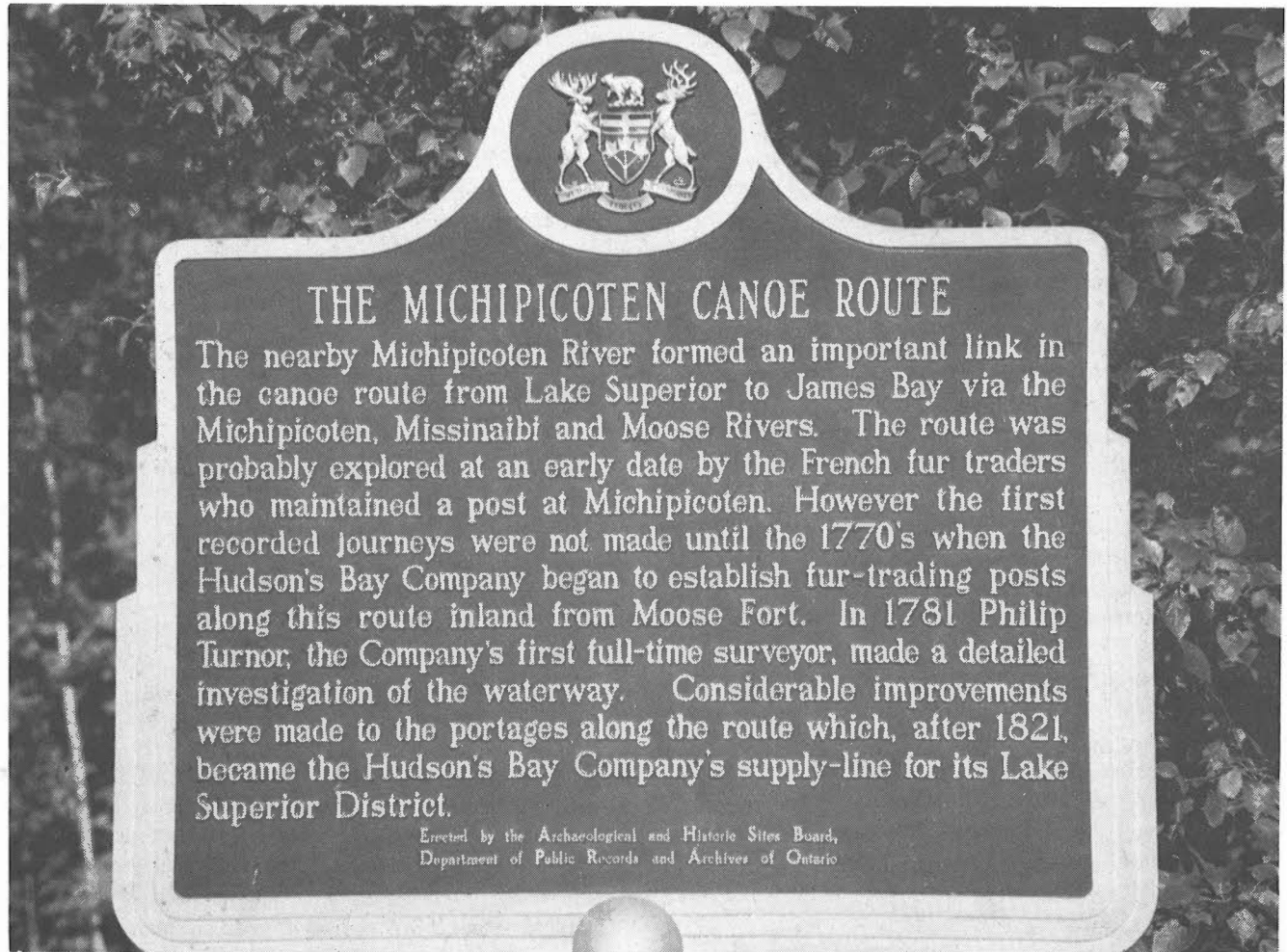




nastawgan

Spring 1992 Vol. 19 No. 1

Quarterly Journal of the Wilderness Canoe Association



MICHIPICOTEN — MISSINAIBI — MOOSE

Following An Old Trade Route from Lake Superior to James Bay

Hugh Valliant

Photos by Hugh Valliant, Duncan Taylor, Toni Harting

One of Canada's oldest canoe routes is the one linking Lake Superior to James Bay. Already used by the native population for many hundreds of years, it was also followed by coureurs de bois, explorers, and fur traders after Europeans began to settle the continent. The route starts at Michipicoten village on Lake Superior, goes up-river on the Michipicoten to Dog Lake, then crosses the height of land to Missinaibi

Lake, and follows the Missinaibi and Moose rivers to Moosonee on James Bay.

Three of us — Ken Coburn, Dennis Kolba, and myself — took this 22-day, 650-kilometre trip in July and August 1990, paddling solo from the start to Mattice before being joined by five others for the last nine days.

After months of planning and arranging, we began our

trip on 11 July, leaving Ken's truck in Michipicoten village, and starting with a short paddle out to Lake Superior for photos before heading up the Michipicoten River at about 1:30 p.m.

At the beginning the paddling was not too hard. We all had double-blade paddles and the current was slow, even though the water level was medium high. But at the Highway 17 bridge, the current started to pick up, to the extent that we had to track the canoes for some 200 metres, a chore we were forced to repeat at several subsequent bends. The current remained strong and we stayed as close to shore as our paddles would allow, but every so often a sweeper would extend out to the river, obliging us to ferry to the other side.

The last two kilometres up to the first dam were even harder, with a very fast current, tricky sweepers, and thick foliage on shore plus a steep drop-off that made tracking impossible. We switched to single-blade paddles to get closer to shore, but one false stroke could cause the current to catch the bow and sweep the unlucky paddler a hundred metres or more down the river, causing a 10 to 15 minute delay.

With great relief we reached a spot where we could take out to portage round the first dam, having taken six hours to cover 15 kilometres and 1-1/2 hours to make the last 1.5 km. The 500-metre portage was steep and rough sledding but at least a welcome break from paddling, and we retired early for the night.

On Day 2 we carried past two other dams, the last at the 1000-foot map contour, with mostly lake travel in between. Paddling was slow due to a head wind from the east. At the fourth dam the current again was strong, and we camped at this point.

Day 3. That night the temperature dropped to about 60°C which sure helped us to get moving to warm up in the morning. Later we gradually shed our layers of clothing as the temperature rose to over 250°C in the afternoon and a westerly wind appeared which made for easy paddling. At Stony Falls, some fishermen from Michigan had just caught a big pickerel which they generously gave us for supper. We camped about 100 metres east of the bottom of the rapid by a bay filled with circulating driftwood.

On the morning of Day 4 we reached Little Stony Portage where the portage on the west side of the river is said to have been in use for over two thousand years. We stopped in Missanabie village in the early afternoon and arrived at the height of land portage around 6:45 p.m. Not finding a campsite, we carried on to Crooked Lake, and found an excellent site on a rocky point on the east shore about 30 minutes into the lake. The upstream portion of our trip had taken us 3-1/2 days of 15, 26, 34, and 34 kilometres respectively, slower than we had expected but still with enough time left over to make our rendezvous at Mattice.

Day 5. While signing the register at the end of the portage to Missinaibi Lake we noticed the name of a WCA member, Peter Verbeek, who had signed it only three hours earlier that morning. Small world. Missinaibi Lake has several delightful spots, but can also get rough when the wind rises; we met one couple who had been windbound for five days. The Indian pictographs at Fairy Point are something to

see, certainly a highlight of the trip. We missed out the pictographs on Reva Island, but photographed several more at Whitefish Falls, on the north shore of the entrance to the bay.

Camping at the provincial park, which is popular with Michigan fishermen and tourists, we woke in the morning of Day 6 to find a rather large black bear sitting at the picnic table in the next campsite. Finding nothing to eat and perhaps disturbed by the great noise we made, he ambled off in no hurry. We stopped at the ruins of Missinaibi Lake House later that morning. There are a few dilapidated buildings and many depressions in the ground which we had to take care to avoid while walking through the long grass.

From the start of the Missinaibi River at the very top of the lake we ran six sets of rapids and several unnamed swifts in five hours, all in loaded canoes, before camping at Barrel Rapids. The portage trail is three times as long as the 200 metres noted on the MNR map, and we were glad to run the rapids loaded next morning on Day 7.



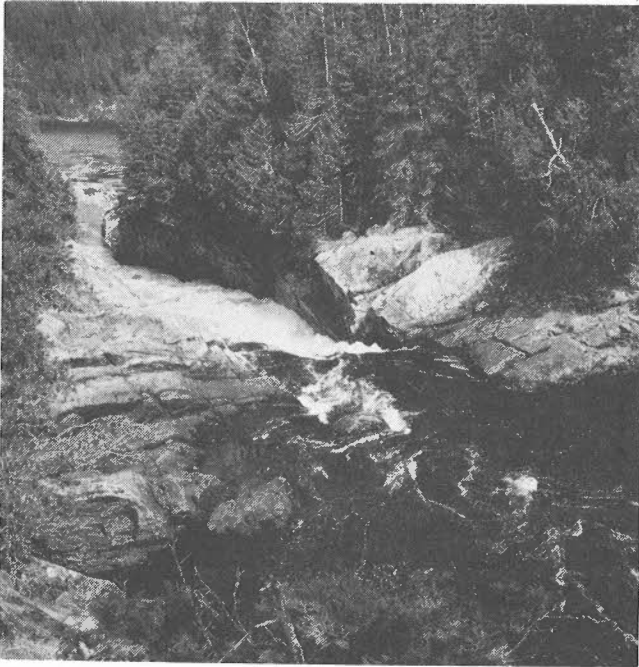
During this part of the trip — about four days — we saw at least three moose a day. After excitedly taking lots of photographs of the first couple, we became so used to them that it was boring to see yet another moose. At Peterbell, where the river leaves the Chapleau Game Preserve, we walked “downtown” to find there is not much left standing. Even the railroad sign had fallen over, although parts of the jackladder are still upright.

After running all the rapids so far, we encountered our first portage at Allan Island due to the channel being blocked by logs. (Note from a portage-averse assistant editor: the left fork round the island avoids this blockage, and has a beautiful campsite at the falls.) Wavy Rapids was run without gear as there were metre-high standing waves near the bottom, and we camped for the night.

Starting Day 8 at Greenhill Rapids, we carried the packs over the portage but found it very strenuous with two 50-metre hills and valleys. We therefore decided to line and/or run the canoes down the rapids. We started on the right side but when Dennis got pinned at the top in a tricky current, we diplomatically decided to line the top part. After the first 150 metres were lined, we ran the remainder of Greenhill Rapids. Upon looking upstream there did seem to be a couple of channels down the centre that would be worth examining.

This set was by far the most technically demanding, and so a word of caution to the unwary. One mistake here can be extremely costly in terms of lost or damaged equipment. Trying to rescue gear or a pinned canoe here would be next to impossible.

The remaining rapids were run, up to Split Rock Falls which was portaged. We camped at Thunder Falls at a site located across the river from the end of the portage. It is in a cathedral grove of cedar trees, has a nice sandy beach, and was the best campsite by far of the whole trip.



Stopping for lunch on Day 9 at the Brunswick Lake portage, we noticed a recent tent depression and speculated (correctly it turned out) that maybe Peter Verbeek had camped here the previous night. This stretch of the river has a fair current with a few small rapids and swifts which can be easily negotiated. That night our campsite was on the east side of the island at map reference 332-285, a poor site but with a nice runnable rapid on the west side.

Day 10. On the water before 8:00 a.m. so that we could stay ahead of another group. We had a headwind all day (a grunt day as we called it), but managed to reach our campsite at Two Portage Falls around 2 p.m. Dennis was the only one to see a moose today, the first day when we hadn't seen at least three. As we were preparing supper the other group came dragging their two Coleman canoes through the rocks full of gear. Oh, the joys of a Coleman! The campsite on the portage was big with a jacuzzi at the front door, which was good for massaging our aching shoulder muscles.

The next morning (Day 11) we portaged the first ledge and ran the remainder of the falls. Pond Falls and Devil Cap Falls were portaged as there are ledges completely across the river with significant drops. The remaining rapids were successfully navigated. Wilson's Bend required a fair bit of manoeuvring and Albany Rapids required extensive ferrying in order to pick our way through. We camped at Big Beaver Rapids, where there are several attractive campsites to choose from.

Day 12 was a short day of only nine kilometres, as we were ahead of schedule and had covered 225 km in the seven days since Crooked Lake, an average of 32 km a day. After portaging Big Beaver Rapids, we ran Little Beaver. Ken and Hugh portaged 10 metres over the shore at Sharp Rock Rapids, while Dennis was able to find a channel down the extreme right side. Care must be exercised here as the shale outcropping exposes very sharp rocks, justifying the name. At around 2 p.m. we reached our campsite at Glassy Falls (Sandy Bay Portage). This is another good site with an extensive sandy beach and lots of room for tents. Fishing below the falls was excellent with good size bass and pickerel caught.

Day 13 was our 'going to town' day! Everyone was in good spirits and put on their finest. Crowe Rapids was a boulder garden so picking your route was in order; the rest of the ten-kilometre paddle into Mattice and the public campgrounds at the far end of town was completed by 11 a.m.

The remaining five of our group arrived at 2 p.m. in Ken's truck. Hans and Kathy Grim had kindly made a huge detour through Wawa on their way to Cochrane in order to retrieve the truck. Both cars had been left at the railway station in Cochrane. Anmarie Forsyth and Stuart Gillespie were especially glad to reach Mattice as they had spent the trip from Cochrane in the back of the truck with all the gear. Greetings and stories were exchanged and repacking and resupplying was underway. At the public campground we met a group of Boy Scouts from Connecticut who were going as far as Moose River Crossing. Our group left Mattice for Rock Island Rapids at 4:30 p.m.

