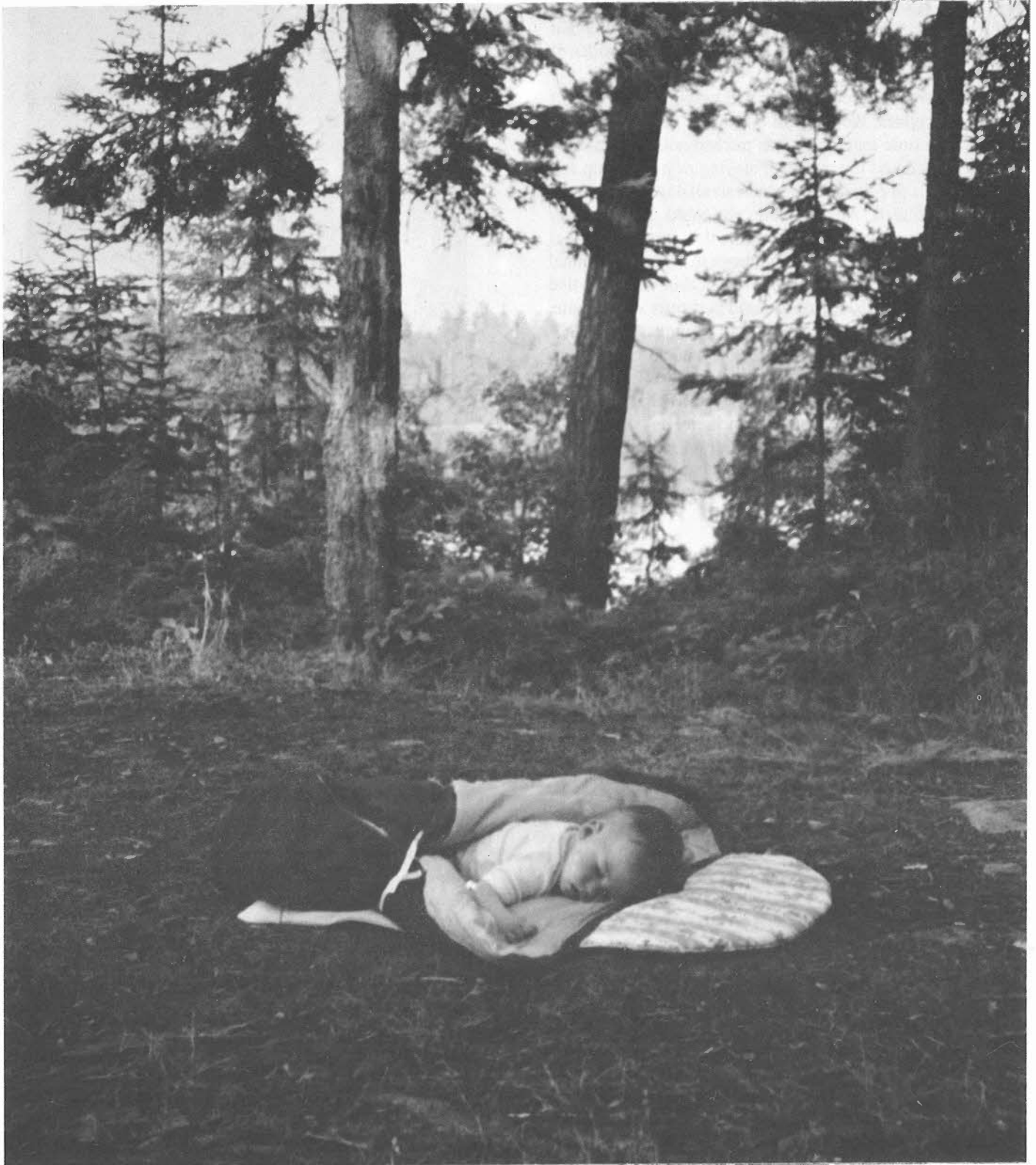




nastawgan

Winter 1990 Vol. 17 No. 4

Quarterly Journal of the Wilderness Canoe Association



THE STORM

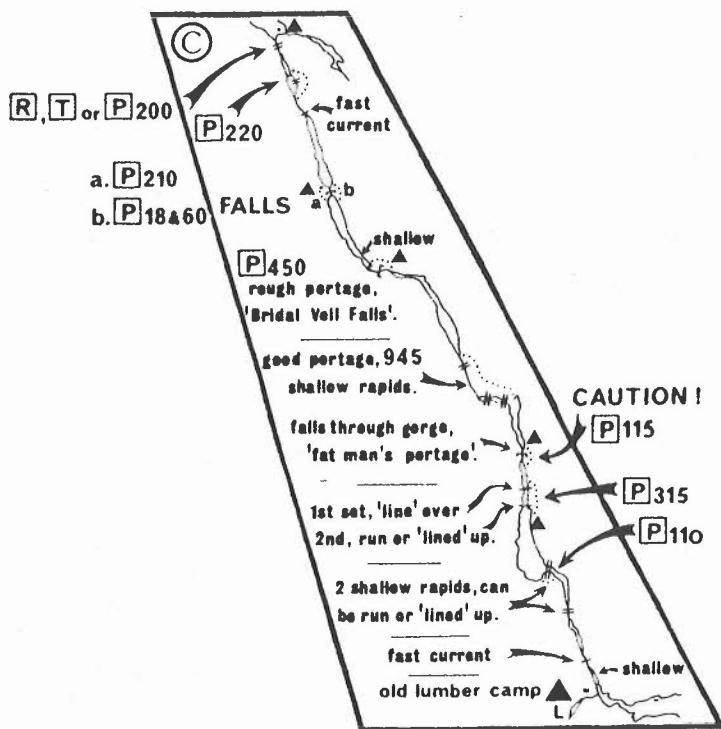
Jon Berger

Rain poured the whole night before. When I crawled out of the tent early in the morning, a deep gray fog covered all the hillsides and smothered the frail light. The fog socked in the entire valley. I went back inside and fell asleep as the rain started again. Finally both children got up and we all played with Erika, aged seven months. Four-year-old Michael had a fine time roughhousing in our temporary home, while Kit and I repeatedly warned him to stay away from the sides of the tent.

After awhile I grew restless and crawled out again. It was a bit brighter, though still socked in. Kathy was still asleep in her little tent which was pitched not far from ours. Kit and I discussed the merits of staying or packing up and travelling. It was possible we would sit all day in the tents if the rain continued. Alternatively, we could move upriver over two steep portages to the cabin we thought was at Bridal Veil Falls, one of the magnificent drops in the south channel of Temagami's Lady Evelyn River. The cabin was attractive for sitting out the storm, but we could get pretty wet enroute.

We decided to move, and under an ominous calm we left the campsite at Fat Man's Portage and headed for the thousand yarder. Kathy Volz, our intrepid "au pair" from West Germany, rode with Erika and Kit while Michael, eating a bowl of Captain Crunch cereal, went in my bow. Just as we began to unload at the portage, a light rain started to fall.

Our route this summer was to cover over 400 kilometres, both up and down river. We travelled in two canoes with Kit and I paddling alone. I took most of the gear, while Kit paddled with Kathy and Erika playing in the middle. Michael sometimes rode with Kit, but often he travelled in my bow and I entertained him with songs and stories. He would play with his toys, eat snacks, and color on the side of the canoe.



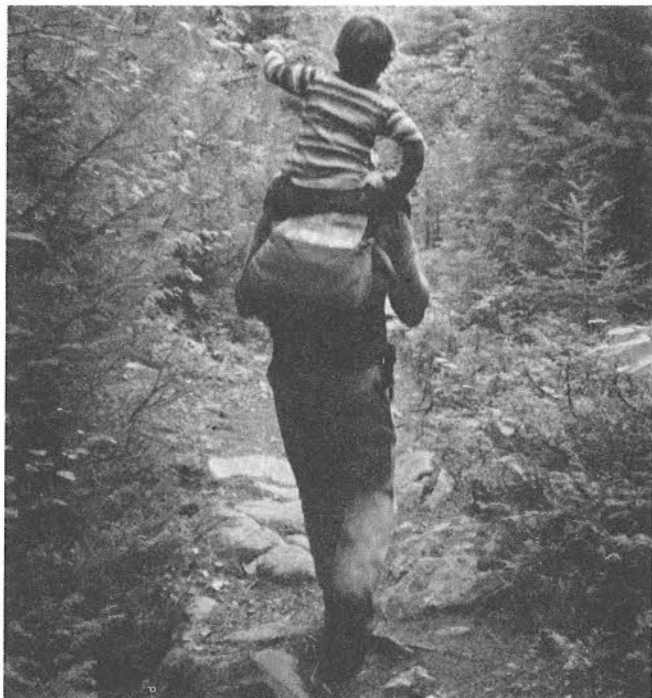
In Kit's canoe when Erika slept, Kathy paddled. Sometimes she even paddled while wearing Erika in the backpack. Kathy and Kit were a strong team so usually Michael and I brought up the rear. This worked out quite well because Kit could get a rest from Michael—the respite was as good as a tail wind.

Kathy stayed with the children at the beginning of the portage while Kit and I began our two and a half trips over the 865-metre trail. Kit would take Erika in a front/side pack plus a large backpack as her last trip. I concentrated on the two canoes and a food load.

The trail led up a hill and then followed the ridge on a flat dry bed. Unfortunately this surface condition ended all too soon, and the more typical boulder-strewn trail began. It took awhile to get all the loads and both the children over the rough terrain to the top of the portage. Most of the way a steady rain fell. Everyone was wet at the end of the portage, either from sweat or falling rain. Alas, the end of the portage did not have a good place to stop for breakfast or a warming fire—so we loaded and paddled through the steady rain to the foot of the Bridal Veil portage.

At Bridal Veil, the falls roared down and the wet rocky cliff trail loomed up on the right hand side. Although I have carried Bridal Veil a number of times, I had to reacquaint myself with the necessary, steep, sheer climb across the smooth rock face to reach the top of the first pitch. Kit and

Map copied from Hap Wilson's book *Temagami Canoe Routes 1979*, MNR



I decided that the safest way up was to shuttle the loads to the top and make sure everyone had good footing.

While I may have been concerned about carrying my loads up the rain-greased face, Michael scrambled up as sure-footed as a mountain goat. Kit and I willed our toes to dig into the rock face as we inched across the precipice and then grunted up the steep incline. The pitch was so steep that the bow and the stern of the canoe alternatively bumped on the slope.

As Kit tended the children, I carried load after load to the top of the cliff. The rain had turned cold but I was a mass of sweat and all I had on was a T-shirt. I felt as if steam rose off me as I puffed my way up the incline and then over the boulders to the end.

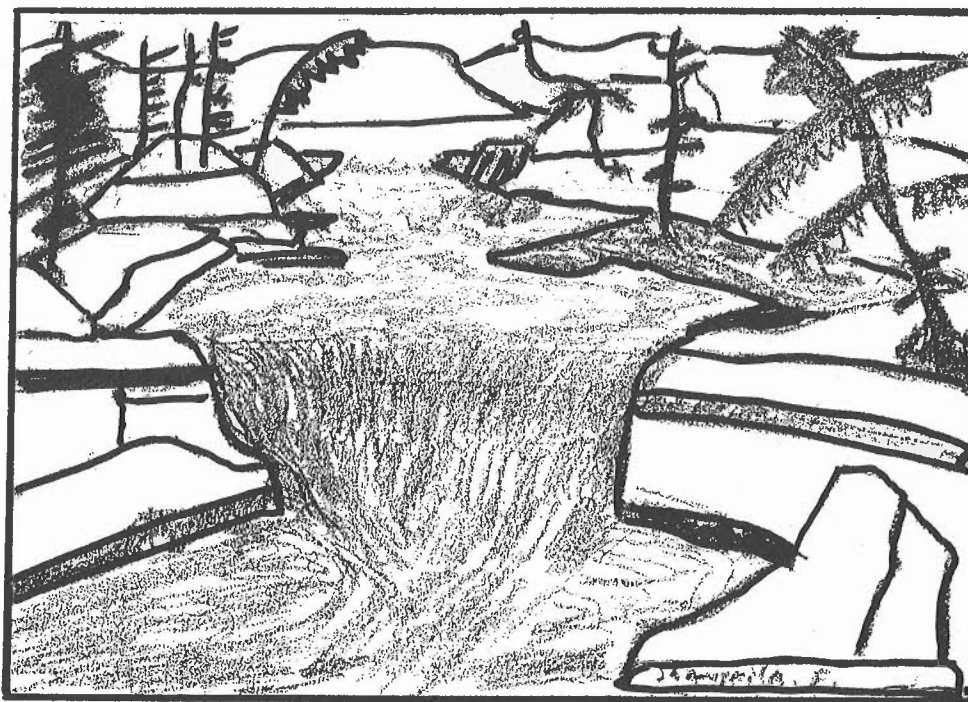
In the pouring rain everyone was unhappy. The cabin which we thought was at Bridal Veil Falls did not materialize, and we realized it must be at the next portage instead. Baby Erika cried, Michael whined, and Kathy did not have a happy smile. We could have put up the rain-fly and made a fire, but the cabin at Twin Sisters lay only a short distance away. At this point, we decided to split up with Kit and the children going ahead to shelter while I went back for the last canoe and the remaining gear.

I sure did not want to fall on that steep trail as I made my fifth journey across the face. At the top side of the trail I loaded the canoe and set out for the next falls. As sometimes happens, the rain quit for a few moments, and I paddled between high cliffs on a black, calm surface. I made a few metres before the deluge cut loose again. The wind blew cold but the exertion at the paddle kept me warm in my T-shirt.

The roar of Twin Sisters mixed with the roar of the rain and wind, and I saw the cabin up above on the left. There was no sign of Kit's canoe and I wondered if she had gotten everyone up and into the cabin. As I approached I saw her canoe on the opposite side of the river from the cabin. She soon confirmed that she had not found a trail up to the shelter.

With her help, I quickly unloaded and carried one canoe across the short steep pitch to the rapids where Kathy and the crying children waited. Although everyone else had safely manoeuvred their way down a 1.8-metres log ladder at the end of the trail, my first step with the canoe broke the top rung and I slid to the bottom. I wasn't hurt, but the fall was spectacular enough that Michael stopped crying and Kit and Kathy laughed. We put the canoe in the water, loaded in the food and the clothes packs, and then Kit took the bow while I took the stern with the children and Kathy sitting in the bottom. Thus loaded we poled up the rapids, crossed to the other side and landed below the cabin.

