



*Panoramic view of the Bonnet Plume range, encircling the southern valley of Mt. MacDonald*

## CANOEING YUKON'S SNAKE RIVER

Jay Neilson with Frank Knaapen

### June 28, 2002: Fly-In

It's early morning in cold, wet spring weather. We are waiting on the dock at Mayo (Yukon) beside a mountain of gear. Low, heavy clouds indicate winds and localized rain, visibility on the water is good, visibility in the mountain ranges patchy. We will be canoeing the Snake River, which follows the Yukon/NWT divide, draining the Wernecke Range glaciers of the Selwyn Mountains as it flows north into the Peel, then the Mackenzie, and ultimately to the Arctic Ocean.

The Snake River has few rapids, mostly class 2–3. Guided trips can be organized and take 12 days, starting with a 220-km flight from Mayo to Duo Lakes and then

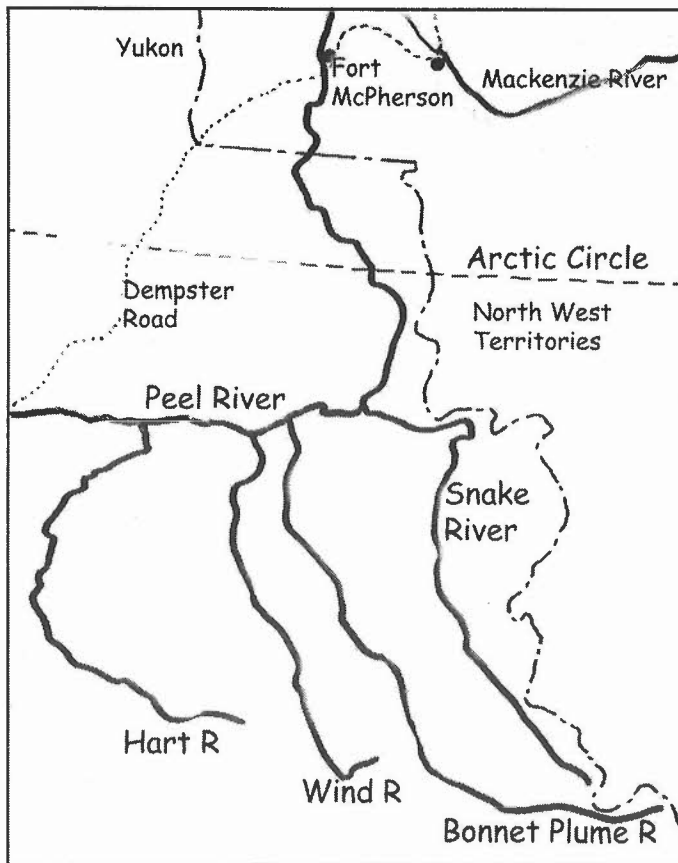
the 300-km canoe trip to the Peel River, with an elevation drop of 2400 ft. Continuing on to Ft. McPherson takes an additional 200 km. Duo Lakes, at the junction of the Bonnet Plume Range and the Snake River Valley, is our high-altitude fly-in destination at 4,100 ft. It is three days after ice-out and we will be the second group on the river. The glaciers are still in spring flood. Our choice of river is confirmed by the total lack of canoe parties flying in to the more challenging Bonnet Plume River.

We are strapped to the seats of a Twin Otter, a vintage rough-and-rattle airplane with three souls on board, lurching left, right, and centre as gusts of cloud pressure and rain pockets smack against our craft. The gasoline

drums scrape against their chains. "They make up the cargo load," pilot Bob groans, as the craft leaps over a violent eddy pocket, simulating whitewater thrills. "How about an eddy turn behind that next cloud?" We all laugh, then listen intently to the crackle and roar, while Bob focuses on getting us there. As we disappear inside a dense wall of white, Bob abandons the below-the-clouds-for-visibility attitude, and climbs higher. He cackles something about a broken altimeter, terrible courier service in the north, and about flying this route for two seasons. It's not a straight line, but one that follows valleys and crosses passes, some just metres below us.

Descending near Duo Lakes, we confirm Goz Creek and its junction to the Bonnet Plume, then splash, bounce, and roar. While unloading, pilot Bob discovers that the food barrel floats.

Three (upper) New Yorkers have done the last of three trips, hauling an inflatable raft and all in rough and wet terrain using a well-engineered cart. Experiencing a route over swampy muck, battling willows and alders, with zero landscape visibility, they followed a GPS reading directly to the black cliffs of the main channel, mentioned in Ken Madsen's notes (*Paddling in the Yukon*) on how to get there (which they never got to). We discuss putting in at a flood-level side channel, featuring 1.5 km of barely navigable alder tangle, where they have set up camp, or continuing only 250 metres further, traversing much rougher flooded terrain, to the black cliffs, which constrain the main channel, a mud-brown torrent.



It's still morning. We breathe in the sweet fragrance of northern spring. Silence, except for the sounds of the wild—wind, streams, birds, and insects. Hiking to high ground we discover a kaleidoscope of spring alpine blossoms, and a well-used portage trail along the margin of the northeast moraine, the easy route to the put-in.

### June 29: Hiking at Duo Lakes

After a night of rain, a low mist lifts to only 50 m, so we enjoy a leisurely pancake breakfast, before setting out to construct three cairns indicating the portage route. The afternoon glows sunny and warm. Surrounded by mountains of folded sedimentary rock, we scramble up the easiest one, to the east, climbing 1,500 ft to 5,400 ft. Peaks tower above us in the clouds. The Bonnet Plume Range remains heavily overcast, while the view of the Snake River Valley is real. In the distance we see heavy breakers across the entire river where there appears to be a cliff wall, with the river disappearing to the right. We follow the progress of the New Yorkers, now afloat. The river is moving fast, with whitewater visible all along the main channel, mostly due to boulders. There is large, jagged moraine about three kilometres downriver. Do the house-size boulders come from the hill beside it? A landslide rumbles in the late afternoon.

### June 30: First Portage

We slog for hours across the portage and set up camp at the put-in. A beastly place, surrounded by alders and willows; the mosquitoes come out in hoards. It begins to rain.

### July 1: On the River

Push, shove, and drag for 1.5 km into the main channel, then five km of serious class-2 boulder dodging with some isolated class-3 waves to avoid; zero eddy opportunities anywhere in this wide torrent. The drop is 100 m over 10 km. A non-covered boat could swamp in these conditions. On this fast and huge section the shore is far off and the river is running in a gully of pebbles, difficult to grab onto with a loaded canoe without spinning around or possibly getting tangled in debris. Later in the summer the Snake River will be a tame paddle, probably with some dragging.

The canyon entrance has an angle wave to avoid on river right. Once inside you are committed, as the walls are sedimentary rock 10-15 m high, straight up. Though there are some gravel bars, be sure to execute put-in manoeuvres to reach the opposite inside bend as soon as possible, especially at the end before the wall.

After a series of switchbacks to avoid the high water, we think we have lined the curve that Ken Madsen mentions in *Paddling in the Yukon*, so we are paddling mid-river. About 1.5 km in, past the so-called flat section, we are startled: "That's the canyon wall! What about that boulder?" Must avoid broadsiding, so Frank hollers "LEFT, LEFT!" and we're heading straight onto the wall. In the



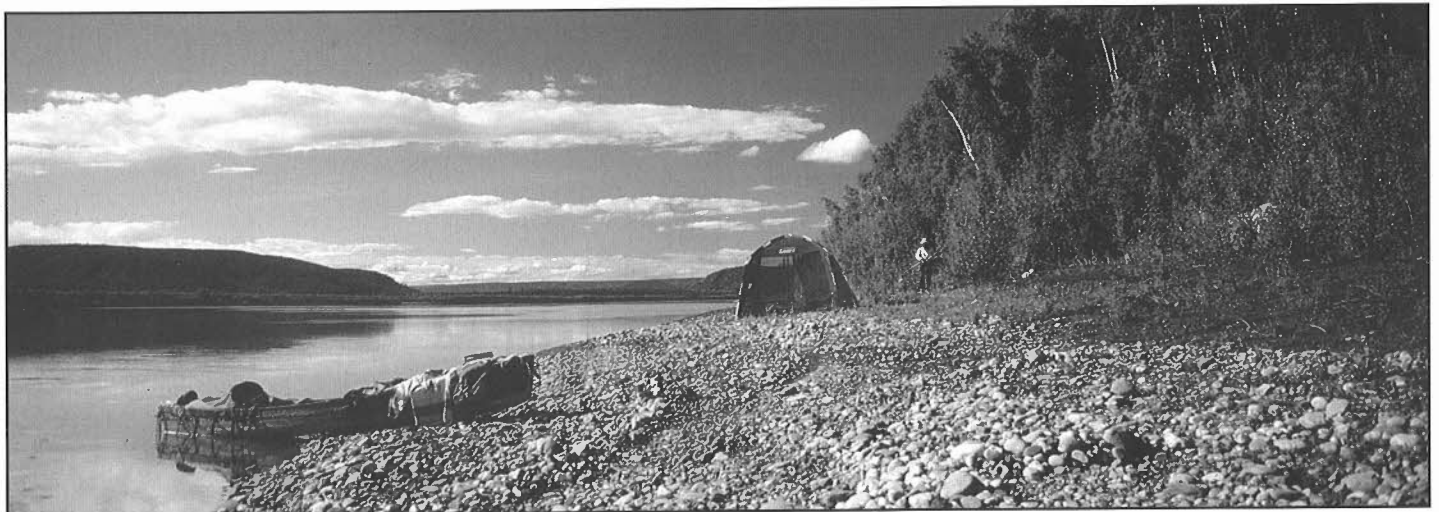
*At 9,000 ft, the peak of Mt. MacDonald attracts wisps of clouds*

bow, I deploy a monster cross brace, drag, and draw, to slow down the boat and the angle of the turn. In the last seconds we turn the canoe broadside to the wall. I recover from a practically upside-down posture, as Frank yells "SIT UP STRAIGHT NOW!" He hauls back hard and holds onto a powerful high brace. The heavily loaded canoe swings against the monster cushion wave along the rock wall. "Phew... nearly lost it on that one!" Below the canyon there's evidence, high up on the cliff, of some very demolished craft.

