



# the wilderness canoeist

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winter 1980

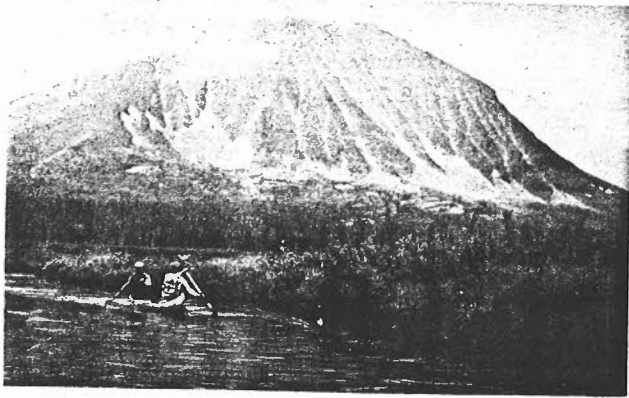


## nahanni

The vicious churning and foaming of the water in the "Sluice Box" lay straight ahead. To the right came the thunderous roar of the South Nahanni River plunging 100 metres (twice the height of Niagara) over Virginia Falls. Emotion overcame me. Virginia Falls symbolized, for me, the fulfilment of a six-year old dream - since seeing Sandy Richardson's slides of a trip down the incomparable Nahanni in 1974.

Our Nahanni adventure began at Watson Lake, Yukon. As our float planes lifted off the lake heading for the Moose Ponds, the seven of us (Herb Pohl in a fibreglas C-2, Paula and Karl Schimek in a 17' Grumman aluminum, Glenn Spence and Bill King in another 17' Grumman aluminum, and Jerry Hodge and I in a 16' Mad River ABS) realized that months of planning and anticipation were over. We soon saw smoke from forest fires hanging over the Nahanni Valley. These forest fires were actually a blessing in disguise. For while they had caused us to reroute from the Mackenzie Highway to the Alaska Highway, we later found that they had caused several other canoeists to delay the start of their trip by five or six days...leaving us alone on the river. But the smoke hid neither the mountains which we could almost have touched, nor the Rock Gardens, which, in a few days we would be canoeing.

Alone beside the Moose Ponds, spectacular in its isolation, stands Mount Wilson. It is a mountain which invites climbing. And so we did...through the dense brush to its base, then 1200 m up the shale and rock and snow of the northwest face. Herb and Karl, like Austrian Sherpas, led the way, and would have reached the summit much sooner, had it not been for the slow and sometimes not so steady progress of the rest of the group. The peak affords not only a downstream view of the river we were about to canoe, but an upstream view of the source of the Nahanni, and a bird's eye view of the nearby Ross River. This was one of three mountain excursions we took on the trip. (The other two were up Sunblood Mountain across the river from the campsite at Virginia Falls, and in the Liard Range in search of the sandstone blowouts.) For me, going up the mountain was not as tricky as coming down when footing was often hard to find, and several steep rock faces proved tricky to negotiate. Herb undoubtedly would disagree with this description... he literally skipped and danced down the shaley sections. Sunset, back at the Moose Ponds was misty colourful, and peaceful. Campfire talk concerning the Rock Gardens which lay ahead, soon gave way to sleep.



The South Nahanni is a cold, clear, meandering stream as it leaves the Moose Ponds. Many little side streams flow noisily into the river; their deposits of shale creating small islands or shallow shoals. Soon there numerous small rapids to be negotiated...the Rock Gardens beckoned. For the next five days (65 km) we were constantly alert - alert to the rocks which had been carefully placed so as to create the greatest possible cause for indecision in the shortest section of river; alert to the ever changing light on the water... from bright sunlight which created glare off the water to sprinkling rain which ran down my glasses and played havoc with my vision; and alert to little nuances of clear communication skills between bow and stern paddlers: "Turn right"... "Right! I said"... "THE OTHER RIGHT"... DAMMIT!". Whoever described the Rock Gardens as 40 miles (that was before the metric days) of continuous white water was not too far off in that description. The adrenalin started flowing early each morning as it seemed we were almost always confronted with a rapid soon after we were on the water. As the rocks got larger, the drops steeper, and the manoeuvring more difficult, we found we were doing a fair bit of lining through some of the most dangerous stretches. After running many of the most boulder-strewn sections of the river, Jerry and I were outspoken in our praise of an ABS canoe which gracefully slid over the rocks. The same could NOT be said of the aluminum canoes.



A silty, unnamed river flowing in from the north marked the end of the Rock Gardens. For us it meant a lay-over day - a rest and relaxation day, if you like. In particular, it meant that our master chef had time to prepare a culinary treat of chicken and dumplings "a la KING". At this point the Nahanni abruptly changed its character, becoming a smooth, wide and powerful river. We drifted lazily along the river, enjoying one majestic mountain spectacle after another, easily canoeing 50 km

a day. Back in the Rock Gardens we had been only vaguely aware of the Selwyn Mountains, which from river level were hidden from sight. To get a good view of these streaked ochre mountains, we had climbed up a rocky ridge which flanked one of our campsites. Now, as we left the clear waters of the Broken Skull River, the towering mountains of the Ragged Range began to close in on the river.

Nestled amongst the highest peaks of the Ragged Range is the milky green Glacier Lake. Despite difficulties in locating the trail to the lake, the scenery and reflections, and blueberries make the 8 km hike well worthwhile. Because the bushes grow so high, it was effortless ecstasy to bend over, just slightly, and scoop up a fist full of these delicious berries. We were surprised to find the blueberries so ripe and abundant in mid-July. Even tastier and more aromatic were the tiny red strawberries which we later found along the shores of Clearwater Creek.

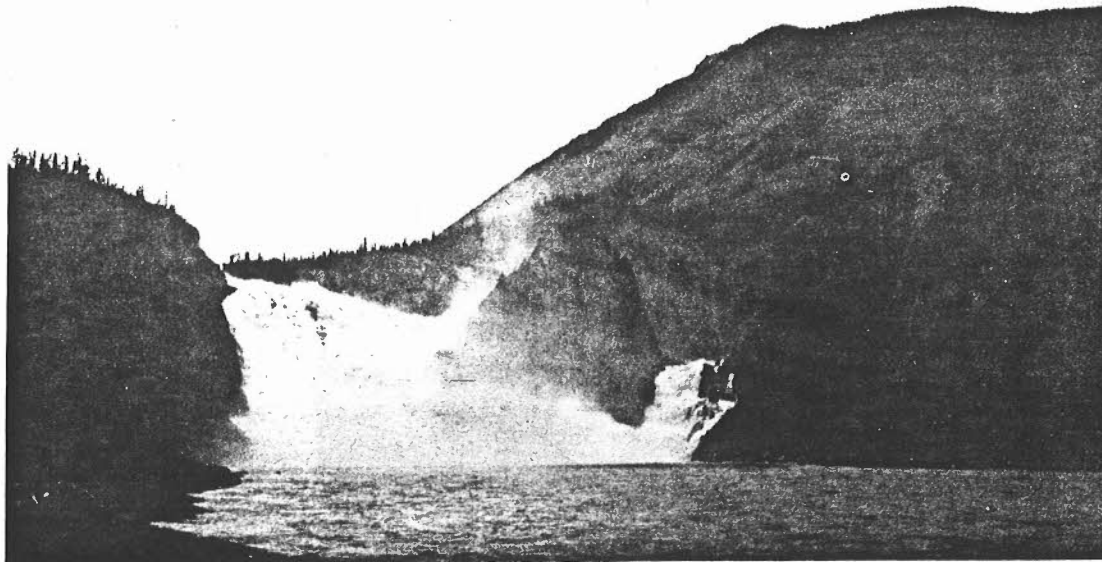


"Nahanni National Park" - the sign marking the park boundary is located 120 km upriver from Virginia Falls. and marks the beginning of the more "civilized" part of the river. That is not to say that there hadn't been signs of civilization before this: a helicopter flying survey crews into Island Lake, a cabin built 2 years ago by a couple on their honeymoon, a party of 4 canoeists camped at Broken Skull River. But within the Park, the warden cabins, the designated campsites, the jet boats in the lower river, the boardwalk around Virginia Falls, and the increasing number of people encountered (we met 17) all detract from the feeling of complete isolation and the true wilderness.

Rabbitkettle Mineral Springs are a major geological feature of the river above the falls. There are two spectacular flat topped tufa mounds. According to the Parks Canada brochure: "Tufa is a rock-like substance created by the precipitation of dissolved minerals (mostly calcium carbonate) from the thermal spring water .... Water emanates from a deep orifice and radiates outwards forming a series of intricate terraces... Subsequent freezing and thawing action has sorted the fragments and formed a series of frost polygons, with coarse fragments on the perimeters and fine material in the centres." Tiptoeing around in our socks, we felt the sharp coral-like texture of the tufa.

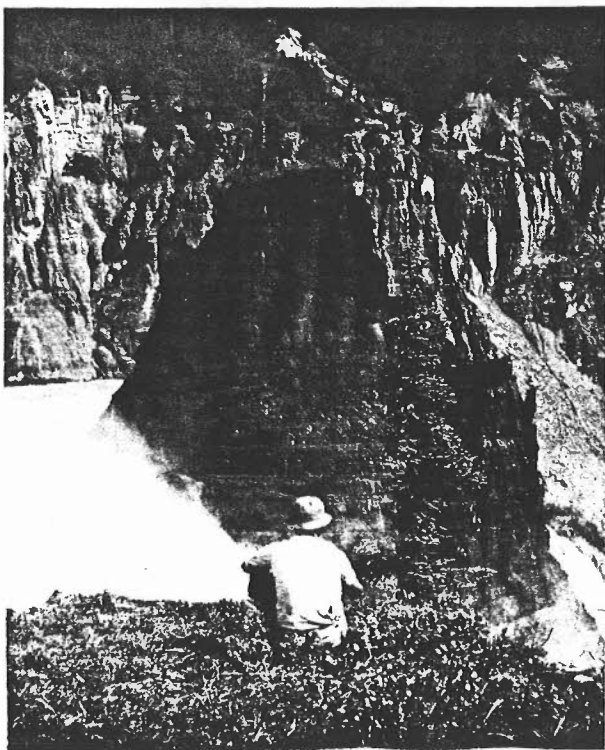


The closer we got to Virginia Falls, the more we found our ABS canoe being out-distanced by the others. Our pre-trip questions about a solo canoeist being able to keep up with the rest of us had been answered very early on in the trip. It was we who had to work to maintain the Pohl pace. But Glenn and Bill? That was another question. Why should they be consistently overtaking us? I blamed Jerry's ABS canoe. Jerry's unspoken displeasure at our "taking the scenic route" around large bends in the river was probably more accurate. I got the message when he simply laid down his paddle and took an extended rest. "Eddy hopping" had taken on a new, if distorted meaning.



Eventually though we did get to the falls. After making camp we hiked 800 m to the Sluice Box. We spent the entire afternoon photographing and exploring the falls area. Glenn got outstanding pictures from every conceivable angle...each of the rest of us was content with a mere 20 or 30 photos. Next day we bushwhacked our way to Marengo Falls. This 10 m falls on Marengo Creek, a tributary which joins the Nahanni below 5-mile canyon. The crystal clear pool at the bottom of the falls was not nearly as cold as the Nahanni. Later that day, on our climb up Sunblood Mountain, we got a bird's eye view of the entire countryside we had explored en route to Marengo Falls. Knowing that in Nahanni country the days are long, we hadn't started out on the climb until 7:00 pm. Herb's dance down the Sunblood shale brought us back to the campsite at 11:30 pm. just as darkness was setting in. These two interesting side trips put the Nahanni River into a little better perspective for us.

During the first week of the trip it had been hard to get a good early morning perspective on the river. There weren't many scenic sunrises due to the cloud cover. Afternoons had been punctuated with frequent, if short, periods of showers. With the showers though came some utterly spectacular rainbows. On one occasion it appeared that our campsite was right at the rainbow's end. Maybe we were close to the Nahanni Gold which eluded Faille and Patterson for so many years! The rainbow had given way to a week of very good weather - climaxed by the bright sunny afternoon when we first arrived at the falls.



