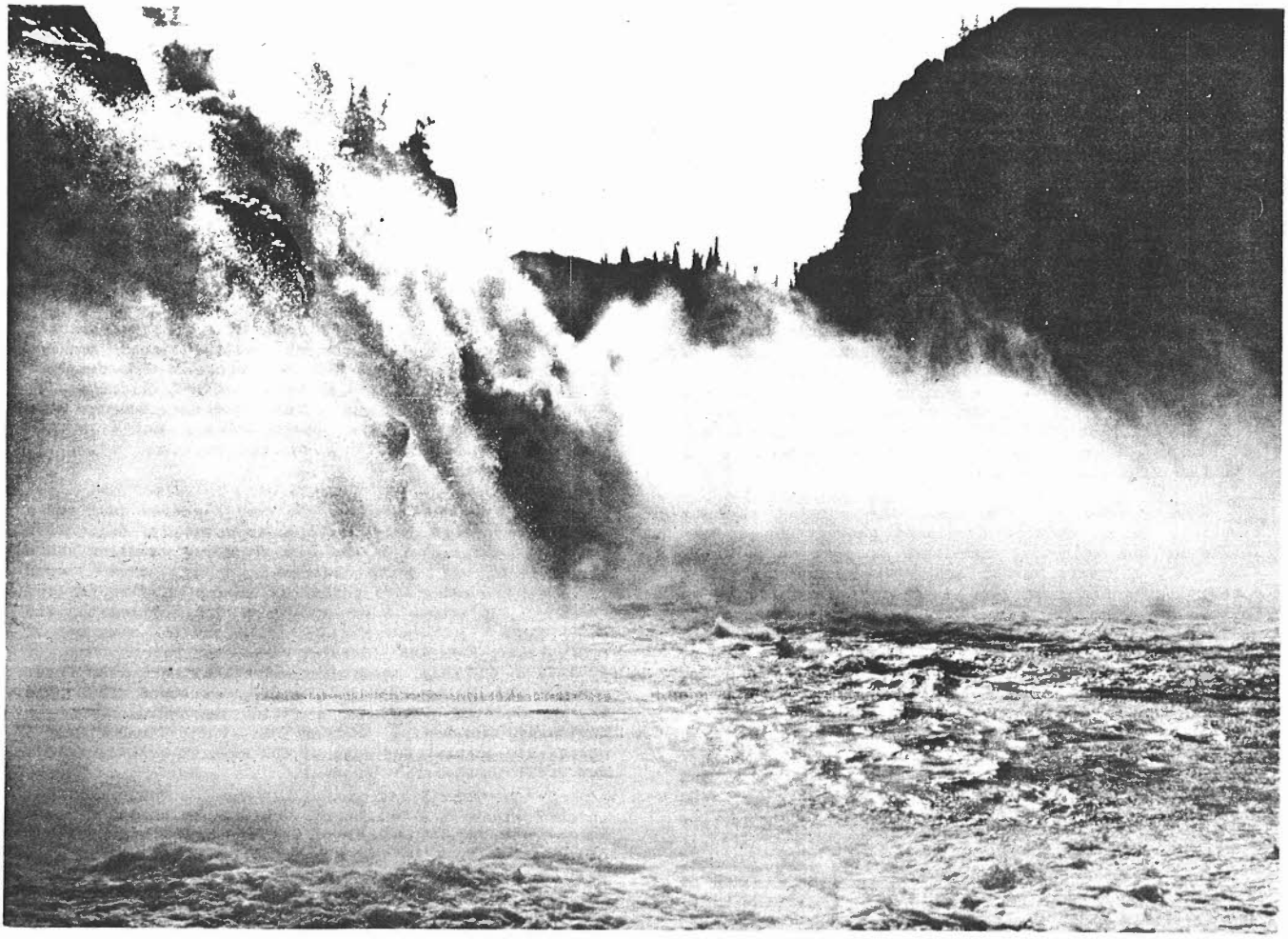
nastawgan

autumn 1985 vol. 12 no. 3 quarterly journal of the wilderness canoe association



on the notakwanon

Herb Pohl

This is Part 2 of a two part account of a solo canoe trip from Schefferville in northern Québec to Davis Inlet on the Labrador coast in the summer of 1984. The author's route is shown on the map on page 5.

How the fire started, I could only guess. The boat was at least five metres upwind from my smudge fire and the latter had not spread across the intervening space. Presumably a burning cinder had been propelled across, landed on the polypropelene bow rope and set it on fire. This would have provided enough fuel to eventually get the fibreglass resin to start to burn. Whatever the process, it was an academic question now. The first 30 cm of the bow was reduced to a blackened mess of roving and matting and an additional 30 cm was partially burned or scorched and of doubtful strength. I had neither enough roving nor resin to build a new bow and so the critical issue was whether I could infiltrate the existing roving with resin and have it adhere.

The first thing I had to do was start a fire to help dry out the bow section and to speed up the curing. Next I taped up the loose roving and carefully impregnated a small section of it with resin. I had lots of time to contemplate alternatives to fixing the boat while I waited for the resin to harden. I was within a half day's journey from the Labrador boundary and at almost exactly the halfway mark of my trip. Behind me lay mile upon mile of spruce bog interspersed with numerous large lakes - pretty hopeless to try to get through on foot. Trying for Davis Inlet, the nearest settlement on the coast, would mean a tortuous 400 km hike over very rugged terrain. Waiting and trying to attract the attention of a plane almost certainly meant a long wait - in fact I never saw or heard a plane until I reached the coast.

Fortunately, the resin adhered well enough to the scorched remains and in an all-day operation, complicated by frequent showers, I managed to patch up at least the underside of the bow. The rest was covered with duct

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tape. For years I had carried a large roll of the stuff with me without ever needing more than a few scraps; this time it helped save my bacon.

When the repairs were done, and in spite of the late hour, I packed up and paddled away from the scene of the crime as quickly as possible. I wasn't going to spend another evening in this blackfly paradise.

I'm sure it was as much relief about the outcome of the repairs as anything else, but it seemed an extraordinary evening. I made camp just a few kilometres further along with the last rays of the sun gilding the bare hills. The bugs were as numerous as ever, but seemed less offensive. The nearest little lake had somehow retained a thick covering of ice and snow in one corner which glowed mystically in the fading light, but the real centre of attraction was a range of high hills on the eastern horizon - Labrador. Soon a cozy fire was crackling away beside the stream connecting two lakes, an Idaho potato of generous size was boiling in the pot and I was busy frying some bacon and fresh onions to produce my favorite meal.

Travelling alone allows little time for leisurely contemplation for there are always chores to do, but this was an exception. Fortified with a quart of tea, I watched the western sky gradually darken to the deep blue color preceding darkness, as all the features around me gradually lost form and melted into darkness except for the little ring of light around the dancing flames. In time, all magic spells are broken and I set to work building up the fire in order to enlarge the sphere of protection against the humming hordes, heated some water, and stripped down to my first good wash since leaving Sept Iles, thirteen days ago.

When I woke at 3:00 a.m., the morning sky was tempting, but I quickly dismissed photography when I looked at the welcoming committee waiting outside. By 7:00 a.m., a breeze was up and I was on my way; three more portages and four more small lakes and I'd be in Labrador. Lakes near the height of land tend to be very shallow with the bottom covered with large boulders which often protrude above the surface. Virtually the only way to navigate is to stand up in the boat and pole your way through the maze of obstructions; consequently progress is quite slow.

Just before noon, I had reached the rocky half - kilometre portage which separates the waters of Québec and Labrador. It had taken me two weeks to get to the watershed of the river I wanted to canoe - the Notakwanon. The inspiration for this particular journey had come from a map in Cabot's book "In Northern Labrador" which bore the notation "Sketched from an Indian Map." The uncertain line starts at the mouth of the river and terminates at Resolution Lake (a part of the George River) - this supposedly was the Montagnais route to and from the HBC trading post at Davis Inlet. In several places the indicated travel route left the river, only to rejoin it farther on, indicating an impassable stretch of water. I was now looking forward to finding the remains of Indian occupancy along the river. Equally intriguing was the prospect of canoeing the stretches of river shunned by the natives - just how difficult would it be?

Near its origin the Notakwanon occupies one of many grooves carved out of the bare rock during the ice-age. Trees grow in all the sheltered spots.

Several hours later, I was standing atop a high, rocky ridge; below me and running southwest to northeast lay a long and narrow waterfilled trough carved out of bare rock - the Notakwanon. Other bodies of water could be seen parallel or at right angles to it. Interrupting the mosaic of grey and blue - rock and water - were green patches of spruce and tamarack in all the sheltered spots. Clouds were welling up in the west, periodically hiding the sun. Each time the transformation was remarkable - the brilliant color contrast would fade to dismal shades of grey, and with it the impression of open friendliness would give way to one of cold hostility. A few kilometres later, I came upon an Indian campsite. The remains of tent poles, scattered over a large area, seemed to be very old. Decay in these parts is a slow process and I thought it quite possible that this was a hundred years old site.

For the next little while, I was excitedly looking around for artifacts but upon finding none, pushed on. The weather had deteriorated considerably, strong head winds had raised whitecaps, and between periodic showers and the windborne spray, I was not only wet but thoroughly chilled. By a stroke of good fortune a sheltered bay was not too far away. Even there the hastily started fire was windwhipped to the point where it provided little warmth. All night long, the tent shook and flapped as gusts of wind tore at it, but early in the morning the rain had stopped and in the expectation of improvement I packed all but my cooking gear and started to prepare breakfast. Even by the fire, the cold dampness had me shivering and when showers returned, I decided it was a good idea to stay put. Only venturing outside when unavoidable, the day was spent cooking meals on the campstove in the vestibule of the tent and sleeping; mostly sleeping.

By the second morning, the wind had died down and a dense fog blotted out all but a small sphere. Navigation would be tricky, but it was time to move. Paddling was a bit awkward with warm underwear, heavy sweater, down vest, windbreaker, life preserver, and rainjacket layered one over the other. A ridiculous amount of clothing and more than I would wear at -30° C, but I was barely comfortable for the first two hours. The feeling of isolation in this uncertain, soundless world of grey shadows was strong. Several times the silence was broken by the muffled sounds of a riffle up ahead. This was curiously reassuring because in the absence of a noticeable current for most of the way, it demonstrated I was still in the right channel.

By the time I had passed through the range of hills which dominate the height of land and entered the first of several large lakes, the weather had improved. This was caribou country and historically a place where the Naskaupi and Montagnais hunted. At virtually all potential crossing places the remains of hunting camps could be seen; with one exception, all very old. By 3:00 p.m. a stiff eastwind had me ashore. I was now in the middle of the Labrador plateau - a vast expanse of barrens with little pockets of gnarled spruce and skinny tamarack in the more sheltered spots of the gravelly plain. The sun cast its usual spell, transforming the dreary scene of grey into a kaleidoscope of brilliance. As always in situations like this, I revelled in my solitude. I know of no other circumstance where the monumental insignificance of one's own existence is so decisively brought into focus than in this windswept isolation.

By late afternoon, the bushes in the neighborhood were adorned with articles of clothing hung out to dry and it was time to scour the countryside in search of photographic subjects. I had barely set up the tripod on a rocky knoll some distance from the tent when a rousing chorus from a pack of wolves a few hundred metres away began. Somehow my interest in wildflowers diminished. I know all the reassuring statistics, and I know Farley Mowat's stand on the matter, but I couldn't be sure that these vocal creatures in their isolation were aware of how they were expected to behave. And so I strode purposefully toward the tent and lit a fire.

At 4:00 a.m. I woke to a clear and frosty morning. Judging by the fresh tracks, a large number of caribou must have passed right in front of the tent during the night without my hearing them. Five hours of hard paddling and a short portage later I was nearing the end of the lakes region. I had seen small groups of caribou here and there, but now I was looking at a massed herd. Taking no notice of me, they continued to strip the bushes at the water's edge of their foliage. Further inland a sea of antlers stretched to the horizon. Because

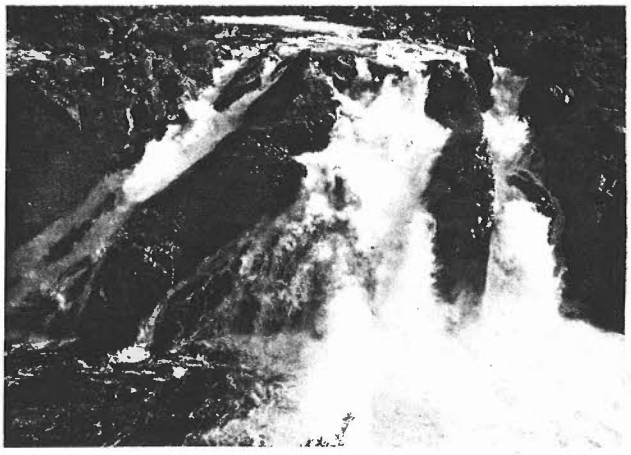
The flat and largely barren highlands are home to hundreds of thousands of caribou.

of the flat terrain I could not gain a vantage point which would allow me to estimate their numbers, but surely there were thousands.

