

stikine - the great river

Three mighty rivers, the Stikine, the Skeena and the Finlay have their origins in the same high country of central, northern British Columbia in and near the Spatsizi Wilderness Park. Today the Finlay, together with Parsnip and the Peace River are dammed to form gigantic Williamson Lake. The lower Skeena is populated with towns. Only the Stikine remains as a free flowing, wilderness river but it too has the threat of a hydro dam hanging over its future.

Last summer, for three weeks and a bit, Dick Irwin, Sandy Richardson, Syd Kreitzman and I canoed, hiked and rode horses along this beautiful, spectacular 550 kilometre long waterway, from its headwaters westward to the salt waters of the Pacific in the Alaska Panhandle. The following is a brief day to day account of our trip.

July 12:

After making preliminary arrangements for a later, mid trip trail ride and a possible raft trip in the Grand Canyon of the Stikine, we fly in to Happy Lake. Trans Provincial Airlines out of Terrace B.C., has a Beaver float plane at Eddontenajon Lake in the summer and the 1984 cost was \$500 per flight with one canoe. Happy Lake, at almost 4500 ft. elevation, is surrounded by snow covered, treeless 7000 ft. peaks on three sides. After lunch we hike up the nearest west peak. It is a sunny afternoon, with broken cloud cover. From the top we are

rewarded with an inspiring view of the landscape, the green and blue Stikine valley to the north, white Mt. Umbach to the south west, our blue lake far below and snow covered peaks in all directions.

July 13:

Same campsite. It is overcast and we rest most of the day. In the afternoon we paddle around our private lake, explore a tumbling stream and investigate a possible hike for the next day. It is a clear, cold and bug free evening. I sleep outside on my pad and wake up in the morning with the sleeping bag encased in frost.

July 14:

Same campsite. This is our day for a long hike to the top of the high peaks at the south end of Happy Lake. We bring along day packs with lunch, extra clothing, rain gear, cameras and one ice axe but no other climbing hardware. By lunch we are above the trees. The weather is unstable, with broken, fast moving clouds racing across the sky and the occasional sunny interlude. While going up a steep snow slope near the top it even starts to sleet and snow on us. But it clears again and we have a magical hour on top, with bright sunshine bathing the glorious snow covered peaks all around. After about a hundred pictures we descend by a different route, glassing most of the way down on the snow. At supper it is a chilly 5°C, but there are no bugs.

Article: George Luste
Photographs: George Luste
Sandy Richardson



July 17:

We get up at 7 a.m. and prepare for a hike to Metsantan Lake Indian Village, about ten kilometres inland, east of the Stikine. The Sekani Indians lived here for a while, but faced with starvation, abandoned it in the late 40's. It is a dry but overcast and cool day. Not finding the trail at the Stikine, we go cross country for the first hour. It is open country and the walking is easy, as much of the area was burnt some time ago. We eventually join up with a well travelled trail, and the going is even easier all the way to Metsantan. The village has a dozen abandoned, weathered structures and is located on a hillside above a small lake, a very picturesque but an unusually isolated location for a settlement. After lunch another four hour hike takes us back to camp. It is 5°C and dropping in the evening as I write in my log.

With hindsight another outstanding hike would have been west from our campsite up to the 6000 ft. Spatsizi Plateau. Apparently the chances of observing wildlife on the plateau are high.

July 18:

An overcast, steely looking day which later turns to mist and rain. Very strong current and some riffles. We lunch on a gravel bar at the mouth of the Chukachida River and have hot broth and a warming fire. Three American rafters in colourful outfits join us. They too started at the headwaters and are doing a slow, leisurely trip down the river. We camp at 6 p.m. An easy 50 kilometre day.

July 19:

A most memorable day and following night for us. We paddle away at 9:30 a.m. The water temperature is 8°C and the air is 9°C. In less than two hours we camp on an island at the mouth of the Spatsizi River. After lunch we hike up 3500 ft. to the open plateau. Sheep or goat hoof prints and droppings are everywhere. A grand panoramic view of mountains and valleys in three directions is spread out below us. The far hills seem to have fresh snow on them; perhaps the rain we had on the river yesterday. Rather than going back to camp the way we came, we decide to hike south and descend a steep goat trail down to Hyland Post on the Spatsizi River. After exploring this deserted and well built hunting camp, with its own airstrip, we set out, rather late at 8:30 p.m., along the river trail for our camp on the Stikine. To make a long story short, pitch black darkness finds us still on the trail, and there we bivouac without supper or warm clothing. Fortunately it didn't rain and wasn't too cold.



July 15:

A clear, bright and gorgeous morning as we begin our first day of canoeing. After a short paddle there is a line and lift around a short rapid and then a portage of about a kilometre around two drops. The trail is intermittent on the right bank and the going is fair. A shallow, fast stream floats us into Tuaton Lake. The scenery continues to be magnificent and at lunch a caribou crosses the river near the canoes. Between Tuaton and Laslui Lakes the stream is a delightful paddle and we camp early at the exit of Laslui, the third and last lake on the river. We bathe and wash clothes in the chilly water. It rains during the night.

July 16:

Another grand, sunny day with much continuous running of easy to moderate rapids. Shortly after Laslui Lake however, comes a major portage around a wild stretch. On the right bank a white sign "Dangerous Rapids Ahead" marks the start of another kilometre carry. There are good campsites, off the trail and along the river, part way along this portage. Below the portage our spray covers are useful insurance in the many easy rapids. After Chapea Creek comes a short rapid with ledges that we scout, run and portage on the right. We camp on the west bank opposite Moyez Creek and the long gone settlement of Caribou Hide. A fine campsite.





July 20:

After a rather miserable and chilly five hours on the damp ground we hit the trail at 5 a.m. on empty stomachs, and make it back to our campsite two hours later. It is a warm sunny day. A large breakfast more than makes up for a missed supper and we then crawl into our tents for some more sleep. At 2 p.m. we load the canoes and paddle away. With the help of the fast current we easily cover 40 kilometres in 5 hours and camp at the mouth of the Pitman River.

July 21:

Another bright, warm, sunny day. We are indeed fortunate with the weather so far. The Stikine is now a substantial body of water, with islands and gravel bars breaking its flow. The valley itself is much wider now and the mountains have receded on both sides. A lengthy leisurely lunch with a fine view is followed by an early camp at Cullivan Creek. The Stikine itself has become silt brown in colour and we prefer the clear water of incoming streams. We bathe, do our wash, bake our bread and talk at length.

July 22:

Again a bright sunny day. Unfortunately Syd feels poorly with stomach flu but is game to travel. And so we do. The highlight of the day is the rapid at Beggerlay Creek. After careful scouting along the left bank, one canoe runs it and the other portages via Beggerlay Creek. Both operations can be tricky at the wrong water level. From there continuous fast water propels us along to the highway bridge and we camp at Willie Williams' picturesque ranch. We have come 250 kilometres along the Stikine and have dropped more than three quarters of a kilometre in elevation in only five and a half days of actual paddling time, and have experienced some fantastic country.

July 23:

A lay-over and reorganization day with more excellent weather. An amazingly generous Erik Johnson and his wife have volunteered to drive our pick-up truck to Skagway. Equally generous Gary Fiegehen will drive our canoes and gear to Telegraph Creek. Arrangements are made with Jim Bourquin of Iskut Trail and River Adventures for a one day raft trip in the lower canyon after our trail ride.



July 24:

The Williams are a Tahltan native family and their son Robert, who is to be our guide, gets the horses ready in the early morning for a three day trail ride along the north rim of the upper Grand Canyon of the Stikine. All the horses are friendly, good looking and well fed animals and prove to be excellent trail horses with an amazing ability to scramble up and down steep side canyons. Along the way we have numerous stops at lookout points to gaze at the wild river far below, in places 1000 ft. below the plateau. Some canyon! On several occasions we spot white mountain goats along the vertical, predator-free cliff sides. We camp on a hillside near fresh water and more important, feed for the horses, but unfortunately without a view of the canyon.

July 25:

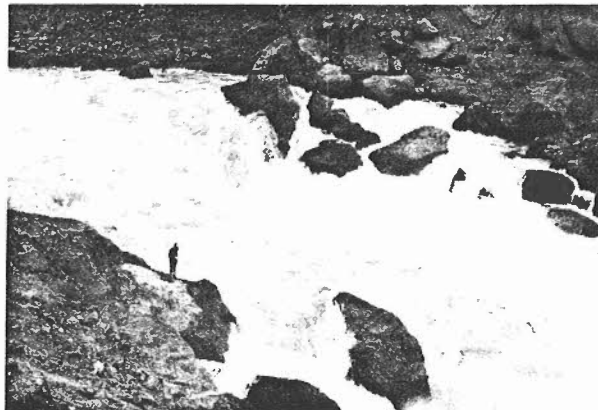
More bright sunshine. A short ride takes us to the general area of the proposed Site Z Dam. If dammed here this wild and beautiful Stikine would become an 80 kilometre reservoir lake. The whole day is spent in climbing, viewing and photographing the canyon and its rapids from all perspectives and with the changing light conditions. A very spectacular wilderness! All of us hope to God that it won't ever be dammed.

July 26:

An overcast, drippy day and we spend most of it on the trail, riding back to the Williams' ranch. More goats are observed along the south wall of the canyon.

July 27:

Most of the day is spent in cleaning up, washing clothes, cooking, packing and resting. In the evening we get a ride into Dease Lake with Ted Jones, the warden for Spatsizi Wilderness Park.





July 28:

After a breakfast with Ted and his son Russell, all four of us squeeze into a helicopter for a 20 minute ride to the staging area for our raft trip through the lower canyon. But it is not to be. After a careful scout of the rougher places with the chopper, it is deemed unsafe. The river is running unusually high. It only takes one dump in this cold, very rough water, with help hours away, to spell disaster. The decision is both a disappointment and a relief to us. The rest of the day is spent hiking with Jim and his friends along the Tuya River, lunching at Tahltan and enjoying a ride in Dan Pekula's boat at Telegraph Creek. We eat and sleep at the Riversong Cafe, the renovated Hudson's Bay Company building. A very interesting and comfortable place.

July 29:

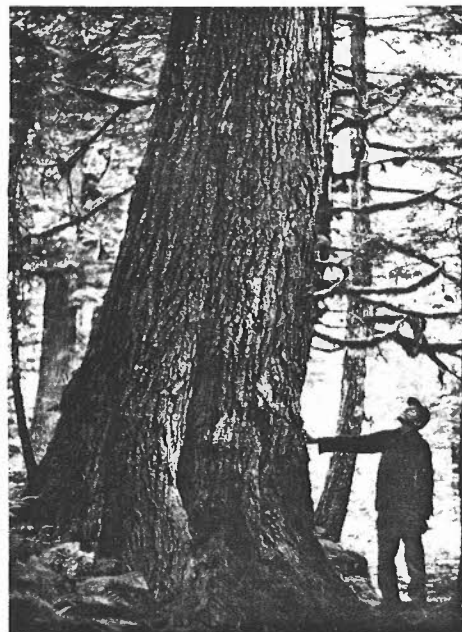
We depart in our canoes from Telegraph Creek early in the morning. The Stikine is running fast and high and even small shore irregularities cause heavy boils and turbulence for our small craft. Below T.C. we pass native fishing camps and drying sheds for salmon. With the current we make terrific time and so camp early, on a sandy spit, across from a hill we might climb. But it clouds over and the possibility of a view from on top disappears. Along the water's edge are grizzly tracks but we never see the real thing. Supper is a salmon steak feast.

July 30:

A cloudy misty day that eventually ends in a drizzle. Our lunch stop on a gravel bar in midstream at the Scud River is most scenic, surrounded on all sides by high mountains with hanging glaciers. We see our first bald eagles. The river is wide and braided with islands and many side channels. For a change we paddle some of the smaller, more intimate channels - it is like being on a small stream. A short hike over the delta flats gives us a view of Flood Glacier. As the mist comes and goes, so do views of mountains topped in white. Our campsite is a make-do affair but we have a friendly social time under the rain tarp.

July 31:

Up at 6:15 and on the water two hours later. The early morning mist envelopes us in a white soup, which slowly lifts. It sprinkles throughout the day. Before lunch we try a back door route to the Great Glacier, but give up after a kilometre or so on a small rocky trickle. Instead we camp at the creek (which is more like a river in flood) feeding from the glacier. It is a much used, scenic spot with hanging moss on all the larger trees. At 4 p.m. we set out, by compass through the woods, to the Great Glacier. It starts off easy but soon becomes a wet rain forest jungle, and at times every metre is a struggle. Eventually we reach the ice covered lake fronting the glacier. Luckily the sun comes out and we take many, many photographs. Then we trudge back through the jungle to our camp by 10 p.m., rather soggy, for a late supper in the darkness - another enjoyable side trip behind us.

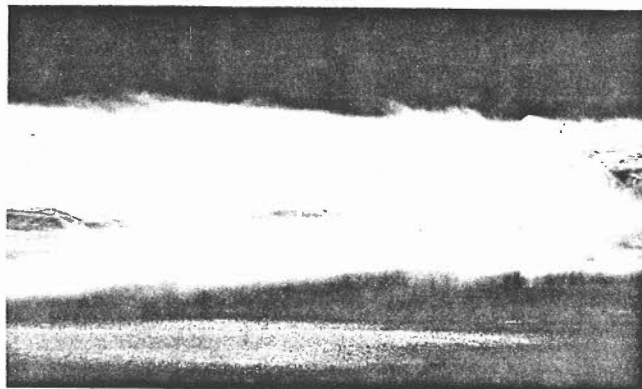


August 1:

We sleep in and start paddling about 9:30. It is a warm, pleasant and leisurely day as we cross the boundary from Canada into the Alaska panhandle. A side trip to Chief Shakes Hot Spring rewards us with a hot-tub experience. Our bodies are cleansed, rejuvenated and tenderized by the luxurious hot water. As we leave we meet another canoe coming in, a couple from Smithers who started at Telegraph Creek. We camp early on an island in mid-river. After much discussion, Syd and Dick decide to leave early in the morning for Wrangell and the ferry south. Sandy and I have another five days to explore and enjoy the lower Stikine.

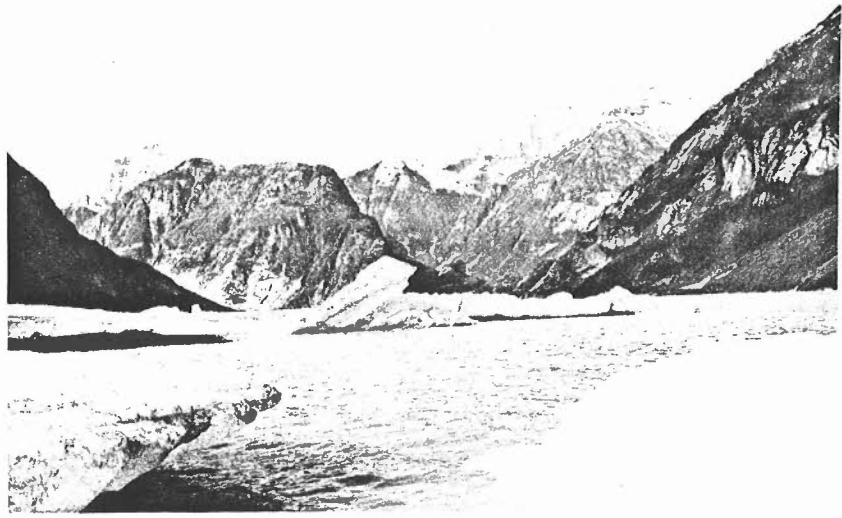
August 2:

A fantastic day. At first it seemed a bit lonesome without the second canoe but all this is forgotten as we paddle upstream to Shakes Glacier. We pass stranded icebergs and reach a scenic lake, enclosed on all sides by high mountains. In the north east corner stands Castle Mountain, at 7330 ft. above us. Our lunch stop is the most idyllic to date, a clean granite rock warmed by the sun, a babbling brook beside us and a panoramic view of mountains, lake and glacier before us. After lunch we paddle up to the face of Shakes Glacier. It seems like a quiet, stable sort but we don't linger long. Camp is part way back to the Stikine. A loud thunder and lightning storm passes through during the night. Again with hindsight, I have a slight regret that we didn't think to take the time and climb Castle Mountain.



