



the lonely land revisited

In 1955, Sigurd Olson, with five companions, retraced the old voyageur route from Ile a la Crosse to Cumberland House situated on the Saskatchewan River, an 800 km trip following portions of the Churchill and Sturgeon Weir Rivers. This expedition was the subject of Olson's book, *The Lonely Land*, now a classic of canoeing literature. On their trip, taken in the days before the burgeoning of recreational canoeing opened the door to governmental paternalism (of which more later), their only guides were the journals of the explorers and what information they could glean from the Indians who seemed to have little knowledge of, or interest in, the route up or downriver from their usual hunting territories.

All that has changed! The modern voyageur goes armed with detailed (and usually reliable) river descriptions giving specific instructions for every rapid. There is even a large sign at the outlet of Shagwenaw Lake naming the Churchill for those apprehensive about wandering inadvertently onto the St. Lawrence. Indeed, so major a tourist attraction is the Churchill, that the Saskatchewan Government maintains tourist offices at the access points to get profiles on each traveller and issue "Saskatchewan Voyageur" certificates to those completing a canoe trip.

"The Lonely Land" isn't all that lonely anymore! Still, if one uses the word to evoke the feeling produced by wide horizons, huge, wind-swept lakes, and the constant cries of waterbirds, rather than the absence of people, then the description is as appropriate as ever.

Like most "pool and drop" rivers, the Churchill has few "rivery" sections. It is, rather, a chain of lakes of various sizes, connected by short river segments usually filled with rapids. As the volume of water is very large and the drops abrupt, these rapids are often quite spectacular. After the voyageur fashion, the rapids are mostly named and many have had more than one name in their time. The water is warm and most of the rapids are short so the price of a mishap is not excessive. We were heavily-laden but keen to run wherever possible so we compromised in marginal situations by portaging the gear and then running empty. A number of the "rapids" were in fact small falls where to run would have been to court disaster. In all, I would estimate that we were able to run between one half and two thirds of the named rapids; we had several close calls but no mishaps.

We set off on the evening of August 3 onto Shagwenaw Lake from the Indian village of Patuanak. Like the Olson party we had three canoes - three WCA couples: the Spences, the Tissots and the Kings. We had decided to pass up the pleasure of the 70 km paddle up Lac Ile a la Crosse in favour of the road-access to Patuanak. Nevertheless, with a few delays due to car trouble, it was 9 o'clock and we were still gazing forlornly at the reedy shore of Shagwenaw Lake, looking in vain for an inviting camping spot. We eventually made a campsite where the base of boulders was usable only by virtue of the thick mat of dead reeds over it. Much to our surprise there were very few insects. The beautiful



sunset (the first of many) added to the elation of finally getting started after a 3500 km drive. Our spongy reed-bed brought a peaceful sleep. Tomorrow we would begin the famous rapids of the Churchill!

After months of reading and dreaming, one forms certain expectations of a trip, but they usually prove to be less than completely accurate. For us, the biggest surprise was the severity of wind and waves on the big lakes. On a barren trip one would be prepared to be windbound; we were not, and were very fortunate in that the winds were usually at our backs and in that we were able to paddle two of the larger lakes in a most atypical, flat calm. With practice, we developed increasing facility in riding with large waves. Surfing on 1.5 to 2 metre waves, we crossed one 6 km open-stretch in 35 minutes! This would probably be ideal country for canoe-sailing, but with the size of the waves, we were reluctant to experiment.

Our outstanding memory of the marshy, upper section of the river is of birds. It is a birdwatcher's paradise with many different species, but two stand out: white pelicans and bald eagles. The pelicans collect in large colonies and their snowy plumage is visible from a great distance. In the air, this awkward bird becomes a picture of grace. The sight of a group of them at twilight flying high enough to reflect the rays of the setting sun is unforgettable! Bald eagles are also numerous along the upper river. They are solitary and shy and will not usually let you get close enough for optimal viewing. Our best view was of two immature birds (already an impressive size) in their nest with their anxious mother swooping back and forth overhead. Other hunting birds - golden eagles, ospreys and a variety of hawk species - are present but less frequent.

Some of the large lakes such as Sandfly and Black Bear Island are a formidable challenge to the navigator. The latter particularly is a maze of islands only recognizable as a lake by an aerial surveyor. It is also the only lake in which I have ever encountered a rapid. There are three at various points!

Two days before the half-way point, where the road comes in at Otter Rapids, we encountered another "permanent memory". We had just run a rapid described as "moderate", where we encountered some rather large standing waves, and were approaching another described as "for the most experienced whitewater experts only" with appropriate trepidation. We had also just made mention of the fact that our wildlife sightings, which formerly had been quite frequent, seemed to be dropping off, when out of the woods came a great, golden "wolf". Freezing lest the slightest movement should provoke flight, we soon realized that flight was the last thing our wolf had on her mind. By whines, yelps, tail-wagging and pawing at the water she conveyed the unmistakable message that she did not want to be left behind. Half-worried that she could be rabid, we lingered a few metres from the shore. She quickly settled the issue by making a flying leap into the canoe and covering us with licks. The upshot was that we were so preoccupied that we ran the rapid, which fortunately had been greatly exaggerated, hardly noticing it and with the sternsman having only one hand to spare for his paddle!

Goldie (for Goldilocks) was plainly a "people dog". The problem was, what to do with her. After the first few minutes there was no question for any of us of leaving her behind. She had an excellent appetite and the provisioning for a camping trip doesn't usually take into account uninvited guests. In addition, although she could swim well, she clearly hated both the water and the canoe and would take every opportunity to go ashore. A variety of stratagems, which were not uniformly successful, had to be developed for enticing her back into the canoe. These gave rise to some hilarious moments! Fortunately for her, she was so endearing and her grief at being abandoned was so obviously genuine that she could melt the hardest heart. We left her with a young couple at the government campsite at Otter Rapids who promised to give her a good home. A good thing both for her and for us - her, because she was spared another 160 km of canoeing, and us, because if she had stayed with us to Pelican Narrows, I doubt that we could have been persuaded to give her up. Good luck Goldie, wherever you are!

The second half of the trip seemed to fly past. We visited the Indian village of Stanley Mission, whose church, built in the 1850's and now being extensively restored, is the oldest in Western Canada. Nistowiak Falls, a short side trip from the Churchill, is a sight of outstanding beauty. There is a trail leading right to the lip of the falls and numerous side-paths off the main portage trail which give different perspectives of the falls and the rapids in the gorge below.



At Frog Portage we left the Churchill and crossed into the drainage basin of the Saskatchewan River. This portage is of considerable interest, both geographically and historically. It is both short (300 m) and low for a height of land between two such mighty drainage-systems. About one year in seven it is submerged at high-water. (John Fallis reports having canoed across it!) It was called by the voyageurs "Portage de Traite" (Trade Portage), since it was here in 1774 that Joseph Frobisher first intercepted and traded with some Crees who were taking their furs to Churchill, thus breaking the H.B.C. monopoly on the fur trade from the rich territories to the north and west. "Frog Portage" is an even older name stemming from a stretched frog skin left as a derisive gesture by the Crees, poking fun at the fur-treating practices of their northern neighbours.

Our trip ended at the fast-growing northern community of Pelican Narrows. There, thanks to a kind benefactor in Prince Albert, our cars were waiting for us and we could begin the long drive home.

Afterthoughts

This is a trip of outstanding beauty which is perfectly suitable, in summertime, for the intermediate canoeist, prepared to function without planned campsites. All but the simplest rapids have easily located portages. The start, and multiple take-out points, are accessible by road although it's hard to keep the car shuttle much under 1500 km! It is possible to reprovision fully at Stanley Mission which has two "supermarkets", although we thought it made more sense to take the staples from home. In summary, we believe it to be a rewarding "big trip" for those with time to do it justice.

flett lake to baker lake along the dubawnt and thelon

Anne B. Spragins-Harmuth and Henning F. Harmuth

From Prince Albert in Saskatchewan the road runs north via La Ronge to the south end of Wollaston Lake. From here we wanted to canoe to Baker Lake at the end of Chesterfield Inlet on Hudson Bay. Since we are already 47 and 55 years old, we broke the trip into three parts: one summer from Wollaston Lake to Stony Rapids at the east end of Lake Athabasca via the Fond du Lac River; the second summer from there via the Chipman River to the height of land between Selwyn Lake and Flett Lake in the Northwest Territories and back to Stony Rapids; the third summer from Flett Lake to Baker Lake. We used a Coleman canoe made of polyethylene. Although the softness of polyethylene is a drawback on the hard rock of the Canadian Shield and on the ice of Dubawnt Lake, the canoe comes at half the price of the better white water canoes and it travels well on the lakes. The problem of softness was readily solved by gluing a few strips of fibreglass to the keel of the canoe.

On 29 June 1983 we flew from Stony Rapids to the south end of Flett Lake. Stony Rapids was under heavy attack by black flies, but the season was still too early for them at Flett Lake, and we could load our canoe in peace. The heavily wooded shores of Flett Lake do not offer many good campsites. We had to pitch our tent for the first night on one of the "moss glaciers" described by J.W. Tyrrell in his book Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada, which is the first written account about the route from Stony Rapids to Baker Lake. The next morning brought us to the portage to Wholdaia Lake. Although only wilderness canoeists use this portage now, it is well marked by parts lost from snowmobiles. Apparently, there is a good deal of motorized traffic between Stony Rapids and Wholdaia Lake in winter. The portage is swampy; it is difficult to find dry spots for the baggage at either end of it, but camping is good in the middle.

Two calm days permitted good progress and we came close to the outlet of Wholdaia Lake, where we reached the protection of islands against a wind that sprang up on 2 July. The islands combined with what seems to be a magnetic anomaly made it somewhat difficult to find the outlet. There is a cabin at 13VET7555. (We use the military grid reference to locate a point; this grid is shown on the 1:250,000 topographic maps.) The following day brought us to Hinde Lake. The wind kept increasing. The shore was most inhospitable for camping. A very small rock island appeared just in time. When we landed, a goose took off in terror. There was a lovely nest with two goslings out of the eggs, one just struggling out, and one still to go. We had no choice but to share the island with the goslings, pitching the tent as far from their nest as possible, which was about five metres. During the night the mother goose flew over the nest to ascertain that her babies were still alive, but she did not dare to land. The next morning a fourth gosling had appeared. With no mother goose in sight, we were adopted as parents. Since the wind kept blowing, we could not move on. The goslings tried very hard to get into our tent, but we did not want to spoil them and they had to settle in front of it. By noon the four little fellows were in the water, very disappointed that we did not join them. In late afternoon it dawned on them that something was wrong with their parents. Mother goose was sitting out on the windswept lake and called them. One by one they left the island and braved the waves. The youngest fellow had the hardest time; since we were the first moving things it saw, we should be its mother. However, the call of mother goose had a stronger imprint in its little brain, and eventually it decided to follow her call.

The north shore of Hinde Lake features a beautiful esker with wonderful campsites. There is also a cabin (13VET7185). We lined the first rapid at the outlet of Hinde Lake, which is over a ledge. Several other rapids since leaving Wholdaia Lake and many more to come were of the bolder-and-gravel type that can be run with care.

There was sometimes a problem with too little water toward the foot of the rapid. On 5 July we camped on a very long and impressive esker just south of Boyd Lake. A well-beaten path of bear tracks on the top of the esker showed that we were not the only ones who preferred eskers.

Getting across Boyd Lake was the most difficult navigational part of the trip. The lake is filled with islands, and the topographic map repeatedly shows passages between them that do not exist. At the outlet of Boyd Lake is a cairn high on the left bank. The trees peter out along the lake but small groves of trees or some bushes can be found as far north as Dubawnt Lake. The rapids between Boyd and Barlow Lake could all be run.



Dubawnt River Gorge above Grant Lake

On 8 July we entered Barlow Lake. Soon a white ice blink appeared in the north. The northern part of the lake - about north of 62° - was still filled with ice. We had learned in Stony Rapids that the ice break-up was about one week late, Canada's share of the El Niño weather pattern of 1983. When we could go no further we pitched camp on an island.

The next morning a strong wind had opened a lead along the west and north shore of the lake - between the shore and the islands located along shore in this part of the lake - and we pushed our way through without too much trouble from the ice but plenty of trouble from the wind. The rapid shown on the topographic map between Barlow Lake and Carey Lake can probably be run in calm weather, but the high wind gave us too little control over the canoe and we lined. At the entrance of Carey Lake is a long "debris" rapid that is readily run.

On 10 July we fought the wind across the southern part of Carey Lake and had to pull out after 3 hours. However, the wind had the redeeming effect of blowing the ice to the east side of the lake. Hence, we could reach the outlet of the lake on the following day, drifting with the ice through the easy exit rapid. Access to Tyrrell's cairn on the east shore of Carey Lake was blocked by the ice.

Soon after, we reached the section of rapids shown on the topographic map below Carey Lake. We lined two rapids and portaged a third. Rain showers drenched from above what was not soaked from below. Once through this section of rapids the scenery makes up for the hardship. There are high rocky shores and some current. On two occasions schools of otters came to inspect us, showing their tricks and apparently laughing. We passed another cabin (13VET71619), built of incredibly thick logs, even though only occasional groves of trees could be seen now.

We crossed Markam Lake on 12 July, just 14 days from Flett Lake. There was no ice. The following day we fought our way across Nicholson Lake against a stiff wind. Again there was no ice.

The first rapid below Nicholson Lake was run, the second portaged. We set up camp at the end of the portage. Rain and wind kept us at this place for two nights. We were on the right bank. Across the river were one cabin and a frame for a tent cabin (13VVF1960). On the third day we launched the canoe in a heavy wind but soon had to pull out since the wind made it impossible to run the rapids. We spent three more days only a short distance below the previous camp. To make use of the time we portaged our equipment about 1.5 km, although this stretch could have been run in calm weather.

On 18 July we could move again. We covered 40 km and reached the last rapids above Dubawnt Lake. Besides wind and rain we had to face fog caused by the cooling of the northwind as it blew across the ice of Dubawnt Lake only a short distance away. The next day the sun broke through the fog by 5:00 and we were ready to go by 6:30. But a heavy fog set in again and we had no choice but to pitch the tent once more to keep dry and warm. By 9:00 the fog lifted and we were gone in an instant. We ran the first rapid shown on the map (13VVF4678), and tried to pull out to scout the second one. Having become careless because of the many rapids run without trouble during the previous two weeks, we did not pull out in time and were sucked into the rapid. Some heavy paddling got us through. The fog closed in again and we entered Dubawnt Lake under conditions best described as continuous transition between fog, water, and ice, on the twenty-first day from the height of land at Flett Lake.

After we had groped around in the fog for some time the sun broke through. We found an open channel close to shore that soon widened and we were paddling across open water. Camp was pitched a few hours later at Teall Point. This is a point of land sticking out some 10 km from the west shore of the lake. The ice was packed solidly against this point. Tyrrell mentions that they had the same problem and got around it by a portage across a narrow neck of land (13VVF5097). We did the same on the following day. Paddling north we were protected from the ice by a chain of islands, one of which is denoted Snow Island on the map. Northeast of Snow Island the protective barrier of the islands comes to an end, and we were stopped by ice piling up on the shore (13VVF5513). For three days we enjoyed absolutely calm, sunny weather. Anywhere else this would have been a gift from heaven but here we needed the north wind to drive the ice away from shore. We noted that there was always a very light breeze towards shore. First we thought this was bad luck but eventually we realized that the direction of the breeze changed from east to southeast to south as we worked our way along the shore of Dubawnt Lake. The explanation is probably that the lake is so large that the ice creates a local high pressure in the middle of the lake that causes a slight breeze toward shore everywhere around the lake. The result is, of course, that the ice is pushed to shore everywhere during very calm weather conditions.

After three days of waiting the ice thinned out somewhat and we started again on 23 July. The following ten kilometres required constant pushing through ice floes, running the canoe up on the ice to break it up, or dragging the canoe over the ice for short distances to the next open water. Eventually we got some protection from several small islands, sneaked through a narrow passage (14VVF6019), and faced another section of the shore unprotected by islands and thus blocked by ice. For four days we waited here for the ice to break. The weather was perfect. Except for the light breeze from the lake - which came here straight from the south - there was no wind and the sky was as clear and blue as in a tourist brochure. We used the time to glue a few more strips of fibreglass to the keel of the canoe, since the ice had worn the old layer thin.

The waiting became too much of a strain by 27 July, and we decided to push right through and over the ice. Of course, sun and blue sky vanish the moment one hits a large field of ice since the ice produces its own layer of fog. It is only a few metres high, but this is all the canoeist needs to feel cold, wet, and blinded. Groping our way through fog and ice we started hearing voices. Not having seen anyone else for 28 days we thought first of an hallucination. But, sure enough, soon three canoes came out of the fog. The group consisted of five boys from a summer camp in Minnesota and their camp counsellor. United we pushed on for a few

more kilometres. Then we were again protected by islands. In the evening we reached the end of the protecting islands and faced the large expanse of open lake to Outlet Bay. The water was covered with ice floes but the passage appeared possible (14VVF8327).

By morning a southerly wind sprang up and soon the lake to the east was solidly packed with ice. We all settled down for a long wait, but luck was with us. After a few hours the wind shifted to the north and began to blow furiously. Within an hour all the ice had been pushed south and our passage was clear. This was the first north wind we had had since entering Dubawnt Lake nine days earlier.

In early afternoon of 28 July the wind calmed down enough for us to make the long open crossing to Outlet Bay. There was no ice in Outlet Bay. The north wind kept blowing for three days, which slowed our progress since we had to paddle straight into the wind. On 30 July we reached the first rapid at the outlet of Dubawnt Lake. We were again travelling alone, the group from the boy's camp having decided to visit Mooberg's Fish Camp in Outlet Bay (14VVF1536), which required a detour.

The first rapid was run without any difficulty. A chain of more rapids followed (14VVF1752). We were on the left bank and had to make a portage of about 1.5 km across rocky and swampy land. It appeared that this could have been avoided by keeping to the right bank. A stretch of smooth river followed. The next rapid (14VVF1856) required a very short portage on the right. The following sequence of rapids was readily runnable except for a short distance requiring lining. By noon of 31 July we reached the head of the great Dubawnt Gorge.

Climbing up the right bank we could see Grant Lake. The portage is some 4 to 5 km long; its lower end is not well defined since there is turbulent water for some distance that one may or may not want to run. We built a cairn at the head of the portage, since we had spent quite some time deciding how far we should stay with the river and would have appreciated some marker indicating the beginning of the portage. The portage itself is as good as any portage of this length can be on the tundra. It is completely dry at the beginning, then follows an esker that looks like a superhighway. At the end it gets rocky if one stays close to the river and swampy if one keeps further inland. Small bushes are growing here again.

The Dubawnt River Gorge is one of the major sights of Northern Canada, in the same class as Parry Falls on the Lockhart River, Dickson Canyon on the Hanbury River, or Bloody Falls on the Coppermine River.

Grant Lake had some ice floes, but they were of no significance. On 1 August we camped above a 2 km long rapid (14VVF3276). It cannot be lined, and a portage would be arduous. We ran it even though it required much maneuvering, and an upset in the upper part of such a long rapid is very risky for a party with only one canoe. Some 15 kilometres of quiet paddling followed, then came first a ledge rapid that we portaged on the right, and a very long rapid at the entrance to Wharton Lake. This rapid was less risky since its challenge was the avoidance of shallow spots rather than the rock dodging in fast water of the previous long rapid. On 2 August, 35 days since Flett Lake, we pitched our tent on an island in Wharton Lake.



Exit Gates of the Dubawnt River

The next morning the north wind was blowing again. We followed the right shore of the lake. In order to avoid the lake's open northern part we went through a narrow passage that the topographic map shows as open water but which required some dragging of the canoe over the rocks in very shallow water (14VMF6497). Going out of Wharton Lake there is a powerful rapid not marked on the map (14VMG6900). No white water is visible from the head of the rapid but the fast water creates high waves that do not break. One starts down along the right bank and crosses over to the left in the middle of the rapid to avoid the highest waves. Shortly after, the river divides into two branches that again come together in Marjorie Lake. Most of the water is in the eastern branch which we followed. The previously mentioned party of three canoes followed the western branch, as we were told later on. We were also told that there are no rapids in the western branch. We found a dismal campsite just above the first rapid on the east branch and had to stay there three nights in a driving rain.