Somewhere in this region the old Indian route to the coast takes a more northerly course as it by-passes forty kilometres of rapids. The first half of this stretch is of the drop and pool variety which gives way to continuous boulder rapids as the gradient gradually increases from five to eight metres per kilometre. By late afternoon I had negotiated about twenty-five rapids, mostly grade II, which could be run on sight, and one very long and lively one which had me well washed by the time it finished with me. By now I had used up all my adrenalin and it was time to put to shore.

Looking back upstream from the top of a high hill behind my campsite, it seemed all so tranquil with no evidence of the boisterousness of the river. Down by the water's edge, the tent was a tiny speck of red among the trees; the barrens were behind me.

When I looked at the section of river downstream from the camp, the impression of tranquillity was not maintained. Even from this distance, it looked like a nasty stretch and the low rumble of the pounding waves added to my unease. I was on the water by 4:00 a.m. in an effort to negotiate the first rapids before sunrise, because the reflection off the water would render one incapable to see once the sun rose over the hills to the east. After a rollercoaster ride, I put to shore above a magnificent waterfall, convinced I had done serious damage to the boat when I crashed on top of a rock hidden by a big roller upstream from it. I needn't have worried.



The Falls of the Natakwanon, 22 metres high.

I spent some time clambering about the falls and finally trundled off over a very taxing portage to breakfast a kilometre away. I was hardly settled in the boat when the next, much lower waterfall necessitated another portage. For the next seven kilometres thereafter, the river roared and boiled in a narrow V-shaped valley with no pools to interrupt the action. The force of the water left little room for manoeuvering. It was a question of tucking in behind a boulder near the shore, looking ahead to plan a general course of action, and plunging in again. In the gloom of what had become a showery day, the scene looked ever more intimidating. I finally reached a small expansion in the valley and with it, quiet water. All day long I had been soaked again and again by waves and now, with the release from a state of acute concentration and anxiety, I became aware that I was very cold. Never does one appreciate a roaring fire more than in circumstances like these.

The region I had now entered was the most rugged of the whole trip with peaks rising over five hundred metres above the valley floor. It should have provided an overview of the whole valley for many miles, but the heavy cloud cover and intermittent rain for the next three days hid the peaks and, after several attempts at hiking, I had to accept that I wasn't going to get any worthwhile photographs here. The next day was a continuation of boulder rapids and included two short portages.

And then I got a little careless, or overconfident.

I could see that up ahead the river was gradually narrowing, the waves were getting higher and higher,and when I finally wished I had gone to shore it was too late. The haystacks were coming at me at a furious rate in a channel barely ten metres wide. All of a sudden I was looking at a gaping hole and the wave behind it closed in over me. The first thing which impressed itself upon me was a sense of quietness; gone was the hiss and swish of the waves. There were bubbles all around me and a strange light filtered through from below the boat. And then I decided I had better get out because the light wasn't below, I was.

Trying to get a canoe to shore in turbulent water can be a bit of a drag, but with some effort I eventually managed to push it up far enough on the shore to keep it there. Just as well too, because with all the boulders in the river for the next stretch it would almost certainly have disintegrated. As I was standing there, my paddle came floating down near the far shore, entered into the cauldron downstream and never reappeared; it must have gotten caught underwater. Now I was truly up the creek without a paddle.

In this deeply recessed valley, campsites near the river don't exist. The shoreline is chiefly composed of large, rounded boulders followed by a dense growth of alders and willows. Farther back and up the steep incline is a tangle of deadfalls in among the closely-packed trees. Because the sun rarely reaches the valley floor and it rains frequently, everything is saturated with moisture. After moving to high ground, I first tried to dry out and put a shaft to the blade I carry for just such an emergency. (To illustrate how slow growth in these regions is, I counted forty-two growth rings on the little spruce I used for a shaft.) Then it was time to portage, for with the single blade I felt much less confident, and besides several impassable stretches there were nearly five kilometers of Grade III and IV rapids left.

By noon of the second day the worst was behind. The valley had widened considerably, with eskers parallelling the river on both sides. I put in opposite a tributary entering from the west which I believe to be the point where the Indian route rejoins the river. The latter continued to run along at the same pace as ever, but the boulders had given way to a gravel bottom; all one had to do was steer in order to move along at 8-10 km/h. Just as well too, because my new paddle was so heavy and clumsy, it took the fun out of paddling.

Even with the little I could see of it through the driving rain and low clouds, I was awed by the scenery. I couldn't let this go by without an attempt to take some pictures. Convinced that an improvement in the weather was imminent, I clambered up the steep sides of an enormous esker rising nearly a hundred metres above the river, and waited for the rain to stop and the clouds to lift, for this was my last glimpse of the most rugged section of the river before it turns east.

An hour later, with the lenses fogged up, I finally quit, soaked to the bone and shivering with the cold. Ten kilometres downstream I landed on a gravel bar, crashed through the curtain of alders and willows to a clump of massive spruce trees and started a fire with the dry, dead branches at the base of the trees. In little more than half an hour everything was dried out and I felt like a different man.

The next six hours were easily the most memorable on the river. The fog rose and fell, revealing parts of the scenery only to obscure it again. Gradually the revelation became more and more complete, the sun's rays broke through periodically, producing strange patterns of light and shadow in a constant succession of moods. A magnificent double rainbow arched across the valley in brief brilliance and vanished in the fog; then a shaft of sunlight broke through like a spotlight, found its way to a small grass-covered gravelbar in the middle of the river and illuminated it to an iridescent glow. It wouldn't have surprised me if the fairies had appeared and danced there.

The following day found me camped on the edge of a cutbank high above the river. Below me the Notakwanon roared past in a giant S-bend. With my first load, I had tried to portage along the river's edge, but soon saw the error of my ways and took to high ground. Now with the evening shadows slowly creeping up the far shore, I wondered who had been here before me. For the first time I had stumbled across an outsider's campsite - a piece of shockcord was hanging from a tree near an old fireplace. Not to be outdone, I left my fork and spoon behind when I pulled out in uncharacteristic sunshine the next morning. The half-kilometre portage down to the river took over three hours to complete, testimony to the density of alders and willows along the way.

Ever since leaving the "magic valley," the paddling had been easy with the river flowing swiftly in a gravel bed interrupted by an occasional riffle. With the exception of a few ice-scoured domes of steel-grey rock, the countryside was now clothed in densely growing spruce. Fifteen kilometres upstream form the mouth of the river, I came upon the last rapids in brilliant sunshine. I was almost at the far end of the portage with the first load when someone pulled the plug overhead. By the time I returned to my rainsuit, it was floating in the back of the boat in five centimetres of water. Somehow, there often seemed to be incentives to use strong language.

View from the campsite on the high portage.

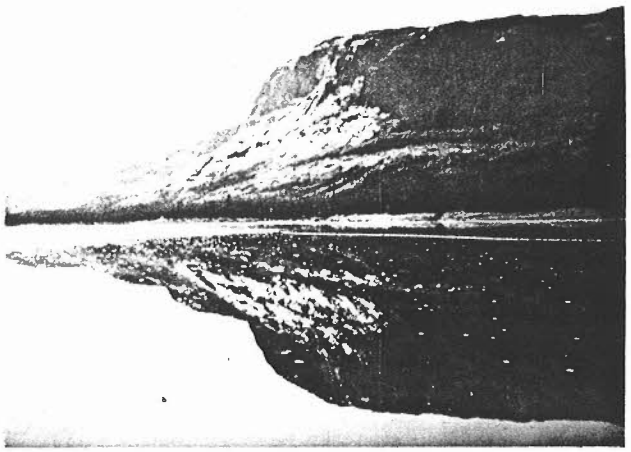
About midmorning of the following day the rain had stopped, and the fog was down to about ten metres above the surface in a solid layer which blanketed all high ground. The Notakwanon meandered endlessly in shallow channels amid the sandbars. Perhaps it was just the knowledge that this was the last day on the river, but it semed a very tedious day. I had been told that there are usually several Naskaupi families camped at the river mouth. The idea of being surrounded by people had little appeal for me and I stopped well short of the tidal flats. With a good push I might be able to reach Davis Inlet the following day. For a long time that evening I sat by the fire and looked back upstream. Periodically the curtain of clouds rose to reveal a mosaic of snow patches on the flanks of hills at the horizon glowing in sunshine.

It had been quite a trip.

But Labrador hadn't finished with me yet. For two days, fierce winds accompanied by rain had me trapped on a bare corner of an island in Merryfield Bay and I began to wonder whether the tent would continue to withstand the constant battering. On the third day, I slipped away in the twilight of dawn with the outgoing tide. Pushing as hard as I could in a quartering slop, I covered the 31 kilometres into Davis Inlet in four hours. There I had the good fortune to run into Horace Goudie whom I had met on the Kogaluk River two years previously. He promptly escorted me to the Grenfell nursing station where Selina Conn was a model of hospitality. Because of the bad weather, aircraft had been grounded for several days and I was fortunate to get a seat on the first plane out the following morning. Left behind was my boat, the burned nose now augmented by several cracks and a belly worn thin with abuse.

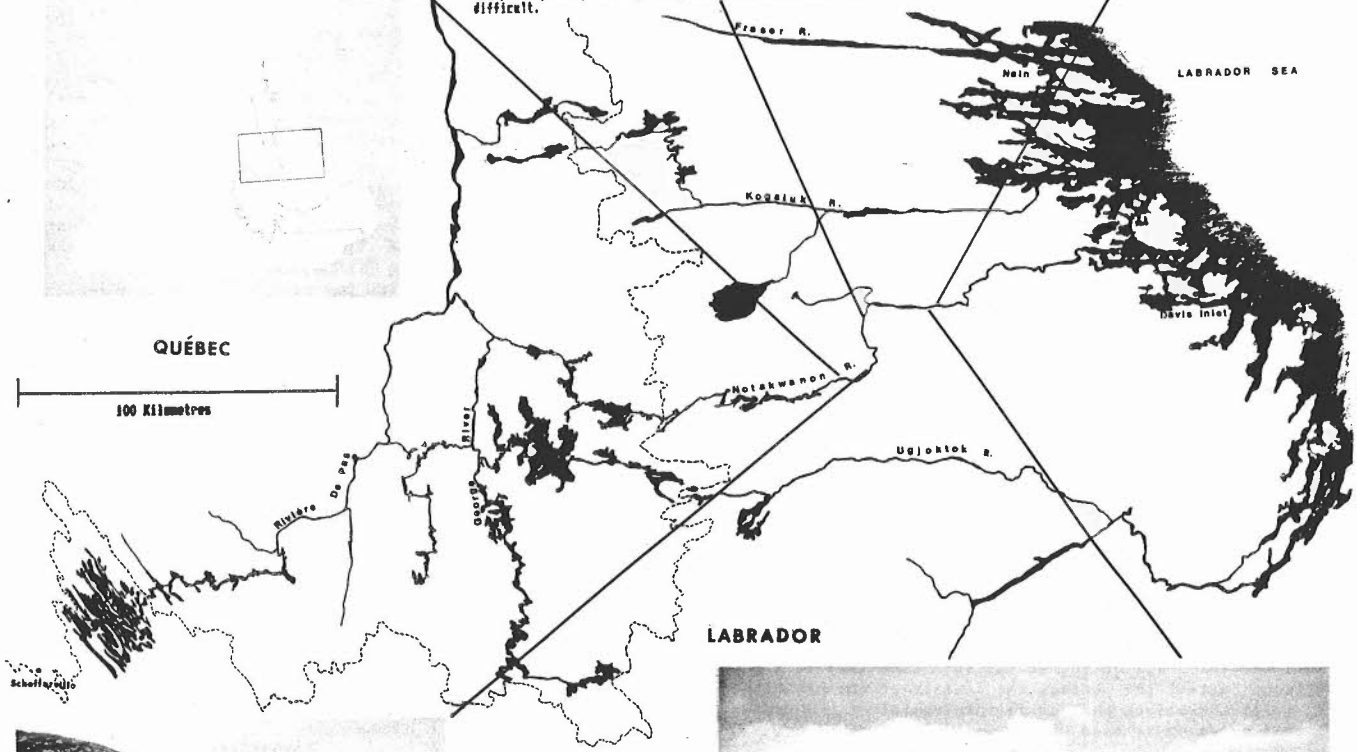
Evening in the magic valley.

Even the highest elevations bear the debris left behind by the receeding ice cover.



Characteristic calm.