We had planned to spend 2 days at the falls, but a lot of rain and clouds on the second day and third morning created a dilemma. If we paddled through 5 mile canyon we would miss some of the scenic beauty of the river, to say nothing of having poor visibility on a stretch of river which would demand a deal of careful paddling; if we stayed at the falls for another day the river would almost certainly rise, making travel through the gorge more difficult. Our decision was to stay and to get an early start next day come hell or high water! We got the latter! With an allowable error of .003 cm, we calculated that since our arrival at the falls, the river had risen 33.02 cm. (In truth, the recording stick which we faithfully drove into the water at each of our campsites indicated a significant increase of about 13 inches.)

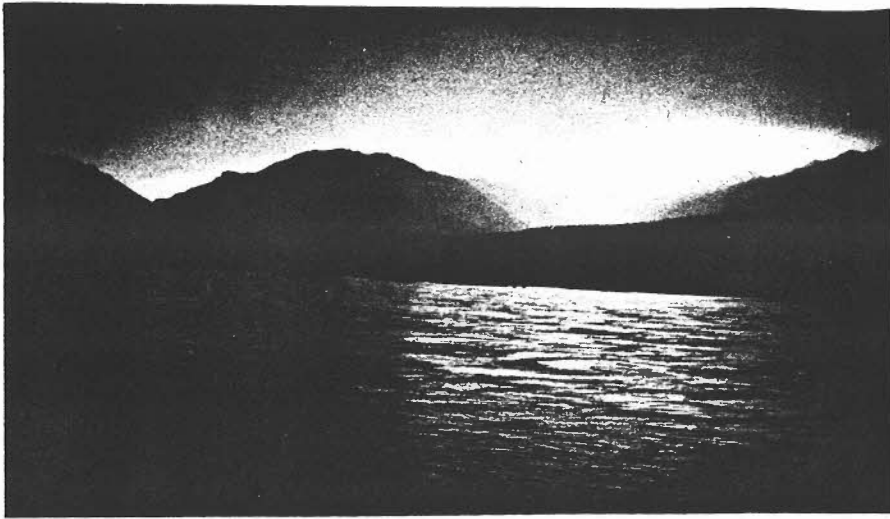


As we portaged our gear across the boardwalks around Virginia Falls, our thoughts were of Albert Faille. What determination and perseverance he demonstrated year after year, as he carried his old river scow and "kicker" piece by piece to the top of the falls, rebuilt it, and continued his search for gold.

The powerful current and 2 m standing waves whisked us through fourth canyon much too quickly. Now we understand why there are so few pictures of the beautiful yellow and orange canyon walls - there simply isn't time. It was impossible to avoid all the big waves. They came from all directions; we were tossed around like a cork. Without spraycovers this stretch would have been the most treacherous of the trip. Hell's Gate without a spraycover would also have been tricky. But, with water levels down a bit overnight, we took on very little water on the exhilarating 90 degree turn which defines this well-known rapid.







Story: David Auger

Photos: D. Auger  
B. King  
H. Pohl  
K. Schimek  
G. Spence

As the rest of us ate or rested at lunch this day, our persistent prospector (alias Jerry Hodge) once again brought out the gold pan. He too displayed great determination and perseverance; first by trying to persuade the rest of us to share in his investment (the pan) with a promise that we would share the wealth, and then in trying to find some of that elusive metal.

A rather comical incident took place as we were packing up after lunch. Herb, in his canoe, was about to begin paddling when Jerry alerted the rest of us to an awkward, gangling caribou yearling (at first incorrectly identified as a baby moose) clomping towards us along the river's edge. There was Herb, cursing silently to himself that he was drifting away from this spectacle. And there was I, about 2 metres away from my camera... not daring to move a muscle. But not to worry - Glenn and Bill both were clicking furiously so we'd have lots of good photos to share. As luck would have it though, Glenn was standing between Bill and the caribou, almost directly in Bill's line of sight... making photography somewhat difficult. To top off the ridiculous situation, Glenn had only 3 pictures left on his film when he first sighted the caribou. Never daring to hope that this curious creature would come within 2 m of us to investigate, Glenn had used up his last pictures and could only stand there muttering! With this great potential, Bill did get one good close-up shot. Our other wildlife photography is unlikely to win any WCA fauna awards. Despite seeing bears on three different occasions we were more pre-occupied with beating a hasty retreat than we were with capturing the moment on film. And the picture I took of a porcupine up a lodge pole pine on Sunblood Mountain might more accurately be described as "black silhouette in black tree against white sky" rather than "porky in action".

With the spectacular scenery of the third and second canyons, it is impossible not to get good photographs. We gazed in awe as we canoed past the 460 m vertical wall of the Gate, and beside the distinctive pinnacle known as Pulpit Rock. Long colluvial slopes are evident here - shale and sandstone, instead of the more resistant limestone we were to find in First Canyon. But with such names as "Funeral Range", "Headless Creek", and "Deadmen Valley", who could have suspected such tranquil beauty in these distinctive land forms? As well as preserving some of the Nahanni legends maybe these names were chosen deliberately - to scare off potential visitors to the area.

Our trip up Prairie Creek in Deadmen Valley will be remembered by our group for two reasons. Looking back up river toward the mountains of the Headless Range, we watched the sun setting behind a translucent screen of rain against which the mountains were eerily silhouetted. Our photos hardly did justice to this rare spectacle. But our pictures told a different story as we got our first photos and indeed our first meal of Arctic grayling the next day. This was a welcome change from our 7-day cycle of freeze-dried food.

Despite the rain which must have been falling up river, the water level at Cache Rapids was relatively low. This necessitated running the south channel, which quickly brought us into the magnificent limestone formations of First Canyon. Scientists believe that the canyons were created quite recently - perhaps within the past 1.4 billion years. We just drifted through the canyon - enjoying one awesome sight after another. The 400 m cliff walls were much closer to the river than in the other canyons. One of the formations resembled the Roman Coliseum! What a sad feeling to leave behind these historic canyons.

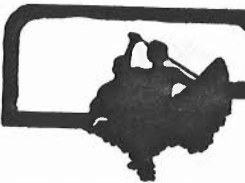


After dinner at the Kraus Sulphur Springs, I visualized that Herb and I would become part of history too... perhaps joining the ranks of the McLeod brothers who had been found beheaded in Deadmen Valley. It seemed innocent enough at the start... a short hike to see if we could find some tastier water than the silty Nahanni or the hot sulphur springs. But the short hike became a two hour search... first for drinking water, then eventually for a path through scratchy rose brambles, over fallen trees, beside a muddy, slippery creek. With a little orienteering by hunch, we arrived back at our campsite. By this time the Nahanni water looked mighty good.

Next morning we headed on to the fascinating Splits. The Nahanni meandered and wound its way through a maze of islands. Yet the water level was high. It seemed that no matter what snye we followed, the banks were undercut - like an Ontario river in Springtime. Then after a day's climb up the jagged, blocky rocks of the Liard Range, we paddled on to Nahanni Butte, where our 500 km adventure all too soon concluded.

**WRITER'S COMMENT:** Last year Nahanni National Park was designated a World Heritage Site. In terms of the world's heritage, the Nahanni is to Canada what the Grand Canyon is to the United States and the pyramids are to Egypt. Yet shortly after our return to Ontario, I was dismayed to read a Canadian Press report that effluent laden with copper and cyanide is being discharged by a mining company into the Flat River which is a tributary of the Nahanni. Apart from the long range pollution concern, is the intrusion by such mining companies into a unique wilderness area.

Wilderness is hard to preserve. Yet we found that the Nahanni wilderness is still there. Not the utter isolation that Patterson and Faille found - that can never be recaptured. There are intrusions and there will continue to be. But let's keep these intrusions to a minimum. Let us preserve the Nahanni so that our sons and daughters may also be overcome with emotion at the majesty of Virginia Falls.



## TWO ON THE NAHANNI

R.M. Patterson, The Dangerous River, Gray's Publishing Co., Sidney, B.C., Canada.

Joanne Ronan Moore, Nahanni Trailhead, Deneau and Greenberg Publishers, Ottawa, Ont., Canada.

Reviewed by: Dave Auger

The chief similarity in the two books is that both describe wilderness adventure on the South Nahanni River in Canada's northwest. The Dangerous River is the story of an attempt by Raymond Patterson and Gordon Matthews to prospect for gold on the lower Nahanni. They first arrived there in 1927 and returned upstream by canoe with a "kicker" - in the following year to stay one year. Nahanni Trailhead is the story of a newlywed couple's \$12 000 year-long honeymoon at their cabin which they built upriver from Broken Skull River - fifty years after Patterson and Matthews.

The adventures of Patterson and Matthews are colourfully and comically described. For almost every wilderness camper Patterson's entertaining account of situations and problems they face will strike a familiar chord. Nahanni Trailhead will be of more interest to those who have canoed the South Nahanni or to those who are planning to build a cabin of their own. Most of the book, which is written as a diary, describes incidents in and around the cabin which Joanne, and her husband built in the summer of 1978.

With the airplane making the South Nahanni much more accessible in 1978 than in 1928, it's difficult to compare the two wilderness experiences. Whereas Patterson and Matthews encountered but a handful of other individuals (among them Albert Paile), the Moores had helicopter visits from Lands & Forests people, frequent Cessna visits from friends and local pilots; to say nothing of the stops by canoeists on the river in the summertime.

Each book describes a rather amusing incident involving guests who overstayed their welcome. The trials and tribulations suffered by an unappreciative guest at the Patterson Matthews cabin are hilariously described. One particular incident involved his trying to flip pancakes with one of those cursed frying pans with the fold back handles ("for easy carrying", they say). Patterson sets up the story very well, and then proceeds to describe, in great detail, an almost unbelievable chain of events. In Moore's book, an amusing situation to reflect on now (though not at the time, I'm sure) involved a pair of visitors who felt that because they wanted to fly out of the Nahanni River Valley, a plane should be at their beck and call - regardless of weather and risks to the pilot. When the weather actually did clear up the situation was defused, but Joanne Moore's description here is very thorough.

In short then, I found The Dangerous River to be a thoroughly enjoyable, well written adventure classic, and Nahanni Trailhead to be an interesting diary of a unique experience shared by a couple united in their love of the outdoors.

## wca workshop weekend

Article: Joyce Peterson

Photo : John McBride

Bill King provided us with wilderness first-aid techniques that could be used by anyone in an emergency.

Carol and Bruce Hodgins along with Ed Hileman, gave us many suggestions for a healthy diet while tripping. The tasting session provided us with an opportunity to be active participants!

Saturday evening we were presented with slides and commentary of trips to Pukaskwa by Sandy Richardson and the Nahanni River by Glenn Spence.

Craig MacDonald, who works at the Leslie Frost Resource Centre, provided us with an insight as to why the many voyageur and native canoe routes, which were instrumental in opening up our vast country, are not being maintained and as a result, another part of our historic past will eventually disappear.



The spirit of some 120 Wilderness canoeists on this get-together was only dampened by the intermittent-come-consistent rain. The beauty of Haliburton and the opportunity to re-live our camp days (for better or for worse) provided an interesting atmosphere at Camp Kandelore!

Friday evening found us settling in by flash and candlelight, while others (who were quicker at deciding who was going to sleep in the top bunk) were provided with an interesting opportunity to travel, via slides, the many spring, summer and winter voyages of fellow canoeists.

Saturday we were offered an array of workshops and a chance to visit the impressive Kanawa Canoe Museum which is situated on the campsite.

Richard Nash explained the historical highlights of the many different types of canoes used by our native people, which are exhibited in the museum. Richard also showed us the art of carving a paddle and explained his construction of birch bark canoes.

Sunday, under somewhat brighter skies, the tripping part of the weekend commenced, but not until Betty Greenacre's photography workshop. Betty shared some great hints on how to take good pictures, which we immediately tried to do on a photo walk around the camp.

