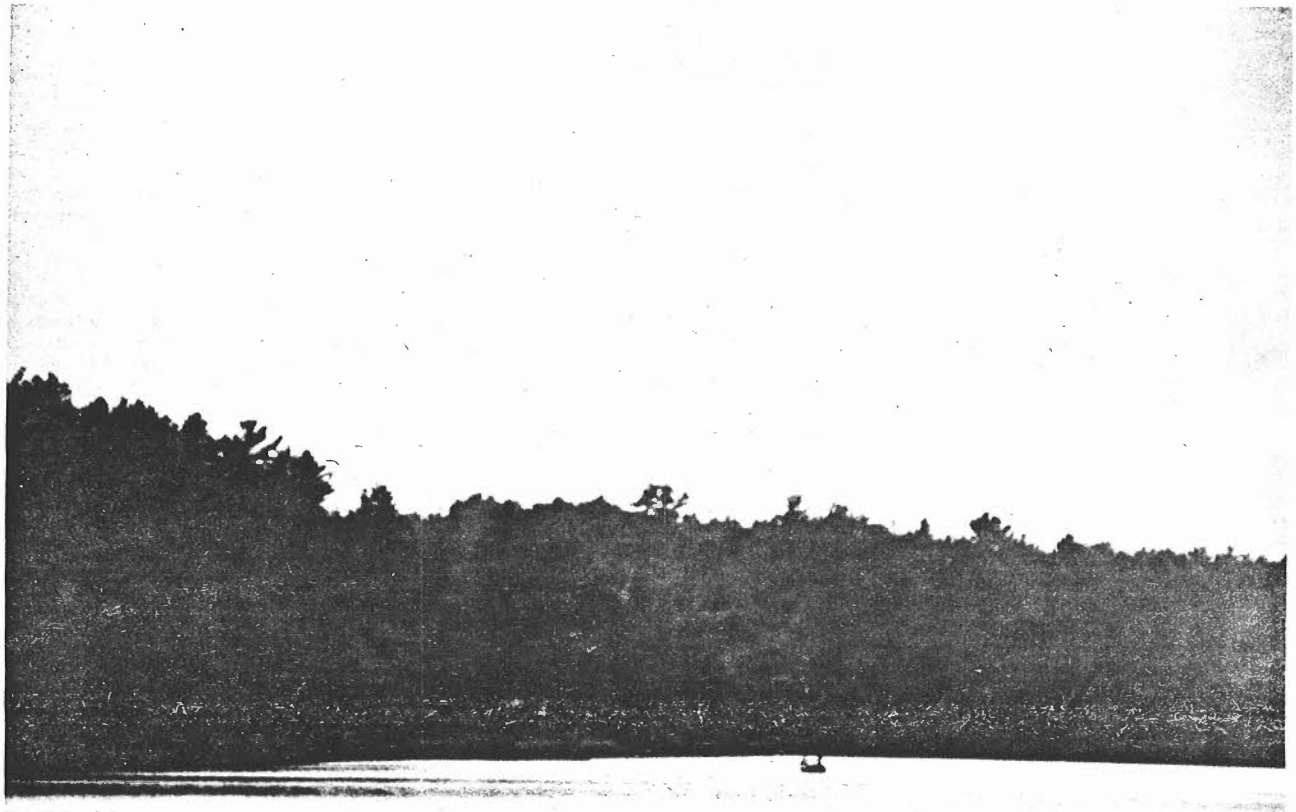


nastawgan

spring 1983 vol.10 no.1

quarterly journal of the wilderness canoe association



the voyageur route wolseley bay to killarney

Canoe tripping is a wonderful form of recreation. A time to reflect on life away from busy highways, ringing telephones and the responsibilities of one's profession. As a church minister, this beautiful means of retreat into the wilderness has a special meaning. It is a refreshing change of environment by which one can have a good and memorable time with friends and meet with God outside the bricks of a church.

For several years now, my wife and I and four or five friends have gone on new canoe adventures each summer; although from April through November I make frequent one or two day solo trips. This year (1982) took us on a trip of beautiful scenery, swift currents and few portages over a one hundred and forty-four kilometre course. Our voyage ranged from the narrows of Bad River Channel to the wide expanse of Georgian Bay.

Saturday, July 31, 1982, saw us spending most of the day taking the cars to the Chikanishing River entrance to Killarney Provincial Park and setting up camp on Wolseley Bay on the French River. The sun set beautifully, like a big orange ball behind two fishermen not far from camp. Our thoughts that evening were wondering what was ahead of us, especially since the water level was two metres below normal. The first day out took us as far as Little Parisien Rapids which were

runnable with care. Blue Chute and Double Rapids were also runnable but Big Pine Rapids saw us wading with the canoes and Little Pine Rapids forced a forty metre portage.

Monday was a long, leisurely, sunny day. Travelling was easy since Devil Chute and Big Parisien Rapids were almost non-existent. Swift currents at these two locations doubled our speed. We thought for sure Crooked Rapids would force a portage but we cruised amongst the current shaped rocks with ease. By late evening we had reached Lost Child Bend and a high, rocky campsite on Fourmile Island. The sun went down red, the moon came up full and bright and the racoons got into our licorice before we heard them.

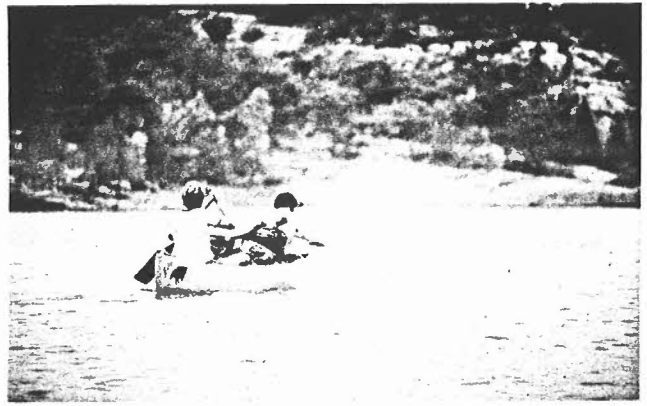
Tuesday saw us for the first time, go under Highway #69 instead of over it. The gentle current of the river moved us slowly past towering rock walls until we reached Recollet Falls where we stopped to enjoy the scenery and eat lunch. While others were sitting on the rocks I paddled around the base of the rapids looking for photo opportunities. On the north side of the falls my canoe drifted over smooth, aerated water where I experienced a sinking sensation but quickly got back on to the black water, however, not before sinking within a few centimetres of the gunwales. From here to

Killarney we saw only three more canoe groups but all were going in the opposite direction. The rapids a couple of kilometres past Recollet Falls were runnable. Here we spent half an hour freeing a canoe which had gone broadside on some rocks. The current wasn't fast but very shallow, so we tugged, pulled and grunted until it came free with the bow pointing upstream. At Flowerpot Bay the rapids were similar but we were able to make it through. Low water levels on the French River makes leisurely paddling but gives little thrill of white water.



It was these conditions as well which made us alter our plans for entry onto Georgian Bay. Voyageur Channel had dried up according to some fishermen so we made our way south through the swift but safe rapids west of Herring Chute and Crooked Rapids only to find on further exploration the next day that they were runnable as well. We camped on Cross Channel making company with several American yachts. When we left to enter Georgian Bay some of their occupants looked at us in disbelief as if to say "only big boats go there". Bad River Channel is an amazing area; a virtual labyrinth of rocks, marshes and narrow waterways. We left this lovely spot through Devil Door Rapids which were no more than a ripple.

Once we arrived on Georgian Bay we found the water rough. We could have taken the waves without fear of swamping and made a bee-line to Point Grodine but we would have worn ourselves out. Our choice was to thread our way through the hundreds of pink granite islands and try to avoid (unsuccessfully) the rock shoals just centimetres under the water. Our compass came in very useful at this point since our topographical maps (1:50,000) did not carry enough detail for one to establish with certainty his position. The barren rock channel to the east of Eagle Nest Point was a welcome relief from fighting waves and avoiding rocks. From our low vantage point we could only see mounds of pink rock but our maps showed unseen channels everywhere. North of Finnis Rock we stopped for supper on a bald rock island about the size of a football field. Erosion of wind and waves had sculpted beautiful forms in the hard rock. In some places it looked as if some bored holes in the rock, varying in width from 0.5 to 1 metre to a depth of one metre, were human made. Seagulls soon discovered our picnic and virtually surrounded us. We



found the common tern very interesting to watch as he dove for fish from ten metres up. This small island was in a picturesque setting. To the north of us, we could see the La Cloche Mountains and Silver Peak 25 kilometres away, while to the south Georgian Bay and the blue sky met at the horizon. The world seemed to stand still at this moment and there was no indication of the age that we live in. It probably looked this way when the Voyageurs passed through. As we rounded Point Grondine the sun set huge and orange behind the well defined and silhouetted peaks of Gulch Hill and Killarney Peak. The mountains of Killarney need to be seen from the Georgian Bay point of view for their beauty to be fully appreciated.

After camping Thursday on Draper Island we got up at four in the morning before the wind churned up the bay. That decision paid off with an unexpected sight. The moon was very high and full in the sky and glowed brighter than I've ever seen. It's light glittered on the bay like a million diamonds. It reminded me of the writings of David when he tended sheep under the night sky. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)

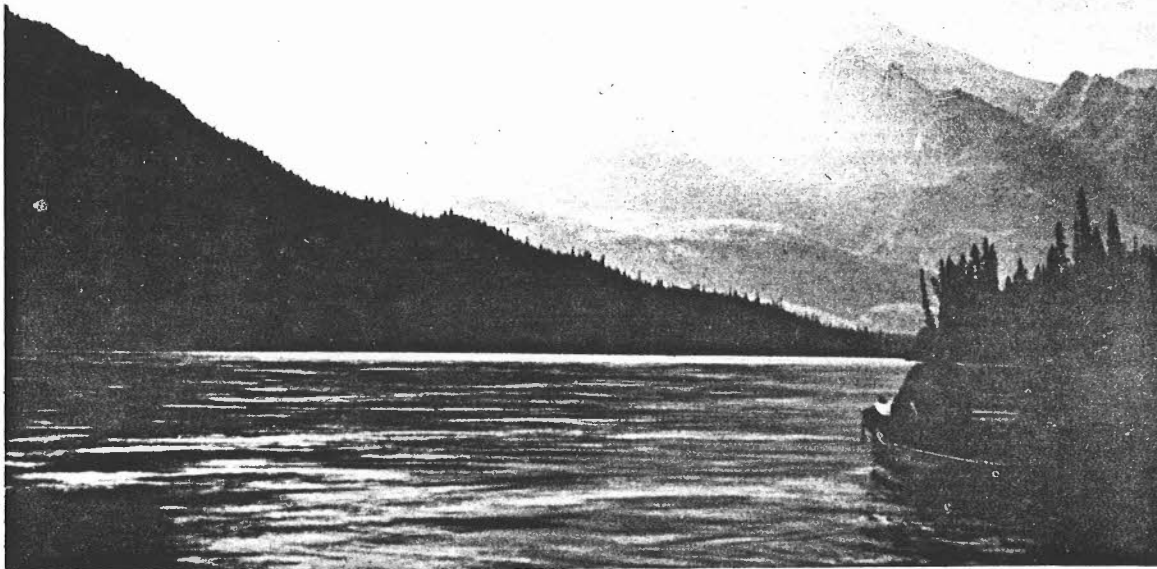
Rounding Popham Point and paddling north into lovely Beaverstone Bay we left Georgian Bay reluctantly. I hope to travel its waters again some time. During our one and one half days on it we saw only two canoes far out on the bay travelling with the waves and a Coast Guard boat. It was a beautiful expanse of solitude with no other signs of human civilization except for very distant navigational lights.

Collins Inlet was our "Nastawgan" to the Chikanishing River entrance of Killarney. It was fairly well populated with yachts from every part of eastern North America. Without incident we arrived at the mouth of the Chikanishing on Saturday. The next three days involved exploring and relaxing in the Park.

Climbing to Silver Peak we were able to view our trip from a different perspective and wish we were starting out again. It was a time now of reflection on our experiences as friends together, of memories (some humorous) made, and scenery enjoyed especially once the photos came back. What a privileged group of people we are who live in Ontario and can paddle a canoe. Some of the most beautiful of God's creation is so close and so quiet.



Harley Winborn



south nahanni

DAY 1

After waiting out two days of heavy rain in Fort Simpson, John and I finally flew in to the headwaters of the river we have all heard and read so much about. It's hard to imagine a more tranquil setting; a green plateau, the moose ponds, omnipotent Mount Wilson and a bald eagle in camp, his rugged features seen clearly through binoculars. As expected, the scenery on the flight in was spectacular and waves on the river could easily be seen from 2500 metres.

DAY 2

Bob and Barry arrived the next morning after a bad weather flight which involved spiralling down through low cloud cover to get a bearing and flying through the canyons until breaking into clear weather just below Virginia Falls. We embarked after lunch, seeing five moose in the ponds. Bob and Barry turned a corner in the narrow swift Nahanni to find a young bull moose lying across the stream. Only some furious backpaddling prevented a collision.

DAY 3

We spent a warm, clear, sunny day in the infamous rock garden, an exhilarating 60 km stretch characterized by swift cold water, mazes of rock outcroppings, waves large enough to make spray covers advisable and on almost total lack of calm water. This section of the river requires constant mental concentration. Although it's hard to imagine feeling much finer than on a day like today.

DAY 4

The weather continued hot and sunny, perfect for another day of running rapids. The river increased significantly in width and volume as several other streams entered the Nahanni. Most rapids can be run on sight, some need careful scouting and precise maneuvering. An upset could be very costly here. We found an almost new fibreglass canoe split in half. When we camped above a rapid which required scouting, we realized how fatigued we were from the cold water, hot sun and the excitement of never-ending rapids.

