



Kaskawulsh Glacier is the source of the Slims and Kaskawulsh Rivers

SUMMER IN THE KLUANES

Teslin/Yukon Rivers & Jarvis/Kaskawulsh/Alsek/Dezadeash Rivers

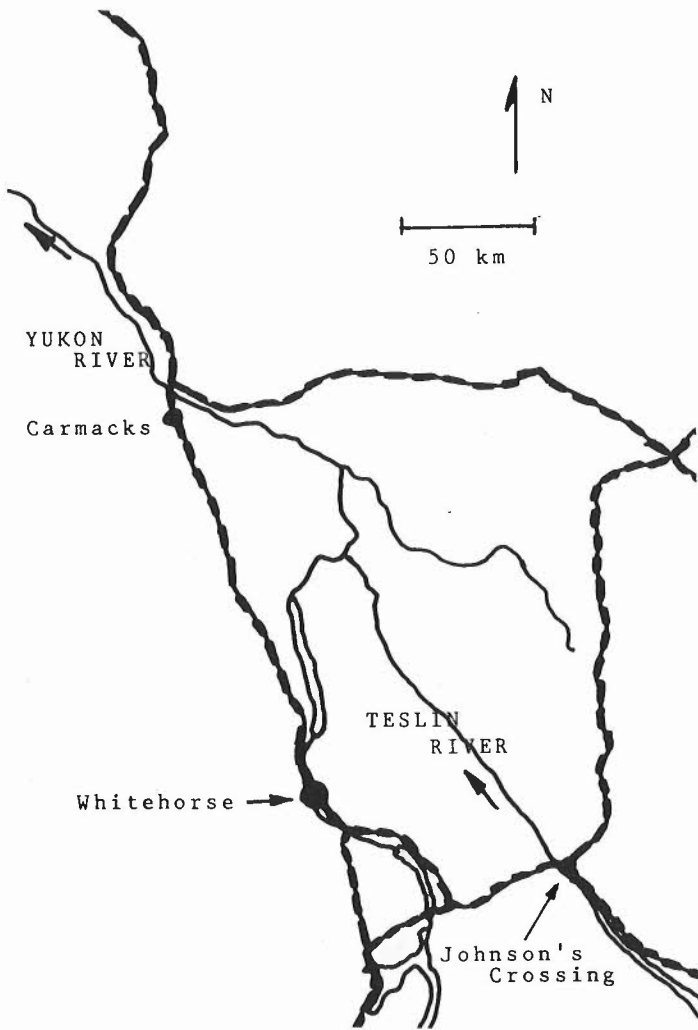
Edited from the journal of Jay Neilson and Frank Knaapen

After a few entertaining phone calls, we resolved that there is only one feasible canoe route, which would bring us close to the majestic Kluane glacial mountains in the southwestern corner of the Yukon Territories. We would paddle down the Class II-III Jarvis River to the Kaskawulsh River (coming from the Kaskawulsh Glacier), which converges into the upper Alsek River (draining the Dusty Glacier), then go upstream on the Dezadeash River, and finally take out at Haines Junction. We were persuaded that the Alsek and Tatshenshini Rivers can only be safely negotiated by large river rafts.

As the Jarvis/Kaskawulsh/Alsek/Dezadeash trip takes only seven days, we decided to first spend a week paddling the Teslin and Yukon Rivers from Johnson's Crossing to Carmacks (370 km). The Teslin/Yukon route is a swift-

water paddle with no portages. Its greatest hazards are the large volume of water, high winds, quick goop shorelines, hypothermic freezing water, and hypothetical bear encounters. We also looked forward to later hike up the Slims River, the second drainage of the Kaskawulsh Glacier, for a closeup view of the glacier, appropriately after already having canoed down part of the Kaskawulsh River. (Kluane National Park Reserve offers extensive hiking trails, of which the overland trail to Goatherd Mountain overlooking Lowell Glacier is a fascinating 130 km challenge.)

Teslin River, Johnson's Crossing (18 July 1998) The magic of the moment, a century of time, I relax and breathe deeply. Remnants of wooden ramparts washed by the cur-



rent of this historic crossing conjure up images of gold-rush fever. The Teslin is a broad river, 250 to 500 m wide, which winds through a valley in the Big Salmon Range. Seen from here, the foothills of the Kluane Mountains did not seem as high as I had imagined when reviewing the map contours. The river descends from Teslin Lake, flowing into the Yukon River 203 km downstream.

At Johnson's Crossing the Teslin is sluggish. Reed beds form in the slow current where pickerel feed on minnows. In the clear water a meaneyed monster eyeballs me. Hundreds of swallows glide and dart about dense nesting colonies in the steep silt banks. A mantle of boreal shrubs provides lookouts for eagles and osprey. Bald and golden eagles are plentiful. Along the inside bends of this wide river quick mud gives way to picturesque green shorelines of muddy reed grass, where yellow-legged pipers feed and nest in delicate carpets of tiny, scented marsh flowers. The river is alive with diving blackfaced terns, swallows, pipers, and kingfishers. At long, slow sections the river widens, creating luscious marsh shores where moose and calves graze, undisturbed by our presence and even curious, their eyes and ears gaping incredulously when we speak.

After lunch the river ran faster (5 km/h) over pebble rocks. Frank spotted a pair of bald eagles perched on the top of some spruce. A pair of golden eagles cried out warning signals, indicating their nest must be close by. Camping in the mud was not very inviting, and eventually we selected a mud shore at Thompson Creek, which offered a small patch of grass.

Trapper's Cabin (19 July) The current was sluggish all day. We paddled our 270 kg barge into camp at 5:30 p.m., having covered only 18 km. There's an old trapper's cabin on the west shore, just below Little River, with an autographed, spruce-peg coat rack, and a layer of moss on the roof with willows growing on it.

As I write, the river gently gurgles, a squirrel trills, chitters, and cheeks, a nesting pair of bald eagles occasionally pierce the air with their cries, while a kingfisher chatters nearby. The fire is banked well for coals and a loaf of bread is baking in my all-purpose teflon pot. The river is illuminated by the sun, low in the sky. It's 8:20 p.m. and the bald eagle just cruised by. This is a canoeing paradise. I sit bare-armed as there has not been a mosquito or black fly anywhere. (They say this is not typical!)

Teslin Crossing (20 July) Good current all day under a blue cumulus sky. Bull Roar Rapids was disappointing, hardly even a swift. A dozen eagles were spotted today. A bald eagle and a golden eagle were perched on the same sand embankment, which was puzzling. Then the golden eagle drove off the bald eagle. Many kingfishers livened up the bird songs with their chattering. The ravens here are majestic birds, scavenging the muddy receding shores for crabs.

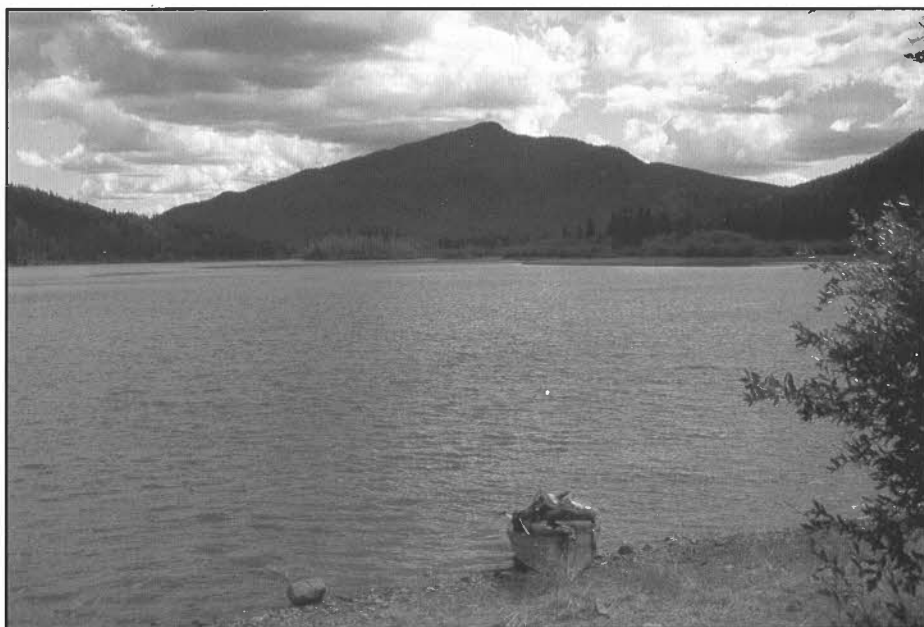
The Teslin/Yukon Rivers feature a few exciting gold-rush sites. In 1998 the Klondike Centennial celebrated the



Remains of Cyr's gold dredge

heady years 1897-1899. After lunch, as we raced along in the current, we did not find O'Brien's gold dredger bar, but perhaps saw what's left of an old sluice on the shore. At a likely location we stopped on a sand mound speckled with gold(?) dust, in a back eddy. Frank eagerly stepped into quicksand, disappearing rapidly to above his knees. Instant terror. My mind raced to the boat to retrieve a paddle — and where is the throw rope?! — while my feet remained disconnected. Oh thank God, he's out.

We then enjoyed a very quick dip in the hot sun. It's easy to forget how treacherous hypothermic water is on a sunny day. We camped at Teslin Crossing, where an old cabin is decaying in a heavenly field of purple fireweed and buzzing bees. Teslin Crossing was a telegraph station and roadhouse on the winter trail from Lake Laberge to



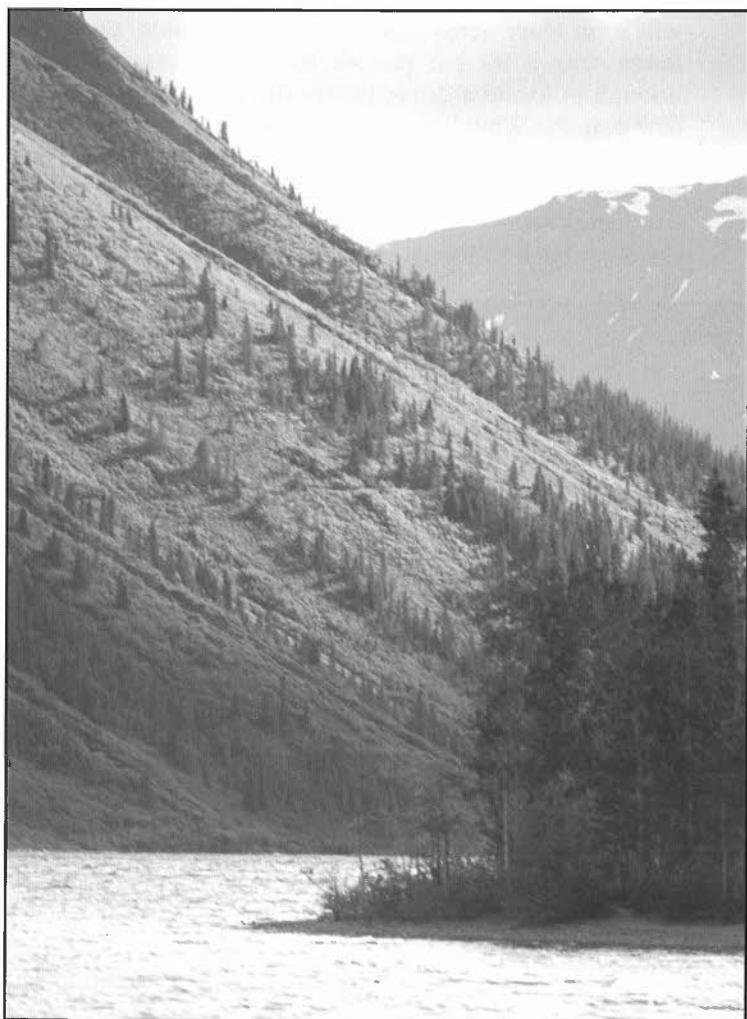
Hootalinqua Crossing

Livingstone, which is still an operating gold mine. This longer winter trail traverses the mountains 300 m lower than the summer wagon trail from Mason's Sternwheeler Landing.

Mason's Landing (21 July) A beautiful paddling day in good current aided by a southerly. As the wind swung around under heavy clouds, building up stiff breezes, we decided to camp early at Mason's Landing, the sternwheeler stop, and explored a collection of old buildings and wood yards. During the gold rush years, a telegraph ran from Hootalinqua to Teslin Crossing, Mason's Landing, and Livingstone. We found the summer wagon trail to Livingstone gold mine, which crosses up and over the Semenof Hills in the Big Salmon Range of the Pelly Mountains, to Livingstone Creek, a tributary of the Big Salmon River, which is a 23 km trek one way.

Hootalinqua (22 July) Hootalinqua, the northern Tutchone name for the Teslin, means "river running against the mountain." The beautiful view at Hootalinqua Landing, at the confluence of the Teslin and the Yukon, is symmetrically balanced by a mountain of boreal forest. Flowing fast across the confluence is the aquabluegreen tongue of the Yukon River. To the east the Semenof Hills show occasional patches of rock and moss in a carpet of boreal woods.

As I write, the sun illuminates a band of green grass on a quickpebble island where shorebirds are wading and piping. Behind us lurks a black bear on a bright yellow warning notice. We saw few signs of bear activity on the Teslin. There are not many berries or summer forage, and the streams are dried up. The sun had returned after a



Yukon River: fast current and scenic mountains

brief afternoon rain squall, during which we huddled in the tent, thankful we did not attempt the next campsite five kilometres down-river. Not wearing our dry suits, the chances of surviving a dump in that current are nil. The water at the confluence of the Yukon is frigid, with enormous boils, while the waves indicate a brisk current, at least 12 km/h.