I struggled up the steep rocks, with the cold wind howling down the valley. I had Michael with me and he was screaming from discomfort. I rounded the corner of the cabin



Shangri-La Falls

and faced the door. Only a small latch needed turning and I had the cold and bedraggled Michael inside. He was alternately whining and crying, when I pointed to a moose hunting rifle hung on the wall and said, "Look, Davy Crockett's rifle, Old Betsy!" He broke into a smile and started hopping about with many "O Boy! Daddy!" cries and statements about how much fun it would be in the cabin.

I left Michael inside and went down the slope to where Kathy and Kit were unloading the canoe. They soon got out of the rain and I brought up the packs. Quickly Kathy and the children stripped off their wet clothes and put on dry ones. I got a fire going in the stove and we boiled water for hot chocolate and got food out. With everyone warming up, I went out into the damp woods to cut down several dry trees so as to keep the stove roaring. Kit and I, still in wet clothes, returned to the other side of the river to retrieve the remaining canoe and gear.

Warm drinks, food, and a roaring stove set the pattern for the rest of the day. It was clear we would not move until the rain let up. We amused ourselves playing with the children, chopping wood, and reading the logbook which had been contributed to by the many visitors in the cabin. Most, like us, had arrived in bad weather. Some had even been out canoeing and were hit with a heavy snow storm! There were notes in Russian, Nepalese, and Spanish. Veteran travellers and novices alike stopped at the cabin.

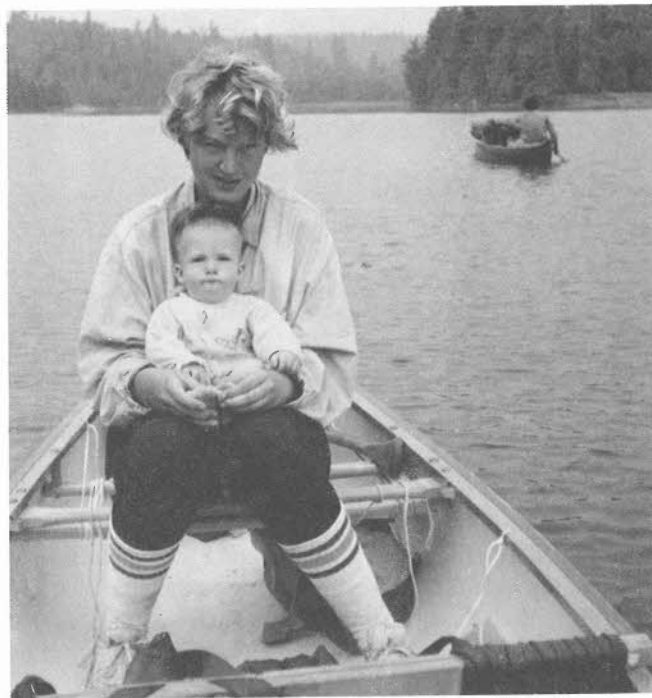
As evening approached, the wind swung to the north and the clouds scudded along. All the signs pointed to clear weather. So it came to pass, and the morning dawned crisp, clear, and cold. With a warm breakfast inside us, the cabin well swept, and the wood box full, we carried the last of the rapids and started upriver. Oh what a glorious, clear day! Somebody up there loves us—a canoeist could not ask for anything better.

Even as yesterday had been dark and ominous, this morning was brilliant—every surface shined. The droplets on the branches glistened like icicles. The wet spider webs shone like polished silver. The purple in the rocks gleamed. The blue sky was so blue that there could not be any other blue on earth. Under these conditions we left the cabin and also made the first upriver portage.



From above the last portage, Kit and I poled the canoes one at a time up the remaining rapids to Divide Lake. At each set Kathy took Erika in the backpack and walked along the shore rocks to lighten the load in the canoe. At the first pitch I poled up with Michael in the canoe, while at the second he walked the rocks with Kathy and Erika.

We entered Divide and paddled upriver with a fair wind in the face. By now we had a strong northwester coming down the length of the lake. The powerful wind alternately



blew in squalls and then cleared. The changing sky conditions formed a backdrop for the massive rise of Dry Mountain to the west. We paddled in an almost alpine setting and headed for the two rapids below the Shangri La Falls portage.

At each rapid the children walked the shore with Kathy, while Kit and I lined the loaded canoes up to the top. The pull-ups went well, the wind roared—rain or clear? We landed at the falls trail and carried to the branch in the trail that went out to the falls. It is quite a twisting trail around large boulders out to the flat rock site.

Amidst changing sky conditions, we had a bit of lunch and Erika a bit of a nap. Then we went back on the trail and carried over the boulders to Stonehenge Lake. By now the wind was really ripping and we had to pull hard to get to the bottom of the next rapid. Again the children walked and Kit and I lined the canoes up. At one juncture we had to swing the canoe out into the current, around a boulder the size of a small house in a semi-circular move, and then pull into shore. Neither of us fell in!

Another pull-up brought us to Macpherson Lake and a windy paddle towards the mouth of the Grays River. Camp was made on the site of an old trapper's cabin, upon a hill. The wind roared, the clouds whipped by, Michael played Davy Crockett with Kathy in the blueberry bushes, and as dinner ended the sky became orange and purple. We turned in with the promise of another bright, clear day.

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO WILDERNESS

Orrie Wigle

The combination of a new job and relocating our home to Sarnia ended any chance of a significant canoe trip this year. However, beautiful scenery, interesting plants, and peaceful moments were provided by the Thames and Grand rivers. Both have hidden bits of wilderness which give a retreat close to home with no need for extensive trip planning or preparation. In addition, paddling the same area in different seasons gives an opportunity to appreciate the changing world of nature. The edge of the wilderness is waiting for a visit no matter how brief. I have tried to express some of the enjoyment available in the following two short trip descriptions.

GRAND RIVER - Cambridge (evening, 1 July 1990)

This short paddle on the pond above the Mill Dam gave my wife and I the chance to relax after spending the weekend preparing for our move. As we started out, a sparkling cascade of light danced on the surface of the water in the distance. The wind rippling the water and the setting sun produced the illusion of a set of rapids in front of us. Morning Glory, Speedwell, and Loosestrife provided interesting patches of color along the base of the granite cliff and invited closer examination. Cedar trees clung to the side of the cliff with an early moon overhead. A small clump of Harebell grew in an impossible location under a one-metre overhang. The roots were established in a crack in the rock. Just a short distance away, a racoon was sunbathing as it enjoyed the last of the light before an evening of foraging. All this in *the middle of the city*.

THAMES RIVER - Thamesville to Kent Bridge (26 September 1990) This was a leisurely paddle with an old friend to enjoy a beautiful sunny fall day. Patches of Asters were covered with yellow butterflies flitting from flower to flower. The sides and tops of several trees that line the clay banks were covered with wild cucumber vines. The height of the dangling fruit indicated how fast this annual vine grows during the summer. Small flocks of ducks flew out from the shore as we drifted downstream. One great blue heron moved downriver several times before circling around behind us. On the banks, brilliant yellow flowers of the Jerusalem Artichoke stood out against the dark green leaves and brown clay. This in an area of *extensive farmland*.

For anyone interested in visiting the southwestern Ontario wilderness, the Grand and Thames River Conservation Authorities provide brief pamphlets on canoeing these rivers. Their valleys contain many examples of the original Carolinian forest which was replaced by agricultural crops. For the part-time naturalist without botanical training, the excellent reference book *Trees, Shrubs & Flowers to know in Ontario* by Sheila McKay and Paul Catling (published by J.M. Dent & Sons) will help to identify and learn something about the most common plants that grow without cultivation in Ontario. About 450 plants are illustrated with short descriptions. Almost all large trees found in Ontario are included, as well as most major groups of shrubs. Some preference is given to wildflower species which are prevalent in the more populated areas of the province, but a wide range from roadside weeds to native woodland plants is included.

THE CAMERA

Trying to take pictures and at the same time keep the camera and film dry. Seem to be mutually exclusive events on river trips. At least for us. Twenty years of trying and still haven't got the problem beat.

Just can't take camera equipment up there, drag it out in the weather, pack it next to wet camping gear, and transport it in a canoe fifteen centimetres above 40 percent of the fresh water in the world and expect it to remain dry. Can't ever seem to learn that lesson. Each year the river teaches it to us anew.

At the start of every trip determined to keep the camera and film dry. Our motto going in is, "Dry camera and pictures this year."

We keep inventing different schemes to keep camera and film dry. One year we tried a double bagging system for

the camera with both bags air-inflated. That particular bag carried first on every portage, packed highest in the canoe, and placed first into the tent at night. Still got wet.

That system was expensive, ingenious, and FOOLproof. And a failure. Consensus among the partners is that the manufacturer needs to do some additional product testing on river trips. It's been our experience that Canadian rivers are a tough proving ground for more than one product.

Can think of only two ways to keep the camera equipment and film dry. The first way is to fly up north in planes, stay at lodges with roofs, and travel by boats with motors for camera shots. The second way is to just admit defeat and buy a waterproof camera. At either end of the spectrum your problems are over. The middle of the spectrum is wet and belongs to the river.

Greg Went



ISSN 1828-1327

Published by the Wilderness Canoe Association — Editor: Toni Harting
Nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning 'the way or route'

The WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION is a non-profit organization made up of individuals interested in wilderness travel, mainly by canoe and kayak, but also including backpacking and winter trips on both skis and snowshoes. The club publishes a quarterly journal,

Nastawgan, to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas of interest to wilderness travellers, organizes an extensive program of trips for members, runs a few basic workshops, and is involved in environmental issues relevant to wilderness canoeing.

EDITORIAL

It occasionally happens that smaller or larger booboos are made during the production of our journal (for tax-exempt purposes the use of the designation 'newsletter' is out; *Nastawgan* is a magazine, a journal!!). There are the inevitable typos, the upside-down pictures, the non-matching typefaces, and even, as in the last issue, some white pages in at least one copy where the printshop managed to not get the ink onto the paper. These happenings are fortunately rare but also practically unavoidable, because were people work mistakes are made.

So, if you receive a copy of *Nastawgan* that has pages missing, double print, blank pages, whatever, immediately send the misprinted copy to me and I'll get you a replacement copy right away. It's very satisfying to occasionally hear that the journal is appreciated by you readers out there in paddleland, but please let me know if things don't turn out the way they're supposed to. This helps us avoiding similar mistakes in the future.



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

WHO CARES?

Overall this has been a disappointing and discouraging year for me as Chairman.

While we have chalked up a couple of successes, notably, the upgrading of our newsletter and the conversion of memberships to a quarterly renewal basis, the worrisome trend of a proportional decline in the number of members who participate in the activities and running of the WCA has now reached a serious level.

We kicked off the year with an AGM that had the poorest attendance that I can recall since the club's first years. Only some 40 members made the effort to appear. Since there were only three candidates to fill the three vacant Board of Directors positions, we didn't have to waste anyone's time on debates or elections. Three long-standing members (Tony Bird, Herb Pohl, Glen Spence) had agreed to take the positions. I don't know where we'd be without such persons who have shown themselves time and again willing to pitch in when no one else would do the job.

This spring, outings organizers once more took time and effort to put together programs of basic flatwater and whitewater instruction to enable novice members to improve their skills so they can participate in more club trips. However, subsequent participation in our activities by the attendees has been to date almost nil. It would appear that these programs have failed to achieve their goals and their further continuance, at least in their current forms, should be re-evaluated.

Indeed, as a whole, participation in outings has not kept pace with growth in membership. The number of regular trip participants probably is no greater now than it was ten years ago when we had half as many members. There are numerous members in southern Ontario whom I have never seen on a club trip, and many more who only turn out once in a blue moon. We seem to be becoming largely a group of armchair paddlers and journal subscribers.

This summer, after a long search for a new Conservation Chairman, Stephen Crouch agreed to assume this position, bringing much-needed enthusiasm and energy that the Board hoped would revitalize our conservation efforts.

Unfortunately Stephen has not received the support he deserves and we hoped he would get. When it comes to conservation, the people in the club talk a good game but it has become all talk and no action. I've heard at virtually

every AGM clamorous demands that the WCA should take a stand on a number of important conservation issues of direct concern to paddlers. But when the Board has asked for the help needed to follow through, it has seldom received a positive response. Everyone was apparently too busy recycling their cans and bottles to be able to help.

This is an unfortunate situation as there are many issues of importance to us in which all that is required is a simple letter to a government official or politician letting them know that you're madder than hell about what they're allowing to happen. Often we even get invitations from the MNR to express our views on a matter. It's an area in which a small effort can make a real difference. If you passed Grade 8 English and have a good vocabulary of four-letter words you can often do the job in an hour or two. If that's too much effort for you, then let's at least not kid ourselves about how much we really are concerned about conservation issues.

As the Board was unable to locate persons to organize the Fall Meeting, Director Tony Bird managed the entire affair personally, right down to the mailing of the announcements by himself. The workshops were provided due to the continuing commitment of six members who have come through for the club when we've been in a tight spot since almost day one.

By the way, guess who ended up organizing the Fall Party? Thanks again, Tony!

Now as to next year's AGM, I have little to say other than that at the moment of writing this letter we don't have an organizer and I don't intend to see the good people who have volunteered to sit on the Board coerced into organizing the club's events as well, due to the unwillingness of others to help out. They're doing their share already.

I think that in the future, if after reasonable search the Board cannot find organizers, they should consider cancelling the event.

The Directors will have to examine additional means of managing the club with the small pool of volunteers available to them. This may require such moves as a reduction in

the number or scale of WCA events, withdrawal from conservation activities, or remuneration for officers, officials, and event organizers.

Unfortunately it appears that even the Board may shortly become a victim of this dearth of volunteers as at present out of the WCA's over 600 members only two have declared their willingness to stand for next year's three vacancies. I find this development a very discouraging and ominous sign.

Many of us have enjoyed the benefits of belonging to this community of canoeists and wilderness enthusiasts which is the WCA. Through it we have learned new skills and met others with whom we have become close friends and paddling companions. It happened because there were enough people who were seriously committed to the ideals of the WCA and its continuance, and were ready and willing to actively support them.

I hope that those of us who have profited from the club can find the time and the enthusiasm to make the commitment that is so necessary to ensure that it will continue and flourish. To put back in a little in return for what we have gained.

