



nastawgan

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Quarterly Journal of the Wilderness Canoe Association



MY OWN PRIVATE RIVER

Bob McCoubrie

Seeking the joys and satisfactions of canoeing untravelled territory in the near North, I began exploring an area in the vicinity of North Caribou Lake, northwest Ontario, with groups of boys in 1979. In some areas we found ancient portages, long unused, and it was hard, satisfying work to reopen them. Other areas yielded routes never used, and we cut the first portages there.

In 1980, in order to reach the road extending north from Pickle Lake, we travelled up the 62-km Nango River. We found no evidence of its ever having been travelled, and the uniqueness of finding and canoeing a whole never-travelled river, and the pleasures, satisfactions, and values derived from it caused me to explore it five times.

BATHTUB FALLS

Our first journey up the Nango (1980) rewarded us with unending delights of discovery. By early afternoon of the first day, we came to rapids that required our first full portage. One section of the narrowed river resembled a huge jacuzzi with water boiling in violently at one end. The safe swimming and diving possibilities at that spot and the time that it was going to take to cut a 400-m portage were good excuses to make camp immediately. We quickly discovered the various antics we could do for the most fun in the wild currents in our newfound "Bathtub Falls."

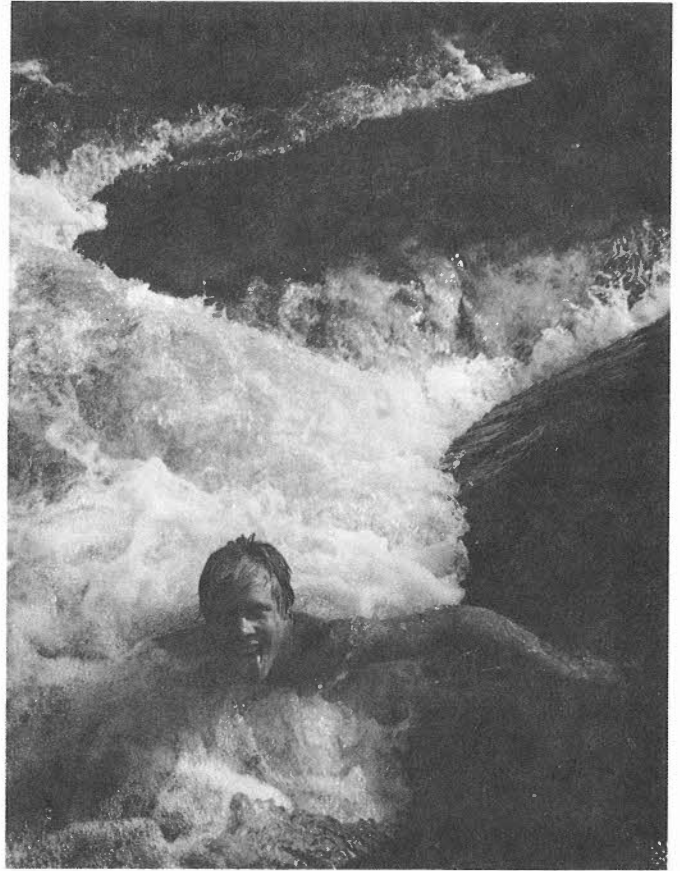
Arrival at Bathtub our second year (1981) held no joy. Early in our trip we had noted fires to the south of North

Caribou Lake. Later, after a rain had ended the fires' progress, we crossed the big lake to the river's mouth. It was unnerving to note that the compass bearing to the river's mouth and also to some thick smoke were the same. We found our campsite spared but the fire had reached and jumped the river.

It was an anxious trip to Bathtub the next day—and a grim arrival. The site had just burned. We imported live moss to patch up our charred tent site, and the canvas tent was erected with our old, charred tent poles. Hotspots along the former trail to the Tub were doused, and we enjoyed the Tub, but not as we had before the fire's devastation. The death of a friend dampens joy. A thundershower further dampened our spirits, but did serve to wet down the carbon on the burn-blowdown-littered portage.

Our 1983 and 1985 arrivals at Bathtub were happier occasions with our tent site moss establishing itself and spreading. Also establishing itself was the supertime thundershower; it was becoming a tradition.

After enjoying a blueberry bonanza at the river's mouth, we arrived at Bathtub our last year (1987) following a slow journey against high waters. The burn blowdown was the worst yet, and the yearly recutting was delayed by the expected thundershower, right on schedule. Departure from Bathtub the next day was difficult. We had always hated to leave its joys anyway, but this was the final goodbye to an old friend that had given pleasure to five "generations" of excited, yelping, young youngsters, and one old one.



Bathtub Falls

JOHNNY APPLESEED CAMPSITE — THUNDERSTORM POINT

The year of the fire we found our second intended campsite burned, so we continued on, finally selecting a tiny peninsula in a small lake. The fire was burning nearby, and before going to bed trips were made to the hottest spots to cool them down. One of the boys put an emptied pot upside down on his head to free up a hand, and the site was thereby named, "Johnny Appleseed Campsite." It was small, and our big tent had to be perched on bedrock at the highest elevation—an engineering feat—and in a very vulnerable position. I always felt uneasy about that. On our 1985 trip there we went to sleep quickly after a tiring, happy, and satisfying day of travel from Bathtub. It was a beautiful night until 2 a.m. when a monster thunderstorm pounced on us with no warning. The tent held, but my adrenalin wasn't down until daybreak. At breakfast, Johnny Appleseed became "Thunderstorm Point."

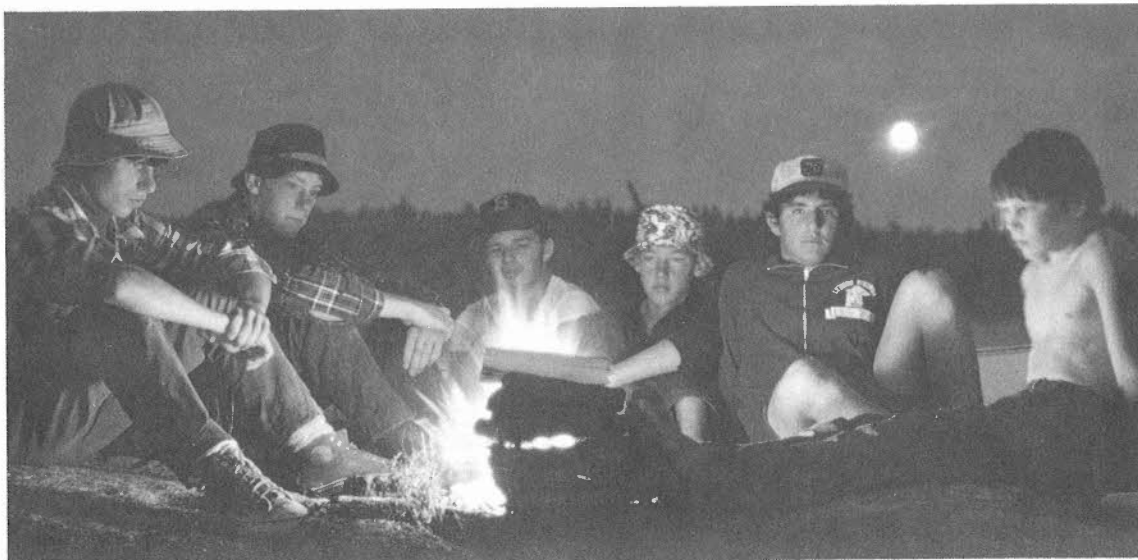
If 1981 and 1985 had been somewhat exciting, 1987 was spiritual. It had been a late farewell to Bathtub and a long time cutting our way through the blowdown on portage two. We arrived at Thunderstorm on a fine, calm evening as the sun was setting. All of us had been there before. As we drew near we saw our five old tent poles stacked neatly against the dominating jack pine—just the way we had left them two years before, and we felt as though they were welcoming us home. In the reds, blues, and purples of the dying day we beheld our old fireplace just as it had always been—a small pile of cut wood nearby. The emotions we felt deep down inside cannot be described. Later, while eating supper in the still darkness, we sat by our tiny fire for the sake of its light, heat, and companionship. Its flickering and crackling cheer made our home all the more special and soothing. We recalled Sigurd Olson's chapter "Campfires" from his famous book, *The Singing Wilderness*. I read from a slip of paper Sigurd's quoting G.M. Trevelyan: "We are literally children of the earth, and removed from her our spirits wither or run to various forms of insanity. Unless we can refresh ourselves at least by intermittent contact with nature, we go awry."

We sat there on the earth of which we were made and felt a great satisfaction to be in such peace and harmony with it. Our bodies were weary, our souls and spirits were refreshed. I added Sigurd's quoting of Thoreau: "In wildness is the salvation of mankind." We looked about us and felt saved. Content.

Paul quoted Sigurd's last paragraph which we knew by heart: "There have been countless campfires, each one different, but some so blended into their backgrounds that it is hard for them to emerge. But I have found that when I catch even a glimmer of their almost forgotten light in the eyes of some friend who has shared them with me, they begin to flame once more. Those old fires have strange and wonderful powers. Even their memories make life the adventure it was meant to be."

We ended our very long, tiring, and fine day with our traditional evening bath, the smooth surface of the lake broken by the splashes which also shattered the stillness of the northern night. It was getting chilly, and we sought the warmth of our friendly blaze. As we dried and had final looks at the brilliant stars, an aurora began. It grew in size, intensity, and complexity until it became one of the best I've seen. We sat down on the rock and gazed wonderingly at the spectacle in the sky—soon comforted by a warm breeze that began blowing in from the south.

Later, as the aurora began to fade, a loon wailed, and the trees on the opposite shore of the little lake took on a ghostly luminescence. We glanced over our shoulders to see the full moon rising—its moonbeams starting to shine through the lacy network of evergreen branches. Several nights prior it had tipped the waves with sparkle during our night crossing of North Caribou. Now it illuminated our little lake and peninsula and filled the night with its magic. Later, dog tired, our souls at peace, feeling a oneness with our beautiful world, we ended our night of mystery—full and overflowing with some of the richest fruits of northern wilderness travel. It had been an experience to linger long in our fondest memories. Yes, Sigurd, it had been a day and a night that made life "the adventure it was meant to be."



*Incineration-Raspberry 1981*

INCINERATION-RASPBERRY PORTAGE

The fire had jumped the river as the saving rains began, and the burn had been splotchy and incomplete. Portage six was different, it was totally incinerated: charred trunks without branches, bushes gone, the ground covered with carbon powder, and the air saturated with the odor of burn. We had grown accustomed to burn and black, but the complete destruction of that once pretty portage left us feeling as if we were in the presence of the dead. My river. My portage. The atmosphere—and our moods—were black.

After a long silence we began to carry. There were no signs that we had ever had a portage route; there couldn't have been. We worked away walking through the warm soot without speaking. Dazed. Depressed. I almost flew out of my skin when a toad jumped across my path. It must have

survived by being in the nearby waterfall at just the right time, and it was searching for food that no longer existed.

Two years later I approached "Incineration Portage" eagerly. Would my land be living again? Indeed it was: grasses and moss, jack pine 30 cm high, poplars as tall as us, and bushes over our heads. In fact, we had a devilish job cutting bush to make a landing and a path up the steep hill. The chainsaw whirred cutting through the corpses of the once living trees, roots burned, fallen in our way. Two additional years and the bushes were twice as thick while the poplars were over our heads. And the raspberries! It was hard getting down to work because of them. We renamed it all: "Raspberry Portage." Nature was slowly healing the wounds of my land.

*Incinerator-Raspberry 1987*



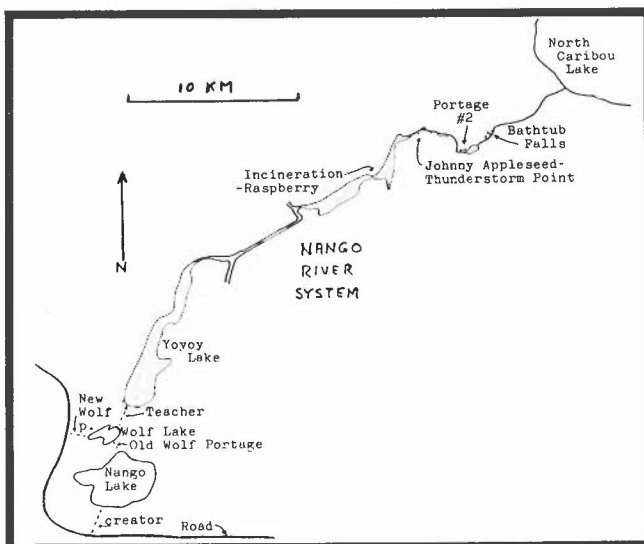
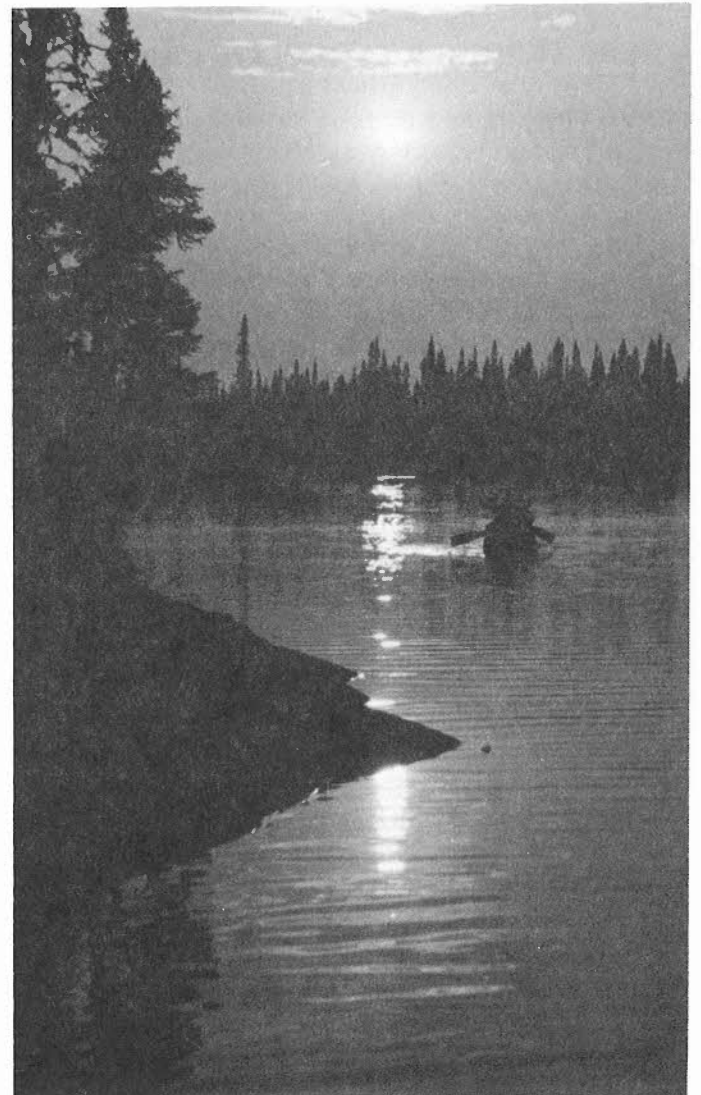
Mid-Nango

Photo by Paul Hietpas

THE TERRIBLE TYRRELL'S TEACHER

(see *Nastawgan*, Spring 1989)

It was necessary on our first (1980) trip to cut a 5.5-km portage from Yoyoy Lake to (my named) Wolf Lake. I had never before cut that long a portage, and the compass seemed wacky, but I followed it rather than my own inclinations, fortunately. It was quite a job 'developing' the thing to which we gave the special name and, at the time, we didn't appreciate the fact that we would never again travel the twisting swamp-ridden route under dry skies. After that first year, approaching the Teacher meant that we were about to be taught what a long, wet portage could be like in the rain. Memories of the Teacher are rich with sog, but character was built, and we were better prepared for what lay ahead.