After the squall, I watched a solo rafter behind us being forced to abandon the crossing. On our crossing we hugged the shoreline and hauled up the Yukon for 250 m, then started an upriver cross-ferry, hoping to make the far shore. We ended up much further downstream than expected, having lost ground to one or two intrepid boils. The centre passage below the confluence is often wind swept and can quickly become treacherous in a surprise squall, as it takes 30 minutes, and possibly a lot longer if the weather deteriorates, to tackle Hootalinqua Crossing.

Gold Dredger Barge at Byer's Wood Camp (23 July) A gorgeous morning, mostly sunny and still. We raced along in the current and canoed 77 km. From Hootalinqua the Yukon River is wide with a powerful current sweeping against steep silt banks and quick mud. The current is fast on both sides of the river; compared with the Teslin there are few back eddies supporting wildlife. We had lunch at Big Eddy Wood Camp, the last wood stop for sternwheelers facing a stiff current up to Hootalinqua. The Big Salmon River (a possible canoeing alternative) is a small river, almost dried up in the drought. Cyr's gold dredge lies abandoned after only one summer of use. Working along the shore of the Yukon River, the dredge buckets

scooped up gravel into a rotating drum or grizzly, yielding only \$2,300 of gold, not enough to cover the \$10,000 cost.

We camped at Byer's Wood Camp, where a sunken gold dredger lies decaying in a lovely yellowgreen marsh, accentuated by the late afternoon sun. The pulley trestles, still standing on the barge, an old caterpillar engine sinking in moss, a solid iron sluice winch and cable, gold rolling drum, and various gears offer a window on a century of time.

We are surrounded by abstract, burned-out terrain and purple fireweed. In a surviving thicket a grouse hen is calling her chicks, which strut, single file, through camp, peeping anxiously as I write. There is lots of wolf scat about.

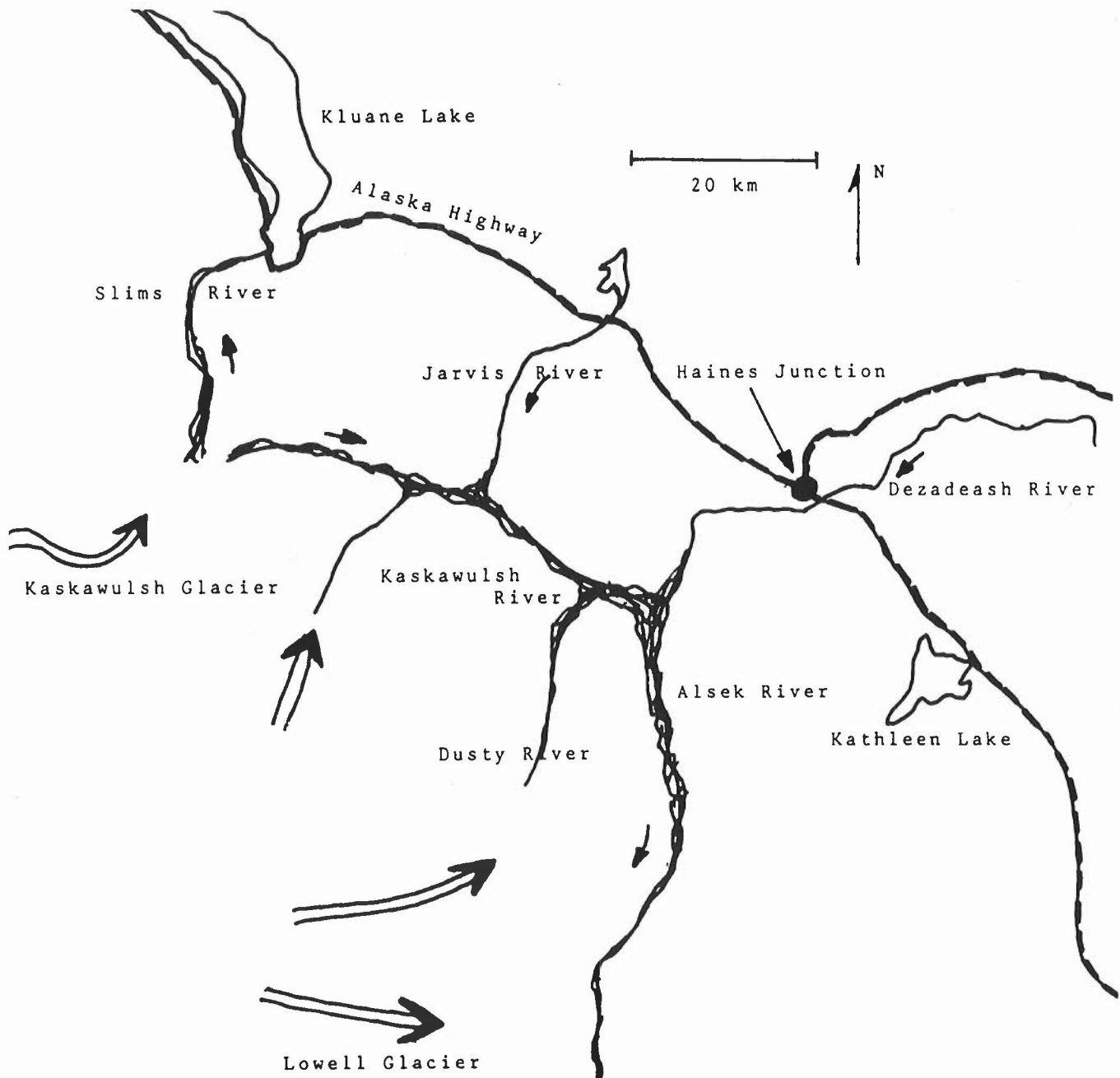
Byer's Wood Camp to Carmacks (24 July) The morning was still. Byer's Wood Camp was too windy last night for a campfire but in the morning we soon smelled smoke. The sky was a white smoke haze as we approached the Little Salmon Fire. Extensive burnout from the Fox Lake fire was spoiling scenic vistas along the Klondike Highway, where fire crews were engaged in 33 of some 150 fires. Purple fireweed, the Yukon provincial flower, will soon blaze across the scarred countryside. Our challenge was a 90 km paddle to reach Carmacks early enough to locate a driver before the Friday bus departed at 9 p.m. for Whitehorse, as there is no Sunday bus from Whitehorse to Johnson's Crossing. At Carmacks, everyone was deployed fighting fire, protecting hydro lines and critically exposed installations. The local garage owner's son drove us back to Johnson's Crossing that night for \$150.



Hoodoos on the Yukon River above Carmacks

Kluane Park (25-26 July) We sat beside Kathleen Lake on Haines Highway in the evening twilight, enchanted by its emerald green ice-cold texture, watching the wind whipping up water spritzers 30 m high; a timely caution for our glacier river run. The following day we ascended the King's Throne for a spectacular view of Kathleen Lake and the Kluane Mountains. The trail is 11 km long, climbing up 1500 m, then an agonizing 1500 m down. The going was tough at the top, scrambling up a steep, loose shale track with the occasional rock hurtling towards the unwary. marmots frolicking about, even on the upper levels of scree. We did not attempt the traverse, having no stabilizer poles. The next day we were brutally sore.

The Grand Mountain Tour (27 July) At Kathleen Lake look-out we met a park maintenance crew. One of them had paddled our route six years ago. According to park officials our route had not been travelled for five years, but this summer two parties would descend after us due to Ken Madsen's writeup in Paddling in the Yukon. On the Jarvis we could expect swift current, mostly Class II with some sweepers not usually extending across the river as trees grow short in the Yukon. There is a Class III soon after Kimberly Creek. Our most serious concern was the Kaskawulsh/Alsek section. Is this a quick mud area? Will we be able to get out of the boat on the mud flats if we encounter high winds? At this time of year the mud flats are usually dry and safe to walk on.





Mount Logan is Canada's highest summit

In the early evening, the sky was a fantastic blue, and we climbed into a Cessna with an Italian couple for a scenic flight over the world's largest nonpolar ice fields, the Kluane Glaciers in the Saint Elias Mountains. The Grand Mountain Tour is offered by Sifton Airways at Haines Junction for about \$175 per person. We flew over most of our future canoe route. The Jarvis River flows in channels down a wide, stony delta into the Kaskawulsh River. The meltwater coming off the Kaskawulsh Glacier, which splits into two glacial moraines, was diverted from its normal course down the Slims River, so we could expect high water levels on the Kaskawulsh. Due to the extreme summer drought the glacial melt had even caused the Lowell Glacier to surge, and icebergs had rendered Lowell Lake impassable, with Alsek River rafters having to be rescued. The natural damming of Lowell Lake by the surging glaciers can suddenly give way, which is why the Tathshenshini peoples have not lived on the Alsek/Tathshenshini shores since the great disaster 150 years ago, when entire fishing communities drowned.

From the air we could see whitecaps and possibly rollers (oh shit!) on the Kaskawulsh, which appeared to be an incredible mud river in a mud delta valley surrounded by mountains. The Grand Mountain Tour flew us over the tremendous Kaskawulsh Glacier into the beyond, where jagged ice peaks ascend in snow-white seas, blindingly brilliant under an intense sun. Thrills of excitement and national pride surged through us as we approached Mount Logan, Canada's highest summit at 5950 m. Mount Logan, Mount Queen Mary, Mount King George, Mount Vancouver, Mount Alverstone, Mount Hubbard, Mount Kennedy present a spectacular symphony of glaciated peaks, soaring and cascading, the trails of thunderous avalanches creating visible, abstract rhythms. Perched in our delicate craft we turned and followed the Lowell/Dusty Glacier.

As we again flew over our canoe route, a whole lot of "Holy Toledo!" was relayed. The Upper Alsek delta and the braiding of the Dezadeash looked apprehensively complex. We viewed our coming adventure with trepidation. We would be traversing one of Canada's most active

grizzly bear regions, and were as prepared as we could be. Being unarmed, we would each carry bear bangers and "sort-of-functioning" pepper spray. As backup we'd have road flares, pocket and rocket flares, grizzly-proof food canisters supplied by the Park, and a covered ABS escape canoe, all of which guaranteed to be non-accessible in the urgency of the moment! Our bear etiquette is that men should urinate on approaching game trails, to warn animals of human presence, while women should only urinate in water, keeping as clean as possible, so as not to excite randy juvenile grizzlies.

Still Brutally Sore (28 July) We both hopelessly failed a canoe seating test and other basic manoeuvres.

Jarvis River Meander (29 July) Slept very badly. Frank talked himself to sleep describing his bird's-eye view of the Kaskawulsh, running high with rollers, and recounting grizzly bear concerns that could not be refuted by any



The reverse image of cougar paws is caused by rain as the mud erodes around the compacted print

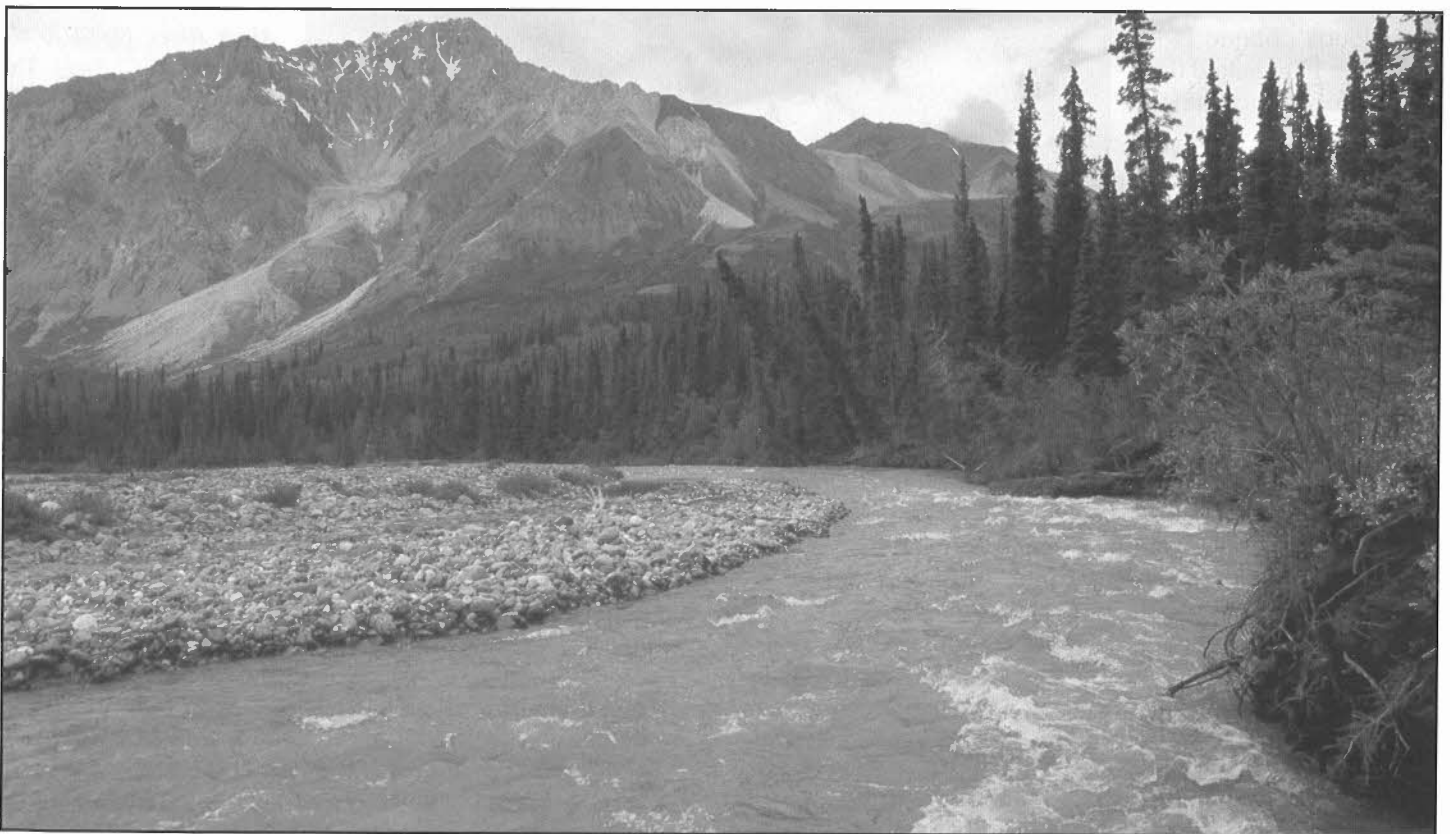
fairly tale rationalizations on my part. For hours I attempted to fall asleep by imagining contented fuzzy bears stuffed with soap berries. The morning was cold and cloudy. Frank got up early, refreshed by a good night's sleep, and was rewarded by a visit from a large lynx cat, which quietly sat contemplating him, and obligingly reappeared after checking the rabbit warrens.