Day 14. When Debbie Sutton (the fifth of the newcomers) woke up in the morning her eye was shut from an insect sting. Fortunately we had Sting Stop with us and by early afternoon she could see a bit, which made the rapids less scary. Black Feather Rapids, a couple of boulder gardens, and then Beam Rapids were run. The top part of Kettle Falls was portaged and the remainder run as well as Makatiamik Rapids. We arrived at the campsite at Bare Rock Point at 4:30, after a 33-km day.

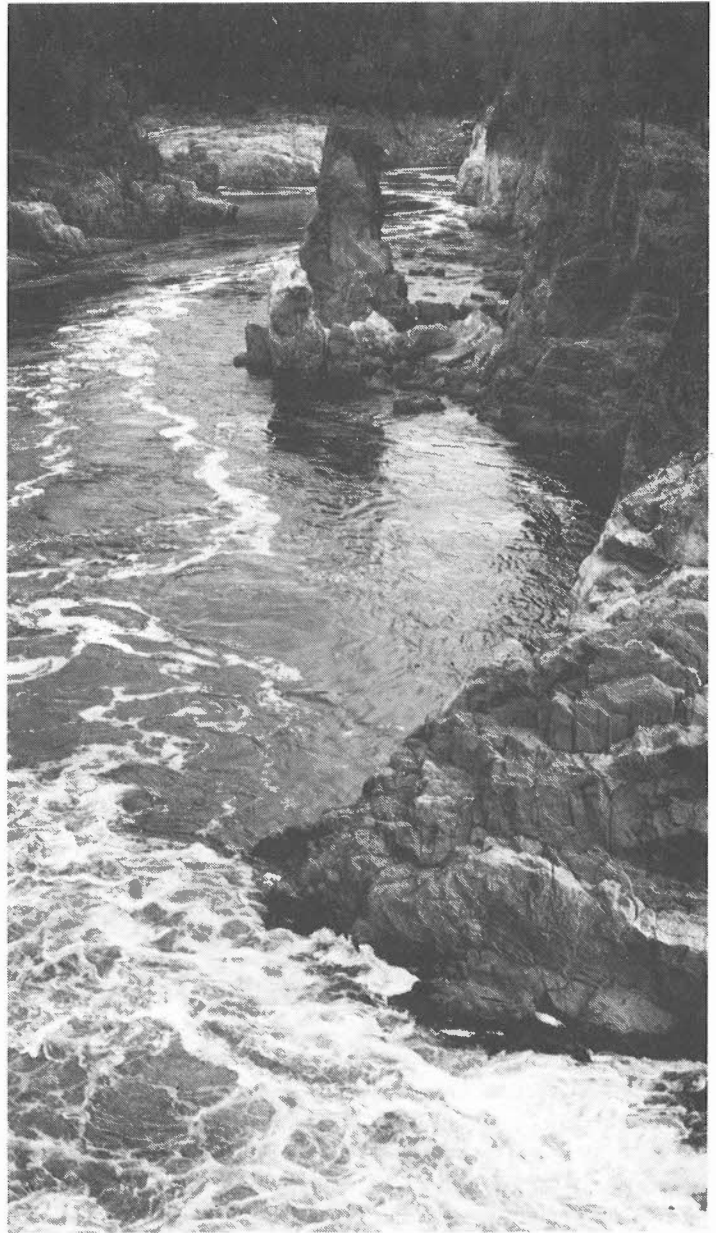


Day 15. In just over two hours we reached Thunder House Falls, by far the most impressive set of falls on the entire trip. The raw power could be felt through the rocks and Conjuring House Rock was spectacular. This was another grunt day as we portaged Thunder House Falls, Stone and Long rapids, a total distance of six kilometres. The last portage lasted until 7:30 p.m. There are several campsites near the end of the Long Rapids portage, and a small one at the start. A portion of Long Rapids can be viewed with great care from the top of the gorge to the west of the main campsite, near the end of the portage, but water must be obtained from the river which is 70 metres down a steep embankment and to the east of the tents.

Day 16. Due to the inclement weather we didn't start until 10:30 a.m. Unfortunately Debbie's second eye was now closed, but another round of medication started to clear it up by early afternoon. At Bell's Bay we found a damaged MNR canoe and equipment. Later we were told that a group of junior rangers had pinned a canoe in the rapids above the bay and lost all their gear.

Below Bell's Bay the river has mostly riffles and small boulder gardens. As we were paddling down the river we noticed a lot of smoke in the distance which we thought was a forest fire around where we planned to camp. As we approached our campsite the smoke seemed to disappear, and we never did find out what it was from. We set up camp early on the island before the confluence of the Opatatika River, having covered 45 km in the steady current.

Day 17. In the morning we could still smell smoke from the fire the day before but we could not see anything. At around 3:30 p.m. we were meandering through a rock garden at McCruig River when suddenly the river turned sharply to the left and dropped unexpectedly. It was so sudden that the Grims didn't have time to put on their life jackets. When everyone else saw them disappear, life jackets went on very quickly and all made it through without mishap. The second set of rapids were run. We missed the campsite on the right side between two sets of rapids so we had to settle for a flat spot on the east shore about one kilometre below the second rapid. Distance covered was 46 km.



Day 18. After an 8:30 start we arrived at Portage Island around 2 p.m.

This is where the Missinaibi and Mattagami rivers join to form the mighty Moose River, which widens considerably to about 500 metres. Our camp was part-way down the left shore of the island. There was an interesting Indian campsite on the south end of the island with several very large fish heads nailed to trees. Another good distance today: 40 km.

Day 19. This morning was cold. The temperature was 50C, everyone was cold and wet, and it had been raining more or less



continuously since yesterday afternoon. We set out at 8:30 a.m., everyone hoping that the paddling would warm them up. The rapids at Nichol and Mike islands were run, and Moose River Crossing was reached in time to see the Polar Bear Express from Cochrane at 12:15.

The river flowed quite swiftly now. We stopped to explore the gypsum caves on the west and east shores. Our campsite for the night was on a gravel bar, and after the tents had been set up, someone noticed that there seemed to be water flowing through the campsite. After marking the water level we determined that it was indeed rising; about eight centimetres in the past hour. After a hurried conference we decided to move the tents to higher ground for the night. We never did find out why the water rose. Perhaps there was a dam release further upstream on the Mattagami. The river was now almost 1000 metres wide. Distance covered today was 31 km.

Day 20. There are numerous gravel bars in the river which caused us to meander and in some cases walk through the shallows. Kwetabohigan Rapids is another dangerous set similar to those the previous day. Meandering through a rock garden, suddenly the river turns sharply to the left and drops. There are two-metre standing waves in the centre channel, and the safest route is by hugging the left shore where waves are much smaller. We reached our campsite at a gravel bar at Hancock Rapids around 3 p.m. Several Indian guides took their freighter canoes with fishermen up through Hancock Rapids flat out. They sure know where the rocks are. The

highlight of our day was seeing a bald eagle fly overhead, less than a hundred metres away. Distance travelled was 39 km.

With an 8:15 start on Day 21, we reached Tidewater Provincial Park, the end of our trip, at around 11:30. After setting up the tents we went to town. Moosonee has very strange tavern hours: open one hour in the afternoon but never the same hour each day. We never did get to make 'last call.'

The next two days were spent sightseeing in Moosonee, Moose Factory, and James Bay. Wandering around Moose Factory, we ran into one of the Boy Scout leaders we had passed at Mattice. Upon our inquiring why he was in Moosonee before us, he explained one of the leaders fell ill and had to be flown out. Fortunately they had a signalling device which bounced an emergency signal off a satellite. Within two hours an Air Force plane was circling overhead with a trained medic on board. This was shortly followed by an OPP plane, and a Beaver was ordered up from Hearst to take the injured leader to hospital. Within four hours from activation of the signalling device, the leader was in the Hearst Hospital. This is a trip the Boy Scouts will never forget.

On 4 August we took the local freight train to Cochrane, retrieved Ken's truck the next morning from Mattice, and returned home with sadness that the trip and companionship was over, but happiness with the great memories that we all had.



MESSING AROUND WITH THE MISSINAIBI

Marion Taylor

In July 1991 I canoed 400 kilometres down the Missinaibi River, from Peterbell to Moose River Crossing. One of the last unobstructed and navigable wild rivers in Ontario, the Missinaibi stretches for 550 kilometres, from just north of Superior almost all the way to James Bay. Although the Missinaibi is both a provincial waterway park and a candidate Canadian Heritage River, for most Ontarians it is as remote and unknown as the Zambezi.

My trip down the Missinaibi was an expedition for data to bolster FON efforts on behalf of this park. For over a year the FON has been battling to win for the Missinaibi a land base that is large enough to protect the river system and the wildlife it supports.

For most of its length, Missinaibi Park consists of a miserable 200-metre land base on either side of the river. Provincial park policy states that this is the minimum boundary for a waterway park. For a river in southern Ontario hemmed in by development and private land, this may be all we can hope for. But park policy allows a maximum boundary of two kilometres on either side of a river and provides for "ballooning" of the boundary beyond the maximum wherever there are special features to be protected. Why, then, on a river bounded mostly by Crown land, has the government failed to provide sufficient land to sustain the park?

The answer lies partly in a system of land valuation based strictly on direct economic return. Over the years government decisions on the use of Crown land have been based on the assumption that unused land is waste land. Successive governments have hastened to turn large tracts of Crown land over to resource extraction. The idea that some areas ought to be set aside untouched has never been popular with business interests and hence with government. And park boundaries have been determined by political rather than ecological considerations.

But the past is catching up with us. At the Environmental Assessment Hearings on Timber Management, Ontarians learned about the huge contiguous clear-cuts that scar the province's north, reducing habitat diversity and often making good natural regeneration impossible.

Nearly half a century ago Aldo Leopold, a forester for the U.S. Forest Service, wrote about the dangers of looking at land as simply a cash cow: "a system of conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided. It tends to ignore and thus eventually eliminate many elements of the community that lack commercial value, but that are (as far as we know) essential to its functioning."

For miles along the Missinaibi south of Mattice, where Spruce Falls Power and Paper has managed the land, there is little left but poplar. Gone for my lifetime on this part of the river is the strange beauty of the black spruce forest, with its mosses and magical groundcover of goldthread, twinflower and mitrewort. Elsewhere on the trip we travelled for miles aware that the conifer forest along the banks was

no more than a backdrop to give us the illusion of wilderness.

No sensible person argues against the use of our natural resources as an economic base for the north and for the province. But the government and specifically the Ministry of Natural Resources have often permitted companies to behave as though they had no obligation for the future welfare and productivity of the land and water. North of Mattice we travelled by van on logging roads that run parallel to the river; we followed these roads for part of a day and saw no mature growth. And yet the government begrudges the river a decent measure of protected land.

Ontario must make up its mind, while there is still time, what kind of northern landscape it wants: miles and miles of poplar, or a diverse forest with scaled-down cuts and some mature — dare I say even overmature — conifers, which will fall when they are ready.



In our abysmal ignorance of the dynamics of the slow-growing northern forests, we have already done damage we may never be able to repair. Who can bring back the white pine? Evidently not MNR, which has had little success with regeneration. From this perspective parks become even more precious, not only as reservoirs of vanishing species and vegetation communities but as living laboratories that have much to teach about the intricate connections of this natural system. In the context of landscape destruction, parks have gone far beyond their original purpose as unspoiled natural areas suitable for recreational activity.

With the provincial parks centennial year 1993 almost upon us, we need to celebrate the fact that parks exist at all. But let us urge the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ontario government to put their centennial resources into educating Ontarians about the variety and beauty of the natural areas within the park system and about their importance as part of our history and as a bequest for the future.

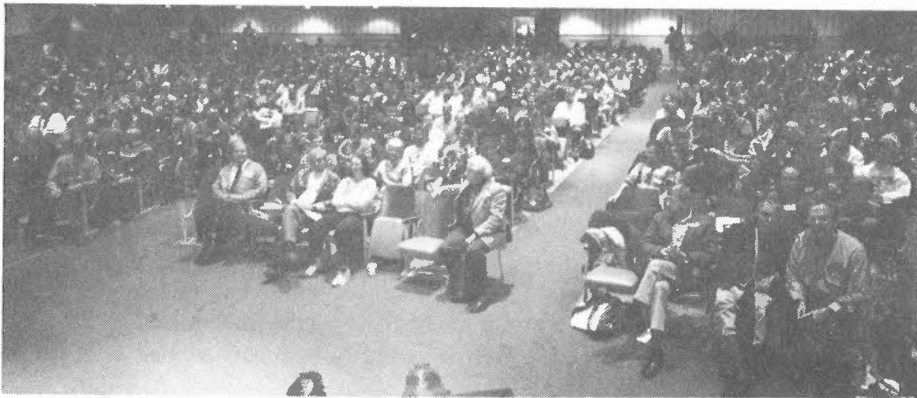
Let 1993 be celebrated as the year we grew up and recognized, as a people and a government, our obligation to ensure that sufficient land is protected within the parks system to guarantee the survival of the natural heritage of Ontario. And further that 1993 be the year of humility, when we embrace a role as stewards rather than exploiters of land.