Tom Boardman led an interesting nature walk while several of our members decided to do some canoeing before returning home. Canoeing around the lake provided a beautiful last look at nature's grandeur of colour.

The new format of this WCA weekend proved extremely successful and we look forward to more such interesting weekends. Many thanks to everyone involved, with a special thanks to Anneke and Dave Auger.



## news briefs

### WCA PHOTO CONTEST

Again this year the WCA is holding a slide competition. Members are invited to submit their slides in any of the following categories:

**CANADIAN WILDERNESS:** Photographs of wilderness scenery and landscapes, taken in Canada, that interpret the "feeling" of the wilderness. (There should be no evidence of man in the photographs.)

**FLORA:** Photographs of Canadian wild plants in their natural settings.

**FAUNA:** Photographs of Canadian wild animals in their natural settings.

**MAN IN THE WILDERNESS:** Photographs depicting man in harmony with the natural environment, and capturing the essence of the wilderness experience.

#### INTERPRETIVE STUDIES OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:

Photographs of an expressive or interpretive nature, portraying the drama or impact of some element from the natural environment. Photographs may be abstract, and may highlight line, form, texture, colour or mood in the chosen subject.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION:

Entries should be sent to the Photo Contest  
Chairperson: Claire Brigden,  
58 Eastbourne Ave.,  
Toronto, Ontario,  
M5P 2G2.

Entries must be received no later than January 30, 1981.

Each slide submitted should be clearly marked with the photographer's name, and numbered. Include with each entry a sheet of paper stating name, address, phone number, and clearly indicating by number for each slide: a) the category entered, and b) the title of the slide.

#### DEADLINE FOR SPRING ISSUE

The number of articles coming in to the newsletter has again fallen off. We know that many members made summer trips, but we have had only two stories so far. We also need trip reports, book reviews, equipment comments, or anything that you think would be of interest to other members. Let's try to get more material in for the next issue!

Please send material to the editor by February 28.

#### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Remember that your 1980 membership terminates at the end of January. The new membership rates and membership form appear on the back page; send it in to the membership chairperson Paula Schimek as soon as possible.

#### PARTNER NEEDED FOR WINISK TRIP

Five Toronto - Guelph area canoeists are looking for one person, male or female, to complete a group for a two month trip on the Winisk River System, mid-June to mid-August 1981. Contact Barry Hodgson 34-B King St., Guelph, Ontario, N1E 4P6; phone: 519-836-8813.

Winners will be announced at the WCA Annual Meeting in February, where all entries will be shown. (Entrants may pick up their slides at the Annual Meeting. For those not present, slides will be returned by mail.)

- RULES:**
1. Entries will be accepted from WCA members only.
  2. Slides that received prizes or honourable mentions in previous WCA contests are not eligible for entry this year.
  3. A maximum of 3 slides per category may be submitted.
  4. An entry fee of \$3 (regardless of the number of slides submitted) must accompany each entry.
  5. The WCA reserves the right to use prints of the winning and other selected slides for display at the WCA Booth at the Sportsmen's Show.

**JUDGING:** The photographs will be judged on their subject matter, interest, technical excellence, and artistic merit by a panel of judges.

**PRIZES:** The winner of each category will receive an 8" X 10" framed and mounted colour print of their winning slide. The winner whose slide is judged Best Overall in the Contest will receive an 11" X 14" framed and mounted colour print of their slide.

In selecting slides for entry, the following quote from Nature Canada should be kept in mind:

"The successful nature photographer must bring a high degree of photographic skill to his work, but pure technique is not enough. The person behind the camera must clearly reveal the character of the subject and at the same time tell us something about his own response to what he catches on film."

#### WCA AT THE SPORTSMEN'S SHOW - HELP WANTED!

The WCA will again be having a booth at the Sportamen's Show in Toronto in March. Help will be needed both in setting up and staffing the booth. Any members interested in helping out are asked to contact Bill King as soon as possible for further details. Call: 416-223-4646.

#### ERRORS IN CANOE ROUTE BOOKLET

Bill Ness has learned that there are errors in the recently published booklet The Northwest Mountains, part of the Wild Rivers Survey put out by Parks Canada. Parks Canada has advised retailers to return all copies, and that it will be reprinted. Further, sellers are being asked to provide Parks Canada with the names and addresses of known purchasers so that they can be contacted. Such measures would lead one to suspect that the errors in the first edition are quite significant and that anyone relying on it to plan a trip may be placing themselves in jeopardy. Anyone with a copy is probably well advised to contact Parks Canada, Information Division, Ottawa, K1A 1G2 for clarification.

## ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the WCA will be held on Saturday, February 28, 1981 at the Faculty Club, McMaster University, Hamilton.

The tentative agenda for the meeting is as follows:

- 9:00 Registration
- 9:30 Business Meeting - Chairman's Report
  - Financial Report
  - Committee Reports
  - Amendments to By-laws
  - Election of Directors
- 12:30 Lunch
- 14:00 Continuation of Business Meeting
- 15:30 Conservation Committee slide show on Ogoki-Albany Wilderness Area
  - Outings Committee discussion of trips
- 17:30 Dinner
- 19:00 Viewing of slides entered in WCA slide contest and presentation of awards.
- 20:00 Guest Speaker: C.E.S. Franks, author of *The Canoe and White Water*, speaking on "David Thompson's Exploratory Travels in Muskoka and the Madawaska in 1837".

Any paid-up member or his/her duly appointed representative may attend, participate in, and vote at the business meeting.

All members in good standing are encouraged to attend the business meeting and to participate in all proceedings. Formal notice of meeting and registration forms will be mailed to each member in January.

### Registration

A registration fee of \$2.00 per membership (\$4.00 for non-members) is required to attend the non-business sessions.

The meals will cost: \$4.50 for lunch (Hot buffet) and \$6.50 for Dinner (Roast chicken). Coffee and Tea will be available throughout the day, and a cash bar will be available during the afternoon and evening. (The arrangement for meals is subject to a minimum of 65 people registering for meals.)

### Elections to the Board of Directors

The candidates who have declared their willingness to serve on the Board of Directors for a two year term are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. If there are others among the membership who are interested in declaring their candidacy, they should contact Bill King (416-223-4646) or Glenn Spence (416-355-3506) as soon as possible so that their names can be included in the notice of meeting that will be sent out in January.

Three directors will be elected at this meeting.

### Members' Proxies

Any member unable to attend the Annual Meeting may designate a person as his or her representative by means of a written proxy to be given to the secretary prior to the start of the meeting. This proxy must be dated, name the representative, specify the meeting at which it is to be used, list any special instructions or limitations, and be signed by the member. (Anyone with questions about the proxy should contact Cam Salsbury at 416-498-8660.)

No-one on the Board of Directors may serve as the representative of any member; no-one standing for election to the Board may use his or her proxies in the election to the Board.

### BEGINNER'S COURSE IN PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THE CANOEIST

This is a course with the special interests, needs, and possibilities of the canoeing outdoor-lover in mind. It gives a basic understanding of the technical side of photography (the camera, its controls, and applications; special equipment for the canoeist, etc.) and concentrates on improving the photographer's ability to see and observe. Student participation is emphasized.

The 8 week course will be given in the Boor-Spadina area of downtown Toronto by the experienced writer, photographer, and canoeist, Toni Harting, Mondays from 7:30 - 10:00 pm. starting February 2, 1981. Class size is limited to a maximum of 10 people. (In case of sufficient interest, the same course will be presented on Tuesday evenings as well.)

The tuition fee for the course is \$70. Assignment material will cost about \$20.

For detailed information package contact Toni Harting, 7 Walmer Rd., Apt. 902, Toronto, M5R 2W8, or call 416-964-2495 (after 8:00 pm.) before January 12, 1981.

### THE GREAT CANADIAN CANOE EXPOSITION

Plans are currently underway to hold a canoe exposition June 20-21 at Harbourfront in Toronto. Included will be displays on the Evolution of the Canoe in History, Construction Techniques and Materials, Canoe Safety, Canoe Experience, a Bookstore, and Seminars dealing with many aspects of canoeing and canoe tripping. Much help is needed in planning and staging this event. Any members who would like to get involved should contact Maureen Bretz at Canoe Ontario, 461-429-7701.

### WILDERNESS EMERGENCY CARE COURSE

This course offered by Humber College has already been taken by a number of our members and comes highly recommended. The 13 week Winter course begins on Jan. 13. For further information, contact the Health Sciences Division at Humber College by phoning 416-675-3111.

### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL PARKS- ISSUES IN THE '80s

"a conference focusing on planning  
and management issues facing  
provincial parks in the 1980's"

MAY 11-14, 1981  
WATERLOO, ONTARIO

co hosted by:-Ontario Prov. Parks Council  
-Faculty of Environmental  
Studies, University of Waterloo

#### FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

Issues In The '80s  
Provincial Parks Council  
Environmental Studies Bldg.  
University of Waterloo  
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1

### OLGILVIE - PEEL CANOE TRIP

Would like to canoe the Olgilvie - Peel Rivers in the Yukon for about 2 weeks this coming summer. It will be a whitewater trip through the Olgilvie Mountains from the Dempster Highway to Fort MacPherson. Experienced canoeists interested should contact Greg Gaglione at 416-239-6960.

### LOOKING FOR WORK IN TORONTO & LOVE THE OUTDOORS?

A downtown Toronto canoeing/backpacking/cross-country skiing store is looking for a capable, friendly female or male, active in these sports, to sell and assist in ordering outdoor clothing and some hard goods. If interested, respond in writing to the WCA postal box.



## CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the Annual Meeting of the WCA on February 28, we will be electing three people to two year terms on the Board of Directors. To date, the Nominating Committee has put forward four candidates for these positions - David Auger, Graham Barnett, David Berthelet, and Jan Tissot.

Having served on the Outings Committee for 3 years, and as a Director for the past 2 years, I am again letting my name stand for the Board of Directors of the WCA. Although my greatest involvement with the WCA has been in canoeing, I am also a participant in backpacking, cross-country skiing, and winter camping activities.

For me the WCA provides a chance to experience some of Canada's wilderness areas with other members. The WCA stands for sharing skills, ideas and stories with other wilderness enthusiasts. The WCA is a conservation-minded body whose aim is to preserve the wilderness for future generations.

Two topics on which I have strong feelings are:

1. The need for more involvement in the WCA by more members. We are making progress in this area, but Outings, Conservation, and Sportmen's Show committees need more volunteers. I'd especially like to see more members organize an outing for their fellow members, or submit an article to "The Wilderness Canoeist."
2. "The Wilderness Canoeist" is our communications link. Without this vital organ, the WCA as a body could not function. We must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the superior quality of this quarterly newsletter is maintained.

David Auger

Below are brief statements from each candidate. Each will have time at the Annual Meeting to amplify on these statements, and members will have the opportunity to question each candidate. (Further nominations may also be made from the floor at the meeting.)

My perception of the WCA is that things as they are, though not perfect, are perhaps as good as they can be. The executive has effected a first class job, and I would not be too eager to change or improve on what has been done.

I am, however, opinionated on a few matters:

1. The WCA is about the right size. Growth in the membership would alter the character of the association in a way that would not likely be for the better.
2. All members of the Association should be encouraged to be independent canoeists. The Association should not be oriented to training or taking people by the hand. That is, those wanting formal instruction should be encouraged to seek out commercial interests. The WCA should not compete with outfitters or commercial trippers.
3. "The Wilderness Canoeist" is an excellent publication, and whatever is required to maintain its quality and timeliness should be done.

David Berthelet

I have been a members of the WCA for 2 years and have known many of its active people for several years. My outdoor past consists of canoeing, skiing, hiking, and the leading of many canoe trips for the University of Toronto Outing Club over the past 12 years.

