

hood river

Article and Photographs: John Schultz

Our Twin Otter banked under a dusky sea of overcast, skimmed a string of pencil-thin tarns, and settled on a tiny, unnamed lake, 1595 feet above the sea, 500 km north of Yellowknife and 30 km northwest of Takiyuak Lake. Our plan was to take a short, untried route into the northwest arm of Takiyuak, paddle east along the north shore, portage a height of land, and descend the Hood River to Arctic Sound. The trip was unambitious from a time/distance standpoint -- 300 km in 24 days, from 8 July to 11 August 1983. The pace was fine with me. I fish and look around a lot.

The six of us had been glued to the ports for three hours watching the barrens crawl by, trying to imagine John Franklin and his desperate crew sloggng across this area in the fall of 1821. On orders to explore the arctic coast east of Coppermine, he was overtaken by winter and made a forced march from Arctic Sound to Fort Enterprise, a rude winter camp below the trees 400 km southwest. Most of the party died of starvation and exposure. One of his officers, Robert Hood, after whom he'd named the river they followed for 100 km or so from the coast, was murdered.

We planned at least two layovers -- one at Wilberforce Falls, a 50 m cascade 60 km or so from the mouth of the river, and the other at the last rapid 10 km above the Sound. One of our own goals was to hunt up, using a metal detector, remnants of equipment and "stores" Franklin had left en cache at these locations. Our attempt was a bit presumptuous since at least two earlier efforts to locate evidence of Franklin's passing had been unsuccessful.

The prime organizer of the trip, John Lentz, had gone to great pains to assure our prospecting had the approval of the Territories government. He had discussed government policy on recovery of artifacts with officials from the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife.

John, a seasoned barrens traveller with a bent for the history of arctic exploration, had a strong interest in the Franklin stuff. Although zeal for the historical aspect of the trip varied among the rest of us, we were grateful. The interest of the National Geographic Society and the donations from a number of equipment companies that John had ginned up (notably the Mad River Canoe Company which donated and transported the canoes -- three 16-foot Explorers -- to Yellowknife, and the Woods Company, which donated tents), made the trip possible. John's account of our trip, with a slant on the history of Franklin's visit and our little treasure hunt, together with a sample of Todd's photographs of the river and its wildlife, appeared in the January 1986 issue of the National Geographic Magazine.

While I found the Franklin angle and the idea of taking part in an effort to locate evidence of the episode fascinating, what hooked me was the opportunity for an extended paddle in the barrens, a chance to fall under its spell, and to wrestle some of its fabled trout.

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As the bright evening sky soaked up the plane, we sorted gear and set up on a hummocky shelf next to the lake. A hasty reconnaissance of the nearby outlet stream was not promising. It was a twisted trickle that wouldn't float a milk jug. Charlie Bond's thermometer showed a water temperature of 7°C.

We slipped single file through a chain of dog-legged ponds a few metres wide in an overpowering stillness. The close, steep shore, low cloud cover, marble-smooth surface, and the scarcely audible echoes of our paddles combined to give the feeling of skimming through a high-walled cathedral. One of those frozen blocks of time, not more than 20 or 30 minutes, in fact, in which a place and a canoe create magic.

Bob and I emerged from our trance simultaneously when the surface began to dimple here and there with rising trout. We are excited by such things. Let's face it, flailing the turgid (and crowded) Potomac for cagey ounce and a half

bluegills doesn't quite come up to spinning for trout 40 to 50 centimetres long in pristine wilderness. Needless to say we dropped behind the others to sample the action. It was slow. One two-kilogram lake trout.

The shore line alternated between skewed slabs of fissured granite and low banks riddled with ground squirrel holes. Ten to 15 km of flatwater ended with a bang. It narrowed against a wall and barreled through four channels, bounding down a jumble of broken rocks for a kilometre before rattling out onto a fan of gravel at the head of a circular pool. A couple of acres of snow-covered ice crowned its head. The pool itself formed the toe of a narrow lake that swung south. Tiers of rebounding granite ridges marched off to the east. To boost our spirits further, caribou, presumably a few battalions of the Bathurst herd, had carved a very handy portage on the right.

Our 21-year-old photographer, Todd Buchanan, was into gourmet meals and thoroughbreds; he couldn't figure out why bugs and rocks are such a big deal to some folks. The occasional scourge of winged beasties put a touch of panic in his eye now and then, but, on balance, he showed a reasonably stiff upper lip. Black flies aside, he had his work cut out: exposing 175 36-exposure rolls of film in 24 days. I here attest to his accomplishment of this heroic feat.

Day 3 began with granola, dry milk, Kool Aid, and cloudless 16°C sunshine. Our course through a dozen kilometres of flatwater was quiet but for the occasional flutelike tinkling of crystalline ice undulating in our wake.

On one of a number of swift drops that knit together a string of lakes, Bob and I "pitoned" the bow into the knobby top of a slightly submerged hunk of granite at about seven knots. The thing shuddered our rig to an instant, dead stop, draped Bob over the foredeck, but left the whole works upright. ABS is wonderful stuff; my thumb fit into the impact socket halfway to the joint.

Caribou. Ten thousand was our consensus estimate. While tracking down a steep rock garden a kilometre from Takiyuak, John began to gesture frantically. Above and behind him, half a kilometre on the left, several hundred of the beasts stood like a painting on a rise, apparently seeking relief from the heat and flies in a SE breeze. Beaching the canoes, we kept below a high bank and

approached to within 100 m of the leading edge of the frozen horde. The tangle of huge antlers that swept over the hill was the first bonified forest we'd seen in a week.

I recall much strategizing about how to get Todd in position to burn a few dozen rolls of that film. Finally, Bob, Joe, and Charlie swung left through a wide rocky bog and over a little rise in hopes of sending the herd, still motionless and partly hidden, our way. Since the herd had chosen ground near the terminus of a narrow peninsula, the scheme worked like a charm. When they saw our stalkers, the mob stirred. Soon a tide of animals was in motion, rolling toward us over the hill. Joe, an old cow herder, materialized in their midst, clambered up on a waist-high rock and began waving his blue windbreaker amid a swirling sea of antlers. It was a glorious sight!

A mere company of the Bathurst army, the herd was nonetheless a rousing spectacle at close quarters. They showed no sign of alarm as we drifted among them, separating like a torn garment as we moved, sprinting a few metres and then slowing to a walk.

We settled on a tiny island a kilometre off shore. Over spaghetti and cobbler we watched the herd graze the hillside opposite our site. Moments after a few cows tentatively approached the shore, the whole herd was streaming across the mouth of the river we had descended earlier. Todd, anxious to photograph the swimming throng, jumped into the bow of our canoe. Again we were among them as they churned across the tiny delta, rolling their eyes under huge racks, throwing a mist over the sinking sun as they shook on the far shore. In minutes the entire herd melted into the tundra. The only sign of their passing was a cornfield-sized carpet of hair drifting on the lake.

The following day, from a rock outcrop that stood 300 m above the lake's surface five kilometres southeast of camp, we surveyed our course to the height-of-land portage. The lake was an icescape lacerated with dark, open leads that meandered, promisingly, to the northeast. A shallow notch in the horizon marked the Hood's headwater lake. Up in the sky, a golden eagle swung through shafts of sunlight that danced through the cumulus formations above our lunch site on the pinnacle. A scourge of mosquitoes, black flies, and heat plagued our return, sapping our enjoyment of the wildflowers, birds (golden American plover, savannah sparrows, and a low flying gyrfalcon), and a huge bull caribou.





The morning's paddle was a dream: the sky cloudless, the lake a flawless mirror, the temperature 17°C and rising. Families of loons screamed at one another, their cries echoing across huge rafts of rotting ice. A bit of wind and a few hours grating and levering the boats through heavy shoreline ice were minor obstacles to attaining camp 5.

The carry, a tortuous five-kilometre course of soggy slopes, rock-hiding tussocks, and heaps of loose granite, was a half-day proposition. Our gear consisted of 13 duluth packs, an Eddie Bauer canoe bag, wood bag (we cooked with wood throughout, except for a small gas stove for heating coffee water in bad weather), Rec Pack, and camera pack.

On the fifth and final trip, three musk-ox appeared on a small ridge 50 m ahead of Bob and Joe. Advancing slowly, Bob wagged the canoe paddles he carried like huge rabbit ears. The beasts made a dignified, but unnervingly reluctant, retreat.

The following day, 35 km or so further on, we picked up our first current, ran two short grade 2's and set up near the tip of a thundering 15 m falls. As we snarfed down shrimp creole and fresh fillet and toasted the close of another fine day, Bob allowed as how "this sure beats dressing for dinner."

Next day a 400 m stretch of heavy water 1600 m below camp gave us a few of those long seconds that come with bottom contact in standing waves. A narrow channel of deep water spit us out unscathed.

At the head of a pool, about four kilometres and a short portage or two downstream, I found myself engaged at the surface with a four or five kilogram trout. The rod had just taken on the appearance of a horseshoe when the fish coughed up the big spoon. As it arrowed toward my right eye (I recall seeing the lettering stamped on its underside), my left arm flew up, burying one tine of the number 2 treble hook just below the elbow. It gave us an opportunity to sample Bob's carefully stocked first aid kit. Driving the point through, cutting the barb, and backing the hook out proved a bloody, but hardly traumatic affair.

For the next two days we floated and lined by the now familiar grey/green expanses of tundra, low willow thickets, and glacial drift plains.

The lake narrowed progressively and fell through a chute 30 m wide like water from an unstoppered tub. Funneling over a two-metre ledge, it turned snow-white, and



boiled downhill for a kilometre through a series of shallow turns. It was here that Bob and I precipitated an ugly suicide. Stepping out on a rock at the head of the drop we startled a flightless merganser that promptly hurtled itself from its stunning ledge into the maelstrom. What a way to go!

Once again, our gregarious friends, the caribou, had worn a first-class highway on the right. An eagle parried the breeze anxiously 200 m overhead. We would soon discover why. Two thirds of the way down and three or four stories above the turbulence, John came across a pair of fledgelings, nearly full-grown, on a tiny ledge cantilevered over the water. The young, a mere 1.5 m below the lip of the chasm, were visible through a cleft in the wall. The nest was littered with the bones of ground squirrels and the partially consumed carcass of a snowshoe hare. Peering into the breach for a close-up look, we were assaulted by the stench of carrion, blasted through the crack by the updraft from the river.

The weather, until now overcast and blustery, cleared. The wind dropped to a comfortable bug chaser. We saw musk-ox often. Occasionally a solitary bull would explode from a bankside swale and lunge away. The river wandered among intersecting eskers, fragmenting into braided streams until, after a few kilometres, it gathered for another leap toward the sea. This one bit off 50 m of elevation in two kilometres, stepping over a succession of three- and four-metre drops to a spot of calm glinting in the distance. Home for the night was a hummocky meadow (are there any other kind?), a few metres from the base of the torrent. Mellow with fatigue, we contemplated its final fit, a ragged ten-metre tumble, over stroganoff and cheesecake.

Next morning, 6:45 a.m.: 9°C and overcast. Having gotten up some circulation with the portage, and after completing a second one-kilometre hillside carry (left) around a pair of unrunnable drops five kilometres or so downstream, we'd scarcely gotten in the boats when the river whitened up and swirled for half a kilometre through a tight, rock-ribbed S-turn. The nastiness ended with a 25 m fall over an escarpment that bordered a broad sandy valley. A jumble of car-sized pieces of granite across the brink of the falls fragmented the flow, making it more spectacular. From this vantage point the river was tame as a kitten for several kilometres downstream. Mid-carry, a 1.5 km affair along the left bank, I spooked a hoary redpoll from her nest at the top of a thigh-high willow. The diameter of a soft drink can, the nest contained three tiny eggs and a naked hatchling the size of a thumbnail. For a look at the tundra's smaller life forms and less obvious ecosystems, there's no substitute for an unforced portage or a leisurely day hike. It adds flavor of discovery and welcome counterpoint to the often hurried scanning of vistas that goes on from a canoe.

Braided streams again, and sloping tundra, dotted here and there with small herds of musk-ox. A few kilometres further on, the Wright river, 30 m wide, raced in from the south.

Seagulls turned our thoughts to Wilberforce Falls, only three days downriver, and the Sound, a day's travel beyond. For those who measure, and value, rivers only by the technical difficulty with which they can be negotiated in a loaded canoe, the trip's appeal would probably wane a bit here. For others, like me, it was a joyride — swift and clear. But still not without its ticklish moments.