Our trip down the Jarvis River began at the Alaska Highway where the river is just a shallow creek and involved a nasty portage through a tangled thicket of fallen logs. Less than a kilometre later the creek was blocked again, this time by a beaver dam. After hacking about we portaged along the dried-up, stony river bed for an easy 500 m until the various lost channels resumed, then put in at a muddy wallow. The Jarvis remained shallow and narrow all day, obliging us to drag every 150 m along pebble shoals and saw through fallen logs. By late afternoon the river meandered obscenely as we approached close to our destination, and it took us an hour to negotiate the complex bends. Eventually we located a campsite, still five kilometres from Kimberly Creek. Sleep was tortuous. Will we be flushed into a dangerous and powerful current, possibly without our canoe? We discussed turning back but decided to first investigate the Class III rapid below the confluence of Kimberley Creek.

Jarvis River Run to Kaskawulsh Delta (30 July) At Kimberly Creek the Jarvis becomes a frigid, gray Class II, running fast and narrow down a stony delta, with treacherous tight bends featuring occasional sweepers and nasty

rocks. There is no room to negotiate. The river races down a deep gully with unstable, half-metre-high banks of crumbling stone offering no purchase, and is barely wide enough to allow rotating a 17 ft canoe. For the first time this summer we donned full whitewater gear, spray deck, helmets, gloves, booties, drysuit, and life jackets with pockets containing flares, fishing gear, and not nearly enough survival stuff. The Class III is visible 1.5 km downstream, where the current piles up at right angles along a cliff wall. We jumped onto the ride and luckily jumped off at the first opportunity, then lined river right down to the wall where a nasty rock lurks behind galloping white horses flushing around a long sweeper bend that cannot be lined. Before giving up we walked through the woods to review the situation and discovered an undocumented fire break line. This excellent portage is located river right, starting about 80 m inland, just after the wall, and avoids the Class III entirely.

The river now turned out to be a tough paddle, featuring constant hairpin bends and absolutely no eddies. Ramming the boat into false channels, then fighting to keep the stern from rotating, presented the only opportunity for desperately needed breaks, as back and arm muscles burned with the force of back-ferrying to prevent the barge from impaling itself against tight bends and occasional sweepers. We tried a sort of eddy turn when the current at the edge seemed slower. We grabbed shore. Frank stepped out, then scrambled wildly as the embankment crumbled into the gully. The stones under my paddle also dissolved into the gully. Our canoe swung



Jarvis River at Kimberly Creek

around, rapidly gaining momentum Oh God, it's solo me! Frank risked a grab at the stern rope, the ledge still crumbling under his feet — Oh thank the angels in heaven, he's stable! We decided not to risk another eddy attempt. In a case like this, make sure both your bow and stern throw bags are easy to reach in front of each of you and attached to the boat, and take one with you, as painters cannot be easily accessed in an emergency.

For four hours we fought our way down a thrilling whitewater run as the river descends 125 m in 10 km. Will the landscape untilt, or will we be hurtled into the treacherous confluence of a glacial monster? Huge relief. The Jarvis slows as it braids into channels, fanning out a large delta. The Kaskawulsh materialized, mud brown, running high at pressure points, manageable in low to moderate wind for at least six visible kilometres. Realization of a dream flooded my consciousness with relief and elation. We hugged each other ecstatically, surrounded by a panoramic vista of magnificent mountains encircling Canada's largest accessible glacial delta. Through an opening in the clouds oblique twilight rays illuminated the Kaskawulsh mountains and ice caps.

Kaskawulsh River Run to Ferguson Creek (31 July)

Rain pattered the tent all night and morning broke cloudy, still with a light rain. After a delicious breakfast and our daily rubdown bath in hot, soapy water, the sun broke through. The Kaskawulsh was flowing strong and again we donned full whitewater gear, including the spray deck. The sky was a glorious blue all day. During the afternoon we abandoned a few landing attempts. In the strong 10 km/h current, quick mud at least offers suction resistance to the paddle, as there are no real eddies. Stony shores crumble alarmingly, revealing deep gullies, so a few times we rotated back onto the ride.

We camped at Ferguson Creek and celebrated the spectacular scenery with a freezing dip in the Alsek. A cougar had recently walked along the river leaving large paw prints in the mud. No bobcat would walk along such an exposed, inhospitable shoreline. The valley is five kilo-

metres wide here, surrounded by mountain superstructures. We could see the confluence of the Dusty glacial river opposite and the Kaskawulsh glacial river, forming the Alsek River, and in the distance the Dezadeash River valley. Clouds soon arrived and a strong under-draft picked up from the east, as clouds moved in from the Pacific west. Within 30 minutes the pressure of the front created tornado dynamics, trapped in the bowl of mountains. The wind soon whipped up sand spritzers 100 m high and a sand haze obliterated our surroundings. The water level went up eight centimetres in two hours due to the hot melt during the day. Some sizable drift logs, mauled loose, galloped by, sucked into the centrifugal

vortex, demonstrating the inevitable outcome for a dumped canoe and its passengers.

Rain at Ferguson Creek (1 Aug) It rained for 12 hours with a convenient break between 10:30 and 11:30. Frank got the fire going and we drank warming brews, shivering in a glacial wind. A misty cloud cover had descended and we retreated into the tent to enjoy a good read.

Alsek River Delta to the Dezadeash (2 Aug) The morning revealed patches of blue; wind was stable, moving with the clouds from the west, which should help blow us up the Dezadeash. We beached often, trying to stay left in this huge delta, concerned that if we got into the main current we would

be swept past the confluence and would face a difficult walk back. The Alsek shoreline looked horribly unlinable. By late lunch we reached Serpentine Creek on the Dezadeash, which is accessible by heavy-duty stream-forging 4x4's. We could locate no road or trail and presumed random access was possible somewhere across this terrain. The wind picked up strongly from the WSW late afternoon, and dangerously high waves forced us to camp on a shoal of sand and quicksand, with only two stable patches for tent and cooking and a narrow walkway between. I slept unafraid of grizzly bears that night. In the evening, the sky was a saturated celestial blue, beautifully offsetting the ridges of Mount Archibald behind us.



Jarvis River (bottom) flows into the Kaskawulsh River

attacked by a large, fierce gull protecting its young. To avoid injuring the gull with my paddle defense we had to wait it out as the chicks swam and fluttered upstream. A pair of meaneyed ravens were attracted by the commotion and scanned menacingly. The gull deployed tactics to diffuse the scene, flying here and there, while the chicks faded into the willows, still swimming hard until they reached the safety of a sandbar gullery of 2030 birds.

By lunch we were struggling against the current, ferrying across after dragging up each pebble sand point. Selecting channels was challenging. How to choose a channel that did not lead back to the stronger south-current channel? False leads had to be avoided as the river braids many times. The river had good gravel footing at each bend. The problem was the straight stretches of fast, deep current between impossible alders. In the end we were hauling upstream under thickets of alder, trying not to tip in the fast current. We were almost defeated but a lucky break presented itself: a small channel that didn't look stagnant. Could it possibly lead to the second bridge? With 25 years experience as a professional forester, Frank is not only an expert map reader, he is also trained to be observant. (I was so excited about the Dezadeash, I never noticed the second bridge, less that 500 m away.) With one last supreme effort we crossferried upstream into this channel. The going was easy now, walking and dragging up a shallow stream. Alleluia — the second bridge. We'd done it. Nobody knew of anybody who had attempted to paddle up the Dezadeash beyond Serpentine Creek take-out, and we do not recommend it, unless water levels are very low.



We camped at the Jarvis-Kaskawulsh confluence

Up the Dezadeash (3 Aug) Awoke early to a cold but sunny morning with mist rising over Haines Plateau and the river. How cheerful, a woodpecker! The Kaskawulsh/Alsek delta was almost barren of birds, except for a pair of golden eagles circling above the western massif. For two to three hours the Dezadeash moved slowly through a lush marsh where I was persistently



Upper Alsek River



Mount Archibald

The Raven Inn (4 Aug) Enjoyed a deluxe sleep-over at the Raven Inn and reorganized at the laundromat in Haines Junction. In the afternoon we drove to Sheep Mountain Park Station and hiked less than one kilometre to Vulcan Creek where we camped. It was a gorgeous, sunny evening. Vulcan Creek was gushing deep and freezing, following the all-day hot melt. Hopefully the water level will be lower in the morning.

Slims River East (5 Aug) An arduous trek, especially for turtles wearing sunglasses. The trail was good, but our loads were heavy in the parched heat, with the wind lashing dust around this drying-up delta. Slims River got its name from a horse called Slim that died because his master could not get him out of the glacial goop. We camped at 11 km on a sandy knoll of stubby poplars at what was indeed the last water – a series of small ponds, an oasis in a parched and inhospitable wilderness. The lakelet was a haven for seven adult green-winged teals and a hen teal tending a crew of chicks, as well as a gang of yellow-legged waders. A solitary sheep had drunk from the pond and a grizzly bear had fed sometime ago on the grasses. A merlin flew by hunting. We observed the prints of wolves, several lynx, and possibly a cougar. The woods were thick with rabbit warrens and marmots.

Hike to Kaskawulsh Glacier (6 Aug) In disappointingly cold, cloudy weather we hiked a gruelling 24 km and saw very little of the glacier. Our feet ligaments ached from yesterday's crawl. We were tempted to walk across the quick mud for a better view, but it just didn't feel right. By evening the river was noticeably higher and our retreat would have been cut off, leaving us stranded with only two pocket flares and not even a sleeping bag. The wind blew with a vengeance all night. Surely a grizzly bear's eyes and nostrils would not wish to investigate so much sand. Despite these comforting concepts and the protection of our poplar hummock, I was terrorized, every half hour, by extra strong pounding! Early in the calm of the morning wolves were howling and later the pups yipped noisily as they were being fed.

Last Day (7 Aug) Returning along our inbound trail, we were amazed at the changed level of the Slims River. Our trail was washed out. My suggestion that we rope across a wicked section where the current had chomped off a slice of mud ledge was summarily rejected. We searched around for trails across a dangerously steep scree and loose shale slope, following the sheep to a sickening height. As the wind had picked up a lot, threatening rain, the situation was becoming perilous. I was overloaded, had no pole stabilizers, and both my knees had simulta-

Autumn 1999

Nastawgan

neously collapsed with no warning. Despite intense disagreement, I refused to take another step upwards. "Only sheep shit up there" I screamed hysterically in the wind. While Frank retreated to search for a better alternative, I tearfully admired the breathtaking scenery and the vertical plunge into the torrent below. Frank returned with some good news: he had found a good trail around the back of the mountain, for which I hugged him heartily. Having survived this predicament, we enjoyed the remainder of the slog, resting frequently so that our foot ligaments would not suffer permanent damage.

Whitehorse (8 Aug) Aaahhhahaha — we vegged out in a soothing jacuzzi, sipping wine by candlelight, and reminiscing — our first and fabulous Summer in the Kluanes.

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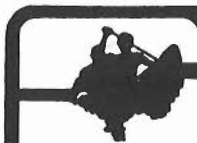


Upper Alsek River

It's the great, big, broad land 'way up yonder,
It's the forests where silence has lease;
It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,
It's the stillness that fills me with peace.

Some say God was tired when He made it;
Some say it's a fine land to shun;
Maybe; but there's some as would trade it
For no land on earth — and I'm one.

From: *The Spell of the Yukon* by Robert W. Service, 1874–1958



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Nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning 'the way or route'

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

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

EDITORIAL

A grateful "thank you" goes to the many members who have expressed their appreciation for the improved production quality of our journal. All photographs are now being processed digitally in the computer by scanning the slides or prints, adjusting brightness/contrast and other variables, and then giving the digital files to the printer on a 100 MB Zip disk. Also, the paper now being used provides for better whites so that the pictures can be printed at higher contrast and quality. Photographs that gave serious problems in the past and had to be rejected can now often be included.

But trying to improve *Nastawgan's* quality only makes sense if you, the readers, keep on submitting appropriate material. Unfortunately, the number of articles on file for the coming issues is dangerously low. This happens often in the summer when everybody is out paddling, but still, to keep *your* journal going, *you* have to produce a constant flow of material. Only if you decide to occasionally exchange the paddle for the pen, we should be able to keep a healthy *Nastawgan* going for a long time. You can always contact the editor if you're having ideas or problems you want to discuss.

PASSWORD To access the Members section of the WCA Web site, find the authentication window and type exactly the following words shown in bold. For the period covered by this issue of *Nastawgan* these are: User Name: **redcanoe**, Password: **paddle**.

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. Try to submit your contributions by e-mail, on 3 1/2 in. computer disk (WordPerfect or MS-Word or text files preferred, but any format is welcome), or in typewritten form, but legibly handwritten material will also be accepted. For more information contact the editor (address etc. see WCA Contacts on the back page). 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:

<i>issue:</i> Winter 1999	<i>deadline date:</i> 1 November
Spring 2000	23 January

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

GREY OWL — THE MOVIE If all things go as planned, this big-budget production, directed by Richard Attenborough and starring Pierce Brosnan as Archie Belaney starring as Grey Owl, will have its world premiere in Waskesiu (a small resort community near Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan) coming September.



