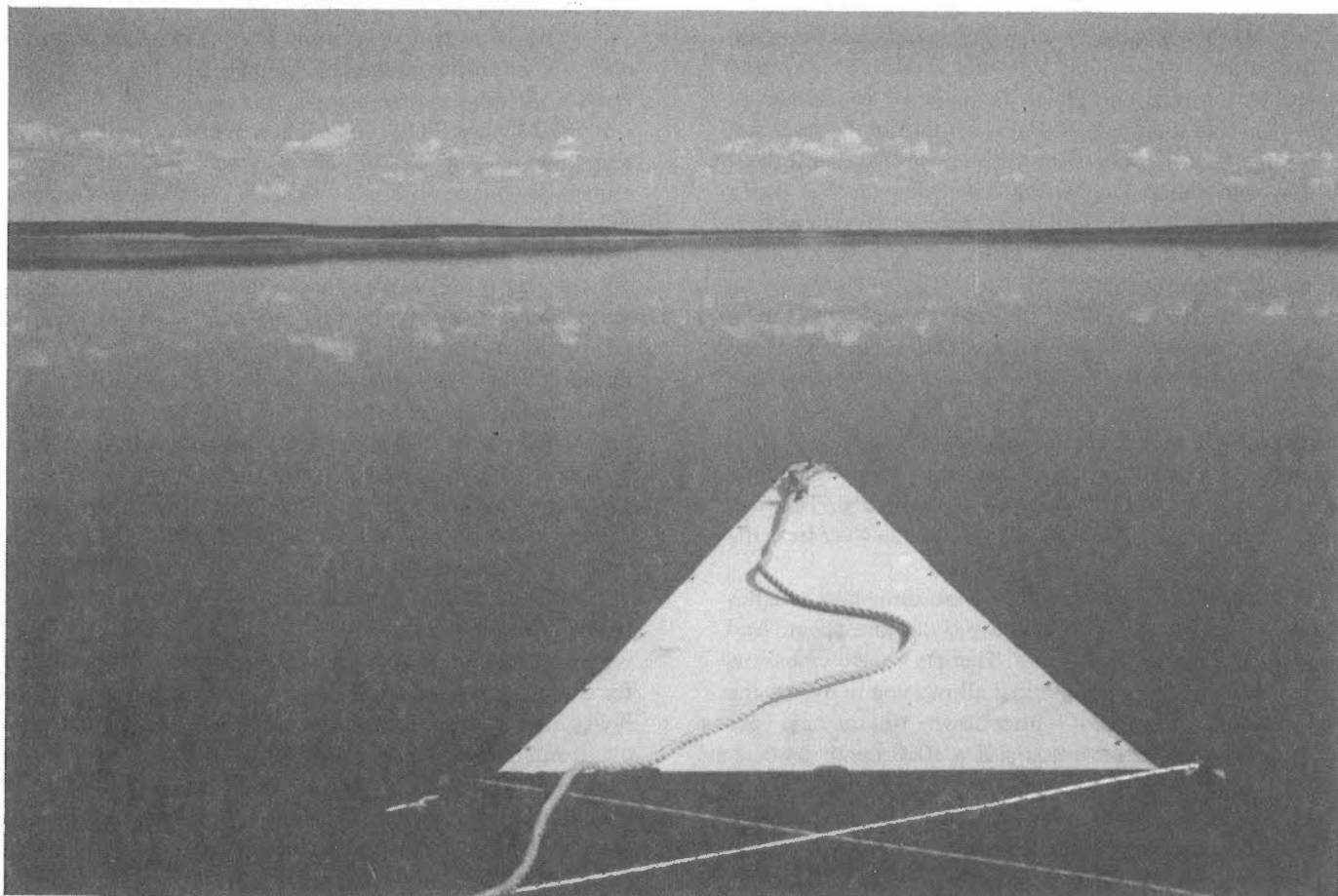


nastawgan

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Quarterly Journal of the Wilderness Canoe Association



THELON '94

Peter Verbeek

In 1994, I finally realized my dream of solo-canoeing the Thelon River in the Northwest Territories, and I'd like to pass on the information I have acquired to other people who may want to organize their own self-guided trip. Throughout this report, I will be using the military grid reference system to indicate locations (e.g. Granite Falls on map 75-I is located at EV0820).

The water level on the Thelon was very low in 1994. The elders at Baker Lake indicated that it was caused by very low levels of snowfall in the preceding winter. At Baker Lake the water level was 1.5 to 1.8 metres lower than that in 1992. Spring had come early in the Baker Lake area and on 1 July there was only a small ice-pan left in the middle of the lake. Although no information was available, it was assumed that the other big lakes to the west, Beverly, Aberdeen, and

Schultz, were also substantially free of ice. In Yellowknife, the spring had come about two weeks earlier than normal. (If you are wondering why I am so interested in the ice cover of the lakes, read "Kazan Revisited" in the Winter-1992 issue of *Nastawgan*.)

I drove to Yellowknife carrying my solo canoe which has the name SP. The 4900 km from Toronto took four days and the weather was generally good. The following day I visited Bathurst Arctic Services, who had served me well the previous year, and asked them if they could arrange to fly me and my gear a distance of 376 km to the west end of Whitefish Lake, the point in the Thelon system closest to Yellowknife. They arranged with Spur Aviation to fly me to my destination in a Cessna 185 that same afternoon. Stewart Grimm, the pilot, did a great job and deposited me on a

beautiful, crescent-shaped beach (75J-CV9338) in the early evening. I made camp to rest up from the five days travel I had just completed.

The rapid between Whitefish Lake and Lynx Lake could easily be run. The water level of Lynx Lake is only one metre less than that of Whitefish. I suggest staying to the south of the island in position DV3614, in order to keep out of the maze of islands to the east and north of it.

Most people fly in to where the Thelon actually starts; the trip is then about 75 km shorter. The first 70 km on the river have quite a few rapids but I only made three portages. The first rapid marked on the topo map (DV6116) is an easy one, unlike the next one which is about 10 km farther on (DV6718). This rapid is just past a left turn in the river and the shore is guarded by numerous boulders making it difficult to get to shore. Due to the low water level it was a challenging run, at least class III. It required fast manoeuvring in order to avoid the many rocks. Nevertheless, I made it through without problems.

A little farther on (DV6820) there is a rapid that can be run; a nice little eddy on the left just before the start of the rapid allows you to easily beach your canoe and scout the rapid. About 10 km downriver (DV7622) is the first portage indicated on the topo map. The map with a scale 1:250,000 does not give a good picture of this rapid and I was happy that I had a copy of the 1:50,000 map with me. This one showed a small peninsula sticking out into the river from the left.

On the left before that peninsula are some nice beaches where you can get the canoe to the shore and scout. And guess what ... it is not a peninsula! There is a narrow, shallow channel to the left of an island that allows you to bypass the top of the rapid and enter it farther down. You may get your feet wet but you can save yourself a 1000-metre portage. After a few more kilometres, in position DV8119, it took only one look at the water to convince me to walk the indicated portage, but it was a shorter carry than the map would suggest, about 500 m.

I should point out that I am fairly cautious when I am travelling alone. I like the canoeist's serenity prayer that goes:

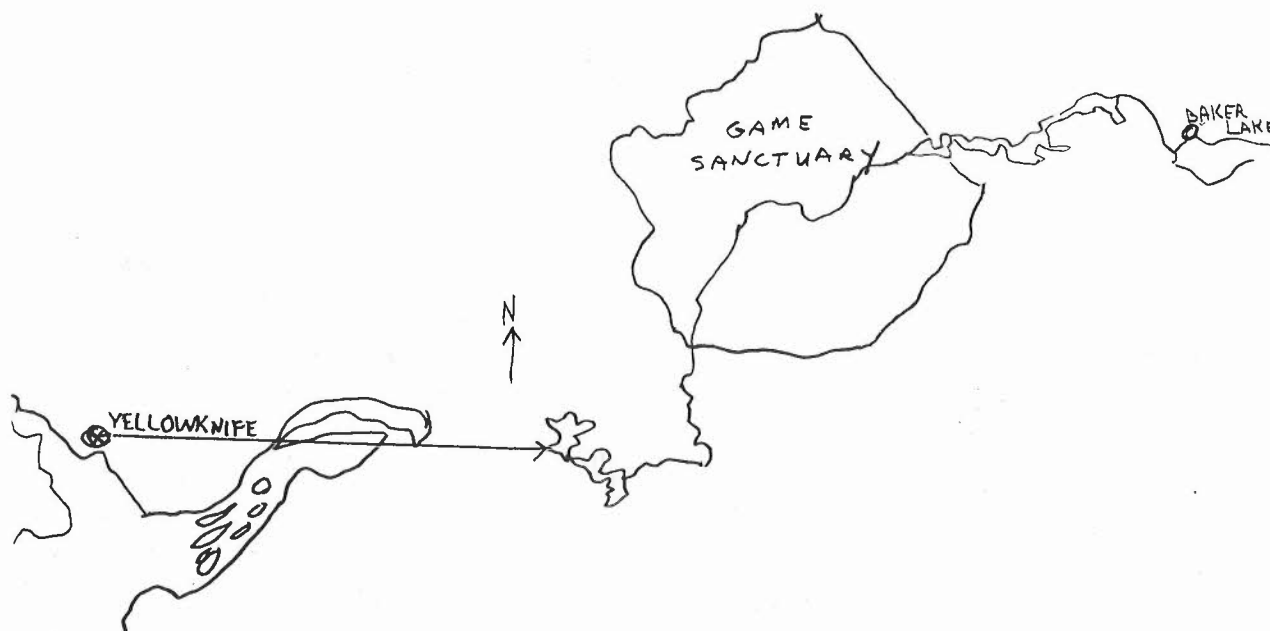
"God grant me the serenity to walk the portages I must,
The courage to run the rapids I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference."

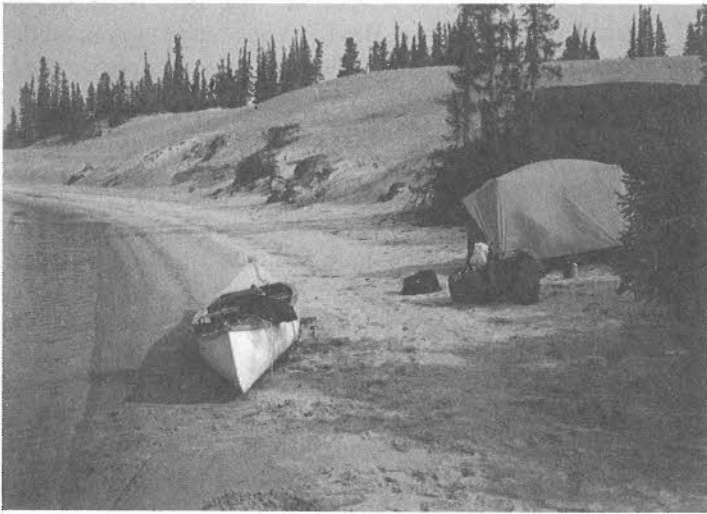
In position DV8320 I encountered a rapid but the map did not show a portage. Nevertheless, I did not like what I saw and portaged 600 m on the right.

There is a rapid in location DV8621, where the river narrows, that is not marked on the map, but it has a well-defined V. After this come many swifts that can be run easily.

For Muskox Falls, in location EV0522, the 1:50,000 map gives a better idea of what you are up against. There is a small bay on the right side before the rapid starts. The rapid follows a horseshoe-shaped channel and the portage cuts across the neck. When you get a little further along the portage you'll see an inukshuk to direct you. At the end of the portage, I was able to float my empty canoe down the little channels that flowed there but I had to carry my packs farther to where the water was deeper. Below Muskox Falls is fast water with rocks all the way to the confluence with the Elk River, but with a little alert manoeuvring you should be able to handle it.

There is a beautiful beach just east of the mouth of the Elk River. North of Jim Lake the river has a good current until it runs into an unnamed lake. I had been told that there was a cabin on the north shore and I promised Akitoshi Nishimura, who was coming down the Elk River, that I would leave a message for him at that cabin. After paddling for an hour along the north shore, I finally spotted the cabin; it was in a bay at the base of a peninsula (EV1538) that stuck out from the north. It was a substantial cabin, windows shuttered, door locked, with anti-bear mats all around. It appeared to be in regular use during the hunting and trapping season. There were numerous bones lying around and the remains of other shelters.





It is worth having a look at this place and it is also a good spot to camp. I left my message for Akitoshi in a jar on the front porch and piled a few stones on top of it. I don't know yet if he found it.

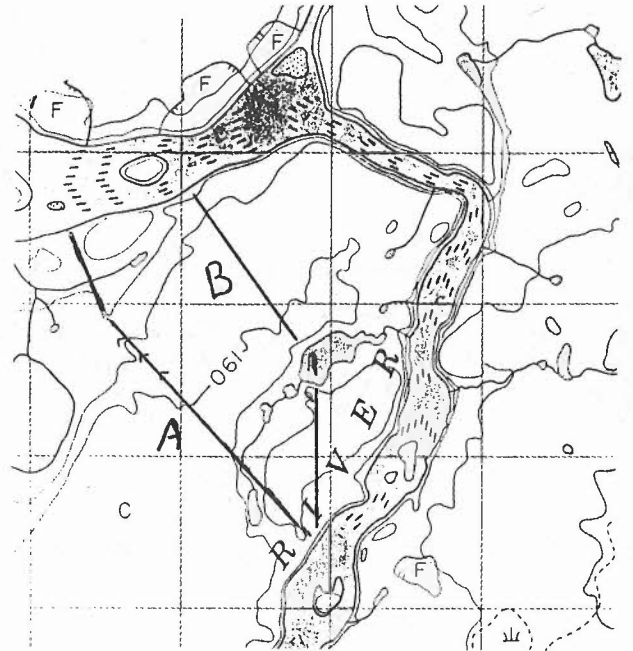
Once you leave the lake, there is a good current, two to four km/h, depending on the width and depth of the river. There are many places with rocks but they can be easily avoided. When I came to Eyeberry Lake, the strong headwind soon drove me to the shore where I made camp. On the east side of Eyeberry Lake, well past the eastern shore, I could see large columns of smoke going up. It surprised me because I did not think there were enough trees to make a forest fire, but perhaps it was moss that was burning. Everything was extremely dry and one had to take great care to make sure that a cooking fire did not spread.

Past Eyeberry Lake there are many class II and a couple of class III rapids. With scouting and due caution, all can be run. Two rapids I want to mention especially. In position EA2242 there is a marked rapid that can be run on the right with due caution. But a couple of kilometres further on, in position EA2344, you should take the time to scout the river. I sneaked by on the left of this class II/III rapid.

I finally reached the Thelon Canyon. Along the way I had attached a message and a red flag to a stick and placed it in a conspicuous place. I knew that Rob Butler, our esteemed WCA treasurer, would be passing that spot that day or the next. Rob was in a group of six people which included WCA members Bill Hosford, Bob Bignell, and Debbie Percival. They were flying out from Baker Lake to Eyeberry Lake where they started their trip. Rob indeed found the message a few hours later.