For those of you living in or reasonably near Toronto but whose only involvement has been the reading of *Nastawgan*, I urge you to become more involved. A membership in the WCA is not just a newsletter subscription, it is belonging to a community of people with a common interest who should use the journal as just one means by which they share their ideas, experiences, and concerns. If you live within southern Ontario and you don't take part in our various activities you're missing out on a lot of our benefits and you're also not really helping the club where it counts. We want your active participation; not just your twenty-five bucks.

Much ink has been spilled over the past two years debating the future of the WCA in terms of what direction it is taking or should be taking. Ladies and gentlemen, as your Chairman it is regretfully my unpleasant responsibility to inform you that, unless we all get off our behinds now and take an active role in the running of the WCA, the club has no future.

Bill Ness

MAILING NASTAWGAN

By the time *Nastawgan* reaches your mailbox, quite a number of people have worked on it in several stages. The final step is the mailing.

Four times a year the dining room of Joan and Bill King



Photo by Suus Tissot

is transferred into a mail room where a small group of volunteers gathers on Sunday morning and works for a few hours. The work used to overflow into the living room, but over the years Bill has streamlined the process and now only the dining room table and the floor are used.

Needless to say that the volunteers enjoy a first look at the new issue which is a reward in itself. Some people stuff envelopes, while others put on the labels and the stamps. Cash Belden provides the mailing labels sorted in three categories: Canadian, US, and Overseas, because the Canadian mailing is done at 1st class rate while the US and Overseas go at a lower rate. Finally all envelopes are sealed. Bill usually takes care of the US and Overseas part of the mailing list. The last step in this mailing process is to deliver the finished envelopes to the local post office.

While the work is being done it is rather quiet because surprisingly the job requires a certain amount of concentration. But during coffee break, when the tempo slows down, a lively discussion takes place about WCA happenings.

Jan Tissot

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: Spring 1991 *deadline date:* 27 January 1991
Summer 1991 5 May 1991

WCA MEMBERSHIP LISTS are available to any members who wish one for personal, non-commercial use. Send five dollars in bills (no cheques, please!) to Cash Belden at the WCA postal address (see WCA Contacts on the back page).

ARCTIC SYMPOSIUM The sixth annual Canoeing and Wilderness Symposium will be held in Toronto on 25 and 26 January 1991. It will focus on the "central Arctic," from the Thelon River north to the Arctic Ocean, and from Hudson Bay west to the Mackenzie River. Most of this region is north of the tree line. It includes rivers such as the Back, Burnside, Hood, Coppermine, Horton, Dearse, Quoich. The format for Friday evening and all day Saturday will be similar to last year's. The location will also be the same, Monarch Park Collegiate. If you have not received a registration form in a separate mailing, please contact George Luste at (416) 534-9313. Register as soon as possible because space is limited.

WCA PHOTO CONTEST The closing date for receipt of your entry in this rewarding and interesting competition is 20 January 1991. See page 21 of the Autumn 1990 issue of *Nastawgan* for all the information you need to participate.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1991 Information on next year's AGM is presented in the enclosed information sheet.

SPORTSMEN'S SHOW BOOTH The WCA will again have a booth at the coming Sportsmen's Show which will take place from 15 to 24 March 1991. Anybody with good ideas and/or some time to spare to help manning the booth, please contact the WCA booth organizer, Mike Jones, at (416) 270-3256. PARTICIPATE!

NAHANNI TV SHOW In March 1991, CTV-TV will present the one-hour special "The Nahanni and Rebekka Dawn," featuring Pat and Rosemarie Keough and their little daughter, based on the Keough's 1988 bestseller, *The Nahanni Portfolio*. This show will also be made available as a video package.

CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVERS SYSTEM In its September 1990 update, the CHR Board announced that the Kazan and Thelon rivers, in the Northwest Territories, were formally designated to the CHRS. These are the first two rivers outside national parks in the NWT to be designated. The addition of the Kazan and Thelon rivers (1,160 km) almost doubles the length of rivers designated to the System, bringing this total to 2,364 kilometres.

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following are the platforms for candidates for the 1991 Board of Directors, received before our publication date. Any other members who wish to run for the Board may do so by letting the Board of Directors know, or by placing their name in nomination from the floor at the AGM in February 1991.

RICHARD CULPEPER

What do I support?

1. A high quality and eclectic *Nastawgan*.
2. The broadest spectrum possible of outdoor activities, particularly at the local and regional level.
3. Opportunities for skill development and increased involvement for new members.
4. Co-operative conservation efforts, including dissemination of information through *Nastawgan*.

What troubles me?

Cliquish posturing over which activities are appropriate to the WCA and the resultant alienation of new members.

What am I?

1. WCA Conservation Committee member working on mid-northern Ontario issues.
2. Conservation and whitewater contributor to *Nastawgan*.
3. WCA Outings trip organizer focusing on whitewater day-trips.

DUNCAN TAYLOR

After twelve years membership in the WCA, I would like to contribute something more in return for the experience, education, and fun I have had through the club. Up to now I have led two or three trips a year and recently have assisted in editing *Nastawgan*. But I believe that only through the active participation of members will we be able to continue the fine work of the WCA. The key activities of the club are the outings program, *Nastawgan*, educational/social meetings, and wilderness conservation. In the outings program I support the objective of "encouraging individual responsibility by providing a program of practical canoeing experience" (one of the founding 'Aims and Objectives'). In this light I think one-day trips as well as workshops have a useful place; they are not only enjoyable but also provide valuable training for longer wilderness trips.

Nastawgan is an outstanding publication which takes a lot of effort by the editor to keep up that standard. The present Board has wisely invested in some hardware and software to streamline publication and I would support further investment if required.

I am encouraged that the Conservation Committee has become active again, because with continued pressure on wilderness areas from hydro development, logging, air pollution, and the like, we need vigilance and thoughtful submissions of member's views to influence specific decisions.

CONSERVATION

The Conservation Committee has shrugged its cloak of apathy and rumbled into activity. The first meeting was held at the end of August with four members present and four others unable to attend. However, there are lots of projects to involve ourselves in and any other willing volunteers would be most welcome. As most members are aware the chairmanship of this committee has been taken over by Stephen Crouch and it is through his efforts that the committee has reformed.

We began by trying to develop some policies on our purpose and direction. Due to limited resources we cannot hope to become involved in the large number of "conservation issues" that may affect or concern our membership. Most of our energy will be spent on those issues having direct impact on "wilderness canoeing" as it relates to our membership. So, although we may all be concerned about ozone-layer depletion and rain forest destruction, these issues have an indirect effect on the quality of wilderness canoeing so we will leave these struggles to others. It is also important that we represent the views of the organization and for that reason we request your ongoing comments on issues discussed in this column.

We decided to focus initial efforts of the committee on a region of the province that we feel has been neglected and may therefore need protection. This is that region of Central Ontario which includes the Magnetawan and Pickering watersheds approximately bounded by Hwy 11 on the east, Hwy 69 on the west, and Hwy 522 and 518 on the north and south respectively. This area is accessible to many of our members, but it is in danger of being encroached on as development heads northward. In essence this is the "near wilderness" and we would like it to remain so.

We are beginning an information-gathering campaign and are making contact with groups, camps organizations, and individuals using the area. We would like to develop a directory of canoe routes

in the region and possibly even get involved in route maintenance/cleanup. Would any members familiar with routes in the area please submit their knowledge in writing with as much detail as possible including time of year, portages, rapids, distances, and access.

Other issues discussed included the ongoing loon count in the province and we are seeking further information to see if our membership can be of assistance in collecting data. We also felt that we should be supportive of the ongoing efforts by various



groups with respect to the Missinaibi, the Spanish, and the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, and will attempt to have representation of WCA views at all future proceedings.

If anyone has a pet project that they would like to volunteer time for, please do not hesitate to call. I attended the recent Temagami meetings in Toronto and spent a couple of hours in discussion with Ministry representatives, trying to protect the rights of canoeists in that region. It is difficult to represent the organization as a whole without lots of input from the members, so please make your opinions known to us, either directly to the committee or via letters to the Editor. The next meeting is scheduled for January in Orangeville, so send us your news and views.

Marlene Spruyt

I'D-RATHER-DIE-THAN-SWIM 1990 AWARDS

Richard Culpeper

The past season has offered some exceptional examples of how paddlers will do almost anything to keep dry. These awards recognize those intrepid individuals who strived and succeeded, though unfortunately they must remain anonymous for liability reasons.

1st Place: A Toronto paddler broached her canoe on a tree in the flooded Magnetawan River. As the canoe went over, she climbed high into the tree. When the tree then started to fall, she climbed back into her canoe and paddled away.

2nd Place: Another Toronto paddler avoided swimming in the River aux Sables by portaging a set of standing waves. Upon seeing the drop, he paddled back upstream, dragged his canoe up a canyon wall, portaged through dense bush, slid the canoe down the canyon wall, and put in at a flushing eddy. The eddy swept him back up to the top of the drop which he had portaged and pushed him out into the middle of the rapid, which he then ran with grace and decorum. The rapid now bears his name.

3rd Place: A Sudbury kayaker avoided swimming by discovering a hidden tongue through a river-wide hole on the Kipawa

River. He had been so concerned that other paddlers might fall into the hole that he set himself up above it as a rescue boat. Unfortunately, he rolled over and was washed into the hole, thus discovering the new route.

Honorable Mention: An Ottawa canoeist almost avoided swimming after his bathing suit was pulled to his knees by the Big Kahuna on the Ottawa's Coliseum rapids. Unfortunately, he disqualified himself from an "I'd-rather-die-than-swim" award when he then dove face first and bare bottomed directly into the hole at the bottom of the rapids.

Honorable Mention: One of Ontario's first environmental water cops almost avoided swimming by carefully scouting a rapid on the Magnetawan before running it. Unfortunately, he missed out on a 1990 award when a flood season dam release surge hit after he had begun his run. A huge wave was turned into a river-wide keeper which kept him, and kept him, and kept him Later that night one of his companions woke the campsite with screams of "FLASH FLOOD!" Better luck next year.

A VERY CLOSE ENCOUNTER

There is a soft breeze from the SSE which creates small ripples on the surface of the lake. There is also the suspicion of a swell with a long wave length which gently rocks my canoe as it passes underneath. The sky is cloudless but hazy, which reduces the sun's heat, but it's still pleasantly warm.

I stop paddling and gaze around to better absorb the beauty of the magnificent, rugged scenery of the shoreline and the two islands which lie off my port bow. I must get some pictures, and as I glance down to remove my camera from its box, the canoe rolls gently as the swell passes under. I am slightly off balance and the canoe keeps rolling. Too late—and I curse as I fall out. I am stunned. I cannot believe it.

My God! This is serious. This is no Southern Ontario warm-water lake in Algonquin Park. This is Northern Ontario where the lakes are colder, especially this one. The reality of my situation is forced home as I watch the now-empty camera box and double-blade paddle float away without any effort on my part to recover them. My life jacket. Where is my life jacket? It was on the floor behind me when I tipped. I find it under the overturned canoe. I get one arm in but it takes several attempts before I finally get the other arm in and the zipper closed. This is not the usual canoeist's life jacket: this one is made for sailors and yachters. It is like a long, padded suit jacket minus the sleeves and fits close against my body. Better protection from hypothermia. Now what?

I search my mind for anything I have read of how a solo canoeist can execute a self-rescue in calm but deep water and far from shore. I remember, way, way back on a WCA instruction course, how King Baker demonstrated how to empty most of the water from a swamped canoe by rocking the canoe violently from side to side. I try it but it doesn't work for me. Maybe I can bail it out. My bailer, a large blue detergent bottle, is tied to a thwart. A dozen or so bottlefuls

and I realize it is hopeless. It will take a long, long time, and time I don't have. Even so, how the hell am I going to climb in without help? It is difficult enough getting back into a canoe when you have a second canoe with two persons holding down the opposite gunwale. Now what?

I think of Red Cross Water Safety advice. They say "Stay with the boat. Climb out of the water onto the boat if at all possible. Body heat loss is less to air than to water." But this is not a boat. This is a 15-foot canoe with a 30-inch beam in the mid-section only. They say "Never try to swim ashore unless you are real close." I am not very close.

What is that small, black box floating beside me? It's my hearing aid, safely waterproofed in a recycled plastic milk bag. How in the hell did it get out of my trouser pocket? I grab the box and stuff it back deep inside the pocket.

The breeze is slightly off-shore and the canoe is drifting in the direction of two fair-sized islands, the islands I was about to photograph when this whole bloody mess I am in started. The nearest island is closer than the mainland shore; not much but definitely closer. Should I stay with the canoe and hope to make the island? But suppose the canoe misses the island, what then? This is a big lake. No, my best chance is to make for the mainland where I know I can walk out to my base camp and then to my truck.

Food! The small yellow stuff sack with enough food in it for about five lunches is still trapped under the spray deck. I wrap the thin nylon draw-string around the index finger of my left hand and start swimming with a steady, measured breast stroke. I aim for a point of land jutting out between two small bays and make slow but steady progress. I think of hypothermia and how much time I have under today's conditions. Negative thoughts. "Think positive" is the advice handed out by survival experts. The story of the founding of Outward Bound flashes through my mind. I'm going to make it. I will survive.



There is something wrong with the finger holding my food bag. It has lost all feeling. The draw-string has tightened and cut off circulation. I tread water and try to unravel it but it is a hopeless tangle. I get my jackknife from my trouser pocket and cut the stuffbag loose, carefully returning the knife to the pocket, and start swimming again. A few kicks with my legs and I feel something dragging on my right leg. The knife is not in the pocket. It is dangling on the end of the cord which anchors it to my trouser belt. I shake my leg and the cord frees itself. The knife will have to just dangle there; it doesn't seem very important to me out here.

The swell, or maybe a surface current, is pushing me off course so I change my angle to the swell. A few strokes later and I get a mouthful of water. Fortunately I swallow it and it goes to my stomach and not my lungs. Another mouthful of water and again it goes to my stomach. I must be tiring and swimming lower in the water. Decide best thing to do is swim on my back where I get the full benefit of the generously padded collar of the life jacket. It keeps my head well above the water. But now I cannot see the shore and my line of direction. Those two islands out there, now much farther away, give me a good point of reference.

Definitely making progress but the shore is still a fair distance away. Again the symptoms of hypothermia enter my thoughts. I don't feel cold and I am thinking rationally. The water must be warmer than its reputation. I just have to keep plodding on.

My right hand touches something hard. A rock. I must be close to shore. A few more kicks and my feet strike solid. I've made it. I roll over and crawl ashore. I'm breathing hard, sucking in great lungfuls of air. Funny, I hadn't noticed that while swimming.