After three portages and a day's paddle in uncomfortable heat, food and a cool, bug-free night's sleep moved to the top of the agenda. Our double-lined (for opacity) Woods dome tents were just the ticket (except for the occasional aggravating loss of a pole seating grommet).

By 4:30 p.m. the following day, in a crisp, 5°C overcast, we'd covered 45 km of nearly continuous, but comfortably runnable, rapids. The river perked along over a gravel bed at five to six knots. An occasional hairpin turn piled up water not fit for an open boat, but the inside bends offered portage-saving sneak routes. Steep slopes, mountainous eskers, and willow-choked dribbles of snow-melt zipped by. Flood-cached windrows of bone-dry willow became a reliable source of cooking fuel. At lunch, John disinterred an enormous musk-ox skull from a muddy wash. "George" soon became our mascot, his huge bony eye sockets fixed on Charlie's back from amidships.

Next day we peeled off 50 km with but one carry, a 300 m rockwalk to the left of a boulder-choked, two-metre drop, four to five kilometres above the confluence of the Booth River. As the Hood started its final descent to the coast, it began to move like a horse heading for the barn. Here we began to speculate about which "broad valley to the south" Franklin and Co. had taken 162 summers before.

Musk-ox were still abundant, hustling up embankments, their long, silky skirts rippling like grain in a wind. But the fish were thinning out and getting slinky.

On day 13 the river swung north and flew through a maze of channels over a one-kilometre-wide belt of gravel west of the Wilberforce hills. The joyride continued but not without occasional scouting and some earnest conversation. Thirty kilometres or so below the morning's camp came the Falls. The river straightened momentarily and then dropped 20 m between walls of rusty quartz into a huge shadowed caldron. A distance of 150 m below the base of the first falls, the river swung sharply left and plunged 30 m into a misty gorge. A small overflow channel parallels the river on the left for a kilometre or so above the falls and culminates in three miniature cascades, the last of which reenters the main flow at right angles to the second major drop. A high peninsula of deeply fissured quartzite separates the two. After a lingering lunch at the brink of the upper falls we used the better part of the afternoon and nearly all our energy portaging (left) to the base of the canyon, some five kilometres downstream.

In high spirits and ideal weather we remained here 3½ days, our tents a few metres from the river on a brushy rise where we believed Franklin's party camped (under considerably different circumstances!). It was here he'd lightened his gear for the overland trek and had his men build canoes from the freighter craft they'd used to explore the coast. Given the lack of specificity about the site of the cache, the search struck me as a needle in a

haystack proposition. Nonetheless, an alternating party of two roamed nearby dunes for three days with detector and shovel. To no avail.

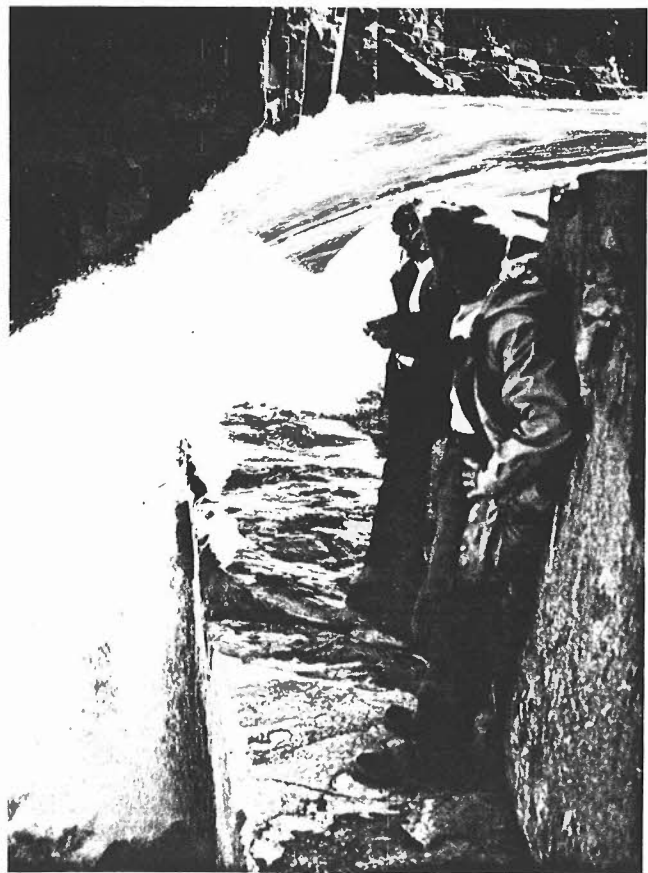
We spent much leisure time poking around the canyon near the falls, gawking at leaning pillars of rock, studying lichens and wildflowers. Eventually, the explorer's curiosity gave way to an urge to rejoin the river. The subtle push of fall was evident in the lowering sun and the sharpness of the morning air.

The group meshed pretty well. With practice, making and breaking camp had become a co-ordinated drill. Solitary forays balanced out the large doses of togetherness. But the biggest plus of a group v. solo trip, as I see it, is the benefit of seeing the country through several sets of eyes. We were a goodly mix: Charlie, meticulous and ready to please; Joe, with the uninhibited grace of a Zorba, willing to laugh or be serious; Bob, wisecracking and wonderstruck by turns; Todd, co-operative, career-minded, still a little baffled by the whole idea; and John, a pretty fair leader -- easy in the role, responsive to suggestion, and good-humored.

Later in the day, Charlie, in a last sweep of our tent site, picked up a strong detector signal in a shallow depression three to four metres above the waterline. A bit of discrete probing and he and Todd exhumed three rusted, hand-forged axe heads, each bearing the initial N B. They were almost certainly articles from the Franklin cache! Todd lit up like a birthday boy, knowing prospects of having his pictures published had risen sharply. Amid general jubilation, after carefully reburying our find, we huddled under Joe's canoe (propped up to fend off a raw north wind) and babbled through dinner and a round of rum, at what it all meant. Some of us concluded, I think, that it meant little. It was exciting nonetheless and it was, after all, the interest of others in some tangible hint of Franklin's passage that had made the trip possible.

After a cold, all-night rain, we fueled up the paddling machines and loaded the gear, uplifted by our small prospecting success, despite the weather.

Rolling once more, and glad of it, we threaded a rock garden or two, and skirted a bit of heavy water as the Wilberforce Hills faded to the southeast. The river was a little pushy, having risen eight or ten centimetres during the night. An hour and a half and 12 km after putting in, we came upon a six metres falls with an easy 100 m carry on the right. Here the river breaks through a ledge of red quartzite in three roughly equal sluices. The broad pool at the foot ends in an island of exposed gravel. Excellent, wind-protected cooking and tent sites presented themselves at the top of the falls. A rugged outcrop several kilometres to the west promised an intriguing day hike. Only 35 km and six days from our rendezvous with the plane, we had the flexibility to be opportunists, confirming the wisdom of our decision to build in several layover days.





Toward evening, subdued by a bit of hummock hopping, we faced an ordeal: another hoary packet of John's veggies. It was time to try for char. A slinky grey female of about six kilos, fully one metre long, snatched my little rapala as I lifted it from the pool below the falls. The fish was loaded with eggs, one of Joe's favorite snacks, and fed the group nicely.

The zipper hour followed quickly upon the dinner hour. Let's hear it for the humble, ingenuous, zipper!: sealing out weather and beasties (real or imagined) with an effortless tug. I can't for the life of me understand why a salute to its inventor is not a universal bedtime ritual among latter-day campers. The finale of this comforting little symphony is the slow movement of the oversize nylon zipper seaming up a down bag.

The following day we ferried to the far shore for an extended day hike among willowed draws and lemming-tunnelled meadows to the west. A flock of willow ptarmigan jumped, the eye-catching black and white male sailing to one side to decoy would-be predators from the young.

From a point 150 metres above the river and five kilometres west of camp, the nearby James river twisted its way down to the Hood from the northwest. The Hood itself broadened and snaked through a sandy lowland to Arctic Sound. East, perhaps 60 km beyond the orange decimal points of our tents, we made out the irregular shorelines of Banks Peninsula and the Barry Islands of Bathurst Inlet. Wilberforce Canyon, scarcely 16 km southeast, was a black seam in a sharp, green slope to the Sound.

Next day, in wool-cap-and-cotton-glove-weather, we reached our final camp by 1:00 p.m. Discolored and seemingly sedated by the James, the Hood rolled quietly along at three or four knots. The day brightened as we neared the last short drop, a little two metres sloop over a sandstone ledge 10 km above the Sound.

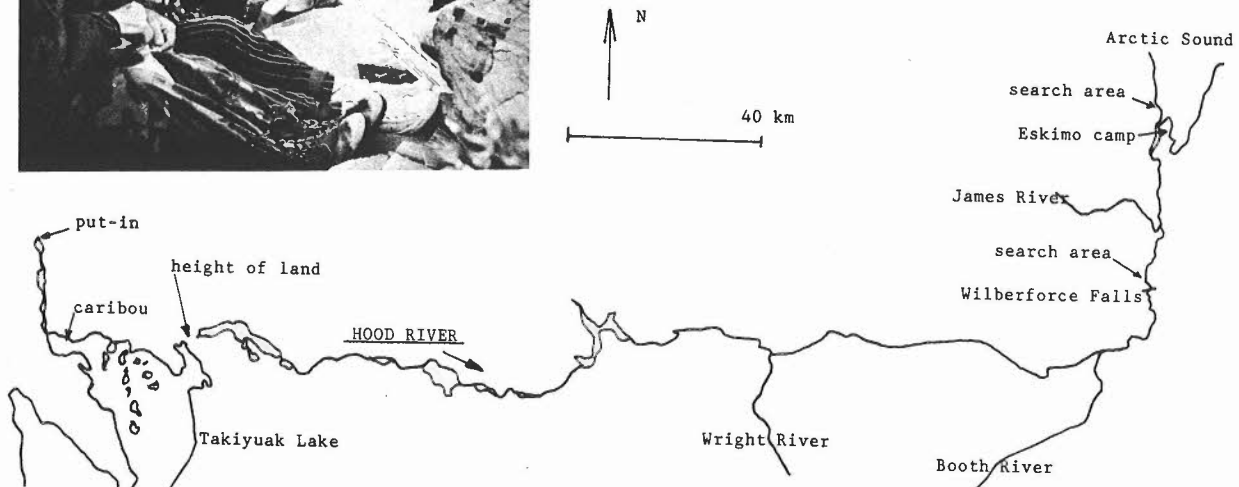
We set our hardy domes on pockets of sand between the rumpled blankets of rock that bordered the river and a

tangle of willows. The last of the jerky was passed around as we pondered the possible location of the "loftiest sand hill," Franklin's reference to the site of a tin box containing a trip log and plans for his march to Fort Enterprise. He had buried the material beneath a flag pole visible to a passing ship. Our topos and satellite photos pinpointed a single, highly probable site. Our optimism faded quickly as we broke over the 12 m embankment to discover a meringue of sand ridges and grassy knolls distinguished only by their uniformity of height. I foresaw three days of fruitless wandering among the dunes. It was a good guess.

It's a sure sign things are winding down when wives, kids, and airplanes enter the conversation as they did that evening. Although the following day we hatched and followed up a theory or two on the whereabouts of Franklin's box, we'd just about rationalized the search away: the pole had probably been blasted by wind or removed by Inuit hunters, perhaps within a year or two after its placement, the box and its contents disintegrated. Three of us made a day hike to a point six to seven kilometres to the east, on Baille Bay — marked "Eskimo Camp" on the map. A wet and uneven trek it was, but a rewarding one. A white wolf trotted toward us down an open draw. At 80 m or so he picked up our silhouettes and hastily retraced his route. A lazing bull musk-ox eyed our descent to the Eskimo camp from a depression in an outcrop above the Bay. Convinced of our good will, he rolled on his back kicking and squirming like a flea-ridden pup, and returned to his nap. Further along, below a wind-sheltered promontory, Joe and I came across a small boneyard where Inuit hunters evidently butchered their caribou.

The camp itself was, as they say, not a pretty sight. It consisted of several acres of debris. It's sobering commentary on our perspective as aliens from a throw-away culture that a pinch of squalor on a sea of tundra can jar the senses more than a mountain of garbage in downtown Toronto. But it's so. The scattered rubble included useable tools: saws, planes, files, hammers, etc., outboard props and pins, two roofless plywood shacks, torn dolls, frying pans, bed springs, traps, more bones, a set of current game regulations, fishing nets, and even a weathered, but serviceable boat.