Different people have tried different ways to pass the Thelon Canyon rapids. Conventional wisdom has it that you line your canoe on the right at the beginning and then run the ledges on the left. An acquaintance of Bill King tried that but, while lining, their canoe got away from them and left them in a very difficult position. Furthermore, if you start on the right, you must beach your canoe a fair distance back. Alternatively, you can do a relatively short portage on the left over a rocky knoll, then wade and line and run the ledges on the left. Regardless of how you do it, it will take hours of scouting to decide strategies and tactics.

If you want to portage though, you can do that on the right or the left of the river. The portage on the right is about three kilometres long. On the left there are two possibilities. Route A was taken by George Luste. Route B appears to be an established route with a number of cairns (inukshuks?) to guide you. Route B goes to a small lake, crosses it to the other side, then continues till it reaches the river again at the start of the first island. Both routes are about 2.3 km long and traverse the tundra with its deep moss. In normal times the terrain is very wet and swampy, as Bill King told me. In my case, because there had been so little precipitation, the terrain was fairly dry and firm.



Because I was by myself, I portaged following the B route, but it was not necessary to paddle across the small lake as the dry conditions allowed me to skirt along the edges. I figured that it would take more time to scout and study the river than it would to portage. The Thelon Canyon was my fourth and last portage of the trip. After the Thelon Canyon, there are no more portages, and the river has a good current.



Just past Warden's Grove I came across an "expedition." There were three Canadians and three people from Zimbabwe who were on a Zambezi/Thelon exchange trip run by two people from Black Feather. After talking with them, I got the impression that they could indeed call it an "expedition" because they had managed to get others to pay for it. They had started at Warden's Grove and would end at Beverly Lake. The Territorial Government had arranged for some Inuit from Baker Lake to come with motorized canoes to pick them up at Beverly and take them to Baker Lake, a distance of more than 300 km.



The high point of my trip came one evening when I was camped at Ursus Islands (LG7251). I heard a lot of noise behind the tent and saw a large number of caribou coming out of the hinterland. After a moment's hesitation when seeing the tent, they passed on both sides of it and proceeded to swim across the river to the other shore.

You should not expect to find any decent camping spots on the 13 km of the river that is shown on map 65M. You should also be wary when coming to the Thelon Bluffs. The rapid in position LG9257 has some big waves on the left; the best channel is on the right, but don't let the current push you over to the left.

Some people had warned me that there would be no firewood available from Beverly Lake on. However, all the shores in the western half of the lake had lots of firewood. Little could be found after that.

When I was paddling Beverly Lake, four float planes took off from various places on the lake and proceeding east; a couple of them noticed me. I wondered what was going on. I found out the reason that night when the wind suddenly changed direction to the north and increased to a wild gale with a light rain. I was at the western end of Aberdeen Lake, close to a cabin, and I quickly moved all my gear into the cabin where I stayed for two days. I was fairly comfortable. Rob Butler later told me that he went to see the cabin and saw the messages that I had left. When the wind diminished I paddled down Aberdeen and Schultz until, with only five kilometres to go on Schultz, the wind suddenly changed again to the north and increased in strength until I found myself paddling in one-metre waves. I was being driven back inexorably toward the headland that I had passed some time before. I had no choice but to beach the canoe, pitch the tent, rest, and do some hiking.

In the evening, when the wind abated, I was able to reach the last headland before the river. From that point the river has a current of at least five km/h and I travelled for a number of hours doing 10 or 11 km/h. Between Beverly and Aberdeen there is some current to help you along and in Aggattalik Narrows, just before Schultz, there is fast current, but it does not last very long. The Aleksektok Rapids were long and impressive but by staying on the right, I was able to negotiate them safely.

In all, my trip was about 970 km long and took me 19 days; although it was quite strenuous, it was also very satisfying and exhilarating. In Baker Lake I had to part with my beloved SP. It was too time-consuming and expensive to take her back to Yellowknife, so I donated her to the Anglican Church. I did feel a twinge of emotion when I walked away, we had been through a lot together. When I got her, she was in three pieces and twice I had put her together. But that's another story.



DUNCAN TAYLOR 1948 - 1994

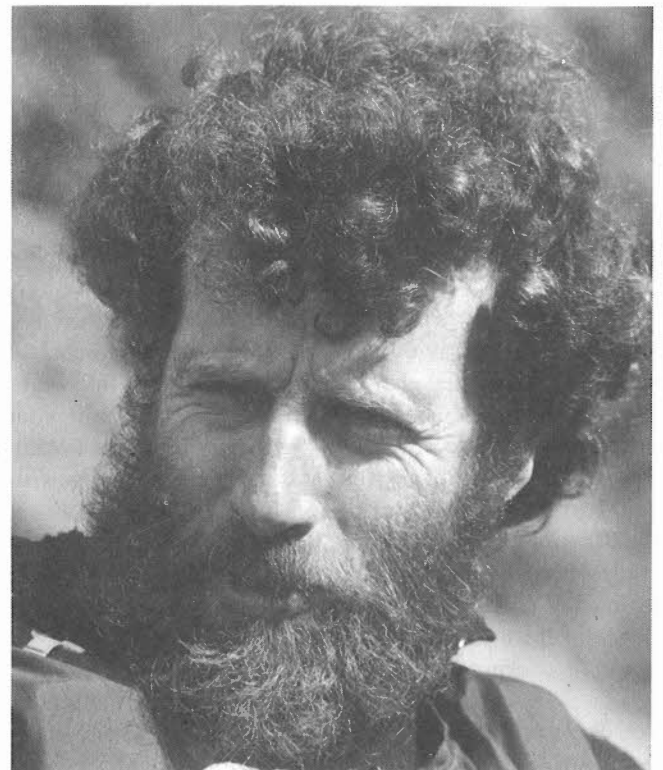
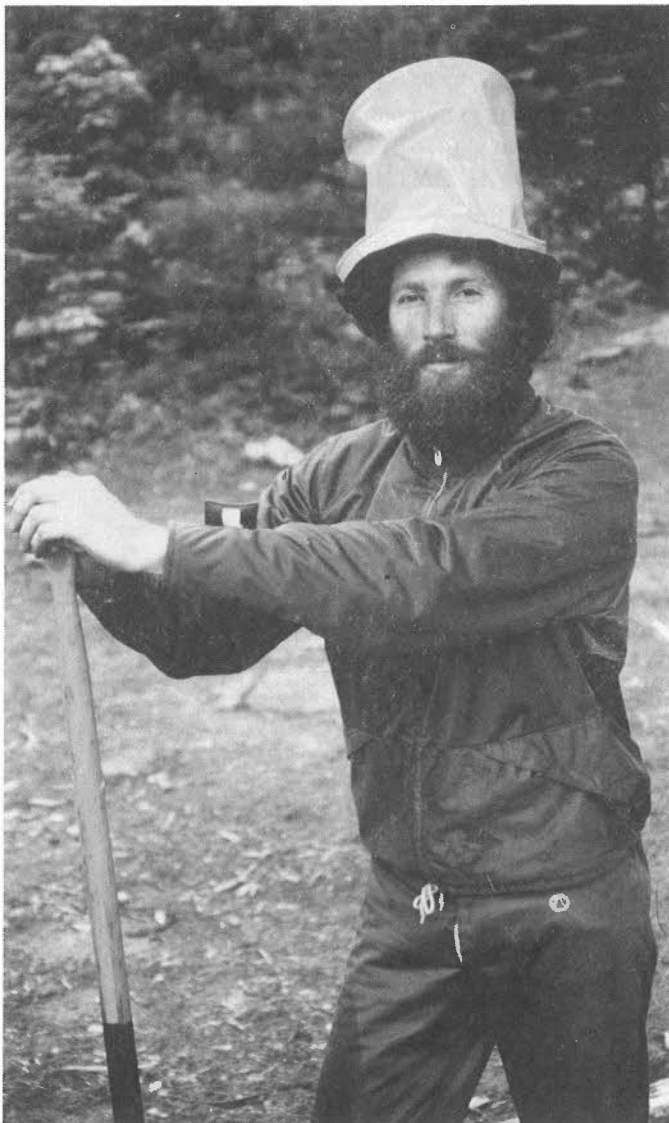
Tragically, on Sunday, 16 October, the WCA lost one of its best friends and faithful contributors. Duncan Taylor, while vacationing on the island of Mauritius (in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar) with his wife, Morna Wales, rented a kayak to go out and play in the surf beyond the offshore reef. He was never seen again. Prompt and professional search-and-rescue efforts, which were continued for over a week, were to no avail and he was presumed lost — a victim either of the reef or of the dangerous currents which are a feature of the South-Mauritius coast.

All who knew Duncan, and many WCAers did, were impressed almost as rapidly by his easy and gentle good humor as by his flaming mop of hair and beard. We shall sorely miss his ready wit, the good counsel so freely and generously given to WCA affairs, and the kindness and encouragement which he extended to less-experienced members.

We shall not soon find his like.



All the rivers Duncan paddled remember our friend's gentle tread, and his habit of feeding sticks to the current to follow the true will of the water.



Duncan, you seem to have caught The Mother of All Eddies. May all your braces be solid, your leans be downstream, your firewood be dry, and may the maps you navigate by be as good as those you have left with us.



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

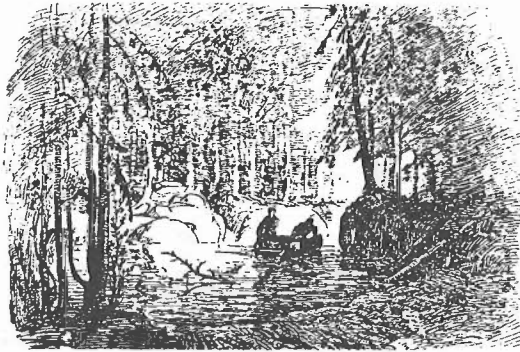
The WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION is a non-profit organization made up of individuals interested in wilderness travel, mainly by canoe and kayak, but also including backpacking and winter trips on both skis and snowshoes. The club publishes a quarterly journal,

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

EDITORIAL

Thanks for the nice response to my request in the last issue for more submissions. There are some new names in the (small) pile of material and they will see their work published in future issues of *Nastawgan*. Keep it up; let your writings and illustrations continue to roll in.

Once in a great while it happens that several of the pages of our journal are blank, not printed, have nothing on it. If you receive one of those misprints, please phone me as soon as possible and I'll send you another, complete copy.



NEWS BRIEFS

NASTAWGAN MATERIAL AND DEADLINE Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think might be of interest to other readers, are needed for future issues. Submit your contributions preferably on floppy computer disks (Word-Perfect preferred, but any format is welcome) or in typewritten form; contact the editor for more information. Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request; please follow these guidelines as much as possible to increase the efficiency of the production of our journal. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue: Spring 1995 deadline date: 22 Jan. 1995
Summer 1995 1 May 1995

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

WATERWALKER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL The official launch of the Third Biennial Waterwalker Film & Video Festival will take place on 4 and 5 March 1995 at the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa. It will be a celebra-

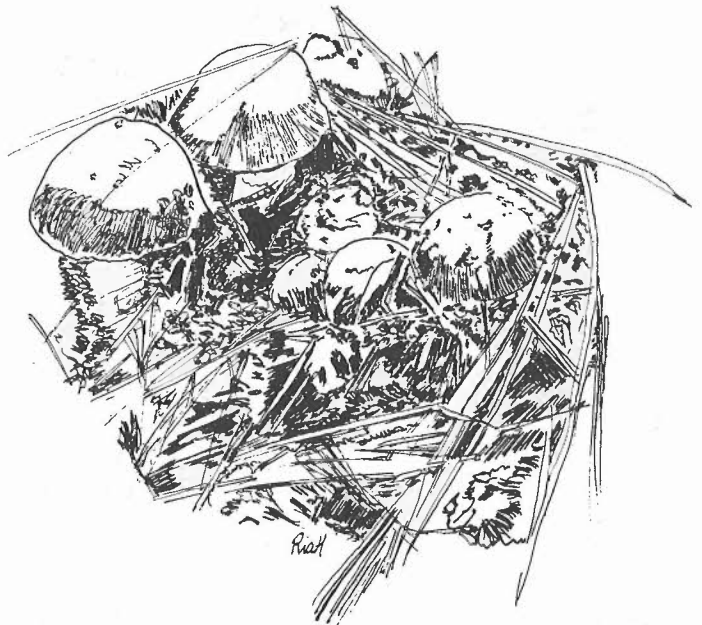
tion of films and videos from around the world on canoeing, kayaking, and sea kayaking, and the conservation of our waterways. Through the presentation of these films as well as the extensive array of exhibits, guest speakers, and social events, the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association hopes to promote and encourage wilderness protection. For information on ticket sales, contact the CRCA at (519) 473-2109.

THE 1995 WINTER MEETING — AGM of the WCA will take place on 18 February 1995 at the Metro Hall in downtown Toronto. Full details on this important meeting are presented in the insert included in this issue distributed to all WCA members.

CANOE EXPO 95 will be held on 7, 8, and 9 April 1995 at the Etobicoke Olympium. For more information, contact Canoe Ontario at (416) 426-7170.

THE CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM is inviting all canoeing/boating friends to become a member of this important organization. Box 1338, 59 Clementi Street, Lakefield, Ontario, K0L 2H0.

THE GREAT WHALE HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT has been shelved by the Quebec government, at least for "the foreseeable future."



RESPECT THE LAND

This is disturbing. It's a true story. A canoeist arrived in Baker Lake (Northwest Territories) last August and proudly showed off a small box containing several colored beads. He said he'd found it "out on the tundra, up the river," beside a pile of stones. It turns out that little brass box of beads belonged to somebody's grandmother, and it was laid next to her grave, in keeping with time-honored Inuit tradition.

I'll bet that young fellow had no idea what he was doing: collecting artifacts is illegal in the NWT. It's that simple. Another group of canoeists stopped to visit some people from Baker Lake who were camped beside the Kazan River last summer. One of the paddlers started talking about the old [artifact] he had found, reaching into his pocket, until someone whispered to him that collecting is illegal, when he suddenly changed his story and denied having any artifacts at all. Obviously, he just didn't know.



I firmly believe that 99.9% of canoeists have tremendous respect for the heritage of the land through which their rivers flow. For most northern canoeists, that sense of history is part of why we go there. The problem is there are some who just don't know the law, or for that matter the deeply felt wishes of the people.

The Inuit want their artifacts left where they are, untouched. Most canoeists already know that and respect it. To the few who didn't, please take it to heart. And to everyone, please help spread the word around your canoeing circle: if you hear of anyone heading north, give them a copy of this article. Reprint it in your club newsletter. And when you're on the river, if ever you run into another party of canoeists, make sure they know the law. And why it exists.

Right now, the people of Baker Lake are upset with "canoeists" at large. We know they're painting with too broad a brush, but how are they to know? It is our collective responsibility to police ourselves on this one, chiefly by educating our colleagues and proteges.

If you see artifacts on the Barrens, admire them, but leave them undisturbed. It's the law. More important, it respects the wishes of the people of Nunavut who own these artifacts.

David Pelly

CANOEING AND WILDERNESS SYMPOSIUM: A NORTHERN OVERVIEW

The tenth Canoeing and Wilderness Symposium (sponsored by the WCA) this year has a general Northern Overview theme. The aim of this annual get-together is to share an appreciation of our northern wilderness. This takes the form of some 19 presentations from individuals who represent a broad mosaic of northern experiences and views. Topics include canoeing, winter travel, Native peoples, conservation, and environment.