I try to stand up but my legs won't support me. My entire body is shaking, violently, uncontrollably. Hypothermia. I'm well into the second stage except my mind. I am still thinking coherently. I need a fire. I need external heat to help restore body heat. The top of the beach is littered with driftwood, from small pencil-size sticks to huge centuries-old logs, bleached white from decades of sun. I manage to remove the life jacket and the bush jacket, though I do have trouble with the buttons on the bush jacket.

The pile of kindling is ready, and I have two matches ready to strike. I try again and again but it is no good; I just cannot stop the shaking. I give up and lie on my back and feel the warmth of the multi-colored, smooth, baseball-sized rocks. My shirt is open to the waist and the cold flesh soaks up the life-restoring warmth of the sun.

Gradually the shivering subsides and I can control my hands, though the legs and feet are much slower in responding. Must try again to get a fire going. As I crawl over to the heap of kindling, I find a small piece of birch bark: that will help. This time I try my lighter. First flick, nothing. Second flick, nothing. Flick four and I get a spark. Flick five a small flame. The birch bark catches instantly and I have fire.

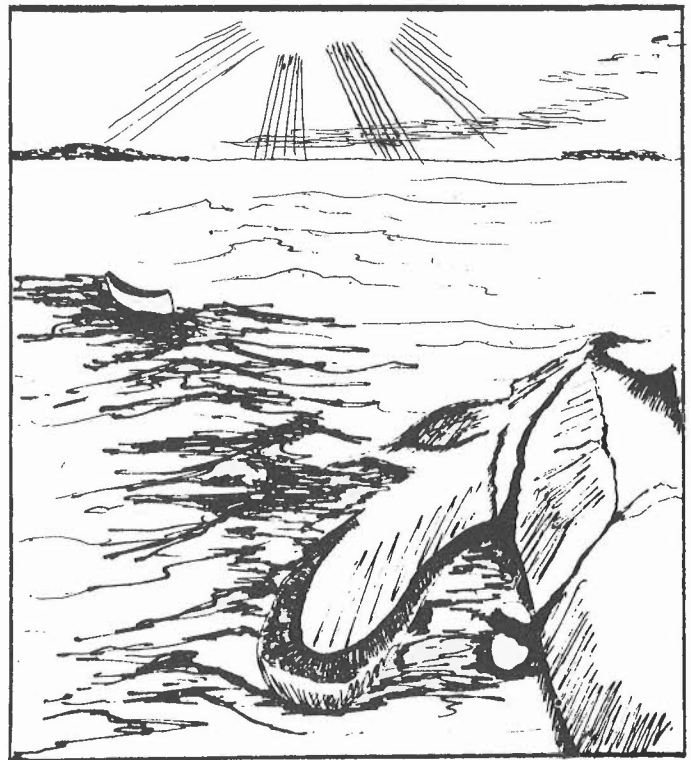
Within minutes I have a bonfire helped along by the now much stronger breeze. Soon I am able to stand up and the fire quickly dries out my slacks.

With my back to the fire, munching on a granola bar, I suddenly realize that there is a boat out there; looks like a

yacht cruising north under power as I see no sail. I grab my bush jacket, fish out the small flare gun which always goes with me on wilderness trips and fire off three red flares. The odds of those flares being seen in daylight are pretty long. The yacht cruises on and disappears behind the outer island.

By now I am feeling rested and think of food. The half loaf of rye bread is slightly damp on one small corner and the margarine is O.K. in a plastic jar. I reach into my trouser pocket for my jackknife. It's gone. All I have left is the length of cord which is supposed to prevent such a thing from happening. The hearing aid, it too has disappeared from the other trouser pocket. A piece of thin, flat driftwood serves as a knife and I have lunch.

I wonder where the canoe might be. Maybe it drifted into the next bay. I make my way over to the point, a bare rock about three metres above the water line, and the first thing I see are two buildings and a dock, over on the nearest island, but at this distance I am not sure about the dock. There is no sign of activity though I watch for several minutes. Something on the tip of the island catches my eye. It is small and bright with a yellow tinge to it. That must be my yellow canoe, but it doesn't help me much out there. Maybe if I can find someone with a power boat when I get out, I can recover it.



Illustrations by Ria Harting

I know precisely where I am and the topo map tells me that about one kilometre due east there is a trail leading back to Gargantua Harbour where I am camped. But the map (Provincial Series 1:100,000) doesn't have contour lines so I am guessing as to how rough it might be bushwhacking to the trail. Decide it best to stay close to the shore. In the bays, walking is easy on the pebble beaches but many of the points between bays rise straight out of the water so I have to make inland bushwhacking detours. Two hours of this and I check

my position on the map. The trail should now be at its closest to the shore line, so on a compass bearing I head due east. A hundred metres or so and I find the trail. Fifteen minutes and I am back at my base camp. I pack up and hike the two kilometres to my truck.

Before I leave the parking lot I walk down to the beach and find, tied to a tree by a heavy padlocked chain, an aluminum power boat that definitely wasn't there yesterday. If I can locate the owner, maybe I can recover the canoe. I drive back to Park headquarters to find the office closed at 4:30 p.m., but over at another building there are some young persons sitting on the steps. I ask if by any chance they know who owns the boat. They don't. There are other people inside the building, perhaps they may know. A young man reluctantly gets up and goes inside. He returns a few minutes later. A Mr. Delaney owns the boat and he lives in Sault Ste. Marie. I head for the Sault.

Next morning, using the Bell Telephone Directory, I track down the Mr. Delaney who owns the boat and the island. He works for Algoma Steel and they are on strike. He readily agrees to go back with me to see if I can find the

canoe. His outboard motor is loaded into my truck and we head north.

It takes about 30 minutes under full power to boat out to the tip of Mr. Delaney's island (named Dixon Island on the topo map) and there, lodged in a fissure in the rock wall that comes straight out of the water, is my little yellow canoe and—much to my surprise and delight—floating alongside



the canoe is my single-blade paddle. I paddle the canoe to Mr. Delaney's cottage where we spend the night, before returning to Sault Ste. Marie early next morning.

For those readers who haven't already guessed what lake this incident occurred on, it was Lake Superior, within the shoreline boundary of Lake Superior Provincial Park. How long was I in the water? I don't know. Almost too long. I know where I swamped and precisely

where I crawled ashore; measuring in a straight line on the topo map, I swam somewhere between 1,000 and 1,100 metres.

I broke the first cardinal rule of safe canoeing, as many of us do: "Never canoe alone" (by that I mean just one canoe), and I almost paid the price.

Jim Greenacre



FALL MEETING 1990

This year's WCA Fall Meeting was held on 29-30 September on Beausoleil Island which is part of the Georgian Bay Islands National Park. Approximately 65 members and friends attended, many of whom paddled to the island from Honey Harbour on Saturday morning.

We camped in the northern part of the island in typical Canadian Shield terrain. Beausoleil Island has numerous hiking trails and many opportunities for good paddling. In the summer this is a popular, crowded spot for sail and power boats. However, at the end of September the island is relatively deserted.



Several workshops were held on Saturday. In the afternoon, Sandy Richardson and friends demonstrated sea kayaking equipment and techniques, followed by John Winters explaining his approach to designing canoes and paddles using his experience as a naval architect.

After supper, people gathered at the beach of the Chim-



ney campsite. The weather was mild, making it pleasant to sit outside. Bill King began the evening's workshops by discussing the contents of the medical kit he brings on a long canoe trip. For a table he used an upturned canoe and lighting was provided by two hurricane lamps. John Winters returned to tell us how, with the aid of his computer, he can prepare a canoe trip food list in 15 seconds, once he knows the length of the trip and the number of participants. Jim Greenacre then explained how he packs items to make sure they stay dry, drawing on his own experience and extensive testing of waterproofing methods. The evening ended with Herb Pohl's thoughtful talk on why he often prefers to travel solo.

On Sunday morning it rained, prompting many to leave early. Despite the rain, however, there was general agreement that this had been another successful and enjoyable weekend. For next years Fall Meeting a similar get-together is being considered. Any suggestions for a location?

Tony Bird

RIVIÈRE DU LIÈVRE

Graham McCallum

If you take ten high school teachers who are trying to pack as many and as varied a group of activities into a summer as possible, you will find that getting them together for a long canoe trip is not easy. Since we are usually "ten day wonders" anyway, we could cut it down to a week this time to help planning. Still too difficult? Then, how about four days on the river plus travelling time—8 to 13 August—six days tops? Can do!

But where do you go for four days of hot whitewater action, in the wilderness where the water is warm and clear, the scenery beautiful, and you don't have to inspect the geological outcrops in the bush for more than ten metres? Where else but Québec?! We have canoed a number of Québec rivers, and during a trip down the Coulonge, a Hull Canoe Club guide we met mentioned that his favorite river was the Du Lièvre but it was only three days long. We made a mental note of this and promptly forgot about it, until now. Perfect—we could easily cram three days into four and there's our trip.

How was the river? Magnificent, just magnificent. The rapids, lots of them, were all runnable. None were the kind that made you mentally check to see if you have paid your last life insurance premium. The water level was excellent for August and apparently is always so. There are several small ledges and chutes which are easy lifts. These are all clearly marked on the accurate maps obtainable from Québec.

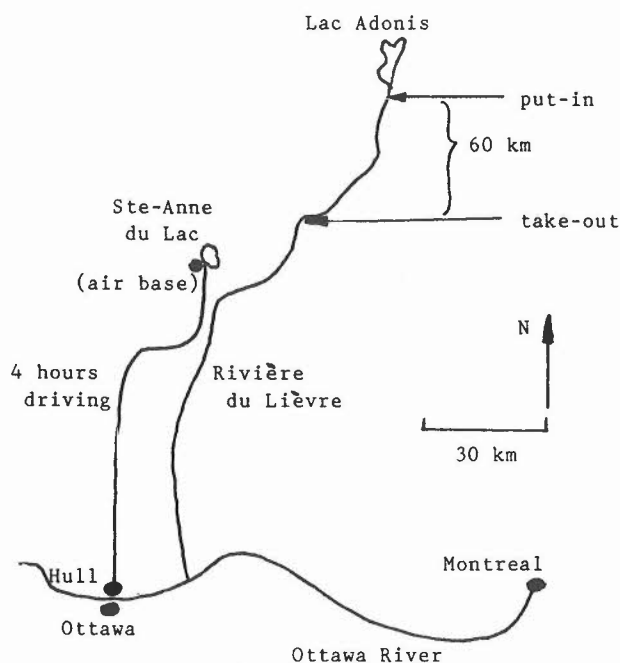
On the last day there is a mini canyon with a ledge at the bottom. The run is marked as an R-IV on the map. From where we landed on the right side at the beginning of the rapids we did not find a portage trail along the top edge where we bushwhacked to get a better look. There is no

portage marked on either the canoe or topo maps. We all ran it with no difficulty down the far left side where the ledge is gapped by a narrow chute. Unless there is a portage somewhere, this canyon could be tricky in higher water, since lining is difficult, if not impossible, due to the steep walls on both sides in places.



Photo by Dave Robinson

From the take-out at 265K on the map, the drivers hitched back to the cars and the trip was over. The river was so action packed that the four days seemed to be the equivalent of our usual trips without the aches and pains of a grinder. It could be habit forming.



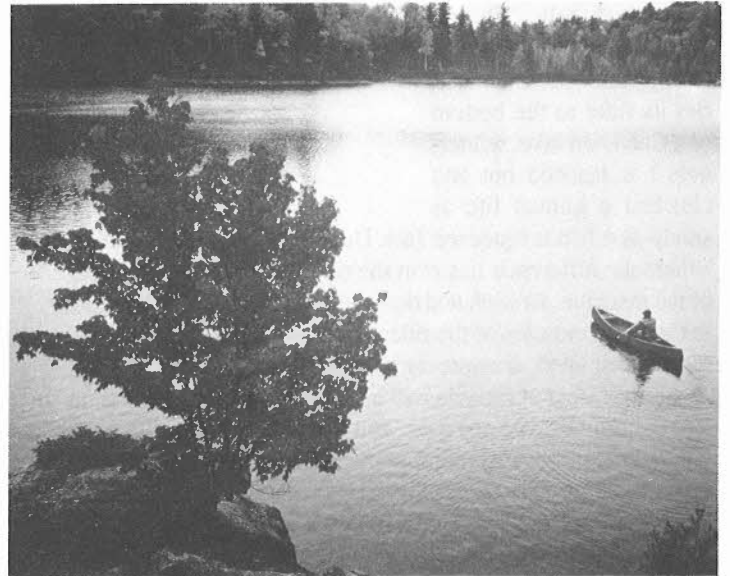
- LENGTH: 60 km
 TIME: Four days on the river.
 CANOES: Blue Hole ABS; Kabecsport, Hull, Québec, (819) 771-2320
 \$136.25 per canoe for a week.
 FLIGHT: Air Melancon Inc., Ste-Anne-du-Lac, Québec, (819) 586-2220
 \$90 each
 MAPS: Fédération Québécoise Du Canot-Camping Inc. 4545 Va. Pierre-de-Coubertin CP 1000, Succursale M Montreal, Québec, H1V 3R2 (514) 252-3000
 \$2.50 each
 PUT-IN: Just south of Lake Adonis, one kilometre below 325K on the map.
 TAKE-OUT: At 265K on the map where the river from Lake Mitchinamecus joins in.

FROST CENTRE

About 250 km NNE of Toronto by car, the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre offers the enterprising nature lover a wide variety of the finest outdoors Mother Nature has to offer in Ontario. Set amid the Haliburton Highlands on a 24,000-hectare site 12 km south of the village of Dorset, the centre is a unique facility offering opportunities in outdoor education, resource management, and outdoor recreation.

from okay to packed!) An excellent map of the whole area—to a large extent based on field work by WCA member Craig Macdonald—is available for a few dollars from assorted Ministry of Natural Resources offices such as the one at the Frost Centre itself: Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre, Dorset, Ontario P0A 1E0, (705) 766-2451.

Toni Harting



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The articles on these two pages offer the kind of information that I think we should encounter more often in our journal. Wilderness canoeing does not exist solely of long, hard trips for experts only in the far north, however welcome their stories are in our pages (please, keep those write-ups coming!), but also, and for most members probably in the first place, of relatively short, easy to organize, finance, and access outings not too far from home.

