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MACFARLANE RIVER

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Photos: Dave Bober and Roger Devine

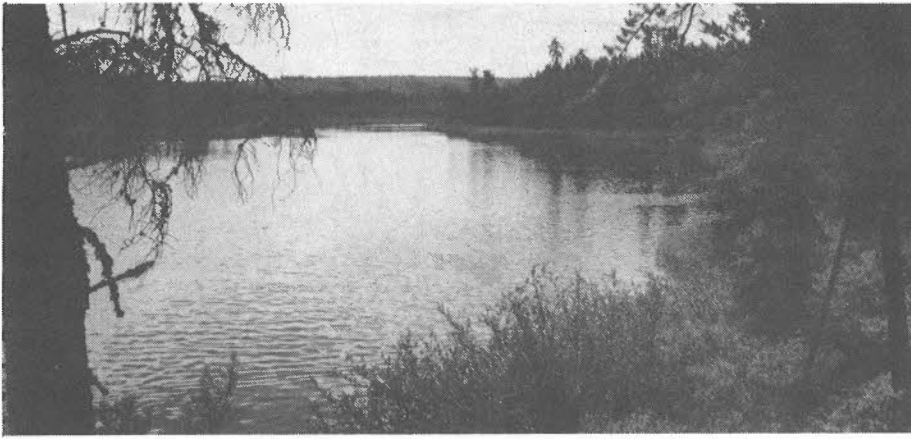
Remote canoe trips usually begin with hours of map dreaming and the frustrating search for tripping partners. In June 1991, the river gods were smiling: a chance acquaintance and three long-distance telephone calls brought strangers together for a two-week whitewater trip on northern Saskatchewan's MacFarlane River.

So here we were, I and Daryl Sexsmith, my regular tripping partner of several years, driving north towards LaLoche with two unfamiliar faces: Bill Jeffery and Roger Devine. These other guys seemed OK — our eccentric fascination with wilderness travel was an immediate bond and all mouths were running in high gear, flush with the anticipation and excitement of our route. But the truth be known, the real clincher for my participation in this trip had been my wife, who didn't raise a whisper of objection: "You'd better go, Dave; you'll be impossible to live with if

you don't!"

In a few minutes the painful part — laying down our bucks with LaLoche Air Service — was over and it was time to fly the 170 km into Lisgar Lake. It was a turbulent ride in the Cessna 185 and several times we had to remind ourselves that there was nothing in our stomachs but butterflies. The pilot thought otherwise and handed each of us a doggie bag, but I am proud to say that with effort we managed to hold our own.

Twice we flew over the Clearwater, a Heritage River that is becoming a popular whitewater run. Our pilot had a little difficulty in locating our destination, as the view below was a regular jigsaw puzzle of small lakes and interconnected streams. But luckily we had Bill's 1:50,000-scale topo map, and after circling for fifteen minutes the pilot finally figured it out, landing at the northeast end of Lisgar



Lake about 7:30 p.m. The plane left for the balance of our crew and Daryl and I set up camp on a carpet of moss, preparing supper and soaking up the remoteness of this jack pine wilderness. A thunderstorm rolled in with gusty winds and we were relieved when the pilot returned about 10 p.m. with Bill and Roger. Then the plane was gone again and the four of us were alone with the summer solstice, weary from the highway miles and the expectation that precedes all journeys into the unknown, not to mention the risks of travelling with untried companions. Yet on this item we need not have lost any sleep, for I've yet to paddle with a more compatible crew.

The MacFarlane River rises about 50 km north of Cree Lake, running 300 km almost due north through the Athabasca sandstone geological formation. Just before emptying into Lake Athabasca, the river cuts through the east side of the unique Athabasca Sand Dunes, a world all its own. The entire region is uninhabited and virtually untravalled today, offering the wilderness seeker some of the most isolated canoe country to be found below the 60th parallel.

A bright blue sky greeted us our first morning out. During a leisurely breakfast, Bill spotted a large woodland caribou crossing from island to island about 400 m from camp. Surely this majestic bull was a good omen. Then it was time to leave our reverie and get to business with the river. It proved to be wider than expected but extremely shallow, necessitating considerable wading for the first several kilometres.

There was something exhilarating about paddling a river without a written record from previous travellers, and I found myself engrossed in a Huck Finn fantasy of peril and adventure. But I do take offense at those who claim a first or whatever descent of a river, as the Indians have done them all before there were any white men around. George Bihun, a friendly Conservation Officer from Uranium City, shared a Geological Survey map dated 1932, indicating old native routes that included some phenomenally long portages. Bill has personally talked to several Dene hunters, now elderly, who endured portages of 10 to 25 km to access this area many years ago. It's a shame their exploits have never been recorded.

Armed with 1:50,000-scale topos, we almost felt we were cheating until we arrived at a location north of Lazenby Lake where the river took on a mind of its own, defying the map in three spots. Overall, we had an easy first day running

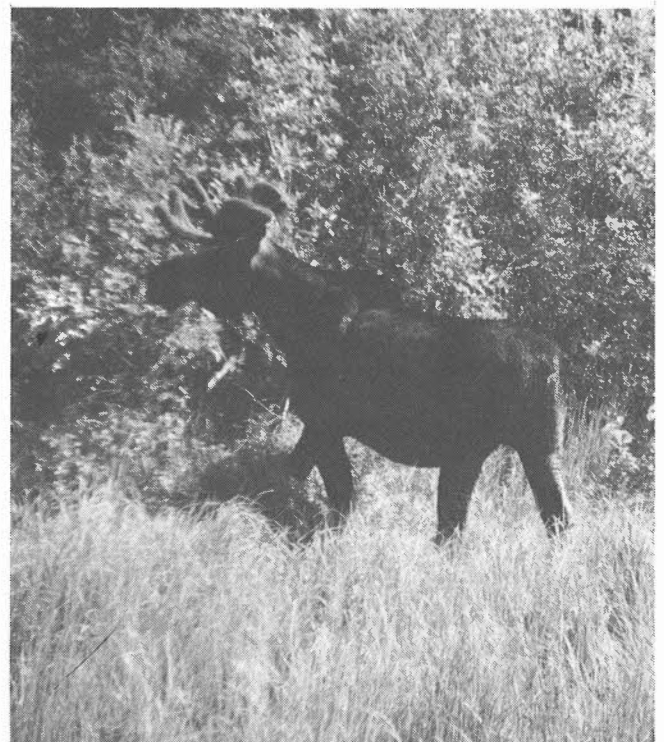
a number of fast, shallow rapids and absorbing the solitude of the pine-covered hills. By day's end we knew we would make a team, our apprehension gone and confident we could face the challenge of the river.

The next several days the MacFarlane picked up volume and we enjoyed some exciting runs in long Class 2 and 3 rapids. We made good progress but always took the time to observe the wildlife around us, including one large bear that did not seem the least interested in our presence until we approached too close; then suddenly we were paddling away like crazy. Fortunately

bruin decided to expend his energies on a handy beaver house; we paddled on for a few kilometres, swapping stories of previous bear encounters.

Eagles, ducks, and geese with their new broods also kept us entertained, as did a pair of trumpeter swans that reappeared several times. We made our first portage around a small fall above Brudell Lake, named for a trapper who lived there in the 1930s. (A fascinating read on this part of Saskatchewan is the book *North to Cree Lake* by A.L. Karras.) Below Brudell we scouted a heavier rapid that Bill and Roger ran, while Daryl and I portaged a faint trail laced with lovely pink lady slipper flowers.

Day three was our day of discovery. Between two rapids and below an overhanging rock face, Bill spotted three native pictographs, red-line figures in the shape of a triangle that may have indicated a travel itinerary. This art work of antiquity substantiates the existence of a native route of travel between Lake Athabasca and Churchill River, via the MacFarlane River. This discovery was particularly rewarding in that there appears to be no written record of pictographs existing that far north.





Our second find of the day was of lesser significance but still the cause of much speculation: the bleached skeleton of an old homemade canoe hanging up in a jack pine, and also two very short, hand-carved spruce paddles leaning against the trunk. A few rusted stove pipes, some beaver hoops of willow, and several axe-cut poles gave evidence that this had been a trapper's camp. The temptation to carry the paddles out as souvenirs seemed inappropriate, and there they will remain until consumed by forest fire or time.

With hills rising to over 100 m above the river, it hardly seemed possible that we were cruising through so-called "flat" Saskatchewan. A favorite activity after supper was an evening climb up a high hill for a sunset panorama of sky, river, and endless pine-covered hills in every direction. This brought on a feeling of minuteness and yet a closeness to the Creator of it all. Some huge depressions in the fragile reindeer moss evoked images of the "Sasquatch," but we remained unharmed by beast and unhindered by the complexities of life as we enjoyed these remote highland vistas.

A spectacular three-split falls was our reward on our fifth day, an open-sky cathedral of primeval beauty where the wild lady slippers grew in profusion. With warm sunshine on our backs, a gentle breeze, and hardly an insect to disturb the tranquility, it was as if we had already arrived.

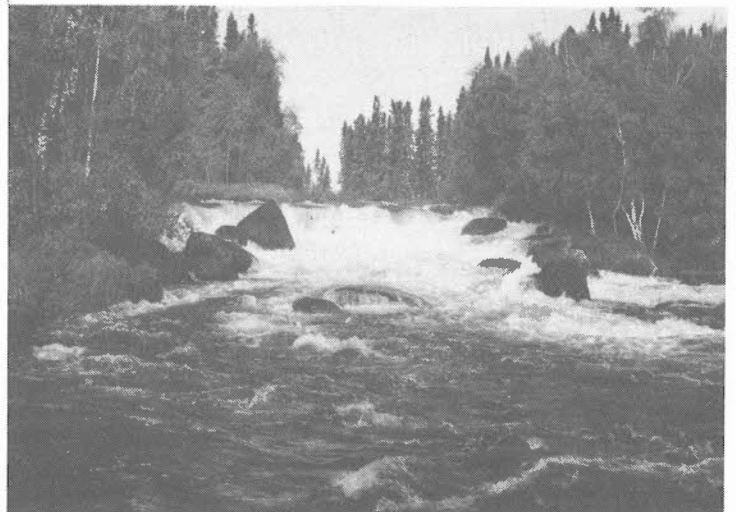
It always amazes me how close you can get to wildlife in a canoe. Coming from downwind, we approached a bull moose in velvet, contentedly munching on young willow branches and totally unaware of our presence only four metres away. Another time we snuck up on a moose napping in the river with only his nose sticking out — man, did he come out of the water like a torpedo!

Soon we passed the mouth of the Snare River and now had some well-written trip notes from an expedition the previous summer, a group that, we learned later, was led by Bob Dannert from Minnesota. At every river constriction there was a rapid even though our topo maps indicated nothing. Most rapids were long and bouldery, and we ran them by scouting from the canoe and eddy-hopping our way down. The shore line did not readily lend itself to lining and I doubt that portages exist, except those kept open by game. The water level was obviously very high as evidenced by drowned-out willows; running the MacFarlane in low water conditions would be a tough go requiring considerable time and effort.

Camp life was falling into an easy rhythm with the passing days. Daryl and Bill did most of the cooking, Roger obliged us with a fish when called upon, and I faithfully endured dish duty (by choice) without complaining. Scenic camps and level tent sites were almost always easy to locate on pine-covered benches that reminded us that we were, indeed, travelling through the Kingdom of Sand.

One evening after a heavy-duty spaghetti supper, we were relaxing over a cup of tea when Bill (sometimes referred to as "Binocular Bill") spotted a moving something in the water. Before I could mutter "I don't see nothing," Bill and Roger were rushing for their canoe with utterances of "Bear! Let's head him off before he hits camp." I was totally amazed at how fast a bear can swim upstream, and bruin landed on a sand spit a couple of hundred metres above camp before the canoe could intercept him. When the boys returned slightly alarmed, I was still unperturbed and remarked, "Never mind — he's just heading back up river." But with a keen sense of smell the bear was coming on strong for pasta, even though we scrupulously clean up after every meal. Although the animal did not charge right in for dessert, his determined pace put a little fear into us, and suddenly Daryl and I were blowing our whistles and ordering him to go elsewhere.

He really was a big fella! All our hubbub did nothing to discourage him and as he approached to within 50 m in the thin jack pines, Bill, our fearless leader, grabbed a large stick and lunged at the intruder. But Mr. Bear just stood his ground, although I don't recall him growling or actively





displaying overt aggression. When Bill put down his feeble weapon and said, "We're outta here," we did not argue and in ten minutes flat we evacuated camp, rolling sleeping bags and clothing up inside the tents, and just throwing everything into the boats. All the while the bear kept a silent watch on us from 30 to 40 m, and when we had gained the safety of the river, we stopped to look back over our shoulders. Sure enough, the bear was sitting on the river bank where we had been reclining only minutes before, finishing Bill's cup of tea (the only item we forgot) and, if I'm not mistaken, with a grin on his face.



In retrospect, we were very fortunate that the bear did not visit us an hour later as it would have been dark and we certainly would have lost some grub. As it was, we made our getaway at dusk, negotiating two rapids in near darkness with nothing tied in. Our alternative camp was pitched at midnight, the thick young forest silhouetted by a full moon riding high in the June sky. Strange to say, bearish thoughts did not disturb my sleep and I drifted off with the sounds of a gentle breeze in the pines and the lapping of the river water against the shoreline.