Of the five rapids shown on the map in this area (14VMF8094) we ran four and made a short portage around the fifth. At the entrance to Marjorie Lake is a vicious ledge rapid not shown on the map that we portaged on the left.

At the outlet of Marjorie Lake we found a camp of geologists prospecting for uranium. We enjoyed their hospitality for one night. Particularly, the first hot shower in 39 days was welcome. There we met again the party of three canoes, and were told about their easy passage down the west branch of the Dubawnt River above Marjorie Lake.

Just below the camp is the rapid where A. Moffatt died in 1955, as far as we know (14WVG7623). We made a portage of about 100 metres on the right. The rapid can be run without too much trouble, but thinking of Moffatt and having only one canoe, we passed up the opportunity. Below the rapid come some 25 kilometres of an unnamed lake. The Twin Mountains of Tyrrell's book are conspicuous on the north side of this lake.

Going out of the lake there is a long rapid that can readily be run by first keeping to the right and then crossing over to the left. This stretch of the Dubawnt River is the only one that has a fast, helpful current for any distance.

Almost exactly at 100 western longitude one hits the exist gates of the Dubawnt River (14WVG5248). This rapid is not shown on the map and Tyrrell does not mention it, even though it is the most conspicuous feature of the Dubawnt River except for the gorge above Grant Lake. We were on the right bank and made a short portage; the descent to the river was very steep and there was hardly any space for loading. The left bank looked much better for portaging, even though it calls for a steep ascent at the beginning, but the current was too fast to cross over.

Below the exit gates the river becomes peaceful, sometimes full of sandbars. Its meeting with the Thelon River is most inconspicuous. The only visible sign is a slight change of the colour of the sandy islands from reddish to more yellow. The description in Tyrrell's book is quite incorrect. There is no driftwood here, as Tyrrell states; the big piles of driftwood are on the west end of Beverly Lake where the Thelon River enters.

Soon after reaching the Thelon River we met a party with two canoes from the Kingston area. In the evening, 8 August and 41 days from Flett Lake, we reached Aberdeen Lake. Two days of hard paddling brought us to its east end. Schultz Lake was reached in one more day. The rapid shown on the map at the entrance to Schultz Lake (14WVG5577) was barely noticeable. We met another party of two canoes from Minnesota here.

On 12 August we woke up in a driving rain. It got worse during the day, and the following night the water was sloshing around in the tent. The great convenience of a waterproof tent floor had turned into its opposite. There does not seem to be anything else one can do to keep dry in a hard driving rain storm on the tundra but NOT to use a floor in order to permit the water to drain. The next day was even worse than the previous one. During the night of 13 August the wind got so severe that our canoe was flipped over even though it was tied down to large rocks at both ends. We had no choice but to get out of the tent, line the canoe up with the wind, and tie it down once more. We used the sponge intended for bailing out the canoe to bail out the tent at two-hourly intervals.

On 14 August the rain stopped but the wind kept blowing. Finally, on 15 August the wind decreased enough that we could risk crossing the large bay at the west end of Schultz Lake. Since the wind blew from the north and we tried to follow the shorter route along the south shore of the lake, we were fighting waves that were getting too high. We decided to go to the south of the large island (14WVG6877) and the long peninsula in the southeast corner of the lake. The temperature dropped dismally, and we barely stopped for lunch since only hard paddling kept us warm. This route required three short portages (14WVG8671) but was worth it. We camped in the middle of the fourth portage that was perhaps 200 metres long and offered excellent camping.

On 16 August we left Schultz Lake. The rapid at the outlet presented no problem. The big rapid farther down was evaded by paddling into a bay to the south and portaging 1.5 km due east back to the Theldon River below the rapid (14WVG0480). We camped at the end of the portage, knowing that one more day would bring us to Baker Lake. The following day, 17 August and 50 days from Flett Lake, we ran down the 80 odd kilometres to Baker Lake. This stretch of the river was quite populated with tents and motorboats from Baker Lake. There is occasionally turbulent water right down to the lake and many sandbars clog the outlet to the lake. We pitched camp close to the airport, where one enjoys more privacy than on the bustling beach of Baker Lake settlement.

WCA ANNUAL MEETING

The 1984 AGM will take place on Saturday, March 3, 1984 on the premises of St. James-Bond United Church in Toronto. St. James-Bond is located two blocks north of Eglinton Avenue on the corner of Avenue Road and Millbank Avenue, and thus within easy reach of the majority of WCA members.

It is hoped that the convenient location will induce a record number of people to participate in this enterprise. The AGM is the only forum which gives members the opportunity to meet with the executive of the Association at a time when an account of the past year is presented and the direction for the coming year can be influenced. It is an opportunity to voice concerns, initiate changes, offer help and express appreciation.

The day's activities are planned so as to allow for a great deal of contact time. The morning is given over to reports from the Chairman and the various committees, and the election of three members to the Board to succeed the three individuals whose terms expire at this time.

In the afternoon, Dr. Ron Sonstegard will discuss aspects of environmental health: "The Effects of Water Pollution". Ron Sonstegard has studied at South Dakota

State, Guelph, Harvard and M.I.T. He is an internationally recognized authority on comparative ecology and an expert on fish health. Perhaps more importantly, he is an enthusiastic outdoorsman and genuinely concerned about environmental issues.

Our evening speaker will be Eric Morse whose topic will be "Changes During the Past 75 Years in Canadian Wilderness Canoeing". Eric Morse really needs no introduction to a canoeing audience. He has been spending his vacations making wilderness canoe trips throughout Canada since 1918; he is author of Fur Trade Canoe Routes of Canada: Then and Now. He has an M.A. and LL.D from Queens, is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and a member of the Order of Canada. We know you would not want to miss his address.

A detailed schedule of events and additional information about the meeting will be mailed to members at the end of January. The names and resumes of individuals who have declared their candidacy for election to the Board of Directors appear in this issue of the newsletter. Other members interested in contesting a seat on the Board should send resumes to H. Pohl (address on the back page) so that this information can be included as part of the January mailing.



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

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

It gives me great satisfaction to look back on the calendar year and see the progress the WCA has made in that time.

Our numbers have come up from a previous low of 250 to nearly 320; and I am constantly meeting and getting to know some very dedicated new members who both care about the wilderness environment, and who express a lot of enthusiasm for what the WCA stands for, and what it offers them.

The Fall Workshop Weekend was an unprecedented success in terms of programme, location, accommodation and weather, and had an excellent member turnout. John Wilson outdid himself as organizer and we are indeed indebted to him. We hope to return to Tawingo next year. What wonderful cooperation and help we had from John Jorgenson and his staff up there.

Cash Belden, our computer wizard, has revolutionized the membership record keeping, and data is now miraculously recorded and updated faster than the speed of light. Phyllis Tiffany will be handling all incoming mail as our Membership Secretary, dealing with related correspondence, and sending the data on to Cash, so we have a great team there, highly organized and efficient. What a debt we owe them both.

The Wine, Cheese and Slide evening seemed an unqualified success with a record crowd of 125, the gastronomic consumption of vast quantities of top quality wines and cheeses (thanks to Norm Coombe's expert advice), and four very exciting slide shows. George

Fairfield's freezing LOWS and sun-burning HIGHS on the bug-infested Severn River to take a bird (and nesting) count for the Federation of Ontario Naturalists last June, Mat Ardron's breathtaking trek through Nepal with closeup shots of Katmandu and its people, and Mike and Geoff Peake's strenuous and exhilarating trips down the George River and over part of Baffin Island, all so beautifully captured on film, left us all enriched and keen to strike out ourselves in '84. The Okefenokee slides elicited some favourable comments too, so I hope they contributed a touch of southern (wilderness) comfort, au canot.

Margaret Hux has regretfully had to tender her resignation as Recording Secretary, due to the pressure of her work, but Ria Harting has generously volunteered her professional secretarial expertise, for which we are doubly grateful, since it has been her husband Toni who has been the active member up until now in the WCA.

May I draw the forthcoming A.G.M. to your attention. It will be held in Toronto March 3rd, and I cannot emphasize sufficiently the great honour it will bring to us to have Eric Morse as guest speaker, after an exciting afternoon programme and sumptuous banquet. Do plan to attend.

In closing, may I wish you all the very best for the Christmas Season, and may there be snow for your winter outings with us, or barring that, open water (as was the case last year) for those spirited WCA paddlers who never missed a winter weekend in a canoe.

Claire Briqden

news briefs

ATTAWAPISKAT RIVER - JULY 1984

We are looking for two to four people to accompany us on a 23 to 28 day canoe trip on the Attawapiskat River in July 1984. We will put in at a road access point northeast of Pickle Lake, approximately 350 km north of Thunder Bay, and take out 800 km downstream at the village of Attawapiskat near James Bay.

This wilderness river offers exciting whitewater alternating with relaxing flatwater stretches, as well as a wide variety of scenery, good fishing and an opportunity to visit a couple of isolated Indian villages. Although it is a challenging trip there will be time for nature study, for photography, for fishing, and for contemplation.

If this trip interests you and if you have whitewater canoeing skills, are experienced camping in remote areas, and are committed to minimal trace camping please contact us.

Bob Haskett
130 Lakeshore Drive
Toronto, Ontario
M8V 2A2

or

Peter Haskett
48 Briscoe St. East
London, Ontario
N6C 1W9

416-251-2073

519-434-7251
519-679-0992

FOCH-NAGAGAMI INFORMATION WANTED

Marnie Rice is looking for first hand information about the Foch-Nagagami canoe route in northern Ontario. If anyone has canoed this river and can offer some help, please contact Marnie at P.O. Box 31, Midland, Ontario, L4R 4K6 or phone 705-534-4006.

DEADLINE FOR SPRING ISSUE

Articles, trip reports, photographs etc. are needed for our next issue. Material may be either typed or hand written, but should be double spaced.

Please send articles to the editor no later than February 26 for inclusion in the spring issue. Material received after this date will not appear in the spring issue, but will be held for use in a later issue.

WCA AT THE SPORTSMAN'S SHOW: HELP WANTED

The 1984 Sportsman's Show will be taking place in Toronto from Friday March 16 to Sunday March 22; and the WCA will have our customary booth there. Why not take the opportunity to join us and become part of the show? We need your help in setting up and staffing the booth. If you would like to participate in this worthwhile project call Jan Tissott in Toronto at 416-489-5032.

BIRD ATTLASSING TRIPS

In 1984 the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas is considering subsidized trips similar to 1983's outing described by George Fairfield in the last issue of the Nastawagan, on the Winisk, the Attawapiskat, the Sachigo and parts of the Albany River. Trips will be at least three weeks in length and will take place during the period of mid-June to late July. Experienced canoeists and/or birders are still needed.

Also, canoe-atlassing outings varying in length from a weekend to two weeks are planned for Algonquin Park during June and July.

For more information about these trips, contact Mike Cadman, at the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, FON Conservation Centre, 355 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Ontario, M3B 2W8, or phone 416-449-2554.

ARCTIC SLIDE SHOW

On Tuesday, January 17th, 1984, David Pelly is to speak and show slides about his arctic travels at Harbourfront Queen's Quay in Toronto. David is a WCA member, regular contributor to Nastawagan, well established freelance writer and lecturer, and arctic aficionado. The audio-visual presentation will carry the audience across the barrens with scenes depicting the natural splendour of flora, fauna, sunsets, and ice-filled lakes. Admission is \$2. The evening, sponsored by the Harbourfront Canoe School, will commence at 7:30 pm.

WCA WHITEWATER INSTRUCTION

From the enthusiastic response to this year's training trips it appears that there are a number of WCA members who are anxious to upgrade their paddling skills. For 1984 we will be setting up a comprehensive whitewater training programme to accommodate you. This course, for novices and beginners, will include several evenings of films, seminars, and local flatwater practice; and a couple of weekends on the river. The organizers' philosophy will stress the need for mastering fundamental boat handling skills; and this will translate into lots of hard work in your boat. The only requirements are a canoe capable of safely handling moderate whitewater, and a personal commitment to attend regularly and to participate actively. Our get-togethers will start tentatively on April 1st. If you wish to take part, please call Bill Ness at 416-499-6389 by February 1 for registration. Members only, please. (Instructors: Jim Greenacre, Howard Sagemann, Rob Cepella, Bill Ness, Jim Morris.)

TRIP HOT LINE REMINDER

In Spring 1983 the Outings Committee arranged for Marcia Farquhar (416-884-0208) to offer a "trip hot line" service for members who were interested in putting together a trip at fairly short notice.

This service has been used by some members and has been a moderate success.

As a reminder, the trip hot line is intended as a means to contact other members when there is no WCA trip scheduled on a particular date, when the scheduled trips are full, or when last minute replacements are needed for unscheduled trips.

Marcia can also be called if:

- (a) members have not received their newsletter and want to know the outings programme,
- (b) members would like to indicate interest in a longer trip at a future date but missed newsletter deadline.

THURSDAY EVENING MOVIE NIGHTS

Every Thursday evening, starting January 5, 1984, I will be organizing a movie and slide night on various topics. If you have slides or movies you would like to show or would like more information on the time, topics or location, please call me after 5:00 pm. Howard Sagemann 416-282-9570, in Toronto.

THE GREAT HUMBER RIVER CANOE RACE

This annual event, sponsored by the Mohawk Rod & Gun Club is a very enjoyable 13 kilometre race on the Humber River consisting of easy grade 1 water. It is a great place to meet other canoeists and see the wide variety of boats people are paddling. This year's race will be held on Saturday April 7, 1984; entry deadline is around March 31, 1984. For more information call Howard Sagemann at 416-282-9570.

1983 FALL WEEKEND

This year, the WCA fall meeting was held at Camp Tawingo, on the shore of Lake Vernon, near Huntsville. It was attended by a total of ninety people. Members spent Friday evening renewing friendships and watching a procession of seldom seen canoeing films.

Saturday morning dawned crisp and bright, and saw a few early-birds already on the lake, dodging the clouds of mist rising off the water. Following breakfast, Claire Brigden gave an interesting and informative presentation on wild edibles. Her talk culminated with the distribution of samples, the most impressive being a rabbit stew prepared by the Camp Tawingo staff and seasoned with some of Claire's natural sages.

For the remainder of the morning, Stewart McIlwraith demonstrated, with equipment and slides, the principles behind lightweight winter camping. His presentation will hopefully enable more members to participate in upcoming WCA outings, as the wilderness in winter is as beautiful and tranquil as during the warmer months.

After a fantastic lunch, those in attendance were treated to the talk and slideshows of Graham Barnett, Jim Greenacre, and Karl Schimek. Their topic was canoeing in the Barren Lands. Graham and Jim recounted their experiences on the Hanbury - Thelon, while Karl followed his adventures on the Coppermine. Their talk on the hazards and highlights of such trips was of benefit and interest to us all.

By this time, the great weather had induced us to hold the next session outdoors. While we basked in the glory of sunshine and fall colours, the Camp Tawingo staff gave members a look into the theory of paddle design, and manufacturing processes. Many questions were asked, and some paddle blanks were purchased to be finished off at home.

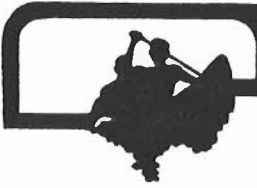
While the directors held a board meeting, other members were free to hike, swim, paddle, or just laze around in the sunshine.

Following supper was the superb oratory and slide presentation of the guest speaker, Brian Weatherhead, who lived in isolation for an entire year on the edge of a remote lake in northern British Columbia. There was a large gap in time between Brian's presentation, and the showing of members' slides, while we waited for the crowd that had gathered around Brian to abate. Gail Vickars then presented her slides of various WCA outings, as well as a pictorial of Lake Superior Provincial Park. Jim Greenacre gave us an insight into sea kayaking, as he showed slides of his journey to the Queen Charlotte Islands this past summer. Finally, I showed slides of a 1981 trip that I had taken on the Winisk River.

As so often happens, the weather for our outings on Sunday was forboding. But the drizzle of early morning had, by lunch-time, blown over, and we were treated to sunshine once again for the journey home.

Before closing the books on the fall meeting I should like to thank the following people for their help: Graham Barnett, Claire Brigden, Jim Greenacre, Stewart McIlwraith, and Karl Schimek for their presentations; Gail Vickars for running the garage sale, helping with registrations, showing slides, and generally being helpful; Bob MacIellan, Bill Ness, Karl Schimek, and Claire and Richard Smerdon for running the outings; Jim Greenacre for his slides; Rob Butler for being "The Bank" and lining up the guest speaker; Graham Barnett, Claire Brigden, Glenn Spence, and John Jorgenson (of Camp Tawingo) for input and support; and to all who attended and made the weekend a success.

John Wilson



By: David F. Pelly

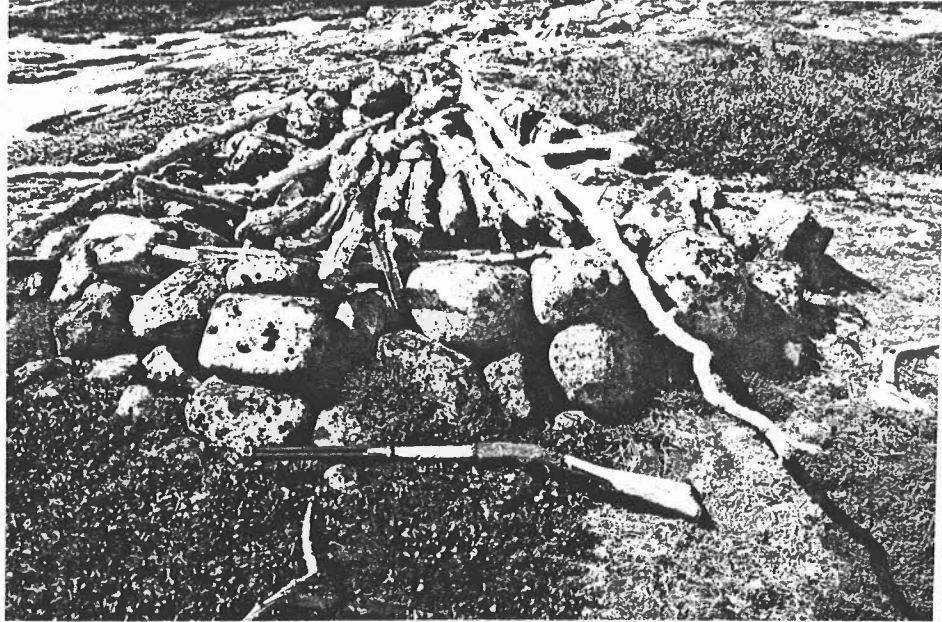


Photo: Chas. Altschul

"We travel through the land of Kopanuak, Hikuatuak, Hallo, Ahyout, Kak-kuk, Uliu, Nuyellik, and Eiyegiak. We see the trappings of their culture - their tools, their shelters, their clothing, their transportation. But it is like a limitless ghost-town, abandoned in mid-life. We see evidence of their lifestyle's perfect harmony with nature, in our failure to find any trace of an active Inuit camp visited and recorded by Tyrrell in 1894. Like some kind of climax we stand before the stone-heaped graves of hunters, women, and young children - and we are witnesses to the abrupt death of their culture."

I wrote this after a week's travel on that portion of the Kazan River which flows through the land of the Padleimuit. Until the 1950's they lived along the banks where we now paddled, thinking we were in an unpeopled wilderness. The impact of their ethereal presence was felt by us all.