Following are some of my thoughts on club policy:

1. I feel the WCA is run in a satisfactory administrative fashion at present and that this competence should be maintained.
2. Membership should not be restricted to a fixed number, but we should not campaign for to boost the membership because this usually breeds inactivity. Members should join because they genuinely want to take part in our outings.
3. Trips such as the trans-Algonquin winter trek and long hiking expeditions should be encouraged to add variety and enable members with such expertise to transmit knowledge and techniques to others who are keen to learn about these activities.
4. We should not have affiliation in any way with people from professional organizations that give instruction or lead trips for a fee. If members desire this sort of thing they can find it in many commercial tripping organizations. The purpose of the WCA is to enable members to enjoy tripping with people with common interests, not to provide costly lessons.
5. I feel that canoeing standards should not be established. If this situation had existed in early Canada we would have had no voyageurs! Certain individuals or groups encourage canoeing standards because they want to benefit financially from them.
6. I am supportive of conservation measures for wilderness areas, but I think that we should be very careful in preparing such things as briefs to government groups, as this may not come under the scope of our activities or be within our constitution.

Graham Barnett

The following are my views on the WCA:

1. Outings: I feel that the present arrangement of outings fills the needs of the majority of the membership. The organization of workshop weekends by members is an excellent way to assist novices and to up-grade skills of members in general. Participation in these should be limited to members only, however.
2. Membership: The ideal number of members of the WCA lies between two and four hundred. The trend over the last few years has been that membership losses are compensated for by membership gains at the Sportmen's Show, and therefore no active recruiting drive is necessary at this time.
3. Weekends: From all the comments circulating about last Fall's weekend, it was a huge success. There may be enough interest in other topics where experts could give explanation about their fields. I can think of several: canoes, gear, clothing, weather, and perhaps others. This would be ideal for future Fall weekends. Members can also swap stories and show off their slides. Participation at these weekends should also be limited to members. A limited number of interested non-members might be admitted on payment of additional fees.
4. Trip Inventory: I feel that the WCA should create and maintain a central index of reports and information covering trips which were made by members. This should include sources of information, availability of maps, campsites, duration of trip, how to get to the starting point by car, by rail, by bus or otherwise, car ferry, and return trip.
5. Miscellaneous: The WCA should maintain liaison with the Ministry of Natural Resources re: portages along major river systems. The WCA should keep members informed on legal difficulties of the usage of portages and if portages are threatened take action to lobby with the Provincial authorities.

Jan Tissot



# Outward Bound in Canada's Wilderness

Tony Sloan

Black Sturgeon Lake is just south of Lake Nipigon... that inland sea of island-studded water that sits like a giant heart in the vast wilderness country of north-western Ontario. A gravel road winds north, off the Trans-Canada Highway at Hurkett, eighty-eight kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay, Ontario and after another sixty kilometres of north woods scenery, you arrive at the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School.

Outward Bound, founded during the Second World War in 1941 in Wales to teach young men and women an awareness of their own abilities, both as individuals or in groups, has now grown to thirty such establishments throughout the world.

Specializing in mountain, sea and wilderness awareness program, Black Sturgeon is the wilderness school and complements the rock climbing camp near Keremeos, British Columbia in western Canada.

The area is particularly well suited for the various activities that make up the Outward Bound program.

Upon my arrival, I was immediately invited to join a white water canoeing and kayak class working out on the Black Sturgeon River. The Class I and II stretches of rapids are ideal for teaching prospective voyageurs how to read and paddle fast water. Students, that day, were asked in turn what features they noted such as eddies or standing waves, and were then taught to plot courses through obstacles such as rocks, sweepers and shallows, by executing the proper strokes in conjunction with their partners. They practised eddying in and eddying out and ferrying across fast water while executing the draw, pry and sweep strokes that make such manoeuvres possible.

This way a ten-day special skills course (white water canoeing and kayaking) where students concentrate on a specific interest. The longer standard courses incorporate a variety of skills and interests basic to wilderness travel and experience.

The following day was allocated to rock climbing. As we trod our way through and around the huge talus rocks and low bush, I caught glimpses of a rock face, towering dark and ominous in the soft, misty rain. It's called Cleghorn Bluffs. A footpath, so steep in spots that a rope is used to assist climbers, winds up to the right of the main face and emerges atop the sheer vertical wall overlooking the forested valley.

Resisting an urge to wrap myself around the nearest tree in a terror-stricken embrace, I allowed myself to be tied on with a climbing rope (belayed) so I could lean over the edge to observe and shoot photographs.

The climbing class consisted of six men and three women who were under the guidance and direction of a jovial ram-rock man named Collin (Col) Bolton.

Everyone seemed to be super organized and went about his or her appointed role with an air of self assurance and efficiency. I was to learn later that they had all started nine days ago on a very small rock climb and had gradually worked up to this monster.

Col Bolton was teaching mountain rescue today. After assigning each member of the class a specific function such as belay, observer, cliff master and choosing the injured "patient", Bolton proceeded to demonstrate a descent. The victim was draped in a sitting position on his shoulders and lowered down the thirty-three metres to the talus rocks that sloped away from the base of the cliff.

Another method had the injured climber trussed up and totally immobilized in a network of rope, something like a pot roast, and taken down horizontally with the rescuer guiding the patient with his arms while pushing off the wall with his feet.

Bolton, with unanimous consent from the class, graciously offered me the opportunity to be taken down as an injured climber in this manner. I graciously declined on the grounds that I was suitably terrified just photographing the rock face.

It seems that this is a fairly common initial reaction but several students found that, with technical instruction and acquired know-how, the butterflies and uncertainties are quickly replaced with an exciting sense of accomplishment and well-being. At least three of the students had taken the junior course in previous years.

Instructor Bolton finds the Cleghorn Bluffs well suited for the Outward Bound program and he states there are even more technically demanding rock formations a short distance north of their present location. It seems, other than snow slopes, parts of northwestern Ontario offer climbers the same technical challenge to be found in the mighty mountains of western Canada.

Begin allowed to sit in on a final debriefing session of a twenty-five day standard course was a first hand opportunity to gain straight-from-the-shoulder insight into the Outward Bound program. This was an adult group made up of five women and three men, ranging in age from early twenties to early thirties. They had just completed a twenty-one day wilderness canoe trip in which they had spent a seventy-two hour period in individual isolation (solo) and had travelled the last five days (final) without the direct supervision of their two guides.

The idea of embarking on such a lengthy wilderness canoeing expedition with inexperienced personnel and, with the exception of the two guides, all complete strangers to each other, is something of a mind-boggling concept to a veteran voyageur.

The simplified explanation may possibly be that the voyageur is well experienced at looking after himself and may even resent the advice of others while the novices actually depend on each other to contribute in some way and in that respect, survive as a group.

Cynicism and a blase disregard for the worth of others takes a beating when, during the appreciation period, you hear remarks such as "remember the late afternoon when I was bogged down with the canoe in that marsh... you waited for me and I really appreciated that... and you were both near me at night."

I can't even remember the last time I had a lump in my throat.

Aside from the special skill courses such as rock climbing, kayak and white water canoeing, which are regarded as ten-day workshops, the standard twenty-five day course is the cornerstone of the Outward Bound program.

A breakdown of the course reveals a rather fascinating cross section of outdoor activities.

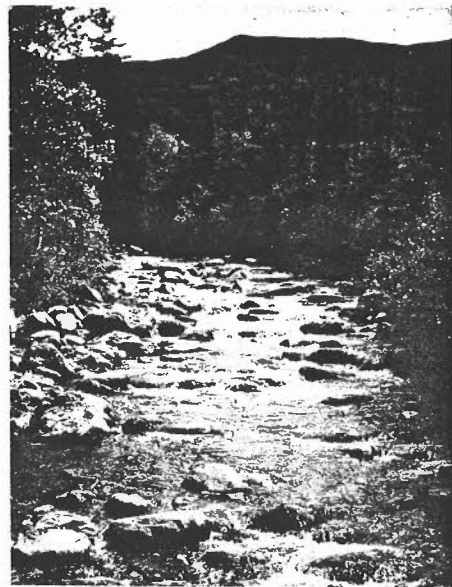
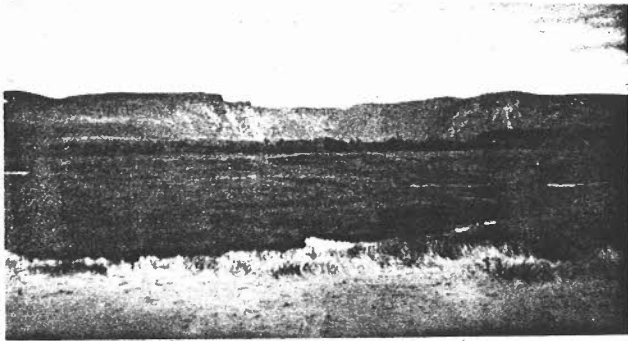
Day one involves being picked up at the train station in Thunder Bay, Ontario and being conveyed by bus the one-hundred and forty-four kilometres to the Outward Bound Camp and settling in.

The next two days are allotted to rock climbing followed by a day and one-half of kayaking and canoeing white water. Then there are two and one-half days to prepare food and learn route planning prior to a seventeen day canoe trip which includes three days of solitary isolation -- usually the highlight of the whole trip according to several OB voyageurs who have experienced the solo.

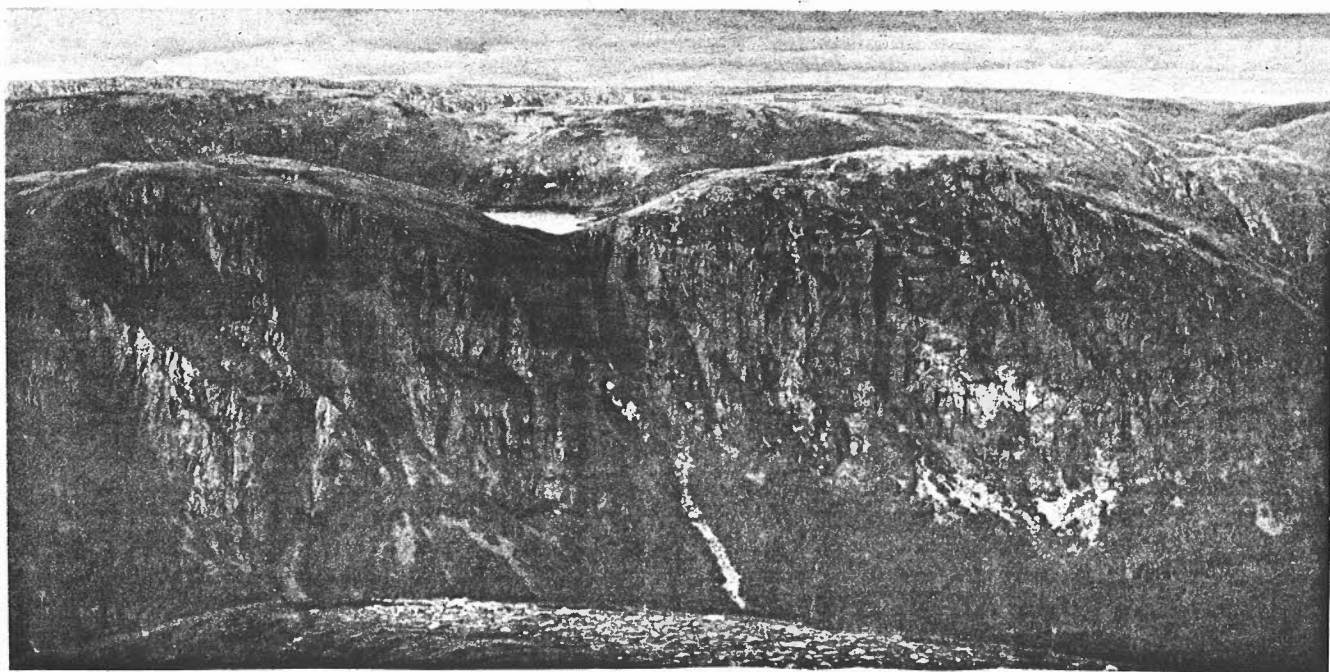
The day following your arrival back in camp is marathon day. Although the race is optional, there is almost one-hundred percent participation as everyone knows the object is to finish, not necessarily to win.