DAY 5

We spent much of the next morning scouting the most difficult rapid in the rock garden. The first section required ferrying around one ledge, a strong ferry to hit a small chute between a second ledge (a metre high drop) and a huge boulder, then quickly setting up to hit a chute through the third ledge. Luckily, our teamwork worked precisely due to the constant practice of the previous three days. The second section featured a ninety degree turn through exposed boulders, a long series of obstructions and large waves, followed by another ninety degree turn against a cliff and another ledge. Downstream of this section, the rapids became easier until they disappeared by late afternoon. The river increased in width by three times over what it had been earlier in the day and the water became even clearer and colder. We camped at the mouth of the Little Nahanni River.

DAY 6

Here we met two Americans from Michigan who had lost their rubber raft and some of their food and gear on an attempt down the Little Nahanni. They were in rather rough shape and they were attempting to build a raft with a hatchet. We cut some poles, strapped our canoes together and ferried them down to the Moore's cabin. The weather turned cold and cloudy and we felt a little depressed, naturally enough, after the emotional high of the rock garden.

DAY 7

After a rather poor sleep at the cabin, we spent a cool, overcast day drifting in a flat current through the outstanding scenery of the Ragged and Backbone mountain ranges.

DAY 8

Today was highlighted by a few interesting rapids, two moose sightings and a walk through a still smouldering fire near the mouth of the Broken Skull River. The burnt forest reveals a thin topsoil reduced to ashes, new moulds growing days after the fire passed through and a surprising quantity of insects and birds.

DAY 9

A storm at night brought heavy winds and more rain. Snow dusted the awesome pale blue glacier in the Cirque which dominated the landscape. While the river rose more than a metre, it was a day for playing Hearts in the tent and guessing which channel the trees that littered the Nahanni would end up in.

DAY 10

The storm broke up, and after a short paddle, we arrived at the mouth of the stream that roars into the Nahanni from Glacier Lake. Leaving our canoes and one tent behind, we hiked for five and a half hours into Glacier Lake. We were rewarded with a lake trout dinner, an abundance of Labrador tea and the phenomenal view of Mt. Harrison Smith, the near vertical walls of which rise to nearly 3000 metres. The hard pluton rock of this mountain was formed deep beneath the earth's surface, and it looks as if the glaciers have just left it.

DAY 11

After an early breakfast of lake trout and pancakes, we spent five hours hiking up from 1000 metres to over 2000 metres initially through heavy bush, until we picked up a game trail on the top of a spur. The trees soon gave way to tundra. At the summit all was splendor. The day was warm and sunny and there were no bugs at this elevation. We had a view up and down the Nahanni River valley, of Rabbitkettle Lake and the tufa mounds, Mount Harrison Smith, the glacier, behind which is the valley of the Rabbitkettle River, Glacier Lake, and most beautiful of all, a deep green valley with higher walls in amazing shades of red and brown.

DAY 12

We hiked out of Glacier Lake on a hot sunny day, paddled into Nahanni National Park and checked in with the warden at Rabbitkettle Lake. Here we had a long enjoyable swim in the shallow, warm lake. The campsite here has a spectacular view. After supper we sat watching the Red Merganzers on the lake and chatting to the warden about Nahanni mishaps. The fire glowed and the tea brewed long into the dusky night.



DAY 13

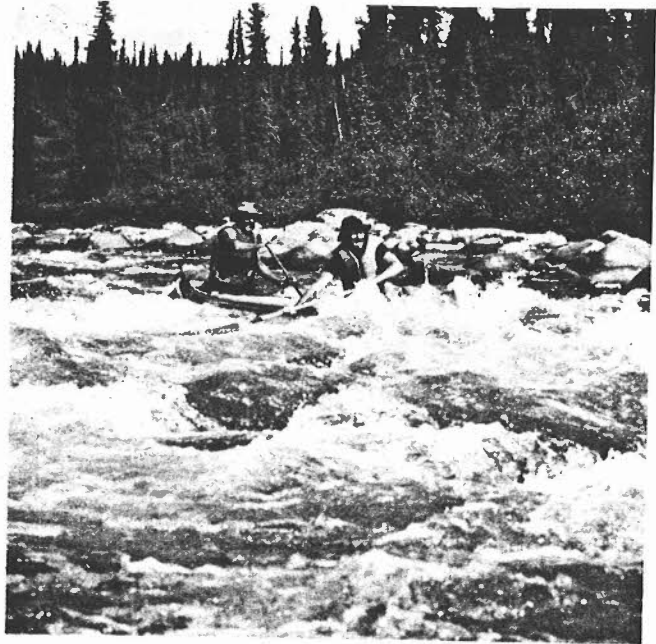
We spent the morning at the tufa hot springs. At the back of the main pool, the tepid water flows in millions of tiny ripples into the Rabbitkettle River. After another swim in the lake and lunch, we picked up a food pack (dropped here on the flight in) and walked out to the Nahanni. It was another endless halcyon summer day in the far north as we paddled downstream.

We passed a good example of an anti-cyncline fold right up against a cyncline fold. Later we saw a level terrace where the river had once flowed before the land was forced upward from below. Our anticipated camping spot at the mouth of Hell Roaring Creek was occupied by thirty army men, so we moved downstream.

DAY 14

We spent a long, hot day paddling to Virginia Falls, which can be heard from 10 km away. We stopped for a time to observe a pair of Arctic Terns feeding their young. After supper we explored above the falls. We walked out to the edge of the 90 metre drop and went into caves formed during high water, where the roar of the falls echoes about. Bob and John, both geographers, were in ecstasy. After a few hours, I decided to pick blueberries. It's interesting how one's standards change.

Tonight our freeze-dried chicken stew tasted almost good, and the freeze-dried coffee and Coffee Mate we secured from an army survival pack tasted absolutely marvellous.



DAY 15

After an excellent breakfast of blueberry pancakes, we completed the easy boardwalk portage around Virginia Falls. We walked upstream to see the boiling whirlpool below the falls as the spray drenched us. It was another hot day with a searing sun. The paddle down Five Mile Gorge was rather easy and over much too quickly. Later we ran through Hell's Gate, however, the run was a disappointment to anyone expecting the giant waves described in Patterson's book. To separate ourselves from the crowds at the falls, we lined up Wrigley Creek in the early afternoon. I have a great fondness for small, clear mountain streams. Here, we found the solitude we sought, as well as an absence of bugs, good hiking, water deep and warm enough to bathe in, an excellent campsite and great fishing for Dolly Varden and Grayling.

DAY 16

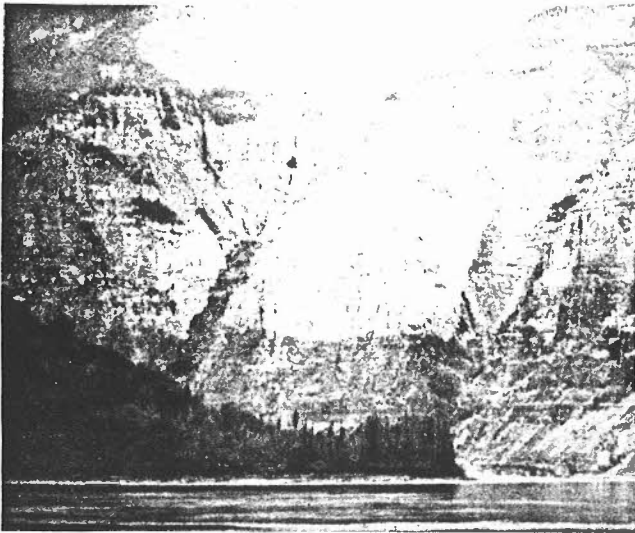
The early mornings on this trip seemed particularly fresh and crisp. How splendid to get up at six, run around a bit and prepare a fire for coffee. This is what I was contemplating as I lay in my cosy sleeping bag waiting for Barry to call me when he had the coffee perked. Our hot, clear weather continued, as we spent the morning hiking up Wrigley Creek, swimming and fishing. This meant fish for lunch and dinner. In the afternoon we cruised down river, occasionally even paddling, and we easily covered 43 km in three hours. We entered Third Canyon and camped at the Gate where the river narrows and turns sharply. I reflected on the efficiency of my three fellow campers. We stopped at six and had eaten dinner by seven. I also reflected on the variety of hiking available here. One could easily spend the summer exploring.

DAY 19

We spent another hot, sunny day (our 10th consecutive sunny day) travelling through the Splits, past the twisted mountain on to Nahanni Rutte and then part way down the Liard River. The day was not without excitement. In the Splits, we rounded a corner where a group of wood bison were lounging. They were transported up here last year by wildlife personnel. So far three calves have been born, one adult has drowned and two adults have been shot. John and I had a close call when crossing a little snye. A huge poplar tree cracked and fell into the water about thirty metres directly in front of us. We camped at Swan Sand Point on the Liard River under a brilliant red sun. As the sun sank low on the horizon a feeling of mortality crept back into our previously immortal days. Although it was still July, one could sense that the season was turning.

DAY 20

We paddled to Blackstone landing where a wildlife officer had brought John's truck from Fort Simpson. It was an exhilarating trip, my only regret being the large groups of people occasionally to be found in the park. My fondest memories are for the friendships I developed with three people I had never met before this expedition. My warmest regards to John Hawkins, Barry Hansen and Bob Moore of Sault Ste. Marie.



DAY 17

I was awakened at 5 a.m. by a rock slide opposite Pulpit Rock. After getting nicely back to sleep, I was again roused by the now familiar beating of a pot and spoon, and the gruff "Alez - Alez - Alez" of Barry Hansen. Needless to say we were on the river by 6:30 a.m. However, there are advantages to early morning travel. Almost immediately, the sun began to enter Second Canyon and work its way down the splendid, immense layered canyon walls. Soon our sweaters and shirts were removed as we half drifted, half paddled in a trance-like state, dwarfed by the awesome 460 metre shale and limestone canyon walls.

After passing through the big bend we noticed six Dall Sheep on the east canyon wall. John and I stopped at a gravel bar and watched, through binoculars, the amazing climbing ability of the sheep. Bob and Barry ferried upstream for some telephoto shots which did not appear to alarm the sheep at all. We lunched across from Headless Creek, pondering the lonely life of the prospector in this massive country. As we approached the last bend in Second Canyon, a phantasmagorical landscape of soft gray and green valleys became visible ahead of us. We camped across from Prairie Creek in Deadman's Valley. After dinner Bob and I hiked up Prairie Creek. We walked over the gravel and boulders of this huge alluvial fan, occasionally wading through swift, clear creek channels. We entered a narrow canyon with sheer walls revealing a fantastic land, a roaring stream with deep clear pools and cliffs rising straight out of the water.

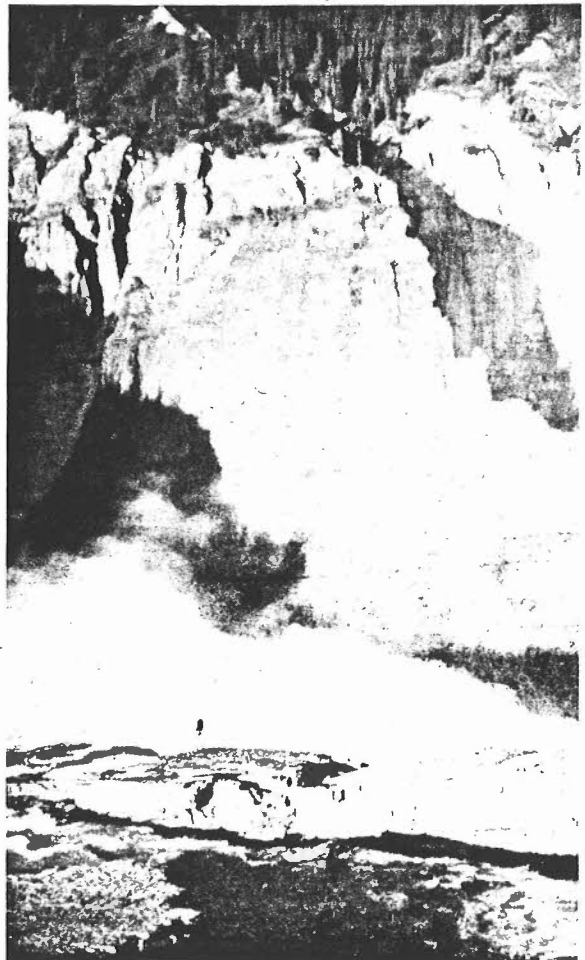
We waded to our waists in spots, crisscrossing the creek as we moved upstream. We caught enough fish for breakfast and, regrettably, we hiked back out of this paradise. Emerging from Prairie Creek, the silent multi-coloured distant canyons transported one back a million years in time. In the soft light of approaching midnight, the valley assumed an unreal magical softness as if the peaceful earth might release its hidden soul and forever free the troubled hearts of mankind. We returned to camp after midnight, cold, wet and gloriously happy. We sat around the fire drinking hot tea and trying hard to express our ecstasy on paper. I failed to do so.

DAY 18

I awoke at seven. The sun was already well above the horizon and it was getting warm. The clear, cloudless morning revealed the beautiful expanse of Deadman Valley with the canyons in the distance. We entered First Canyon, which has the highest walls of the three, and drifted downstream in awe. We stopped to do some rock climbing and spent some time playing in George's Riffle. Too soon the canyon ended as the day turned hazy with smoke from the Flat River fire. We had a thrilling ride through the long section of rolling two metre waves of Lafferty's Riffle. When the canoe rode over the crest of a wave, the bowman could not even approach reaching the water with his paddle. We camped and soaked at Kraus Hotsprings. Unfortunately a group of twenty-five obese rafters pulled up later that evening.

Article: Mark Riddell

Photographs: John Hawkins
Barry Hansen
Bob Moore





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nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning 'the way or route'

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

As you can see in the "Contacts" box on the back page, there are a number of changes since the last issue. I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on your behalf, some of the people who have put in a great deal of time and effort to keep this organization operating.