August 3:

Everything is damp and we use our MSR gas stove for the first time at breakfast. Farther down the Stikine, in the afternoon, we begin an over land and over creek hike to Popof Glacier. A steep, wet and slippery mountain side prevents us from going up to the glacier. A late 9 p.m. campsite on a sandy island ends the day.



August 4:

We take the North Channel exit to Frederick Sound, as we intend to paddle north up to Le Conte Bay. A clear incoming stream beckons us to stop and we discover swarms of fish, migrating salmon - exhausted as well as dead bodies of this mighty species. The shoreline grass looks trampled, probably by numerous hungry bears.

At 2 p.m. it is low tide at the mouth of the Stikine and we must paddle out around the tidal mud flats. A flock of eagles (yes, a flock) are feeding on the flats and depart as we approach. White and blue icebergs are everywhere, what a sight! We camp at Russy Creek, as we need fresh water. While filling the water containers in the evening, Sandy watches a seal chasing fish at the mouth of the stream.

August 5:

Another four star day. It is calm and sunny as we nervously paddle our aluminum canoe amidst the ice and slush deeper into the bay. In places the ice is solid and we scout for open water. Slowly we paddle the eight kilometres in to Le Conte Glacier. We stop within sight of it and watch the moving ice debris. The glacier is continuously calving huge ice slabs from its face, and these feed the already crowded bay. After studying the scene for some time, we gain some self assurance and paddle closer, to the rocks near the north corner of the glacier. Here we sit, watch, take pictures, snack, eat lunch and take more pictures. What an afternoon, as we gaze at this huge glacier and watch it slowly being nibbled away by the ocean. Some of the larger fractures send out mini tidal waves as they hit the salt water. The canoe trip back out is uneventful, and for this we are thankful. We pass a small herd of seals cavorting and sunning themselves on the ice. By 6 p.m. we are back in camp, relaxing and thankful for the fine day and another fine summer of canoeing.

August 6:

My 44th birthday. Not much of a day as we paddle against a chilly wind and rain, run out of water at low tide, but eventually reach Wrangell. After a huge meal of seafood called "spots", we board our ferry, the "Malaspina", for Skagway and our transportation back to Toronto. A long way from the Stikine but well worth the effort.

A number of people helped make our trip possible. Without their spirit of generosity and sharing, our summer experience could not have turned out so well; to Pat Butcher, Erik Johnson, Klaus Streckmann, Jim Bourquin, Ted Jones, Dan Pekula, Gary Fiegehen, "The Friends of the Stikine" and others, our sincere thanks.

STIKINE REFERENCES

1. Alaska Geographic, "The Stikine River", Vol. 6 No. 4, 1979.
2. Patterson, R.N., Trail to the Interior, 1966, Toronto.
3. Hoagland, E., Notes from the Century Before, 1969, N.Y.
4. Walker, T.A., Spatsizi, 1976, B.C.
5. Pike, Warburton, Through the Sub-Arctic Forest, 1896, London.
6. Wilson, C., Campbell of the Yukon, 1970, Toronto.
7. Money, A., This was the North, 1975, N.Y.
8. Young, S.H., Alaska Days with John Muir, 1915, N.Y.
9. Alaska Brochure, Stikine River Canoe/Kayak Trails, leaflet no. 174, c/o Wrangell Ranger District, P.O. Box 51, Wrangell, Alaska, 99929, U.S.A.





nastawgan published by the wca editor: sandy richardson printed by bayweb

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

EDITORIAL

This is our second issue of Nastawgan on the higher quality book-stock paper. From the comments we received about the last issue, it seems that most of you are very pleased with our new look especially the better reproduction of both photographs and text. Some of you, however, received copies in which the printing was a little faint. This problem is caused by our small press run, and occurs with only a few copies each issue. (In fact, this has always occurred, but was less noticeable on the newsprint we used to use.) Should you encounter this problem with any issue, please contact the editor and we will send you out a better copy.

In a similar vein, sometimes for one reason or another, some of you fail to receive a copy of the newsletter. Should this happen, please contact our secretary Ria Harting. She will see that you get your paper, and will also be able to make sure that you are correctly recorded on our membership list.

We owe an apology to Gail Vickars for what happened to her article "Yukon Again" in the last issue. Not only did we misspell her name, we also laid up the article with a few of the paragraphs out of order. We hope that

you were able to follow her story despite our blunder. Gail continues her story in this issue with the article "Around Alaska"; hopefully we have everything right this time.

With this issue we are beginning a new regular feature, "canoetoon" by Paul Mason. We hope that these unique canoeing cartoons will add to your enjoyment of Nastawgan. And if you would like to get copies of these "canoetoon", Paul is marketing them as greeting cards; they are available at Trail Head stores in Ottawa and Toronto.

Also in this issue we have David Pelly's regular column "Arctic Journal" with some observations on the barrens in winter, the fifth article in our series on the Quetico - Superior 75th Anniversary, articles about two quite different wilderness trips - one a canoe trip on British Columbia's Stikine River, and the other a hiking trip in Alberta's Willmore region, an article on how to make your camping a bit more comfortable with a kitchen fly, and a selection of some of the best photographs from the WCA's photo contest. As well, we have the usual news, trip reports and a very comprehensive spring schedule of canoe trips and seminars.

news briefs

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Articles, trip reports, photographs, etc. are needed for future issues. Material may be either typed or handwritten, but should be double spaced with large borders and margins. The deadlines for the next four issues of Nastawgan are:

Issue	Deadline
Summer 1985	May 4 1985
Autumn 1985	August 18, 1985
Winter 1985	November 16 1985
Spring 1986	January 25, 1986

No material received after the deadline date will appear in that issue, but will be held for use in a later issue if appropriate.

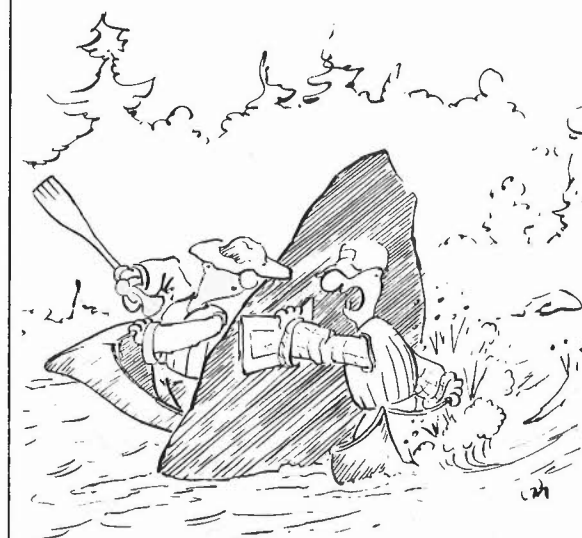
WOODS RE-OPENS

After teetering on the brink of bankruptcy last spring, Woods Bag and Canvas underwent a financial reorganization and is back in business. The new owners are actively promoting retail sales out of their factory showroom of both finished goods, and fabrics and findings. They are making available to the public many raw materials that are either difficult or impossible to locate elsewhere, and their prices are quite attractive. Warehouse manager Leo Algoraty is very knowledgeable about raw materials and their possible applications, and is pleased to offer advice. Call him at 416-465-2403.

Bill Ness

canoetoon

by paul mason



SEE, PAGE 37!
BOW PADDLER JUMPS OUT!

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Rita and I joined the WCA with canoeing backgrounds similar to those of most new members. The basic how-to guides on the subject had been committed to memory; and we had done a couple of years of lake tripping - Algonquin Park and the like - plus a little easy river travel. In short, we knew a bit and were anxious to learn more. Becoming part of a canoe club, meeting and paddling with experienced people who knew the ropes seemed to be the way to go.

So the Nesses took the plunge. Eight bucks got you a family membership and four issues of the slim photocopied newsletter "Beaverdam" back in '75. Wow! Great! But wait! These folks paddle the Nahanni, Dumoine and Missinaibi. They sure aren't going to want to paddle with us. They'll laugh at the greenhorns, or at least snicker. The new recruits promptly got hypothermia of the lower extremities, also known as cold feet, and spent their first two years dutifully reading the newsletter but little else.

Realizing that we weren't getting what we had intended out of our membership we finally found the courage to sign-up for a couple of novice outings after carefully scrutinizing the organizers' trip descriptions for any sinister implications.

And so it came to pass that we actually went canoeing with the WCA. What did we get from these experiences? Good companionship, improved skills, and helpful advice from seasoned paddlers were our rewards. The only laughter came from around the campfire as our group swapped jokes and reminisced.

The moral of the story is don't follow our bad example. Get involved! This organization is user friendly and encourages participation from canoeists of all levels. Our novice trips are run by veteran members and provide opportunities for new paddlers to acquire the skills and experience needed for more demanding adventures. For those who are interested in a more structured approach to skills acquisition the WCA has a number of capable people who organize workshops and instructional outings.

In return for their commitment, our trip organizers make only a simple request: that participants exercise courtesy, responsibility, and common sense.

We're looking forward to having you come along with us.

Bill Ness

NAHANNI, JULY 1985

Two experienced whitewater canoeists are wanted to join a private trip down the Nahanni River, N.W.T. in the summer of 1985. Two weeks on the water: July 8 - July 22, 1985. If interested, please write giving full details of experience to: J. Law, 187 Rathnally Street, London, Ontario, N6H 2E1.

THREE SPRING SEMINARS

Claire and Richard Smerdon are organizing three seminars this spring on a variety of topics of interest to canoeists.

For the past 8 summers the Smerdons have disappeared into the bush in the Temagami area and reappeared a month later. They will lead informal discussions on the following topics:

- April 10 Canoe trip food: planning, organizing & packing. April 17 Longer canoe trips: choice of route, equipment, wet weather tolerance. Especially for those wishing to expand from weekend canoeing to longer trips.
- April 24 Canoeing in the Temagami area: choosing the trip that's right for you - what the route descriptions don't tell you. Many photos, maps & logs to peruse.

All seminars will be held at a Toronto location T.B.A., 7:30 pm. If you are interested in any of these topics but live outside the Toronto area, please let us know; we may be able to send you the information you'd like.

To attend any or all of these seminars please contact Claire or Richard at 416-461-4249 between March 24 and April 7.

ARCTIC CANOE TRIP

Anyone looking for one or two experienced whitewater canoeists for a canoe trip in the arctic, please contact Tom Elliott at 416-648-1560.

MOVING?

If you are moving, please send your change of address notice to the club secretary Ria Harting (not to the newsletter editor) so that membership and mailing lists can be updated. It will speed things up if you include the membership number that appears in the top right corner of your mailing label with your notice.

PHOTO EVALUATION EVENINGS

Toni Harting will be conducting two different meetings where a small number of amateur photographers (maximum ten per meeting) will study and discuss photographs (slides as well as prints) made by the participants themselves and brought to the meetings for group evaluation. This should be a valuable and unique opportunity to learn what other photographers, from novice to expert, have to say about your photographic efforts. All participants should learn and profit from studying and commenting upon each other's work, discussing the submitted slides and prints under the guidance of an experienced photographer.

The meetings will be held at Toni's place in downtown Toronto on March 28 and April 25, starting at 7:30 pm.

The participants will receive information re: maximum number of photographs to submit, directions for parking, need for refreshments, etc. There is no cost involved. Register any time by phoning 416-964-2495.

WCA WINE AND CHEESE PARTY

Our November wine and cheese party saw 125 members descend upon the staff lounge of George Brown College's Casa Loma Campus to renew old acquaintances while nibbling on tasty tidbits and quaffing grape juice preserved in ethanol or other less potent elixirs. A great night of entertainment was provided with slide shows of canoe trips on the Churchill River by Glenn Spence, and the north shore of Lake Superior by Norm Coombe, as well as a hiking trip in the Rockies by Jim Greenacre. Many thanks to Glenn, Norm, and Jim; and to Claire Brigden for the overall organization of the evening; Cash Belden for arranging the room, and lounge manager Dave Fraser for being host to our crew.

Bill Ness

NORTHERN CANOE TRIP

Thomas Stiverson, an experienced canoe tripper from Columbus, Ohio, is interested in taking a challenging 4 to 6 week canoe trip this summer in the Canadian north. If any member is planning such a trip and is looking for another canoeist please contact Thomas Stiverson, 498 South Hamilton Road, Apt. 58, Columbus, Ohio, 43213, U.S.A.

around alaska

Top of the World Highway from Dawson City, Yukon into Alaska, was a gravel road with plenty of construction, dust and traffic. Marcia held a wet cloth over her mouth to enable her to breathe more easily. We drove through towns with interesting names such as Chicken and Chickaloo. The road eventually met up with the Alaska Highway. By then the weather was hot, so we were looking for a campground with a swimming area. Moon Lake was supposed to have swimming, but by the lake was a sign warning people that there may be bugs in the water which could give one "swimmers' itch". Anyhow it was a pretty camp, with a slight view of snow capped mountains.

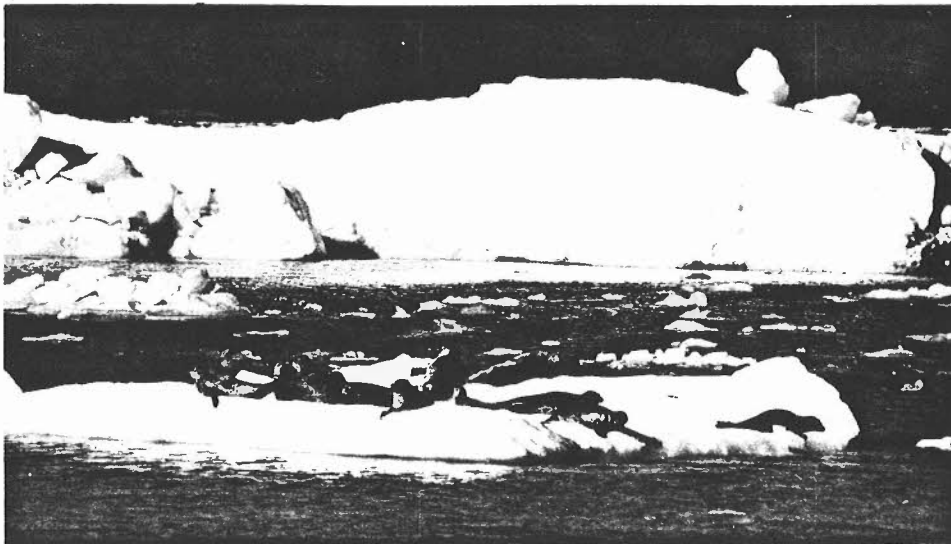
As we continued the next day, we saw more snow capped mountains and dusty gray (from silt) rivers, before the rain closed in. We were impressed by the lack of land disturbance around the pipeline. However we were disgusted by all the pick-up trucks with racks full of rifles in their rear windows and the bullet holes in all the highway signs.