WHEN? Friday evening, 27 January 1995 from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., and all day Saturday, 28 January, from 9 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

WHERE? In Toronto, at Monarch Park Collegiate auditorium: One Hanson Street, near Coxwell and Danforth, with reserved seating for about 750.

HOW? Registration form and information should have been received by now by all names on the mailing list.

CONTACT: George Luste, (416) 534-9313 at home, (416) 531-8873 via fax, (416) 978-2295 at work.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am writing to compliment Jim Morris on his well-written article, "Missinaibi Tragedy," in the previous issue of *Nastawgan*. The tragedy his group came upon was a nightmare beyond belief. I'm astounded that Jim was able to articulate the events of this trip so well.

My admiration for Jim's article, and the reason for this letter, stems from the fact that Jim wrote in a way that taught or reinforced safe canoeing practices, without being condescending. A good example is when Jim writes, "A word about our equipment," and goes on to describe, with examples and reasons, his canoe set-up, ropes, and tethering. This type of writing repeatedly occurs whether he refers to canoe techniques, the current, the importance of lunch, and, depressingly, the torn life jacket.

As heart-wrenching as this story is, I hope when members read Jim's article, it will humble even the most experienced canoeist.

Robin Silverstein



PADDLING THE BATHURST SEWER

John Winters

Who would have suspected that an innocent trip advertised in the WCA Trips section of *Nastawgan* (Spring 1994) would cause so much turmoil within the bowels of Toronto's public works department? But turmoil it caused and, once the bureaucratic wheels were set in motion, nothing could stop them. When the sun rose on the appointed day, Ian P. Freele's (an engineer in the public works department with nothing better to do than harass paddlers) threats proved good and one of Toronto's finest was on guard at each and every manhole along the Bathurst sewer route. I was all for calling it quits. Pioneering new paddling routes is fun despite the hardships of bushwhacking, insects, and foul weather, but getting arrested should not be part of the plan.

"Hang loose," said Bill Ness, the trip's co-leader. "We'll get in."

I couldn't see how but sure enough, after a few minutes the policeman drove off down the street.

"How did you know that would happen?" I asked.

"Ten o'clock. It's coffee-break time. Let's get those boats off. We only have twelve minutes and fifteen seconds."

"How do you know that?" I asked additionally.

"That's the average time a Metro policeman spends in a donut shop. Here, help me with this manhole cover."

In seconds we were dropping my aging Chestnut Troglodyte canoe part way down the hole. Part way because it got stuck

"Hmmmmm. Maybe the manholes are smaller these days," I mused.

"Maybe its a people-hole cover. They're smaller than the old manhole covers. Let's get this thing out of here before the cops come back."

We didn't make it. It was wedged in tight as a clam at low tide. A patrol car pulled up behind us.

"You can't park here," he said.

"Uh, we aren't parking," Bill replied, "we're just loading."

"Doesn't matter. Get a move on or you'll receive a ticket."

You have to hand it to the Metro police for courtesy. He helped us get the boat unstuck and offered to bring back some donuts and coffee.

Thankful not to have been handed a ticket we drove back to Bill's to regroup. After much debate we voted not to let this temporary setback deter us

and soon, Cloaca, my trusty old solo sewer-surfing canoe, went down the hole followed by three other solo boats. Then, with head lamps, breathing apparatus, and a map of the Toronto sewer system in hand we were off.

I will refrain from elaborating on the glories of subterranean paddling. The week's heavy rains had produced a torrent with mammoth waves, cross currents that sent us careening off the walls like pinballs in an arcade. OK, aesthetically the trip left a lot to be desired but the paddling was exquisite and the thinning ozone layer was far from our minds. The end came all too soon as we were flushed out into the sun and Toronto harbor.

What advice do we have for future sewer surfers? Don't advertise your trips. The paddling is great but the incidental costs can be significant if the police catch wind of your trip. Not every policeman is a sympathetic as the one who helped us get our canoe unstuck.

One would think Toronto would welcome the development of a new tourist attraction but such is not the case. The bureaucrats gave us a long song and dance about the dangers of the sewers and even suggested that paddlers would litter the route, thus destroying the pristine beauty of the system. No amount of assurances that we were an environmentally aware group would sway them and you can expect considerable harassment from the city once they catch wind of another attempt.

We will go back, however. A sizable underground network of paddlers is forming to organize future trips. Anyone wishing to join can contact a member of the WCA Sewer Surfers at the Sportsmen's Show or CANOE-EXPO.



Happy sewer surfers exiting Bathurst Sewer.

Photo: Bill Ness

PADDLING IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE

We have all heard some of the media hype about the uninformatively named "information superhighway." Having ventured into electronic waters, I was pleased to find there is some useful material for paddlers out there.

To millions of people the expression "surfing the net" implies absolutely nothing about paddling. It implies the electronic exchange of information through computers and telephone lines. In most major cities, a simple 286 DOS-based computer, software, and a modem are all that one needs for cheap local access to at least some of the wealth of information that is available.



Newcomers to the world of electronic communication usually start with free access to a local Bulletin Board Service. This avoids the cost concerns that keeps many away from the large service providers like Compuserve. Larger Bulletin Boards usually carry echoes of "conferences," groups of messages on a related topic. For instance, in Toronto, many Bulletin Boards carry FidoNet conferences which are echoed by Bulletin Boards all over the world. FidoNet includes conferences on wilderness survival and wilderness travel. Some Bulletin Boards also carry access in varying degrees to the Internet. This worldwide network of networks is the source of most of the recent media publicity.

Most common Internet access (and often very cheap, if not free) is through Usenet which operates similar to Bulletin Board conferences only on a much larger scale. Among the thousands of Usenet newsgroups (as conferences are called there) are groups on paddling (rec.boats.paddle), wilderness travel (rec.backcountry), as well as ones on other outdoor topics like skiing (rec.skiing), climbing (rec.climbing) and birding (rec.birds).

My favorite conference is rec.boats.paddle, a Usenet newsgroup I access through a Toronto Bulletin Board. The conference contains messages relating to paddling sports. Although contributors are predominantly American whitewater paddlers, any discussion related to paddling is acceptable. Recent months have included detailed discussions of paddling in tidal areas (including some articles on

the physics of tides); recommendations for new canoes (John Winters take note: lots of people out there seem to like your designs); articles on paddling in the Everglades, the former Soviet Union, and even parts of Africa.

The quality of the messages in this group is very good. However, about 20-80 new messages are posted each day in this one group alone, so selective reading is obviously essential. Software that allows messages to be downloaded and read "offline" is a necessity. The software is usually available as shareware from Bulletin Boards and requires only a small registration fee.

Reading messages is in itself a lot of fun and most people are content to read and not post their own messages. But sometimes I can not resist the urge to add my own two cents worth to a discussion. As a result I exchanged messages earlier this year with, amongst others, a paddler from Sweden planning a whitewater trip in Ontario and a paddler from North Carolina on paddling the Florida Everglades. When Pat and I were considering buying a used C2 but knew nothing about the model in question, I posted a message in the group asking for information. In a few days I received a reply from none other than the designer himself explaining the characteristics of the C2 and what it was designed for.

Reading and exchanging mail is just a small part of what is out there. There are also "sites" that contain text files, pictures, and even maps that would interest paddlers. For now I am content with my very limited access. But as winter approaches, the temptation to explore further will probably grow. Meanwhile, I'd be delighted to hear from anyone out there with Internet E-mail access. My e-mail address is: bryan.buttigieg@canrem.com.

Bryan Buttigieg

A GREAT LAKES PADDLE

On 17 september 1994, WCA member Michael Herman paddled his 19-ft Seaward kayak into Toronto's Sunnyside Beach, thereby completing his solo kayak expedition of the Great Lakes. Titled "Kayaking for Cancer; a Celebration of Life," the trip was an effort to raise awareness and funds for the Canadian Cancer Society. The trip began in Thunder Bay on 14 May and included Lake Superior, St. Mary's River, Lake Huron including all of Georgian Bay, St. Clair River, Snye Channel, Lake Sinclair, Detroit River, Lake Erie, Niagara River, and Lake Ontario.

Michael was paddling solo without support by land, water, or air, but kept contact with the Canadian Coast Guard through VHF radio. Maintaining an average speed of 30 to 40 kilometres per day he carried all the necessary gear for the 127-day trip. Camping each night on the shores of the Great Lakes he had the opportunity to experience the Lakes at a very personal level. Michael is now working on an article describing his trip for publication in a future issue of *Nastawgan*.

CANOE TRIP LOG

John Barker

Day 1 We're finally on the water. Been waiting all winter for this — the sun, the lapping sound of the water on the canoe. Gorgeous sunny day; just a breath of wind to keep the bugs at bay. My partner, Norm, and I are paddling the historic Spanish River in Northern Ontario, on a trip which we expect to take about five days.

Your trip is only as good as your equipment. We've planned this trip for several months now, tended to each detail and gone over every list. In fact, we even had a list of lists. Some friends have recommended various pieces of camping and tripping equipment to us; we're eager to experience the wilds of Northern Ontario.

This sun is gorgeous. Nice, hot, brilliant. Take my hat off to "soak up the rays." Roll up my sleeves and apply my strength with a vengeance to the duties of paddling.

See a brilliant-red bird: it's one I know - a cardinal. Take a photo, even though it's at least 50 yards away. I brought the camera along to take lots of photos, since it's nice when you're back in the city to be able to flip through an album and watch the envious expressions on your friends' faces.

Stop for lunch. Ah, trail mix, cheese and crackers. Haven't had trail mix in about ten years, ever since the summer on the Bruce Trail when that guy that was allergic to nuts got drunk and ate a handful and we had to rush him to the hospital.

Back in the canoe for more paddling. It's high noon now, and the sun is really coming down. Put my baseball cap on. After about three hours we stop at a clearing and make camp. Set up the tents. Norm makes dinner. Nothing like a ribeye steak in the bush. Since Norm cooked supper, I volunteer to do the dishes. It's amazing how similar dish soap and cooking oil can look.

Mosquitoes get quite pesky about 9 o'clock, so we turn in. Arms are a little sore, but I'm not in as bad shape as I expected. A loon calls.

Day 2 My arms are sore. And the backs of my ears are burning. Had a little trouble getting to sleep last night; funny how one always seems to set the tent up with a root that pokes right up in the worst place, isn't it?

After a quick breakfast of oatmeal (instead of brown sugar, we use some of the maple syrup that broke open in the food pack), we break camp and get on the river again. The canoe is stable and steady as we proceed swiftly down the river. The light-hearted songs of birds accompany us as we re-trace the paths of the Voyageurs. Norm starts to sing Voyageur songs.

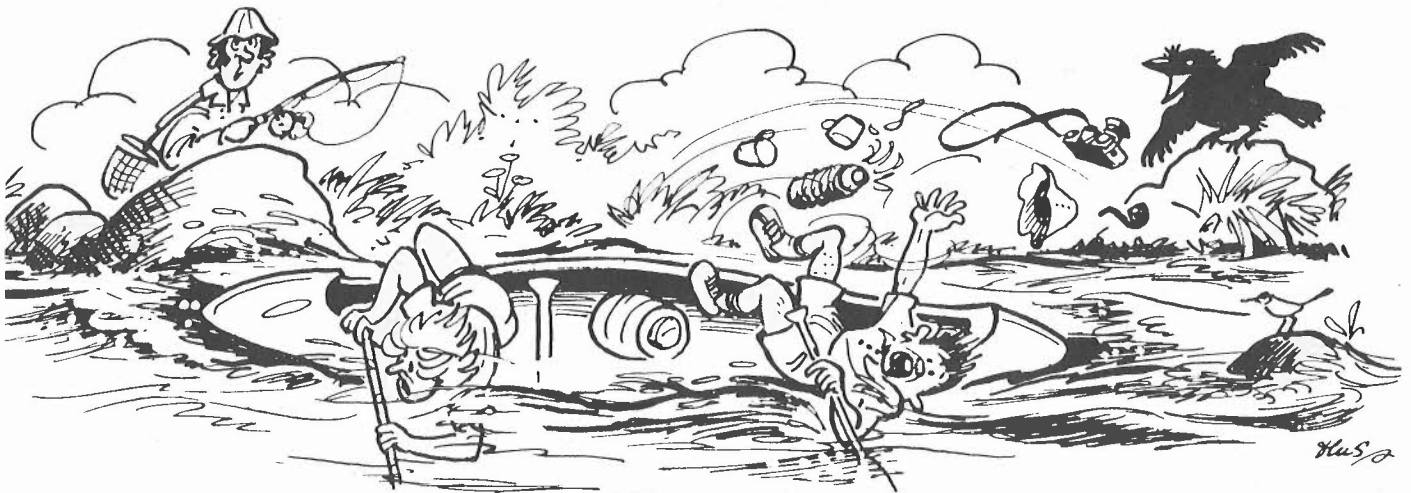
I'm really hoping this trip will toughen up my body. After years of office work, I need to push myself a little and tone up this bicycle tire around my waist.

More trail mix.

Show Norm how to "paddle-dunk" to get a drink. He does it several times, until he doesn't notice that the blade of the paddle has sunk into the muck at the bottom and takes a mouthful of river sediment. I laugh so hard I fall into the bottom of the canoe, but Norm just glares at me; he's a little touchy today. Maybe he slept on the same root I did ... ha! ha!

Although there aren't any mosquitoes, the deer flies are out in droves. They take a vicious bite, and the real trouble is that you don't know it until they're leaving. Realize I am bleeding profusely from a bite behind my ear, but a little damp Kleenex stops the flow; just like a shaving cut. Man, this is really "roughing it."

Come to our first portage. I hoist the canoe and charge into the bush. Halfway through, the mosquitoes come out in full force. As I clear my eyes with a free hand, I hit a tree and the canoe comes smashing down. My scraped arm is now a "battle scar," to be proudly displayed back in the city. Hoist the canoe again, and proceed on. Scrape the hell out of my legs going through a raspberry patch. Must remember to wear long pants when portaging.



Go back for a second load to help Norm; strap breaks on my backpack and it drops in the mud. Norm is still singing Voyageur songs. Tell Norm to hurry his butt up.

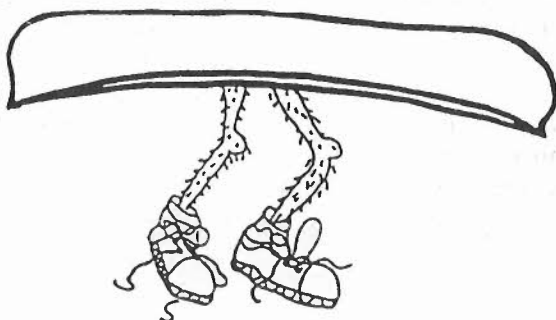
Paddle on for another 10 miles. See two muskrats swimming across the river. Arms are getting progressively sorer and my head is burning. More trail mix. Take my extra shirt and drape it over my head, but the bugs want to use it for a house. Come to another relatively flat spot, so we decide to pitch our camp.

Norm drops the spaghetti as he drains it. Pine needles don't taste that bad after all, especially with lots of ketchup. Tried baking a cake for dessert. Oh, well, we can always buy another cake pan.

Small blisters have appeared on both sides of my hands — on the palm from the paddles, and on the back from the sun. Birds come out at sunset and entertain us with a cacophony of sounds. Take more photos. As darkness descends, a loon appears. This time he's a little closer, and a lot louder.

