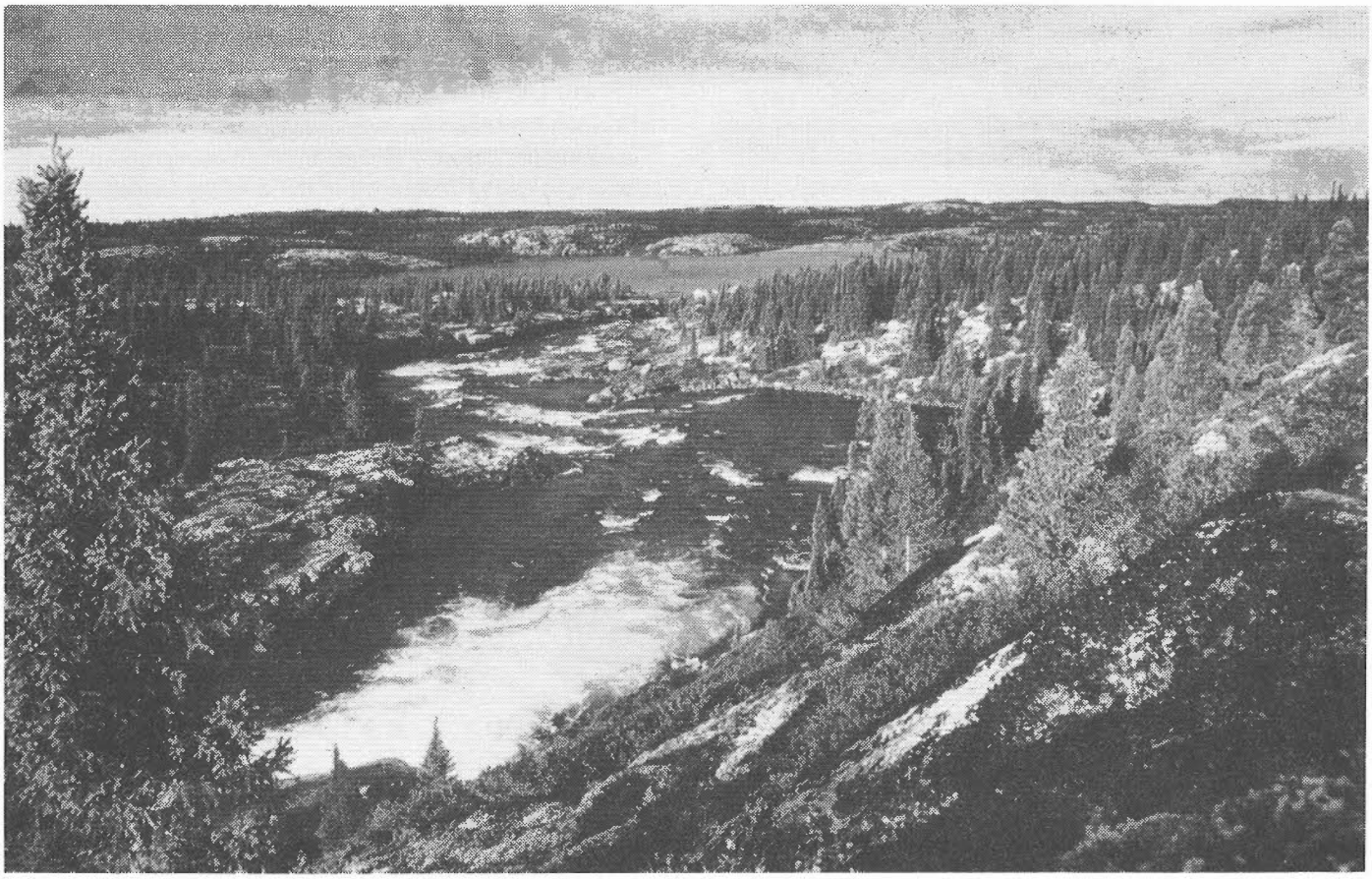
nastawgan

Autumn 1991 Vol. 18 No. 3 Quarterly Journal of the Wilderness Canoe Association



On a portage overlooking the Clearwater River

RICHMOND GULF REVISITED

Herb Pohl

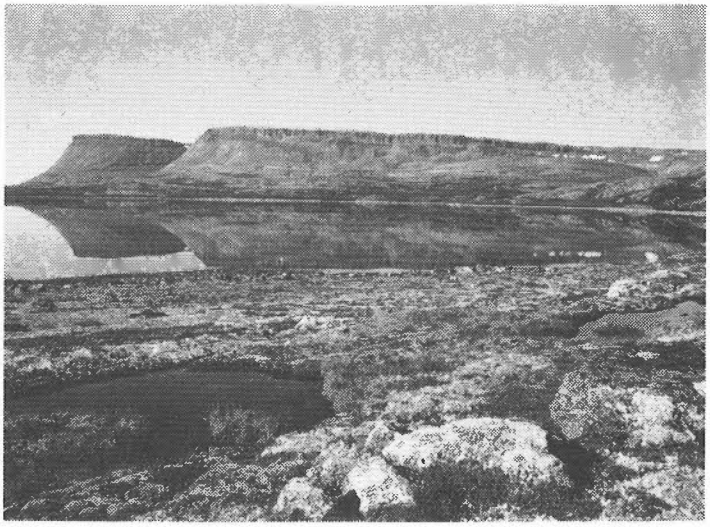
In the winter of 1987, Craig Macdonald led a party of four men on a trip from Clearwater Lake to the newly established settlement of Umiujaq on the coast of Hudson Bay (see *Nastawgan*, Winter 1987). It was one of the most exhilarating journeys I have ever undertaken. Extreme cold, exhausting labor, clear moonlit nights filled with the dancing lights of the aurora borealis, and most of all the everpresent rugged landscape – the frozen waterfalls, windscoured bare hilltops, the treelined lowlands buried beneath metres of soft clean snow – it all left a lasting impression. Long before the end of the trip I vowed to return to this region.

In the winter the extreme north end of Richmond Gulf can be reached from Umiujaq by an eight-kilometre snowmobile trail. In the summer one can travel about half that distance by ATV to a gap in the escarpment which separates the Gulf from Hudson Bay. And here I was, after some mechanical assistance to get this far, at the start of a 23-day, 500-km trip which took place in August 1990. Below me, and almost due east, shimmered the waters of Richmond Gulf in the morning sun. On either side of the gap leading down to the water the steep broken walls of sedimentary rock, which rise to a height of 500 m, form a little sheltered valley, its centre occupied by a small stream. The dark green of groves of small spruce, the light green of willows, and the

still lighter color of Caribou moss interspersed with little ponds of meltwater and specks of snow left over from last winter – it was a picture of peace and tranquil beauty.

It turned out to be the worst portage of the whole trip. The squishy, ankle-deep cover of lichen, saturated with moisture from an all-night rain and rivulets of meltwater made every step treacherous and tiring. Legions of black flies and mosquitoes obscured the view, and what appeared a gently sloping valley proved to be a succession of little ravines partly filled with water and tangled willows. By late afternoon I had gained the sandy shore of Richmond Gulf, acutely and gratefully aware that for the next fifty-odd kilometres I needn't worry about another portage. There was something else I became aware of – the fresh tracks of a large solitary wolf. It reminded me of the parting remark of the Inuit who had transported me to the top of the escarpment: "I should tell you that wolves around here seem to have lost their fear of man and there have been several attacks in the last while." I must confess that for the rest of the evening I never strayed too far without my axe.

Richmond Gulf by any standard is a remarkable place. The western shore is guarded by the steep ramparts of sedimentary rock which rise abruptly out of the brackish waters, giving it the appearance of turrets and castles of a race of giants. There is only one narrow breach in these fortifications at the extreme southwest end of the gulf, and through it tremendous volumes of water surge with the rise and fall of the tides. The eastern shore by contrast rises more gradually and is largely Canadian Shield rock interspersed with outcroppings of lava. Several large rivers enter the gulf in boisterous rapids or sheer falls, and the island-studded waters are home to a large population of seal, fish, and fowl. Raised beaches extend far into the sparsely wooded valleys, evidence of the post-glacial rebound which exceeds 125 metres in this region. The whole visual impact of contrasting colors and physical grandeur, the evidence of the gigantic forces which have shaped the land, the enormous time-scale embodied in the bands of sedimentary rock, all conspire to awe the solitary traveller and lend perspective to one's own importance in the scheme of things.



The magic morning; view of the western shore of Richmond Gulf as seen from the north

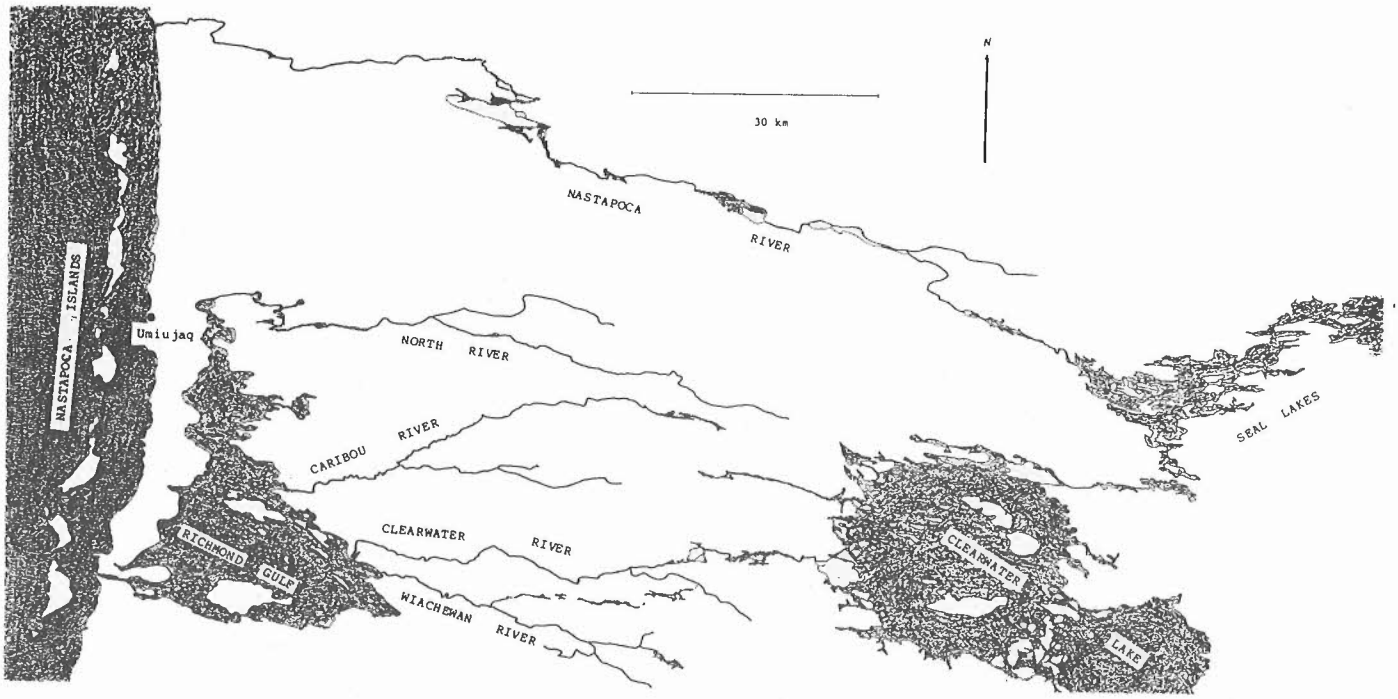
I was on the water with the first light of dawn and slowly made my way south. Not a breath of wind disturbed the surface of the gulf. Soon the first rays of the sun illuminated the highest ramparts of the western shore, their amber reflections mirrored in the water. I paddled silently through this quiet world lest I break the magic spell.

About an hour later I was jolted out of my reverie by a tremendous splash immediately behind the boat. Within a few seconds the head of a seal surfaced a short distance away. I swear I could detect a mischievous smile on its face. The creature obviously enjoyed the game, because the process was repeated several times over the next few hours. I, by contrast, was not amused.

By late afternoon I was camped at the mouth of the Caribou River and the magic was gone. I barely managed to cook supper before a deluge drowned the campfire. For the next two days I fretted while the waves pounded the shore and the wind worried the exposed tent. On the morning of the third day I pushed off into a heavy swell during a brief lull in the elemental assault and struggled toward the mouth of the Wiachewan River (Riviere de Troyes) at the southwest corner of Richmond Gulf. A great deal of sand carried into the bay has rendered the last kilometre of water very shallow. Into this confining space the great waves generated in deeper waters break with disconcerting force. It made the conclusion of an already exciting paddle a bit tense.

The second falls on the Wiachewan river (a drop of 17 m)

The Wiachewan River has been part of the native route to Clearwater Lake and beyond for many centuries. A.P. Low describes it in the Geological Survey report of 1888. Within a few minutes after putting ashore I discovered faint traces of an old trail leading up the steep embankment. This, no doubt, was the beginning of the four-kilometre portage which by-passes a 100-m high waterfall. After a few hundred metres the trail emerges on a spur of rock and finally traverses a small treeless plain. This plain, one of several raised beaches encountered on this portage, is remarkable for two reasons: it affords a beautiful view of the southern part of the island-studded gulf and, to me even more exciting, there are a score of shallow circular depressions scattered about which the lush carpet of Cladonia has not managed to hide completely. These teepee sites are of various ages and the indication is that not more than two or three were active sites at any one time, the latest occupancy being between 30-50 years ago.