GREAT CANOEING VIA POINTS NORTH, SASKATCHEWAN

Some of northern Saskatchewan's finest whitewater rivers are accessible via Points North, a privately operated freight-forwarding service located at the end of the Saskatchewan road system, 30 km north-west of Wollaston Lake on gravel highway 905. Points North has been providing freight service since 1983 to mining camps, fly-in fishing lodges, and native settlements in northern Saskatchewan, northern Manitoba, and south-central Northwest Territories, with both wheeled aircraft and pontoon-equipped float planes. The friendly staff at Points North are also ready to serve canoeists.

Wilderness canoeists looking for remote adventure will find Points North a geographical hub for many whitewater rivers, including the Fond du Lac, Porcupine, Cochrane, Cree, Mc Farlane, Otherside, Hawkrock, Waterfound, and Geike Rivers. Charter flights into the above rivers are mostly short, ranging from 15 to 100 air miles one way. Canoeists could paddle two or more of these short rivers in sequence by returning to Points North for a layover day with a hot shower and a meal in their famous Pilots Cafeteria. Fuel, accommodations, and limited mechanic services are available. A primitive tent campsite is located on their lake front and a snack can be had at their newly constructed air terminal confectionery.

NWT rivers can also be accessed through Points North, and in conjunction with Kasba Lake Lodge Air Service it provides a cost-efficient entry into the Thelon, Dubawnt, and Kazan River headwaters.

The long 440 km drive up gravel roads 102 and 905 from La Ronge to Points North can be an adventure in itself (some canoeists

have mentioned they would rather take their chances in the rapids!). Depending on the weather and how recently the grader has passed, the extremely isolated road (only four gas stops) can be incredibly dusty and rough or terribly muddy and rough. A full tool kit, several spare tires, and an alert driver are recommended. On one occasion we managed the entire trip without a flat, but the last trip the sinister road blessed four tires! The posted speed limit is 80 km/h but 40 to 50 is what you can expect to do if you want to get there in one piece.

A much easier and quicker alternative to Points North is the flying option. Scheduled air flights run daily from Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. Churchill River Canoe Outfitters has several Royalex canoes available at Points North for rent. Contact Ria Dredger at phone/fax (306) 635-4420 for rental information.

Float planes for charter flights at Points North include: Cessna 185, Beaver, and Single Otter. For more information on rates, bookings, and services available at Points North contact: Andy Acaule, Points North Air Services Inc., Bag 7000, La Ronge, Sask. S0 ILO or phone (306) 633-2137 or fax (306) 633-2152.

For information on scheduled air flights from Regina, Saskatoon, or Prince Albert contact: Air Sask at 1-800-665-7275 or Athabasca Airways at 1-800-667-9356.

Dave Bober

THE FIND

Coming down the long hill at the end of the portage. Carrying the canoe. Having to watch the feet because the ground is loose shale and the chances for slipping are high.

You have a limited field of vision when you're carrying the canoe. You can only see the small patch of ground that is visible under the canoe's gunwales. While concentrating where I was placing the feet I thought that I saw something. An object that seemed to be out of place in the wilderness. Had to continue on 30 more metres to where we had put the bags down from the first carry on the portage before I could put the canoe down. Then walked back the 30 metres to look around. Spotted it immediately because the lines were straight. Straight lines in the wilderness are almost always man made.

It was a combination brush and comb set. Comb on one end and two rows of bristles on the other. The comb folded into the bristles. Like a pocketknife.

Picked it up and kept it. Stuffed into the personal bag until it could be sterilized back in the city.

The brush set is now in the bathroom drawer allocated to me for the storage of my shaving equipment. After every shower I get great pleasure in opening that drawer and seeing it. Brings an automatic smile.

Something so close to being lost forever now has a daily job providing joy to someone else just by its presence. Maybe that's what we all need to find happiness. Make such efforts to be kind that people are glad just because we are there.

Using the brush set got me thinking about what else we have found on all of our wilderness trips. Found a hand-made paddle floating in a pool at the bottom of a long rapid on the Attawapiskat River. Found a 25 cent coin on a gravel island on the North French River about a day's travel from Moose Factory. Not much in the way of things.

But outside of things, I have found a great deal. Have found inner strength to endure hardships. Both the physical kind and the mental kind. Have found perspective. What's important and what's not. Have found inner peace. Perhaps the greatest find.

Haven't given up hope of finding more. On every trip I keep my eyes and my heart open.

Greg Went

FALL PARTY

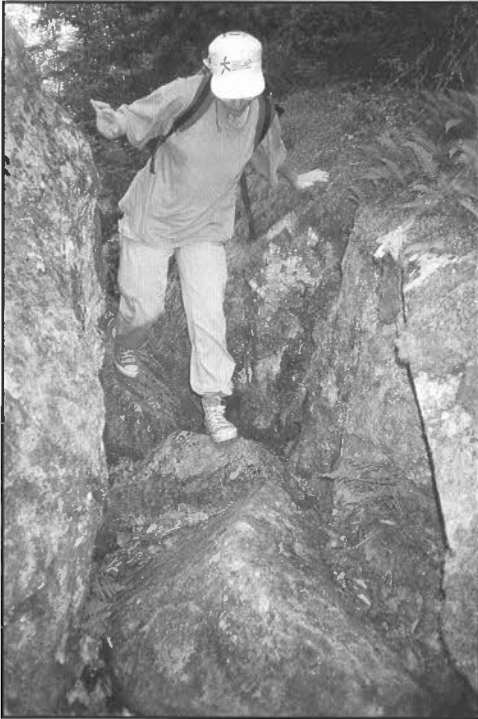
Want to meet old canoeing friends? Want to hear some tall paddling stories and see interesting photographs? Want to find out what the WCA is all about, who its members are, and what inside information they can give you?

Then come to the WCA Fall Party, also called Wine-and-Cheese Party, on Friday evening, 19 November, at the Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club (TSCC), 1391 Lakeshore Blvd. West, Toronto. There is free parking for 150 cars. To help cover the expenses, an entry fee of \$8.00 per person will be charged at the door. Everybody is welcome, including non members. If you arrive early, you could have as a special feature a fall paddle by launching at the TSCC. Stay inside the breakwall and dress appropriately.

Program

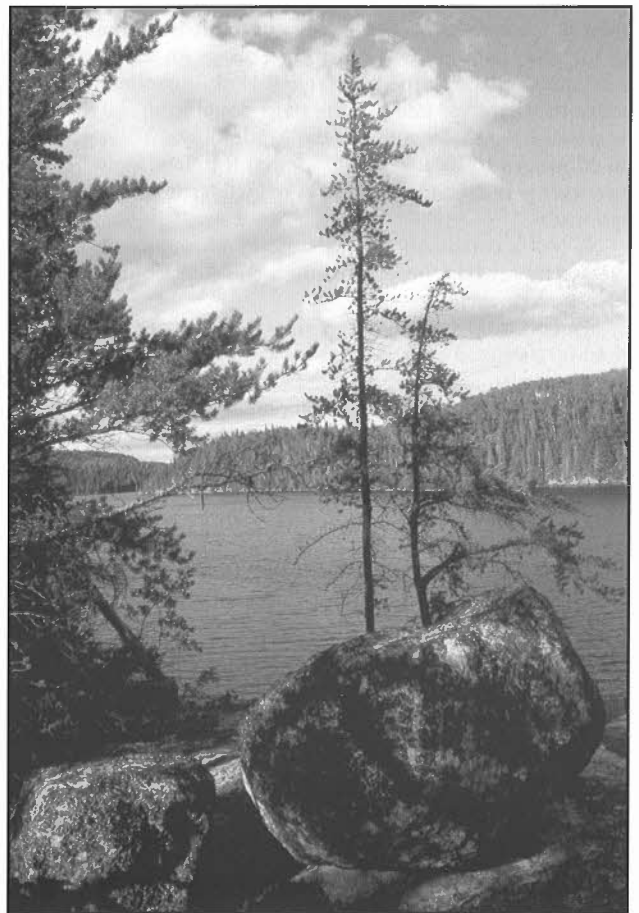
- 7:00 Registration and welcome
- 8:00 First presentation
- 8:45 Meet the people, enjoy the treats
- 9:15 Second presentation
- 10:00 Coffee and clean-up

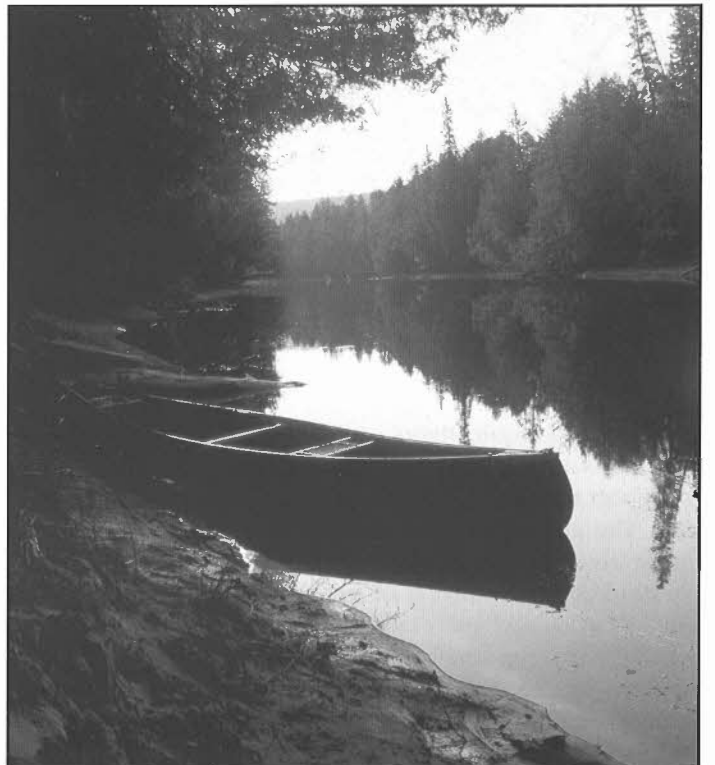
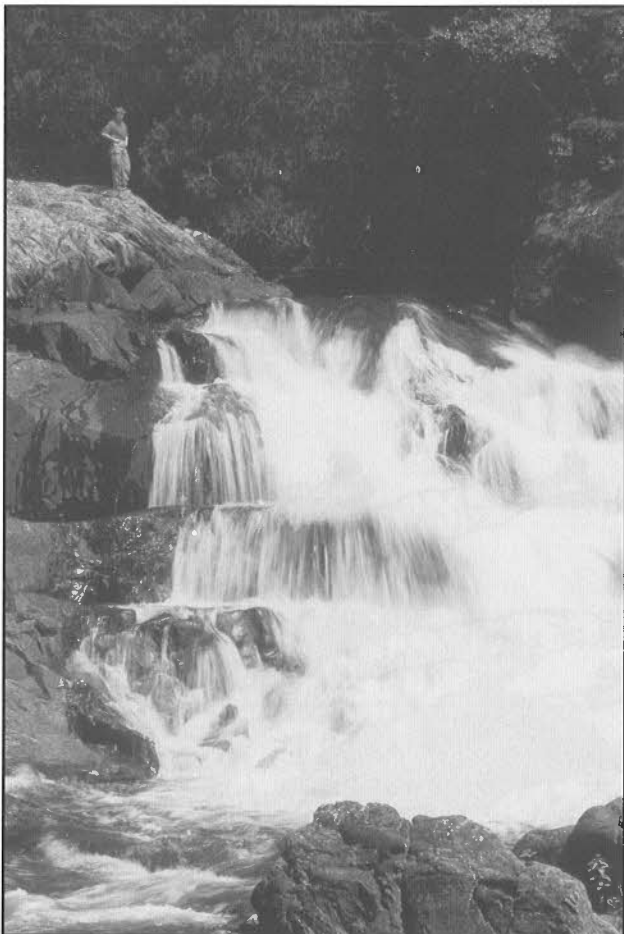
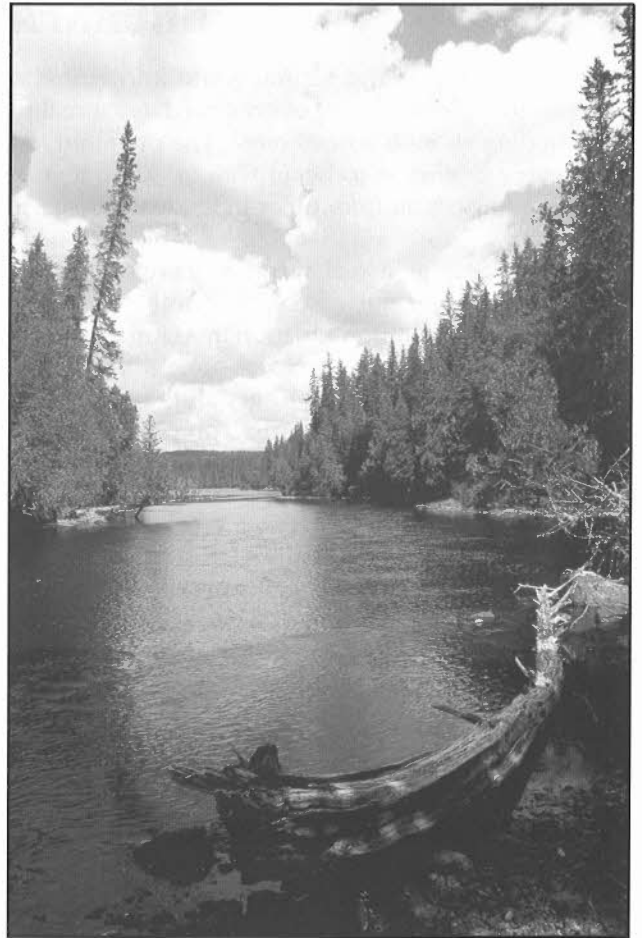
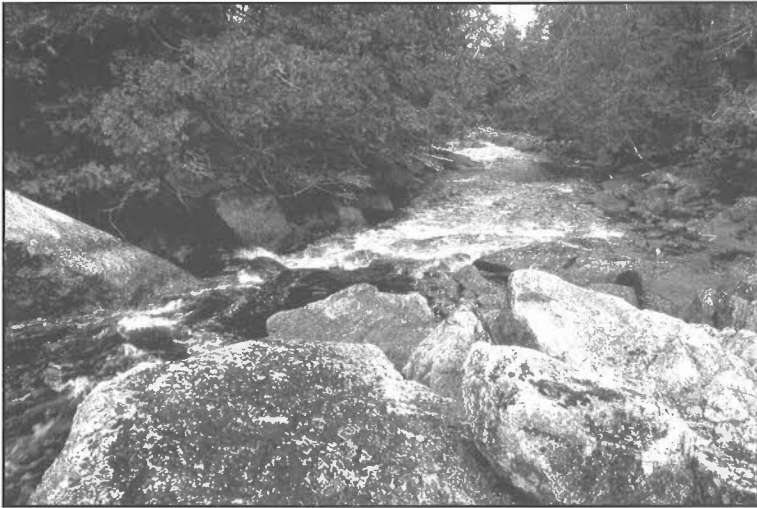
For more information contact Anne Snow at (416) 482-0810.