The next day we were sped on our way by good current and some long easy rapids, and then by the wind which afforded us an opportunity to sail as we neared Davey Lake. Our island campsite, a "Shangri-La" with a lovely sand beach, was blessed by the absence of biting insects and we thoroughly enjoyed the lingering evening, leisurely swimming in the surprisingly warm water and relishing the magic of twilight.

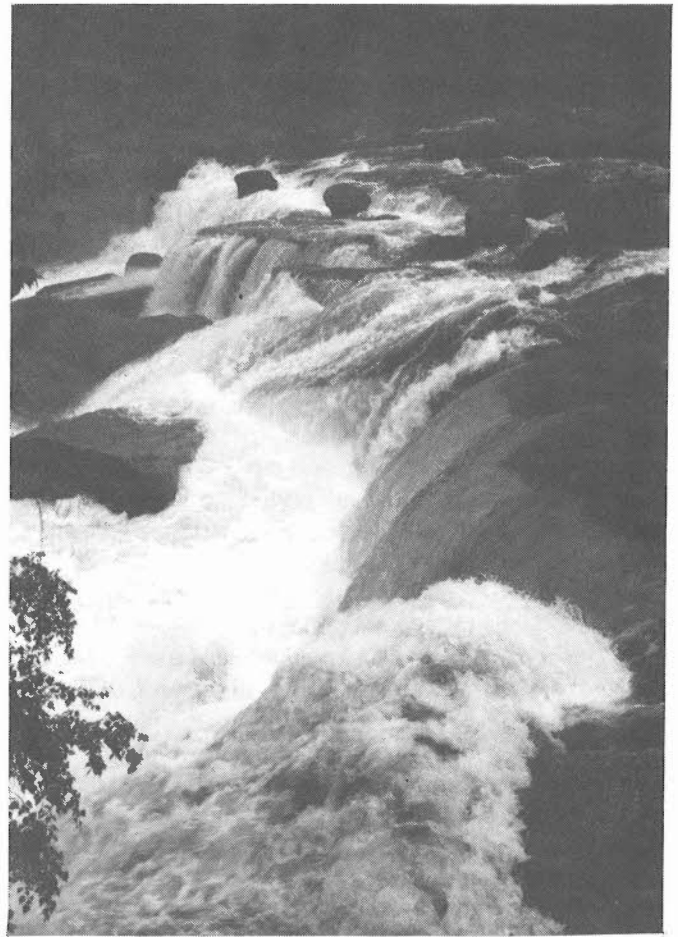
A vicious, but short-lived, squall hit just before dawn, rousing all of us from slumber to check the security of our gear. Fortunately, the wind abated as suddenly as it had risen and we had an ideal 14-km crossing of Davey Lake the next morning, lunching near an active eagle's nest along Gunthrie Bay. At another location the ever-curious Bill actually checked out an abandoned eagle's nest and found that a man could comfortably curl up inside of it.

Nearing the river mouth, some old cabins caught our attention. As we peeked inside the door of the first dirt-covered hut, we hurriedly withdrew as an agitated mother merganser flew off her nest of eight eggs. The point between the north shore of Davey Lake and the MacFarlane River is obviously a perennial favorite of the Chipewyans from Fond du Lac; the natives probably access this area by snowmobiling across Lake Athabasca and the Great Sand Dunes. A couple of kilometres down-river we passed a newer cabin that was unlocked and stocked with the customary items of trapping: rifle, homemade snowshoes, traps, and an assortment of tools and snowmobile parts.

The next three days were canyon days as we worked our way down the final kilometres of the MacFarlane River towards immense Athabasca Lake, one of the last large lakes in our province still inaccessible by road. The Upper Gorge drops 40 m in about three kilometres, necessitating a one-kilometre portage on river right along five-to-ten-metre high canyon walls. The humidity was oppressive and for once the black flies came out in full force for blood, causing us to hurry across the fairly easy carry through semi-open jack pine. Numerous ledges and a five-metre fall kept the river roaring and camp was pitched on the canyon rim at a spot where we could access the water by dragging the canoes over the cliff. It had been a tiresome day and we were pooped from the exertion and the heat. Hopefully, no roving bears would trouble us, for the noise of any intruder would have been obliterated by the thunder of the gorge.

A large toad greeted us the next morning while we loaded the boats and gladly posed for his picture. Running out the balance of the rapids in the canyon, we were forced to ferry across the strong current several times in order to locate the deep-water channel — our river had grown from a benign stream to a formidable opponent in only nine days. Then it was 28 km of smooth cruising, the monotony broken by the appearance of two moose and several eagles.

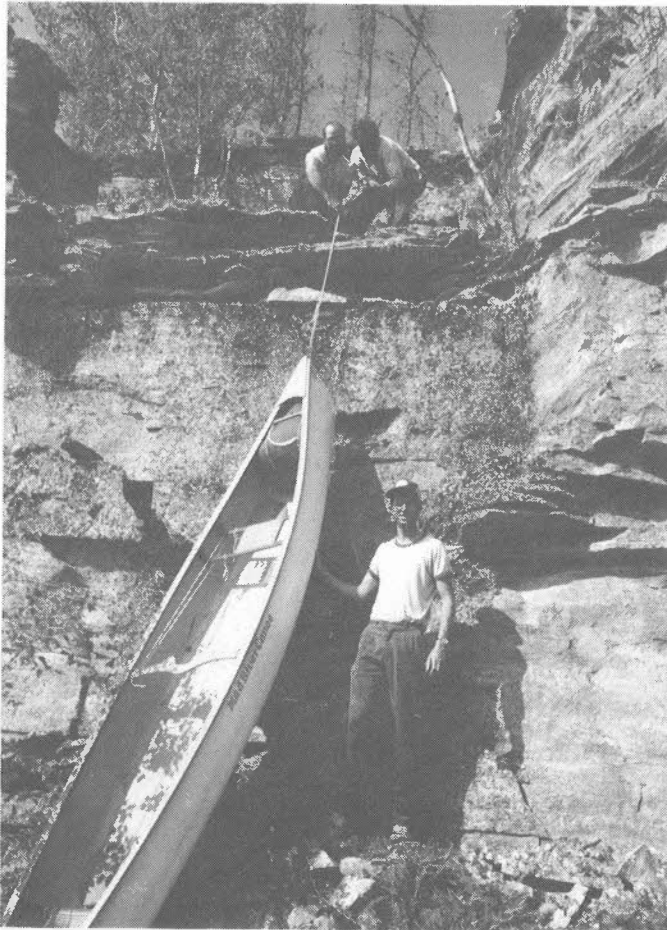
In late afternoon we reached the Big One, the Middle Canyon of the MacFarlane. Scouting the west side of the canyon for about three kilometres, our topo maps came alive as the river plunged down across nine contour lines in five kilometres of rugged pristine beauty. Sheer canyon walls rise



10 to 18 m high and the 80 m drop pounds itself out in almost countless ledges and four sets of falls up to 12 m high. In some places huge pieces of cliff have fallen or detached themselves from the main canyon wall, creating all sorts of weird crevices and interesting overhangs. Bill remarked that this canyon reminded him of the Dubawnt in the N.W.T., albeit with a lesser volume of water.

By late evening we had completed our scouting and had formulated a plan of action for the next morning. Ferrying across a very strong current, we camped on river right on a high sandy bank. Our enthusiasm for this lovely spot was somewhat dampened by fresh bear dung and the inevitable apprehension of our upcoming day with the Big One.

Ferrying back across to the west side in the morning, we began our descent into the canyon with a feeling of elation, yet tempered by respect for the river. Hugging the west shore for about 800 m, we kept all eyes peeled for the exact spot where we would take out just above the first impassable ledge. Don't worry — we didn't miss it! Then it was time to put Bill's plan into action: crawl up through a narrow crevice and manhandle the canoes and packs up the canyon walls with a rope. Adrenalin did the trick and soon we were safely on top; the last squeeze through that ominous crevice was a relief, even for a little guy like me. The three-kilometre portage through recent burn was strenuous work but not as bad as we had envisioned the evening before. For some reason apprehension is usually worse than reality. The awesome Middle Canyon is an Indian Reserve — "Sacred Land and Thunder Water."





Taking a long break at the bottom of the bushwhack portage, we recuperated with a big mid-afternoon lunch and a cool submersion in a jacuzzi-like boil that helped relax sore muscles and aching backs. Although evening was at hand, we were anxious to have a little extra time to explore the Sand Dunes and so shoved off into the Lower Canyon, manoeuvring constantly in the five kilometres of heavy water. Taking a small side channel on river right we were able to avoid some of the bigger stuff. As we regained the main channel we surprised a busy beaver and then caught a glimpse of the first majestic sand dune. The last surprise of the day was a near hit with a small bear — we almost ran over him in the rapids before he panicked and fled from the strange floating monster that was, excuse the pun, bearing down upon him.

At last the whitewater was behind us and we glided across a small roundish lake, bordered on two sides by high, almost barren dunes, that mark the eastern limit of the Great Athabasca Sand Dunes. By 9 p.m. we were camped at a superb site on the north end of the little lake and all agreed it had been one very long, hard day of wilderness travel. This small unnamed lake was an ideal pick-up spot for a float plane, as opposed to the wind-tossed south shore of Athabasca, five kilometres north at the delta of the MacFarlane. In the lingering calm of twilight, the muffled roar of the lower canyons could still be heard in the distance, but we smiled at the prospect of a leisurely time exploring the dunes on foot the following day.

The sweet sleep of success was tranquil and deep, and I awoke with a start at the splashing of water, but it was only Bill going for his morning dip. At 59 degrees latitude the water was much warmer than expected, and the

weatherman had certainly been generous to us with warm sunny days and only an odd shower, a stark contrast to some other northern trips I have done.

The Dunes were a delight and it was amazing how fast they warmed up in the early July heat. A hike over the dune fields was like a walk on an alien planet and we thoroughly enjoyed the vistas from these most northerly dunes in the world. Individual dunes reach 1,500 m in length with heights up to 30 m, some of the largest dunes in North America. The region is geologically and biologically unique with a number of plants that are found nowhere else on earth. The Saskatchewan government has recently set aside the entire area as a wilderness reserve, but this status could be threatened if road construction is allowed to access the dunes from the south.

Our day of hiking went all too quickly and it was a shame that our charter was booked for the next day before noon. Moose, bear, and some huge timber wolf tracks were evident on our walks above camp, and from a high dune we caught sight of the vast expanse of Lake Athabasca, glittering in the evening sun. The dune fields in the immediate vicinity were interspersed with spruce and pine-covered ridges, an eerie and exotic land where the ever-shifting sands are either smothering plants and trees by burying them, or building up solid formations firm enough to support new plant growth. An excellent article on the Dunes can be found in the July 1991 issue of "Canadian Geographic."

Crawling into the tents for our last night, we reflected on the wonders of the river and the fragility of these remarkable dune lands. Our hope is that this unique ecosystem will remain unspoiled and wild far into the future.

As this was our final morning, Bill prepared a delicious apple cobbler from leftovers and we celebrated our fortune of health, comradeship, and adventure. The Cessna arrived on cue for the 320-km flight south and this time, Bill and Roger went first, allowing Daryl and I to savor the dunes for a few hours longer. Then it was our turn to wing south over the vast wilderness of northern Saskatchewan. And next time I'll remember to bring the Gravol tablets.



FALL PARTY

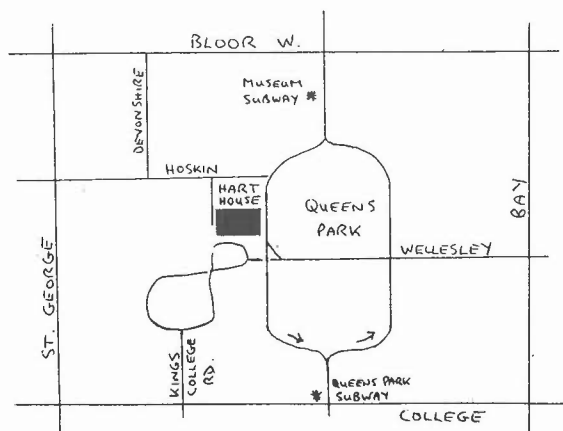
Want to meet old canoeing friends? Want to hear some tall paddling stories and see interesting photographs? Want to find out what the WCA is all about, who its members are, and what inside information they can give you?

Then come to the WCA Fall Party, also called Wine-and-Cheese Party, on Friday evening, 26 November. Due to renovations at George Brown, we're unable to use the staff lounge this year. **THE NEW LOCATION IS HART HOUSE**, 7 Hart House Circle, University of Toronto in downtown Toronto. Non-WCA members are also welcome. Admission, to be paid at the door, is \$7.00 per person.

Program

6:30 – 7:30	Registration and welcome
7:30 – 8:00	Slide shows
8:00 – 9:00	Meet the people, enjoy the wine and cheese
9:00 – 9:30	Slide shows
9:30 –	Coffee and gab

For more information, contact Paul Hamilton during the day at (416) 791-1303.