That evening, as I cooked my supper in one of the old fireplaces and looked out over the harshly beautiful land, I felt a spiritual kinship with the people whose moccassined feet had travelled this way for centuries. Two days later I was nearing the end of my journey on the Wiachewan. For several kilometres a wolf had followed me along the shore, clearly curious about this strange creature on the water. By the time I reached the little tributary which marks the beginning of the overland portion of my route the wolf was nowhere in sight. Taking my cue from Low who states that the portage "follows a small tributary stream to the north" I diligently searched both banks of the stream, sloshing through the marshy ground and tripping over willows for over an hour, all the while convinced that no self-respecting Indian would ever start a portage in this mess.

Finally I retreated some distance down the river to a place which seemed better suited to the purpose and before long carried the first of my three loads two kilometres up to a plateau a hundred metres above the valley floor and made camp near a small pond. Shortly after noon the clouds had disappeared and an indifferent day closed in a blaze of sunshine. In spite of fatigue and the discomfort of blistered feet I felt exultantly euphoric. The tent was set up in the shelter of one of the few trees of any size, in a place where others had camped before. The ancient highway which had brought me here carried on, more felt than seen, up a gentle rise to the shore of a small lake, one of a number of interruptions in its eastward advance across lakes and streams towards the Clearwater River.

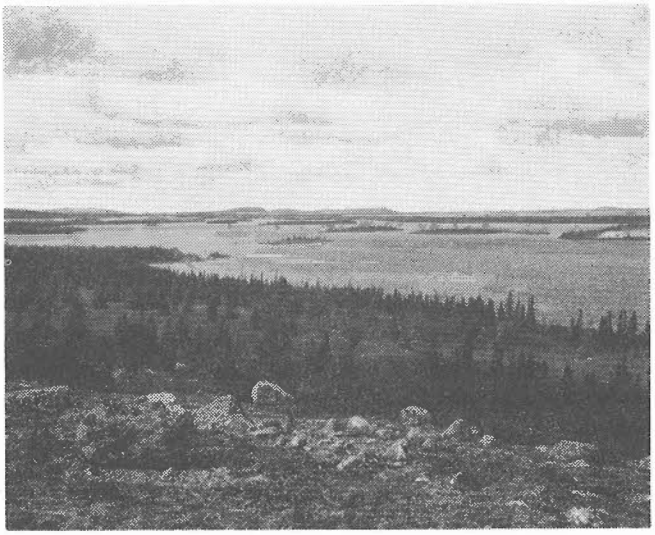
The next morning everything was covered with a thick coating of frost. Tiny columns of mist were rising into the pale sky from hidden bodies of water and forced into a spirited dance by the first golden rays of sunlight. It marked the beginning of a glorious day.

Mid-day found me on top of a high rocky spur. I had lost the trail among the large boulders and as always in situations like this I headed for high ground. The long, narrow lake I was aiming for was due east; to the west lay the deep blue waters of the small lakes I had traversed. The missing trail could be seen as a series of disconnected lines in the water-logged plain below me. In spite of the extra work involved I decided to portage over the high ground, motivated by the desire to see as much of the sun-drenched scenery around me as possible – and to take advantage of the breeze which kept the mosquitoes under control.

Overnight it started to rain. It signalled a change in the daily weather pattern which was to hold (with one notable exception) for the remainder of the trip: light precipitation during the night, cold foggy mornings, slight improvement with the odd hint of sunshine before noon, thereafter progressive deterioration. Westerly winds increased steadily during the day such that by afternoon portaging the canoe over exposed terrain and paddling became difficult. Between four and five in the afternoon the long threatening storm would break with strong gusts of wind and heavy rain. While these squalls rarely lasted more than half an hour, they emphasized the need for a sheltered tent site and fireplace. The latter was normally placed in the lee of one or more large erratics of which there is no shortage. It was the only way to avoid having the campfire drowned or blown away by the wind. On the plus side, with temperatures between zero and ten degrees Celsius and a chilling breeze, portages were welcomed as a means to get warm. Even better, mosquitoes and black flies were ridiculously clumsy and spent most of their time hiding in the groundcover where they were easy prey for the large number of jumping spiders.

The region immediately west of Clearwater Lake is criss-crossed by long water-filled troughs. Through a succes-

sion of these grooves in the Shield rock the Clearwater River flows westward towards Richmond Gulf. Large expanses of flatwater are interrupted here and there by boiling rapids and falls. I reached the river some 30 km below its origin and continued towards Clearwater Lake amid a steady stream of southward moving caribou who crossed the river singly or in small groups, quite unconcerned about my presence.

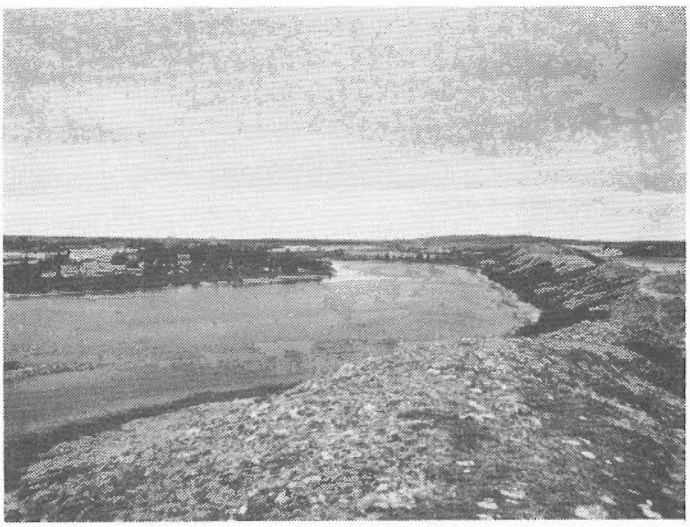


The Seal Lakes; somewhere beyond the horizon is the Nastapoca River

A week after leaving Richmond Gulf I paddled out of the shelter of the high hills along the western shore of Clearwater Lake and headed towards the nearest of the islands which surround the centre of the impact crater of the meteorite which created the lake. Even moderate winds give rise to high rolling waves on this large body of water and I was physically and emotionally drained when I stopped on the northernmost of the ring islands at day's end. In the morning I crossed over to the north shore of the lake and after some confusion in the dense fog found the mouth of the small stream whose course parallels that of an esker which rolls eastward toward the Seal Lakes. The latter are separated from the Clearwater watershed by a rocky ridge requiring a half-kilometre portage. The Seal Lakes are spread out over an enormous area, only a fraction of which is water, owing to the presence of many peninsulas and islands.

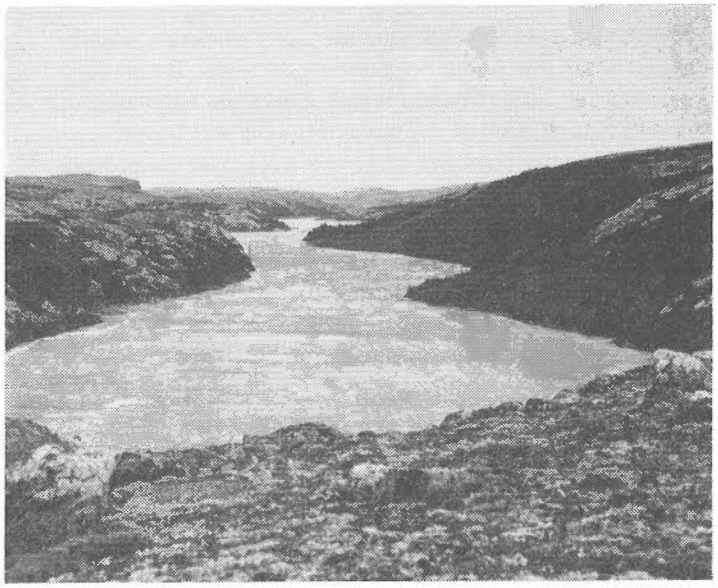
The view from the top of the portage was delightful, in no small measure because for one brief day the sun had returned and blue skies stretched to a limitless horizon. It also marked the beginning of the descent toward Hudson Bay. Up to this point signs of old native encampments and portage trails had been encountered almost daily. By contrast, not a single campsite or axemark was seen beyond this point (save for one small stone fireplace replete with little sticks of firewood cut into very short pieces with a saw, obviously the work of paleface urbanites). There was, of course, plenty of evidence that Hydro Quebec is set to drastically alter the landscape.

The Nastapoca River exits from the most westerly arm of the Seal Lakes in a long sweep of fast smooth water which terminates in a confusion of haystacks. In its westerly course the river at first drops quickly over a number of boulder



For some distance the Nastapoca runs in two or more channels separated from one another by parallel-running eskers

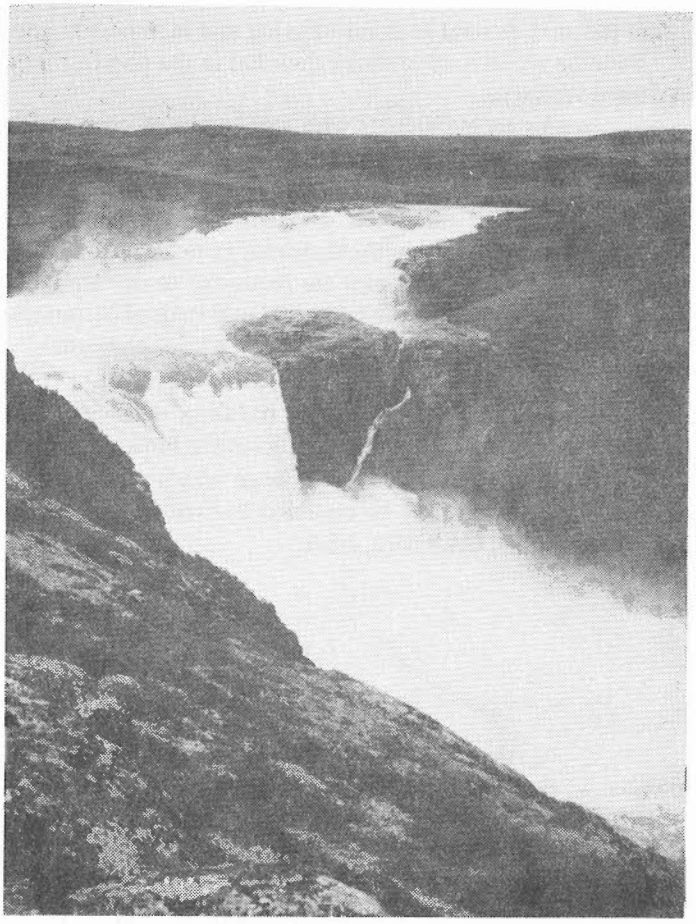
rapids. The large volume of water and speed of descent gives rise to large waves and much turbulence. Nevertheless, the majority of these obstacles are negotiable, albeit in my case not without some trepidation. For more than half its length the Nastapoca courses through gravel and boulder beds. At times the river splits into channels separated from one another by eskers or other glacial debris. Long stretches of utterly desolate country are interrupted by the occasional oasis of remarkable beauty.



"... the river runs confined between hills of solid bedrock ..."

Finally sand and gravel are left behind, the river runs confined between hills of solid bedrock and boulder rapids give way to sharp drops over ledges and spectacular falls. Trees become progressively smaller and more widely scattered until only dense stands of willows remain in sheltered places. Progress downriver was severely slowed by constant headwinds and generally unpleasant weather conditions. Evenings were usually spent listening to rain drumming on the tent rather than exploring the lay of the land.

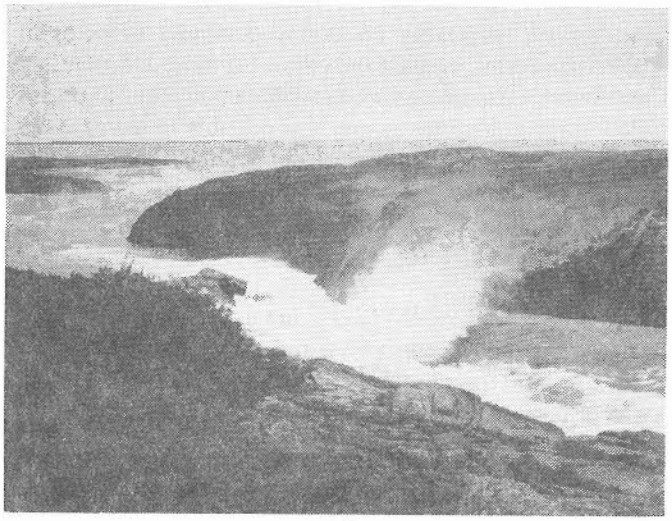
One of these evenings is particularly clearly remembered. When I broke camp in the morning, the tent was uncharacteristically dry. All day I felt a certain smugness – no matter what else might happen, I was going to have a comfortable, dry abode. And because it was a particularly miserable day it was a sustaining thought which made adversity easier to bear. By mid-afternoon the sky assumed an unusually threatening countenance. By a stroke of good fortune I was in the process of portaging around an obstruction and quickly found a nice sheltered spot, spread out the groundsheet on a thick layer of moss, unravelled the tent to insert the poles into the sleeves – and then the deluge came. In a minute the groundsheet was transformed into a miniature swimming pool upon which floated my no longer dry tent. Despite my most passionate profanity it would not let up and rained throughout the night. I was not a happy camper.



The falls at the start of the long S-bend

The last 20 km of the river are easily the most awesome. At the beginning of a large S-bend the Nastapoca thunders 50 m into a deep straight-walled canyon and continues with considerable agitation in a northerly direction. Here it receives the waters of a large tributary which discharges its waters into the canyon in another sheer falls. The bend in the river which brings it back to a westerly course marks the start of a sharp and long rapid. It took more than half a day to portage around the falls and scout ahead before running the remainder of this section. When I put ashore at the head of the Nastapoca Chutes – the last obstruction before tidewater – it was with a sense of great urgency. Evermore threatening storm-clouds which had followed me for several hours rendered the landscape dark and gloomy. A few drops of rain started to fall as I scrambled up the steep slope. 'Good grief, not again!' was the thought uppermost on my mind.