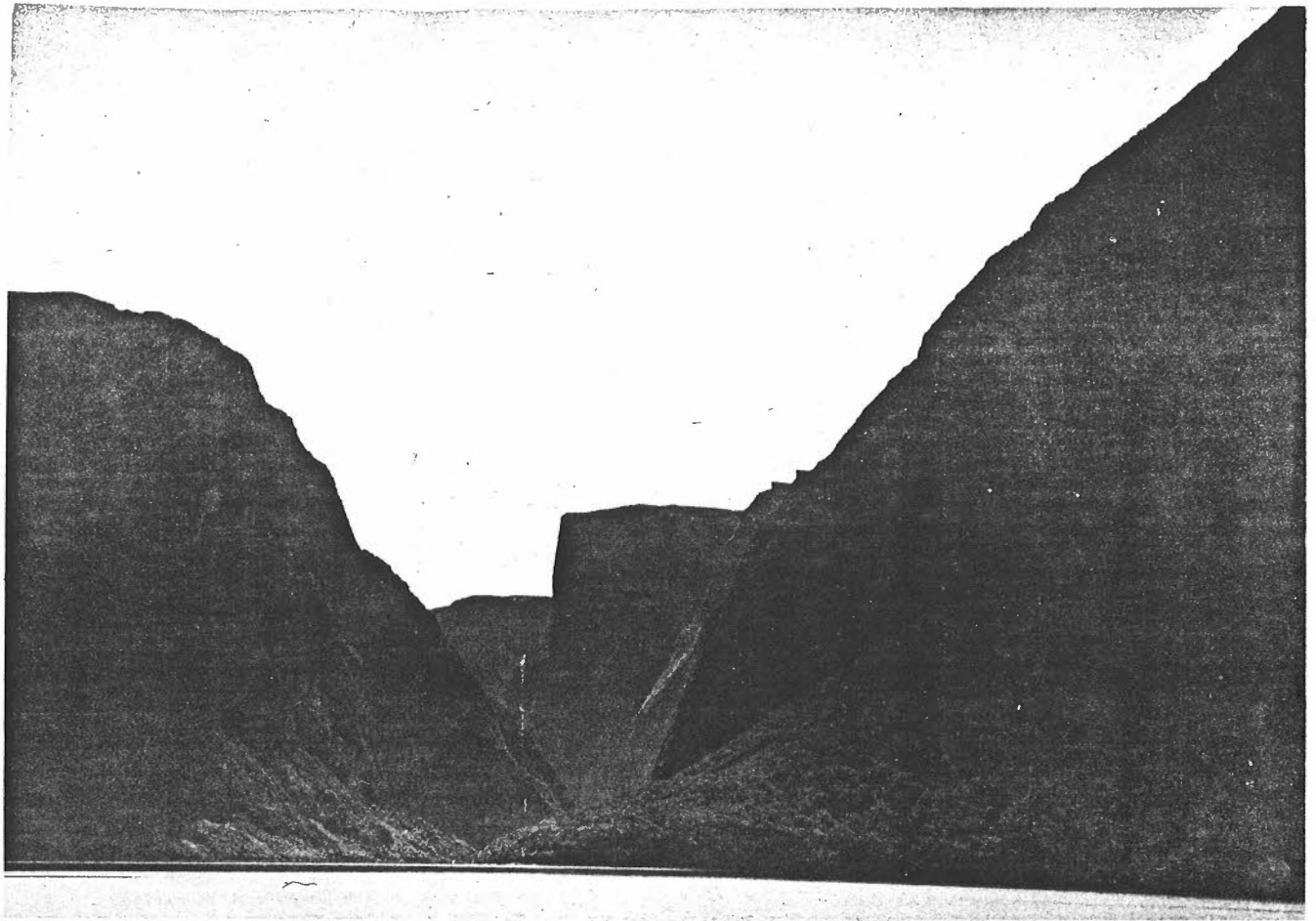
There are a variety of courses available for different age groups throughout the summer including an eight-hundred kilometre river trip that takes thirty-five days and ten or twenty-one day courses in winter.

For complete information on the Outward Bound experience contact Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School, Suite 200, 11 Yorkville Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4W 1L3 or telephone (416) 922-3321.



gro





# smorne



photographs: Sandy Richardson



JERRY HODGE

## ROSENCRANTZ AND GULDENSTERN

A new neighbour has just moved in on our street. The house had been unoccupied for about four months prior to the move. A neighbourhood squirrel, sensing the lack of occupancy dug a small hole at the edge of the roof and spent some time turning the attic into a nest. When the new neighbour arrived he patched the hole. The squirrel reopened it. The neighbour patched it. The squirrel reopened it. The war was on! Seeing that the problem was not going away the neighbour, being a man of action, called in the pest exterminator. The exterminator, not being a man of honour, convinced the neighbour that live trapping was the only way to end the menace in the neighbourhood. He arranged a contract with my neighbour to look after his squirrel problem for one year. He was to live trap the squirrels and move them elsewhere. A live trap was set in the backyard and the next morning had its first catch, a black squirrel. A couple of days later the exterminator collected the squirrel and reset the trap. Another black was caught a few days later and then Rosencrantz was caught. Rosencrantz was a large gray squirrel. He was large, as were most of the squirrels in the neighbourhood, because he was well fed. A good meal was always available in our neighbourhood from an assortment of neighbours. Many of the squirrels, and there are a lot of them, have names. Rosencrantz was the particular pet of a neighbour across the street. When Rosencrantz was caught, I phoned the SPCA to see what could be done. Our new neighbour was denuding our area of pets! Nothing, they said unless there is cruelty shown. I phoned my neighbour to tell her what was happening. Her son went over to talk to the man who told him about the contract. Rob said that the neighbours that have any trouble with squirrels usually bought a can of moth balls and placed them in the attic near the hole. The man told him he had a contract and was going through with his obligations to the exterminator. The next morning David, my youngest, came running in from the back telling me that Rosencrantz was dead. The exterminator had not come and a very chilly night in a metal trap had done him in. The neighbourhood mourned. No one said any more to our neighbour. The trap was left closed from them on and is still sitting in the snow about twenty feet from where I'm typing, a black monument to contractual obligations.

## SLUP N.E. AND SLUP N.W.

Now that I've got your attention.

SLUP is the shorthand for reports produced by the Ministry of Natural Resources about Strategic Land Use Planning. I believe there have been three of them; one for Southern Ontario (SLUP-SO), another for North-eastern Ontario (SLUP-NE) and the last for North-western Ontario (SLUP-NW). The Southern Ontario document was thin and not very controversial. There are few natural resources here which have not long since been exploited. SLUP NE was large and comprehensive-impressive. It covered a large area and was full of intricate plans for the area for the next 20 years. SLUP NW was however not nearly so impressive and if you read the following letter to the Minister of MNR I think you can begin to understand the implications of the document. It simply a poor piece of work

to present publicly to Ontarians representing a 20 year planning document for an area much larger than some European countries. The major villain of the piece is the paper companies who wish to strip mine the forests of the area. A number of conservation groups got together on this one and have sent separate briefs on the area.

Our brief follows:

## EVALUATION OF SLUP N.W. LETTER TO MINISTER

In comparison to a thorough piece of work in Strategic Land Use Planning for North-Eastern Ontario, the document for the North-West is unfortunately far less adequate and less thoroughly documented.

In the matter of Parks in particular we have questions and comments concerning the following: 1. Site regions in SLUP N.W. are difficult to identify because of inadequate mapping. 2. While there is one proposed wilderness park in each site area according to Parks policy there is only one large park proposed involving a river (Missinaibi-Moose). The river passes through three site regions and is the only proposed park in these areas. We would like to see two additional wilderness parks—one each in two of the site areas through which the Missinaibi-Moose passes. Some of this land is in the North-Eastern Region and some in the North-West requiring a further alteration to SLUP N.E..

Only five natural environment parks exist in SLUP N.W. (Figure 9) while stated Parks policy is that there be one Natural Environment Park in each of the 19 site districts. It appears that the location of parks is yet undetermined (Pg. 41) making approval of the plan difficult.

Waterway parks are also in the same category. These parks are unidentified except one in site district 2 of site region 2W. This site connects a section of the Winick River to the Winnick Park in N.E. SLUP. Again one park is used to cover two areas. As canoeists we feel the need for significant protection of the natural areas of SLUP N.W. and are concerned that we will have no input into the inevitable choices of the 18 waterway parks yet to be established. Again we find the plan difficult to approve under these circumstances.

We understand that the preliminary document for SLUP N.W. contained more specific proposals for parks. If that is true why were the specific proposals not included in the final document? We note in Table 3 (55) that approximately 10% of land in SLUP N.W. will be set aside for Wilderness Parks. We hope this figure remains a planning target but the public should be involved in the selection of these sites.

The management strategy (pg.12) indicates "multiple use" without defining the meaning of "use". It is obvious that some uses are not compatible with the protection of the natural environment, nor the wilderness nor a park. If sequential use means an area will be logged prior to designating it as a wilderness park the "use" of it as a park is severely restricted. For example, Great Lakes Forest Products and St. Lawrence Corporation Ltd. hold timber licences for the bulk of a proposed wilderness park in site 3W. This Agoki-Albany park, if logged, prior to designating it, would be severely affected as a wilderness area. The



Moose-Missinaibi Park Proposal has been held up presumably while logging is completed in that area and consequently the quality of the area is seriously depleting while the park awaits official designation. We do not feel this is a viable way of designating wilderness and hope "use" in the Agoki-Albany area will not follow the same course.

"Full discussion of proposed road locations" is a policy in SLUP N.W. (pg.14). However, Great Lakes Forest Products Ltd. is currently proposing a road north into the head of the Agoki Wilderness Area to assist in their logging operations. We understand that proposals for funding from DREA have been withheld and that permission for logging from the MNR regional office has been withheld to date.

The timber licences issued to Great Lakes Forest Products and to St. Lawrence Corporation Ltd. permit cutting of spruce and jack pine, the major pulp species, at NO COST. We fail to understand as citizens of Ontario why Crown timber is being given away for the profit of two companies. We also fail to understand why in other areas in the vicinity these two companies are asked to pay for these two species. It appears there is a policy which encourages cutting in the proposed wilderness park. We are extremely disappointed in MNR if this is the case and wonder about the reasoning employed to reach a NO COST decision.

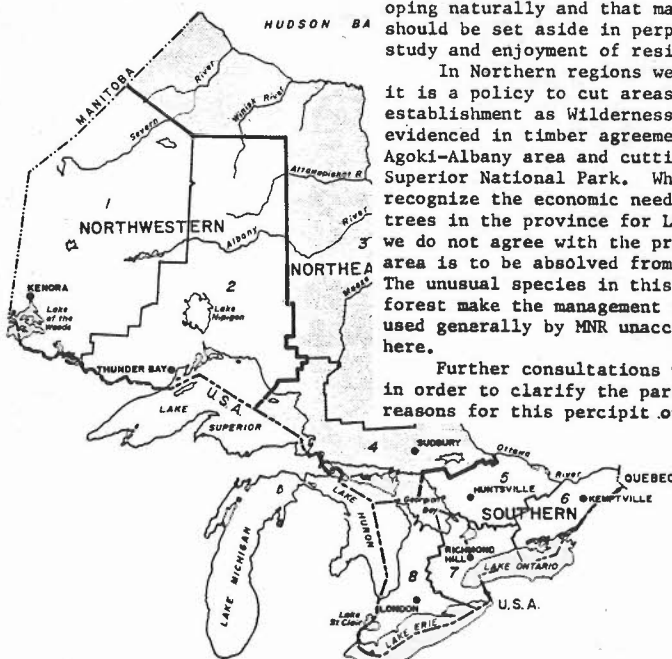
We would endorse the extension of the Agoki-Albany proposed park boundary northward to the south shore of the Albany River as discussed in the proposal presented to you in a meeting with FON on October 16, 1980. We would agree to reducing the eastern boundary so that the park would remain approximately the same size.