Paula Schimek, as you know has been our membership secretary for four years, and during that time has painstakingly kept track of who we are, a never-ending and repetitive task. We have all been indebted to Paula every time we received a mailing.

Claire Smerdon has been very busy over the past year typing up the minutes of the meetings and working on the newsletter.

Our thanks go to these people and our welcome aboard to their successors, Tanis Mathers and Margaret Hux.

We will also miss Jerry Hodge's distinctive Conservation Reports, which have appeared in this newsletter over the past three years. A Conservation Committee is in the process of being reformed. People who are interested in examining and reporting on some of the environmental concerns of particular interest to canoeists should get in touch with any member of the Board of Directors, or Richard Smerdon.

John Cross

news briefs

DEADLINE FOR SUMMER ISSUE

Articles, trip reports, book reviews, equipment comments, etc. are needed for the summer issue. Written material may be either hand or type written, but please double space.

Send articles to the editor no later than May 21 for inclusion in the next issue.

NOTICE TO ALL STUDENT AND FAMILY MEMBERS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

The law of the land requires a parental signature for you to participate in any WCA Outing. So, if you are planning to go on one of our Spring trips, and we hope you are, would you please tell the trip organizer that you are under 18. The organizer will send you a waiver form to be signed by your parent or guardian. Hopefully, this "red tape" won't detract from your enjoyment of our trips.

WCA CRESTS AND DECALS

Crests (2" x 4") and decals (3" x 6") showing the WCA logo and name in two shades of blue and white are available for WCA members. The cost is \$3 for a crest and \$1 for a decal.

To order yours, send a cheque or money order payable to the Wilderness Canoe Association to: Bill King, 45 Himount Dr., Willowdale, Ontario, M2K 1X3. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

SOMETHING NEW - SHORT-ORDER TRIPS

The Outings Committee is pleased to announce the formation of a new service for members. Marcia Parquhar will fill the new post of "Short-Order Trip Co-ordinator".

This service is intended to provide a liaison for members who want to go out for a day or weekend on short notice but have no way of knowing who else may have the same idea. The Short-Order Trip Co-ordinator will provide a telephone contact service for members seeking other members with whom they can put together a last minute outing. (She will not organize your outing for you.)

Marcia will also assist scheduled trip organizers to fill their trips or to replace drop-outs. Last minute drop-outs are an abomination, but they do happen. Trip organizers should contact Marcia if they have vacancies to fill.

Because of the last minute nature of these outings and because waiver forms may not be available, trips organized through the Short-Order Trip Co-ordinator will not be acknowledged as regular WCA trips. Participants will be on their own and totally responsible for their own decisions and safety.

A very warm thank-you to Marcia Parquhar for willingly accepting this new post. When necessary, please contact Marcia in Richmond Hill at 416-884-0208.

OUR MISTAKE

Three of the four photographs that accompanied the article "An Aussie in the Wilderness" in the last issue were taken by Shirley Williams. We apologize to Shirley for omitting the credit. (S.R.)



BOOKS FOR CANOEISTS

Norm Coombe

Your can't learn all about canoeing and camping from books but they can be extremely helpful. Learning by trial and error can be long and painful even with the help of friends. Good books can help you sort out the advice you get and reinforce the training you receive. Besides, they are fun to read.

The following would be the books I would recommend to a new canoeing friend.

Pole Paddle & Portage - Bill Riviere

We haven't read it for a long time but remember it as one of the best of the older books. Borrow this one from a library.

The Complete Wilderness Paddler - Davidson and Ruge

A very complete modern instructional book on canoe tripping written in good humour using a Quebec river trip as a plot line. Ignore their advice on using packframes in canoes. Very clear drawings. Worth owning.

Canoeing - The American Red Cross

A thick, thorough paperback covering all aspects of modern canoeing and kayaking. Very clear drawings on all forms of canoe usage including excellent sections on whitewater, safety, poling and sailing. Not a how to camp book. Try to get it at the Canadian Red Cross; published by Doubleday.

The Canoe and White Water - C. E. S. Franks

An exceptional book of great depth, almost a history of the sport but still covering today's whitewater game thoroughly. Of particular interest because the writer is a Canadian living in Ontario and writing about the rivers the WCA regularly paddles. The section on clothing is bang on. Unique sections on historical usage and the legalities of canoeing.

The Path of the Paddle - Bill Mason

Without a doubt the finest "how to paddle" book ever published. Mason uses hundreds of photos and unique river drawings, accompanied by related step by step instructions. If you had to learn to paddle with a book this would be the one to own. You should buy it anyway, it's gorgeous.

More thorough reviews of these books can be had by referring to past issues of this newsletter.

PADDLERS WITHOUT PARTNERS

No, not another social club; but many of us for many reasons do not have regular paddling partners. If you qualify as a P.W.P., let me assure you that you have lots of company. The Outings Committee, for instance, has 4 members without regular paddling partners. Do not let the lack of a partner inhibit your participation in WCA trips! Phone the trip organizer--most consider it part of their job to match up the P.W.P.'s if they possibly can.

If you register early, you can meet your partner for that trip over a cup of coffee to further arrange details. It is also quite commonplace to paddle with one person and share a tent with another. You and your partner can sort this out in advance. So let's have P.W.P.P.--Paddlers Without Partners Participating!

Norm Coombe

YOUTH ENCOURAGEMENT FUND

This fund was created to assist active student members of the WCA to participate in major wilderness trips or to attend courses to improve their wilderness canoeing and camping skills.

Over the last seven years, this fund has assisted a number of our younger members to take part in major backpacking and canoeing expeditions, to take whitewater courses, and to participate in an exchange trip with a Quebec canoe club. The YEF Committee hopes this work can continue. If you are interest in this aspect of the WCA, you are invited to make a contribution to the fund by sending a cheque (payable to the Wilderness Canoe Association) to the treasurer indicating that it is a donation to the YEF; and if you know of active young members of the WCA who are planning some activity and who you think are deserving of support, please contact the chairman of the YEF Committee (see Contacts) and recommend them to the committee.

KAZAN RIVER CANOE TRIP

We are looking for 2 or 4 experienced canoe trippers to join 2 others in making a four to five week canoe trip on the Kazan River this summer. Participants should share an interest in barrenlands travel, arctic ecology and the environment. We plan to begin in late June or the first week of July, flying into Ennadai from Baker Lake. If you are interest please contact M. Taylor in Baker Lake, N.W.T. at 819-793-2908 (evenings) as soon as possible.

CAN YOU HELP?

Stephan Lemyre is 15 years old, lives in Longueuil (Montreal), and is a member of the canoe club "L'Amis d'eau de Varennes." He wishes to come to Ontario to visit with someone or some family so that he can have the opportunity to improve his English. And he extends the invitation to come back and spend several weeks with him in Quebec.

One possibility that he finds very interesting is that of going on a canoe trip with canoeists from Ontario. Stephan is an experienced canoeist having teamed up with his father on many outings including wilderness trips of several weeks in duration and is now as fine a canoeist as his father.

If you are interested in having Stephan visit with you or go on a canoe trip as your partner, or can offer suggestions for arranging this visit, please contact me as soon as possible at 416-431-3343.

Please mention this to others who you think might be interested.

Gord Fenwick

hanbury - thelon

Jim Greenacre



The trip started with a 440 km flight from Yellowknife, NWT to Sifton Lake on the upper section of the Hanbury River.

The plane left, leaving Graham Barnett and me to sort out our equipment and consolidate everything into three Woods canoe packs plus a small but heavy day pack. With average loads of 34 kilograms we would be able to complete each portage with only two trips.

We pinpointed our position on the map using Muskox Hill, the only outstanding geographical feature to be seen in this whole, vast, desolate area. At 2:45 pm we were on the water and paddling. Sifton Lake has many wide, deep bays and long narrow fiords and a navigational error found us in a dead end. We retraced our path and got back on course. The strong N.E. head wind made for strenuous paddling and the choppy waves occasionally splashed over the bow. The sun was weak and as soon as you stopped paddling you felt a chill. We wore our life jackets more for warmth than for safety. We camped at 8:30 pm and ate a hearty supper, three thick juicy hamburgers each, liberally laced with fresh onion, tomato and relish and washed down with hot tea. Distance covered today: 29 km, not including navigational errors.

Day two we were on the water early and made good progress with only a slight northerly breeze but as the day proceeded the wind freshened and we were slowed down. We encountered our first rapid, scouted on the left over a jumble of large boulders and decided to run. The wind was blowing straight up the rapid and just about neutralised the current, so we had to power into the chute. A rock garden at the base of the rapid, some big standing waves and we took on a little water. Our second navigational error when moving from map #1 onto map #2 cost us two hours of paddling time. By mid afternoon the headwind was so strong we decided to quit and wait until the wind abated. We found a nice spot and explored the area on foot.

We had supper and at 9:00 pm we were back on the water as the wind had subsided, though there were still 30 cm waves. Two hours of paddling later we encountered our second rapid, a series of ledges which we had to portage. Midnight and the portage was completed. (This far north there is no total darkness, just a sort of twilight period between 11:30 pm and 3:00 am.) We paddled for another hour and a half and heard Grove

Rapids ahead so put ashore and set up camp. Grove Rapid would have to be scouted in daylight. Distance travelled today: 36 km.

Next morning we were slow in rising, 8:30, because of the late night paddle. A short walk across the tundra to a hillock overlooking a bend in the river revealed that we were about a kilometre from the rapids. Our camp was on high ground, exposed to the strong northerly wind which was already blowing, so it was decided to delay breakfast until we were past Grove Rapid. Scouting from the canoe it was obvious that we would have to portage. Halfway over, the portage dropped down into a gully providing an ideal spot to have breakfast, well protected from the cold wind on the north side. We completed the first trip over the portage and had breakfast on our second trip over.

It was here that we found an error in Parks Canada's River Survey. The survey mentions a fast 7.5 km section of water between Grove Rapid and Hanbury Lake. There is no such fast section as the portage ends right on the shore of the lake. The 4.5 km paddle across Hanbury Lake was soon over, helped by a tail wind. The next obstacle, Caribou Rapid, was another portage. Caribou Rapid is clearly named on the topo map yet Parks Canada don't even mention it in their survey.

Another 8.5 km downstream, a shelf across the entire width of the river involved a short portage on the right limit. It was early evening so we camped here as there was a well sheltered hollow behind some rocks which provided excellent shelter for our small, one burner stove. So far there had been no trees to provide firewood for cooking except for a few stunted spruce seen at Grove Rapid. Today's distance: 17 km.

The next two and a half days on the Hanbury were uneventful. Hoase Lake was glass smooth and from here on the river narrowed considerably and we were blessed with a strong current. On this section when exploring for a campsite we found the remains of a fire pit, and a small supply of cut firewood, so set up our camp. Supper was cooked on our first fire of the trip. From here to the Thelon scattered groves of spruce provided enough wood for cooking fires. It was here that we saw our first wildlife, two Muskox resting among some dwarf willow. Immediately upon sighting us they jumped to their feet and trotted away across the tundra.

There are a number of rapids and falls on the final

25 km of the Hanbury with Dickson Falls and Dickson Canyon being the longest, about 3 km. It took one hour and twenty minutes to get our first load over the portage but on our return trip for our second load we saw some cairns and by following these markers our second trip took one hour.



The Parks Canada notes mention a fast 90 metre run into the gorge above Ford Falls before landing to start the portage. From the river we didn't like what we saw so landed upstream of the gorge and scouted from the shore. The survey crew had had to get into a small narrow eddy and then scramble up almost vertically over some huge smooth rocks to get to the level tundra above. If, by mischance, you failed to make that eddy, then it would be "game over" because from there on the walls of the gorge went straight up from the water's edge and the strong current would take canoe and occupants right over the falls. To save 150 metres on the portage the survey crew did, in our opinion, a crazy thing. Helen Falls is the last obstacle on the Hanbury before it runs into the Thelon and required a 45 minute portage over a well defined trail marked with cairns. Here again the Parks people did a risky thing. They did a short portage then lowered the canoes and gear down a precipitous, three tiered cliff to a ledge at water level, the ledge being only 150 cm wide. This was right at the base of the falls where there was a great deal of turbulence and a strong underertow.

The confluence of the Hanbury and Thelon is awe inspiring. Looking upstream on the Thelon, we had our first sighting of mature spruce trees. Down stream are golden sand bars and the flat barren land of the tundra stretches away to the far distant horizon. The river is broad with numerous sand bars and a sluggish current. Eight days had been allotted for the 166 km to this point. However, because the many portages were not as difficult as had been anticipated, we were two days ahead of schedule.



Later we saw something over on the left in a grove of large, mature spruce about 1 km in from the river so we landed to investigate. We found a substantial log cabin, all four walls intact but a number of the roof logs had been moved in a rather haphazard fashion and the interior was in shambles. Written on one of the de-barked wall logs is the story. Built in 1955 by Fred Riddel, arctic trapper for 50 years, marauded by grizzly bears in 1967 and again in 1968. A short distance from the cabin was a smaller building just as well built from 25-30 cm thick logs. Except for a section of the plywood door which had been eaten by animals, this building was in perfect condition, complete with a set of large caribou antlers, bleached white by the elements, mounted over the door. A look inside revealed a long bench seat with a rather long hole in it. This had been Fred's outhouse. The first trapper's cabin I have ever encountered where the owner had bothered to construct an outhouse.

For the next 310 km the Thelon River twists and turns its course through the Thelon Game Sanctuary where you can expect to see wolf, fox, caribou, muskox and grizzly bear as well as flocks of snow and Canada geese. The Canada goose at this time of the year is molting and unable to fly, but half running and half flying still manages to move at a fast pace when it thinks it is in danger. We saw 12-15 muskox, mostly single beast with the occasional pair. One muskox which we saw from well upstream was lying down and facing away from us so we were able to land and get to within 7 metres before it heard the click of our cameras and turned its head and saw us. It made a movement as if to stand up but we didn't wait to watch, beating a hasty retreat to a safer distance. When we did stop and turn it was on its feet facing us, pawing the ground and snorting.