(Start of canyon: NTS 106C/9 UTM PG 337,619 UTM  
— NAD27 Canyon wall: UTM PG 326,627)

### **July 2: Painted Mountain Hike**

It's a blue morning. With spirits soaring, we trek up the shoulder beside Painted Mountain, the lower 2.5 km in dense alders and willows, looking forward to vistas of mountains in all directions, especially the abstract labyrinths of Painted Mountain. Imagine our disappointment on emerging from this tangle—a dense smoke has rolled into the entire region from the northwest, showing hazy outlines of looming mountains, still quite awesome, though.



*The Peel River is an enjoyable paddle when the wind is not blowing; a bug tent is most advisable*



*The take-out at the Second Portage presents no difficulty, except a steep climb*

### July 3: Paddle to Mt. MacDonald

After 10 km of standing waves, avoiding powerful, shallow channels becomes the challenge. In the stiff current we have to fight our course and a few times get dredged sideways. "Is all this bailing necessary because of the waves, or do you reckon we're leaking again?" The bottom of the canoe is constantly flexing with the load in the current; hurtling into shallow channels over smooth rocks really stresses the canoe skin. (Frank later repairs some splits where the ABS had previously been sliced by jagged rocks in Labrador.) I gaze at the landscape disappearing into a dense fog at about 100 m distance. "Do we know where we are?" Approaching Mt. MacDonald, all the bottoms of the mountains look about the same. Exhausted after only four hours of tough paddling, we bag a channel and drag ourselves up on the first gravel bar that looks like it might hang in should it rain heavily.

The clouds finally lift, showing the lower snow and ice of the southern glaciers, and from this vantage the south face of Mt. MacDonald is accessible along a valley. An alternate trek, further on, overlooking the east face, appears to be a stiff climb, then a scramble along a traverse for three or four kilometres. This traverse may actually be flat on top (according to the topos) though from this angle it looks like a razor edge of rock and some snow patches. We decide to leave that challenge for later and set up camp. We gaze for hours with the binoculars at the mountain goats grazing on the steep slopes opposite.

### July 4: Mt. MacDonald South Face

We set off at 9 a.m. and get back at midnight (it never gets dark up here). Ascending the last slope, we scramble up the final meadow, blooming in purple monkshood. When we're teetering along a goat track on the upper shale, the view of the south glacier and Mt. MacDonald is spectacular, with vertical frontal cliffs cascading 3,500 ft. In con-

trast, the panoramic view of the Bonnet Plume Range, encircling the southern valley is serene, lending tranquillity to this rugged landscape. Our first blue skies, and here we are, on top! One of life's marvellous highs. Not so high is the weary trek back.

### July 5: Exhausted

We spend the day recovering in camp, basking in heat. So far the bugs are few and slow. Poor things just cling to the safety of the dining tent screening.

### July 6: Rain

It's raining heavily all day; reading in the tent, recovering from yesterday's heat stroke.

### July 7: Mt. MacDonald East Face

A promise of sunny skies by midday. We break camp early and paddle five kilometres in glorious sun to Mt. MacDonald East Face. It's a 3,000-ft climb to 5,500 ft, though it takes only four kilometres to get there. The lower slopes are heavy going, deep in moss and lots of wet sloughs; we're leaping from one spongy mount to the next. The slope is the steepest yet. Then, towards the top, the terrain changes to rolling meadow, before the final vertical goat track. Our vision of Mt. MacDonald is stupendous and *blue!* A jet of water free-falls 1,000 ft in sunlight, disappearing into a deep basin shrouded in wetness. The peak at 9,000 ft attracts constant wisps of clouds. We



*The rapids at the Second Portage present a fun challenge for expert paddlers*



*Snake River gravel bars offer excellent camping*

sit for a long while on the ridge, meditating. This razor-back ridge turns out to be at least one metre wide with even a cushion of grass, very comfortable, then falling with a breathtaking steepness of loose shale. The view of the glaciers and the valleys is stunning.

#### **July 8: Paddle to NWT Canyon**

We plan to hike up a stream in a canyon to the NWT divide. This will be a tough 10 km with a 3,000-ft climb to 5,500 ft. We stop at the camp beside the Mt. MacDonald glacial stream we were told about. The gravel bar we had used yesterday is a shorter trek, with less woods to negotiate. Otherwise it is a missed opportunity as the site is in a beautiful location, opposite a scenic canyon where Mt. MacDonald empties into the Snake as a deposit of white flour silt. As the site is crowded with boats (at least seven), gear, and tents, we do not stay long. Paddling in the sun in short and T-shirt after the drysuit sure feels precarious; we're eyeballing the evil current.

(Popular Mt. MacDonald access camp: UTM PG 106,876)

#### **July 9: More Rain**

Awake to light drizzle, threatening rain. Dive back into the tent after breakfast. Heavy rain and thunder rumbling up and down the valley all day.

#### **July 10: NWT Divide Canyon**

Set off to trek the canyon pass to the NWT with some blue patches showing; thrashing through wet willows to a

stream. A white patch on the hill appears to be moving, possibly a sheep, but sheep and goats are usually in groups. It's in fact a golden grizzly, probably a male as there are no cubs, grazing on luscious moss and moving up the canyon towards our destination. Not wanting to get caught with the grizzly between us and camp, we abandon the trek. The grizzly moves fairly quickly, even while grazing, and soon disappears over a ridge.

#### **July 11: Knoll Quest**

The cloud base is getting heavier and lower, and a cold northern wind is building up steadily. At first the ride is enjoyable; we're gazing at mountains looming up into dense clouds. Then, as we enter the section where four valleys join, the wind picks up with an unexpected fierceness. The river is now unbraided, picking up steam when approaching this intersection. The waves in the centre of the river are getting nasty with two-metre roosters, and along the surface the waves are being driven by the wind in crazy directions. We are paddling hard into the wind, just to keep up with the current as a willow tree cruises by us. I let out a shriek of terror as a strong gust destabilizes our canoe.

After a long, freezing paddle, we beach awkwardly on a mud bar, where the job of the bow person is to get out first. Luckily Frank leaps out, delighted at our location situated within easy walk of a knoll, at the intersection of four grizzly bear valleys, pointing out likely places for our tent, babbling about ancient hunters and artifacts. I count-



*The Third Portage is located where two opposite streams enter the Snake River*

er that the wind is at full force, whistling down four mountain valleys, and that this particular location features the largest patch of grizzly bear licorice root I have yet seen in the Yukon. We agree to try our luck downriver with the knoll still accessible, on the leeward shore, and we land at a flat bed of scrubby alders and ugly boulders. Frank is determined to set up the tent here, so as not to abandon the Knoll Quest. He says, "It stinks here!" I try a few whiffs: "Sure does. That's fresh grizzly piss. Must be a scenting location for all these passes!" I have never smelled such a stinky place and so we push off, passing the knoll, and finally find a decent campsite. I start clucking happily about where to put the tent, feeling exceedingly cheered that it is not raining – as it is now snowing!

### July 12: Rain and Snow

Visibility makes paddling ill-advised as we are now close to the second portage, and the clouds, lower than 100 m, are not even high enough to suggest a mountainous landscape.

### July 13: Second Portage Canyon

Some of the hilltops are heavily snowed. Paddle about 15 km, deceptively quicker than anticipated, as there are some straighter sections. The approach to the canyon is obvious, with a good gravel bar and eddy on river left. The well-trodden 600-m portage features a steep incline at the start. For 500 m the river races between low canyon walls, a moderate class 4.

(Second Portage Canyon: NTS 106F/3 UTM NH 807,290)

### July 14: Canyon to Ledge

Cold, cold, cold, then afternoon wind breaks up the clouds. We submarine through a gigantic souse hole where two channels merge, hollering: "ENOUGH, let's go for shore and bale!" Luckily there is the first ledge dead ahead. The two drainage streams on opposite shores are not obvious from upriver. Not knowing that the portage

is on river right, we fortunately beach on that side. In the distance is a band of white from shore to shore, confirmed using binoculars. This first ledge is probably not a concern at lower water. Up ahead is the real portage.

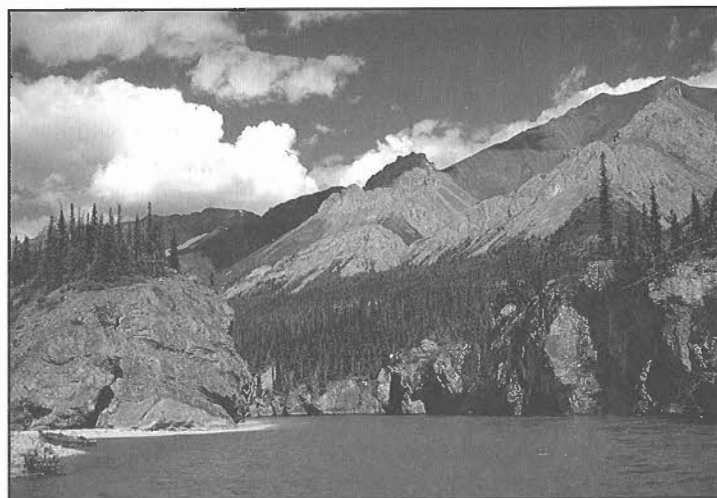
(First ledge on river left: UTM NH 744,530 Portage take-out where two streams meet: NTS 106F/6 UTM NH 753,534)

### July 15: Third Portage

Line, then walk all of the 1,000-metre flat portage rather than take any risk, as the approach on river right is rocky. It's a gorgeous, sunny day. We paddle late after the long gruelling portage.