The barrens is an unparalleled natural wilderness, and in some parts it has been ever so. But a reflection on the history of other parts reminds you that this was once an inhabited land. Picture the children playing happily with only nature's simple toys, and delightedly smothering their faces with the purple juice of crowberries. Imagine a band of lonely hunters, clad in heavy skins with the fur turned out toward the cold, searching the endless whiteness for a tiny, distant speck that could mean more meat. Consider the joy of seeing the birds return in spring after the harsh winds of winter. This was the cycle of life as it endured on the barrens. Now all that remains are the shadows of that civilisation: the rocks used as graves and markers, the hand-worked pieces of wood left to rot, the abandoned trading goods from the early H.B.C. post.

We read the explorers' accounts: of frightful massacres, of incomprehensible jabbering, of primitive reactions, of merciful assistance. From Franklin we sense an ambivalence, a degree of incomprehension. From Hearne we sense a superiority yet an acknowledged dependence. From Rasmussen we sense his brotherhood and his understanding. From George Back - the first white man to descend a river across the barrens - we sense a compassion and a respect for the Esquimaux. From them he learned much of what he knew about arctic travel. He spoke their language. It was the Utkuhigjalngimuit ("people of the soapstone place") who helped lift his boat around the falls where the Thlew-ee-choh spills

finally into Chantrey Inlet. It was a hunter at the mouth who drew for Back a sketch upon which he based his approximated chart of the unsurveyed coast to the east. Yet another reason that every contemplative arctic canoeist should read the explorers' journals.

Today these people of the barrens are gathered into settlements. Their ability to survive without the support of southern technology, alone in the wilderness, might soon be questioned. Yet for us who now travel the barrens there are rivers where their presence is an essential component of our canoeing experience. The responsibility to protect the cultural remains on the barrens lies partly with the canoeing fraternity.

There is one gravesite just downstream from Lake Ennadai on the Kazan River which is particularly well known. The log from George Luste's 1974 trip describes it in excited detail, their "first archaeological find." We visited it, attracted by this and other reports. Beside the grave lay a beautiful, wooden-stocked Winchester rifle, c.1857. Within our group there was no thought of taking it as a souvenir. Clearly the same decision has been reached by each of the thirty or so groups who has stood beside the grave. Is that not encouraging?

On another occasion I stumbled, almost literally, upon an Inuit site well off the beaten track. I recorded the event in my journal.

"Beside a pile of rocks lay a wooden chest. On the other side, a tin cup, a rusted H.B.C. tobacco can, the frame of a kayak. The dead Inuk had been lain in a small hollow beneath his qamatik (sled), then covered with hundreds of small rocks, meticulously placed to protect the body and some of his treasured tools from the elements and the barrens' carnivores.

"This is the most undisturbed grave we have seen. I share with my companions a strong sense that we are the first kabloona to visit this site. The grave, its surroundings, the artifacts, all look untouched, unharmed, undisturbed. Each rib of the kayak stands in place, like a rank of sentinels proudly guarding their masters. The static ceremony has already endured decades, and remains at peace. In time the ribs too will lie down, fallen, their roles fulfilled."

We left this grave as we left the other sites - undisturbed. When I wrote about it, I was moved. It is a spiritual sensation which one who has not been there could not understand. That night as I drifted to sleep, that Inuk hunter came alive in my mind's eye. I watched as he guided his dogs across the frozen tundra, pulled up at our campsite - the former camp of Enetah - to share a moment with his fellow barren land dweller, then pushed on in his endless quest for survival.

In 700 km of the Kazan we saw 52 abandoned tent rings. We stood beside the graves of at least 14 people. We saw no one. But we were in another people's land.

Asked to share my reactions to the trip with my travelling companions in our log, I wrote these words.

"The abundant sense of vital history all around us as we travel has become for me the most important aspect of the experience. There is along the Kazan a wealth remaining from a past culture. We have seen elements of both its primitive origins and its recent demise, as contact with our civilisation took over. But can this history, its sites, its artifacts, its entire setting, somehow be preserved? What is the future of this wealth?"

To some degree the answers rest with those canoeists who will in future years paddle through the land of the Inuit.

Canoeists travelling the arctic barrens who discover an archaeological site should record the following information, and upon return submit answers to these questions to :

The Senior Archaeologist
Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre
Gov't of the N.W.T
Yellowknife, N.W.T
X1A 2L9

1. Map reference
2. Description of Site location (topography, landmark, etc.)
3. Description of site (size, features or details visible attach sketches, photographs)
4. Artifacts seen or collected
5. Other pertinent information (condition of site, erosion, disturbance, etc.)

Arctic Journal, by WCA member David F. Pelly, is a series of articles on various aspects of barrens canoeing. David Pelly is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in Canadian Geographic, Outdoor Canada, and North/Nord amongst others, and is author of the book EXPEDITION, An Arctic Journey Through History on George Back's River.

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MIKE GRAHAM-SMITH

Some weeks ago I was asked if I was prepared to serve as a Director of the WCA. I already have fairly heavy commitments on my time during the winter months, but within that limitation, I am prepared to help the Association.

More recently I was told I need a platform on which to stand for election, and that I find more difficult. I have been a member of the WCA for only about 4 years but it has served me well. I have enjoyed the outings and the other meetings. I have learned a good deal in the process and have met friendly people with similar interests. I therefore have no wish to make radical changes - I would prefer to help the Association continue on its present course.

If anything, I would oppose change in the objectives of the Association. I believe that canoeing in the wilderness is our primary interest - our one common bond. Backpacking, skiing and the like are fine as secondary interests, but that is what they must remain.

In this context, I opposed the change in the name of the Association Newsletter. I felt that our members were not getting a fair chance to hear each other's views on the subject before the change was made. I also did not accept the view that we were becoming a "Multi-Interest Group".

JIM GREENACRE

I have been a member of the WCA for eight years and by regular participation in Association trips have met many fine people, gained a great deal of canoeing and outdoor experience and have received a lot of pleasure from my membership in WCA. I am now ready to put something back into the Association.

I have been active in the Association, other than going on trips, but mostly as an Indian rather than a Chief. I helped put together our booth at the Sportmen's Show and for three years was senior organizer of the booth. I have also been active on the Outings Committee for some five years.

Outings are the life blood of our club and it is in this direction that I will direct most of my energies.

GLENN SPENCE

WCA INVOLVEMENT: member since 1975; organized two fall conferences; frequent contributor to Nastawgan; frequent trip organizer; presented a programme on the South Nahanni River at a fall conference; avid canoeist and cross country skier; treasurer for two years; Board member for two years.

WCA'S FUTURE: Our club should continue to provide the trips for our fellow members which are so vital to our operation. Also, we must continue to support our excellent newsletter, Nastawgan.

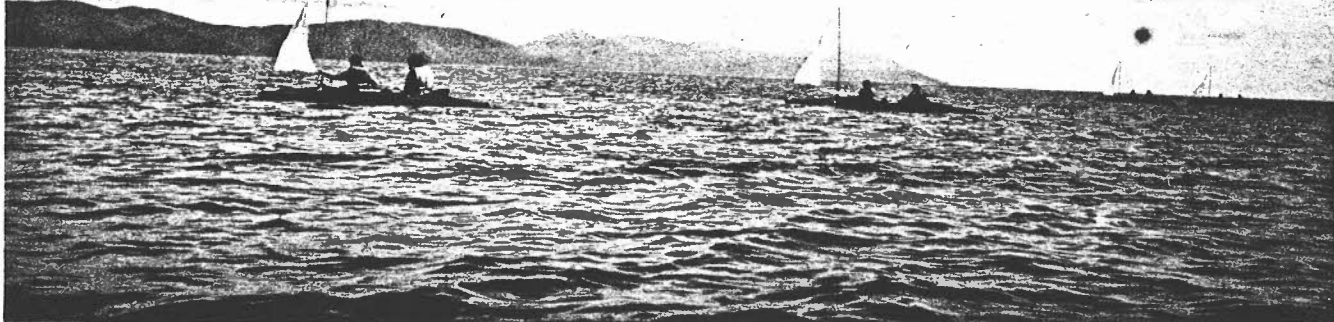
The WCA must take a more active role in provincial conservation matters. There is hardly a week that goes by without my reading about some destruction occurring to our environment such as: acid rain; improper reforestation techniques; cutting back on reforestation research etc. Therefore, in order to have anything left for future generations to enjoy, we must devote more effort and money to this crusade.

I hope to be able to meet many of our members at our Annual General Meeting so that we may discuss canoeing and those issues that threaten our natural surroundings which mean so much to all of us.

whitecaps and totems

ocean kayaking in the Queen Charlottes

Jim Greenacre



The Queen Charlotte Islands are located off the northwest coast of British Columbia, 50 km west of Prince Rupert and 200 km north of Vancouver Island. On the west side is the vast Pacific Ocean, over 7,000 km to Japan. No matter which direction the wind comes from it crosses water, picking up moisture and dropping large quantities of it on the islands in the form of rain, drizzle and fog. As a result the islands are almost entirely covered with temperate rain forest of gaint Red Cedar, Sitka Spruce and Hemlock (all great woods for canoe building).

Because I lacked previous experience in ocean kayaking I felt it would be wise to use a professional outfitter, so I contacted a Vancouver company which has been organizing ocean trips for a number of years. The only prerequisites being a doctor's certificate as to general health and money to pay for the trip.

The list of suggested clothing to take had me puzzled. I had more clothing with me on this trip than I would normally take on a canoe trip and winter camping trip combined. But once on the trip the suggestions began to make sense.

The group, ten of us, rendezvoused at Sandspit Airport in the Queen Charlottes where we were met by a representative of the outfitter. We split into two groups and were flown by private charter planes to the southern end of Morsby Island. Both aircraft were amphibious. The Beaver had wheels attached to its floats. The other aircraft, a seaplane, was a bulbous twin-engined "Grumman Goose", whose undercarriage (wheels) retracted into the hull. Retracting the undercarriage was a manual operation; the pilot turned a crank with sprocket and chain and wound up the wheels. It reminded me of the Avro Anson World War II trainer which also had a manually operated undercarriage.

Forty-five minutes flying time later we landed at Rose Harbour where we were ferried ashore in a rickety old dinghy. Rose Harbour was a whaling station from 1910 until 1946. There is very little left of the once thriving community. There was one chalet-like building, unpainted, with weathered cedar shingles, and signs of someone cultivating a small vegetable garden. The fence around the garden was made from old, deep sea fishing nets strung between cedar posts. I don't know if there are rabbits on the Queen Charlottes but there are certainly lots of deer. Deer are not native to the islands but were first introduced by man many decades ago. They are very small, a mature specimen being no taller than 1.25 metres. They have no predators and population is controlled only by the supply of food. The garden we were told, belonged to some "squatters" who had moved in for the summer.

As we jumped ashore onto the coarse gravel beach we were greeted by our two guides, Bob Sutherland and Bob Borking.

Strung along the beach up beyond the high tide mark were six Klepper Aeriis II, two seater kayaks. These craft are 5.4 metres long, 87 centimetres wide with a depth of 38 centimetres. The bow and stern are sharp and

narrow, gradually flaring out to full beam just aft of where the cockpit begins. The cross section is a shallow 'V'. They have a full spray skirt which extends right up to the armpits, mast and sails, and a rudder operated with foot pedals by the stern person. The Klepper is also collapsible, having a skeleton frame which slides into a one piece rubberized canvas skin.

The guides explained their method of packing gear and food into the kayaks. Pretrip instructions had told us to pack our personal gear well waterproof in small stuff sacks 25 cm X 38 cm. Items not likely to be needed on the trip (emergency clothing, personal first-aid kits etc.) were jammed in first, right into the point of the bow and stern. Considering that you sit on the bottom of the craft with legs stretched out, you wonder if there will be enough room for gear and paddles. We had a trial fit on dry land; somehow we squeezed in. I was in the stern and had difficulty making the rudder work. Adjustments were made and I then had a nine litre waterjug between my feet, two large coffee pots between my legs and under my knees, and my camera case stuck into my crotch. My partner Bob, a Vancouver dentist, and I were first to solve the gear/space problem. We were standing back admiring our handiwork when we were handed a large nylon sack by one of the guides. "Seeing as how you have got everything in", he said, "how about taking this tent". He suggested I put it on my seat and up the backrest to make it more comfortable. An excellent idea.

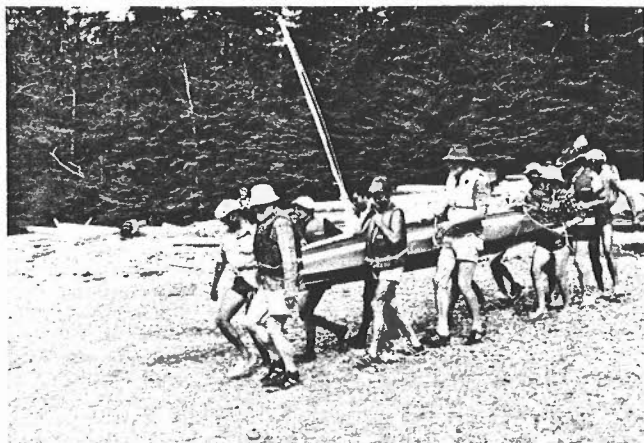


Finally everyone was packed and ready to go. The guides demonstrated how to assemble the two piece, two bladed, paddles which have three positions; unfeathered, feathered twist right, feathered twist left. He suggested unfeathered as being best. He also explained that each day before launching the rudder mechanism should be inspected for loose or worn parts. All detachable parts of the rudder are tied to the craft with pieces of cord so that in the event something works loose it won't drop into the sea and be lost.

By now it was late in the day so we simply paddled over to the other side of Houston Stewart Channel where there was a better campsite. We were on an ebb tide and the craft were about 25 metres from the water and fully

loaded with food and gear for 14 days. It took all twelve of us to carry them one at a time down to the water. This was the routine whenever we launched. The procedure was reversed when we landed. It was tricky carrying those kayaks at very low tides when you sometimes encountered rocks made slippery with seaweed and moss.

The kayak had to be fully floating before paddlers could get in. You wade into the water and with the stern person steadying the craft, the bow person gets in by springing upwards and sideways and flopping their backside over the cockpit rim into the seat, leaving the feet dangling in the water. Then you work your feet in under the spray deck and shuffle around adjusting coffee pots etc. until you are comfortable. Finally, you fasten the spray deck, zip up the spray skirt, assemble the paddle, put on the life jacket and you are ready to go.



Paddling a kayak is a wet business. Even with a calm sea, drip deflectors, and paddling with a relatively low shaft angle some water still drips onto the spray deck where it collects in the hollow around the waist line. Just at this spot there is a seam where the skirt is sewn into the deck. It is supposed to be waterproof, probably was when new, but now it isn't, and consequently the water seeps through and you are wet from the waist down. You don't feel the dampness; it is warm inside with the spray deck closed; it's when you step ashore into a cool sea breeze that you feel the chill. The guides both wore lightweight boxer style swim trunks when paddling. These held very little water and dried quickly. Even so, as soon as all craft were safely beached, the guides changed or pulled on a pair of pile pants. The rest of us soon followed their example.

It took us forty minutes to cross the channel and it was soon evident that Bob and I were the strongest team. I had difficulty steering because besides using the rudder, I also instinctively did a sweep with my paddle which caused the craft to overreact. We set up our tents under a canopy of magnificent red cedars just a few metres in from the beach. The ground, the deadfalls, the stumps, even some of the lower branches of the trees were covered with spagnum moss. Very little sunlight penetrates to the forest floor.

The guides cooked supper on a fire built on the gravel beach just at the high tide mark. They practised "no trace" camping and each morning the ashes were raked into the gravel. The guides did all the cooking on the entire trip. On one occasion at supper time when everyone was confined to the tents because of a severe storm, they brought a cold supper around to each tent.

Fire wood was almost exclusively cedar driftwood which was piled up in profusion on the beaches. Starting the fire was always a chore. Standard procedure was to split a piece of driftwood to get at the dry core and then cut shavings with a sharp knife. The guides would first light a candle and then use it to light the shavings. Much of the driftwood was immense logs, many over 1.5 metres in diameter and because of the squared off ends, obviously had been cut by lumbermen; what waste.

The guides called us at 7:30 the next morning and announced that breakfast would be in 30 minutes. Juice, bacon, fresh eggs, toast, jam, tea or coffee. If all meals were to be like this no one was going to lose weight on this trip. And all meals were substantial with

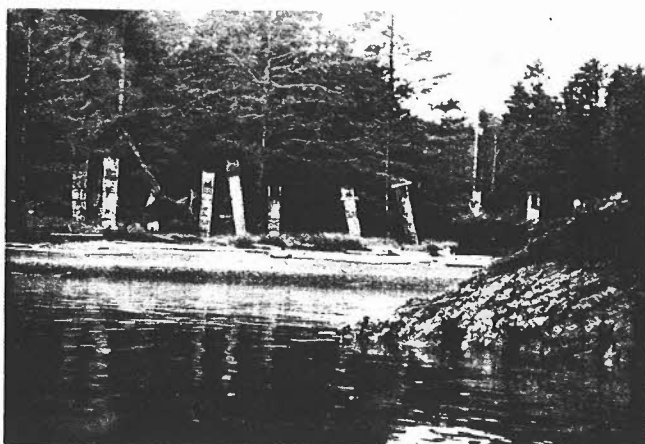
seconds, thirds and still some left overs. Breakfast was leisurely; there didn't seem to be any desire on the part of the guides to get going. We broke camp and there was a repeat performance of the previous afternoon when we attempted our first packing and loading of the kayaks. How did we get it all in?

About 10:30 the group was ready to go. The guides called us together and laid out a marine chart of the area. They explained the various markings and symbols on the chart and filled us in on the day's itinerary. They explained flood tide and ebb tide and how it could affect our progress. From a separate set of tables they taught how to calculate high tide and low tide times. Our direction of travel meant that until lunch we would be paddling against a flood tide of about seven knots out in the centre of the channel. As we were likely to be paddling at no more than two knots we would be going backwards. However, by staying close to shore where the current is much weaker, using the bays and eddies, we could make progress. There was one last warning before we carried the craft down to the water. Once launched we might be on the water for four hours or more with no possibility of landing so make sure the bladder is empty or have your mug handy if needed. A visit to the bushes became a prelaunch ritual.

By lunch time we were clear of the straits and out in open sea where the tide has no effect. Wind, waves and swell were what we now had to contend with. It was on this, our first experience on open seas, that we found out just how stable these Klepper Kayaks are.

Our destination was Anthony Island, a World Heritage Site, former home of a Haida band, the Ninstint. The 3.3 km open water crossing took about an hour. As we approached a gap in the vertical rocky shoreline against which the Pacific Ocean swell was breaking with a thunderous roar, we could see off to the right a cedar shingled shack. This is where the site warden lives when he is in residence. We knew he wasn't at home because he was the gentleman who had hitched a ride out the previous day on one of the planes that had flown us in. Officially there is no camping on Anthony Island.

We paddled through the gap into a small, well protected bay, a perfect natural harbour, the ancient home of the Ninstint. The forest here is well back from the shoreline and in the open area, scattered around the entire bay are many grey, weather-beaten totem poles. Out came the cameras. Photography session over, we backed off and paddled round the rocky headland into another natural harbour. We landed and carried our craft up above high tide mark. If we had got here much earlier, on low tide, we would have had to land on, and carry the kayaks over wet, slippery, seaweed covered rocks. This was the reason for our late start; those rocks were now under water.



We set up camp and then walked the short distance back to the totem poles. Our guides requested us not to touch anything and to watch where we tread as these archaeological remains of the Ninstint are centuries old and very fragile. Chief Ninstint had ruled over twenty longhouses with a population of over three hundred. In 1880 smallpox decimated the community and the survivors fled north to Skidgate where today's population is about three hundred Haida. The weathered totem poles, many still standing straight and proud, are carved with symbolic figures of bears, eagles, whales, beavers, frogs and subordinate men. There are still a few massive longhouse corner posts standing with their mortice and

tenon jointed ridge beams. Several mortuary poles are still standing, reminders of noble Ninstint chiefs of the past. Many more close up pictures were taken of these ancient reminders of a proud, aggressive band of Haida.