Another interesting cabin or what little remains of it is the John Hornby cabin. It cannot be seen from the river but its location is marked on the topo map. Only the lower section logs can be seen where the cabin was dug into the hillside. There are three graves close by, each marked with a rough cross with initials carved into the cross member. Hornby and his two companions had been buried here by a member of the R.C.M.P. They had slowly and painfully starved to death during the winter of 1925-26. Their plans to live partially off the land went awry when they missed the caribou migration. (The book "The Legend of John Hornby" is fascinating reading.)



There are sections of the Thelon where the river is broad and shallow and canoeists could easily be wind-bound. Though we did encounter some headwinds they were never strong enough to stop us completely. Other sections of the river were narrow with a good current and 60-66 km could be covered in a day. It was never very warm, even with the sun shining. There was no problem keeping warm when paddling but the moment we went ashore it was necessary to button up shirts and jackets. On many mornings and in the evenings we wore our life jackets for extra warmth. The warmest it got was 62° F but most days were in the low 50's F while night time temperatures would drop to mid 30's F. Water temperatures were never higher than 42° F. There are no rapids or portages on this 310 km section of the Thelon.

On one occasion we heard and saw an aircraft flying at about 700 metres just south of our position. Abruptly the plane banked into a tight turn, dropped low over the river and buzzed us. I wonder what their thoughts were, sighting two solitary figures way out in

the barrans, relaxing on a gravel bar in the middle of a remote river, having lunch. There were reasons for lunching out there; that's where the breeze was strongest and by sitting facing into the wind, the mosquitoes were less bothersome.

Late afternoon on day eleven of the trip we rounded a point on the river and saw some movement high up on the tundra. A few minutes later we realized it was a flag, a Canadian flag. As we paddled closer we could see tents lower down on the slope and people moving around. Close to the river smoke was curling up from an open fire. We landed slightly upstream, pulled the canoe out of the water and were almost into camp before anyone realized we were there.

A tall, lean man tending the fire and some cooking pots saw us first, walked over, greeted us and introduced himself. He was Alex Hall, professional outfitter and licenced guide for the Northwest Territories, operating out of Fort Smith. He was guiding eight Americans ranging in ages from 13 years old up to mid-fifties. They come from places as far apart as Syracuse, N.Y. and Seattle, Washington. We were invited to camp and have supper with them; soup, bannock, freeze dried Chili Con Carni and tinned strawberries for dessert. Quite a change from the one pot meals we were accustomed to. After supper we exchanged experiences. They had had a leisurely 18 days on the river and this was the end of their trip. The next day some were to fly back to Fort Smith, the rest were to follow the day after. They were impressed with our rate of travel and how little equipment we seemed to have and that we still had another 335 km to paddle.

Next morning we bade our new found acquaintances farewell and after a couple of hours steady paddling were out on Beverly Lake, the first of the three big lakes which had to be crossed on the way to Baker Lake. The lake was relatively calm with a soft breeze coming from the north as we cut across a deep bay, heading for a peninsula on the south shore. Alex Hall had told us that the peninsula was a good spot to load up with firewood which would have to last for the remainder of the trip because from there on there were no more trees.

We were about 1.5 km from shore when, as if from nowhere, the breeze freshened into a wind and in a matter of minutes 80 cm whitecaps were breaking over the port gunwale. We changed course, ran with the waves towards the nearest shore and surfed onto the sandy beach taking on a little water over the stern as we scrambled ashore. For the next two days the wind and waves kept us pinned down at that spot. It wasn't until about 8:00 pm the following evening that it became safe to continue paddling.

It was a perfect location to be windbound. The driftwood, piled high on the beach, was very dry, very brittle, very old and must have been there for decades. Using two huge, conveniently placed boulders as anchor points, am loads of driftwood stacked up between the boulders, created a cosy, sheltered spot for a kitchen and cooking fire. The first afternoon was spent breaking up driftwood into short lengths to take with us and when we finally left, all space not occupied by our packs was filled with driftwood, plus a pile of much longer lengths lashed across the top of the three packs.

The following morning was spent exploring the area on foot with a long walk out to the point of the peninsula, where, from a high point, it was possible to



see where we were headed. It was on this hike that I found a small caribou skull complete with miniature antlers about 40 cm high; these I brought back with me as a souvenir of the barrans. Because of the abundance of firewood I spent the afternoon baking a four day supply of bannock, afterwards relaxing, snoozing and generally taking life easy in anticipation that the wind would drop in the evening and we would be able to continue. Graham did likewise except instead of baking he caught up on some laundry chores.

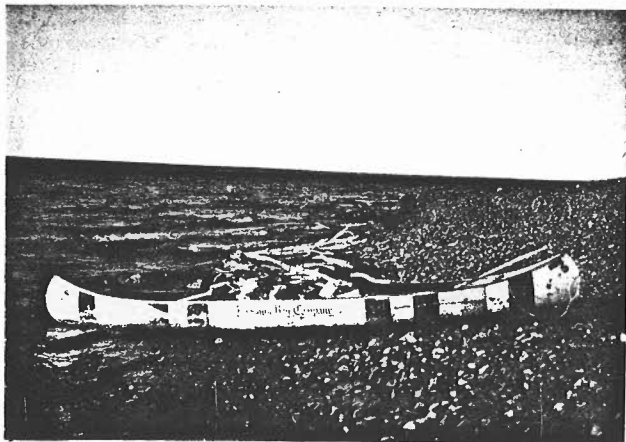
As mentioned earlier, the wind did subside that evening but we still had to contend with a slow, lazy swell. Five hours of vigorous paddling following close to the shore got us about halfway down the lake and into an area studded with islands. The half light of the arctic night made it difficult to navigate among the islands as shore lines tended to blend into one another so we quit for the night at about 1:30 am.

The following morning we found we had camped on an island with a high ridge so we climbed the ridge and were able to pinpoint our location on the map. By the end of the day we had threaded our way through the maze of islands and channels into the short 10 km long section of river that joins Beverly Lake to Aberdeen Lake. On many of the high points on the islands cairns could be seen indicating which channel to take. Those cairns had been built and used by the Inuit who travelled these waterways long before the arrival of the first Europeans. The Dubawnt River flows north into Beverly Lake but because of the many islands and channels it is difficult to locate exactly just where the river is.

Crossing Aberdeen Lake would require 70 km of paddling if the shortest route was used but it would also mean being at times many kilometres from shore. This would be extremely hazardous because of the possibility of being caught by one of those sudden storms notorious to the lake. The safe way is to follow close to the north shore; this adds about 20 km of paddling.

Day seventeen (July 20th) was a day we will never forget. We were about halfway along the north shore of Aberdeen and were making an early start to try to beat the wind. The sky was grey and overcast when we first got up and there was no wind. It was about 7:00 am when we were ready to lift the canoe down to the water's edge. To the north the sky was black and threatening though there was still a dead calm. We decided to walk up to a high spot on the tundra to take a last look. What we saw changed our plans. Way off on the distant horizon there were black rain clouds down to ground level and coning our way. The canoe was lifted higher up the beach and weighted down with several large rocks. Then, loaded down with packs, we set off to find a sheltered spot where we could pitch the tent. The calm was still with us.

Inside the tent, in our sleeping bags, we were warm and dry for about twenty minutes (Graham promptly fell asleep) before the wind and rain reached us. The wind grew in intensity and suddenly one of the front "A" frame aluminum poles bent to a 90° arc. This caused the tent and fly to flap a great deal louder which roused Graham. His immediate reaction was that the tent would be blown away but I argued otherwise. With the number of rocks used to anchor the guy lines and the two of us inside, it might be flattened, but not blown away. Graham insisted we pack, take the tent down and move to



a more sheltered spot. This was done and for an hour or more we searched, without success, along the beach for a better location.

By this time we both realized we were in a serious situation. Soaked to the skin, a gale force north wind which by this time had chilled our exposed hands so that they were stiff and numb. Both of us were aware of hypothermia, "The Silent Killer" and knew it was imperative we get out of the wind. We did the only thing left to us; the tent was laid flat on the beach, loaded down with rocks and we crawled inside, pulling the packs in after us. We were in that flattened, sopping wet tent for eighteen hours. A sheet of 6 mil plastic was spread out under us along with one of those thin lightweight emergency space blankets to help prevent body heat loss through the wet floor. Initially we huddled close together, again to conserve body heat, and after about thirty minutes I felt my fingers and hands slowly warm through and the odd body shivers which I had been experiencing, stopped.

Our packs gave us a little headroom and later in the day we were able to enjoy a snack of cheese, summer sausage and bannock. Towards evening, by improvising with sections of the broken "A" frame, it was possible to increase the headroom inside the tent to about 60 cm. This enabled us to change into our dry emergency clothing, get into our sleeping bags, and enjoy a good sleep.

The rain stopped sometime during the night and the wind diminished enough so that at 5:00 am we were able to get outside, repair the tent and generally improve our situation to near normal. The sky cleared, a weak sun appeared but the wind was still whipping up white caps on the lake so for a second day we had to stay put. We took advantage of the situation by drying our wet clothing and gear and replenishing the supply of bannock.

If there are any lessons to be learnt from this experience they are, first, most of our modern, free standing tents with their minimum number of guy ropes, are not designed for use on the open barren lands. For centuries the Inuit used round tents anchored every few centimetres with heavy rocks. Secondly if you are in your tent, warm and dry, and it looks like the wind is going to flatten it, let it down on yourself, but don't move it. There is virtually no shelter from the wind on the open tundra.

The wind died in the early evening and around 8:30 we were on the water and once more on our way paddling at a steady rate until about 1:15 am. This got us around the most eastern point of the north shore and off Aberdeen Lake which was our immediate objective. It took a day and a half to get from Aberdeen and into Schultz Lake. This section is marked as river on the map but in reality it is two small lakes with a short, narrow stretch of fast water between.

It was on this section that we met two geologists who overtook us in an inflatable rubber boat powered by an outboard motor. They were members of a government team making a geological survey of the area. Their base camp was on the south side of Aberdeen. They enquired about how we had survived the storm which had severely damaged one of their tents. They said the wind was a gale force of 100 km/h gusting to 130 km/h.

The rapids marked on the map at the west end of Schultz are nothing more than swifts and easily runnable. Immediately after we cleared the fast water we turned and headed for the north shore, about 1.5 km distant. As we approached the shore a big, brown, prospector tent was sighted so we landed to investigate.



We were halfway up the beach when a tall, lean, touselled haired man emerged from the tent, saw us, and with a look of puzzlement on his face, walked towards us. We introduced ourselves. "I'm Ernie Nutter", he said, "come in and meet my wife, she has just made a pot of tea." Ernie is chief geologist for a mining company prospecting for uranium. For the past two weeks they had been here enjoying a fishing holiday. His wife had flown in from Toronto to join him in Baker Lake. The company helicopter had flown in all their gear, tent, oil fired space heater, propane cooking stove etc. and they had come up river from Baker Lake in a rented, seven metre, freighter canoe with an outboard motor. We chatted with them for half an hour or so and graciously accepted the apples and oranges Mrs. Nutter offered us as we left.

Two hours later we saw another tent and floating just offshore a small, single engine aircraft and then way out on the lake we heard the "putt, putt" of an outboard motor. The noise was coming from a small black dot which was headed in our direction. We waited. It was an inflatable rubber dinghy with two men in it, both wearing large, wide brim, cowboy hats. They were from Buffalo, N.Y., both pilots, and owned the float plane. They too were on a fishing holiday.

Next day we started early, finished late, and paddled 60 km but were now clear of the lakes and about to enter the final section of river where we could expect to get considerable help from the current. A late start next morning, coupled with scouting two sets of rapids, (the first set we ran but the second set involved a 3 km portage) and waiting out two rain storms, kept our progress down to only 17 km for the day. There were now only 75 km left to Baker Lake, the end of trip. Tomorrow should be our last day on the river.

The sky was grey with a heavy overcast, it had rained most of the night, and a strong wind was blowing out of the north when we pulled away from the river bank into a good 8-10 km/h current. With the wind at our backs plus the current, we made tremendous progress with little effort. Just before lunch we met a group of Inuit, mostly youngsters. There were three families; they were from Baker Lake and had come upstream in their big freighter canoes to fish and also hunt caribou. They had caught some fish but the hunting was poor, they told us. We had only seen a few caribou ourselves and that had been back on Aberdeen and Schultz Lakes. We still had a two day supply of firewood so we left it with them.

Ten kilometres from Baker Lake the river widens to 3 km and turns due east. The wind, which had been our friend all day, once again became our enemy, hitting us broadside on and doing its utmost to blow us over to the wrong side of the river. Progress was slow. Five kilometres from the village the shore-line turned due north around a point and we could see buildings and houses in the distance. On our left we could see the airport. The wind hit us head on. We struggled and made slow progress for another 2.5 km but finally "The Demon" which is the name some northerners call the north wind, beat us to a standstill and we had to land.

We carried our gear and canoe to the airport where we were able to scrounge a lift into the village in the back of a truck. The trip, 830 km in 23 days, was over.

7 Come 11

The Demon calls the shots
On the treeless turf
Where life becomes his crapgame
And the croupier's his serf.
He owns the dice and tables
And beckons all, "Come in"
To gamble here a little while
And take a chance to win.

Some people spend their entire lives
Sittin' on their asses,
Or, worse yet, lying down
They miss the Demon's passes.

So grab those bones when it's your turn
And shake 'em so they clatter,
Toss 'em hard against the wall
And read the dots they scatter.
The fate you threw just then, my friend,
Counts more than you've allotted
You took a fling at life
AND LIVED
The rest sat back and rotted.