Cold, wind, rain, and fog are just some of the factors which make travel in Labrador difficult.



Below the falls the river drops in one continuous rapids for many kilometres.

The swirling fog and clouds give an ever changing appearance to the mountains.

nastawgan published by the wca · editor: toni harting · printed by bayweb

ISSN 0828-1327

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

EDITORIAL

For now, in this last-minute madhouse getting everything ready for paste-up and the printer, just a few words to say a most sincere 'thank you' to Sandy Richardson for teaching me how to run a unique publication, to the paste-up group for pledging me their continuing support and co-operation, to the Board for having so much confidence in me, and to the many WCA members who have promised to send me their fascinating paddling stories for publication in Nastawgan. A more deep-digging editorial, discussing things that stay and things that may go, as well as policy-ideas for the future, will be published in the next issue. I look forward to receiving some great material from you, because you make this very special newsletter.

Toni Harting

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Some things never change. Once again during the spring canoeing season demand has outstripped supply, as large numbers of members signed up for every available spot on our scheduled trips. It is gratifying to see that WCA members, new and old, continue to be an active lot. Particularly popular have been the instructional outings, and thanks are due the organizers of these events.

By the time you read these lines, many of you will have put your (new and improved) expertise to use during the holiday season, and have returned with a story or two to tell. I hope all of you recognize the proper forum for storytelling is all functions of the WCA, and that you will find the time to show up at the annual Fall Meeting in Haliburton in September and at the Fall Party at George Brown College in Toronto in November.

Since this is the first issue of Nastawgan produced under the direction of our new editor, I want to express the appreciation of the Board of Directors to Toni Harting for taking on this responsibility in full knowledge of all the work and anxieties which are associated with it. I want to remind all of you at the same time that to a significant extent the content and quality of the newsletter is going to reflect the active involvement of the members -- what shows up is what we put in.

At recent Board meetings your executive reviewed the financial position of the Association in order to set membership fees for 1986. As you may know, our last increase in membership dues occurred in 1980. In the interval substantial increases have occurred in virtually all sectors of the club's operation. Of particular impact was the decision by the executive to try to improve the appearance of the newsletter by going to a better grade of paper, a move widely applauded, one could add. Meritorious or not, the decision was largely responsible for a projected shortfall. Consequently, the Board decided to increase fees by $5 for all categories of membership, with the hope that by careful housekeeping we may be able to keep to the new schedule for some time to come.

Herb Pohl

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I was recently reviewing the autumn 1984 edition of Nastawgan and spotted Roger Smith's 'Letter to the Editor' concerning the height, general public knowledge, derivation, and official recognition of the ridge he called "Ishpatena", located west of Maple Mountain.

Lately, I have been researching the history of the Temagami area and, in the course of my work, briefly investigated the origins of place names.

The local MNR office confirmed that 'Ishpatina', as it is also spelled, is the highest point in Ontario, with one summit peaking at 2,275 feet. On the MNR's 'Canoeing in the Temagami District' map, the range is designated 'Ishpatina', which indicates the name has achieved official recognition with the Ontario government. The Ontario Geographic Names Board could provide information.

Craig Macdonald, who I believe is familiar to the Wilderness Canoe Association, has called the entire structure 'Kinaybig Puckwudina', Puckwudina meaning hill. The ancient Algonkian inhabitants coined the ridge 'Ishpudina' which was corrupted to 'Ishpatina' from 'Ishbatina', a word coming from the dialect of a Georgian Bay area band. As I understand it, Spadina Road in Toronto is also a vastly altered version of 'Ishbatina'. I'm sure Mr. Macdonald could provide a more accurate and detailed description of Ishpatina's etymological roots.

On page 34 of Frank G. Speck's Memoir 71, "Myths and Folklore of the Timiskaming Algonquin and Timagami Ojibwa", printed in 1915 as a result of a government anthropological survey he undertook in part with the Temagami Indians on Bear Island in 1913, there is a short portrayal of the band's legend regarding the formation of the ridge: Nenebuc, a trickster giant, shot "a great snake" with his bow and arrow which became this high rocky ridge.

In his letter, Mr. Smith asks "what steps can be taken to educate the public about the existence of this fact?" (that Ishpatina is the highest point in Ontario). One possible approach is to apprise the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, and perhaps the local Tri-town Chambers of Commerce.

Sincerely,

Pam Glenn

arctic journal

by David F. Pelly

June 19, 1985 - Baker Lake, N.W.T.

This morning the Thelon opened its icy gates. The rush of water pushed a ridge of ice up on top of the frozen lake, though not as high as some years. In general the water levels are not high this year, the amount of ice around is not great, and a late season is not expected.

June 27, 1985 - Baker Lake, N.W.T.

Getting ready for a barren lands canoe trip, when you are already in the middle of the Barrens, is a new experience. For one thing you can't run down to your favourite camping store for the extras you might like to have along. And if the Bay had not got in a shipment of brown sugar yesterday, after three weeks of looking at an empty shelf, we would have been going without. But there are advantages. We are first to know the state of the river. Local knowledge of the area's wildlife is nice to have - we know where a musk-ox herd has been spending the spring just upstream from Beverly Lake. And, not that it's likely, should something happen out there to prevent us from returning on time, lots of folks in town will take action.

In preparation we have spoken with the wildlife officers, the water survey people, and several hunters. That has been an enjoyable part of the process. Commenting to one Inuit friend, an older lady, about the different perspective on the passage of time during an extended Barrens trip, she became concerned that we might lose track of the days and promptly rustled through her kitchen to produce a small calendar, in syllabics but nevertheless comprehensible. Across the top is written a significant biblical quote; "Open thou mine eyes, that I might behold wondrous things."

June 29, 1985 - Baker Lake, N.W.T.

We are doing something I have never advocated, and occasionally criticised: travelling in a single canoe. To compensate for the obvious element of additional danger, we will adopt a very conservative approach. We are going in at a point, near the confluence of the Hanbury and Thelon Rivers, which is below most of the heavy whitewater. There are several trips coming down behind us. We have the connections in Baker. And, in case something does happen, each of us will carry at all times, in a small waist pack, an emergency kit containing: snare wire, waterproofed matches, a mirror, a plastic bag, Ozonol ointment, fishing line and lure, emergency blanket, and Muskol.

Our purpose, apart from the evident pleasure of a three-week descent of the Thelon, is two-fold: to visit the known peregrine falcon nesting sites along the river valley, observing activity, and to discover new sites, in the service of the N.W.T. Department of Renewable Resources, from which a field officer was originally to accompany us until recent fiscal cutbacks prevented that; and second to photograph and report on the highlights of canoeing the Thelon for the Department of Tourism. Both of these N.W.T. government departments have been of assistance in the execution of this trip.

We are off in the morning!

June 30, 1985 - confluence of Hanbury & Radford Rivers

Our chartered single Otter - equipped with wheels, for the take-off from Baker Lake's airstrip, which then retract into the floats needed to land out here in the Barrens - put us down on a small lake not far up the Radford River, one of the few bits of good water the pilot could find for us. During the flight we saw large chunks of ice floating down the lower Thelon, and an apparently solidly frozen Aberdeen Lake.

As we paddled our first miles, shortly after the dramatic departure of our last link with civilisation, a peregrin falcon flew overhead, as if welcoming us. Our work is, after all, directed at protecting this endangered species.

July 2, 1985 - Dickson Canyon, Hanbury River

Having cached the bulk of our supplies on an island in mid-stream near the confluence yesterday, we began the arduous hike up the Hanbury valley, checking the riverbanks along the way for peregrine nests. We found one new site, determined that two former sites were unoccupied, and found several good nesting areas taken over by rough-legged hawks. The two species will not share a cliff-face. The canyon itself is a spectacularly deep cleft in the earth, with the full thrust of the Hanbury's spring run-off still churning through it.

July 3, 1985 - Thelon River

Having accomplished our objective we completed the 30 km walk by returning along the high rocky ridges that run parellel to the river, to find all our food and gear in good order back at the base camp. How good it felt to get into a canoe this morning and to feel the current pushing us along. For the rest of our journey the Thelon is to be our home, our path, our source of life.

July 19, 1985 - Schultz Lake

The trip is nearly over. We have done a thorough survey of the peregrin nesting sites along the river. Not one of the previously recorded sites was occupied this year, though we did find a few new nests. On a brighter note, all the nests we did examine contained some young, most often three or four.

In addition the Barrens provided us with its usual array of sights and sounds and sensations: musk-oxen, caribou, wolf, moose, golden eagle, paddling amidst ice floes, all night paddles on uncharacteristically calm lakes, bearing up before arctic gales, and the ever-present realisation that this is the real wilderness.

July 20, 1985 - lower Thelon River

On the eve of finishing, in reflecting back on the trip, as always I try to think of new things I have learned or tried. Two lessons from Inuit friends and travelling companions on previous Barrens excursions come to mind. I have finally accepted that the best way to get a fire going here is to use the mosses, which burn readily and have provided cooking fires for the oldest inhabitants of the area for generations. Secondly, having spent years looking for a soft, level spot for my tent, I now apply the Inuit approach more often than not - create a flat area of stones on the beach, enjoy the excellent drainage which they offer, and use their weight to counter the inevitable winds. Provided you have good sleeping mats the arrangement is very comfortable.

July 21, 1985 - Baker Lake, N.W.T.

How pleasant it is to finish a Barrens trip like this: a brief greeting from a few friends on the beach, then a short walk home to a waiting shower.

Considering the river, as a trip, it does not have a single characteristic which defines it. Rather it is quite segmented. The section west of Beverly, though somewhat varied in its surrounding terrain, generally flows along smoothly, allowing easy progress with no portages for nearly 300 km, and offering ample firewood and wildlife. The lakes, three of them, are quite different: large, imposing, potentially threatening bodies of water that require care and patience as you enter the barren lands. Finally, the last section of river, nearly 100 km of swift current from Schultz down to Baker, is a canoeist's joyride. The river is varied, alright, but not mixed.

Arctic Journal, by WCA member David F. Pelly, is a regular column featuring 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.

news briefs

CARIBOU NEWS

For the ever increasing number of paddlers going on extended trips through the Barren Lands, seeing caribou is always one of the highlights of their adventure. A well-produced bi-monthly magazine exists that contains a wealth of information and pictures on these fascinating deer of the North, and in particular the Kaminuriak and Beverly herds. Part of the magazine is translated into Inuktitut syllabics.

For more information, contact:

Caribou News
Roy Vontobel, Editor
Suite 200, 16 Concourse Gate
Nepean, Ontario
K2E 7S8

THE SPANISH RIVER

(An announcement by the Ministry of Natural Resources). We at M.N.R. recognize the Spanish River as something special.It's an area that's special for clean, fast water, abundant fish and game, great scenery, and valuable timber and mineral resources. These resource values make the river attractive to canoeists, campers, anglers and hunters, trappers, tourist outfitters and their clients, and industrial users.

As our way of recognizing its importance, we're preparing a land use plan specifically for the river. The Spanish River Special Area Plan will provide direction for future land use activity and resource management on the Upper Spanish River up to the year 2000. The planning area includes the East and West Branches of the river from Duke and Biscotasi Lakes downstream to Agnew Lake, north of Espanola. We'll be looking at existing use, development potential, and specific issues such as access, river crossings, and water management.

The consultative process has already begun. A Public Advisory Committee, with local representatives from various interest groups and the resource industries, has been assisting us from the start. If you want to find out more about what's being planned, you can write to us at:

Spanish River Special Area Plan
Ministry of Natural Resources
Northeastern Region
199 Larch Street
Sudbury, Ontario
P3E 5P9

or call Bob Felker at 705-522-7823.

WINTER TRAVEL COURSE

A Course in Traditional Winter Travel by Toboggan and Snowshoe will be held from Friday evening, January 3, till Sunday afternoon, January 5, 1986, at the L. M. Frost Natural Resources Centre. This course is sponsored by the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario and costs $200 per person (all meals, acommodation, the use of specialized equipment, displays, handouts, and expert instruction). An optional field test and written examination for certification will be given for $25 at the conclusion of the course.

An overnight trip is planned to provide training in equipment handling and safe operation of wood-heated tents and emergency shelters. Participants will be able to examine a wide range of sleds and toboggans, as well as a collection of over 25 different styles of native-built snowshoes. This course will be the best one ever offered concerning the rapidly expanding field of traditional winter travel by toboggan and snowshoe.

The first 20 paid registrations will be accepted. To register, mail a cheque or money order, payable to: Craig Macdonald, Frost Centre, Dorset, Ontario, P0A 1E0; phone 705-766-2885.

WCA MEMBERSHIP LISTS

Membership lists are available to any members who wish one for personal, non-commercial use. Please send $1.00 to: Cash Belden, 77 Huntley St., Apt. 1116, Toronto, M4Y 2P3.