toni harting

STEEL RIVER





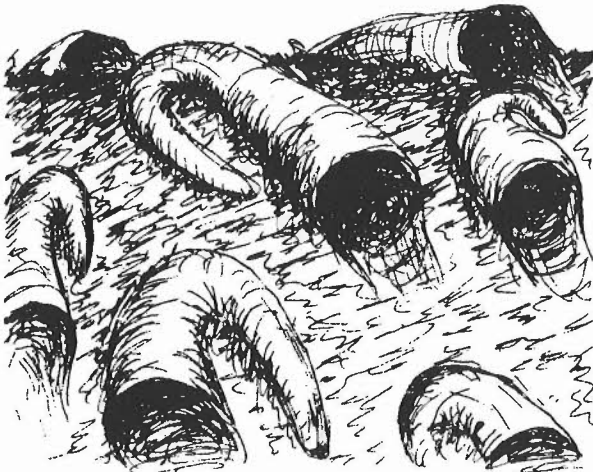
BREAKFAST IN (RIVER)BED

Anyone familiar with the natural world knows that most creatures, for at least part of every year, have a real problem in finding enough nourishment. The preferred food is either scarce or elusive to begin with or, when it is abundant, the competition from other individuals or species is very intense.

It may come as a real surprise, therefore, to realize that there is a spectacular exception to this general rule. In fact, there is a common situation in Algonquin Park and elsewhere in which the food consumers don't have to move even an inch in order to get all the food they can possibly handle. They just lay back, process the food, and grow beneficiaries in a kind of nonstop, natural, room service.

The situation we refer to is our creeks and rivers, and the animals which benefit are the larval blackflies, caddis flies, and others which can actually filter food out from the water as it moves past them. The strategy employed by these creatures is so successful that, in some cases, river bottoms are literally packed with their bodies.

Caddisfly nets



Since Algonquin rivers are almost always very clear, you may wonder just what kind of food in them could go to support such tremendous numbers of (albeit small) animals. The answer is that the food, although abundant, is almost always microscopic. There is the odd small invertebrate, but more consists of even smaller algae and bacteria swept along by the current, and most common of all is a class of very small organic particles known as "fine detritus." The sources of fine detritus include bits of dead plants brought into the river by runoff from the land and also faeces of aquatic insects living upstream. This may not sound particularly appetizing but the particles often

have a coating of slightly more nutritious "icing" in the form of bacteria, fungi, or other tiny organisms.

There are two general methods employed by dwellers of the river bottom to capture these morsels. One involves the use of nets and the other could be called the "direct interception" approach.

Some caddis fly larvae provide excellent examples of the net technique. In many rocky, shallow, but slow-moving stretches of Algonquin rivers (the Petawawa and Barron Rivers on the east side of the Park are good cases in point), the bottom may be covered with quite conspicuous foodtrapping nets spun by young caddis flies. The nets, shaped like "horns of plenty" with the wide end facing upstream, are sometimes 15 centimetres long or more. The larvae, which take about three days to construct these sophisticated traps, live in the narrow part of the tube and feed on mostly the large (and often living) food items swept into the funnel entrance.

Blackfly larvae, on the other hand, feed on the small end of the spectrum of current-borne food particles, and they employ the "direct interception" technique. They live in both small and large streams, often in quite fast water. Using tiny hooks on their rear end, they anchor themselves to a pad of gummy saliva they have placed on a rock or plant surface. They then face into the current, lean back, and spread their specialized "head fans" (the arm-like brushes you see in the illustration) to filter food particles from the flowing water. The fans are actually even more efficient than their fine mesh structure would allow them to be, thanks to a covering of sticky mucus. Blackfly larvae can capture particles as small as one millionth of a centimetre in diameter.

Blackfly larvae



It is true that most of these particles cannot be considered as very high-quality food. In fact, as little as two per cent, and never more than 20 per cent, is actually assimilated by blackfly larvae. Nevertheless, there is so much fine detritus swept along in the current that blackfly larvae do extremely well. They were once recorded in Costello Creek beside the Opeongo Road, for example, at the staggeringly high density of 55,000 larvae per square metre of creek bottom!

Earlier we suggested that the situation of river-dwelling filter feeders was like that of someone receiving room service. At least in the case of blackflies, however, there is a serious flaw in the comparison. However pampered they may be as larvae, blackflies emerge into the air

as adults and, before they can reproduce, the females need a shot of much-higher-quality, protein-rich food to form their eggs. That is why they turn to us humans, completely innocent bystanders though we are, and drink our blood.

Normally when someone has had the luxury of breakfast in bed, they are also expected to pay. Unfortunately, blackflies do quite nicely indeed with their "room service" in the river but, alas and alack, we humans up on land are the ones who get stuck with their bill.

Reprinted from the 15 August 1985 edition of Algonquin Park's The Raven, courtesy of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

PADDLERS' TALK

EMERGENCY BOAT REPAIRS

Duct tape is amazing stuff, but sometimes it's just not enough. That's when many paddlers reach for the five-minute epoxy. The problem is that epoxy sticks all too well, and after the trip you're left with the frustrating task of trying to clean up the temporary goop to make the permanent repair. Hot-melt glue sticks can be used to make effective temporary repairs to cuts and gouges in the hull. Just heat the stick with your lighter and spread on with a knife. Back up with duct tape, for extra security, if desired. If it starts to peel, just reheat and re-apply. When you get home, simply heat with a hair dryer or heat gun and cleanly pull off.

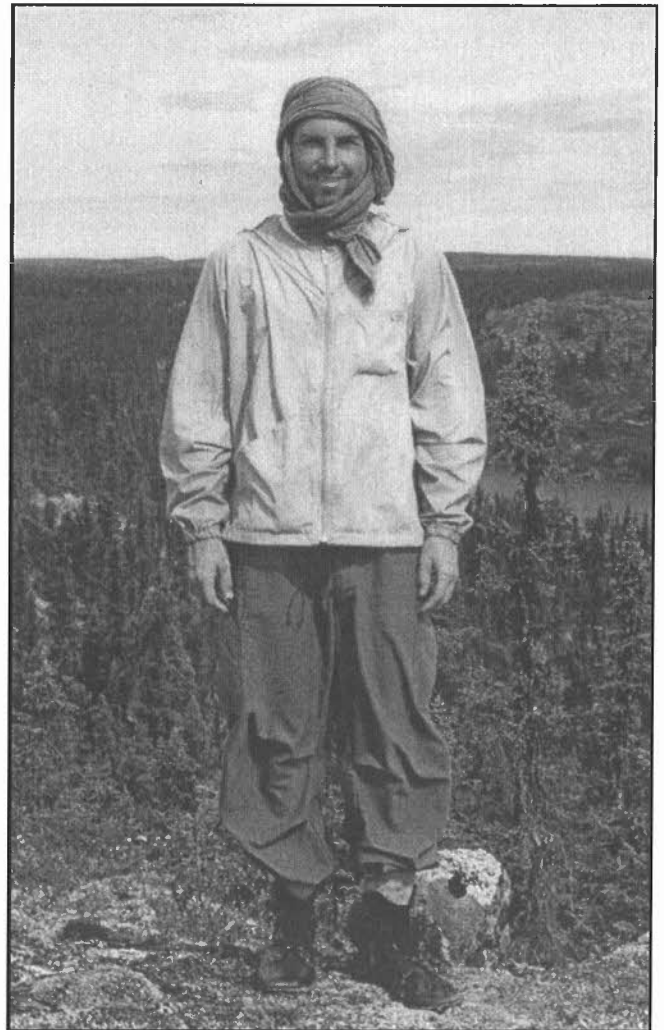
Bill Ness

HAT OR TURBAN?

On some canoe trips in the past, I haven't been happy with wearing a typical brimmed hat. What bothered me especially was having blackflies and mosquitoes use the brim as a resting area before launching attacks on my ears and neck. I also like to minimize my use of a headnet as much as possible. I find that using the net distorts color when looking through it and I like to see as much of the natural scenery around me as I can.

I came up with an acceptable solution by wearing a turban while canoeing. The turban is just a long piece of cheesecloth wrapped around head and neck. It doesn't prevent insect bites completely, but I found that it does minimize them to a more tolerable level. I am quite happy that my ears don't get bitten at all while wearing it. The turban is light in weight and offers some protection from hot sunlight as well. It's easy to store and can readily double as a scarf. I use a piece of material that is two metres long. Letting just over 30 cm hang down over the left side of my head, I wrap the rest over the top and then around my neck, finally finishing up by wrapping the remainder around the crown of the head, partially covering the forehead. The fit should be snug but still comfortable, not tight. I am very happy with the results.

Mike Jones



PADDLERS' TALK is your opportunity to publish ingenious solutions to all kinds of big or little problems encountered in the field. To submit your ideas, please contact Bill Ness or Toni Harting; addresses etc. are in the WCA Contacts on the back page.

PANHANDLING IN ALGONQUIN

Herb Pohl

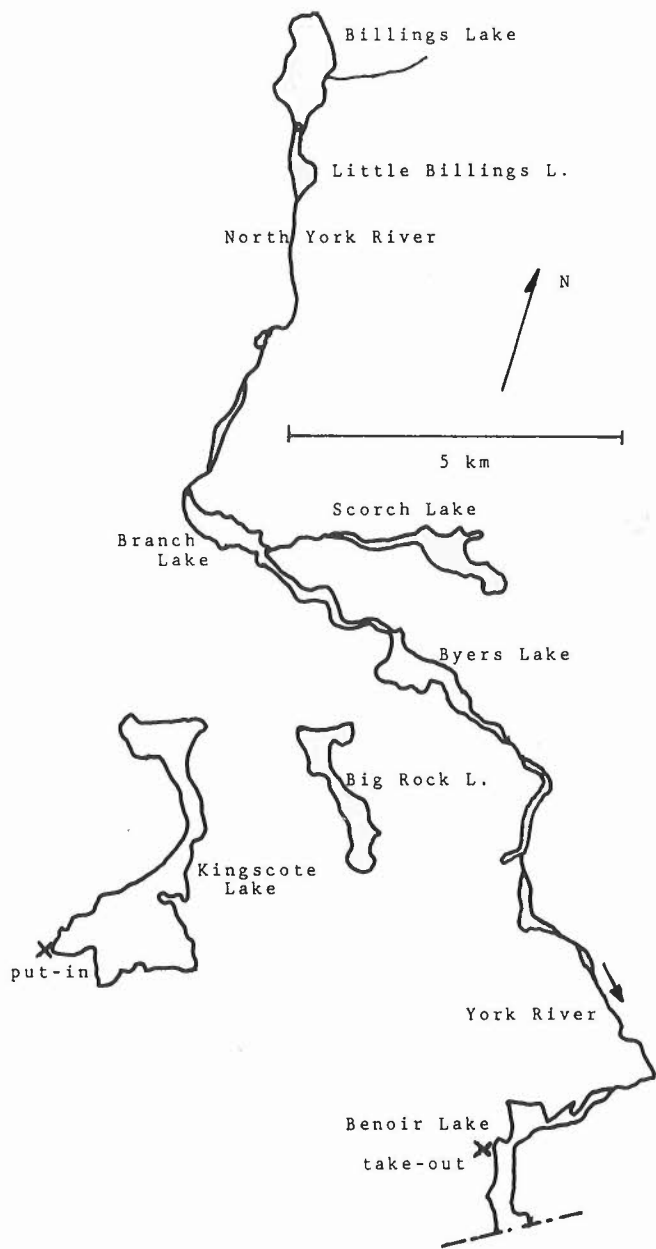
One of the speakers at the Annual General Meeting of the WCA in February 1999 was Craig Macdonald, whose topic "Recent Changes in Algonquin Park" found a very interested audience. Among the changes he mentioned were the establishment of new campsites as well as hiking and biking trails in the southern panhandle of Algonquin Park. At one time this area had been one of my favorite destinations, particularly during the fall, when the hardwood hills of the region are ablaze with color. Craig's talk provided the incentive to revisit the place after an absence of 14 years. I had very little difficulty in convincing Rob Butler, the WCA Treasurer for life, to come along on this investigative endeavor.