Our final full day, bright as a dollar, was given over to packing for the return to Yellowknife. Day 24 was a ringer for 23. The plane was early — 8:45 a.m.; the return flight uneventful. Our Hood River excursion was over.





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

too close for comfort

(The second in a series of articles on safety issues.)

Marcia Farquhar, Tony Bird, Bill Ness

Have you ever found yourself shaky from a spill in cold water and wondered if you should go on? This was one of the many topics covered in a safety workshop presented during the February 1986 Annual General Meeting of the WCA in Toronto. Organized by the Outings Committee, the workshop divided participants into small discussion groups. Trip descriptions, based on actual club experiences, were distributed in order to highlight a number of safety issues. The following summary of a trip on the "Scotawishi River" raised many points.

"It was early May, with the temperature around 10°C, when our group of twelve canoes set out on the Scotawishi River, for an intermediate whitewater trip. My partner and I were looking forward to the six-hour run down the river, although Josh admitted to feeling quite tired from a week of long-distance driving.

"Within then minutes of beginning the trip, we arrived at a ledge. Although we tried to follow the path of the previous canoe through the channel, we brushed a submerged rock causing the canoe to hit the rollers at an angle. My attempts at bracing didn't seem to help, and I watched as the canoe slowly came down on top of me. After somersaulting, I was thrown clear of the rollers. Josh

wasn't as lucky. He was trapped under the canoe and finally emerged short of breath. Fortunately, he was close to shore and was able to get out of the water without much difficulty. I was swept further downstream and was picked up by the rescue canoe three to four minutes later.

"As soon as the canoe and paddles were fished out of the water, the group continued. The trip had started later than anticipated and the spill had slowed everyone down even more. Josh and I were cold but didn't feel any need to stop; after all, the trip had just begun.

"It was just a ten-minute paddle to a short portage and then we were faced with the next set of rapids. Still feeling a bit shaky and chilled from the dump, I was apprehensive about attempting this more difficult rapid. In fact, I considered asking someone else to make the run with Josh. But all the paddlers were successfully manoeuvring through the chute and around the boulders, so I decided not to back down. When Josh finished photographing the others, he took a quick look at the water, suggested a strategy, and we were off. Since Josh had run this rapid many times before, and we had had a successful run last year, we didn't spend a lot of time scouting or discussing what to do.

"As we went over the first drop and manoeuvred to avoid the souce hole, Josh started yelling to draw harder. HARDER! HARDER!! And once again the cold waves closed in around me. Suddenly my body was thrust underwater against a boulder. My arms were stretched overhead clutching my paddle which seemed to be jammed in a crevice. The weight of the rushing water made it impossible for me to reach the surface for a breath of air. After moments that seemed like ages, my body started to move through the undercut section of the rock, feet first, and I was free.

"Below the rapids, the welcome rescue canoe was there to tow me to shore. I did not have the energy to climb in. Even crawling onto shore was an effort. The organizer of the group suggested that we should consider switching partners before we arrived at the next set of rapids. He then went off to assist in recovering the canoe.

"As soon as the canoe was rescued, the group again set off, more delayed than ever. Josh asked how I was feeling. I finally admitted that I could not stop shaking and didn't really want to face any more rapids that day. As it was still possible to turn back and portage along a dirt road to the put-in point, we decided not to continue. Our group organizer was nowhere in sight for us to advise him of our plans, but we let some of the other canoeists know we were leaving.

"Disappointed, we stopped on shore to warm up and have something to eat. The food and dry clothing restored our spirits and energy, and we started the trip home."

In discussing this and other incidents, the groups focused on the responsibilities of both the trip organizer and the participants. The following points were raised:

1. Many canoeists are not fully aware of the consequences of immersion in cold water. Watch for signs of hypothermia, shock, fatigue, and lack of confidence. It may be necessary to rest, warm up, eat. Remember, victims of exposure to cold water are far more likely to dump

again.

2. There is a tendency for individuals to try ever more challenging rapids. One must differentiate between skill development and unnecessary risk. The consequences should be considered in terms of personal safety, the safety of others, and the ability of the group to proceed. A submerged canoe can mean hours of lost time and possibly an aborted trip.

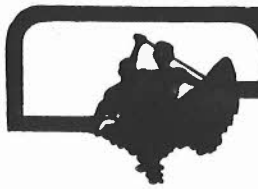
3. Upon arriving at a difficult rapid, a trip organizer should point out the hazards to less experienced paddlers. In some instances, the organizer may not want to run a rapid, rather than encourage participants to attempt a run for which they are unprepared. Similarly, if some paddlers appear over-confident, the organizer may want to insist on more scouting or to strongly recommend the portage trail.

4. Trip organizers should explain the plan and procedures of a trip to participants before starting out. On group trips, especially in whitewater, it is important to stay together. No canoe should be left running rapids alone in case of a mishap. It is often helpful to designate a particular canoe to go "last" to ensure that no one is left behind. Where there are a large number of paddlers (say, more than ten), subdividing into smaller groups, each with a lead canoe, is advised. The lead canoe should request that all canoes in the sub-group stay together. On lengthy rapids, where canoes can easily become separated, a buddy system can be used with two canoes keeping a close watch on one another.

5. There should be a match between individual experience and the type of trip being scheduled. It is the responsibility of both the organizer and potential participants to discuss the demands of an outing before any commitments are made.

6. Organizers will be reluctant to accept on trips, club members who repeatedly: 1) sign up for trips for which they are not prepared, 2) do not bring or use appropriate equipment (such as, life jackets), 3) are not amenable to suggestions from the trip organizer, 4) put a group at risk unnecessarily.

It is hoped that these suggestions can help make your canoeing both fun and safe.



This photograph, made by a lady of questionable morals with a very long lens, is used with the consent of its subject -- one of the best-humored WCA'ers around -- who said: "Fame at any price!" He thus becomes the first published WCA Paddlemate, a tradition we hope will be very shortlived.

"Okay, but keep it clean, Dave," warned our esteemed editor when I told him I wanted to do a follow-up piece to a previous Arctic Journal entry about "the call of Nature."

"Nothing could be cleaner," I assured him.

Bathing in the Barrens is fraught with problems. I've known canoeists who travelled for weeks through foul weather, against endless headwinds, down tumultuous rapids, across solidly frozen lakes, over back-breaking portages -- a most resourceful lot of folk -- but who never solved the problem of how to bathe. Nor worried about it! The fact that their arrival back in civilization was not marked with hugs and kisses from crowding welcomers may have been their first cause for remorse.

There's the other extreme too. It's been said (though not necessarily by him) that Eric Morse went for a morning dip at the start of every day of paddling, whatever the weather, the latitude, or water temperature. And I've watched a German paddling partner dive into a small bay of open water in an otherwise ice-covered lake.

We have all seen those gizmos in the outdoor catalogues that are designed to be hung from a tree -- a portable shower of sorts. A black garbage bag with a few holes punched in the bottom is not a bad makeshift substitute. The problem in the Barrens is the tree.

Then there are THE BUGS. Even the most dedicated of bathers must question the wisdom of keeping clean as the hordes of mossies descend upon his/her freshly perfumed body's bareness.

Ahhh, the pleasures of the bath, of languishing in warmth up to the neck, with soft music in the background, be it the Boston Pops or a barren lands ornithological chorus. Muscles and mind relax in tandem. No more than a dream for the arctic canoeist, you say. But I saw it once, I swear. It was day-off in the middle of a summer-long expedition. Our protagonist conceived his scheme over a leisurely coffee beside the morning fire. An up-turned canoe -- one with a dark grey interior, the better to absorb the sun's heat -- was partially filled with water. In a few hours the water temperature rose to an acceptable level. Then the stern of the canoe was raised, thus collecting a handsome depth of water in the bow, between bow seat and stern. Despite his appeals, we all gathered to observe the ritual. Unabashed, in stepped our hero, to recline peacefully in his field-bath, most ingeniously construed.

But none can match the enterprise of a man who hollowed out his custom-contoured tub in the sands beside Ennadai Lake. First he poured in gallons of the lake, till finally the concept held water. Then a big pot of boiling water raised the temperature to his comfort threshold, and in he plunged. Splashing about gleefully, as his bath slowly drained, he did indeed get clean.

Cleanliness, they say, is next to Godliness. But for most of us, the proximity to Nature which canoeing on the Barrens offers, is close enough.

Now, there was no dirt in any of that, was there?

news briefs

WCA FALL MEETING Mark down the dates of 26 to 28 September 1986. Camp with us at the Minden Wild Water Preserve on the Gull River. On Saturday, participants will be able to choose from day-long trips on nearby rivers, or indoor and outdoor activities on-site. Plans include seminars on photography, safety and rescue, along with field work. Waterproofing techniques will also be discussed. For those who would like to practice their paddling skills, there will be opportunity to run the challenging rapids on the Gull River or to try a flatwater slalom course. A trip to a nearby canoe museum may also be arranged. Saturday night we'll return to the clubhouse for a home-cooked dinner, films, and tall stories of summer adventures. Sunday will be devoted to white- and flatwater trips and to hikes. Details will be sent to all members in August. For information or to volunteer to help, contact Marcia Farquhar in Richmond Hill at 416-884-0208.

WCA BOOTH AT THE SPORTSMEN'S SHOW 1986 Many thanks to all the members who volunteered their time to staff the booth, some of whom served on several shifts. Special thanks, as usual, are due to Claire and Richard Smerdon who designed, printed, and constructed the First Aid display and also, somehow, transformed a great jumble of pipes and connectors into a framework to which all the other booth paraphernalia could be attached to or hung from. Sales of newsletters matched the outlay of expenses of operating the booth, but more important than financial considerations was the interest generated in our organization amongst the general public and the opportunity for the volunteers to work together and contribute to an important WCA function. Howard Sagermann has volunteered to organize the booth in 1987. Any suggestions for a theme for next year's show would be welcome. Contact Howard in Toronto at 416-282-9570.

Gerry Lannan



CREDIT RIVER PUBLICITY DAY On 4 May 1986 a group of eight canoes set out on a quiet, three-hour paddle down the Credit River from Glen Williams to Eldorado Park. The purpose of this short but important trip was to provide physical evidence, in the form of photography and publicity, of the recreational use and navigability of the Credit River around the Julian Reed property in Norval, that can be used as evidence in the future court case concerning "canoeists and private property." This day of silent, non-confrontational protest, organized by the Environmental Concerns Committee of Canoe Ontario for the executive of the Ontario Recreational Canoeing Association, was most successful. A number of informative articles in the local, Toronto, and national press were published, several interviews were given on radio and TV, and a large collection of photographs was assembled for later use.

Toni Harting

STURGEON RIVER CHANGES COURSE On a recent canoe trip down the Sturgeon River north of Sudbury, Joan and I had a surprise at the area of Lower Goose Falls. According to Trudy Wilson of Smoothwater Wilderness Outfitters, there was a major washout three years ago which took out the road which used to cross the river there and established a new river course to the east of the previous channel. Husband Hap's book, "Temagami Canoe Routes," and all the Ministry information directs canoeists to look for a portage on the left. Indeed it is on the left of the previous river-course which is now dry. The river now makes a sharp left bend around a high sand bluff and comes immediately to the six-metre falls. Anyone hugging the left shore around this blind corner is at some risk of being carried over the falls as there is no convenient landing at high water. So, spread the word: portage is on the RIGHT!

Bill King

WCA FALL PARTY This popular, annual get-together, marked by happy banter, wine, cheese, other delicacies, and slide shows, will be held on Friday, 28 November 1986, again at the Casa Loma Campus of The George Brown College in Toronto. Mark this date on your calendar! Don't miss it! More details later.

SLIDES FOR THE WCA FALL PARTY At the above-mentioned WCA Fall Party, the introductory slide show will consist of a very special presentation of slides made by WCA members on their trips, preferably the organized outings. We want to make this show something other-than-else, a most enjoyable experience for everyone. Prize-winning photographs are not what we're after, those will find a place in the competition announced in the item below. What we're looking for are the funny, crazy, different, outrageous, experimental, never-before-shown shots you bring back from your trips. Be part of this slide show! More details later.

WCA PHOTO AND SNAPSHOT CONTEST After skipping one year, there will again be a contest in February 1987, this time organized by Mike Peake. The four permanent categories are: 1) wilderness, 2) wilderness and man, 3) flora, 4) fauna. The extra category for this competition is: child(ren) and wilderness canoeing. Keep making those prize-winners in mind when you're out there.