And there surely are dozens, if not hundreds of these everywhere in the vast canoeing country in Canada and the USA. All that is needed for those of you who have some information on a good area for canoeing, camping, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing is to make a simple report and send it to the editor, with a few photographs and a simple map if at all possible. It is the what, where, when, how that we're interested in here; you really don't have to create a complete trip description, a few hundred words should be enough. Your contribution will then be added to the rich collection of unique information we're building up in the pages of our journal. If you need help, please contact me.

Editor

The primary objective of the Frost Centre is to provide a variety of opportunities related to demonstrations of and education in natural resources, their management and use. Each year approximately 11,000 visitors participate in residential and day-use programs. Although it deals mainly with residential groups, the general public is welcome to visit. During the summer months, visitor services staff provide a variety of family-oriented day programs.

Besides these organized programs, there is ample opportunity for the more individually-minded canoeist, camper, hiker, snowshoer, or skier to enjoy the marvellous opportunities for discovery and adventure available in the area administered by the Frost Centre. Ponds, lakes, creeks, rivers, portages, everything the avid canoe-tripper's heart can possibly desire is abundantly available here. There still are places to be found where in the canoeing season (June-August) very few others will cross your path. (Better to stay away from the long weekends, though; occupancy can range

WILDER-BLINDNESS

(Part 3 of 3)

Raymond Chipeniuk

Yet of course it does need protection. It needs protection because it can be altered from something richly patterned and grand or exquisite—though of a terrible beauty—to something simplified and ugly. When a snowmobile breaks through uneven ice and carries its rider to the bottom of a Canadian lake, wilderness has reached out and clutched a human life as surely as when it squeezed Jack Hornby on the Barren Lands. Where the difference lies is in the ear-splitting, unnatural roar of the machine, its stink and destructiveness, yes; but still more in the slack muscles of the rider, his shell-shocked senses, and his undisciplined, unappreciative mind.



Large areas of Canada will be dangerous wild places as far into the future as we can gaze. But for most people wilderness without natural beauty, complexity, and spectacle is not much worth seeking. And those of us who love it want it to be worth seeking, because we know what it does to people.

Listen. First the fear:

... Hours here mean nothing. You speed away in your mind, accomplishing miracles, and come back reluctantly to watch snow falling, soft, thick and slow. You feel tough, but three miles in the cold leaves you burning all over. Your throat tissues are raw.... You wonder anxiously what has happened to your "wind." At last, while you pretend to watch the snow-smoke whipping on a distant hill, you make yourself face the facts. You are soft all over; and you are more than halfway afraid. It doesn't shame you. You are simply flabbergasted.

It sounds like a slow transition, but a few hours can do it. From a man full of courage and great nonchalance, you become like a chickadee bewildered by new curves.¹³

Notice that the fear is quiet, calm, and gradual. It is as if the soul were slowly being eaten alive, and watching its own demise with an astonished detachment.

But that stage passes:

But that stage swiftly passes, and soberly you begin to work through your crisis.

Simple confidence was not going to be enough. It must be replaced with something more positive. The muscles must be more hardened, carefully, with gradual exercise. The mind must learn patience, if only for the conservation of nervous energy. In this country one would never be able to "take it or leave it." Obviously, one would take it!¹⁴

Clearly, although it is no longer fashionable to say so, wilderness tempers both body and mind, empties them of one thing and fills them up with another. In the judgement of those who have experienced wilderness themselves, people who pass through wilderness—in one classic case, an individual who spent forty days in it; in another, an entire nation that spent forty years—come out the other side transformed. They are harder, able to endure more than they had ever imagined they could. They have a new or renewed sense of purpose in their lives, and a reinforced mastery over themselves that often is the first thing that strikes city people when they see them.¹⁵ They walk differently from other people; a little like wild animals themselves.

For that may be the final irony: wilderness in its deeper, "wildern + ness" sense is not "wild deer + ness," the preserve of wild animals, but the preserve of wild people, or the preservation of what is wild in people.¹⁶ As human beings domesticate themselves more and more, extending government-, social-, or self-control over every aspect of their lives, they need occasional release from overmuch security and obedience if they are not to become completely tame.¹⁷ They need to work out their own purposes in their own ways, as do the wolf, the whisky-jack, and the whitefish.

Those who have transcended themselves through wilderness, who have encountered their fear and learned how to deal with it, have no trouble seeing "wildern + ness," because they have no trouble looking at it. It is no Gorgon to them. And in bygone eras when wilderness was undeniably everywhere in this country, such persons could watch the humanizing of it with indifference.

Not now. Those of us who must have places to nurture the wildness in ourselves look on in fascinated horror as the summer wilderness of Canada, at least, breaks up and dissipates like a fog under the morning sun. If we want real wilderness for ourselves and the kind of posterity we would like this Canada to be in the hands of, we will have to work hard.¹⁸

First we must expose the sham. We must convey to Canadians walking the sidewalks and reading their newspapers that wilderness is not just "wild deer + ness," a government-denominated acreage in a park or the undeveloped back-of-beyond. It is also "wildern + ness," the combination of wildness of place with wildness of mind.

Next, we must make it crystal clear that wilderness cannot be bought cheaply. It cannot be had for the price of a helicopter ride to the summit of an ethereal mountain. It is not assured by anyone's signing on for a commercial canoe tour of a famous and dangerous river. The boardwalk leading to the lip of the formerly unattainable falls goes nowhere. Instead, wilderness, like life, is created by the living that is done to get there.

Third, to perpetuate true "wildern + ness," as opposed to "wild deer + ness," we must have legions of like-minded fellows. That means inveigling others into the baptism of their

own encounters with wildness, and redeeming them from the false gods of second-rate experience and outdoor gymnastics.

These will be the Canadians with eyes opened to both wilderness and the lack of it. Theirs will be the ideal of a Canada running up to certain vast bounds, on the other side of which will be the unknown, the perilous, the lonely. They will swiftly, we hope, tutor Canadians in general on the importance of "wildern + ness" as well as "wild deer + ness," the wildness in themselves as well as the wildness of Canada. Then the dazzled eyes of this invalid nation will heal and turn cautiously again towards the white world we have chosen to live in.

Footnotes

13 Arthur C. Twomey, *Needle to the North*, ed. William C. James (place of publication not indicated: Oberon Press, reprinted 1982 from original 1942 edition), p. 39.

14 Twomey, cited above, p. 39.

15 For a very good exposition of the changes wilderness works in a person, see Bruce W. Hodgins and Margaret Hobbs, eds., *Nastawgan: The Canadian North by Canoe and Snowshoe* (Weston, Ontario: Betelgeuse Books, 1985).

16 Is this what Thoreau meant by saying: "In wildness is the preservation of the world"? Who knows?

17 The great exponent of this view, of course, is Thoreau; but a fine post-Darwin discussion of it can be found in W.H. Hudson, *Idle days in Patagonia* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1893), chapter XIII, "The Plains of Patagonia."

18 I am not suggesting we preserve wilderness solely for instrumental reasons; about the wisdom of doing that there are serious reservations, as described for example in Eric Katz, "Searching for Intrinsic Value," *Environmental Ethics*, Fall 1987, Volume 9, Number 3, pp. 231-241; or John A. Livingston, *The Fallacy of Wildlife Conservation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1982).

(Parts 1 and 2 of WILDER-BLINDNESS are presented in the Summer 1990 and Autumn 1990 issues of *Nastawgan*.)

Ray Chipeniuk and his wife, Sonia, have climbed, canoed, or hiked, in many parts of the world, from the Northwest Territories to Patagonia. For a long while he worked as an editor in the Committee Reporting Service of the House of commons, Ottawa. Currently he is on unpaid leave, studying towards a Ph.D. in regional planning at the University of Waterloo. The themes of his research are wilderness futures and Canadian concepts of the natural environment.

MISHAP ON THE MOISIE

In mid-afternoon on 2 August 1980, Joe Griffith and Bruce Schnapp arrived at the head of the impassable gorge below Rim Canyon on the Moisie River. Bruce had sprained his ankle on the previous portage around Rim Canyon, so he set up camp while Joe took a load over the 1200-metre portage around the gorge. On his return up the trail, Joe heard shouts coming from within the gorge. Scrambling to a lookout spot, he was appalled to discover two persons stranded precariously in midstream, each on a different rock, virtually at the lip of a horrendous waterfall. Their canoe was wrecked against one of the rocks. Joe then found their two companions on shore in an "agitated state."

It seems that the four of them had portaged around the upper of the two major drops in this gorge and had then foolishly launched in rapids above the second drop. One canoe swamped immediately in the rapids, so the other did not proceed. Ironically, this quick capsizing of the first canoe probably saved the lives of all four canoeists. The two capsized canoeists were then swept downstream until they could cling in desperation to the first rocks they came to. These four were all inexperienced and unskilled, with no adequate guide map or knowledge of this difficult river. The two were not aware of the second falls until they stood up on their respective rocks and peered downstream at the river disappearing into misty space over the lip of the falls into the thundering cauldron below.

Since rescue by canoe was out of the question, the only alternative was to throw out a line. Joe and Bruce had 45 metres of rope, which was just too short to reach either one, so they spliced on the 7.5 m more that the other party had. From the top of a bluff, they threw this line out with a small log tied to the end of it and tried to float it down to Marc, who was the closer of the two. After several unsuccessful tries in the swirling waters, they suddenly realized that if they did get the rope to Marc and pulled him to shore, then there would be no way to rescue Norbert, who was even

closer to the lip of the falls, since only Marc was in a position to get a rope to Norbert. But they did not have enough rope to reach Norbert too. So the difficult decision was made to leave Marc out there until more rope could be found.

In the short time remaining before darkness, wood was gathered for an all-night bonfire to keep up the spirits of the two in the gorge and perhaps their companions on shore too. One can imagine that Joe and Bruce spent an uneasy night, wondering if they would look out in the morning to see only bare rocks. Added to their concerns, the two in the gorge could be heard calling out hysterically during the night, even over the unnerving thunder of the falls.

At dawn next morning, both were still there. Joe and one of the others headed back upstream by canoe for help. Normally this would have consumed at least several days, even if they were lucky enough to run into another party from the next train three days after theirs. But again they had incredible luck, for in about an hour they met a canoeing party that had flown in—a rarity at that particular place because of the convenience of the train. With the extra rope from this other party, the rescue proceeded as planned. The rope was launched to Marc, who threw it to Norbert, who was then pulled in. Then it was sent down a second time to Marc and he too was rescued. About a week later, all four were taken out by helicopter thus saving them the bother of having to paddle themselves back out to the railroad in their other canoe. This sort of incident is becoming commonplace. They call this wilderness canoeing.

Reported by Stewart Coffin

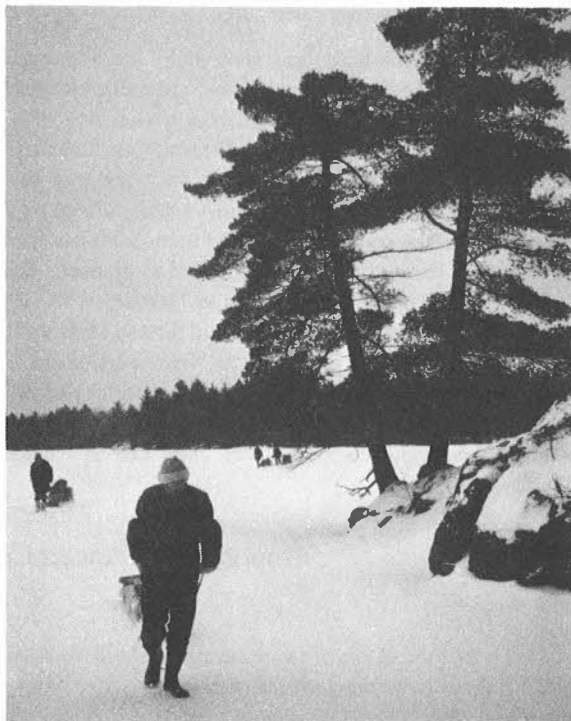
This is the kind of tale of canoeing mishaps and rescues Coffin is looking for as mentioned in his Letter to the Editor on page 7 of the Autumn 1990 issue of *Nastawgan*. (ed.)

PICKEREL TO MAGNETAWAN IN WINTER

Mark van Stempvoort

One of the largest wilderness areas remaining in Southern Ontario lies about halfway between Parry Sound and the French River, to the east of Hwy 69. It is a region whose surface seems fairly flat when represented on a map, but whose rocky outcrops and wooded valleys present an interesting and challenging topography when travelled by snowshoe or canoe. Pine forests are maturing once again along the shorelines of the numerous waterways which crisscross the area, after severe forest fires in the early 1930s. Only a handful of hunting and fishing camps, cottages, and cabins populate the interior of this region. The Ministry of Natural Resources deserves congratulations for prohibiting additional public vehicular access, and for minimizing the evidence of logging by carefully planned skyline and portage reserves along the waterways. As a result, much of the wilderness character of the area has been preserved.

A group of five WCA members ventured into this region from 17 to 24 February 1990. Using traditional methods of winter travel and camping, we explored a route starting in the north at Lost Channel on the Pickerel River system and ending to the south at Harris Lake on the Magnetawan River system. Craig Macdonald of the Frost Centre in Dorset planned the route and supplied most of the gear and equipment, much of which he had crafted himself. Other veterans of winter travel included Herb Pohl, Jim Greenacre, and Roger Nelis. As the "rookie" in the group, I enjoyed listening to stories of expeditions in far remoter and colder regions such as Labrador, the Ungava Peninsula, and James Bay. For my veteran companions, the current outing promised to be a relatively leisurely trip. Nevertheless, unusual winter conditions were to provide unexpected challenges.



METHOD OF WINTER TRAVEL

We travelled by snowshoe, although the wind-packed snow conditions on most lakes and rivers meant that we were able to cover many kilometres on moccasins or boots. On portages and bon-ka-nah (as winter trails connecting waterways are traditionally called) the deeper snow required us to strap on snowshoes.

Our food and gear were packed onto a toboggan and three trail sleds, which we pulled by means of leather tumplines. The long, narrow toboggan was fitted with a canvas tank, into which duffel such as clothing, sleeping bags, and tarps were packed. The shorter (one of 1.8 metres, two of 2.4 metres) and wider sleds carried rigid objects such as the wood stove and heavy items such as food (packed into varnished cardboard boxes) and the tent. All of the packs were secured onto the "trailers" by means of brightly colored bungee cords.