We had another late start, 11:00 a.m., on the third day. We paddled around the island where we saw two seals sleeping on a rock shelf just above the water line. We got quite close and took pictures. Farther round the island we saw three or four walrus resting high up on the rocks but because of the ocean swell breaking on the rocky shoreline we were unable to get close enough for pictures. As we left the island we encountered a herd of 30 or 40 seals. They are curious creatures, and popped up out of the sea quite close to us, supported high on their flippers the better to see us. They grunted and honked their disapproval at these intruders into their domain.

At lunch the guides told us we were going to meet and camp with another group, a group of fourteen backpackers who had been on a fourteen day trip exploring the peaks and ridges in this region. We were also in an area where the fishing would be good and hopefully we could catch enough fish for supper for both groups. Out went handlines and as we paddled towards our rendezvous we trolled. It was not long before the first salmon, weighing about 5 kilograms, was caught. By the time we reached our destination we had seven salmon and lots of rock cod. The cod averaged about 3 kilograms in weight. More than enough fish for supper. The fishing throughout the entire trip was good and we had salmon for supper on at least eight or nine occasions.

The backpackers greeted us as we landed and lent a hand to carry our craft ashore. They were delighted to see the supply of fresh fish. One of our guides cut thin cedar stakes of various lengths and demonstrated how the Haida used to cook their fish around an open fire using a self supporting frame made from the stakes. Some of us lent a hand and made similar frames for the other salmon. To go with the fish we had steamed rice, fresh carrots, onions and seaweed. Dessert was pie with cream from a can. It was a delicious meal.



One interesting thing I noticed was that the rice was cooked in small pressure cookers on single burner backpacking naphtha gas stoves. Pressure cookers, compared to the lightweight pots we carry, are heavy. I asked the backpackers' guide, who was doing the cooking, about this and her explanation was that pressure cookers cook very much faster and therefore you don't have to carry as much fuel for the stoves.

When we first landed I had noticed that off to one side, right on the sandy beach, someone had pitched a large dome tent. Its location puzzled me. I also noticed that the backpackers were placing in the rather large fire we had, rocks about 12-18 cm in diameter. Later in the evening, when the wine supply had run out, everything was revealed. The hot rocks, which by this time were glowing bright red, were carried in a pail over to the tent which in reality was a sauna. The next day was the last day for the hikers and they were going out clean.

The hikers had had a rough trip. On numerous occasions they had to remove their packs to enable them to crawl under deadfalls. On another section it had taken two days to travel just over three kilometres, with much energy being used to hack a path through dense undergrowth using a machette.

On our fourth day, Bob, my paddling mate, was trolling when he felt a strong bite. His rod was bent almost double and the line went screaming out. He played the fish for thirty minutes before we even got a glimpse of it. It was a salmon. Five more minutes of playing it and finally we managed to get it into the net, still fighting. It took a few sharp blows on the head to subdue it. We estimated its weight at about 10 kilograms. We had a long lunch again so as to have a favourable tide at our next campsite.

The next morning, while waiting for flood tide to launch, a guide took us on a nature walk through the bush. He knew his trees and shrubs. At one o'clock we left and had a stiff breeze coming from behind us. We had our first experience of sailing using the jib only. All I had to do in the stern was steer, but it was cold, so I occasionally paddled to keep warm. There was quite a swell and some of the whitecaps broke over the stern. Sometimes we found ourselves surfing. These were the roughest seas we had so far experienced. It was exhilarating. Three and a half hours of travel and we landed for a late lunch. A severe storm was developing from the southeast so it was advisable that we stayed where we were. We set up camp and all retired to the tents. This was the evening the guides brought supper to the tents. Our three neighbours in the next tent joined us for a game of bridge. The storm blew all night.

The storm was still raging next morning and the guides brought a granola breakfast to each tent. The once almost dry creek behind our campsite was now a raging torrent. We stayed here the rest of the day. The storm abated late in the day and then after supper the fire was built up and we had a big drying out session.

The next day we encountered strong headwinds and rough seas as we paddled well out from shore to clear a rocky headland, and took on some water which seeped under the spray deck and the cockpit combing.

We saw a black bear foraging in a clearing on the top of the cliffs. Bob and I, because we were out in front, caught sight of something bobbing on the surface between two islands. It turned out to be a deer which, as soon as it saw us, turned and headed back to where it came from. We were also the only ones to see a school of dolphins, their black triangular dorsal fins breaking the surface just ahead of us. On the left shore were signs of extensive excavating. This was Jedway, a worked out iron ore deposit, that was mined from 1961 to 1968.

Late that evening (11:30 p.m.) the guides led us along the shore and up a steep slope through the trees. Here, they told us, we would hear and perhaps see the shift changing of the Storm-Petrel, a sea bird which nests in burrows on the hillside. Both parents share nesting duties on a twenty-four hour basis and change over under the cover of darkness. We neither heard nor saw anything and at 12:30 a.m. returned to camp.

Everyone slept late next morning. Three hours of paddling in choppy sea and then we stopped for lunch near a half demolished shack. The framework was good but the shingles from two walls and half the roof were gone. The floor was gravel.

The wind was now from the southeast and we faced the good possibility that we would get another storm so the guides decided it best to stay here. That evening, after darkness, some of the group seated around the fire heard shrieks of laughter coming from the direction of the semi-open outhouse. One of the ladies while using the facilities, a double holer, had inadvertently dropped her flashlight down the open hole. She was now trying to retrieve it with the use of two paddles. The laughter came from a second lady who was trying to take a flash picture of the situation, but who burst into laughter everytime she got the view finder up to her eye. The unfortunate one was not having much success and finally gave up and retired to her sleeping bag. The following morning the flashlight was recovered. Fortunately it was one of those rubber enclosed waterproof types and a good clean in salt water was all it required.

The storm was still blowing next morning, though our site was well protected from the wind. The shack with its half roof, which we extended using a tarp, gave us good protection from the rain. The fire pit was also inside on the gravel floor. It was decided to stay here. Two members of the group donned their wet suits and snorkel gear and went hunting for crab. Our largest cooking pot was soon filled to the brim. We cooked them for hor d'oeuvres at supper time.

We were to stay here one more night, and today, we set off on a two hour paddle to climb a 600 metre peak from which we hoped be able to see Hecate Strait to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. At 4:30 p.m. we were still about 40 metres below the peak and as the weather was closing in (the sky had been over-cast all day) the guide decided it best to start our descent. Even if we had made it to the top there would be no spectacular view because the peak was now shrouded in cloud. It was almost nine o'clock by the time we got back to camp.

Next day, after an easy three hour paddle, we landed, had lunch, and set up camp. While on the water we had sighted two solo kayakers headed south but our courses were too far apart to exchange greetings. The leading kayak was at least a kilometre ahead of his companion, not much help to each other in the event of a mishap. We sighted another school of dolphin. After lunch five of us set out to bushwack over to a small lake but after half an hour of struggling through dense alder we gave up and returned to camp.

We awoke to a cold breakfast under a tarp which offered little protection from the blowing drizzle. The wind shifted from the south to the west and was blowing at about 20 knots. There was a deep swell on the sea and white caps could be seen just offshore. Visibility was down to about a kilometre. The guides decided we could make it to Hotsprings Island which was our final destination.



By staying close inshore there was some protection from the wind which was hitting us broadside and sending waves crashing over the deck. A regular canoe, even with full spray cover, could not have survived long in those seas. Its high profile would have caught the wind and made it impossible to stay on course.

We followed the coast line for about 6 kilometres then turned down wind and ran with the sea. We faced 8 kilometres of open sea which had to be crossed to reach Hotsprings Island. We had to trust the guides' navigational ability as it was necessary to travel by compass bearing because of the poor visibility.

The crossing to Hotsprings was the highlight of the trip for all of us. The 1.5 metre swell with 0.5 metre waves and the 18 knot wind made for exciting paddling. There were many occasions when all that was visible of the other kayaks were the topmost tips of their masts. When swell and waves were co-ordinated the kayak was pushed along like a surfboard and then as the craft dropped into the trough the wave would break over the stern. In spite of the rough seas, we had been paddling just over four hours when we entered the calm waters of a cove on Hotsprings Island.

We lunched, set up camp, and headed for the hotsprings. There are four soak sites: a natural pool in the rocks which could hold maybe twenty bodies or more; a man made pool where a rock retaining wall had been cemented together; two large old fashioned bathtubs in an open windowed shack; and a single bathtub out in the open and perched high up on the rocks. The view from this last location is truly fantastic. You sit in the tub and gaze out over Juan Perez Sound to some islands in the south and over to the west you see the San Christoval mountains, the backbone of Morsby Island.

The water temperature in the pools is comfortable and you can soak, soak, soak for as long as you wish without discomfort. The bathtub temperature you control yourself. There is a hot water pipe and a cold water pipe, both of them running continuously. The hot water temperature runs about 70°C. There is no smell to the water as it is not sulphuric.

Hotsprings Island is a focal point for kayakers exploring the Queen Charlottes. There were six other kayakers there who had spent the past six days paddling down the coast from Skidgate, a distance of some 125 kilometres. The many sailboats which cruise the islands also anchor in the bay and come ashore to enjoy a hot bath. The Haida band have three of their members living at the springs during the summer months to keep an eye on things and act as public relations agents and suggest you sign the visitors' book. The Haida band are in the process of establishing a number of base camps throughout the islands with the idea of running tourist trips with small craft and going ashore each evening.

Now that our trip was almost over, the weather improved and for the first time in several days we saw the sun. That evening at supper the guides produced two casks of wine and there was a party like atmosphere. When I remarked that this was not our last evening together, one guide agreed, but then, could we be sure of the weather tomorrow night?

The next morning the wind shifted to the northwest which meant better weather with longer periods of sunshine between showers. As we were now finished travelling, the craft were unloaded of all gear and there was a complete dry-out and repacking for tomorrow's flight out. The two ardent fishermen went off for a final cast and both returned with some rock cod for supper. The scuba divers returned with Abalone snails which we fried for hor d'oeuvres. Two members went berry picking and came back with a pail full of Salaam berries. The cook made a delicious pie with these, topped off with canned cream. I went for a solo paddle around the island. The Klepper, empty and paddled solo, was sluggish compared to my Bluewater and my solo stripper and it wallowed excessively. That evening we lingered around the fire, chatting until after midnight.

On our last day the wind had shifted back to the southeast with a low cloud base, and a possible storm brewing. The guides contacted the charter air line on a small hand held VHF radio. Two planes would arrive about 10:30 a.m. The tents were left standing for the next group which would arrive tomorrow. One kayak, which would not be needed for the next group, was dismantled and packed into its two bags ready to be flown out with us.



The first plane, a "Goose", landed and taxied in. Just as it touched shore the rain came down in torrents. Eight of us waded out to the plane and scrambled aboard, leaving two members to follow in the second plane. The aircraft took off into the storm and we had a bumpy half hour flight back to Sandspit where we landed in brilliant sunshine. It never seems to fail. Later I learned that July rainfall this year in the Queen Charlottes had been triple the previous record.

I bid farewell to my nine companions who were all flying back to Vancouver, and got on the daily bus which took me to Queen Charlotte City. My plan was to return to Vancouver via the B.C. Ferry to Prince Rupert and then ferry boat through the "inside" passage to Port Hardy, located on the northern tip of Vancouver Island. At Port Hardy I transferred to a bus for Nanaimo then back on the ferry to Horseshoe Bay and Vancouver. It took longer this way but was much more interesting. How much of the countryside do you see seated in a jet aircraft flying at 10,000 metres, high above the clouds?

nature's way

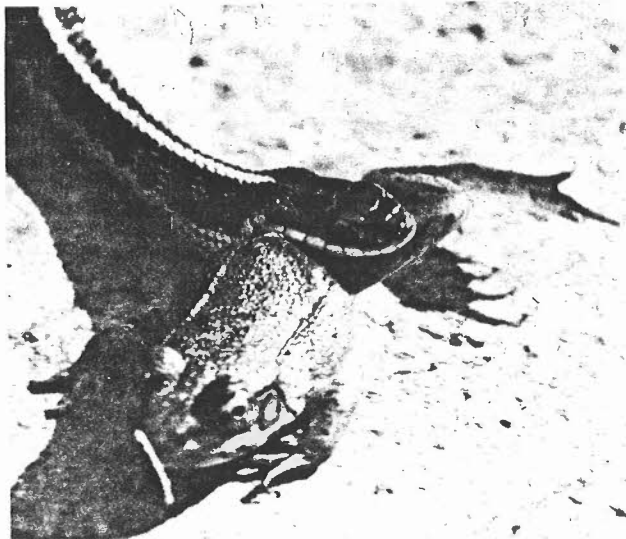
Toni Harting



It sounded like the tiny, high-pitched voice of a crying baby. The faint, plaintive sound reached our ears while we were slowly drifting in our canoe close to the shore of quiet, out-of-the-way Little Sheguiandah Lake in Killarney Provincial Park, thoroughly enjoying the sunny, windless day, and completely unaware of the timeless drama unfolding near us.

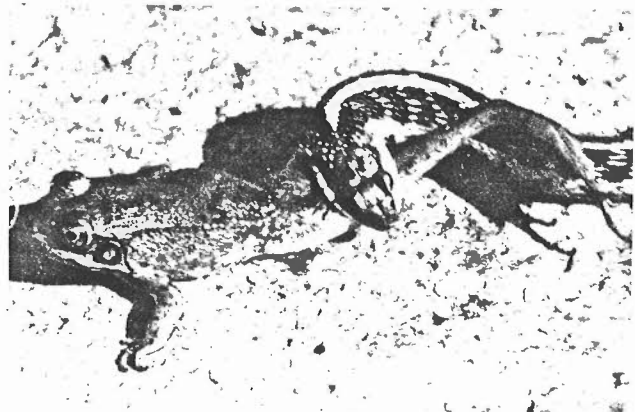
Coming from a low-lying patch of land near the water, the soft, intermittent squeeks now seemed a desperate cry for help, as if filled with terror and mortal fear. Guided by the sound we carefully stepped ashore and there quickly found the source of the strange noise.

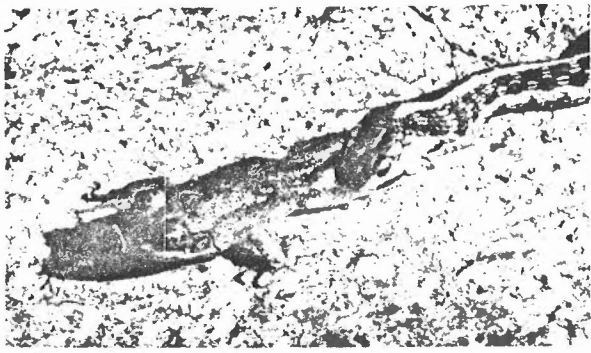
On a flat, sun-warmed rock a small garter snake, not longer than 25 cm, had grabbed a green frog by the right hind leg and was trying hard to swallow the sometimes struggling prey. The frog, very much alive, every now and then emitted the curiously human sound that had brought us to this small arena to witness nature's way of balancing itself. Both snake and frog were merely playing their parts as links in the food chain: life needs death.



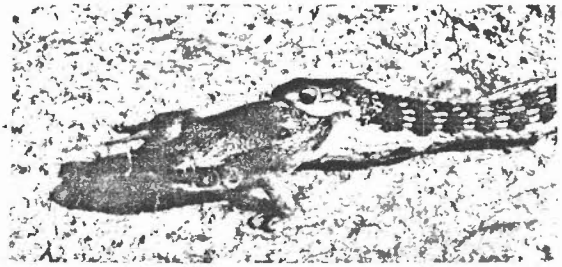
However, before the snake would be able to find a quiet place to rest and digest its meal, it had to solve one problem. If possible, snakes try to grab their victims in such a way that they can easily swallow their prey head-first. But in this case, the snake had one of the frog's hind legs in its mouth and throat, while the other leg was still outside, sticking out at an angle, and blocking all attempts to swallow the frog in this manner.

The snake instinctively sensed how to overcome this problem. It slowly and very carefully let the captured right hind leg slip, bit by bit, out of its throat and sideways out of its mouth. At the same time it grabbed the left leg with front part of its mouth, bringing that leg against the right one and holding it there. Then, with only the right foot still between its jaws, the snake managed to get hold of the left foot too, thereby sealing the frog's fate.

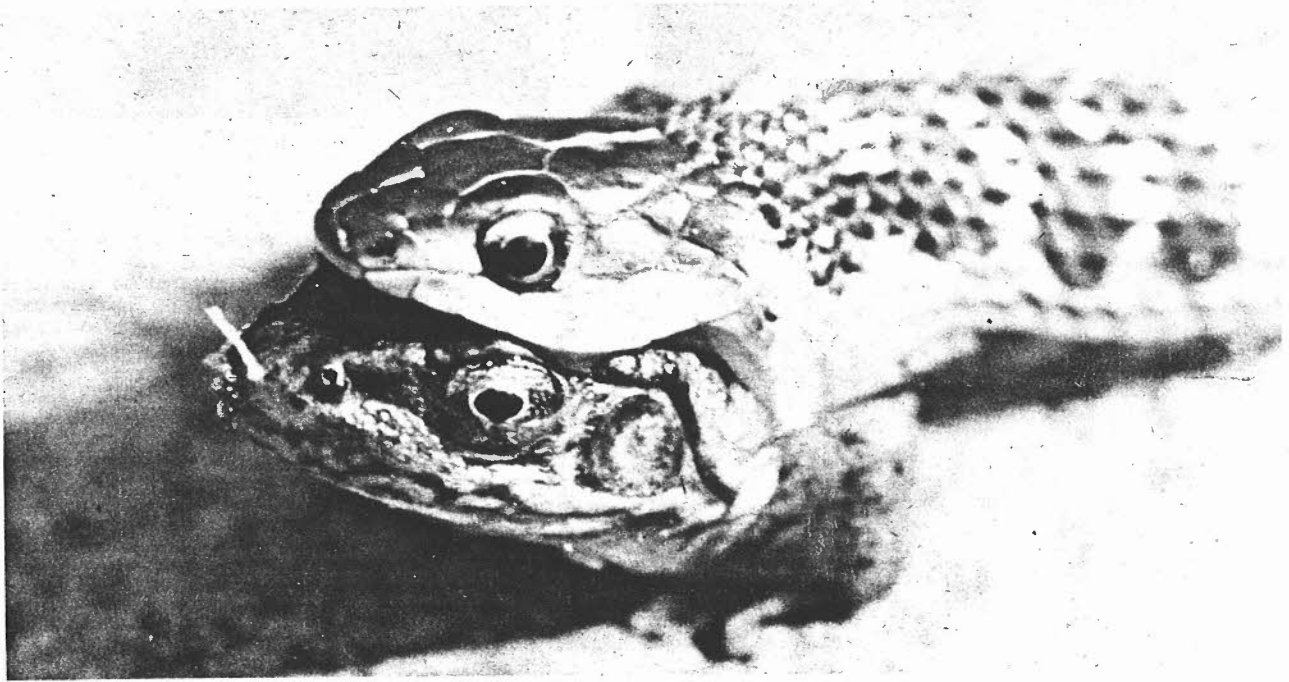




This would have been the last opportunity for the frog to free itself, but it was strangely quiet and hardly moved, as if in shock and paralyzed by fear. Only the trembling skin at its throat and the progressively softer and more infrequent cries showed that it was still alive.



Then the snake slowly and deliberately began to finish its meal. The highly flexible jaws moved forward and from side to side, gradually working the now silent frog inside the snake, hind legs first, then the body.