To store the food and equipment, we haul most of the stuff into a tree. I notice that my backpack is smouldering; when I set it down, the loose matches must have rubbed together and flared off. Norm douses it with coffee, says the river was too far off. Idiot. Now it's burnt **and** wet.

Turn in about 9:30 to the hum of a half million mosquitoes. Have to get up about ten minutes later to pee. Return to bed and realize that I've gotta finish the job. My rear is severely bitten by the time I finally get back into bed. Dig out several mosquitoes that have hitch-hiked into the sleeping bag via my underwear. The romantic loon keeps calling.



Day 3 I swear that root is following me down the river and hiding under my tent until 3 a.m. Slept poorly, partly because of the root and partly because of Norm's snoring.

When we arise, we find that coons have chewed the foodpack. However, even **they** wouldn't touch the grapefruit. Salvage most of the food and repack it. The morning mist turns to a gently drizzle, but we decide to "rough it" and head out. My ankles are swollen from bites. My legs are cramped, my back is sore, my arms are tired, and my hands are tender; my eyes are puffy, my lower back is bitten raw, and I'm bleeding from behind my ears. Ain't this lovely?

The mosquitoes attack, so I put on my sweater and a raincoat. After an hour, I decide to put up the hood, but it's

full of water and it all runs down my back. Norm the Fool is still singing Voyageur songs. The drizzle turns into a down-pour. Hard to see very far down the river but the bush is so thick, we can't go to shore. More bloody trail mix.

Come to another portage. Realize that the one inch of water in the bottom of the canoe has soaked everything. I get some branches to lay in the bottom of the canoe to hold the packs up. While carrying the canoe, my left leg gives out so I heave the canoe off and it hits a rock. Only takes a little duct tape to repair the hole. Pause at the far end of the portage for a rest. Mosquitoes are a thick blanket now; there's so much blood on my head, I look like I've been in a bar fight. Norm the Tuneless starts singing again.

Sun finally reappears. Arrive at our first fast water. I stand to scout the rapids; it looks quite easy, so we proceed down the river.

After emptying the canoe and gathering the floating backpacks, we manage to retrieve our stove, but the lantern immediately sinks and the bag of garbage is blown downriver quicker than we can paddle. Norm the Know-It-All criticizes my method of sweeping; what does he know. How did I know those rocks were there? I've never been down this river, either.

Norm the Knowledgeable points out I used pine branches in the bottom of the canoe, and now everything's sticky. Screw him. Have some trail mix that tastes like sawdust. When Norm isn't looking, I slip a handful of loose trail mix into his backpack.

Decide to camp here for the night. All the matches are gone, but I brought along a magnifying glass to start a fire. Rather proud of myself for that foresight. In a few minutes a cosy fire is going, no thanks to Norm. Norm the Useful lays a beating on some dead wood; the head flies off the axe and pops a hole in the tent. Have boil-a-bag for supper. Take more photos. My boil-a-bag must have had a hole in it, it is absolutely putrid; got a mouthful before I realize what is wrong. While barfing, my compass falls out of my shirt pocket into about 30 feet of water. What the hell, who needs a compass when all we have to do is go downstream anyway?

Foodpack is really starting to stink since the garlic powder container broke. I put wet Kleenex on my ears to help the blisters subside. Notice that I'm up to 29 photos on a roll of 24 (which seems improbable), so I wait until it's absolutely dark and then crawl down into the bottom of a sleeping bag and open the camera. Sure enough, I find that the film leader never caught. Reattach and wind the camera to #1.

I crawl into my (damp) sleeping bag about midnight. Seems there was a hole in my protective plastic bag, and the sleeping bag is "squishing." Thankful it's not cold out. Blisters on my hands finally broke; just makes it wetter inside the bag. I'd likely sleep better with my sleeping pad, but it got left at the beginning of the portage this morning, and I'm not paddling upstream 12 miles to get it. My root is back. Norm is snoring. I think that loon is following us down the river.

About 4 a.m. I get up, grab the axe, and chop the bejeezus out of the ground. Realize that the root was actually a large rock. Probably explains all the sparks.

Day 4 Two wooden paddles were chewed in half last night. Norm the Extremely Stupid forgot to hoist them up into a tree, and it looks like a porcupine had a midnight snack. Since we've only got one aluminum paddle left, I tell Norm he can do all the paddling from here on. Norm just glares. Crackers and strawberry jam for breakfast. Thought it was raspberry jam because of all the seeds, but realized they were ants.

The trip has deteriorated into periods of blistering sun separated by intermittent deluges of cold rain. As a result of our capsizing, our garbage has preceded us down the river; we occasionally see bright plastic wrappers and aluminum foil hanging in branches at the shore. Norm the Mario Lanza is still singing. Told him if he sings one more verse of "Alouette," I'll part his bloody hair with the remaining paddle.

The trail mix is now soggy and lying in the bottom of the canoe. Looks like calf brains. Puke city. My butt is so red I look like one of those African monkeys. Have to use a handful of drink crystals mixed in a bowl, since Norm the Blank left the canteen hanging on a branch at last night's campsite.

Stop for lunch, although I've got absolutely no idea of what we're going to eat; everything from the food to my sleeping bag is wet. Find a nice spot to have a dump, but the stuff rolls back onto my underwear and when I pull them up ... never mind. Pitch them into the bush; what the hell, part of it's organic, anyway.

Lie down and drink from the river. Wonder what the weird taste is until I realize that Norm the Retarded is relieving himself upstream. Tell him I'll be glad to go in his drinking cup anytime he wants. Goof.

Take turns paddling on in silence. See more of our garbage. Pass two campers, who complain about messy tourists. Tell them to *!@*#\$!. After four more hours of complete bliss, we find a small clearing sufficient to set up our tent. I gather wood for the fire. All our firewood has to be less than one inch in diameter, since we don't have a file to re-sharpen the axe. Intended to catch a fish and then have it with lemon juice and noodles; lost the rod and lures when we tipped, so we just have noodles and lemon juice. Norm the Health Nut comments on how nutritious this meal is.

Figure we'll be out tomorrow, so I use the macaroni. It's amazing how similar dish soap and cooking oil can look. Finish the grapefruit instead. Camera starts slipping down the rock towards the water. Grab it, but the back pops open. Surprising how far a camera can be thrown. Norm the Lumberjack tries to sharpen the axe by scraping it on the granite. Use the First Aid kit to bandage his hand.

About 9 p.m., I'm off to bed. Loon starts again. Everything hurts. The underside of my eyelids and my nose are burning from reflected glare. Can't get to sleep for the incessant loon. Throw a large rock at him. Hear a thunk instead of a splash. Will fix the canoe tomorrow.

Day 5 Up at 7 a.m. and outta here. Leave tent, leave stove, leave sleeping bags, leave bush, leave everything. Decide to take my backpack. Find that Norm has shoved two handfuls of trail mix into my package of underwear. Pour sand in his bowl of cold oatmeal.

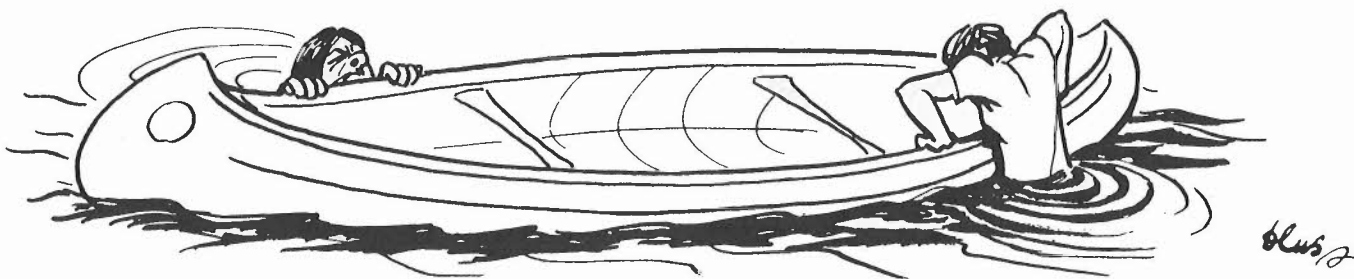
About 1 p.m. we reach the take-out spot. Norm the Marksman strides to the back of the truck, takes out the shotgun, and pumps two blasts into the bottom of the canoe. I then shove Norm the Swimmer into the water; let him get the truck keys out of my pack at the bottom of the river. While he's under, I heave the shotgun as far out into the water as I can.

Never again. What a joy. You gotta be some kind of idiot to enjoy this crap.

Author's note

Over the past 15 year I've had cause to do a fair bit of canoeing, including trips on Ontario's Magnetawan, Spanish, White, and Petawawa; many of the write-ups published in *Nastawgan* have been quite helpful. On each of these trips I keep a log and circulate it to the participants.

A while ago, I sat down and wrote the above "log." Although it is a fictional one, most of the events have occurred at one time or another. Norm is a fictional character, and any resemblance to Bob Shortill (whom I used to paddle with) is entirely, absolutely, and unequivocally coincidental.



UPPER MISSINAIBI UPDATE

Our group of six paddled the Upper Missinaibi River (Missinaibi Lake to Mattice) this past summer, starting 27 July. We had the Ministry of Natural Resources map, all the topographical maps, *Canoeing Ontario's Rivers* by Ron Reid and Janet Grand, a previous trip report from *Nastawgan*, and a preview of Hap Wilson's book about to be published by the CRCA. Having read these books and reports, generally speaking we used the MNR map as we were going along for overall guidance as to where we were on the river.

The main purpose of this article is to add some more information about this section of the river, where we could not see it was already covered by that source material. I will list them in sequence.

1. Quittagene Rapids A Ranger told us there was an unofficial campsite river left just above the rapids. Yes there is, but as it is accessible by motor boat from the lake, you would not want to stay there — disgusting. There is also a campsite at the bottom of the portage trail. It's okay, but again is visited by fishermen from the Park as they can motor right up to the top of the portage trail. We paddled on 100 yards and found a spit of solid rock behind which there was sufficient clearing in the trees for our three tents. A very nice unofficial campsite.

2. Junction with Hay River We saw an unofficial campsite on river left just before you start the 180° left turn.

3. Rapids between Long and Sun rapids Already confused by MNR's descriptions of rapids, (e.g. sometimes "may be run" and other times no comment) and finding all of them generally runnable (so far), we were wetly surprised by the final ledge on the otherwise extremely easy first section of the set of rapids that have no name, the set between Long Rapids and Sun Rapids. From then on, we used the MNR descriptions of the rapids as a source of occasional humor.

4. Allen Island The MNR map does not tell you that the right fork has a huge impassable log jam across it, and the portage trails there are now little used and impassable. So we had to paddle all the way back up that fork to take the left one. We found the "falls" easily runnable in the medium water levels (high for July) that we had.

5. Greenhill Rapids We could scout the upper ledges by standing on the rocky "outjut" on river right, next to the top ledge. Obviously you have to be extremely careful landing there. You cannot see the whole of the rapids from that spot, because they disappear around the bend, but from everyone else's description, the first ledges are the worst. And relying on that, you can scout the remainder from the eddy and banks once you have got over the bad part. It is true there can be no rescues from the banks.

6. St. Peter's Rapids Only after the trip was over did I work out that "several rapids which may be run or walked down follow" meant "several rapids follow which may be run or walked down."

7. Split Rock Falls The lethal danger of these falls cannot be too strongly emphasized.

8. Thunder Falls Ditto. There may be a campsite on river right, but a huge one can be found on river left near the pond below the falls; this one was very buggy at nightfall (mentioned in *Nastawgan* report).

9. The only official campsite on the river proper between Brunswick Portage and the Junction of the Brunswick River: there are actually two nice campsites here, one on the island and one on the portage trail.

10. Two Portage Falls May be runnable with a great deal of skill, but this is not a good place to find out whether you and your canoe are indestructible.

11. Pond Falls Logs get spat out at the other end, but you may not be.

12. Devils Cap Falls Because of the unusually high water levels (for July) we could run it on the right-hand side with a great deal of care and skill and land-based rescuers. We think that if the water had been higher, the stopper would be a Terminator, and in lower water too many rocks on the slide down would be exposed, allowing no route through.

13. From Devils Cap onwards we found the MNR map confusing as to where we were; we ran Devils Shoe Pack Falls (after scouting from the bank) without realizing these were "the falls." The campsite there was very poor so we pushed on in search of a better, unofficial one.

14. After clearing the Devil collection of falls and rapids, we paddled for two hours without finding any unofficial campsite or indeed any flat surface on which to burg our tents. After Wilson Bend, just before the next set of riffle-rapids, we located an abandoned logging/quarrying road river right on the topo map and found that others before us had made a ring of campfire stones - a welcome sight.

15. Beaver Rapids After the conservative attitude to the rapids displayed by the MNR map, we were horrified to discover these major obstructions were not described as "Beaver Falls - Keep Out."

Of course, all paddlers must make their own decision about each set of rapids/falls. The above comments illustrate the importance of doing this, knowing your and your boat's limitations, and not relying on other people's experience and descriptions, except for very general guidance. We learned at the Park that no Ranger had paddled down the river for two years, due to funding shortage. Having now been on a few wilderness trips, we were happy with the adventure of not knowing precisely what lay ahead, but I think it is important to realize that changes have occurred since the MNR map was last updated. Things are going to continue to change, given the nature of a river as a living entity with varying water levels and that the Ministry are not sending rangers out to maintain any status quo.

Debbey Del Valle
Godalming, Surrey, England

GRAND PORTAGE — OLD FORT WILLIAM

REMEMBERING THE HEYDAY OF THE FUR TRADE

Between 1784 and 1821, the fur-trading North West Company from Montreal had its inland headquarters on the north-west shore of Lake Superior. Acting as the central depot for the transshipment of goods and fur between Montreal and the Canadian Northwest, it was a tightly organized operation that for almost four decades was the focal point of much activity.

For about two summer months each year, the main purpose of the depot was the exchange of trade goods and supplies transported by brigades of 36-ft *canots du maître* coming from Montreal (via the Ottawa, Mattawa, and French rivers and the north shores of Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, and Lake Superior), and fur brought down by brigades of 25-ft *canots du nord* coming from the northwest. Business meetings between Montreal partners and the winterers from the northwest trading posts were also an important part of the activities in the depot.

The site of the original depot was Grand Portage, a few kilometres south of the present Canada - USA border which runs along the Pigeon River. This location was used until 1802/1803 when the whole operation was moved about 60 km north to Canadian territory in order to avoid USA taxes on goods transported by the Canadian NWC.