OPEN CANOE RACE Don't forget to attend, as participant or spectator, the Gull River Open Canoe Slalom on 6 and 7 September 1986 at the Minden Wild Water Preserve. A great opportunity to paddle, learn, see, and enjoy. For more information contact Wendy Grater at Trail Head in Toronto at 416-862-0881.

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. Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue	Autumn 1986	deadline date	17 August 1986
	Winter 1986		16 November 1986

WCA MEMBERSHIP LIST Membership lists are available to any members who wish one for personal, non-commercial use. Send a \$1.00 bill (no cheques, please!) to Cash Belden, 77 Huntley Street, Apt. 1116, Toronto, M4Y 2P3.

PARTNERS AND INFORMATION WANTED

TRIPPING PARTNERS Do you have time available from January to June 1987? I am taking a leave from work and want to contact other individuals to take part in various trips, such as: Agawa Canyon, cross-country skiing, Grand Canyon, backpacking, canoeing, Pukaskwa River, or other interesting trips. If you have some time and like being active, please contact Bob Knapp, R.R.#5, Owen Sound, Ontario, N4K 5N7, phone 519-371-1255.

BACKPACKING FOR VEGETARIANS Waterton National Park, Alberta, 21 June to 6 July 1986. There will be day hikes from the base camp and a four to five day trip from Logan Pass back into Canada. Call Dave Houseman at 416-221-7935, or Marcia Farquhar in Richmond Hill at 416-884-0208.

MACAL RIVER, BELIZE Paddle through a tropical rain forest in the highlands of Belize, Central America. This route is an exploratory one; the river may not have been descended for its full length by canoe, due to its remoteness and grade 3 rapids. The area is largely uninhabited and thus has a great variety of wildlife which is as yet unafraid of man. The trip will take place between 23 August and 3 September 1986. The organizer is a zoologist who has done research in the region. Contact as soon as possible: Joe Frago in Toronto at 416-469-5034.

UPPER ALBANY RIVER Who would like to join us on a relaxed trip down the upper Albany River in northern Ontario, from Sioux Lookout to Fort Hope? Trip dates from 2 to 31 August. Contact as soon as possible Jan Tissot in Toronto at 416-489-4032.

the fever

David Berthelet

Isolation in a small group for a period as short as a few weeks can alter the perspective in a way that can be traumatic during the trip and troubling for many months afterwards. I refer to this aberration as canoe fever or just "the Fever." It is not a well-understood or widely-recognized phenomenon, at least not by canoeists, partly because canoe trippers who have gone through an intense wilderness experience do not generally talk about what happened, and sometimes will not acknowledge that something unpleasant occurred.

Post-trip comments on the subject are often about the idiosyncrasies or personality weaknesses of travelling companions rather than a syndrome that affected the group. The Fever does not occur on all canoe trips. It does, however, occur to varying degrees on many trips of long duration. The objective of this article is to examine some of the characteristics of the syndrome from the point of view of a canoeist who has experienced it and observed it in others.

Canoe trips should be pleasant, enjoyable, and relaxing. Most short, and especially weekend, trips are like this. I have found, however, that there is tension associated with long canoe trips into isolated country, often resulting from confinement, bad weather, or lack of stimulation. This stress can express itself in an abnormality that is somewhat similar to the syndrome referred to as cabin fever. This refers to some combination of irritability, moodiness, unco-operativeness, frustration, boredom, anger, impatience, depression, withdrawal, loneliness, feeling of entrapment, dissatisfaction, and listlessness.

One of the worrisome aspects of the aberration is the associated loss of judgement. Canoeists sometimes lose their common sense and ability to size things up on longer trips. Encounters with rapids provide an example. Decisions such as whether a particular set of rapids should be run or "sneaked" down the side (i.e., run without scouting) become increasingly difficult. Experienced canoe trippers have been known to imprudently run immense rapids, then, after becoming unsettled, portaging or taking-the-sneak around the next set of rapids.

Loss of judgment is not only evident in the way rapids are negotiated. The ability to conduct the trip in a sensible way tends to become impaired. This is true even for normally competent canoe trippers. They may lose the ability to work out seemingly ordinary concerns: where and when to make camp, what time to leave in the morning, how to share the work load, where and when to take side trips, and whether to increase or reduce the pace of the trip. The inability to deal with ordinary matters has another manifestation — the unilateral declaration: "I'm going to take a swim," even if the water is ice-cold!

The Fever is highly contagious. If someone in the party develops it, it is not long before others are also exhibiting symptoms. It can be very trying on the other members of the group to adjust the tempo of the trip to moods and expressed wants of the Fever-bound individuals. Moreover, giving in to the demands of the affected people does not seem to have a remedial influence on their symptoms.

The Fever is also progressive. It is less evident in the morning. After a night's rest, the symptoms are greatly reduced, but as the day progresses and fatigue sets in, the symptoms become more apparent. Moreover, the symptoms have a tendency to get worse as the trip goes on. That is, the malady seems to have a self-reinforcing effect so that if the symptoms get bad, the syndrome gets worse.

One of the hazards to avoid on long canoe trips is the paddling marathon. There is a propensity for some destination-oriented canoe trippers to make an all-out physical effort — 14 to 16 hour days, seven days a week. When this happens, I have found that not only the body but the mind breaks down. A contributing factor is the drive to the put-in point. A long, hard, fatiguing drive, cooped up in a loaded-down vehicle crowded with people and equipment, tires the paddlers before the trip begins, and predisposes them to the malady.

Differing physical abilities can be a source of stress among the members of the party. The strong leader/organizer in a slick, fast boat sometimes has difficulty reducing the pace to accommodate the weaker paddlers in slow-moving crafts. This can lead to emotional confrontations.

The strong member has been known to accuse the exhausted members of not performing their share of the domestic tasks about camp, not fully appreciating that the poor fellows are not lazy but merely exhausted. Moreover, the real reason why the offending party does not get up on a beautiful paddling morning is not because he is trying to sabotage the trip — it is because he can't.

The pattern is often that the strong, experienced leader/organizer wears out the inexperienced members of the party, and then browbeats them into increasing or maintaining the pace. First he breaks their bodies and then he breaks their minds. I'm at a loss to explain why axe murders are not a common occurrence on long-distance canoe trips!

Knowing that you have the Fever helps but does not remedy the ailment. Other than ending the trip, which may not be possible or desirable, the best way of dealing with the syndrome is to break the routine. Variety in daily activity is essential. Perhaps the worst way of dealing with the Fever is confrontation. This sometimes is resorted to in exasperation but only makes the problem worse.

The tedium associated with long, uninterrupted hours of paddling should be avoided, not only because breaks in the routine reduce the incidence and severity of the Fever, but also because variety makes the excursion more enjoyable. I think the day should be divided into three periods of two-and-one-half to three hours (i.e., pre-breakfast, morning, and afternoon) and one of these periods should be used for an activity other than paddling (e.g., photography, side trips to interesting landmarks, relaxing about camp). That would allow time for diversions and would result in a slower, but more enjoyable trip. If the canoeists are happy, they won't get the Fever.

There is a great deal of interdependence among members of a canoe party. Almost everything an individual does influences everyone else, and irritations are unavoidable. Because of this, it is important that trippers not tent with their paddling partner. Some people need a place, in private, where they can unwind. I would go so far as to assert that each person should have his or her own tent on long trips. This would result in more bulk and weight to be transported and create problems in finding campsites large enough to accommodate numerous small tents, but would be a small price to pay when the alternative is considered.

If someone has problems before they go on a long wilderness canoe trip, the likelihood is that they will get worse on the trip. More stress is not advisable for someone who is already under stress. Psychological screening has been attempted with varying success for researchers selected to over-winter in Antarctica and for astronauts. The Fever is like space or altitude sickness — it's very difficult to predict who will become afflicted. The nature of the syndrome is that it does not become evident until the trip is well on its way and the party is in isolated country. That's why I think that the feeling of entrapment is one of the underlying causes. I'm also of the opinion that sensory deprivation associated with the lack of variety and the tedium of long hours of paddling are important contributing factors.

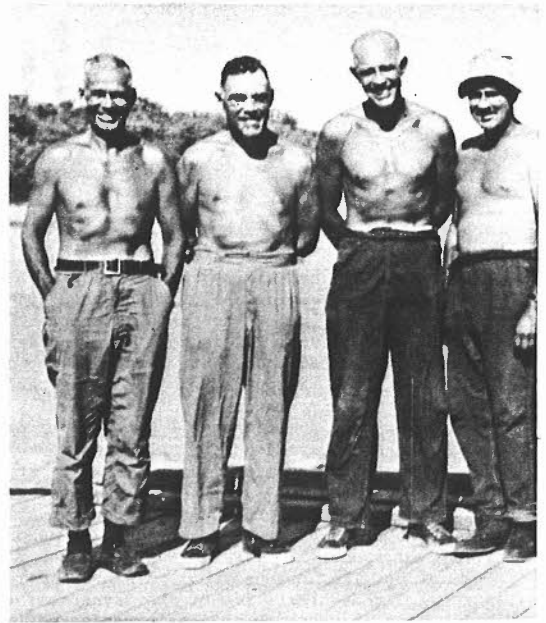
Keeping people happy can be difficult. Often everyone has a different perception of how the trip should be run. These differing points of view do not become evident until the trip is underway. It's not always possible to have a long pre-trip discussion on the details of how the trip should be organized. It's not so much a question of whether there will be Fever on any long trip, but whether it can be controlled.

The Fever seems to be unavoidable on long trips into isolated country. Traveling alone does not remedy the problem, for the change in perspective and impaired decision-making will also afflict the solo traveller. The most sensible trips are short ones that end before the isolation and tedium can wear people down. That is not to say that long trips should always be avoided.

It seems, however, that confinement and stress are certainly contributing factors in the emergence and development of the Fever. Variety and change are important to people, and there is a lot to be said for the old cliché, "variety is the spice of life."



Ottawa River, 1974



eric morsi

WILDERNESS CANOE

Photographs courtesy of:
Mrs. Pamela Morse
and
The Citizen, Ottawa



1904

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1986

Kazan River, 1968



Lake Superior, 1960





Churchill River, 1955



Ottawa River, 1974

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With the death of Eric Morse on the 18th of April, Canadians in general, and the canoeing fraternity in particular, have lost one of their great men.

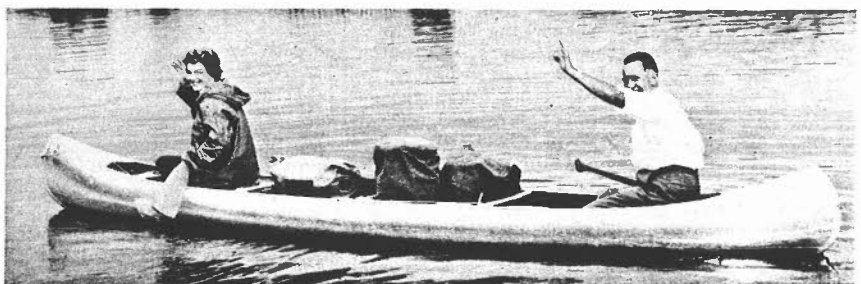
Eric was intimately and personally associated with the development of recreational canoeing in Canada. His first wilderness canoe trip took place at the end of WW I in Muskoka -- how the wilderness has receded since then! As he told us in his address to the 1984 Annual General Meeting, it was necessary to go further and further to find it. In the 1950's and 60's he travelled, first with "Les Voyageur" and later with his wife, Pamela, and other companions on many of the remote rivers of Canada's north. Sigurd Olson's book, "The Lonely Land," is an account of one such trip on the Churchill River in 1955. It conveys beautifully the thrill of the wilderness experience in an era when such trips were "simply not done" for recreation.

Eric's book, "Fur Trade Routes of Canada / Then and Now," gives an account of the changes man has wrought on the waterways of the original voyageurs. No dull historical treatise, this book brings the unique perspective of a historian who actually travelled the routes of which he wrote. His several articles in The Canadian Geographic Journal did much to debunk the myth of "conquering the wilderness," while stressing the virtues of planning, preparation, and prudence.

While we will all mourn Eric's loss, his teachings and his example will always remain for us a legacy of courage, commitment, and common sense.