We had to line up early in the morning to get a campsite in Denali, National Park. The first campground we stayed in had a sign at the gate informing that there was a grizzly with her cubs in the area. After we set up camp, Marcia and her friend went for a ride on the shuttle bus to get warm and dry. The weather had now been cold and wet for days and there was fresh snow in the mountains and farther up the road in to the park. I went for a walk along the road, then into the woods. There was a rectangular area cleared away with droppings of red berries beside it. I returned to the road. Later I learned the grizzlies were eating the soap berries in the area. Back at camp, I joined Penny in the car, turned the motor and heater on to try to get warm and dry (as the other campers were doing). She purred, happy to have the company.



little streams. After a few hours of enjoying the peace, quiet, beauty and solitude, I went back to the road to wait for the bus. I watched ducks swimming on a pond beside the road, for awhile. When I turned around, there was the usual cloud cover, exposing the bottom of the mountains, but away above was something which didn't look like a cloud. We'd heard of people staying in the park and leaving without ever seeing the highest mountain in North America. There it was, peaking through the clouds! When the bus arrived, I asked the driver if that was "the mountain". It was. The Indians call it Denali - the great one. (It is also known as Mt. McKinley.)

The following day the sun shone and Denali was in clear view! We moved to Wonder Lake Campground as we'd been able to get a permit for two nights there. Along the way we passed another caribou herd.



The next day, I rode the shuttle bus to get warm and dry. At the information centre, I changed buses to go to Wonder Lake, the campground farthest into the park. Just as I was finally warm and dry, we saw caribou. When some of the passengers left the bus to take pictures, I joined them. So much for being dry! It had stopped raining but the ground cover was still wet. I followed one of the caribou but it was much more agile on the tundra than I and soon left me far behind. Someone called from the road. I couldn't figure out what they were saying so I waved. They were probably asking if I wanted to catch the next bus; they obviously did, and left me alone. Oh what bliss! The tundra was hard to walk on, though. Not only was the ground spongy, but also low bushes covered

From there we went hiking in different directions, leaving Penny in the car so she wouldn't be eaten. I followed a trail up a hill. A noise in the bush beside me broke the silence. Out in front of me jumped a pretty cross-fox, who ran up the trail ahead. Eventually the trail ran beside a beaver pond with ducks, then continued up. A few more kilometres and it became animal trails going in all directions. The top was evasive. Beyond each crest was yet another crest. Finally, with storm clouds approaching from the mountains on both sides, I gave up trying to reach the top and turned back. There was an area which looked like men had been digging to put in a pipeline. There were no people around. The little hill had many tunnels made by small animals. There was a black bear in the area and I learned later, there was also a grizzly. It had been seen in the spot where Marcia had been taking pictures the previous day.

I could see the lake far below and knew the campground wasn't far from the end of it. Along the trail on the way up there were patches of underbrush on the tundra, and as I didn't want to startle a bear from his nap, I thought perhaps a different route would avoid the underbrush. I headed diagonally for the lake (which wasn't always in view). Well, I was soon into solid underbrush and forest dotted with bear droppings. By now it was raining and slippery. The animal trails (there weren't any other) seldom went the same direction I was heading. After what seemed like ages, I finally reached the lake, then the road. Back at camp, I learned that during the afternoon, a small tornado had moved the tent of one of the other campers and had scattered his letter writing well beyond the campground.

Driving out of the park, in the rain, we saw three grizzlies in different areas, two of whom crossed the road in front of my car.

Anchorage wasn't much different from any other city.

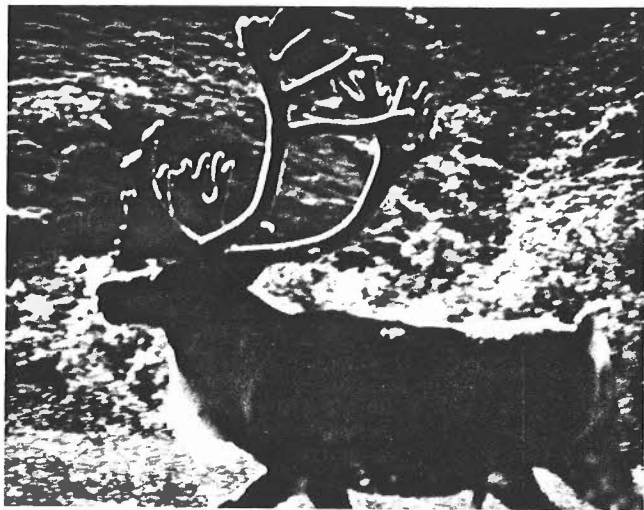
We drove south around part of the Kenai peninsula, to the Pacific Ocean. There were more mountains, heavy rain, and fierce winds. We were in the tail end of a typhoon.

On the way back to Anchorage, we could see white, rubbery backs rising and falling in the chalky seawater of the inlet. They looked like whales. The only whale (to my knowledge, at least) which is completely white is the Beluga Whale. I'd been disappointed when we couldn't get to the Arctic Ocean from Inuvik, NWT, as I'd wanted to see these whales living free (not in captivity). It was hard to believe, but here they were. Words can't express the excitement of seeing these magnificent, graceful creatures swimming past, just a few metres off shore - some spraying water through their blowholes. Evidently they swim up the river at this time of year after fish. Unfortunately we could not see their faces below the surface of the water.

At Valdez we took a small tour boat up to the Columbia Glacier. We were surprised at how close it went. The ice in the water around us sounded like a bowl of rice crispies. En route we passed sea otters floating around, seals lazing on an ice floe and different species of gulls. To add to our enjoyment the sun shone.

The road back to the Alaska highway passed more snow covered mountains, pretty scenery and gray rivers. We were surprised at the Alaska Highway. Where we had been looking for a place to swim because of the heat a week and a half ago, there was now about 30 centimetres of snow and the temperature was well below freezing. Penny was fascinated by a black bear walking along the side of the road. She didn't take her eyes off it until it was well into the woods and out of sight. We crossed the border into the Yukon without further incident.

Marcia had said that she wasn't interested in winter camping. It's not an activity usually associated with August in the U.S.A. or Canada. However here we were, pitching our tents on snow and finding the water in our jug frozen in the morning.



The highest mountain in Canada is in Kluane National Park in the Yukon. We didn't see it. We couldn't even see much of the mountains we were driving past. It snowed off and on and there was low cloud cover. The weather became milder and the snow alternated with rain. Kathleen Lake had a nice, enclosed picnic shelter beside it. Here we built a fire in the stove, cooked, dried clothes and visited with other campers (including two from Holland). Outside, a friendly red squirrel kept us entertained. When we walked along the lake, we saw and heard many different birds.

Back in Alaska, we took the ferry from Haines to Skagway. We camped in a campground near the start of the Chilkoot Trail. There were many interesting looking mushrooms. The area obviously received plenty of rain.

After a walk around the town, we drove up the fairly new Skagway road, back into Canada. In Carcross, Yukon, we stopped in the restaurant of the Caribou Hotel (also known as The Boo) which is shown briefly in the movie "Never Cry Wolf".

Marcia and her friend stayed in Whitehorse to catch their flight back to Toronto. Penny and I drove back to my sister's cabin near Camacks. We stayed there for a few weeks, enjoying the fall and sunshine, then drove back across our country, through rain, freezing rain, snow, more rain and some sun to Newmarket, Ontario. The fall colours around Lake Superior were impressive - even in the rain. Being in a warm, dry house and not having to drive anywhere was nice, too - for a couple of months, anyway.

Gail Vickars



QUETICO SUPERIOR

1909-1984

75TH ANNIVERSARY

HISTORY OF QUETICO-SUPERIOR - IV

By Shan Walshe
(Research assistance by Shirley Peruniak)

Photos courtesy Quetico Provincial Park Archives.

On November 7, 1913 the Quetico Forest Reserve of the Ontario Department of Game and Fish became Quetico Provincial Park under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Department of Lands, Forests and Mines. It was to be set aside as a public park and forest reserve, fish and game preserve, health resort, and fishing ground for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Ontario and for the protection of the fish, birds, game and fur-bearing animals therein.

On December 8, 1913 Mr. A.J. McDonald of Cochrane, Ontario was sworn in as Quetico Park's first superintendent at a salary of \$1,300 per annum. His staff consisted of six rangers with a salary of \$60 - \$75 per month plus board.

The following excerpts from diaries, newspapers, and superintendent's reports describe conditions and events in Quetico Park during A.J.'s superintendency from December, 1913 to January, 1917.

1913

December, 1913 - Quetico staff - A.J. McDonald, George Gilfoyle, Robert Ogelstein, Napoleon Hegeart, Robert Johnson, R. Sexsmith, Alex McDonald (A.J.'s brother).

December, 1913 - A.J. has all equipment moved from Eva Lake to Park Headquarters at French Lake (his predecessor, Colonel Young preferred Eva Lake and built a house there). That winter A.J. lived at French Lake in a small two-room shack.

- A.J. sent four men out into the Park to watch for poachers.

- Asked Toronto for wolf poison and 30/30 rifles to defend themselves against poachers. Toronto advised that rifles were too cumbersome and recommended Smith and Wesson 38 special revolvers.

- A.J. requested permission to hire a man and wife team with the wife to cook for all staff.

December 9, 1913 - Indian Reserve 24C cancelled.



The "Heartless Moose" Indian Pictograph on Barky Lake, Quetico Provincial Park.

1914

- Park staff of superintendent, eleven men and housekeeper, also eight fire rangers.

- Men charged 20¢ per meal.

- A.J. built himself a 26' x 36' house of squared pine logs and tin shingle roof with full basement and furnace enclosed in a fireproof 12 ft. square stone room.

- Plastered all French Lake buildings with mortar.

- Purchased iron cots and mattresses for the men.

- Built new 16' x 20' ranger cabins at Eden Island of Quetico Lake, Johnston's Point, Basswood Lake (west end), Darby's Island, Basswood Lake (east end), and Pickerel Lake. Tourists started cooking fire which burned new cabin at Johnston's Point just after it was erected by Johnston and Darby.

- Very difficult to get supplies into French Lake in summer. Very rough road from Kawene Station to Eva Lake. Built barge on Eva Lake to transport horses and supplies.

February, 1914 - Owing to epidemic of smallpox in Fort Frances, A.J. does not want to obtain supplies there at present.

- Not much poaching this year. Picked up some steel traps along the southern boundary. Destroyed several dead-falls.

- All tourists provided with copy of Park regulations.

- A.J. says red and white pine on Jean, Quetico Beaverhouse Lakes are better than any he had ever seen.

- Moose very plentiful; deer also numerous; beaver increasing rapidly, porcupines very abundant.

- Two moose calves killed by bears in June at Pickerel Lake.

- Bass found in only two lakes in south part of Park.

- A.J. advised men to kill owls, hawks, wolves and porcupines.

- Two commercial fisheries in Quetico - fish shipped to Winnipeg and Montreal.

- Impossible to obtain a dog team - rangers must use snowshoes and toboggans.

- Quetico River dammed up at Beaverhouse Lake. A.J. ordered logs removed as no reason for high water (no log drives). Afraid high water might damage timber.

- Mining claims and timber licences issued in Quetico but no land yet sold. A.J. recommends cottage lots be sold on Pickerel Lake and northern boundary lakes.

August 5, 1914 - "This beautiful park region is attracting the attention of a lot of Americans, who, once having made the trip, tell their friends of the wonderful experience they have met with. Dozens of moose and deer can be seen almost anytime and fishing is excellent. The scenery down the rivers and gives a variety to the traveller which keeps up the interest throughout the trip."

1914 - The Fort Frances Pulp and Paper company Ltd., a subsidiary of Minnesota Pulp and Paper, erects a paper mill in Fort Frances.

1915

- A.J. McDonald asks permission to build five or six new cabins in Quetico, as sleeping in tents in winter is out of season. Also considers tin stoves a waste of money.

- A.J. builds ice house at French Lake as cannot live without one in summer.

- A.J. tells rangers to stop building cabins in summer and follow tourists to make sure they obey regulations.

- Quetico Park maps are so inaccurate as to be altogether useless.

- Diamond drilling for iron in Quetico near Saganagons.

- Telephone line to fire ranger cabins commenced (finished in 1925). Kawene - French - Sturgeon - Lonely - Jean - Badwater - Beaverhouse - Flanders, with a branch to Shelley - Kawniipi - Agnes - Meadows and Prairie Portage. Ontario Forestry Branch (fire protection) paid C.N. operator \$40/month to relay messages to the Chief Ranger at Fort Frances. Moose often became tangled in the wires, so much so, that, to celebrate the rare times when the line actually did work, staff would have a party.

- A.J. said, "I prefer canvas-covered Chestnut canoes but all the men advise the use of Peterborough canoes, owing to the rocky nature of the country. The Peterborough is of wood only and less liable to damage; if damaged it may be repaired by strips of tin tacked on."

- One U.S. commercial fisherman on Basswood Lake, who often fished the Canadian side, told his helper to keep watch for a red canoe (Ranger Bill Darby) rounding Merriam Bay Point. If seen, they quickly pulled up their nets.

- No logging yet in Quetico in 1915.

- Many caribou reported in Quetico in 1915.

- Only two Indian women observed on Kawa Bay at former Indian Reserve 24C.

- Death of Deputy Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines, Aubrey White, whose life was devoted to keeping lumber companies satisfied and raising timber revenue to its highest point. He boasted that, since 1867 he had sold 12,000 square miles of timber and brought in 40 million dollars in revenue. "The people of Ontario have been relieved of taxation by the sale of the natural resources of the Province."

August 24, 1915 - Ice in waterpail. Garden at French Lake completely destroyed (even potatoes)!

1916

- Quetico Park staff of superintendent plus nine men (three men had enlisted; seven fire rangers hired from May to September).

- 13 cabins now scattered throughout Quetico.

- Ice very unsafe this year. Three men fell through ice - A.K. McDonald himself, Bill Darby (32 minutes in water), and Bill Both, who had snowshoes on.

- A.J. wants to extend Park boundaries northward because present zigzag boundary is difficult to enforce.

- Brass monuments (boundary markers) installed on Monument Portage from Swamp Lake to Ottertrack Lake.

- 200 metal Quetico Park boundary signs installed.

- Wooden fire tower erected in Quetico.

- Shevlin Clarke preparing to log in west part of Quetico this winter.

- Prospecting for iron in This Man Lake and Jasper Lake.

November 23, 1916 - A trek of caribou from the north country was discovered at Nickel lake. Twenty-five were counted and there were many more. This is the first large herd to be seen here for many years. Perhaps they are looking for the Quetico Park Reserve where they will be allowed to roam at leisure without fear of being killed by hunters.

December 14, 1916 - A.J. McDonald says he never saw the wolves so numerous or so ravenous as they are this winter. Deer and moose are scarce in the Park, having gone to some other part of the District. He says that fisher and lynx are very numerous, also otter. So far no person appears to be trapping beaver in the Reserve as they do not seem to understand the new regulations and are afraid of getting into trouble.