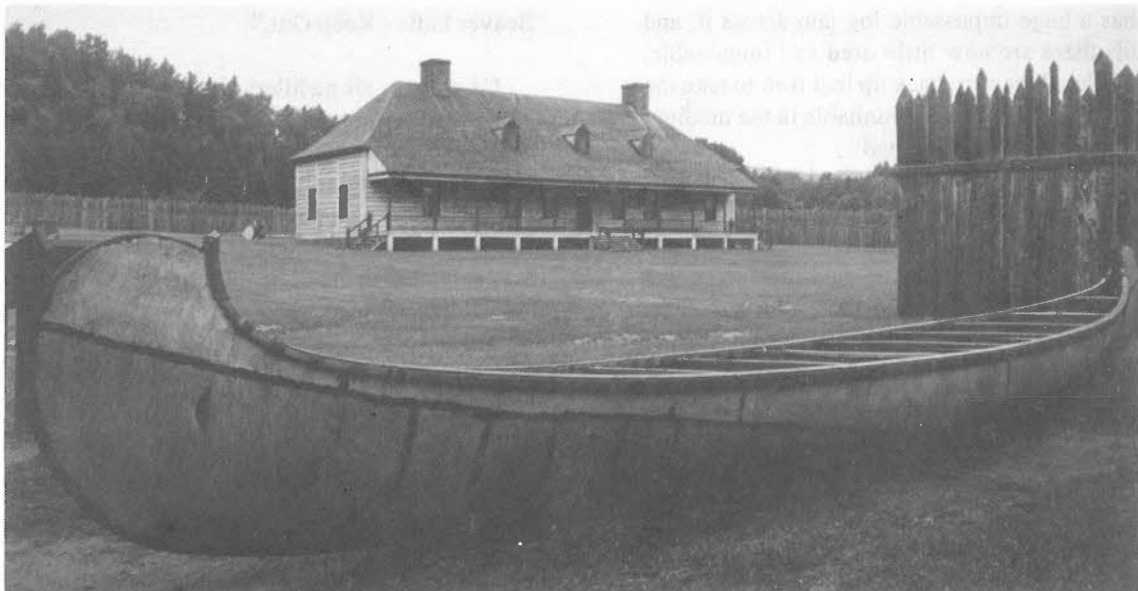
The new headquarters was Fort Kaministiquia (in 1807 renamed Fort William in honor of William McGillivray, chief superintendent of the NWC), located at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River. This location was not as good as the previous Grand Portage site and made the early part of the trip to the west quite a bit more difficult, but because everything was taking place on Canadian soil, interference by the USA tax people was avoided.

This depot was in use till 1821 when the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company amalgamated and the fur trade from the Northwest was being re-directed through Hudson Bay trading posts, no longer using the famous voyageur canoe route between Montreal and Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca. Fort William became just another HBC post and its importance declined rapidly, leading to the official closing in 1883.

Several decades ago, the interest in the history of the fur trade started to grow again and both the American and the Canadian sites were eventually restored to much of their former appearance. Grand Portage was in part rebuilt on the same site it had occupied around 1800 and is now operated by the National Park Service. Because the original Fort William on Lake Superior at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River was gradually destroyed and its location is now covered by modern developments of the city of Thunder Bay, Fort William was faithfully reconstructed at a new site on the Kaministiquia River, about 15 km upstream from the original one. This "new" place is called Old Fort William and occupies a large site with 42 historic buildings.

Visiting both sites, especially the extensive Old Fort William complex which is larger and contains more artifacts and information than Grand Portage, and immersing oneself in the history of the fur trade and canoeing of 200 years ago is an eye-opening experience of the first order. There is much to see and learn in the carefully rebuilt sites, and you will soon discover how crucial the fur trade was for the development of both Canada and the USA.

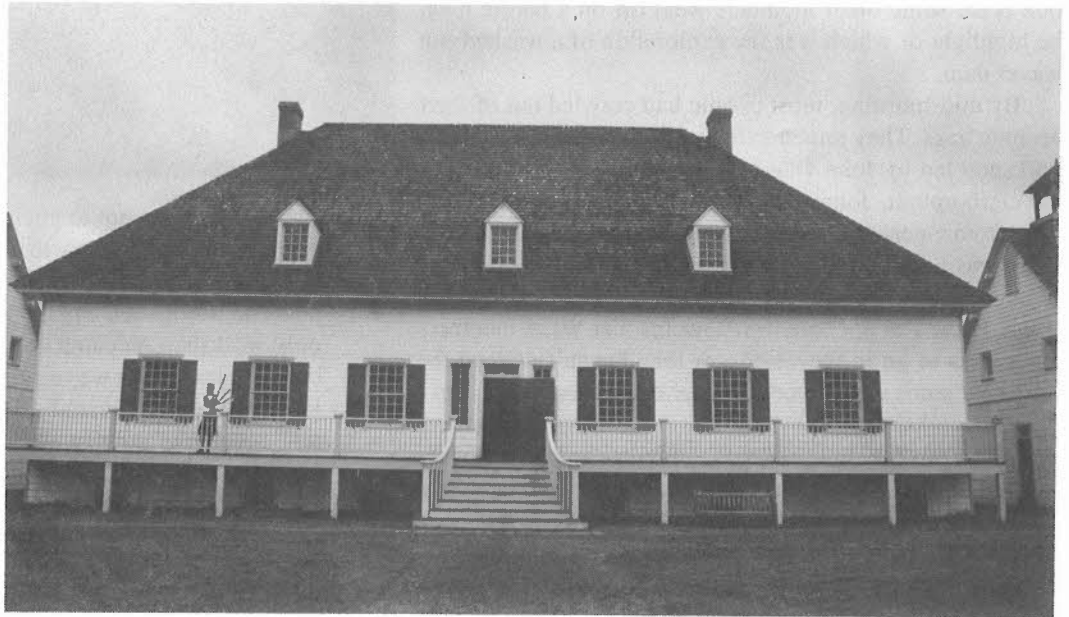
A good visit to Grand Portage takes about a day, including a hike on part of the 14-km portage trail itself. The main



Grand Portage



Old Fort William



building with the adjacent kitchen is filled with interesting artifacts and is more than worth a few hours of your time.

Visiting Old Fort William should preferably be spread out over no fewer than three days, but one day will do just fine if you're not too ambitious. If at all possible try to include in your Old Fort William visit all or part of the joyous meeting called Great Rendezvous Festival that takes place over several days in July each year. There you can see fascinating re-enactments by costumed interpreters and learn how things were done during the heyday of the fur trade when everything depended upon the use of birchbark canoes paddled by the legendary voyagers. A special place in my heart has the extensive Old Fort William resource library where a highly knowledgeable staff will help you find your way in possibly the best and largest collection of North American fur trade information anywhere.

Toni Harting

FALL MEETING '94

Over 80 WCA members and friends made the journey to Bon Echo Provincial Park on the weekend of 17 September. We enjoyed wonderful warm weather and the terrific color of the autumn leaves. A few of the advance members set up camp early on Friday, with the majority wandering in later, until the wee hours of Saturday morning.

On Friday night the group gathered around the campfire to renew acquaintances over coffee and cookies. And even though we offered a prize for the best bannock, no one stepped forward to offer their favorite recipe to the group for taste trials. Perhaps it's a myth that canoers bake bannock! The Saturday-morning program got underway for the early risers with several members displaying their canoes and describing some of the modifications they had made to them. It was interesting to look at the different approaches to design, manufacture, and fastening of spray skirts. While this took place some other members went off on a nature hike, the highlight of which was the exploration of a washed-out beaver dam.

By mid-morning, most people had crawled out of their sleeping bags. They joined in the well-attended canoe repair workshop led by John Glasgow from Wild Rock Outfitters of Peterborough. John demonstrated and discussed everything from emergency repairs to repairing Kevlar and ABS. There was considerably less interest in the workshop "How to build a wilderness crapper," given by WCA member Chuck Lacy. I'm not sure if this means that WCA members never have to go in the woods, or they haven't noticed the mess near some of the more popular campsites.

The workshop lead by Bill Ness on waterproofing gear, gimmicks, and techniques was, judging by the numbers crowding into the marquee tent, a rousing success, or maybe it was just because we had a few drops of rain. The rain cleared and 30 to 50 people gathered on a rocky point to watch the display of Classic Canadian Style Paddling put on by Doug Gifford and Michael Ketemer, both from ORCA.



Photo: Glenn Spence

Those that chose not to attend the demonstration missed an excellent opportunity to see the enjoyment you can have in a canoe after camp is set and the lake is calm.

The Buttigiegs, Pat and Bryan, put on a standing-room-only workshop on camp cooking. I am told they even gave out samples, which was a good thing considering the mix-up in dinner times, covered on the next page. The "show and tell" session of strange and uncommon gear and gimmicks put on by Bill Ness and Paul Hamilton was an outstanding success, proving once again that all WCA paddlers are suckers for this stuff. No wonder the outfitting stores do so well.

Fortune smiled upon us as the later-than-announced dinner gave an opportunity for the park naturalist and Native interpreter, Bond Stand, to give us a very engaging talk on the significance of the pictographs on the face of the Bon Echo rocks. This was followed by a slide show illustrating the rock paintings and comparing some of them to other pictographs, and also to some of the images at the Peterborough petroglyphs. Huge mounds of food eventually arrived, thus averting a lynching of the event organiser. The food was wolfed down in minutes. Kevin Callen, author of Cottage Country Canoe Routes, put on a dazzling slide show featuring shots taken on some of his favorite Haliburton and Kawartha canoe routes. By ten o'clock most of the rugged paddlers were snuggled into their sleeping bags.

Sunday was sleep-in day for some, and a few drove up to Palmer Rapids to play between the rocks. The rest gathered in a flotilla around Bond Strand for a paddle out to the face of the towering Bon Echo rocks. Once there Bond told a few native legends and attempted to interpret the meaning of the pictographs along the face of the cliff.

This was indeed a very successful Fall Meeting.

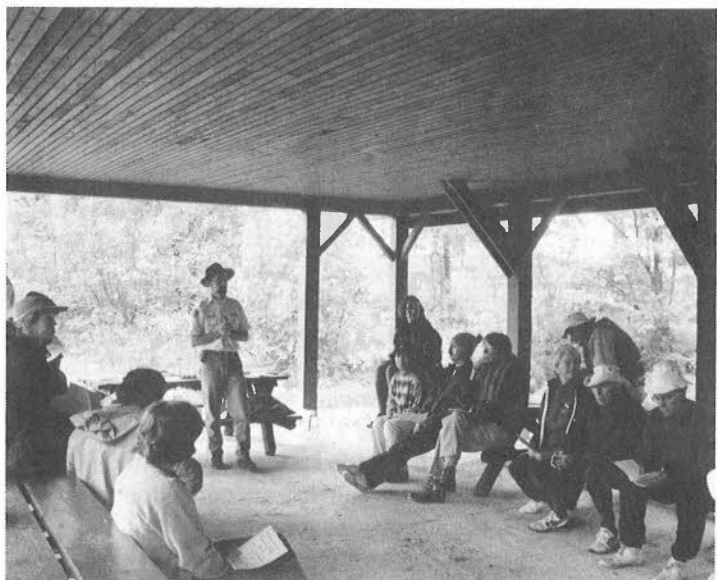


Photo: Bryan Buttigieg

Bob Shortill

BEER BECOMES THE WCA

This year's WCA Fall Meeting took place at Bon Echo Provincial Park, as reported in the write-up by Bob Shortill. As part of the deal, the Saturday night meal was planned to take place at the local Lion's Club Hall in nearby North Brook. Originally, we were supposed to have supper in Cloyne, which is closer to Bon Echo, but we were bumped by the ladies' auxiliary. Being bumped is not new to canoeists. Most of us, at some stage in our tripping experience, have had to paddle to the next campsite because the desired spot was taken by a ladies' auxiliary.

Anyway, back to the story. Acting on information given to us at Bon Echo we arrived for supper at the Lion's Hall at 6 o'clock. But once again the meal plans were thwarted. Supper, we were told, would only be served at 8 o'clock. Two hours is a long time to fill, particularly when you are hungrily anticipating a meal and the only thing to do is to hang around the local parking lot chewing on one's nails. It so happened that we were close to a beer store which was still open. The evening being warm, an enterprising member bought a few bottles of beer to console himself and his fellow diners and to help ease the burden of waiting.

But behold, before too much time had elapsed the local police detachment were upon us. No, not because the WCA members had become drunk and disorderly. Rather it was because we had contravened the law against having pre-prandial alcoholic pick-me-ups "al fresco" in the parking lot. Needless to say the WCA members had to do some fast talking trying to get out of this one and we were soon engaged in lively discussions and negotiations with the police.

However, just talking a good line does not necessarily mean that being arrested can be avoided. Now ... would you believe that we were marched down the main street to the

local jail to be booked for the spirited offense and that, having spent all our money on beer, we did not have sufficient funds to raise bail? Some members were able to keep their wits and formulated a plan for an alternative to having to pay cash. Drawing upon their extensive wilderness experiences, they offered to do workshops for the constabulary and the town folk on topics such as: drying your own food, waterproofing techniques, and the latest gizmos for purifying water. Imagine this offer being so valuable that it was worth hard currency or, as we J-birds say "bail equivalence."

We were also able to convince the police that prisons cells are too small to accommodate audio-visual equipment, and that looking at beautiful sunset scenes through a set of steel bars is not conducive to appreciating the wilderness. Even the cops agreed with this argument.

Besides, they would not have been able to feed us. We were a group of hungry canoeists and you know what kind of appetite canoeists have. In the end we were set free to continue to revel in the planned evening meal and slide shows.

The question is: did we really parlay our expertise in giving wilderness workshops to escape a minor jail term, or was this the product of devilish minds "chewing the fat" in the parking lot while waiting for supper and the evening's entertainment? I'll leave it to you to decide what is fact and what is fiction.

But back to business. I would like to thank Bob Shorthill for organizing the Fall Meeting and especially for gathering together so many qualified and diverse people to share their experiences with us.

Submitted by ex-con Earl (00367) Silver

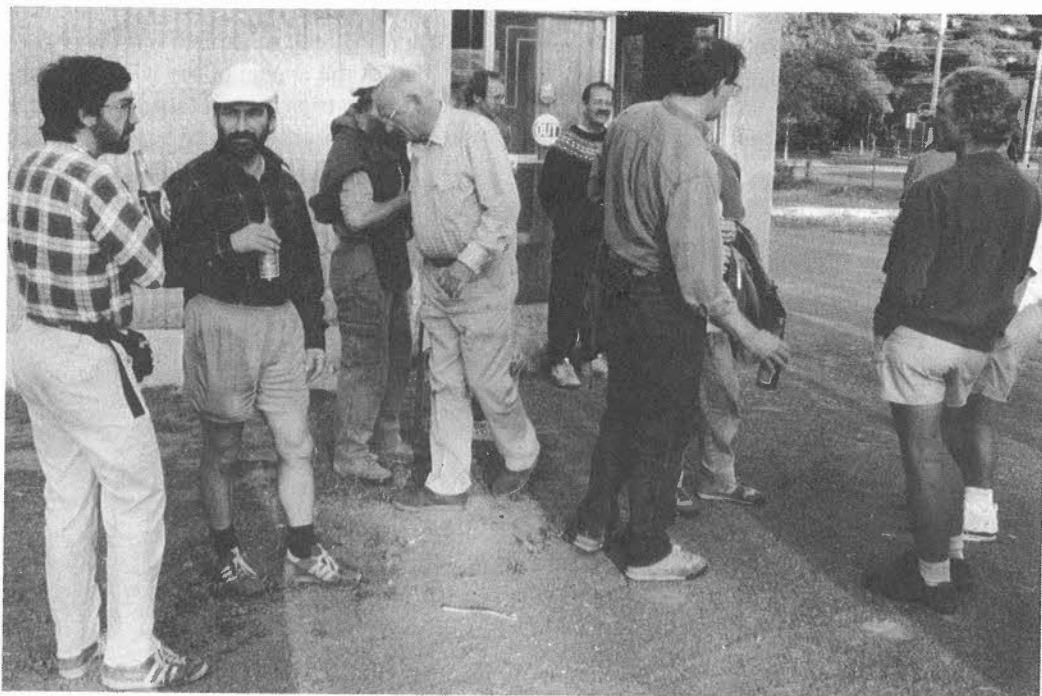


Photo: Bill Ness

A SOJOURN IN THE BARREN GROUNDS

Canoeing the Thelon River, NWT

Article: Peter B. Irvine
Photos: © Lou Gardella

A lifelong passion for the wilderness inevitably drives one further and further north, until the Canadian Arctic is reached. Beyond the tree line, the armchair explorer finally finds his ultimate destination. Some people remain content merely to read about the exploits of the famous explorers of the North, while others, dissatisfied with the vicarious experience, are driven to emulate them in a more tangible way.