### July 16: Snake River Meander

Leaving the mountains, the river changes from wide flood plain to a winding meander, carving its way deep into sedimentary terrain, once part of the Pacific Ocean. We float past rock walls towering 600 ft above us. The cliff wall suggests a constant gradient, as layer upon layer of sediment are etched in gently downward transverse lines like the rings of a tree. Each compacted layer indicates an age of 100 years or so. A peregrine falcon squawks from its perch on a cliff. As we race by, bald eagles and golden eagles fish for pool minnows, stranded in the receding flood. The valley is now more heavily treed and the shores can be muddy, offering habitat even for beavers, which dam up the streams, and for an Arctic loon in a quiet, deep back eddy. The current in the Snake River meander is still strong as the river descends over 1,000 ft after leaving the mountains below Third Portage to its junction with the Peel, and is finally allowing pleasant floating. We



*This popular site for trekking to Mt. MacDonald East Face ridge is in a beautiful location, opposite a scenic canyon*

surprise a moose swimming mid-stream who surprises us by leaving all its flies as an escape gift. We pass over a boil that slurps as it tries to eat our craft before belching as it releases us. Sometimes parts of the river are more than half a metre above other parts—quite weird. There are many rock slides along the walls, clouds of sliding dust, rocks splatting into the river, sometimes large slumps avalanche loudly.

#### **July 17-18: Snake River Meander to Peel Confluence**

Paddle effortlessly 40—50 km a day. Hike occasionally to view the Peel Plateau. Sun, blistering sun.

#### **July 19-22: Peel River to Ft. McPherson**

Two million years ago the ancient Peel River flowed far to the east, draining into the Arctic Ocean by way of the Anderson River. The ancient upper McKenzie flowed in the opposite direction of today, draining into Hudson's Bay. And 13,000 years ago the ice began to melt back from the Richardson Ogylvie Mountains. The Peel found a new route between the edge of the ice and the Richardsons. The Peel Valley and Eagle Plains were never glaciated and have been eroded flat by winds and permafrost.

Are the bugs on the Peel really that wicked? They are so wicked, the low point of the trip was accidentally crapping on my rain gear, ingeniously rigged as an anti-mos-

quito protective toilet shelter, and having to wash this out in the mud of the Peel!

Not so lucky were the members of the Lost Patrol, attempting the gruelling return trip of 800 km from Fort McPherson to Dawson. The NW Mounted Police carried mail by dog team between Dawson and McPherson, nearby Arctic Red River, and to Herschel Island in the Beaufort Sea. Inspector J.F. Fitzgerald, Constable J.F. Kinney, Constable R.O. Taylor, and ex-Constable Sam Carter left Fort McPherson in December 1910. Esau, a Gwitchin guide, travelled with the patrol from Trail River to Mountain Creek. There Fitzgerald dismissed Esau, based on Carter's assurance he could guide the patrol. It was a fatal mistake. The patrol went astray trying to find the trail between the Little Wind River and the Hart River. Unable to locate the pass out of the delta over the Richardson Mountains, they turned back, lost. They ate 15 dogs and froze to death. Fitzgerald was the last to die attempting to reach help, only 42 km from Fort McPherson. Many Yukon landmarks are named after the early guides: Corporal Dempster (Dempster Highway), who led the search party for the Lost Patrol with Charlie Stewart (Stewart River) as guide; Hubert Darnell (disappeared on the Anderson River that same year, 1910); Alfred Bonnet Plume (Bonnet Plume River) to name a few.



*Paddle away from steep rock walls as there are many rock slides creating clouds of dust*



*Overlooking the Snake River valley*



*As the Snake River leaves the mountains, the flow in early July is still strong*

**Homeward Bound**

Driving down the Dempster Highway we are surprised to see the entire cab of a truck blown into a ditch. Apparently the bad weather we experienced at the four valleys (Knoll Quest, July 11) dumped over 60 cm of snow with high winds along the Dempster. Unfortunately this coincides with our car shuttle from Mayo to Ft. McPherson, which ends up taking two days, costing us \$600 for fuel (\$1 a litre; two vehicles) and overnight hotel, so that it would have been more expedient to fly-in from Ft. McPherson. The Mayo Resort Hotel is a magnificent wooden structure with an excellent dining room and bar, whereas in Ft. McPherson there is camping only, and a ferry with limited hours of operation.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Note:* Following the topo contour lines, which have not been converted to metric on the maps, geographical elevations are stated in feet, whereas horizontal distances are given in metres/kilometres. UTM co-ordinates are based on the topo maps and NAD27. On-site GPS readings may vary depending on satellite positioning.



## VIRGIN TO THE TUNDRA

When I was twenty-two, I asked my college roommate, Bernie Peyton, if he'd like to go canoeing in Canada. The year was 1976. He was graduating and I had one more year to go. I'd been out in the real world for a couple of years before I returned to finish up my undergraduate degree. I fully appreciated the returned gift of summers off. Bernie said he'd like to go canoeing in Canada. He thought it would be fun.

Bernie and I looked at the map of North America and verified that one place the road ended was in Yellowknife, North West Territories. North of the Great Slave Lake there looked to be hundreds of thousands of square miles of wilderness. We identified the Back River as the river we wanted to canoe. Like most twenty-two year olds we did not worry about what might go wrong. We got what we needed for food and equipment and fitted it all into Bernie's parent's Jeep Cherokee, and drove to Yellowknife. On top of the car we had a new wood-and-canvas Old Town Tripper donated by the company in return for a story about our journey. During the winter I had contacted a man in Ottawa who had written about his canoe trips. He had invited us to stop and see him on our way through Ottawa.

Eric Morse suggested we meet him at a club overlooking the Ottawa River. Bernie and I dug out our scruffy coats and a tie and went looking for the Rideau club. Two other gentlemen joined us: L.A.C.O. Hunt, a retired Hudson Bay man, and Graham Rolley, an archaeologist. They regaled us with their stories. The club's atmosphere was reserved, but by the time the entrees arrived, the laughter erupting from our table set us apart. Halfway through lunch Mr. Hunt, a stout man with a large twinkle in his eye, let it be known he'd recently flown over Hudson Bay in a cargo carrier. The plane detoured two hundred miles from its course to land. Both Mr. Morse's and Mr. Rolley's ears pricked up. (Graham Rolley had

spent much of his career in Hudson Bay and a small cluster of islands there were named for him.)

"Yes," said Mr. Hunt. "I couldn't come that near your islands without paying them a visit." Mr. Morse looked sideways at his friends, as if he knew what was coming.

"Really?" Mr. Rolley remarked.

"Yes," went on Mr. Hunt. "How could I pass up an opportunity to pee on one of them?"

Mr. Rolley was the first to laugh.

The conversation turned to the best ways to cook a char. Having no idea what a char was, Bernie and I had no opinion. There was one advocate for boiling, one for frying, and one who saw the benefits of both. None of them was subdued in espousing his preference. When he brought desert, the waiter quietly pointed out to Mr. Morse that other tables had remarked on our volume. Mr. Morse ignored him, but gracefully changed the subject by encouraging Bernie and me to help ourselves to more chocolate sauce for the ice cream.

"After all," he said, "You won't have any of that where you're going."

Robert Perkins



### FALL PARTY

The WCA Fall (Wine and Cheese) Party is a great time to meet old canoeing friends and make new ones. If you are new to the club, or not so new, and even if you are not a member, this party is for you. You can find out who belongs to the WCA, what the club is all about, hear about recent outings, and get new ideas and tips for planning future trips.

*Date:* Friday, November 19, 2004  
*Location:* Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club (TSCC),  
 1391 Lakeshore Blvd. West, Toronto.  
 There is free parking.  
*Cost:* \$10 members, \$12 non-members.  
*Program:* 7:00 Registration and welcome  
 7:45 First presentation  
 8:30 Meet old friends, and make new acquaintances  
 9:00 Second presentation  
 9:45 Coffee and clean-up

The names of the presenters are available on the WCA website: <http://www.wildernesscanoe.ca>

For more information contact Elsie Carr-Locke at 416-463-9019 or [elsiescot@yahoo.ca](mailto:elsiescot@yahoo.ca)



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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

When Sandy Richardson asked me, in September 1984, to take over the editorship of *Nastawgan*, I agreed to do the job for a period of five years, starting with the Autumn 1985 issue. It is now September 2004 and you are reading the Autumn 2004 issue, the 77th of my editorship. Preparing our club newsletter still is an interesting and challenging task for me and I am proud of the role our journal continues to play in the success of the WCA. I am grateful to the various Boards for giving me the opportunity and freedom to make our journal into what it is today.

However, the look and set-up of our journal has not changed for quite a few years now, and it may be necessary to get new, young blood with fresh ideas in the editor's chair. Also, time is going quickly and we're all getting older. The quality of my health is slowly diminishing (nothing really serious), and I need to spend more time on my own writing projects and other activities.

I have therefore decided to terminate my editorship sometime in the fall or winter of 2005, depending upon the time required to attract and train (a) successor(s). On the next page is a request for volunteers to come forward to be trained for the editor's job. I realize it will not be easy to find one or more persons willing and able to take on the responsibilities of this challenging job, but I am convinced we will be successful and that *Nastawgan* will continue to flourish as probably the best and most-respected journal in the world of wilderness canoeing.