We agree with the statement under Forestry on page 34 that regeneration is necessary "if a sustained yield of forest product" is to be achieved. Ontario's record of regeneration is very poor in both the public and private sectors and we feel the regeneration policy of SLUP N.W. promises nothing - merely recognizes the problem. We feel stronger statements could lead to stronger policies. Sustained yield forestry is in the best long term economic interest of the regions.

Tourism in the area is limited by the region's accessibility, by high energy costs and by low local populations. People who wish to have a Wilderness experience will not come to an area which has been previously despoiled by lumbering or mining operations. If tourism is to be a priority for regions of SLUP N.W. then there must be environmental protection. In the long term wilderness park development should not permit other "use" concurrently. We believe tourism should be a priority with reasonably good water access to entry points, that outfitting be encouraged in the park areas, and that the park lands be a "managed preserve" for the natural environment of the area.

The wildlife populations in the area do not match the contents of SLUP N.W. Table 10 (72) has been, we believe mistitled. The last column should read Harvest rather than Target. No notice has been given of woodland caribou populations in the north sectors of the proposal. There seems to be a lack of data as compared to SLUP N.E.

In light of the deficiencies noted we would recommend that you not approve the plan until it has reached at least the quality of SLUP N.E.



## THE BACKUS WOODS

The Backus Woods is a 650 acre tract located near the base of Long-Point on Lake Erie. It is part of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority's Backus Mill. In 1960 it was placed under the management of the Ministry of Natural Resources who immediately cut parts of its stock of huge trees.

The area is unique and has several species which have reached very large heights and other species which are not normally found in Ontario. As part of a Conservation Area it is expected that tree harvesting for lumber would be kept to a minimum, to remove diseased trees or damaged trees. Not so, the MNR sees it as a timber resource and has decided to cut again. The Norfolk Field Naturalists are trying to stop the MNR from going ahead with its plans. The letter which follows is the Conservation Committee's response to the idea.

If you wish to add your name to the detractors the following letter may help your organize your thoughts. Send missives to:

The Long Point Conservation Authority  
Box 525  
Simcoe Ontario

Thoughtful commentary in a very fair and intelligent manner can be obtained from:

Donald M. Dean  
President  
Norfolk Field Naturalists  
Box 159  
Langton, Ontario  
NOE IGO

## BACKUS WOODS- LETTER TO THE LONG POINT CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

After considerable discussion with a long-time summer resident of the area, a forestry management consultant and our Conservation Committee it is our considered opinion that the Backus Wood be granted special status, be removed from the area granted under the Forestry Agreement in 1960 and become an area for biologists to study large tree forests operating in near natural conditions. Considering the forestry history of Ontario there are very few of these areas remaining. In addition, considerable research into this forest has already been undertaken to serve as base data for such use.

We are of the opinion that second and third growth cutting in Southern Ontario prevents large tree forests from developing naturally and that many such areas should be set aside in perpetuity for the study and enjoyment of residents.

In Northern regions we have discovered it is a policy to cut areas prior to their establishment as Wilderness Areas as evidenced in timber agreements in the Agoki-Albany area and cutting in Lake Superior National Park. While we recognize the economic need to harvest trees in the province for Lumber and fibre, we do not agree with the premise that no area is to be absorbed from this process. The unusual species in this particular forest make the management techniques used generally by MNR unacceptable here.

Further consultations with LPRCA seems in order to clarify the particular reasons for this precipitous policy.

# biggar lake

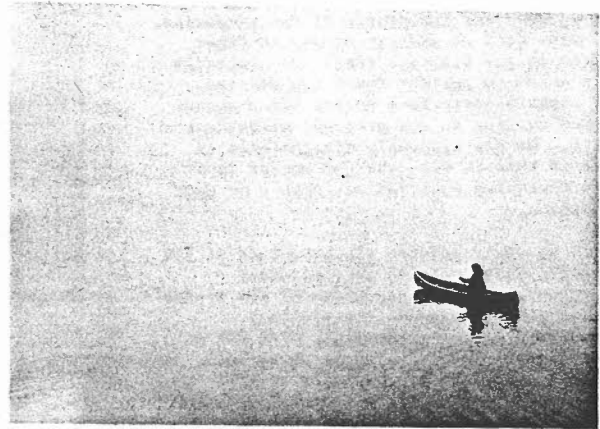
SNAPSHOTS OF A DAY IN NORTHWEST ALGONQUIN

by Toni Harting

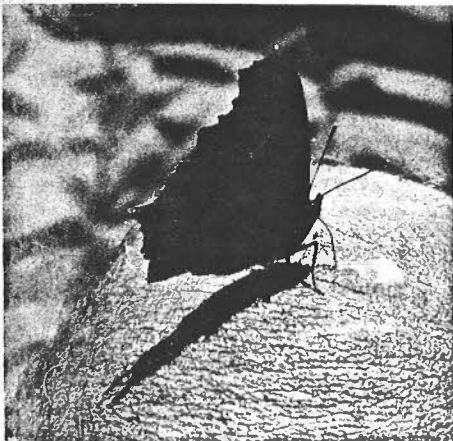
Early morning, the sun has just left the horizon, September fog is slowly creeping over the lake surface. No breeze, no sound, no movement. Quiet.



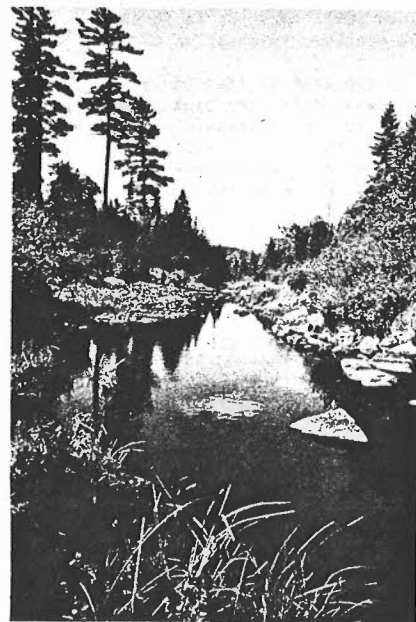
The fog has filled the space between the hills, and muffles the paddler's sound to a soft swish, swish. The canoe disappears into the white cloud, never returns.



The sun has warmed the fog away, and the lake shows itself, inviting us for a visit. We paddle to the far end and find reeds, mud sand, driftwood, animal tracks, the same signs of wilderness that live on the shores of thousands of other lakes.



Thirsty little butterfly on my knee, sipping milk. Probably for the only time in its short life.



Night. The moon has just cleared the hill on the other side of the black waters. Time for thinking, dreaming, wordless contact. Tomorrow will be another day. At Biggar Lake.

Wading and swimming in the marsh where the creek empties into the lake. Collecting water lily seeds and pods and sweet water clams for an extra treat with our evening meal. The water is shallow, and the clams can easily be seen working themselves slowly through the sand, leaving behind a twisted trail. A good place to put on diving mask and snorkel and take a close up look at the incredibly rich underwater marsh life.



The clams need a lot of cleaning before they are reasonably free of sand. But roasted over an open fire or fried in a little oil together with some onions they are simply delicious. The roasted seed pods substitute for nuts and go very well with our last sherry.

Day is ending. A short, intense rain and windstorm has just swept the area; tomorrow the lake level will be a few centimetres higher. The wind is now slowly dying down, the lake surface ripples gently. The canoe is safe on the shore. The resident loon swims past our rock, echoing his haunting call over the lake.



We make a trip up Loughrin Creek, paddling and portaging as far as we can go this main tributary of our lake. It is a quiet little stream now, rocks, water, trees, grass. But the signs of its spring furor are everywhere. Nobody else around. Heard an owl.





Six gals converged from London, Kingston, Scarborough, Harbour Front, etc. to our North Toronto rendezvous and packed all the gear and three canoes in and on two cars, and headed out early, driving and laughing all the way to Latchford, gateway town to the mining country and one-time lumber mecca. To the east lay Quebec, and to the west the Temagami Forest Reserve. Go west young(?) gals, go west. There was Mick the Mighty, Tanis the Intrepid, Anne the Awesome, Joyce the Junior, Mary the Marvel, and Claire the Crazy who dreamed this whole trip up.

We drove down a humped backed gravel road five miles to Anima Nipissing Lake and surveyed cottages, motorboats and a welcome-looking island lying low to the left. We were organized alright. Laminated maps (I only took four 1:25,000) nesting pots, soft packs, compression packed sleeping bags (except Anne and Mick who had daily wrestling matches with bedding and a large THICK foam pad (more later) light canoes, and the sweetest pre-packaged Food Plan you ever saw. Loading up we headed out and set up camp on thin soil amidst the island pines. Up tents, out swim wear, on pots and in pre-cooked stew. It was a glorious evening not even marred by Anne's necessity to commandeer C the C into paddling back to the car for forgotten items.

The next morning found us all quickly falling into the smooth eat-pack-clean up-paddle routine which typified our whole trip. Four had opted (been engineered?) to do the cooking and Mick and Claire pitched, struck, packed, washed up or lay around.

The sky was rather leaden as we paddled southwest. Warm and dull. We changed partners at intervals that day, trying to balance out the best canoeing teams. A few campers on campsites, lots of gulls, one snapping turtle and splendid scenery marked our way. It was a nice surprise to glide into McLean Lake through a watery narrows sans need of portage, and then to paddle along in the quiet wilderness, having shaken off the motor boats.

'Carrying Lake' it said on the map. An understatement. "Boulder Scramble" would have been more appropriate at the beginning of the trail where we lugged and sweated the gear and canoes up through the first section of the portage to higher, more even (?) ground. Anne fell, toting the heaviest canoe up a slippery place, and gashed open the back of her head. Flies quickly collected on the blood. The cut needed about three stitches so we wrapped Anne's head in a pressure halo of bandana and kept going. The portage was hot and closely overhung but we staggered on to the other end and quickly set off to shake the flies and mosquitoes. On the north shore of Carrying Lake a cool, breezy pine-shaded rock beckoned us and we stopped for lunch there, and to re-dress Anne's head.

At the west end of Carrying Lake we collided head on with a noisy gang of young people harrelling through with six canoes, stream gear, bulging muscles, soggy sneakers, wet towels and a happy laissez-faire attitude. "Bon Chance!" This portage was a "longy" but very fair underfoot and mostly downhill. Anne loaded up her canoe again, waved the others aside and forged ahead. We all trotted along through tunnels of green and came out on a raw, ugly gravel-pit-of-a-place connected to civilization by a road running away to left and right. Two families with camper trucks were squatted there in the pit, complete with deck chairs, radios, horse-shoes and beer. Over the far lip of the pit lay Red Squirrel Lake. Two trips each got us packed up and away, just as another gang

of seven canoes hove in sight. We headed for the left hand shore further down the lake and landed under a stand of magnificent red pines in a lovely place with a panoramic view, and the perfume of a carpet of long thick needles, mosses and wintergreen. The sky continued to darken but did not rain until we had eaten and strung up the packs.

Speaking of eating - all the while that we had been travelling, Tanis had been totting white plastic shopping bag which she stuffed in the bow of the canoe, or slung on top of the stuff on her back. It seemed feather light and in no way fragile, but it wasn't 'til Red Squirrel Lake that we got a peek inside. She had three egg cartons there, each containing two pressed-down sheets of aluminum foil between which were sandwiched damp ALFALFA SPROUTS. Each carton held contents in different stages of development and it never failed to amaze us that Tanis produced fresh sprouts EVERY noon and evening throughout the entire trip. It became a ritual to dunk the sprouts twice daily to freshen them as we went along, and they thrived regardless of temperature.

The next morning saw us off up the lake to a westerly narrowing channel which eventually led to the waterfall and portage around part of the Anima Nipissing River. It was hilly but Mick and Anne shouldered the usual heavy loads and away we trotted again. We put into the river around a big bend, and drifted and steered down with the flow of water to Ferguson Bay in the northeast arm of Lake Temagami.