The 'creator'

Photo by Paul Hietpas

THE TERRIBLE TYRRELL'S CREATOR

Our exit from the bush the first year was hurried. Rains had delayed us, the 'Teacher' and a 1.3-km portage (the 'Wolf' to Nango Lake) had to be cut, leaving us seven working hours to carry 3.5 km from Nango Lake to the road, somehow. Vivid memories! Fortunately, much of the distance involved bushes and young trees, and in our haste we marked most of our route by bending twigs and breaking small tree tops. The uncut route was then followed as best the portager could in the humped footing through thick, foot-tripping low bushes and canoe-stopping high bushes and branches. The day was boiling hot with no water on the road end. Close to dehydration, our lives were saved by finding a little swamp water in a spruce grove about mid-portage, and the blessed spot became known fondly as "The Oasis." The portage received its name, too: "The Terrible Tyrrell's creator."

One half kilometre along the 'creator' on our second year I had the uneasy feeling that we were going in a slightly wrong direction. Furthermore, the blazes I was following were professional, surely not done by the boys. Again the 'Oasis' rescued us. When I spotted its trees from a weird angle I knew what was wrong. I had been following a prospector's trail that had intersected our hard-to-find bent-twig route. We corrected the situation by using some of the "pro's" trail and made some new trail of our own. I didn't find our original route to the 'Oasis.'

In the fall of 1983 I had cut a new portage ("New Wolf") directly westward from Wolf Lake to the road and had used that shorter, easier route with younger boys in 1985. The 1987 voyage was to be my last and the boys were older and more ambitious, so we planned to leave the bush via the

'creator,' the historic and challenging route. The morning we were to move from Wolf Lake to the 'creator' a rain began. Knowing what lay ahead, I began chickening and advised using the 'New Wolf.' Paul would have none of it. I gave in to his desires, knowing he had the right idea anyway.

The instant we finished crossing Nango Lake, all hell broke loose. A cold, rain-laden gale whipped the lake into a raging ocean. We gasped and pushed through the wet bush to erect the tent in near-record time. After hot drinks and finger-warming over the tiny stove, we slopped through the sop to find what we could of the way out. It was a repeat of our 1981 dilemma: fine for the first half kilometre and then again we couldn't find our route, but we did see some new professional blazes. That time they didn't trick me. I searched and searched for my own. The wind blew and the cold rain descended.

Then I found a very old bent twig. Fifteen minutes later, another. And so it went. While Paul was cooling very rapidly in temperature and enthusiasm, I was warming up (enthusiasm only). I was becoming convinced that we were following the old, straight, original (1980) route, and I was oblivious to the cold sog. Suddenly I spotted the 'Oasis' and knew exactly where I was. Joy and satisfaction were mine! We were on the route—and the newer one was coming in but a few metres away. Home again—my old routes, my "portage," my old, dreaded friend. Once back at our tent my enthusiasm drove us right into the stormy lake for a cleansing, bone-crunchingly cold, zesty bath—and hasty retreat.

The next day the refinding work beyond the 'Oasis' was slow but steady, and we eventually gained the top of the route's high hill with all our gear. Before the final descent to the road, we marked the occasion as the custom had developed. At the hilltop we used to pause and look back

physically on the 'creator' and Nango Lake, and also in our minds on the journey just completed. Our minds scanned hundreds of kilometres and 70 portages; the rapids and wades; the headwinds and whitecaps; great heat and our spirited swims; the times of cold and our hot food; the unknowns ahead; our fighting it foot by foot; the lone portages, muskeg, and blowdown; our exhaustion and our comforts; our feelings when we reached our goal, and our pride in having done it. We were conscious of the friendships and camaraderie that had carried us through. We knew we had drunk deeply of the North, and we were full . . . complete.

That last time on the 'creator's' hilltop I additionally looked back on an ending lifetime of boys' trips. I knew that hilltop was the most appropriate place for the final goodbye. I had always preferred untravelled territory, and my Nango had been exactly that.

In travelling my river, the Nango, I experienced many common canoeing joys, satisfactions, and values. But having an intimate wild waterway all my own and developing the first route through, magnified all those rewards. Common experiences were made extremely special by the fact of "private possession." Even now, though my Nango days are over, there are still special memories of a special place—all those memories enhanced by the fact that the Nango was mine.

There are many small rivers in Canada. Some are used, some destroyed, some rather inaccessible, and some undesirable. But there are a number of potential Nangos to be claimed. You can find yours studying the maps. Many Nangos aren't all that far away, the cost to get to them isn't prohibitive, and they don't all have long portages. You won't enjoy the thrill of heavy whitewater or of making an epic journey, but the unique pleasures and satisfactions from canoeing your own river will, in other ways, be just as great. Take your time travelling your Nango. Know it intimately. Experience its personality and varied moods. Soak in all its special features and beauties, and return again and again for new pleasures and to relive fond old memories. Your Nango will thereby enrich your life and help it become "the adventure it was meant to be."

Bob McCoubrie began canoe tripping in Maine and was introduced to Canada by working for Keewaydin. He spent 1960–1987 canoeing untravelled areas in Ontario, and is currently discovering Manitoba's "Land of the Little Sticks" and the tundra. He has lived in Minnesota since 1982.





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

EDITORIAL

After having appeared for most of its sixteen years in the familiar 11x17 tabloid format, our newsletter has now entered a new stage in its existence: a small team of assistant editors is helping the editor in the production process; we've almost completely "gone computer," including electronic typesetting, lay-out, and paste-up; the newsletter is produced in the more convenient 8½x11 magazine format; and it is printed by a company in Metro Toronto.

These changes, which have been implemented over the last year to try to save production time and money, should also make *Nastawgan* an even better conduit for the ideas, ideals, experiences, activities, and opinions of the members of the WCA. But without contributions from *you*, the members, there is no newsletter. So, send us your material (on floppy computer disk and/or typewritten, preferably), and we'll take care of the rest. Please contact me if you have questions.

BOOBOO

Sorry, Glenn! Your photograph on page 8 of the last issue was printed upside down. The printer has been sentenced to cleaning open-fire pots and pans.

THANKS, PAULA

Paula Schimek has announced that she will no longer be able to continue in her capacity as Membership Secretary.

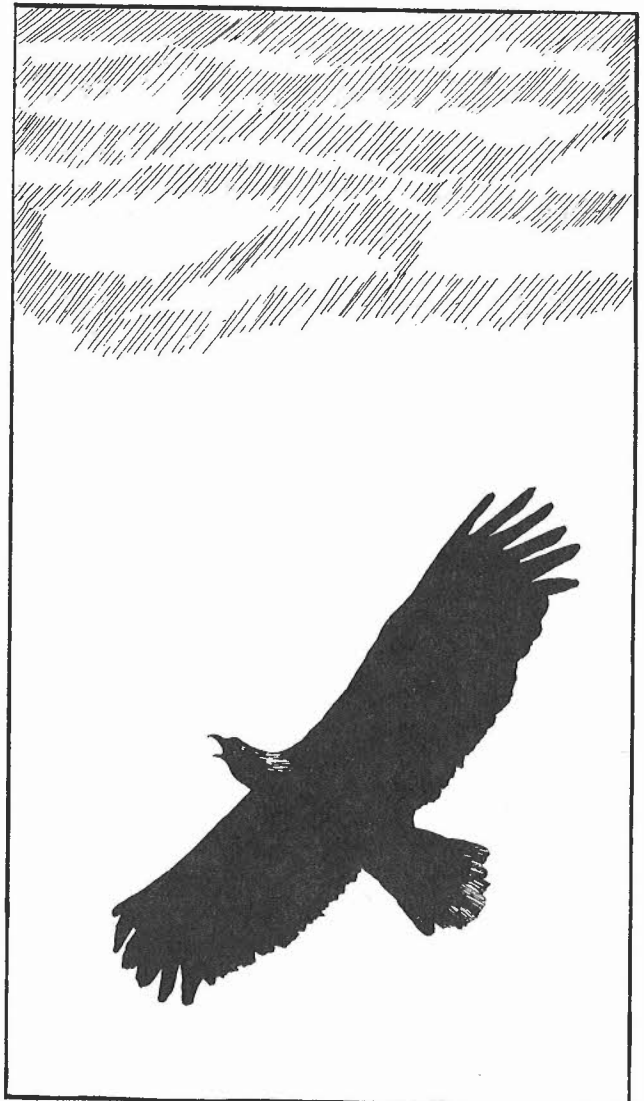
Paula is one of the unsung heroes of the WCA who, from 1979 to 1982 and then again from 1986 to the present, performed a vital behind-the-scenes service to this club, promptly handling membership renewals and inquiries. Often when we received our new membership card there would be a handwritten note from her just to say hello and wish us well in our canoeing adventures. It reminded us that, when we joined the WCA, we became part of a group of kindred spirits—lovers of the canoe and the wilderness, not an impersonal organization.

In the early days of the WCA there was no computer to help Paula. She did all her record keeping manually, and as well frequently would end up doing the newsletter mailings too, with the help of her husband Karl.

We've come a long way since then, largely due to the untiring efforts of Paula and others like her who believe in what the WCA stands for and have made a personal commitment to ensure that we will thrive.

We thank you, Paula, for your very real contribution to the WCA over many years, and we hope that on all your canoeing adventures in the years to come you will enjoy tail winds and sunny skies.

Bill Ness, Vice-Chairman



Pat

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

What a pleasant experience it has been being Chairman of the WCA. My fellow directors have been so extraordinarily capable and helpful and our other officers so willing and competent that one hardly noticed the few glitches that did arise, so smoothly and expertly were they handled. One must not, however, get the idea that all is beer and skittles. With growth (over 10% in the past year) comes more work in operating the organization, yet there has been no corresponding increase in members volunteering to help out. At some point this trend must reverse itself if the WCA is to survive its own success.

Look for a moment at the list of WCA contacts on the back page of *Nastawgan*. They are familiar names not because they are long-time members (which they are) but because they do most of the work from organizing trips to writing articles for the newsletter. In short, they carry the burden for the rest of us. I can assure you that they enjoy doing it but I can also assure you that they would not go kicking and screaming out of office if someone else volunteered to do their job. I know of nothing that brings greater joy to an old WCA member than a new volunteer.

Specifically, we have a serious problem in finding a Chairman for our Conservation Committee. Diane Hamilton stepped into the position when it became vacant and has done a splendid job while serving on the Board, organizing the Fall Party, and helping with just about everything else. It is unrealistic and unfair to expect her to continue with such a

burden. If I have to tell you how important this committee is to the WCA, then you are probably in the wrong organization! Virtually every member responding to our membership survey supported increased activity in conservation issues, and yet the burden of doing the work continues to fall upon those who already are heavily laden. I find this very disquieting.

Four times a year Toni has to beat the bushes for people to write articles for *Nastawgan*. One would think he would have more than he could handle given the passion members have for talking about their trips. Now, if they could only write as well as they talk. . . .

And, of course, there can never be enough trip organizers. Exploratory trips have become a rarity and I was astounded to see only nine winter trips in the Winter '89 *Nastawgan*, all but one of which were being run by the same old crowd. (Nice people, I know, but still the same old crowd.)

Meanwhile, the debate over our current and future direction as an organization continues. Unfortunately this debate has taken on the appearance of a private conversation as few members seem willing to become involved. We *are* changing, in size and composition. We can drift into the future and accept the consequences or learn a few control strokes and choose our own course. Whatever the future holds, it would be nice to say, for better or worse, "That's how we planned it" rather than, "I don't know what went wrong."

John Winters

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The future belongs to specialization, not generalization. The WCA does not need the fad-oriented member that has overwhelmed other sports associations which have turned "popularist." *Nastawgan* should not try to compete with glossy canoe magazines supported by advertisers' money.

If the "Wilderness Canoe Association" is to live up to its name, then it is about wilderness. Popularist canoe associations' emphasis on the latest equipment and "improved" camp sites with latrines and bar-b-que grates are incompatible with "wilderness."

Trying to cover a "broad range of canoe activities" will destroy the WCA, in my opinion. Thank God for *Nastawgan* and its first-person wilderness articles; it is uniquely Canadian and we should be proud of it. The day I see a *Nastawgan* article on disposable diapers is the day I cancel my WCA membership.

John Mackie

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Two cheers for Sandy Richardson in his plea for WCA to emphasize the W(ilderness) in its name instead of continuing its shift toward becoming the R(ecreational) Canoe Association (*Nastawgan*, Winter 1989).

Wilderness offers WCA a unique role that is not being filled by other groups and, as indicated by the article on the Spanish River in the last issue and Denison Falls in this one, a role that desperately needs to be picked up.

Why then do I give Sandy only two cheers? It is because I fear that WCA will shift to the other pole and define "wilderness" too narrowly. Trips to Labrador and the Arctic are wonderful and exciting, but there is lots of wilderness that is more accessible, less expensive, and not so demanding of strength and skill.

By all means, let's regain a focus on wilderness, but let's also remember that one of the blessings of living in Canada is the variety of wilderness experiences open to us, and none is more valid than any other.

David B. Brooks

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sadness and thankfulness were the emotions I felt on reading the article "Delusions" by John Winters in the Winter '89 *Nastawgan*. I've spent much of a lifetime seeking (and finding) untravelled canoe country in the near North—long-unused portages or none at all, virgin campsites, and no-one else for many miles. Each time, within a few years, the sportsmen have arrived, toileting the only tent sites, burning the tent poles, and littering the virgin beaches with foot-slitting busted liquor bottles . . . even plundering a food cache. Each time I've moved further on, and had to move again. One such area was that travelled by Mr. Winters. On my first (32-day) trip there in '72 I saw two other people. It might seem that the NWT is the answer for the wilderness seekers, but at a recent symposium on canoeing that area the word from those who know is: "Better do it quickly; it's going . . . going . . ."

The reason for my feeling sad is obvious—but why thankful? I recently read Archie Hunter's *Northern Trader* and P.G. Downes' *Sleeping Island*. Both authors spoke of the "old North" (far North) and were thankful for having been amongst the last whites to experience it. I'm envious. But I'm thankful! Apparently I'm one of the last to have experienced some of the near North before it disappears forever before the onslaught of the population bomb. How nice. Lucky me. But what about future generations? Sportsmen (who have as much right to it as I) desecrate the spiritual, but they do not destroy the material—lumbering and mining do.