We generally walked in single file, led by the one whose turn it was to be out of harness and in charge of the map. Where the snow was deep, the snaking toboggan followed next, thus preparing a packed trail for the heavier sleds behind. Lake and river travel was very fast; on our speediest day we covered 17 km. Portages and bon-ka-nah slowed us considerably, and on our most difficult day we travelled only two kilometres. But slow travel over the irregular terrain and under the forest's canopy offered its own, often hard-won, rewards.

METHOD OF WINTER CAMPING

We slept in a 3 by 3.6 m cotton tent under a polyethylene fly, both supported by external poles which had to be found at each campsite. At the front of the tent a rectangular pit was shovelled out of the snow, into which a woodstove on skids was placed, with its pipe angling through a hole in the front wall. The snow which remained at the back of the tent formed a platform for sitting and sleeping. This raised area positioned the beds above the level of the stove, thus keeping us toasty warm all night long (provided someone got up a couple of times to stoke the fire). Above us, wet clothes and gear dried out surprisingly quickly on lines strung from front to back under the tent's peak.

Our best campsites were close to swamps filled with dry standing chicots (dead trees), which we used for tent poles and firewood. At first this strategy went against my best canoeing instincts, but the absence of the hordes of biting insects which infest these locations in summertime changed the picture completely. Naturally, our swampy campsites required us to chop our water holes a good distance away from shore.

FIRST LEG: PICKEREL RIVER TO NOGANOSH LAKE

We made rapid progress on the first stage of our journey. After marching east over the hard-packed surface of the Pickerel for seven kilometres, we made a 90 degree turn to the south and followed Smoky Creek and Smoky Lake to Nogansh Lake, the largest body of water on our itinerary.

Because of the snow conditions and direct links from one frozen waterway to the next, we were able to cover about 25 km in our first day and a half.

The drawback of this broad and easy way was that we had to share it with packs of roving snowmobilers, who roared by us leaving exhaust fumes and curving tracks in their wake. Some of the more curious of the helmeted speedsters cut their engines to find out where we were headed. They seemed genuinely amazed that, in spite of our traditional means of transportation, we were planning to go all the way to Harris Lake. Paradoxically, our speedy compatriots with their high-tech machines were much more limited in their range of travel.

Visible evidences of civilization south of the Pickerel River were scarce, apart from the occasional snowmobilers and their ever-present tracks. The distant sounds of logging operations were audible from time to time, but we never actually saw any activity along our route. On the north arm of Noganosh Lake we stopped briefly to look around a dilapidated site identified as the base camp of the "Red Tam Hunt Club, Orillia." The main building was a rundown clubhouse which looked as if many of its exterior planks had been pried off for firewood. We took turns peering through a window at the upturned shape of a Peterborough canvas canoe. Now here was a technology we could appreciate!

SECOND LEG: SUNNY LAKE TO SINCLAIR LAKE

The second stage of our journey actually began at the southern extremity of Noganosh Lake. This stage involved a cluster of small lakes and creeks which could be linked only by means of portages and bon-ka-nah. As a result, our progress slowed considerably. We did some trail-cutting with hatchets and shovel, and occasionally had to use long ropes to let the sleds down steep slopes.

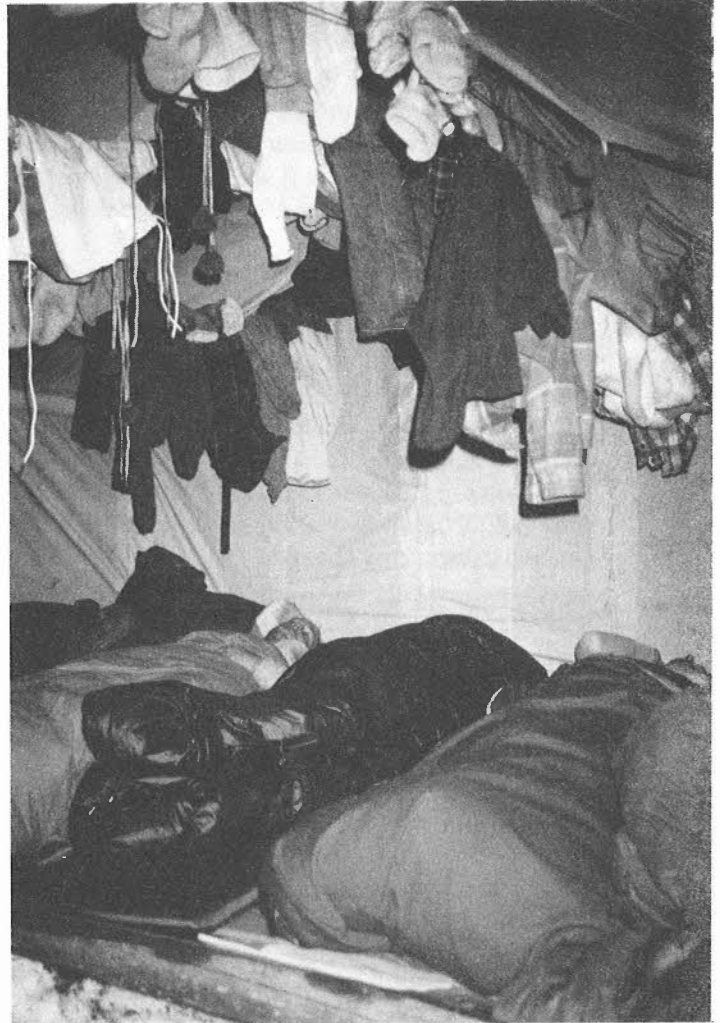
At this stage the topography became more rugged, and the double track of a trapper's lone machine was the only evidence of human activity. Even that lonely track ended at Deep Lake. For the next five days we had the frozen wilderness all to ourselves. And it was a beautiful area. The little lakes were ringed by maturing stands of white and red pine trees, and some contained tiny pine-studded islands. My favorite spot was a narrow valley connecting two small lakes. One end of the valley was blocked by a beaver dam, which allowed a stream of black water to gurgle along before disappearing under the snow-covered surface of the next lake. Suspended above the moving stream was a frozen waterfall. I struggled on snowshoes to find the best angle for a photograph, but knew that I could not capture the crisp atmosphere and stillness of that secret spot.

Of the many available routes through this lovely region, we chose one which took us southeast over the following lakes: Sunny, Portage, Crow, Finney, Deep, Sinclair, Ball, and Duck. We had hoped that we could bushwhack from Duck Lake to the Magnetawan River and cross over at Trout Lake, but that was not to be.

We first looked down upon the mighty Mag from a snow-covered oak barrens high above the river. The black open water was a chilling sight. It meant that we could not cross here, and there was no telling how far we would have

to travel downstream before we would find safe ice. At worst, we would be forced to bushwhack 10 to 15 km over rough hilly country in order to reach a railroad trestle which spanned the river downstream. This would require herculean efforts in trail-cutting and hauling the sleds. It could also mean that several of us would not be able to appear in our respective workplaces at the appointed hour.

Two of us bushwhacked for a couple of kilometres along the Mag's undulating shore looking for a safe crossing, but saw only thin ice and more of that dark open water. The bad news was delivered to the rest of the group, and then we all filled ourselves with peanut butter and jam sandwiches before backtracking to Sinclair Lake. On Sinclair we were able to move quickly in a westerly direction parallel to the Mag-



netawan. We did a short portage due west to a tiny unnamed lake where we dropped the tumplines.

Before setting up camp, we snowshoed overland to the banks of the big river, some 4 1/2 km downstream from the point of our first encounter. This time we found ourselves high above the Mountain Chute Rapids, which raced and frothed through a narrow gorge. At a point below the rapids where the canyon broadened into a small lake, we were able to get a good view downriver. We could see that the force of the rapids kept an open channel far downstream. However, in the distance, just upstream of open water surrounding

Carve Island and Stovepipe Rapids, a narrow band of unbroken whiteness on the river's surface indicated a possible crossing there.

While the others returned to our tiny no-name lake to begin setting up camp, Craig and I made our way downriver through the woods for a closer inspection. Here the ice looked solid and safe. Craig cut a pole and crossed very carefully, banging the ice before each step and chopping a couple of holes with hatchet to gauge the ice's thickness. After returning much more quickly, his first words were: "A thousand pounds have been lifted from my shoulders!" We returned with the good news to our companions on the pretty little lake, which we rescued from anonymity—temporarily, at least—by calling it "Lake of Good Cheer."

THIRD LEG: MOUNTAIN CHUTE RAPIDS TO THREE SNYE RAPIDS

The next morning, after our usual hearty breakfast of porridge and bacon, we hauled our gear overland through a series of beaver ponds and a well-frozen side channel to the main river and crossed in single file. It was a good feeling, almost of triumph, to cross the mighty Mag which had done its best to block our way.

However, our real adversary had not been the river—which under normal winter conditions should have been easier to cross—but rather the mild weather which had prevented it from freezing solid. And this adversary was not yet defeated. In fact, as we were crossing the river the falling snow was turning to sleet and would soon turn to rain. It wasn't much longer before our clothing and footwear were soaked. As our bodies chilled, our spirits sank. At the same time, the sleds and toboggan moved sluggishly in the wet snow and required extra energy to pull.



We decided to stop and warm up. Following Craig's guidance, we rigged up a tarp for shelter from the rain and in front of this lean-to stacked up a huge pile of dead limbs pulled from standing trees. In a remarkably short time, the tremendous heat radiating from our bonfire had warmed us up, all but dried our clothing, and sent our spirits soaring. A big lunch which included a date cake baked by Mrs. MacDonald and a hot drink from Herb's thermos also had their salutary effects.



After an hour or so we pushed on another kilometre to the southern-most bay in Island Lake, a wide section of the Magnetawan. Here we stopped and made camp in the spitting rain. It was tricky getting the stove fire started. My veteran companions said that they had never experienced such difficult winter conditions for igniting a fire. The sleet seemed to have stuck onto the wood, acting as a fireproof coating. Finally, human craft prevailed over nature's harshness and flames roared in the metal box at the front of the tent. The stovepipe damper was kept open until warmth had soaked into every human bone and sinew, and by morning the clothes and gear suspended above our heads were basically dry. The adversary—unseasonably mild weather—had been defeated a second time.

The miserable conditions of the day just described laid the foundation for the glorious conditions of the day following. During the night the temperature dropped and the rain turned to snow. As a result, a light fluffy layer froze onto a wet base, creating a thick white blanket over every tree and shrub of the forest. By the time we had broken camp and were leaning into our tumplines, the sky had cleared and a brilliant sun sparkled on a "winter wonderland." We spent the entire day travelling through this magical forest, following a series of beaver ponds and forest clearings roughly parallel to the south shore of the Magnetawan. It was a marvellous day of hard work in a glorious setting. The day ended at a campsite in view and in hearing of Three Snye Rapids, with the sun setting in a golden sky which turned hues of pink, orange, and red. The only sour note was heard from Herb, who had meticulously composed numerous photographs of the spectacular scenery and then discovered at the day's end—yes, you guessed it—that he had neglected to load up his camera with film.

FOURTH LEG: NORTH MAGNETAWAN TO HARRIS LAKE

Leaving the wildest stage of our journey behind us, on the morning of our final day we headed overland to the south. Before long we reached a collection of small buildings which we understood to be the remains of North Magnetawan on the CN railway line. No human presence was evident. Our topographical map indicated a trail leading from this place

in a southwesterly direction to the South Branch of the Magnetawan River. However, the only obvious route before us was a substantial logging road which took us much farther west than we intended to go. At a large inland swamp (indicated on the map), we switched to a snowmobile trail which took us quickly to the bank of the South Branch at a row of cottages. We crossed the river and continued into a large bay which was connected by an overland snowmobile trail (identified on a sign as "Donkey Trail") to Harris Lake. We stopped beside the trail for our last meal in the bush, sitting under a giant arborvitae with our backs to a rock face.

Out on the lake, the wind felt very fierce. The temperature had dropped considerably since we had broken camp, and a winter storm was brewing. As we neared the end of our journey, the marks of civilization were multiplying: an abandoned snowmobile, cottages, directional signs, and groomed trails. I was beginning to dream of dinner that evening in a cozy restaurant. We pulled up at the Harris Lake Marina at about 2:30 p.m., and a couple of hours later had completed our car shuttle. By then a full-blown storm with driving snow was raging outdoors, and we took shelter in the warm atmosphere of a Parry Sound eating establishment. Here we relaxed over dinner and dessert, and reflected on our week's activities. It had been a memorable wilderness experience with some unexpected winter challenges.

CONCLUSION

WCA members will find the region between the Pickerel and Magnetawan Rivers east of Hwy 69 well worth exploring. In wintertime, the big lakes and rivers allow for speedy progress if the weather conditions are suitable. Though the easily accessible areas must be shared with occasional snowmobilers, signs of human activity are few in the more remote areas. The most attractive section, to my mind, is the rugged topography south of Noganosh Lake and north of the Magnetawan River, where numerous winter routes are available through a network of small lakes and creeks. Cold is not the primary risk facing winter travellers in this region; rather, the main risk is unseasonably mild weather which can prevent watercourses from freezing over and can quickly transform snow into rain.

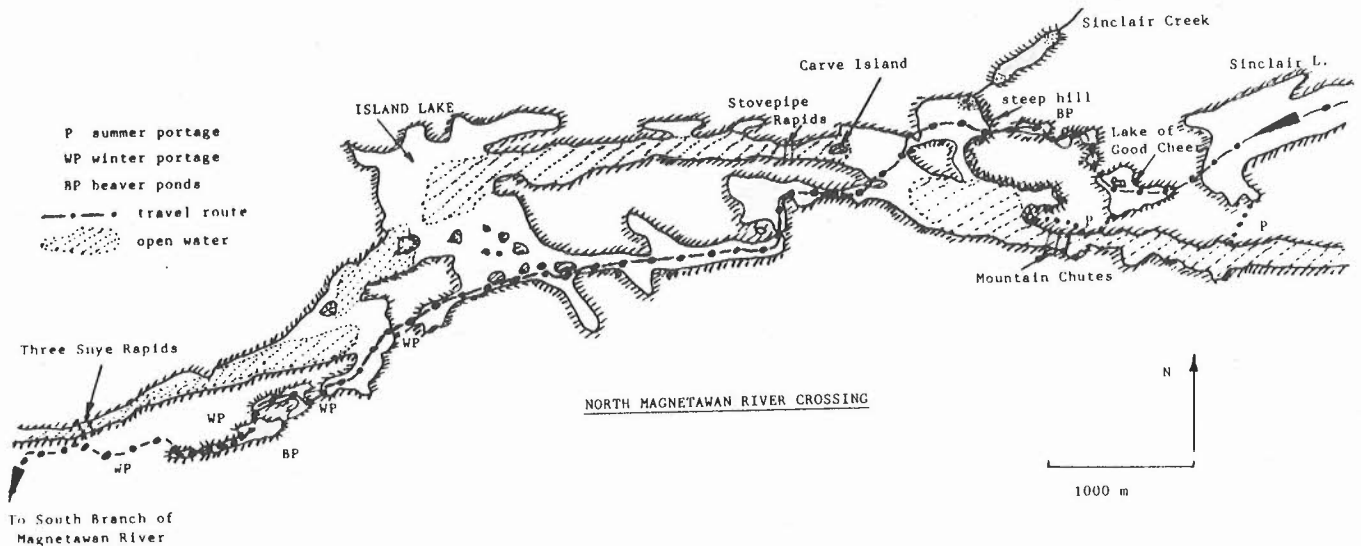


ADDENDA BY CRAIG MACDONALD

If you plan to explore this area, the 1934 whiteprint Ontario Forestry Branch Maps are invaluable because they show the location of numerous portages that have not been recorded on modern topographic sheets. In earlier years, this area was extensively canoe patrolled by government fire rangers. Well maintained portages existed to almost every lake. On some of the more obscure side routes, the portage trails have now become faint, especially under snow. Furthermore, only a few of the old sign boards remain standing to locate the portage entrances. For the experienced snowshoer, the problem of trail finding can be reduced to a manageable challenge using these old maps.