October 12, 1916 - Open season was ordered for otter and beaver in Ontario (including Quetico Park). This was the first open season for these animals in Ontario for 20 years. Trapping in Quetico was to be done under the supervision of A.J. McDonald. Very little trapping, if any, was actually done, for the reasons outlined above.

- Silver fox skin sells for \$1,500.

- A cook in a nearby lumber camp could serve moose meat in more forms than any other man living.

J.A. Osborne, editor of the Fort Frances Times, wrote the following account of his visit to Quetico Park in 1916: "Arriving at French Portage, a short walk of a quarter of a mile to French Lake, where another and larger gasoline boat was waiting soon brought us to Headquarters where we were warmly welcomed by Mrs. McDonald. Here to our surprise we found all the comforts of a modern house.

"A well-built log house with logs neatly hewn and the inside covered with beaver board was most homelike and the spacious rooms and office were all spic and span. A furnace in the basement heated the house and a flowing well also in the basement supplied the water-works, giving everything an air of comfort. Around the house a good-sized clearing with a generous stock of vegetables being harvested attested to the care and work of the superintendent. Close by is a substantial log house occupied by a man and his wife as helpers and used by the fire rangers of the Park as Headquarters when in from their respective stations.



Camp on Jean Lake, Quetico Provincial Park.

"One of the most interesting trips was across French Portage to Lake Windigoostigwan, a distance of two miles which we took in company with Superintendent McDonald. This is the portage cut out by Dawson and used by the Voyageurs and Wolseley soldiers at the time of the first Riel Rebellion. Here at the end of the portage can be seen the remains of an old dam where the waters were backed up to admit the landing of the large barges with their tons of supplies and army accoutrements. Old iron kettles broken and thrown aside, bolts, spikes anchors and numerous other articles can be picked up almost any place, all marking the spot which was the scene of great activity 50 years ago. The road between the two lakes has been put into good shape by Mr. McDonald so that our trip, which was made with a team and light wagon, was a big improvement over the trail as it was even years ago.

"Mrs. McDonald is also a thorough woodswoman. She can paddle a canoe and handle a rod and gun as good as the average man; while for preparing a meal there is none better in the land. She is most hospitable to strangers and often gives up the bed for some wandering American tourists and takes a shake-down on the floor in order that the tired tourists can enjoy a comfortable bed. Her larder is always well-supplied with plain, wholesome food in which delicious preserves from the many wild berries can always be found on the table. Fresh fish forms a staple diet in the absence of fresh meat and it is Mrs. McDonald that knows how to cook them.

"Although this large Park reserve is situated in the centre almost of the Thunder Bay and Rainy River Districts, there are very few of our government officials at Toronto that have any conception as to its size and beauty. This should not be. The people should take more interest in their own and see for themselves what a glorious heritage we of Ontario have in this Quetico Park Reserve."

January 13, 1916 - President Theodore Roosevelt of the "Bull Moose" Political Party in the U.S., wrote a letter to Colonel McKenzie of Fort Frances, congratulating him on calling his regiment the "Bull Moose Battalion" of the Rainy River District.

February 3, 1916 - "Only married men and unmarried men unfit for active service will be given positions as fire rangers in the Province of Ontario."

A.J. McDonald found it difficult to find suitable men with canoeing experience to replace those of his men who had enlisted in World War I. He said, "I feel proud of those of my men who have enlisted and may say that, had I, myself, been of military age, certainly would not have been in this position for the past year or more."

March 31, 1916 - Herbert Rooney Quetico Park Ranger since May 1, 1915 has enlisted in the 94th Battalion at Port Arthur. His mother is Mrs. S. Boon of Atikokan.

September 28, 1916 - Percy Wright of Fort Frances wounded in the Royal Flying Corps. in France Writes:

"12 of us started at 2 p.m. yesterday for a raid - ran into big cloud. lost the rest, kept on by compass to objective. Almost hit by explosives - altimeter affected - let go my 224 lbs. of bombs My plane was a mess - struts and left wing so full of holes you couldn't get a square foot of sound fabric. Petrol on tanks and rad punctured so I got sound fabric. Petrol on tanks and rad punctured so I got a nice dose of oil, smoke, petrol and water. The engine evidently hit, but still going (as Beardmore's always do) and one blade of propellor gone. The other blade had a piece out of it. Vibrations so bad I expected engine to shake herself loose and fly off alone. We got over the lines and landed where the Australians are. Didn't make a very good landing as there wasn't enough wing surface to hold up when engine stopped, so landed pretty fast and did in my undercarriage. There were a thousand Australians round in less time than it takes to tell it and I climbed out and asked for a doctor. I sure was a sight - all blood and powder smoke. Four spots on right arm, one on left hand, four on top of my head and a bruised ear and lovely black eye. My leather cap and coat had stopped some, so only cut the skin. Telephoned for a squadron car. ANZACS lined the road about a mile and cheered like mad."

February 7, 1917 - A.J. McDonald move to North Bay to Ontario Forestry Branch (fire protection) and shortly thereafter his brother, Hugh McDonald, becomes Superintendent of Quetico Park.

SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST -1913 to 1917

- 1910 - 1914 - Joe Fitzwater, Superior National Forest Supervisor.
- 1914 - 1919 - Leslie Brownell, Superior National Forest Supervisor.
- 1915 - Forest Guards (rangers) were allowed by logging companies to put canoes and packs in a handcar and push it over the four mile railway between Fall Lake and Hoist Bay free of charge.

1915 - Commercial fishing licences granted on U.S. side of Knife, Basswood, Iron and Crooked Lakes.

"The Record of a Journey of Four Gentlemen" provides an interesting and humorous account of a canoe trip along the boundary waters in August 1915 by four gentlemen from Nebraska. The following are excerpts from this journal:

"At Lac La Croix Portage, we met James Beatty, the wolf of the lakes, the strongest man in the North, who will fight anything from a rattlesnake to a bull moose single-handed. He was for years the game warden and deputy forester for Minnesota."

"At this same portage we also met a party of young Canadian engineers from Ottawa who were surveying the boundary line. The boys gave us lemons for lemonade. The Canadians were typical of the English and the exact wording of their invitation to lunch was, "I s'y would you chaps care to come an' 'ave some lunch with us?"

(speaking of Lac La Croix) "No one can conceive a piece of nature so mysterious and beautiful as this large lake covering thousands of acres with hundreds of islands of beautiful tall pines and birch shores of solid granite and water deep, clear and pure."



"Picture Rock", site of the largest concentration and best Indian Pictographs in Quetico Provincial Park.

(Crooked Lake) "One is appalled by the very silence of the large forest. As he is hidden in the deep, dark woods, he hears nothing but his own heart throbs and footsteps on the crackling twigs. Not the slightest sound is heard of birds or beasts, although he knows they are there. Nothing but silence, silence everywhere - big, heavy, burdensome, heartrending - SILENCE! Nature, not spoiled by the hand of man - what a wonderful book it all is!"

ODE TO THE MOSQUITO

"To worry and aggravate mortal man and beast, the mosquito surely will take away the gold medal. They grow to such dimensions here that they can hold a man back by his suspenders while he is making a portage and all the time be drilling his life blood and poisoning his system. They are as thick here as the leaves on the pines, as watchful as the hell-diver, as penetrating as the mauser bullet, as poisonous as a rattlesnake, as persistent as an old maid, as musical as a German band. They can bleed you like a family physician or your confidential lawyer. They call at all hours and have no departure time; they are the scourge of God, the working tool of the devil, the curse of hell, the fuse of profanity, the prince of all pests, the king of all aggravation, the abomination of all blood life, the discord of heaven, and the damnation of the earth. If anything more or worse can be expressed in the vocabulary of man, they are that too. To swear at them is almost flattery - God damn the mosquito!"

Even in those days wilderness enthusiasts were painfully aware that the constantly expanding industrialized society posed many threats to the wilderness. At beautiful Curtain Falls on Crooked Lake, the four gentlemen gave vent to their fears.

"This was certainly a beautiful camp in sound of roaring Curtain Falls. What a world of power and energy is passing each second at these falls making nothing but music and beauty for the forest and nature, and the wanderer who chances to pass that way. But some day, yes, they are coming that way now they will be harnessed, suppressed, their beauty and rage turned to light and force and power for man and the "The ravishing hand of man is coming there, taking from the world the last wild region of forest, lake and stream. The timber is being cut for logs and pulp, the lakes being set with monstrous nets which rob the waters of hundreds of fish each day, the moose and deer being murdered for the hunting lust of man, and the wild and tumbling waters harnessed, robbed of their beauty - all for money, greed ----- commercialism"

SETTING UP CAMP IN THE RAIN AT NIGHT

"We were in a very peculiar part of Lac La Croix's island formation and tried three or four different islands for a camping site and found them all composed of flat, perpendicular rocks on which a man could not stand up or lie down. It finally began to rain and we were forced to land on, for lack of a more appropriate name, what will be termed S.O.B. (sure of a backache) Island.

"Harry and Doc pitched the tent on the rock, the edges of which were to do chiropractic stunts on the boys all night long. It was raining all the time and every rock where the cooking was being done sat at an angle of 45 degrees and was as slippery as a snake fish (pike). It was pitch dark and the wood was all wet and hard to find. It would not burn. The wind blew so the candle would not light. Everybody was hungry and tired. Nobody could find anything, not even stand up on the rocks. Bill upset all the coffee after it was made and it put out the fire. While he was whittling shavings for a new fire, he kept repeating a few words which generated enough heat to light another fire."



Author Shan Walshe is the Quetico Park Naturalist, a position he has held for the past 14 years, and knows the Quetico-Superior area like the back of his hand. He is the author of the recently published book: Plants of Quetico and the Ontario Shield. Shirley Peruniak is the Park Historian and is also very knowledgeable about the Quetico-Superior area from first hand experience. She has researched and written extensively on the cultural aspects of Quetico Park.

This is the fifth of a series of articles on Quetico and the Quetico-Superior 75th Anniversary.

WCA PHOTO AND SNAPSHOT CONTEST

A total of 143 photographs [28 prints and 115 slides] were submitted to the 1985 WCA photo and snapshot contest by 17 members. The 6 novices entered 29 photographs and the experienced ones 114, making this the largest participation in any WCA competition. We're counting on even more entries in next year's contest which will have as extra category [no. 5]: "child(ren) and wilderness canoeing". Keep your cameras clicking the coming season!

The judges were: Bruce Murray [Toronto Guild for Colour Photography], Sandy Richardson, and Toni Harting [both WCA]. Scorekeeper and administrative assistant was Ria Harting.

The prizewinners and Honourable Mentions are:

novice

wilderness [7 entered]

1. "October sunrise" Gerry Lannan
- HM -no title- Philip Nusbaum

wilderness and man [12 entered]

1. -no title- Chris Weber
- HM "Solace sunset" Claire Smerdon
- HM "Golden trail" Gerry Lannan

flora [no entries]

fauna [2 entered]

1. "Cedar waxwing" Claire Smerdon

canoeing action [8 entered]

1. "Two-up through Little Graveyard" Lucie Howell
- HM -no title- Chris Weber

experienced

wilderness [30 entered]

1. "Evening on the Notakwanon" Herb Pohl
2. -no title- Dave Berthelet
3. "Diamond sunset" Richard Smerdon
- HM -no title- Tony Bird
- HM -no title- Tony Bird
- HM "Morning fog on the Labrador coast" Herb Pohl

wilderness and man [29 entered]

1. "Inuit Komotik" John Bigham
2. "Discovering" Glenn Spence
3. "October mists" Herb Pohl
- HM -no title- George Luste
- HM "Endless ecstasy" Glenn Spence
- HM "Evening on the river" Ken Reeves

flora [18 entered]

1. "Water lily" Mike Graham-Smith
2. -no title- Tony Bird
- HM "Green and white" Norm Coombe
- HM "Canada lily" Norm Coombe

fauna [17 entered]

1. "Red squirrel" Richard Smerdon
2. "Three loons" Richard Smerdon
- HM "Grass snake" Mike Graham-Smith
- HM "Clarke's nutcracker" Glenn Spence

canoeing action [20 entered]

1. "Superior" George Luste
2. "Whitewater wilderness canoeing" Ken Reeves
- HM "Randy" Mike Graham-Smith
- HM "Right through the eye of the needle" John Bigham

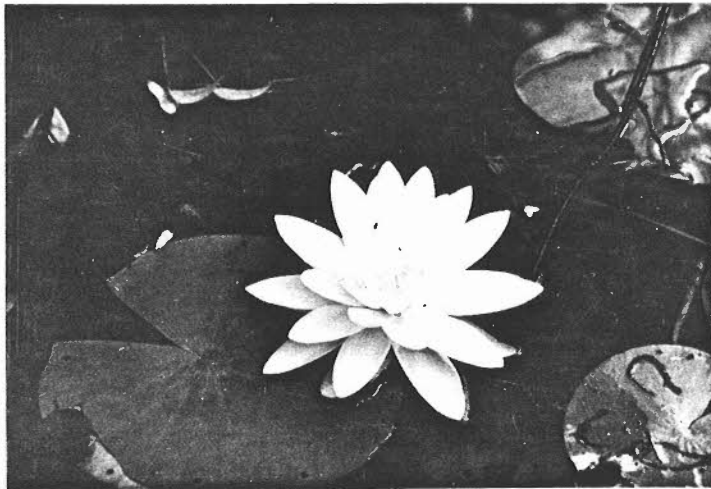
The prizes, in the form of Certificates of Merit, were presented at the WCA Annual General Meeting in March. The nine first prize winning photographs are reproduced on the centrespread of this issue of Nastawgan. Selections from the remaining entries will be published in coming issues.