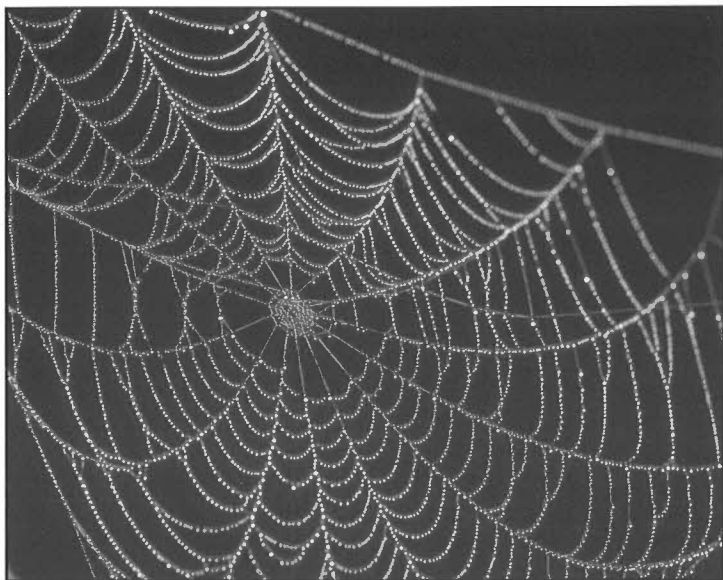
Rob, always the organizer, had already secured our interior permits at Pine Grove Point Lodge on Lake Benoit when we met on a suitably sunny Monday morning in June at the Kingscote Lake access point. And what a nice place it is now, not at all the dark and dingy spot I remembered. A large (and I may add, totally empty) parking lot, new toilet, dock, and six campsites were the first of a number of changes we encountered. Another change I noticed on the way north was that the two portages which bring the traveller to Byers Lake and the York River are now longer and require more effort. Rob, who is quite knowledgeable in these matters, calls it the age effect.

The valley of the York River in these parts is the remnant of a large meltwater stream which deposited huge amounts of sand all along the way. Today, all the low-lying areas are covered by marshes through which the York River runs a convoluted and uncertain course. Further downstream the placid nature of the river is interrupted periodically by sharp drop-offs over outcrops of bedrock.

By mid-afternoon we were comfortably set up at the only campsite on Branch Lake. Both Rob and I become very lethargic in hot weather, and since the day had become a real scorcher we didn't venture out of the shade until the sun was getting a little closer to the horizon before setting out on a bit of exploration. If you like marshes, the region upstream from Branch Lake is a visual delight. After several liftovers over beaver dams and a detour via a dead-end channel, we managed to reach the portage into Billings Lake, which, by the way, is in excellent condition. We arrived back at the campsite just as the sun disappeared below the horizon, and had a very late supper.

Tuesday morning dawned mercifully cool. It was Rob's turn at the campfire, and so he set about among the rising mists to cook his favorite breakfast, porridge, and a little





while later, in a feeble attempt to appease my tastebuds, a few slivers of bacon. Day 2 was set aside to check on some of the developments which Craig had mentioned in his presentation. A brand-new portage, which starts right beside the Branch Lake campsite, now offers easy access to Scorch Lake. A beaver dam at the outflow of the lake seems to have raised the lake's water level to record height, since there are a number of drowned trees along the shore. This, and the many tall and stately white pines, lend an air of untouched wilderness.

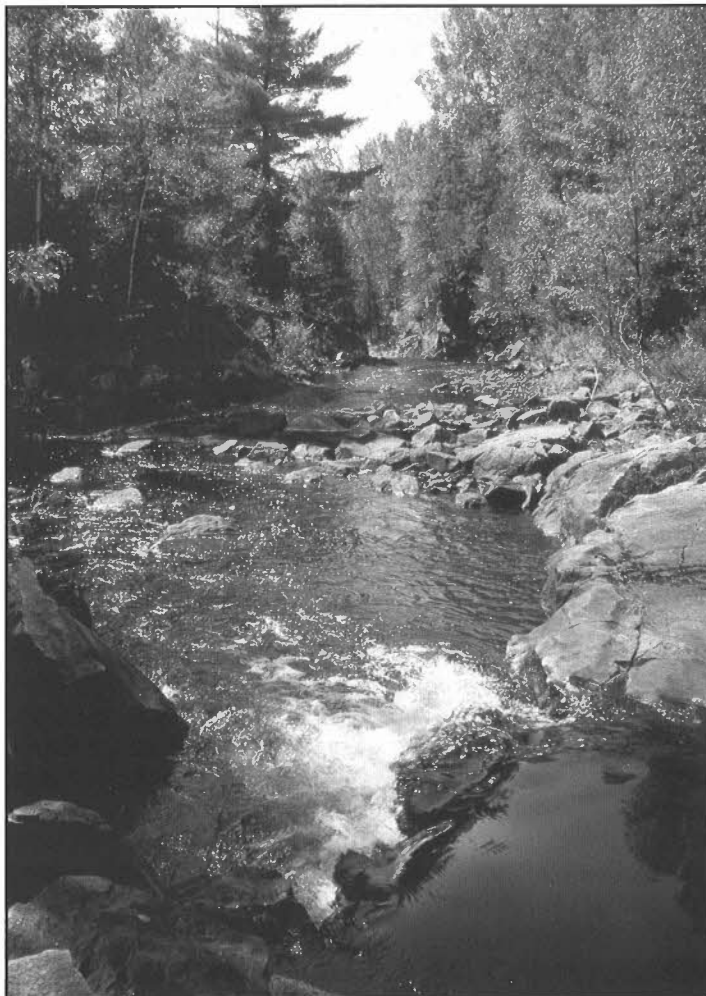
After inspecting all the new campsites, so far unused, we hiked to the top of the lookout on the south shore of the lake along a well-marked trail. It provides a wonderful view of the lake and surrounding hills and is certainly worth the effort. From there we carried on to the Bruton Farm hiking trail. In the winter this trail is part of the 80-km-long cross-country ski trail system of Algonquin Northern Wilderness Lodge. It largely follows an old road leading to the remains of the Bruton Farm, which supplied loggers with food before the turn of the century. A pleasant 40 minute walk through oak and maple forest, the road showed no sign of usage and ends anticlimactically in a small clearing overgrown with weeds and grass. Apart from a few heaps of rocks and a stone fence, there is nothing to indicate that anyone ever lived there.

After lunch I proposed we return to the north shore of Scorch Lake by a roundabout route and swim across the lake to retrieve our canoes, but Rob decided to go back the way we had come. It was just as well; when I finally got there, the distance across the lake seemed a lot greater than my original guesstimate and I gratefully accepted Rob's offer to tow my boat across while I splashed around near the shore.

The next morning we dashed off early by following the York River to Benoir Lake. There are several very scenic spots along the way, which were glorified by persistent sunshine. Because of my insistence to get through Toronto before the evening rush on the way home, we didn't get around to check out the new mountain bike trail to Byers Lake nor the High Falls hiking trail, a situation I hope to attend to in the fall.

For all the improvement, which are listed in a new pamphlet, Algonquin South, the management of Algonquin Park has to be commended. The increased variety of recreational opportunities may well boost the usage of this underutilized part of the Park. What will counteract this possibility is the continued schizophrenia about Park use, in particular the conflict between logging and recreation.

At the same time that Park management has invested some of its resources in improving the recreational infrastructure of the panhandle, it is also engaged in expanding logging operations in the region. During our brief stay the sounds of heavy equipment and power saws operating just south and west of Branch Lake filled the air from 4:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. A cursory examination of the south shore of Branch Lake revealed a newly expanded roadway within 100 m of the lakeshore and trees marked for cutting within less than 50 paces from the shoreline. In other words, the logging authority of Algonquin Park operates with fewer restrictions than are in place for Wild River Parks, and this in what is supposedly a recreational corridor. Even if one were to accept this dual use of "park land," to carry on logging at the height of the recreational season just makes no sense.



York River

photos: Toni Harting

REVIEWS

BASIC ESSENTIALS: KNOTS FOR THE OUTDOORS
BASIC ESSENTIALS: COOKING IN THE OUTDOORS
BASIC ESSENTIALS: MAP AND COMPASS
BASIC ESSENTIALS: CANOEING

By Cliff Jacobson, published by The Globe Pequot Press (PO Box 833, 6 Business Park Road, Old Saybrook, CT 06475-0833, (800) 304-4562), 1999, softcover, about 70 pages, US\$7.95.

These four books in the extensive series that Cliff has created over the years have now made it to a second edition, a good indication of their popularity. The series contains some of the best instruction books available in any collection of outdoors publications and provides a treasure of still-to-be-learned or almost-forgotten information to the novice and experienced paddler and camper alike. Don't be fooled by their relatively small size and low cost; this collection of Basic Essential books presents an impressive amount of useful information. The books are lavishly illustrated with clear drawings and black-and-white photographs, making them a joy to use.

* * * * *

PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE by Gary and Joanie McGuffin, published by The Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ontario, 1999, hardcover, 208 pages, \$39.95.

This glossy, colorful book is the McGuffin's latest creation and covers the same subject as the above Basic Essentials: Canoeing book, but them on a much grander scale. About 600(!) color photographs of the superb quality we're used to from Gary accompanies clear and informative text, presenting in minute detail all the intricacies of paddling, portaging, and boat handling in general in flatwater as well as whitewater. The production quality of this very well-designed instruction manual is excellent, and there is no doubt it could become the standard text for learning the basics but also the finer touches of using your canoe in all kinds of situations. A book to be enjoyed again and again.

There is but one somewhat negative remark I have to make, and that concerns a continuing and rather annoying McGuffin "trademark." In too many of the photographs Joanie appears in (and that must amount to many hundreds if you count all the McGuffin publications), she is smiling, or at least showing her (admittedly beautiful) teeth, which becomes very distracting. After a while, you tend to see nothing but the smile and the teeth. Please, guys, give us a bit more of the true face of paddling, which is not always light and sunny and smiley, but can be gritty and tense and sweaty. Still, the McGuffin books are among the very best publications on the joys of canoeing —especially the photographs are outstanding, albeit leaning to the pretty-picture variety — and this one is no exception.

WHERE RIVERS RUN by Gary and Joanie McGuffin, reprinted by The Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ontario, 1999, softcover, 241 pages, \$22.95.

This reprint of the 1988 account of their 10,000-km canoe trip from Baie Comeau on the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Quebec to Tuktoyaktuk on the Beaufort Sea is a fascinating story that again illustrates what fabulous canoeing country Canada really is. This was the first book created by the McGuffins and already shows the seeds of their future quality and depth of coverage. (Even Joanie's smile is there!) It is among the best of Canadian adventure stories and deserves a respected place in anybody's library.



RIVER, Journal of Paddlesport & River Adventure, published by MacLeod Publishing, PO Box 1068, Bozeman, MT 598715, USA.

RAPID, Canada's Whitewater Mag, published by Rapid Magazine Inc., Box 115, Quadeville, Ontario, K0J 2G0.

Of these two relatively unknown paddling magazines, *River* is the older one, having been in existence now for several years, whereas *Rapid* just started this year. Both present lots of information on the kind of paddling most wilderness canoeists are interested in, and both do it well. They are fine productions with good color photographs, maps, and drawings (and, inevitably, lots of advertisements).

River covers much ground in its varied articles and columns and should please many an adventurous paddler. For instance, the latest (July 1999) issue presents major articles on: Ancient Water Trails (The Algoma Highlands), Raft Carnage (photos from the world of rafting), Urban Rivers (Oasis in the Cityscape), and Daylighting (unearthing covered rivers). There are of course also the usual columns on paddling events, destinations, safety, equipment, and much more.

Rapid is a Canadian magazine written by whitewater paddlers for whitewater paddlers. It aims to cover everything from trashy surf holes and the slalom racing circuit, to whitewater river tripping and rafting adventures around the world. Whether an old-school classic paddler, a freestyle hot shot, or a summer raft guide, *Rapid* has something for the newcomer, the weekender, and the industry guru.

All reviews by Toni Harting.

NINE DAYS IN TEMAGAMI

Shirley Williams

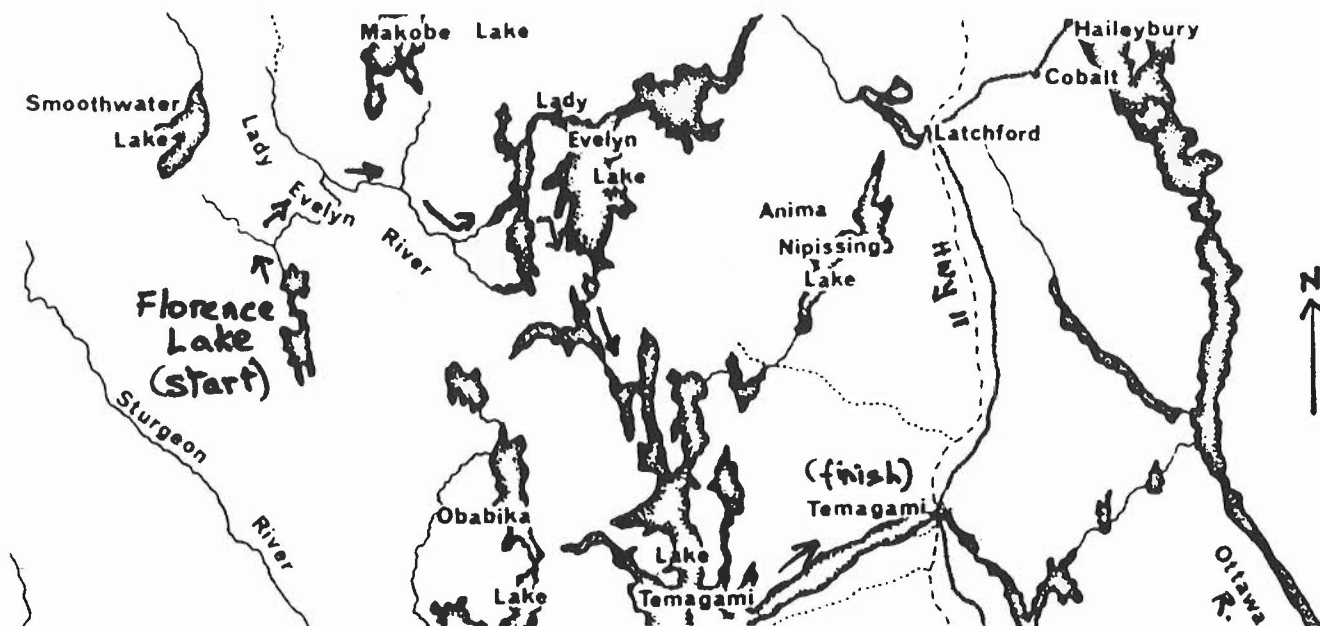
Florence Lake, Florence River, South Lady Evelyn River, Macpherson Lake, Stonehenge Lake, Katharine (Dividing) Lake, Lady Evelyn River, Willow Island Lake, Diamond Lake, Sharp Rock Inlet, Lake Temagami.