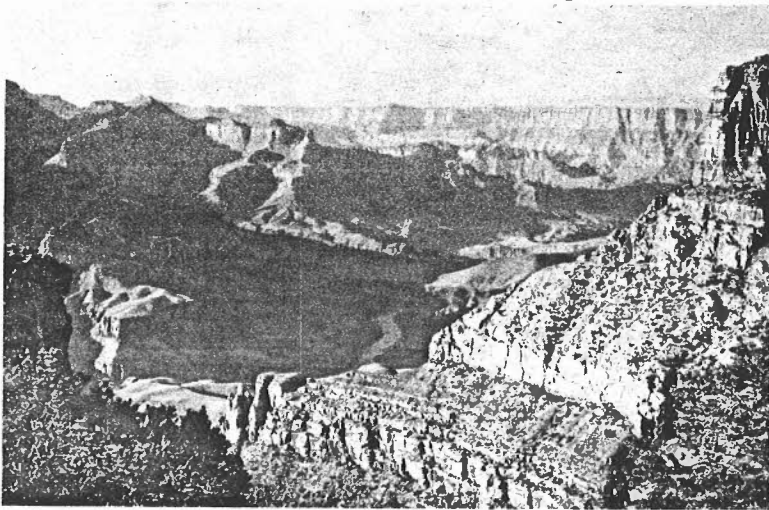
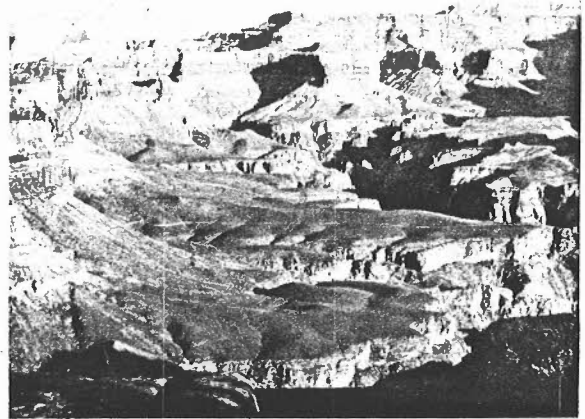
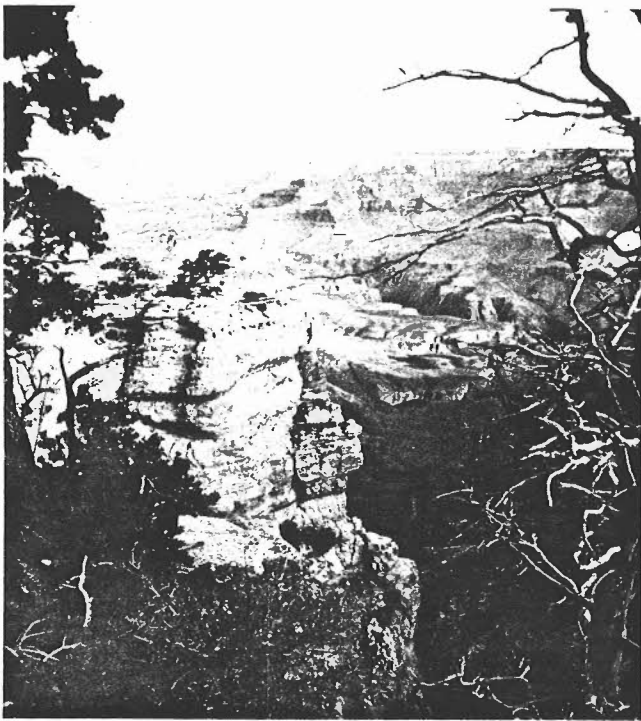


When only the frog's head was still outside, the snake rested a few seconds, as if gathering strength for the last effort to get its meal down. The strange, two-headed creature, lying quietly on the warm rock, stared at us with its four unblinking eyes. Then the snake's jaws started working again and slowly, smoothly, the frog's head too was swallowed.

The small garter snake moved its head from side to side a few times, yawned to adjust its jaws, then turned around and disappeared in the grass.



grand can



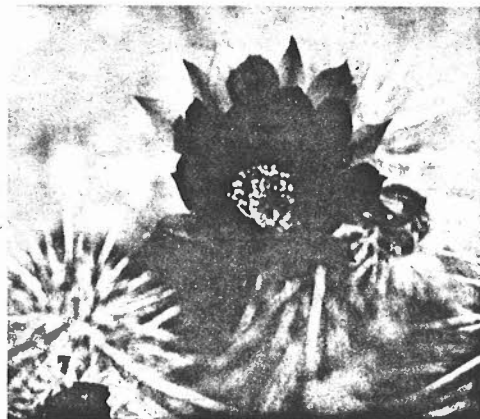
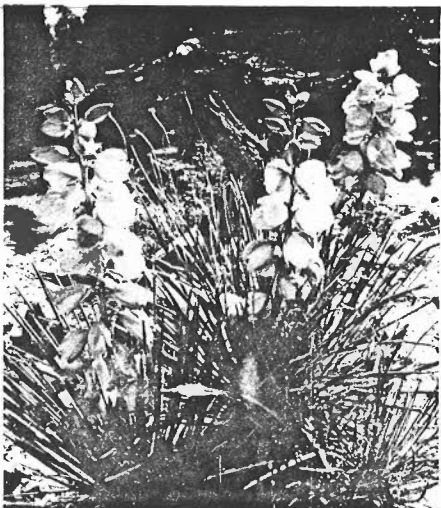
There, defeating my senses, was depth and the distances. Cliffs and terraces, all sculptured on a scale beyond ever imagined. Colours neither red nor purple but a fusion. And stamped the master pattern.

Colin Fletcher from The Man Who Walked T

Photographs by Herb Pohl

Even before I accepted what I saw, I heard the silence; felt it, like something solid, face to face. A silence so profound that the whole colossal chaos of rock and space and colour seemed to have sunk beneath it and to lie there cut off, timeless.

Colin Fletcher from The Man Who Walked Through Time

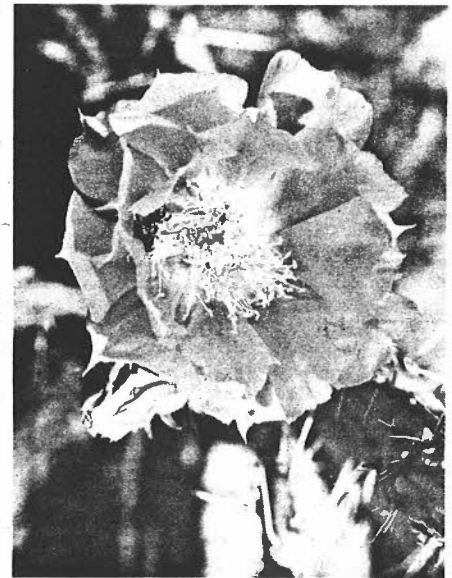
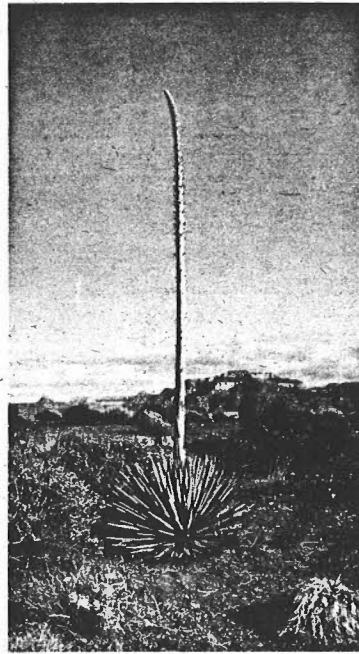


nyon



the depth. The buttes and hanging
ond anything I had or white nor pink
across everything,

through Time.



I ran up to the verge of the Canyon and had my first memorable and overwhelming view in the light and shade of the setting sun. It is the most tremendous expression of erosion and the most ornate and complicated I ever saw - turrets, towers, pyramids, battlemented castles, rising in glowing beauty from the depths of this canyon of canyons noiselessly hewn from the smooth mass of the featureless plateau.

John Muir in 1896 on first seeing the Grand Canyon



wild superior



Lake Superior is a beautiful, fascinating, great lake and I wanted to see more of it. Saturday, September 3, 1983, was a hot, sunny, windy day in the north end of Lake Superior Provincial Park. The lady in the park office where one gets interior permits, assured me that there would be no difficulty canoeing into Gargantua Harbour Hike-In Campground, despite the wind, as it was on a bay. She didn't answer my question about Mijinemungshing Lake (better known as Mijin Lake), the first place to which I was going, east off highway 17. It was difficult paddling. A calm cove part way down the lake was a nice refuge for awhile before battling wind and waves again. Once I tried holding my paddle up as a sail but the wind was going in a different direction. A sand bar between an island and the mainland brought me to stop until I could push off with my paddle.

The campsites were not marked and difficult to find. I settled on a spot on a tiny peninsula. The islands around were already occupied by other campers. No sooner was my tent up and hammock (for food) slung, than the sun bade good-bye, not to be seen again until I left, three days later.

Is there such a thing as a canoe trip without wind and rain? A few times during those days, the rain stopped long enough for me to cook a meal, explore around the area, laze on a rock, watch and listen to the loon, laugh at the fish ducks, and observe other birds and wildflowers. Otherwise I finished a thick, fictional book - something for which I seldom have time.

The nights were wild! No need to worry about bears. No sensible bears would be out in that kind of weather - heavy rain, strong wind, lightning, thunder. It seemed as if my tent should fly away. Sleep was impossible so it was back to the book, reading by candlelight. The third night was the worst. It rained and blew so much that I kept checking the lake level with my flashlight to be sure it wasn't coming up to meet me. It did rise considerably. So much so that when paddling out, against the wind and waves again, the canoe went over the sandbar without my noticing. I did notice some of the leaves had turned gold though.

Next stop - Gargantua Harbour. The road in was not the best. At one place the water flowing from one lake to another went through the two culverts and across the road. However it was solid enough for travel.

More dark clouds and rain storms. When I reached the parking lot, I could hear the lake before I could see it. Canoe in? Too bad those who said it was possible weren't there to see the sight which greeted me. Waves pounding on the rocks. The campground was on a quiet harbour, but there was all this crashing water and rocks to overcome between the launching site and the sandy cove.

I was not prepared to hike in. During the next downpour, I sat in my car, trying to think of another way. A couple coming off the trail said that the first campground was just over a kilometre's hike away. They were soaked to the skin, fed up with the rain, frightened by the previous night's storm, and were heading out.

Down the trail I trudged, expecting to return the next day to paddle in with the rest of the food. Surely by then the lake would have calmed down!

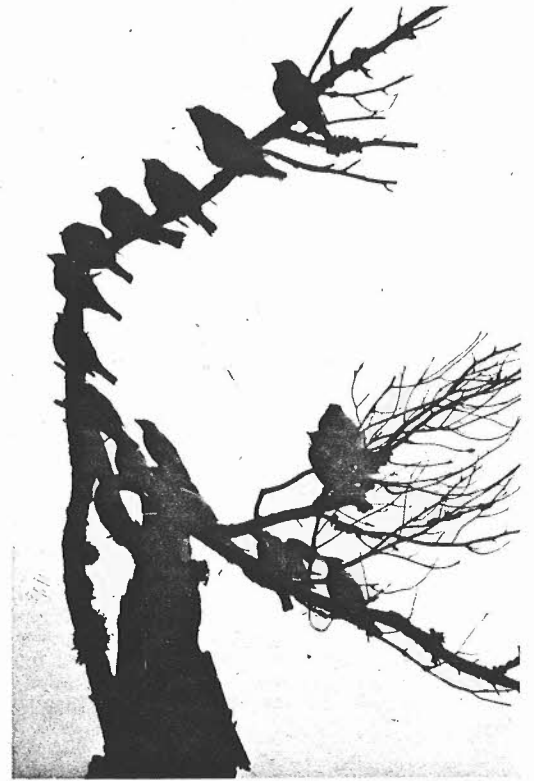
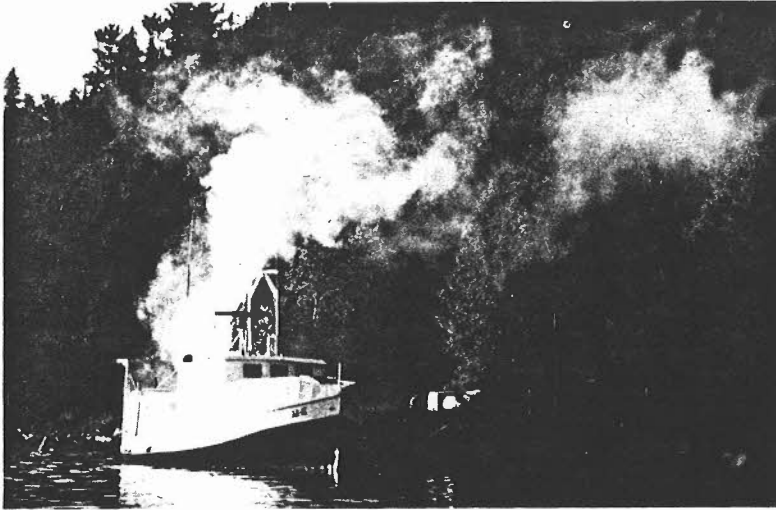
The camping area had trees between each tent site, a sandy beach, and a trail going up through the woods to rocks over-looking the lake. What a spectacular view! There was an old boat in the cove and a couple of empty shacks. In the evening I joined the three other campers for coffee and conversation. They were American and surprised to hear that our rivers in Southern Ontario were polluted. They thought all our rivers were clean. Oh, if only they were right!

Later, in my tent, I was surprised by a truck driving by. The trail was an old logging road which hadn't looked suitable for vehicles. Evidently the padlock on the gate wasn't locked.



It was a quieter night than usual. Just stars, lightning and company. Company? During the night I was awakened by the rustle of a garbage bag. After a few moments, I realized that the food was in the hammock, well away from the tent. The garbage bag was in my pack beside my head, on the inside of the tent. I'd forgotten to put my toothpaste out with the food. As I started to sit up, the animal left quickly through the open flap. In the dark, it was larger than a chipmunk, smaller than an adult skunk, and had a dark, bushy tail.

In the morning there were many storm clouds but they passed over. The sound of the crashing waves was intriguing so I found another trail through the woods behind the camp, which led to a little, rocky bay.



Back in our cove, I found a bloodsucker swimming in the water. Also a pair of loons and some fish ducks. Two of the other campers were going to head down the trail to the next campsite. The other came with me, hopefully to paddle back. The lake had calmed but not enough to launch. So the canoe rode and we drove down the old logging road. Perhaps we all do foolish things sometimes. I was glad to have someone else along to move boulders, branches, and guide me over the narrow bridge. At times there was a little stream running along the trail with us. Almost at the campsite, we got stuck in the sand. Fortunately the other campers hadn't left yet so with our combined efforts we freed the car.

Due to the hot summer, the water was warmer than usual, although refreshing for swimming. It was so clear that I was surprised by my shadow moving along the bottom - in water over my head.



We went canoeing in the bay as far out as sensible, which wasn't far. The waves were wider than those on a smaller lake. It's an odd feeling to put the paddle in and find that there's nothing there but air. The waves were regular so I learned to steer when we were in a trough and not bother on top of a wave.

In the evening we talked with the men from the old fishing boat in a cove. It's interesting hearing from people who actually live in the area you're visiting. One of them lived along a section of the highway which I usually find uninteresting and long. He pointed out the beauty of the area. When driving back I thought of what he said, saw the beauty he'd described, and that part of the trip was no longer dull. Eventually someone built a campfire for warmth. The fishermen planned to leave early in the morning to pick up their fish nets about 50 kilometres out in the lake.

Finally, a quiet, peaceful, restful, uneventful night. It certainly was a welcome change! The next day was the kind of day that vacations are all about. After waving the fishing boat off early in the morning, I scrambled around on the rocks, went swimming again, lay on the beach in the sun, read, and tried to photograph gulls and sandpipers. People appeared from nowhere, wandered along the beach, made a few comments and disappeared. Supper that night was baked in hot coals in the only decent campfire I was able to get going on the whole trip. It was a peaceful, beautiful, dry, sunny, warm day. The lake was still too rough though for canoeing beyond the cove.

That night the one remaining camper and I climbed the hill to watch the sunset. There wasn't much to see, just dark clouds coming over the horizon. When we came off the trail we heard waves pounding on the shore in our cove.

What a storm! The night was very dark - between lightning flashes, which wasn't too often. There was a constant roar, a combination of thunder, wind and waves crashing in the harbour and on the rocks beyond and behind. It was too noisy for sleep, so I sat in the doorway of my tent, watching the lightning.

The other camper was leaving the next day so I accepted his offer of help to bring the car down. We packed up, then paddled out to investigate a sunken steamboat. It was still wavy, even in the cove. We almost got everything into, or onto the car before the next downpour. At the main road we went our separate ways. He back to the States, I on to the Provincial Campground at Agawa Bay.

The next morning there was an unbelievable sight. The lake was calm! It didn't take me long to be launched and off paddling. This time I was actually canoeing on the open water of Lake Superior.

A fisherman staying in the camp, had mentioned a river in the next bay where the salmon were running. I wanted to find this river. However as I tried to round the point, the wind had different ideas. There were dark clouds coming up on the horizon and thunder, faint but getting louder. I turned back, disappointed. A person on the beach watched me until I was almost to shore, then turned and walked away. I'll always wonder if she had seen me go out and was waiting to be sure I was safely back.

In the tent I wrote letters, and read. When the wind wasn't blowing the rain into the tent, I opened the flap and watched the activity.

Finally it let up a bit. I was fed up with being in, so I walked along the beach and trail to the next bay to find the river with the salmon.

The sand was smooth. No human footprints. Solitude. It was so nice to have the beach to myself. But I was wrong. I found the river, the salmon (much smaller than those on the west coast) swimming upstream, human footprints and what looked like an empty car. I turned and headed back to camp.

By then the wind and waves had increased considerably. I gave in to the temptation to go back over the rocks instead of along the path. This was the same point where earlier I'd had to turn back in the canoe. It was wild, now. The waves were splashing up, the wind howling, the dark clouds speeding by overhead. One cloud was so black, I couldn't see the hill ahead of me.

That night there was a sunset and light along the horizon. Perhaps tomorrow would be a sunny, calm day.

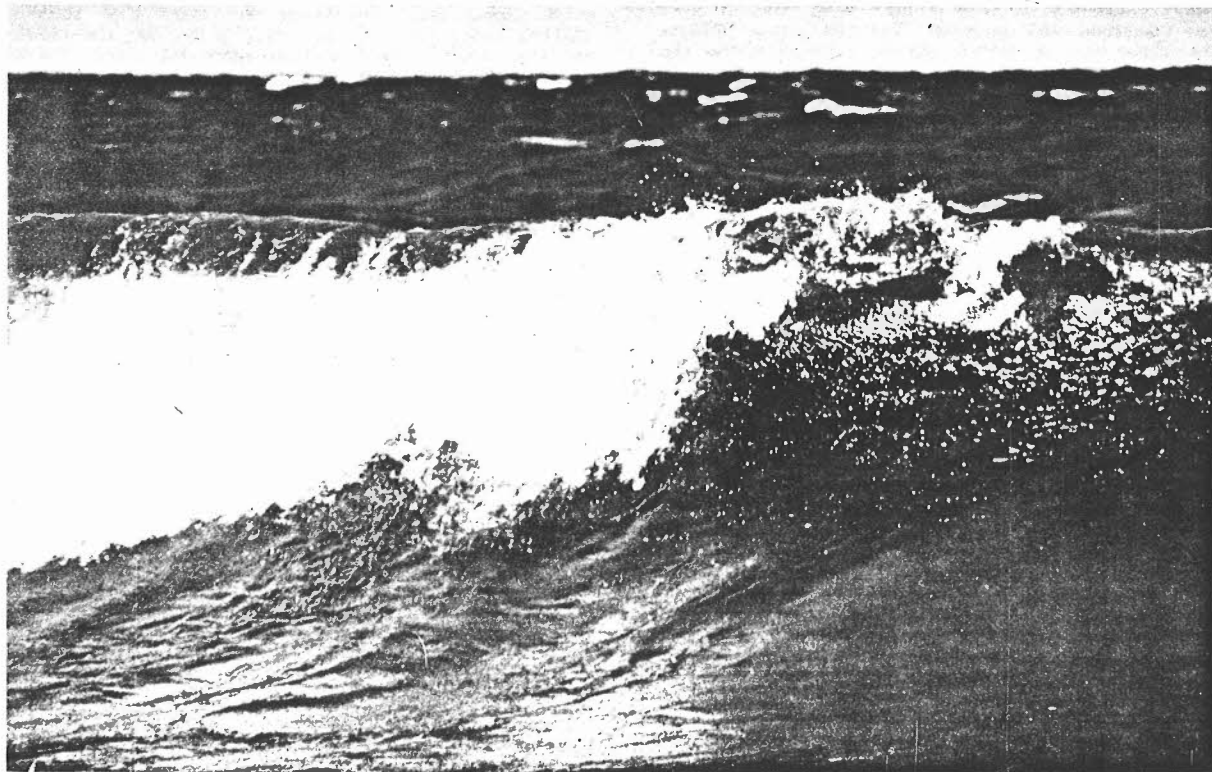
I'd left the canoe a safe distance from the water. When I checked it during the night, however, the waves had reached it. I dragged it farther up the beach. Settling back in my tent, I listened to the roar getting louder, then moved the canoe again. Eventually I'd moved it up behind the trees. Surely the water wouldn't reach that high. According to the amount of vegetation around, it would be unusual. It was a dark night. I couldn't see the waves - just the whitecaps.