OCTOBER SUNRISE - Gerry Lannan
(Wilderness, Novice)



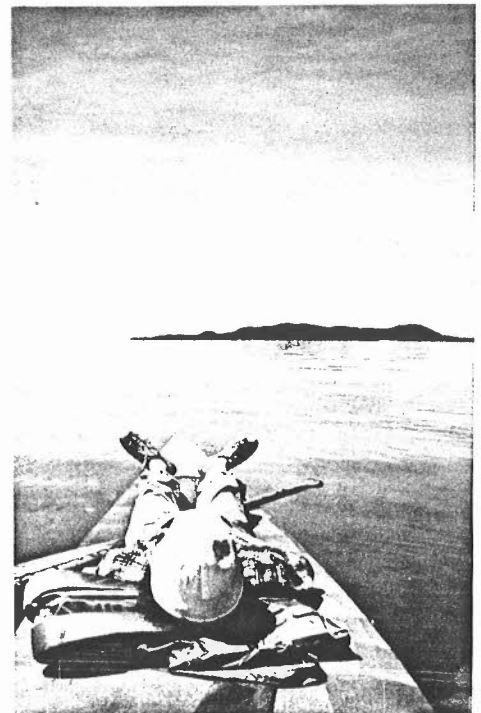
wca photo winners



WATER LILY - Mike Graham-Smith
(Flora, Experienced)



INUIT KAYOTIK - John Bigham
(Wilderness & Man, Experienced)



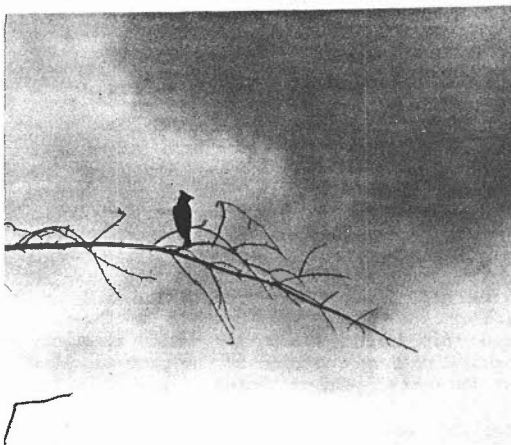


RED SQUIRREL - Richard Soerdon
(Fauna, Experienced)

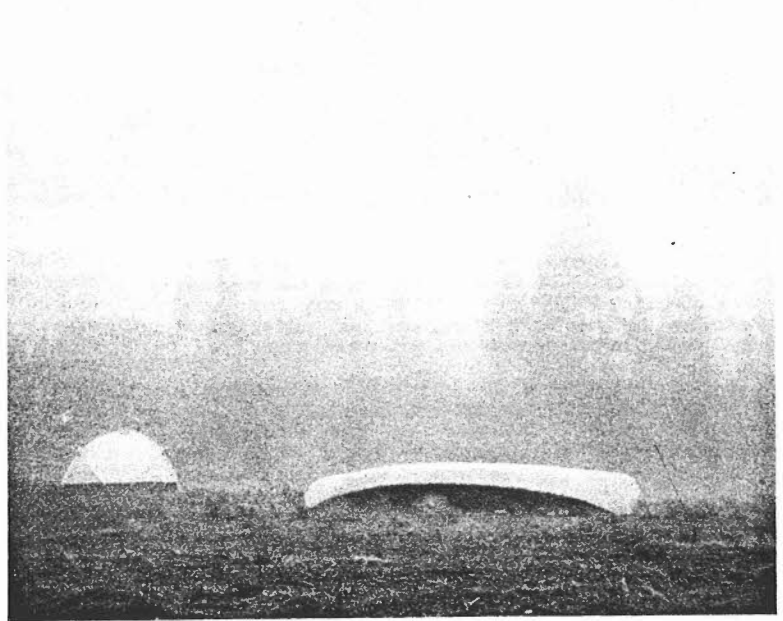


TWO-UP THROUGH LITTLE GRAVEYARD - Lucie Howell
(Canoeing Action, Novice)

contest



CEDAR WAXWING - Claire Soerdon
(Fauna, Novice)



UNTITLED - Chris Webber
(Wilderness & Man, Novice)



EVENING ON THE NOTAKWANDH - Herb Pokl
(Wilderness, Experienced)



SUPERIOR - George Leste
(Canoeing Action, Experienced)

hiking the willmore

Article: Claire Brigden
Photos Jim Greenacre



Willmore Wilderness Park is Alberta's last great mountain wilderness. It is north of Jasper and embraces an area of about 20,000 km². Altitudes vary from 3,000 to 8,000 feet and the scenery includes lush valleys, snow splashed peaks, alpine meadows and moist timberland.

Hunting is permitted in the Park in certain months and the early trapping and present overkill have sadly reduced the game. Campaigns by the ecologically conscious currently petition the government to give the Willmore a chance to recover. Helicopters cruise overhead daily the pilots looking for the signs of forest fires, but environmentalists challenge this practice as detrimental to the process of natural clearing and as a loss of opportunity for new growth upon which the ranging animals feed.

Weather patterns are very local here, with clouds forming and dispersing unreliably and with great rapidity, so that alternate clothing ready at hand is a must for the traveller. Rain, sleet, snow and sun can attend the hiker in summer months.

August 2

Jim and I arrived via plane and bus at Hinton and were driven to beautiful Entrance Ranch where we joined 7 other hikers from Alberta and pitched tents on the spacious lawn. Log buildings dotted the landscape and Norwegian Duns grazed in the fields or whinnied at the fence lines. (They were short, stocky, sand-coloured horses, each with a dark line from forelock to tail, distinguishing them from the hunter class riding horses sharing the field with them.)

The first evening, our hosts, Rocky and Anne Notness taught us two Eastern Greenhorns how to pack and balance 2 wooden saddle boxes with our food using a scale for accuracy. Everyone worked getting organized and making a car shuttle and then went to bed to dream of the morrow, in the fresh air of the foothills.

August 3

We breakfasted, packed, and left everything in big piles, and drove to the starting point 50 km away, while horse vans and the truck with gear followed. The Notness family plus cousins and ourselves numbered 15 people and we unloaded 19 horses and gear for all. We hikers then started out with our day packs, leaving the others to the 2 hour job of loading the horses.

We walked upstream on gravelly flats, along a 2 track seismic line, or through evergreen forest on the slopes. We had to cross the river and many incoming streams many times on this and subsequent days, and quickly discovered various means of negotiating icy waters: 1) walk logs, 2) jump, 3) wade barefoot, 4) ford with running shoes, or 5) get the hiking boots wet. I tried every combination over the course of the trip and ruled out getting the boots submerged as a "no-no". Donning the old thin tennis shoes and taking them off again to hang dripping from the back of the pack was slow but had to beat for overall effectiveness.

That first day was an easy 15 kilometre hike at 4,000 feet in sunshine, and the pack train passed us at 2:00 p.m. the horses (foot hobbled) were grazing on the "flats" below, the outfitters tents were up, and our gear was piled nearby. We set up our own equipment, bathed, carried water, built a communal fire and cooked in 3 groups. Horse flies were very troublesome but we had no other problems.

AUGUST 4

The six younger hikers set off up to the highest ridges (where one saw a bighorn ram), the pack train kept to the valleys, and Ruth, John, Jim and I hiked up the valley of Adam's Creek using the seismic line road (which



humps up and down along the right side of the valley) then forded the river and followed a horse trail along the flats, through more icy waters to an "island" of higher ground with jack pine, old fireplace and a pair of weathered moose antlers. We were looking for the lowest spot in the mountain bowl, but John suggested going right up the mountain. We clambered up past a burn, over windfalls, through near-vertical meadows of flowers - bear paw, monks hood, forget-me-not, Indian paint brush, wintergreen, and grass, deep and luxuriant at the bottom, shorter and closely woven on the slopes, thin and sparse (or absent) at the top. We stopped every ten minutes or so. Sometimes I was on all fours. The scenery broadened out, until at 6,900 feet we looked back on a great green bowl, grey-rock trimmed, with quicksilver waters threading through the basin.

We all donned warm clothes in the wind and rested over lunch. I was exhausted from the altitude. The men were soon up and hiking the ridge to reconnoitre. We women converged with them and we all headed down the other side of the mountain into Inglemann spruce forest along a pretty stream bed with honeysuckle, sorrel, wild onions, asters, roses. We were met by Rocky who had made camp and was doubling back to look for us. It was a good campsite with a view. Jim got supper. I could hardly move. We found a type of vetch here, called *Hedysarum Mackenzii* with lovely pink flowers, and lots of bladder locoweed. We covered about 15 kilometres in all.

AUGUST 5

Thunderstorms. We hiked up the valley on a horse trail then turned left and Jim and Diane each independently, missed the turn. The rest of us crossed the river 4 or 5 times and I got sick of changing shoes, so went in bare feet. There was a lovely cliffy place where we waited. Jim caught up quickly. Two riders passed us. Diane finally appeared. Ruth explained that this was prime grizzly country because of the legumes growing in the valley. We took the right bank instead of the seismic line with all its river crossings, and were slowed down by heavy verdure. We had to bushwhack through spruce and willow and over a tiresome but incredible moss carpet up to half a metre thick. It poured rain with thunder all around. We kept walking until there was a break in the clouds at 2:15 p.m. when we put on dry clothes for lunch, and then changed back into light rain-soaked togs. We were on the horse trail by this time - a black mirey path. Up and down. We got to camp at 4:00 p.m. The others had arrived at 1:00 and the pack train came in at 5:00 as they had taken a wrong trail. We hiked 15-18 kilometres.

AUGUST 6

This was a layover day with big clouds and lots of wind. We all slept until 8:30 and had a lazy breakfast. Carol had two bad blisters. Everyone hung out wet clothes and washed. The group then scattered to explore, all visiting a beautiful burn a kilometre away, at some time in the day. I spent a lot of time watching Rocky shoe horses. (Average loss of shoes was 2-3 per day, but the horses were only reshoed every 6 weeks normally.) We think we saw wolf pug marks. There were big mountains all around with bare caps and snow.

Trees at the burn were all standing black or grey with an extraordinary garden of flowers at their feet - fireweed, Indian paint brush, alpine hairbell, bracted wintergreen, arnica, and along the path, tiny spider plant. Butterflies everywhere, content on romance, especially the females, who were brazenly indecent in their posturing.

AUGUST 7

We hiked up through a forest of big trees and down across Snow Creek valley watching for grizzlies. (A sow and cub were seen the previous eve.) Then up and over a beautiful if rugged pass with lots of spruce and willow. We found goat and wolverine tracks and lupin, cow parsnip, sorrel and monkshood. Magnificent Inglemann spruce and lush mosses grew in the very moist environment. False hellebore grew, most beautiful with striped spiralling leaves and yellow-green flowers, along the stream. In the muskeg we saw wolverine tracks again and coyote, weasel, birds and mouse prints.

There were many stream crossings - various fun methods: leaping, jumping off the top of a post, stepping stones, wading, and climbing live willow branches.

Up Rocky Pass (see poem) to the saddle. It was like a moonscape with big ragged chunks of rocky limestone

melding into sandstone mountains in the background. Bearberry plants were in fruit, and gellow folios lichen, alpine forget-me-not; we saw a marmot sitting up with hands folded over his chest, and pika just a flash amongst the boulders. The wind was cold and seemed about 80 km/h. I was in shorts, but changed into jeans when the pack train caught up and I hitched a ride. We still had a good distance to go, and Rocky thought I should ride before I got too tired. Great idea. We crossed a plain with low lakes, and grizzly tracks, then went down through a very rough gorge, the horses skidding on the rocks and sloshing through the streams. (I should say here, that two of the Notness family stayed with us for a few days, then went back another route, with tree horses; and Rocky and Anne, with the two girls Roo and Su Su and a young cousin Ann who had come up from California, made up the permanent party. The three girls trotted and ran every day most of the way, guiding the pack horses, and holding the lead horse by the halter to prevent the animals from going too fast and losing the loads. Sometimes Rocky and Anne walked too, but they had a lot to do in camp. All, of them were tall, the women nudging 5'10, I swear.)

I got off after a 10 kilometre ride and felt like chicken's wish bone. The horse I had had was fat, and I stood, bow legged, on the side of the trail, so stiff I couldn't move. Jim came along and passed me and I waited until he was out of sight before I took the first painful steps, trying to straighten out my legs. I finally got going, and began to run, as it was downhill on a widening trail, and caught up with him, and we found cougar pug marks in the mud. What a thrill. Finally we reached the very big plain of the Sulphur River flats and hiked to Big Grave campground. The big grave was in the middle of the plain and could be seen at some considerable distance, as there weren't many willows here, and the mound was protected by poles and boards to keep out wolves. Camp was pitched near the river. The grassy bank was well undercut and in some places was 2 metres above the sand and gravel bars where the river had cut a wide swath. We hiked 25 kilometres.

AUGUST 8

It was a very hot morning, and a layover day. A coyote was yipping in the hills. Big sandstone peaks were all around the long wide valley which contained a well built Rangers' log cabin with two stoves, cupboards, food, bunk beds for 4-6 and bear proof door and window, but poor forage for horses. Ground squirrel holes dotted the banks. The odd hawk soared overhead.

We had a late breakfast and spent time washing. Brian built a Sweat House. Diane went off with a fishing rod and caught four Dolly Vardon. There was a yellow rattle and poplar copse near the river. Yellow, blue and orange butterflies flew about. It was very hot. It is the foot of the Continental Range here, right in the middle of the Willmore at about 4,700 feet elevation. The Sweat House was finished and various people took advantage of this honest-to-gosh sauna after supper, to burn themselves up and then head for the icy river nearby in a recommended sequence of three sweats and three soaks. Jim went crazy. It was a revelation. He rubbed in the sand, and yelled and shouted and sank to his neck in the river and went back for more. (Be forewarned, that on any future trips with Jim where there are manageable rocks on a beach Jim will build Sweat Houses and shout and yell yet again.) It was a starry night.



AUGUST 9

We had a clear sky at 6:30 a.m., packed up early and the horses ferried all of us across the cold river except Brian who waded. Lovely deep woods on the other side in the flat valley was prime bear country. Ray kept hooting. (Bears move off if they hear people coming.) Big trees. Lush moss. We hiked up through meadows and more trees and past beaver dams, streams and up a forested mountain trail. Muck, rock and meadows to a long notch with a seismic line which we followed across the top. It was very beautiful and full of flowers. The horses passed us as we ate at noon. At three places where rock slides had covered the vegetation. Yellow Indian paint brush, and white delphinium, a bounded with grass of parnassus. Down and along to a lake. Fred found a moose head with antlers, skull and teeth intact. We passed a big beaver pond and hiked on past a campsite through the bush to another (proper) land-locked lake, which Diane christened Sandpiper Lake because a mother bird was raising three youngsters on the shore. This is the Kvass Meadows and we camped here. Jim got lost he took a wrong turn but used his head and came at the camp from a different approach. Big mountains were all around. One looked like a table top tipped on its side. Some rain. We hiked about 15 kilometres.

AUGUST 10

We spent our second layover day here, as this was a most scenic spot to explore. I bathed in the lake at 7:30 before the others were up. Mist was rising and the sun coming up hot. No wind. Clouds were flowing over mountain peaks. The rest were up latish for a big breakfast before heading to a chain of upper lakes. I stayed behind, while the others filed past in little groups, at different speeds. (All saw a magnificent bull caribou up there with a prize rack of antlers.) On another ridge, Su Su spotted an eagle.

I explored around camp and found flocks of juncos, rufous hummingbirds, Wilson's warblers, the sandpiper family again, and numerous sparrows. A game trail produced more moose bones, and the trail led to another little lake fringed with saw grass. The edges of the lake were jade; the centre King's blue. Ground squirrels were in abundance. The mountain on the right resembled elephant hide. Patches of snow lay on the peaks.

Dead trees and bones look the same, I've decided. Grey bones and bleached trees, playing "What am I?". Pebbles, clay and beaver dams were all bleached, in fact. Bleached bones. Bleached beach bones. Beached bleached bones.

The wind acts as though it awoke with the day, and resenting us interlopers, blows itself to exhaustion trying to dislodge us, but only succeeds in loosening tent pegs and ruffling the lake's feathers, ere it puffs off down the draw at dusk, breathless.

The others return. Di has cut her knee rather badly and fixed it with butterfly tape. She hobbling.

AUGUST 11

Frost in the night was great, as it wiped out the flies. Zap. Another layover day here. Ruth, John, Jim and I set off up a mountain with spectacular flowers in deep spongy soil: lady's tresses, burgundy paint brush, daisies, moss campion, felwort and arnica. John flushed an owl out of a spruce grove and we climbed higher and higher until the verdure thinned out from long grass to short grass to putting green grass to snow patches. It was great to stand there in shorts and make snow popsicles. On to the summit, and there, over the rise, were a pair of glorious caribou, who stared incredulously, and then lopped away as they headed across a high valley and over another rim. So effortless they seemed in their flowing gait. Di and Carol came up, and Di found a caribou antler, which she carted with her, or on the horses, the whole way home.