The view from the top was perhaps the most dramatic experience of the whole trip: in the foreground the river plunged from view with a muffled rumble, sending up clouds of spray; stretched out beyond was the immensity of Hudson Bay shimmering in the late evening sun. Spanning across this silvery expanse in a discontinuous line were the jagged, utterly black silhouettes of the Nastapoca Islands. The transition from the gloom and confinement of the rock-walled canyon to the bright and wide expanse of the coastal landscape over such a short distance was truly incredible. The dark storm-clouds which had followed me all day like evil spirits remained behind, as if suddenly contained by an invisible wall.



At the mouth of the Nastapoca River. In the foreground the river disappears over the last ledge of the Nastapoca Chutes.

The next morning the situation was unchanged: threatening skies upriver, bright and sunny on the coast. After a miserable portage past the last falls through spray-soaked willows all that remained was a fifty-odd kilometre paddle down the coast to Umiujaq. Soon I was riding the long swell of Hudson Bay with the gentlest of breezes urging me southward. Somehow I had expected the shore along the bay to have the same inhospitable countenance as the region upriver; instead there were many small bays with bright sandy shores and ample driftwood.

By mid-afternoon, messages of distress from various parts of the body began to arrive in the brain, but I dared not stop lest I become windbound. A fogbank was creeping up the coast, the water became choppy and I began to worry – where the hell is Umiujaq? It was evening when I pulled the canoe ashore for the last time. In a show of bravado I humped up all my gear at once – three packs and a duffle bag – staggered up the village to Eddy Weetaltuk's place and knocked on the door.

"You look absolutely beat!" he said.

I was.

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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.

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 or in typewritten form; contact the editor for more information. Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request; please follow these guidelines as much as possible to increase the efficiency of the production of our journal. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue:		*deadline date*:	
	Winter 1991		27 Oct. 1991
	Spring 1992		26 Jan. 1992

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).

SYMPOSIUM The seventh annual Canoeing and Wilderness Symposium will be held in Toronto on **24 and 25 January** 1992. It will focus on Northern Quebec and the North Shore. The format for Friday evening and all day Saturday will be similar to last year's. We plan to mail out registration information in November to past participants and to WCA members. Suggestions for speakers and presentations are always welcome. Contact: George Luste, 139 Albany Ave., Toronto, M5R 3C5; tel. (416) 534-9313.

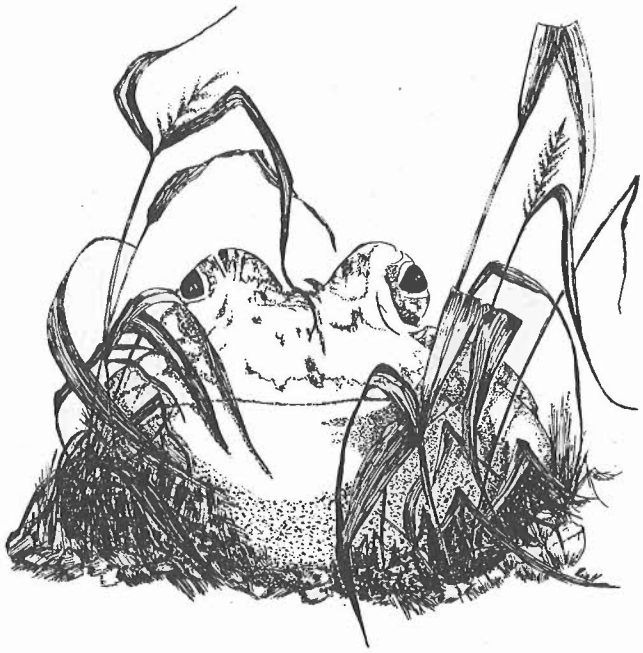
CRAIG MACDONALD now lives in Dwight (705) 635-3416 and works in Algonquin Park (613) 637-2780.

WINTER POOL SESSIONS If you would like to improve your whitewater skills by learning how to roll a canoe or kayak, we will be renting a Scarborough swimming pool for one two-hour session each week. Sessions will run from early January through late March and cost approximately $30.00 for the entire season (a steal!). Probable times will be Sunday 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. To register, call Bill Ness at (416) 321-3005.

1992 CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS Your Board of Directors is made up of six members who are elected for a two-year term. The term of three directors end at the next Annual General Meeting and members in good standing are invited to throw their hat in the ring to fill the three vacancies.

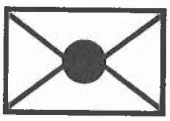
Interested individuals who would like to contribute a little more than their membership fee but aren't sure what the job entails are invited to contact any Board member or the secretary of the WCA who will be happy to answer questions. Although nominations may be made up to the time of the elections, candidates are requested to declare themselves prior to the deadline of the Winter issue of *Nastawgan* (27 October), so that they can publish a brief platform.

PADDLESPORT is a new paddling magazine being published in the USA, offering articles and illustrations quite similar to those in Paddler and Canoe magazines. Subscription information may be obtained by writing to P.O. Box 1388, Soquel, CA 95073, USA.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

QUETICO



There seems to be a minor controversy with respect to Quetico Park. (See the Spring and Summer 1991 issues of *Nastawgan*. Ed.) Having just returned from a short trip I would like to offer my views.

Before I went to Quetico I took note of Jim Greenacre's comments regarding lack of portage and campsite signs, and incorrect portage locations on some maps, etc. Forewarned, I took a little extra time to talk to parks staff who were extremely helpful in pointing out portage conditions, locations, and re-routings. (I didn't find out until the trip was over that there is an excellent campsite map in the information centre library.)

I understand their philosophy on portage and campsite signs but don't agree with it. Their view seems to be that such signs detract from the 'wilderness" concept. My view is that they do not have any more of a negative impact than the blazed trails, lob trees, cairns, and inuksuit of previous generations of wilderness travellers. I also believe that if long-established campsites could be more easily located, it would prevent the creation of new sites in unsuitable locations and their inappropriate use by novice trippers — a forest fire started from an unsuitably located fire pit creates a hell of a negative impact on the wilderness environment.

If suitably colored and located signs have a detrimental effect on our wilderness experience, how much greater is the detrimental effect of our nylon tents, freeze-dried foods, Kevlar canoes, etc.?

We enjoyed our trip into Quetico; it's a beautiful park and we wish we could have stayed longer and gone farther. However, for the majority of canoe trippers from Southern Ontario who do not have the time, money, or wilderness skills for a major trip in the *far* north, Algonquin and Killarney parks can offer as much in the way of a "wilderness" experience (wilderness being a state of mind rather than a location) as Quetico can without the travel time and distance. All three parks offer long, short, easy, difficult trips according to one's own personal choice of routes.

Gerry Lannan

QUETICO

Andrea Allison has good reason to be upset but not at Jim Greenacre's article about Quetico. Her concern should be for her failure to count ten before posting her letter and making a public spectacle of herself.

If she disagrees with Jim's facts, opinions, or conclusions then she should write to rebut them but the personal insults and innuendos are unconscionable. Whatever she may know about Quetico, she is woefully ignorant about Jim Greenacre.

Those of us who know and have travelled with Jim can only chuckle at the idea of anyone lecturing him on "... the meaning of wilderness." He is an accomplished and sensitive wilderness traveller and most would gladly trade what they know about the wilderness for what he has forgotten. Even more ludicrous is her challenge that he "... put his money where his mouth is." Jim does not wear his tax deductible receipts on his sleeve, but anyone even remotely conversant with wilderness and conservation issues will find his name familiar as both an unstinting financial contributor and a willing worker. Few can say they have contributed as much.

We should all take note. *Nastawgan* has always been available to the WCA membership for the dissemination of information, ideas, and opinions without censorship. The reader may disagree with the factual content or the opinions expressed, but the forum has always been open and, one hopes, will remain so. It is to the credit of the editor and his predecessor, Sandy Richardson, that they have adhered to this unwritten policy over the years. Andrea's puerile and insulting letter is but one beneficiary of this policy.

Nastawgan's credibility stems from the breadth and scope of its contributors' offerings and not from slavish adherence to any "politically correct" agenda. For Andrea to suggest that *Nastawgan*'s credibility has suffered is fatuous. Indeed, printing Andrea's letter, warts and all, is but an enhancement.

John Winters

BOARD ACTIVITIES

(This column is intended to keep WCA members up to date on the activities and decisions of their Board of Directors *occurring prior to the Nastawgan deadline.*)

The Board held their last meeting before the summer break on 11 June. Rob Butler reported that our association is in a sound financial position. At that time membership stood at 584.

Advance planning for the 1992 meetings has begun. The AGM will continue the one-day format. The merits of a location in Toronto vs a rural location such as Mono Cliffs were discussed. Duncan Taylor is going to investigate possible locations and act as Board liaison with the organizer. The outdoor format for the Fall Meeting will be continued. Herb Pohl is investigating suitable sites.

Mike Jones presented the report of the Sportsmen's Show Committee. In short, they felt that when problems of cost, storage, and sturdiness were considered, our present booth, with a few improvements and an instruction booklet for assembly, would continue to serve us well. Some accessories such as the carpet and the curtains will need to be replaced. Plans for the design of next year's booth are underway. A display from the Conservation Committee will be a prominent feature.

The next Board meeting will be held in conjunction with the Fall Meeting at Presqu'ile Park; hope to see you all there.

Bill King

SPANISH RIVER

SOME INFORMATION

This July Sharon and I spent six days on the Spanish River going down the east branch from Duke Lake and ending at Agnew Lake lodge, a total distance of about 140 km. The river offers a variety of shorelines as it flows south down a relatively protected valley. There are kilometres and kilometres of swifts which are a safe introduction to class 1 whitewater. Also there are about five class 2 rapids with good portage trails. Most of the rapids can be lined. During our trip we had zero portages though we did some lining.

Anyone planning to canoe the Spanish should buy the book "Canoeing Ontario's Rivers" by Ron Reid and Janet Grand. It gives an excellent description of the location and difficulty of the rapids; maps are included.

Last year the owner of the Agnew Lake Air Service was killed in a plane crash so there is no longer an air service directly out of Agnew Lake. Sudbury Air will pick you up at Agnew Lake but it is more expensive as they must fly an extra 60 kilometres.

The Agnew Lake Lodge (705-869-2239) will arrange to have the guide Bruno drop you off at Duke Lake in your car for about $100.00 and return your car to Agnew where parking is only $3.00 a day and is quite secure. Bruno is a very responsible person who guides in the summer and runs a trapline in the winter. Talking to him in the car about trapping and the ways of animals in the bush made the three-hour drive seem like 10 minutes. No one understands the woods and animals like a trapper. One can also camp overnight at Agnew Lake Lodge for a site fee.

The watershed of the Spanish River is controlled by Inco for a hydroelectric project on Agnew Lake, and one can phone them and get an idea as to water levels (705-866-2880). The key information is the quantity of water flowing into Agnew Lake. When we canoed the river it was 550 cfs and too dry. Look for a figure of about 650 cfs or more. They will also tell you if the dam at Bisco is open if you plan to do the west branch.

There is a possibility that Inco could dam the river above Agnew Lake and ruin the Spanish for canoeists. By my understanding they could proceed tomorrow without an environmental assessment. With the cancelation of Ontario's nuclear program, sources of hydroelectric power are even more valuable. It is rather unlikely that there will be a need for more nickel production capability in the foreseeable future. However, the real danger is the development of the capacity by private people to sell to Hydro when Ontario starts to run out of power in ten years. In Inco's favor it should be noted that the only reason the Spanish is available now for canoeing is that Ontario Hydro does not have the rights to it. Ontario Hydro will buy private power and are using private projects to do an end around the environmental assessment process.

So enjoy the Spanish while you can and tell your friends. The more popular it is, the less likely we are to lose it. It is my favorite river as it has so much to offer; if you leave Toronto at 6 a.m. you can be on the water by 3 p.m. Allow for about seven days at a pace of 25 km a day. Agnew Lake can be difficult if the wind is from the south and may then require an extra day. Campsites are about five kilometres apart and are usually excellent. Take your time scouting the rapids; it will add about five hours to your trip. If you like to fish, bring your rod and Bruno might give you some tips on the way up to Duke Lake as the fishing is excellent.

John Hackert

DUMPING

"Keep your feet up, keep your feet up, keep your feet up!" I yelled to Fraser after I bobbed to the surface near the top of the last major rapid on the Spanish River during our 1990 trip. "I've still got my contacts," my 17-year-old son yelled back as the strong current carried us down the river. Lorne, my 15-year-old son, was in another canoe with my friend Don, eddied out further down. Don stood and threw a rope that landed short; there was no way I could swim across the current to grasp it. I told Fraser we should stay away from the overturned canoe and he advised me to hang on to my paddle. We had already lost a paddle the previous day in a rapid further up but this was our first dumping.

We continued floating down the rapid, our untied packs floating to the right side and the canoe to the left. We thought the packs would be okay, they were lined with garbage bags and our sleeping bags had another green garbage bag around them. I'd heard of canoeists walking back to the top of rapids after running them and floating down again, and I was beginning to enjoy it. This was the first time we had dumped in a rapid and we were in our fourth season of canoe tripping together.

Fraser and I had stopped at the top of the rapid at what we thought was a portage but it petered out in the bush from the river clearing. We looked at the other side of the river but couldn't find a landing there either. Don, who is a much more experienced canoeist with whitewater training, and Lorne picked a line through the first standing waves and rocks so I proposed to Fraser to give it a try. He agreed and after six days coming down from Duke Lake with some whitewater instruction from Don I thought we would be okay. We lined up to go through the first set of rocks and to pass to the left of the standing waves. The rocks slipped by and we started to slip into the waves. I yelled to Fraser to paddle hard and I tried to pry the stern out. Fraser pulled hard but I wasn't successful and we slipped broadside into the trough. The next second we capsized, upstream luckily.