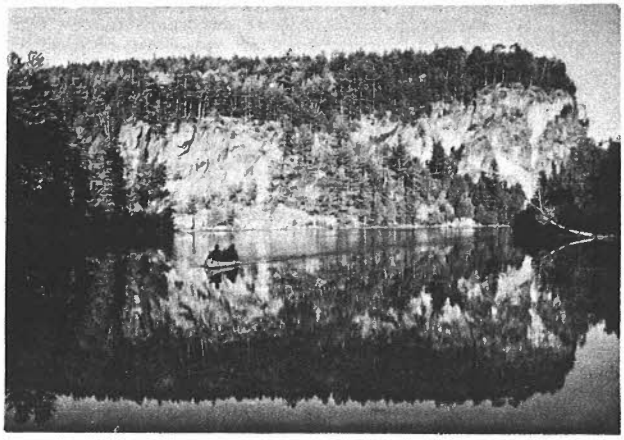
WCA CRESTS AND DECALS

Attractive crests and decals,showing the WCA logo in two shades of blue and white, are available to members. The crests measure 51 mm x 102 mm and cost $3.00 each. The decals are 76 mm x 152 mm and sell for $1.00 each.

Both crests and decals will be on sale at WCA meetings and events. Members wishing to order by mail should send a cheque or money order payable to the Wilderness Canoe Association to: Bill King, 45 Himount Dr., Willowdale, Ontario, M2K 1X3. Please include a stamped, self addressed envelope, or add 35¢ for postage.

WCA PHOTO CONTEST 1986

You've still got a few months to work on your entries for this friendly and instructive competition. The four permanent categories are: 1. Wilderness, 2. Wilderness and Man, 3. Flora, 4. Fauna, and the extra category is: Child-(ren) and Wilderness Canoeing.



CANOETOONS

Paul Mason's "Canoetoons", the canoeing cartoons that you have seen in Nastawgan, are available as greeting cards from Trail Head, at both their Ottawa and Toronto stores.

NASTAWGAN : THE BOOK

Several people are hard at work to get this interesting book out on time, and signs are that the publishing date in November will indeed be met. The book, Nastawgan: the Canadian North by Canoe and Snowshoe, is an illustrated collection of fourteen historical essays focusing on different aspects of wilderness travel in the shifting Canadian North, and is published by Betelgeuse Books.

N.W.T. TRIP INFORMATION REQUESTED

A request was received from Canoeing the N.W.T., an affiliate of the Northwest Territories Canoeing Association, for firsthand reports on recent canoe trips in the N.W.T., with the emphasis on general advice and specific details re. rapids and portages. This information could be used in a comprehensive manual on paddling in the N.W.T. which is presently being compiled. If you have meaningful information to contribute, please contact Jim Edmondson. N.W.T. Canoeing Association, Yellowknife, N.W.T.

1986 CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Three positions on the Board of Directors will become available this spring, with elections for a two year term to be held at the A.G.M. The office is open to all paid-up members who have reached the age of majority, or will do so within ten days of election. Candidates should notify the Secretary of their intention to run. Although nominations may be made up to the time of election, candidates are requested to declare themselves prior to the deadline for the winter 1985 Nastawgan so that they can publish a brief platform.

ANOTHER FIRST PLACE

The WCA has among its members some first-class white-water paddlers who consistently place with the winners in canoe races. Howard Sagermann is one of them. At the Gull River Open Canoe Slalom held on September 7 and 8 near Minden, Ontario, Howard was first in the C.1 men class (i.e. solo canoe), with a better time than the winners of the two-men C.2.

NEWSLETTER MATERIAL AND DEADLINE

Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think would be of interest to other members, are needed for future issues. The material should be clearly legible, preferably typewritten, and should be presented double spaced with large borders and margins, otherwise it runs the risk of being returned for a rewrite, if time permits. The deadlines for the next four issues of Nastawgan are:

Issue		Deadline
Winter 1985	--	November 17, 1985
Spring 1986	--	January 26, 1986
Summer 1986	--	May 4, 1986
Autumn 1986	--	August 17, 1986

In principle, no material received after the deadline date will be considered for that issue, but will be held for use in a later issue, if appropriate. In some very rare cases, such as time-related news briefs, can acceptance beyond the deadline date be discussed with the editor.

NO SMOKING, PLEASE

Although most of the WCA activities are taking place outdoors, several times a year we get together for meetings, wine and cheese, slide nights, and such. At these "indoor" gatherings we have run into a bit of a problem. Non-smokers, particularly those with allergies, have been mentioning their discomfort with second-hand smoke. As a consequence, the Board of Directors will be asking organizers to announce, at the beginning of each indoor get-together, that individuals refrain from smoking in common areas.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The paddling season is almost gone; many canoes have been stored in a safe place; hiking and skiing are beginning to take over. But the busy volunteer bees behind the WCA-scene are always buzzing to keep our organization in a healthy state. And that means, among many other activities, membership renewal.

The issue at hand is not whether to renew or not (who would ever want to leave the warm embrace of the WCA?), but when to send your renewal form and cheque to the membership secretary. The people most closely involved with the membership administration (Ria Harting - secretary, Cash Belden - computer wizard, Rob Butler - treasurer) would be very grateful indeed if you'd renew your membership for 1986 anytime between November 1, 1985 and January 31, 1986, and not later. If you don't renew on time, some nasty problems can and will arise. Not only will you no longer receive copies of Nastawgan, but, most importantly, late renewal gives especially the membership secretary a huge and discouraging amount of extra administrative work. And good membership secretaries are frightfully hard to find. So renew on time, please.

Note that the membership fees for 1986 have been increased across the board by $5, as mentioned in the present Chairman's Letter. The 1986 fees are $15 for Students, $25 for Adults, and $35 for Families. Also note that the application/renewal form on the back page of this issue of Nastawgan still mentions the old 1985 fees. The new 1986 fees will be presented in the coming winter issue.

Renew between November 1, 1985 and January 31, 1986

fall party

Want to meet old canoeing friends? Want to hear some tall paddling stories and see interesting photographs? Want to find out what the WCA is all about, who its members are, and what inside information they can give you?

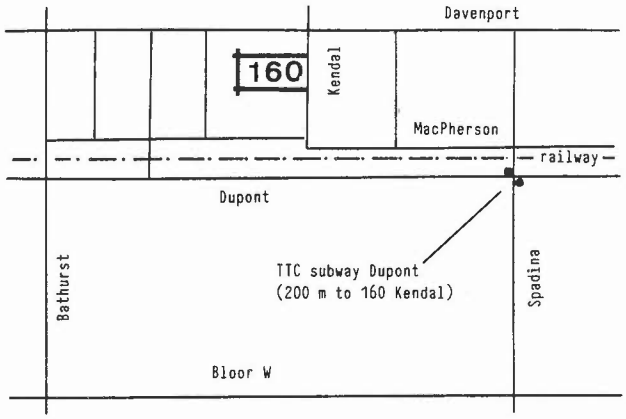
Then come to the WCA Fall Party (also called Slide Show Night or Wine-and-Cheese Party) on Friday evening, November 29, in the Staff Lounge of the Casa Loma Campus of George Brown College, 160 Kendal Avenue, Toronto. Non-WCA-members are also welcome.

Admission, to be paid at the door, is $6.00 per person.

Program

7:00 - 7:30	Registration and Welcome.
7:30 - 7:45	Introductory slide show by Toni Harting: "Some Wilderness Canoeing Photographs."
7:45 - 8:45	Meet the people; enjoy the wine and cheese.
8:45 - 9:30	The main event: Slide/talk show by Herb Pohl: "Just another Labrador trip."
9:30 -	Coffee and Gab.

For more information, contact Joan King in Toronto: 416-223-7995.



There are several parking lots in the area. Do not park on the streets.

aki-a-gun

Craig Macdonald

For as long as can be remembered, the Anishinawbeg of eastern Canada have used a relatively standard system of signs for leaving messages along their winter travel routes. Many of the signs are widely understood, even by native groups so distantly related that they cannot understand each other's speech. Despite the introduction of syllabics and other forms of written language, this ancient system has proved ideal for winter conditions and still sees use in the more remote areas of the north.

Signs made of grass and stone or those which are scratched on the gound, as depicted in many woodcraft or Boy Scout manuals, are of little use in the winter. Newly fallen snow and winds can hide all evidence of these types of markings. In their place, a signage system using poles and small evergreen trees was developed. These signs are highly visible at a distance and can be quickly made using an axe or knife. Aki-a-gun is the Ojibwa name for the devices (poles and trees) used to mark the winter travel routes.

The signage system can consist of up to three basic components.

In the first component, information concerning direction and rate of travel, rest stops, and overnight camps can be presented by the arrangement of poles thrust into the snow. First, however, the snow must be packed down by snowshoe. This packed snow will soon freeze, so the poles will stand firm in stormy weather. Since subsequent snowfalls may elevate the snow's surface, the layer of packed snow also serves as a fool-proof base to evaluate the relative position of the poles at the time they were planted.

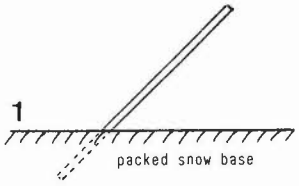
The poles are cut 1.2 to 1.8 m (4 to 6 feet) long, usually from dead spruce or balsam fir of approximately 50 mm (2 inches) in diameter at the butt. They must be completely de-limbed. These types of markers are placed at trail intersections or, more commonly, offshore, where the travel route leaves a waterway and heads inland to a sheltered camp or across a portage. It is best to locate the markers well out on the ice as some signs could be mistaken for naturally growing vegetation, especially after dark. Also, by keeping the markers well offshore, they can be more easily seen at a distance since they are less likely to visually blend into a forested shoreline.

To explain the system, the following generalizations can be made:

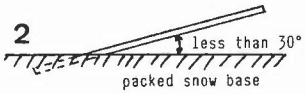
- Leaning poles indicate the direction of travel; if the angle between the pole and the snow is small (30° or less), rapid travel without the encumbrance of loaded sleighs or toboggans is indicated; otherwise one can assume the normal rate of travel.
- Each vertical stick symbolizes the poles used for making an overnight camp and thus represents one night's stay.
- Each short stick tied to the leaning pole and positioned over one of the vertical sticks symbolizes an extra night's of firewood, implying a day's layover at this particular camp.
- Notches on vertical sticks symbolize the breaking of wood for small fires and identify the number of rest stops where fire will be made during the day before the ovenight camp is reached.
- The position of the leaning stick relative to one vertical pole indicates the amount of time required to reach the camp.

If one studies the following signs and their possible meanings, the basic system will become evident.

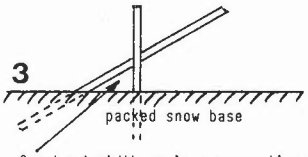
POSSIBLE MEANINGS



a. I'm travelling in this direction.
b. The route goes this way.

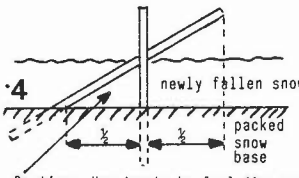


I'm travelling fast (i.e. without loaded sleigh or toboggan) in this direction.



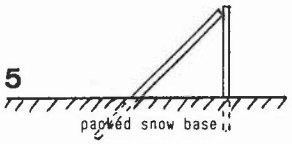
My camp is just a short distance away in this direction. (Commonly used to direct travellers to camps set back from the shoreline in the shelter of the forest or near a better fuelwood supply.)

One hand width or less separation at the level of the packed snow base.

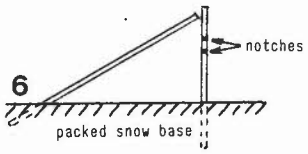


a. My camp is a half day's travel in this direction.
b. I plan to travel a half day in this direction before making camp.

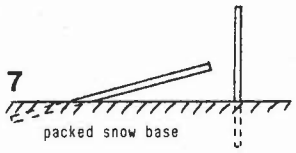
Caution: Use hands to feel the position of the markers relative to the packed snow base, otherwise this sign could be mistaken for the previous sign.



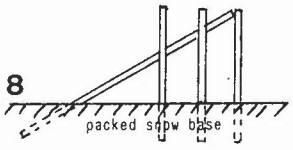
a. My camp is located one day's travel away in this direction.
b. I plan to travel a full day in this direction before making camp.



I plan to travel a full day before making camp, stopping twice during the day for fire.

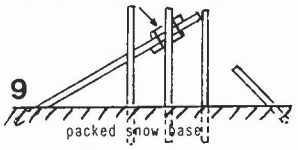


My camp is located in this direction more than one day of vast travel away (i.e. you cannot reach my place without having to camp out on the trail).