Reprinted from the Autumn-1991 issue of *Seasons*, courtesy of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

NORTHERN QUEBEC SYMPOSIUM

It was again a delightfully varied and informative program that the almost 700 wilderness enthusiasts listened to at the George Luste / WCA symposium held in Toronto on 24 and 25 January. A total of 20 presentations were made, including a 60-minute movie:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| - Northern Quebec Overview | Herb Pohl |
| - Early Recollections | David Cooter |
| - A Native Perspective | Bill Namagoose |
| - Hudson Bay to Ungava by Canoe | Rod Beebe |
| - Wheeler-Whale River Trip | Seana Irvine |
| - George River Perspectives | Judith Niemi |
| - Povungnituk — in
Flaherty's Footsteps | Michael Peake |
| - Living and Canoeing in Ungava | Hugh Glassco |
| - Travels in Ungava | Camille Choquette |
| - Partners in Furs | Toby Morantz |
| - A.A. Chesterfield and
Ungava, 1901-04 | Bill James |
| - Canoeing — Then and Now | Carl Williams |
| - Camp-canoeing and Native Guides | Seth Gibson |
| - Winter Walk to Kuujjuaq | Garrett and Alexandra Conover |
| - To Richmond Gulf on Snowshoes | Craig Macdonald |
| - Canoeing as a Coureur de Bois | Andre-Francois Bourbeau |
| - Flooding Job's Garden (movie) | Peter Raymont |
| - Summer Long Solo | Madelaine Sauve |
| - Elegy for the Great Whale | Jonathan Berger |
| - Eastmain Memories | George Luste |



Time and enthusiasm willing we hope to keep this annual WCA event going in the future. At next year's symposium, which will again be held in the last week of January, the geographical focus will be on the Arctic Islands including Baffin Island, Victoria Island, Ellesmere Island, and others. If you have suggestions for speakers, please contact George Luste in Toronto at (416) 534-9313.

THE WU WEI OF WHITEWATER by Chuang-Tzu, c. 300 B.C.

The great waterfall of Lu Canyon is thousands of feet high, with a halo of mist that can be seen for many miles. Nothing survives the violent waters at its foot.

Yet once K'ung Fu-tzu saw an old man swim the tempest. K'ung Fu-tzu and his companions ran with ropes to rescue him, but when they had descended to the shore they found the man sitting on a large boulder, quietly singing.

K'ung Fu-tzu exclaimed, "You cannot be alive! What are your powers to allow you to do what you have done?"

The old man turned and smiled, "I am just a man, but I began to learn as a boy, and I continue to practise. I flow with the water. Going up, down, and around with it. I forget myself and do not struggle against forces far beyond my control. Then I use my meagre abilities in the moments when the water and I share the same path."

Richard Culpeper



ISSN 1828-1327

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

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

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

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: Summer 1992 deadline date: 3 May 1992
Autumn 1992 9 Aug. 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).

HOME FOR CANOEING The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA) is launching the "Home for Canoeing" campaign (Oct.91 — Oct.94) to build/purchase an Outdoor Education/Environmental Learning Centre at which the Association's office would be located. It would also serve as a centre for outdoor and environmental education, slide shows / seminars / guest speakers on canoeing/kayaking and the outdoors, a "Wall of Fame" area to pay tribute to great Canadians who have made outstanding contributions to canoeing and kayaking, a place to find information about paddling in Canada, and much more. Donations sent to the CRCA — designated for the "Home for Canoeing" campaign — will receive a charitable donations tax receipt and will be recognized in perpetuity at the new "Home for Canoeing" as well as in *Kanawa Magazine*.

Contact: CRCA, 1029 Hyde Park Road, Suite 5, Hyde Park, Ontario N0M 1Z0; tel. (519) 473-2109; fax (519) 472-0768.

THE ADDICTION

Wilderness canoeing's an addiction. One of the worst. You do it, it gets into your blood, and you have to keep doing it. Can't shake it. Always there. Inject, ingest, and inhale it. If not up there canoeing, planning to be up there canoeing. Can't ever seem to get rid of the addiction. Got to have the yearly hit.

By late winter barely holding on. Always a long wait till summer and the chance to be in the Canadian North. Usually the first indicator that the withdrawal will be a bad one is the right hand. Starts to tremor. By January have to start watching it. A compulsive. During the last few days before the yearly trip the body displays classic withdrawal symptoms. The shakes, the damn-the-cost attitude, the rush for the hit. Textbook classic.

Sometimes in the dark depth of winter can understand the drug problem. Poor guy can't help himself. Actually in the same boat with the guy, but my addiction isn't against the law. At least so far. There are ominous storm clouds on the horizon though. Hope I can get the boy through them before they make it illegal for us to have the hit.

At one campsite last year sat there watching the boy watching the fire. Looked into his eyes. Could see deep into the whites. As far back as the ice. For a few moments we were at the first fire.

Afraid to look the other way. The boy may not be able to sit here with his boy and do the same looking.

Spring now. Moving to summer. Almost time for the next hit.

Greg Went



PARKS COMPARED

We would like to share our feelings on Quetico Provincial Park. We were most fortunate to have tripped in Algonquin, Killarney, and Quetico provincial parks in 1991. This was our first journey to Quetico and it rated a '10' with our family. We spent months researching and planning through books, fellow canoeists, and park staff. And of course we took note of Jim Greenacre's, Dave Buckley's, and Andrea Allison's articles in earlier *Nastawgan* issues.

Our 12-day trip was GREAT! We thoroughly enjoyed the "no sign" experience and we liked the challenge of navigating with a compass and topographical maps. You need to accept the park on its terms. If there were a change to be made in Quetico, we suggest a (Canadian) map with campsites marked on it, to assist with trip itinerary.

Killarney is a beautiful, well-managed park. Having to reserve your lake and route takes careful organization and gives you less freedom. Nevertheless, it satisfies our needs, and we keep returning.

Algonquin, however, does not offer a wilderness experience, just an experience. We have tripped countless times in Algonquin over the years, each year becoming less gratifying. Our May trip was spoiled by a camper's chainsaw; our July trip spoiled by yet another chainsaw and by noticing a high-powered rifle laying in the bottom of a canoe at a portage. Our September trip was spoiled by some drunken canoeists with a pistol, practising target shooting down a small lake!

In regard to Gerry Lannan's letter (*Nastawgan*, Autumn 1991), in our opinion Killarney and Algonquin do not offer as much in the way of a "wilderness experience" as Quetico does. Wilderness is a state of mind, yes, but determined by the location. All three parks are busy and show signs of over-use and abuse. We agree all three parks offer long, short, easy, and difficult trips. It is worth whatever it takes to have the best wilderness canoe trip experience. For us: Quetico.

Carol and Keri Evans

P.S. Chin up, Andrea.

WHITEWATER CANOE OUTFITTING

There has been a growth in whitewater canoeing, which is an activity different from running rapids in a loaded canoe on a wilderness trip and requires different techniques and equipment. Generally, whitewater canoeing is practised on day or weekend trips with lightly loaded boats. Risks are taken which are inconceivable in a fully loaded canoe. As spills are common, trip leaders expect you to have your canoe safely equipped.

Your canoe must be outfitted with airbags so that it is easy to rescue by another paddler as it will sit high in the water when upside down. To install mandatory grabloops you will have to drill a hole below the deck at stern and bow. The grabloops make a canoe-over-canoe rescue easier. Also needed are thick, floating ropes about 15 feet long at stern and bow, attached securely and held firmly bundled on the deck with bungee cord. These ropes are useful in rescues. They must be readily available for use on the deck but must never come loose and get tangled around your legs. Too often these ropes are tied to the seat when they are really needed. Install the lines about 8 inches below deck and you won't need to rig a harness when you're lining. With the ropes secured to your canoe you can use them to tie the canoe to the car. More canoes have been damaged falling off cars than anywhere else.

An empty canoe filled with water weighs over two tons. If you are pinned between a rock and that canoe you could quite easily drown or get injured. Airbags reduce the weight of your canoe when full and add buoyancy which often prevents the canoe from hanging up on rocks after a tip. Also if you are going through large waves your canoe can fill to the gunwales and your airbags will be the only thing that

keep you floating and upright. On an overnight trip tying your gear in will serve as a kind of airbag instead, but if you have room for stern and bow bags, use them. In our tandem we use bow, stern, and centre bags which has saved the canoe from being totally destroyed when we wrapped around a rock.

Your airbags must be installed tightly as water exerts tremendous pressure. If your canoe is wrapped it is very embarrassing to watch your airbag explode out of the boat, so the bags should be attached to the bottom with D rings as the water tends to push the bags laterally. Holes can be drilled below the gunwales to string ropes to keep the bags from floating up and allowing water underneath them.

Thigh straps provide additional leverage and stability to allow the paddler to reach further out and maintain balance. With thigh straps there is always the danger of being tangled during a tip, but without straps it is difficult to really control the canoe. The newer saddle systems, which use toeblocks to push the legs into straps which are anchored to the floor, eliminate the risk of being caught. Saddles also lower your centre of gravity. Practise escaping from any strap system and prepare a contingency plan in your own mind. If you relax when you tip rather than flail about you will slip right out of your straps. If you can't relax when you capsize you should probably take up another activity.

Whitewater canoeing can be a very safe activity if one takes the time to approach it carefully. Dedicated volunteers in the WCA offer courses in June to provide beginners with instruction at no cost. It's also a good way to meet really nice people to paddle with later.

John Hackert

WRITING THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

A discussion of field notes, journals, and books concerning Samuel Hearne's account of the massacre at Bloody Fall.

I. S. MacLaren

George Luste, in his fine article in the book, *Nastawgan*, dubs Samuel Hearne "the true Marco Polo of the sub-arctic." Peter Browning does something similar in *The Last Wilderness*. I find this very apt, not just because of their intention to align two first-time European explorers in parts of different continents, but because of the loose analogy that it incidentally strikes between the literary fates of these two deservedly famous men of history. In Polo's case, he had to turn into words the continent of Asia, known to eleventh-century Europe chiefly only through hearsay; in Hearne's, he had to turn into words the northern interior of a continent unknown to Europe. This challenge turned into a complex matter for them, since, even though an explorer or traveller has his or her own narrative or pictorial record to offer the world of readers who await it back home, that record, when it becomes published as a book, when, that is, it becomes public and available for public consumption like any other commodity, must take public tastes and expectations into account, and must reflect them. If it does not, it will not succeed in its chief aim: it will not sell, and publishers usually know it will not.

Polo's own record has disappeared, largely because it failed to accord with Italy's expectations that it would record the wondrous Orient, full of mysteries, odd vapors, incantations, monsters, and the like. The original record apparently was dull. As he saw fit, each copyist of the manuscript in the days before Johann Gutenberg invented movable type would alter the version that came down to him.

The consequence of that process is that today the world has nearly 120 manuscripts of Marco Polo's travels. No two are alike; all claim to be authentic. In this fashion, his book became what has recently been described as "the collaborative effort of a whole culture, enacting by its means the Italian discovery of the Orient."

Samuel Hearne's published fate is comparable to Polo's, not because there are 120 different versions of his narrative — there aren't — but because his own words changed when they moved from the form of field notes into the form of a published narrative. This alteration Hearne apparently began in the twenty-one years between 1772, when he returned to Fort Prince of Wales from the Coppermine River, and 1793, when he died. During those two decades, field notes, that is, what Hearne wrote while travelling, evolved into a journal. The process was perhaps not dissimilar to the one that you and I follow subsequent to the return from a wilderness trip. But the caveat, "apparently," is necessary because Hearne's field notes and journal have not survived in his own handwriting, and only a fragment

of the journal has survived at all.

When *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson Bay to the Northern Ocean 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772* appeared in 1795, Hearne was dead; he played no part in the final preparations for publication of his book. His publisher, Andrew Strahan of London, knew that he needed a *story*, not a *document*. Being myself a reader of literature rather than a historian, I am interested in the book less as a document of a remarkable trek than as a process by which field notes became a journal, a journal became a manuscript, a manuscript became the published commodity, placed on sale in the city of London at the end of the eighteenth century, and a book became a classic of the Canadian north. My particular interest prompted an examination of the book's most famous passage, the massacre of Inuit at Bloody Fall by the Chipewyan and Copper (Yellowknife) Indians with whom Hearne was travelling. This event is probably the chief story of arctic history; in 1912, Vilhjalmur Stefansson called it "the story of the North." My examination, in turn, prompted me to reconsider Hearne's final remarks about his narrative; when he sold it to Andrew Strahan, he stated his expectation that "anything in reason shall be allowed to the person that prepares the Work for the Press ... [so that] the Book shall be sent into the World in a style that will do credit both to you, and myself."

As Richard Glover's edition from 1958 of *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort* points out, a copy of Hearne's field notes exists in the British Library, and a copy of that copy was made for the Public Archives of Canada, now the National Archives of Canada, early in this century. Meanwhile, the account of the massacre from Hearne's journal, which differs from that of his field notes, survives in *Andrew Graham's Observations on Hudson's Bay 1767-1791*, which Glyndwr Williams edited in 1969 as volume 27 of the Hudson's Bay Record Society. A reading of the field note, the journal fragment, and the book's account of the massacre shows a steady heightening of the drama of the massacre.

First, Hearne's field note contains no eighteen-year-old girl twining herself "like an eel" round the spears of her assailants. In the book, this is the central Arctic's answer to the Gothic heroine, pursued by the sexually demonic outlaws of the conventional Gothic novel. To the extent of that analogy, one needs to keep in mind that Hearne's book was published for English readers in 1795, the year of the first great wave of popularity in England of the Gothic novel — perhaps best remembered today by the single title, *Frankenstein*, but, loosely speaking, a sort of late eighteenth-century cross between a Stephen King novel, a porn movie,



and a fable by Aesop. This “poor wretch,” as the book calls her, makes her appearance first in the fragment of Hearne’s journal, where she is a “poor girl, who was then twining and twisting round the spears like an eel” (no exclamation mark).

Hearne’s field note lacks any mention of the book’s deaf and nearly blind old woman, who is tortured upriver after the initial massacre, and who is remembered by the book’s wording as the one who, victimized by Indians’ spears, has her eyes poked out, and who is “stabbed ... in many parts very remote from those which are vital.” The field note does mention the old man, the final individual in the book’s trinity of victims, but does not include the book’s piercing simile, “not less than twenty had a hand in his death, as his whole body was like a cullender.” As well, from field note to journal fragment to book, there is a considerable increase in the attention paid to Hearne, the sensitive observer of the massacre.