Two canoes had stopped at the bottom of the rapid. When they saw us capsize they turned back to help us. I'd like to thank them once again for corralling our packs on the right shore. Fraser and I were able to backpaddle out of the slackening current to the right shore further down. The two canoes then came to see if they could help us. They reminded us that it is best to face downstream when floating rapids, something I'd forgotten and which my left hip should have reminded me of when it bounced off a rock. Don and Lorne

pulled the canoe to the left bank and while Lorne bailed it out Don came to pick us up, ferried us to Lorne, and retrieved our packs.

Neither of us was hurt. The canoe had suffered a bit of bow-deck damage were it must have rubbed over a rock, and my sleeping bag was wet. My clothes dried out as I checked through the packs, and Fraser put on dry pants and shirt. We heated water on the Coleman stove and had a cup of hot chocolate and some gorp. We headed downstream and within an hour we found a good campsite just upstream from the Wakonassin River.

With lessons well learned and another canoeing story to tell we were very lucky. It was the middle of summer, the day was sunny, and the air and water were warm. We had lots of help getting our equipment out of the river and a good campsite was close by. But next time I'm going to lash the packs to the canoe and use something better than cheap garbage bags for liners. I hope I remember this when I see the WCA whitewater course listed in *Nastawgan*. I need it.

Don Smith

BODY LANGUAGE

It is an interesting fact that we humans exchange some of our most important ideas and messages by means other than words. Indeed, we doubt that any speech, however brilliant, could convey the warmth of a single smile, the fear shown by trembling hands, or the determination expressed by piercing eyes. In judging a person's sincerity we seldom pay as much attention to what he says as we do to how he says it, and we would think twice before buying a car from someone who refused to look us in the eye. In fact, the more you think about it, the more you realize that such apparently trivial behavior patterns make up a "body language" of great subtlety--and of great importance to all of us.

Now it might seem, since spoken language is generally thought of as an exclusively human possession, that body language would also be restricted to our species. In recent years, however, it has been learned that this is far from being the case; many animals can and do communicate important messages to each other--and very often it is through highly developed form of body language.

Take for instance the Great Blue Heron. At first glance, this bird would appear to have little need or opportunity to use any kind of language. Usually we see Great Blues as solitary individuals in some favorite haunt, patiently waiting for a fish or frog to come within reach of its lightning-fast neck and bill combination. Fairly obviously, Great Blue Herons do not get along especially well with each other and prefer to spend the day hunting alone.

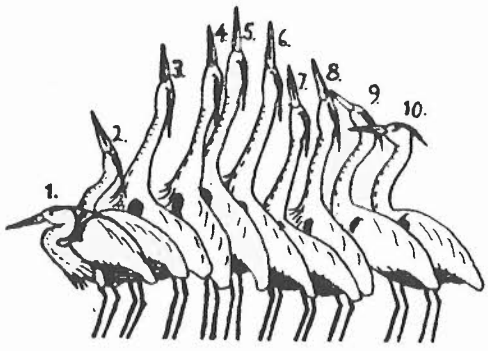
There is one situation, however, when they are forced to forgo their normal solitude and that is the nesting season. Great Blues raise their young in tree top colonies of bulky stick nests which are often placed so close to each other that one tree contains several. The reason for this uncharacteristic sociability is that predators are less likely to attack eggs or young in a colony (where some adults are always present) than in an isolated nest (which the adults must often leave unattended in order to find sufficient food for themselves and their young).

Over the millions of years herons have been evolving it has been the individuals who have been able to overcome their normal mutual hostility and nest in colonies that have had the greatest success in producing young. The really important point is that the herons had to evolve some way of making their intentions known to each other and some way of settling disputes without actually coming to blows. (Otherwise the damage that would be done to each other by such large birds, armed with such lethal bills, would totally wipe out the benefits of nesting in colonies.)

Yet another excellent reason for developing some sort of language is that the male and female of each pair must learn to accept each other's presence on the relatively cramped area of the nest. It may seem odd that a male and female should have to learn to accept each other, but not if you remember that for most of the year their normal attitude is mutual avoidance, if not downright animosity. In fact, amazing as it seems to us humans, male and female Great Blue Herons cannot even tell themselves apart by mere appearance; they have to watch for behavioral clues (or body language) in order to get sorted out and nest at all--in a colony or out of one.

Herons lack the facial muscles that are so important in our human body language, but they make up for this with the long neck and copious plumes whose positions can be varied greatly. For example, in a display called the "Stretch" (see picture) a heron starts from a resting position with all feathers relaxed and then smoothly lifts its head, fully erects its lower neck plumes, and swings the closed bill toward vertical. At the peak, the heron begins a long, moan-like call that continues right through the descent back to the resting position.

This particular display, which lasts about six seconds, is used by both sexes, but for different purposes. When males perform it, they convey to females a message that might be



translated as: "I will not attack; you may approach." If a female responds to this message she will do so hesitantly--not only because she must overcome her own aversion to other herons, but also because the male may change his mind and attack. In a successful pairing, the male's attacks will gradually diminish (partly because the female keeps her head low, and faces away from the male) until, eventually, the two birds will accept each other, even in the close quarters of the nest platform. At this point, when the male has been thoroughly domesticated, the female also uses the Stretch--to send the now docile male to find a stick and add it to the nest. When two mated birds really get to know each other, the female doesn't bother to perform the full display at all; even a slight motion suggesting that a Stretch might be coming is sufficient to send the male lumbering off with majestic wingbeats to look for a stick.

The Stretch is only one of at least 14 distinct displays in the Great Blue Herons "vocabulary." Among these are the Circle Flight in which a heron flies with its neck completely outstretched (instead of the normal folded-back position) in a large circle ending near the point of origin. Other displays include the Twig Shake, the Arched Neck, the Fluffed Neck, Bill Duel, and Bill Clappering. Notwithstanding their curious names, these displays are absolutely essential for the heron to function in its social environment.

If you should be lucky enough to see two herons conversing in their elaborate body language, you will be observing behavior which (like ours) is of great importance and interest. Also, as an added bonus to the especially observant, you may be able to tell (ahem) which bird is the heron and the which is the himon.

Reprinted from *The Raven*, courtesy of Ministry of Natural Resources.

THE OUTWARD SIGN

Back from the river. First day at work after the trip. Outward appearances do not tell of the great adventure of living for four weeks without a roof overhead. During the entire four weeks, living and the quality of the living dependent upon your wits, whatever you could fit in a canoe, and supplemented by huge amounts of genuine hard labor.

Looking at people recently returned to work and you can not tell that they have been on a wilderness trip. Offer to shake their hand. If they refuse, or wince with pain when you grasp their hand, or present an appendage that looks more like ground chuck than a hand, and you can tell.

Wilderness travel is tough on the hands. They are constantly cutting, cooking, cleaning, paddling, and they pay the highest price for the miles covered. The hands are all beat up. Battle scars are there for all to see.

Cut and scraped in a dozen different places. Some of the cuts are cracked and split deep and will still be a couple of weeks more in healing. Skin turned dark brown by a combination of sun and ground-in dirt. Aluminum oxide worn off the canoe paddle colors the flap of skin between the thumb and forefinger.

Current appearance of the hands will survive several more rounds with Lava soap. Final victory may not be won until the upper layer of epidermis surrenders.

Hair on the back of the hands burnt down to skin level and then some by too many close encounters with the campfire. Palms of the hands calloused from gripping a canoe paddle too tightly for too long. Hands seem to want to assume the canoeing grip without conscious thought. Even now, a week after the last grip of the paddle, a twinge of remembrance shoots through whenever the hand accidentally passes through the canoeing grip on the way to picking up a pencil or a pen.

Band-aids cover the outward signs of wilderness travel. Now wearing four, two on each hand. The inner signs of wilderness travel are covered by the heart.

Greg Went

FALL PARTY

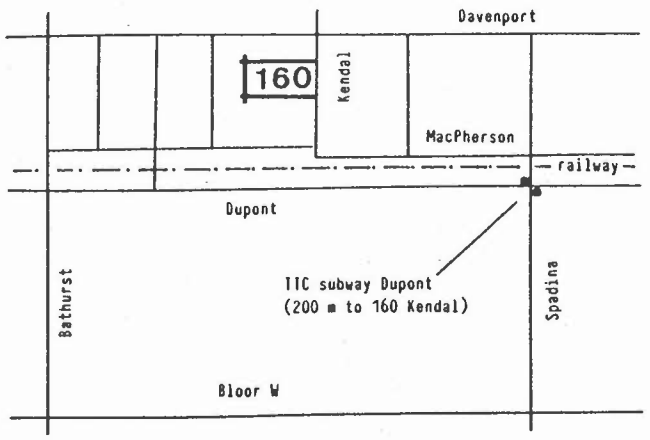
Want to meet old canoeing friends? Want to hear some tall paddling stories and see interesting photographs? Want to find out what the WCA is all about, who its members are, and what inside information they can give you?

Then come to the WCA Fall Party, also called Wine-and-Cheese Party, on Friday evening, 29 November, in the staff lounge of the Casa Loma Campus of George Brown College, 160 Kendal Avenue, Toronto. Non-WCA members are also welcome. Admission, to be paid at the door, is $6.00 per person.

Program

7:00 - 7:30 Registration and welcome.
7:30 - 8:00 Slide shows.
8:00 - 9:00 Meet the people, enjoy the wine and cheese.
9:00 - 10:00 Slide shows.
10:00 —— Coffee and gab.

For more information, contact Dee Simpson at (416) 778-9944 (w).



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

THE LOWER FRENCH AND PICKEREL RIVER SYSTEM

Chris Riddle and Jeff Gardner

The WCA has recently 'adopted' the wilderness area lying east of Highway 69 and between the Pickerel and Magnetawan rivers. Close by, to the west of Highway 69 and running north from the Pickerel River, is another area for 'creating your own wilderness.' In essence we are talking about the myriad of channels that drain the French, Pickerel, and Wanapitei rivers into Georgian Bay. It is an area of incredible variety, from channels as wide as your canoe, to the wide reaches of the French, to the 'fingerboard' islands and the vastness of Georgian Bay. The portages and rapids are infrequent, but both can be unique, and the flora and fauna are outstanding.

A special moment, by way of example. In August of 1990 we were sitting on a rock some 10 metres above Canoe Channel on the French, finishing an early breakfast. It was quiet and misty — no other paddlers nearby. All of a sudden the water in front of us exploded as a cormorant burst from the depths, taking flight immediately, only to land again in mid-river. He was followed, in the space of some 15 seconds, by many more cormorants. The display was over before we could even think to reach for a camera.

This is prime blueberry territory: good for bears, rattlesnakes, and deer as well. Many backwaters exist where reedbeds abound and other paddlers, let alone motorboats, rarely venture.

Several access points are available. Hartley Bay marina is our favorite but Grundy Lake Provincial Park and the marinas on Highway 69 at the Key, Pickerel, and French rivers are also useful. These three rivers are of course highways for motorboats and at least two published canoe routes cross the area. Hence the need to 'create your wilderness.'

We usually visit the area at least once a year, spending from four to ten days 'exploring.' We revisit certain favorite sites from time to time but rarely travel the same route in doing so.

As much as describing the area, this article therefore is intended to create a state of mind for planning a canoe trip. We rarely plan our route or itinerary in detail. Instead we will usually decide to explore a particular area and possibly agree to investigate some features noted on the topographic map. Day-to-day planning is determined by the weather as much as anything.

The numerous outlets to Georgian Bay make canoe loops easy, so no retracing of steps is necessary. In addition, the lay of the land provides many apparently easy portage opportunities. We say 'apparently easy' from experience. With low water levels in recent years some channels have dried up, others have changed thanks to the work of beavers. It is also easy to take the wrong channel in some sections. Once, after hauling our canoe through muck and slime for over an hour, we took a rest on the bank only to discover an open channel fifty meters over and parallel to our dried-up 'river bed.'

Clearly there is no one route to recommend here; however, there are some highlights to note. One thing to bear in mind is that on Georgian Bay the weather can be unpredictable and if a wind comes up the paddling can become difficult. Some inlets offer few landing points and knowing your limits is important since some sections of the coastline are quite isolated.

An easy introduction is to take the MNR-recommended route down the Pickerel and back up the Key River. The centre section of the Pickerel where it turns south and runs from the French to Georgian Bay is a series of narrow channels carved into the rock. Wild iris and water lilies abound, and the exposed red rocks glow in a summer sunset. Campsites are hard to find and small so this is not an area for large groups.