Having been for many years myself an armchair explorer, I determined at last to take a trip that in its scope and ambition would approximate the many adventurous accounts I had read. The reality of the journey turned out to be more familiar than I anticipated, though there were many aspects of the new and untried.

The tundra is a natural environment that is as foreign to most of us as outer space. It stretches across the Canadian Arctic, encompassing vast areas of unexplored wilderness. The home of abundant wildlife, it is a place where man is merely a visitor, for the most part. Yet as we found, human beings have inhabited this stern landscape for thousands of years. Ancient chipping stations, or stone tool works, may be found in abundance, as may stone tent rings and cairns, man-made rock piles marking certain places of human significance. We find, inevitably, that we are neither the first nor the last to visit here, but merely sojourners in the wilderness.

The Thelon River flows through the Thelon Game Sanctuary, the largest such preserve in the world. It lies in the migratory path of the Beverly caribou herd, which has been estimated to number 420,000. Barren Lands grizzly bears roam free in this landscape, as do arctic wolves, fox, and wolverines. The musk-ox, a great bison-like beast that is almost prehistoric in appearance, is abundant there.

Hundreds of miles north of the tree line, the Thelon nonetheless provides sites for isolated stands of evergreens, termed "oases." These stands appear in the middle of vast reaches of tundra, where only muskeg and dwarf plants survive.

The land is almost uniformly flat, with an occasional rise created by the passage of glaciers. Eskers — long, gravelly hills also formed long ago by glaciers — appear here and there along the river. The mass of land is dotted with lakes that have nowhere to go, their water held by the permafrost that lines their bottoms. Dig less than a foot into the soil of the tundra, and you will reach frozen ground, even in the middle of summer.

In August, the arctic summer is at its peak, yet the cold nights may bring an occasional frost. The temperatures are extreme, ranging from uncomfortably hot to the frigid cold of the river's water.

Said to be one of the most remote regions of North America, the Thelon Game Sanctuary can easiest be reached by flying hundreds of miles in a float plane. There is little sign of human habitation, beyond occasional archaeological sites once used by the ancient Inuit.

One might wonder why anyone would want to visit such a stark landscape. For years, my friend Vijay and I had made canoe trips in Canada and in the Northeastern United States, drawn by the lure of the wilderness. Our goal has always been to leave civilization as far behind as possible, at least for a short while. To those who are not drawn by the wilderness, it is difficult to explain our fascination.

Part of the appeal of the wilderness is its sheer beauty, and in all the trips we had taken over the previous ten years, we had always encountered beautiful landscapes. However,





the Thelon had another, more special attraction. We were lured by the promise of abundant wildlife, of a place where wild animals remain unafraid of man. We were not disappointed. In our twelve-day trip in August 1993, we saw herds of caribou and musk-oxen, a grizzly bear, arctic wolves, tundra swans, arctic terns that dive-bombed our heads, eagles, and other equally rare species.

Vijay and I met at Seton Hill College in Greensburg, Pennsylvania (an unlikely spot for a pair of middle-aged Arctic explorers), where he teaches economics and I was director of development. We soon discovered our mutual interest in canoeing and took a number of relatively tame trips in Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Northern Ontario. Each of these trips has taken us to a more remote location than the previous one and correspondingly has increased in difficulty. Over the years, we developed a dream to visit the Canadian Arctic, inspired by such books as Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf* and Sigurd Olson's *The Lonely Land*, among others.

One day in the dead of winter at the Pittsburgh Outdoor Show, we wandered among the many booths of hunting and fishing lodges in Canada. There a lone outfitter attracted our attention. "Tundra Tom" presented the solid appearance of a northern guide. He spoke with authority about leading many canoe trips in the Arctic, which he had done since he was a young man. His father had been a guide before him, teaching Tom the techniques of survival in the wilderness.

Tom described the Thelon River with great enthusiasm, mentioning the herds of caribou, grizzly bears, musk-oxen, and other animals. He clearly had a real love for this particular wilderness, as his conversation was filled with conviction and passion. He appreciated the ecological fragility of the tundra and mentioned his efforts to save it from the ravages of mining.

Vijay and I were suitably impressed, and we agreed that "some day" we would canoe the Thelon River with Tundra Tom. Several years later, when my wife decided to abandon our annual canoe trip for a study tour of Greece, we decided to take the plunge.

Arctic canoe trips are not for everyone. The black flies and mosquitoes are legendary in their ferocity. The weather is fickle and severe. And the inherent dangers from wild animals, hypothermia, and medical emergencies in an area of extreme remoteness are not to be underestimated. But our enthusiasm remained strong.

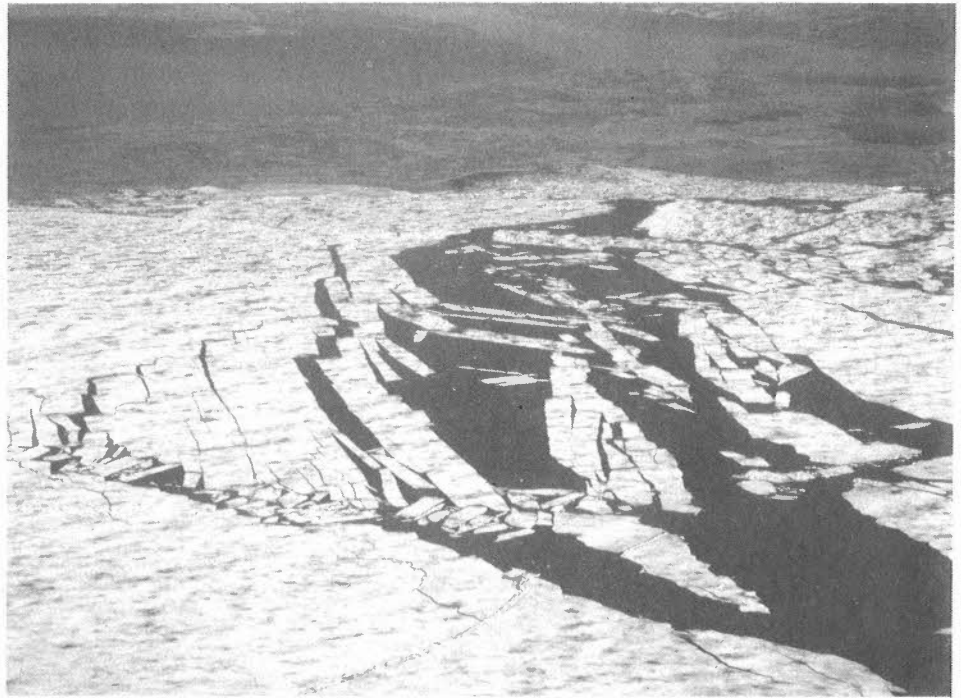
Part of the appeal of such a trip is the utter unfamiliarity of it all. Yet we found in the midst of our journey that it was not unlike trips we had made on other rivers. There is a certain ritual involved in every canoe trip. The mindless strokes of the paddle, one after the other, all day, day after day. The putting-up and taking-down of tents. Preparing meals. The taste of bourbon at the end of a long day of paddling. These are some of the elements that combine to make all canoe trips very much look alike.



But the Thelon was an experience above and beyond the others. We had our long-awaited first encounter with a grizzly bear, which turned out to be something of an anticlimax: the bear was more frightened of us than we were of him. We also encountered three-foot waves created by wind and rapids. These were a major challenge, considering the survival time in frigid Arctic waters is only about thirty minutes. After that, hypothermia can claim one's life. Under the circumstances, we determined to avoid capsizing at all costs.

The real danger, however, turned out to be the possibility of medical emergencies that would not have been adequately planned for. An evacuation could have taken days, and if someone had come down with acute appendicitis (as I did some two weeks after the trip), he could have been raven meat.

The dangers of the trip, however, were not only ours alone. I have a vivid recollection of watching a caribou calf, observed intently by a white wolf on the ridge to the left of the river, swimming frantically to the other side. As the calf approached the right bank, two of our party unthinkingly pursued it for a photo opportunity. Panicked by the sight of human beings, the calf reversed direction and swam back to the left shore, where the wolf stood, waiting with impassive malevolence. Though we did not observe the outcome of this scenario, we felt that the wolf would soon find its prey, as we watched the caribou struggle exhausted onto the bank.



Wolves are sinister figures to most people, but we found them curiously benign toward humans. The first night on the tundra, a lone wolf wandered into our campsite, apparently unafraid of human beings. He paused for a moment to listen to the call of the pack, which could be heard across the tundra. Then he vanished over the sand. Another night, a pack of five wolves sauntered aimlessly up and down the bank across from our campsite. We did our best imitations of wolf howls, trying to get them to answer. But they just seemed bored with our efforts. It is perhaps this disinterested preoccupation that is most unnerving about the wolf.

The caribou, on the other hand, were skittish, turning tail at the mere appearance of human beings. At one point, Vijay and I were deep in conversation in our canoe when a buck with a full rack of antlers suddenly appeared on the bank, not twenty yards from us. As we floated down towards him, he crashed into the brush and disappeared. Tom taught us to imitate the caribou, raising our arms like antlers and rocking back and forth, making caribou sounds. It was his theory that this performance would attract the caribou, but we never really proved that point, since the animals seemed to avoid us at all costs.

The musk-oxen were a bit more placid and tolerant of our advances. At one point, we approached what I thought was a caribou carcass. As we paddled closer, the animal suddenly came to life and stood up; it was a full-grown musk-ox that had been sleeping on the river bank. He seemed to shrug his shoulders and then bolted off into the tundra.

The indifference of this landscape is unsettling at best. We are mere sojourners, strangers in a hostile environment. It is difficult to know how to approach such a country, let alone try to control it. We are reminded of our ultimate insignificance and inability to determine our own destiny.

Yet persevere we did, finally reaching our destination at Beverly Lake, some 180 miles from our beginning. Our thoughts on concluding the trip focused on the utter isolation of it all. Even in a group of twelve people, we were all very



much alone. I suppose that coming to terms with this solitude is the essence of a trip to the Arctic.

The country is large and empty, more remote than most people can even imagine. A misstep can be fatal. But the rewards are correspondingly great. One gains a sense of the vastness of the wilderness and the fact that man has not yet spoiled it all. This revelation, I must admit, comes as a great relief. There still exist wild places where man is on equal footing with his fellow creatures. On our trip down the Thelon, we were without a gun, without a radio, and without any means of evacuating anyone quickly. Under the circumstances, one gains a renewed apprehension of mortality.

But the wonder of the natural environment more than compensates for the grim aspects of wilderness travel. We realized with some sorrow that the closest many people come to the wilderness is a photograph on a calendar published by the Sierra Club. This is a pity. If more people would actively seek a true encounter with the wilderness, they would be better off for it. Many outdoorsmen guard "their" wilderness jealously, resenting the intrusion of other people. But I believe that our society would be more harmonious if people would learn to live in harmony with nature. A wilderness experience is one step toward cultivating a constructive relationship with the land.

Throughout our trip, there were unfortunate momentary lapses of wilderness ethics by a few members of our group. Some frightened the wildlife by trying to get too close while taking photographs. Others unearthed stones from ancient tent rings to anchor their own tents. And others even removed artifacts from some of the archaeological sites we visited. (Which is not only illegal but also immoral, see "Respect the

Land" on page 7. Ed.) These are all reprehensible mistakes severely damaging our harmonious relationship with the land and its people. If all of us can grow to appreciate the wild places of the world for what they are, perhaps these abuses will diminish.

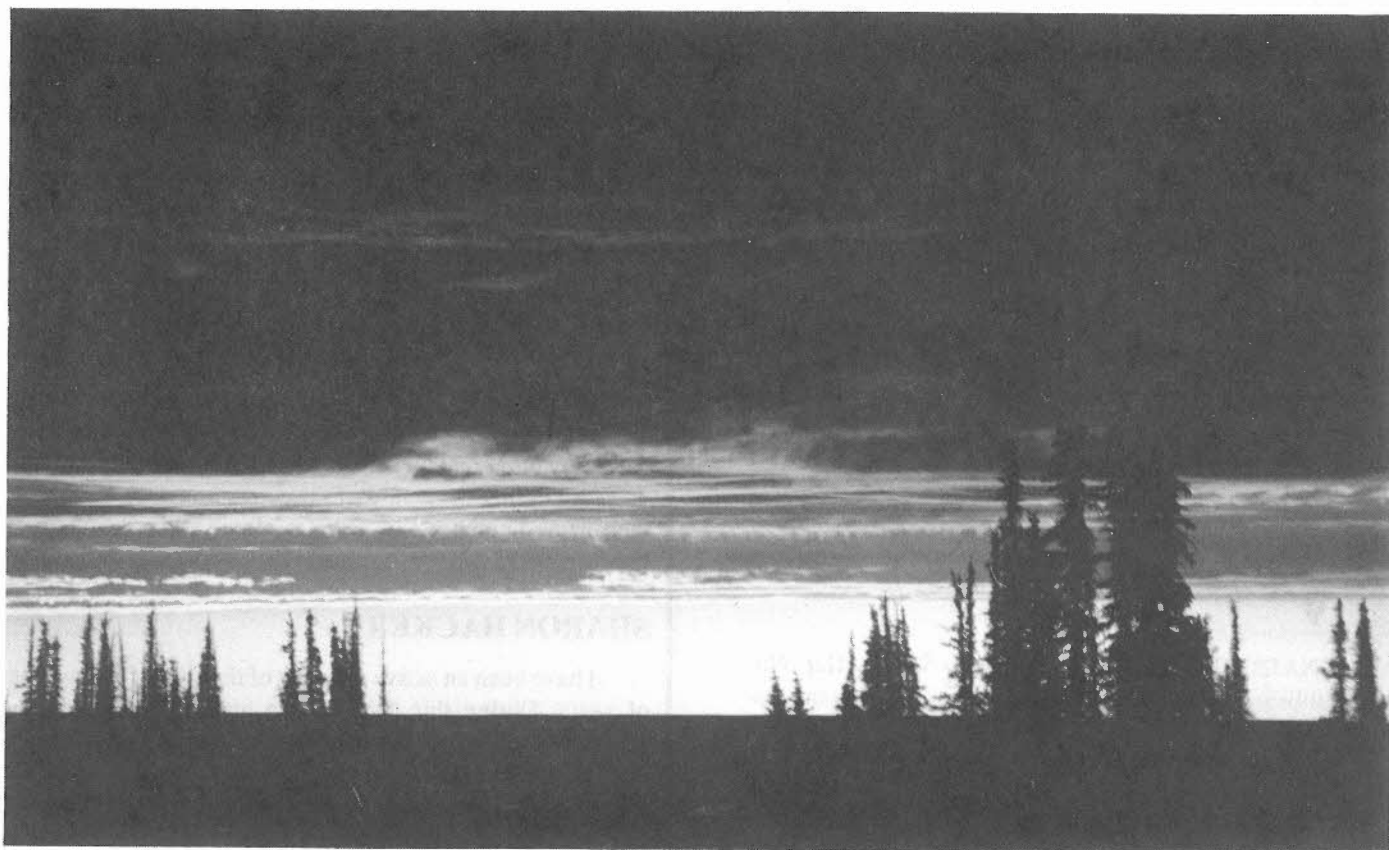
The only way for people to understand these things is for them to encounter the wilderness for themselves. I therefore encourage those who have read and dreamed of natural wonders to actualize that dream by visiting one of those special places. There can never be too many people who value the natural world. Through education, perhaps we can preserve the best of it.