The roar increased. The waves were reaching almost to a bench on the edge of my campsite. It was hard to believe, (especially at 3:00 a.m.). From there it would be slightly downhill into my tent. It seemed so unlikely. But then so did the distance the water had already covered. Was there no limit to it? I moved. After dragging my canoe to a higher campsite, throwing my tent and contents into the car, I drove to the higher campsite and spent the rest of the night in my car.

The morning was bright, sunny, cold and windy. The water hadn't reached beyond where it had been when I'd moved, and had even receded slightly, although it still covered the first two places where my canoe had been. There were dark clouds on the horizon again. I'd had enough. After walking along the beach to the point once more I left.

Sand River Falls had looked interesting so I drove back. They were no longer interesting. I'd seen enough active water and weather to last for quite awhile. Sunday, September 11, I drove home, a day earlier than planned.

Article and Photographs by Gail Vickars



the experience of a lifetime

living and travelling with the inuit

Story & Photos: David F. Pelly

The temperature outside our iglu is -35 C. Howling winds and swirling snow have reduced visibility to just a few paces. We are over 100 km from the settlement of Baker Lake, in the Northwest Territories, travelling across the barren lands in mid-April to check Tuluiialik's traps for fox pelts. A sudden blizzard has trapped us in the iglu.

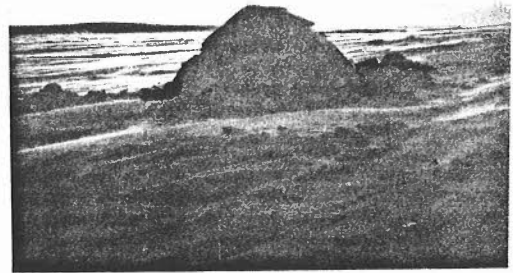
Seated on a bed of caribou skins, my Inuk friend's grinning face exuding confidence through the cold, steamy air, clad warmly in bulky caribou parka and oversized kamiks (muk-luks), I am comfortable - surprisingly so, I feel - as I fondle the warm mug of tea just made from a melted block of the river upon which our shelter sits.

The next morning the storm abates. We emerge to see the snow sparkling under a clear blue sky, an endless tract of whiteness, the most pristine wilderness I've ever seen. The skidoos are exhumed from beneath the drifted snow. Our trip continues, as if the storm was only a short coffee-break.

The scene shifts. I have returned to Baker Lake, to renew friendships, to see the mysterious barren lands in another season. The summer has just passed. Birds are winging southward. The tundra sports a profusion of autumn colours. No trees, but every lichen turns a different shade. Caribou gather for the winter migration. The wilderness has a new face.

The Inuit family around me has left the "civilised" comforts of its settlement home to go out on the land in search of their primary sustenance: caribou meat. Upon the first kill, we feast. Boiled ribs with intestine garnish, leg-bone marrow, raw meat cut from the tender flank. Tomorrow is another day, a time for serious hunting, to gather provisions enough for the weeks and months ahead. Tonight we celebrate.

I hear stories of the old days, before contact with white man, of famous hunters, of lean years. I listen. I learn. I marvel. This is a people with pride and tradition as I've never known.



Travelling the barrens with the Baker Lake Inuit has opened a new world to me. A world where man lives in harmony with nature. The vast stretch of unpeopled, treeless territory west of Hudson Bay is not an inhospitable wilderness. It is a beautiful place. Where you can sit in a meadow filled with dozens of wildflowers. Where countless birds migrate every summer. Where the fishing, for giant lake trout and arctic char, is unsurpassed. Where the sunsets and midnight twilight create a beauty you can never describe to anyone back home. Where caribou roam in mighty herds. It is a land of tradition and legends. The tundra today is still home for the Inuit of Baker Lake.

Just a few years ago these people eked out their isolated lives alone in the barrens. Only the occasional hardy explorer or missionary came in contact with them. Today the hunters of Baker Lake remember their youth in that past era, though they participate in the social and commercial reality that is Canada today. But they are a unique generation: born and raised in traditional camps, yet socialised and at ease in our technological world. That combination will never be repeated.

For me, living and travelling in their way, on their land, was simply the experience of a lifetime.



For anyone interested in travelling the arctic barrens with the Inuit, Tuluiialik of Baker Lake runs an outfitting and guiding service that offers trips of one week or more "out on the land". Groups of at most four participants travel with an Inuk guide by freighter canoe or skidoo and qamatik, depending upon the season, and experience the traditional life of an Inuit camp. Your guide will provide food and shelter, and will open the door for you to discover the culture and the traditional lifestyle of the Inuit.

For a detailed brochure describing these unique arctic trips contact:

Betelgeuse Arctic Expeditions
P.O. Box 1334, Stn. B
Weston, Ontario M9L 2W9
Telephone: 416-749-2176

through darkest hyperbole by canoe

John Winters

So you want to buy a canoe? Where's a good place to start looking? Why the ads, of course! You'll get all the information you need right there in the ad. Or will you? Let's just see what you get by examining an ad from one of the largest canoe manufacturers.

Our sample ad is from the Sawyer Canoe people and shows a gentleman paddling a shiny brown canoe (The colour was chosen by an interior decorator who said it was the "in" colour.) against a backdrop of reeds, blue sky, and fluffy white clouds. The canoe is the "Summersong" designed by Dave Yost. (You know him don't you?) The bottom caption on the picture says, "A concerto for blue water, sunlight, and the solo paddle". OH WOW!! This is what we want. Let's read on. "The Summersong, Dave Yost's twenty-ninth hull, and the tenth hull in his 'R' series, which includes the legendary D.Y. Special." You don't know what the "legendary D.Y. Special" is or the "R" series? Why, in that case you shouldn't be reading such an esoteric ad but you may as well keep on, you might learn something.

"This tidy (They swept out the bilges before the picture was taken.) 15'4" canoe has a working waterline beam of 26 inches...", the ad says. Now that is important to know. Can't you just see that little beam "working" away? Just what is a "working beam" anyway? What happens if it quits working? Later we are told that the maximum beam is 28 inches and the molded beam is 22 inches. Do you know what a "molded beam" is? I suspect the writer meant that the canoe has 4 inches of tumblehome but that would not have been flowery enough nor would it have sounded "technical" so we are given "molded beam" as if it were somehow better than plain old everyday tumblehome. On to the hull shape, where the poet in the adman flows as freely as the Salmon River in late summer.

"The hull is an asymmetrical vee-arch-vee of exceptional cleanliness, with generous freeboard flare fore and aft." Now I don't want to be picky, but what does "exceptional cleanliness" mean? Does it mean the canoe doesn't have a keel? If so, why not just say so? As for "freeboard flare", isn't that a bit redundant? Where else would the flare be in a vee-arch-vee hull but in the topsides? (It should have read topsides, as freeboard refers to the amount of hull above the waterline not the portion of hull itself, but let us not be too picky. No one expects canoe builders to know what the correct names of the parts of a hull are.) No need to concern ourselves with what is meant by "generous". What this canoe has is "generous". All others are either too "generous" or stingy. "But no recitation of numbers can convey what this merry little boat is about." (You can say that again.) Why don't we skip the jolly little poetic verbage in the rest of this paragraph and get on to the next wherein the timeless question, "Should I sit or kneel?", is asked. In my church we kneel but this "boat doesn't care"! OH JOY, OH JOY!! You know how some canoes throw up on your duffel when you sit in them. But not this merry little vessel. It is so tolerant as to be positively disgusting.

Moving right along we are told how roomy this boat is. "That Yost 'bubble' gives you a lot of volume above the waterline where you need it and there's lots of flare in the ends too." Did I hear an echo? Do you know what a "bubble" is? Can a boat be "exceptionally clean" and still have "bubbles"? Is Mr. Yost the only person who puts "bubbles" on his canoes? Let's just skip that and find out how stiff (stable) the canoe is. Well, the stability is remarkable on such a slim canoe. Which is all that much more amazing in that the canoe is both slim and has lots of volume. It is narrow while it is wide. Tell me Mr. Yost is no genius. Next he will turn that lovely blue water into a delightful but unpretentious Cabernet Sauvignon.

**Opus 29, The Summersong.
By Dave Yost.**

**A Concerto for Blue Water,
Sunlight, and Solo Paddle.**

The Summersong, Dave Yost's twenty-ninth hull, and the tenth hull in his 'R' series, which includes the legendary D.Y. Special. This 15'4" canoe has a working waterline beam of 26 inches, a bore height of 18 inches, a 13 inch waterline depth and a stern height of 15 inches. The maximum beam is 28 inches, with a molded beam of 22 inches. The hull is an asymmetrical vee-arch-vee of exceptional cleanliness, with generous freeboard flare fore and aft.

That the maximum of cleanliness can convey the slightest glimmer of what this merry little boat is about. So... let's go paddling you need. Let a pair of cushions Summersong, we'll put in on a little side creek at Free Island, Florida, and paddle out into the Gulf of Mexico.

Should I sit or kneel? You sit, I'll kneel. The boat doesn't care.

Roomy little boat, isn't it? Yep. That Yost 'bubble' gives you a lot of volume above the waterline, where you need it, and there's lots of flare in the ends too.

Think her beam wide to side. What? Oh, that's right, it's a vee-arch-vee hull, and she's got a keel. You know what a "bubble" is? Can a boat be "exceptionally clean" and still have "bubbles"? Is Mr. Yost the only person who puts "bubbles" on his canoes? Let's just skip that and find out how stiff (stable) the canoe is. Well, the stability is remarkable on such a slim canoe. Which is all that much more amazing in that the canoe is both slim and has lots of volume. It is narrow while it is wide. Tell me Mr. Yost is no genius. Next he will turn that lovely blue water into a delightful but unpretentious Cabernet Sauvignon.

Well, she's got a keel. You know what a "bubble" is? Can a boat be "exceptionally clean" and still have "bubbles"? Is Mr. Yost the only person who puts "bubbles" on his canoes? Let's just skip that and find out how stiff (stable) the canoe is. Well, the stability is remarkable on such a slim canoe. Which is all that much more amazing in that the canoe is both slim and has lots of volume. It is narrow while it is wide. Tell me Mr. Yost is no genius. Next he will turn that lovely blue water into a delightful but unpretentious Cabernet Sauvignon.

SAWYER CANOE

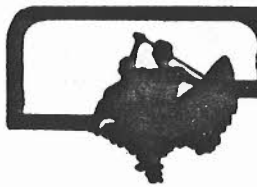
Box 435C, Oscoda, MI 49750
In Sawyer Canoe People's Guide to Canoes

Sawyer Canoe ad, reprinted from Canoe, Sept./Oct. 1983.

So much for the mundane, now let's talk about speed, and this little jewel has it. Why it is almost as fast as the "legendary D.Y. Special" (You remember that don't you?), except for normal touring when she is just as fast which means..... What does it mean? How fast is "fast"? If you were any kind of canoeist you would know. That's the problem with writing ads, the public isn't smart enough to know what you are talking about.

Meanwhile, this canoe really tracks. Why the wind doesn't bother it at all. It tracks like it "was on rails" but it is still easy to turn. So easy, it takes no effort at all, yet that 20 kilometre per hour cross wind won't turn it. Who said Yost wasn't a saint? And look at that little 110 pound woman just stroking along with no effort at all while even that flabby old 200 pound man is managing just fine too. How can that be? It's because Yost didn't quit designing at the 4 inch waterline like other designers. (Makes you wonder how other canoes manage to get their shape doesn't it?) Where is the 4" waterline? Why it's 4 inches above the bottom which is either above or below the working waterline depending on whether the working waterline is working or not. Confused? Take heart the best is yet to come, for wonder of wonders, Sawyer didn't quit building at the 4 inch waterline either. (Good thing too.) This little work of art has those shiny sides, aesthetically pure decals, aluminium rubrails, aluminium thwarts, and a nifty orange stripe down the side to make the whole thing look like a stock car racer. These are the signs of quality to look for in a canoe.

Finally we are told that we too can be virtuoso canoeists. If we will just purchase a Summersong, we too can paddle off into the sunset to the sound of massed strings and the occasional plop of a meadow muffin. Be still my beating heart.

THREE BOOKS ON OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP

Reviewed by: John Winters

The Canoe Guide's Handbook

Author: Gil Gilpatrick

Publisher: Delorme Publishing, \$7.95

The Spirit of Canoe Camping

Author: Harry Drabik

Publisher: Nodin Press, \$6.95

The Wilderness Handbook

Author: Paul Petzoldt

Publisher: (W.W. Norton & Co., \$6.95)

When I first led a canoe trip for Scouts, I had the vague idea that all I need do was increase the supplies to suit the number of participants, decide where to go and proceed as if it were just another of my own personal trips. Such are the dreams of babes. I am now a bit wiser from experience but still feel a need to learn more about the "art" of leading wilderness trips. So, when I found these three books, I thought I would finally get the low down on the business. After all, Drabik and Gilpatrick are professional guides of apparent success and Petzoldt is the founder of the National Outdoor Leadership School and with the credentials their books should be just what the doctor ordered. Unfortunately only one of the three lived up to expectations: Petzoldt's.

Drabik's and Gilpatrick's books are worth a quick read through if only to see what their attitudes are towards the wilderness. No doubt you will also find a few tid-bits of information that you had never known before, but for the most part these books contain little that has not been covered in one or more of the better books on camping and canoeing. (I am thinking of The Complete Wilderness Paddler by Davidson and Ruggie, The Canoe and Whitewater by Franks and The New Complete Walker by Fletcher as being the "better" variety). I suspect that both Gilpatrick and Drabik have more to tell than is found in their books, but they don't seem to have much success in passing it on. Their discussions of gear hint at experience with a lot of equipment but we never

find out what that experience was or even why they choose Brand X over Y. They seem satisfied to tell us that they like what they use and if you want to try something different, well go ahead. Not the attitude one expects in a "how to" book is it?

There was very little mis-information although one might take issue with Drabik's description of how to do a "J" stroke or his opinions on canoes (There are no other kinds for him but aluminium.); and Gilpatrick is guilty of recommending the use of nonbiodegradable soap pads and canned food plus a few photos of people running rapids in fully laden canoes while not wearing life jackets. We are supposed to know better, but still... Simply put, these are the kind of books you want to check out of the library and read once, they are not what you would want to buy for reference.

Such is not the case with Petzoldt's The Wilderness Handbook. That canoe is never even mentioned is beside the point. Nine of the thirteen chapters contain information of value for any wilderness expedition. (The other four are strictly for mountaineering types.) Everything Petzoldt says has the ring of extensive experience as well as the input of many knowledgeable people. Best of all, he explains the "why" behind it all. Granted, there is a bit of duplication with other books but the chapters on expedition behavior and outdoor teaching are unique. To my mind, this book is must reading for anyone planning an extended trip with other people.

rideau waterway

Ingeborg Dodds

For a fall trip this year Jack and I decided to canoe half of the Rideau Waterway, from Kingston to Smiths Falls. The length of this trip, including a side trip into Tay Marsh is about 105 kilometres. We normally prefer white water, but decided upon this route because we knew there would be ample water following an unusually dry summer.

The weather was beautiful and the autumn colours were brilliant; and even though this waterway is a very busy one for motor boats until Labour Day, we enjoyed all the privacy of wilderness canoeing at its best. The added attraction of this particular trip is of course its historical interest. The canal was built under the supervision of Colonel By of the Royal Engineers, and was finished in 1832. The dams and over 40 locks constructed at that time are, for the most part, still in operation.

Portaging around the locks is an easy matter, and it is an exciting event when a lockmaster lets you go through the lock as happened when we came to the electric lock at Newboro. Drinking water may be obtained at the locks, and with the permission of the lockmaster you may camp on the well-kept grounds that surround the locks. The kindly lockmasters go home at 16:30, but if you get there before they go, they will leave you a key to the clean washrooms that have warm water.

We parked our car on a Saturday afternoon at a private campground situated on Cunningham Road on the west side of highway 15 a couple of kilometres north of Kingston Mills locks. We had viewed these locks beforehand but the lockmaster advised us that the car would be safer at the campground than at the locks.

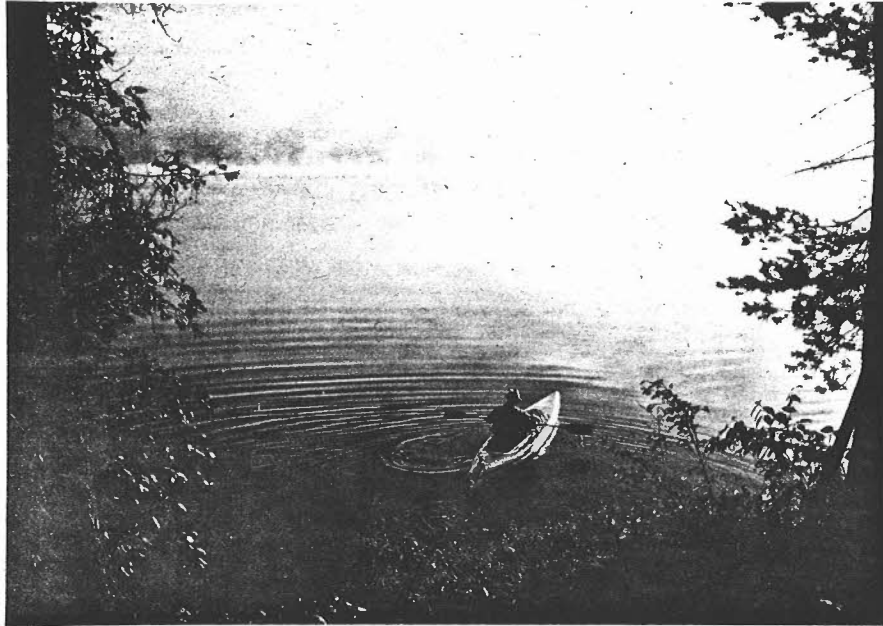
We stayed overnight at various locks: Upper Brewers, Chaffeys and Beveridge, the latter being situated on the Tay Canal leading from Perth to Lower Rideau Lake.

The highway is never far from the waterway, although you can never see it. You may be able to stop at night and have your dinner at a nearby inn or hotel. Otherwise there are picnic tables at all lock grounds, and you must bring your stove to cook on. On our last evening (Tuesday), when the wind had changed to blow from the east and the air was saturated with moisture, we were able to portage from the lock at Smiths Falls right into the Lockview Motel; the bus station is immediately opposite and if it is not the Express, the bus will stop for you at Cunningham Road where you can pick up your car. Within 2 1/2 hours you can be back at the motel to pick up your canoe and gear.