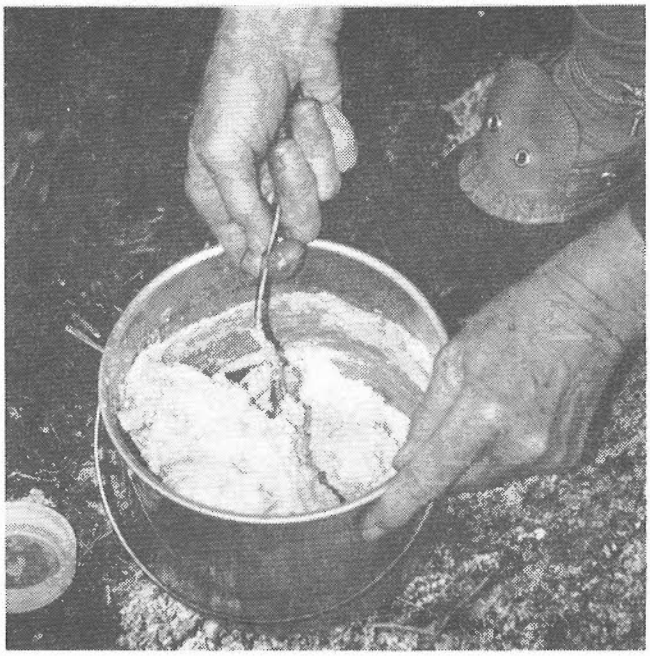
More challenging is the Canoe Channel/Eastern Outlet route of the French River to Georgian Bay and a crossing to the Western Outlet. Careful mapreading will reveal an inner channel, starting at Whitefish Bay, avoiding the surf of the Bay in The Fingerboard and Bad River Point, which brings you out at Devil Door Rapid -- your gateway back up the river. Here the Cross Channel acts as a catchment basin for the multitude of channels that the river has divided into. There are several exits to the Cross Channel of which Devil Door Rapid is possibly the most scenic one, a narrow neck that funnels the water in a clear stream out into Bad River Channel. The Cross Channel is a fun place and worth a couple of days the first time you pass this way.

Each small river channel ends in a simple set of rapids as it empties into the Cross Channel. Ideal for doing circuits on a hot summer's day: run down and carry up. Back on the main river, travel upstream is difficult only in a couple of places due to the current, and as often as not the wind will be behind you. For the more adventurous, the 2-3 km crossing of the Northeast Passage brings you to the Bustard Islands, well known for unpredictable weather.

Two 1:50,000 topo maps, 41I2 and 41H15, cover the area. However, the Pickerel River seems to run down the crack between the two sheets for a fair way and you will be well-advised to get out the scissors before your trip and tape the two maps together.

Hartley Bay access point: travelling north on Highway 69, cross the French River and go a further two kilometres before turning left on the Hartley Bay road. It is about 14 km to the marina, located right at the CNR tracks. (Watch for the crossing; there is no gate and you can be on the tracks before you know it.)

The marina runs an efficient dock and charges a reasonable fee for parking. Food, camping supplies, and canoe rentals are not available. For these you could stop at the Grundy Lake Supply Post, at the intersection of Highways 69 and 522 (ask for Gladys or Dave).

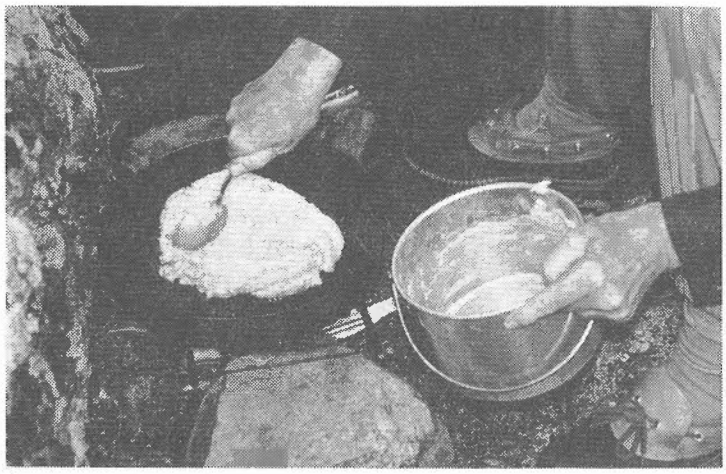


1 — mix: whole weat flour, milk powder, egg powder, baking powder, oil, water

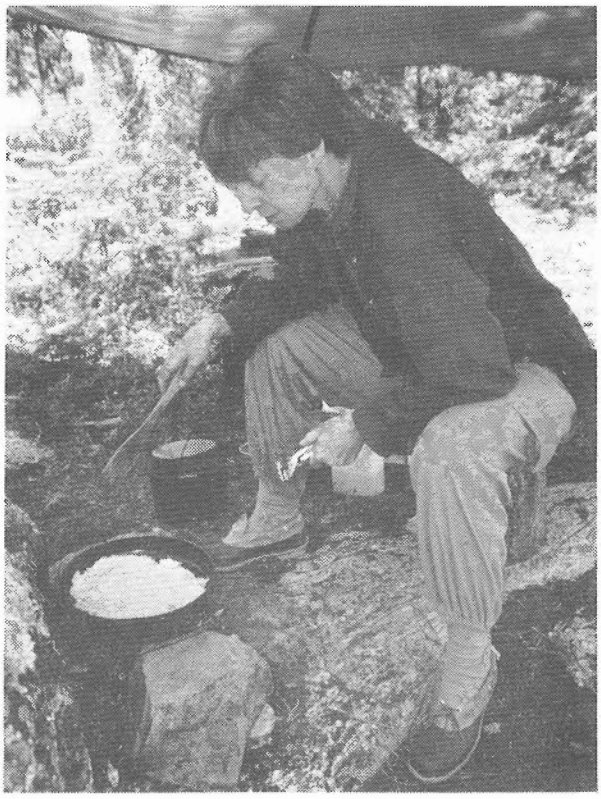
2 — heat frying pan and oil

BASIC BANNOCK

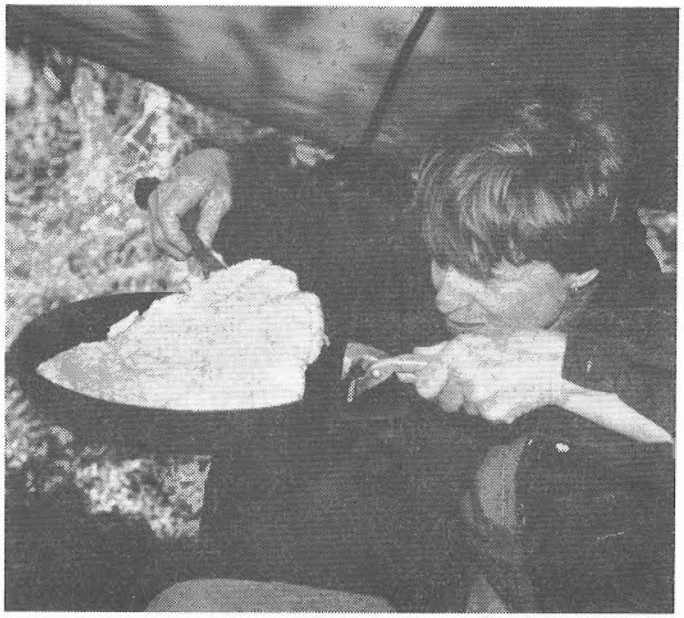
Ria and Toni Harting



3 — put mixture in pan

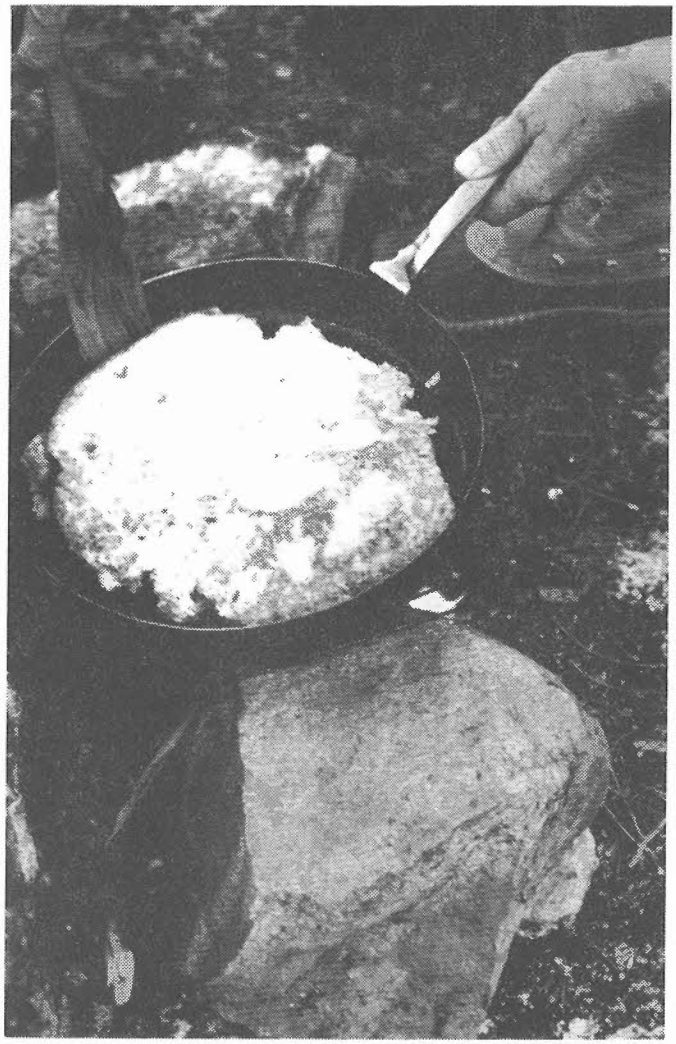


4 — bake over low fire

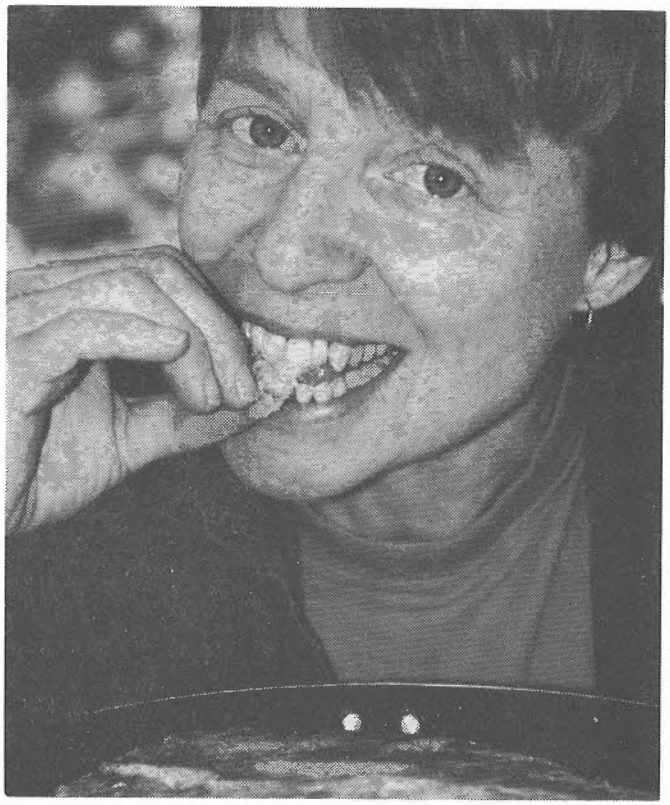


5 — check

6 — turn



7 — bake other side



8 — enjoy

WEST BRANCH SUSQUEHANNA RIVER

Article: Bryan Buttigieg **Photos: Pat and Bryan Buttigieg**

WCA members are used to American members coming North for their trips, so it was with some surprise that Dan Jenny responded to a call from us asking to join a trip he was leading down the West Branch of the Susquehanna River on 6 and 7 April this year. "It's not a wilderness trip like you are used to in Canada," he said, "but the country is worth seeing."

There was no need for Dan to sound apologetic. We were about to be treated to two ideal days of early spring paddling through some of the most isolated parts of Pennsylvania.

The West Branch of the Susquehanna River is a wide, fairly fast-moving river. Water levels can be too low for canoes by the end of June, but were perfect on the weekend we were there. The river flows through a deep valley with numerous streams flowing into it through their own valleys. The hills rise steeply on either side of the river creating some spectacular scenery as well as friendly updrafts for the group of eight Turkey Vultures that appeared to be following the same downstream route as we were.

We drove down from Toronto on Friday night, travelling slowly through a very thick mist – the result of a cool night following an unusually warm day. Thanks to Dan's directions and the fact he was still awake to shine his flashlight at our car on our arrival at 3:30 a.m., we somehow arrived in time for a good night's sleep.

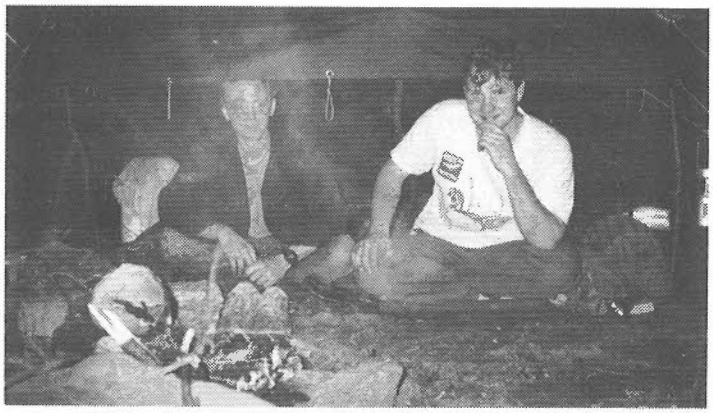
Put-in on Saturday morning was south-east of Frenchville on route 879, below the bridge at Rolling Stone. The fast flow created many riffles and small waves but nothing that required any manoeuvring. As beginner whitewater paddlers we appreciated this opportunity to only figuratively "break-in" our newly acquired Explorer. Rocks were always easy to see and the downstream V's very clearly marked. If a group of standing waves looked intimidating to our conservative spirit, the wide river allowed other calmer routes.

Moshannon Falls was the only stretch that required scouting. Although the waves were the largest we would see, the real problem was a hole at the end of the rapid, which is known to dump paddlers who thought they had finished the run and were prematurely congratulating themselves. We thought we would take the cautious route and followed Ken and Jerry. We discovered, too late, that they were heading for the heaviest waves. In our surprise we forgot to back-paddle and almost caught up with them just as they realized that bow and sternsman were headed for opposite sides of that last rock. They reached an understanding just in time and both canoes navigated the rock almost simultaneously on either side.