1984



Lake Superior, 1960

Ottawa River, 1974

moods on the nahanni

Debbie Ladouceur and David Salayka

The first part of the account of our two-person expedition across the Continental Divide, which began on 3 April 1985, 228 km northeast of the settlement of Ross River in the Yukon Territory, was presented in the winter 1985 issue of *Nastawgan*. That part of our journey concluded on 3 June, 15 km downstream of the Moose Ponds, with a final haul down to the ice-lined banks of the South Nahanni River. The second part, described below, would take us on a magnificent and challenging 600 km descent of the South Nahanni and Laird Rivers to Fort Simpson, N.W.T., which we would reach on 10 August.

(Editor's note: I accidentally left two important words out of the second but last sentence of part 1, which should read: "We looked forward to a leisurely paddle down the lower stretch of the South Nahanni River." Sorry, D and D.)



The Nahanni area held visions for us of some of the most spectacular and varied country in Canada. Patiently we watched the moment-to-moment transformation of the South Nahanni. The 31st of May marked ten consecutive days of magnificent weather with +16°C temperatures, cloudless skies, and warm breezes hastening deterioration of the snow-pack. Spoiled by the warmth of the sun, we were to be disheartened by 23 consecutive days of rain in June and 19 days of rain in July. An above-average snowfall, a quick spring thaw aided by 15 days of intense heat, and the endless spring rain put the Nahanni into a rage that would greatly challenge our limitations of patience, common sense, and endurance.

In the past, the Nahanni had been recorded to rise three metres overnight. This caused us concern as our first high and dry camp began to flow with the onset of rain and snow. From camp the entire river resembled a churning cauldron of one- to two- metre curling waves with appropriately spaced boulders effectively eliminating navigable routes. The river drowned out all sound and we had to shout to make ourselves heard on shore.

We were accustomed to daily sightings of caribou near camp. Often they raised their heads adorned with velvet-covered antlers, sensing some message on the wind. Their scarred and weather-beaten coats conjured up images of a hard winter.

We scouted downriver from Camp 21 thrashing through two-metre-high willow and birch thickets. Expectations played an important role. We had anticipated a great deal of what confronted us but the constant rain and low temperatures not only stressed us but increased the difficulty of paddling. The most frustrating problem we would encounter was the continual search for non-existent eddies. With the current of this mighty river stretching from shore to shore we began to look for an eddy in the form of a good strong limb overhanging the bank.

Heavy upon us was the pressure of time to get down this river and meet our 1 July food drop. We had 23 days to cover 100 km to Island Lakes; our progress was limited to two to three kilometres per day at times. It was our decision to travel alone without means of contact, yet at times we desired the security of additional support and rescue crews should the need arise. We had faith in our capabilities and resourcefulness to handle any survival situation; caution and respect were foremost in our minds.

While watching new caribou calves spindly-legged and awkward never straying far from their mothers, we sensed the change and noted the ensuing activity as two wolves plodded along savoring the scent of their prey. Soon all disappeared over the ridge leaving us wondering.

Imagined promises of a warm summer came with the onset of spring as the south-facing slopes greened up beautifully. Brilliant flowers and the leafing-out of willow, birch, and aspen added a warmth to the cool, grey days. As much as all living things depend on the river, so too was it our lifeline, our link to the outside world. The reality was that we had to safely navigate this rock-strewn torrent with a heavily loaded boat.

Our third portage, a five-hour slog to Camp 23, passed a section of river we christened the Roller Coaster, where this mad current constricted to a 15 m channel - big holes, big waves, and big rocks. Our choices were few. We were fatigued; our bodies ached from the difficult terrain and heavy loads. Trails were nonexistent as we plodded and thrashed through unyielding willows, constantly wet and cold until one of our many tea breaks.

The 12th of June was a typical day on the upper Nahanni. We were able to run a short set of rapids after scouting with the usual battle through the bush. We rode out the large water after setting over into position, but had difficulty landing. Waist-deep in the icy water we waded around the next bend. Numbed by the 5°C water it was time for a tea break. We then ran a short section while hugging the left shore and backferried to the inside, again having difficulty landing in the swift current. We encountered whitewater around the next three bends. Was it runnable? The water was too large, too risky, so we lined down another two sets followed by a tea break.

We sat on the bank warming ourselves by the fire. We had scouted carefully, and were on the right bank one kilometre upstream of a 90° left-hand bend with a 30 m sheer rock cliff on the outside. We planned to backferry across the river picking our way through rocks to a large and rare eddy on the left shore. Seven metres from shore, just downstream of us, was a rock, 2.5 m across, the water at times breaking over its surface. We had plenty of room and were planning on being downstream of it when we started our backferry. From the small eddy we attempted to move into the current, backpaddling and sideslipping to control the entry angle, but remained suspended in time on the shear zone. Water boiled by us on the left. We wanted in that current. We shouted to each other over the roar: "Watch the angle, not too sharp, keep paddling, we are almost over, not too much pry, here we go, here we go, David the angle is too sharp, the rock, the rock. . . ." Like a mighty fist the current grabbed the stern and instantly we were broadside, then wrapped around the rock. All I could hear was the breaking boat, and then my gasping for air. The upstream gunwale had dipped as we piled up onto the rock. I went under the boat, grabbed the bow line and was bobbing in the curling wave downstream of the canoe. I could see David, hear him shouting at me, and saw the gunwales like bayonets splintered and spear-like amidships. Paddle in one hand, line in the other I was unable to reach shore. David clambered from the rock to the floating gearbags, then down the line to me and we eventually found slippery rocks under our feet and worked our way to shore. We tied the bow line to the largest spruce we could find.



We will never forget that moment holding each other on shore, shivering in the rain and staring in astonishment at our canoe wrapped around the rock and all of our gear contained within. The centre yoke had snapped, the inwales and outwales had broken and the hull was flattened amidships. We were thankful our gear was securely tied in and all held firm. The unconscious survival instinct controlled our initial responses, yet once on shore, we felt disappointment at what we had allowed to happen — a judgment error. Alive and unhurt, the subsequent decision-making process required common sense and clear collective thinking. Quickly and efficiently we decided on our plan of retrieving the gear.



When two-thirds of the gear was out of the boat, David shouted from the rock that the boat was moving. The instant I shouted to get off, over the rock came the battered canoe. David made a forward dive over it, dragged his legs over the ripped gunwales and landed hands first on the rock. As the canoe hit the water downstream it rolled over and with the force of the current within resumed its original shape. The miracle of kevlar! The canoe banged its way to shore and the bowline held. Once more I had to throw the rope to David and this last time it was he I dragged to shore rather than a gearbag. A wince of pain crossed his face as I watched his body bang on two large rocks.

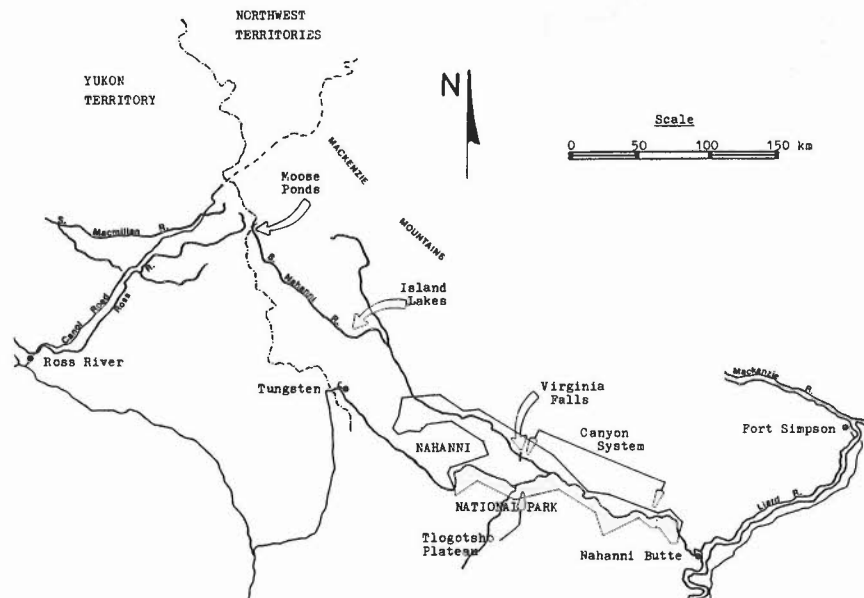
After a fire and change of clothing we were then confronted with a one-kilometre portage downstream to find a suitable location for camp. Wreck Corner, approximately 29 km downstream of the headwaters, would be camp for five days as we awaited dry weather to repair the boat. Repairs included splicing the inwales, securing outwales and installing a new centre thwart. The hull suffered numerous extensive fractures and delamination. S-glass, resin, and duct tape would complete repairs, as long as the weather co-operated. The only loss was our remaining seven tins of butter, our precious fat supply. Under the forthcoming conditions we were to realize the extent of the loss.

The day we were back on the river we were amazed to discover four odd-looking creatures in a rubber raft pull in to shore behind us. After two and a half months of total solitude we were overwhelmed with the need to talk with these folks. They volunteered their services as mailmen taking with them 36 irreplaceable letters. We graciously accepted their offer of lard and sugar and their kindness

and generosity was greatly appreciated. In two days they would accomplish by raft what would take us 26 to reach Island Lakes.

The days went by typically — in the water mostly, it seemed — lining and wading in water often to our waists with numerous fire breaks to thaw out. We often thought of the prospectors and explorers and the hardship of toiling each day, week after week, years of their lives spent in the bush.

The 22nd of June started out as many others as we broke camp in the rain and scouted in the same. We ferried to river middle, then ran through a chute between two large boulders, and planned to hug the inside shore on the right side and grab the eddy around the bend. As we approached the bend we took a diagonal wave over the right side, partially swamping us, and the entire load shifted and hung over the opposite gunwale trying to balance the disastrous angle of the canoe. We proceeded to backwater through the 1.5 - 2.0 m curling waves we had planned desperately to avoid. The first wave took my hat off and completely swamped the boat, clearing the load and taking David's wool hat as well. The impact of that wave took my breath away and when the second wave knocked me out of the boat I was very confused about what was happening to me. But how I clung to that paddle. As David saw me floating away he shouted to hang on to the stern, while he kept backpaddling for the now closer left shore. When close enough he jumped out and we both tried to get footing, but the current and the slimy boulders made it impossible. The stern line wrapped around my ankle and I lost a rubber working it free. I finally stopped moving 15 m from the next boulder garden and looked back to see David beckoning for help. The bow line had wrapped around his ankle and he was clutching it in his hands while he stood motionless in waist-deep water.



The swamped boat was banging on rocks with the gear floating tenaciously within it on the brink of the next rapids. I fought my way upstream to David, while I shouted for him to hold on. My hands and feet were numb and he calmly asked me to get out his knife to cut the line. I found the knife, but with numb hands I could not open the blade. David handed me the bow line and managed to cut the line and free himself. We wondered if we could hold on to the boat and feared that all might be lost. It was another miracle. The stern line which had been wrapped around my ankle had wedged between rocks and the canoe held firm. Possibly my rubber still wrapped in the rope had jammed.

As we lost two paddles in the mishap, David quickly fashioned a replacement with our flattened oven as a blade. Shattered confidence would prove a difficult obstacle to overcome, compounded by the use of this inefficient paddle which would draw little water. However, we soon found a weathered, old, metal-tipped kayak blade that served us better.



Our days passed slowly in a cold and stressful way. With rain daily, wading and lining kept us wet and fatigued. Additionally we were unsure of our location as the rapids were incorrectly marked on our maps. We were then confronted with another major obstacle, what would be correctly named Hollywood Rapids. The river is broad, approximately 40 m wide, and is divided by two large islands end to end separated by 15 m of misdirected mad water. The river crashes into a 70 m cliff on the right shore and is then deflected around a left bend to meet the remainder of the Nahanni and another cliff on the opposite shore as it swings right. Our option to paddle consisted of two difficult ferries and very treacherous lining. Up and over the 70 m cliff became our only choice.



So, our ninth portage began on fairly good game trails, although the vertical climb made us question just how good. Approximately 1.5 km in distance, the second portion took us down through deep muskeg and alder flats. As usual, the rain accompanied us. We later learned that as recently as 1983 a paddler had died in the rapids below.

According to our map we should expect another 13 km of rough water, and that day being 25 June we questioned the reality of making our 1 July food drop. We asked ourselves again, how much longer could we deal with this? But we went on -- paddled and lined around the next bend to the left and continued to paddle. Junction Rapids was not to be. We picked up all the tributaries on the map and found no rapids as indicated. Disbelieving, not daring to hope, we approached each bend with suspicion and caution. We could not believe it. We were ecstatic, elated, and ever so thankful.