Jim Abel July, 1981



Outings Meeting

wca fall workshop

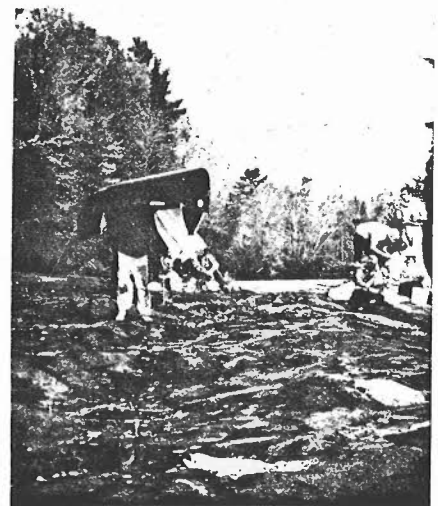


Portaging Seminar

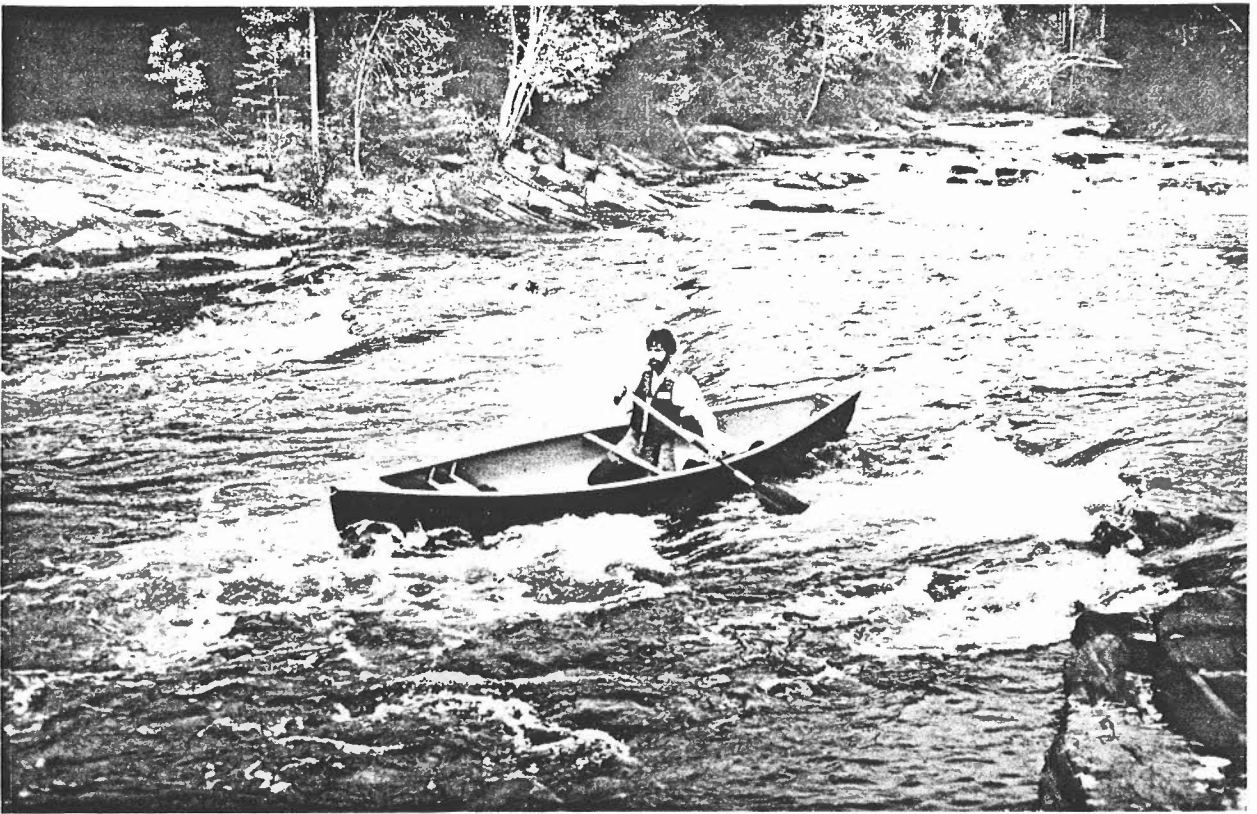
Photographs by Glenn Spence



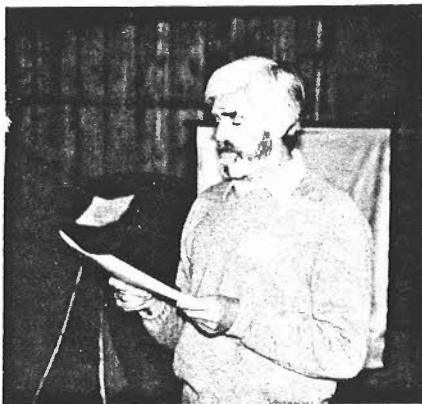
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Burnt Ri



Burnt River



Prothemia Seminar - Jack McGinty



Food Seminar - the Smerdons



attawapiskat



Robert Hartog

All the Ontario rivers flowing into Hudson and James Bay have a lot in common: most start in the shield and end in the lowlands, have clay banks, and "skip" over the limestone ledge. But each one is different, with a character all its own. The Attawapiskat has all the common characteristics, but combines them in an often surprising way; it has outstanding white water, a tremendous variety of scenery, water conditions, and a beauty all its own. It really is a "super-river" and the 17 days we spent on it, to run its 790 km, were most enjoyable.

Having departed from the South on the evening of 28 July and after having left a station wagon at the Timmins Airport, 8 canoeists and four "Old Town" ABS canoes, drove to Pickle Lake where, somewhat weary, we arrived on the evening of the 29th. On the 30th we found a driver to return the van to Pickle Lake and drove the 56 kilometres to the Badesdawa Bridge where around noon our trip started. After an hour, just when the hunger pains started to hit, especially our younger members, the first set of rapids appeared and, after scouting, was run easily. From then on there were many interesting rapids, and except for two, where a portage was absolutely required, and one where lining seemed to be better, we ran everything, but never without careful scouting. In that first section (the 200 kms from Badesdawa Bridge to Lansdowne House) we seemed to alternate between excellent and challenging white water (once a 9 km stretch - what a roller coaster) and lakes. Campsites were plentiful and fishing well above average. The weather was "average": sometimes a bit of rain, a bit of sunshine, quite often clouds - and on 1 August a very solid frost.

We reached Lansdowne House on Thursday, 5 August (Austin Airlines have a scheduled flight on Monday and Friday from Lansdowne to Pickle Lake) as planned and after a bit of shopping at the Hudson Bay store there,

we left two canoes and four of our friends behind (to go back home and work on Friday morning) while the other two canoes left, in now brilliant sunshine to cross Lake Attawapiskat which has a very modest, but definitely noticeable, set of rapids in the middle (of a lake - yes!).

The 400 kilometres from Lansdowne House to the coast are fascinating. We had several days of downpour, were stopped at 11:00 am one day for the rest of the day by terrific head-on gales, but also had 5½ days of absolutely cloudless weather. The variety of terrain is amazing; the river flows fast, and at times, when pinched by rocks, wildly; and the last 6 days (having been a bit lazy in the upper stretches) we completed more than 250 km - and each of us got a glorious suntan. The limestone "ledge" spreads out over 20 km and is a beautiful sight with a very fast flowing river running around small limestone "atolls".

In the morning of 15 August we camped a few kilometres above the village of Attawapiskat - by tidal water - for our last night on the river. The next morning we paddled into this very hospitable, very clean town of some 800 people, arranged for flights on Austin Airways (which flies daily, except Sundays, from there to Fort Albany, Moosonee and Timmins) and were able to have our two canoes accompany us.

We had not seen any other human being since leaving Lansdowne House - but had photographed moose, fox, bear (including a very cute, white-nosed, black bear cub), wolves, mink, otter, beaver and all the waterfowl one can imagine.

The Attawapiskat is a wilderness river, remote, challenging, varied and beautiful. The trip is one that all four of us who enjoyed its hospitality in 1982, can heartily recommend.

mid-winter canoeing

Erik Frebold

Its usual volume of flow is about 10 cfs, but on February 3rd (for the fourth time this winter) the mighty trickle known as Green's Creek let loose with about 500 cfs. This may not seem like much, but when it means that the water level under the bridge rose from less than 25 centimetres to more than two metres overnight, it's understandable that my suppressed primitive paddling urges came to the surface.

Out came the spanking new wetsuit, and shortly I was standing on the bank shaking portage kinks out of the shoulders, wondering if this swift surging flow was the same one I couldn't float my canoe in 3 months before. My whitewater experience is rather limited, but voracious reading of any and all books remotely concerned with moving water, and hours of furtive experimentation with paddles in the bathtub, imaginary eddies behind the living room sofa, and souse holes in the dishpan had prepared me for anything. I hopped in and spent half an hour practising ferries and eddy turns in the straight section of fast water that precedes the first rapid at the old farm bridge. Deciding I was ready, I set off downstream and forgot to tuck the stern in going around the bend. I drifted broadside, embarrassed, until able to eddy out and work back up again to do it right. The first vee approached and, once in it, I noticed that the waves seemed much larger than they had from shore. Backpaddling furiously, I began to realise that a 17 foot, deep keeled aluminum canoe does not pivot willingly into a ferry. Violent backsweeps eventually achieved the desired result. Having noticed that an ice jam blocked all of the creek except for a narrow chute, I expertly eddied out, right into a big clump of trees. (Crash!)

Emptying the canoe of an inexplicable quantity of water, it occurred to me that I was standing in a sloshing mix of ice and water, and yet my sneakered feet weren't complaining at all--living proof of the old adage that "if you want warm feet, wear a hat" (and a wetsuit). As I was poking the bow out into the current again, a large 20 centimetre thick slab of ice came wallowing down the haystacks. Not wishing to tangle with it, I withdrew to watch it hit an obstacle and roll over several times before disappearing around the bend.

The chute was easy going, with a ferry to avoid the largest waves. Eventually I found myself parked in an eddy above another chute. There remained at least another half kilometre of rapids below this point, and, as the ledges lower down extended right across, it appeared prudent to portage. A low cliff on my side of the creek made an upstream ferry to the small eddy on the other side necessary in order to get the canoe ashore. When I got there my angle was too small to get across the eddy fence and, unable to pivot in the strong current, it took me several tries to punch through. Once ashore, the canoe was surprisingly easy to pull through the snow, handling like a toboggan, although needless to say, it still refused to pivot, this time around rocks and trees.

The last section before the Innes Rd. bridge runs, tucked out of sight, just below the roadbed. Looking at the water piling up against the soft limestone cliff, one wondered how many years it would be before the whole road fell over the edge--there was already evidence of landslip at the top of the cliff, and trees along the pavement leaned at odd angles. Backferrying down the relatively quiet inside of the bend, I marvelled at the metre-high breaking waves a boat width away. After tangling with a final chute, I arrived at the car, but not before being drenched with brine, from hydraulics of another sort, as cars ploughed through deep puddles on the road.

Canoeing in winter can be great fun, but one must always remember to exercise great care when running rapids alone, particularly in cold water--in my case the day was warm, the river was small, without falls, and just outside the Ottawa city limits. Calm water lay below the take out point, and I wore lifejacket, full wetsuit, and knew the river cold (no pun intended) from extensive scouting in many different water levels. The dangerous element in running an unfamiliar river in cold water in a remote area is not so much the river itself, as the fact that if you are alone there is no one to help you if you get into trouble--you are gambling that you won't be pinned, swept over a falls, or otherwise injured, and that is too great a risk to be worthwhile.

SPRING CANOEING TIPS

Norm Coombe

Cold water, cool winds, rain, mud and icy floodwaters often accompany the spring sunshine and exciting whitewater. These possibilities call for more than the usual preparations for a day's paddling. For example cold extremities; feet, hands and head, can lead to severe discomfort; if not hypothermia.

Good wool socks under boots, not running shoes, will keep feet warm even when wet. Plastic or rubber gloves will keep icy river water off your hands. A wool cap or a foam lined helmet can keep the head warm.

The usual wool tee-shirt, overshirt and/or sweater of wool topped with a wind shell or rainwear top, with the life preserver, usually protects the torso quite well, but pay special attention to the legs. The large leg muscles can chill you thoroughly if they are not kept warm. Nothing is colder than wet jeans. Try for wool underwear, under wool trousers. Of course a wet suit is the ultimate in protection. Don't forget the rainwear.

Two, I repeat, two changes of clothing are

desirable: the mandatory complete change of clothes double waterproofed and carried in the canoe, and if they are used, another set waiting in a car at the end of the trip. It can be very rewarding to get out of cold wet clothes at the end of the run.

A thermos of hot liquid, your choice, (we like the energy provided by rich hot chocolate) can warm you during the trip, help a buddy who has dumped, and is a great "pick me up" at the end of the trip.

On WCA day trips, individuals usually pack their own lunch. Choose high energy foods that are easily digested. Avoid foods that lose flavour and acceptable texture in cold conditions. For instance, many sandwiches are horrible when very cold.

Incidentally, if your partner is providing both canoe and car it would only be fair for you to supply the lunch.

I hope your spring trips are all warm, sunny and dry, but do be prepared. Good Luck.



barely winter

John Cross

In mid-January, a light snowfall dusted the ground, so Herb and I dared hope that we might take a true winter trip, hauling our gear on odawbans, instead of backpacking it. When we reached the Long Lake area on Saturday morning, it appeared that we would end up rock-scraping, so we kept on going to Algonquin Park and the North Madawaska valley, which we had wanted to explore for some time. Snow there was, adequate for odawbans, though insufficient to require snowshoes.