In the same issue of *Nastawgan* were the facts of the destruction of Algonquin Park. Last summer I revisited the unique and priceless Canadian heritage area known as Temagami and learned of the destruction in progress

there—some legal and the rest done when no-one is watching. Neither the government nor the MNR have the souls of future generations in mind. They are good businessmen thinking only in terms of present material profit. If some citizens in Minnesota could win preservation of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (yes, its heavily used, it isn't true wilderness, but most of what's left *is* preserved—with constant battles), shouldn't Brian Back's Temagami Wilderness Society and the cheated Teme-Augama nation have all possible support for the sake of future Canadian Generations? Sandy Richardson wrote (same issue): "We now have a Conservation Committee in name only." Glenn Spence wrote in his platform statement: "Conservation activities on the part of the WCA must be increased."

In effect, Algonquin is really all but gone, isn't it? And the Ontario Government is spending vast quantities of taxpayer's money for nice studies done by very nice people in the Temagami area—while legal and illegal destruction continues right along. If an association is a *wilderness* association, should they be sitting by on their paddles while this happens? What desirable wilderness will the members' grandchildren have? What will future writers for *Nastawgan* have to write about? At the rate it's all going, they will only be able to write book reports on how it seemed to have been with their pioneer grandparents back around 1990.

Wilderness-loving people are a small minority, but you should see the masses of minority enjoying the BWCA! Don't future Canadians deserve just as much for their souls as Minnesotans? Considering how many Americans use Canada, I think Canadians deserve lots more! Meanwhile . . . it's going . . . going . . .

Bob McCoubrie



NEWS BRIEFS

NASTAWGAN MATERIAL AND DEADLINE Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think might be of interest to other readers, are needed for future issues. Submit your contributions preferably on floppy computer disks and/or in typewritten form; contact the editor for more information. Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue: Summer 1990 *deadline date:* 6 May 1990
Autumn 1990 12 August 1990

WCA MEMBERSHIP LISTS are available to any members who wish one for personal, non-commercial use. Send two dollars in bills (no cheques, please!) to: Cash Belden, 77 Huntley Street, Apt. 1116, Toronto, M4Y 2P3.

CRCA PHOTO COMPETITION The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association presents *The Nikon Canadian Canoe Photograph Contest*. The five categories are: canoeing skills, natural environment, heritage, wildlife, people and canoes/kayaks. Entries should be submitted to the CRCA before 21 September 1990, 5:00 p.m. The contest is open to anyone who wishes to enter, and many prizes are made available to the winners. For more information contact CRCA in Hyde Park, Ontario; tel. (519) 473-2109.

WILDERNESS ADVENTURE CONFERENCE will be held at Simon Fraser University on 17-19 November 1990. It is aimed at those interested in learning about how to organize, lead, or simply choose a wilderness expedition. Contact: Mary Day, Capilano College, 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver, B.C. V7J 3H5; tel. (604) 986-1911.

STIKINE RIVER A plan to manage the lower Stikine River in British Columbia for a variety of uses was approved by the Environment and Land Use Committee of Cabinet in May 1989. Road building, timber harvesting, and mineral exploration and development will be permitted along the



HELP WANTED

Transportation needed for myself and my canoe from Toronto to the vicinity of Lynn Lake, Manitoba. Departure, end of June. Will share driving and expenses. Please contact Bob Dion in Toronto at (416) 481-1347 (h) or (416) 469-8112 (b).

river, which has been widely acknowledged for its spectacular scenic, wilderness, and recreational values. The approved plan makes no mention of a recreation corridor. Copies of the "Lower Stikine Management Plan" are available from: Ministry of Forests, Prince Rupert Regional Office, Bag 5000, Smithers, B.C. V0J 2N0.

PUKASKWA PARK Your comments and suggestions regarding the Pukaskwa National Park Management Plan Review would be greatly appreciated. For your Management Plan Review Newsletter contact: Mike Murphy, Superintendent, Pukaskwa National Park, Hwy. 627, Hattie Cove via Heron Bay, Marathon, ON., P0T 1R0; tel. (807) 229-0801.

DUMOINE RIVER The Quebec Provincial Department of Cultural Affairs has approved a three-year study of the history of the Dumoine River Valley and the Island of Des Joachimes, Quebec. Wally Schaber, a long-time guide for whitewater canoeists on the Dumoine and an amateur historian for the area, is appealing to local sources for help in preparing the modern history of the area. If you have something useful to offer, contact: Wally Schaber, Trail Head, 1341 Wellington St., Ottawa, Ont., K1Y 3B8; tel. (613) 722-4229.

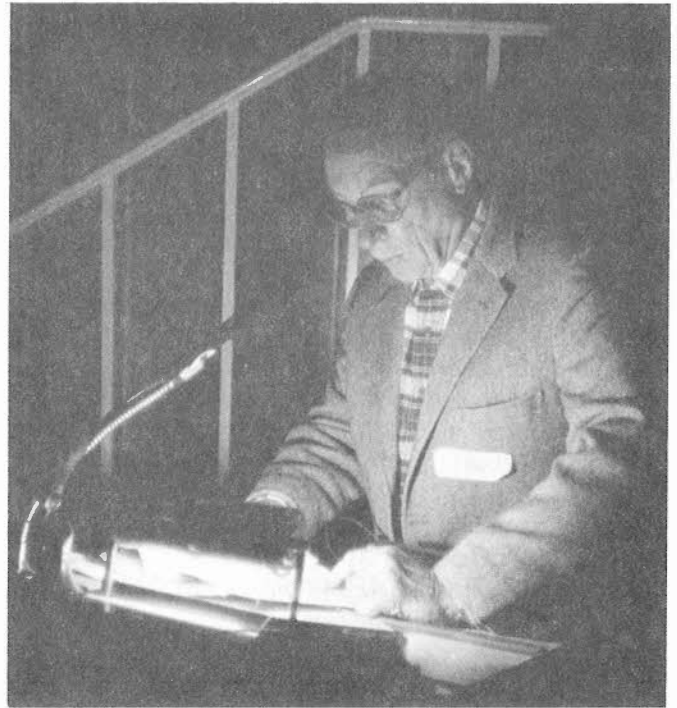
MISSINAIBI PROVINCIAL PARK A management plan is being prepared for Missinaibi Provincial Park, a wilderness waterway in northeastern Ontario stretching 501 kilometres from south to north. In April 1990, the Ministry of Natural Resources will be releasing the next document in the planning program entitled, "Missinaibi Provincial Park: Proposed Zoning and Policy Options." A detailed questionnaire will accompany the document to assist participants in responding. In May, the Ministry is planning to hold open houses in Chapleau, Mattice, Kapuskasing, Moosonee, and Toronto. Ministry staff will also meet with any groups wishing to have a presentation and discussion about the contents of the document. WCA members are encouraged to get involved in the process. Interested persons may have their name added to the Ministry's mailing list to receive this next document by contacting: Dan Paleczny, Planning Team Chairman, Ministry of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 3000, Cochrane, Ontario P0L 1C0; tel. (705) 272-7037; fax 272-5477.

POLAR BEAR PARK long-term management plan was approved in 1980 and is now undergoing a review to assist the relevance of the directions established at that time. This spring, the Ministry will be conducting a public review of background information, issues and options, and the Park goal. Interested persons may have their name added to the mailing list to receive further information by contacting: Dan Paleczny (see above item, Missinaibi, for address).

LABRADOR SYMPOSIUM

More than 600 enthusiastic wilderness lovers gave George Luste a standing ovation at the end of this smoothly organized meeting, presented in Toronto on 26 and 27 January. And well he, and his dedicated team, deserved it. Again everybody present enjoyed a marvelous feast of stories, pictures, information, and discovery, all taking place in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Many well-known personalities were evident among the presenters and audience, with Elliott Merrick, the author of *True North*, very much the soul of the party. The following presentations were made:

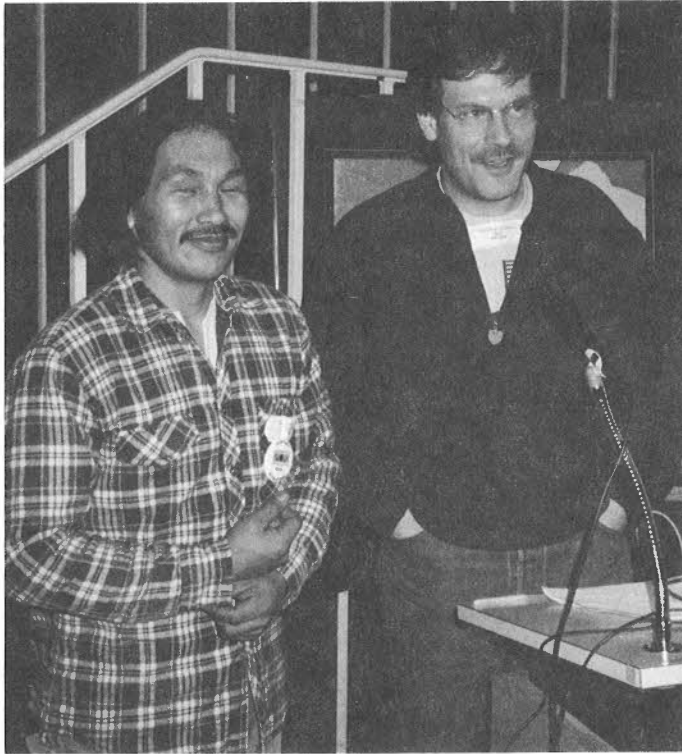
- Labrador landscapes (Herb Pohl)
- Historical perspectives (Stephen Loring)
- True North remembered (Elliott Merrick)
- Naskaupi trip in '68 (movie) (Dick Irwin)
- Great Heart (James Davidson)
- Mrs. Hubbard's Labrador (Judith Niemi)
- Canoeing in Labrador (Stewart Coffin)
- Coastal perspectives (Tony Oppersdorff)
- Notakwanon River (Caroline Tennent)
- Mealy Mountains and North River (Huw Jenkins)
- Family on the Uqjoktok (Barry May)
- Faces of the winter sun (Garrett and Alexandra Conover)
- Snowshoes across Labrador (Pat Lewtas)
- Through artist's eyes (Bill Ritchie)
- Kajarijaga (Gilbert Hay)
- Northern Labrador by canoe (George Luste)
- Solo kayak, Ungava to Nain (Carl Schoch)
- Tornat visitations (Ray Chipeniuk)
- Northern soliloquies (Robert Perkins)



Time and enthusiasm willing we hope to keep this annual WCA event going in the future. Next year, the geographical focus will be on the High Arctic, rivers that flow into the northern Arctic Ocean and beyond. If you have any suggestions for speakers, please contact George Luste in Toronto at (416) 534-9313.



LOW-LEVEL MILITARY FLYING ACTIVITIES



The following is the essence of a letter initiated by the organizers of the recent Labrador Symposium, and signed by many of those present at that meeting on 26 and 27 January. It was sent by George Luste to Dr. David Barnes, Chairman of the Environmental Assessment Panel, Review of Military Flying Activities in Labrador and Quebec, as well as to Prime Minister B. Mulroney, Hon. J. Turner, Hon. A. McLaughlin, and The Globe and Mail.

“Low-level military flying activities in Labrador and eastern Quebec are incompatible with wilderness preservation. We object to this short-sighted assault on our environment. Please terminate it.

“We, the undersigned, are attendees at the “Labrador Canoeing and Wilderness Symposium” in Toronto. Most of us who have been privileged to visit the unspoiled rivers and coastline of Labrador, cannot comprehend the present practice. The shriek of an unexpected jet is an unforgettable and horrific shock to any visitor who has come to Labrador to enjoy and respect the quiet, natural solitude of its wilderness.

“Please, please stop destroying that which we have gathered together this weekend to celebrate.”

(218 signatures)

WCA'S FUTURE

The following is a letter received by Sandy Richardson as a reaction to his article on the future of the WCA, published in the Winter 1989 issue of *Nastawgan*.

Dear Sandy:

I cannot help but comment on your recent superb article in *Nastawgan* with which I couldn't agree more. In the way of a point of reference: I've canoed Ontario (and a few other places) since 1955, moved to Minnesota from New England in 1982, joined the Minnesota Canoe Association two years ago and the WCA just a year ago. My prime interest is the wilderness, not the canoe.

After two years with the MCA I might conclude that the MCA is everything to everybody. On closer consideration, the truth might be more that it is something to everybody—and very little to the wilderness lover. The monthly publication is full of racing statistics, building tips, ads, calendar events, and odds and ends. The membership voted something like a 6% interest in trip reports—*any* trip. I find I really have nothing in common with the other people of the loose organization and see little sense in continued membership. (There are a small number of individuals who travel the NWT, and while at my age and financial state I cannot match their adventures, nevertheless I find myself of the same spirit as they.)

In my opinion, there are common grounds amidst the canoe builders, racers, day and weekend paddlers, and rapids runners. But, again in my opinion, the *wilderness* canoeists have little in common with the others. By now (five issues of *Nastawgan*) I've noted the fact of the increasing dilution in the WCA in the original wilderness orientation. It is a dilution of spiritual things with superficial fun-first and artful expression things (which certainly have their place and their values). This disturbs me, and I'm not even an old-timer (in the WCA).

Considering my observations of the MCA, I really wish the WCA would split into two groups with the non-wilderness group not using the word “wilderness” in their title and the wilderness group not being diluted.

Permit me a final opinion. A wilderness group should have two equally important objectives: (1) sharing of wilderness experience and inspiration, and (2) efforts to preserve what little can be preserved for future generations. There may not be many of these yet to come, but as many as there are ought to have a little sanity-preserving wilderness left for the needs of their souls. *They are going to need it far more than we do now!*

Thank you for your splendid article. I hope there is positive action on it.

Bob McCoubrie

HALLOWEEN IN THE DEAD ZONE

Richard Culpeper

Imagine paddling across three drainage systems and two geological provinces. Imagine 70-metre lookouts, steep rock walls, sand dunes, and marshes. Then squeeze your trip into less than 16 kilometres and keep it within municipal boundaries. Sounds good? Now imagine a chemical desert, and run your route through the worst of it. Trick or treat!

I spent the last weekend of October kayaking through the Dead Zone south of Coniston, Ontario. I wanted to see the effects of 10 million tons of sulfur dioxide. In addition to effluent from several other smelting operations in the region, smelting operations in Coniston emitted over 200,000 tons of sulfur dioxide per year between 1913 and 1972. The resultant acid rain, coupled with heavy metal particulate fallout, killed much of the surrounding area.

My late afternoon put-in was below the Coniston Generating Station, at the confluence of Coniston Creek and the Wanapitei River. The station is one of Ontario's oldest. It was built in 1905 by the Wanapitei Power Company as one of three stations on the Wanapitei River. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission (later Ontario Hydro) purchased the Wanapitei Power Company in 1930, and is still operating the stations. The Coniston dam was replaced in 1938, but the stone powerhouse looks the same now as it did eighty years ago.

Before setting off, I climbed a 60-metre hill west-southwest of the put-in. From its peak I looked west over the Coniston heap roasting beds, remnants of Mond Nickel Company operations. In the early part of the century, alchemists proffered burnt offerings to the gods. In return, they magically received ore which they could smelt. The process involved the sorcery of fire and brimstone. The alchemists laid down 40 rows of cordwood, dead pine, and tinder, each row 40 metres long by 11 metres wide by 30 to 45 cm deep. Then they laid almost 2000 tons of coarse ore onto each row, and buried each pile with 1000 tons of fine ore. Next, they

lit the tinder. The wood burned for about 60 hours, but the brimstone continued to burn slowly for 3 to 4 months while the gods reduced the smoking pyres. Shades of transmutation? No, but the burning brimstone was rather noxious. It killed most plant and aquatic life downwind. Shades of Hades.