Back to camp at 4:30. Thunder and lightning and heavy rain came at 10:00 p.m. It was a cold night again, with refreshing slumber.

AUGUST 12

Hoar frost on the grass, and we were up and away for our return journey. Back up over the seismic line with the rock slides and down the steep hill to the climax forest. This was the day that I waded in my hiking boots. A mistake. This became too sloshy and formed blisters. Most stopped for lunch at a stream, but Jim and I went on at a fast pace, as Jim was really coming into his stride by this time, altitude or no. The three

boys caught up and passed us, and Jim went with them, as I had to patch the blister. Soon we met a pack train, and I badgered them into giving me a lift across the Sulphur River. (The men had all waded across in the shallowest place which was up to their thighs. Not for me. It would have swept me away.) This brought us back to Big Grave campground at 1:30 and the men started another Sweat House. Horses and hikers kept trickling in and it was another great sauna evening of sand, sweat and icewater. We hiked about 15 kilometres.

AUGUST 13

Rain started about 4:00 a.m., a steady, solid, soaking rain. This a layover day, which we didn't plan on. Rocky's big white cook tent came into its own. It boasted a wood stove like Craig Macdonald's winter camping setup and we made that our headquarters for meals and laundromat. Socks and boots hung everywhere, and we ate around the long tables and read and played cards.

No wind, but heavy clouds were shuffling back and forth over the ridges and mountain peaks peaking and seeking in a gigantic game of Miss the Mist. It was certainly a spectator sport, and after 12:30 the rain stopped and the spectators sallied forth to take in the view from various vantage points along the swollen river. It was "strolling" afternoon.

AUGUST 14

We were up and off early to Little Grave campsite. We hiked across the flats and then up through a spectacular evergreen woods with deep sphagnum moss in gold and bronze. Purple laurel, twin flower, lungwort, lousewort, coral root, clintonia, and umbrella chickweed abounded here. (Don't you love the names?) We followed the Sulphur upstream for a long way, and had to negotiate a nasty step bank of loose slate. We needed the sure feet of mountain goats here, as the river was deep, cold, fast and nasty right below us, and we were scrambling along sideways at a 60° angle, with the slate rattling out from under our boots - very bare, very unforgiving. Never mind, we saw three merlin there and farther on elk scat and tracks, and coyote scats with lots of hair in them. We made long slow progress up a grade, then along a seismic line and horse trail to the camp in willow flats. (We saw an old log cabin with roof caved in, pleading for resurrection along the way, but passed the beggar by, pretending it didn't exist, as one has a want to do with beggars.) It was a 19 kilometre hike to this camp at 5,000'.

AUGUST 15

Up early and on to "51" Creek (51 miles from Old entrance). We climbed uphill about 8 kilometres and then a good trail broadened out and we trudged a long wide valley with the river running through the middle, the flats clogged with willow, and the left mountain wall most impressive, and shaped like a long row of elephants side by side with their back ends facing the valley. Hump, hump, hump, hump. The opposite wall was higher, sharper, and irregular, with green wedges scalloping the valleys edges.

This is the "Starlight Range" and well named. We passed a new burn, and came upon the Little Grave, which Jim and John opened, photographed, and reverently closed again. We saw an eagle. Hey, how about that! My first Golden! It was hot and sunny all day. Western pigmy blue butterflies were at some kind of rally on a log.



Maybe even a fashion show. Blue ribbons all. I counted 54.

Our campsite was among Jack pines. Ruth got out her Solar Shower. It really works. (Fill a flatish square bag, with nozzle attachment full of water, lay in sun until water warms, hang it up, open the nozzle and luxuriate.) We had a big party around the campfire that night; the Notness gang served wine and goodies and we sang and told stories and had a great bonfire evening. It was most congenial. We hiked nearly 20 kilometres that day.

AUGUST 16

Our last layover. John, Ruth and Jim hiked up the east ridge and saw 37 dots resting on a far slope. Mountain goats. Rocky went off exploring on his own. All the rest climbed the higher western ridges, and by early afternoon Anne and I could spot tiny moving figures trotting along against the sky.

Brian came back early (he avoided the more risky places) and we went down to the river where he tried to entice Dolly Vardons, but the hot sun kept them down deep. I spent a lot of time feeding whiskey jacks, and writing, and poking about, finding a toad and sparrows and woodpeckers I couldn't identify. Another campfire night, but the Notress family went to bed early as they had covered a lot of hiking distance exploring.

AUGUST 17

I got up at 6:00 and grabbed a fast breakfast and headed out alone to get a 2 hour head start on the others, so I could poke along and relish memories of the last day. I followed a seismic line through Eagle's Nest Pass, a big cathedral rock formation on the right and high grassed range on the left, then down to wide open plains with a pack train camped away over in a wooded hillside. One horse was staked out alone. Farther on I saw a camp on the right with blue and orange tents. Across the plain to some creeks then I swung and around to the right, past an old air strip, and past an ugly white box of a government office with distraught swooping swallows lamenting the loss of their nests, which I found scraped off the south wall. A typical government whitewash job!

On to Wild Hay River, and there a magnificent stag was staring at me. I stopped and we both stared. "Mornin' stranger". "Howdy". Then he was off, cantering up a wooded hillside. He looked back once, then was gone. A touch of class.

I crossed the river in bare feet, then hiked along the "line" which had now turned into a road. A beaver dam was on the right and dead sodden-footed trees marked the pond. On the fringe I saw a flash of feathers. I sat down and concentrated. The feathers shifted slightly. What was it? Memorize the shape, you haven't your book. Memorize. Imprint. (That night I found it on page 230: Townsend's solitaire. Hurrah).

Others caught up to me at 12:30. We all had lunch beside the river, and the pack train came through. I hitched a ride again for 4 or 5 kilometres, then moved along on foot to take in purple rocks, a vole carrying her baby in her mouth, more flowers, and to say "goodbye" to the birches and jackpine and icewater and gravel beds and mosses. Twenty kilometres of goodbyes.

We watched the horses being loaded at Rock Lake parking lot, sorted out the gear, and drove off in a cloudburst. All headed back to Entrance Ranch for hot water, mown grass, and coffee in china cups.



That night we had a great dinner party in town with wine and smorgasbord, and sh'more wine and never bored an' sh'more board wine an' lick yure liqueur glasses. Glasses high, an' "hi" an' "goodbye", an' "no, not goodbye, au revoir". Oh reverred company. Oh comradship. Oh wilderness. Skol to the wilderness, Skol to the Willmore...Skol, Skol.

THE LEGEND OF ROCKY PASS

High in a notch in the Willmore
Is a pass all lonely and wild,
With boulders as big as cabooses
And peaks both jagged and spiralled,
With shale and scree and outcrop,
Gray and slabbed and tiled.

They say that a pack train once passed there
Just ahead of the winter snow,
(I can't say the time exactly
And I don't think anyone knows),
But the winds were raw and bitter,
And the frost on everyone's clothes.

It had a good string of horses
With bedding and gear and food;
The parents and spritely first-born son
Heading down to a jack pine wood,
Having hunted and fished and prospered
Ere the advent of new motherhood.

They rattled and rocked o'er the boulders
With the child on Old Pal in the rear,
Where he wanted to ride with wilful pride -
A prince on his charger dear -
And they didn't see him tumble off
And his cries they did not hear.

So on they went for a mile or more,
Ere the little son they missed,
Then they turned in desperation
To beat the descending mist,
But the heavens closed about them
And the rain and the hail hissed.

They hunted and called in the twilight
Retracing, again and again,
The places most likely to hold him,
But the search was all in vain
For night came on, and after it dawn,
With the chill and the greezing rain.

They say they never found the boy
And the mother went quickly mad;
The father hunted and trapped for a time
But never a word he said,
And finally died in his cabin alone,
The child's toy by his bed.

And if you travel this Rocky Pass,
You'll hear the wind howl and moan,
And you may hear a sigh, or the ghost-child's cry
As he wanders there alone,
But never a scrap of his clothes will you see,
Nor never a human bone.

But the yellow lichens now carpet the ground
And the tiny wild things bloom;
Where once it was bare now a garden rare
Gives off a sweet perfume,
And the lovely flowers, child's size,
Have made a summer home.

And the pika now live there in crevice and crag
With whom the ghost-child plays,
And they say the marmot now runs by his side,
And he's happy in many ways,
But his cry can be heard like the cry of a bird
If you go there on certain days.

So this is the legend of Rocky Pass
Where the winds can be cruel and cold,
But where flowers abound on the once bare ground
And the pika and marmot scold,
For they all keep a secret company,
Which no human eyes behold.

Claire A. Brigden
August 1984

Similar packing trips into the Willmore will be run this year July 18-29 and August 4-17. The cost is \$40 per person per day. Contact Jim Greenacre at 416-759-9956 for further details.



the kitchen fly

Richard Smerdon

It's four o'clock in the afternoon you're in the middle of the lake and it's raining. Correction, raining is a polite euphemism it's pissing down and has been for two or three hours. The drizzle with occasional heavy showers has given way to cold, pelting nastiness as far as the eye can see. The wind driven, slanting torrent has penetrated every crack of your expensive rainwear and your undergarments remind you vividly of life before potty training. The thoughts of a bowl of hot soup and being 'charged' are like fresh liver to a fly so you head for the nearest likely spot and land.

The woods are drippingly sodden and the rocks are slick horrors complete with miniature versions of grade six rapids. You dump out the gear and cover it with the canoe. You find the fireplace awash but usable. You note that there are convenient trees about and, leaning in one of them, a bunch of poles left by a previous tenant with an old Wood's tent.

Given this optimum situation, you quickly rig the kitchen fly over the fireplace, gather a load of birch bark, split up some standing deadwood and in next to no time you are warm with exertion, luxuriating before a roaring fire and making rude gestures at the elements, now reduced to an inconvenience. That is, if you happen to have a kitchen fly. If you haven't you are probably retreating into your tent and contemplating a cold supper unless you are equipped for one pot meals on a small stove.

Maybe at this point I should make it clear that I am writing this for people who trip with menus designed for cooking on an open fire, i.e. a bush kitchen. I have infinite respect for people who use nothing but a stove and, with their tent and vestibule can laugh at anything that nature serves up. I recall seeing a film of climbers preparing hot food in a blizzard on the North Face of the Eiger with such a stove. It is not for us, however.

We enjoy cooking on trips and find the fireplace both practical and a necessary part of our campsite. We do long trips which normally involve days of excessive heavenly moisture and have solved the water/fire incompatibility with 'The Fly'. I should add, somewhat boastfully, that we have never had to forego our scheduled hot supper since we acquired it.

Now, just in case there are readers who think this is a smart idea and want to run out and get one, let me hasten to say that there are pitfalls ... in fact there are positively deep mine-falls that can make the wet 'Pamper' feeling inconsequential. You see, a kitchen fly consists of three elements. A square or rectangular piece of waterproof material, approximately 10 ft. X 12 ft., with grommets on the corners and sides; support poles found on or near the site and a set of guy lines (we use our 50 ft. 'lining' ropes).

This kit will provide you with a fly but it will also provide a sail which would do the Mayflower proud, a cloth funnel which will divert gallons of water into your otherwise perfect tent space and an enemy in league with the rain which, if given half a chance, will self-destruct just when you have all your packs open under it. Believe me, we have suffered all its quirks and have only survived because we are alert for its infantile pranks.

The traditional fly used by generations of outdoor travellers and presently by the canoe camps is made of canvas. It is usually set by tying a ridge pole between two trees and lashing the high leading edge of the fly to it. The whole thing is guyed with wannigan tump lines. While this method will certainly provide shelter, fireplaces located between two close trees are, for good reason, rare. Our free-standing system allows sheltered cooking and a chance to dry things out beside the fire. We use a ripstop nylon fly made by Eureka of the same coated fabric as the floors and flysheets of their tents. It is light and waterproof but, if you don't use a ridgepole, the hem and grommets are not strong enough. In one hefty gust last year the wind ripped a corner right off.

This brings me to the possible danger of setting nylon over the fire. We have never burnt ours, even when the choice of wood was a bit doubtful and the sparks have flown. Just keep it a reasonable height (about 2 metres) above and it will be fine. It should never be left unattended with a fire going but then one doesn't really leave fires on their own anyway. The one danger is if the whole thing collapses into the flames. This is definitely R.I.P. nylon fly in a matter of seconds. We were just lucky when the corner ripped. The complete solution is to reinforce the outer hems with a 'seat belt' type webbing and set new, heavy duty grommets into it. This allows you to pull like hell on the guys without any fear of tearing it. Be assured that nobody is strong enough to break that stuff and I guarantee that if you put it up in a hurricane the centre fabric might emigrate to parts unknown but the hem will remain in place.

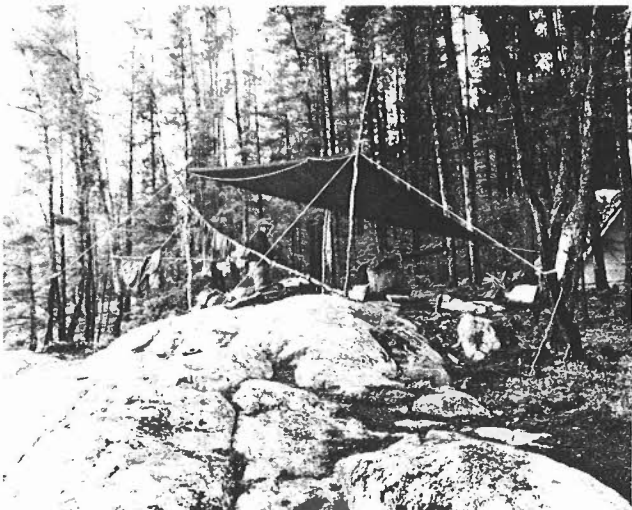
So, we have a lightweight nylon 10 ft. X 12 ft. with a reinforced hem. Next you have to develop a three dimensional mind. The four basic considerations are: 1) Wind direction, 2) Drainage direction. 3) Fire placement with respect to drainage direction and 4) Tie offs for the guys, i.e. trees, rocks etc. The kitchen fly is a unique creation at each campsite and putting it up adds an interesting dimension to setting camp. The above considerations dictate how it must fly so I will expand on them.

1) Wind direction. If you set the high side to the wind you will be attempting to sail the campsite away and you will fail. The rain will blow in and you will curse the stupid fly and also the person who suggested you needed one. You must set the low end into the wind even though it ruins the view.

2) Drainage direction. Rivers flow down to the sea and fly drainage tends to flow down to your tent creating your own, private water bed. Do not underestimate how much water will flow off in a downpour.

3) Fire placement with respect to water drainage. There are two parts to this consideration: a) While avoiding the water bed don't let it get the fire instead; b) Try to set the fly so that it covers the area of rock that drains through the fireplace.

4) Tie offs. These have to be solid in order for you to feel confident. If you're going to pull it tight it has to be held tighter and if you think that a dinky little sapling will probably hold it, it won't, as sure as God made lousy weather to test us. We once used the canoe as an anchor and the wind just rolled it over.