PAK-CANOE WANTED

We are writing to ask for your help in locating a particular kind of canoe. A group of students from the Harvard Outing Club is planning a trip on the Teles Pires River in Brazil. This river is fairly remote, we will be travelling up to four weeks without resupply, and there are sections of whitewater. Ideally, one would have a boat which can carry a large load in up to Class 3 whitewater and which can also be easily transported by plane and bus. After much research, we have decided that the best boat for the trip is the Ally Folding Canoe, also known as the Pak-Canoe.

Pak-Canoes are made in Norway and are available in the United States. Unfortunately, they are currently so expensive that our club cannot afford to buy them new. We are therefore hoping to obtain used canoes, in any condition. Perhaps you, someone in your club, or even just a casual acquaintance has a Pak-Canoe in his or her attic and is willing to part with it. Best would be a donation, of course. Donations to the Harvard Outing Club are tax deductible (in the USA, ed.) and we would pay for shipping. However, we are even willing to pay you some money (we don't have all that much!) for the right kind of canoe.

Can you help us out? If you know someone who has a Pak-Canoe, could you give us a call or write us? Thanks ever so much.

Harvard Outing Club, c/o Georg Jander, 10 Goodrich Rd. #2, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, Phone (617) 432-1921.

HOW PORCUPINES DO IT

Because so many diverse forms of life surround us in a place like Algonquin Park, we human beings sometimes start taking for granted that other creatures can make their living in truly amazing ways. To be sure, we always marvel at the stream-damming abilities of beavers, the aerial prowess of dragonflies, or the fact that little bundles of feathers called woodpeckers can excavate cavities in solid wood. Nevertheless, many other remarkable feats in the natural world often remain ignored or unappreciated.

Take for example the question of how porcupines eat trees. Now, at first glance, you might think that this behavior is decidedly unspectacular. Porcupines have the teeth to do the job, after all, and trees can hardly outrun their attackers so what is so special about porcupines munching on a few twigs? The truth is that trees are anything but a free lunch for porcupines. They have evolved some fairly obvious, but also some very sophisticated, defences against would-be

predators and the fact that some porcupines have known success in the tree-eating lifestyle is a remarkable accomplishment.

The most straightforward obstacle in the way of happy dining in the forest is that most parts of most trees are nutritionally very unrewarding. This is by no means an accident. Over millions of years of being chewed on by a world-wide array of tree-eaters ranging from insects to elephants, the strains of trees that have survived best and have come to dominate the earth are those varieties which happened to be the least interesting to plant-eating animals. The trees we see today are tough, bad-tasting, and extremely poor in key constituents needed for good nutrition because relentless pressure from tree-eaters has made them that way.

Up to a point, the tree-eaters themselves have managed to keep pace with the unwitting but very real unpalatability defence evolved by the trees. Porcupines, of course, have

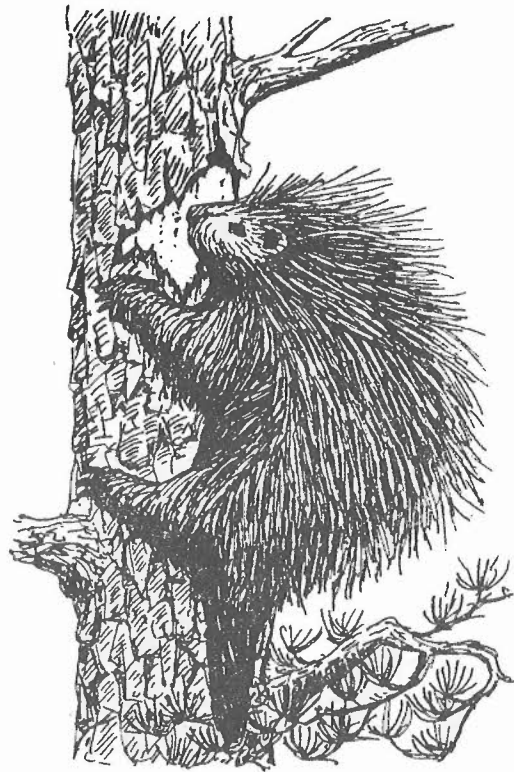
their sharp, ever-growing, self-sharpening teeth with which they tirelessly scrape away the tough outer bark of trees. They also have an enormous digestive system adapted to extracting the utmost value from the low quality fare offered by trees. Fully 75% of a porcupine's body cavity is occupied by the stomach, the intestines, and the caecum. The caecum is a large sac attached to the intestine and filled with bacteria. These are capable of breaking down cellulose and other normally indigestible carbohydrates and converting them to chemical compounds that the porcupine can digest.

At times, however, even this isn't enough. In the winter, when porcupines are forced to subsist on the inner bark of trees, they actually lose weight. They try to stem their losses by keeping travel down to a minimum and then only on well-worn trails through the snow from warm denning areas to choice feeding areas, but it may all be for naught. There are cases on record where porcupines starting the winter in poor condition literally starved to death even though their stomachs were full and in spite of being surrounded by an inexhaustible supply of their supposed food.

Of course, as you might expect, things do improve in the spring. The first flush of tree leaves is especially nourishing, containing about 20% protein — as opposed to a mere 2–3% contained in the winter diet. After a long winter of slow starvation, porcupines have a lifesaving feast in which they selectively fatten up on the best-tasting items they can find. Included are the leaves and buds of beech and sugar maple and the catkins of trembling aspen.

This is not to say that summer continues to be all beeches and cream. Tree leaves are very nutritious at first but very soon they start to change. Not only does their protein content steadily drop through the rest of spring and summer, but also they start to produce bitter chemical defences — compounds that sicken leaf-eating insects and slow down or alter the digestive processes of larger animals. Porcupines keep gaining weight but with much greater difficulty. They search far and wide for species like basswood or aspens that aren't quite so offensive, and among these preferred tree types they look for individual trees that happen to be a little more nutritious and palatable.

Even then, porcupines have trouble because trees have other defences. Like us humans, porcupines contain within their bodies equal, though small, amounts of sodium and potassium and need these "nutrients" for proper health. The trouble for porcupines is that even otherwise nutritious leaves contain far more potassium than sodium, sometimes 300 times as much. If porcupines eat enough green leaves to get the sodium they require their system may be flooded with potassium. That won't do because, in high concentrations, potassium seriously interferes with the operation of nerves and muscles. The porcupine's kidneys work hard to get rid of unneeded potassium but, unfortunately, they can't avoid excreting some of their precious sodium in the process. If a porcupine is going to maintain its sodium balance, in other words, it has to find an artificial source of sodium (like a salt lick) or stop eating green leaves. When this happens the tree, helpless though it may seem, has actually defeated the porcupine.



Things get even more subtle than that. It has been known for a long time that porcupines often adopt a "favorite" feeding tree, returning night after night, and inexplicably bypassing similar trees of the same species nearby. Chemical analyses of the preferred and untouched trees have revealed no difference in protein content or in the bitter compounds that discourage plant-eaters. Where the eaten trees did differ was in the acid content of their leaves. Porcupines much prefer leaves with a low acid content and other work has shown why. High blood levels of acid greatly inhibit an animal's ability to get rid of potassium through its kidneys — but that is precisely what a porcupine has to do if it is going to have a diet of green leaves.

The ploys used by trees and porcupines in their unconscious struggle for survival start to take on the aura of a chess game. On the face of it no-one would have thought that porcupines would have any problem eating all the trees they cared to. In fact, the relationship between the eaters and the eatees is amazingly subtle, delicate, and complicated, and anything but one-sided. It is easy to conceive, in fact, that with just one or two additional tricks in their chemical arsenal, trees might utterly defeat their enemies. Is it any wonder that porcupines have to adhere to a strict regime of energy conservation and to exercise the utmost selectivity in their diet choices to survive?

In truth, porcupines — far from having an easy time of it — must perform a behavioral balancing act of great sensitivity to succeed in life. Eating trees is not simple. As someone once said, porcupines have to do it "very, very carefully."

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

THE TRAVELS AND FINAL STRUGGLE OF HERMAN J. KOEHLER

Bob Henderson

The multi-faceted Hubbard story of 1903–05 with all its central players — Leonidas' struggles and death in the high country, Mina's completion of the story and "race" against Dillon Wallace's travels in the same year, the endurance and support of indomitable George Elson, and the skill of canoe men Job Chapies and Gilbert Blake — is an account now synonymous with the Labrador interior. It is, however, certainly not the only story that deserves our attention for the lessons it might teach us now and the simple larger-than-life proportion of the characters involved.

Indeed there is undoubtedly many a story of ill-fated travels left unrecorded and now lost through time. The Labrador/Ungava interior lends itself to the unrecorded travel saga. One story that has been reported in various issues of *Them Days: Stories of Early Labrador* and the Labrador archives is the strange account of Herman J. Koehler's travels in Labrador.¹ With three days of waiting for lost luggage in Goose Bay — Happy Valley, and time to browse, I came across his story: another Labrador tale of a dominant, ambitious personality, faithful admirable guides, and finally death and a mystery in the advancing winter season on the Labrador plateau.

Herman J. Koehler made three trips in Labrador. The first one, of which little is recorded, involved the St. Augustine River to the North Shore. On the second trip in 1928 he had as partners son Hans and the classic "Labrador man" John Michelin, then a twenty-five-year-old area trapper. The route, in John's words, was as follows: "I went across [from Voisey's Bay on the coast, up-river on Frank's Brook (Kogaluk River) over the plateau portage to the George River] with Koehler and his son across to Indian House Lake, almost out to Chimo [Kuujuaq] and back again." The trip took three and a half months and was not without its incidents.²

Though Michelin had respect for Koehler following the 1928 travels, he refused to join Koehler and partner in 1931. In that year Koehler returned, picked up another young local guide, Jim Martin, (who was strongly advised not to go) in the town of Cartwright, and proceeded on the Nascopie ship to Fort Chimo from where the party of three would travel to the George River by canoe and over the height of land to the Atlantic coast via the Notokuan River [Notakwanon] to Upatik [Okpatik], about 30 miles up in the bay from Davis Inlet. Koehler, his partner (always a new partner) Fred Cornell from Glen Ridge, New Jersey, and young Jim Martin (age 26) never returned. Cornell's and Koehler's remains were eventually found, in 1932 and 1938 respectively, in settings that piece together a puzzle comparable to the final struggles of Leonidas Hubbard. Jim Martin's remains were never discovered and all evidence suggests he survived, but chose not to return. He was never heard from again. Though there are some stories ...

John Michelin's recollections tell a tale of Koehler as, "a hard man [at] different times," but "a good man, a hard-

headed man." Koehler had aspired to write a travel book on Labrador. He had likely read Cabot's and Prichard's narratives and saw himself (rightly so) in that tradition. More accurately, he and company fit the Hubbard tradition. Like Leonidas Hubbard's 1903 attempted travels across the Labrador interior, Koehler had a loyal but reluctant "travel-smart" guide and a greenhorn white companion with less visions of grandeur for self as superior to the challenges of the land. Koehler, like Hubbard, was also unwisely pig-headed given his limited understanding of the terrain. Koehler's third trip (1931) was meant to complete his package objectives for a book on the Labrador interior. There is no book.

It is questionable whether Koehler's book would have recorded the tales that John Michelin remembers 48 years later in the first volumes of *Them Days*. Michelin mentions "difficult times" during the full moon and the new moon when Koehler seemed to lose control. Once, Michelin arrived on the scene just in time to prevent a full-moon-crazed Koehler from slitting his son's throat at a time of lean food supplies [out of grub for ten days]. The son, Hans, told John that his father was getting worse every year. One must surmise that there were more such incidents in 1928 and again on the ill-fated saga of 1931. Koehler also stubbornly refused to follow Mina Hubbard's old map of the George River country. He claimed, "a woman never done nothing right in her life. If we follow that map, we might get lost." Michelin identified the map to be accurate and its suggested route sound, but Koehler would have no part of it. He was in charge, in control, and not to be swayed by lesser people such as a woman and local "Indians". So, as Michelin calmly notes, "we went sixteen days the wrong route ... I told him ..." Koehler said, "we'd go that way till he wanted to turn back". Hubbard, similarly, would not let himself defer to local native intelligence and, in so doing, mistakenly followed the lesser Susan River to his death rather than pursue the main line and "obvious" Naskapi River route. (Having recently flown in a single Otter over the confluence of these rivers, small and large, at the end of Grand Lake, I was struck by the magnitude and absurdity of this mistake. Ah, the benefit of hindsight.) Koehler's blunders in defiance of native intelligence would finally catch up with him as well.

One should also note that Koehler was a boxer, a football player, and, as John Michelin points out, "six foot six in his stockings." He had a habit of getting his way no doubt. Lawrence Millman, author of a soon-to-be-published book on the Labrador Innu peoples, wrote to me, highlighting that, "Herman Koehler was a universally detested man ... Everybody I know who ever met the man seems to have been struck by the sheer awfulness of his personality." As Millman noted, the fact that Koehler was a toilet manufacturer possibly has a relevant place in the story. Look for Koehler on plumbing fixtures in older buildings. It seems Herman Koehler was respected in a "certain" way, but not as a

travelling partner. His travels in Labrador would be short.