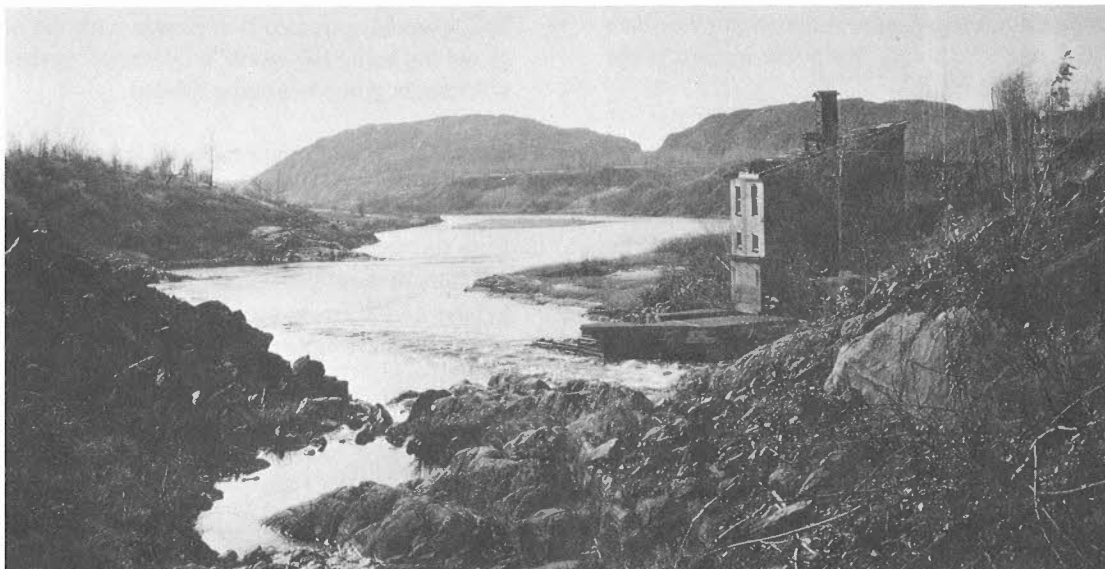
The first leg of my trip was down the Wanapitei to the outflow of Alice Lake. For the first kilometre, 60-metre walls of magmatic gneiss rose above me. The rock was 0.9 to 2.5 billion years old, and had been turned black in the last 80.

One kilometre south of the put-in, a CN bridge crosses a narrowing in the channel. There were noisy, very short class I rapids under the bridge running directly into the culvert and weir of the Coniston smelter's pumphouse. The pumphouse was built by INCO in 1958 and closed in 1974, but the ruins still make a nasty, but easily avoidable, obstacle. Keep to the left of this legacy, especially in high water.

After the pumphouse, the channel widens and drops sediments onto its banks and shoals. One kilometre downstream of the pumphouse I passed under two major Ontario Hydro transmission lines. The river enters a flood plain and begins to meander. The soil is extremely sandy, but scrubby maple, aspen, and oak are holding their own.

Halfway through the second 180 degree bend, I paddled up a small channel on river right to an abandoned bridge foundation. The bridge is part of an old tote road from Coniston to Dill Siding. There was almost no trace of the road. If the bridge foundation had not remained, I would have mistaken the small dike for an old beaver dam.

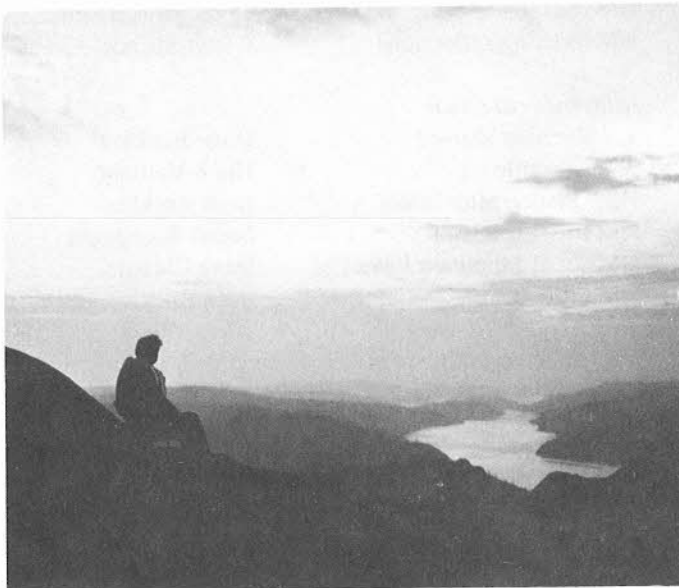
The stream up to Alice Lake was too low to navigate and was surrounded by marsh, so I portaged north through small sand dunes to a small unnamed lake that was just deep enough to float my boat. I followed beaver canals west to a



beaver dam, and portaged north through an oak thicket and then west over a hill to Alice Lake.

Alice Lake runs north for almost two kilometres. There is a lot of glacial till in the hills surrounding its southern half. The acid precipitation and heavy metal particulate fallout denuded much of the area. This led to massive erosion. Now, the lake is milky with suspended clay.

A small flock of seagulls was perched on an island in north Alice Lake. The north shore is rimmed with cattails. Beyond them towers the Coniston slag heap: one square kilometre, up to 50 metres high. I was directly in front of the face, so I could not accurately judge the slope. My guess was 40 degrees. From the northwest bay of Alice Lake, I portaged to Baby Lake. The portage landscape was extremely odd. Baby Lake originally drained through the southwest into Daisy Lake. In 1909, CP's rail bed diked the outflow. Since then, Baby Lake has drained northwest into Alice Lake, which has left part of Baby Lake's original lake bed exposed. There is little soil in the drainage basin, and what remains is acidified and contaminated by metal particulate. Nothing grows on the portage. Quite eerie.



Since 1972, when INCO's Coniston smelting operations ceased, Baby Lake has begun to recover. Its pH has risen from 4.05 to 5.8, and the metal levels have declined 60 to 90%, with the strongest rates of decline in the most extant metals, nickel and copper. To date, the recovery has not included life. Can you say phytotoxic? Too big a word? Then just chant fire and brimstone.

The 500-metre carry between Baby and Daisy lakes starts with a 30-metre-high CP rail causeway. Water draining northeast off the causeway into Baby Lake flows into Georgian Bay via the Wanapitei and French rivers. Water draining southwest off the causeway flows into Georgian Bay via the Whitefish River. Bedrock to the northwest is part of the Southern Province, which is relatively unmetamorphosed rock. Bedrock to the southeast is part of the Grenville Province, which is primarily highly metamorphosed rock. The Grenville Front and a local fault run up the middle of Daisy and Baby lakes. The rail cut at

the north end of the causeway is through wanapitei quartzite, while the cut at the south end is through quartz monzonite. Quite an intersection. Too bad it's sterile.

I left my boat on the causeway and scrambled another 30 metres up the quartz monzonite to watch the sun set. The view to the south was exceptional, for the topography was rugged indeed. Once the sun went down, I finished the portage and set up camp beside Daisy Lake, at the head of the wide canyon which the portage had followed.

The next morning, after breaking camp, I paddled southwest down Daisy Lake for two kilometres. The water was turquoise, due to the lake's high acidity. At the southwest end of the lake, I portaged west-northwest out of the Dead Zone for one kilometre over a couple of 25-metre ridges where a link between Highways 69 and 17 is being proposed. Water from the lake I was portaging to eventually flows into Georgian Bay via the Vermilion and Spanish rivers. Unfortunately, the lake turned out to be a beaver marsh, which presented a problem. Portaging around it would have added another kilometre over rugged territory, so I tried poling across while sitting up on the back deck with one leg tucked underneath me. The extra leverage this position afforded made poling through the mat possible, but only just. The poling was extremely slow, and raised vile smelling gas. Several times, I found myself literally bogged down while methane and odorous hydrogen sulfide bubbled around me. Quite a difference from the sterile lakes in the Dead Zone.

After crossing the marsh on a more or less west-northwest line, I portaged west-southwest for half a kilometre to Perch Lake. The put-in was delightful! I carried through tall reed grass until I found a beaver trail, and then followed the trail until it lowered and widened into a canal. I poled down the canal until it opened up into the lake.

Perch Lake is about one quarter of a square kilometre, so the paddle west across it was too brief. A small flock of ducks rose as I approached the lake's outflow, which was blocked by a marsh. I paddled north, up the west bank, until I came to a large beaver canal running west. It was three metres wide, ran straight as an arrow for over 200 metres, and was dotted with beaver and muskrat lodge entrances. Mondo condo. The channel ended at a beaver dam just a few metres from the western arm of Lake Laurentian, which was exactly where I wanted to go. Beavers never cease to amaze me.

I surprised a family of homo sapiens when I hauled over the dam. They were quite lost, and were heading directly away from where they thought they were going. After turning them around, I paddled out into the main channel of Lake Laurentian and followed it north-northwest for one kilometre to a 30-metre wanapitei quartzite ridge, where I took out at the Nickel District Conservation Area nature chalet. A few minutes later the lost family happily wandered in.

While I was loading my boat onto Rocinante, a friend from the local cross-country ski set asked me where a nice place to walk was. After thinking about how alive Perch and Laurentian lakes were when compared to Alice, Baby, and Daisy lakes of the Dead Zone, I pointed to where the lost family had emerged. Trick or treat? You tell me.



SCENTED POND LILY
Isabel Boardman
(First Prize, Flora)

WCA PHOTO CONTEST

A total of 81 photographs (60 slides and 21 prints) were entered in the 1990 competition by 13 members. The judges were Roger Harris and Sandy Richardson.

THE WINNERS ARE:

flora

- 1. Scented pond lily
- 2. Backlit cedar
- HM Oyster mushroom
- HM Coral fungus

Isabel Boardman
Chris Motherwell
Paul Siwy
Paul Siwy

fauna

- 1. Goldfinch
- HM Kasakokwog turtle
- HM Frog on log

Chris Motherwell
Dave Buckley
Chris Motherwell

wilderness

- 1. Web and grass
- 2. Perfect evening
- HM Spring rapid
- HM Ice falls
- HM Evening reflections

Chris Motherwell
Glenn Spence
Dave Buckley
Chris Motherwell
Glenn Spence

wilderness and man

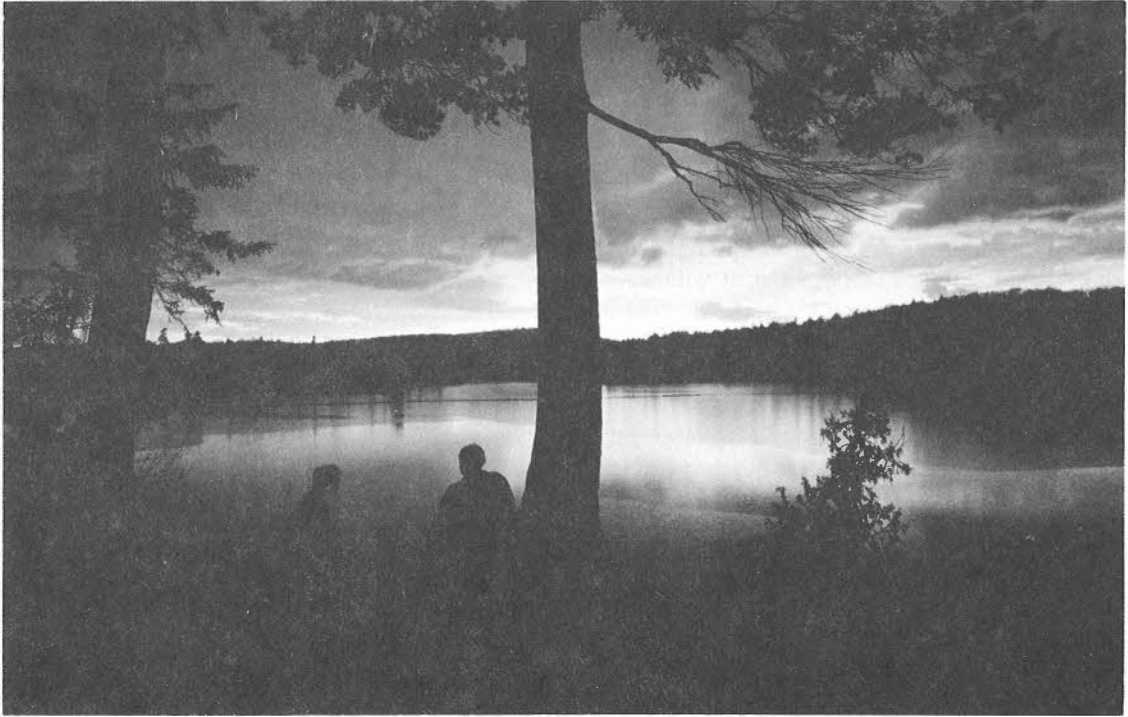
- 1. Evening shower
- 2. - no title -
- HM Quetico after hours
- HM Bustard Island
- HM Great Mountain Lake
- HM Early start

Dave Buckley
Hugh Valliant
Beth Buckley
Isabel Boardman
Irene Christie
Beth Buckley

The prizes (enlargements of the winning photographs for numbers one and two, and Certificates of Merit for all placed entries) were presented at the WCA Annual General Meeting in February. The seven photographs selected as one and two are published in black and white throughout this issue of *Nastawgan*. A selection from the Honorable Mentions and the remaining entries will be presented in future issues.



WEB AND GRASS
Chris Motherwell
(First prize, Wilderness)



EVENING SHOWER—Dave Buckley
(First prize, Wilderness and Man)



no title—Hugh Valliant
(Second prize, Wilderness and Man)



GOLDFINCH—Chris Motherwell
(First prize, Fauna)

ICE-OUT IN THE NORTH KAWARTHAS

Will Bartlett

25 April I was not disappointed as I rounded the final bend in the access road off Highway 28. Long Lake stretched to the west, still crowned with a stubborn layer of winter ice, but along its north shore there wound a narrow channel of open water. Ice-out is a magical time of year; the silence over the lake is expectant with the coming spring. I relished the six-kilometre trip up the lake, skirting the edge of the ice, poking at it with my paddle to watch it splinter into crystalline slivers which quickly disappeared in the warming water. Swallows, chickadees, woodpeckers, and mallards greeted me along the shore while in the bush the ruffed grouse were drumming. A lone turkey vulture followed my progress from its aerie on the bluff above the lake.

The narrows at the end of Long Lake were clear of ice and I guided the 17-ft Grumman through them into Loucks Lake. The east half of Loucks was open and a light breeze teased it into ripples. Winter still held the west end. As I reached our cottage dock the sun broke through the clouds and a west wind rose, driving the ice to the east end of the lake, and cutting me off from "civilization." That afternoon I hurried through the usual tasks of opening the cottage. The wind direction changed often, grinding the ice floe against one shore, then the other. The ice moaned with the labor pains of spring.