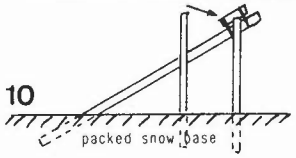
a. My camp is located three days travel away in this direction.
b. I plan to travel three days in this direction.

2 short sticks lashed to direction pole



I plan to travel two days, stay in camp for two additional nights at the second camp, then move further away to a new site on the fifth day, and head back on my old snowshoe trail on the sixth day.

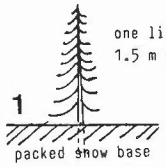
1 short stick lashed to direction pole



a. My permanent winter camp is located two days away.
b. I plan to travel for two days and camp indefinitely at this location.

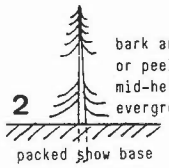
The second component of the sign system is not always included. It consists of evergreen trees approximately 1.5 m (5 feet) high, placed in the snow near the poles. Where possible, messages are combined into a single tree to reduce the amount of cutting and preparation. The following interpretations are commonly recognized.

MEANINGS



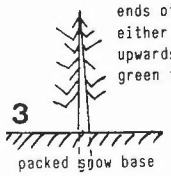
one live cut evergreen tree, 1.5 m (5 feet) high

Our food supply is in good condition, so we can welcome visitors with a full larder.



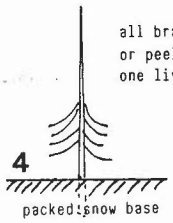
bark and branches are blayed or peeled off on all sides at mid-height on one live cut evergreen tree

One of our members is seriously ill and unable to travel, however, our food supply is in good shape.



ends of most branches are either broken off or bent upwards on one live cut evergreen tree

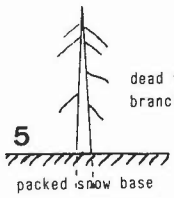
One of our members has been seriously injured and is unable to travel, however, our food supply is in good shape.



all branches and bark blayed or peeled off upper half of one live cut evergreen tree

Our shelter has been destroyed or lost, however, our food supply is in good shape.

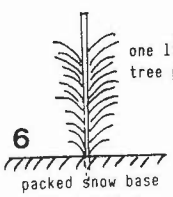
N.B. If the upper half has been charred or blackened (usually with some burning birch-bark), the shelter was destroyed by fire. In most other circumstances charring and blackening are associated with the death of a person.



dead tree with no live branches

We have little or no food and are starving.

N.B. When this message is combined with any other that requires bark removal and the dead tree has already lost its bark, the outer wood is blayed off at the appropriate locations instead.



one live cut evergreen tree planted upside down

One of our members has died (small trees signify the death of children), however, our food supply is in good shape.

leader cut off to make placement easier

The third component always consists of a row of three upright, live cut evergreens planted in the snow often remote from the first two components but in a highly visible location. When the third component is used, the message is always the same and can be interpreted as: "We are in serious trouble and urgently request your help. Follow in the direction of the row of three trees to find our other markers." If there is any doubt as to which end of the row to follow, the upper tip of each of the three evergreens is broken or bent in the appropriate direction. For maximum visibility against a background of snow, the evergreens are preferably well-branched trees of balsam fir or spruce, approximately 1.2 to 1.8 m (4 to 6 feet) high and positioned three or four tree-lengths apart. They are located far out from shore and oriented at right angles to the principal direction of travel, so they will be perceived clearly as a row of three trees from a great distance in either direction. The three trees are meant to symbolize a barrier or fence that one should not pass without giving aid.

This message is so compelling that northerners use it only for life-threatening emergencies and promptly remove the trees after the emergency ends. Many self-reliant Anishinawbeg would never erect such a message, especially if strangers were likely to find it. To them it is a message of defeat and, at least in the old days, some would rather endure great hardship and risk death than admit defeat.

Now that more people have had schooling, the first and second components are often reduced to a single directional pole, possibly with a live cut evergreen planted in the snow beside it to attract attention. A message pencilled on paper or birch-bark is stuffed into a cleft in the upper end of the directional pole. On land, the planted evergreen is of little value because it would not easily be recognized as a signal. In this case, because it is so easy to miss, the directional pole is often planted in the middle of the trail. Alternately, the message can be rolled up and tied to a string which is hung down into the trail from an overhead limb.

Many messages are still written in syllabics by people who have little knowledge or comprehension of the Roman alphabet. Therefore it is necessary for most non-speakers of the native language to carry a syllabic de-coding table and a native language dictionary and grammar appropriate to the area. Native and European languages are so profoundly different in structure that it may take more than an hour to formulate an intelligible message in syllabics using these cribs, even with ideal weather conditions to thumb trough books. Therefore, if circumstances require leaving a written message, time would be better spent writing it out in plain English, or in some areas in French, and drawing a picture of the traditional arrangement of poles and evergreens. Simple maps and cartoons might be useful to further explain the situation.

The traditional system evolved in an era when people were few and far between. Apart from face to face meetings, which often involved the expenditure of enormous labor and time for travel, the signage was the only form of winter communication between isolated native hunting groups. Certainly such a simple system was never intended for idle chit-chat. Winter travellers should follow tradition and resist any urge to hack down vegetation and pollute portage entrances and other areas with needless, unimportant messages. Although every winter traveller should have a thorough knowledge of the system, the less it is actually used the more effective it will remain for transmitting vital information and soliciting aid in a true emergency.

Craig Macdonald works for the Ministry of Natural Resources and is stationed at the Frost Centre, south of Dorset, Ontario. He is a widely recognized expert in traditional winter travel by toboggan and snowshoe.

TWO BOOKS FOR NATURALISTS

ADVENTURES IN WILD CANADA

Authors: John and Janet Foster
Publisher: McClelland & Stewart, 1984 ($29.95)

ARCTIC WILDLIFE

Author: Monte Hummel
Publisher: Key Porter Books, 1984 ($29.95)

Reviewed by: Chris Winter (Conservation Council of Ontario)

Naturalists are, by and large, a healthy bunch. They revel in seeking out remote landscapes, untouched by the creature comforts of civilization, and succeed in finding exquisite beauty in what most would consider a dull, unimaginative landscape.

Photography lends itself well to this discipline, for just as the mind of the naturalist can focus on the essential beauty of a scene, so too can the camera capture in perpetuity a mood or a feeling by concentrating on select features of a landscape.

Adventures in Wild Canada is a collection of photographs by two well-known naturalist photographers, John and Janet Foster, taken on their travels to the Queen Charlotte Islands, Lake Superior, the Atlantic and the Arctic regions. The text, wrapped around more than 90 photographs, recounts their experiences and adventures as filmmakers and naturalists. Describing their canoe trip along Superior's north shore, they reflect on the absence of highways which so often choose to follow the lakeshore:

"How different the north shore would be if the highway had continued to be blasted through beside the lake, with towns and pulp mills and gas stations and passing lanes where only the winds and mists of Superior now wander. Because much of the shoreline is in fact bordered with high-speed roads, those places that were spared have acquired extraordinary value. These values have to do with mystery and magnificence, or, as described by canoeists Wayland Drew and Bruce Litteljohn, with the 'co-existence of power and fragility - of the immensity of the landscape on one hand, and the astonishing resiliency of delicate plant and animal life on the other'."

This concern for the preservation of the natural environment also forms a strong component of the naturalist characters. It's the rational counterpoint to the spiritual bond with nature, the point of re-entry into the harsh human world. It's curious that these concerns are relegated to the written word and find no counterpart in naturalist photography. Photography, for the naturalist, is in the realm of experience and as such should attempt only to reflect the joy of direct experience with pure, raw nature.

Monte Hummel's Arctic Wildlife is of the same mould, and yet it succeeds in conveying a powerful sense of personal experience...not the personal experience of the author or photographer....for Hummel has drawn from the work of sixteen photographers in piecing together this book...but of the reader, or rather, the viewer. Spend fifteen minutes with Arctic Wildlife and you'll feel as if you already know the region intimately. 150 colour photographs will bring you face to face with 90 species of arctic wildlife and flora. Each picture alone is worth framing. Together, they acquire new meaning, as close as a coffee-table book could hope to come to direct experience. The thought of Arctic Wildlife lying inconspicuously on the coffee tables of the nation's living rooms is almost unthinkable. It's an exquisite synthesis of nature appreciation and the conservationist argument; a most powerful book.

CANOEING WILD RIVERS

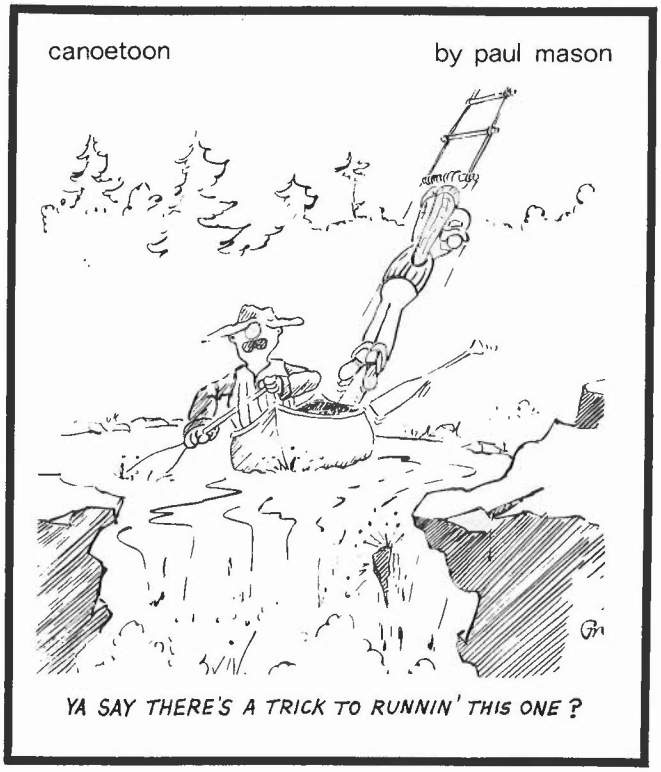
Author: Cliff Jacobson
Publisher: ICS Books Inc., 1984 ($19.95)

Reviewed by: Herb Pohl

For years now I have picked up books on various aspects of wilderness travel; rarely have I finished reading them. Invariable they are overly technical and narrowly prescriptive. Often one is left with the impression that the authors are more at home in the library than the outdoors, and that what they are dispensing is transcribed from other sources rather than personal experience.

Well, Cliff Jacobson is not one of them. He draws on more than thirty years canoeing experience and in Canoeing Wild Rivers he has produced a valuable reference book which is not only informative but also interesting to read. As the author himself indicates, this is not an instruction manual for the beginner. Rather, it is aimed at the individual who wants to raise his sights from the occasional neighborhood paddle or weekender to extended trips into more remote regions. Throughout the book, the emphasis is on practicality and common sense. The author reveals his own attitude towards the various aspects of wilderness tripping, but also includes the opinions of other seasoned travellers in those areas where no universal solutions exist. This is true in particular for components such as choice of canoe, tent, clothing, and food.

It is easily the best book of its kind that I have come across, and one that every serious canoeist should read. It's a little pricey for a paperback. If I do have a criticism, it is not directed at the author; whoever did the proofreading should try to find other means of making a living.



QUETICO SUPERIOR

1909·1984

75TH ANNIVERSARY

HISTORY OF QUETICO-SUPERIOR - VI

by Shan Walshe
(Research Assistance by Shirley Peruniak)

Photos courtesy Quetico Provincial Park Archives

In June, 1925, John Jamieson was appointed Superintendent of Quetico Provincial Park, replacing Hugh McDonald. Excerpts from Quetico Annual Reports, old ranger's diaries and interviews, newspaper clippings, etc. give the highlights of Jamieson's superintendency from 1925 to 1935.

1925

- Backus-Oberholtzer battle over building of hydroelectric dams on the boundary waters was raging. Oberholtzer's supporters in the U.S. were Charles S. Kelly, Sewell Tyng, Frank Hubachek, Fred Winston, and Sigurd Olson; and in Canada, Clifford Sifton and the Right Honourable Vincent Massey.

1925 - 29

- International Boundary Survey Programme along the Border Lakes. Bill Magie of Duluth worked on this by snowshoe, dog team, canoe, and airplane.

February 6, 1925

- Constable Kilbride of the O.P.P. and Corporal Bebb of the Royal North West Mounted Police confiscated a huge still and many gallons of mash at the premises of Bob Ogglestein, Quetico Park Ranger. He was fined $400 plus costs.

November 24, 1925

- Superintendent John Jamieson is willing to buy Hugh McDonald's livestock seized by the government; cow ($40), calf ($7), nine geese ($9), nineteen hens ($8).

November 27, 1925

- Wolves, mink, fisher, and fox will be trapped by wardens. Only when there are too many beaver and not enough food will beaver be trapped.