Even in cold weather, water flow on the lower Magnetawan River is so great that its ice strength can never be entirely trusted. For snowshoe campers seeking untracked wilderness and remoteness, the Magnetawan creates a significant barrier for snowmobiles, virtually isolating certain areas lying north of the river in winter.

Since snowshoe crossings of the Magnetawan are limited, I have enclosed a sketch of our route from Sinclair Lake to Three Snye Rapids which used side channels, bays, parallel lakes and beaver ponds to avoid dangerous ice. This route involves unavoidable "cliff-like" hills too steep for snowmobiles which should ensure continued tranquility of the lakes and rivers to the north.



WHERE HAVE ALL THE SONGSTERS GONE ALL GONE EVERY ONE

When I was a kid at camp, we learned camp songs and sang them at the table or around a campfire or a Sunday Service, depending upon the song.

Then in my teens on an Ontario Lake, I met Kindred Souls and we began to collect and pool everything we heard and found on the music sheets and song books which we thought appealing. There were college songs, Spanish songs, French songs, cowboy laments, bawdy songs, hobo numbers, French Canadian songs, nonsense songs, rounds, and modern pieces. Long ones just increased the challenge and we would belt out The Blue Velvet Band, Abdullah Bulbul Amir, and Behind Those Swinging Doors with gay abandon.

Sometimes we sang because it was wet and we were bored with the incessant patter of rain on our 9x12 wall tents (with the board floors and iron army cots), sometimes we sang over dessert in someone's dining room, often songs like Bali Boogie written by Sylvia Fine for her husband Danny Kaye's latest musical:

Yawk but-tock a boing boing,
Ah oo awk a soing soing
Means, "Shoot the lava to me Java."

Sometimes we'd dream up our own "show," building skits around the tunes we knew, and rehearsing song and dance on some long porch, prior to the "evening performance":

The Iroquois all hated the French
Who walked along their trail space.
And every time they had a chance,
Pop went a paleface.

Sometimes we sang as we hiked arm in arm along some gravelled cottage road, defying beeping "creeps in jeeps" who tried to screech past the three, four, or five of us in a line, belting out:

Hulla Lou, the kind of girl who never could be
true.....
She had the cutest eyes, don't know what shade
they are,
'Cause looking from the ground I never got that
far.

Sometimes two canoe loads of us would paddle out to a certain favorite submerged reef, and one canoeist would paddle off some distance with both boats, leaving the others to stand knee-deep in water in the middle of the lake, clutching each other and wailing:

There was blood on the saddle and blood all
around,

And a great big puddle of blood on the ground.
revelling in the startled looks on the faces of passers-by in their powerful 10-hp outboards, or chugging d.p.'s.

Sometimes we sang in washtubs (one each) as we traded challenges and dares to propel ourselves with "hands alone" across the bay and back without shipping water, and we'd spin around and cry out:

This old man, he played one.....

and laugh so hard we could hardly swim when the tubs sank, leaving only bobbing bottles on the painters to testify as to their whereabouts as we stroked back to shore.

Sometimes we sang after a strenuous hike up the back side of a certain 30-metre cliff, where we'd hug our knees, just a little back from the edge of the straight face, with the marvellous view across the gully to the Precambrian sounding board on the other side, and chant:

High on a rocky ledge, I'll build my wig-wam.....

Oh sure, we sang around campfires and beside the water when "on the trail" camping out, and we'd sing the tried and true ones like Ann Bolyne, The Martins and the Coys, The Old Chisholm Trail, Bible Stories, Rio Grande, and My Darling Clementine.

Nothing, however, NOTHING could touch the magic of singing in drifting canoes on shimmering waters on star-studded nights with guitar, maracas, and banjo uke. La Vie En Rose would waver over the water, and My Castle On The River Nile, and Blue Moon, Abilene, and Barb'ry Allen. Our voices were mostly awful and the playing not much better, but we prided ourselves on good enunciation, rhythm, passion, close harmony, and sensitivity of expression. What we lacked in quality we made up for in memory, for we knew literally dozens of songs, and we'd sing on and on, fortifying ourselves with Freshie and Peek Frean's best. As the night air cooled and the climbing moon reminded us of the passing hours, we'd step up the nostalgia and enhance the mood with Over The Sea to Skye, Cool Clear Water, The Wanderers Song, Sweet and Low, or:

It's a flash of paddle blades agleaming in the sun,
Of canoes so swiftly skimming by the shore,
It's the tang of pine and bracken coming on the
breeze,

That calls me to the waterways once more.....

About ten years passed after those magic summers, and then one July I heard for the first time, the Canoe Song, a delicate, sensitive echoing of the magic of the paddle on silvered waters, and I frantically wrote down the words. Over the years, Life's priorities shifted, and my personal impedimenta were boxed and stored; and after that, when I sought that song amongst my sheaves of verses and music sheets, I found it not. Oh, woe was me. The tune hung hauntingly in my memory, but the words were gone, gone.

Last June, poking through my song sheets and typed verses (in a futile effort to reduce the encumbrances of a lifetime) and humming Bury Me Out On The Prairie, some papers tumbled out of a back pocket in a thick leather binder full of "goodies", and THERE, with other song sheets, was my scribbled page. A RESURRECTION. I closed the door of my room (to spare the family) and sang the Canoe Song through, and through again, and yet a third time. I felt as though I had found a great friend, long presumed dead. It is a simple, haunting melody deserving of a trio or quartet of quality voices, but deserving of more than that, deserving of lapping waters and pine-clad shores and flickering campfires, and most of all, deserving of the rhythmic harmony of paddler, paddle, and canoe, dipping and gliding, dipping and gliding in our vanishing wilderness.

Canoe Song

Our paddles dip, our paddles glide,
Our paddles dip, along the side,
Laugh as we sing, sing as we play,
Play as we work, working away.

Away you go-o-o and make it so-o-o,
Together all, the paddles fall, in tune and time.
So look alive oh-oh, and dip and drive, oh-oh,
The current swings, the water sings a river rhyme.

For light is the burden of la-bour
When each bends his back with his neigh-bour,
So each for ah-ah-all, we stand or fa-ah-all
And all for each, until we reach
Our Journey's end.

May the words sing in your hearts too.

Claire Muller

GULL RIVER OPEN CANOE RACE

John Hackert

For the last ten years Trail Head has sponsored and organized whitewater open canoe races at the Minden Wild Water Preserve in September. This was the first year that Sharon and I attended them and it was a lot of fun in a relaxed environment.

The idea of the race is to go down the course as quickly as possible and to go through the 15 gates which have been placed on the course. If you hit a gate you add five seconds to your time and if you miss a gate you add 50 seconds. The course starts below the falls and about 10 of the gates are in eddies and are approached upstream. One of the gates is in the middle of the river but must be approached going backwards. It turned to be our nemesis as our canoe was not equipped with a rear-view mirror.

When we arrived on Friday night, Mark and a number of dedicated volunteers had already placed the course. On Saturday we had a chance to see friends, including several from the WCA: Hugh Valliant, Mike Jones, Steve with his family, and Anne Marie who later won the ladies solo. We also saw former classmates Mike Yee and Howie Abrams from our class at MKC in 1988, and our fearless instructor Nick Falangis.

All day Saturday was spent practicing for Sunday's meet. I found the atmosphere friendly and helpful. Whitewater open-canoeists are used to assisting each other; the river is always stronger anyway and the real competitive people go for kayaking, an Olympic sport. Nobody expected us to win and our objective was not to finish last, so we received lots of advise: "Don't grab the gunwales; lean downstream; don't paddle on the same side!" If we were threats to win we wouldn't receive these kinds of valuable pointers.

The discipline required when one is going through gates is a very valuable experience. The gates are about 10 cm wider

than the canoe so it is difficult to go through them without losing points. The most interesting part is that one goes through the course without thinking, automatically concerned only with speed and accuracy. Concerns about staying upright and tipping are forgotten in the excitement of the moment, particularly by the time one hits the end of the course and one is becoming very tired indeed. Basics like teamwork, leaning downstream, and bracing in the eddy turns become vital.

Sharon and I managed to tip on our first run thus giving our rivals a chance to be overconfident. Our second run put us well in the middle of the pack, out of the brutal glare of the limelight but we achieved our ambition to not finish last. The toughest part of the course is the carry back to the top of the course.

The canoe races were exciting and a valuable experience forcing one to concentrate on the basics at a more intense level than normal. The other great aspect of these races is that it brings so many canoeing fanatics together at the same time, allowing us to think that our obsession is quite reasonable. When I discuss adding another canoe to my fleet I get lots of support and encouragement. When we talk about river running and use its vocabulary, everyone understands each other and no one gives strange looks.

Sharon and I plan to return next year. This year we were using a brand-new Starburst which we bought before Labor Day to replace our battered and bruised OCA. By the end of the weekend the Starburst was starting to look like the OCA. Of course we would have done a lot better if we had not used a brand new canoe that we weren't used to. Next year I'll have a new excuse. But you don't have to be an expert to enter, just bring \$10 and a desire to have lots of fun.



REVIEWS

BIRCHBARK CANOE: The story of an apprenticeship with the Indians, by David Gidmark, published by General Store Publishing House Inc., 1 Main St., Burnstown, Ont., KOJ IGO (\$14.95 + \$2.00 handling charge), 160 pages. Reviewed by Claire Muller.

Birchbark Canoe is Mr. Gidmark's fourth book; maybe I should have read *Journey Across a Continent*, *The Indian Crafts of William And Mary Commanda*, and *The Algonquin Birchbark Canoe* first, but at least on the strength of his latest, I would recommend the others.

This book, *Birchbark Canoe*, is, for David Gidmark, an expression of the symbol of the best of everything the Indians stand for: expert craftsmanship, self-reliance in the bush, art, and a complete "one-ness" with the environment, epitomizing a spiritual harmony with the woodlands. The book is the expression of an interest which becomes an obsession, a series of trials, an apprenticeship and fulfillment, which the author shares with his readers, of this symbolic subject.

Maybe it was luck, maybe something more, but Mr. Gidmark did three things in the right order: 1) he applied himself to learning Algonquian, 2) he moved (by invitation) onto a Reserve, and 3) he made friends with local craftsmen. After a real trial by fire (his struggle with the language), his sincerity and patience bore fruit and William and Mary Commanda took him under their wings and taught him how to gather and prepare materials and turn them into functioning birchbark canoes at their home at Maniwaki.

The description of the building process is adequate for our understanding and appreciation but it is not meant as a set of blueprints, and there are no drawings, although photographs are plentiful. The book is meant to reflect reverence for the interrelationship between man and nature, if we only care to look and listen and THINK.

I recommend this book to all who have love affairs with this natural medium, and it will appeal especially to those who, through canoeing, have discovered something of this spiritual relationship between man, woods, and waters. It is the birchbark canoe which symbolizes this relationship and emotion, and it is David Gidmark who helps us to feel the bond. An important book.

RAMBLING THROUGH ALGONQUIN PARK; Paintings, Sketches, Thoughts by Jeff Miller, published by Limberlost Studio, Huntsville, Ont., 1990 (\$17.00; see announcement in Products and Services section, p.27). Reviewed by Ria Harting.

During the 45 years that Jeff Miller has wandered through his beloved Algonquin Park, he has not only done a lot of paddling, camping, painting, and sketching, but also a good deal of thinking. A small selection of his work and ideas has now been collected in this charming and attractive 24-page booklet that is illustrated with 16 well-reproduced color paintings and several often very effective black-and-white sketches. It is a personal testimony to his great love for the

Park, presenting an impassioned plea for the preservation of this unique piece of Ontario's outdoors.

The book is a welcome addition to the relatively small collection of quality publications on Algonquin Park and will no doubt bring some very pleasant moments to many of its thousands of visitors. A minor criticism is that a bit more care should have been paid to proofreading and punctuation, which are sometimes a bit sloppy. But those shortcomings hardly distract from the real value of this appealing labor of love.

THE BASIC ESSENTIALS OF KNOTS FOR THE OUTDOORS, by Cliff Jacobson, published by ICS Books, Inc., Merrillville, IN, 1990 (US\$4.95; C\$6.95). Reviewed by Toni Harting.

Here we have another one of those little gems in *The Basic Essentials Series*, see page 24 of the Spring 1990 issue of *Nastawgan*. In his lucid, often humorous no-nonsense style, Cliff Jacobson tell us more or less everything wilderness canoeists need to know about different kinds of rope and what can be done with it. He discusses the 30 knots plus the most essential splices and lashings which he considers to answer all our needs, ten of which are essential to the avid wilderness paddler and backwoodsman.

It is not a big book, only 65 pages, but it gives us all the information we really need and it does it very well. The many excellent illustrations add immensely to the value of this book; there is nothing better on the market for the money. An added bonus is the addition of drawings of knots for lefthanded people.

THIS RIVER THE MUSKOKA, by Gary Long, published by The Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ont., 1989 (\$35.00 hardcover). Reviewed by Toni Harting.