The Thelon River and Game Sanctuary are truly among the natural wonders of the world. Nowhere else is the distinctive wildlife of the Arctic more abundant. What became clear on our trip is that there is so much territory yet to explore, so many rivers to be discovered.

And so the ritual begins its cycle once again. In the dead of winter, we dream of distant, unexplored territories. And if one of those armchair explorers gets out of his chair, looks at a map, and heads for the far North, I will consider my mission accomplished.

* * * * *

(If you want to become involved in the planning process of the Thelon Game Sanctuary by contributing suggestions based on your experience and interest in the sanctuary, contact PRP Inc., 2034 Casa Marcia Cres., Victoria, B.C., V8N 2X3.) (Ed.)



REVIEWS

CANOEING NORTH INTO THE UNKNOWN, A Record of River Travel 1874 to 1974, by Bruce Hodgins and Gwyneth Hoyle, published by Natural Heritage / Natural History Inc., Toronto, 1994, softcover, 278 pages, \$29.95. Reviewed by Toni Harting.

Most canoe trippers, while paddling a wilderness river somewhere far away, must have thought once in a while: "Who were here before me; why and when did they travel these waters?" This extraordinary book provides many of the answers to those questions, at least as far as numerous Canadian rivers are concerned flowing north to the Arctic Ocean.

It contains a huge amount of information on the who/where/when/why of travel on these wilderness rivers, including a geographical description of each river system, its historical significance, and hundreds of chronological records of those who have canoed its waters.

There are also many excellent black-and-white photographs (providing a good example of the very high quality that can be achieved using modern computer-based reproduction techniques), 10 well-organized maps, three indexes (people, lakes and rivers, organizations), and an extensive bibliography of printed sources.

If dreaming about a trip is as much part of the canoeing reality as the actual trip preparations themselves, this is one book that will surely set you off to slumber land. It will last you a lifetime with ideas for unforgettable trips, and the ones you can't do yourself, you can always wish for. (While feeling the slight twinge of jealousy that inevitably comes up when you hear someone else describe a fabulous trip up north.) An important book, pure joy for us paddling dreamers and/or dreaming paddlers.



MISSINAIBI, Journey to the Northern Sky, by Hap Wilson, published by the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association, Hyde Park, Ont., 1994, softcover, 135 pages, \$18.95.

Reviewed by Toni Harting.

It's always a pleasure to open for the first time a new book by Hap Wilson. His works are well-researched and

profusely illustrated with his trademark maps and sketches, bringing the eager paddler a wealth of information on the rivers Hap talks about. And this intriguing book on the famous Missinaibi River is no exception. It is an excellent guide book (in fact, the only such book available discussing this river) that takes the reader from the remote past to recent events on the Missinaibi, including a harrowing Preamble detailing the tragic drowning of two paddlers in June 1993. There is lots of background information illustrated with old and modern photographs as well as Hap's personal black-and-white drawings. His effective use of two colors, black and red, make studying the numerous maps a delight, and the four-page chronology provides us with a good skeleton of the river's history.

The book also warns of the dangers threatening this wild river. An anguished cry of concern in George Luste's foreword emphasizes the urgent need to keep development and intrusions away from the river corridor, lest we lose an irreplaceable part of our natural heritage. The book does an outstanding job of informing us what the river is all about and that fighting for its integrity is more than worth all the trouble.

I have some criticism, though. The photographs are the weak part of this book; many of them are not of the same quality as the graphics and unnecessarily diminish the appeal of the book. Furthermore, their reproduction is often very disappointing. Stricter quality control would have been required here. And why Hap insists in adding a few extra pages for a trip log, a check list, and even a menu list in the back of this book is a mystery to me. These useless pages have no function in a guide book like this; they belong in the separate files that each tripper has of his or her trips.

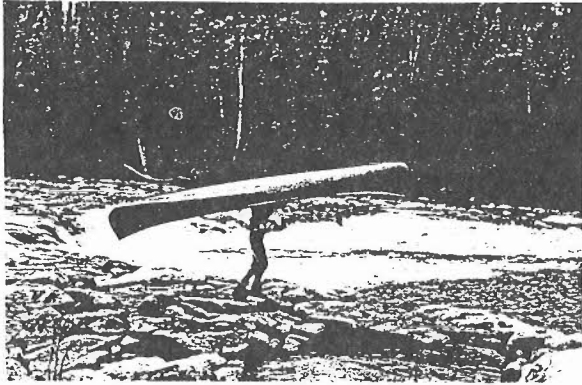
But these are just minor squabbles. The book is a remarkable piece of work that Hap can be very proud of; it will help past, present, and future Missinaibi paddlers to enjoy this outstanding river to a higher and better-informed degree than before its publication.

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following is the only platform for candidates for the 1995 Board of Directors received before our publication date. Any other members who wish to run for the Board may do so by letting the Board of Directors know, or by placing their name in nomination from the floor at the AGM on 18 February 1995.

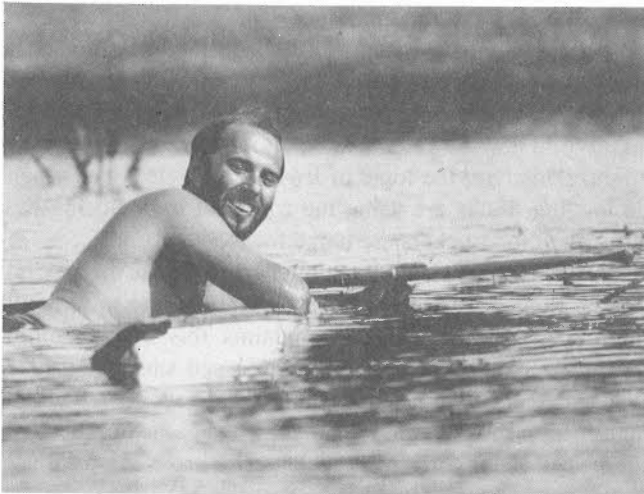
SHARON HACKERT

I have been an active member of the WCA for a number of years. During this time I have made new friends and participated in many WCA outings, meetings, and seminars. As a member of the Board of Directors I would promote the interests of club members and support the concerns our club has on environmental issues.



HOLY WATER

We paddled across the beautiful waters of Cauliflower Lake, one of the deepest in Algonquin Park, with its awesome pink granite shoreline basking in the early morning sun. Later we enjoyed a refreshing swim. Little did we realize then the pleasures in store for us when we would be paddling in some of the most beautiful Madawaska River scenery. However, at one point the going got quite tough — we were up to our elbows in leeches and dense, overgrown dogwood. The creek we were in became a wild, rugged, leech-infested terrain, and the map a useless reference. We were frequently overcome by hysterics, laughing uncontrollably over our “African Queen” saga. “And whose turn is it to get out and pull!?” It took over eight hours to travel five kilometres between Cauliflower Lake and the South Madawaska River.



Some scorn Algonquin Park as too well-travelled to provide exhilarating wilderness thrills. But there sure are some remote and rewarding places. The South Madawaska meanders through an undisturbed marshland of beaver dams, framed by masses of purple clusters of spotted Joe-Pye weed, thick beds of fragrant water lilies, and rare carpets of delicate smartweed flowers.

As we packed up the trip, my paddling partner turned to me while filling his waterbottle and exclaimed: “Aaah, Holy Water!” “Yeah,” I replied, “There’s Lotus leaves everywhere!”

Jay Neilson

THE LAST DAYS

End of the trip getting near. Spent the last two nights camping on the limestone of the Hudson Bay lowlands instead of the granite of the Canadian Shield. Can’t be more than a day or two from the bay.

Dramatic change of the terrain after dropping off of the Shield onto the limestone. Travel gets easier. The river broadens, the view increases, and the land opens up. Rapids are less severe and it’s easier to get around them. Danger factor in travel is much less than on the Shield.

Also noticing a change in the buddies once we dropped off the Shield. More joking, more laughing. The buddies sense that the end of the trip is getting near. Starting to think of homes, wives, children, jobs. The buddies getting anxious to get off the river.

Yesterday a pickup in the pace. Packed up earlier in the morning and paddled hard all day. Hurrying. The buddies trying to get back quicker to homes, wives, children, jobs. They haven’t realized that once back home in the city they will wish that they were still on the river. The buddies have far to go.

The goal of a wilderness canoe trip should be to collect enough of the wilderness experience to last the whole year. Doing the math is one of the first priorities after the end of the trip. A sad conclusion to the trip when the math shows that not enough has been collected to last the winter. Top that with the knowledge that the last few days have been hurried through and you almost have sacrilege. There are only so many wilderness canoe trips to a lifetime. Every moment of the wilderness experience should be savored and treasured. Including the travel on the limestone.

Ending the trip hurriedly also risks losing some of the joy so carefully collected during the trip. A full cup is the only way that the winter can be endured. Need all of the joy and challenge and adventure of the current trip to make it to the start time of the next one.

Cities do that to you.

Only way out is to fill the cup these last few days by squeezing each moment to the fullest. Concentrate on no place other than here. No time other than now. Till your cup runneth over.

I want to travel carefully these last few days. There is still the chance of a spill.

Greg Went



SENIOR "CRIMINALS"

Canoeists guilty of trespassing in Algonquin Park

In mid-July 1994, a group of six senior citizens, all members of the "Seniors for Nature Canoe Club" from a base camp on Crotch Lake (access point #17), decided to explore Shirley Lake and Ryan Lake. They had two choices to access Shirley Lake: a) a strenuous 1050-metre portage (remember they're all seniors), and b) transport their canoes and gear by car on a logging road to Shirley Lake. The trip organizer had checked out this road on two previous scouting trips and it was decided to use the road.

On the way in they were hailed by a logging truck driver who asked them to turn on their CB radio and keep them (other truck drivers) informed of their position on the road. This they did. The perturbed truck driver informed them that there had been an accident on that road a few days ago.

All went well until late in the afternoon when they found their path between the lake and their parked cars blocked by a disgruntled park ranger who demanded to see their drivers' licences, questioned their disregard for the "closed road" markings at the gate, and, after considerable delay, handed summons to the drivers for trespassing. Court day was set for 1 September in Kilaloe which is east of Algonquin park on Hwy 60/62 between Barry's Bay and Eganville.

Needless to say all were concerned and on the way out checked and photographed the open entrance to the road. They did find a sign with the rather ambiguous statement "use at your own risk." Also a stop sign obscured by over-

grown foliage. The gate had no lock and showed no signs of being used. For the sake of other recreationists visiting Algonquin Park (there had already been one accident) they decided to do something, so on their return to the city a letter was sent to Howard Hampson, Minister of Natural Resources (MNR) with copies to the Superintendent and the Algonquin Park Forest Authority, pointing out the inadequate signage at the Shirley Lake road entrance and the potential danger to the unsuspecting public.

At the trial in Kilaloe all pleaded not guilty. Their color photographs refuted the park warden's statement that "red markers were clearly visible," indicating a closed road. The judge found them "technically guilty of trespassing, but since they had not gone there for illegal reasons," suspended any sentence.

Revisiting the "scene of the crime" that same day they found a new, clearly visible bilingual sign which still ended with "use at own risk." Overgrown foliage had been cut down. Also a new, very visible "stop" sign had been erected. Although the gate was still wide open, a new chain and padlock had been installed.

On 3 September, the criminals received a letter from the MNR thanking them for informing the MNR of the situation at the Shirley Lake road entrance. The MNR assured them that all issues would be addressed with the exception that "during active logging operations the opening and closing of the gates would be extremely impractical." The park warden has advised that the gates will be closed during weekends. I am puzzled about the logic of leaving the gates open when the logging trucks are using the road and then closing the gates when the truckers are home for the weekend.

Advice: if you visit Algonquin Park, only use the official "Canoe Routes of Algonquin" map and be sure to read all the fine print. The MNR also claims this map is more up-to-date than topo maps as it is re-issued annually (????? Ed.). There is one thing that I have always wondered about on the official Algonquin Park map: why are the hundreds of kilometres of logging roads which criss-cross the park not shown on the map? Could it be that the MNR bureaucrats are afraid to let the general public know just how much logging is going on in Algonquin?

This incident goes to show that, whenever there is a conflict between recreationists and logging in Ontario, logging wins. And this is a Provincial Park!

James Greenacre

PARTNERS AND INFORMATION WANTED

HESS RIVER I'd love to hear from anybody with information on the Hess River in the Yukon. (I've already got the topo maps and Ken Madsen's Rivers of the Yukon.) Debbey Del Valle, 155 Peperharrow Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2PR, England.

FRENCH RIVER (1) The voyageur canoe trip announced on page 7 of the Summer-1994 issue is looking for three more participants to make up the full crew of ten. The somewhat toned-down plans are now as follows: ten people in 36-ft Montreal canoe, 7-day trip sometime end of May 1995 starting from just below historic Chaudière portage and finishing at Key River on Hwy. 69, cost per person about \$500 includes all food and shuttle transportation, BYOT (bring your own tent). Call Toni Harting at (416) 964-2495 before mid-January 1995.

FRENCH RIVER (2) I'd very much welcome any kind of information from people who have been on the French River in a 36-ft Montreal canoe, especially those who have run (or attempted to run) any of the Western Channel outlets. Toni Harting, (416) 964-2495.



WCA TRIPS

For questions, suggestions, or anything else related to the WCA Trips, contact any of the members of the Outings Committee: Bill Ness (416) 321-3005; Ken Coburn (416) 767-5845; Mike Jones (905) 270-3256; Ann Dixie (416) 486-7402.

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

27-31 December **WINTER CAMPING IN ALGONQUIN PARK**
Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321, book before 20 December.

Winter camping in a warm tent with a wood-burning stove. Long red underwear and winter sleeping bag a must. Precise location and snowshoeing routes to be determined by consensus. Limit four tents.

13-15 January **WINTER CAMPING IN ALGONQUIN PARK**
Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321, book before 6 January.

Winter camping in organizer's warm tent with a wood-burning stove. Winter sleeping bag a must. Precise location and snowshoeing routes to be determined by consensus. Limit four tents. Long red underwear optional.

10-12 February **WINTER CAMPING IN THE PARK**
Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321, book before 3 February.

A warm place in the cold snow. Tent with a wood stove. Winter sleeping bag essential. Precise location and snowshoeing routes to be determined by consensus. Limit four tents.

11-12 February **ALGONQUIN PARK SKI WEEKEND**
Pat and Bryan Buttigieg, (905) 831-3554, book before 1 February.