December 25, 1925

- Deputy Minister Cain advises Jamieson that the maximum fine for poaching had the most beneficial effect and that would-be poachers failing to meet the fine would receive a jail sentence and therefore would be more careful to avoid violating the law.

1925

- Jamieson met a party of tourists coming out of Robinson Lake that had been routed out of the two campsites by bears. He recommended that law-abiding citizens be allowed to hunt them to keep them thinned.

- "To meet the growing demand of canoe trips and summer outings, the Dept. of Lands and Forests is considering the advisability of employing photographic means in collaboration with our aircraft service of detailing our parks and thus getting a perfect map of all waters and water routes therein. The tourist or health seeker is with us to stay and we must get ready for more of his friends."

- Shevlin Clarke first use a 3/4 mile-long flume between Batchewaung and McAlpine Lakes which diverted the natural drainage of Pickerel Lake westward into McAlpine, Kasakokwog, and Quetico Lakes.

1925 - 26

- Active logging at Pickerel, French, Marion, Jesse, McAlpine, Quetico, Oriana, and Batchewaung by Shevlin Clarke.

1926

February, 1926

- Rangers Bernasky and Tilson found snowshoe tracks going towards McKenzie Lake and followed them. Asked Rangers Meech and Atkins to join them. A man at a Shevlin Clarke camp said Bert Gray (charged a year previously for selling moonshine to the Indians) was trapping in the Park and said he would shoot anyone who came after him. They then wired the R.C.M.P. in Fort Frances. Four Rangers plus R.C.M.P. Corporal Bebb searched for four days without success. Poachers had picked-up the traps and snares and had thrown them into the bush, then had doubled back on their own tracks. This gang had been poaching in the Park for years and knew where to go to make a hasty getaway.

April 26, 1926

- Beaver numbers taken by Quetico rangers - Meech and Atikins 54, Dettbarn and Quinn 71, Hurn and Hickey 29, Bernasky and Seeley 11. Total 165 beaver.

September 7, 1926

- Ranger Tilson found the body of poacher, James Gannon, in a shack on Fred Lake. Also found a 35 Remington rifle, a 12 gauge shotgun, 11 traps, and a gold watch.

1926

- Superintendent Jamieson sends Rangers Bernasky and Tilson to Pickerel Lake to tell trapper Donald McLeod he would have to move out of the Park - they found him dead (heart attack) and confiscated his rifle, dog harness, snowshoes, 3 axes, and 23 traps as he was a poacher.

- Two dead trappers in Quetico in one year!

- Basic supplies of trappers and rangers - flour, baking powder, bacon, beans, lard, coffee, tea, salt, jam.

- Wooden fire tower built at Lac la Croix. Three Norway pines were used as a base, then topped. Norway pine poles were raised with block and tackle and spliced to the required height. Guy lines were brought in by canoe to brace the tower, from the top of which rangers could see 25 to 30 miles.

- High water on Pickerel Lake caused by Shevlin Clarke dam at Bisk Portage was eroding away red pines at "The Pines" campsite.

- Wolves poisoned with strychnine in Quetico.

- U.S. and Canadian rangers troubled over an aeroplane operating along the border and both suspect it is scattering poison all over the country. The pilot's name is "Dusty" Rhoades of Virginia, Minnesota, a dangerous man to be allowed to operate a plane. He came low enough to U.S. rangers that they had to lie on the ice to prevent being hit. On another occasion he came so low over U.S. engineers working slong the border that he frightened their dogs. They say he came within 20 feet. U.S. rangers hope to cancel his licence but have searched his plane several times without finding any fur.

June 8, 1926

- Ranger Walt Hurn at King Point, Cabin 11, on Basswood Lake met Sigurd Olson guiding a party of children.(Walt Hurn maintained his famous vegetable and flower garden at King Point, fertilizing it with fish remains donated by the tourists.)

Boundary Surveyors and Quetico Rangers at Quetico Cabin, 1925, Quetico Provincial Park.

1927

- John Jamieson was rebuked by the Deputy Minister for trying to force everyone who entered Quetico to buy a fishing licence. Letter from W. C. Cain to Jamieson: "On the other hand, there may be parties who have no desire whatever to fish but are anxious to take a trip through the Park. It is true that few don't fish and it may be rightly assumed that anyone entering the Park desires to do so partially for the purpose of fishing and it may be difficult to understand anyone not creating within himself a desire to fish in such abundant waters. The fact remains as stated above that there are exceptions to every rule and under these circumstances you should explain to your rangers that a fishing licence is not a fee to enter the Park."

- Formation of Quetico-Superior Council. "The QUETICO SUPERIOR COUNCIL is an international organization associated with the Izaak Walton League of America for the sole purpose of obtaining, with the consent of the Province of Ontario, a treaty between Canada and the United States to protect and expand the rare public values in the Rainy Lake watershed, which forms part of the international boundary between Ontario and Minnesota." Canadian advisers to the committee were Arthur Hawkes of Toronto and Jules Prud'homme of Winnipeg. Reminiscing about the creation of the Quetico-Superior Reserves in 1909, Arthur Hawkes wrote to Oberholtzer that it was the first time two foreign governments had taken perfectly sympathetic action for the disposal of territory and not a word had been exchanged between them.

- Quetico Improvement Company asks permission to build five (5) dams on the Bear (Bearpelt) Creek - Wolseley Lake drainage system.

- Ranger Art Madsen recollects: "The greatest raft of logs I ever saw (70 million board feet) came down Quetico Lake. One tow hauled by a steam gator carried 3/4 mile of 3/4" cable."

- James A. Bartlett (former forest fire detection observer) comments: "I served the summer of 1927 with the Ontario Provincial Air Service as an observer and had the 'good fortune' to enjoy the superb ventilation in the nose of an HS2L in flight - I may say the ventilation from that vantage point was the best possible. It was also a good spot to enjoy the pelting rain and it was even cold there on a hot day."

- A Gipsy Moth looked small and fragile when it took its place among the HS2L flying boats.

- Charles Lindbergh of Little Falls, Minnesota, made the first solo flight over the Atlantic. His name was carved on logs inside a Quetico ranger cabin on Kawnipi Lake in the 1930's.

- Ontario government encourages destruction of wolves by drawing attention to the Wolf Bounty Act of 1924.

- Bill Magie obtained a Johnson outboard motor in Ely for Rangers Tom Quinn and Ted Dettbarn who were trying to catch a Finnish couple who were poaching. With the help of the motor, they reached Meadows Lake Portage (between Agnes and Sunday Lakes) two days after the ice went out and caught the couple with 4 packsacks full of beaver, fisher, mink, and wolves. The court sentenced them to work al summer at French Lake headquarters. The woman cooked and the man did odd jobs.

July 5, 1927

- Because of damage to lumber camps, Jamieson issued instructions to his rangers to shoot bears on sight.

November 8, 1927

- Quetico rangers asked to investigate report that R. S. Campbell of Flanders had erected a store on an island in Lac la Croix.

1928

- Deputy Minister Cain reminded Jamieson that the Quetico Superintendent had the power of Police Magistrate and could hold trials himself without having to send poachers to a judge in Fort Frances.

- Letter from J. A. Mathieu to the Minister of Lands and Forests, Honourable W. Finlayson.
"Quetico Park is really a game reserve and not much of anything else. I venture to suggest, however, that there are other portions of the District in which game is very much more plentiful than in the Quetico Park reserve and there is much better fishing in portions other than Quetico, notwithstanding the fact that game has been protected in this park for about twenty years. I believe this is the only park in North Western Ontario notwithstanding the fact that the District of Rainy River is rather a small area compared with other Districts in that portion of the Province and I am very much opposed to the placing of any more of the lands in the District into parks."

- Fred McKay found a coffin containing a human skeleton on an island in McKenzie Lake (still there in 1984!).

- Tom Quinn appointed Chief Ranger for Quetico Park at a salary of $1300 per annum.

- Man named Crazy Joe was living in a root cellar of an old logging camp on Long (Cirrus) Lake.

March, 1928

- Dr. A. R. Cahn of the University of Illinois at Urbana wishes to study fish in Quetico. He claims fish in Jean Lake are dying from lack of food. At certain times of the year, the shores are strewn with dead fish (possibly dynamite or gill nets?).

April 14, 1928

- Letter from Ranger Ted Dettbarn to Superintendent Jamieson from Winton.
Dear Sir: The 8th we traveled across country headed for Cabin 18. When we struck Louisa Lake, we seen a man's trak on some places we followed him up to Fauqueir lake wehre we found 8 trap's set for beaver. We broke them up but could not locate the men. as the ground was bare in lots of places then. we will go back wehn we got more grub with us and try and find them and there is another party somewehre's towards the Shade lake Route. we seen some trak's on one place leading that way. Tom run across 2 big finns at Meadow lake coming in and turned them back as he was alone at the time. he did not take there outfit. As they wehre dangerous looking féllow's. one had a long Colts Revolver 8 inch 8arrell hanging around his neck by a string. Ole Harri and his partner Sandsted is out somewehre too. and there may be more we dont know about from Ely. Tom think's we should have more help here at the present time. The aroplane wizzed by again right after we got here flying about 30 feet above the ice. we could not see him ver far this time, dont know wehre he went we will pull from Agnes lake Monday and look over the Shade lake Route. and around Fauqueir lake and than cross over too Carp lake if the ice gets to poor we can make it by land over there. It looks now as if it will be a late spring."

January 26, 1928

- Ted Dettbarn and Tom Quinn caught trapper John Wilson on Silence Lake. He had a wigwam, a Winchester rifle, a shotgun, nine traps, one marten, and three beaver.

September, 1928

- Jamieson hired a school teacher to live at Park Headquarters at French Lake to teach his two children.

1929

- American and Canadian Legions, which had opposed Backus dams in 1927 and 1928 at their respective national conventions, suggested that 'as much as is feasible of the Rainy Lake watershed be set aside' for censervation purposes 'In the name of Peace and Dedicated as a Memorial to the Service Men of both countries'. (A widely-applauded suggestion.)

- A bad fire year. Gipsy Moth aircraft stood up well. HS2L flying boats were condemned.

- World record northern pike (46 lbs) caught in Basswood Lake.

- Superintendent Jamieson decides to trap 300 beaver in the spring of 1930. Trapping is to be done by experienced rangers who know where beaver houses are located.

- At freeze-up on Robin Lake in Quetico they brought in a lumberjack who had been hit on the head by a big branch (in tough shape with brains oozing out). He was taken out by truck. They never expected to see him again but in the fall he returned with a plate in his head, demanding his $40 in back wages.

- Shevlin Clarke ordered to close up the flume from Batchewaung Lake to McAlpine Lake by which water was diverted west from its natural watershed.

- Ranger Fred Clark followed down Quetico Lake by 7 wolves and he could not make Camp I by dark. Made a big fire on Eden Island and shot 3 wolves during the night.

- Quetico Park consists of 1,740 square miles in the Rainy River district along the International Boundary between Minnesota and Ontario. It is becoming increasingly popular, particularly with Americans. The park staff consists of a Superintendent, fifteen rangers, and a housekeeper. In addition to the buildings at headquarters, which are at French Lake, there are now 38 stop-over cabins for the use of rangers on patrol. Most of these cabins are equipped with stoves, blankets, and cooking utensils. Telephones have been installed in four of the cabins to facilitate communications between the patrols and headquarters. During the year, two new cabins have been constructed, and consideration will require to be given to the renovation of the existing headquarters' buildings or the construction of new ones in the near future. Ninety-six portages have been cleaned out, two new ones have been cut, and 280 signs have been placed on the portages.
In enforcement of the park regulations, a number of persons were apprehended, and several served time in the Fort Frances jail. Two were given suspended snetences and one was fined. Confiscations were as follows: one Ford truck, five beaver pelts, one marten pelt, one belt, three hunting knives, one flashlight, 71 traps.

During the year, 1,234 persons entered the park and purchased fishing licenses; the bulk of these being from the United States. Deer, moose, beaver, and partridge are all increasing in number.

April 19, 1929

- Letter from Gregory Clark of the Toronto Star to Oberholtzer:
"In the States you have suffered and lost so much of your wilderness and we are merely in the process of losing it. We who are interested in conservation in Canada are looked upon as airy idealists and faddists by our hard-boiled brothers who are wholeheartedly devoted to the principle of exploring and exploiting the apparently unlimited resources of our great Dominion."

September 24, 1929

- Note to Prime Minister MacKenzie King from the Prairy Club of Chicago:
"We have noted with keen regret the increasing demolition of the forests by lumbering companies despite some slight restriction by recent legislation enacted in Ontario."

1930

- Travel permits required to enable staff to keep a record of those entering and travelling through Quetico, and check them in case of fire or emergency.