Now, almost all anthologies of Canadian Literature, if they include any exploration writing at all (and, its being the first important genre in English for this country, they should include a great deal more than they usually do), include the massacre scene from Hearne’s book. Also, I hazard the guess that most canoeists who have seen fit to complement their descent of the Coppermine River with a reading of all or part of Hearne’s book have eagerly anticipated reaching Bloody Fall (only the book provides this name), a specific place amidst the vastness of the wilderness, a place with historical dimension and resonance — the site of *the* story of the North, which happens to serve conveniently as the climax of Hearne’s sojourn just as he reaches pretty well the farthest extent of his penetration into what his book also dubs the Barrens, the savage wilderness, the farthest distance the eighteenth-century mind could imagine from the blessings of civilization.

Hearne’s field note, if the British Library’s copy may be taken as the words that he wrote while in the wilderness, certainly does record that the explorer witnessed a massacre. What the note does not mention is any torture. Two brief portions of the field note (quoted by permission of the Department of Manuscripts, British Library) read as follows:

The land was so situated that the Indians crept under some of the rocks within 100 yards of the tents where they lay some time to watch the motions of the Esquimaux but finding all asleep they ran on the tent on a sudden & killed every soul before they had power to rise in the whole 21 persons ... I stood neuter & saw the cruel massacre which was soon accomplished, the Esquimaux being all asleep.

Clearly, according only to the field note, the attack came in the dead of sleep. The note is clear, factual, explicit; the facts of the massacre preclude the elements of torture, which, by contrast, the book’s gothic account uses to prolong the attack into many pages of suspense and terror. The Inuit, perhaps Kogluktomiut or Nagyuktomiut, do not awaken in the field note’s version; they remain asleep. Thus, *all* the gothic torture, right down to the naming of the cascade, enters the narrative only when the field notes are rewritten, by Hearne or someone else.

What are the motives for revising an incident so much? In a sense, they are quite understandable. To the English





reader of Hearne's day, the remoteness of arctic North America (no one but Hearne found salt water west of Hudson or Baffin bays in his lifetime) could be imagined but not easily understood. Remoteness, as the example of Marco Polo in the orient shows so well, had long had the effect of conjuring up images of abnormality, of perversion, of extremity in every sense. Think of Caliban in Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

Differences (no trees, for example), rather than similarities, tended to be pronounced. To the Roman, the Gaelic race was monstrous; to the Italian of Polo's day, the people of Cathay were idolaters; to the Puritan of the eastern seaboard,



so were those terrifying Iroquois. So the logic went, and perhaps still goes, to a greater extent than we are prepared to admit. Thus, in the remote north, years' travel from temperate England (temperate climate, temperate human values, including the Christian virtue of temperance), inhabitants were bound to act monstrously, doing unto one another in fact what Europeans desired to think they themselves only did in fiction. (Even in fiction, it is worth noting, the crimes often occurred abroad; the English Gothic novel was usually set in what was thought of as decadent France and southern Europe, the sites at the end of the eighteenth century of recent revolutions, after all.)

Here, then, is one example that begs several questions. The first is: how does one read the published narratives of explorers? Briefly, and based on similar analyses of other books from Hearne's era and since, I suggest that one read them not as straightforward journals only, but as the reflections of the tastes and ideologies of their age, and, book by book, as the products of their era's publishing mechanism. For example, we think of the twentieth century as a more enlightened age than the eighteenth in matters anthropological. Perhaps, then, it is not surprising to find that, in *Lands Forlorn*, its evocative Hearne-like title, George Douglas seems almost to go out of his way not to mention Hearne's narrative when he is at Bloody Fall. For him, unlike for his contemporary, Stefansson, the massacre is evidently not the story of the North. His book describes the Inuit whom he encounters at the fall in May 1912 as:

all nice looking men; one was a particularly fine looking fellow, several inches taller than the others, active, robust, with rosy cheeks, and an air of alert intelligence ... indeed it was hard to believe, so far as conduct and behaviour went, that we were not dealing with highly civilised and cultivated people.

That perhaps stands at one end of the spectrum of responses. The other, likely the latest at only five years old,

is, if it can be believed, a ludicrous and pathetic attempt to outdo Hearne's book's account for gruesome gothicism:

The scene was more reminiscent of an abattoir than of a battle, with the panic-stricken victims rearing out of their cozy tents and being impaled on out-thrust spears. More than twenty men, women and children, their faces still sweet from interrupted slumber, were slain within minutes, their death rattles despoiling the Arctic silence.

This is but a brief, and distasteful, taste of Peter C. Newman's long purple patch on the massacre scene in his deservedly rebuked but widely read *Company of Adventurers*. In fact, Newman exploits the massacre narratively as Hearne's editor seems to have done, but in the case of our contemporary historian, the unbalanced portrayal of Hearne dwells so obsessively on the torture as almost to exclude all other aspects of his remarkable explorations.

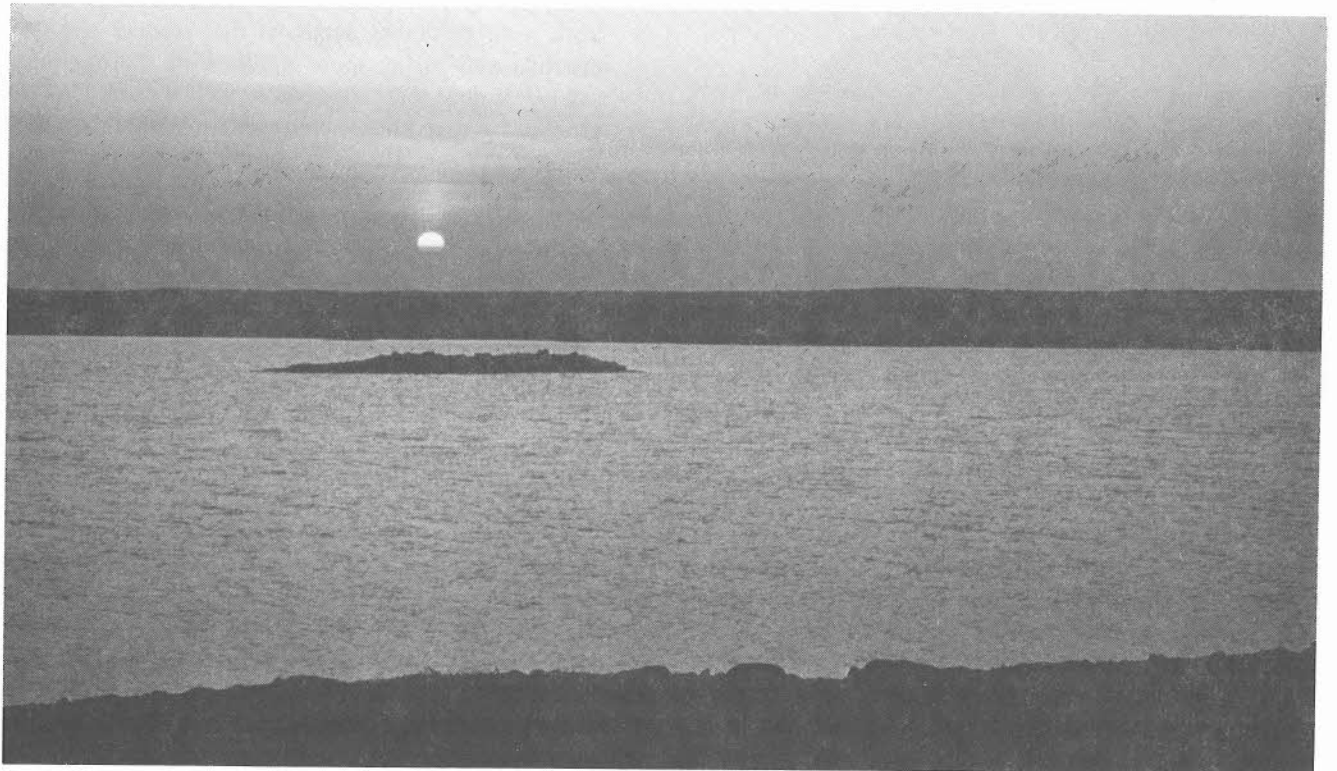
The second question worth posing amounts to a series of questions: How much do the journals that we write up from field notes following wilderness canoe or hiking trips shape and alter the originals? What sorts of changes is one inclined to make retrospectively, when, having succeeded in returning home, there is a sense of a complete, finished story to tell, and not just a series of episodes, entered on a pad day by day, or hour by hour, without any certain knowledge of what lies ahead? Is there a truth about wilderness travel that occurs to one only after a certain amount of time has elapsed? Meanwhile, what is happening to one's immediate experience of the wilderness, or, put another way, what changes is wilderness undergoing narratively? In another vein, does one contemplate a different set of changes if publication becomes a possibility? One recalls Hearne's concern that his book be sent into the world in a style that would do him credit. A similar process occurs with the editing down of too many slides into a slide show that one is prepared to present

to (inflict on?) others. What gets edited out, and what gets included fully? What values do we let serve as our standards? It is said that in its various publications, the tourism industry of the Northwest Territories sedulously avoids, whenever possible, any photographs showing cloud-filled skies. Similarly, can one imagine publicity featuring a photograph of landscape in which big blobs of insects block the view? Yet, we've all got such slides, seldom shown, a story suppressed under the pressure of, what, aesthetic considerations?

These questions are not easily answered but they are, given that the explorers' books indicate how the experience of wilderness undergoes alteration for publication, worth asking. We all have stories to tell, and the telling is not a factual rendering only. As we come to understand what we have experienced, and to tell others in a way that will make sense to them, we shape the wilderness, the power of which sometimes altogether precludes any effort to describe and reflect on it immediately.

Another version of the discussion of the massacre scene at Bloody Fall has appeared in *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, volume 22, number 1 (January 1991), pp. 25-51; available in university libraries or from the Department of English, The University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary T2N 1N4.

I.S. MacLaren enjoys canoeing in the Arctic, and teaches Canadian Studies and English in Edmonton at the University of Alberta. At present, he is working on the paintings of George Back from the first Franklin expedition; on the poetry written by the officers of William Edward Parry's arctic voyage of 1819-1820; on Captain Cook's account of his stay at Nootka Sound, Vancouver Island, in March 1778; and on Paul Kane's transcontinental trip of 1846-1848.



REVIEWS

THE LONG CROSSING and Other Labrador Stories by Elliott Merrick, University of Maine Press, 1992, cardcover, 136 pages, approx. \$20.00. Available from Northern Books, Toronto, (416) 531-8873.
Reviewed by George Luste.

Elliott Merrick's first book, *True North* was published almost 60 years ago, in 1933, and was based on his personal experiences in Labrador from 1929 to 1931. It has become an enduring classic of vivid and romantic wilderness literature.

His eighth book, *The Long Crossing and Other Labrador Stories*, has just been published. It consists of a collection of short writings on Labrador, six non-fiction and three fiction, about trappers and guides, lighthouse keepers and sea captains, nurses and adventurers. An excellent introduction by Roland Rompkey, from Memorial University, provides the reader with a brief but valued sketch of Elliott Merrick's life and his writings. He includes the following quote by Merrick: "Through most of (my stories) weaves the thread that 'man is great but nature is greater', and that the function of a highly developed civilization should be to lead men closer to the heart of the world, not farther away." It seems to me that this is the context in which most, if not all, of his writing is set.



The main story, *The Long Crossing*, recounts the three Labrador expeditions at the turn of the century involving Leonidas Hubbard, Dillon Wallace, George Elson, and Mrs. Hubbard. In his re-telling, Merrick pays particular tribute to 'the guides, those men of Indian, Eskimo, Scottish, and French admixture who find the way and give their loyalty.' This tribute is often overlooked. One tends to forget that it was mostly the educated white adventurer who wrote the bestsellers that promulgated the writer's own perspective of their worth in the wilderness.

Perhaps my favorite story is *Snowshoe Trail*. It recounts his winter travels into the Labrador interior with Henry Blake — from February to April. It is frank and vivid, describing the physical hardship and human friction involved. But it also describes the alluring beauty of it all: "The long, white lakes, the mountains and rivers, the space and the northern lights, the spruce forests and birch hills, the cold and the terrible beauty of it when darkness is tightening like a grip of iron; nothing in my lifetime will be more satisfying to have glimpsed than the heart of all that."

BEYOND THE PADDLE by Garrett Conover, published by Old Bridge Press, Camden East, Ontario, 1991, 105 pages, \$19.95.

Reviewed by Toni Harting.

From the introduction: "*Beyond the Paddle ...* covers the art of poling, portaging, lining, tracking, and using the ice hook with sufficient detail so that readers can begin to practice and refine these skills with thoroughness and safety." It does that wonderfully well indeed. Conover has produced a marvellous, well-written book that will surely become a classic, *the* source of information on "... the non-paddling skills that any serious wilderness canoeist should constantly be honing, the skills that will gain one access to the remotest regions, the skills that will increase one's possibilities and pleasures and ease one's passage to that wildest country."

Supported by numerous photographs and diagrams, this book is a must for anybody interested in canoe tripping, from the beginner still trying to figure out how best to portage a canoe to the old hand who 'has seen it all.' Three (minor) comments: although Conover doesn't like them, those highly practical wide-mouth plastic barrels equipped with the correct carrying harness (not a rigid pack frame) including tumpline are as easy to carry as a wanigan; it would have been nice to include some words on the versatile 'gee pole' (see *Nastawgan*, Summer 1989, p. 1) in the section on lining and tracking; and an index would have increased the efficiency of the book. *Beyond the Paddle* is a pleasure to study and I can't wait to start following the many excellent tips.

CONSERVATION

CANOE ROUTES

Please send a letter to the Ministry of Natural Resources every time you go for a paddle down a wilderness river. Why? So we can keep the rivers we enjoy in a wilderness state. If we do not let the MNR know which rivers are important to us, they will not be able to properly consider our interests in their management plans.