We headed north on Sasejewun Lake, to the inflow of the Madawaska. Plainly, it was broken by rocks - rapids, no doubt, at higher water levels - so we feared for our safety on the ice. The map, however, showed a road which appeared to parallel the river, so we veered into the bush to find it. There did indeed appear to be an opening in the trees, but it was so choked with deadfalls, bushes, and some small trees, that we regretted our decision. Plainly, this would never form a useful route; after struggling through it for at least 1½ hours, we decided to break back onto the river. Effectively, the road shown on the topo does not exist. The corresponding stretch of river, we covered in 8 minutes on the way home.

On the river, of course, our greatest fear was thin ice, particularly on the outside of bends, but a curious pattern developed as the trip progressed: frequently, it was the wide open water stretches which were the safest. When we took to the alder scrub which lined the bank, hoping to avoid questionable passages, it was to find that there a thin layer of ice covered about 15 cm of air, through which we crashed, onto the (usually dry) ground below. Perhaps in the heavy rains of December, the ice had formed on the flooded verges, only to have its support drain away later. On the swampy patches we thought that the water, being stiller, might have formed thick ice, but it appears that some kinds of swamp-decay generate enough heat to keep the ice thin.



On the other hand, on rounding a bend, we were confronted with slippery, solid overflow on the ice, which extended below a frozen waterfall. The entire ledge, over which water had flooded, was solidly coated in ice armour, up which we gingerly walked, hearing the river rumbling away below. Perhaps there had been a jam there earlier in the winter, to back the water up above the falls; however it had been, we found ourselves peering through a slit in the ice at the centre of the river; the river ran swiftly about a metre below; we were on a very thick table of ice which was almost unsupported, yet was perfectly solid.

Not really trusting it, we kept close to shore, and ascended past the mouth of Fern Creek to a narrower, swifter section. Here the fall of the water level had caused the ice to sink, but not quite to break; a narrow table close to shore was there for us to walk on, while our odawbans skidded diagonally along the sides of the V-shaped ice valley sagging toward the centre. Most dangerous were the environs of beaver dams; nowhere, it seemed had the ice had a chance to solidify.

Before this story begins to sound hair-raising, or we foolhardy, I should like to make note of two important factors: the water, even at the centre of the river, was obviously shallow, and the weather was only slightly below freezing. Thus a break-through was not to be greatly feared, only avoided as an inconvenience. We both in fact did go through more than once, but the slight dampness in our boots which ensued was not sufficient to cause us to stop.

The onset of late afternoon, without impressive progress, did, however, induce us to modify our plans. The "road" was a dud. The river up near Cory Lake was even rougher. We decided to camp on a small lakelet.

The tarp was soon up and a warm fire going. Only with the slowing of circulation about supper-time did my wet feet start to feel cold, but a change of footgear remedied that, and my socks, boots, and trousers were soon drying on a line, as we comfortably digested our stew.

Early next morning a light snow fell, and the temperature rose. We were more sure of our way now, and so anticipated no time problems on returning. Since the river above our little lakelet was closed to us (until later in the winter, with lower temperatures, if we get any) we decided to explore up a tributary, Fern Creek.

Like most creeks in this section of the park, Fern consists of filled-in swampy valleys and beaver ponds, on which the going is easy, separated by steep, narrow, defiles, through which the creek tumbles in cataracts, and in which the bush is jungle-like. The length and ease of the swamps and ponds might make these valleys appear easy of passage for an odawban, but the steep sections are extremely difficult; in fact, for travelling in this country, there may be something to be said for sticking to the hillsides and avoiding the valleys altogether, particularly when the hill-sides in question are covered in deciduous trees. We climbed Fern to its wide-open section, from which, had time permitted, we could have crossed to several neighbouring valleys, or the lake-chain on which we travelled last year.

Once again, on beaver ponds, there seemed to be a distinct advantage in sticking to the middle, where the ice was solid; near clumps of alders or banks, the ice frequently cracked, to reveal muck below. Again, this is probably a function of decay.

We returned to the Madawaska, and descended it to the junction with Fox Creek, where we noted ski tracks. Two sets of pole impressions, so two skiers; one set of tracks, so two careful skiers, who could follow one another exactly without straying; pole drag marks going in one direction only, so they had not come back by the same route. When we reached Herb's car, the well-known diesel Rabbit, a small bag of coffee tied to the door handle established the skiers' identities: Karl and Paula Schimek. They had gone up Fox Creek and followed the road that had eluded us (as they later told); it is apparently much farther east than it is marked on the topo.



We were pleased to have discovered so much about the topography of the valley before committing a larger, more heavily laden party to it in February.

Points of tripping technique noted:

A Coleman lantern does much to cheer up a clearing on a dark January evening. The glow of a dying fire on an orange tarpaulin makes a nice night-light. Rubber galoshes (my favourite footwear for high winter temperatures) are hard to dry, even with the advantage of a fire; if a chemical dry pack is not available, I have used newspapers, or put them on wet the next day, protecting the socks with plastic bags.

Narrow, short toboggans (4 slats wide by 5' long) sound small and handy for light outfits, but are so prone to tip-over that they are not worthwhile. Perhaps for a very compact, heavy cargo like moose meat, such as we read of the Indians hauling on small craft, they would be worth constructing.

People sleeping near open fires should have sleeping bag covers (mine is of old sheets), or take the consequences in spark holes.

linda lake loop

John Cross

After a few disagreements with the ice of the North Madawaska River over its lack of thickness, Herb moved the mid-February winter trip a few kilometres west to the Linda Lake loop. From spots a few kilometres apart on the highway in mid-Algonquin Park, snowbound roads lead to Source Lake and Canisbay Lake; from each of these, a canoe route leads through chains of lakes to Linda Lake (from which a further portage-and-lake route winds north to Burnt Island Lake). We started from the Park Museum, ascended the west side of the loop, and came back down the east side to Canisbay Lake.

The weather was perfect on the Saturday morning: about -20, bright sun, and no wind, so that on the lakes it could be quite warm. In these conditions, coats tend to ride along on the odawbans; even in shirtsleeves one can work up perspiration pulling the load. The snow was not very deep, the winter being what it has been, but I found that I preferred to wear my snowshoes even on the lakes, for the sake of the traction they provided, if not for the flotation.

The portages from Source Lake to Raven Lake are not especially difficult, although there are places where care must be taken to prevent the odawban sideslipping on the side of a hill. It appears that these portages are not heavily used, so a number of large fallen trees block the path, uncleared as yet by the ministry. From Raven Lake to Owl Lake, the up-and-down of a portage can be avoided by following the creek, or rather, the verges of the creek, which is itself unsound to walk on. The portage to Linda Lake, however, must be reckoned a difficult one on account of the hill climbing which must be done.

Some people tend to look for faults in their equipment to explain the tipping over of their odawbans, but I doubt that there is any better grounds for this than for blaming a canoe for tipping. There are a host of tricks of technique which enable one to negotiate fairly difficult slopes, but these are rather hard to describe, and have not been seen in print, so far as I know. One is continually glancing back over one's shoulder, alert to the slightest change in the pull from behind, and ready to lift up one trace or the other when one side seems to require support. On side hills or in dense woods, I often carry the reins by my side, in both hands, for better control, although this method is more tiring, and, over long distances, must be abandoned in favour of the chest pull.

So far as a choice of equipment contributes to stability, it is clear that a long odawban is far superior to a short one. It may be that when part of a long one begins to tip, the remaining length tends to pull it back level; certainly I had little trouble with my 8-footer, although it was loaded far higher and more heavily than the 5-footer I used three weeks before.

Even with a light load, you can spread that load along a long odawban so as to reduce the height, and the danger of tipping. Jim and Tom pulled high canoe-tripping wannigans, which, while most convenient for getting at things, caused some problems on side hills. Graham and I hauled the woodstoves, and put up with their tendency to snag low branches. A woodstove, no matter how tightly tied down, has a tendency to twist sideways during the flexing of the odawban over a rough trail; this can be cured only by carefully binding its feet to the odawban crossbars.

From Linda Lake, there is a portage route back to Canisbay Lake, but Herb and I last year discovered that, by penetrating a swamp and a dense thicket at the southeast end of Linda, one can descent a creek which is faster and easier going. Moreover, it is scenic, lying as it does in a shut-in valley, that is virtually never travelled; in the summer it is probably an impassible, miserable swamp, and it lies off the obvious routes even for winter travellers.



With last year's hindsight to help out, we made a far easier passage of the thicket, and prepared to pitch camp at the head of the creek. We were well sheltered from the wind, and well supplied with firewood, but where to set up the tents? The open, grassy meadow next to the pond seemed most obvious; it gave us plenty of space, and provided clean snow for melting. Graham hesitated: weren't we camping on a swamp? No, we said, the land was obviously higher than the pond, and must be dry.

While digging out the firepit in my tent, I came to frozen ground...and broke through. Below was nothing but open, muddy water, from which foul-smelling swamp gases rushed up into the tent. I quickly blocked the hole with snow, and we considered our predicament. Both tents were up, at the cost of a fair amount of work, and we were reluctant to shift them. We decided to adapt, if we could, to the new experience of swamp camping.



The stoves, as usual, were underlaid by aluminum foil, to reduce the amount of melting by radiation below the stove. Instead of the usual two skid logs, we built small log cribs for the stoves to rest on, and nailed them securely on. Traffic on the floor tended to widen the hole in the ice to the swamp below, so we laid down a floor of firewood billets. Snow jammed the holes and kept the smell down below.

In the middle of the night, the stoves melted their way through the floor and sank hissing and stinking into the swamp. No, I'm sorry for the readers who were waiting to hear that, but no such thing happened. It felt good to write, however.

The wood thereabouts was almost all spruce, and on the swamp was very dry and dead. It was not the best-burning wood, and the speed of supper suffered somewhat. Eventually, with one tent cooking the macaroni and the other the beef bourgignon, we were able to settle down to an enormous supper in Graham's tent, in the cheery light of Herb's Coleman lantern (a morale-builder worth the weight).

Since some of us had mixed our signals, and failed to bring lunch, it was very fortunate that Herb leans to the over-sufficient food school; there was enough spare stew, and extra pancakes from breakfast for all who wished to partake. (That probably included the Canada jays - on the scrapings of the macaroni pot, after we'd left.)

The unnamed creek, which we descended on Sunday, is like a giant staircase, each of the steps being beaver ponds. Occasionally, there will be a steep pitch, with dense bush and fallen trees, but these are few and short. At the easternmost bend in the creek, we parked our odawbans, and went on a side trip eastward to the head of Fern Creek, which Herb and I ascended from the Madawaska end 3 weeks before.

We frequently encountered tracks of otters, whose idea of a winter jaunt seems to be to take a few steps and then sssslide, leaving a long skid mark in the snow. On Fern Creek we actually saw one, scampering about on the ice, rolling over on his back and wriggling in play, until somebody's snowshoe squeaked on the crust, and he dived for his hole. We looped back to our gear by way of Olive Lake, another pretty little lake in a hidden valley, which is off the usual routes and so seldom visited.

We continued our descent of the staircase, traversed Canisbay Lake, and, in the late afternoon, followed the road from the Canisbay Lake campground to the highway. As we descended the last hill, Herb decided to use the toboggan for what it had originally been built for; he perched himself on top of his gear, and ssslid.

equipment

ON BUYING A KEVLAR CANOE

John Winters

The advent of modern materials has drastically changed canoeing and, depending on your personal experience, the change may not have been all that good. More than a few have been disappointed when a new canoe failed to live up to the hype. Such is often the case with "KEVLAR" which, while strong, light and durable, is only as good as its builder. In fact, a poor quality "KEVLAR" canoe is far worse than even the worst fiberglass canoe. "KEVLAR" simply leaves no room for builder error. How then can the buyer with little knowledge of plastics avoid getting burned to the tune of \$1000 or more? To begin with one must inspect the new canoe as if it were a prospective son-in-law. What follows is a check list to help in that inspection.

The first step is to separate the pointy-ended junk from the legitimate canoes. Fortunately this is not very difficult as the obvious defects are easy to spot.

1. Is the canoe gel-coated? If so look elsewhere or ask the builder if he will build one for you that is unpigmented. The quality of the laminate is so critical that you must insist upon being able to inspect it visually. After you buy the canoe you will want to paint it for protection against Ultra Violet degradation but in the meantime you should insist upon seeing what you are buying.

2. Now sight down the gunwales. They should be smoothly and symmetrically bent. Aluminum gunwales should be riveted and bonded to the hull with a flexible adhesive. Most builders leave out the bonding step. You can do it yourself using a marine type adhesive such as 3 M's #5200, available at most marine supply stores. The job is not difficult and is a guarantee that your rails won't come off when your canoe goes bouncing down a rapid upside down leaving you with a hull that resembles JELLO.

Wood rails should be screwed and bonded on the inside and the outside rails should be attached using screws only to facilitate repair or replacement. Wood rails, I believe are a sign of good quality as well as being attractive. Well done, they will stand a remarkable amount of abuse.

3. Seats and thwarts are good clues to the builder's attention to detail as they are a good place to cut corners and keep the cost down. Cheap canoes will have thwarts riveted to the underside of the rails. Proper construction is to bolt the thwart to an aluminum bracket which is in turn bolted or riveted to the vertical portion of the rubrail (Fig. 1). Wooden thwarts should be bolted and never screwed to the rails. Seats, when hung from the rails should be bolted or, if

mounted on stiffeners bonded to the hull, may be screwed down. The stiffeners should extend at least 15 cm forward and aft of the seat and taper at the ends to avoid any abrupt transition in hull stiffness. Cheap canoes often use aluminum angles riveted to the hull sides as seat supports. These angles are much stiffer than the hull and will distort the hull at the ends of the angle. I have seen canoes that had broken laminates before they were ever used! An additional sin with this form of seat support is loosening of the rivets which causes leaks and worse, the seats can fall out. Usually during a high brace.