- Only 500 non-resident fishing licenses issued (due to depression?).

- Deputy Minister Cain asks Jamieson to designate Quetico Lakes under three categories: 1) no shoreline cutting, 2) selective cutting on shoreline, 3) unrestricted cutting on shoreline.

- Quetico rangers trapped 18 muskrats, 3 fisher, 4 bear, 1 weasel, 8 timber wolves, 3 brush wolves, 163 beaver. Estimate 403 live beaver houses in Park.

- Letter from U.S. tourist: Mr. Jamieson and his men have protected their wildlife so that to-day the Quetico is rich in this respect. Last summer I photographed 99 deer and 68 moose in Quetico.

1931

- Timber sales had dropped owing to the depression.

- Gregory Clark, a Toronto Star reporter, wrote to Oberholtzer that the Ontario government was still dominated by lumbermen and unsympathetic to the wilderness cause.

- J. D. Pluth of Wilderness Outfitters in Ely had parties in Argo Lake who caught two trout weighing 35 lbs.

- Pilot Tom Mann, flying an HS2L flying boat, had his wooden propeller break and cut off al the tail controls. Tom told his mechanic to run back and forth through the rigging struts to balance the craft, and succeeded in landing it safely at Calm Lake.

May 4, 1931

- Quetico Park boundary extended north to C.N.R. line, adding 400 square miles to Park. This was done because ofincursion of trappers from the north and the growing difficulties of enforcement in the absence of a properly defined line.

- Many letters and petitions of protest received from the 400 residents of the area newly incorporated into Quetico (trappers, guides, tourist camp owners, etc.). These people had to abandon their cabins and move north of the C.N.R. line. Forestry officials were accused of "Czarism" (ruthless tactics emplyed by the Czar of Russia's soldiers in an attempt to subdue the working classes).

Art Nadsen, Albert Lemay and Bob Halliday, Quetico Rangers at the Cache Bay Cabin, 1937, Quetico Provincial Park.

1932

- Only 234 non-resident fishing licences issued (due to depression).

- Famous bush pilot, George Phillips, receives McKee Trophy for flying 770 hours in 1931 without a mishap.

- Flock of trained homing pigeons maintained by the Provincial Air Service. During intense fire hazard, when the pilot has discovered a fire, it will be convenient for him to dispatch a pigeon from his plane with information, thus permitting him to carry on his patrol.

December 21, 1932

- Letter to the Ontario governmentfrom Dr. A.R. Cahn of the Ecological Society of America:
"The time is not far off when wilderness areas will be worth their weight in gold as wilderness areas, and I can only urge that as much country be included in your preserves as it is possible to properly protect. The Quetico is the only great wilderness area accessible to the middle United States. While I sometimes feel that the Quetico is not fully appreciated by native Canadians - they have so much country at hand - it is certainly appreciated in the States, and will, when financial conditions ease a bit, be more used by us than ever. It is the hope and prayer of those who know the country that you will continue to protect it in the future as efficiently as you have in the past, and that, whenever opportunity offers, you will continue to extend your protection to more and more country, even against the protest of the narrow-minded and short-sighted few. The honest and honorable manner in which the Quetico is supervised is the constant admiration of us all who know what is really being done."

1933

- Superintendent Jamieson said: "Very few Canadians know anything about the Park, and the kind that do are mostly poachers."

1934

May 15, 1934

- Letter to Deputy Minister Cain from the Minister of Lands and Forests, Honourable W. Finlayson: " It has finally been decided to restore the old boundary of the Park because a considerable number of people would be deprived of hunting and fishing grounds."

June, 1934

- An investation of forest tent caterpillars was so severe, that trains were held up because the wheels of the locomotives slipped on the rails.

July, 1934

- A Liberal government under Mitchell Hepburn came imto power.

- November 22, 1934

- Ranger Albert LeMay was rushed to hospital in Port Arthur. On November 17th he burned his feet badly when his rubber boots caught fire as he was sleeping beside a fire on Customs Island, Saganaga Lake.

December 31 1934

- Letter from Deputy Minister to Superintendent Jamieson: "Under new management, Quetico Park, of which you have been Superintendent for some years, will be placed directly under the jurisdiction of the District Forester at Fort Frances who will be George Delahey who has been on the Forestry staff in the Flying Corps for some years." (Jamieson was reduced to the rank of Chief Ranger.)

1934 Annual Report Quetico Park

The mink and fisher are quite plentiful throughout the Park, while the otter are multiplying very fast. The moose and deer are less plentiful then they were a year ago, and the beaver are much scarcer owing to the inability of the reduced Park staff to satisfactorily patrol this large area, consisting of 1,722 square miles.
During the year two new Ranger's cabins were erected, fifty-eight portages cleared, in addition to the construction of a new road half a mile long and the general repairs of buildings. The possibilities of this Park for angling purposes continue to be widely known and increasingly taken advantage of, there being three hundred and twenty-four non-resident angling permits issued during the year. This Park has been allowed to remain in a perfect state of Nature, and as such forms an attraction to an increasing number of American citizens and tourists generally.
The Staff consists of a Superintendent and fifteen Rangers, a number of whom, due to a restricted vote, have been subject to teporary lay-offs or reduction in wages.

1935

- Frederick Noad, new Deputy Minister under the Hepburn government, was known as an "axeman" who ruthlessly fired people. One day he took a list of employees,whom he thought could be dispensed with, to Premier Hepburn (who that day was filling in for Minister Peter Heenan). Hepburn crossed out all the names on the list, turned the sheet over, wrote one name on the back, Frederick Noad, and promptly fired him.

- Under the Dominion Provincial Youth Training Programme (unemployment relief measure), 14 youths under Rangers Oscar Frederickson and Bill Croome replaced the telephone line from Beaverhouse to French Lake.

- Smallmouth bass introduced into Knife Lake.

July 13, 1935

-John Jamieson resigns as Chief Ranger of Quetico.

October 14, 1935

- Lloyd Rawn officially sworn in as new Chief Ranger.

1926

1926-30

- Forest Supervisor Al Hamel.

SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST NOTES 1925 - 1935

1925

1925-26

- Forest Supervisor A. L. Richey

1925

- E. W. Backus proposes construction of hydroelectric dams along the boundary waters, some of which would be 80 feet high. (The proposal was referred to the International Joint Commission and, after a lengthy and heated battle, was rejected in 1934.)

1926-28

- "Mack" McKennan remembers working with the Corps of Engineers investigating the possibility of dams on the boundary waters. From their camp on Northern Light Lake it took 4 days by snowshoe to reach Ely: 1st night - Cache Bay, 2nd night - Knife Lake, 3rd night - Basswood Lake.

1926

- U.S. Forest made initial wilderness reservations in the northern part of the Superior National Forest along the international boundary "to be kept free of roads and private development."

- A bad fire year.

- From the article "Hot Fur" by Dr. Julius Wolff: Two men were seen depositing packsacks in the bush near Grand Marais. Five wardens organized a search, thinking the packs contained beaver skins, but were very embarrassed to find countless flasks of moonshine whiskey (this was prohibition time).

Back in the woods away from the pond he stretched and dried the hides on a sapling frame. The dried hides would be rolled and hidden in a hollow log. One trapper scattered red pepper around the pelts and around the log to discourage wild animals or game warden's dogs.
The flooding of the market with thousands of legal beaver pelts, when an open season was finally declared in 1939, caused fur prices to drop drastically and put an end to the large scale poaching.

July 23, 1926

- Fourteen students of geology from Northwestern University, Michigan Institute of Technology, University of Illinois, and University of Arkansas, made a geological field trip to Quetico under the leadership of Professor Ulysses S. Grant of Northwestern University. They travelled through Basswood, Birch, Carp, Knife, Ottertrack, Savanagons, Emerald, and That Man Lakes.

1927

- U.S. Quetico-Superior Council (which also contained a Canadian Advisory Board) called for " treaty between the U.S. and Canada, which, although not infringing upon the sovereignty of either country, would guarantee retention of this international wilderness area in a wild state and with development on both sides of the border running parallel courses" (Arthur Hawkes). Members of the Council included Ernest Oberholtzer, Frank Hubachek, Charles S. Kelly, Fred Winston, and Sigurd Olson.

- Leo Chosa moved to Prairie Portage on Basswood Lake, where he operated a small store and minnow business until his death in 1956.

April 9, 1927

- President Calvin Coolidge added 359,380 acres to the Superior National Forest.

1928

- From "Hot Fur" by Dr. Julius Wolff: "Dusty" Rhoades purchased a small tract of land north of the Iron Range and professed to be going into the beaver-farming business. Yet no hundred beaver farms could possibly have produced the amount of fur that he would market in the next few years. With his trappers spotted throughout the Minnesota wilderness, and with possibly some auxiliaries on the Ontario side of the border, Rhoades' pelt collection business developed magnificently."

September, 1928

- Ernest Thompson Seaton accepts honorary vice-presidency in Quetico-Superior Council. (At this time a battle was raging between the Council and E. W. Backus.)

1929

- American and Canadian Legion endorsed the Quetico-Superior Programme and urged that the area be dedicated to the veterans of both countries as an International Peace Memorial.

- A bad fire year.

1930

- The Shipstead-Nolan Act was passed, stating that "In order to conserve the natural beauty of the area, there be no cutting of timberalong the shorelines of lakes and streams, and that natural water levels be maintained". This decision was referred to the International Joint Commission in 1934 and upheld at that time.

- Moose season closed in Minnesota. Deer on the increase.

1930-31

- Forest Supervisor S. D. Anderson.

Cooking gear at a Quetico Park campsite. Cans and bottles are not permitted in the Park interior. Notice the use of plastic containers.

1931

- One day in 1931 the wife of the Fernberg towerman had to go to Ely for groceries, leaving her husband to look after their 2 month-old baby son. Just after she left, towerman Maki received a call to man the tower. He wasn't stumped a bit, but just bundled up the baby along with the very necessary equipment for babies, placed the baby in a packsack on his back and climbed the tower on an outside ladder with no protective cage.

- Herd of caribou (13 or 14 animals) seen at Red Lake, Minnesota.

- Notorious fur poacher and bush pilot, "Dusty" Rhoades, became so bold as to "bomb" the Minnesota Game and Fish Department Headquarters at Winton with illegally-trapped, skinned beaver carcasses. In Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police set up a stake-out for him at a resort on Lac la Croix. When Rhoades landed with passengers who had not cleared Canadian Customs and Immigration procedure, a "Mountie" posing as a tourist suddenly canoed to the plane followed by an Ontario Provincial Police Constable. Rhoades attempted to rake off with the Canadian officers hanging onto his pontoons. Drawing his service pistol, the Mountie smashed the plexiglass cowling of the cockpit and placed the muzzle of the weapon against the pilot's head, commanding: Put 'er down!" Rhoades did.

1931-32

- Forest Supervisor R. A. Zeller.

1932

- Sigurd Olson is the manager at Border Lakes Outfitting.

- E. W. Backus' empire collapses.

- Game Census for Superior National Forest

Muskrat	2,990	Mink	3,600	Elk	14
Beaver	5,100	Lynx	64	Coyotes	720
Fox	1,170	Moose	2,820	Wolves	460
Fisher	268	Deer	1,100	Weasels	6,350
Otter	244	Bear	1,540		

May 13, 1932

- Big Fred Frederickson, caretaker at Bill Berglund's resort, former state game warden), dropped dead on a portage between Carp and Knife Lakes, carrying a heavy cast-iron cookstove.

1932-33

- Forest Supervisor Leslie Bean.

1933

June, 1933

- 4,000 men working in Civilian Conservation Corps camps (a Roosevelt unemployment relief measure during the Great depression). They will concentrate on forest management, one of the tasks being the eradication of wild gooseberries and currants to save the white pine from blister rust.

July 14, 1933

- Well-known Minnesota State Game Warden, John Linklater, drowns in Basswood Lake.

1934

- President Franklin D. Roosevelt appoints the President's Quetico-Superior Committee under the chairmanship of Sewell Tyng. Members are Ernest Oberholtzer, Fred Winston, and Frank Hubachek. The committee was backed in Canada by Arthur Hawkes (Toronto journalist), Jules Prud'homme (Winnipeg attorney),John Dafoe (editor of the Winnipeg Free Press), H. H. Richards (manager of the Royal Bank of Canada in Fort William), and Laurence J. Burpee (historian).
  Members of the Quetico-Superior Committee made frequent visits to Canada in support of the conservation movement in the Quetico-Superior country. From the early 1920's on, every Minister of Lands and Forests and every Premier of Ontario received visits from these men.

- The International Joint Commission recommends denial of the 1925 application for water power development on the border lakes, stating:
  "The boundary lakes are of matchless scenic beauty and of inestimable value from the recreational and tourist viewpoints, The Commission fully sympathizes with the objects and desires of others who take the position that nothing should mar the beauty of the last great wilderness."