John Michelin, on the other hand, lived long and prospered in his native home. He had thirteen kids, thirty-three grandchildren, and forty-two great-grandchildren at the time of his death on 3 May 1991. In his own words, "I knows all the waterways, all around the country, right across to Fort Chimo." Among his travels and trapping stories are his 1930 inland trapping season and travels with the intrepid Elliott Merrick and Kate Austen (told in eloquent style by Merrick in his 1933 book *True North*), and his 1951 National Geographic guiding trip to Grand Falls with side trips that made for a round trip of about 600 miles. In 1972, John received a cardiac pacemaker which he fondly called his peacemaker. An important and exemplar figure of the Labradorian self-confidence in the land "up country," traveller/trapper John Michelin died in bed at age 88. Herman Koehler likely had lots of praise and gratitude to bestow on his guide, to whom he should have deferred to in earnest. Koehler was not to die in bed in the company of family.

In 1931, with Herman's return for his last "pre-book" trip, he had new partners and a less ambitious route, though his stubborn refusal to accept advice from natives would help turn a reasonable adventure into a traveller's nightmare.

Tshenish (translation: old man) Pasteen from Davis Inlet remembered in 1990 that, when he was a young boy, his family told the Koehler party of 1931 that there were easier routes to cross the height of land to the coast. The Naskapi natives advised a route finishing at Nain via Frank's Brook already familiar to Koehler. The white men were told that

the overland route to the Notakwanon River and on to Davis Inlet is longer, heavily wooded, and difficult with whitewater. The difference in distance is approximately sixty-five miles. Tshenish remembers: "... it was starting to snow and they would not make it. Their leader didn't want anyone to show him where to go."

The harder route from Indian House Lake to Davis Inlet rather than Nain was to be tried. Koehler wanted to find Mistinibi Lake which he erroneously believed to be a relatively easy access to the Notakwanon. He never got close to this plateau lake and had he ever struck the Notakwanon, he certainly would have been overwhelmed in every way by the long stretches of rapids and canyon portages.

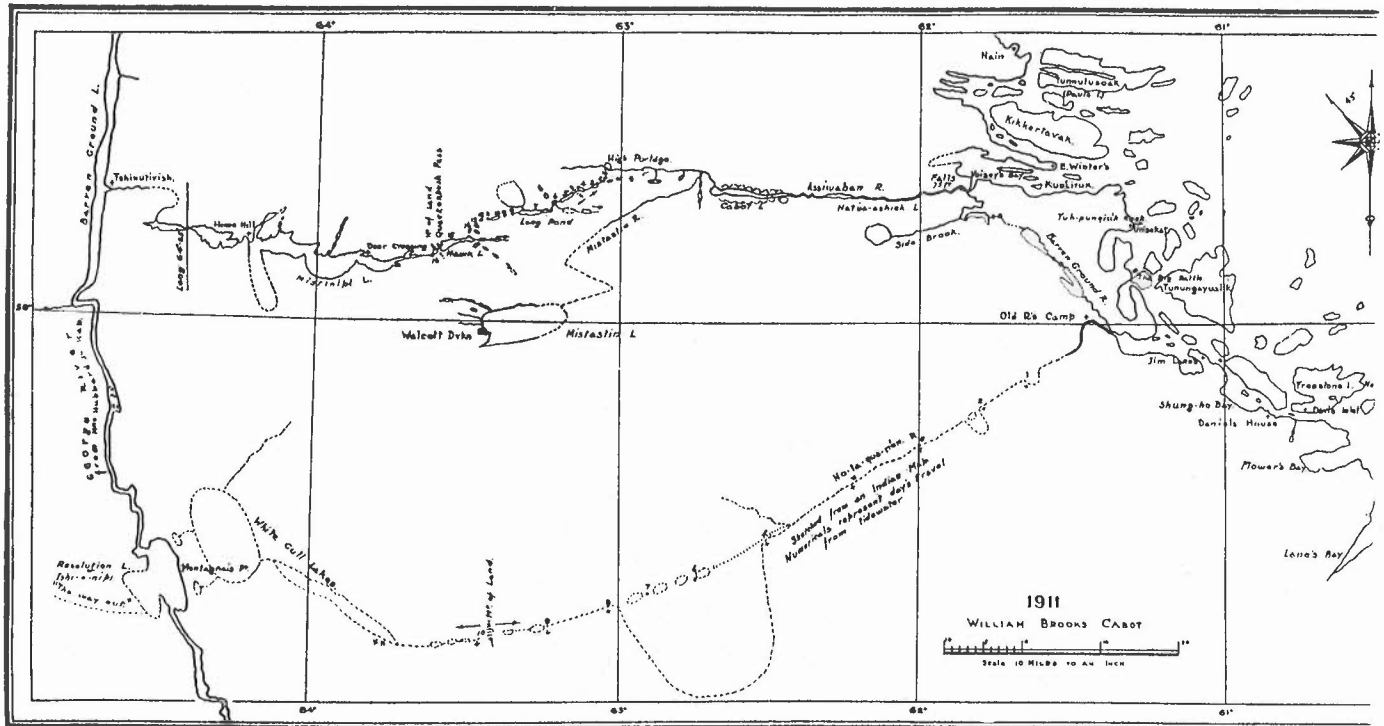
Clothing was repaired and some food was supplied by the indigenous Naskapi, and everything seemed possible perhaps until heavy frost and snow froze up the plateau lakes. Apparently a decision was made to transform their canoe to a sled, but once this task had been completed, the weather dramatically changed. There was a major thaw. The party was now canoe-less and forced to proceed on a difficult walk. Chances are they were mostly lost following their meeting with the sympathetic Naskapi. H.H. Pritchard's 1911 book *Through Trackless Labrador* opens with the claim that luck ultimately determines one's fate in Labrador. Like the Leonidas Hubbard story, bad luck certainly contributed to matters, but an undaunted self-initiative without attention to local knowledge proved the real downfall of both expeditions. Koehler hadn't learned from Hubbard's mistakes.

Cornell's body was the first to be discovered in the



L to R: — John Michelin, Herman and Hans Koehler — 1928

(Courtesy *Them Days*)



Native-drawn map showing standard Assiwaban (Nogaluk) route and Koehler's "dream" destination, the Notakwanon. (Ref. *In Northern Labrador*, 1911, William B. Cabot)

spring of 1932. Father O'Brien of Hopedale wrote an official report in August 1932 that claims the Koehler party was last seen 31 October 1931 east of Indian House Lake near what O'Brien called Erlandson Lake (now Lac Terriault, to be more precise). Tshenish Pasteen's 1990 recollections concur loosely with this reported location. Cornell's body was discovered not far from here on the open barrens about 25 miles east of Lac Terriault. Tshenish remembers that, "the next spring my mother found the fat man's body near the path [portage route]. He must have gotten sick and died, but he didn't starve because he was still fat." He had likely camped, unable to go on while Koehler and Martin continued either in search of a route or in search of the natives, who had so critically helped them earlier. Pasteen mentions hearing gun shots which in retrospect were probably emergency pleas for help. These shots were judged to be others of the Naskapi group hunting in the area and were disregarded.

Koehler's body was eventually found in 1938 east of Erlandson/Terriault Lake in a well-wooded place about three miles away from Cornell. Koehler had partridge feathers stuffed in his clothing. His bones were scattered, likely due to bears and wolves. The skull was never found. The bones were of a very tall man, not a short one like Jim Martin. Koehler's camera fell into pieces when picked up. It and other supplies were found with the body under a tattered canvas tent. It appeared to Jim Saunders Sr., who accompanied the coastal ranger in the search once natives had made the initial report, that, "... [it] goes to show that they was trying to head back down into George's River where the woods was to. The first feller was found on the barrens. No

woods or nothing. I think, meself, what happened was that at that time of the year the lakes freeze up in there. When they got to the lakes they started to head back, likely all the while hoping to refind the Innu." The party's gun and axe and Koehler's journal were not found at the site. Koehler's widow, Willamina, had made a special request of Father O'Brien to seek out, "the little notebook he carried on this, as previous trips, which would detail the journey he made day by day." Headlines in the Daily News, a New York paper at the time, read SKELETON OF MISSING EXPLORER RECOVERED.

The mystique of the "formidable Labrador" lives on with the Hubbard/Koehler tradition. But as guides Michelin and Martin would surely attest, it was not the land that deserves the formidable reputation, but the ambition and naivety of the foreigners, hoblanoks (translation: outsiders) who pit their will against the land.

Meanwhile, Jim Martin's body was never found. A man with a gun and an axe might survive in the country to likely refind the local natives and join them, thought many of Jim's friends. Among them, Henry Mesher from Cartwright believed in 1978 Jim was still alive then. Leonard Budgell, whose brother Max was among the group who had discovered Cornell's body that spring of 1932, suggested that, "Indians buried Jimmy's body." The missing items suggests otherwise and perhaps there is a story best not told. But, the events surrounding the deaths and the story of Jim Martin become speculation. Word had it that Jim, who had worked in Resolute Bay and trapped on Somerset Island in 1926, might have eventually got out to the coast, felt responsible

as guide for the deaths, or was involved in more “full moon” related crazed Koehler events, and headed back north to the N.W.T. One story has it that a young fellow in the N.W.T. had been asking about his sweetheart in Cartwright. The sweetheart had been Jim’s girlfriend.

One thing seems certain, Jim Martin would not have abandoned his party. The Labrador guides’ ethos would have prevented this. Yet the extreme qualities of Herman Koehler might have meant that for Jim this was a story best left a mystery, demanding action outside of the respected ethos. If Jim did survive, the events of 1931 would be of the kind that would haunt one’s spirit for life and perhaps be of such a bizarre nature as to be rendered unbelievable. Much seems possible given Koehler’s disposition. Perhaps these thoughts are a part of the untold fate of the once light-hearted, young, “try-my-hand-at-guiding” Jim Martin. I am reminded of poet Wallace Stevens’ epigram, “Imagination, we have it because we do not have enough without it.” One must imagine the events of the three wandering “hikers” as they contemplate a walk to the coast or a winter stay with the nomadic Naskapi with an authoritative “impossibly pigheaded” leader (Koehler). Elliott Merrick recalls John Michelin using words to that effect in various stories told around the fire at night.

Thanks to author and fellow researcher Lawrence Millman, I do have one more story now part of the folklore of this as-yet untold saga. In 1988, Millman heard from a friend of Jim Martin’s sister that “a grizzled, white-bearded man” showed up at the family home in Cartwright in 1985 or 1986. When he (allegedly Jim Martin) was identified by his sister and she beckoned him to her, he, as the story is told, retreated to the bush like a frightened animal.

There is not much more to tell, though this seems enough. There is no Koehler book, no answers from the missing journal, and no recovered gun and axe. The fate of Jim Martin remains a mystery. This is a tale not unlike the Hubbard story. Ultimately, it is a story in the long tradition about hoblanoks lost in the high country with an advancing winter season and of the local guides that must put up with

them. Captain George Cartwright from the mid 1700s coastal outpost offers a few such stories in his published journal as well. The mistake was in not listening to the advice of the area’s local peoples, in not coming to respect and travel *with* the country. In short, if it is to be a battle with the country as seemed Koehler’s game, then the country (particularly Labrador at 2000 feet) will win.

It may seem a hopeless non-sequitur to the Koehler/Martin tale in chilling Labrador/Ungava, but I’m thinking about the screenplay to the film “Mountains of the Moon” about African explorers Richard Burton and John Speak’s quest for the source of the Nile River. Amidst the hardships of travel, the local guide asks, “Why don’t you celebrate what the river has to offer; a meal and a good bath.” Perhaps we hoblanoks are slowly learning just that, to celebrate what the land and waterways have to offer. Koehler and Hub-

bard are not healthy examples, to this end. Both sought fame and miles covered. But their stories are certainly instructive. By way of corollary, we would do better to focus on the lives and wisdoms of the John Michelins, Jim Martins and the odd hoblanoks such as Elliott Merrick who sought/learned local wisdom and stories directly. And, have shared all this with unique honesty and insight in books such as Merrick’s *True North* and *Northern Nurse*, and Mina Hubbard’s *A Womans Way Through Labrador*. In Labrador/Ungava, every story has a message tied to a relationship with the land.