## NEWS BRIEFS

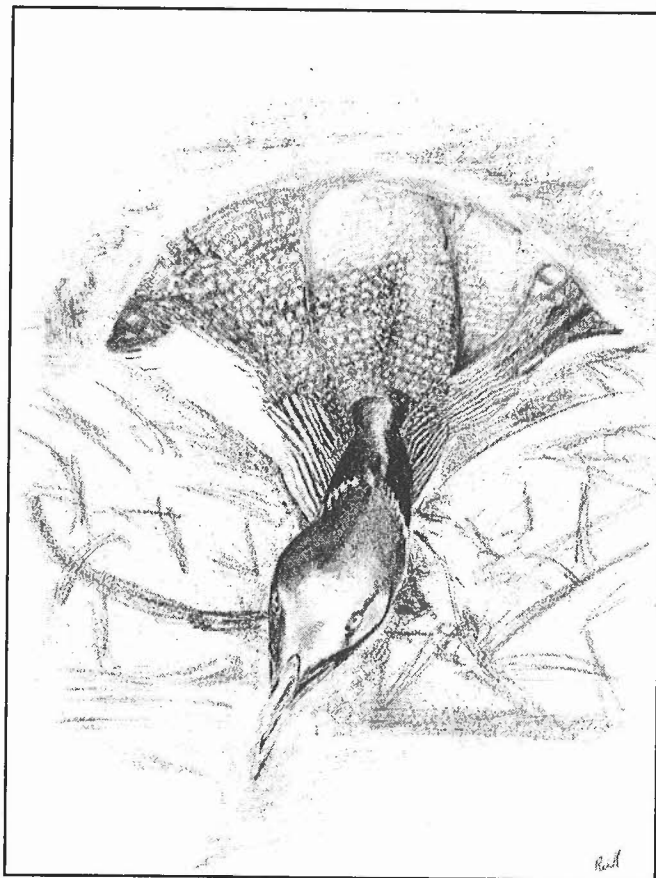
### NASTAWGAN MATERIAL AND DEADLINE

Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think might be of interest to other readers, are needed for future issues. Try to submit your contributions by e-mail, on 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 2004	<i>deadline date:</i> October 1
Spring 2005	January 30

*MULTIPLE-YEAR WCA MEMBERSHIPS* are now possible, albeit with no discount. This will help alleviate much of the (volunteer) administrative work, save your time and postage, and also hedge against future fee increases. Contact membership secretary Gary James for more information.



## LESLIE FROST CENTRE

Many of you may have heard already that the Ontario Government has closed the Leslie Frost Centre and is now trying to sell it. For those that are not familiar with this facility: it is located south of Dorset on Highway 35 and has had quite a significance for Ontario's outdoor folks. Let me quote from Kevin Callan's 1993 book *Cottage Country Canoe Routes* :

In the mid-1900s a training school for forest rangers was opened on the site of the present centre. It ran until 1969, at which point it was closed. In 1974, it re-opened as a centre to educate the general public about forest management in Ontario. The centre was named in honour of the late premier of Ontario, who was the first to perceive the need for such a facility. Today hundreds of tourists, school children and camp kids visit the centre, and hundreds more head off into the expanse of public lands over which the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has custodianship.

As of last July, the MNR closed the facility as a cost-cutting measure, hoping to save between 0.5 and 1.2 million dollars annually, and because "...the facility is not a core function of the ministry." [Toronto Star, August 21, 2004]. It may solve some headaches for that branch of the government, but at the same time it harms the ability of

Ontario's public to maintain its environmental skills and values. The closure of the centre will make it more difficult for Ontario educators to bring children close to nature and teach them environmental values. And it will make it more difficult for adults to find venues to further their outdoor interests and own education.

The future will most likely see a sell-off of the property (30 buildings and about 370 hectares on St. Nora Lake) to someone with a business proposal. As far as we can tell, the canoe routes in the area (Sherbourne, Silver Buck, McKewen, Wren, Herb, Gun, Nunikani Lakes, and others) seem not to be "up for sale," but we won't know for sure until further in the process. And there are several large tracts of land that protect the southwest flank of Algonquin Park from encroachment by developers. A sell-off of the Forst Centre lands and rights could mean more than just "just another few acres lost."

In the meantime, the WCA has done an e-mailing to inform its members. A large number of organizations and individuals have protested and there is a petition on <http://www.experiencehaliburton.com/> where one can express one's objection. We'll try to stay on top of developments and keep you informed.

Erhard Kraus

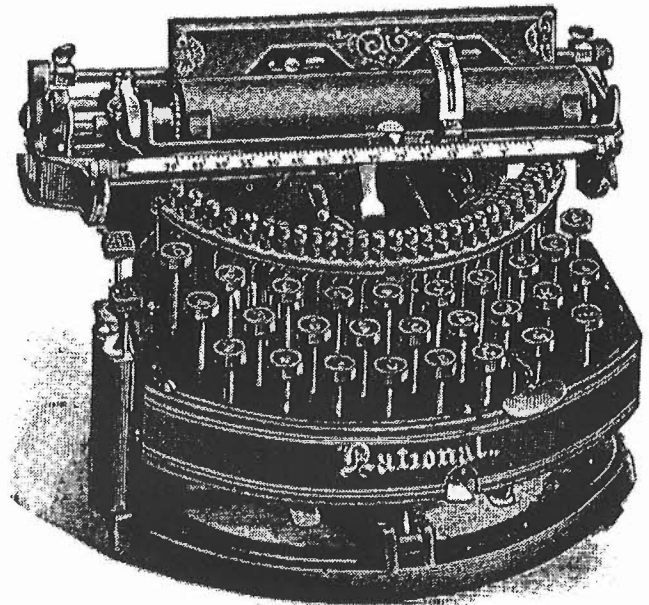
### EDITOR(S) WANTED

As mentioned in the Editorial on the previous page, *Nastawgan* should have a new editor (or a small team of editors) by the end of next year.

In order to accomplish this, one or more volunteers need to come forward from the WCA membership who are willing to undergo a training period of approximately one year (four issues), which should be sufficient to prepare them to take over this important, demanding, time-consuming, but ultimately highly satisfying job.

Main requirements are a good knowledge of the English language, computers (text and photographs), and the wilderness canoeing universe (environment, people, organizations). However, the successful candidate should above all have a strong motivation to produce a journal worthy of the WCA.

If you think you could do a good job as the editor, or maybe as a member of an editorial team, please submit your name and credentials to the present editor (see backpage for addresses, etc.).

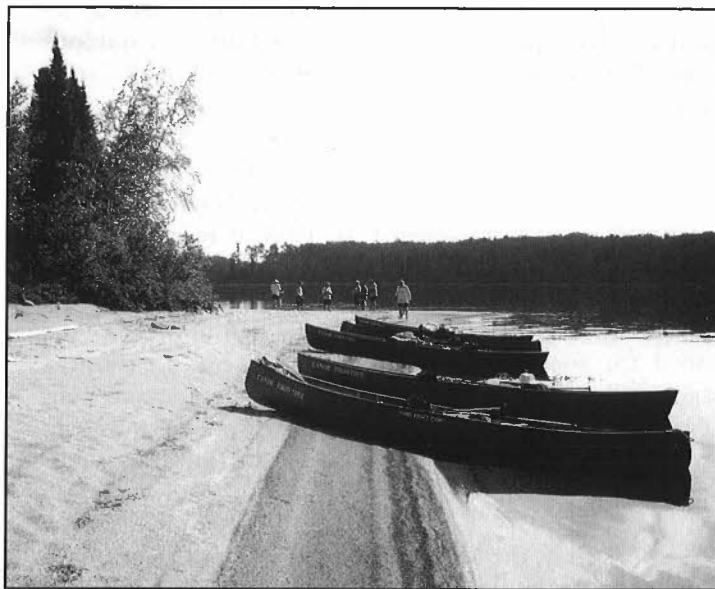
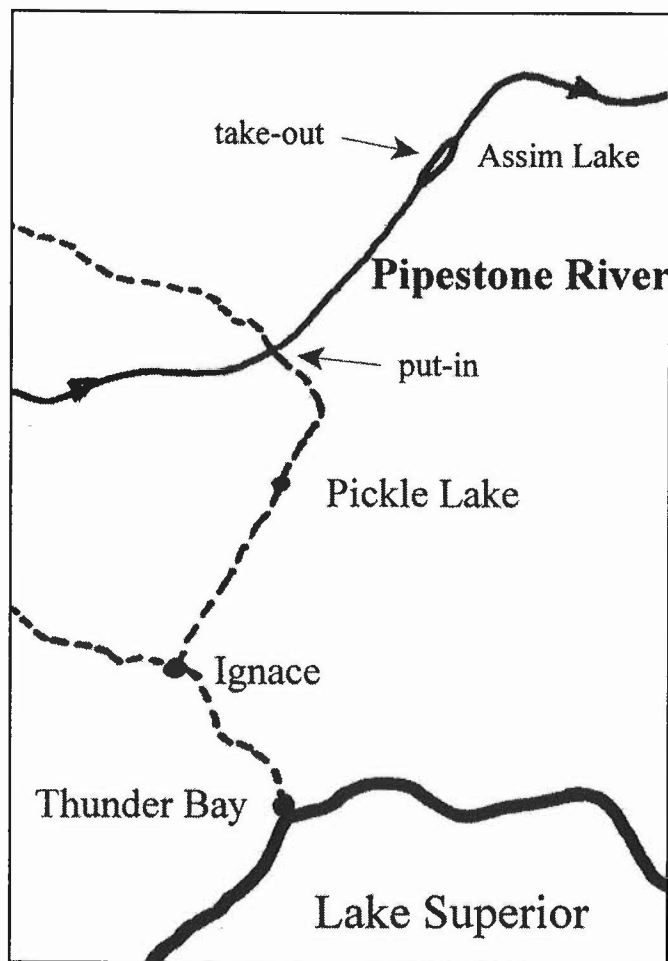


# PIPESTONE RIVER

Graham McCallum

If you want to get away from the guy across the street who mows on Sundays or you brother-in-law who guzzles your last beer, it can easily be done. There is just such a place—the Pipestone, a whitewater river in Northern Ontario, where you are unlikely to meet anyone for quite a while.