26 April I rose at dawn to find that at some pivotal moment in the night the ice had vanished and spring had been born. My old 14-ft cedarstrip canoe was coaxed from storage and by 8 a.m. I was loaded and blissfully paddling west to the first portage on a 60-km loop of the lakes and creeks of the North Kawarthas, north-northeast of Peterborough, Ontario.

I entered Deer Bay Creek at the south end of Stoplog Lake. The water level was unexpectedly low and several rapids which should have been runnable had to be portaged. The upper reaches of this creek are through beautiful Shield country. Apparently it is not travelled often and the portages and campsites are not marked and are little used.

Downstream of the junction with Buzzard Creek the shoreline changes from rock and white pines to sand and swamp ash. The floodplain is broad and flat and heavily wooded. It seemed to close in around me and the creek became a tunnel. The numerous logjams were a nuisance. The creek's water flowed fast and clear and in the deep pools in the sandy bottom I watched muskies spawning. Navigation ended abruptly at the delta of the creek. Rocks, sand, logs, and other debris had accumulated to the point that the flow was split into a dozen separate channels. I chose the wrong one. Much later my search for enough water to float the canoe in ended as the channels rejoined before tumbling into the head of Deer Bay Reach in Lower Buckhorn Lake. I portaged the last set of rapids due to the low water level and entered the Trent Canal System. A west wind had risen and my weary shoulders thanked it for its help. At the 20-km mark I made camp on Wolf Island in Lovesick Lake. In the twilight as the bannock baked, ducks and herons glided into the bays to rest for the night, and a beaver passed my camp on his way to work.

27 April In spite of the ring around the moon last night, the dawn was clear. The first portage of the day came at Burleigh Falls on Highway 28. I followed the locks, passing quietly under the Highway bridge and into Stoney Lake. Along the



north shore the cottages did not seem to be as numerous as the topo map had led me to believe. Of course most were quiet and empty and did not intrude upon my solitude. The MNR had rigged several fish traps along my route. My curiosity led me to investigate their inmates which appeared to be either young muskies or pickerel. They would probably be tagged and then released. I paddled on.

Early in the afternoon, as a light rain fell, I bid farewell to Stoney Lake and paddled upstream into Eels Creek. Distant noises faded away as I left the cottages behind and headed for High Falls. The film, "The Teaching Rocks," shown at the WCA symposium a few months earlier in January, had suggested a connection between High Falls and the petroglyphs north of Stoney Lake. Recalling the eerie reverence that I had felt when I first viewed the petroglyphs many years previous, I now approached High Falls.

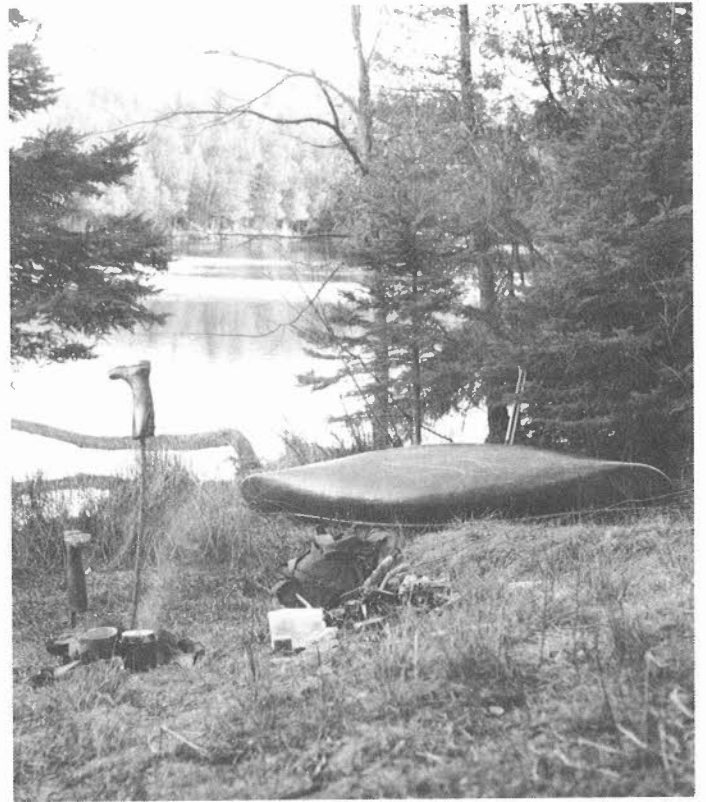
I was not prepared for the litter of the many campsites, nor the vandalized outhouses, but the beauty and power of High Falls forced such desecrations into relative insignificance. As I slid my old cedarstrip canoe into the waters above the falls, the sun broke through the clouds. I hoped that it was a sign that the spirits were pleased with my solitary quest. I spent the rest of the afternoon exploring the region upstream of the falls.

28 April I rose with the dawn and shook the frost from the tent fly. Wearing all my clothes I paddled further upstream. At the first set of rapids I surprised a young otter who snorted his disgust at my arrival and quickly departed. The current increased and it was a steady paddle to the falls at Haultain. An easy portage along the Haultain Road led me to Big Cedar Lake and familiar territory. Big Cedar was glassy calm and the sun warmed my back as I leisurely practiced various paddle strokes on my westward journey. Unimpressed by my presence, a pair of loons swam and fished as I crossed their bay.

At the end of Big Cedar I found a snowmobile trail across the marsh to Coon Lake. The trail turned out to be 70% water too shallow to float the canoe in, with the remaining 30% being muck and unstable hummocks. Somehow I managed to remain relatively dry. From Coon Lake my journey took me over several portages and small lakes to Shark Lake. There I spent some time fishing and revisiting the lake which I had not seen for many years. A fire had recently swept across the south shore of the lake. I noted that the burned area included a campsite and wondered if a campfire had been the source of the blaze. Across the lake, a trapper's cabin had been burned a few years back, purportedly by canoeists/campers. That cabin had been a symbol of a gentler time. It was never locked and when I was lost in the bush 20 years ago, I found refuge there. The trappers have built a new cabin further down the lake in a more secluded spot. The door is fitted with a heavy hasp and padlock.

Late in the afternoon I shouldered my pack and canoe and started across the portage into Cadge Lake. The winter frost had heaved and loosened the soil on the trail and I realized that the tracks I was leaving were the first of the year.

In the canoe once again with no wind and the spring sun striving to banish any memory of winter, all was right in the world. Approaching the end of my journey, I slowed my pace and enjoyed the ecstasy of a leisurely paddle. A sudden splash jarred me from my daydreaming. A little ways ahead a white-tail deer was swimming from the shore to an island. When it reached the island it turned its ears like radar dishes towards me. Although I tried to remain motionless as I drifted towards the island, the deer bounded out of sight. I paddled frantically to catch up with it at the far end of the island and amazingly we both reached it at the same time. The deer made it quite obvious that it had not expected to see me again and leaped into the water not far from my bow, swam to the nearby shore, and quickly disappeared into the bush.



The afternoon was fading into twilight as I crossed the final portage into Long Lake. Just a few days before, I had been skirting the edge of the ice on this familiar lake. Now, although the air was cool and the trees were not yet in bud, the unmistakable promise of summer had broken winter's siege. A large beaver had felled a poplar tree at the shore and was busy feeding. As I approached, he fled to the safety of the lake and slapped his tail on the surface. I followed him hoping to get a good photo of him slapping the water again. I only succeeded in harassing him and his raspy snarls made it clear that he was not in a mood for posing for nosey tourists.

A bank of clouds was threatening in the west as I reached our cottage dock on Loucks Lake, and within an hour a cold front had swept in with high winds and falling temperatures. A fitting end to a satisfying solo trip.

DENISON FALLS UNDER THREAT

David B. Brooks

It would have to be a new member of the WCA that has not seen one or more of the late Bill Mason's films on canoeing. And almost everyone of those films had some sequence showing Bill paddling, swimming, or just relaxing near a beautiful falls. (He was a terrible ham in front of the lens.)

Bill was careful never to mention where that falls was located, save that it was on the North Shore of Lake Superior. Well, the secret is out; it is Denison Falls on the Dog (formerly the University) River, just east of Pukaskwa National Park.

Now Great Lakes Power Limited would like to dam Denison Falls!

In an effort to block the proposed power development, a group called Friends of Bill Mason (organized by Wally Schaber of Trail Head) has taken up the issue. Letters of opposition should be sent to the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, Lyn McLeod (99 Wellesley Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3), and to Hugh L. Harris, President of GLPC (Box 100, Sault Ste.-Marie, Ontario P6A 5L4). But first some facts.

The Falls as a Hydro Site

GLPC is an independent power corporation that supplies electricity to the region around the Sault (including Algoma Steel and St. Mary's Paper), with a total population of 100,000. The firm already has dams on other rivers in the region, including the Montreal and the Magpie, which give the company a total capacity in years of normal rainfall of some 400 MW (a megawatt is 1,000 kilowatts). This is enough for about two-thirds of its load; the other third it purchases from Ontario Hydro.

Given GLPC's need to buy power, and its efficient operation of the existing hydro plants, it is clear why it would like to build more capacity. Also clear is the fact that the company has the water rights, acquired years ago before wilderness or canoeing were only something to be put behind a growing nation.

What is less clear is the true value of Denison Falls to GLPC. Flow rates are highly variable during the year, with various data showing the falls as having a capacity of 4 to 16 MW (at 50% availability during the year). In either case, the addition to capacity seems small and likely expensive. (The last couple of plants have cost over \$2000 per kW to build.) If a dam is built, flow over the falls would be negligible during the summer when most canoeists would see it. (The falls is also accessible by a 5-km trail to Lake Superior, so people with moderate hiking ability can get to it as well.)

A Further Caution

My letter to the Minister follows. I would only add that the point about conservation in the letter is critical—and not just to save Denison Falls. In a world facing the threat of warming and other forms of climate change, hydropower is

going to look pretty good in comparison with coal. However, techniques to conserve electricity are advancing rapidly and offer a far better alternative than either coal or hydro. (See reports by Torrie and Brooks, and Torrie and Marbek to the Ontario Ministry of Energy.) As for the nuclear industry (which, not surprisingly, has concluded that global warming is the key environmental problem), analyses continue to show that, even were there no other objections, the nuclear option is too slow and too expensive to be of much, if any, help. Our energy future lies with conservation!

Sample Letter

Dear Madame Minister:

I was greatly disturbed to learn that there is a possibility of damming Denison Falls on the Dog (also called the University) River near Wawa. This falls is not only beautiful and representative of all that is best in Northern Ontario, but a site that has come to have enormous symbolic value as a result of Bill Mason's films and books on canoeing. Indeed, as more people come to know the site, I suspect that it will be something of a shrine—drawing many canoeists and lovers of wilderness to the region.

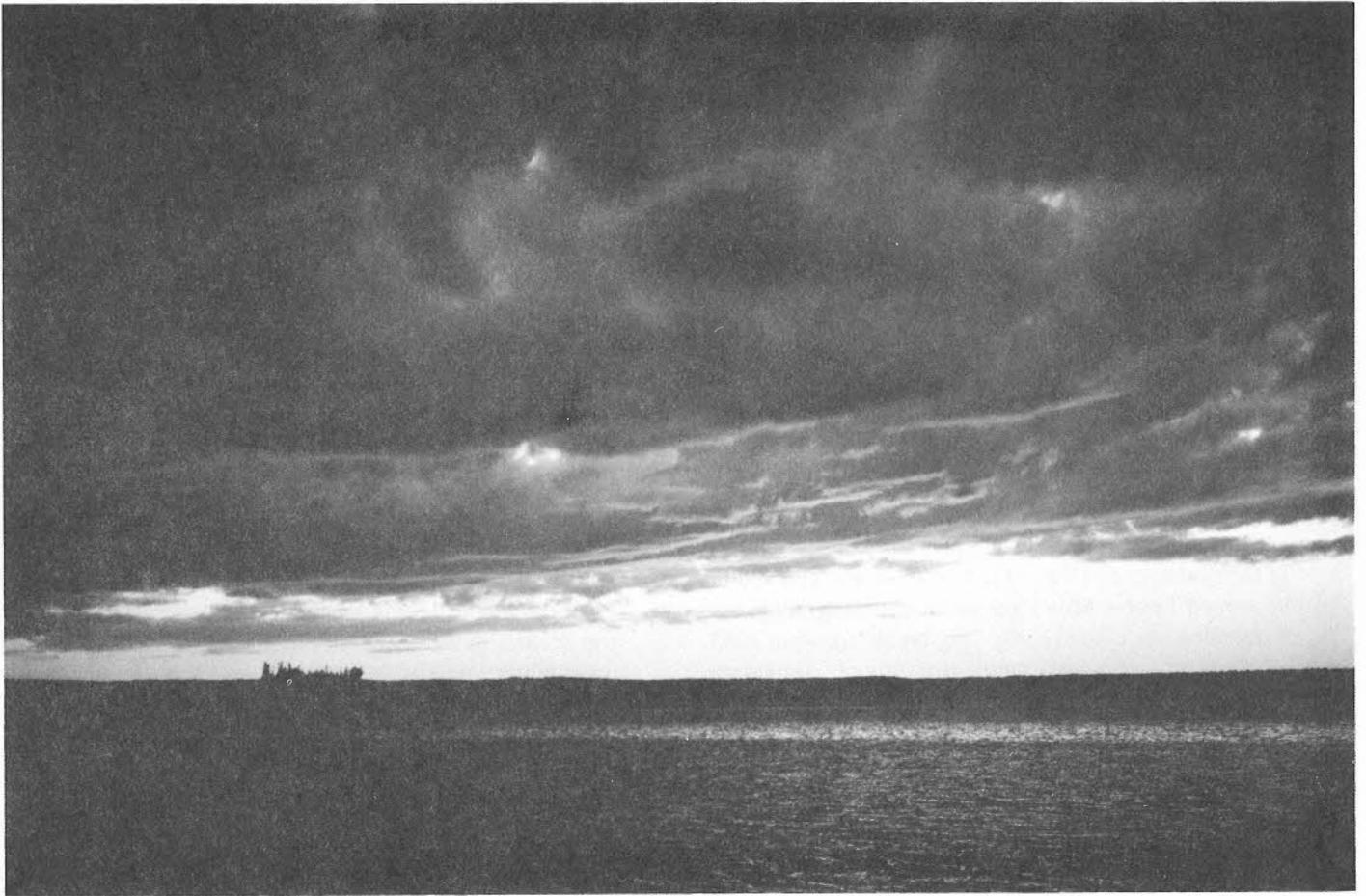
It is my understanding that Great Lakes Power Corporation wishes to develop Denison Falls as a hydropower site. Being familiar with energy issues, I can appreciate the potential and understand why GLPC might find it useful to add this site to its system. However, economic theory indicates that, as more and more sites are taken for power or other reasons, those remaining increase sharply in value beyond what their use value might be. Thus, there is a good case for preserving the falls specifically because it is the last major site available in the region.

No doubt arguments will be made that the added power is needed for the development of Northern Ontario. I doubt that this argument can be well supported. In almost every case, it has turned out to be more cost effective to economize on the use of energy than to develop new sites that cost several thousand dollars per kilowatt of capacity. Moreover, the installation of conservation measures—in homes, buildings, and industrial plants—creates at least as many jobs as does construction, and in many cases they are permanent rather than temporary jobs.