This is extremely important. If a river is not known by the MNR for canoeing popularity, it is more likely to be developed for uses that might conflict with paddlers.

For more information on why the MNR needs your help, and how they will use your comments, please write or call Mr. Dan Paleczny, Ministry of Natural Resources, Northeast Regional Office, Box 3000, Cochrane, Ontario, P0L 1C0, (705) 272-7037.

CREDIT RIVER PARKING

McCarthy's Mill in Streetsville has recently changed ownership, so let's ensure that the new owners continue to allow us to park on their property. (This is the popular Credit put-in at Eglinton Avenue). Park well away from the transport turning and loading area, and remember, they often have shipments on weekends.

KESAGAMI PROVINCIAL PARK PLAN

The Kesagami River Provincial Park is developing its park management plan in conjunction with a timber management plan for an area south of the park. The wilderness park preserves a wild and remote river which flows into James Bay on the Ontario/Quebec boarder.

In light of hydroelectric encroachment on rivers flowing into the Bay, and logging and mining interests near the Kesagami, the river is well worth saving. A little bit of effort now will make development far more difficult in the future. Make sure your opinion is heard.

Please drop a note saying what you would like done with the Kesagami to: Mr. Grant Ritchie, Planning Team Chairperson, Kesagami Park Planning Project, Ministry of Natural Resources, Box 3000, Cochrane, Ontario, P0L 1C0. Send a copy to Richard Culpeper at the WCA address.

OMCRA CREDIT PADDLE

The Ontario Marathon Canoe Racing Association is hosting a Credit River paddle on 9 May for all Ontario's canoeists and kayakers. A highlight will be the more or less continuous stream of paddlers portaging through downtown Norval as they pass Julian Reed's dam.

Reed refuses to allow paddlers to portage his dam, and has been supported by the courts. He is planning to build another dam on the Credit for small hydro.

For more information, call Canoe Ontario at (416) 495-4180.

RIVER AUX SABLES RENDEZVOUS

If you want a first-hand look at one of Ontario's most threatened rivers, come out to the River Aux Sables Rendezvous, near Massey, on Victoria Day Weekend, 16, 17, 18 May 1992. The river offers beautiful wilderness and outstanding whitewater. Unfortunately, it has one new dam and is scheduled for five more. Most are being built by Electrogen, whose president, Ron Dodokin, is also the president of the Water Power Association.

There will be two types of trips. The first one is the Falls Section Overnight Trip, which is suitable for intermediate recreational canoeists: 37 kilometres (23 miles), 0.2 %, 2 m/km (11 ft/mile) gradient; most rapids class I to III; overall challenge II. The second one is the Canyon Section Day Trip, which is suitable for advanced whitewater paddlers: 10 kilometres (6.2 miles), 0.6 %, 6 m/k (32 ft/mile) gradient; most rapids class II to V; overall challenge IV. Helmets and PFDs are required on all trips. We will paddle the river in small groups, but will share our experiences at a common base camp.

The Rendezvous is co-sponsored by the Wilderness Canoe Association Conservation Committee, the Sudbury Canoe Club (ORCA), and the Rainbow Country River Adventurers (OWWA). You must register in advance, so that the organizers can know how many people of what abilities to expect. If you register before 1 April you'll receive a Save the Sables T-shirt. The fee is \$25, which should just about cover the cost of running the event. If any funds are left over, they will be put back into saving the river. If you would like to receive a registration package, filled with copious Save the Sables propaganda, or if you would like to help out with the event, contact Tom Brown (V.P. ORCA) (705) 522-4057, or Richard Culpeper (WCA), 160 Wembley Drive, Sudbury, Ontario, P3E 1N2; (705) 671-3343.

Richard Culpeper

FRESHWATER SEAL

If you've tripped on Quebec's Ungava peninsula and had a sighting of a freshwater seal in a river or lake, or know of someone who has, I'd very much like to hear from you. I'm conducting a study of these animals with the goal of mapping their range and establishing to which species they belong. With Hydro-Quebec set to begin construction on the James Bay II hydroelectric development, the time to do this work is now! Please contact: Rick Smith, Department of Zoology, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1G 2W1; tel. (519) 767-1948; fax (519) 767-0284.

NAHANNI 1991

Peter Verbeek

In the summer of 1991, I finally realized my dream of canoeing the South Nahanni River. This river has been described and written about many times, so I will not go into that here. However, I decided to write an article about the logistics of the trip for the benefit of those who are thinking about visiting the river.

I had read Joanne Moore's book *Nahanni Trailhead*, Dick Turner's book *Nahanni*, and Patterson's book *The Dangerous River*. Besides that I had read an article in the September 1981 issue of National Geographic and an article in the June/July 1980 issue of Canadian Geographic.

Parks Canada has an excellent little publication titled: *Guide to South Nahanni and Flat Rivers*, which covers the South Nahanni River as far as it is located within the park, namely, starting from Rabbitkettle Lake. They also have a good description of the hikes that can be made in the park.

The Northwest Territorial government has an excellent publication titled *Explorers' Guide* which provides as much information as one would wish about the Territory.

There are at least four places from which the South Nahanni can be accessed: Fort Simpson in the Northwest Territories, Fort Nelson in British Columbia, Watson Lake in the Yukon, and Blackstone Landing on the Liard Highway in the Northwest Territories.

At one time it was possible to drive to Tungsten, which is very close to the headwaters of the Little Nahanni and the Flat rivers, and start the trip there. Recently, however, the Nahanni Range road to Tungsten has been abandoned, after the mine in that location closed.

Now, if people drive out west and take their own canoe and gear, the logistics for getting to your starting point on the river are simple. The logical start and end point of the trip is Blackstone Landing. Liard Tours offers a fly-in service from Blackstone, which allows you to leave your car there and paddle back to it. In the summer of 1991, the cost of flying two people with their canoe and gear from Blackstone was as follows: Virginia Falls \$630, Rabbitkettle \$860, Island Lakes \$1,060, Moose Ponds \$1,320.

Usually, people do not have the vacation time to drive out west. Then you must fly by scheduled airline to one of the three other locations mentioned above that have airline service, and proceed from there. The three locations are serviced by different companies:

FORT SIMPSON, NWT You fly to Yellowknife using either Air Canada or Canadian Airlines and then to Fort Simpson using NWT Airlines or Buffalo Air. The airport where you land is not the place where Simpson Air or Wolverine Air have their base, but usually there are taxis (vans) available to take you there at a moderate price. Trail Head has canoes available here, but you better reserve them very early in the year. In 1991, Black Feather charged \$210 per week for an ABS canoe with a good spray cover. You had

to supply paddles and ropes for fore and aft yourself.

You fly to your starting point using Simpson Air or sometimes Wolverine Air and here again, you should make reservations early in the year. The end of the trip is at Blackstone. From there you get Bert McAuley to ferry you back to Fort Simpson with his big van and canoe trailer. In July 1991, Bert had just moved to Cadillac Landing, which is four kilometres downstream from Blackstone. Bert charged \$300 to ferry all of us with the canoes and gear back to Fort Simpson. It is possible to canoe down the Liard river all the way to Fort Simpson, but after the Nahanni it is an anticlimax. Besides, The Liard River carries a lot of sediment and to me the water looked definitely unappetizing. If one has time to spare, it is better spent on the Nahanni.



FORT NELSON, BC Liard Tours offers a comprehensive package where they pick you up at the Fort Nelson airport, one night at a lodge, a flight to the Nahanni and, at the end, a shuttle back to Fort Nelson from Blackstone. In July 1991, their charges were as follows:

	2persons 1 canoe	4 persons 2 canoes	6 persons 3 canoes
Virginia Falls	\$1,500	\$2,350	\$3,050
Rabbitkettle	\$1,650	\$2,650	\$3,450
Island Lakes	\$1,775	\$2,850	\$3,850
Moose Ponds	\$2,025	\$3,250	\$4,450

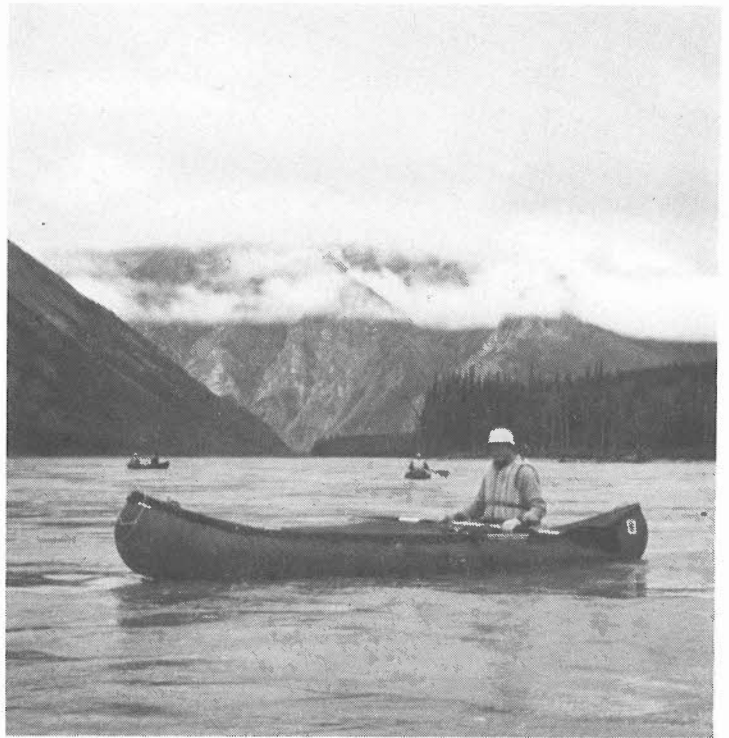
Liard Tours also had canoes to rent at a cost of \$35 per day, including two lifejackets and two paddles. A splash cover came at \$150 per trip and a spare paddle was \$15 per trip. A second canoe could, however, be rented for half price.

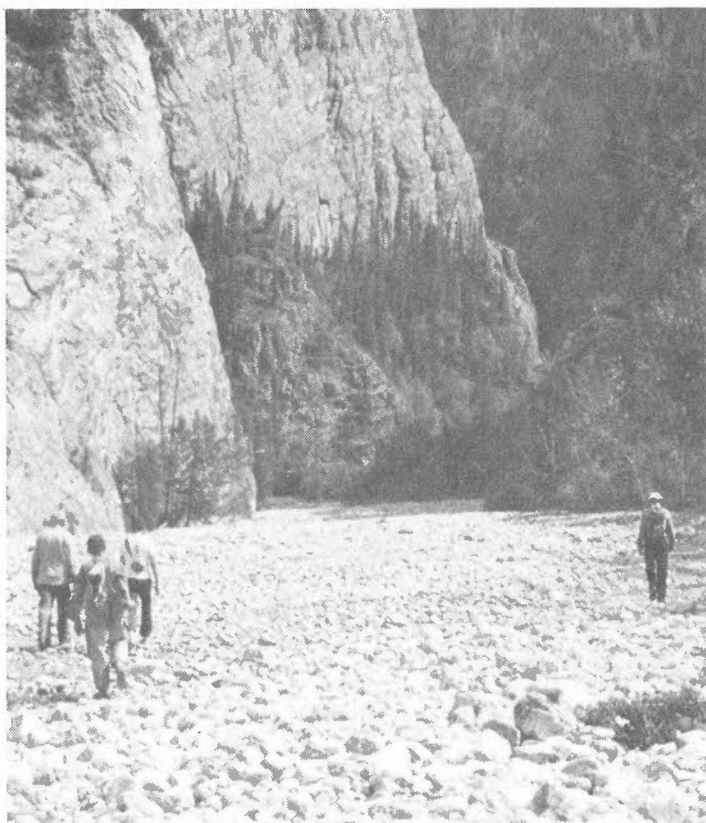
WATSON LAKE, YUKON Yukon Paddle offers a service which can be attractive to groups of 6 to 10 people. They will pick your group up at Watson Lake airport and bring you to their base at Finlayson Lake which is 237 km north of Watson Lake. In 1992, they will be charging \$474 for this service. Then they will fly you to your starting point on the Nahanni with their Beaver aircraft. They quoted the following:

	1991	1992
	per flight	per flight
Moose Ponds	\$792	\$849
Island Lakes	\$693	\$758
Rabbitkettle	\$817	
Flat Lake (Little Nahanni)		\$647

A flight can carry up to 4 people, up to 2 (nested) canoes and gear, provided that total weight is under 900 lbs. At the end, they will pick your group up at Blackstone and bring you back to Watson Lake (a distance of 835 km) with their big van and canoe trailer over two days. In 1992, they will charge \$ 1,600 for this shuttle.

Yukon Paddle has canoes for rent, including splash covers, life jackets, and paddles, for \$28 per day. They also have a food package available for \$16 per person.





In my case, I drove to Fort Simpson accompanied in another car by my friend Henk Fennema. We both carried our solo canoes and brought our gear. I had allowed seven days to cover the 4900 km from Toronto to Fort Simpson but it took me 5.5 days. We stayed in the campground behind the Papal site for a few nights until our four other companions arrived by plane. For them, canoes had been rented from Black Feather.

We chose to charter the Twin Otter from Simpson Air because this plane has a carrying capacity of 3000 pounds and was able to carry all of us, with all our gear and canoes, to our starting point.

A couple of people in our group did not think their whitewater skills were adequate and did not want to do the Rockgardens, and we therefore decided to start at Island Lakes. As it happened, the water level on the river was very high in 1991. Conversations with people we met on the river, and who had started at the Moose Ponds, convinced us that we had made the right decision.

Simpson Air dropped us off on Welcome Lake, the western-most of the Island Lakes, and from there it was just a short paddle down a creek to the Nahanni. That contrasted with the story we heard from people who had been dropped off at another of the Island Lakes by another company and who had a seven-hour portage to get to the river.