Finding ourselves at the confluence of the Little Nahanni on Friday, 28 June, at a beautiful, sandy camp was a triumphant moment. We enjoyed our first bath in weeks and were calmed by the change in character of the now tranquil Nahanni. Island Lakes was a mere 25 km away, a short, peaceful paddle.

Arriving at the old, vacant cabin, a portion of our journey came to an exhausted end. We were thankful, yet utterly disappointed at the condition of the cabin. An old porcupine with a terrible weakness for plywood had claimed it as his home, and garbage and broken glass were strewn about. It took hours of work to return some dignity to the well-built cabin.

The anticipation of our food drop is difficult to express. We had been completely out of sugar and high-fat foods (butter, nuts, granola) for four or five days and on rations prior to that. We were subsisting on plain lentil dishes and cornmeal mush. Many of our thoughts turned to cashews, cheese, peanut butter, maple syrup, and butter. We longed for food with substance. The first of July came and went with no food drop. We could not believe it after all we had been through. Then all day 2 July and no sign of the plane. Very disheartened and worried our prayers were finally answered near 7 p.m. by the drone of the floatplane. They had delayed the food drop awaiting packages from our families. Other than our "mailmen," the pilot was our first human in three months. We opened letters from home, cried and laughed, ate until we could eat no more, and savored every bite and word of love and support from our families.



In five days we consumed a two-week supply of food, then leisurely packed to head for Rabbitkettle Lake within Nahanni National Park. On the river the wind was at our backs for a change. Burns were evident along the Nahanni, the ridges streaked with pastel colors from the dead standing timber. The river made sharp turns in wide meanders. Belted kingfishers flew ahead leading us downriver while sleek, healthy bull moose plodded along shore hardly taking notice of us. Cow-and-calf pairs browsed in the willows with ears erect, watching our every movement. While the calves seemed easily distracted, mama's devote attention was focused on us until we were out of sight.

Nahanni National Park would provide us with a unique experience. A definitive change would take place with the addition of human activity within the park, yet we were enticed by a variety of features and a character that invited endless exploration. Ancient landforms that escaped glaciation, an unusual geological history, and an antecedent river that existed prior to the formation of the Mackenzie Mountains -- these could only leave us with a childlike fascination.

Nahanni National Park was established in 1972 and covers 4765 square kilometres, beginning approximately 250 km downstream of the Moose Ponds. In 1978 it was nominated by UNESCO as a world heritage site in recognition of unusual geological and climatological phenomena, vegetation, and wildlife. The western parts of Nahanni Park were invaded repeatedly by Cordilleran glaciers from the west, and the eastern parts by Laurentide glaciers. In the centre, however, are areas which escaped glaciation. At the western boundary are the spectacular granitic peaks of the Ragged Range rising to elevations of 2700 m with matterhorn peaks and razor sharp ridges.

We camped just downstream of the park boundary, opposite Rabbitkettle Lake which occurs with the Hot Springs in an upland formed by ancient river terraces above the Nahanni River. In a setting of majestic snow-capped peaks, the lake is an oasis of tranquility broken only by the mystical call of the loon.

Rabbitkettle Hot Springs is one of two types of thermal springs occurring in the park. Anomalous springs, they are heated by the chemical reaction of water with minerals in the bedrock. These warm, perennial, highly mineralized springs rise through two mounds of tufa (calcium carbonate) built by precipitation. One dome, 27 m high, is still being formed by 20°C water trickling from a 14 m well in the centre of the dome. A multitude of tiny dams (gours) trap water and aid cooling and precipitation. When the gours dry as new courses are followed, frost action strips the fragile tufa layer by layer forming stone polygons. So

fragile is the tufa and surrounding area that the springs are designated a Zone 1 protection area by Parks Canada officials. On guided tours, footwear is shed before stepping upon the mounds to minimize impact.

From Rabbitkettle to Virginia Falls the South Nahanni flows 130 km in a broad valley carved by an old trunk Cordilleran glacier; valley walls are crumbled by frost and slashed by ravines. The river is deflected into hairpin meanders wherever ravines have deposited large quantities of debris. We paddled downstream under a canopy of dark, ominous clouds and intermittent downpours, though still enjoying the views of immense alluvial fans widening to the river's edge. Though forced to shore by an electrical storm, we were revitalized by the surge of positive energy.

We climbed a peak of the Sunblood Range approximately 25 km upstream of Virginia Falls. In 1982 a great deal of the area within the park burned and the opportunity for wildflower photography was enhanced as resplendent species recolonized the fertile burn.

A short evening paddle under a clear sky brought us to Virginia Falls, the heart of the park. The 96 m drop (twice the height of Niagara Falls) creates wind and mist resulting in a micro rainforest in the immediate vicinity. The falls were formed as a glacier gouged away a spur of Sunblood Mountain leaving a steep floor of hard limestone. The ice receded and the river replaced it, accelerating down the floor in a great rapids, then plunging to the canyon below.

At Virginia Falls we realized the true wilderness of the Nahanni was gone and the traffic and abuse by some visitors has taken its toll. We thought of Patterson witnessing it in the late 1920's. We could only imagine his awe and perhaps his desire to share this beauty with some, but not many.

An hour's hike through the wet muskeg and black spruce found us at Marengo Falls southwest of Virginia Falls, a 10 m deep gorge carved through limestone by a branch of Marengo Creek.

Taking the time to explore the area, a scramble up Sunblood Mountain at Virginia Falls provided us with fantastic views. The peaceful lake-like Nahanni accelerates through the Sluice Box for 200 to 300 m over slabs of limestone with explosions of spray in its race to the brink. The falls are divided by a spire of limestone with the majority of the Nahanni exploding through the southern channel.



Later, standing on the brink of the falls, we felt a part of the incredible power of this river, so changed from its beginnings. Words cannot describe the raw power and beauty of this, North America's largest unharnessed waterfall.

Looking north from Sunblood Mountain the expanse of the Mackenzie Mountains seemed endless, a lifetime of exploration contained within. The Mackenzie Mountains, in which the South Nahanni had its beginnings and through which it carved its way, are one of the largest ranges in the North American Cordillera, straddling the Continental Divide for more than 800 km of their length.

We met many experienced paddlers who agreed that the Nahanni was the highest it had been in 25 years this late in the season. Because of the above-average snowfall and rain throughout June and most of July, the river was running high and ferrying uprooted trees along her course.

After five days at Virginia Falls we decided to meet the challenge of the canyons. We had portaged our gear the evening before in the dismal rain and awoke to a sky that promised neither rain nor sun. The rocky beach lashed with waves seemed to urge us onward. It seemed only fitting that we saw not a soul. We were a lone boat challenging the waters again. We lined upstream and pushed off the rocks to be swept across the river into the first bend of Fourth Canyon. The sheer sentinel walls watched silently as we rolled through the wild, deep water.

Downstream of the falls, the three largest river canyons in Canada were cut by the river through the Mackenzie ranges varying from 15 to 36 km in length and 1000 to 1375 metres in depth. These modern canyons began to evolve approximately one million years ago, making them

the oldest well-preserved landforms in Canada. They survive because they escaped glaciation.

Figure Eight rapids (Hell's Gate) is a unique rapid downstream of Fourth Canyon. A sharp bend in the river between rock cliffs divides the waters and creates a huge upstream eddy and an opposing downstream whirlpool. There is only one route between the two powerful currents through unpredictable water. With the increased difficulty due to the water level and lack of support we chose to portage.

In Third Canyon, a most spectacular shortcut is the "Gate" where the water leaked through a fracture across a hairpin turn in limestone opening it to a chasm 100 m wide with walls more than 200 m high. The river deepens the canyons at a maximum rate of almost two metres each 1000 years.

Entering Deadman's Valley we were awed by the view of a magnificent plateau, the Tlogotsho. Deadman's Valley is a myriad of lush carpeted peaks deeply incised by narrow canyons, each concealing pristine and peaceful solitude. The vast alluvial fan created by Prairie Creek is ideal range for Dall sheep attracted to mineral licks.

At times and in retrospect it was hard to believe we continued on our 10 km climb up Sheaf Creek to the Tlogotsho Plateau. The burn of 1982 left the creek criss-crossed with deadfall. A warm, humid 30°C day prevailed as we slogged up the creek, streaked with charcoal from scrambling over and under the deadfall. Our sleepless night at the halfway camp was marauded by mosquitoes which drained our energy and enthusiasm temporarily.

The plateau, golden and magnificent in the early morning light, greeted us. It would prove to be an arduous 850 m vertical ascent to the top, but the triumph and free feeling of overlooking this vast domain was ours.

The expanse of the plateau was captivating. Unending, a flat moss- and lichen-covered land lay before us, bespeckled with boulders aged by time and weather. Dall sheep with lambs grazed peacefully; however, finding wolf scat diminished our illusion of their total safety. Views of the upper river and what awaited us were breathtaking; clouds met us at eye-level leaving us with feelings of accomplishment and respect that have not faded.

A hike up Dry Canyon Creek upstream of the entrance to First Canyon led us to a world of unique rock formations resembling Roman baths smoothed over the ages by flowing water. We had the opportunity to scramble for close photos of Dall sheep catching the last of the sun's rays. Despite us stirring up clouds of dust on that windy afternoon, they remained motionless though wary. Finally disturbed, they scrambled across the rock face quickly escaping our presence.

First Canyon is one of the world's deepest canyons. The walls at 1375 m surpass those of Arizona's Grand Canyon. Karst caves occur within these awesome places, carved by ground water dissolving tunnels in the limestone. Grotte Valerie with kilometres of ice-lined caverns contains the 2000-year-old preserved skeletons of more than 100 Dall sheep.

Kraus Hotsprings provided a most welcome first warm bath in more than four months. There are two source pools where the 37°C water bubbles up through fine mud. Gus and Mary Kraus, in the area from 1940 to 1971, dammed the spring water on the bank of the south Nahanni. We sat for hours in the pool as a cool drizzle prevailed and were visited by a black bear. He left the bush 30 m upstream and sauntered along shore toward us, then undaunted ferried across the river.

We faced gusty headwinds enroute to Twisted Mountain as we made our way through the "Splits" where the Nahanni becomes a braided river meandering through a maze of islands. The bushwacking up Twisted Mountain was through alder thickets, deep moss beds, and dense young pine stands, short and unyielding. Looking west to the canyons left us questioning why we were leaving a paradise of mountains, canyons, and secrets, and a powerful river. We were about to enter the plains leading back to civilization along the wide and sluggish Liard River, 160 km to the mighty Mackenzie. Fort Simpson would be the link ending our journey and returning us to a world that would forever seem sedentary.



The north continues to beckon.



chernobyl and canoeing

David B. Brooks

What does the near melt-down of a nuclear reactor in the Soviet Union have to do with canoeing in Canada? Does it mean that, when the inevitable happens and we lean upstream, we should be careful to keep our mouths closed so as not to ingest any water? No, the linkage is less immediate but perhaps more environmentally threatening. Our bodies will not suffer greatly from the small amounts of radioactivity picked up from this and other equally inevitable nuclear accidents.

The serious linkage between Chernobyl and canoeing comes in the renewed force it will give to the conventional alternatives for generating electricity: mainly coal, oil, and hydropower. Coal-fired electricity is (along with metal smelters and auto emissions) one of the main sources of acid precipitation and several other forms of pollution. Oil remains in sufficiently short supply (despite the present glut) that no one is going to build a new generating station based on the prospect of cheap oil. So that leaves the rivers. But where does it leave canoeists and other defenders of the wilderness?

The real answer is -- as so often when environmentalists are confronted with a dilemma of this kind -- NONE OF THE ABOVE. We are not seriously confronted with a coal-v.-nuclear choice, nor with a need to dam any more rivers in Ontario or most other parts of Canada. The fact is that, if Americans are gasoline junkies, then Canadians are electricity junkies. We have deliberately promoted the use of electricity in space and water heating where there are better supply options and even better conservation options. We have an industry that uses electricity in prodigious quantities, not because it is electricity-intensive, which is logical in an electricity-rich region, but because it uses that electricity inefficiently. We have electrical rate structures that, ironically, penalize conservers and reward energy wastrals.