29 June 1998, day 1 Hot, no rain. Jim and I reached Lakeland Airways in Temagami at 7:30 a.m. and got a flight at nine instead of having to wait till noon. Unloaded our canoe and gear at the dock and had a hasty breakfast at the Shell station. The flight took half an hour. I had tears in my eyes as we flew in, partly happiness at being back here, and partly sadness at remembering our trip here with good friends in 1988, one of whom has since died.

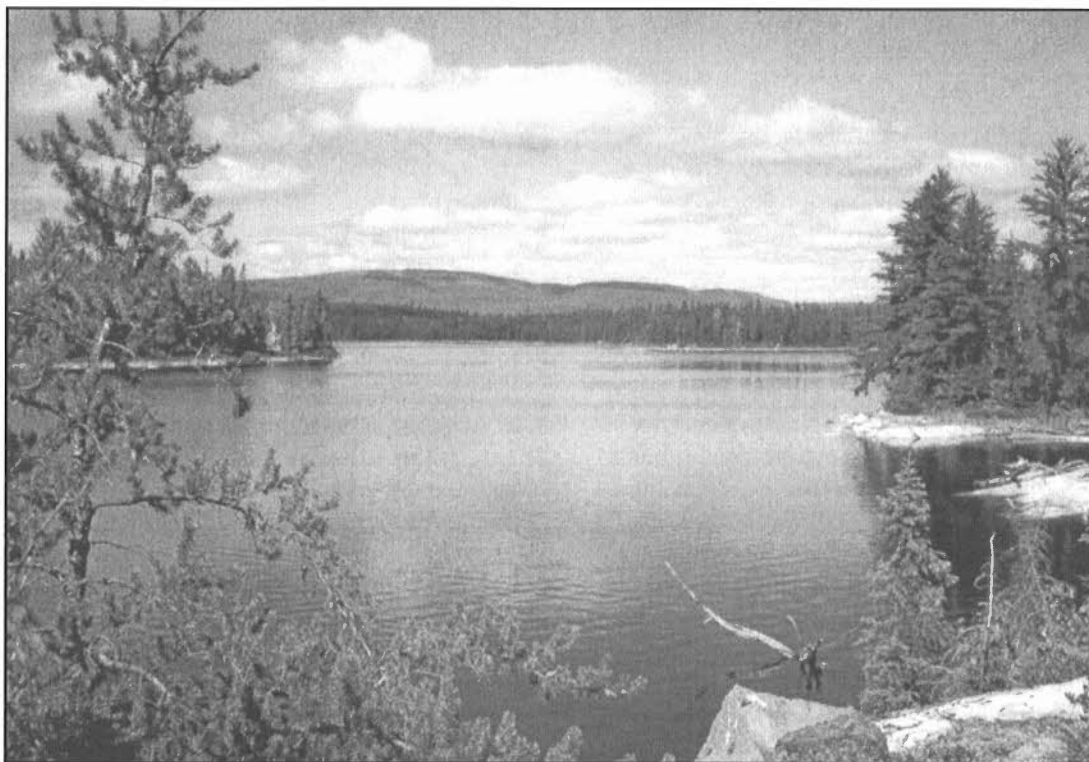
We were set down beautifully, and paddled against a good breeze into Florence River. Sun and white clouds, plus occasional big grey ones. So lovely to hear only birds and the wind. Saw a very noisy osprey and her nest here. Pairs of loons were in each broadening of the river. We paddled northeast a kilometre or two up the South Lady Evelyn River to see what the two campsites there were like: very small (one tent) but nice. We went on as it was so early. Stopped in Duff Lake at the same site we had in 1988. It was very degraded, with litter, tin cans, and so on. There were no less than four tables, one white enamel, plus a rather disgusting latrine, set too close to the river. After lunch we had a swim, then put up the bear rope. Water lovely. Deer flies, a few blackflies, some mosquitoes. Sudden tiny shower while we were still in bright sunshine. A hummingbird came to investigate the potbag and the sun highlighted his ruby throat most beautifully. Soon the sun had gone and so had the breeze; it was grey but didn't look too threatening.

Did a big cleanup, picked up everything except toilet paper, which I kicked out of sight. Millions of cigarette filters, which don't seem to break down at all. Couldn't pack out all this garbage at this point, so tried to burn it down a bit. At 4 p.m. there was a big storm to the west and we hastily put up the shelter; rain came at 4:30. Took down the enamel-top table and dragged it far back into the bush. From this campsite we could see the lookout point we climbed to above the cliffs in 1987 (inspired by Herb Pohl). Saw a gorgeous black butterfly with white splotches, a blue-and-white frill on its wing edges, and five tiny red dots on each side. I found a beautiful little flower and drew it in quite a lot of detail, leaves and all, and absolutely can't find it in my frustrating Audubon flower book. The nearest to it is something called Beetleweed, found only in and south of Virginia. We went to bed in a big rain-storm.

30 June, day 2 Rain on and off all night. Usual poor sleep first night. Noisy bullfrogs. Grey but clearing this morning, wind from the northeast. A chipmunk with half a tail finally appeared — there were always a few chipmunks here. Buried the burned garbage and, using the spade I found in the campsite, covered the latrine. It'll probably all be just as bad this time next year. Paddled off in sun and cloud, occasional rain drops. The wind slowly veered north and then westish by evening. Saw two gorgeous bull moose, their racks still velvety. The second was absolutely huge and we came on him suddenly; thought he was going to charge us. He finally stepped on land but didn't flee.



courtesy Hap Wilson



Leisurely day. Somehow managed to miss the entry to the North Lady Evelyn River and went a few kilometres upstream before we realized it, as we were battling quite a strong headwind. Made camp in the same #2 site as last time. Grassy, LOTS of blackflies. They drive me crazy but don't bother J at all, none even around him. I wear nothing perfumed, so why is this? Two fishermen in a boat came up the South Lady Evelyn just before the turn, must have come in at the bridge on the North LE. Destroys the sense of wilderness. A cow moose wandered up the river to our site tonight. A funny object swimming across the river turned out to be a huge, green bullfrog.

1 July, day 3 Slept 10 hours. Few brief showers in the night. Misty this morning but the sun burned it off. Cooler. Mosquitoes awful as well as blackflies. A "good morning" from the river surprised us as we were packing up; it was a couple heading up the North LE to Ishpatina Ridge and Smoothwater.

Today was a tough day. Rapids began about one kilometre from camp and continued all day. We portaged five falls and ran the rest, Class I and II. The carries were terrible, very bouldery, thank God it wasn't raining. Had to doublecarry the canoe over the worst one, the old riverbed. There was an extensive fire burn from the first rapids as far as Macpherson Lake but the blueberries and red currants were great. Camped on a tiny windswept island in Macpherson Lake, same #3 as last time. Three beautiful white pines there; I wonder why they escaped the loggers. It's a lovely little spot but someone had shat — since the last rain — in the middle of a trail to the

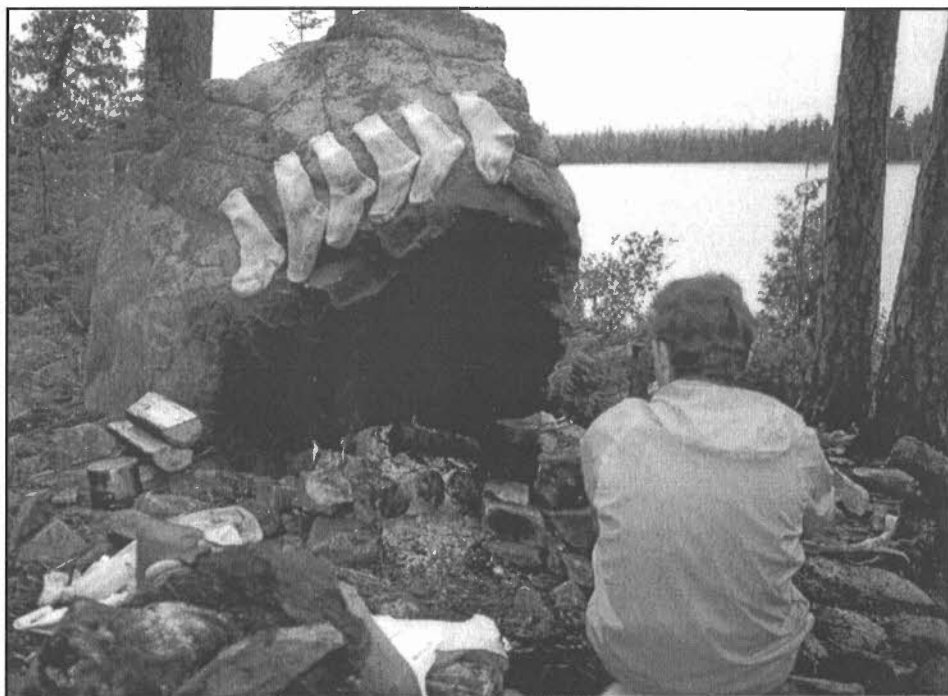
water, and all the toilet paper had blown into the bushes. I cleared it up. Why do people come here if they don't appreciate the beauty? A hummingbird came and seemed very interested in J's hat.

2 July, day 4 Perfect morning, a faint breeze from the west. Lots of cedar waxwings here and a pair of whitethroated sparrows. Could hear, but not see, a pileated woodpecker across the water. Ran, portaged, and lined rapids all day. Lovely lunch stop on the portage from Stonehenge Lake — the "ShangriLa Portage" according to Hap Wilson — where we swam and lazed for a while. It was needed as there was an awful canoe doublecarry at the beginning.

Stopped in Katherine Lake at 3 p.m. as it was very hot. There were two tents at the narrows, just like last time, and we realized that it must be a flyin camp, set up by Lakeland probably. After we'd made camp further down the lake, we saw a canoe with mother, father, and two small girls, no gear, paddling by, which confirmed the flyin camp. This family, and the couple we saw on the second morning, were the only trippers, i.e., not kids' camps, that we saw until we reached the Northeast Arm.

We swam and sat in the shade all the rest of the afternoon. Here we saw the first of many youth camp groups come by, five canoes. We saw two mink today, one black and the other a bit bigger and a beautiful dark chestnut color. These were the closest I've ever seen. A garter snake was the only other wildlife today and the last animal we saw on this trip.

3 July, day 5 Very muggy today, sun and cloud at first and then a sudden downpour. An awful portage out of Katherine Lake followed by a bad one, followed by the worst of the day at Helen Falls. Set up camp opposite the portage at the bottom, and the rain gods very kindly allowed us to get the shelter up before opening the heavens. The rain got heavy and steady. A group of five canoes, eight teens and two leaders who didn't look too much older, started going up the portage at 4 p.m. and hadn't finished at 7 p.m.; they ended up making camp at the top of the steep part. They had five wannigans, one twomen and two huge fourmen tents, and 18 ft Old Town canoes besides their personal gear. Each time the eight returned to the beginning, they formed a circle and held hands and appeared to pray for at least five minutes. We talked to the leader,



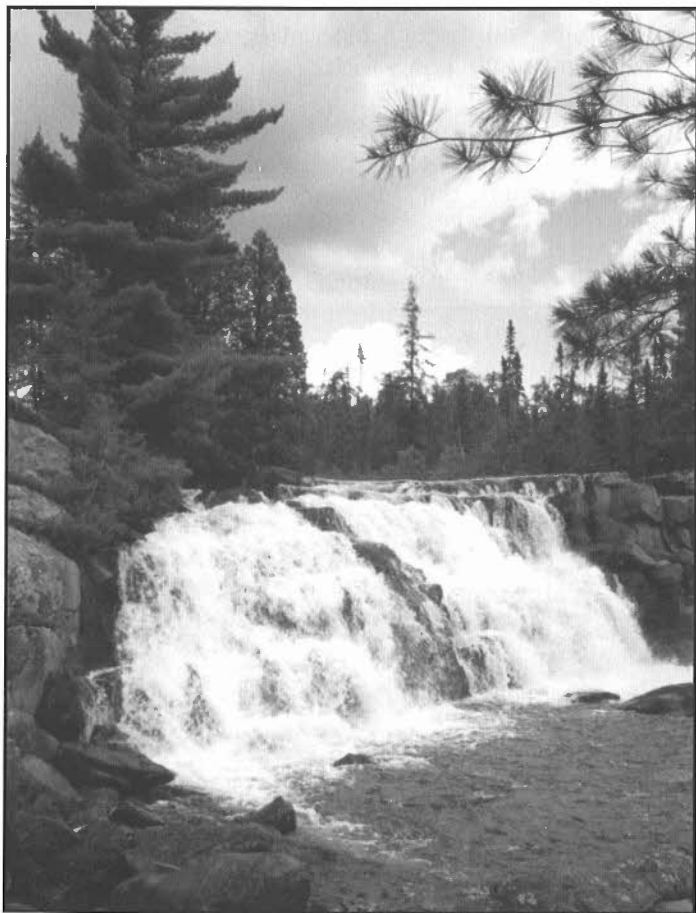
this was his summer job. The kids (the camp was coed) were all from the States. We didn't ask about the circle.