- Saturday Evening Post, 1948 - Summary of the Backus battle:
  It was a memorable battle, still remembered in Minnesota. Backus was rich, and a power in politics. His opponents had neither money nor political strength, but they burned with a righteous fire and they were willing to fight the tough old tycoon with any weapon that lay at hand. They stumped the state,denouncing him and his plan before whomever would listen. They probed into the tax records of his companies. They brought suit against him on behalf of landowners whose timber holdings had been damaged by the rise of water levels on lakes Backus already controlled. They brought cross-sections of dead trees into court, describing them with a fiery eloquence as "those silent sentinels of God, withstanding for 200 years all the ravages of nature - until killed by high waters backed up by Mr. Backus' dams."

November 9, 1934

- E. W. Backus dies of a heart attack at 74.

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 seventh and last of a series of articles on Quetico and the Quetico-Superior 75th Anniversary.

ALGONQUIN IN SPRING

Friday night, May 3, we slept out under the stars and the full moon. In the morning, the ground and our sleeping bags were covered with tiny frost crystals. Exploring the area before driving into Canoe Lake soon warmed us. The ice had gone off these lakes only on Wednesday, so we paddled very carefully in the heavily loaded canoe on the cold, black water. A grouse was beating its wings on a log.

After we set up camp on the shore of Littledoe Lake, the clouds rolled in. Later, while canoeing in a nearby bay, we heard a rustling sound in the woods. A small, odd-colored moose emerged, followed by another, larger one - probably the mother. Her head was the usual color of a moose, but her body was a patchy grey and white from moulting. The youngster didn't mind having us around. The mother, however, was more wary and soon returned to the bush. The little one finished drinking and joined her.

A mink scampering along the shore hesitated now and again to investigate us. The welcoming call of the loons made us feel at home. There were a few tiny wildflowers in bloom. Our evening campfire was serenaded by a chorus of blackbirds who filled a nearby decidious tree.

The air was becoming colder now; we expected it to snow, but it rained instead. Later we heard it was 3° too warm for this time of year.

Next day we paddled into Blue Jay Lake. The water was high enough for us to go from one lake to the next without using the portage. A heron stood at the end of the lake, watching us until we were almost close enough to take a picture, but, of course, flying off just before the shutter was released. We glided beside a pair of ducks which we couldn't identify or even find later in the bird book (male - white body and green head; female - similar to a fish duck or merganzer).

Paddling out was very wet, quiet, and peaceful. There's something special about being in a canoe on a channel emptying into a little lake, with heavy rain splashing off the water, fog in the surrounding hills, a small waterfall tumbling out of the rocks, and no one else within sight or ear-shot.

On Canoe Lake the wind picked up, creating some nasty waves. There weren't many people around, this early in the season. Too soon it was back to warm, dry clothes, traffic, and noise.

Gail Vickars

LAKE SUPERIOR PARK SNOWSHOE EXPEDITION

Unfortunately, my wife Doris fell seriously ill before the Lake Superior Snowshoe Expedition of February this year. In my absence, Jim Raffan took charge and successfully lead the group across the park from north of Agawa Canyon on the railway to the Trans-Canada Highway. Jim did an excellent job and everybody had a good time. (I am also very happy to report that Doris' health has improved considerably. We were able to take a short canoe trip in the lower French and Pickerel Rivers area where she found a new, unrecorded pictograph site.)

If everything goes well, I hope to be back on the trail this winter. Trip details will be announced in the winter issue of Nastawgan. Those who could not be fitted into the last trip will be given special consideration for this up-coming expedition.

Craig Macdonald

October 6 ELORA GORGE BUMP AND GRIND

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book immediately.

The Elora Gorge on the Grand River at low water provides an excellent location for budding whitewater enthousiasts to practice their stuff. This outing will be a training trip for those who have some experience in moving water and are anxious to upgrade their skills. We will ferry and eddy-turn our way down the Gorge, working the many small chutes and eddies, and hopefully missing most of the rocks. Suitable for good novices or intermediates. Limit 6 canoes.

October 7-10 HIKING IN KILLARNEY

Organizers: Diane and Mike Wills 416-293-9067
Book between September 23 and 30.

This is a mid-week outing planned to take advantage of limited use and the early fall colours. The route selected will depend upon the group's wishes with a preference for walking the ridges around O.S.A. Lake. Much of the hiking will be with full packs, and the pace will allow time for photography and individual interests.

October 12-14 ALGONQUIN PARK

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book between October 1 and 6.

On Saturday we will start at Smoke Lake, paddle south and set up camp at Big Porcupine Lake. Sunday, if we feel energetic, we can do a strenuous loop carrying only a light day pack, and return to the same campsite. Alternatively, Sunday can be spent exploring the bays, crooks, and crannies of Big Porcupine and Bonnechere Lakes. Monday we paddle back to our starting point. Suitable for beginners. Limit 4 canoes.

October 12-14 ALGONQUIN PARK LAKE LOOP

Organizer: Herb Pohl 416-637-7632
Book immediately.

Starting at the Portage Store on Canoe Lake, we'll paddle north through Teepee, Littledoe, and Sunbeam Lakes to Big Trout, and return via Otterslide and Burnt Island Lakes to the starting point. This 70 km trip, which includes 7.5 km of portages, traverses several marshy regions. There is an excellent chance to see wildlife and take prize-winning photographs (weather permitting). Participants must be reasonably fit. Limit 4 canoes.

October 19-20 ALGONQUIN PARK

Organizer: Herb Pohl 416-637-7632
Book before October 10.

From the accesspoint on Kingscote Lake on the southern tip of Algonquin Park we'll cross over to Byers Lake. Camp will be made at the first suitable place upstream on the York River. On Sunday we'll follow the latter downstream to finish at Benoir Lake. There will be lots of time to explore the pretty surroundings on this leisurely trip. Suitable for anyone with a decent sleeping bag and the ability to gather firewood. Limit 4 canoes.

October 19-20 ALGONQUIN PARK

Organizer: Karl Schimek 416-439-6788 (bus.)
Book before October 10.

A moderately strenuous trip starting at Smoke Lake and finishing at Rock Lake. Since the organizer is considering some exploratory side trips, we will not necessarily be taking the shortest route. Limit 4 canoes.

October 20 MOON RIVER

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between September 29 and October 13.

Join us for a leisurely day of paddling through the fall Muskoka countryside as we travel the Moon River from Bala down to Highway 69. The river, for most of this distance, runs placidly along, but there are also a few rapids to add a little excitement. Suitable for novices. Limit 6 canoes.

November 3 UPPER GIBSON RIVER

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between October 13 and 27.

This day trip will take us to the seldom-visited headwaters of the Gibson River between Ninemile and Gibson Lakes. This outing should provide us with some interesting paddling as we follow the river through a maze of marshy, creek-like sections, and long, narrow lakes. Since this trip covers some 25 km, participants should be capable of maintaining a steady pace over a long day. Limit 6 canoes.

November 10 RED PINE LAKE LOOP

Organizer: Rob Butler 416-487-2282
Book between November 1 and 5.

From Red Pine Lake in the Kennisis/Haliburton area we will paddle and portage a few lakes and complete a loop and maybe find a cranberry bog. This is a flatwater trip for canoeists in reasonably good shape. Limit 4 canoes.

November 10 HIKING IN THE HOCKLEY VALLEY

Organizer: Marcia Farquhar 416-884-0208
Book before November 7.

We'll go to a lovely spot, around an hour's drive from Toronto, and take a leisurely five mile hike through woods, over creeks, and across meadows. A good place to bring your dog and binoculars.

November 17 HIKING ON THE FIVE WINDS TRAILS

Organizer: Paul Barsevskis 416-239-2830
Book after November 1.

A day hike on the Five Winds ski trails in the Gibson River area near Highway 69. This area consists of attractive Canadian Shield country which should be ideal for a late fall hike.

December 7-8 HIKING IN ALGONQUIN PARK

Organizer: Tony Bird 416-466-0172
Book before December 3.

Algonquin Park at this time of year will probably have a thin covering of snow. We should therefore be able to hike through a winter landscape without the hard work of breaking trail trough deep snow. This will be an overnight hike in the vicinity of the Western Uplands Trail.

December 28-31 ALGONQUIN PARK

Organizer: David Berthelet 819-771-4170
Book between December 9 and 13.

Heated ridgepole tenting will ensure that camp conditions will be warm, dry, and comfortable. The first day will be devoted to snowshoeing with the toboggans to the campsite, which would be located off HWY 60 not too far from the Sunday Lake Ski Loop. Day two and three, depending on conditions, would be spent exploring the surrounding trails and woods. The final day would be reserved for breaking camp and making our way back home. Suitable for 3 to 6 trippers.

products and services

CANOE PARKING SPACE WANTED: My 17 ft. canoe is in urgent need of a good parking space such as in a garage, shed, etc. If you can offer any help, please call to discuss terms: Howard Sayles, 105 Isabella Str., Apt. 302, Toronto, Ont., M4Y 1N9; phone 416-921-5321 (res.) or 416-363-1865 (bus.).

MASTER CANOE BUILDER: Nick Nickel's new book MASTER CANOE BUILDER, about canoe builder Walter Walker and the glorious history of wooden canoe building in the Kawarthas, is avilable by ordering directly from the author. The cost is $10 postage paid. Send to: Nick Nickels, Canoe Canada, Lakefield, Ontario, KOL 2HO.

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE:

one	25 ' canvas covered Chestnut canoe (needs repair)
three	Cannondale Wabash tents (2 person); $285 each
two	Fibrelastic Phoenix Slippers; $450 each
one	Fiberglass C-1 canoe, high volume; $150

Contact Richard Hagg, Lakefield College School, Lakefield, Ontario, KOL 2HO; phone 705-652-3324 (bus.) or 705-652-8626 (res.).

ODAWBAN WINTER TRAVEL EQUIPMENT: Explore Canada's wilderness using proven methods for comfortable winter travel.

fully equipped tent stove units	$230
trail toboggans	$100
trail sleds	$130
canoe sleds	$ 75
canvas toboggan tanks	$ 75

Instruction included. Contact Craig Macdonald, Frost Centre, Dorset, Ontario, POA 1EO; phone 705-766-2885.

DISCOUNTS ON CAMPING SUPPLIES: WCA members who present a membership card will receive a ten per cent discount on many nonsale items at:

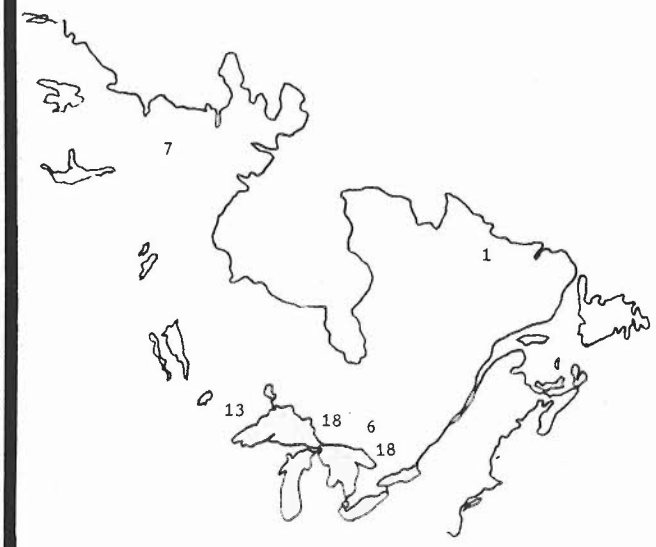
A.B.C. Sports, 552 Yonge St., Toronto,
Rockwood Outfitters, 699 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph,
The Sportsman's Shop, 2476 Yonge St., Toronto.

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

CLIPPER CANOES: Clipper canoes from Western Canoeing Inc. are now available to Ontario canoeists. There are 22 models to choose from including solo, touring, racing, and whitewater models. A variety of fibreglass and kevlar lay-ups with wood or aluminum trim make for an excellent selection.

For more information, as well as a copy of Canoe Magazine's 'water test' on the 17½ ft Tripper model, write: Canoeing Canadian Waters, Box 608, 5651 Gordon St., Osgoode, Ontario KOA 2WO. Or phone Jim or Pam Baldaro at 613-826-3094.

where it is



The approximate location of some of the places mentioned in this issue are shown by page number:

1	Notakwanon River
6	Temagami area
7	Thelon River
13	Quetico Park
18	Lake Superior Park
18	Algonquin Park

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WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I enclose a cheque for $10 ___ student under 18
$20 ___ adult
$30 ___ family
for membership in the *Wilderness Canoe Association*.

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

NAME_____ ADDRESS_____

_____

_____phone_____

Please check one of the following: [ ] new 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.