At the end of July, Westjet Airlines will get you from Hamilton Airport, west of Toronto, to Thunder Bay, on the northwest shore of Lake Superior, for \$329 return, with a cookie thrown in. This is how we moved up north in late July 2003. While in Thunder Bay for the afternoon, take a tour of Old Fort William. For a Canadian history buff and a paddler, it is a wonderful experience to step back in time to the days of the voyageurs. From Thunder Bay, the outfitter, Canoe Frontier ([www.canoefrontier.com](http://www.canoefrontier.com)), drove us—Gord Stevens, Jack Doherty, Rick Wilson, Paul Harris, Romano Dreossi, Kim Klodt, Dave Robinson, Lee DeSoto, Jim Laxton, and myself—due north to Pickle Lake, a gold mining town. This took six hours, with a lunch stop at Ignace.



We had intended to camp at Pickle Lake but as it looked like rain, we considered a room at the Pickle Lake Hotel. The cheerful woman in charge offered an \$80 room for four and a \$100 room for six with a hot tub in the room and some mattresses on the floor. It was just like camping, only drier. As by now it was really coming down, it was an easy decision. Canoe Frontier lent us a van to shuttle ourselves around town and the next morning we drove to the airport, where their office is located. As it was still raining, we commandeered an unused hangar to sort out all the gear, one last time.

After being issued a radio and signing a bunch of forms to the effect that if we all drowned we wouldn't sue anyone, we loaded up the van and continued driving north. This time the road was dirt and so corrugated that the nuts holding one of the trailer wheels jarred loose and forced a stop for repairs. A trucker from the gold mine stopped to offer assistance. During repairs, he informed us that the Pipestone was too shallow for canoeing but the fishing was superb. So Plan B looked like driving to the put-in, fishing for a week, then coming home. We could use the canoes to sit on. Two hours of driving later, there was the Pipestone, running under a bridge. To optimists like us, it looked just fine—cancel Plan B. Certainly it was low and rocky but these were rental canoes and the outfitter himself was dropping us in there, so we felt good about Plan A again.

After a quick lunch, we started down the 115-km-long river, that would be our highway for 6.5 days, requiring good intermediate skill levels. The water level was just enough for a canoe and then it dawned on us that the



trucker was an aluminum-boat-and-outboard-motor fisherman who needed more water than we did and judged the river accordingly. The rain kept up, under cloudy skies, off and on, mostly on, for the next five days. This was our 27th summer of canoe tripping together, but we couldn't remember this happening before. Our rain tarp skills were fine tuned and life under the tarp became the new routine.

#### *Campsites*

Few and far between but each one we used was a beauty—among the best that we have ever stopped at. There could be a problem if the river becomes popular but as far as we know, Canoe Frontier is the only outfitter and would stagger trips.

#### *Rapids*

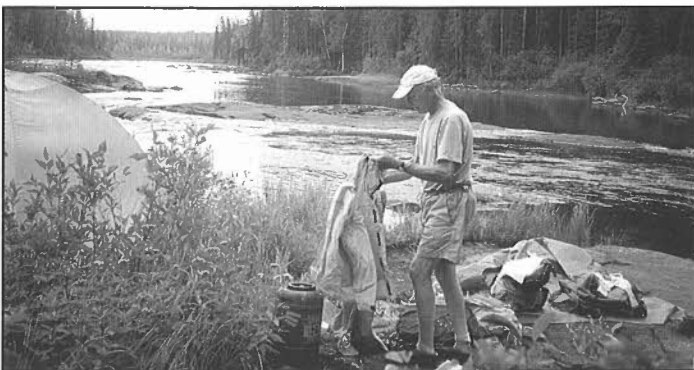
Not a lot, but interesting, in that they nearly all have something halfway down that passes for a ledge, so lining around these is fairly frequent. This could be the result of low water, with some parts runnable at higher levels.

#### *Portages*

A challenge—those that couldn't be avoided, three in all, each less than a kilometre in length, were through a 40-km-long, 1997 fire area and subjected to serious blow-downs. Care was called for to avoid the spikes left after twigs had broken off the downed pines, criss-crossing the trail.

#### *Fishing*

The trucker was right about the fishing: superb! Almost no need to start fishing until the fire is going and the pan is good and hot. But only if you like pickerel.





### *Sun*

Finally, the sun and blue skies returned, we were out of the blackened fire zone, and the scenery changed back to technicolour. The incessant north wind faded away and paddling was easy again. The last two days alternated between long lazy drifts on narrow, still lakes and swimming from large, golden beaches. The rain was now just a memory.

### *Pick-up*

The arrangement was, that we were to be picked up from the far end of Assim Lake, at noon on August 6 by two Otters. We had the radio and were only to use it for emergencies but were to turn it on, just before the appointed time. As we are a cautious bunch, with huge mortgages, we never plan on having an emergency, so for fear of triggering a four-alarm \$10,000 search, did not dare touch this unfamiliar piece of equipment until we had to.



Just before noon, we turned it on and sat around looking at this small box, in the middle of the wilderness, not expecting much. We nearly fell into the fire when it crackled to life with a loud squawk and the words of the pilot saying that he would be there in ten minutes and to stay on shore.

Half the group paddled out to the plane, as it was too shallow for it to come in to the beach. So shallow in fact,



that when loaded, the plane grounded and the passengers had to get out and push it further out into the lake before it could take off. As soon as the first canoe reached the plane, the pilot sent a cooler with cold beer to the group remaining and said that the other plane would be there in about half an hour. Canoe Frontier, we all agreed is a class act.

So this wonderful trip came to an end with us sitting on a beautiful beach, in the sun, with a cold beer and good friends, enjoying one of life's joyous moments.

## REVIEW

**A CANOEIST'S SKETCHBOOK** by Robert Kimber with illustrations by Jerry Stelmok, published by Countrysport Press, Camden, Maine, originally published in 1991, softcover, 202 pages, US\$14.95. Reviewed by Toni Harting.

It really is a treat, once in a while, to read a book on canoeing that does not talk at length about equipment or trip reports. The present book is one of those pleasant exceptions; it presents instead an interesting collection of essays on various important wilderness-canoeing-related subjects such as Midday Snoozes, Peanut Butter, Sex, and Wet Feet — but also more serious subjects such as Map and Compass, Paddles, and Semi-Wilderness.

The 37 short chapters are fun to read and bring some interesting and original points of view to the canoeing literature. The 34 pen-and-ink illustrations are well executed and contribute to the comfortable feeling of the book. A nice book to take along on a trip and to read by the campfire.




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## THE ALL-NIGHT LIGHT

Eight p.m. and we're just pulling into shore to set up camp for the night. You would think that eight p.m. is awfully late for just starting to get the tents up and supper going, but not this trip. On this trip, the map says we were above 66 degrees in latitude, so the all-night light would be with us.

It's the midnight sun. At the summer solstice, the sun is visible on the horizon at all points along the Arctic Circle for 24 hours. If you are north of 66 degrees, the sun stays with you for more days than just the day of the solstice. On some rivers heading into the Arctic Ocean, you could do the entire trip and have the sun with you the whole time.

Our first wilderness canoe trip with the all-night light was different from all previous trips. On those earlier trips, daylight was a constantly diminishing quantity to be treasured and used to the fullest. Probably the commodity in shortest supply on a wilderness canoe trip. Every activity was measured in the amount of daylight that it used up. And to go from that to a trip where sunlight is always available in abundant amounts, maybe even excessive amounts, is beyond understanding.

One of the basic tenets of life is that all resources should be used wisely. How do you use daylight wisely

when your cup overfills? How do you share with others who have less? What did we do to deserve such a gift? It's all a person can do to just stand and stare at the sun in amazement and gratitude.

On this continent the all-night light happens in the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Alaska. Anywhere north of the Arctic Circle. You can paddle after supper and search out possible campsites. You can cook your evening meal at midnight. You can go fishing at three a.m. Decisions as to when to travel are made more by listening to your internal body clock, by looking at the weather, and by a careful assessment of the food bag, rather than having to work with a shrinking amount of daylight.

As a little boy, sometimes all I wanted was to go outside and play before it got dark. The coming of darkness always brought a measure of sadness because it meant that play for the day was ending.

With the all-night light I now get to play to my heart's content. Or at least until it gets dark.

Greg Went

## TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE BAT

Everyone enjoys a summer evening in Algonquin. We all like to relax around the campfire after a day of paddling and portaging and, who knows, just after sunset we may be lucky enough to glimpse some of the Park's early rising night wildlife before it gets too dark.

One of the Park's nocturnal animals that we personally enjoy seeing, however imperfectly, is the Little Brown Bat, by far the commonest of the four species of bats proven to occur in the Park. Especially if we're camped on a lakeshore or in some other open area with reasonable lighting conditions, we may hope to follow the silent, rather slow, and sometimes erratic flight of our strange little visitor for a minute or two until it is swallowed up by the gathering night.