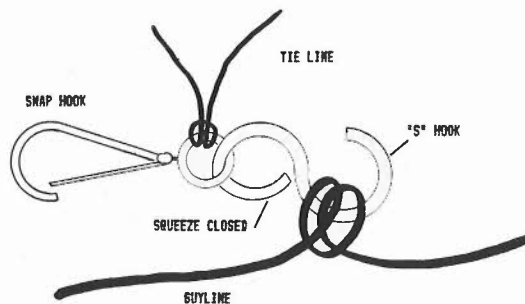


(Claire and I would be pleased to provide a demonstration for anyone who is interested but finds my description incomprehensible.)

Setting Up

The four guys should be set as near 45 degrees to the edges as possible. The more you come round square to the side the harder you have to pull to get it taut (that's physics, folks). Poles hold the high corners up and rocks do the reverse for the low ones. We have the following piece of 'gear' to make the connection of poles and guys to the fly simple.

You need four brass snap hooks with rings (see diagram) available from yachting store. Four plated steel 'S' hooks and four 18" pieces of thin tie line. You also need the ability to tie a clove hitch. If you can't, ask a sailor. The whole 'piece of gear' looks like this:



You proceed as follows:

- 1) Lay the fly out on the ground covering the fire and determined area. It's best to do this before the fire's lit.
- 2) Hold your poles up at the corners and eyeball how high up the fly wants to be. Tie the "pieces of gear" on at this point.
- 3) Tie the guys to the anchoring points and then to the 'S' hooks (using the clove hitch) with enough slack to allow the poles to stand straight up in the desired position.
- 4) Snap the four hooks onto the corner grommets and stand the whole thing up.
- 5) Laugh or cry at your drunken shambles.
- 6) Get serious again and adjust the guys to give you a neat, tight roof just where you want it.

You are an expert when you can do this in five minutes with the fire lit. The fly can be dropped for the night, or if the sun comes out, by simply lowering the poles and unclipping it. Leave everything tied however and it can be replaced in about thirty seconds. We often get it all rigged when we land, even if it isn't raining, and drop it down for the view. This gives a great sense of security on those 'iffy' evenings.

In conclusion, the only way to learn is to experiment and practise. It's much easier for two to put it up than one and if the two are a well oiled team, it's a snap. You have to develop a three dimensional mind and be able to visualise what you want. It's worth persevering because, boy, do you feel smug when it's chucking it down and you're warm and toasty by the fire and everyone else is either fleeing to the tent or getting wet.



David F. Pelly

Photo: Donna Barnett



"December 13, 1984 - Baker Lake, N.W.T.: We've just come in from two days 'at the land' with some local hunters. It wasn't necessary to go far; there's a herd of caribou wintering up by Whitehills 45 km to the north.

"We set off from here in the morning, led by old Mannik, who has shown me so much of his land and who said 'If you're staying out overnight, then I have to go with you.' His son, Nakturalik, drove the other ski-doo, with the long qamutik towed behind carrying grub box, coleman stove, ice chisel, snow knife, a musk-ox hide, several scraped caribou skins, and me. As the sun set about 2 p.m. in a glorious blaze of colour a giant full moon rose in the northeastern sky to light our way.

"We met another hunter, Avaala, who proudly announced he'd caught a wolf. He asked where we were headed and I heard Mannik say 'iqlulik' - the place of iglus - so I knew there must be some others out here. As we continued on across the endless tundra the sky clouded over, leaving us in total darkness. Sure enough, an hour later we arrived in a camp with perhaps 15 people milling about like shadows. Before long we were enjoying warm tea, crowded into Alerk's iglu. He was happy because his traps had produced three foxes on the day's rounds.

"Several hours later, we bedded down in our newly constructed iglu, the door sealed with a snowblock. Six of us crammed onto the 3-metre sleeping platform, lined with caribou skins. Outside the temperature fell to -38°C. Inside it was much warmer, though certainly well below freezing - evidenced by the pot of water left standing overnight beside the stove, at the head of our collective bed. In the morning when old Mannik reached out of his sleeping bag to light the stove and move the coffee water into position, the contents were frozen solid.

"Not long after emerging from the iglu as the southeastern sky reddened to mark the approach of the mid-day sun, a familiar cry rang through camp - "Tuktu"! There were caribou grazing on the far shore of the frozen

lake. The few hours of daylight were spent hunting. At one point, standing atop a hill overlooking the surrounding tundra, hundreds of caribou could be seen all around us. The hunters took nine, all females, the choice meat at this time of year. By sunset the stew-pot was boiling up a fresh treat back in our iglu, the first meal of the day, other priorities having asserted themselves.

"The trip home was accomplished in darkness, a blizzard threatening with biting ice crystals. The men felt their way over familiar terrain, the undulating white infinity, with a confidence that stems from years of travel in this vast environment. Every tiny hill acts as a signpost. Each frozen lake that we crossed, in the barrens' myriad of millions, is like a milestone to them along their journey."

As I prepare this recent extract from my journal for despatch south there is a late December blizzard raging outside. Writing a canoeing column in this setting seems quite absurd. But I am moved to reflect on what happens to this "wilderness canoeists' paradise" when summer is over and all the trippers head south. Ice begins to form on our waterways in September. By now the lakes and rivers are all solidly frozen, with the exception only of places like Kazan Falls and Dickson Canyon. The fishing is still good, and an important source of food while travelling - but now it requires chiselling a hole through ice 2 to 3 metres thick. The water that bubbles up to fill that hole still tastes as deliciously crystal clear, but you have to drink fast or it freezes in your cup. The signs of life, subtle enough in the summer time, are more elusive now. The short canoeing season is gone - the long, October-to-May winter is here.

But as the qamutick beneath me bumps along over the ice of Baker Lake, Schultz Lake, the Thelon or the Kazan, my mind inevitably drifts away to summer and thoughts of dipping paddles into these arctic waters. The two events co-exist in my mind, inseparably linked by the lure of this wilderness. Worlds apart they may seem, but it's always the same ever-changing, beautiful barren lands.

Arctic Journal, by WCA Member David F. Pelly is a series of articles on various aspects of barrens canoeing. David 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.



big east river

Herb Pohl

The plan for this Victoria Day weekend trip was to start at the Rain Lake access point on the western edge of Algonquin Park, make our way across several small lakes into McCraney Lake, continue to the Big East River and follow the latter to highway 11 just north of Huntsville. The area south of McCraney Lake is one of the most rugged in Algonquin Park and in spite of the fact the trip was billed as "exploratory" I was a little concerned about the difficulty participants might encounter. In particular the three kilometres from the outflow of McCraney Lake to the East River could be troublesome. At a gradient of 30m/km it was doubtful that McCraney Creek was navigable and portaging would be challenging. I decided I had better have a look at the place beforehand. So, the weekend before Victoria Day I set out with a young friend to look at McCraney Creek.

I should mention here that one of the reasons I picked Rain Lake as the starting point was its isolation. What a pleasant surprise therefore to find the parking lot crammed with vehicles. When we reached McCraney Lake we counted no fewer than fifteen canoes. It seems the lake has an excellent reputation among fishermen and with apparent good reason - we saw a nice string of fish at one of the campsites.

We set up camp at the south end of the lake and spent most of the next day hiking along McCraney Creek to the East River and by a different route back to the campsite. About a kilometre downstream from the lake we came upon three abandoned canoes. Two of them sitting in a little bay of the creek filled with water, soggy kapok life preservers floating inside, the other overturned on the shore. According to the ranger at Rain Lake a party of canoeists had the bright idea to paddle from Rain Lake via McCraney Creek and the Big East River to highway 11. When things got too unpleasant they simply left the three rental canoes and returned to the starting point on foot. A long hike to be sure. To finish this strange tale, on our way back Sunday afternoon a fourteen foot canoe containing four people passed us heading for McCraney Creek. Happily waving to us they seemed oblivious to the fact that they had only 5 or 6 cm of freeboard. They had come to retrieve their canoes. I understand that they made it back well after midnight.

The following Saturday our party, consisting of four solo paddlers, was heading east on Rain Lake by 10 o'clock. When you have fellows such as Dave Berthelet, Jim Greenacre and Karl Schimeck along, there is bound to be a certain element of quiet competition, so when we came to the first portage - a mere 1800 m - up goes my pack and away I go at a fast trot. I shouldn't have bothered. Dave and Jim quickly caught up to me and the rest of the way I was straining like hell trying to stay with them. Thank God, there was the end of the portage. As we turned around to go back and get the boats there was Karl, pack and canoe, waiting for us to get out of the way.

Still, it was a wonderful sunny day.

Early afternoon found us at the dam at the south end of McCraney Lake. Dave looked at the scene before us in a thoughtful, almost pensive way. It was a pretty sight: the clear waters of the creek cascaded in little channels among the rocks, disappeared below deadfalls which spanned the narrow canyon and were transformed into liquid silver by the reflection of the sun further downstream.

"You mean to say you saw this mess before and still brought us here?"

Dave obviously didn't see things my way. A little distance downstream it did get a bit messy and it took

some lifting and tugging in order to get past obstructions. In the process I managed to slip on some rocks a couple of times and fall headlong into the creek. With the water on the cool side and a slight breeze blowing upstream it didn't take long to bring the goosebumps out, despite the hard work. Misery loves company they say - and I was cheered immensely when another member of the party lost his footing.

All good things must come to an end and by 5 o'clock we had reached the East River. With the increased volume and a lessening of the gradient it was now clear sailing until we reached the lake created by Finlayson Dam. There, on a grassy point in front of a weathered hunting camp we stopped for the day.

Sunday morning dawned cloudless and cool. After a short trip to high ground in vain search of photographic subjects we shipped out. Dave, always a bit restless, quickly took the lead and was rarely seen the rest of the day except at portages.

The East River below Finlayson Dam is a delightful mix of chutes, shallow lakes, rock ledges and fast water. It is very picturesque country even without summer's foliage. It's also very popular with fishermen. I think it's fair to say that at least on a small stream the relationship between canoeists and fishermen is one of mutual disapproval. With several lines floating in a narrow streambed it is easy for fishermen to get hooked on canoeists. Conversely, the fellow who justifies his hipwaders by fishing from the middle of a narrow stream is at risk from the out of control canoeist. On the whole, fishermen are a gregarious lot. We passed one party about 11 o'clock already (still?) in great spirits who invited us to join them; before them and partly submerged in the river was a very large tub containing many dozens of bottles of beer.

Despite these distractions we enjoyed the day. The writer, as is his custom, managed to lead the party astray on one of the portages. Nevertheless, by mid-afternoon we made camp just below Raft Creek and spent the rest of the day tramping through the neighbourhood. The area north of the East River at this point is largely abandoned farmland which is slowly being reclaimed by poplar and birch. During the afternoon we had our first chance to enjoy the new crop of insects, but in the chill of the evening we were once again alone as we huddled by the fire.

A half hour's paddle the next morning brought us to the head of an absolutely delightful rapids. With the early morning sun streaming over our shoulders we cautiously picked our way down the long and steep incline. Quite a harmless affair really, but pride in trying not to touch one of the many rocks in the shallow streambed made it interesting. A little farther on, past the road to Williamsport, the river deepens and slows as it meanders for several kilometres, offering little excitement.

And then again, one never knows.

We had almost reached our finishing point and everyone's mind was already preoccupied with the car shuffle and driving back home. Jim was paddling smoothly along on the tranquil waters a few boat lengths ahead of us when he checked himself in midstroke. In spite of a momentary balance problem his gaze was fixed on some object on the near shore. There, smiling sweetly, was a latter day Lady Godiva (minus the horse) seemingly undisturbed by the admiring glances of four dirty old men.

It seemed like a nice way for the trip to end.



March 23 OAKVILLE CREEK--BRONTE CREEK

Organizer: Mark Riddell 416-827-0939 (bus.)
Book after March 17.

These rivers offer fast water, turbulence, a few ledge rapids and the possibility of obstructed channels. The water will be cold so the trip will be limited to experienced white-water canoeists. The date may be changed depending on water levels. Limit 5 canoes.

March 24 CREDIT AND HUMBER RIVERS

Organizers: Duncan Taylor 416-368-9748
Bill Turner 416-677-5147
Book after March 3.

A fun run on the almost continuous rapids of the lower Credit will be followed by a trip on the Humber from 401 to Dundas Street. A scenic area and, in spring, the possibility of some exciting sections of whitewater. Suitable for intermediates and those novices who have taken whitewater training. Limit 5 canoes.

March 28 PHOTO EVALUATION EVENING

Organizer: Toni Harting
For details see item in News Briefs.

March 30 OAKVILLE CREEK

Organizer: Howard Sagemann 416-282-9570
Book before March 26.

If water levels are high Oakville Creek offers a fairly challenging run. Intermediate or better. Limit 5 canoes.

March 31 UPPER CREDIT RIVER

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book between March 18 and 25.

The Credit River between Inglewood and Glen Williams at this time of the year offers fast current, tight bends, riffles, small waves and cold water. It gives us the opportunity to ease into the whitewater season without exposing us to more hazardous situations. Suitable for teams where at least one partner has intermediate whitewater skills and for those who have taken a basic whitewater training course. Limit 6 canoes.

Late March ROUGE RIVER

Organizer: George Haeh 416-465-2292
Book immediately.

The Rouge, west of Toronto, at high water has almost continuous technical whitewater from Steeles Ave. to Hwy 2. Our trip will be timed to catch it during the early spring run-off. Icy water and difficult rapids make this a challenging trip for advanced paddlers. Limit 6 canoes.

April 5-7 HAVELOCK-MARMORA AREA

Organizer: Graham Barnett 416-651-5496
Book anytime.
During Easter, depending on water levels, I would be interested in canoeing rivers in the Havelock - Marmora area, principally the Moira and Black Rivers and Beaver Creek. If canoeing is possible at this time, members who are interested should give me a call. Suitable for intermediate whitewater canoeists. Limit 4 canoes.

April 7 UPPER CREDIT RIVER

Organizer: Mike Graham Smith 416-877-7829
Book after March 10.
The Upper Credit with its many swifts, gentle rapids and rocks is a pleasant challenging spring run. Location will depend on conditions. Suitable for intermediates and trained novices. A great warm-up for more challenging runs later in the spring. Limit 6 canoes.

April 10 CANOE TRIP FOOD SEMINAR

Organizers: Claire and Richard Smerdon
For details see item in News Briefs.

April 13 LOWER BLACK RIVER

Organizer: Bill King 416-223-4646
Book between March 24 and April 7.

A gentle trip through pretty countryside near Washago. At high water there will be at least one portage and some areas of moderate sized waves. Suitable for families and beginners with some sense of adventure. Trip time is about 4 hours. Limit 6 canoes.

April 13-14 BAYFIELD CREEK--MAITLAND RIVER

Organizer: Herb Dohl 416-637-7632
Book between March 26 and April 9.

The Maitland at 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 before Benmiller. Limit 4 canoes.

April 14 EELS CREEK

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between March 24 and April 7.

Narrow Eels Creek as it twists and turns its way south from Apsley to Haultain drops in a series of ledges and boulder rapids that require precise manoeuvring to negotiate. This trip is timed to catch the spring run-off and should provide a lot of excitement for top-notch intermediate paddlers. Limit 5 canoes.

April 14 GRAND RIVER

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book between April 1 and 8.

The Grand River below the Elora Gorge during spring run off offers fast water, wide channels, riffles and no portages as it traverses agricultural land and rural areas. The river banks in many sections are heavily wooded with abundant wildlife. Suitable for novices who can control their canoe in fast moving water. Limit 6 canoes.

April 17 LONGER CANOE TRIPS SEMINAR

Organizers: Claire and Richard Smerdon
For details see item in News Briefs.