James Martin, Cartwright — c. 1925

(Courtesy *Them Days*)

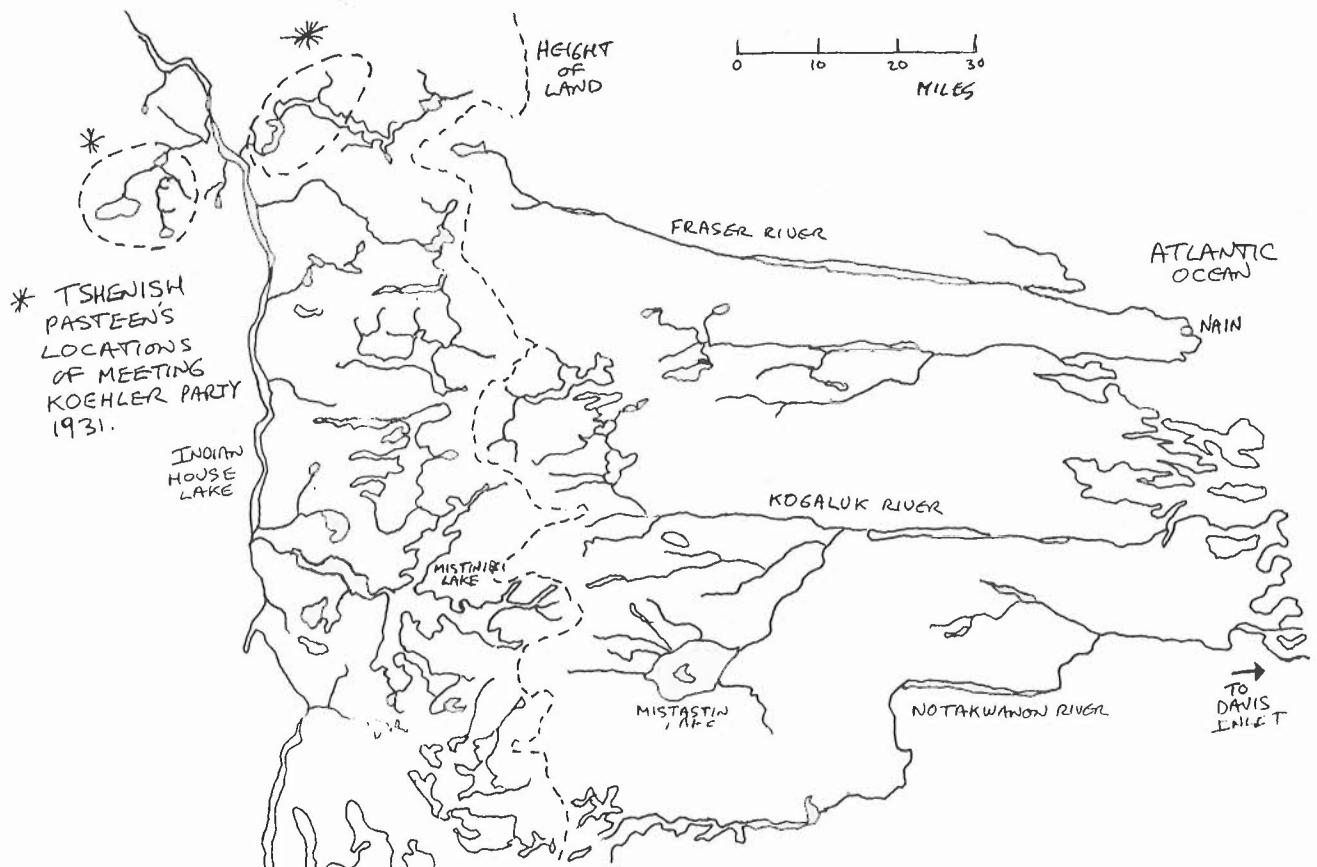
ENDNOTES

- 1 This story is gathered from: several Labrador archives records that include New York newspaper clippings, hearsay around town in Happy Valley, correspondence with authors Elliott Merrick (now age 88) and Lawrence Millman, and recollections in the following features of *Them Days: Stories of Early Labrador*:
 Vol. 1, No. 3, March '76, pages 34-40
 Vol. 8, No. 4, June '83, pages 35-40
 Vol. 16, No. 3, April '91, pages 16-19
 Vol. 17, No. 1, Oct. '91, pages 48-52

The events recorded comprise my interpretation. There are many discrepancies between informants. I have tried to convey what I take to be the most plausi-

ble reconstruction from the assorted recollections. To learn more about John Michelin, see Elliott Merrick's *True North*, reprinted in 1989 by the University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska. For more on the Hubbard story, see: Dillon Wallace, *Lure of Labrador*; Mina Hubbard, *A Womans Way Through Labrador*; and Rugge and Davidson, *Great Heart*.

- 2 Scott in his 1933 book, *The Land That God Gave Cain*, differs with Michelin's own recording of the 1928 route. Scott reports that the party, "canoeed and portaged up the Canairiktok River, reaching Lake Michikamau, crossed to the headwaters of the Grand River and descended it". (Thanks to Gwynneth Hoyle for this reference).



Tshenish Pasteen of Davis Inlet in 1990 roughly circled these two locations on the map as the general area where, when he was a young boy, his family had met the Koehler party in 1931. These locations would have the Koehler party much closer to the Kogaluk and Fraser rivers than their alleged destination of the Notakwanon River. Perhaps Koehler was mystified by William Brooks Cabot's 1911 map of the No-ta-qua-non drawn as a 12-day up-river trip to the George River with a two-day portage. The Notakwanon was certainly not the best choice given this (suggested by the circles) northern location, not to mention its major sections of whitewater.

Other evidence suggests that perhaps Tshenish Pasteen's eastern circle was a more likely location to have

met Koehler and company. Cabot in his 1911 book *In Northern Labrador* confirms that the travel overland west of Mistastin Lake is through an unusually heavily wooded area. It was a noted wood-gathering and canoe-building location and therefore likely not the best travel line. If Tshenish Pasteen is correct with his eastern location, then Koehler was likely closer to the coast than he thought, given that the standard Assiwaban River [Kogaluk] route was nearby. But Cabot had well documented this route as had H.H. Prichard the more northerly Fraser River. Likely the quest for a "first" aided in the group's demise.

(Thanks to the staff of *Them Days* for sending along Tshenish Pasteen's locations.)

Richard Munday lives in Scotland and is an enthusiastic wilderness lover who regularly organizes canoe trips in Canada's far north, such as the ones described in the following reports.

BURNSIDE RIVER

This is a short report of a 150-mile canoe trip by a party of four paddlers through the Barren Lands of Canada's Northwest Territories from 15 to 31 July 1991, starting at the western end of Kathawachaga Lake and finishing at Bathurst Inlet on the Arctic Ocean. Despite being three weeks late for the main southerly migration of the Bathurst caribou herd, the highlight of the trip was undoubtedly the abundant wildlife: muskoxen, caribou, grizzly, eagles, hawks, lake trout, arctic char, and the ever-present but less welcome black flies and mosquitoes.

We picked the Burnside because of its isolation, scenery, and wildlife. We also knew from reports of previous trips down the river that almost all the difficult whitewater is conveniently concentrated in the final 30 miles, and that the river as a whole is graded Class 3. With only one whitewater expert in the group, we had ruled out the Hood (a Class-4 river some 50 miles to the north) as a little too risky. And although our original preference had been the Mara (a tributary of the Burnside), we had been warned off on the grounds that its water level would likely be too low after the end of June.

Because the Burnside valley is one of the main caribou migration corridors, it has been an important hunting area for the Inuit and Indians for over a thousand years, and there are a number of significant archaeological sites in the area. More recently, the upper valley formed part of the route used by the Franklin expedition in 1821 in returning from their exploration of the Arctic coast. A cache of their abandoned equipment is thought still to be in the hills to the N.E. of Contwoyto Lake.

We flew to Kathawachaga Lake from Yellowknife in a chartered Twin Otter float plane. We rented two canoes, a 17-ft Old Town Tripper and a 16-ft Mad River, plus spray decks. Both performed well, though the greater load in the Tripper meant that it tended to dig into standing waves more than the Mad River, which with only 9 stone up front was very bouncy in rapids.

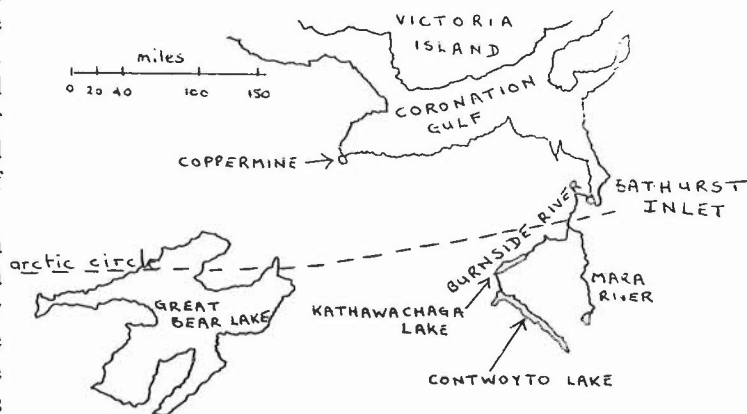
An early task was to repack our extensive food supplies in four waterproof barrels. With tinned butter, bacon, eggs, fruit cake, and apples in addition to the usual dehydrated meals and bannock, we thought it unlikely that we would be reduced to Franklin's "tripe de roche" (an edible though unpalatable glutinous lichen).

Our three days on the lake gave us our first sighting of muskoxen and we managed to get to within 30 ft of a bull. With its long flowing coat and curved horns it was almost like a glance back into prehistory. Thereafter, we saw muskoxen on most days throughout the trip and were told afterwards that, thanks to Canadian conservation policies, the animal is now off the endangered species list. Unusually, we came across fewer caribou, and then generally lone young or sick animals that had probably failed to keep up with the main migration. But we did see some bulls with splendid antlers and could understand why the grizzly some-

times comes off second best. We had to wait for the Burnside Canyon for our only sighting of a grizzly and that, somewhat to our relief, was a distant and rear view.

The lake trout fishing early on was excellent, particularly at the Kathawachaga Narrows. We caught plenty of fish in the 6-12-lbs range and those were the small ones. Certainly on the basis of our experience, those canoeing the Burnside should have little difficulty in supplementing their food supplies with fresh fish. Our main failure was to catch any of the landlocked Arctic char. But we made up for it after we got to Bathurst Inlet when, with a little help from the lodge there, we got amongst the fresh run char and had fish up to 10 lbs. They made superb eating, baked in foil over an open fire.

Another highlight of the trip was the walking. With a relaxed schedule, we were able to spend six days walking up into the hills overlooking the valleys of the Burnside and its tributaries. The going was easy, because what trees there were (willow, alder, and dwarf ash) rarely grew above knee height. And from only a few hundred feet up, the vistas were huge and the feeling of space was almost overwhelming.



The weather was dry and hot (mainly in the 70s and 80s) which meant we could enjoy the whitewater. We carried round Bellanca Rapids, and ran everything else except the Burnside Gorge. Experienced groups should have little difficulty (but a lot of fun) on the six to eight Class-3 rapids north of the water-monitoring station. Less experienced parties will need to do a good deal of scouting on this stretch, and above all avoid missing the pull-out for the portage around the Burnside Gorge (well marked with a cairn and caribou antlers at the time of our trip). The three-mile portage is hard work and it is worth checking the route before loading up.

This was an interesting and relaxing trip, though it could have been very different if the weather had been bad. The canoe rental and transport arranged through Bathurst Inlet Lodge worked well, and we much enjoyed Glenn and Trish Warner's kind hospitality at the end.

SLAKE RIVER

This is the account of a 300-mile canoe expedition down the Snake and the Peel rivers in the N.E. Yukon during late summer of 1987. We started the trip by chartering a Beaver float-plane to fly us in to Duo Lake, 4,000 ft. up in the Selwyn Mountains and close to the source of the Snake. We finished 15 days later, 60 miles north of the Arctic Circle, at the point where the Dempster Highway crosses the Peel just outside Fort McPherson,.

The Snake is remote, even by northern Canadian standards. After waving goodbye to the Beaver it was 11 days and 250 miles before our next human contact with a party of Dene Indians out on a hunting trip from Fort McPherson. But during this time there was no shortage of wildlife. We saw grizzly and black bear, woodland caribou, Dall sheep, otter, and beaver. The only disappointment was moose; although we saw plenty of tracks, we had to wait for a taxidermist in Whitehorse to show us an actual specimen. We also saw golden and bald eagles, swans, loons, and one evening at dusk a superb great horned owl.

Although the Snake is a fast whitewater river with an average gradient of 20 feet per mile for most of its length, it is not as difficult technically for example as the Ogilvie. There is only one stretch of more than Grade 2 and that can readily be portaged. But what it has got as well as its exposure is stunning mountain scenery in the upper reaches. Some of the biggest peaks, including the highest Mount MacDonald (9,500 ft), are very similar to the Dolomites with permanent snow fields and glaciers. Even the peaks which rise directly from the river valley go up to 5-7000 ft.



The 17-ft Mad River (Royalex) canoes we hired in Whitehorse stood up to the conditions well. The low water levels for the first few days gave them a few dents and us a lot of icy wading. The blessing was the abundance of driftwood, mainly willow and aspen, which meant we had roaring camp fires to thaw our feet out every evening. When the evenings were calm and warm we had some trouble with mosquitoes and black flies and sat around in the traditional wilderness gear of head nets, buttoned-down heavy-duty shirts, long trousers, and Muskol. But from accounts of other trips in the area it was clear that by going in late August we had missed the worst of the bugs. We never had to paddle in head nets as happens frequently on the Barren Lands, and most evenings we were able to leave the tents unzipped with mosquito coils burning in the entrances.

As we dropped down the Snake valley the river split into numbers of braided channels. Good route finding and luck meant a fast, elegant ride; the alternative was to get stuck, wade, and put a few more dents in the Royalex. Some of the trickiest whitewater was where these braided channels disgorged against steep cliffs requiring deft 90-degree turns whilst avoiding the bigger waves. And there were often deceptively fierce currents where two or more braids joined.

The most difficult portage on the trip was the first two-mile carry from Duo Lake to the river itself. Some of the ground is very marshy and there are a number of dense thickets of willow. We spent four hours identifying and marking a good route and were greatly helped by a set of marker tapes left by a previous party. That apart there was only one compulsory portage 65 miles downstream where the river cuts and drops through a shallow ridge which extends across the valley. The optional portage about 20 miles later was a narrow chute in a ledge with a two-foot drop and big standing waves. One canoe made it, the other swamped. But the swimming team had securely lashed in all their gear and lost nothing. Prompt action to warm up and dry out around a roaring fire prevented any risk of hypothermia.