I sincerely suggest that the Government of Ontario would be serving the best interests of all Ontarians if it (1) denied permission for development of Denison Falls, and (2) took steps to recapture any water rights that GLPC may hold.

Yours truly,

David B. Brooks



PERFECT EVENING—Glenn Spence
(Second prize, Wilderness)

JAMES BAY RIVERS THREATENED

Jim Higgins

Hydro-Quebec has accelerated plans to dam most of the rivers flowing west into James Bay as well as the Great Whale River which flows into Hudson Bay. This would complete Phase II of the massive James Bay Project and would provide power to New York and New England as well as Quebec.

A coalition of Americans and Canadians has been formed to defeat this project and *to promote energy efficiency and conservation as the alternative.*

The project will have a very serious impact on the Cree and Inuit cultures and will mean the end of some of the world's great eco-systems. Migratory birds, land mammals, marine mammals, fish, and plant life will be drastically affected.

VOICE YOUR CONCERN!

In *Canada* write to Premier Bourassa of Quebec and Pierre Paradis, Quebec Minister of the Environment. Also: Lucien Bouchard, Minister of the Environment, Ottawa.

In the *northeastern USA* write to the State Governors and to the agency that regulates energy (i.e. Public Service Board or Public Utilities Commission).

For more information:

— New England Coalition for Energy Efficiency and the Environment; RD.1, Box 730, Cambridge, VT 05444; (802) 899-3657 (Jim Higgins).

— The Green Energy Conference, Hydro Glasnost Campaign; 445 St. François Xavier St., Montreal, P.Q.; (514) 340-6031 or (514) 842-0552 (Carol).

— Jeff Wolloch, James Bay Defense Coalitions; 310 - 52nd St., New York, NY 10019.

— Le Groupe du Courant, D. Castel; a/s Collège Dawson, 3040 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest, Montreal, P.Q., H3Z 1A4.

MEMORIES OF A GREAT SUMMER

AND WHAT IT TOOK TO GET THERE

Noel Lewis-Watts

Last year, my wife Bev and I had one of the greatest summers ever, but it started more than a year before, in January 1988. In fact, for me, perhaps fifty years ago. Here is a brief background.

In 1939, given the choice of staying in Toronto for the King and Queen's visit or going north to Carnarvon, I fortunately chose the latter. It became the start of an on-again, off-again love affair between me, the outdoors, and canoeing. At that time, I was introduced to the birch bark canoe. It was the first and last time I was ever in such a craft, but it was enough to spark the interest of a young boy.

In the summers of 1940, '41, and '42, I was allowed to paddle around Twelve Mile Lake while attending camp, but never travelled any distance. My "big break" came in 1943 when I went on a two-week canoe trip through Algonquin Park. That trip had a lot of bitter-sweet memories, but as they say about childbirth, as time passed, the painful memories subsided and I was left with only the beauty of the trip.

Canoeing opportunities from then until 1951 were very sporadic and I was only able to get out on an occasional basis because of little knowledge and no role model. In 1951 I put about 650 km on a canoe, but that was when I was young and single and courting a young lady down the lake from where I was working at the time.

Although I have always been connected with the water, it rarely included the canoe. My next "trip" was a long weekend in 1973 with a group of cyclists. As you can see, my canoeing experience was not great.

In January 1988, Bev and I started talking about perhaps going on a canoe trip that summer. What an ongoing discussion that turned out to be. Somewhere about the end of February I came to the conclusion that, while I might know a little about weather, car camping, and flatwater canoeing, I knew almost nothing about "tripping." Planning, provisioning, packing, navigating, whitewater, portaging, and equipment were way out of our range of expertise and a little frightening to say the least.

My wife, who has the ability to see things in their proper perspective and cut through to the heart of the matter, suggested that, since her experience in a canoe was limited to three times in a canoe at a friend's cottage, to say nothing of the fact that she had never slept in a tent, we go through an outfitter. Her thinking was: "We will see how the provisioning and packing is done, find out if we both enjoy canoeing or not without tying up a lot of money on equipment we may never use again, but most importantly preserve our relationship."

After a great deal of reading, research, talking to outfitters at the Sportsmen's Show, phone calls, and letters we decided to go with Algonquin Outfitters. Because we wanted to "get away from it all" (haw! — found out those days are

gone forever), we chose to go through the Brent base in northern Algonquin Park. It obviously turned out to be a wise decision; we learned a great deal.

Our first canoe trip started a love for the outdoors which would keep us busy for the winter. More research, reading, telephone calls, writing, working out finances, car trips to show rooms and canoe builders, stores, stores, and more stores. We never realized there were so many avenues to be investigated and each one just seemed to lead to another. Finally, we had amassed the basic equipment. Now the trips. How many and to where! Damned if that didn't involve almost as much research as buying the equipment.

Fortunately we had joined the WCA, so we turned to the trip section in the newsletter and selected our first trip, an overnigher south of Parry Sound on Lake McDonald. The only problem was that the trip took place at the end of April and the lake was still frozen. Not to be outdone by the elements, we settled for a day trip on the Severn at Big Chute and enjoyed a picnic lunch on a little island in the warmth of the spring sunshine.

Our second trip saw us on the Saugeen River canoeing from Hanover to Walkerton. The water was quite high and moving rapidly which helped greatly in our battle against the wind. That wind stayed with us (or against us) all summer. This trip was perfect for novices and it was kind of fun camping in the downtown park in Walkerton, almost on the "main drag."



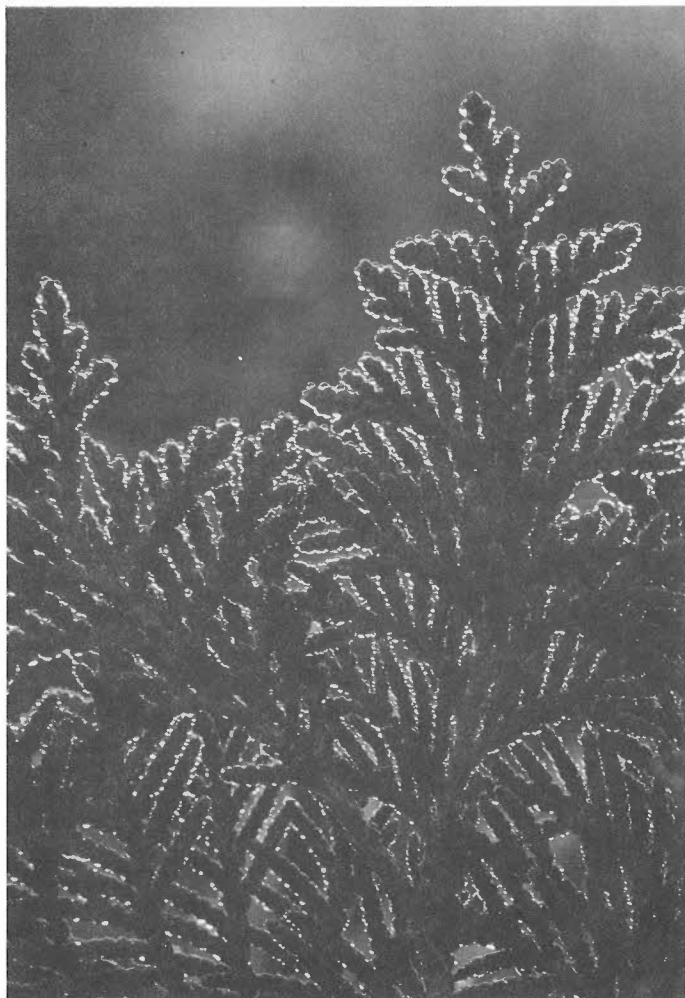
At the end of June, we joined Jim Morris at Palmer Rapids to take part in the two-day whitewater course he was offering. He proved to be a great teacher, with the patience of a saint, and the instruction he provided was put to good use the rest of the summer. All students were very supportive, even though most of them were much more experienced than we were.

The third week of July we undertook to canoe the Mattawa River from North Bay to Mattawa. If you are a history buff, this trip is even more rewarding. It was like travelling over sacred ground. The scenery is magnificent, the campsites are nearly deserted, and the portages provide a challenge which will long be remembered.

On Sunday, 30 July, we headed back to Brent for a 10-day trip into Algonquin Park. The road into Brent should discourage anyone from going to that part of Algonquin, but apparently it doesn't. Although the park can no longer be considered wilderness, it is still quite lovely and gives the illusion of remoteness. The 10 days provided us with challenges, laughter, tears, the wonders of nature, and beautiful memories.

Our last trip together was into Killarney Park to enjoy the fall colors at the end of September. Being novices, we thought we would have the park practically to ourselves, but that was a laugh. At the gate that Saturday morning at 9:30, the park ranger told us to hurry and choose a campsite because the park was filling up. It turned out to be not as bad as it sounded and we found a lovely campsite in the exact spot we had hoped for. During the weekend we saw six or seven other canoes. The colors were absolutely incredible against the white quartz and the blue of the sky and water. It is a trip we will look forward to each year.

I managed two more trips into Spider Lake, south of Parry Sound. One with my youngest son and one with an old friend, to acquaint them both with the joys of canoeing. In November, we moved our canoe to a friend's home to store it for the winter, but we look forward with great anticipation to planning our trips for 1990 and reminiscing about all the fun times we had in the summer of 1989.



GENTLY

Standing alone at the campsite. Everyone else is down by the canoes. Bags loaded and tied in. Canoes already in the water. A paddle sticking up from each end of the canoe is signalling us that it is time to move on. Everything and everyone ready to go.

Can hear the canoeing partners talking, some loudly, some quietly, about what the coming day will offer. Danger, adventure, weather, fish. The partners nervous, anxious, eager. Adrenalin rampant on the shoreline.

Looking at the campsite and what damage our 14 hours of occupancy have done to it. Not much. A grassy patch flattened by the tents. A black spot where the fire was. Some overturned rocks displaying color differences from the rocks surrounding them.

Looks OK. We've passed by and haven't hurt the land too much. The touch of man always hurts, but we've apologized, and have tried to wear gloves.

Greg Went

BACKLIT CEDAR—Chris Motherwell
(Second prize, Flora)

REVIEWS

THE GREAT LAKES: An Environmental Atlas & Resource Book, published by Environment Canada & U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
Reviewed by Sandy Richardson.

This book is the work of the Institute of Urban and Environmental Studies at Brock University and the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research at Northwestern University, and has been published jointly by the Canadian and American governments to provide citizens of the Great Lakes Basin with the 'grounding they need to be full participants in resolving the problems facing our lakes.'

The authors take an ecosystem approach to understanding the Great Lakes and what has happened to them over time. That is, they do not consider any element in the Great Lakes Basin, including humans, in isolation. Rather, they look at the relationship people have to other parts of the system, and the chain effects that our actions have on these other parts. As a basis from which we can attempt to understand our own impact on the system, the authors examine the physical characteristics of, and the natural processes operating in, the Great Lakes Basin, including geology, climate, hydrological cycle, lake levels, and living resources.

They then trace the impact of people on the Great Lakes ecosystem, from the earliest native inhabitants, through early settlement by Europeans, to the massive urbanization and industrialization of today; looking at the effects of agriculture, logging, shipping, commercial and sport fishing, recreation, urban development, industry, and major diversion proposals.

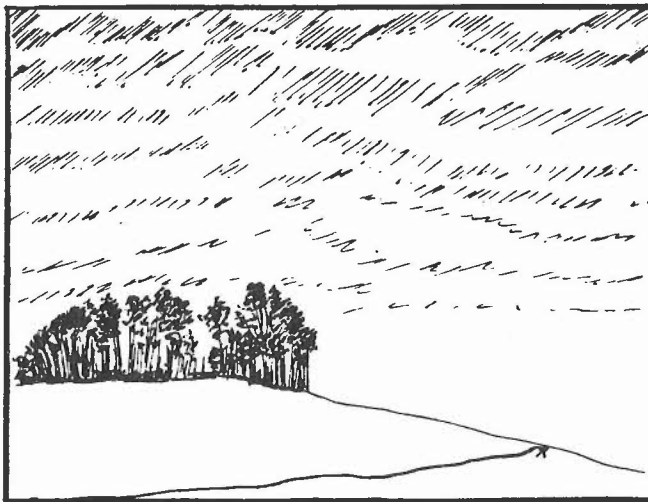
Hand in hand with this massive development has come equally massive problems of eutrophication and toxic pollution. And the authors deal with these current concerns about the Great Lakes, examining sources and pathways of pollution and their effects such as bioaccumulation and biomagnification, which we are only just beginning to understand.

Having considered the problems, and in keeping with the aim of publishing this book, the authors then look at the various ways our governments have tried to understand and deal with the many problems facing the Great Lakes. They discuss joint management of the lakes from the first Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to the current Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. In closing, they attempt to look beyond to the future of the Great Lakes.

This is an atlas as well as a resource book, and the text is supported by 19 excellent maps showing such Great Lakes features as geology, climate, land use and fisheries, waterborne commerce, recreation, industry, transportation, population, and known pollution sources. These maps appear both throughout the book and together in a composite folio map. Finally, there are a number of fact sheets giving statistics on the various physical features of the lakes; land, shoreline and water usage; and areas of concern.

The Great Lakes: An Environmental Atlas and Resource Book is an interesting and useful resource for canoeists who

travel the Great Lakes, and who want to understand the complex and fragile ecosystem in which they paddle. It is available free from Great Lakes Environment Programme, Environment Canada, 25 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1M2 in Canada; or from Great Lakes National Program Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 230 Dearborn St., Chicago, Illinois 60604 in the United States.



THE BASIC ESSENTIALS OF COOKING IN THE OUTDOORS, by Cliff Jacobson, ICS Books, Inc. (for address, see item below, ICS Books catalog), 1989 (US\$4.95 or C\$6.95.)

Reviewed by Ria Harting.

This is a handy little book, written in a pleasant, easy-to-read fashion by an experienced guide who has been around campfires most of his life. Many aspects of preparing food for a canoe or winter trip, including preparation of food at home, maintenance of trail stoves, and, of course, cooking on the trail, are discussed. If you are not too worried about your cholesterol level, you might even follow the recipes verbatim. I especially recommend this book for people who cook for and with groups, and who wish to consult an expert in this field. Cliff Jacobson will impress you with his first-hand knowledge.

THE ICS BOOKS INC. CATALOG presents dozens of titles that can be of great use to wilderness canoeists and other lovers of the outdoors, newcomers and experienced ones alike. Of special interest are the attractive, small books (72 pages, illustrated, US\$4.95 or C\$6.95, paperback) in *The Basic Essential Series*. They each treat a subject that is part of life in the outdoors, such as: camping, backpacking, cooking, map and compass, first aid for the outdoors, sea kayaking, etc. Many other more advanced titles are also included in the catalog. For information, contact ICS Books Inc., One Tower Plaza, 107 E. 89th Avenue, Merrillville, Indiana 46410, USA; tel. (219) 769-0585.