We know many Algonquin visitors share our appreciation for such glimpses because, nowadays, knowledge of how Little Brown and most other bats can navigate in total darkness is quite widespread, and who could fail to be impressed by such extraordinary sophistication? What our visitors are doing, of course, is emitting little bursts of sound, too high-pitched for us to hear, and then using the echoes returning from nearby objects to form precise, non-visual "pictures" of their surroundings. This is what permits Little Brown Bats to avoid crashing into trees even on the darkest of nights and what allows them to detect and capture the flying insects which are their exclusive food. Needless to say, this is an ability that no human can even remotely aspire to and no doubt explains why people are usually fascinated when a bat visits their campsite.

Still, beyond being impressed by their echolocation system, most of us probably don't think very highly of bats. True, they may be the only mammals that can fly, but they quite obviously don't manage as well as birds and, in the eyes of most perhaps, they aren't nearly as pretty either. In our humble opinion, however, it would be short-sighted to concede the prowess of bats in the night-time navigation department and then treat them with disdain for all their other characteristics.

Indeed, it is precisely because bats are not birds, but mammals like us, that we need to regard them with respect and awe. Bats acquired the powers of flight via an entirely different route from that taken by birds and in spite of several major disadvantages. Most authorities agree that the ancestors of our present-day birds (probably a group of small dinosaurs) possessed body feathers long before they evolved the ability to fly. The feathers probably served to keep the animals warm in cool climates but it so happened that, with a little bit of lengthening and stiffening, feathers (unlike mammalian hair) were ideally constructed to become the light, flattened, aerodynamically sensitive wing and tail surfaces we see in present day birds.

The ancestors of bats, on the other hand, were mam-

mals and did not have a body covering so well predisposed to being transformed into efficient flying surfaces. Bats acquired flight, instead, by evolving greatly elongated finger bones (all except the thumb) with a membrane of skin stretching, not only between the fingers, but also down to the hind foot and often beyond, right down to the tail. It is these finger-supported flaps of skin that we think of as the wings of a bat but we would be just as correct to think of them as the bat's hands (albeit very specialized ones).

When we compare bird and bat wings, it is apparent that those of birds are superior for several reasons. Gram for gram, they are lighter and stronger, and an unanticipated collision with a sharp object would likely be much less serious with a bird's wing than with a bat's wing. The object might very well push through between two adjacent feathers (as opposed to putting a hole through the bat's taut wing membrane) and, even if an individual feather is broken, it can be replaced independently and relatively easily. Perhaps even more important, the wing feathers of a bird, being unconnected to each other, can be slotted (like the slats of a Venetian blind) on each upstroke of the bird's wing. This makes for sensitivity and efficiency that cannot be achieved by the continuous single membrane of a bat's wing.

Birds have several other advantages for flight not possessed by bats. One is a large breastbone, affording a much larger area for attachment of the wing muscles. A second plus is having a very light (though still strong) beak, as opposed to the relatively much heavier skull and teeth of bats—which tends to make them too front-heavy for easy flight.

And yet the point is that, in spite of all the disadvantages for flight imposed on bats by their mammalian ancestry, bats still managed to overcome their handicap and, about fifty million years ago, to acquire the power of flight. And it's not as if bats were some sort of freak oddity that lingered in the shadow of more successful animals. In fact, the original bats have evolved into the over 900 species in four separate families present in the world today (accounting for about 25% of all living mammals).

This success is all the more remarkable when you consider that the ancestors of bats had another, perhaps even greater, obstacle in their way as they evolved the powers of flight. Being mammals, bats do not lay eggs, but give birth to live young instead. But this being the case, it means that pregnant female bats have to carry their fetuses with them in flight (as opposed to leaving them in protective eggshells in a nest the way birds do). But, as we have already seen, bats are considerably less efficient fliers than birds are, so they are less able to carry the extra weight than birds would be. And it gets even worse. In theory, bats might be able to give birth to underweight "premature" young in a nice, warm nest somewhere (as



mice do, for instance) and thereby avoid having to fly around with their increasingly heavy fetuses for as long as they do. But no bat is known to build a nest and it's probably out of the question since most can barely manage to scuttle around on the ground (no doubt because of being specialized for flight with their awkward "hand-wings" and weak back legs). Moreover, precisely because they are so inept on the ground, bats are obliged, for safety's sake, to roost high up in protected places like tree cavities or on cave walls. That, in turn, means that baby bats must be born in a sufficiently advanced state (read heavy) that they can hang on to those vertical surfaces (or at the very least to their mother).

Thus it is that bats are caught in very tight circumstances. It seems that flying (especially when you are designed like a bat) and being a mammal are not very compatible! It can be done, obviously, but it involves some demanding compromises. In the case of our Little Brown Bats here in Algonquin, females give birth in late June or early July to single babies weighing about two grams, or about 25% of their mother's weight. The mother uses gravity to assist the difficult birth by temporarily hanging right side up, by her thumbs, and using the membrane between her legs to catch the baby as it comes out. The newborn then crawls up its mother's body to find a teat (in one of her mother's armpits) and then clamps itself across its mother's chest by putting its hind feet claws in the opposite armpit.

For the first several days the mother carries and nurses her baby on her nightly foraging flights for insects but, after that, it is simply too heavy and she is obliged to leave it hanging upside down in the nursery colony along with the young of other females. She returns, of course, to feed it periodically, distinguishing her own baby by its voice and possibly smell. Baby Little Brown Bats are born with well-developed limbs and claws, but the fingers and

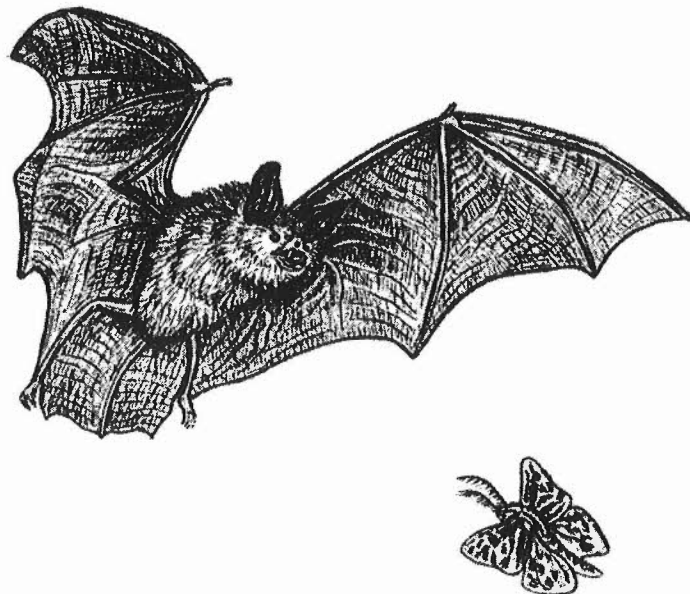
the wings they will support have a lot of growing to do before a first flight can be attempted. That will happen in late July when the young are about four weeks old. Even then, although the baby's body weight may be up to 60% of the adult figure, the wingspan may not be any greater than 20% of an adult's. This means that first flights can be quite perilous and no doubt many young bats die at this point. In a way they are casualties of the greater investment that had to be made in the early development of the babies' limbs and claws (made at the expense of its fingers and wing membranes).

More dangers await juvenile Little Brown Bats, not the least of which is the migration they must make in the fall to a cave or abandoned mine somewhere outside the Park where conditions are suitable for hibernation. These include a temperature near 5°C (40°F), so the torpid bats don't burn up their energy reserves over winter, and a high relative humidity (so they don't dry out before spring).

All in all, the chances are very poor for an individual baby Little Brown Bat to live through to its first birthday. After that, however, it should do quite well. Survival rates for adult Little Browns in Ontario are in the order of 80% per year for males and 70% for females. There are even two cases of marked individuals that lived for at least 30 years.

So who knows? The Little Brown Bat that flutters back and forth past your campsite this week may be older than you are, or it may be a female actually nursing its young as it flies about and uses its ultrasound to track and capture flying insects. The one thing you can be sure of is that you are seeing a marvellous product of evolutionary innovation and compromise and a creature much more wonderful than those imagined in any human fairy tale.

And on this note, perhaps we could leave you with a slight modification of some verse on the subject first offered by the great Lewis Carroll over a century ago in *Alice in Wonderland*. You can recite it to the next Little Brown Bat that graces your campsite on a warm summer evening.



Twinkle, twinkle, little bat  
 How we wonder what you're at  
 Is it true before you grew  
 That you on Mummy's tummy flew?  
 You flap with your hand  
     and see with your ear  
 And do lots more that's mighty queer  
 Some people say you're a  
     second-rate bird  
 But if we could hear it,  
     you've the last word  
 For pay no mind if your  
     design seems crummy  
 It works just fine on those bugs so yummy

*Reprinted from the July 4, 1996, issue of Algonquin Park's The Raven, courtesy of the Ministry of Natural Resources.*