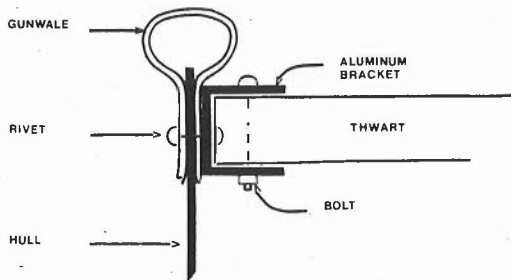


FIG. 1

4. Hull stiffening is the next area of inspection. Few canoes have first class stiffening as a proper job is expensive. You will simply have to make do with the best of a bad lot. If the stiffeners run across the canoe rather than fore and aft, be certain the ends are tapered to nothing and do not terminate abruptly. Also, reject any canoe with stiffeners which are markedly stiffer than the hull such as those made from wood or aluminum. These rigid stiffeners will cause stress concentrations upon impact and a broken laminate will result. Laminated material over the stiffeners should lap onto the hull at least 5 cm either side of the stiffener.

Some canoes use cores as hull stiffening and at first blush they look good. Unfortunately, few work well in practice. Balsa, which is cheap, is heavy due to absorbed resin and also soaks up water in time. Honeycombs are difficult to bond well and separate from the skins on impact as do foams of low resilience. Resilient foams generally lack rigidity and distort over time. The ideal cores are syntactic foams but few builders have the experience or skilled workers to use them properly. It is doubtful that you will see syntactic cored canoes.

Carbon fiber makes excellent stiffening but requires careful installation and when done incorrectly, fails dramatically. The best stiffening I have seen was on a custom canoe and consisted of light fiberglass tubes (the kind used for fishing rods) bonded to the hull with an elastomeric adhesive. I shudder to think of the cost. The best of the inexpensive stiffeners are foam covered with "KEVLAR" as in Fig. 2. You should inspect these for proper bonding and resin content. Excess resin will appear as glossy areas and inadequate resin as dry cloth with obvious pin holes between the fibers. As most stiffeners are installed after the basic laminate is cured (a process called secondary bonding) the hull should be abraded or chemically etched to assure proper adhesion. Evidence of such operations should be obvious around the stiffeners. If you see no scratch marks, try to slip a knife under the stiffener covering. If the covering comes loose, consider another canoe.

5. The final inside check is for flotation. Few builders would cheat on the required quantity but you must be certain that it is installed securely. Tanks which are fastened to the hull should have provision for drainage and you should reject any canoe on which the flotation is merely glued to the hull.

6. Now turn the canoe over and sight down the keel. It must be straight or convex but never concave. There should be no major humps or bumps in the hull. There will be a few minor ones in the vicinity of tanks or stiffeners but their severity is indication of the builder's care and standards.

The preceding will have only taken about 5 minutes and should the canoe have passed everything so far, you can get on with the more detailed items.

7. With the canoe upside down, carefully look over the hull for bubbles in the laminate. (You could not see these if the hull were gel coated.) More than 2 or 3 in 10 cm² is a bad sign. Look for excess resin which will show up as dark areas in the laminate. Sometimes the pattern of the fabric will be obscured. The most frequent areas of excess resin and bubbles will be in the hard laminate areas of the box and stern. A sign of good laminating will be smooth even edges of the cloth plies. Ragged edges are not a serious defect but smooth ones indicate a good laminator.

8. Now press on the bottom up and down the keel and at occasional spots on the bottom. Apply about 20 kg of pressure (you can practice on the bathroom scales to get a feel for the right pressure). If the canoe flexes over a large area, say 0.5 metres either side of the pressure, the builder has failed to do his homework and the canoe is too flexible. There should be no flex at the stiffeners. Local bottom deflection and flexure in the hull sides does not seem to be a problem although I find sides that pant in heavy waves a bit disconcerting.

9. The remainder of the job takes the form of interrogating the builder. Ask what kind of resin is used. It should be a vinyl ester or an epoxy. Ask who made it and what the number is so you can call the manufacturer to be assured they approve of its use with "KEVLAR". If the builder will not tell you, you have reason to doubt his integrity. The resin is one place a builder can cut costs without being obvious. While discussing the resin, ask if he puts any Ultra Violet inhibitor in the resin. If he doesn't, be doubly sure to paint your canoe inside and out.

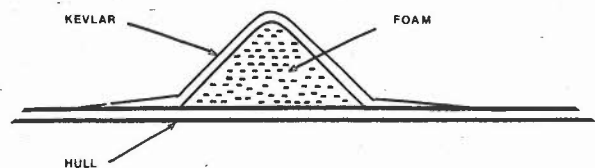


FIG. 2

And so ends your inspection. Few canoes will be perfect in every respect but there will be some that fall short on only minor details and will be perfectly servicable. You may have detected a bit of cynicism directed towards builders in this article. I should point out that few builders are unscrupulous. Most try to produce a reasonable product. The problem lies in the lack of expertise they may have. Modern materials are not as forgiving as everyday fiberglass and a builder has to be more than just conscientious to avoid making a mistake! The buyer has no protection and so, some one produces a guide of which canoes are good or bad; it is caveat emptor.



Again this spring we are offering a wide variety of canoeing and wilderness experiences from which, it is hoped, everyone can select something to his taste. We have tried to keep trips small and informal in order to enhance the wilderness experience, as well as for safety reasons. Also, for environmental reasons we are encouraging members to cook on portable stoves rather than using campfires.

Some of our outings have been designated "exploratory" to indicate that the organizer has not travelled the route previously. Participants should note that this increases the level of difficulty of the trip for all concerned.

As you know, our program has to be put together some time in advance of publication. The scheduling of specific trips is done in anticipation of "normal" weather patterns. It appears now that we may be facing an earlier than usual Spring, as a consequence the timing of some of our earlier trips may have to be changed in the light of existing conditions. Check with

the organizer shortly before the date of an outing you have signed up for just to make sure it will proceed as planned.

Also, we wish to remind you of the additional safety hazard posed by the icy waters of early Spring which can transform a harmless unscheduled swim into a dangerous emergency.

Our trip guidelines, safety rules, and river rating system are included again this year in this issue, and everyone is asked to read it carefully before participating in an outing. Also please remember that the trip organizers are not paid professionals, but fellow members volunteering their time to help put a trip together; and that each participant is responsible for his own transportation, equipment and safety (trip organizers will, however, endeavour to match up people who may be missing either equipment or transportation).

We sincerely hope that all of you will have a safe and enjoyable season of canoeing and wilderness experience.

SPRING CANOE TRIPS

The dates of all early spring canoe trips may have to be changed to suit the weather and water conditions, so book early!

April 10 UPPER CREDIT RIVER

Organizer: Mike Graham-Smith 416-877-7829
Book between March 13 and 27

The Upper Credit, with its many swifts, shallows, and rocks, is a pleasant spring run, and a challenge to your manoeuvring and route-finding skills. This day trip will take us, depending upon water levels, from Cheltenham to above Norval, or from Huttonville to Streetsville. Suitable for novices. Limit 6 canoes.

April 9-10 UPPER UPPER MAGNETAWAN RIVER

Organizer: John Cross 416-961-7465
Book as soon as possible

The exploration of the Upper-Upper-Northern-South branch last May revealed an exciting whitewater route if only there had been enough water at the time. This year we will try to catch the spring run off in order to (1) enjoy the Upper-Upper-Northern-South, (2) explore the whitewater of the Upper-Upper-North, and (3) check out the possible route for the Trans Ontario Strategic Canal along the Upper-Upper-Southern-South branch. This will be an exploratory trip. Advanced canoeists only. Limit 4 canoes.

April 17 UPPER HEAD RIVER

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between March 27 and April 10

On this exploratory one day trip we will paddle the Head River from Head Lake to the village of Sebright. The river here is narrow and winding and is rumoured to have many interesting, "ledgy" rapids. Suitable for intermediates with good white water skills. Limit 4 canoes.

April 17 ANSTRUTHER LAKE LOOP

Organizer: Bob Butler 416-487-2282
Book between April 4 and 13

This 28 km one day loop involves traversing nine scenic lakes north of Peterborough. Suitable for novices or better in good physical shape. Limit 4 canoes.

April 16-17 WHEREVER THE GOOD WATER LEVEL IS RIVER

Organizer: Penny Clarke 416-921-0047
Book between April 5 and 13

This is the date for a prospective river which will be decided upon closer to the time depending on water levels and how "early" or "late" spring run off is. If water levels are high in the Maitland and Bayfield Rivers that would be excellent but if run-off has already gone then we will look for something more challenging e.g. Beaver Creek, Black etc. Phone me if you are interested in a whitewater trip that weekend. Intermediate and advanced whitewater canoeists. Limit 4 canoes.

April 20 PACKS AND WATERPROOFING

Organizers: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Norm Coombe 416-751-2812
Book before March 30

An evening get together to discuss the packs on the market and demonstrations of waterproofing techniques. An important evening if you are buying a pack and essential if you are a beginner at whitewater canoeing.

April 23 UPPER GIBSON RIVER

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between April 3 and 17

This day trip will take us to the seldom visited headwaters of the Gibson River between Ninemile and Gibson Lakes. This outing should provide us with some interesting paddling as we follow the river through a maze of marshy creek-like sections and long narrow lakes. Since this trip is exploratory and covers some 26 km participants should be ready for some bushwhacking, and capable of maintaining a steady pace over a long day. Suitable for novices. Limit 5 canoes.

April 23-24 SALMON RIVER - MOIRA RIVER

Organizer: Glenn Spence 416-355-3506
Book between April 7 and 16

Once again, as so many times in the past, the redoubtable Glenn Spence offers intermediate paddlers a chance to join the annual Spring migration in the Belleville-Marysville area. Good scenery, good paddling and short portages will be on tap. The Salmon in high water offers a consistent gradient and numerous limestone rapids with strong current and large standing waves, while the Moira has many flat sections interspersed with steep drops that require precise manoeuvring. If so desired participants may camp in the organizer's backyard. Limit 5 canoes.

April 23-24 UPPER UPPER CROWE RIVER

Organizer: John Cross 416-961-7465
Book before April 18

Given enough run off, the top of the Crowe River below Paudash could make an interesting run if it has anything in common with the exciting lower section. An exploratory trip for advanced canoeists. Limit 4 canoes.

April 30-May 1 OPEONGO - UPPER MADAWASKA RIVERS

Organizer: Tond Bird 416-466-0172
Book before April 22

The intention will be to try and catch these rivers at relatively high water. We will canoe the section of the Opeongo from Shall Lake in Algonquin Park to Highway 60, and the Madawaska from Whitney to just above the town of Madawaska. If water levels are too high on the Opeongo a number of bushwacking portages will be necessary. Suitable for advanced canoeists. Limit 4 canoes.

April 30-May 1 MOON RIVER LOOP

Organizers: Shirley & Jim Williams 416-628-8324
Book between April 15 and 22

A 34 km flatwater trip including lakes and rivers with spectacular scenery and little driving. Suitable for novices in good condition willing to do a few portages. Limit 4 canoes.

April 30-May 1 SEGUIN RIVER

Organizer: Herb Pohl 416-637-7632
Book before April 15

The Seguin is one of many small rivers which flow west into Georgian Bay. The organizer has chosen this river simply because the topographical map (31F/5) shows an interesting profile. At least for part of the way it runs through a narrow, steep walled valley and drops over 100 metres in 35 km. Numerous rapids are indicated. Because of the exploratory nature of this trip, the steep gradients and the cold, cold water at this time of year, the trip is rated for experienced canoeists only. Limit 4 canoes.

April 30-May 8 WHITEWATER TOUR OR UPPER WANAPETEI RIVER

Organizer: Penny Clarke 416-921-0047
Book: Anytime

Time again for the 3rd annual Spring whitewater tour since the previous two tours were so successful. This year we may do a different whitewater river each day or do the Upper Wanapetei River in the Sudbury area. This river is very challenging with frequent and extremely long sections of grade II and III rapids. A whitewater week for advanced canoeists. (The time could be changed depending on water levels.) Limit 4 canoes.

May 1 BLACK & HEAD RIVERS

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between April 10 and 24

This will be a leisurely day trip starting on the Head River, northeast of Sebright. From the Head's confluence with the Black, we will continue downstream to just east of Washago. These rivers feature some good, short drops with moderate waves separated by enough flat water to give you time to relax and enjoy the scenery. Suitable for novices with some whitewater experience. Limit 6 canoes.

May 7 BURNT RIVER (near Kilmount)

Organizers: Dave & Anneke Auger 705-324-9359
Book between April 17 and 28

The lower Burnt River abounds with rugged scenery and scenic waterfalls. This 15 km trip has a few stretches of runnable white water and two 1000 m portages. Suitable for novices with some canoeing experience. Limit 5 canoes.

May 4, 11, 18, 23 METRO AREA EVENING PADDLES

Organizer: Norm Corbe 416-751-2812
416-293-8036

Every Wednesday in May we will meet at 7 p.m. to get some exercise, see some birds, meet other members, acquire paddling partners and try out new equipment. Some extra canoes will be on hand and basic flatwater instruction will be available. No limit to numbers but please register your intention to attend. Locations: May 4 mouth of the Rouge River, May 11 mouth of Duffins Creek, May 18 Huron River south of Bloor St., May 23 to be arranged.

Life preserver or P.F.D. and a change of clothes essential. Paddlers will not participate unless they have both items with them.

May 7-8 BONNECHERE - MADAWASKA RIVERS

Organizer: Graham Barnett 416-651-5496
Book between April 11 and 25

Saturday we will canoe the Bonnechere, a narrow river with long sets of rapids, which flows through Algonquin Park. Sunday we will paddle the Madawaska from Whitney to the Shell Lake Road Suitable for advanced canoeists. Limit 4 canoes.

May 7-8 MISSISSAUGA RIVER - EELS CREEK

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between April 17 and May 1

The Mississauga River, north of Peterborough, tumbles from its source in Mississauga Lake south to Buckhorn Lake in a series of scenic falls and rapids separated by sections of quiet water. For intermediates with good whitewater skills it makes a challenging, strenuous six hour trip.