Lunch was at a beautiful site where Moshannon Creek joins the river. It was clear from the rocks and driftwood on the beach that water levels could get much higher, but even at this time we saw two kayaks come down the creek. They said it was runnable and "interesting" all the way, with a ninety-degree bend at one point that required a fair amount of skill. Dave looked interested and we may yet hear of him successfully taking a canoe down the creek one spring.

A short distance from the creek mouth, Dave pointed out the remains of an old stone foundation. It was probably a mill and appeared to have been built over a man-made channel which would have carried diverted water from the creek.

The campsite that evening was even better than our lunch spot. The site appears typical of those found along this stretch of the river: large and flat, backed by steep hills and right next to a stream that provides clear drinking water. It allowed more than ample room for the seven adults, three children, and one dog in our group. We arrived at the site early enough for a short hike up the stream. Northern gardeners will marvel at the four-metre-high rhododendrons the State can grow with ease in the wild and which make a thick



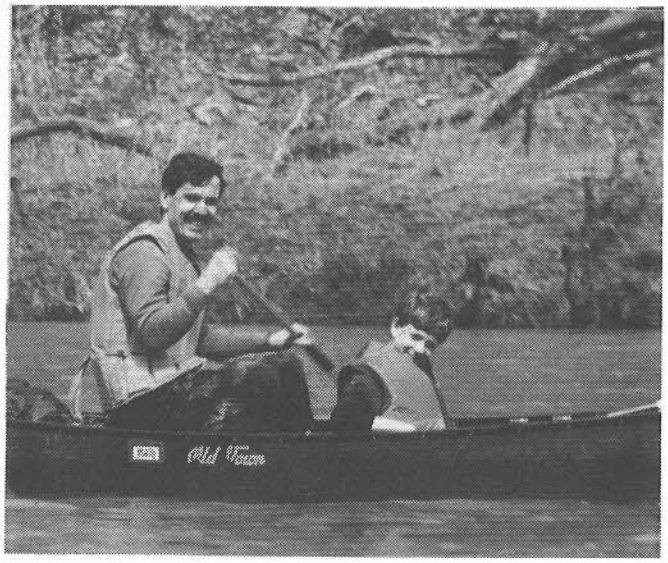
undergrowth along the first stretch of the river. There were also quite a few yellow birch, as well as sycamore. The predominant tree, however, was oak, judging by the dense carpet of leaves underfoot.

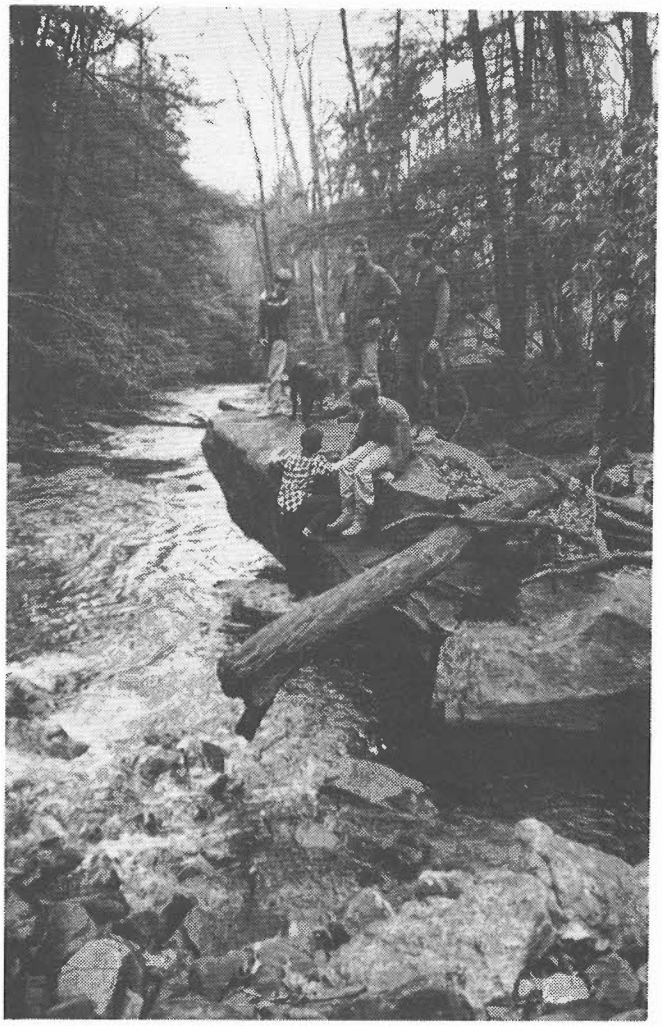
A peaceful evening around a campfire was enlivened by a spectacular explosion of a rock in the fire outside Ken and Jerry's tarp ... just after Pat took their picture. Fortunately there was no rain to penetrate the tarp shelter that was now well ventilated on three sides.

The perfect weather held all through the second day with more blue skies and temperatures in the high 20s. Our toques and down vests remained unused, deep in the bottoms of our packs. Although the waves were smaller further downstream, the current was still fast enough to allow for very lazy paddling. The sun was at our backs most of the time and so was the wind. Some even tried their hands at sailing downstream. What more could we possibly have asked for?

Late Sunday afternoon we passed a grim reminder that the weather is not always so benign. An entire hill-side where a tornado had touched down a few years ago was almost completely bare. We could see small patches of green where some evergreens had started to come back.

Since it was so early in the year that there were no leaves on the trees, we were able to see the structure of the limestone hills and cliffs quite clearly. Many of the hills looked very inviting for hiking, with lots of potential lookouts. A combined canoeing and hiking trip over this route would make for a very enjoyable four or five days.





Also evident was a fairly large amount of deadfall among the trees. Fred explained that the area had been hit very hard by a gypsy moth outbreak a few years ago. The area is, of course, all second-generation growth, as the original forest was logged extensively.

Most of the approximately 50-kilometre stretch that we paddled was unpopulated. This portion of the river runs through a state forest and game area. Deer in particular are quite plentiful and we saw their signs everywhere. Our hosts also saw a bobcat in the area on a previous trip. Not surprisingly, the area is very popular for hunting. Since water levels are too low for paddlers in the fall hunting season, hunters and paddlers can stay away from each other if they wish.

The section we travelled is crossed by only two bridges, the first at our start point and the second at the village of Karthaus. Railway tracks follow a lot of the left bank, but we found them surprisingly unobtrusive. Apart from a few picturesque cottages, all of which appeared empty, we had the river to ourselves. Take-out was below the settlement of Keating where the Sinnemahoning Creek enters the river. A 45-minute car-shuttle along a logging road returned us to our starting point.

Canoeists interested in paddling the West Susquehanna can plan trips from two to five days in length. Trips can start as high upstream as Shawville (trips higher upstream will require an awkward portage around the power station). Take-

outs can be as far downstream as Renovo; anything lower involves paddling through populated areas. Hikers should give themselves time to explore the area. Campsites are large and plentiful. Trout season starts in the second weekend in April at which time one can expect heavier use of the river. Other rivers in Northern Pennsylvania (Pine Creek was mentioned a lot, although it is not as remote) are also popularwith local paddlers. Topographic maps are available from the U.S Geological Survey (1:100 000 scale Williamsport West, Pennsylvania and Clearfield, Pennsylavnia cover the entire route). They should be consulted if car shuttles over logging roads are planned – we found the commercially available road maps unhelpful.

Drivers from the Toronto area can expect the 550-km drive to take almost seven hours on account of the lower speed limits along the most direct route. Part of the drive along route 219 is through the picturesque Allegheny National Forest and State Park. Novice paddlers (see WCA definition) should have no difficulty along the river which is well worth the visit for Southern Ontarians wanting a spring river trip offering something different from the typical pool-and-drop Canadian Shield rivers.

CONSERVATION

Well, the "conservation" mail continues to pour in: information from the Toronto health board, Ministry of the Environment news releases, bulletins from Ontario Hydro about transmission lines, requests for money and more. From the "mail bag" a few items of interest from the past three months are...

BISCOTASING AREA The draft District Land Use Guidelines amendment for the Biscotasing area has been completed and is undergoing review (see *Nastawgan*, Summer 1990). In general the guidelines protect the remoteness of the area but as always some compromises have been made. Responses to the draft guidelines were to be submitted to the MNR before 10 September.

ELLESMERE ISLAND The world's most northerly park is currently being planned: Ellesmere Island National Park Reserve. This remote park is located on the northern tip of Ellesmere Island only 600 km from the North Pole. It will protect 37,775 sq km of high Arctic environment.

ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK The conclusion of an investigation into the historic and legal aspects of the Golden Lake band land claim, on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee to Save Algonquin Park, was that the claim was "full of holes so big you could paddle a canoe through them -- even sideways." The investigation identified eight major flaws in the claim; one flaw being that western sections of the park have never been occupied or used at any time by Algonquin or Nipissing Indians. The committee has produced an informative 20- page bulletin on the land claim issue.

QUETICO PROVINCIAL PARK Two requests for additional access into Quetico Provincial Park have been submitted to the MNR. One request is for motorboat access into French, Pickerel and Batchewaung lakes along the north edge of the park by Quetico Guides Association. The other request is for further access into interior lakes by the Lac La Croix Band. The band already has motorboat and airplane access to some interior lakes. Mechanized access into a wilderness park is inappropriate and contrary to the essence of what has been set up. One would hope that such requests are flatly denied, however (as we all unfortunately know) that can not be assumed.

For further information on the above or any other conservation issue please ontact Stephen Crouch (416) 782-7741.

ALGONQUIN PARK John Simpson (District Manager, Sudbury District, Ministry of Natural Resources) submitted the following note regarding the information on Algonquin Park presented on page 17 of the Spring 1991 issue of *Nastawgan*.

"I would like to make a brief comment about one of the points (No. 1) regarding Algonquin Park. This statement is definitely not true. Because of the silvicultural system used (selection), the tolerant hardwood forest on the west side is regenerating to the same species. These forests will continue to contain a mixture od softwood as well (white pine, spruce, hemlock).

"The pine stands on the east side are predominantly regenerating to pine and are harvested using the uniform shelterwood system.

"For more details on the harvesting and silvicultural systems used in Algonquin Park, I suggest you contact one or both of the following: Mr. W. J. Brown, General Manager, Algonquin Forestry Authority, P. O. Box 1198, Huntsville, Ontario P0A 1K0; or Mr. G. E. Martelle, District Manager, Box 219, Whitney, Ontario K0J 2M0."

REVIEWS

THE BASIC ESSENTIALS OF FIRST AID FOR THE OUTDOORS by William W. Forgey MD, published by ICS BOOKS Inc., Merrillville, Indiana, 1989, 61 pages.
Reviewed by Bill King, MD.

Dr. Bill Forgey has a lot of experience in three areas which make him very well qualified to write a book of this sort. He is an experienced emergency physician, a longtime outdoorsman and canoeist, and the author of several books for the layman on various aspects of wilderness medicine. This latest addition to what I'm sure the publishers hope will be a long "Basic Essentials" series is, in essence, a precis of his textbook, "Wilderness Medicine" to which on several occasions he refers the reader for more detailed discussions. Since "Wilderness Medicine" is already a readable, portable, practical guide to caring for most of the ills likely to befall typically-healthy people on a wilderness outing, I had hoped that "First Aid for the Outdoors" might take a more different approach, for example giving greater emphasis to rescue and evacuation techniques. The problem of selection for a limited monograph is always a difficult one; here, for example, eleven of the sixty-one pages are devoted to heat and cold injuries (already the subject of a 160-page text by the same author) whereas immobilization of the patient with a potential spinal injury is given passing reference in the section headed "Shock Care" but then never detailed.

However, on the positive side, there is no doubt that this book is interesting, reasonably comprehensive, easy to understand, and well illustrated. There are useful appendices covering cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (although I agree with Dr. Forgey's warning that no book can substitute for taking a CPR course!), the outdoor first aid kit, and water purification. There is also a bibliography which refers the reader to more detailed and specialized reference works.

In summary, I would say that this is a useful book although I wonder if the first-time buyer of a first aid manual might not be better off with Dr. Forgey's more detailed text, particularly as the 5 X 9" (15 X 23 cm.) format of "First Aid for the Outdoors" won't lend itself any more easily to inclusion in a first aid kit.

COASTAL LABRADOR, A Northern Odyssey by Tony Oppersdorff, published by Nimbus Publishing Ltd., Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1991, 96 pages, $ 27.95, hardcover.
Reviewed by Herb Pohl.

"*Coastal Labrador*" is a collection of photographs which the author has taken over the course of several years. During this time Oppersdorff has travelled by motorboat, kayak, snowmobile, and shank's mare on and along the isolated coast of Labrador. Produced in the standard coffee-table format, which has become so popular over the last few years, it contains just under one hundred photographs as well as a brief introduction of the physiography and human history of the region. The printing is of exceptional quality and the design generally attractive. Many of the photographs are hauntingly evocative and give expression to the opening statement on the dustcover: "Labrador is a land of many reputations. On the one hand, it is monochromatic and lunar-terrible, frost-shattered, God-forsaken. On the other, it is a paradise of majestic mountains, glacial valleys, sandy beaches, never-ending fjords and awe-inspiring icebergs."

In the selection of photographs the author has shown a pronounced geographic bias – the vast majority of pictures are from the region north of Nain, which represents only a third of Labrador's coastline. By ignoring the broad range of landscapes found further south Oppersdorff gives a misleading impression of the appearance of the whole coast. This could have been avoided by using the more appropriate title "Northern Labrador". It would also get rid of the totally unjustifiable use of the word "Odyssey" in the subtitle.