# BONAVENTURE RIVER

Fred Argue

## PLANNING

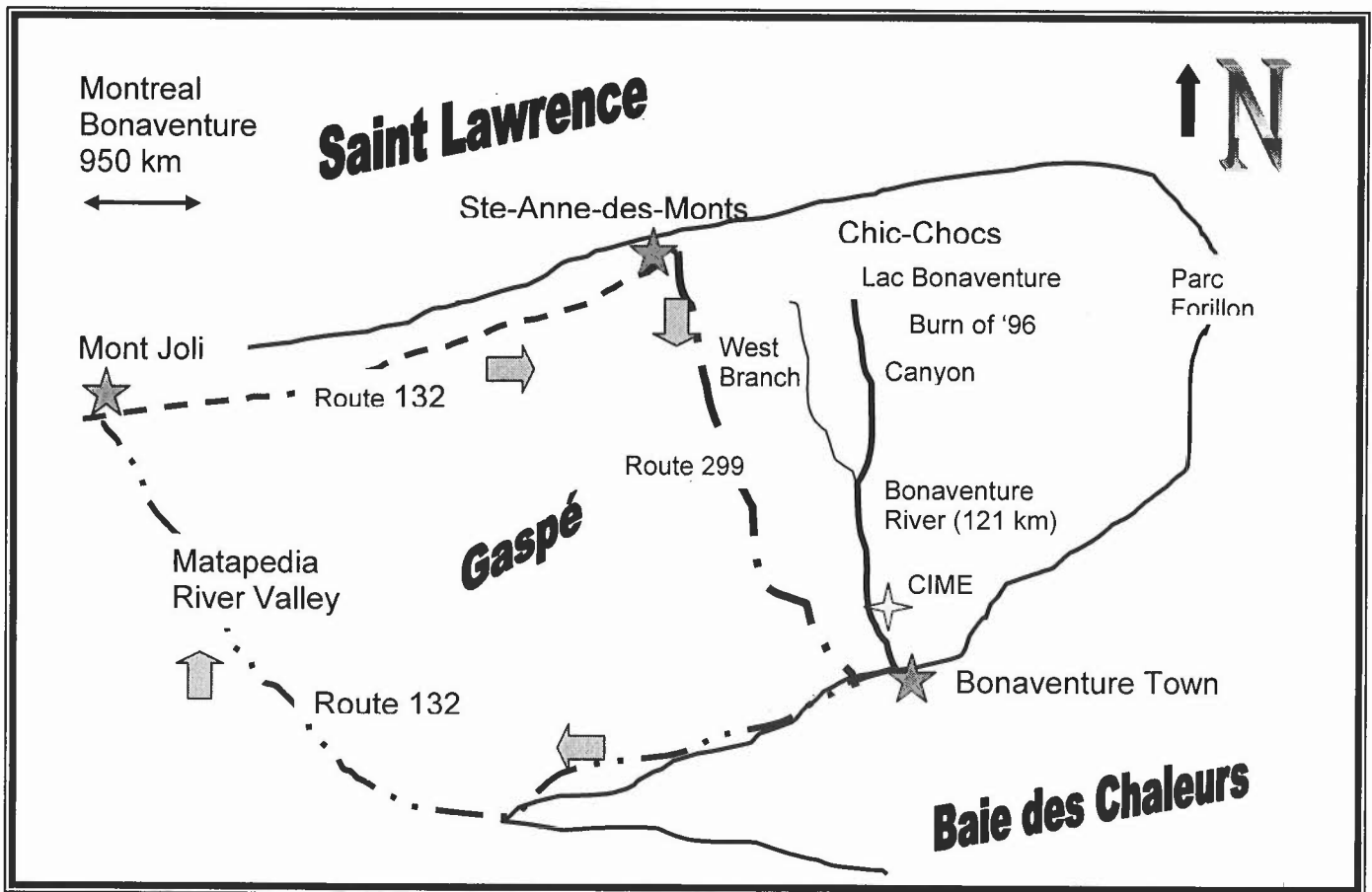
A unique feature of this salmon river is its remote location in the Gaspé peninsula of Québec. Having the salmon there adds both attraction and deterrence. In the pools we saw several dozen of the three thousand Atlantic salmon that use the Bonaventure River for their spawning run. These majestic fish enter the river between early June and mid August; some will even winter in the river before returning to their home in the sea.

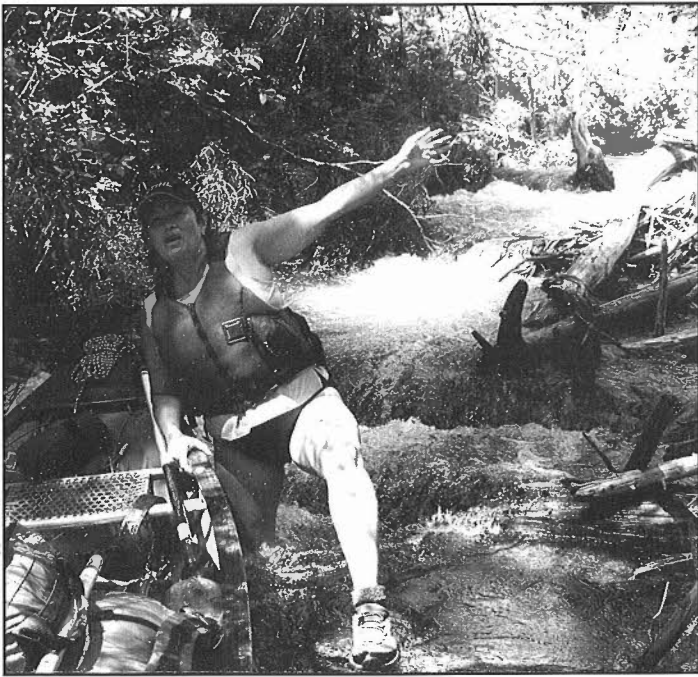
Our group of four — Bob Barnes, DT Twynam, Penny King, Fred Argue — made the trip from July 7 to 11, 2003. The river is accessible by VIA Rail, but we went by car because this gave us some flexibility with route and dates.

One should make the drive to and from the river part of one's vacation. In fact it is a shame to rush to the Gaspé and back when so much is to be seen along the way. Certainly don't hesitate to linger at Québec City—but then you could also go hiking for some time in the Réserve faunique des Chic-Chocs; take a run up to Percé and visit the bird sanctuary on Île Bonaventure; or stay in one of Canada's best parks, Parc national de Forillon.

you like woodcarving, stop at Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, or if flowers are your thing, visit Les Jardins de Métis. There is a special charm in this very clean and friendly part of the country and here you can truly state: the smaller the road, the bigger the reward.

We made use of the services of an experienced local outfitter: CIME Aventure, 200 chemin A. Arsenalut, Bonaventure, QC, G0C 1E0; 1-800-790-2463; www.cimeaventure.com. We arrived at CIME by 5 p.m. on July 6 and were very pleased with the reception and services of this organization located some eight kilometres upstream from the coastal town of Bonaventure. We used their shuttle and camping services. Cost of the shuttle was \$110 per person with a minimum total of \$570. Camping on their campsite for our group was \$25, showers included. They drove us 3.5 hours toward Lac Bonaventure in a GMC AWD van with our three boats in tow: one Dagger Legend and two Genesis'. The hired shuttle made good sense on several counts: not having to find the put-in, avoiding wear and tear on one's car, and avoiding a seven-hour trip at the end to retrieve one's own vehicle.





*At the top the river is just a small stream*

## MAPS

The region is managed by ZEC (Zone Exploitation Contrôlé) de la rivière Bonaventure and it is worthwhile to get their map (available locally free) marking the 103 salmon pools below the Secteur Sanctuaire. For information on fishing regulations they have a toll-free number: 1-888-979-1818. For general information on any ZEC there is [www.zecquebec.com/english/zec.htm](http://www.zecquebec.com/english/zec.htm).

We found the camping sites to be very good, but not as plentiful as one might expect. On the ZEC map several of the fishing pools have tent logos marked, but we were not sure if these were reserved for the fishermen. We used a 1990 map (\$12.95) provided by the Fédération québécoise du canot et du kayak ([www.canot-kayak.qc.ca/](http://www.canot-kayak.qc.ca/)) and produced by Sabin Bois and Sylvie Grondin. We found that without clear metric grid references on the map the Garmin Legend GPS system was a little frustrating to use, but we figured out our locations and proceeded confidently. At least we could always tell our distances travelled and rate of speed. The marked rapids, ledges (sills), campsites, and kilometres on the map helped our navigation. Some of the indicated campsites had overgrown and new ones had been established, so a revision of the map would be a good project for the FQCK.

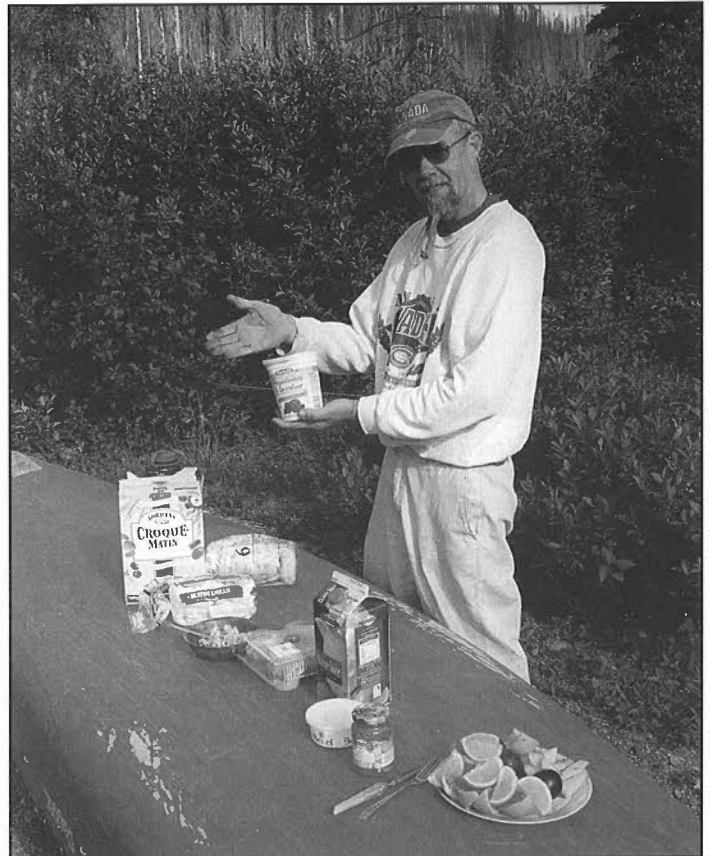
In addition to the Fédération map one might purchase the seven metric UTM 1:50,000 maps that cover the route: 22A/13 Lac Madeleine, 22A/12 Deville, 22A/11 Mont-Alexandre, 22A/6 Rivière Reboul, 22A/5 Lac McKay, 22A/4 New-Richmond, 22A/3 New Carlisle. CIME also has detailed maps of the region.