Once out of the mountains the river meanders through low, hilly country, frequently cutting steep cliffs on the outside bends. And the tree cover thickened to the point where it was very hard work penetrating any distance inland from the river bank.

After the junction with the Peel, the river widens often to more than a one mile. The last 100 miles to the ferry crossing at Fort McPherson were a slog, albeit a scenic one. The weather also started to deteriorate. We had our first snowstorms and biting cold winds during the day. We needed our strong tents, four-season sleeping bags, and cold-weather clothes. We had one most uncomfortable night on the site of an Indian hunting camp, waking in the morning to frozen tents and boots, and the realization that this far north summer is over before the end of August.

The truck we had arranged to meet us at the ferry was on time and the two-day drive down the Dempster Highway to Dawson and back to Whitehorse gave us well-deserved rest and recreation.

BARKING UP THE RIGHT TREE

Claire Muller

Bernard and I have returned from a fabulous (Jan. to Apr. '93) trip to Australia, confining our journey almost exclusively to New South Wales in the SE corner of the country. We had broad-brimmed hats, a camper van, snorkling equipment, binoculars and long scope, hiking gear, cameras, and field guides to birds, mammals, and trees, but we quickly discovered that we were lacking one important article which we dearly craved — our trusty canoe.

To be sure, vast stretches of the continent are bone dry, but emptying into the sea around the whole land mass are rivers, lots of them. And from Cairns in the north to Melbourne in the south, humped up in one mighty ridge along the whole east coast is a mountain range (up to 2,000 m high), so that in our wanderings we encountered three big reservoirs, fast mountain creeks (which slowed and widened enticingly at lower elevations), ponds, marshes, broad lazy rivers, sleepy lagoons, and salt water estuaries.

Oh, there were boats alright — fishing smacks, sailboats, pleasure cruisers, houseboats, the odd good kayak, and fleets (it seemed) of the most awful fiberglass mongrel craft reminiscent of bathtubs with paddles, but it was mighty hard to find a REAL tripper's craft. Since, therefore, it was nigh on impossible to beg, borrow, or rent a decent canoe, there was only one recourse open to us — to console ourselves by browsing in bookstores, libraries, and museums. The search became both a revelation and an education.

Although the Australian Aboriginals arrived 50-60,000 years ago by water from a (then) much closer land mass with the sea 60 metres lower (see map), only cave and rock paintings give hints of the craft used in that misty past (probably rafts). What we do know for sure is that when the white men arrived in 1788, the Indonesian Macassar trepang fishermen were coming across to Australia in dugout canoes for their annual fishing seasons, and the Aboriginals, influenced by these visitors, were building dugouts of their own along the northern coast (Darwin, Arnhem Land, the Torres Strait, and Cairns areas).

As well as the dugouts (which might measure five to six metres long by one-half metre wide with eight-centimetres thick walls), the Aboriginals made sewn bark canoes. These boats were crafted from one or two kinds of eucalyptus trees (Australia has over 700 kinds of eucalypts), and the bark was peeled off when the sap was running at its best and the wood pliable. One long strip would constitute one side of the canoe while two long strips (don't ask why two, we don't know), sewn together, formed the other side. These two sides were then joined along bow, keel, and stern and sewn with root fibres and caulked with gum. Both bow and stern were fashioned by sewing in more pieces of bark to make the turned-up ends, and then ribs, braces, seats, and floorboards were fastened in, the final touch being mahogany gunwales lashed into place. Such canoes might be five metres long and of commodious depth and width. Both these and the dugouts were propelled with paddles and/or poles and might be used well out to sea.

At lower latitudes along the coast, canoes were made of the stringy bark eucalypt (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), again built when sap was a-running. Men would choose a good straight tree and carefully pry off a cylinder of bark three to four metres long. This piece would be cautiously laid on logs and the outer surface of the bark stripped off. Carefully tended small fires would then be laid under the sappy piece to make it more pliable, and at exactly the right moment the whole thing would be flipped over, turned inside out, the ends drawn up, and each end lashed with cord. Pliable branches were collected and fashioned into ribs to complete the job. Such craft were neither as sophisticated, durable, nor roomy as the sewn-bark boats and were never taken to sea, but were quite satisfactorily poled in rivers and marshes and wherever freshwater transport was needed.

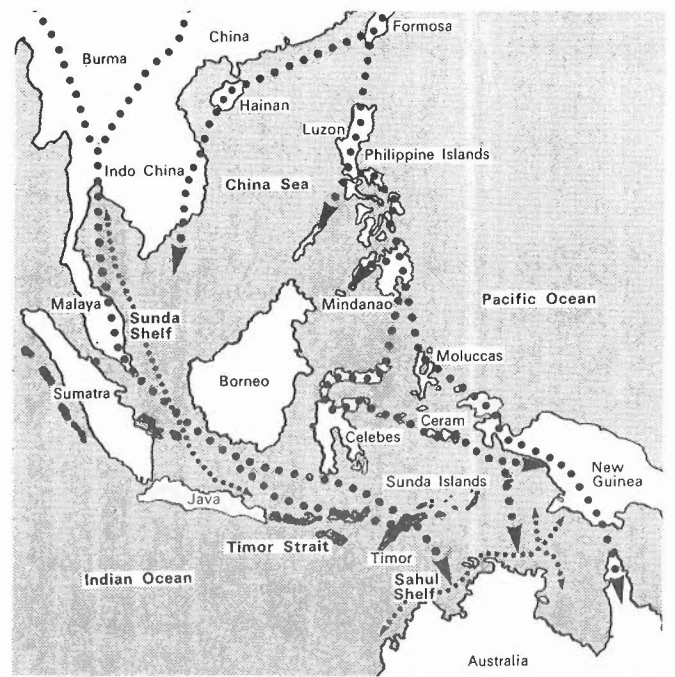
In the south of eastern Australia the Aboriginals built the most delicate and artistically beautiful canoes of all. They were beautiful not because of complexity and durability — far from it — but because of freedom of line, minimum of contrivance, and a harmony with nature. These were made from the river red gum (*Eucalyptus canaldulensis*) known as "canoe trees," for their scars were in evidence all along the big rivers, especially the Murray, a river just east of Adelaide. Paddlewheel steamer crews pointed the trees out to their passengers on this famous river but as the steamers gobbled up wood for fuel, and as axes felled these trees for land clearance, the mighty "canoe trees" disappeared and the craft and craftsmen with them.

Anyway, to build them, men would go along a river bank or inland a little, seeking just the right tree of good height, thin bark (hopefully) and a nice curve. (The curve was vital as it saved hours of extra labor shaping the canoe). Once a tree was chosen, men would begin at what was to become the stern of the canoe and work upwards. Stone axes or yam sticks (hardwood sticks flattened at one end for splitting yams) would be used to incise and pry the bark along the edges of the boat-to-be, and the bark would also be pounded. (Climbing techniques included cutting toe holds in the tree trunk, using a rope like a hydro man's safety strap, or simply shinnying up and down using hands and feet).

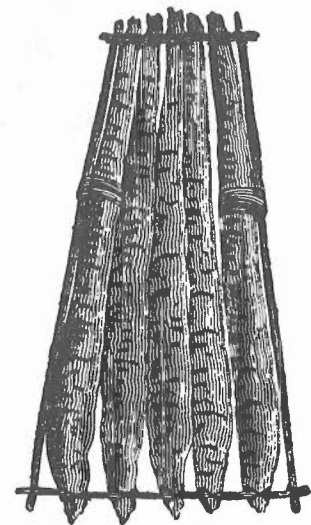
Slowly the edges would be loosened along the length of the piece in question, then flattened sticks would be wedged under the bark at regular intervals along the two cuts and these would be gently tapped and driven in further, a little at a time. One or more ropes would now be tied right around the trunk near the middle of the sheet (the longer the bark sheet, the more girdles required). This was a vital procedure to keep the sheet of bark from falling. When the sheet was completely free, about six men took their places at the foot of the tree, the girdles were loosened, and the sheet was gently lowered to the ground. Seldom was there a miscalculation.

A word about ropes. Rope was often made solely by the men, depending upon local custom. The Aboriginals used a

Australia at the time of low sea level during the ice age. The sea level on this map represents a lowering of the sea by 60 metres. Although during the Pleistocene epoch sea level rarely dropped to this depth, the nature of the sea floor contours are such that dry land normally approximated this outline.



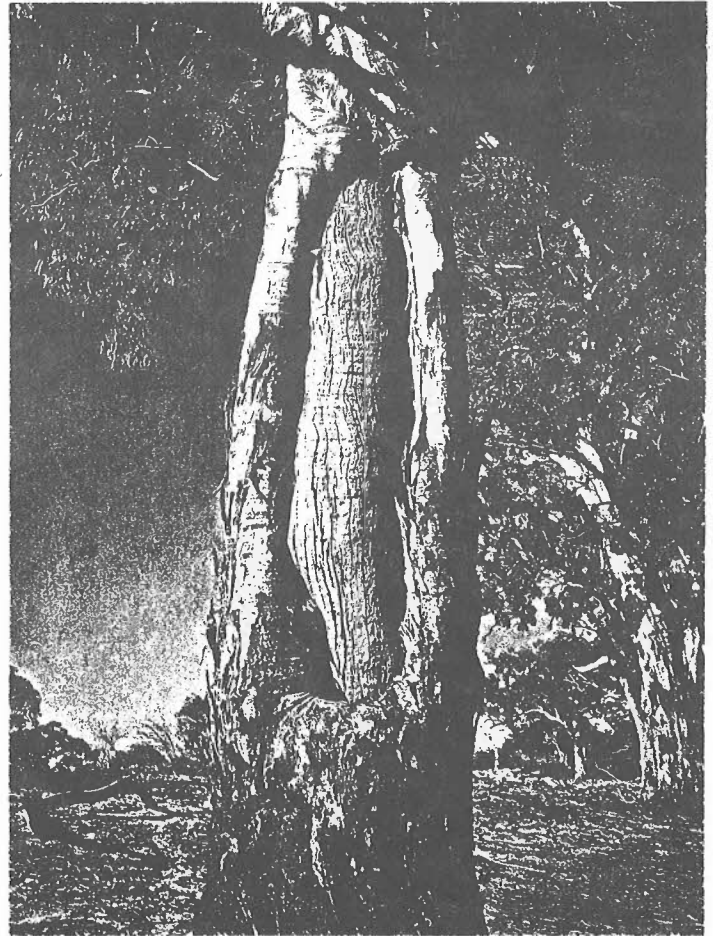
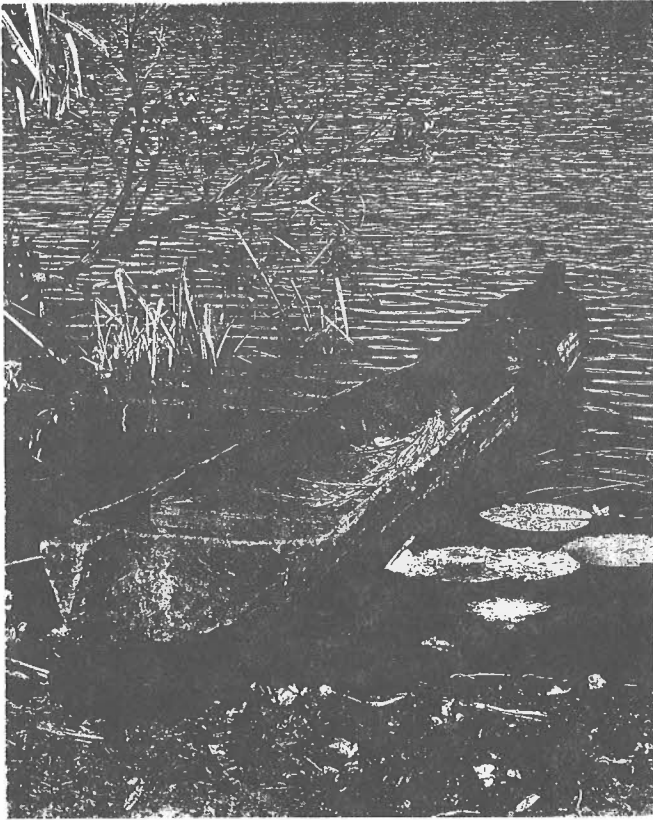
Aboriginal bark canoe on the Wimmera River, Dimboola, Victoria



Mangrove logs lashed together to form a raft, Northern Australia



Fishing from a bark canoe, with a small fire burning on wet weeds and sand. The firelight attracted the fish—a method often used along the Darling and Murray rivers



A bark canoe under construction at the Murray River in 1862. The bark sheet, propped up at the edges and with stones and logs to weigh it in the middle, was heated by fire underneath and inside. The heated sap made the canoe soft and pliable until it dried in the shape required



very tough grass which was dried and twisted. Two-ply rope was common but in some areas three-ply was made, three men sitting on the ground in a circle twisting and overlapping the strands while a fourth man sat apart pulling on the finished rope, looped over an overhanging branch, to maintain the tension on the cord.

Canoe-drying techniques varied. One method involved pouring a thin slurry of clay into the bottom of the piece of bark to prevent cracking in the slow drying process. Another technique required a shallow "grave" the shape of the canoe, into which the bark was then lowered and filled with stones and clay to weigh it down and promote the slow drying. Still another method involved propping up the sides with stakes, laying logs in the canoe, and lighting tiny fires around the edges, constantly tended and moved around.