We spent a total of 18 days on the river. We did a two-day hike to Glacier Lake and to the Cirque of the Unclimbables. Black Feather had given us permission to use the two canoes which they have on Glacier Lake, to avoid the long and arduous hike around that Take. This allowed us to camp at the beautiful Indian camp halfway along the eastern shore.

It should be noted that there are no paddles and lifejackets with the Black Feather canoes on Glacier Lake, so you have to bring your own.

We hiked to the top of Sunblood Mountain and were rewarded with a beautiful view up and down the valley. At Prairie Creek we also did some hiking but missed climbing to the top of the Tlogotsho Plateau. Ah well, maybe next time.

The fishing was disappointing and, as far as I was concerned, not worth the \$10 cost of the fishing license. We had our best success near Pulpit Rock.

Nahanni Butte, according to the topo map, is on the north side of the river. But the map is wrong, it is on the south side. They even have a campground, but when we got there it was occupied by a billion mosquitoes. We decided to carry on to Swan Point, a sandbar in the Liard river, a short distance further on. At Nahanni Butte also, there is a telephone located in the hallway of the community centre; it could only be used for outgoing calling card or collect calls. And there is a store where they sell pop, chocolate bars, and other groceries.

A word should be said about fluctuating water levels. During our trip, water levels dropped steadily. On a couple of days it dropped as much as 20 cm. However, when we were at Swan Point, the water level rose by about 30 cm and one of the canoes started to float away. Fortunately, it was noticed in time and the canoe was quickly recovered.

The temperature of the water on the Nahanni was fairly steady at about +10°C and the air temperature fluctuated from +10°C to about +20°C. We had two days of rain, and those days were very cold. Those of us who had brought wetsuits were very thankful.

Contacts:

Yukon Paddle, c/o Andy Blaine, 25 Claude Ave., Toronto, ON, M6R 2T5, (416) 533-6301.

Simpson Air, P.O. Box 260, Fort Simpson, NWT, XOE ONO
Liard Tours, P.O. Box 3190, Fort Nelson, BC, V0C 1R0



MINNESOTA SYMPOSIUM

M.T. Kelly

In November, normally a bleak time of year, before real winter and with low lead skies making a mockery of even the concept of Indian summer, the Minnesota Canoe Association holds a Wilderness Canoe Symposium. The format of the symposium will be familiar to WCA members (a series of slide shows over two days) but the setting is unique: The Wilder Forest, near Marine On St. Croix, Minnesota. The river's name, St. Croix, will echo in the minds of readers of exploration literature, and the Wilder Forest has a haunting beauty.

It will be somewhat familiar to Canadians — lakes and forests, canoe country — but because it is near the prairies, and the species are different, it has a strange feeling as well. Here is oak savanna, a mixture of prairie and open grown oaks, as well as white, red, northern pine and bur oaks, and black cherry. To the north, where Ontario's boreal forests shades into the prairies west of Kenora, on the way to Winnipeg, the feeling is different. Trembling aspen occur in both places, but the northern sky seems larger, an imaginative reflection of Hudson Bay. The hills of Minnesota have aspects of a smaller landscape, New England. There are 1,124 acres of hills, lakes, meadows, and farmlands in The Wilder Forest. All both alien and welcoming.

The landscaped buildings of the Wilder Forest, where the slide shows were to take place, are set into the sides of hills. They are in the tradition of Frank Lloyd Wright and other architects who try to have buildings and landscape reflect each other. They are joined to twelve miles of trails, a welcome relief for any slide-weary spectator.



Photo by Orrie Wigle

Last year the theme of the symposium was *Canoeing The Far North*. There was to be one slide show, "The Labrador Coast," on Friday night, presented by WCA's George Luste. Saturday would have twelve slide shows, from 8:00 a.m. (including breakfast) to 4:00 p.m. and they would occur at different venues. You'd have to choose. I especially looked forward to Bob McCoubrie's scheduled two-part presentation on *Sleeping Island*, P.G. Downes' luminous book about his journey to Neultin Lake. Downes is a compelling figure, *Sleeping Island* one of the most evocative books about the taiga and barrens, and any information on him promised to make the long trip worthwhile. Other well-known canoeists such as Cliff Jacobson were scheduled, and Wilderness Inquiry, one of the sponsors of the symposium along with Wilder Forest and the Minnesota Canoe Association, were giving a show on "The Big Canoes In The Barrens."

None of it was to be, or at least not much of it. An early winter storm struck and kept most of the natives away, while George and I, who'd driven 900 miles from Toronto, did show up. Arriving in a blizzard didn't do the idea of Canadians as true "gens du pays" (or is that "gens du nord") any harm, even if we hadn't taken the northern Lake Superior route. But then we hadn't much choice. Near St. Paul my impulse was to pull over but George "feel-the-road" Luste insisted on crawling ahead. Marine On St. Croix isn't far from St. Paul, the Wilder Forest isn't far from Marine On St. Croix and when we arrived at the "meeting house" Bonne Roemhildt, one of the organizers, greeted us with great surprise. We were the only people who'd showed up.

That evening people and presenters eventually did trickle in, and more people showed up the next day, but the symposium was greatly truncated. Cliff Jacobson didn't make it, nor did Bob McCoubrie. Wilderness Inquiry did their show, represented by Greg Lais and Al Gustavson, and four women, Monica Lindquist, Mary Schroeder, Julie Driscoll, and Bibby McGovern showed "Minnesota Women on the Anderson River, NWT." Because it was their first trip the women's show reflected their exuberant sense of wonder at seeing the North. It was a highlight. George Luste did double duty, filling in the next day with slides of the Stikine. There was only one venue, and all participants met together in one place as the wind howled outside. The Far North visited us.

The fact that the storm highlighted the setting, and kept down the number of participants, made organizer Bill Simpson reflect on how much scale matters in gatherings like this. If they get too big, too successful, some of their power and purpose seems to bleed away. Next year's symposium will stay on a human scale, storm or no storm. For those WCA members interested in attending, information is available from Bonne Roemhildt, Wilder Forest, 14189 Ostlund Trail North, Marine On St. Croix, Minnesota, USA 55047; (612) 433-5198.

M.T. Kelly has two stories set on canoe trips — on the Missinaibi and Mississagi rivers — in his new book *Breath Dances Between Them*.

GRASS RIVER, FAMILY STYLE

Dave Bober

My ten-year-old daughter, Leona, was ecstatic as she hollered out to her eleven-year-old brother: "Hey, John, I got something on my line and this time I know its a real-live fish! Help me right now or this monster will drag me in." John, slightly perturbed at having to leave his own rod, yelled back, "Yeah kid, you just got another snag, you'll never learn how to fish." But sister was adamant and brother finally came to the rescue and was soon removing a shiny one-kilogram pickerel from the treble hook lure. And you can guess who had to fillet that fish and the other eleven that were caught in less than an hour just below a six-metre unnamed fall on the Grass River in northern Manitoba.

Just watching the kids having so much constructive fun made the hassles of a family canoe trip worth all the effort. Experiencing the wilderness together will always rank high in our memory bank.

Our five-day family trip last summer included a crew of six: my immediate family of four, a 12-year-old friend of my son, and a neighbor friend who couldn't resist the temptation to find out what wilderness tripping is all about.

Wekusko Falls campground on the Snow Lake highway was the starting point of our 140-km downriver journey that ended at Setting Lake just opposite the Cree town of Wabowden. This portion of the Grass River is still remote country; the seven or eight short portages discourage most motorized travel. A much longer trip can be had by continuing down through a series of lakes and river sections to the junction of the Nelson River. Avoid the Grass River and Paint

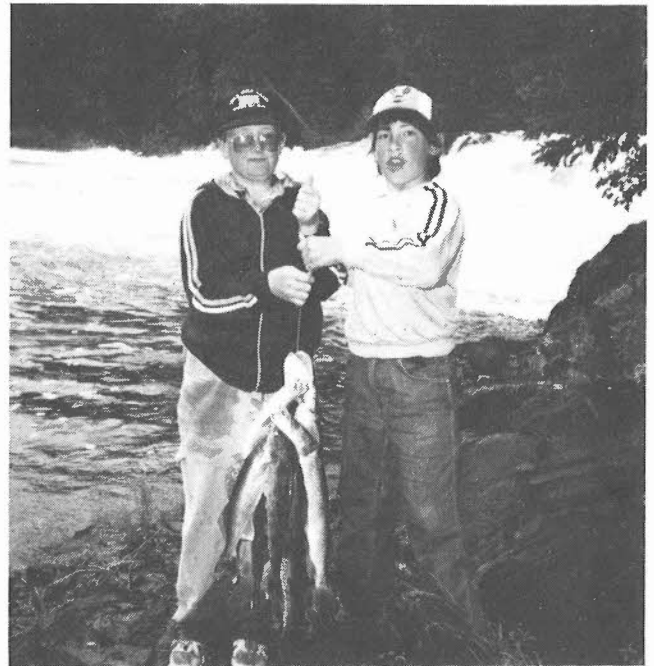
Lake provincial parks if you wish to escape heavy use areas and designated campsites. The Grass is a family friendly river with almost a non-existent current except at falls or the few short rapids.

The Grass should be paddled with an appreciation of history. The Hudson's Bay Company and Northwest Company maintained trading posts along the 700 km Grass River route in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Native history goes back perhaps thousands of years as evidenced by petrograph

sites at several locations.

We paddled three to a canoe, and with the right attitude on the part of the adults it was almost amazing how much distance we could coax out of 11 and 12 year olds. Early starts and frequent rest breaks were paramount to our successful 24- to 34-km days. Setting up camp went smoothly as each trip member had specific chores to perform. Showing a youngster how to accomplish a task is the preferred method of teaching and 'work before play' was the general rule.

Emulating the example of the Voyageurs, we exercised our vocal cords or swapped stories of adventuresome peril while we worked our paddles. Sometimes we paddled on in

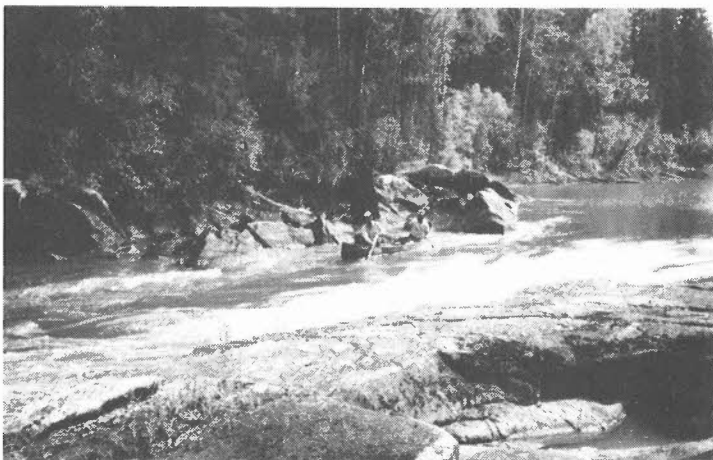


silence, each maintaining a steady stroke, but locked into his or her own world as the kilometres sped by.

One particularly quiet, late June day was memorable for the almost continuous bird symphony. The joy of the short northern summer was bursting at the seams all around us.

Counting beaver houses and their occupants was also a favorite pastime. The swampy nature of the Grass River provides a paradise for these tree-eating rodents. In some areas the river bank resembled a logging operation; scores of large white and black poplar felled at a perpendicular angle to the slow-moving river, seemingly waiting in a long row to be skidded out to a lumber mill. We passed about a dozen trappers' cabins, but I doubt there is much trapping activity with the present poor return for furs.

The predominance of clay soils supports a lush mixed forest, including some remarkably large white spruce for this latitude. The forest we travelled through was for the most





part mature with no recent forest fires to break the thick green canopy.

Locating a suitable campsite was not always easy on the densely timbered and often swampy river bank. Our preference is a formerly used site but fatigue and the lateness of the hour forced us one afternoon to hack out a marginal spot just above a beaver house, whose residents let us know in no uncertain terms that we were trespassers. Their nocturnal water games woke us up several times during the night and I recall a dream where these creatures effectively terminated our travel by dropping a huge poplar on our canoes. Considering the resident beaver population I should have been dreaming about the possibility of catching giardia from the river water.

Getting the kids to bed at a decent hour was no problem. Getting them up was also easy if we were fortunate enough to have camped at a waterfall. Everyone agreed that the falls were the highlights of our journey — even a slowpoke river like the Grass comes alive at an eight- or nine-metre drop. The kids revelled in the fishing below the falls, Dad com-



plained at the filleting job, and Mom cheerfully fried us up a fish treat.

The magnificence of Whitewood Falls was somewhat marred by thoughtless predecessors who left a pile of nasty garbage strewn about on the bare rocks. Dirty disposable diapers indicated that the culprits had either flown in or had managed the few portages with a motorboat. Needless to say, we burned what we could and packed a large plastic garbage bag out. The positive side of human nature was also reaffirmed at the conclusion of our trip. My camera box was inadvertently left along the lakeshore at our take-out point on Setting Lake, and a kindly older couple, who operate a small market garden there, returned my camera by mail.