Rocky Eels Creek to the east, which we will do on the Sunday, has more frequent and more difficult rapids, and requires the ability to negotiate tight spots. Participants can sign up for either day or both. The overnighters may take a motel or book a local housekeeping cabin. Suitable for intermediates or better. Limit 5 canoes.

May 7-8 PEPPERLAW - NONOUCON RIVERS

Organizer: John Cross 416-961-7465
Book before April 29

These are two short rivers near Toronto which are said to be flat and well provided with marsh birds. We will be day tripping these to check them out. Novice. Limit 6 canoes.

May 14-15 AMABLE DU FOND RIVER

Organizer: Tony Bird 416-466-0172
Book before May 6

The Amable du Fond runs from the north of Algonquin Park to the Mattawa River. The river has some attractive falls, one spectacular gorge and some long sets of rapids. Suitable for advanced canoeists. Limit 4 canoes.

May 14-15 PETTAWAWA RIVER

Organizer: Dave Berthelet 819-771-4170
Book before May 6

This will be a two day trip on the section of the Pettawawa River from Lake Traverse to McManus Lake. Suitable for advanced canoeists. Limit 4 canoes.

May 14-15 LOWER OXTONGE - BIG EAST RIVERS

Organizer: Karl Schimeck 416-222-3720
Book between April 18 and 22

The lower Oxtonge has more rapids than the upper section. Some rapids may include difficult portages depending on water levels. We will start the Big East near Algonquin Park and finish at Arrowhead Provincial Park. Both trips are exploratory for the organizer. Experienced whitewater canoeists only. Limit 4 canoes.

May 21-23 PETTAWAWA RIVER

Organizer Don Austin 416-293-7872
Book before May 7

We will canoe the Pettawawa River from Lake Traverse to McManus Lake. This section of the river has some big rapids at high water, all with good portages, and some long easier sets. Suitable for intermediate canoeists. Limit 4 canoes.

May 28 SCHOMBERG RIVER - SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE

Organizers: Betty Cook 416-498-8559
Ann Snow 416-486-5200
Book between May 1 and 20

A Saturday flatwater day trip through three types of terrain; first the Schomberg River marsh forms then the large natural marsh on the south shore of Lake Simcoe where we will stop for a while. We will proceed through the marsh to the open shoreline and a cookout at our takeout point. Suitable for fit beginners. Limit 4 canoes.

May 28-29 FRENCH RIVER WHITEWATER PRACTICE

Organizer: John Cross 416-961-7465
Book before May 20

I'm going to practice upstream techniques on the forgiving French River rapids, but there may be many people who want to practice running downstream to develop their whitewater skills in unpressured circumstances. This is the place to see if you understand what Bill Mason meant. Beginning to advanced whitewater canoeists. Limit 6 canoes.



June 5 FLORA GORGE BUMP AND GRIND

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between May 15 and 29

The Flora Gorge on the Grand River at low water provides an excellent location for budding whitewater enthusiasts to practise their stuff. This outing has been designed as a training trip for those who have some river experience and are anxious to upgrade their skills. We will ferry and eddy turn our way down the gorge, have a picnic lunch in the conservation area, and make a second run in the afternoon. Suitable for intermediates. Limit of 5 canoes.

June 4-5 UPPER MAGNETAWAN

Organizer: Bob Alrack 705-426-7752
Book between May 20 and 29

The third annual naturalists' weekend trip from Ahmic Lake to Maple Island. Last year we saw Rald Eagles, thirteen species of warblers and other wildlife. Bring your binoculars and camera on this lightly travelled and scenic river. Suitable for intermediates. Limit 4 canoes.

June 4-5 SEGUIN RIVER

Organizer: Karl Schimeck 416-222-3720
Book between May 9 and 13

This is a 30 km whitewater trip from Seguin Falls to Highway 169 near Parry Sound. It has many interesting rapids and gorges. This is an exploratory trip for the organizer. Suitable for experienced whitewater canoeists only. Limit 4 canoes.

June 4-5 COWPER LAKE

Organizer: Rudi Jismer 416-766-8076
Book between May 16 and 19 or May 24 and 29

A beautiful part of the Southern Georgian Bay Canoe Route. Two hours paddling to the camp site, Saturday afternoon and Sunday exploring by canoe; 2 to 4 short portages. Because of possible cool weather; canoeists should be well equipped and have experience with cool weather tripping. Suitable for novices or better. Limit 5 canoes.

June 19 THE WILDCAT LOOP IN ONE DAY

Organizer: Rob Butler 416-487-2282
Book between June 6 and 15

With a dawn start going south from Bear Lake, this beautiful 50 km loop southwest of Algonquin Park includes portages totalling 10 km going over the height of land and down the Golden Stairway. This schedule calls for intermediates in good physical shape. Limit 3 canoes.

June 25-26 FRENCH RIVER

Organizer: John Galbraith 416-725-9812
Book between May 16 and June 3

A two day flatwater trip suitable for novices and of course everyone else who would like to visit part of this scenic and historic fur trade route. Limit 4 canoes.

July 9-10 UPPER MAGNETAWAN

Organizer: Duncan Taylor 416-368-9748
Book between June 1 and 27

From Ahmic Lake to Wahwashkesh Lake for whitewater novices or better. Very scenic trip, great for naturalists. Limit 4 canoes.

July 16-17 GIRSON RIVER - McCRAE LAKE

Organizers: Bob McLellan 416-488-9346
Ann Snow 416-486-5200
Book any time

A southern Georgian Bay area trip that gives a perfect sampler of canoe tripping with river and lake travel and some gorgeous scenery. Excellent for a 2 day weekend because of the short drive and less than 1 kilometre car shuttle. Suitable for novices or better. Limit 3 canoes.

July 23-24 JOE BERRY LAKE

Organizer: Roger Nellis 416-421-3497
Book between June 6 and 30

An overnight trip out of Bon Echo Provincial Park. Suitable for families. One portage of about 1 kilometre. Limit 6 canoes.

August 6-14 DRAG LAKE - NORTHERN TEA LAKE

Organizer: Bob McLellan 416-488-9346
Book anytime after May 1

A "Men and Boys" trip for fathers and sons, uncles and nephews, big brothers etc. Our canoes will rendezvous at a cottage on Drag Lake then proceed on a 4 day trip into Algonquin Park, finishing the week with a day or two of fun at the cottage. Limit 3 canoes.

guidelines for wca trips

1. The Outings Committee shall arrange a schedule of appropriate wilderness trips organized by unpaid volunteers from the membership of the WCA, to be published in the newsletter.
2. All trips must have a minimum impact on the environment. To ensure this, trips organizers will limit:
 - a) the number of canoes (or participants) permitted on the trip,
 - b) the type of equipment and supplies used for camping.
3. Participants must register with the organizer at least two weeks (but not more than four) prior to the trip. This is necessary:
 - a) for participants to get detailed information about meeting places, times, changes of plan etc. (It is suggested that organizers send out written information),
 - b) to avoid having too large a group,
 - c) to screen participants as to skill, if necessary.
4. Food, transportation, canoes, camping equipment, partners, etc. are the responsibility of each participant. (In some cases, however, the organizers may be able to assist in these areas; particularly the pairing of partners.)
5. Participants are responsible for their own safety at all times, and must sign a waiver from. (Organizers should return completed waivers to the Outings Committee to be kept on file.)
6. Organizers reserve the right to:
 - a) exclude participants based on experience level,
 - b) determine paddlers' positions in canoes by experience,
 - c) exclude any canoe deemed "unsafe" for any particular trip.
7. In the event of any dumping or other potentially dangerous situation occurring on a trip, the organizer and participants involved will fill out a Mishap Report to be sent to the Outings Committee, immediately after the trip.
8. Lone paddlers and / or Kayaks are permitted on trips at the discretion of the organizer.
9. Non-members are permitted to participate in only two trips.
10. Organizers should write a brief description of the trip (or arrange to have this done) and send it to the newsletter editor as soon as possible after the trip.

trip ratings

In order to avoid confusion over the level of difficulty of WCA canoe trips each newsletter description will state the level of experience required. The following international river rating system, advocated by the Canadian White Water Affiliation, should serve as a guide.

CLASS	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
	<u>Very Easy</u> : moving water with no rapids, some small riffles, and wide passages.	Beginner (with some instruction)
I	<u>Easy</u> : some small rapids with small waves and few obstacles. Correct courses easy to recognize. River speed is less than hard backpaddling speed.	Novice (beginner with some practice)
II	<u>Medium</u> : frequent but unobstructed rapids. Passages easy to recognize. River speed occasionally exceeds hard backpaddling speed.	Intermediate
III	<u>Difficult</u> : numerous rapids, large waves, and many obstacles requiring precise maneuvering. Courses not easy to recognize. Current speed usually less than forward paddling speed. General limit for open canoes.	Advanced
IV	<u>Very Difficult</u> : long rapids with irregular waves, boulders directly in current, strong eddies and cross-currents. Scouting and fast precise maneuvering is mandatory. Courses difficult to recognize. Current speed often exceeds fast forward paddling speed.	Expert
V-VI	<u>Exceedingly Difficult</u> : very strong current, extreme turbulence, big drops, steep gradients, many obstacles. <u>Limit of navigability</u> :	Team of Experts in covered canoe)

NOTE: This rating system is flexible, and just a rough guide. It is not based exclusively on the above descriptions. Factors such as remoteness, water temperature, river width, etc. can make a river more or less difficult, and vary the level of skill required. Further, a river may change its rating drastically depending upon the time of year. Finally, a stretch of river may be classed as easy, but may contain rapids of any grade which may influence the overall rating of the trip very little.

Lake trips cannot be so readily rated for difficulty. Generally, lake trips are suitable for beginners; however, strong winds on a large lake can be dangerous for any canoeist, no matter what his experience.

THE RATING OF TRIPS IS THE DECISION OF THE ORGANIZER.

canoe safety rules

(These rules are to be applied at the discretion of the trip organizers.)

- 1.) Paddlers will not be allowed on any trip without:
 - i) a flotation jacket that can be worn while paddling,
 - ii) a "safe" canoe (minimum length 15 ft for 2 paddlers),
 - iii) lining ropes (at least 25 ft) on bow and stern.
- 2.) Paddlers should always bring:
 - i) spare clothing, well waterproofed,
 - ii) extra food,
 - iii) matches in waterproof container.
- 3.) The signals used on WCA river trips should be known ahead of time.
- 4.) On rivers, canoes should maintain a definite order. Each boat is responsible for the one behind, giving signals after finishing any rapid, and positioning itself below the rapid ready to assist in case of trouble. Always keep the canoe behind in sight.
- 5.) Canoes should keep well spaced in rapids. Do not enter a rapid until the preceding canoe has successfully completed its run and signalled.
- 6.) The organizers' decisions on all trips are final.

SIGNALS



difficult - use own judgment



danger - do not run



all clear - with caution

products and services

Bluewater Canoes:

Lightweight Kevlar-S-glass, fibreglass, and nylon canoes made with vinylester and epoxy resins. Bluewater spraycovers made from coated, waterproof nylon to fit any canoe. Also, this year we will be manufacturing, under licence, a few of Eugene Jensen's designs. Long distance canoeists will be particularly interested in the extremely sleek 18'6" Whitewater II model. For further information contact Rockwood Outfitters, 45 Speedvale Ave. E., Guelph, Ont., N1H 1J2. Phone 519-824-1415.

Coleman Craft Canoes:

Coleman Craft Canoes, of hand-layed-up fiber-glass, are available in 12'8", 14'8", and 16'-L.O.A., with either a lake keel or shallow keel for river use. Custom made and sold only at our shop. Maximum production is limited to 100 per year. Please phone if you are interested in viewing films of our canoes and discussing their features. Bill Coleman: 519-623-1804/1894. Shop located at 333 Dundas St. (Hwy. 8), Cambridge (Galt), Ontario.

Scott Canoes:

Complete line of Canadian-made fibreglass and Kevlar canoes is available at special discount prices to WCA members. For information contact David Pelly at 416-749-2176 during business hours.

Discounts on Camping Supplies:

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

A.B.C. Sports, 552 Yonge St., Toronto.
Rockwood Outfitters, 45 Speedvale Ave. E.,
Guelph

Members should check at each store to find out what items are discounted.

Cotton Tents for Sale:

Egyptian cotton tents to cannibalize. These are old pyramid tents (not a good design in my opinion) and some of the material has worn. People interested in sewing their own small cotton tents, but appalled at the price of new material, may wish to cut off panels from the lot of tents I have acquired, and assemble their own dream design. Contact John Cross at 416-961-7465

Odawban for Sale:

Light, sturdy odawban, 5 feet long, suitable for small and compact load (group day-trip equipment or go-light weekend outfit). Contact John Cross at 416-961-7465.

Waterproof Watches:

If a total of 10 or more orders come in, Claire Brigden can get a 40% discount on digital watches for members and friends, at no profit to herself or the WCA. Features: Casio, black resin case, 5 year lithium battery, 12 or 24 hour format, stop watch. Wholesale prices: \$24 to \$48 each, depending upon complexity. Five designs to choose from. Contact Claire Brigden in Toronto at 416-481-4042.

wca contacts

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WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I enclose a cheque for \$10 — student under 18
\$20 — adult
\$30 — family

for membership in the
WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION. I understand that this entitles me/us to
receive *Nastawgan*, to vote at meetings of the Association, and gives
me/us the opportunity to participate in W.C.A. outings and activities.

NAME: _____ ADDRESS _____

_____ phone _____

Please check one of the following: { } new member application
{ } renewal for 1983.

Notes: -This membership will expire January 31, 1984.
-Please send completed form and cheque (payable to the Wilderness
Canoe Association) to the membership committee chairman.

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