Useful maps and information may be obtained at the locks or by writing to Environment Canada in Ottawa. A very handy and interesting pocket book is Kenneth McNeill Wells' Cruising the Rideau Waterway (McClelland & Stewart). For a more thorough description get Rideau Waterway by Robert Legget (University of Toronto Press); it is a fascinating account. You definitely need the topographical maps (31 C/8, 31 C/9, 31 C/16) as one morning we had to rely entirely on compass navigation due to dense fog. Also many lakes are fairly large with numerous islands.

This canoe trip on rivers and canals, through lakes and exploring the Tay Marsh was very exciting and for us a beautiful way of ending the 1983 canoeing season. We are looking forward to doing the rest of the trip from Smiths Falls to Ottawa.

thanksgiving on the petawawa



Herb Pohl

The instruction to the participants - Diane and Mike Wills and Dave Berthelet - was to meet at the Husky Truckstop on the West End of Pembroke. Nobody had any difficulty finding it, but Dave took great pains to point out to the organizer that according to the operator of the establishment, it hadn't been a Husky station for ten years. How time flies!

The original intention was to finish the four-day trip at the town of Petawawa. However, the request to allow our convoy to pass through the Military Reserve was turned down by the authorities on the grounds that it was against "policy". It's difficult to mount a rational argument against "policy".

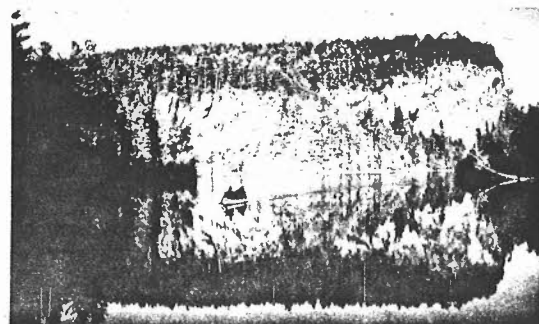
This meant that we had to terminate the trip at McManus Lake which added another 100 km. to an already long car shuffle. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as we would have been pushed to cover the additional forty km of paddling from McManus to the town of Petawawa. Luckier still, we managed to pile the three boats onto, and people and gear into, Dave's vehicle for the 2½ hour car shuffle.

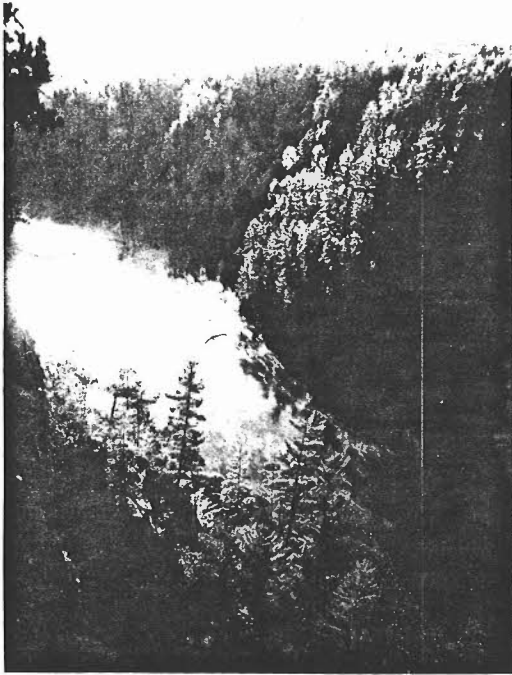
The Great Wendigo, it may be remembered, is a dreaded figure of Algonkian mythology particularly noted for his fondness for human flesh. So when we arrived at Wendigo's Lake about lunchtime, I wasn't the first one to leave the car. As it turned out, the coast was clear and before long, we headed off into the sun. Our route took us due south along a rocky groove carved out during the Ice Age and now occupied by a succession of long narrow lakes. The lakes are interconnected by a lively stream - the North River - which alternately rushes over narrow ledges in miniature waterfalls or spreads out fanlike as it hurries down a sloping rockface. Here and there the spirited descent is interrupted by beaver dams and marshy lagoons.

The scenery tempted us to stop early, but lack of a suitable campsite kept us moving until we reached Radiant Lake. Darkness comes early at this time of year. We had carried over a number of portages and when the cold westerly began to be accompanied by rain, there seemed to be no reason to linger around the fire.

It rained gently throughout the night and carried on intermittently until noon of the following day. We were up at first light and after a quick breakfast, pushed off into the shallow waters. Almost immediately after leaving Radiant Lake, we encountered fast water. It starts with Battery Rapids which looks very formidable from the top. It's steep and boulder strewn and an excellent test of manoeuvring ability. From then on, until Lake Traverse, most of the portages indicated on the Algonquin Park map bypass ledge rapids; some are runnable, others require short liftovers. Only the last two were portaged.

At the medium waterlevels we encountered, this stretch of river seems to be an ideal training ground for anyone who is planning to step into the "big time" of wilderness tripping. Instead of using the regular portage trails (which one can pretend don't exist), one can stay on or near the water's edge, examining each obstacle as it presents itself. Should one run, line, lift over, portage along the shore, ferry to the other side? The alternatives are all there many times over. Even, as in this case, with a blessed railroad right next to the river, it seems to me a much better (although often slower) way to work one's way down (or up) a stream than the mindless acceptance of a portage sign as the decision-making authority. The wilderness tripper, after all, has to make his own decisions.





We made camp on a point of land shortly after reaching Lake Traverse. We had barely settled in when our first visitor made his appearance and thereby reminded us to hang up our food at bedtime. As the evening progressed, the skies gradually cleared and as the temperature fell, the circle around the fire drew closer. More and more stars appeared until the Milky Way shimmered in full splendor. When I finally turned in, at 8 o'clock, it was to seek the warmth of my sleeping bag, but somehow I never got quite comfortable.

Sometime during the night, I was startled by a commotion outside. It seems our earlier visitor had reached into the Wills' tent and fished out the (empty) cooking pot. Now, with Diane in hot pursuit, the retreating raccoon tried to disappear into the night with the spoils; the noise generated by a metal pot being dragged over rocky terrain in considerable, we discovered.



A dense blanket of fog covered the lake in the morning. Now and again the outline of the far shore would rise out of the mist as a slight breeze would lift the gray curtain. The sun, visible as a bright indistinct disk on the eastern horizon, provided no warmth, but set the morning aglow. One by one the other boats pushed off and vanished in the fog. A few minutes later I followed. Orienteering by the position of the sun, we made our way uncertainly down the lake. Three otters, perched atop a half sunken log, watched us intently as we passed. We were nearing Thompson Rapids when Dave noticed a moose at the shore and managed to get quite close for pictures. When I tried to follow, the creature decided things were getting too crowded and moved off unhurriedly.

The waterlevel downstream was perfect and we ran all rapids on sight except Crooked Chute. A little earlier, we had caught up to the only other paddlers we met on the trip. One of them ran the chute in his kayak; somewhere along the way man and boat parted company. Dave and I felt vindicated in our decision to carry around the corner. After lunch Rollway gave us a good ride and when we reached the cliffs below The Natch Rapids in mid-afternoon, we settled into an early camp.

Later on, we made our way to the top of the cliffs and looked out over the unbroken wilderness. The evening sun and its reflection on the waters far below, the peace and silence of the place made one want to linger. Mike even suggested, half-heartedly I thought, moving our camp to this lofty place, but in the end inertia triumphed easily and we retreated to the world below and supper.

Another glorious morning dawned; the mist rose in faint little columns that curled upward, propelled by the morning rays of the sun. Dave and I once more climbed to the top to catch the early light and then we were off. The scene was memorable. Beams of light were streaming in low, the light filtered and diffused by the rising mist. Not a breath of wind stirred. The smooth surface of the river was only broken by the bow wave of Diane and Mike's canoe some distance ahead. Magically, soundless, just as the waves in the water, the mist parted as if a gaint translucent curtain were opening behind them. We paddled in silence for nearly two hours in this trancelike setting.

Gradually, as the sun rose higher in the sky before us, the mists evaporated. At Five Mile Rapids, the reflection of the sun transformed the rushing water into liquid silver; blinding and camouflaging, it raised the level of difficulty and we proceeded cautiously for awhile.

By the time we reached Whitson Lake, a determined headwind was blowing which remained with us till the end. The last two hours before McManus Lake always drag a bit and this time was no exception, but it could not diminish the feeling of deep satisfaction. Algonquin in Autumn - it's magic.

map & compass

Rob Cepella
Howard Sagemann



This two part introductory session on the use of map and compass was very successful. Marcia Farquhar kindly provided the use of her home for the Tuesday evening seminar. The evening was a mixture of discussion and practice. Some of the many topics covered were: the compass, sightings, bearings, declination, grid references, the UTM system and maps in general. After the discussion the floor was taken over by the eager participants (literally) who proceeded to practise the skills taught. They were quick to learn the principles covered and left the evening seminar anxious to apply their skills on the following October 15-16 weekend. The weekend session was held at McCrae Lake, which is near Six Mile Lake Provincial Park.

The Saturday morning drive up brought fears of stormy weather but the dark clouds soon disappeared to reveal a beautiful brisk fall weekend. While paddling to the base camp, the trip organizers (ourselves) tried fruitlessly to lead the group astray. We knew we had failed when we saw that the team of Linda Butler and Georgina Graham had stopped paddling to check their maps. Georgina was quick to shout, "Hey guys, you're going the wrong way!" Obviously a quick learner since she had missed the Tuesday evening seminar.

Prior to reaching base camp, the group stopped at a rock island which, because of its height, provide an excellent overview of the surrounding area. Here the techniques of triangulation and sightings were used to determine our position. As well, we demonstrated the effectiveness of the compass mirror as a signalling device. Upon arriving at base camp, tents were quickly set up and lunch was eaten in the warm autumn sun amidst cries of "OOPS, POISON IVY!" Fortunately, no one was infected.

Lunch was followed by a short paddle to the start of the afternoon hike. The group followed a trail leading to the top of the cliffs overlooking McCrae Lake. This scenic spot provided another good point for practising more sightings and triangulation. The hike was then continued to the starting point of a bushwack from McCrae Lake to Buckshoof Lake. The participants gained confidence in their abilities by successfully completing this bushwack on their own. On the return hike, the group met up with a squadron of air cadets who were rappelling down the McCrae Lake cliffs. Their camp, complete with ghetto blaster and squadron flag was on a small point below the cliffs. We then paddled back to base camp for dinner.

In the true October spirit two of the more imaginative members of the group had an Oktoberfest dinner, while the others endured less festive meals. Dinner was followed by the identification of Polaris, the North Star, in the clear night sky. Later, the two Oktoberfesters each grabbed a canoe and paddled by the light of the moon towards the air cadets' camp. Their movements were cloaked by a mist hovering above the mirror-like lake.

Sunday morning the group awoke suprised to find the air cadet squadron flag in our campsite. The organizers insisted the flag be returned much to the objections of the other group members. With the flag flying from the bow, three strong paddlers swiftly paddled to the air cadets' camp. With the cadets watching from the cliffs, Joe Thompson returned the flag to the thankful supervisors. Following the return of the flag, the group paddled back and we broke camp.

In order to provide more practice at using the compass, the organizers had set up a course consisting of 14 markers on an island. The route from one marker to the next involved taking several sightings along a particular bearing.

The participants were supplied with a list of bearings. The first bearing was from our base camp to the initial marker on the island. Jim Greenacre, in his sleek solo boat, was the first to reach the island and start the course. Everyone enjoyed the solitary walk through the autumn woods taking the time to observe the wildlife and fall colours. As storm clouds approached, the group paddled back to their cars at the put-in point, please with the confidence they had gained and the new skills learned.

We look forward to repeating this successful trip next season.

in search of the phantom road

Herb Pohl

There is something special about Algonquin in the winter. It conjures up views of trackless space, of frozen lakes, of little streams hidden away under snow and ice which rise now and again to reveal their existence; most of all it represents solitude and silence for there are few if any travellers who venture beyond the groomed trails along the highway.

Well, John Cross and I are not the ordinary sort and so, on a mild Saturday last January we made our way to the north end of Sasajewun Lake with the intention of following the North Madawaska River to Croy Lake and beyond. Lest this leave the impression that here was a case of idle self indulgence it should be pointed out

that at least part of the reason for our journey was to assess the difficulty of travel along this route for a WCA outing later on.

It was simple enough - we wanted to follow the river, but should that prove too difficult we would switch to the old logging road which, according to the topographic map, runs more or less parallel to the stream for several kilometres. At the end of the road we would be able to continue in open marshland - no problems. Because the river ice at the far end of Sasajewun looked rather unsafe I convinced John that we would save time and effort if we continued on the road which could be no more than a few hundred metres to the east of us.

We searched diligently - first for a road, than for signs of what might once have been a road and finally just for a way back out to the river. Nearly two hours later we re-emerged perhaps half a kilometre upstream and I at least, noticeably wearier. For quite awhile thereafter we were content to follow the meanderings of the stream. Now and again we'd pause to look for signs of the elusive road which should have crossed the river here, or run along the banks some distance farther on. Our progress became more tentative as open water here and there forced us into the matted alders on the shore. Numerous beaver dams complicated the situation and despite our best efforts to take a safe course, wet feet prevailed.

By mid afternoon we passed Croy Lake and when John managed to break through the crust once more we decided to beat a short retreat and set up camp. The place was a veritable jungle of dead balsam fir, some vertical, some horizontal, all nice and dry. Without ever venturing further than ten metres we had enough fuel for a comforting fire which John nurtured for hours, all in the name of necessity of course.

Once the initial flurry of activity of setting up camp was over my partner decided it was time to attend to his personal comfort. I watched with considerable interest as he proceeded to take off his boots, remove the wool liners, then in stages three socks from the left and four from the right foot (perhaps it was the other way around), all equally wet but wonderfully varied in texture and colour. Obviously John is not your average snappy dresser. There in another thing about him - he is determined; from 5:30 p.m. EST to approximately 9:46 p.m. he patiently moved articles of clothing to and fro in an intricate pattern. My last impression before I drifted off to sleep under our lean-to was that of a shadowy figure with hands encased in boot-liners and arms stretched out toward the flame as if in a pagan ritual.

Snowflakes carried by the shifting breeze under our shelter landed on our faces and woke us disagreeably the next morning. Because of the freshly fallen snow and mild temperatures we were concerned that the ice cover for our homeward journey would be even more treacherous; but except for a few near-misses we managed to stay dry. Since we had lots of time on our hands we decided to leave our toboggans at the junction of the North Madawaska and Fern Creek and follow the latter for some distance upstream. The whole region is wild overgrown scrub-forest, full of dead falls and obviously still has not recovered from the after effects of logging operations some fifty years earlier. On our return we noticed ski tracks join our route for the rest of the way back to the car and there an unmistakable clue: a little bag of coffee tied to the car door handle - we were not the only WCA members in these parts.

Our trip had been useful in that it convinced us that it would be unwise to pursue this route with a larger number of participants. Nevertheless I wasn't satisfied - how could a logging road disappear so completely? A comparison of the Park map with the topographic map showed several inconsistencies and when I dug out a 1947 map of Algonquin it disagreed with both; in particular it showed a logging road farther east. There was the answer to the puzzle no doubt and an excuse to spend another weekend in the region.

With John tied up at a director's meeting, here was a chance for real solitude as well. All week it had been cold; Saturday began with glorious sunshine and a decided nip in the air - minus thirty the man at the research station said. In the intervening two weeks the region had experienced a heavy rainfall which froze into a solid crust on the lakes. No need for snowshoes I decided as I followed our old tracks. I could hear the faint gurgling of water below me as I started upriver from Sasajewun Lake. An instant later the sound was more noticeable, so was a cold sensation in my left foot. The water wasn't deep and I didn't linger to marvel at the large hollow beneath the thin crust I had travelled on, I just decided to be more careful from now on. A half hour later, just as I was about to leave the old route behind and turn up Red Fox Creek I happened to turn around and there, pumping hard, approached a solitary skier. It was the dispenser of the bag of coffee - Karl Schimick. I could detect a slight air of condescension as he glanced at my outfit (not fast enough?) and after a brief exchange we went our separate ways.

For most of its short existence Red Fox Creek runs in a narrow steep-walled valley. Open channels make travel through the alder-clogged shoreline a frequent necessity. I was trying to negotiate another beaver dam when I experienced once more a sudden loss of altitude.

I was not pleased!

Standing knee-deep in slush I gradually (i.e. step by step) enlarged the area of open water in my efforts to get the hell out of there. What makes this process even more annoying is that your feet don't get soaked all at once, as experts in the field know, rather the moisture advances gradually from the top of the tightly laced mukluks downward as a cold front so that the full effect is not realized until several minutes after the event.

Of course I had a change of footwear with me for just such an occasion, but with the way my luck was running I thought it best to leave things as they were in spite of the cold. Progress for some time thereafter, was more hesitant. Once again the elusive road which should have crossed the creek in this area failed to materialize. Resigned to failure I continued upstream, now content to make an early camp at a suitable spot and from there explore the countryside. It wasn't long before I found myself trapped on the wrong side of the creek. The ice was too thin to venture across and here I was stuck between a rockface on one side and Red Fox Creek on the other, precariously advancing on a little shiver of shoreline and behind me an eight-foot toboggan which kept sliding sideways onto the ice which would promptly give way. For the next fifty metres I left a trail of open water (and four-letter words) behind me without coming to serious grief but the cover of ice on the toboggan didn't help the glide. It was early in the afternoon when I came upon a nice sheltered spot on Banjee Lake. Once again, as two weeks earlier, there was a profusion of dry firewood - this was going to be a comfortable camp.

There was plenty of daylight left, so I set out with map and compass to do a little circle route. It was a glorious day and the scenery had a fairy-land quality about it. The icy coating on the vegetation sparkled with the sun's reflected rays and every breeze brought forth a wave of tinkling sounds. When I reached Amyoa Lake I climbed the rocky promontory which dominated the scene and remained there for awhile, in part to look at the scenery. The other reason was that down by the lakeshore a moose was noisily snorting about and I couldn't tell whether it was angry or just suffering from a bad cold.

By the time I returned to the toboggan it was dusk and I got down to the business of setting up camp. It was then that I made an interesting discovery - my waterproof duffel bag wasn't all that waterproof and consequently my spare clothing had been transformed into a frozen lump. The rest of the evening was reminiscent of two weeks earlier, only the temperature was much lower this time around.

Intermittently throughout the night the silence was broken by loud reports from the lake as the ice cracked with the increasing cold. I wasted no time getting a fire started in the morning and lingered near the flame until my boots were pliable once more. Another beautiful day was in the offing.

On the way back I carefully steered clear of all trouble spots. New ice had formed on sections of previously open water which seemed to attract a number of Cross Bills; in fact there seemed to be an unusual number and variety of songbirds about which filled the morning air with cheerful tunes. I tried to capture the flavour of the scene on film to serve as a reminder of the feeling of happiness engendered. And long before I finished I vowed to return again.

As a post script it may be appropriate to inform travellers contemplating a visit to the area that the writer is convinced that gremlins inhabit the region. Besides the tribulations mentioned above the final proof came when the author opened the camera to send a roll of exquisite pictures to be developed and found it - empty. But that's not all - exactly the same thing happened to Paula Schimeck two weeks earlier. Coincidence you say? We'll see!

north madawaska valley

John Cross

After last year's Annual General Meeting participants went off on several outings, one of which was a ski trip up the Madawaska Valley, north of Highway 60 in Algonquin Park. Several trips had already been taken this way during the winter by WCA members, and it shows great promise as a winter recreation route.

One of its positive features is its obscurity; although the Mew Lake Campground and the Highland Hiking Trail are just south of the highway, and are very well used, no one seems to know about what is to be found to the north. We parked in the Mew Lake lot and walked about a kilometre up the Sasajewun Lake road. Although this road is sometimes open to cars, and some of us have driven up it (with permission from the Natural Resources people there), it was closed this weekend because of animal experiments at the labs up the road.

We started skiing at the Sasajewun Lake dam and skied up the lake and the Madawaska River. The snow was melting quickly and had exposed the tracks of all the travellers who had passed that way during the winter. They were 5 in number: Herb, me, Karl, Paula, and Herb again. Not even the lab staff seems to use this route.