INTO THE GREAT SOLITUDE, by Robert Perkins, is a color/sound film journal of a solo canoe expedition to the Arctic Ocean. It is available on video (57 minutes, VHS or Beta) for US\$49.95 plus US\$3.00 shipping from The New Film Company, Inc., 7 Mystic Street, Suite 20, Arlington, MA 02174, USA; tel. (617) 641-2580. The following is extracted from promotional material supplied by the distributor:

"In his unique and intimate film journal, Robert Perkins brings alive the barren Arctic tundra. Trading a high-paying job in New York for a solo adventure in this uninhabited wilderness, he travels alone for 72 days in his canoe down the 700-mile-long Back River, one of Northwest Canada's toughest and most remote waterways.

"Filming his own journey with an artist's eye and a deep sensitivity toward the environment, he draws us into the open, elemental beauty of the land: its power, its fragility, its mystery. We follow him during the long hours of Arctic twilight, in encounters with wild animals, in battles with strong winds and dangerous rapids.

"His isolation also takes him on an inner journey in which he faces change and death and searches for new perspectives on his relationship with his father.

"With honesty, humor, and insight, *Into the Great Solitude* reveals the poetry within the adventure and affirms the resilience of the human spirit."

It is indeed a remarkable, thought-provoking document by a perceptive and sensitive man exploring his world and himself. (TH)

HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME A WILDERNESS PADDLER?

Orrie Wigle

As a newer member ('87), I am writing this to say 'thanks' to all the individuals who spent the time and energy to make the WCA open to a novice wilderness canoeist. I joined to take the basic whitewater course, my wife took the flatwater one. Both courses provided an introduction to safety, equipment, and paddling skills. The most important thing was meeting people, both new paddlers and more experienced members. I found a partner, someone willing to risk whitewater canoeing with me.

The course only gave the basics which had to be improved by several whitewater weekends. Here was the opportunity to improve my paddling skills, learn to read rapids, and meet more WCA members. They provided additional instruction with rescue boats and helpful comments ("Lean the !!*%*!! canoe downstream! . . ."). The fireside discussions covered a wide range of topics and provided information on different rivers, equipment, food preparation, and much more. Day and weekend trips let me explore local rivers and meet more members. The Fall Meeting and the January Symposium expanded my knowledge of wilderness tripping.

Our first extended trip (one week) was in 1989. There is not enough room to list everything we learned. This trip was very important in preparing us for longer trips. This year, I plan to be part of a group going on a two or three-week wilderness trip. Most importantly, this group consists of members who have become confident in their individual and combined skills to plan and complete a trip safely.

This leads me to my question: "How does someone become a wilderness paddler?"

A novice paddler must gain the skills, knowledge, and contacts to go on wilderness trips. There are commercial canoeing courses and trips available. These do not teach the

self-reliance and do not give the personal satisfaction of learning the skills as part of the WCA. Books and films provide knowledge but not experience.

I do not consider myself a wilderness paddler yet, but sixteen years from now, I may be one. I hope that I will be helping some new members, telling them about my first swim down Palmer Rapids, passing on what experience I have gained, and showing slides of my latest trip. Two of the aims of the WCA, as listed by Sandy Harris in the Winter 1988 *Nastawgan*, seem to express our commitment to being involved in developing wilderness paddlers. These are:

The provision of a flow of information pertaining to canoeing and wilderness matters to members . . . and the public.

The encouraging of individual responsibility in canoeing by *providing a program of practical canoeing experiences*.

Note the emphasis which is my own. The WCA has a program consisting of basic courses, readily available day/weekend trips, symposia, and regular meetings. This program is supported by numerous individuals who are willing to share their experience and give the time to help the novice. THANKS.

If we do away with the basic courses because we do not want to teach people, if the Canoeing Symposium is dropped because it is a successful social event, if the Fall Meeting is eliminated because of the social aspects, and other activities (day trips, whitewater weekends, rescue clinic, etc.) are dropped because they do not fit our wilderness image, what's left? It is my hope that the WCA remains an association willing to start the novice on the path to being a wilderness paddler and not become a private club for the experienced wilderness tripper.

COLD ON THE CREDIT

Stupid? Of course it was stupid! Incredibly so! Why I ever decided to run that nice little chute in the broken dam across the Credit River is beyond me, in hindsight at least.



We were making every mistake in the book: doing whitewater in a decidedly non-whitewater boat which was too short, too wide, and keeled; no scouting from the shore, just some superficial looks from the boat; no waterproof pack with extra warm clothing; no waterproof camera case; no protective dry suits in case we would fall in the about-freezing water. In fact, no correct preparations at all for a cold-water trip in March down a pleasant, small river without any real problems. We thought.

Ha! Did we ever swamp! It all happened so fast, I just couldn't believe it. One moment Ria and I were slowly drifting to the 50-cm drop, getting to the edge a little too far to the left, then the bow went down, we hit the wave on the left at the wrong angle and at the wrong point, and whoops . . . we were swimming and gasping for air in the icy water.

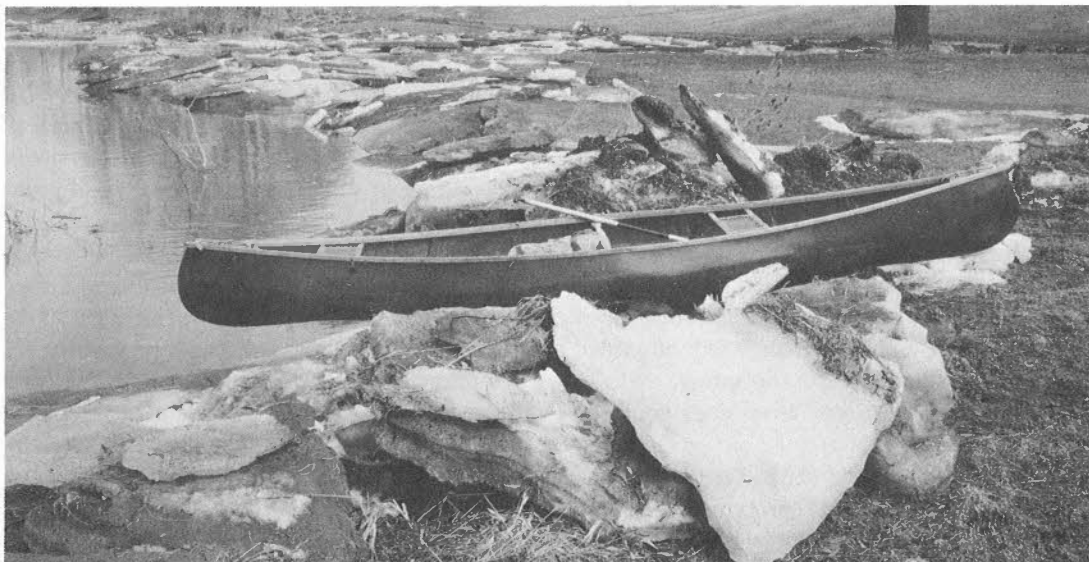


Everybody swamps a canoe now and then, nobody's perfect and it's all part of the canoeing game. But please, not in March a few days after break-up in a river with its banks still covered with huge chunks of ice.

Except for my damaged pride and a waterlogged camera, we came off pretty well, thanks to sunny, windless weather and a supportive group of WCA-ers. They got us out quickly, helped us dry ourselves as best and as fast we could, gave us a warm sweater. We escaped hypothermia this time, but if we'd been alone on this trip, we'd have been in big trouble indeed. One just cannot take cold-weather paddling too seriously.

Well, a lesson learned the hard way is a lesson not easily forgotten. Next time we'll do it right so that we don't needlessly endanger ourselves and spoil the trip for the rest of the party. I'll make the correct preparations and the right decisions, and above all, I'll leave the know-it-all confidence of the experienced old-timer at home. Ah well, never too old to learn.

Toni Harting



EQUIPMENT JUNKIES COLUMN

John Winters

Scratch a wilderness canoeist and you will uncover a traditionalist. Some more than others. The far right is represented by the Woods pack, wear-wool-next-to-the-skin, the-only-good-canoe-is-a-Prospector type of fellow who revels in being the reincarnation of the timber cruisers and gentleman adventurers of the not-too-distant past. They are not so dedicated that they live off the land and sleep on the ground sans tent, but they sneer at synthetics and snarl at plastic canoes. At the other end of the spectrum are the "Tech-Weenies" who wouldn't be caught dead in natural fibres, laugh uproariously as they streak past in low-slung, ultra-light canoes propelled by bent-shaft carbon-fibre paddles. Both are equally fanatical and thus, equally unreasonable.

Somewhere in-between are the great unwashed masses who lean both ways with ease without shame or thought. I belong to this uncommitted and unentertaining crowd, even though I confess to falling somewhat left of centre. Trying new and supposedly improved gear is as much fun to me as gloating over my 60-year-old Peterborough canoe that still has another decade or two left in her. In fact, there is an inner compulsion to possess the "best" outdoor gear only because it is "best." The same compulsion drives an automobile fanatic to eat beans so he can afford a Mercedes. It is, in the context of that person's world view, a justifiable eccentricity. Or, so it seems to me.

This leads me up to my subject which is a company that does not understand the concept of "good enough." I discovered Grade VI through my travels at canoe symposia in the USA. Charlie Wilson, the founder, owner, and general go-fer of the company, turns out to be a thoroughly delightful fellow who climbs rocks and mountains (hence the name Grade VI which is the greatest degree of difficulty), as well as being a truly superlative style paddler. Charlie is modest about his stuff to the extreme. He tells you what he thinks is good about it and might get a bit excited about the use of teal accents on the packs, but for the most part he lets the equipment speak for itself. If you can't see the obvious quality, you just aren't paying attention, and that doesn't seem to bother Charlie at all. To give you some idea of the kind of thing I'm talking about, consider his solo touring pack that he pulled out of the bottom of a box and introduced as a "pretty nice pack for solo touring."

It is made from coated ballistic nylon which means pretty much what it sounds like, i.e. it's bulletproof. The roll-down top, which closes with both velcro and clever snaps, is, for all practical purposes, waterproof. I filled mine with assorted gear, tossed it in the bathtub, sat on it, and let it float around for an hour. There was only a trace of water inside. Charlie doesn't advertise it as waterproof but it is a lot better than he admits. The suspension system is extraordinary. There is no frame (internal or external), but there is a waist belt, contoured shoulder straps, and a sternum strap, all cleverly attached so you would think there must be a frame somewhere. The waist belt is even removable. This is

the first canoe pack I have ever seen suitable for mountain climbing. It remains solid on your back no matter how you lean, bend or contort yourself. One of the best features is that the top is low-cut and does not impinge on the yoke, thus making one-trip portages less curse-worthy if not enjoyable.

There are little details that you discover with each use. Every (yes, every) seam is taped so there are no loose cloth ends floating around. The sack itself is contoured to hold the



bulky but light things like sleeping bags near the bottom without the usual two-man stuff-and-bump routine. The combination of bottom pockets with drains and compression straps permits secure packing of tent poles, etc., and the top flap has an honest map pocket that holds properly folded maps. The hand loop is just that—the size of your hand and contoured and stitched so you can actually carry the thing. The foam back pad is removable for both replacement and for use as a seat if your ageing posterior needs such a thing.

How does all this work in real life? A full week's solo gear and food will fit nicely, and you can still do single-carry portages. The pack fits your body snugly with no wobble, so bushwhacking is safe, and even hopping from rock to rock is possible with security. Packing is easy and you can be confident that even a sloppy job of waterproofing your gear will probably survive a dunking. Over the years I have cursed and loved any number of packs from a hated nylon imitation Duluth pack to my beloved Kelty climbing pack which was, until recently, my pack of choice for canoeing. It will now get a rest. I have seen the future and it is not a Duluth pack.

Is this all Charlie makes? No way. He has managed to come up with thoroughly ingenious approaches to just about every canoeing need from packs to nylon webbing tie-down straps that are the salvation of every lapsed Boy or Girl Scout. For more information, write to Grade VI, Box 8, Urbana, Illinois 61801, USA. Prices aren't low. This is no-compromise, high-quality, high-tech gear and it doesn't come cheap. By the same token, you won't be disappointed either since the direct relationship between price and what you get is alive and well at Grade VI.

WCA TRIPS

For early trips, see the listing in the Winter 1989 issue of *Nastawgan*.

14-16 April **TIM RIVER**

Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321; book before 2 April.

A meandering river with many twists requiring the ability to manoeuvre precisely in moving water. The trip will begin at the Tim River access site and continue via Tim Lake to Rosebary Lake, the Shaw Portage, and beyond. Suitable for novices. Cold conditions make warm clothing essential. Limit three canoes.

19-21 April **BEAVER CREEK**

Phil Nusbaum, (416) 221-5345; book between 1 and 12 April.

Description Despite the name, Beaver Creek (north of Marmora) is a real river, with idyllic and dynamic moments in the swell of spring run-off. Thursday and Friday we'll do the remote middle section; and probably Saturday the usual lower end from Shanick Bridge. The trip involves numerous chutes, portages, and canyon stretches and a rather long car shuttle.

Conditions Experienced intermediate paddlers and spring run-off campers; solo canoes welcome. Trip will not go if weather report is horrible. Participation: minimum three, maximum seven persons. Old-timers who've done this one before are especially welcome, as it will be exploratory for the organizer.

21 April **NOTTAWASAGA RIVER**

Mike Jones, (416) 270-3256; book before 12 April.

A flatwater trip suitable for novices. Water levels permitting we will paddle from Willow Creek to the Edenvale Conservation Area through the Minnesing Swamp, an area through which many birds migrate at this time. Limit six canoes.

21-22 April **SALMON AND MOIRA RIVERS**

Glenn Spence, (613) 475-4176; book before 12 April.

Is this the 74th Salmon and Moira Challenge for Glenn and company? A weekend of riotous fun in the turbulent waves and ledges of Southern Ontario's finest whitewater. Intermediate canoeists with a sense of adventure are invited. Limit five canoes.

22 April **HEAD AND BLACK RIVERS (WASHAGO)**

Gary Walters, (416) 783-0240; Gerry Lannan, (705) 636-7419; book before 12 April.

Novice paddlers who have some whitewater experience will find this a pleasant day trip. Down the Head River and then via the Black to Washago. Gentle stretches of flatwater with several small ledges and some waves. Limit six canoes.

22 April **NONQUOM RIVER**

Jane Burgess, (416) 466-3145; book before 12 April.

The Nonquom winds through marsh, a conservation area, a dog training club, and the farmlands of Seagrave. We begin at Hwy 12 and take a leisurely approach to the trip. Ideal for family canoeists. Limit eight canoes.

28 April **ANSTRUTHER LAKE LOOP**

Rob Butler, (416) 487-2282; book before 12 April.

A loop through six or seven lakes which takes about eight hours. The longest portage is about one kilometre. Limit four canoes with fit crews.

28-29 April **EAST RIVER AND LOWER OXTONGUE RIVER**

Karl Schimek, (705) 487-0172 (before 9:00 p.m.); book before 18 April.

The East River is small with some rapids, the Oxtongue is more challenging with larger rapids and some falls requiring portages. Suitable for experienced novices who are prepared to portage. Limit four canoes.

29 April **ELORA GORGE**

Ken Coburn, (416) 767-5844 (before 9:00 p.m.); book before 22 April.

The Gorge, this early in the year, can be very strenuous paddling with cold water and swift rapids. This is a trip for experienced paddlers who are prepared for the cold. Limit six canoes.