Many are the WCA members who have spent cherished moments paddling the rivers and lakes of the Muskoka River system between Algonquin Park and Georgian Bay. Names like Oxtongue, Muskoka, Big East, Moon, Musquash are familiar to a growing number of us and rightly so. Although much of this vast area is typical cottage country characterized by people in noisy motorboats, there are still some true jewels of peace and quiet to be found for the enjoyment of the recreational paddler, be it on large or small lakes or down whitewater-filled streams in the spring.

Over the years, Gary Long has amassed an impressive amount of information on the Muskoka River and the numerous streams and lakes in its watershed, and he has presented much of what he learned about the Muskoka in this well-produced (albeit rather pricey) and fact-filled book. He tells us about the geological past of the area and describes the intricate relationship of the numerous lakes, streams, and waterfalls that make up the Muskoka River system.

Long also extensively covers the fascinating man-river interaction by discussing early exploration, control of the

river, water mills, hydro dams, steamboats, resorts, and tourism, subjects not too attractive to the wilderness canoeist maybe, but interesting reading all the same. A good number of historical and present-day black-and-white photographs and maps provide much additional information, and a well-researched bibliography adds to the value of this fine book.

JOURNAL OF A BARRENLANDER, W.H.B. Hoare, 1928-1929, edited and annotated by Sheila C. Thomson, 186 pages, 14 maps, bibliography, cloth bound, \$24.95, available from Sheila C. Thomson, Box 4435, Postal Station E, Ottawa, Ont., K1S 5B4.

The following is extracted from promotional material.

Documenting a fascinating fragment of barrenland history, *Barrenlander* is the unabridged journal of W.H.B. Hoare who, in 1928, travelled by dogsled and canoe into the remote Thelon Game Sanctuary in the heart of the barrenlands on an 18-month expedition for the Canadian Government. An appendix by Dr. K.L. Buchan outlines the mapping history of a troublesome section of the expedition's route. An introduction is provided by the late Dr. C.H.D. Clarke, who crossed the barrenlands with W.H.B. Hoare in 1937.

For decades the journal lay gathering dust in the family home. Now published privately by the author's daughter as a family project, about 500 copies are available for sale to institutions and individuals interested in northern history, wilderness travel, and the wild Hanbury-Thelon river route across the barrenlands.

CANOEJOONS
PAUL MASON



PARTNERS WANTED

WINTER We are looking for partners to go winter camping and skiing in Algonquin Park. We provide a warm canvas tent with a cozy wood stove. Cost only about \$10.00 for snow removal. Contact: Jay Neilson, (519) 855-6749.

...our woods are lovely dark and deep every weekend...

MAJOR EXPEDITION Experienced tripper would like to join or help organize a major expedition to a remote area for summer 1991. Competent whitewater and trail food experience. Tom Elliott, (416) 648-1560.

450 B.C.

Two and one half millennia ago, a young man named Herodotus set out to travel the world. He learned of Persians, Egyptians, and many other cultures. Concerning the Persians, he noted that they "have a profound reverence for rivers: they will never pollute a river with urine or spittle, or even wash their hands in one, or allow anyone else to do so." By contrast, he noted that Egyptians disposed of dead cows by throwing them "into the river."

If Herodotus could paddle with us today, what would he write about our culture's treatment of rivers?

Richard Culpeper

WCA TRIPS

10 November GRAND RIVER

Steve Lukasko, (416) 276-8285; book before 2 November.

A four- or five-hour run with swifts and moving water. Ontario farm country makes a scenic background to this trip. Limit six canoes.

24-25 November MYSTERY HIKE ON BRUCE TRAIL

Joan Etheridge, (416) 825-4061; book before 9 November.

The weather will determine the location and length of this weekend of hiking. Either two days of backpacking with an overnight camp or two one-day hikes from a base camp. Warm clothing and blythe spirits. Limit 10 hikers.

2 December HOCKLEY HILLS HIKE

Ron Jasiuk, (519) 942-2972; book before 25 November.

A cold-weather hike led by a local naturalist. There are plenty of hills to keep everybody warm. Limit eight people.

NEW TRIPS

29 Dec.-1 Jan. WINTER CAMPING

Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321; book before 20 December.

A snowshoe and toboggan trip, location as yet undecided. A warm tent with a wood-burning stove will be supplied by the organizer. A *winter* sleeping bag is a must. Limit three participants.

19-20 January BEAUSOLEIL ISLAND

Bill King, (416) 223-4646; book before 12 January.

We will ski or snowshoe to Beausoleil Island and set up camp in or near the shelter at Chimney Bay. We will then spend the weekend skiing the beautiful trails that crisscross Beausoleil Island. Participants should be prepared for a cold camp but some at least could probably camp in the shelter, which has a wood stove.

19-20 January KOSHLONG LAKE AREA

Dale Miner, (416) 730-8187; book before 10 February.

Didn't we get lost here before? The Koshlong Hilton welcomes backcountry skiers for two days of trail breaking in some fine woodlands around Koshlong Lake. Overnight stay in the luxury of a heated prospector tent. Limit five people.

2-3 February WINTER CAMPING

Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321; book before 26 January.

Another chance to experience "winter canoeing." Snowshoe and toboggan through the woods. *Winter* sleeping bag essential; the organizer will provide a winter tent with a stove. Limit three campers.

9-10 February LINDA LAKE LOOP

Herb Pohl, (416) 637-7632; book before 20 January.

Starting at the Algonquin Park Museum parking lot, our snowshoe route leads through Source, Bruce, Raven, and Owl lakes to Linda Lake, where we will set up camp. The journey back to Highway 60 follows a little stream to Cannis Bay Lake and beyond. The organizer will use a toboggan to

carry his gear but participants may decide to backpack instead. A reasonable level of fitness is required. Limit four participants.

16-17 February ALGONQUIN PARK SKI TRIP

Karl Schimek, (705) 487-0172; book before 8 February.

We will follow lakes and portages with some bushwhacking. Participants should be in reasonable shape and able to ski with a load. Trip length will be about 30 kilometres. Limit four intermediate skiers.

23-24 February MINNESING SKI TRAIL

John Winters, (705) 382-2057; book before 16 February.

An overnight ski camping trip on the Minnesing Ski Trail in Algonquin Park. The trail is groomed and this trip provides a good opportunity for intermediate cross country skiers to get some camping experience. Limit six skiers.

2-3 March WINTER CAMPING

Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321; book before 23 February.

Winter camping in the organizer's heated tent. Snowshoe and toboggan in the backwoods. *Winter* sleeping bag is a must. Limit three participants.

3 March LOWER CREDIT RIVER

Steve Lukasko, (416) 276-8285; book before 23 February.

The organizer is ready if the weather co-operates and the ice is out. Cold water is guaranteed. Experienced intermediate canoeists, dressed for the cold, are invited to begin the season early. Limit six canoes.

16 March OAKVILLE CREEK

Howard Sagermann, (416) 438-6090; book before 10 March.

Oakville Creek is a narrow stream that can have fast-moving current. There may be sweepers to avoid and participants should be experienced in manoeuvring in cold whitewater. Limit six canoes.

THE TORONTO SPORTSMEN'S SHOW

EXHIBITION PLACE
TORONTO

15 - 24 MARCH 1991

Come on down and see us!

A CANADIAN NATIONAL  SPORTSMEN'S SHOW
A non-profit Corporation dedicated to Canada's outdoor heritage

16 March LOWER CREDIT RIVER

Jon Kirby, (416) 276-1718; book before 9 March.

Cold water, a stimulating rapid under the Eglinton Avenue bridge, and the possibility of good run-off make for a challenging trip. Participants should dress for the cold and have experience in whitewater. Limit six canoes.

23 March LOWER CREDIT RIVER

Ken Coburn, (416) 767-5845; book before 16 March.

The trip down the Lower Credit from Streetsville is nearly continuous Grades 1 and 2 whitewater. This is a great run in itself and a good warm-up for better things to come. Suitable for intermediates. Limit six canoes.

24 March ELORA GORGE

Ken Coburn, (416) 767-5845; book before 16 March.

Water levels can be high in the spring runoff. Certainly the water is cold and canoeists should be well prepared for adverse conditions. This is a very scenic trip, the rapids can vary up to Class 3 depending on precipitation and dam release. Experienced intermediate canoeists are welcome. Limit six canoes.

24 March UPPER CREDIT RIVER

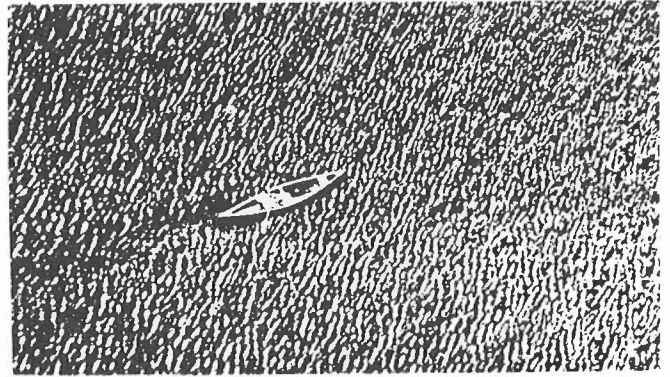
Mike Graham-Smith, (416) 877-7829; book before 18 March.

The Upper Credit with its many swifts, gentle rapids, and canoe-grabbing rocks is a refreshing early spring run. Suitable for novice paddlers with some moving water experience. Limit six canoes.

7 April GRAND RIVER

Dave Sharp, (519) 621-5599; book before 30 March.

We will start at Cambridge and, depending on the water level, take out in either Paris or Brantford. This is a flatwater trip for novice moving-water paddlers. Limit six canoes.

**13-14 April SALMON AND MOIRA RIVERS**

Glenn Spence, (613) 475-4176; book before 6 April.

Just north of Belleville, these two rivers offer a chance to enjoy exciting whitewater and fine scenery. The Salmon River is the more gentle of the two but there are some ledges to practice your skills. The Moira, from Lost Channel, has larger rapids with a possibility of Class 3 at high water levels. This is one of Southern Ontario's most delightful spring rivers. Intermediate paddlers will enjoy a chance to paddle these rivers with an organizer who has travelled them frequently. Limit six canoes.

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, Ont.
- Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ont.
- Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str. (Hwy 70), Hepworth, Ont.

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



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

FOR SALE I have a GILL-S-P (from Bath, N.Y.) 51" bent-shaft paddle in excellent condition for sale for \$35.00. Also, I have an MSR Whisperlight (white gas only) camping stove with a small fuel bottle for \$30.00. Contact Peter Verbeek in Toronto, (416) 980-8857 (b) or (416) 757-3814 (h).

ALGONQUIN NORDIC SKI TOURING Join me once again for a weekend of cross-country skiing in Algonquin Park, 22-24 February 1991. Stay at the ANST lodge; meals, sauna, and hot tub included. Bring sleeping bag and towel. Cost \$119 per person plus taxes. Call Joan Etheridge by 15 January in Oakville at (416) 825-4061.

NEW BOOK *Rambling through Algonquin Park* 24 pages of painting, sketches, and writing—full color—8 1/2 x 11; a personal view of Algonquin Park by canoe-tripper/artist Jeff Miller; \$17.00 + \$2.00 mailing. Write: Limberlost Studio, RR 4, Huntsville, Ontario, P0A 1K0; phone (705) 635-2754.

FOR SALE One yellow Perception Dancer, with floatation bags and Brooks spray skirt. Never used in whitewater. All for \$650. Also one Loki kayak paddle. Call Debbie Sutton after 6 p.m. at (519) 869-2935.

Where it is ...



... in this issue

- 1. The Storm
- 5. SW Ontario Wilderness
- 5. The Camera
- 6. Editorial
- 6. Chairman's Letter
- 7. Mailing *Nastawgan*
- 8. News Briefs
- 8. Candidates for Board ...

- 9. Conservation
- 9. I'd Rather Die than Swim ...
- 10. Very Close Encounter
- 13. Fall Meeting 1990
- 14. Rivière du Lièvre
- 15. Frost Centre
- 16. Wilder-blindness
- 17. Mishap on the Moisie

- 18. Pickerel to Magnetawan ...
- 22. Where have all the Songsters ...
- 23. Gull River Open Canoe Race
- 24. Reviews
- 25. Canoetoon
- 25. Partners Wanted
- 25. 450 B.C.
- 26. WCA Trips
- 27. Products and Services

WCA Postal Address:
 P.O. Box 496
 Postal Station K
 Toronto, Ontario
 M4P 2G9

Dale Miner
 Burlington, Ontario
 (416) 639-1337

John Winters
 Burks Falls, Ontario
 (705) 382-2057

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Bill Ness (Chairman)
 194 Placentia Boulevard
 Scarborough, Ont. M1S 4H4
 (416) 321-3005

Herb Pohl
 Burlington, Ontario
 (416) 637-7632

Tony Bird (Vice Chairman)
 Toronto, Ontario
 (416) 466-0172

Glenn Spence
 Brighton, Ontario
 (613) 475-4176

WCA Contacts

SECRETARY
 Bill King
 45 Hi Mount Drive
 Willowdale, Ontario
 M2K 1X3
 (416) 223-4646

INFORMATION
 Herb Pohl
 480 Maple Ave., #113
 Burlington, Ontario
 L7S 1M4
 (416) 637-7632

WCA TRIPS
 Roger Harris
 43 Huntley Street
 Toronto, Ont., M4Y 2K9
 (416) 323-3603

JOURNAL EDITOR
 Toni Harting
 7 Walmer Road, Apt. 902
 Toronto, Ontario M5R 2W8
 (416) 964-2495

TREASURER
 Rob Butler
 Toronto, Ontario
 (416) 487-2282

MEMBERSHIP
 Linda Lane
 Guelph, Ontario
 (519) 837-3815

COMPUTER RECORDS
 Cash Belden
 Toronto, Ontario
 (416) 925-3591

CONSERVATION
 Stephen Crouch
 Toronto, Ontario
 (416) 782-7741

Wilderness Canoe Association

membership application

I enclose a cheque for \$25 (adult) or \$35 (family) for membership in the *Wilderness Canoe Association*. I understand that this gives me/us the opportunity to participate in WCA trips and activities, and entitles me/us to receive *Nastawgan* and to vote at meetings of the Association. I also understand that WCA trips may have an element of danger and that the ultimate responsibility for the member's safety is his/her own.

PRINT CLEARLY! Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

New member Member # if renewal: _____

Single Family

Phone Number(s):
 () _____ (h)

() _____ (w)

* This membership is valid for one year. Postal Code: _____ Ext. _____

* Send completed form and cheque, payable to the WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION, to the membership secretary at the WCA postal address.