Because the stern was of thicker bark than the bow, it presented a special problem. Bows could be curled up slightly in the drying process, but sterns were too thick. To surmount this problem, the Aboriginals mixed a little clay and dry grass and built a little mud wall inside the stern, curving in a half moon. This kept the water from coming in over the back of the boat. As the mud wall deteriorated with the use of the boat, it could be rebuilt at whim.

White men found these "flimsy" boats almost impossible to use, but the Aboriginals stepped aboard with a casual grace. Apparently there was no more beautiful sight than to see these canoes used at night — one man standing in the stern with his long wooden-pronged pole guiding the course of the boat, while a second man curled up (or down) in the bow, tending a little sandalwood fire built on a wad of clay. The sandalwood gave a most brilliant light for spear fishing, and these lovely canoes would glide smoothly and silently on the dark waters, sweet perfume wafting from the little fires within.

Aboriginals did not portage any of their boats. Each was used locally up and down and across water courses for transporting goods and people and for spear fishing. Canoe size simply reflected the size of a man's family.

Both the sewn-bark and single-sheet-bark canoes were very delicate. Unlike our birchbark canoes, they became easily waterlogged and the trick was to try to keep the interiors dry at all times, and to store the canoes on shore immediately after use. To have a canoe swamp could be a disaster. At best, none of these boats lasted more than about two years so they were treated with delicate consideration.

Techniques, materials, and watercraft styles varied depending upon many factors, and ingenuity was the byword. In the north, softwood rafts were common (paddled or poled), while in other parts of the continent reed rafts were in use for gathering plant materials, harvesting mussels (one dove overboard to do this), and setting bird snares in marshes. The people were in intimate harmony with the water. They swam well and all ages were right at home in all kinds of water craft for gathering food, travelling and visiting, and for escape from fire.

A word about Tasmanians. These aboriginals were eventually cut off from the mainland and made only one kind of water craft. It was a reed boat similar to that used on Lake Titicaca in Peru, but must have been made of a different kind of reed, because it had a limited use. It could never cover more than 10 miles without becoming waterlogged. Tasmanians had stone tools, but none of these were ever fashioned with hafts and so they had no way of making dugouts, and were confined to a simpler if more challenging lifestyle..

Paddles were only made in the north of Australia and all were without hand grips. Poles were the ubiquitous tool of propulsion everywhere.

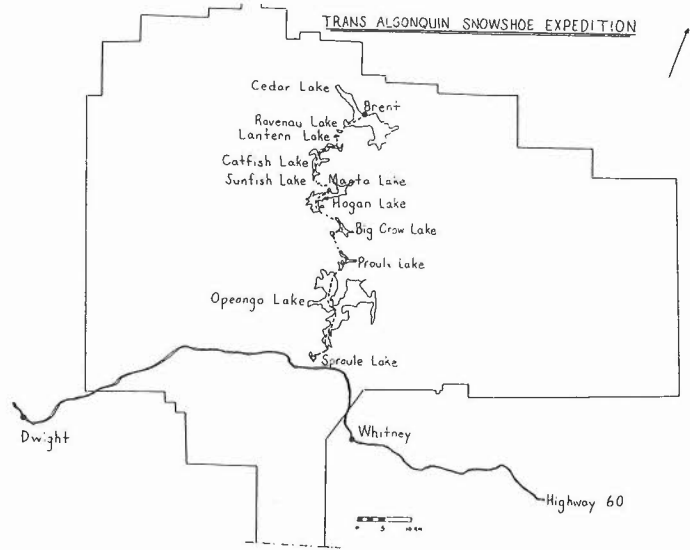
I have not been able to get hold of a picture of a sewn-bark canoe yet, and I'm sure there is much more to learn. Never mind, we're going back this coming winter to pick up our van and keep travelling and exploring. We should come across a wealth of artifacts and information in Hobart, Tasmania, in Melbourne, and in Adelaide. Who knows, there might be enough material for another article. Maybe we might even be lucky enough to find a good tripping canoe. We'd love to paddle the Murray.



TRANS-ALGONQUIN SNOWSHOE EXPEDITION

As part of the centennial celebrations commemorating the founding of the Ontario park system, the Trans-Algonquin Snowshoe Expedition took place from 30 January to 14 February 1993. Expedition members included Craig Macdonald, George Lupton, Jim Raffan, Bob Davis, Roger Nelis, Jim Greenacre, Tom Linklater, and Michael Kerwin.

After rendezvousing in Dwight, the modern-day packeteers drove to Capreol, northeast of Sudbury, where Canadian National had requisitioned a caboos to transport the expedition on an Ottawa-bound freight train to Brent, the trail head in northern Algonquin Park. Over the ensuing two weeks, the expedition travelled south toward Highway 60 following historic ranger patrol routes across Cedar, Ravenau, Lantern, Catfish, Hogan, Big Crow, Proulx, Opeongo, and Sproule lakes.

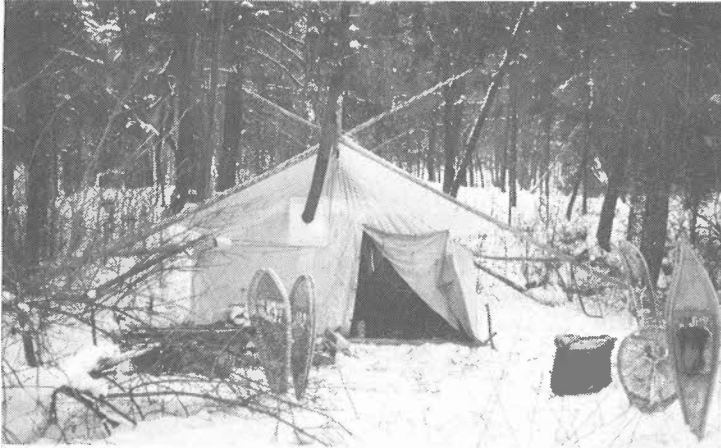


The success and, indeed, the very being of the Trans-Algonquin Snowshoe Expedition was due in large part to the efforts of leader Craig Macdonald. Through extensive research, aerial surveys, and interviews with Native elders and former rangers, Macdonald was able to reconstruct the winter routes over which the expedition travelled.

The expedition trekked by snowshoe, hauling equipment and supplies on four sleds and one toboggan across frozen lakes, rivers, muskeg, and marsh. Despite the generally favorable weather, travel conditions were often difficult with deep snow, slush, and arduous portage trails.

Daily routines were much the same from one travel day to the next. Following contact with the "outside" via radio phone, breakfast was eaten, lunch made, and, by about 10 or 10:30 a.m., camp struck. Often, there was trail breaking and





clearing to be done before the expedition could proceed, especially along the more difficult sections of the route. Following a short midday lunch break, the team would continue on, travelling until 4 or 4:30 p.m. before stopping to set up camp.

Once a site had been selected, the 10' by 12' wall tent had to be pitched and the wood stove installed, firewood cut, and water hauled. Sleds would be unpacked and placed on skids to prevent icing of the runners. Setting up a new camp might take upwards of two hours. After that, dinner had to be prepared and so it would be close to 8 or 9 p.m. before anyone could entertain thoughts of relaxation — writing journals, going for a solitary walk along the shores of a windswept lake, chatting, or resting.

The first week of the trip proved to be the most demanding with an approximate gain of 500 ft in elevation. At times, three or four people might be required to haul a single sled up steep pitches. From Crow Lake on, however, travelling became much easier with fewer hills and longer stretches of lake travel.

Making excellent time on this last leg of the trip, the expedition arrived at its last camp on Sproule Lake well ahead of schedule. On Sunday, 14 February, the expedition came to a formal conclusion with a brief ceremony held at the new visitor centre in the park.

Michael Kerwin

The following is an urgent plea for help from the Wildlands League.

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS THREATENED

Ontario's once vast old-growth forests are disappearing. In the south, most of the once-flourishing hardwood forests have been cleared for agriculture and urban development. Now, even the last few surviving stands are threatened by residential and industrial development.

The last 150 years of logging in the near-north region from North Bay to Thunder Bay have left only a handful of undisturbed pine forest areas. Most of these remaining stands are slated for harvest during the next few years. North of Thunder Bay and Temagami, Ontario's fragile boreal old-growth forests were once the least disturbed of Ontario's forests. But now large areas are disappearing — the victims of new, devastating harvesting technology and increasing international demands for newsprint pulp.

Time is running out for Ontario's old-growth forests. What takes a few hours to destroy may take centuries to recreate.

This fall, a committee appointed by the Ontario government will be travelling around the province asking the public what to do about our vanishing old-growth forests. The committee's job is to incorporate what they hear into a series of recommendations to the Minister of Natural Resources. These recommendations will be the final stage in a two-year process. Based on public consultations in 1992, the committee has already developed an interim strategy (completed in June of this year) for red and white pine old-growth forests. Now they are working on ALL the old-growth forests in Ontario — including boreal, mixed hardwood, maple/beech, Carolinian, and red and white pine.

The forest industry is stepping up its pressure on the government to back off on the protection of old-growth

forests. More than ever, the committee needs to hear an overwhelmingly loud, clear message that the people of this province value their precious old-growth resource.

SPEAK OUT FOR THE PROTECTION OF ONTARIO'S OLD-GROWTH FORESTS. Participate in the fall public meeting nearest you. Put the date into your calendar and plan to attend.

Remember: the advisory committee will be keeping a tally of public opinion. Every person counts, literally, so bring out your friends, your family, and everyone who cares about the future of our ancient forest ecosystems.

Here is the schedule of upcoming public meetings, all starting at 7 p.m.:

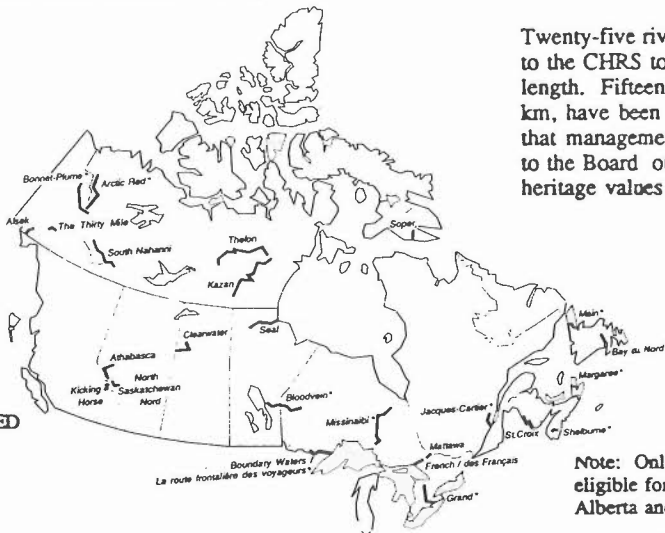
- 25 Oct. Moose Hall, Dryden
- 26 Oct. Knights of Columbus Hall, Sault Ste. Marie
- 1 Nov. Royal Canadian Legion, Huntsville
- 2 Nov. Hellenick Community Centre, London
- 11 Nov. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), Toronto

This year, 1993, will be critical in deciding the fate of old-growth forests in Ontario. The provincial government is inviting the people of the province to help decide how to conserve old-growth forests. The government says it's listening — let's take this opportunity to tell them what we think!

For more information, contact: Nancy Bayly, Old-Growth Forest Campaign Co-ordinator, Wildlands League, 160 Bloor Street East, Toronto M4W 1B9; phone (416) 324-9760.

CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVERS SYSTEM

CHRS DESIGNATED AND NOMINATED RIVERS (SPRING 1993)



Twenty-five rivers have now been nominated to the CHRS totalling over 5,000 km in length. Fifteen of these rivers, totalling 2,965 km, have been formally designated, meaning that management plans have been submitted to the Board outlining how these rivers' heritage values will be preserved.

Note: Only rivers in national parks are eligible for heritage river status in Alberta and British Columbia.

<i>Designated Rivers</i>			
River	Province/Territory (Park ¹)	Designation Date	Length
French	Ontario (French River P.P.)	Feb. 1986	110 km
Alsek	Yukon (Kluane N.P. Reserve)	Feb. 1986	90 km
Clearwater	Saskatchewan (Clearwater R.P.P.)	June 1987	187 km
S. Nahanni	Northwest Territories (Nahanni N.P. Reserve)	Jan. 1987	300 km
Bloodvein ³	Manitoba (Atikaki P.P.)	June 1987	200 km
Mattawa	Ontario (Mattawa River P.P. and Samuel de Champlain P.P.)	Jan. 1988	33 km
Athabasca ⁴	Alberta (Jasper N.P.)	Jan. 1989	168 km
N. Saskatchewan ⁴	Alberta (Banff N.P.)	Jan. 1989	49 km
Kicking Horse ⁴	British Columbia (Yoho N.P.)	Jan. 1989	67 km
Kazan	Northwest Territories	July 1990	615 km
Thelon	Northwest Territories	July 1990	545 km
St. Croix	New Brunswick	Jan. 1991	185 km
Yukon (30 Mile)	Yukon	Jan. 1991	48 km
Seal	Manitoba	June 1992	260 km
Soper ²	Northwest Territories	June 1992	108 km
		Total	2,965 km

<i>Nominated Rivers</i>			
River	Province/Territory (Park ¹)	Anticipated Designation Date	Length
Arctic Red	Northwest Territories	Sept. 1993	450 km
Missinaibi	Ontario (Missinaibi P.P.)	June 1994	426 km
Jacques-Cartier ⁴	Québec (Jacques-Cartier P.P.)	Jan. 1994	128 km
Grand ²	Ontario	Jan. 1994	290 km
Main	Newfoundland	Jan. 1994	57 km
Margaree	Nova Scotia	June 1994	120 km
Bloodvein ³	Ontario (Woodland Caribou P.P.)	June 1995	106 km
Bay du Nord	Newfoundland (Bay du Nord Wilderness Reserve)	June 1995	75 km
Boundary Waters	Ontario (La Verendrye/Quetico P.P./Middle Falls)	June 1996	250 km
Bonnet Plume	Yukon	Jan. 1996	350 km
Shelburne	Nova Scotia	Jan. 1996	53 km
		Total	2,305 km

1. P.P. denotes provincial park; N.P. denotes national park
 2. Length of main stem of river, excluding nominated tributaries.
 3. Bloodvein River has been nominated in two sections, by Manitoba and Ontario.
 4. Only upper section of the river is located in the Park.