There are several instances of questionable editing – a two-page spread of a swimming polar bear (with two-thirds of the picture out of focus) which should have been trimmed; a wonderfully evocative winterscene disrupted with an insert; an evening picture of Manvers Run, possessed of a wonderful mood, but which is just not crisp enough. Overall the shortcomings do not take away from the primary effect this collection of images produces, namely to inspire the lover of wilderness to want to go out there and see for himself what this land is all about.

KILLARNEY by Kevin Callan, published by The Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ontario, 1990, 84 pages, $16.95, softcover.
Reviewed by Joan Etheridge.

After reading this book, I found myself determined to make a trip to Killarney this fall, before the snows come. Killarney is an unusual place and the author's warm feelings towards this 'Crown Jewel of Ontario' shine through every page.

The first half is devoted to the geology and history of Georgian Bay; supported by a decent bibliography at the end. I learned that in rough weather the voyageurs left the open waters of Georgian Bay and portaged across the La Cloche Range of mountains. Those of you who've walked up Silver Peak can imagine what that journey must have been like – and they didn't have Kevlar canoes and Goretex in those days. The anecdotes in this section would have been enhanced by a map of Georgian Bay.

Without belaboring the point, Callan shocked me with some of the facts about the environment in that area. By the late 1800s, the fertile fishing shoals of the area had already been overfished; this only took 100 years of European settlement to achieve. Also, the lakes in what is now Killarney Provincial Park used to teem with fish. However, he seems to let Inco off lightly for their acidification of most of the lakes. Interestingly, the need for reforestation was recognized in the 1870s by the president of a local lumber company.

A.Y. Jackson, one of the Group of Seven painters, was instrumental in getting part of the area protected from logging, back in the 1930s. It now has a wilderness designation, so won't come under the same multiple usage problems that afflict Temagami and Algonquin.

Various hikes are described in useful detail but there is no trail map to follow. Canoe routes are also described well, with practical information on tough portages and good campsites. There is a canoeing map but not all the lakes and access roads are marked on it.

The book doesn't seem to stand alone. When reading it one needs at least the Killarney Provincial Park Hiking Guide at hand. Some of the photographs are lovely but many are too dark for my taste. Despite the shortcomings of this book, I enjoyed reading it and look forward to using it to plan trips into Killarney.

The following anecdote is excerpted from Stewart Coffin's forthcoming book, Black Spruce Country.

THE CASE OF THE THEFT AT PORTAGE LAKE

In the late summer of 1959, Jane and I, together with another couple, were on a two-week canoeing vacation in Maine. As was our custom, we strung together a series of downriver runs, mostly with camping gear and mostly of an exploratory nature. The first was down Spencer Stream and the Dead River. The second was from the East Outlet of Moosehead Lake to The Forks via the Kennebec Gorge. The other couple found the Kennebec (at 6500 cfs) so fulfilling that they decided they had had enough whitewater for the entire summer and headed home. That left us with only one car, so Jane and I drove to Portage Lake, left our car there, and got a lift to Churchill Lake to run the Allagash. When we reached Fort Kent by paddle, I took the bus back to Portage Lake to retrieve our car.

When I returned to Fort Kent to pick up Jane and the canoe, she rummaged around in the back of the car and exclaimed, "where's my purse?"

Then I looked in the glove compartment and asked, "where's my flashlight?"

Those turned out to be the only two items missing. We then returned to Portage Lake and went to the only business establishment in that small, isolated village, which happened to be Coffin's General Store, owned by a presumably distant relative. The only cash missing was a $20 Canadian bill, and on that bill we knew rested any hopes we might have for recovery. We urged the store owner to keep an eye out for it. He seemed rather offended for us to suggest that a local resident might be responsible, but we considered it likely. We left a list of the contents of the purse and a description of the flashlight – an especially nice one that my sister had given me for Christmas many years before.

After many weeks had passed and we had abandoned all hope, we received a letter from the sheriff of Aroostook County saying that the thief had been caught, and that all the stolen items had been recovered and were being held for evidence. We could see no reason for them to hold, among other things, Jane's wedding ring, driver's license, and identification badge for where she worked, whereupon a devious scheme entered my mind. That badge just happened to represent a U.S. Government security clearance, so I wrote back and stated (sort of half correctly) that if it was not returned immediately, the F.B.I. would be notified, and to please return everything else at the same time. Shortly thereafter, it all arrived back by mail, including a mysterious quantity of sand. All, that is, except the $20.

Now the story becomes really bizarre. Among the items returned were Traveler's Checks amounting to $100. We later learned that because of these, the thief (Langois was his name) had been charged with grand larceny. But his defense argued that they were non-negotiable, and accordingly he was acquitted. I was rather disappointed, as usual, in the court's idea of justice. But later I had reason to change my mind.

On a trip in that part of Maine two years later, we stopped at Coffin's store and heard the rest of the story. There had been no progress in the case until one fall day when Langois came into Coffin's store with a $20 Canadian bill. Coffin said nothing but immediately notified the deputy sheriff. They obtained a warrant (perhaps) and searched Langois' room. There they found my flashlight, which fortunately I had described in exquisite detail including a sketch. Confronted with this, Langois confessed. But where was the purse? Now we come to the good part. He said that after removing the money, he had filled it with sand and dropped it off the end of the dock into Portage Lake. So, they marched him straight down to the dock, made him take off all his clothes, and told him to keep diving down to the bottom of the lake until he came up with the purse.

Let us hope he learned his lesson. I always wondered. We never did find out what happened to the $20, but it would have been worth at least that much to have watched Langois plunge repeatedly down to the bottom of that frigid lake and finally actually come up with the purse, surely against all odds!

(Note: Jane passed away in February of this year. This book is being published in her memory.)

CHURCHILL RIVER

Dave Bober

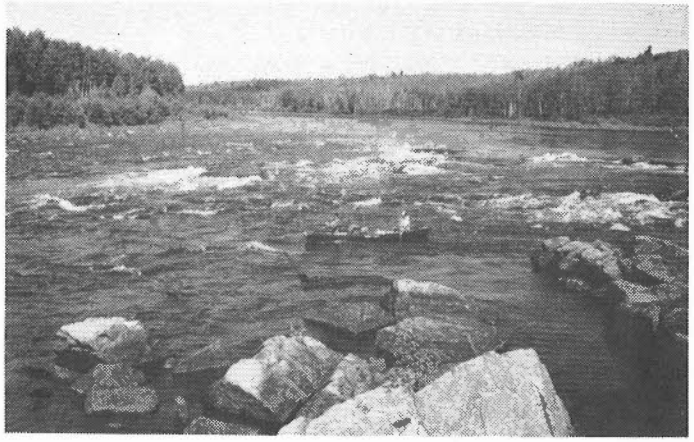
Canoe trips in northern Saskatchewan are often remembered for the unstable weather patterns, chilly nights, and cold water. However, 1989 was a definite exception when the water temperature in the Churchill River exceeded 25 C in late July, ideal for a relaxed and leisurely swim.

Our crew of six was a diverse group: a 17-year-old student, two retired engineers, a teacher, a minister, and a farmer. Most of us had never met previously but we did have one thing very much in common: a love for wilderness canoeing. We spent 14 nonrushed days paddling from Patuanak, a small Chipewyan community, north of Green Lake, Saskatchewan, to Missinipe townsite on Otter Lake, a distance of about 320 kilometres.

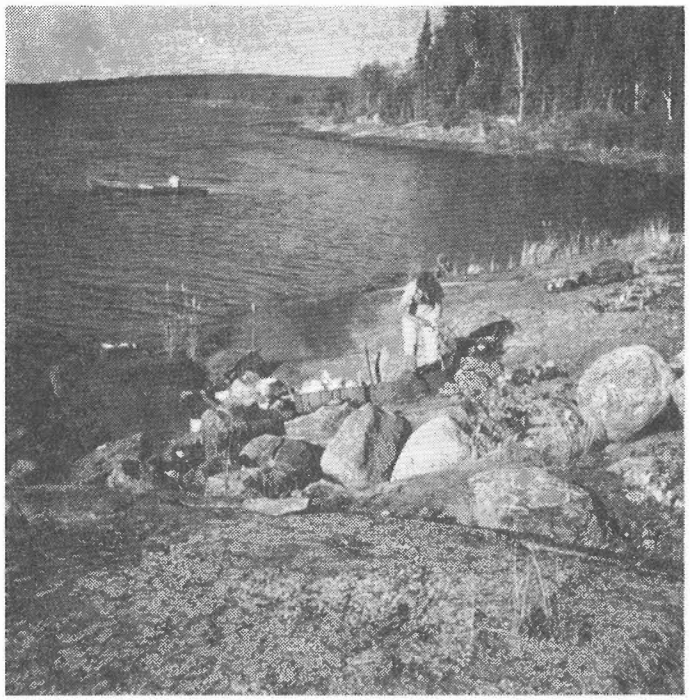
Experiencing this great historic river was everything we had anticipated with one major exception - the heat! Four days in succession the mercury exceeded 33 C and we all suffered from varying degrees of heat exhaustion and sunburn. Those uncomfortably warm nights compelled us to sleep on top of our sleeping bags and the tent felt like an oven by 6:00 a.m. Crossing the expanse of Knee Lake in the stifling stillness with a blazing sun overhead, we entertained visions of ice cubes. The hot, dry weather was also tough on the insect population, but the scarcity of mosquitoes and black flies did not offend us in the least.

For several days the smoke of forest fires hung heavy in the air, and in the vicinity of Sandy Lake we passed by a crew of twenty Cree fire fighters who had inadvertently been dropped off at the wrong location, which did not seem to bother them in the least. Our brief visit with them was interrupted by a bush plane that had arrived to carry them to the actual fire area. Fortunately for us the wind shifted and we were soon out of the danger zone.

The upper Churchill River is much smaller than we had envisioned or, in my situation, as remembered from an earlier trip down the Mudjatik River and up a short portion of the Churchill through the Leaf and Drum Rapids. Perhaps the water levels were much lower this time, or my imagination suffered from nostalgic growing pains, a malady common to river canoeists. Waterfowl were abundant and we were constantly entertained by geese, ducks, pelicans, and loons. One day we spotted eleven bald eagles including several nests occupied by baby eaglets, beautiful symbols of the wilderness.



Wildlife sightings on our route were somewhat disappointing, only two bears and two otters. Maybe we were too noisy. But the sheer number of spiders in certain locations was amazing, they seemed to be hanging from every available willow limb. Fortunately, they bore us no malice but we double-checked our tents and sleeping bags before crawling in. The cuisine provided by our New York chefs attracted an unusual number of curious bees to our campsites. And while portaging Dipper Rapids some irritable hornets took offense and we quickly obeyed orders to evacuate their territory.



On Primeau Lake we stopped at a cluster of cabins and had an interesting conversation with a young Cree fellow who told us that most of the natives have moved off the river and into the larger settlements. His dogs, including a small poodle and a very large German Shepherd/wolf cross, were obviously happy to see us. The young man made the comment that fewer canoeists were travelling his area of the river in recent years.

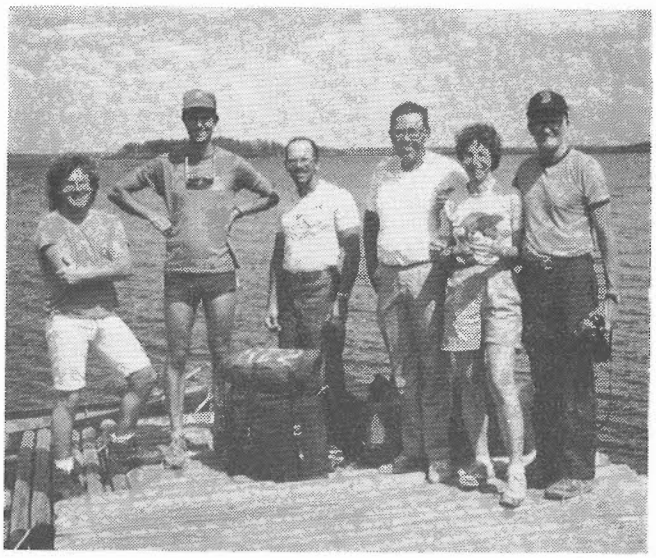
Fishing success on the Churchill was only fair, always enough to eat but no big ones that we could talk about as having alluded our angling skills. However, a 48-kilometre stretch of river was loaded with fish, dead suckers floating on the surface and almost all the same size, probably the conclusion of their natural life cycle.

The character of the river gradually changed from a poplar-covered clay shoreline to increasing outcrops of the Canadian Shield as we neared Pinehouse Lake. A 1914 account of exploration described in Angus Buchanan's book *Wild Life in Canada* paints a perfect word picture of the nature of the Churchill. "Throughout its course the Churchill River is an extraordinary series of wide lake expansions linked together by gateways and glens of magnificent river where waters gather in indrawing volume to enter, and hurry, and tumble, and roar in their wild escaping onward, ever onward to the next lake, and the next, in their incessant, time-set journey to the Sea."

Suitable campsites were usually easy to locate and we gave a descriptive name to each. Kinapik Island camp was definitely one of our favorites - a huge rock outcrop 15 metres high covered with jack pine; flat on top and gradually sloping to Snake Lake. Our evening there was memorable with a warm swim and lingering conversation as Ol' Sol gradually sank in the clear western sky; an utter sense of contentment filled us on our island kingdom.

A few campsites were remembered for a unique experience there, like the camp we reached on an island in Sand Fly Lake just before a vicious storm hit. Gale winds and rain lashed us for several hours as we huddled beneath our dining tarp. Supper was a challenge getting a fire going long enough to cook and then managing to get the spoon up to our faces before the wind blew the soup off. A near disaster was averted by the quick hand of our youngest trip member when he grabbed an airborne tent. Our chef was not to be outdone by a mere gale and we enjoyed apple pie baked in the reflector oven as planned.