Studies of Canadian energy systems have shown clearly that here, as in most other industrial countries, there is no need at all to increase the supply of electricity. The options for conservation are so widespread and -- if the accounts are kept right -- so economically compelling that it would be half a century or more before anyone would even need to think about new electrical capacity. Indeed, some studies have shown that it is cheaper to conserve than to operate existing capacity, much less build new capacity. Nor, by the way, is it at all clear that those purportedly huge markets in the U.S. eyed by Mr. Bourassa and others of his ilk are going to be there, at least not at prices that come close to repaying costs. (Obviously, if you sell at a low enough price, markets will be found, and that is

exactly how British Columbia is finding markets to justify its senseless construction of the Revelstoke dam.)

Why is it that these results differ so sharply from those put forward by, say, Ontario Hydro? Mainly because Hydro is not in the business of providing energy at least cost to Ontarians, but in the business of selling electricity (in part to repay debt incurred in earlier construction). Their monopoly gives them a powerful position to control the numbers and to include, or exclude, factors in the demand projections they provide to elected politicians. It is not that Hydro is not good at what it does; in fact, the staff is very good. The problem is that we have now reached a point where we need to question just what it is that Hydro is doing.

Without question, the Chernobyl nuclear accident will have two opposite results: a defensive one on the part of pro-nuclear people, who will show why it can't happen here; and an offensive one on the part of pro-coal and pro-hydro people to show why they were right all along. As canoeists, we should work to create a third position which indicates that there is a still better choice: a less electrically intensive, more economically efficient society.

THE DUMOINE IN AUGUST

During the first nine days of August 1985, the following numbers of canoes and paddlers were seen portaging around Grande Chute of the Dumoine River in southwestern Quebec. The figures were collected by Gerald Dagg, the gatekeeper for Z.E.C. Dumoine just west of the bridge.

1 August	7 canoes with 15 people
2	10 17
3	18 40
4	12 24
5	22 40
6	5 10
7	6 12
8	11 21
9	12 24

That makes 103 canoes and 203 people in nine days. Oh wilderness!





A NATURALIST ON THE THELON RIVER

Author/Publisher: David F. Pelly, Castleton, 1985. (\$5.00)
Reviewed by: Toni Harting

COMPANY OF ADVENTURERS

Author: Peter C. Newman
Publisher: Viking, Toronto, 1985. (\$25.00)
Reviewed by: Sandy Richardson

The Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated on 2 May 1670 under a royal charter granted by King Charles II of England. Its territorial domain covered fully a quarter of North America, and to a large extent the history of the HBC is also the history of Canada.

Company of Adventurers is popular history designed to put readers in touch with at least some of the essential elements of their heritage, not a textbook trying to give the definitive word on the long history of the HBC.

Canadian history has often been criticized for being dull and lacking in "heroes." Company of Adventurers may be a step toward rectifying this state of affairs.

Some historians have taken issue with Newman's "great man" approach to history, and have criticized the book as derivative and lacking in scholarship.

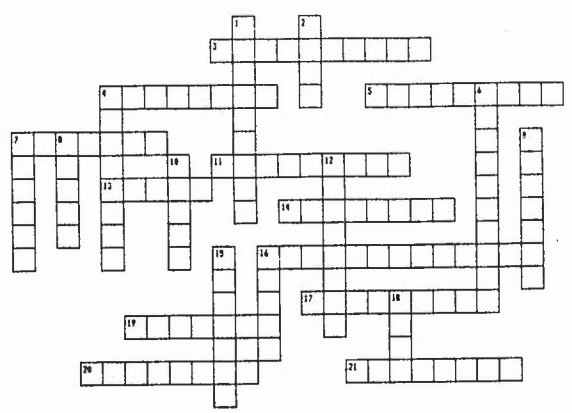
Few readers, however, are likely to be disappointed with Company of Adventurers. It is written in a highly readable style that is both interesting and informative.

This is not a book in the regular sense of the word, but a typewritten account of a canoe trip (30 June to 21 July 1985) on the Thelon River, with the principal objective of assisting the North American census of the peregrine falcon.

Anyone interested in the wildlife of this part of the barren country will discover a wealth of information in this small but valuable publication. It can be obtained directly from the author by sending \$5.00 (copying and postage) to: David Pelly, "Beaulu," RR#1, Castleton, Ontario, K0K 1M0.

NASTAWGAN CRYPTIC

Our resident genius Sandy Richardson has concocted a mean test of your "outdoors" intelligence in the form of the first "Nastawgan Cryptic." If you send the editor your solution before 1 September 1986, you may win one of the three \$20.00 gift certificates made available by Trail Head in Toronto.



ACROSS

- 3. WILD NORTHERN SEERS PROVIDE UNSPOILED LAND. (10)
4. IS THIS WHAT THE HIKER DOES OR WHAT HE CARRIES? (8)
5. TO THE ANISHINABI IT'S THE WAY TO GO! (9)
7. A WAY TO MOVE YOUR TOP GEAR PERHAPS. (7)
11. A WATER VOYAGE FROM TROPICANE. (5,4)
13. TO THE INUK, IT'S HIS BOAT NO MATTER WHICH WAY HE LOOKS AT IT. (5)
14. NOW YOU'RE COOKING, ON AN 11 ANYWAY. (8)
16. A RADIANT WAY TO BAKE WITH A 14. (9,4)
17. WEBBED FEET? NOT MUCH USE EXCEPT IN WINTER. (9)
19. THIS'LL KEEP THOSE CANOEISTS IN LINE! (1-6)
20. A TRADITIONAL LUNCH BOX? YOU'LL NEED A 12 TO CARRY IT! (8)
21. YOU'RE DEFINITELY OFF THE BEATEN TRAIL TO DO THIS. (8)

DOWN

- 1. THE ORIGINAL MATERIAL FOR A 10. (5,4)
2. TEMPORARY ACCOMODATION USED ON AN 11. (4)
4. WILL YOU DIE WITH HIM PICKING YOUR BONES IN NORTH ONTARIO? (5,3)
6. THE TRADITIONALIST'S CHOICE IN 10 CONSTRUCTION. (4,6)
7. THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND AN 11? (6)
8. A FEATURE OF 16 DOWN OR A DESCRIPTION OF YOUR PASSAGE THROUGH IT. (5)
9. TREELESS LAND ABOUT BARNS PERHAPS. (7)
10. AN OCEAN CRAFT? NOT USUALLY. (5)
12. WITH THIS YOU'LL HAVE TO USE YOUR HEAD ON A 7. (4,4)
15. IT HELPS YOU GET THE LAY OF THE LAND. (5,4)
16. A FLOWER FOR THE CANOEIST? (5)
18. A KISS PERHAPS WILL SEND YOU GLIDING OVER THE SNOW. (4)



THE TALE OF THE DANCING CANOES

Once upon a time, on a beautiful fall day, six solo paddlers canoed down Oakville Creek.

Endless numbers of bends, hidden sweepers, steep gradients, and a low water level combined to make navigation slow and hazardous. The author was forced to leap out of his kayak in a most undignified manner before it hit a sweeper. But, everyone was having fun in the sun.

However, the boys did not notice that it was getting dark while they were playing. It was about this time that the "Wherearewe?" bird was heard calling.

At last, they were saved from the dark, menacing jungle on the river banks, which was preventing their escape from the river, by smooth, gently-rolling slopes.

Alas, it was "The Home of the Canadian Open," Glen Abbey Golf Course. Praying that they might not be discovered by the spirit of Jack Nicklaus (who designed the course) or by an angry greenskeeper, the boys decided to abandon the dark serpentine shape that had once been their friend, and make a run for the safety of civilization.

Have you ever seen anyone trying to run, carrying an ABS canoe? Yes?

Have you ever seen anyone run on tiptoe (to avoid marking the fairways), carrying an ABS canoe? No?

Well, imagine if you can, this column of canoes dancing back and forth across the fairways, looking for a way up the surrounding cliffs, doh-se-dohing around the greens and sandtraps.

How did it all end? Nobody really knows, but it is said that if you walk there in the dark, you sometimes can see the shadows of the "Dancing Canoes" dashing to and fro, desperately trying to find their way back to the world of living paddlers.

Gerry Yellowlees

BEAVER AND BIG HEAD RIVERS

On the morning of Saturday, the 12th of April, we set off for the upper dam near Heathcote on the Beaver River. Originally there were going to be 11 participants, but five people cancelled before the weekend, and so we had Kevin Forsyth, Mike Jones, Phil and Robert Nusbaum, Peter Buchanan, and myself.

It was a cool, brisk, frosty morning, but the sky was showing some promise of a sunny day. After car-shuttling we had a brief practice above the dam, and then started our trip down the river. Peter wasn't too comfortable paddling his canoe solo, but as I was really looking forward to kayaking, he said he'd give it a try. We made a slow, leisurely descent, often pausing to investigate or to practice manoeuvring in an eddy. The only upset we experienced was when I got caught off-guard. The river went under an undercut in the bank and then the water was going in two different directions with very little turbulence. I lost my balance and learned the hard way: when in a kayak, this situation can only be handled by paddling quickly through the troublespot, or by avoiding it.

We indeed set a leisurely pace, enjoying each other's company and the solitude of the river. Our trip wasn't over until after 4:30 p.m. We hadn't seen any other boat on the Beaver all day.

The next morning there were only three of us left to go down the Big Head River. I warned Kevin that he might get some scratches on his big, new, yellow canoe as the water had dropped quickly this spring. The Big Head was a great surprise. I had run it only once before and had forgotten how interesting the rapids and bends are. Unlike the Beaver, which has four dams, the Big Head is almost continuous rapids for four to five kilometres. I tremendously enjoyed kayaking it, especially after warming up on the Beaver the day before. Kevin and Mike really found it a challenge to thread the canoe through many of the rock gardens, and to try to keep from hitting the far bank as they were swept around a bend. The river is beautiful with high clay banks in some places and sandy shoals in others. We saw many fishes of all sizes in the shallows. It is unfortunate that the Big Head is only navigable in early spring or during periods of heavy rain, as we all agreed it was worth returning to. I'll surely offer this trip again next year, perhaps with the option of doing the Big Head on both days.

Bob Knapp

CROWE RIVER

We thought it would be a two-day trip, but with the driving there and the shuttles we needed a good three.

The Crowe belongs to a series of south-central Ontario streams that I like to call the South Shield drainers. It lies north of Havelock and Marmora on Highway 7. It is a watershed sister to Beaver Creek and runs through some pretty remote granite bush.

By early Monday afternoon, 28 April 1986, Jan and Suus Tissot and I were ready to put in at the southwest end of Wollaston Lake. For a dollar a day, Mr. Ferguson will keep an eye on your car at his picnic ground/launching yard there. He told us about one big rapid downstream that would kill us if we tried to run it.

We started down Deer River, as the eastern access to the Crowe. The leaves were already coming out on the trees, the weather was gorgeous, the choke cherry trees in full blossom, and water levels just perfect for running some of the rapids that would come later. By choosing weekdays for the trip, we never saw a person the whole three days on the river.

The Crowe system is pool-and-drop, long sections of flat water punctuated by exciting ledges, chutes, falls, and rapids, about half of which were runnable for us. But Mr. Ferguson was right about that one long series of rapids on the Deer. This was the longest portage of the whole trip, with almost no trail. Trying to run bits and pieces of it didn't save any time or effort either. It reminded me of Thirty Dollar Rapids on the Magnetawan. Night was closing in on us and we weren't even off the Deer yet. We settled for a marginal campsite, and Suus' plans for a gourmet supper were put aside.

But each day got better. There were more rapids we could run, portage trails were clearer. On Tangamong Lake we paddled a threesome in Tissot's Saugeen Kevlar, towing my solo ABS behind as freight wagon, because of a headwind. There were several beaver and otter encounters that day, and lots of geese, mergansers, ducks. Blackflies were out, sometimes in swarms, but not really biting yet. The rapids are some of the best exercises I've ever done. It was exciting to scout them out, plan a course, and then see how well we managed it. That night we camped on a breezy riverbank clearing and enjoyed a little comfort after what had been a pretty strenuous day. (Goes without saying, we left the place cleaner than when we arrived.)

By Day Three our confidence was growing all the time. We were running some good stuff fully loaded, and drinking water right out of the river. There were no dumps on the whole trip. With lunch we had wiped out all our food supplies, so it was a good thing when we ended about 4 p.m. at the county-line bridge above Cordova Lake. But poor Suus had to spend nearly three more hours waiting it out in the flies while Jan and I got the other car and brought it back. We reached a restaurant just before closing time.