REVIEWS

UP NORTH, A Guide to Ontario's Wilderness from Blackflies to the Northern Lights, by Doug Bennet and Tim Tiner, published by Reed Books Canada, Markham, Ontario, 1993, softcover, 316 pages, \$19.99.

Reviewed by Toni Harting.

Want to know what the osprey eats, how water striders stride the water, what painted turtles do in winter, why lichens are so important in the creation of organic soil, how the Big Dipper relates to the North Star, and much, much more? Then you should study this useful book which gives fascinating answers to many of the multitude of questions that keep coming up when travelling in much of Ontario's canoe country.

More than 150 topics are presented, divided into chapters: amphibians, birds, creepy-crawlies, fish, mammals, reptiles, plants, trees, day sky, night sky, and Mother Earth. Excellent line drawings by Marta Lynne Scythes accompany most entries and a number of photographs provide further illustrations. The book is small enough to be taken along on a trip and will surely delight the inquisitive mind of any observant paddler.

* * * * *

THE BEST OF THE RAVEN, by Dan Strickland and Russ Rutter, published by The Friends of Algonquin Park, Whitney, Ontario, 1993, softcover, 220 pages, \$11.95.

Reviewed by Toni Harting.

To add some colorful background information to the canoeing stories that form its main fare, the editors of this WCA journal have, for many years now, gratefully copied articles from Algonquin Park's popular newsletter *The Raven*. Its essays are little gems of insightful information

covering numerous topics that are of great interest to lovers of the outdoors. *The Raven* was first published in 1960 and is still going very strong. Now, 33 years later, 150 of its best essays have been selected, newly illustrated by Peter Burke, and presented in this surprisingly low-priced (but excellent-quality) volume that is destined to provide many hours of quiet happiness. Contact The Friends of Algonquin Park, P.O. Box 248, Whitney, Ontario, K0J 2M0, to find out where the book can be purchased.

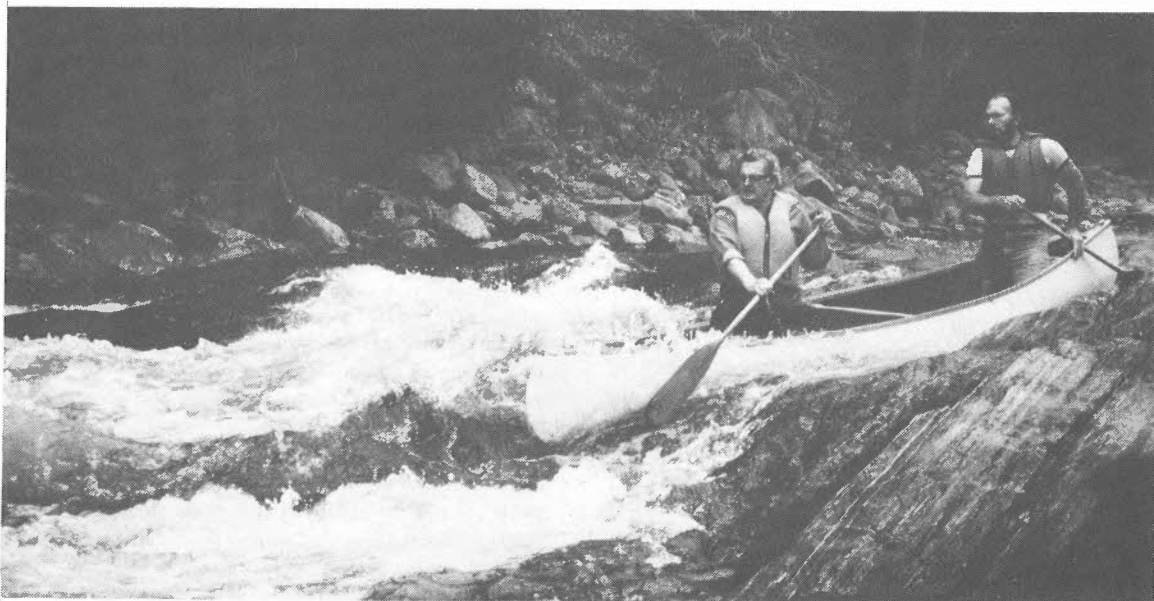
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ALGONQUIN, The Park And Its People, photographs by Donald Stanfield, text by Liz Lundell, published by McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1993, 196 pages, \$50.00.

Reviewed by Toni Harting.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary in 1993 of the largest and best-known of all Ontario provincial parks, Algonquin Park, several books have been published showing the beauty and diversity of this unique part of Canada. Among those publications, *Algonquin, The Park And Its People* is one of the very best, with superb photography and informative text. The production quality of this splendid coffee-table book is excellent and many of the 100 color photographs are real treasures.

There is much to enjoy and learn about the park in this publication: geography, history, natural environment, logging, rangers, canoe tripping, hotels/lodges/cottages, artists, management, research, nature interpretation, and more. Many fine historical photographs enliven the text about the days past, illustrating how fast man can change nature when he begins to intrude. This handsome book is a worthy tribute to a wonderful canoeing area that has provided us with so many magic moments and should continue doing so for at least another 100 years.



Moon River

WCA TRIPS

Remember that WCA trips may have an element of danger and that the ultimate responsibility for your safety is your own.

2-3 October GANARASKA TRAIL

Peter Verbeek, (416) 757-3814, book immediately.

A backpacking trip of about 40 kilometres completing the Wilderness Section of the Ganaraska Trail from Devils Lake to Victoria Bridge. Those who complete this trip and the earlier one, 19 September, will qualify for the "End to End" Chevron.

2-3 October ALGONQUIN PARK

Herb Pohl, (416) 637-7632, book immediately.

Starting at the Tim Lake access point we will paddle down the Tim River, past Rosebary Lake, to the portage into Queer Lake. From there several short portages will take us to the finish at Magnetawan Lake. Suitable for the determined geriatric set. Limit four canoes.

3 October ELORA GORGE

Jeff Lane, (519) 846-2586, book immediately.

A day trip in the scenic Elora Gorge. The water will have cooled sufficiently to deter the tubers, allowing us to enjoy the serenity of an Ontario autumn at our leisure. Suitable for contemplative whitewater paddlers. Limit four canoes.

16 October GRAND RIVER

Mike Jones, (416) 270-3256, book before 11 October.

Gently moving water, mooing cows, and fall colors at their finest. Suitable for the family. Limit five canoes.

16-17 October FERRIE RIVER

John Winters, (705) 382-2057, book before 4 October.

The Ferrie River is a small feeder stream of the Magnetawan, running from the north. This is an exploratory trip that will reconnoiter the route. The topographical map shows numerous rapids, but who knows what we will find. Suitable for rugged intermediates who enjoy surprises. Solo canoeists welcome. Limit four canoes.

17 October BURNT RIVER

Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005, book before 10 October.

The Burnt is a quiet river with a few mild riffles and some easy portages. The scenery is excellent on this great family trip which goes from Kinmount to Burnt River. Limit six canoes.

23-24 October GEORGIAN BAY WEEKEND

Herb Pohl, (416) 637-7632, book immediately.

This will be a leisurely weekend paddle but there is always the possibility of adverse winds on Georgian Bay at this time of year. We will paddle down the Gibson River and camp overnight on one of the islands of Georgian Bay Provincial Park. The trip will end at Honey Harbour. Suitable for novices equipped for the weather conditions. Limit four canoes.

30-31 October ALGONQUIN PARK

Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321, book anytime.

I'm heading to Algonquin Park for the weekend to prepare the winter site and some hikes. Those interested in winter camping later are invited to see the site now. Algonquin in fall and winter is worth it: no bugs, people, or highway nuts.

31 October HALLOWEEN ON ELORA GORGE

Mike Jones, (416) 270-3256, book before 24 October.

Suitably costumed for the day, we will paddle the rapids of Elora Gorge in the finest style. Each boat must be equipped with a pumpkin and other seasonal floatation. A prize will be awarded for the most original attire. Suitable for intermediate paddlers, ghosts, and goblins. Limit five ethereal watercraft.

7 November GRAND RIVER

Steve Lukasko, (416) 276-8285, book before 30 October.

From Cambridge to Paris, moving water with a few small riffles. Suitable for novices who are prepared for any weather conditions. Limit five canoes.

27-28 November ALGONQUIN PARK

See 30-31 October weekend, Howard Sayles.



BLACK RIVER

On Sunday, 18 April, an intrepid group led (for the umptysomethingth time) by Bill and Joan King, conquered the mighty Black River (Washago version). All the right elements were there: bright and sunny weather, high water levels, attractive countryside, congenial companions, no bugs — man, this is living!

Putting in just below Cooper's Falls, we had a leisurely morning of flatwater paddling with one portage around a series of ledges which might have been tempting with properly outfitted boats. Our lunch spot has two outstanding advantages: it's large enough to accommodate the entire Russian army (even during its glory days), and it's strategically placed just beyond the point where people start to moan about being hungry.

After lunch we got into the "serious whitewater" (all Grade 1) which is confined to the section of the river below Highway 169. Anyone wanting to "skip the dull stuff" or just have a quick warmup in easy rapids could paddle only this section of the river. It would probably take about an hour and a half and would certainly make an easy car shuttle.

This is a pleasant spring outing which I can heartily recommend to novices and families. I have personally paddled it with participants ranging in age from two years to my mother (no, I won't specify - she'd kill me). You can do it in summer but be prepared to wade; don't bring your birchbark canoe. Multiday trips are possible by starting higher up the river. Happy paddling!

Bill King

PROTECT YOUR HANDS

Even If You Don't Play The Bassoon

In an article titled *The Outward Sign* (Nastawgan — Autumn 1991) Greg Went describes severe wear and tear on his hands as a result of canoeing. Here is a suggestion for all paddlers who have a special concern about their hands.

Because I earn my living playing the bassoon and also make long, demanding canoe trips, I wear heavy leather work gloves, unlined and with a large gauntlet, for all paddling, portaging, and some camp chores. Besides excellent hand and lower arm protection, the gloves provide better grip on the paddle and some warmth in cold conditions.

The gloves are sometimes called lineman's gloves. To obtain them, try stores which specialize in work clothes, farm or safety

supplies. Select gloves with smooth, close-fitting fingers with seams on the inside for ease of use. Dyed leather may stain your hands when wet.

Between trips coat the gloves well with a conditioner such as Neatsfoot oil, Sno-seal, or Dubbin, and store in a plastic bag to allow oils to penetrate the leather.

Having tried gloves made of various materials, I think that leather is the best.

On one trip a small animal chewed my gloves which were left on the ground. It probably liked the salt from my hands and couldn't have cared less that I play the bassoon.

Tom Elliott

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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

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

ABC Sports, 552 Yonge Street, Toronto,
Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake,
Dwight, Ontario,
Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West,
Guelph, Ontario,
Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str. (Hwy. 70),
Hepworth, Ontario.

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

SWIFT CANOES now available for test paddling in Elora, Ontario. Limited selection, custom orders, discount for WCA members. For details please contact Jeff Lane at (519) 846-2586.

FREE NEW CATALOG available from the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association, outlining one of the most comprehensive collections of paddling materials available anywhere: CRCA, 1029 Hyde Park Road, Suite 5, Hyde Park, Ontario, NOM 1Z0; phone (519) 473-2109.

KIRKLAND LAKE CANOE ROUTES brochure with some maps is available from: District Manager, Ministry of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 129, Swastika, Ontario P0K 1T0.

CHAPLEAU DISTRICT CANOE ROUTES map and information is available from: Ministry of Natural resources, 190 Cherry Street, Chapleau, Ontario K1A 0E9.

CANOEJOONS
PAUL MASON



Where it is ...



... in this issue

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| 8. WCA Journal Index | Snowshoe Expedition | 27. Products and Services |
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| 9. How Porcupines Do It | Rivers System | |
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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(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

Postal Code: _____ Ext. _____

New member Member # if renewal: _____

Single Family

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

* This membership is valid for one year.
 * Send completed form and cheque, payable to the WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION, to the membership secretary at the WCA postal address.