April 20 ANSTRUTHER LAKE LOOP

Organizer: Rob Butler 416-487-2282
Book between April 8 and 14.
This 28 km one day loop involves traversing nine scenic lakes north of Peterborough. Suitable for canoeists in good physical shape. Limit 4 canoes.

April 20-21 CROWE RIVER--BEAVER CREEK

Organizer: Tony Bird 416-466-0172
Book before April 15
These two rivers, located north of Highway 7 east of Havelock, can offer interesting and challenging runs for intermediate canoeists. The rapids are generally short, usually consisting of drops and, at this time of year, large standing waves. The run on the Crowe on Saturday will be a long day, followed by a shorter trip on Beaver Creek on Sunday. Limit 4 canoes.

April 20-21 SALMON--MOIRA RIVERS

Organizer: Glenn Spence 416-355-3506
Book between April 7 and 14

Once again the redoubtable Glenn Spence invites intermediate paddlers 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. Participants may camp in the organizer's backyard. Limit 5 canoes.

Organizer: Jim Morris 416-793-2088
Book after April 1

A leisurely trip on interesting fast moving water that will give us an opportunity to review and practice whitewater techniques before challenging more difficult spring rivers. Water will be too cold for beginners, but those who took whitewater workshops and others interested in improving their technique will find it an enjoyable day. Limit 6 canoes.

April 24 CANOEING IN TEMAGAMI SEMINAR

Organizers: Claire and Richard Smerdon
For details see item in New Briefs.

April 25 PHOTO EVALUATION EVENING

Organizer: Toni Harting
For details see item in News Briefs.

April 27 UPPER MOIRA RIVER

Organizer: Tony Bird 416-466-0172
Book before April 19.

We will canoe the upper section of the Moira River starting on Highway 62 north of Bannockburn and taking out at Highway 7. This section of the Moira is a good day's paddle so an early start will be necessary. The river has a number of interesting but short rapids. Suitable for intermediate and advanced whitewater paddlers. Limit 4 canoes.

MISSISSAGUA RIVER

April 28

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between April 7 and 21.

The Mississagua, north of Peterborough tumbles from its source in Mississagua Lake to Buckhorn Lake in a series of scenic falls and short rapids separated by sections of quiet waters. For intermediates with good whitewater skills it makes a challenging, strenuous six hour trip. Limit 5 canoes.

May 4-5 AMABLE DU FOND RIVER

Organizer: Mark Riddell 416-827-0939 (Bus.)
Book after April 21.

This scenic river is quite challenging at high water levels. There are several long rapids which are difficult to scout. We will start near Kiosk and end where the Amable du Fond enters the Mattawa River. Suitable for intermediate whitewater paddlers. Limit 4 canoes.

May 4-5 ALGONQUIN PARK

Organizer: Gail Vickars 416-895-9976
Book before April 30.

A quiet paddle into Algonquin. We will meet at Canoe Lake on Saturday morning. Hopefully we will be too early for the bugs and the ice will have melted. Be prepared for cold water, rain, wind and sun and possible black flies. The length of the trip will depend on conditions and the interests of the participants. Limit 4 canoes.

May 4-5 BEAVER CREEK

Organizer: Peter Odell 416-820-9230
Book between April 1 and 20.

A fast moving 2 day run on Beaver Creek with an overnight camp on the river. Cold high spring water and travelling with full packs limits this trip to 3 canoes of intermediate to advanced whitewater paddlers ready for grade II and III rapids in a remote situation.

Organizer: Bob Haskett 416-251-2073
Book between April 9-28.

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

May 8, 15, 22, 29 EVENING PADDLES METRO AREA

Organizer: Norm Coombe 416-751-2812 (day)
416-293-8036 (evening)

Book before May 1.

These Wednesday evening get-togethers will provide flatwater instruction for beginners. Novices can refine their strokes to be ready for whitewater instruction, and other members are welcome to join us for exercise and socializing. Participants must have their own P.F.D.'s. We will try to round up some spare canoes and paddles.

May 11-12 MAGNETAWAN RIVER

Organizers: Diane and Mike Willis 416-293-9067
Book between April 21 and May 3.

The intended route is to paddle a loop from Lake Wahwashkesh, down the Magnetawan river and via portage and paddle into Kashegaba Lake. From here the plan is to proceed down Bolger Creek looping back to our starting point via Loon and Gooseneck Lakes.

The trip is suitable for paddlers with some experience in moving water and who are prepared to complete single-trip portages and cover 30 km days. The stretch of the Magnetawan River contains both Canal and Grave Rapids and, with time permitting, may make for a couple hours of playing during a lunch or evening stop over. Limit 4 canoes.

May 11-12 OPEONGO - UPPER MADAWASKA RIVERS

Organizer: Mark Riddell 416-827-0930 (bus.)
Book after April 28.

The Opeongo River, at this time of year, is a fast flowing river with a few ledges and numerous boulder gardens. The Upper Madawaska contains many rapids, some difficult, of the pool and drop variety between Whitney and the town of Madawaska. Suitable for intermediate whitewater paddlers. Limit 5 canoes.

May 18-19 FRENCH RIVER

Organizer: George Luste 416-534-9313
Book between April 14 and 28.

Paddle the historic French from Wolseley Bay to Hwy. 69, canoeing the river at the same time as the spring Montreal fur brigades would have passed down it. The voyageurs would have covered this route in less than a day, but we will pursue a more leisurely pace, enjoying the gorgeous scenery and challenging rapids. This two day trip could be extended to three days depending on the weather and people's interests. Suitable for intermediates. Limit 4 canoes.

May 18-20 GIBSON - McDONALD LOOP

Organizers: John Galbrath 416-725-9812
Judy Wahl 416-225-2870 (res.)
416-487-7157 (bus.)

Book before May 13.

This will be a leisurely trip through very scenic Canadian shield country, with a combination of lake and river travel. Limit 4 canoes.

May 18-20 LITTLE MISSISSIPPI, YORK AND MADAWASKA RIVERS

Organizer: Karl Schimek 416-222-3720 (res.)
416-439-6788 (bus.)

Book between May 6 and 10.

We will start out near Highway 41 at Wesslemkoon Lake and follow the Little Mississippi to the confluence of the York River. After passing through Conroy Marsh we will join the Madawaska River near Palmer Rapids. We then will paddle down the exciting Snake Rapids section to Griffith. The Little Mississippi is an exploratory trip for the organizer. Suitable for intermediate whitewater paddlers in good physical shape. Limit 4 canoes.

May 25-26 ONAPING RIVER

Organizer: Del Dako 416-421-2108
Book before May 13.

This is an exploratory trip on a river just northwest of Sudbury. The information available would indicate that the river has many long rapids, making this an outing suitable for advanced paddlers only. Limit 4 canoes.

May - June BASIC WHITEWATER CANOEING

Organizers: Howard Sagemann 416-282-9570
Rob Cepella, Jim Greenacre,
Bill Ness
Book before April 15.

First run in 1984 on a trial basis, this programme was well-received and is being offered once again this year. The course is progressively structured to build the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to run moderate whitewater for canoeists who now possess basic paddling skills. It begins with an evening of introductory classroom instruction and a one day flatwater work-out. This is followed by a day trip on an easy river, and finally a whitewater weekend on a major river in central Ontario. Participants must have suitable canoes, P.F.D.'s and paddles for whitewater; and must sign-up for the entire course. Registration is limited to 20 persons to permit individualized instruction. Members only please. To register, contact Howard Sagemann.

June 2 ELORA GORGE

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book between May 20 and 26.

The Elora Gorge on the Grand River at low water provides an excellent location for budding whitewater enthusiasts to practise their basic manoeuvres. This outing is for those who have had basic whitewater training and need more practical experience. Suitable for novices with some experience. Limit 5 canoes.

June 8-9 MADAWASKA RIVER

Organizer: Duncan Taylor 416-368-9748
Book before June 1.

This will be a weekend trip on the challenging Snake Rapids section of the Madawaska River for intermediate paddlers. Limit 4 canoes.

June 8-9 POKER LAKE-BIG EAST LAKE

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book between May 24 and 31.

On Saturday morning we will paddle a short distance, set up camp and then, with only a light day pack, paddle and portage the balance of the loop back to camp. Sunday morning we will return to our cars, leave the heavy camping equipment and then, with a light load, explore Big East Lake. The organizer will supply communal supper and breakfast on a cost share basis. Suitable for novices in reasonable physical condition. Limit 4 canoes.

June 15 BURNT RIVER

Organizers: Dave and Anneke Auger 705-324-9359
Book before June 8.

The upper Burnt River from Gelert to Kirmount makes a leisurely scenic day-paddle for beginning canoeists. There are several waterfalls which will require participants to have some portaging skills. Limit 5 canoes.

June 15-16 NAISCOOT - HARRIS LAKES LOOP

Organizer: Judy Wahl 416-255-2870 (res.)
416-487-7157 (bus.)
Book between June 1 and 8.

This is an easy 30 km loop through scenic lakes northeast of Pointe au Baril on highway 69. The pace will be leisurely with a few portages. Limit 4 canoes.

June 22-23 WHITEWATER WORKSHOP - PALMER RAPIDS

Organizer: Jim Morris 416-793-2088
Book between June 3 and 4.

We will have a preliminary session to meet each other and review basic paddling strokes. At Palmer Rapids on the Madawaska River we will learn whitewater techniques with emphasis on backpaddling, upstream and downstream ferries, eddy turns, reading the rapids and canoe safety. Open to beginning and intermediate whitewater paddlers. Limit 8 canoes.

June 23 THE WILDCAT LOOP IN ONE DAY

Organizer: Rob Butler 416-487-2282
Book between June 10 and 16.

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

June 22-23 PETAWAWA RIVER

Organizer: Paul Barsevskis 416-239-2830
Book between June 3 and 13.

This 2 day trip down the Petawawa should find the river with good water levels and less crowding than on a long weekend. A car shuffle on Friday night will enable us to get an early start on Saturday morning. This scenic river offers challenging rapids for paddlers with intermediate whitewater skills or better. Limit 4 canoes.

June 29 - July 1 FRENCH RIVER - WHITEWATER PLAY WEEKEND

Organizer: Paul Barsevskis 416-239-2830
Book between June 10 and 20.

The French River in the vicinity of Commanda Island has several closely situated rapids where whitewater paddlers of all levels can hone their skills. Informal instruction will be provided by the more experienced participants. A static camp will enable us to have almost 3 fun filled days of rapid running. Limit 8 canoes.

July 20-21 KAWARITHA LAKES

Organizer: Bob MacLellan 416-488-9346
Book between July 7 and 13.

The Long Lake/Big Cedar Lake loop offers a leisurely two day trip through a series of small pristine lakes with some portaging, and time for swimming. Limit 4 canoes.

guidelines for wca trips

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

trip ratings

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

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

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

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

THE RATING OF TRIPS IS THE DECISION OF THE ORGANIZER.

canoe safety rules

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

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

SIGNALS



difficult - use own judgment



danger - do not run



all clear - with caution

products and services

Mountain Equipment Co-op:

Mountain Equipment Co-op, a Vancouver based member-owned cooperative with over 100,000 members, will be opening a new store in Toronto in March. We specialize in quality equipment at very reasonable prices, and will be expanding our line to include more canoeing equipment for our eastern store.

You must be a member of the cooperative to purchase from us. A lifetime membership costs only \$5.00, which is usually recovered by the savings on your first purchase.

Our new store will be located at 675 Yonge Street (at Charles St., south of Bloor), 2nd Floor, M4Y 2B2. Phone 416-964-7901.

High Performance Products:

Ian McCall Sales Inc. distributes a range of exotic boatbuilding materials such as Kevlar Fabrics and tapes, graphite tapes, epoxy resins and adhesives, and Nomex structural foam as well as hand and machine tools used in the reinforced plastics industry. Small sales to the individual builder a speciality. Contact Ian McCall at 12 Brimley Crescent, Islington, Ont. M9A 3X3, telephone 416-233-1871.

Canoe For Sale:

A 16' cedar strip canoe. Completely sealed in fibreglass, with keel and web seats. Used two weeks last summer.

Asking \$700. Contact Jerry Brown at 519-833-9323.

Res-Q-Tos Rescue Bags:

Members can purchase a high quality rescue throw bag directly from the manufacturer at substantial savings. Made with brightly coloured 2800 lb. test polypropylene rope in a heavy-duty weighted nylon bag, the 50 foot model costs \$24.95 and the 75 foot model sells for \$29.95, plus tax. Contact Sydney Carlyle of Barrett - Carlyle Enterprises, 28 Livingston Rd., Unit 33, Scarborough, Ontario, M1E 4S5; telephone 416-266-1039.

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.

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, 699 Speedvale Ave. W., Guelph.
The Sportman's Shop, 2476 Yonge St. Toronto.

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

The Sportman's Shop:

For Hiking, Camping, Working or Recreation. We are The Sportman's Shop, and are offering your club a 10% discount on any purchase at our store. (Please have proof of membership.) The Sportman's Shop, 2467 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario. Phone 416-481-5169.

Bluewater Canoes:

New this year! We have a few models available in an ultra-lightweight vacuum bagged honeycomb-Kevlar laminate. Jensen has designed for us a new 17' tripping canoe, rather bulky by Jensen Standards, but with a higher profile and larger capacity. Barry Leslie has designed a new touring Kayak. Please visit us in our new shop. Rockwood Outfitters, 699 Speedvale Ave. West, Buelph, Ontario, N1K 1E6. Phone 519-824-1415.

Rockwood Outfitters offers a 10% discount to WCA members on merchandise and rentals.

wca contacts

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Ness (Chairman)
1 Chester Le Blvd., Unit 6,
Scarborough, Ont.
M1W 2W7
416-499-6389

Herb Pohl
480 Maple Ave.,
Apartment 113,
Burlington, Ont
L7S 1M4
416-637-7632

Jim Greenacre (Vice-Chairman)
34 Bergen Road,
Scarborough, Ont.,
M1P 1P9
416-759-9936

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

Mike Graham-Smith,
39 Regan Cres.,
Georgetown, Ont.
L7E 1B2
416-877-7829

Jan Tissot,
185 Gien Grove Ave. W.,
Toronto, Ont.
M4R 1P4
416-489-5032

CANOE ROUTES

John Cross,
281 Hillhurst Blvd.,
Toronto, Ont.
M6B 1M9
416-782-3908

CONSERVATION

Richard Swerdon,
79 Woodcrest Ave.,
Toronto, Ont.,
M4J 3A8
416-461-4249

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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

TREASURER

Rob Butler,
47 Collin Ave.,
Toronto, Ont.
M5P 2B8
416-487-2282

OUTINGS

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

TRIP HOT LINE

Narcia Farquhar,
187 Hill St.,
Richmond Hill, Ont.
L4C 4B1
416-884-0208

SECRETARY

MEMBERSHIP
Ria Harting,
7 Walmer Road,
Apartment 902,
Toronto, Ont.
M6R 2W8
416-964-2495

W.C.A. POSTAL ADDRESS

P. O. Box 496,
Postal Station K,
Toronto, Ont.
M4P 2E9

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 Mustawgan, 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 membership application
 renewal for 1985.

Notes: -This membership will expire January 31, 1986.
-Please send completed form and cheque (payable to the Wilderness Canoe Association) to the membership committee chairman.