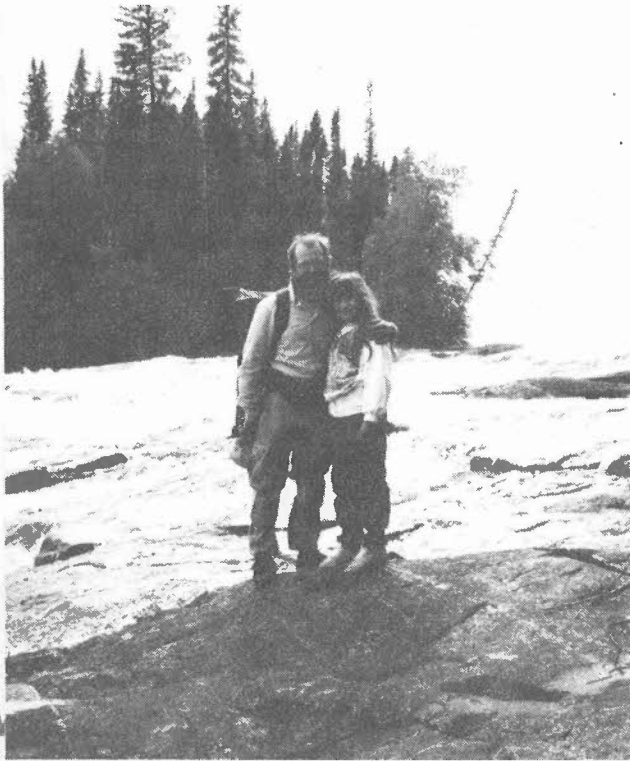
Late June canoeing is usually the height of the bug season and we did have our share of mosquitoes and black



flies. Frequent applications of repellent were only partially successful and the noon lunch breaks on shore were eat and run back to the canoe. One evening while trying to help her mother prepare supper, an exasperated Leona came out with a winner: "Why did God create mosquitoes? It's just not fair, there's only six of us and millions of them!"

Although we only saw one large animal, my wife swears it was a bear while the rest of us agreed it was a something. We did enjoy the entertainment provided by the many forms of bird life, especially mother duck and mother goose, who would always attempt to lead us away from their precious little brood. Parental authority prevailed and the kids managed to resist their urge to capture a few chicks just to play with.

A strange sight on the river was the abrupt appearance of a recent grave headstone erected on a tiny islet to the memory of a Wm Clark (1910-1986), probably a trapper whose weather-beaten cabin stood on the opposite side of the river. Stopping to investigate, we borrowed a few pieces of juicy rhubarb from his patch behind the old shack. The old trapper must have dearly loved this lonely spot where for



so many years he had made his living off the land, wrestling with the wilderness and the creatures that live therein.

We had no close calls on our journey but one incident provided some humor at the expense of our neighbor friend. After supper he was out practising a few solo manoeuvres, when suddenly the canoe was up on top of him — the only consequences being a little wounded pride and a bath. My son's friend had never been on a canoe-camping trip before, but it didn't take him very long to establish his priority: fishing, fishing and more fishing.

Checking the campsite and any shore-break spot cannot be over-emphasized as my son committed the cardinal transgression by leaving his life jacket on land for some future traveller. Although I sternly reminded him that my life was now in his hands as he would have to wear my life vest for the remainder of the trip, he kept reminding me that I had once found that same life jacket on a far northern river — the moral being, "easy come easy go, some life jackets are born to roam." In any case, we did agree that it is advisable to carry a spare flotation device when tripping with young people.

My very patient wife is not overly enthusiastic about water travel but she does carry a mean spoon on the camping end of life. After enjoying her trail cooking, I realize how much I have yet to learn about contented stomachs and meal preparation. When it comes to preparing food over an open fire, she is flat out fast and that is worth extra brownie points to starving paddlers every time.

All too soon our trip was winding down as we made our last camp on charming Mitishito Lake, lingering long over the campfire, enjoying loon music and the solitude of the early summer twilight. Listening to the children share and plan a longer trip for next summer, I knew that tripping with kids was a significant chapter in our family history. The wilderness is a great teacher as we learn together and from each other.

WE'RE BACK! whoopee

*I thought I was ready for civilization,
Leaving behind all the backwoods frustration;*

*But when I returned to the paved city street,
My personal habits had grown indiscreet.*

*We'd had few occasions when nudity mattered.
When weather'd been warm so our teeth
hadn't chattered,*

*We'd skinny-dip freely with no thought in mind
Of anyone leering at us from behind.*

*The bush was our bathroom, at times mighty rough.
But people on sidewalks don't go for that stuff.*

*Returning to town was like having jet lag;
We knew what to do, but oh, what a drag!*

*We'd sometimes forget to use napkin and fork,
Instead of spoon, for our barbecued pork.*

*When steering the car, I couldn't stay straight.
My seatbelt forgotten, I sure tempted fate!*

*We couldn't get used to the nit-picky things:
The sirens, the horns, the telephone rings.*

*The noise of the city was raucous and cruel
Compared to the wilderness, quiet and cool.*

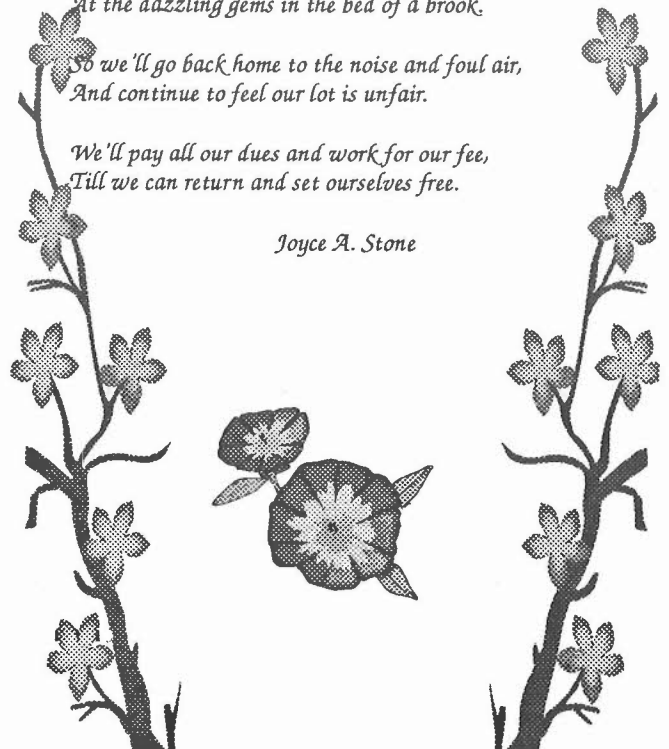
*Solitude's wasted on those who won't listen
To loons on a lake or rapids that glisten.*

*Blind people see more than those who won't look
At the dazzling gems in the bed of a brook.*

*So we'll go back home to the noise and foul air,
And continue to feel our lot is unfair.*

*We'll pay all our dues and work for our fee,
Till we can return and set ourselves free.*

Joyce A. Stone



WCA TRIPS

14 March OAKVILLE CREEK

John Kirby, (416) 276-1718; book before 7 March.

Oakville Creek is narrow and can have fast water. Paddlers need to be experienced in fast-moving cold water and must be able to manoeuvre around possible sweepers. Experienced paddlers in cold-weather clothing; limit five boats.

15-16 March WINTER CAMPING IN ALGONQUIN PARK

Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321; book before 8 March.

A warm place in the cold snow, tent with wood stove; winter sleeping bag essential. Snowshoeing and location to be decided.

15 March LOWER CREDIT SEASON OPENER

Steve Lukasko, (416) 276-8285; book before 7 March.

Experienced cold-weather paddlers will welcome the opportunity to paddle the thaw. Intermediate to advanced paddlers prepared for the season; limit five boats.

22 March UPPER CREDIT RIVER

Mike Graham-Smith, (416) 877-7829; book before 15 March.

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

22 March IRVINE CREEK/GRAND RIVER

Jeff Lane, (519) 837-3815; book before 14 March.

Irvine Creek flows into the "Gorge" just downstream from our normal put in. The creek runs through its own boulder-strewn gorge. With high water this trip should prove extremely challenging. Restricted to advanced paddlers with properly equipped boats. Participants must be dressed for cold, wet canoeing. Limit six canoes.

28 March ELORA GORGE

Ken Coburn, (416) 767-5845; book before 21 March.

Water levels can be high in spring runoff; trip is limited to advanced whitewater paddlers in boats with full floatation. Limit six boats.

29 March OAKVILLE CREEK

Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005; book, before 22 March.

A narrow stream that can have fast current and many swifts. There may be sweepers to avoid and paddlers must be able to manoeuvre safely in fast water. Limit six canoes.

4-5 April MOIRA WATERSHED WHITEWATER

Dale Miner; contact through Sandy & Roger Harris (416) 323-3603; book before 27 March.

Precise routes will be chosen with regard to weather conditions, water levels, and the skill of the group. The Salmon, Moira, and/or Beaver Creek are on the list. The Salmon is the easiest of the three but this early in the season the cold waters demand caution. The Moira is larger with significant waves, and Beaver Creek is a narrow river that challenges even experienced paddlers. Participants should be dressed for cold, wet conditions and have properly equipped canoes. Limit six boats.

5 April BLACK RIVER (WASHAGO)

Bill King, (416) 223-4646; book immediately.

This trip will take us down the Black River from Cooper's

Falls to Washago. For the most part, the Black flows along gently with a few easy rapids. The outing is suitable for adventurous novices who are equipped for cold weather. Limit eight canoes.

5 April GRAND RIVER

Dave Sharp, (519) 621-5599; book before 29 March.

A gentle flatwater trip starting at Cambridge and, depending on water levels, ending at Paris or Brantford. An excellent trip for novice moving-water paddlers. Limit six canoes

5 April IRVINE CREEK/GRAND RIVER

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

A repeat of the previous trip. With enough spring runoff these waters will still be a challenge. Hoping for pleasant weather but be prepared for less than perfect. Limit eight canoes with expert paddlers equipped for cold whitewater.

11 April ERAMOSIA RIVER

Jeff Lane, (519) 837-3815; book before 4 April.

Essentially a flatwater trip with some swifts and easy portaging. Suitable for novices prepared for cold weather. Limit eight boats.

11 April LOWER BLACK RIVER

Steve Lukasko, (416) 276-8285; book before 4 April.

From Queensboro to Highway 7; experienced whitewater paddlers with properly equipped boats. The river has several significant drops and demands precise manoeuvring in fast water. Limit five canoes.

11-12 April WEST BRANCH SUSQUEHANNA RIVER

Daniel Jenny, (412) 443-1913, book now.

Only a five-hour drive from Toronto, the Susquehanna is the most remote river in Pennsylvania. This trip offers a very different canoeing experience from Ontario rivers and is well worth a visit. The Susquehanna runs through mountainous countryside with beautiful valleys and waterfalls down cliffs at the edge of the river. There is no significant whitewater and the trip is suitable for novices. Limit five canoes.

11-12 April SALMON AND MOIRA RIVERS

Glenn Spence, (613) 475-4176; book before 4 April.

Just north of Belleville these two rivers offer exciting whitewater and fine scenery. The Salmon is the more gentle one but has some ledges to practice your skills. The Moira has larger rapids, possibly up to class 3. This is one of Southern Ontario's finest spring rivers. Intermediate paddlers welcome. Limit six canoes.

11-12 April MOIRA RIVER AND BEAVER CREEK

Dale Miner; contact through Roger & Sandy Harris (416) 323-3603; book before 3 April.

The Moira provides a challenging warm-up for the narrower, more demanding Beaver Creek. Together these two rivers provide a whitewater thrill for the most experienced paddlers. Experienced paddlers prepared for cold water are welcome. Limit six canoes.

12 April UPPER BLACK RIVER

Del Dako, (416) 421-2108; book before 5 April.

From Cooper to Queensboro this river offers strenuous paddling through a series of demanding rapids. The put-in is on private land and there is a small parking fee. Suitable for advanced paddlers only. Limit five canoes.

17-18-19 April PALMER RAPIDS, MADAWASKA RIVER

Dale Miner, Sandy & Roger Harris, (416) 323-3603; book before 9 April.

Easter at Palmer Rapids; an early start to canoeing on the Madawaska. We plan to camp at Palmer and take advantage of the potentially very high water levels. Solo or tandem canoes or kayaks with experienced paddlers or intermediate paddlers who are prepared for the cold water and wish to stretch their paddling ability are welcome. Limit eight vessels.

25-26 April NORTH KAWARTHAS

Will Bartlett, (519) 268-3701; book before 14 April.

A leisurely lake loop suitable for novices with cold water experience. Be prepared to portage and enjoy the spring scenery before the bugs emerge. Limit three boats; solo paddlers welcome.

2 May GIBSON RIVER — GEORGIAN BAY LOOP

Tony Bird, (416) 466-0172; book before 24 April.

Starting at Gibson Lake, we will canoe down the Gibson River into Georgian Bay and return via McRae Lake and Crooked Bay. A day trip for those who enjoy a long day's paddle. Limit three canoes.

2-3 May UPPER MADAWASKA — OPEONGO RIVERS

Dale Miner; contact through Sandy & Roger Harris (416) 323-3603; book before 25 April.

Two days, two very different rivers. The Upper Madawaska is a fast-flowing "pool and drop" run with quiet stretches interspersed with some very serious rapids; all of these can, and some must, be portaged. The Opeongo contains long stretches of continuous riffles plus several significant drops. Portaging is more difficult here and in high water this can be a strenuous trip. Limit six canoes.

2-3 May BEAVER CREEK

Karl Schimek, (705) 487-0172; book between 24-30 April.

A fast-moving, two-day run on Beaver Creek, with an overnight camp on the river. The trip includes class 2-3 rapids in remote areas. Limit three canoes with intermediate or advanced crews.

3 May WILLOW CREEK — NOTTAWASAGA

Steve Lukasko, (416) 276-8285; book before 25 April.

Novice paddlers are welcome to participate in this scenic trip on a gentle river. Limit five canoes.

9-10 May TANDEM CANOE, LOWER MADAWASKA

Dale Miner; contact through Sandy & Roger Harris (416) 323-3603; book before 1 May.

From Latchford Bridge to Griffith; a leisurely two-day camping trip with plenty of time for play en route. The rapids can be run or portaged according to skill and taste. All paddlers welcome. Limit five tandem canoes.

9-10 May WOLF LAKE LOOP

John Winters, (705) 382-2057; book before 2 May.