Here at the river's mouth the Camp Wanapitci docks greeted us, and Anne and Claire marched into the Infirmary to find the nurse and some suture. They had the nurse and the suture alright, but no local anaesthetic, so poor Anne endured a sore moment while one stitch tied the lips of the gash together. (One stitch would have to do). Back on the dock we all picnicked and chatted with campers and staff before heading across the big bay. A big bay it was, and I was watching the sky, expecting the wind to pick up. Sure enough it did, just as we raced for shelter in the little bay on the west side. We looked back on some big waves building up. Mmmmm. At the back of the bay lay the little portage which hop scotched us into the other arm of Lake Temagami, thus avoiding the necessity of a long paddle around the peninsula. It was lovely and flat here, and the bugs had gone with the wind so we took our time, and "gorped". (The gorp was all homemade and homeroasted so rivalled ambrosia).

The sheltered harbour before us enticed us out and we moved away from the portage well satisfied to have the stitch in time, and big loose clouds overhead. Once out in the channel our complacency vanished. Big rollers carried us along at a fearsome clip, and it would have been dangerous to paddle broadside. We had three choices: to paddle down the left channel (at an angle to the waves), keep slightly to the right and tear through the billowing water hoping not to swamp, or head straight for the high island straight ahead. We hadn't much time to make a choice and Mary and I opted for the island, even although it was private property. We could see a campsite on the point and it drew



us like a magnet. Landing was a real exercise in dexterity, as nobody dared turn around and we clutched at patches of flat rock and leapt out with alacrity to get the gear out of the boats before they swamped.

Boy what a wind. We clambered up to the campsite and the wind just tore at us, but we were SAFE. Up came the packs, the canoes, the odds and ends (sprouts, cushions, somebody's shoes) and we surveyed our "digs". Lots of room to cook, but hardly any to pitch three tents. Tanis and Joyce got out ropes and made guys from everything to everything and the end result resembled the inside of a broken grand piano, with strings going every which way. Then Joyce yelled that there was "something coming" (as she had her camera out taking pictures from this eyrie) and sure enough away to the south loomed a large indescribable creation, slowly bearing down upon us. We all stood there guessing. Kon Tiki? The Brenden? Lots of colour, tiny figures moving about, some sort of sweep oar, or oars, bowsprits. Closer and closer. Oh for binoculars. Finally they were discernable--canoes from camp Kee-waydin lashed together with tent fly sails a sort of raft platform in the middle and boys standing, or sitting to steer, all having a great time. We yelled and cheered and they answered in kind. Hurrah. They swept past in glorious style around the left bend into the shelter of the narrows where the island and mainland almost touched. We guessed that they'd camp there, were the big campsites nestled among the hemlocks. Joyce got two good pictures.

Supper was a great affair in the wind with engineering feats at the fireplace and Tanis outdoing herself again. Mary was itching to explore the island and check to see whether occupants were home and would take umbrage at our trespassing. Off we went on "an explore" along a narrow path winding along the perimeter of the island. The island was heavily wooded and very steep in some places but very sheltered and a lovely place. We peeked in the windows of five rustic, well-kept buildings, all cabin size, and envied the owners. I hiked off on a tangent up and over the razorback and proceeded cautiously, alert for wildlife. Luck. A partridge moved on a log and up into a low branch. I stood as still as the tree against which I was braced, and the bird couldn't stand the suspense. I clucked and he craned and peered and lifted his feet in indecision. Slowly he worked his way closer. Closer. I clucked and whistled and he flew to a lower branch. Finally he lit on a log six feet away. Hey, how about that. He fluffed his feathers and preened and cleaned his feet and hunched down. Light was fading. Not wanting to be caught in the dark scrambling over boulders and crevasses, I flushed him as I moved away. The wind was falling and the channel way below seemed not to be licking its lips so much. By the time we all settled for the night, the channel marker was alight, winking back at the odd star.

Next morning we entered Sharprock Inlet and paddled along admiring the broken shoreline. North up the big bay we went until the water narrowed and narrowed to a fine ribbon. We entered a little creek, now no longer flowing, but merely a backwater. The lumber barons laid a big logging road here years ago, damming up the creek which once acted as the spillway for the north end of Lake Temagami, carrying the overflow into Diamond Lake, and north to the Montreal River via Lady Evelyn. That has all changed, and the creek is now a dead end. The lumber men had channeled this water into a wooden sluiceway to carry the logs down the drop, but only the skeleton of the sluice remains high above the rubble and boulders of the old creek bed. A sad sight, and a nuisance portage over all the rough rocks.

The sun came out in full force and we paddled through Diamond Lake admiring all the bays and inlets and fingers and peripheral marshes. A low flat smooth-rock island invited our exploration, and we stopped for a fabulous two hours of lunching and sunbathing. People lay around like seals, basking in the heat. Tanis and Claire worked up energy and did a big garbage cleanup of stinking fish skeletons, tins,

small bottles, paper, foil, and general mess left by ONE fishing party. Clouds were huddling up in the west as we packed to leave and the sun vanished. It started to spit. Boy did I goof that time! I had started out from shore with Mick in the bow and Joyce and Mary were voicing doubts about the sky, but I figured it would be a dull steady rain, and best to keep going. Well it rained alright. We were all caught in a rumbling growling storm in the middle of the lake with gallons of water lashing at us. Anne and Joyce split off for the right hand shore and we could see them hugging the land. Tanis and Mary disappeared around the rocks on our side and Mick and I hunched in the canoe at the waters edge, waiting for a break. It didn't come and the canoe began to fill. Nothing to do but get out. We stood against the rocks in our raingear waiting. No good. The water penetrated everything. We were soaked and beginning to get cold. Anne and Joyce took advantage of a slight remission and paddled fast across the bay. This one was for keepers and we soggly admitted defeat. Nothing for it but to make camp. There was no natural campsite, but fortunately a great stand of red pines up the hill, and here we shook out a BIG nylon tent fly I carry, and put up the first tent under it, and then moved it to a new location, and set all the packs under the fly. Joyce and I were shaking with cold and got in the tent and striped to the skin and put on dry duds. Someone produced Joyce's portable stove and Mary turned up with water and soup mix and Tanis found the bread. I made soup at the door of the tent with all six of us inside and we really relished that meal. The rain still seemed down. We were soon warm and laughing in our cozy shelter. We took cognisance. Tanis was the only dry member. Joyce and I had been the wettest. When we examined the rain gear, we realized that some of it wasn't really waterproof at all as the seams weren't sealed, and Joyce was particularly dismayed, since her suit was Gortex and was supposed to withstand anything.

With our renewed energy we set about making camp in earnest. The canoes were better secured, Tanis took charge of the cooking and fire-starting, I got out the collapsible saw and went after a dead red pine which had fallen at an angle. Mary and Mick and Joyce made clothes lines under the big tent fly and sorted out the packs and set up the other two tents. Tanis was a wizard with that fire in the rain. As the bad weather eased up we ate supper standing up or in a tent. We ate very well and in retrospect benefitted from the experience as it illuminated the strengths of the trimmers in an emergency, the weaknesses of judgement and rain gear, and reinforced the great camaraderie which never flagged throughout the whole trip.

Anne was up early the next day with Mary looking over the scene. Anne's famous foam mattress was a sorry soggy mess. Her sheets of spare plastic had been invaluable, by contrast Mick had things out from under the fly, drying in a bit of breeze. We were O.K. We ate well again and packed up. It was an easy paddle to the top of Diamond Lake (well, almost the top), where we turned off to the right and lifted over the spillway into Lady Evelyn. We met three men there who hadn't had any sun in over three days. Where were they yesterday noon?

The bottom of Lady Evelyn is very very beautiful with many inlets and little islands and back bays, all in miniature. So peaceful. We hated to leave, but headed north anyway into the bottom of the open lake. Mary was worried about a strong wind and scudding clouds but at least this time I felt sure I'd be right in predicting fair weather, so we kept in the lee of the big islands and worked our way around the southeast shoreline.

Mary spotted a great campsite and here we unloaded and hung everything up to dry on our rope clotheslines, on branches and snags. All the gear inside the plastic bags was dry, all our food was dry, and it really only remained to dry the tents and packs and towels and rain gear. This didn't take long in the strong wind.

After lunch we paddled on, all dried out and kept to the east shore. The next big campsite was half way up the lake and when we stopped

here at 3:00 p.m. for a gorp ston, Anne realized that she'd left her camera at the lunch ston.

General consentaneous conclusion: let's stop here for the night. So again Anne and Claire hopped in an empty canoe and headed back for the camera, lying safe in a crevice in the rocks.

That was a magic evening. The wind died and the sky was clear and the weather as perfect as one could wish, warm and balmy. After dinner Joyce suggested a paddle and Mick and Claire took her with her camera to explore the mouth of a lovely creek which fed the Lady Evelyn from Sugar Lake. The setting sun poured a gold aura over everything, and Joyce photographed a great unrooted white pine root, and a family of baby moccasins. Moose tracks abounded in the shore mud, and dragonflies cruised the airways.

That night we had a real 'campfire atmosphere' with Mary at her best singing campsongs and reminiscing about her teens as a camper.

We retired very late, Mick hating to go to bed and end it all.

Next morning we set out in lovely weather for the top of the lake and were camped by 10:00 a.m. This was our stop-over day, which we should have extended had it not been for the storm on Diamond Lake. Mary wanted to rest and read and swim. The rest of us, not having done much all week, decided to go for a paddle. We took two canoes in the burning heat and crossed the top of Lady Evelyn for Sucker Gut Lake. Tanis and Claire found a hidden portage, while the others paddled around the peninsula. We lunched at a very rocky outcrop where evidence of bears made us cautious about venturing inland. We toyed with the idea of paddling to Frank Falls, but the wind was in our faces and the sun pretty searing. We turned back and by 3:00 p.m. had rejoined Mary on the island, having surfed across Lady Evelyn on some gloriously high waves like bronco busters.

Not satisfied with that, someone proposed canoe lessons and Claire and Mary did the honours on the fine art of paddling stern, for the benefit of Joyce and Tanis. Joyce was pretty good anyway, and picked up the "J" stroke in one lesson. Tanis wanted more practice, but gained confidence in a brand new challenge.

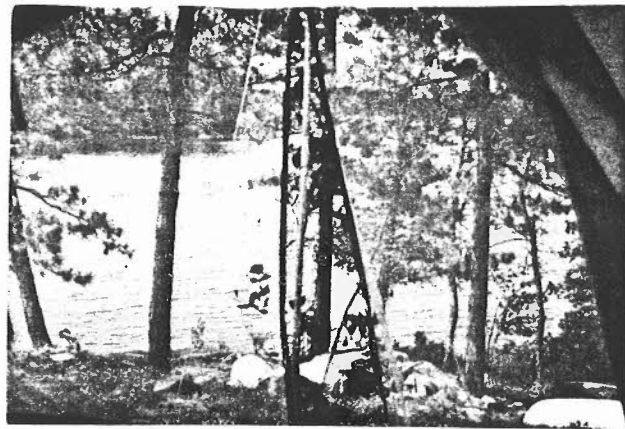
We enjoyed that island with its family of fledgling white crowned sparrows and the swimming was great there. People got a lot of sun back and from that day.

Up early next morning we set out for the eskers to have lunch there, but the water levels were too high and we went on to an island where Anne picked blueberries in abundance. On again past the fishing lodges and up the northeast arm. Trippers were coming down, and most of the campsites were full. The wind was rising. We finally found a big dirty spot on the left, just being vacated by seven canoes full of young people.

It began to rain and up went the trusty big tent fly. Fortunately all the tents were already in place, so the packs were dry, and we cooked and ate under the fly. Another good meal prepared by experts went down very well, and we watched a filtered sunset, after the rain.

This was to be River Day after breakfast, and we looked forward to a change of pace. The Mattawapika dam gave Joyce and Anne a chance for more photographs and the portage was an easy walk downhill on a gravel road, with fishermen and fishing lodge staff going to and fro ferrying people and supplies by back or truck: the few hundred yards between water levels. On the Montreal it was just straight paddling. Lots of bird activity here with herons, ducks, kingfishers and sparrow families, and big marshes to left and right, probably reverberating with the sounds of gunfire in six weeks time. It got monotonous just paddling on the river, but it was a one way street for us. We kept going and came out on Bay Lake with the wind directly in our faces. This was serious business. We shifted around to put the strongest paddlers in the best positions, and dug in. Steep shorelines, open water, and headwind. Paddle.