1-3 May **SMOKEY LAKE - STILL RIVER**

Phil Nusbaum, (416) 221-5345; book 16 and 23 April.

Description Starts Tuesday morning at Lost Channel on the Pickerel River (north of Parry Sound). Then up Smokey Creek to Smokey Lake, through Noganosh Lake, and downstream through Still River canyon to Hwy 69. Navigation of the marshy connecting creeks will be interesting. Easy car shuttle on major roads.

Conditions Same as for Beaver Creek (19-21 April), see above.

5-6 May **SKOOTAMATA RIVER**

Ross Sutherland, (613) 336-8194; book before 27 April.

This is a narrow river with fast chutes, requiring precise manoeuvres in potentially heavy water. Suitable for experienced canoeists who are used to cold water. An exploratory trip for the organizer. Limit five boats.

6 May **ELORA GORGE**

Jeff Lane, (519) 837-3815; book before 28 April.

Fast, cold water and numerous technical rapids make this a good workout for experienced canoeists. Limit eight boats.

12-13 May RIVER AUX SABLES

Richard Culpeper, (705) 673-8988; book before 5 May.

This historic river, west of the Spanish River, provides both whitewater excitement and scenic beauty. The water should be high but the rapids can be portaged. A chance to see the canyon section of the river and some impressive waterfalls. Suitable for expert paddlers or experienced intermediates who are prepared to portage the worst sections. There will be time for photography and we will camp overnight. Be prepared for cold water and weather. Limit five canoes.

13 May NOTTAWASAGA RIVER

Gary Walters, (416) 783-0240; book before 5 May.

A gentle trip for novices and others through the Minnesing Swamplands. The trip ends at Edenvale Conservation Area. Limit five canoes.

19-21 May KILLARNEY PROVINCIAL PARK

Jim Greenacre, (416) 759-9956; book after 8 May.

We will meet at 9:00 a.m. Saturday at the main gate of the park, register, and drive to the Carlisle Access Point. Three days will be spent paddling a 55-km loop. There are a few portages, the longest is about 1200 m. Suitable for novices in good paddling shape. Limit four canoes.

19-21 May RIVER AUX SABLES

Karl Schimek, (705) 487-0172 (before 9:00 p.m.); book before 8 May.

Intermediate paddlers will enjoy this historic trip, which provides significant whitewater sections. Limit three canoes.

19-21 May ALGONQUIN PARK PHOTO-GRAPHIC EXCURSION

Chris Motherwell, (416) 461-2741; Paul Siwy, (416) 423-1698; book before 8 May.

We will travel either in the Upper Poker Lake area or Parkside Bay (Smoke Lake) in Algonquin Park. This is a trip for serious wilderness photographers who will enjoy working together to make pictures. Minimum requirement: SLR camera and tripod. Limit four boats.

2-3 June and 9-10 June TANDEM WHITEWATER

Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005 (before 9:00 p.m.); register before 19 May. Co-organizers: Ken Coburn, Sandy Harris, Roger Harris, Rob Cepella, Howard Sagermann, Mike Jones, Jeff Lane, Neil McKay.

This clinic will take place over two weekends, the first on the Elora Gorge and the second on the French River. If you've been out with the WCA and can hardly wait to get the necessary skills and experience to be able to join in our higher-level outings, this clinic is for you.

Participants can expect two intense skill-building weekends that will teach them the fundamentals of water reading, whitewater strokes, manoeuvres, and river safety. Registration limited to ten canoes to permit individual instruction. A suitable canoe, PFD, and whitewater paddle are essential.

9-10 June UPPER MADAWASKA AND OPEONGO RIVERS

Karl Schimek, (705) 487-0172 (before 9:00 p.m.); book before 1 June.

The upper Madawaska is a river for paddlers who enjoy heavy whitewater and will provide a challenging first day of paddling. The next day we will run the Opeongo River. While its rapids are not as severe as those of the upper Madawaska, they are more continuous and require good ferrying skills. Intermediate paddlers. Limit four canoes.

16-17 June WHITEWATER, PALMER RAPIDS

Hugh Valliant, (416) 784-8522 (day time); book before 6 June.

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

23 June BASIC FLATWATER CANOEING

Doug Ashton, (519) 654-0336; book before 15 June.

This workshop is being offered to new members who wish to develop their basic flatwater skills. It will involve discussion of paddling strokes, paddling skills, and canoe safety. The day will be slow paced with plenty of time for practice. Participants will be expected to provide a suitable canoe, lifevest, and paddles. Registration is limited to 20 persons who must be current members.

30 June - 2 July FRENCH RIVER

Gary Walters, (416) 783-0240; book before 23 June.

A weekend spent in the area near Blue Chute. We will test our whitewater skill in the rapids and camp nearby. Suitable for experienced paddlers who enjoy fun in whitewater, or intermediate paddlers who want to develop their skills. Limit five boats.

30 June - 2 July WHITEWATER, FRENCH RIVER

Hugh Valliant, (416) 784-8522 (day time); book before 20 June.

We will set up a base camp on Comanda Island from where we can easily reach a number of rapids which can be run repeatedly. An excellent opportunity to practise whitewater canoeing in more challenging rapids. Suitable for novices with some experience who are looking to improve their paddling skills. Limit eight canoes.



guidelines for wca trips

1. It is the function of the Outings Committee to arrange and publish in Nastawgan a schedule of trips and related events, organized by members of the WCA.
2. All trips should have a minimum impact on the environment. Trip organizers may:
 - a. limit the number of canoes (or participants) permitted on a trip.
 - b. advise on the type of equipment and camping techniques used.
3. Participants should:
 - a. follow the booking dates established by the organizer.
 - b. inform the organizer promptly if they cannot make the trip.
4. Food, transportation, canoes, camping equipment, partners, etc., are the responsibility of each participant. Organizers may assist in these areas, particularly in the pairing of partners.
5. Participants are responsible for their own safety at all times, and must sign a waiver form. Organizers should return completed waiver forms to the Outings Committee.
6. Organizers receive the right to:
 - a. exclude participants who do not have sufficient experience for the trip.
 - b. exclude any canoe deemed unsafe.
 - c. make any arrangements necessary to ensure safety of the group.
7. In the event that on a trip organized by the WCA an accident occurs, or any potentially dangerous situation arises, the Outings Committee must be informed.
8. Solo canoeists and/or kayakers are permitted on trips at the discretion of the organizer.
9. Non-members are permitted to participate in no more than two trips. Educational trips are for members only.
10. Organizers should give a brief description of the trip to the Outings Committee and, where possible, write a short article on the trip (or arrange to have it done) for publication in Nastawgan.

canoe safety rules

The need for these safety rules will vary with the time of year and the type of trip. They are to be applied at the discretion of the trip organizer.

1. Paddlers will not be allowed on a trip without:
 - a. a flotation jacket that can be worn while paddling,
 - b. a canoe suitable for the trip.
2. Paddlers should bring:
 - a. spare clothing, well waterproofed,
 - b. extra food,
 - c. matches in a waterproof container,
 - d. spare paddles, bailer, and a whistle,
 - e. material to repair the canoe.
3. On trips when the air and water temperatures are cold, a wetsuit is recommended.
4. The signals on WCA river trips should be known by all participants.
5. When running a section of river with rapids:
 - a. canoes may be asked to maintain a definite order,
 - b. each canoe is responsible for the canoe behind,
 - c. signals should be given after finishing a rapid (when appropriate), and canoes positioned below the rapid to assist in case of trouble.
 - d. canoes should keep well spaced,
 - e. each canoe should be equipped with ropes which can be used for lining and rescue.
6. The organizers' decisions on all trips are final.

SIGNALS



difficult - use own judgment



danger - do not run



all clear - with caution

trip ratings

The trip ratings presented below are intended as a general guide. For a detailed description of a WCA trip, the trip organizer should be contacted.

WHITewater TRIPS

The rating of whitewater trips will be determined generally by the difficulty of the rapids; however, water temperature, time of year, length and remoteness of the trip could also influence the overall rating.

| SKILL LEVEL | RIVER CLASS | RIVER CHARACTERISTICS |
|--|--------------------------------|---|
| <p><u>Beginner</u> Feels comfortable in canoe and is proficient in forward and steering strokes.</p> | <p>0 (Very Easy)</p> | <p>Moving water with no rapids. Some small riffles. Wide passages.</p> |
| <p><u>Novice</u> Can perform draw, pry, and sweep strokes; and is able to side-slip and to backpaddle in a straight line. Can enter and exit from a mild current. Recognizes basic river features and hazards.</p> | <p>I (Easy)</p> | <p>Some small rapids with small waves and few obstacles. Course easy to recognize. River speed is less than backpaddling speed.</p> |
| <p><u>Intermediate</u> Is proficient at all basic whitewater strokes. Can execute front and back ferries and eddy turns in a moderate current. Understands leaning and bracing techniques. Is able to select and follow a route in Class II water. Knowledgeable of river hazards, safety, and rescue procedures.</p> | <p>II (Medium)</p> | <p>Generally unobstructed rapids with moderate eddies and bends. Course usually easy to recognize, but scouting from shore may be necessary. River speed occasionally exceeds hard backpaddling speed. Waves up to 60 cm high. Some manoeuvring necessary.</p> |
| <p><u>Advanced</u> Is able to ferry and eddy turn in strong currents, and has effective bracing strokes. Can select and negotiate a course through continuous rapids. Can paddle solo or tandem. Is able to self-rescue, aid in rescuing others, and knows safety procedures thoroughly.</p> | <p>III (Difficult)</p> | <p>Numerous rapids with high, irregular waves often capable of swamping an open canoe. Route often requires complex manoeuvring. Current usually less than fast forward paddling speed. Course might not be easily recognizable. Scouting required.</p> |
| <p><u>Expert</u> Has complete mastery of all strokes and manoeuvres, and can apply them with power and precision in turbulent water. Recovers quickly in unexpected and dangerous situations. Can read complex water patterns and knows how they will affect his/her boat. Exhibits good judgment and has full competency in safety and rescue techniques.</p> | <p>IV (Very Difficult)</p> | <p>Long, difficult rapids that often require precise manoeuvring. Turbulent crosscurrents, powerful eddies, and abrupt bends. High, irregular waves with boulders directly in current. Course difficult to recognize. Scouting mandatory. Rescue difficult. Generally not possible for open canoes.</p> |

FLATwater TRIPS

Flatwater trip ratings will be determined by remoteness, length, and pace of trip; and the length, number, and ruggedness of portages. It is important to remember that cold water and strong winds on large lakes can create conditions dangerous for any canoeist, no matter how skilled or experienced.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This PRODUCTS AND SERVICES section is available, free of charge and on a first-come, first-serve basis, to members as well as non-members for their announcements regarding items for sale, special products, discounts, services, courses, etc. Contact the editor if more information is required.

DISCOUNTS ON TRIPPING SUPPLIES WCA members who present a membership card will receive a 10 percent discount on many non-sale times at:

ABC Sports, 552 Yonge Street, Toronto,

Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, Ontario,

Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ontario,

Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str. (Hwy 70), Hepworth, Ontario.

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

EQUIPMENT WANTED I'm looking for a 15-16 ft. solo canoe, compromise flatwater and whitewater with good carrying capacity; also a small tent for one to two people. Please call Bob Dion in Toronto at (416) 481-1347, evenings or weekends.

CANADIAN WILDERNESS TRIPS is now accepting resumes for flatwater and whitewater canoe guides. We require ORCA certification, First Aid and swimming qualifications, an F-class licence, and most of all, an outgoing, enthusiastic manner. Please send resumes including past experiences to: Markus Glickman, Canadian Wilderness Trips, 171 College St., Toronto, M5T 1P7.

WHITE SQUALL Join us in exploring the 30,000 islands of Georgian Bay by sea kayak. We teach carefully and with a smile. Our shop has paddling and trip gear that works, fine folk music, friendly chickens, and the best selection of canoes and kayaks on the Bay. RR#1, Nobel, Ontario, P0G 1G0; (705) 342-5324.

L.L. BEAN 1990 PADDLING EVENTS

— 5th Annual North American Canoe Symposium, 8-10 June on the shores of Moose Pond, Bridgton, Maine.

— 2nd Annual Advanced Coastal Kayaking Workshop, 13-15 July at the University of New England, Biddeford, Maine.

— 9th Annual Coast Sea Kayaking Symposium, 3-5 August at Maine Maritime Academy, Castine, Maine.

All three events sponsored by L.L. Bean. Registration details and descriptive brochures available by writing us at: Public Clinic Program, L.L. Bean, Inc., Freeport, Maine 04033; or calling 1-800-341-4341, Ext. 7800.

WILDERNESS BOUND Our new color brochure, presenting wilderness canoe trips as well as canoe courses, is available by contacting: Wilderness Bound, 43 Brodick St., Hamilton, Ontario L8S 3E3; tel. (416) 528-0059.

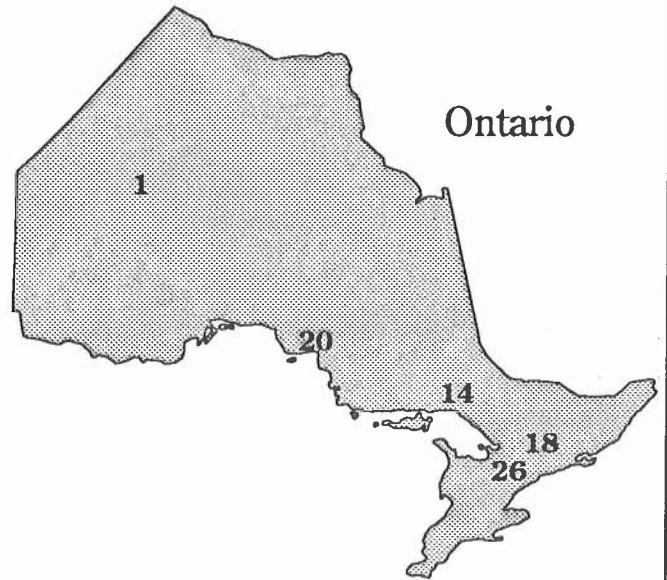
AROOSTOOK TENTS Cannondale will produce another 100 Aroostook tents this spring, for delivery by 1 May. There are still 20 tents left from the '89 run which are available from me for immediate delivery. I plan to hold the cost at US\$465, unless I receive a price increase from Cannondale. Cannondale pays for shipping to any U.S. or Canadian address. Contact: Cliff Jacobson, 928 West 7th Street, Hastings, Minnesota 55033, USA; tel. (612) 437-7497.

NORTHERN BOOKS Used, rare, reprinted, and select new books with northern and/or wilderness focus; emphasis on canoeing, exploration, fur trade, Arctic anthropology, etc. Catalog #2, with 230 books listed, is now available. Write: Northern Books, P.O. Box 211, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2S7.

CANOETOONS
PAUL MASON



WHERE IT IS



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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 gives me/us the opportunity to participate in WCA outings and activities, and entitles me/us to receive *Nastawagan* and to vote at meetings of the Association.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

new member PHONE _____ (h) _____ (b)
 renewal

- This membership will expire 31 January.
- Send completed form and cheque, payable to the WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION, to the membership secretary at the WCA postal address.