Although the ice was thick in spots, the rapid melt of snow was forcing warm water up against its underside, thinning it, cracking it, and probably portending breakup in a few days. We trod very warily (although we knew the creek to be very shallow).

About a kilometre above the lake, the river is joined by a tributary, Red Fox Creek. This we ascended, expecting to cross the narrow land gap to Croy Lake and re-descend by the Madawaska. However, we discovered a

trail along the west side of the creek, and decided to follow it instead. It parallels the creek, in sight of it in its lower reaches, and appeared to end at a cabin just below Chit Lake.

The cabin had obviously been used within the past year: food and lantern fuel were stocked in the cupboard, and the deadfalls on the west side of the creek had been cut out with a saw. Yet there were no tracks in the snow to show use during the winter, and on our descent, we discovered that, after the trail crosses the creek, the east side has not been cleared of deadfalls. It would seem as if the owner must use only the west side, ascending the creek to that point. Yet, since he did not do so in the winter, how does he get up? Surely the creek is too shallow for a boat! A puzzle to consider.

In the lower reaches, the trail follows the creek on the east side, then veers away and up a hill to eventually wind its way back to the Sasajewun Lake dam and road. This section is harder going, so we headed back to the Madawaska, and on our way found the ruins of an old logging depot. There are several large, connected clearings, with the ruins of 6 to 9 buildings, some of them showing the remains of log walls, others having decayed to nothing more than a neat square of particularly luxurious thorn bushes. The remains of an old landing on the river bank is barely noticeable.

Although snow had vanished from most of southern Ontario by this time, it was still adequate in Algonquin Park. The blazing sunshine, reflected off the snow, coupled with the warm wind blowing up from the south, made this one of the hottest days so far this year, and permitted torso tanning while skiing. We were glad to have been out ski-exploring on this of all weekends.



kipewa

Article: Tom Elliott
Photos: Ken Knowles

We used a 3-man dome tent with the door and windows wide open for maximum ventilation to keep the sleeping bags dry and warm. The weather was excellent with a full moon, good snow and ice and a temperature range of -35°C to $+10^{\circ}\text{C}$. Although we followed snowmobile trails, we saw no one until we neared Kipewa on day five, a Saturday.

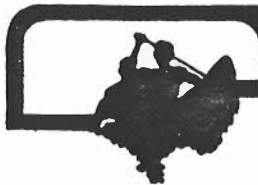
This is a beautiful wilderness area with only a few fishing camps. It has great winter trip and summer canoeing potential. The Quebec conservation officers at Temiscaming (819-627-3335) were most helpful in the planning of this trip. (The pertinent topo maps are 31 L 14 and 15.)

The cold camping system we use with respect to food, equipment, methods of keeping warm, etc. is based on what I learned on an Outward Bound winter course. Having done a few trips since that excellent course, our skill level is increasing and we are as comfortable in winter as we are in the other seasons of the year. Winter has become my favourite season to be in the wilderness.

Although this was an Iroquois Canoe Club trip, Herb Pohl suggested that a report be sent to Nastawjan. As the trip organizer, I wish to express thanks to Craig MacDonald and John Cross for the advice they gave on where to go in this winter of marginal snow and ice conditions.

Three people did this trip which started at Highway 101 about 16 km north of Letang, Quebec. A trail leads from the highway to Lac Marsac. We walked with and without snowshoes, pulling two toboggans and carrying one pack. The snow was not deep. We followed a lake system east for two days to the east side of McKenzie Island, where we set up a base camp. From here we did runouts on skis, one day on large lakes and one day on a system of small lakes on McKenzie Island. The last two days were spent walking south to Kipewa, where a local resident gave us a ride to the car.





WINTER TRIPS

January 7 SILENT LAKE CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Organizers: Roger & Mary Ann Nellis 416-421-3497
Book immediately

The regular loop is 19 km, but shorter loops are possible. Limit 10 skiers.

January 13-15 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING IN HUNTSVILLE AREA

Organizer: King Baker 416-284-6004
Book immediately

A low key, easy going week-end at Camp Tawingo. We will ski the local trails and enjoy the recreational facilities and excellent food prepared by the camp staff. Limit 12 people.

January 14-15 LIGHTWEIGHT CAMPING IN BUCKHORN AREA

Organizers: Sandy Richardson 416-429-3944
Cam Salsbury 416-498-8660
Book before January 8

Come on an exploratory ski-backpacking trip with us into a scenic wilderness area of numerous small lakes, rocky ridges and open bush. Travelling with light-weight equipment we will bushwack in and set up a campsite, leaving ample time to explore the surrounding area, photograph, and simply enjoy the clean, quiet beauty of the bush in winter.

Suitable for anyone in reasonable physical condition, and with some experience cross-country skiing while wearing a backpack. Limit 6 people.

January 21 HORSESHOE VALLEY SNOWSHOEING

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book after January 15

The Horseshoe Valley area, north of Barrie and adjacent to the ski resort, offers a variety of terrain suitable for snowshoeing: wide, clear paths under stately deciduous trees, open grasslands and narrow tortuous trails through dense spruce and pine bush. Car pool will be arranged. Limit 8 people.



January 22 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI IN YORK REGION FOREST

Organizers: Rudi and Gerda Tismer 416-766-8076
Book before January 17

Participants will meet in the York Mills Subway Station parking lot at 9:00 a.m. where a car pool will be organized. Skiers should be capable enough to handle moderately steep slopes and to ski a distance of 10 km. Bring a lunch.

January 22 GOODRICH-LOOMIS CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Organizer: Glenn Spence 416-355-3506
Book before January 15

Come on out to Colborne country for some cross-country skiing. We will go to the Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area which offers three challenging loops totalling 15 km in distance. The skill level will range from novice to intermediate. Limit 8 skiers.

January 28-29 LINDA LAKE LOOP

Organizer: Herb Pohl 416-637-7632
Book before January 17

This trip will take the same route as in the past, that is, we will start at the Algonquin Park Museum parking lot and finish at the outlet of Canisbay Lake. Whether it will be a "warm" or "cold" weekend will depend on the participation of "warm camping" enthusiasts who are willing to share the use of their equipment. Either way, the organizer will use snowshoes and toboggan. Limit to be determined.

January 28 NORTH KAWARTHA SKI TRAILS

Organizers: Anneke & Dave Auger 705-324-9354

Remember canoeing on Eel's Creek? Did you ever wonder what the area was like in winter? This intermediate trip will follow wilderness trails into the area east of highway 28, north of Haultain and south of Apsley. Limit 8 skiers.

February 4-5 DRAG LAKE POT POURRI

Organizer: Bob MacLellan 416-488-9346
Book between January 7 and 21

Winter variety at our cottage on beautiful Drag Lake. We will ski in 5 km packing in our supplies in backpacks and on tobaggans. Free time can be spent exploring this scenic area on skis or snowshoes. The cottage will provide shelter but that's all. Water through the ice, wood heat, outdoor facilities and cold sleeping quarters will offer seasonal challenges to the six participants.

February 4 INTRODUCTION TO BACKCOUNTRY SKIING

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6384
Book between January 16 and 29

This outing will take us into the area west of Gravenhurst for a day on the scenic Five Winds Ski Trails. This trip will be especially oriented towards novice skiers who are interested in learning off-trail skiing. We will move along at a moderate pace over an easy section of trail in order to provide participants ample opportunity to learn and practise those techniques that are necessary for travelling through the bush on skis. Suitable for novices in reasonable physical condition. Limit 8 skiers.

February 11 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI IN ALBION HILLS OR PALGRAVE AREA

Organizers: Rudy & Gerda Tismer 416-766-8076
Book before February 6

Participants will meet at High Park main entrance on Bloor Street West at 9:00 a.m. where a car pool will be organized. Skiers should be experienced enough to handle moderately steep slopes and ski a distance of at least 10-12 km. Bring a lunch.

February 12 GANARASKA FOREST SNOWSHOEING

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book after February 4

Ganaraska Forest, east of Kirby on highway 35, is well known to many of our members for its cross-country ski trails. It also offers good snowshoeing possibilities so let's go exploring. Limit 8 persons.



February 18 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING ON BRUCE TRAIL

Organizer: Rob Butler 416-487-2282
Book before February 13

The Bruce Trail in the Terra Cotta region offers some excellent cross-country skiing over hills and dales with some delightful bush sections. The loop covers approximately 20 km and is suitable for intermediate skiers. Limit 6 skiers.

February 18 WINTER PHOTOGRAPHY TRIP

Organizer: Sandy Richardson 416-429-3924
Book between February 1 and 12

A day of off-trail cross-country skiing with the emphasis on winter wilderness photography. The distance travelled will be kept short so that we can make the most of photographic opportunities. Location of the trip will be decided based on snow conditions at the time. Limit 8 people.

February 24-26 ALGONQUIN PARK WEEKEND

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book immediately

The organizer has booked a winterized housekeeping cottage on Oxtongue Lake for the week-end, Friday afternoon, for those who can leave early, until noon Sunday. We will snowshoe and/or cross-country ski Saturday and Sunday and maybe enjoy a log fire in the evening. Accommodation cost will be about \$20.00 per person. Organizer will arrange a communal menu on a cost share basis. Limit 8 people. (A \$15.00 deposit, payable to the organizer, will secure your place.)

February 25 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI IN GIBSON RIVER AREA

Organizer: Karl Schimek 416-222-3720 (Res)
416-439-6788 (Bus)

Book before February 7

A one-day trip on the Five Winds Ski Trail from Gibson Lake to Torrance, distance about 20 km. Suitable for advanced cross-country skiers in good physical condition. Limit 6 skiers.

February 25-26 RETURN TO THE NORTH MADASWASKA

Organizer: Herb Pohl 416-637-7632
Book between January 27 and February 16

The weekend will be spent exploring the terrain first visited by the organizer last winter. The mode of travel will be by snowshoe and toboggan, but participants are free to choose their own system. We'll set up camp on Chit Lake (approximately 8 km from Mew Lake Campground) and explore the country on skis or snowshoes. Limit: 5 diehards, reasonably fit.

March 3-5 A CHEEMAUN ODAWBAN (CANOE SLED) TRIP
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Organizer: Craig Macdonald 705-766-2885
(See original listing: Nastawgan, Autumn 1983)

In the event of forecasted rain, this trip will be re-scheduled for the spring of 1985. The plan is to travel 2 people per canoe. For most of the route, we will be hauling our sleighs loaded with canoes and supplies rather than paddling. Each sled-load will average approximately 260 pounds. In spring travel

conditions, such a seemingly formidable load can usually be managed by just a single person. The principal effort will be on the portage and snowshoe trails where we will be working as a full team with tail and gang lines and tandem harnesses to get each sled through with a minimum of labour. Trip participants will be selected and notified by the end of January at which time an itinerary and personal equipment list will be mailed out. This should be an enjoyable adventure and well within the physical capability of most WCA members. Both the route and method of travel will be of great interest. Bring your camera!

March 10-11 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI IN ALGONQUIN PARK

Organizer: Karl Schimek 416-222-3720 (Res)
416-439-6788 (Bus)

Book before February 21

This can be a one day or week-end trip depending on the inclination of the participants. This crack unit of individuals will tackle either the Western Upland and/or Highland Hiking Trails in Algonquin Park. Suitable for intermediates in good physical condition.

March 10-11 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI WEEKEND FOR NOVICES

Organizer: Marcia Farquhar 416-884-0208
Gary Walters 416-743-4628

Book before February 26

We will spend the weekend at a cottage near Dorset, and will be skiing at two sites in the area. The pace will be leisurely to facilitate skill development. Trails range from beginner to expert. Bring your own food, skis and sleeping bags.

SPRING CANOE TRIPS

March 25 UPPER CREDIT RIVER

Organizer: Mike Graham-Smith 416-877-7829
Book after March 1

The upper Credit with its many swifts, shallows and rocks is a pleasant challenging spring run. The actual location will depend upon conditions at the time. Suitable for novices with intermediate partners. A great warm-up for more challenging runs later in the spring. Limit 6 canoes.

March 31 BRONTE CREEK & OAKVILLE CREEK

Organizer: Herb Pohl 416-637-7632
Book after March 20

If possible, we'll try to run sections of both creeks. At high water levels, either of these is tricky because of the possibility of obstructed channels as well as substantial turbulence. Consequently, only experienced paddlers should consider it. Limit 4 canoes.

April 1 CREDIT & HUMBER RIVERS

Organizer: Duncan Taylor 416-368-9748
Book after March 10

An exciting run on the continuous rapids of the lower Credit will be followed, if time permits, with a run on the Humber from the 401 to Dundas St., a scenic area of Parks, golf courses and, in spring, some "hairy" sections of whitewater. Suitable for intermediates and trained novices with better partners. Limit 5 canoes.

April 7-8 BAYFIELD CREEK - MAITLAND RIVER

Organizer: Herb Pohl 416-637-7632
Book between March 20 and April 2

The Maitland at the high water level can be both intimidating and exhilarating. Ledge rapids give rise to large standing waves which requires strong back paddling to avoid swamping. A spraycover is an asset but not essential.

The upper Bayfield is a narrow, fast flowing stream with tight turns; the possibility of sweepers obstructing progress exists. The lower section is akin to the Maitland below Benmiller. Limit 4 canoes.

April 7 OAKVILLE CREEK

Organizer: Mike Wills 416-293-9067
Book between March 26 and April 2

In early spring when the snow is melting, Oakville Creek, which is narrow and tortuous, offers the intermediate canoeist some fast water, moderate waves and tight bend. Intermediate or better. Limit 5 canoes.

April 8 SPRING CLINIC ON UPPER CREDIT

Organizer: Jim Morris 416-793-2088
Book between March 12 and 29

This one day trip will give us an opportunity to review and practise our backpaddling and eddy turn techniques before tackling the more challenging Spring rivers. The water will be too cold for beginners but those who took the whitewater workshops last summer and others interested in improving each other's technique will find this an enjoyable day. Limit 6 canoes.

April 14-15 SALMON & MOIRA RIVERS

Organizer: Glenn Spence 416-355-3506
Book between March 24 and April 7

Once again, as so many times in the past, the redoubtable Glenn Spence offers intermediate paddlers a chance to join the annual spring migration to 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 22 UPPER HEAD RIVER

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between April 1 and 15

On this day trip we will paddle the Head River from Hwy. 505 down to a little east of the village of Sebright. The river is narrow and winding here and has a number of tricky ledges to negotiate, making this outing an interesting challenge for good intermediates with solid whitewater skills. Limit of 5 canoes.

April 29 GRAND RIVER

Organizer: Dave McMullen 416-766-9643
Book between April 8 and 21

Just north of Kitchener, the Grand is a fast flowing river at this time of year with enough riffles to make it interesting. Suitable for novices. Limit 6 canoes.



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Craig Macdonald

If you have an interest in winter camping this may be the most important material that you ever read.

Man has lived comfortable in northern Canada throughout the winter for thousands of years without gortex, holofil, thinsulate, polypropylene, or feathers. The advertised importance of these products for comfortable winter camping has been one of the best marketing scams of this century.

The human species is so ill adapted to cold climates, that long term health and comfort are not possible by relying solely on body heat trapped by the insulation of clothing and sleeping robes. What is required is an external heat source to create an artificially warmed atmosphere. Indeed, during the Canadian winter, the availability of an external heat source has been fundamental to all sustained human existence. I have found no documented evidence to the contrary.

In highly insulated structures such as the Inuit's iglu, the heat source has been the seal oil lamp. With a hide liner for the inner walls, temperatures were regularly maintained by oil lamp at 5°C and routinely increased to over 10°C for short periods. Modern mountaineers imitate the Inuit when they heat their snow caves with candles. Living in forested areas, Native Indian peoples used the wood fire to heat their wigwams and teepees. This permitted much higher air temperatures and a corresponding improvement in comfort.

Wood stoves have largely replaced the open fire in most northern camps. They are less smokey and more fuel efficient since the draft can be controlled to prevent much of the heated air being drawn out through the roof of the shelter. Stoves permit the creation of a ridge line air seal, so warm air can be pooled overhead.

A warm atmosphere allows sleeping, resting, eating, washing, and clothes-changing at levels of comfort conducive to sustained winter camping. In the warm dry air of a heated shelter, clothes will dry overnight thus eliminating the danger of moisture build up and the need for keeping them perfectly dry and sweat free during the day.

For forested areas adequately supplied with fuelwood, one of the most practical shelters is the cotton wall tent. When heated by a well designed light weight wood stove, it can be maintained as a spacious, warm residence in even the most severe winter temperatures. Being portable, this unit provides enormous potential for inexpensive vacation accommodation at almost any location of your choice! Since there is no need to seek refuge in a nearby hotel, cottage or cabin, winter activities such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and fishing can take on exciting new dimensions in otherwise inaccessible wilderness.

The lower the temperature, the more difficult it becomes to prevent back sweating while carrying a pack. In cold weather, profuse back sweating may occur even when the rest of the body is uncomfortably cool. A severe chill is sure to result. For this reason alone, Native Indians, Inuit and other experienced northerners almost never carry packs on their backs in winter. If they do, the packs are invariably less than 5 kilograms so that back ventilation may occur. Unless one is trying to scale mountains, the best solution is to use either the traditional sleigh, tobaggan or komatik to haul the load rather than to carry it on the back. You will be surprised how much easier it is.

Something to think about!

products and services

Bluewater Canoes:

Lightweight Kevlar-glass, fiberglass, and nylon canoes made with vinyl ester 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.

Scott Canoes:

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

Odawban Winter Travel Equipment:

Explore Canada's wilderness using proven methods for comfortable winter travel. Fully equipped tent stove units: \$230; trail tobaggans: \$100; trail sleds: \$130. Instructions included. Contact: Craig Macdonald, Frost Centre, Dorset, Ontario, POA 1E0; phone: 705-776-2885.

Nastawgan Index:

A cumulative index to NASTAWGAN (and its forerunners), from 1974 updated to the current issue, is available for \$5.00. (The index is computer stored, and special searches for articles on various topics, trips, etc. are also available.) Contact Sandy Richardson, 5 Dufresne Cr., Apt. 2705, Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 1B8.

Coleman Craft Canoes:

Coleman Craft Canoes, of hand-layed-up fibre-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: 519-623-1804/1849. Shop located at 333 Dundas St. (Hwy. 8), Cambridge (Galt), Ontario.

Canoe Wanted:

Used Grumman aluminum 17' standard. Contact Dave Berthelet, 107 Front St., Hull, Quebec, J8Y 6E2; phone 819-771-4170.

Backpacks for Sale:

Two frame packs, one Cannondale and one Jan-Sport. Both in excellent condition. Contact Mr. Davy in Toronto at 416-231-8042. (Please call before 9:00 p.m.)

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.

wca contacts

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

CONSERVATION
Richard Smerdon,
79 Woodycrest Ave.,
Toronto, Ont.
M4J 3A8
416-461-4249

OUTINGS
Tony Bird,
119 Glebe Holme Blvd.,
Toronto, Ont.
M4J 1S8
416-466-0172

TRIP HOT LINE
Marcia Farquhar,
187 Mill St.,
Richmond Hill, Ont.
L4C 4B1
416-884-0208

CANOE ROUTES
John Cross,
138 Wellesley St. E.,
Apartment 6,
Toronto, Ont.
M4Y 1J1
416-925-0029

MEMBERSHIP
P.O. Box 496,
Postal Station K,
Toronto, Ont.
M4P 2G9

YOUTH ENCOURAGEMENT FUND
Cam Salsbury
70-3 Castlebury Cres.,
Willowdale, Ont.
M2H 1W8
416-498-8660

W.C.A. POSTAL ADDRESS
P.O. Box 496
Postal Station K,
Toronto Ont.
M4P 2G9

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 1984.

Notes: -This membership will expire January 31, 1985.
-Please send completed form and cheque (payable to the Wilderness
Canoe Association) to the membership committee chairman.