Another highlight of our journey was a climb up a steep ridge on an island in the centre of Black Bear Island Lake, a large lake filled with hundreds of islands, some of which have their own little lakes on them. The view was awesome, a wilderness panorama of lake, blue sky, and pine-covered islets in every direction - the Canadian Shield in all its glory. The words of Isaiah came swiftly to mind, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out



the heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." Isaiah 40:12.

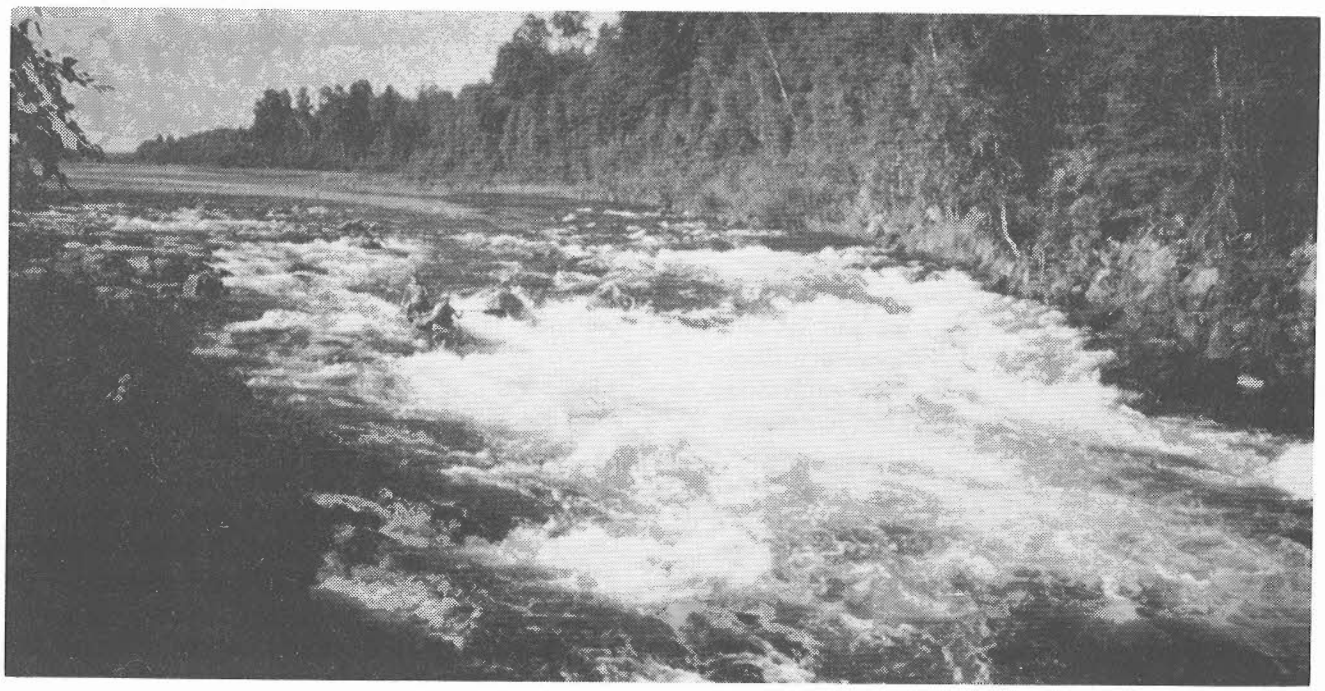
Our trip also included a few downers: a freak capsize that spoiled some film, a nasty fall by one of our group that could have easily been quite serious, and a hand that was bitten by a jack fish.

With over twenty sets of rapids the Churchill offered us plenty of challenge as we scouted and ran or portaged these obstructions. Descriptive place names on our topographical maps became alive as we progressed downstream: the Marshes of Haultain; Snake Rapids; Needle Falls; Silent, Birch, Trout, and Mosquito rapids; and the Lake of the Dead. Several of our trip members demonstrated advanced whitewater skills, providing the rest of us with some great photographs. And each of us had a rapid or two that etched itself into our memory. I distinctly recall a nasty looking ledge in Crooked Rapids that greatly assisted my draw stroke from the bow. The most spectacular whitewater was encountered in the Donaldson Channel, continuous heavy rapids that end in Sluice Falls. That mandatory portage of one kilometre is an alternative to the much longer portages on the more popular route around Great Devil and Little Devil rapids.

Antiquity seemed to catch up with us on the portage trails as our footsteps followed the moccasins of the early Indians and the Fur Trade Brigades of the 18th and 19th centuries. With a little imagination we could at odd moments catch ourselves slipping back in time, our Royalex canoes transformed to birch bark, our paddles hand-carved black spruce, and our cargo a large bundle of furs.

As we spent our days enjoying the song of the paddle, the comradeship of tripping partners, and a closeness with the Creator, a sour note was sometimes heard as we pondered the future of the Churchill River wilderness. With the approach of the 21st century, the destruction by the bulldozer, uranium mine, and hydro dam is not far away as many interests look to the North for short- term gain. The sentiments shared by Sig Olson over 35 years ago in his book *The Lonely Land* have been prophetic as development continues at a rapid pace in northern Saskatchewan. In recent years the move to designate the Churchill as an official "Heritage River" has met with great opposition from those elements that would exploit the environment. Those of us who have heard the song must speak up for our beloved river before its wildness is forever destroyed by ignorance and greed.

We fully expected to see other canoe parties on the Churchill and yet we never passed a single canoe. That was a very pleasant surprise and the absence of garbage was encouraging, especially in the more heavily travelled portion below Black Bear Island Lake. Although a lot of canoeists have run the Churchill since Olson's 1955 trip, this great historical river is still uncrowded and largely unspoiled. Our 1989 trip proved in every respect to be one of our most enjoyable and rewarding.



WCA TRIPS

5-6 October **MINDEN WORK WEEKEND**
Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005; contact Bill for more information.

If you have enjoyed paddling the serene and placid waters of the Gull, come and lend a hand cleaning the place up. Maybe you will get a chance to smoothe out the chicken heads. Seriously, a lot of us get a lot of pleasure from the Minden Wild Water Preserve; this is a chance to give something back. No limit.

12-13-14 October **KILLARNEY PROVINCIAL PARK**
Howard Sayles (416) 921-5321; book before 1 October.

Turkey time in the park. Hiking and canoeing in some of Ontario's most scenic country. Limit four canoes.

20 October **ELORA GORGE**
Dave Sharp, (519) 621-5599; book before 12 October.

Fun on the Gorge. The waterlevels are unpredictable, could be low or high. If it's rainy the conditions could be strenuous, be prepared. Limit six canoes.

26 October **MEW LAKE HIKE**
Doreen Vella, (416) 463-9973; book before 18 October.

A Saturday hike around Mew Lake. We will meet at nine a.m. on Saturday morning. Those who feel like making a weekend of the trip can camp over and hike the second day in a mutually agreeable area. Limit ten hikers.

26-27 October **ALGONQUIN PARK**
Herb Pohl, (416) 637-7632; book before 18 October.

Starting from the Rain Lake access point, the organizer is looking for the company of other "old and/or out-of-shape derelicts" to join him on a short circle route, which includes only ten portages of which the longest is less than one and a half kilometres. Think of frost, morning fog pierced by sunbeams, the haunting call of the loon, pancakes and bacon, a crackling fire, and the soothing odor of linement or whatever rubs you the right way. Join us. Limit four canoes (eight bottles of linement).

26-27 October **SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY**
Hugh Valliant (416) 699-3464; book before 18 September.

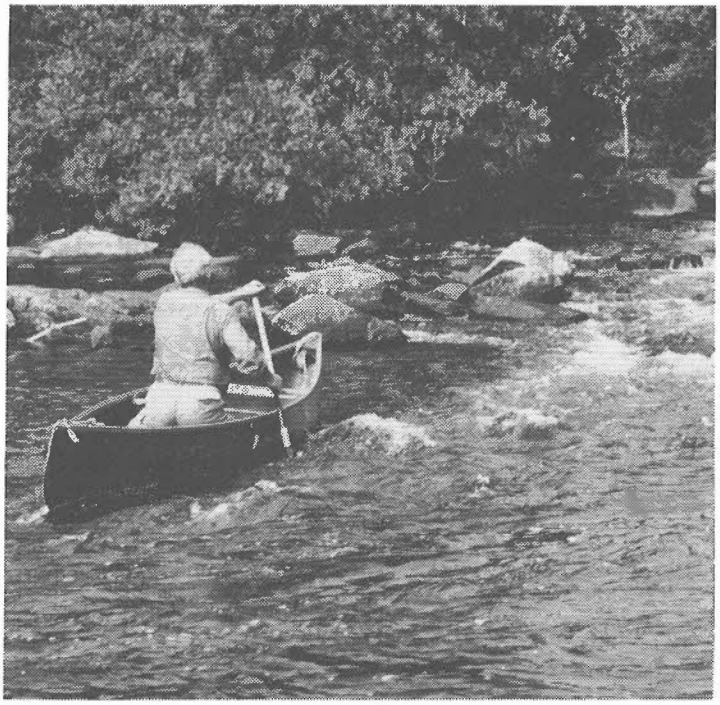
This could be the last trip of the year. A flatwater route suitable for novices. The trip will begin north of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park at Spider Lake, then loop out to Georgian Bay before heading back to our cars. Trip participants should be prepared for inclement weather. Limit four canoes.

27 October **ELORA GORGE**
Jeff Lane, (519) 837-3815; book before October 19.

The Gorge is unpredictable in the fall. Heavy rain can make high water levels, long dry spells could mean the trip is almost a hike. Generally the paddling is fun. Paddlers who have moving water experience are welcome to join us. Limit six canoes.

3 November **BRUCE TRAIL HIKE**
Mary & Jasper Megelink, (416) 877-0012; book before 26 October.

A day hike in the Milton area. Pack your lunch and your rain gear. Limit ten hikers.



3 November **GRAND RIVER**
Steve Lukasko, (416) 276-8285; book before 26 October.

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

10 November **ELORA GORGE**
Mike Jones, (416) 270-3256; book before 3 November.

The gorge is unsuitable for prolonged swimming in this season. Paddlers experienced in staying in their boat in very cold moving water are invited to join the organizer in a season-closer on the Grand. Limit six boats (linement optional).

1 December **ELORA GORGE**
Jeff Lane, (519) 837-3815; book before 25 November.

The Gorge is still unpredictable. Heavy rain can make high water levels, long dry spells could mean the trip is almost a hike. Generally the paddling is fun. Paddlers who have moving water experience and are ready for cold water will find this trip a fine opening to next season's paddling. 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, Ontario,
Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ontario,
Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str. (Hwy 70), Hepworth, Ontario.

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

FOR SALE One Old Town Discovery 169 canoe, red, one year old, excellent condition, Crosslink, $800; contact Dick Hawkins at (519) 467-5678.

FOR SALE One Loki Mischief kayak, spray skirt and Grey Owl paddle included, excellent shape, no whitewater, $625; contact Dick Hawkins at (519) 467-5678.

WANAPITEI WILDERNESS CENTRE Experience northern Canada by canoe. Since 1931, Wanapitei has been running quality canoe trips in the Canadian North. Trips and canoe clinics vary in length from one day to several weeks and there are options for all levels of paddlers from novice to expert. Trips are offered throughout Canada, from Quebec to the NWT. From our base in Temagami, Ontario, we also offer complete outfitting services as well as a unique canoe trip camp for youth ages 9-18. For a free brochure, contact Wanapitei, 393 Water St. #14, Peterborough, Ontario K9H 3L7; phone (705) 745-8314.

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

KANAWA MAGAZINE Subscribe to the quarterly *Kanawa Magazine* and learn about the world's number one canoeing and kayaking destination: Canada. When you subscribe to *Kanawa Magazine* you're supporting the preservation of Canada's canoeable wilderness in co-operation with the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association. Contact: Kanawa Magazine, c/o CRCA, 1029 Hyde Park Road, Suite 5, Hyde Park Ontario, N0M 1Z0.

RAINBOW ADVENTURES Canoe adventurers wanted; no experience necessary. Come share our passion and desire for the great outdoors and wild rivers. We offer custom canoe trips on the Dumoine, Petawawa, and Madawaska rivers. Total or partial outfitting can be arranged. You have total control over the itinerary. Guide and instructional services start at $250 per day, plus expenses. Other trips and clinics are available, including kayaking and rafting on the Ottawa River. For more information contact: Rainbow Adventures, River Road West, Palmer Rapids, Ontario, K0J 20; tel. (613) 758-2244.

SEPTEMBER

From space, you'd see the ragged line of dusk
Sweep Pacific islands into dark
And in the midnight blackness, too small to see
My campfire makes a tiny, warming spark

The flame leaps up, blinding me a bit
The trees grow still, the branches silhouette
The canopy of slowly turning stars
And catch the moon within a sliding net

The dawn's over Africa, still hours away
Beyond the beached canoe, two loons complain
They pause to let Andromeda clear the hill
And carelessly disturb the velvet lake again

This September night, below the speckled dark
Of seas and stars and endless deeps of sky
I poke the fire and listen to the lake
And sparks drift upward, and galaxies slide by

(This poem by an unknown writer was submitted by an anonymous person.)

CANOETOONS
PAUL MASON

Where it is ...

. . . in this issue

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Wilderness Canoe Association membership application

I enclose a cheque for $25 (single) 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:_____ ☐ New member Member # if renewal:_____

Name:_____ ☐ Single ☐ Family

Address:_____ Phone Number(s):

_____ (_____)_____(h)

City:_____ Prov._____ (_____)_____(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.