The rain stopped just as we went to bed at 8 p.m. Our new MSR Dragonfly stove was wonderful, has the best simmer I've ever had, but it is as noisy as the old Primus/Svea stove.

4 July, day 6 The alarm for J's eyedrops woke us at seven after 11 hours' sleep. Beautiful cool, sunny morning. We're down to three packs today, able to put the little green rucksack inside a blue one. We chatted with the 20-year-old leader of another group of campers travelling upstream, all boys this time. They, like the earlier group, were to be out 22 days and would restock from a food drop in Makobe Lake. We ran a bouldery rapids and had lunch on a tiny island at the bottom of Centre Falls, and then it was out into the strong wind from the northeast but the clouds are in line and the sky looks okay.

Frank Falls was a pleasant carry after the other two. Our choice of campsite, the island, was taken by another group, so we went on, and there were whitecaps as we came out into more open water towards Sucker Gut Lake. Stopped at a tiny place on the point, and a cup of tea hit the spot, but one of the mugs had broken when I knocked it with the paddle these cups are NO GOOD, they not only break, they sink too. We wound it up with duct tape but it still leaked.

We were both tired today, our muscles weary. We decided that this spot was really hopeless for the tent, and the tea gave us the strength to move on. And of course around the corner everything was much better: the wind was at our backs and we found a perfect little spot on a





point about one kilometre down the lake. It looked as though someone had camped there the night before, so we didn't dare eat the blueberries around the tent site, although they were the biggest and fattest we'd seen on the trip. There were a fair number of flat tent spots at the top of the hill, and one of those appalling new Ministry toilets in a hollow in full view of everyone. I mean the kind with a white plastic seat. What was wrong with those lovely thunderboxes they used to have in Algonquin Park?

5 July, day 7 Perfect morning, very still, mist on the river, and water like silk. Very heavy dew. The sun woke us as it rose. Coffee and a morning like this is perfection. I spent some hours trying to compose a "Sonnet to a Thunderbox" as we paddled down into Willow Island Lake and portaged east into an unnamed lake. The next portage was something of a fiasco. We thought (trouble was, we didn't really think it out at all) people had tried to paddle the creek, which was a muddy swamp, so we took the old portage. There were signs that someone had recently crossed on it, but they, like us, must have returned as it was clearly wrong. Yes, we should have floundered through the mud, which only lasted a couple of 100 metres before there was a decent trail to follow. We both got soakers of ooze — in our clean socks, too.

After this portage we were in Lady Evelyn Lake and heading south. We camped on a very rocky site with many smallish dead trees — practically no topsoil here. It was very hot all day, with little breeze. Today, we both saw two men in white T-shirts in an aluminum fishing boat but,

on examination through binoculars, it turned out to be two seagulls sitting on a rock.

6 July, day 8 A whitethroated sparrow woke me at five from a dream about the BBC time signal, which kept repeating on different radios. A grey morning with no dew



or wind and sure enough, showers began at 6:30.

We had only seen one chipmunk on this whole trip was there a population crash? And we had seen and heard very few squirrels. An easy pullover into Diamond Lake, and then a coffee break on shore allowed us to keep going until we stopped for lunch on Beaver Island in Sharp Rock Inlet, a beautiful lunch spot with clear, clear water ruined by huge fishheads and spines, bottle pull tabs, etc. in the water, and garbage on shore. People are such pigs.

Now out into the wind, which got up at 1 p.m. after a still morning. Into the North Arm of Lake Temagami. We had a real struggle to catch up with yet another camp group, who had left a pack at their lunch spot. We finally made it and they were very grateful, but I was exhausted. We paddled down past Devil Mountain to Devil's Point against a wind just off the starboard bow and waves splashing over the gunwale; I was so tired I couldn't climb out of the boat without J's help. A cup of soup soon put me to rights, though. This was a grubby little site. The sky was good now, but the wind still strong. A merganser family, mother and six littlish ones, came by three times, not at all fazed by J doing dishes. Tonight we had eaten, hung the food, and were in bed by 6 p.m., and J's alarm for his eyedrops woke us an hour later. We again set the alarm for 5 a.m.

7 July, day 9 I was awake three hours into the night and tried to persuade J to paddle down Lake Temagami by moonlight. I had to wake him up with the idea; I think he was too sleepy to appreciate its brilliance because he vetoed it. I had a really bad dream before I woke up at 11 p.m., and it continued after 2 a.m. when I went back to sleep. Was this a Devil's Point dream? The alarm woke us at five and we were away by six without breakfast. No wind, silky water, beautiful morning. This was a good idea, to get into the Northeast Arm before the wind got up. We rounded Matagama Point and started looking for a breakfast place but all the campsites were occupied. Finally, at 9:30, we crawled up onto a little patch at the south end of Boat Islands Bay and made the best cup of coffee of the whole trip.

Amazingly, the wind never did get up and it stayed flat calm all day, with an occasional puff of breeze from the northeast to cool our faces. Small white clouds gathered all around us, but never came over — it was as if Lake Temagami was in the centre of a barometric high.

We had lunch in the canoe, tied to an island with a cottage on it; all islands have cottages on them here. This was the best Northeast Arm section we've ever done, perhaps because it was midweek and there were fewer powerboats roaring about (there's a lot to be said for retirement), and also of course there was no wind.

We landed at 3:30 p.m. and had a cold beer, wonderful.



WCA TRIPS

**WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT PRESENTED IN THE WINTER ISSUE?
Contact the Outings Committee before 15 Oct!**

For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Trips, contact any of the members of the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005, rabbit1@globalserve.net; Mike Jones, (905) 275-4371, dd890@freenet.toronto.on.ca; Ann Dixie, (416) 512-0292, dixiea@cs.clarke-inst.on.ca; Peter Devries, (905) 477-6424; Gisela Curwen, (416) 484-1471, g.curwen@danielbtorger.com

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

25 Sept. or following Saturdays. **MISSISSAGUA RIVER, MAYBE**

Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005, book as soon as possible, call before 9:00 p.m. ----- If there is enough water, this is a really great fall whitewater trip. However, over the last few years, dry summers have prevented me from doing it. If you would be interested and should we have enough water, let me know. I check water level in advance with the Trent Waterways staff who control the dam so don't worry about driving a long way for a surprise.

9-11 October **PETAWAWA THANKSGIVING WEEKEND**

Ann Dixie, (416) 512-0292, book as soon as possible ----- The classic fall trip from Lake Traverse to Lake McManus. A fabulous way to end the paddling season. Sunday includes a short hike to the top of a steep cliff overlooking the river. Enjoy the colors of Algonquin while having lunch. Some rapids require intermediate level skill. All rapids can be portaged, so beginner paddlers are welcome.

9-11 October **KILLARNEY CANOEING AND HIKING**

Richard Todd , (819) 459-1179, richard@magi.com , book as soon as possible. ----- This will be an easy trip amidst the colors. The paddling will be from George Lake to O.S.A. Lake and back; there will be hiking or exploring by paddle on Sunday. Limit nine people, four tents.

16-17 October **GULL RIVER**

Barry Godden, (416) 440-4208, book by 9 Oct. ----- The Gull has probably the only decent whitewater west of the Ottawa at this time of year. Come on out and do some paddling before the snow flies. Suitable for solid intermediates with fully equipped whitewater boats. Limit six boats.

24 October **ELORA GORGE**

Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005, book before 17 Oct., call before 9 p.m. ----- Fun in the Gorge. The levels should rise with the fall rains and the water is cooling. Rapids are Class II or maybe even III if rain is very heavy. A chance to play in the whitewater. Limit six canoes.

FOOD FOR PADDLERS

My husband Dave has a few recipes that he traditionally makes for our family. One of them is pancakes. When we started canoeing, we adapted his recipe to take along on our trips.

Dave's Favorite Pancakes

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1&1/2 cups white flour | 2 tablespoons baking powder | 1 tablespoon salt |
| 1 cup whole wheat flour | 4 tablespoons egg powder | |
| 2 tablespoons sugar | 3/4 cup skim milk powder | |

Mix ingredients prior to departure. Before cooking, add 2&1/2 cups water (more or less) and 2 tablespoons of oil. Stir just until moistened. Fry in large teflon frying pan.

Notes Optional: add fresh or dried blueberries. For thinner pancakes add more water. This quantity makes lots for four people with leftovers for lunch. Egg powder available at Mountain Equipment Coop (last time we bought it).

We take **maple syrup** with us but it is messy. I picked up the following recipe for making "maple syrup" under Tips and Tricks at the Ontario Canoe Routes Web site www.webpan.com/canoeroutes

Ingredients: 1/2 cup sugar and 3/4 teaspoon Maple Flavouring. When needed, add contents to 1/4 cup boiling water in small pot and stir until sugar dissolved. If anyone has other suggestions for dressing up pancakes, please let me know.

If you would like to share your favorite tripping recipes, please contact Barb Young, 12 Erindale Crescent, Brampton, Ont. L6W 1B5; e-mail youngdav@interlog.com

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This PRODUCTS AND SERVICES section is available, free of charge and on a firstcome, firstserved basis, to members as well as nonmembers 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 nonsale times at:

- Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, Ont.
- Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ont.
- Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str., Hepworth, Ont.
- Smoothwater Outfitters, Temagami (Hwy. 11), Ont.

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

CLASSIC SOLO CANOEING instructed by Becky Mason at Meech Lake, Quebec. All levels, equipment provided, fee \$70. Please contact (819) 827-4159; redcanoe@istar.ca; www.wilds.mb.ca/redcanoe

KENNKART DIGITAL MAPPING Since 1996 KennKart Digital Mapping has provided custom maps for outdoor recreation and environmental education. We are dedicated to providing service to nonprofit groups and businesses across Ontario. Whether you are developing a map for tourism, canoe routes, snowmobile trails, bicycle routes, hiking trails, nature trails, fishing guides, or environmental education, we are here to help. If you have any questions concerning a mapping project please feel free to contact us any time at: KennKart Digital Mapping, Box 580, Beeton, Ontario, L0G 1A0; (905) 7294273 or 18883553313; kennkart@sympatico.ca

ADVENTURE PADDLING INC. offers ORCA accredited Moving and Flat Water canoe courses, OWWA accredited kayak courses, canoe/kayak rolling clinics, instructor course, and wilderness whitewater courses in several locations which now include Costa Rica. Weekend courses take place in the Guelph/Elora area, just one hour from Toronto. Contact: 17A218 Silvercreek Parkway N., Suite 101, Guelph, Ontario, N1H 8E8; (519) 763-9496; adventure@sentex.net; www.sentex.net/adventure

The SENIORS FOR NATURE CANOE CLUB is accepting a few new members. The club is small with members mostly from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) who paddle and cycle in summer, hike and cross-country ski in winter. Members are 55 or older and usually retired, so activities take place Monday to Friday. The club is particularly interested in experienced canoeists who could lead wilderness and other canoe trips in Ontario. For more information please call Jim Greenacre at (416) 759-9956.

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CANEXUS II PROCEEDINGS have recently been published as a softcover book, *The Canoe in Canadian Cultures*, available in better book stores. This important book can also be ordered directly from one of the contributors for the regular price of \$24.95 but without tax or postage/handling costs (USA and overseas customers pay US\$ 24.95 for surface mail, no tax or p/h). Contact Toni Harting, 7 Walmer Road, Apt. 902, Toronto M5R 2W8, (416) 964-2495, aharting@netcom.ca

HERITAGE RIVERS CALENDAR Plan your next adventure with the full-color, large-format 2000 Canadian Heritage Rivers Calendar — 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 short description of each river. Cost \$12.95 plus \$2.00 p&h and 7% GST. The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association can be reached at: CRCA, P.O. Box 398, 446 Main Street W., Merrickville, ON, K0G 1N0; tel. (613) 269-2910; fax (613) 269-2908; e-mail staff@crca.ca website www.crca.ca



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WCA Postal Address:
P.O. Box 48022
Davisville Postal Outlet
1881 Yonge St.
Toronto, Ontario M4S 3C6

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 Glenn Spence (Chairman)
 Box 1677
 Brightonn, Ont. K0K 1H0
 (613) 475-4176
 glenspen@ontario.enoreo.on.ca

Ann Dixie (Vice Chair)
 Toronto, Ont.
 (416) 512-0292
 dixiea@cs.clarke-inst.on.ca

Anne Lessio
 Scarborough, Ont.
 (416) 293-4116
 lessioa@yorku.ca

Anne Snow
 Toronto, Ont.
 (416) 482-0810

Brian Robertson
 Cambridge, Ont.
 (519) 650-5727
 robertsb@sentex.net

Bill Stevenson
 Toronto, Ont.
 (416) 925-0017
 stevebil@aol.com

WCA Contacts

SECRETARY
 Bill King
 45 Hi Mount Drive
 Toronto, Ontario
 M2K 1X3
 (416) 223-4646
 lyonrex@aol.com

WCA TRIPS
 Bill Ness
 194 Placentia Blvd.
 Toronto, Ont. M1S 4H4
 (416) 321-3005
 rabbit1@globalserve.net

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

TREASURER
 Rob Butler
 Toronto, Ontario
 (416) 487-2282
 rwbutler@pathcom.com

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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): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

New member Member # if renewal: _____

Single Family

Phone Number(s):

() _____ (h)

() _____ Ext. _____ (w)

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