Incidentally, this trip was a last-hour substitute for a smaller stream that I wanted to do, called Partridge Creek, but that had to be dropped because water levels were so low this spring compared to normal. Therefore I didn't have along the old Ministry of Natural Resources Crowe River route description, which is long out of print, but much of which appears in Nickels' canoe route book, Ontario section. The portage information is not too helpful insofar as their description is made at very low water levels. But a useful appendix is a mile-by-mile indication of where Crown land is to be found. The Crowe passes through a great deal of privately owned land.

Next time I'd do this river, I would forget the Deer and put in at the Gut Conservation Area access bridge on the Crowe. Whatever portage is there couldn't be worse than what we had on the Deer. To do this trip in two days you would have to start there at daybreak, all shuttled and ready to go. The topo maps overlook some of the biggest falls and rapids that you have to deal with on this river. Allow yourself time.

The Crowe (along with the Beaver) is about as far south as you can paddle in Ontario and have this degree of rugged isolation and semi-wilderness over a two or three day continuous stretch. During that stretch, the river drops about 75 metres. But I would only want to do this river during the first three weeks after ice-off.

Phillip Nusbaum

**13 July** BURNT RIVER

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between 22 June and 6 July.

On this leisurely-paced day-trip we will follow the Burnt from Kinmount down to the village of Burnt River as it placidly winds its way through attractive mixed forest, and here and there spills over ledges, adding a little whitewater excitement to our day. Suitable for novices. Limit six canoes.

19-20 July NIPISSING AND TIM RIVERS

Organizer: Howard Sayles 416-921-5321
Book before 9 July.

Energetic first day of single-trip portages on the Nipissing River, followed by a relaxed second day of paddling on the scenic Tim River. This will be a pleasant flatwater trip in the western part of Algonquin Park. Limit three canoes.

19-20 July SOLO WHITewater CLINIC

Organizer: Howard Sagermann 416-282-9570
Book before 20 June.

This weekend clinic for solo paddlers only will be spent on the French River rapids. This clinic is intended for the intermediate tandem paddler who wants to give solo paddling a try. The paddling pace will be slow, with the majority of time spent playing the rapids. Limit ten canoes.

26-27 July MINDEN WILD WATER WEEKEND

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between 6 and 20 July.

Join us for a casual weekend of fun on the man-made whitewater course on the Gull River. The rapids are technically challenging and provide a great way for skilled intermediates to get some experience in difficult whitewater, while the bottom and run-out can be used to advantage by novices for perfecting their ferries and eddy turns. We will spend Saturday night together at the Minden Wild Water Preserve's campground. Limit six canoes.

2-4 August FRENCH RIVER

Organizer: Gary Walters 416-743-4628
Book between 7 and 11 July or 22 and 25 July.

We will travel the French River from Wolseley Bay to Highway 69. This will be a leisurely trip with plenty of time to play in the rapids. Beginning whitewater paddlers welcome. Limit six canoes.

9-10 August PALMER RAPIDS WHITewater WEEKEND

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between 20 July and 3 August.

Just a lazy August weekend at Palmer Rapids on the Madawaska River. Whitewater paddlers from novice to experienced will find interesting spots to play on this well-known section of the river. Bring along the family. Non-paddlers will enjoy swimming and sunbathing on the beach. Limit eight canoes.

20 August - 1 Sept. WHITE RIVER

Organizer: Doug Fairbanks 416-622-5711
Book before 25 July.

The White River, flowing into Lake Superior at the northern end of Pukaskwa Park, is the tentative location for this trip. Open to intermediate paddlers. Limit four canoes.

23-24 August UPPER GIBSON RIVER

Organizer: Howard Sayles 416-921-5321
Book between 1 and 19 August.

Paddle the upper Gibson River area: Nine Mile Lake to Shaw Creek via Indian Pond and High Falls, returning to Nine Mile Lake. This route is rarely used. A scenic marsh, creek, and narrow lake area which should present a quiet weekend. Rapids will be portaged. Limit three canoes.

30 August - 1 Sept. (Labor Day weekend) MADAWASKA RIVER

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book after 6 July.

We will meet at Palmer Rapids (Harold Jessop's campground) Saturday morning and spend the day honing our whitewater skills. Sunday we will run Snake Rapids to Griffith and return to our base camp. Monday stay as long as you wish playing the rapids. Suitable for anyone who has taken a basic whitewater course. Limit five canoes.

30 August - 1 Sept. ALGONQUIN PARK

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

Tim River to Rosebury Lake in the western part of the Park. This will be a short trip on a long weekend, leaving lots of time for photography, nature study, and just plain relaxing. Limit four canoes.

Between 2 and 14 Sept. KILLARNEY PROVINCIAL PARK

Organizer: Bob Knapp 519-371-1255
Book before 28 August.

Spend four to seven days paddling in Killarney at a leisurely pace. Take time to climb Silver Peak and just enjoy the tranquility of the early fall once the summer tourists have left the park. The exact time and duration of the trip may be determined by the participants.

6-7 September ALGONQUIN PARK

Organizer: Wini Stoddart 416-242-3797
Book between 11 and 31 August.

September brings a return to cooler weather and an end to the bug season. It's a perfect time for experiencing Algonquin Park. This weekend outing will take us into the western part of the Park via the Tim River. Our route is flexible and will depend on the interests and abilities of the participants. Limit five canoes.

**6-7 September** MADAWASKA RIVER

Organizer: Jim Morris 416-793-2088
Book after 10 August.

After a warm-up on Saturday morning at Palmer Rapids, we will do the car shuttle and then proceed to run the Snake Rapids section of the Madawaska River. Suitable for intermediates and novice whitewater paddlers with some experience. Limit four canoes.

13-14 September MADAWASKA RIVER

Organizer: Duncan Taylor 416-368-9748
Book after 15 August.

An interesting whitewater run in the famous Snake Rapids of the Madawaska River. We should have the bug-free clear air of early fall. Suitable for intermediates and novice whitewater paddlers with some experience. Limit four canoes.

14 September ELORA GORGE

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between 24 August and 7 September.

The Elora Gorge on the Grand River provides an excellent location for budding whitewater enthusiasts to practice their manoeuvres. This outing is ideal for those who have had basic whitewater training and need more practical experience. Limit seven canoes.

20-21 September MACDONALD AND GIBSON RIVERS

Organizer: Howard Sayles 416-921-5321
Book between 1 and 16 September.

Perennial early fall trip offering flatwater paddling through narrow lakes and rivers. The lack of bugs and the fall colors should make this a very pleasant trip. Limit three canoes.

25 September MISSISSAGUA RIVER

Organizer: Bill Ness 416-499-6389
Book between 31 August and 14 September.

This trip will follow the Mississauga River from the source in Mississauga Lake south to Buckhorn Lake. The autumn colors and the river's scenic chutes and falls should make this a memorable outing. Bring your camera! Suitable for intermediates. Limit five canoes.

11-13 October (Thanksgiving) SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY LAKES

Organizer: Jim Greenacre 416-759-9956
Book after 22 September.

A leisurely, bug-free, flatwater loop through the beautiful lakes southwest of Parry Sound. Suitable for canoeists capable of paddling up to 16-18 km per day with a few short portages. Limit four canoes.

products and services

CANOE FOR SALE 16 ft. 8 in. Canadian by Rockwood Outfitters. A sleek (31 in. at centre) round-bottomed tripper, weighing just 48 lbs., designed primarily for flat water. A good compromise for solo and tandem paddling. Yoke included. Asking \$700. Phone Kevin Forsyth, Highway 89 and Airport Road north of Toronto, at 519-925-3688.

KAYAK FOR SALE Orange and white Femat Ranger kayak, all accessories. Boat almost like new. Contact John Eason in Keswick, Ontario, at 416-476-3084.

CANOEES FOR SALE 1. 17'3" stripper made by Wilderness Workshop. Heavy-duty cloth/Endura layup plus graphite/epoxy bottom. A rugged tripper. \$700.
 2. 16' cedar/canvas made with native softwoods in B.C. Has narrow strips for ribs. A stable, quiet, family canoe. \$675.
 3. 16'2" Rockwood/Mohawk Royalex tandem whitewater canoe with wood trim for \$700.
 4. Mohawk Challenger solo ABS whitewater with tie rings and removable portage yoke. Length 14'2". \$750.
 5. 14'8" Mad River Kevlar solo Lady Slipper; weight 39 lbs. New except for demo use. \$1150.
 Contact Phil Nusbaum in Toronto at 416-221-5345.

SPORT CANOEING The Madawaska Kanu Camp offers a Sport Canoeing program that teaches aggressive open canoeing whitewater skills. Similar to kayaking whitewater, the course focuses on surfing waves, eddy-hopping through the rapids, and learning controlled paddling. By specially outfitting your open canoe with thigh straps and air bags, playing the rapids becomes easier. For more information contact: Madawaska Kanu Camp, Box 635, Barry's Bay, Ontario, M3A 3L1, phone 613-756-3620.

REDWING CANOES Custom-designed and -built canoes to suit your needs and desires in fibreglass, Kevlar, or cedar strip. Quite often at prices below those of comparable canoes from large manufacturers. How do I do it? A one-man shop and 25 years experience designing and building boats. I also sell Camptrails packs and Eureka tents at reasonable prices. For example: Camptrails nylon canoe pack, 7000 cu.in., with padded nylon straps, etc. for \$60; Eureka Timberline 2 and 4 men tents, "Outfitter" grade, for \$250 and \$330 respectively. For further information contact: Redwing Canoes, Box 283, Burk's Falls, Ontario, POA 1C0, phone 705-382-2293.

DISCOUNTS ON CAMPING SUPPLIES WCA members who present a membership card will receive a ten percent discount on many non-sale items at:
 A.B.C. Sports, 552 Yonge Street, Toronto,
 Rockwood Outfitters, 699 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ontario,
 The Sportsman's Shop, 2476 Yonge Street, Toronto.
 Members should check at each store to find out what items are discounted.

CANOE RENTALS. Do yourself a favor this year and try one of the wide variety of rental canoes from Rockwood Outfitters -- everything from the 17' royalex Intrepid to ultra-lightweight kevlar canoes like the Saugeen and Jensen S2 and Tripper. For the solo paddlers we have slalom and touring kayaks and the Jensen Solitude. Contact: Rockwood Outfitters, 699 Speedvale Ave. W., Guelph, Ontario, N1K 1E6, phone 519-824-1415.

GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE A limited enrolment course is offered preparing the beginner in all aspects of flatwater canoeing and wilderness camping. A one-day classroom workshop prepares the student for a two-day canoe trip in Muskoka. For more information contact George Brown College, Continuing Education Division, P.O. Box 1015, Station B, Toronto, M5T 2T9, phone 416-947-9914.

TEMAGAMI WILDERNESS CENTRE Provides complete services related to canoe tripping in the Temagami Forest Reserve and the Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater Wilderness Park. TWC is willing to offer WCA members a 15% discount on scheduled courses, accommodations, and outfitting rentals. For more information contact Temagami Wilderness Centre, P.O. Box 130, Temagami, Ontario, POH 2H0, phone 705-569-3733.

NORTHERN WILDERNESS OUTFITTERS Provides a complete canoe tripping service for the northwest part of Algonquin Park. NWO is willing to provide WCA members with a discount on any canoes or equipment. For more information contact Northern Wilderness Outfitters, Box 89, South River, Ontario, POA 1X0, phone 705-474-3272, direct seasonal phone 705-386-0466.

BLUEWATER AND JENSEN CANOES. A wide variety of traditional and modern designs in sophisticated layups. Take a look at our new aircex composites, lighter and stronger and available in the S-glass-kevlar and nylon-kevlar layups. All the models are available for try-out and rental. Contact: Rockwood Outfitters, 699 Speedvale Ave. W., Guelph, Ontario, N1K 1E6, phone 519-824-1415.

where it is



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

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Nahanni River	12
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Beaver / Big Head	18
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WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I enclose a cheque for \$15 — student under 18
 \$25 — adult
 \$35 — family

for membership in the Wilderness Canoe Association.
 I understand that this entitles me/us to receive Newsletter, to vote at meetings of the Association, and gives me/us the opportunity to participate in U.C.A. outings and activities.

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

_____ phone _____

Please check one of the following: new membership application
 renewal for 1986.

Notes: -This membership will expire January 31, 1987.
 -Please send completed form and cheque (payable to the Wilderness Canoe Association) to the membership committee chairman.