Join us for a great weekend of cross-country skiing on the many trails accessible from the Highway 60 corridor. We will spend Saturday night in a nearby motel. (No fires in your room.) Suitable for reasonably fit intermediate skiers.

21-27 February **ALGONQUIN PARK WINTER CAMPING**
Herb Pohl, (905) 637-7632, book before 12 February

We will set up a base camp a short distance from Highway 60. From there we will go out on day trips to explore the neighborhood and beyond. The organizer provides a heated tent as a place to cook, partake of meals, and some socializing in the evening. He will also provide pots and pans for cooking; everything else the participants are expected to bring, including shelter as not all will have room in the organizer's tent. Each participant is also expected to provide and prepare own breakfast and one supper of the carnivorous variety. Limit six reasonably fit persons. People may also join for the weekend part of the outing only.

18 January **WEDNESDAY SKI DAY**
Rob Butler, (416) 487-2282, book before 14 January.

Ski the Five Winds routes near the Gibson River, west of Highway 69. Stamina needed.

4 March **LOWER CREDIT RIVER**
Steve Lukasko, (905) 276-8285, book before 1 March.

Early spring paddling, if weather permits. Leave bathing suit at home. Appropriate cold-water gear required. Limited to semi-sane intermediate paddlers. Five-boat limit.

11 March **LOWER CREDIT RIVER**
Barry Godden, (416) 440-4208, book before 5 March.

Weather permitting, we will catch the Credit at peak levels for an exciting run from Steetsville to Erindale Park. Participants must be able to manoeuvre a boat quickly in a fast current to avoid sweepers in this narrow run. Wet or dry suits are required. White ties optional.

19 March **OAKVILLE CREEK**
Harrison Jolly, (905) 689-1733, book before 12 March.

This actually is a beautiful trip through a scenic valley in the Great Lakes Lowlands. Be prepared for cold weather and dress accordingly. Limit five boats.

26 March **OAKVILLE CREEK**
Tim Gill, (416) 447-2063, book before 24 March.

Narrow and winding, this is a run that requires accurate manoeuvring on swiftly moving water. Put-in and take-out will be determined by prevailing conditions. This can be a long day paddling and has been known to be a cold and wet trip. Limit five canoes or kayaks. C1s accepted.

2 April **GRAND RIVER**
Dave Sharp, (519) 846-2586, book before 26 March.

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

2 April **ELORA GORGE IRVINE CREEK**
Harrison Jolly, (905) 689-1733, book before 26 March.

This could be a rip-roaring trip (very dependent on water levels). Suitable for advanced or experienced intermediate paddlers who have cold-weather gear. Limit five canoes.

8 April **UPPER CREDIT RIVER**
Paul Hamilton, (905) 877-8778, book before 2 April.

An early paddle down from Ingleside to Glen Williams. The river will be fast and cold with some small rapids. Canoeists should wear wet/dry suits and be prepared for wet conditions. Limit six canoes.

16 April **UPPER AND LOWER BLACK RIVER**
Del Dako, (416) 421-2108, or Steve Lukasko, book before 9 April.

From Cooper to Highway 7. This river offers strenuous paddling through a series of demanding rapids. The rapids will be scouted from our boats as much as possible. Participants must have fully outfitted boats and be comfortable paddling Class 3 rapids. Limit five canoes with advanced paddlers.

15-17 April **MOIRA WATERSHED WHITEWATER**
Dale Miner, (416) 489-2067, book before 8 April.

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

22-23 April **SALMON AND MOIRA RIVERS**
Glenn Spence, (613) 475-4176, book before 16 April.

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

23 April **ERAMOSIA RIVER**
Dave Sharp, (519) 846-2586, book before 16 April.

Join us on this relaxing spring float through the southern Ontario countryside. The Eramosa is mostly gentle current, with some easy swifts and a little portaging so that you can stretch your

legs. This trip is a great introduction to river paddling for novices and a fine family outing. Limit six canoes.

29 April **ELORA GORGE**

Mark Raffman, (905) 898-4043, book before 26 April.

At this time of year there should be lots of water flowing through the Gorge, making this an exiting trip for good intermediates. However, the weather will have warmed up enough to make for pleasant playboating. Limit six canoes.

29-30 April **UPPER MADAWASKA AND OPEONGO RIVERS**

John and Sharon Hackert, (416) 438-7672, book before 22 April.

Two days of whitewater excitement for advanced paddlers. The Upper Madawaska is a fast-flowing pool-and-drop river with quiet stretches interspersed with some very serious rapids. All rapids can, and some must, be portaged. The Opeongo contains long stretches of continuous riffles plus several significant drops. Portaging is more difficult here and in high water this can make for quite a strenuous trip. Wet suits or dry suits, helmets, and fully outfitted whitewater boats with good floatation are a must. Limit six canoes.

6-7 May **UPPER MADAWASKA AND OPEONGO RIVERS**

Tim Gill, (416) 447-2063, book before 28 April.

Please refer to description for 29-30 April. The only difference is that the previous weekend was cold and wet, this weekend is sunny and warm. Limit six canoes.

13-14 May **PALMER RAPIDS INTERMEDIATE WHITEWATER CLINIC**

John and Sharon Hackert, (416) 438-7672, book before 6 May.

This tandem and solo clinic is designed for those who have previous whitewater experience and want to further develop their skills. The emphasis will be on having fun and playing in whitewater. We will practice surfing, jet ferries, and eddy turns across a strong current differential. Participants should have an ABS canoe outfitted with thigh straps and full floatation. Helmets and wetsuits are required. Limit five canoes.

13-14 May **MAGNETAWAN RIVER**

Tim Gill, (416) 447-2063, book before 6 May.

We will run the Magnetawan from Ahmic Lake to Maple Island twice, both on Saturday and Sunday, camping overnight near Maple Island. This is a fun whitewater trip for solid intermediates. Wet suits or dry suits and fully outfitted whitewater boats are required. Limit six canoes.

20-22 May **UPPER MADAWASKA AND OPEONGO RIVERS**

Mark Raffman, (905) 898-4043, book before 8 May.

Please refer to description for 29-30 April outing. At medium water levels these rivers become technically challenging and make for some fun paddling. If you did this trip last month, come back and enjoy a different experience on the same rivers. Limit five canoes.

VOLUNTEER WANTED

We need someone to organize a spring 1995 BBQ and introductory paddle for new members on the lower Humber River in Toronto. Please call Bill King (416) 223-4646 or Bill Ness (416) 321-3005.

KIDS - PARENTS - CANOEING

Some people have approached me about the problem of wanting to continue canoeing while at the same time recognizing that their family responsibilities significantly limit their recreational opportunities. If you are in this dilemma, read on.

There are a number of possible solutions. One may be that a separate group of parents organize trips which include all members of the family. The get-together would recognize family obligations. For example, a group of canoeists and their families would travel to the French River and camp near Blue Chute. Each member of the party would share in minding the kids as well as organizing activities. In addition, everyone would get a chance to paddle without leaving their kids alone.

A second option could develop kid-sitting arrangements. In this network, people would agree to mind each other's kids. One would receive "free weekend days" in exchange for kid-sitting someone else's children for another weekend.

Should you want to explore the possibilities, please contact Anmarie Forsyth at (905) 770-4778. She has volunteered to determine the members' interest level and help with getting the group started.

Earl Silver

**THE
TORONTO
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TORONTO**

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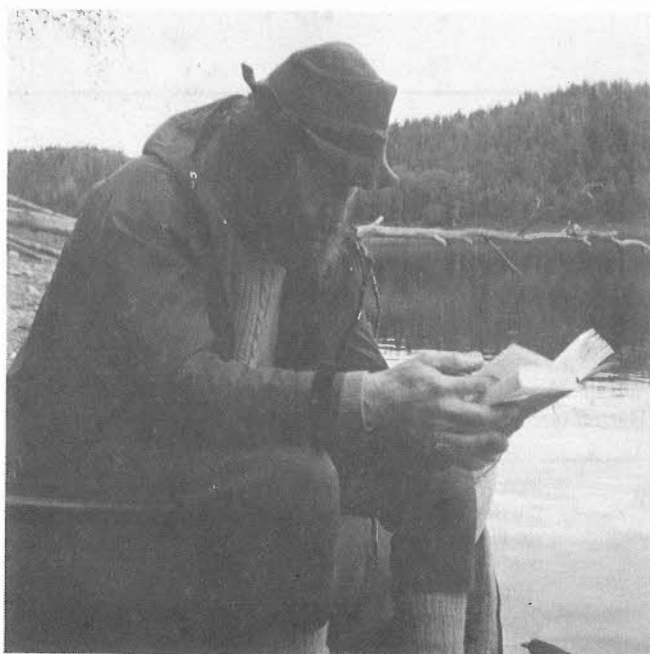
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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.



CANOE FOR SALE Dagger Impulse Solo whitewater canoe in very good condition. Fully outfitted, air bags, thigh straps, foam saddle, aluminum foot braces. Michael Herman, (905) 857-3311.

KAYAK FOR SALE Klepper Aeries 2 (two-seater), the original "Foldable Kayak," c/w steering, paddles, spraydeck. Not the youngest but in working condition. Asking \$250. Marlies and Dieter Schoenefeld, Sudbury (Ont.), (705) 522-3085.

VHF RADIO FOR SALE An ICOM model IC-M7 VHF radio, small hand-held, battery-powered, 5 watts, comes with battery charger, about two weeks of limited use between charges, \$400.00. Contact Michael Herman at (905) 857-3311. (See the short article in this issue on Michael's Great Lakes trip.)

CANOE WANTED for a good home, Kevlar, 15-16 ft., used, red if you have. Call Al at (416) 291-9371 (6-10 p.m.).

FRENCH RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK MAP This 1:50,000-scale full-color map is an indispensable guide to canoeists and boaters who want to visit any part of the French River system, providing much useful information such as access points, campsites, and portages. Sales of the map — which costs \$10.00 (including tax) plus postage and handling — are primarily made through the Friends of the French River Heritage Park, P.O. Box 142, Copper Cliff, Ont., P0M 1N0. (I still have a number of maps available in Toronto for direct sale at \$10.00 plus postage; Toni Harting, (416) 964-2495.)

TEMAGAMI WILD Smoothwater Outfitters offers a range of energizing courses and workshops. We cater to artists, photographers, and paddlers with a passion. From ORCA to AGO, we've got an exiting program. We're also available for just canoe outfitting. Ask for our '95 brochure. Smoothwater Outfitters, Box 40, Temagami, Ont., P0H 2H0; tel. (705) 569-3539.

BIRCHBARK CANOE-BUILDING COURSE Join bark canoe builder Mike Ketemer at the Wanapitei Wilderness Centre in Temagami for this unique opportunity to build a 26-ft fur-trade canoe. This will be a hands-on course from start to finish. Participants will build, from the ground up, a genuine replica of a Canot du Nord. The skills learned will be directly transferable to the building of smaller bark canoes for personal use. Dates 1-30 July 1995. Cost \$3000, including food and lodging. Contact: Wanapitei, 393 Water Street, # 14, Peterborough, Ont., K9H 3L7; tel. (705) 745-8314.

1995 CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVERS CALENDAR Plan your next adventure with the full-color Canadian Heritage Rivers calendar, printed on glossy-recycled paper and produced by the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association in co-operation with the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. Thirteen of Canada's most spectacular Heritage Rivers are featured with a description of each river. Experience the Churchill, North Saskatchewan, Bloodvein, Alsek, or Bonnet Plume every day. Cost \$9.95 (plus \$1.50 postage & handling and 7% GST); USA orders in US funds. Send your order to: CRCA, 1029 Hyde Park Road, Suite 5, Hyde Park, ON, Canada N0M 1Z0.

"RESTORE THE LINK" SHIRTS The Restore The Link Committee is working to purchase a key piece of property on the historic La Vase Portages near North Bay, Ont., which link the headwaters of the Mattawa and French rivers, and re-establish the route as part of the Canada Sea-to-Sea canoe route following the fur-trade route of the voyageurs.

RTL is offering T-shirts and sweatshirts for sale to help with purchase costs and raise the profile of the route. A voyageur cartoon design by North Bay cartoonist Dave Palangio is available in green and gold on an ash-colored shirt. A one-color version (natural) is also available on a forest-green or purple sweatshirt. T-shirts are \$20.00 (ash only) and sweats are \$30.00. Tax-deductible donations are also very much appreciated.

Contact: Paul Chivers, 370 Foren Street, North Bay, Ontario, P1B 4E4; tel. (705) 476-1977.



OK, LET'S SEE:
3 TENTS, 6 PACKS, 3 CANOES ... UH OH!

CANOE TOONS
PAUL MASON

Where it is ...



... in this issue

- 1. Thelon '94
- 5. Duncan Taylor
- 6. Editorial
- 6. News Briefs
- 7. Respect the Land
- 7. Symposium
- 7. Letter to the Editor
- 8. Paddling the Bathurst Sewer
- 9. Paddling in the Electronic Age
- 9. Great Lakes Paddle
- 10. Canoe Trip Log
- 13. Upper Missinaibi Update
- 14. Grand Portage - Old Fort William
- 16. Fall Meeting 94
- 17. Beer Becomes the WCA
- 18. Sojourn in the Barren Grounds
- 22. Reviews
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- 23. Holy Water
- 23. Last Days
- 24. Partners and Information Wanted
- 25. WCA Trips
- 26. Kids - Parents - Canoeing
- 27. Products and Services

WCA Postal Address: P.O. Box 48022 Davisville Postal Outlet 1881 Yonge St. Toronto, Ontario M4S 3C6 BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Bob Shortill (Chairman) 2 Hamilton Dr. Bethany, Ont., L0A 1A0 (705) 277-3538 Paul Hamilton (Vice Chair.) Georgetown, Ont. (905) 877-8778	Cathy Grim Oshawa, Ont. (905) 655-3485 Duncan Taylor Toronto, Ont. (416) 368-9748 Mike Jones Mississauga, Ont. (905) 270-3256 Earl Silver Toronto, Ont. (416) 486-7402	WCA Contacts SECRETARY Bill King 45 Hi Mount Drive Willowdale, Ontario M2K 1X3 (416) 223-4646 INFORMATION Herb Pohl 480 Maple Ave., #113 Burlington, Ontario L7S 1M4 (905) 637-7632	WCA TRIPS Bill Ness 194 Placentia Blvd. Scarborough, Ont., M1S 4H4 (416) 321-3005 JOURNAL EDITOR Toni Harting 7 Walmer Road, Apt. 902 Toronto, Ontario M5R 2W8 (416) 964-2495 TREASURER Rob Butler Toronto, Ontario (416) 487-2282	MEMBERSHIP Linda Lane Elora, Ontario (519) 846-2586 COMPUTER RECORDS Cash Belden Toronto, Ontario (416) 925-3591 CONSERVATION Richard Culpeper 160 Wembley Drive Sudbury, Ontario P3E 1N2 (705) 671-3343
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Wilderness Canoe Association membership application

I enclose a cheque for CDN \$25 (single) or CDN \$35 (family) for membership in the Wilderness Canoe Association (for non-residents US \$25 or US \$35). 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): _____ New member Member # if renewal: _____

Address: _____ Single Family

City: _____ Prov. _____ Phone Number(s): _____

_____ (h) _____ (w)

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