Somewhere ahead lay a bay on the right with an island and a portage and maybe a campsite. Paddle. This bay? NO. This bay? NO. Finally we spotted a VERY inviting island with two cottages and mown lawn. Boy did it look inviting. That lawn begged to be laid on. We headed for it. "FOR SALE" "NO TRESPASSING" Hmm. Well, we landed anyway. Boy what a relief. We could



run about and explore and swim and hang up a bit of laundry on the lines and brew tea. By 5:00 p.m. we had decided to sleep on the screened verandah. By 6:00 the cooks had supper on the boil. By 6:15 we could see a motorboat coming straight for us. Oh golly. In two seconds we had everything out of sight except the pot on the tiny fire on the rock. Claire, feeling responsible headed right for the lions mouth and shook hands with the owners, explained the circumstances and offered to help carry up the beer. In ten minutes the cabins were open, we were offered a whole building to ourselves, someone wanted to turn on the propane for us, and would we like a drink? Talk about Northern Hospitality. We refused the drinks and propane but settled for the cabin, and after supper Claire, having nothing much to do, took the owner's kids out in her canoe and in short order had the girls paddling around with "Teacher" riding in the middle. That night Mary and Claire slept on the verandah (purists?) while the others threw sleeping bags on the beds.

Next morning there was a guest book to sign, so a poem accompanied the signatures, and Mick wrote out the verses in her beautiful handwriting. This was the last day and we had to reach the cars. Anne and Claire set out on the portage behind the island with Anne's canoe and a pack full of gear, while the rest paddled the 3 miles down Bay Lake to Latchford.

It was a 1 1/2 mile portage, mostly uphill, and Anne stopped at intervals along the most beautiful Carrying Place of the whole trip, to rest, admire the magnificent trees and watch a family of partridge. Anne was powerful and made it through in good time with Claire trotting ahead to pick out crotches where the canoe might be wedged at rest stops, and to watch the footing. A 3 mile paddle lay ahead, and the two moved along with alacrity, well seasoned by now and full of energy. It was an easy run to the cars in a rising wind (talk about timing) and loading up and driving around to Latchford was anticlimax. Never did six people stow the gear so fast, and the rain struck as the last rope was lashed down. We sat in the two cars unable to communicate, as the deluge streamed down the window panes. Finally the rain eased and we proposed lunch in Temagami in a restaurant. This was a parting of the ways, for Claire was heading down the Mine Road for more adventures, this time with friends up there (didn't she ever get enough of that place?) while the others headed south where Tanis would branch off for Parry Sound.

Light days, 90 miles, only one accident, nothing lost, nobody sick, and NEVER a serious altercation. Pretty good for six women, what? Would we do it again? Why we have the whole thing planned already, folks. Only eight months to go gals and this time we'll have sealed the seams on the rain gear, made up new recipes, talked Anne into a better mattress, and further honed our skills. It is still early but already we've had two reunions. There has to be something in this tripping business. As Mary says, "We're phantasmagorical. We're the tripping sextets." Well, a sextet, anyway.



Winter - crisp, clean, silent, beautiful. Come out with us and experience our wildlands in winter, on snowshoes or cross-country, for a day or a weekend. We have included in our winter trip schedule a variety of day trips and camping trips to appeal to everyone, from the novice to the experienced winter traveller.

We remind you that our trip organizers are just that - organizers - not outfitters, guides or instructors, but fellow members who have volunteered to put together a trip and share the experience with you. Participants are responsible for their own transportation, equipment, and safety while on the trip.

## Jan. 17 GANARASKA FOREST X-C SKIING (near Kirby on Hwy. 35 & 115)

organizers: Dave and Anneke Auger 705-324-9359  
book between Dec. 29 and Jan. 12

The scenic Pine Ridge area provides some interesting, yet challenging trails. Our intention is to ski the longest (about 15 km) trail with a stop for lunch en route. Suitable for people with some skiing experience. Limit of 8 skiers.

## Jan. 18 CROSS COUNTRY SKI

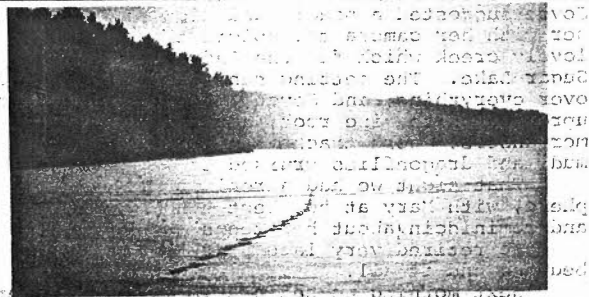
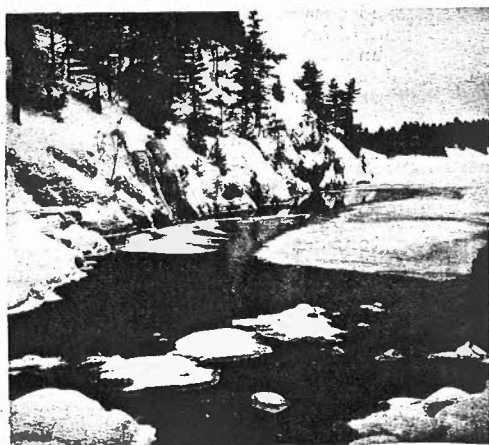
organizer: Karl Schimek 416-222-3720  
book as soon as possible

We will ski the Bruce trail from Mono Centre to highway 89 a distance of about 15 km. Suitable for intermediates. Limit 8 skiers.

## Jan. 24 RANKIN SKI TRAIL

organizer: Roger Bailey 519-832-5211  
book between Jan. 5 and 18

The Rankin ski trail runs for 17 km along the Bruce Peninsula near Red Bay. It passes over largely forested, rolling countryside with some short steep hills and ridges. This trip will start at the north end Saturday morning and finish that afternoon at the south end. The lunch break is planned for the top of tower hill, the highest point in the area. This gives a view of some of the finest scenery on the western edge of the peninsula. Participants are welcome at my home in Port Elgin Friday night or can join the group at the trail head Saturday. Suitable for those with intermediate cross country skiing ability. Limit 10 people.



## Jan. 31 - Feb. 1 CROSS COUNTRY SKIING, ALGONQUIN

organizer: Joe Keleher 705-436-1300 (R) 416-675-5800 (B)  
book between Jan. 5 and 26

We will ski 15 km with no packs from the shore of Rock Lake along an abandoned railway which cuts through a dense coniferous forest, revealing a winter scene of wilderness beauty. We will camp overnight, then ski one of the loops in the park. Suitable for intermediates. Limit 8 skiers.

## Feb. 1 COLBORNE CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

organizer: Glenn Spence 416-355-3506  
book between Jan. 8 and 29

Our skiing will be in a conservation area with two main loops for a distance of 8 km. There is some nice scenery, for example skiing down into a valley and then along beside a creek. Suitable for novices or intermediates. Limit 8 skiers.

## Feb. 21 SKIING & PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE GANARASKA FOREST

organizer: Carol Thwaites 416-668-3034  
book between Jan. 23 and Feb. 7

This trip offers another chance to ski the scenic Pine Ridge in the Ganaraska Forest. The plan is to ski the orange trail (15 km) with stops en route for those who bring along a camera. For those with a minimum of two years of skiing experience. Limit 8 people.

## Feb. 21 - 22 WINTER CAMPING, KILLARNEY

organizer: Joe Keleher 705-436-1300 (R) 416-675-5800 (B)  
book between Jan. 26 and Feb. 16

We will travel 10 km in from the road and set up a base camp at Bell Lake. From there we will ski or snowshoe in the vicinity of Silver Peak. Suitable for intermediates. Limit 8 campers.

## Feb. 22 CROSS COUNTRY SKIING, BEAUSOLEIL ISLAND

organizer: Rob Butler 416-487-2282  
book between Feb. 9 and 17

We will ski from Honey Harbour to tour the northern hills and bays of Beausoleil Island. Suitable for intermediates. Limit 8 skiers.

## March 7 - 8 GUNN LAKE WINTER CAMPING TRIP

organizer: Herb Pohl 416-692-7632  
book between Feb. 7 and 21

This trip in the Dorset area will involve 9-7 km of skiing in from the road and is recommended for intermediate campers. Limit 6 people.



# products and services

## Spray Covers:

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## Discounts on Camping Supplies:

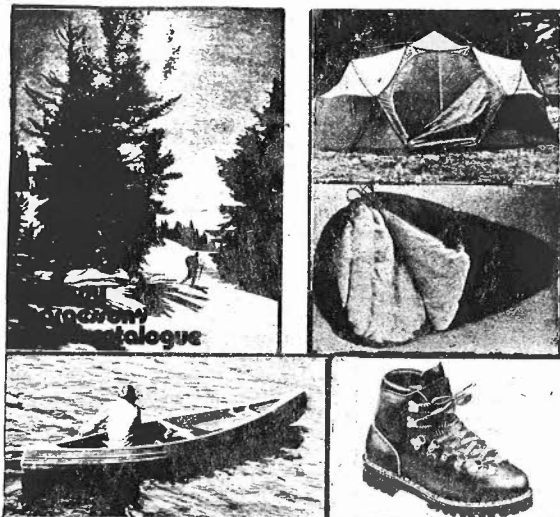
WCA members who present a membership card will receive ten percent discounts on many non-sale items at:

Margesson's, 17 Adelaide St. E., Toronto.  
Don Bell Sports, 164 Front St., Trenton.  
A.B.C. Sports, 552 Young St., Toronto.  
Rockwood Outfitters, 15 Speedvale Ave. E.,  
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Members should check at each store to find out what items are discounted.

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## wca contacts

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Herb Pohl (Chairman),  
480 Maple Avenue,  
Apartment 113,  
Burlington, Ont.  
L7S 1M4  
416-637-7632

Dave Auger (Vice-Chairman),  
65 Peel Street,  
Lindsay, Ont.  
K9V 3M5  
705-324-9359

Barry Brown,  
1415 Everall Road,  
Mississauga, Ont.  
L5J 3L7  
416-823-1079

Roger Bailey,  
R.R. #2,  
Port Elgin, Ont.  
N0H 2C0  
519-832-5211

Bill King,  
45 Himount Dr.,  
Willowdale, Ont.  
M2K 1X3  
416-223-4646

Glenn Spence,  
Box 755,  
Colborne, Ont.  
K0K 1S0  
416-355-3506

### OUTINGS

Cam Salisbury,  
70-3 Castlebury Cres.,  
Willowdale, Ont.  
M2H 1W8  
416-498-8660

### CONSERVATION

Jerry Hodge,  
46 Camwood Cres.,  
Don Mills, Ont.  
M3A 2L4  
416-449-9212

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Sandy Richardson,  
5 Dufresne Cr.,  
Apt. 2705,  
Don Mills, Ont.  
M3C 1B8  
416-429-3944

### SECRETARY

Claire Brigen,  
58 Eastbourne Ave.,  
Toronto, Ont.  
M5P 2G2  
416-481-4042

### MEMBERSHIP

Paula Schimek,  
139 Couling Ave.,  
Willowdale, Ont.  
M2M 1L5  
416-222-3720

### YOUTH ENCOURAGEMENT FUND

Cam Salisbury,  
70-3 Castlebury Cres.,  
Willowdale, Ont.  
M2H 1W8  
416-498-8660

### TREASURER

Rob Butler,  
47 Colin Avenue,  
Toronto, Ont.  
M5P 2B8  
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### W.C.A. POSTAL ADDRESS

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I enclose a cheque for \$10 — student under 18  
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\$30 — family

for membership in the  
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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please check one of the following: ( ) new member application  
( ) renewal for 1981.

Notes: -This membership will expire January 31, 1982.  
-Please send completed form and cheque (payable to the Wilderness Canoe Association) to the membership committee chairman.