Another one of my brutal backwoods adventures for masochistic paddlers. We will go down the Magnetawan and into Wolf Lake and then back onto the Magnetawan near Wahwashkesh Lake. There will be a number of strenuous portages for us to savor. Stoic solo paddlers preferred; suitable for fit novices. Limit five canoes.

16-18 May CANOEING IN ALGONQUIN PARK

Doreen Vella, (416) 463-9973; book before 10 May.

We will meet at 9 a.m. at the Canoe Lake store and paddle to Tom Thompson Lake and Burnt Island Lake. A leisurely trip with nine portages; the longest is 680 metres. Suitable for novices; limit four canoes.

16-18 May MAGNETAWAN RIVER

Duncan Taylor, (416) 368-9748; book before 9 May.

Enjoy the scenery, rapids, and portages of the "Mighty Magnetawan" in spring water. We will paddle upstream from Harris Lake to above Mountain Chute, then run as much as we can of the rapids downstream to Highway 69. Suitable for good intermediate paddlers or better. Limit four canoes.

16-18 May MATTAWA RIVER

Pat & Bryan Buttigieg, (416) 831-3554; book before 9 May.

Follow the route of the Voyageurs down this scenic river which Eric Morse has called "a little gem of history." Walk the paths trodden smooth by thousands of moccasined feet. Follow in the footsteps of Mackenzie and Fraser. The trip is not difficult, mainly flatwater with a few easy rapids. Some portaging necessary. History buffs will appreciate this route. Limit four canoes.

16-18 May FRENCH RIVER

Anmarie Forsyth (416) 881-5145; book before 10 May.

We will meet at the Hungry Bear Restaurant at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, and proceed to the put-in spot at Wolseley Bay. We will set up a base camp at the "Ladder." Within a short distance of this spot are several rapids to play in. High water levels and cold temperatures make wet or dry suits a must! Solo canoes welcome. Suitable for intermediate paddlers. Limit six canoes.

24 May ELORA GORGE

Dave Sharp, (519) 621-5599; book before 21 May.

By this time of year the Gorge's water level has dropped to produce a series of grade 1 and 2 rapids. The air and water should be warm enough to encourage budding whitewater canoeists to really push themselves without worrying about a frigid swim. Suitable for novices with moving water experience and a sense of adventure. Limit six canoes.

30 May BASIC FLATWATER WORKSHOP

Doug Ashton, (519) 654-0336; book before 16 May.

This workshop is being offered to new members who wish to develop their skills. We will discuss the basic strokes, portaging, and canoe safety. The day will be slow-paced with plenty of time for practice. Participants will be expected to provide a suitable canoe, PFDs, and paddles. Registration is limited to 20 people who must be current members.

30-31 May OPEONGO AND UPPER MADAWASKA RIVERS

Karl Schimek, (705) 487-0172; book before 23 May.

On Saturday we will paddle the Opeongo, which offers long runnable sets of rapids. The more technical, challenging Upper Madawaska will be run on Sunday. Suitable for intermediate whitewater paddlers. Limit four canoes.

30-31 May MINDEN WHITE WATER WORKOUT

Jeff Lane, (519) 837-3815; book before 22 May.

Now is the time to enhance your whitewater skills. If you are a good intermediate paddler looking for a challenge, this man-made whitewater course offers the opportunity to extend your

limits and build your confidence. Experienced paddlers will be on hand to give informal advice and assistance. Intermediate whitewater skills and proper equipment a must! Strict limit of ten boats.

Early June **CANOEING MICHIGAN RIVERS**

Orrie Wigle, (519) 542-9677, or by mail to 1074 Salesbury St., Sarnia, Ontario, N7S 3V5. Book immediately.

I would like to organize a one-week trip to the Upper Peninsular in Michigan. Anyone interested? We would establish a base camp at a State Park or other campground and make four or five day-trips to different intermediate-level rivers (Manistique, Sturgeon, Two Hearted, etc.). Early contact date is required to determine if there is enough interest. Limit six canoes.

6-7 June **PALMER RAPIDS WHITEWATER PLAY WEEKEND**

Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005; book before 29 May.

Palmer Rapids on the Madawaska River at this time of year is one of the best spots in Southern Ontario for good novice to intermediate whitewater paddlers who want to sharpen their skills. The rapids provide some good challenges but are very safe. Limit eight canoes.

6-7 June **WILDCAT LOOP — HOLLOW RIVER**

Karl Schimek, (705) 487-0172; book before 31 May.

We will have an early start at Kawagama Lake and follow a chain of lakes with nine portages to cross Corner Lake. There is a 3000-metre portage to bypass the upper portion of the Hollow River; this is the only portage on Sunday. Limit four canoes.

20-21 June **WHITEWATER COURSE AT PALMER RAPIDS**

Hugh Valliant, Anmarie Forsyth, Jim Morris, Debbie Sutton; phone Hugh at (416) 699-3464, fax (416) 699-3847; book before 1 June.

We will meet at Palmer Rapids on the Madawaska River for

an exciting and instructional weekend. The emphasis of the course is on the strokes and techniques necessary to safely negotiate a set of rapids. Palmer Rapids is considered class 2. In this controlled and structured environment where the pace is slow, there will be plenty of time to practice and perfect your strokes. You will learn how to control a canoe in moving water so that you can go where you want to go (most of the time). The river will no longer control your canoe (all of the time). To feed your hungry appetites, there will be a group bbq on Saturday night featuring a real salad, real steak, and real potatoes using real charcoal. A deposit of \$15 is required. Open to experienced flatwater, novice, or beginning whitewater paddlers. Preference to first-time registrants. Friends are more than welcome to the Saturday night's festivities; just let us know beforehand. Limit eight canoes.

3-5 July **ALGONQUIN PARK MOOSE HUNT**

Joan Etheridge, (416) 825-4061; book before 26 June.

This trip will start Friday from the Opeongo dock. We will take the water taxi to the north end of Opeongo Lake. From here we will make a number of portages through a chain of lakes where there is a high probability of seeing many moose. Limit four canoes.

4-5 July **LOWER MADAWASKA RIVER**

Hugh Valliant, Anmarie Forsyth, Jim Morris, Debbie Sutton; phone Hugh at (416) 699-3464, fax (416) 699-3847; book before 22 June.

This is a continuation of the Palmer Rapids weekend. We will meet at Palmer Rapids on Saturday at 9 a.m. sharp. From there we will travel to our put-in point. We will take out at Griffith. This will be an excellent opportunity to practise and further refine our whitewater skills in a tripping environment and in more challenging rapids. In addition there will be plenty of opportunity to learn and practise our river rescue and waterproofing techniques. At summer water levels the lower "Mad" is suitable for novice or beginning whitewater paddlers. Preference will be given to those who attended the Palmer Rapids weekend. Limit eight canoes.

CANOE EXPO '92

On April 4 and 5, 1992, the Etobicoke Olympium in the Toronto suburb of Etobicoke will be the heart of the paddling world. The Olympium will then house the first Canadian Canoe Expo, organized by Canoe Ontario for the benefit of all paddling enthusiasts, young and old, novice and experienced, canoeists and kayakers of all disciplines. This promises to be a truly unique event that offers everybody the opportunity to get acquainted with the fast-growing sport of paddling. All paddlers will find something to their liking, from the recreational canoeist interested in the latest equipment for a month-long trip down the Missinaibi, to the marathon racer who wants to discuss the pros and cons of the ultimate in light-weight, carbon-fibre bent-shaft paddles.

More than 80 display areas in the EXHIBITION HALL will be occupied by retailers, manufacturers, outfitters, distributors and representatives of canoeing-related products, services and organizations. Information will be available on canoe routes and guided tours, camps and outdoor centres, instruction courses, environmental organizations, clubs, and associations.

In the Olympic-size swimming POOL many fascinating activities will take place: demonstrations of sprint and marathon canoe racing and of diving/rolling by squirt boats and kayaks, "paddle-by's" of all kinds of canoes and kayaks, including sea kayaks, water polo with plug plastic boats, rescue techniques and

much more. There will also be an invitational celebrity open and closed boat slalom, and a fashion show will demonstrate the latest in outdoor clothing, rain gear, wet/dry suits and footwear.

Several SEMINAR ROOMS will be used for more practical "how-to" sessions where the Expo visitors can get information on: building your own canoe, the latest in canoe tripping equipment, things every first-time-tripper should be aware of, wilderness survival, cooking on trips, outdoor photography, tripping with kids, using maps and compass, and much more.

The Expo will also feature several video shows and walk-by displays, as well as a collection of paddling craft made available by the famous Canadian Canoe Museum. Information booths on how to get started in canoeing, finding clubs and instruction courses, buying and renting equipment, and other subjects are also planned.

The CANOE EXPO '92 will be presented on Saturday, 4 April, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday, 5 April, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Etobicoke Olympium, 590 Rathburn Road, Etobicoke, Ontario. It is easy to get to by public transit and car, and the parking is free. Admission is \$9.00 for adults and \$7.00 for seniors and students. For more information on CANOE EXPO '92 and on how to get a \$2.00 discount on the price of admission, phone Canoe Ontario in Toronto at (416) 495-4180.

guidelines for wca trips

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

canoe safety rules

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

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



difficult - use own judgment



all clear - with caution

SIGNALS



danger - do not run

WCA TRIPS MAY HAVE AN ELEMENT OF DANGER.

THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A MEMBER'S SAFETY IS HIS/HER OWN.

trip ratings

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

WHITewater TRIPS

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

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

FLATwater TRIPS

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

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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

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

ABC Sports, 552 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ont.

Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, Ont.

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

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

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

CANOE FOR SALE Mad River ME whitewater canoe in daring red. Fully outfitted and in very good condition. Call Bill Ness in Toronto at (416) 321-3000.

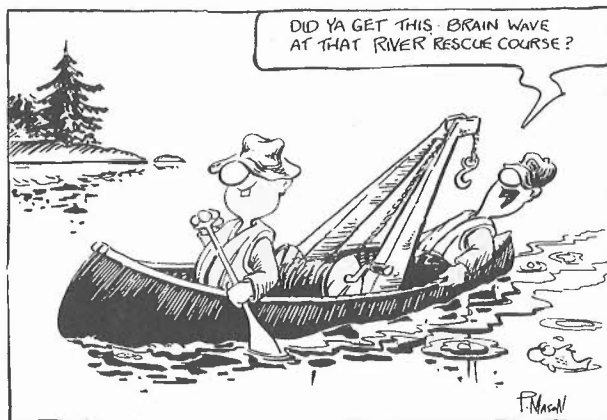
WANIGAN WANTED Can anyone tell us where to buy a light-weight (11-12 lbs.) watertight portageable wanigan? Please contact Chet Harvey, 17 Meadow Road, Rexford, NY 12148, USA; tel. (518) 399-7286.

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.

STOP SLIPPING OFF YOUR SLEEPING BAG Use the **PADGRIPPER**. No more slipping and sliding. This high-quality rubberized mesh grips the slippery materials of your sleeping bag and pad to keep you from sliding off during the night. Generous 24"x40". You cut the size you need. Weight 4 oz. couples use two sideways. Remit cheque or money order (C\$12.25 + 4.75 S&H, US\$10.75 + 4.25 S&H; Ontario residents add 8% PST) to HAV Enterprises, Dept. NS, 35 Pine Cres., Toronto, ON, M4E 1L3.

CANOEJOONS
PAUL MASON



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, NOM 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, Palmer Rapids, Ontario, K0J 2E0; tel. (613) 758-2244.

YUKON PADDLE Float plane or helicopter access from the untouched Yukon Territory. Consider combination hiking and canoeing trips designed to suit your abilities. Explore the Cirque of the Unclimbables on the Nahanni River. Moosepond / Little Nahanni specialized combination trips offer 12 days of Canada's best whitewater. Selfguided economical outfitting or luxury guided tours from our comfortable lodge. 25 Claude Avenue, Toronto, ON., M6R 2T5; phone (416) 533-6301.

PADDLES We make one-piece, hardwood paddles in any style for \$30. Mackenzie Wood Products, RR#3, Bancroft, ON. K0L 1C0; call Doug at (613) 339-2450.



DEE-BOAT FOR SALE My beautiful, high-performance, solo, whitewater Blue Hole canoe is looking for a new home. She's 14' 9" long and fully equipped with air bags, thigh straps, and 25'-long painters. This is a top-quality boat for sale by an experienced paddler who bought a mountain bike. Asking \$900. Contact Dee Simpson in Toronto at (416) 778-9944 (wk) or (416) 967-4799 (h).

THELON/KAZAN For experienced paddlers interested in canoeing the Thelon or Kazan rivers in the NWT, we offer canoe and equipment rentals and logistics from Kasba Lake, and easy access from Winnipeg or Minneapolis to the edge of the tundra. This is a new and very cost-effective access for all rivers of the central Barrens. We also offer escorted expeditions annually down these rivers, and to the Thelon Game Sanctuary for wildlife photography. Contact 'Tundra Tom' at Great Canadian Ecoventures, P.O. Box 9-E, New Denver, BC, V0G 1S0, phone (604) 358-7727, fax (604) 358-7262.

Where it is ...



... in this issue

- 1. Michipicoten — Missinaibi — Moose
- 6. Messing Around With the Missinaibi
- 7. Northern Quebec Symposium
- 7. The Wu Wei of Whitewater
- 8. News Briefs
- 8. The Addiction

- 9. Parks Compared
- 9. Whiteater Canoe Outfitting
- 10. Writing the Wilderness Experience
- 14. Reviews
- 15. Conservation
- 15. Freshwater Seal
- 16. Nahanni 1991

- 19. Minnesota Symposium
- 20. Grass River, Family Style
- 22. We're back! Whoopee
- 23. WCA Trips
- 25. Canoe Expo '92
- 26. Trip Guidelines
- 27. Products and Services
- 27. Canoetoon

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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: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

New member Member # if renewal: _____

Single Family

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

(____) _____ (w)

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

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