## ON THE RIVER (121 km)

The clarity of the water on the "Bonnie" is beyond comparison. Cold and crystal clear describes the total route, with the ability to see right to the bottom of the salmon pools that can be some nine metres deep. The stones lining the bottom come in every shade of green to form a true mosaic of nature. We bottled this water to take home, but had been ignorant enough to bring bottled water to the river.

The headwaters for this river would be Lac Bonaventure in the Monts Chic-Chocs. There had been a major forest fire in this region in 1996 and it took us a full day of canoe travel to get through the burnt section. We started our trip around km 113 due to the low water levels and because many of the burnt trees were now starting to fall across the river, making navigation difficult below the lake.

We would agree with the reports that suggest an end-of-May or early-June descent for best water levels. But if you can only go in early July, don't hesitate to do the trip, but know that there will be some bumping and grinding in the shallower sections, in particular on the first two days. Later on we would from time to time encounter gravel shoals where you would need to exit the boat for a short while. This was only a minor inconvenience. While the water was cold, it didn't freeze your feet nor require you to wear a wetsuit.



*Breakfast!*

In the canyon section (km 93-85) you will find the most challenges, but even this was good fun for our group. You need to be mindful of some serious ledges, otherwise expect class 2 rapids—and in higher water perhaps a few sections rating 3. Many areas had long stretches of class 1 and almost all the river has a good flow or swifts that make travel easy. There are no lakes and we didn't find anything that would require a portage, only lining or lifts at two or three ledges. Overall, we would rate this as a class 1, a beginners' river.

On the fourth day we were floating in sunshine through some easy water when we could see people ahead on the shore. By this point we were accustomed to the salmon fishermen at the various holes and we waited for a signal to pass them on river right or left. However, what we saw in this case was somewhat different: a man and woman wearing PFD's, signaling obvious delight at our appearance, as though we had been sent from heaven.

Bill and Sarah turned out to be a Maine couple traveling alone (from the West Branch km 62) in a 17-foot Old Town Tripper that had broadsided a large boulder. As a result the canoe was turned inside out with water gushing in at both bow and stern. Their red cooler and a blue dry-bag had floated downstream out of sight. Their stove had also been flushed away. Bill had no hope of moving the

seats, and thwarts were all intact. We loaded up the boat again while DT scouted ahead to find floating debris. The cooler was quickly spotted and put on the shore. The map case and a piece of kneeling foam were lifted from the river's surface. Around the next bend a fisherman pointed to where a folding chair had sunk, and a guide on the bank raised a blue dry bag. Bill did a diving rescue in the chilly water for his chair and felt lucky that the only missing items were his stove and fuel bottle.



*A cold and wet day in the canyon*



*The tarp is the focal point of the campsite*

craft by himself and had in the cold swift water painfully carried most of his remaining camping gear to the far shore with the intention of bushwhacking out to a road, hoping to meet a passing fisherman.

When we came to the site of the accident, Bob was the first to spot the boat and he made the assessment that we could perform a salvage operation on the boat stuck on a rock about 15 m from the shore. Because we had six people available who could use poles, lines, slings, and a pulley we were able to pop the craft free. Bill and Sarah were elated when they recovered their friend. As a testament to ABS, everyone was surprised to see the only damage being a crease in the side—otherwise the gunwales,

At our suggestion, Bill and Sarah decided not to travel the rest of their trip alone and joined our party, camping with us that evening and sharing future meals.

We enjoyed good weather most of the way: sun, cloud, and with the only rainy time on the river on Tuesday when we were in the canyon section. We then put up a small tarp during lunch and made a fire, but used Allan's large Chlorophyll Cavern 5 m x 5 m tarp that evening. Although we had brought bug jackets, we never wore them. Saturday, on the way home, we experienced intermittent showers.



*Paddling through the burn-out*



*Waiting to be rescued*

Our Broadview Canoe Group tradition of meal rotations was used on this trip. Penny and Bob each did two breakfasts; DT and Fred shared the responsibility for the five lunches. Each person prepared one evening meal.

*Breakfasts:* cereal, yogurt, fruits, bagels, porridge, coffee.

*Lunches:* wraps, pitas, croissants, bagels, cold cuts, tuna, salmon, several cheeses, cabbage, cherry tomatoes, condiments, apples, oranges, melon, fruit bars.

*Evening meals:*

Monday: cocktail shrimps, grilled bbq chicken, straw berries with whipped cream.

Tuesday: boiled navy beef, rice, brownies.

Wednesday: smoked turkey, Stroganoff noodles, peas, carrots, red cabbage salad, fresh pineapple with whipped cream.

Thursday: Guava jelly and cheese appetizers, vegetarian meal of assorted lentils, beans, grilled vegetables, fresh chocolate pie—and more whipped cream.

Friday: fish and chips in Bonaventure.

## CONCLUSION

We missed many of our friends on this river, but we were still pleased with this expedition into a wonderful region of Québec. This pristine, friendly, well-maintained Gaspé region should more often be considered for whitewater canoeing. It was once commented that good paddlers and good planning make for dull trips. In this case we were helped to some excitement by finding a canoe in trouble. From the rescue good relationships were established as evidenced by Bill and a friend wanting to join us for our summer 2004 expedition trip, probably the Mistassibi Nord Est. While we would have benefited from higher water and bigger rapids we were quite content with the river as it was offered to us. Some GPS coordinates are available for the river by writing to: [fredargue@videotron.ca](mailto:fredargue@videotron.ca)

\* \* \* \* \*

(Note from editor: another trip down the Bonaventure is presented in the spring 1999 issue of *Nastawgan*.)

## THE ANCIENT ONE

*You are four sides smooth  
from grinding sweet dried corn.  
A thousand years ago and more  
you slipped from the woman's hand.  
You tumbled from high cliff village  
spinning and bounding with joy.  
You clattered down the sandstone  
and rolled to a nook in the shale,  
free once again and with friends.  
There beneath the fragrant sage  
you lay hidden from the woman  
and the children sent to find you.  
The air you breathed,  
the rain you drank,  
the cold you bore,  
the sun you welcomed  
as you waited the turn of centuries.  
No hand would touch you until mine.  
Surely you were her favorite  
for you are small and round and sturdy.  
Woman, I hold your stone in my hand!  
I remember you and greet you through time.*

*Michael Van Winkle*



## PROBLEMS IN THE FRENCH RIVER PROVINCIAL PARK

This summer, a group of ten paddlers set out on a six-day trip on the French and Pickerel rivers. They purchased the required interior park permits (see page 14 of the Summer issue of *Nastawgan*) from three well-known locations in the river region.

However, the weather turned so bad that after a few days the trippers decided not to continue. Two of the permit sellers were very helpful in obtaining the MNR-sanctioned refund offered to those coming out early. But the third one was most un-co-operative and even refused to deal with the canoeists any further.

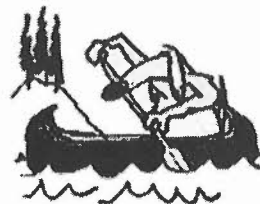
*Nastawgan* is not the place to go into this unfortunate event in more detail, but all the information can be found by contacting [wca@sympatico.ca](mailto:wca@sympatico.ca)

Reported by Gary James.

## PARTNERS WANTED

### UNGAVA

Are you interested in joining in on a canoe trip from Schefferville to Kuujuaq in the Ungava region of Quebec from the second week of July 2005 to the last week of July or the first week of August (depending upon weather and conditions)? This is a fairly remote area with a variety of water types ranging from flat to class 6. Obviously, some portaging will be required. Side trips are planned to view muskox and marine wildlife following completion of the trip. Looking for three adults and one more canoe to complete the trip. If you are interested, please contact Jack at 519-823-5709 or [j\\_frimeth@hotmail.com](mailto:j_frimeth@hotmail.com)



# RENDEZVOUS WITH THE TRUE NORTH WILD AND FREE

## A Celebration of the Boreal Forest

Imagine canoeing ten northern boreal forest rivers via a free flow of big screen images, songs, essays, and stories from some of Canada's most celebrated paddlers, artists, photographers, musicians, writers, conservationists, and scientists, all in one November night.

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) will be launching the illustrated book *Rendezvous with the Wild* (The Boston Mills Press, September 2004) on a cross-Canada tour, True North Wild and Free, part of the organization's boreal forest campaign. *Rendezvous with the Wild*, edited by James Raffan, well-known canoeist and wilderness author, recaptures the spirit of the Boreal Rendezvous—10 river journeys through the boreal forest in 2003 organized by the CPAWS in partnership with the David Suzuki Foundation and the Canadian Boreal Initiative ([www.cpaws.org/boreal-rendezvous.html](http://www.cpaws.org/boreal-rendezvous.html)).

This book is an impassioned, eclectically written, visual celebration of the majesty of Canada's vast boreal forest. It includes contributions from prominent Canadians such as Elder William Commanda, Becky Mason, Courtney Milne, David Suzuki, His Excellency John Ralston Saul, Wade Davis, Sarah Harmer, Jimmy Rankin, Tom King, Tomson Highway, and Patrick Lane. Seventy-five contributors explore the many faces of the boreal forest, express their love of the land, illustrate life on a river journey, or tell of their first truly wild encounters with the vast northern woods. It is a fascinating and compelling collection of art, photography, essays, stories, anecdotes, songs, poems, journal entries, maps, and memoirs.

The True North Wild and Free tour will visit 10 cities, lifting the fantastic images from *Rendezvous with the Wild*

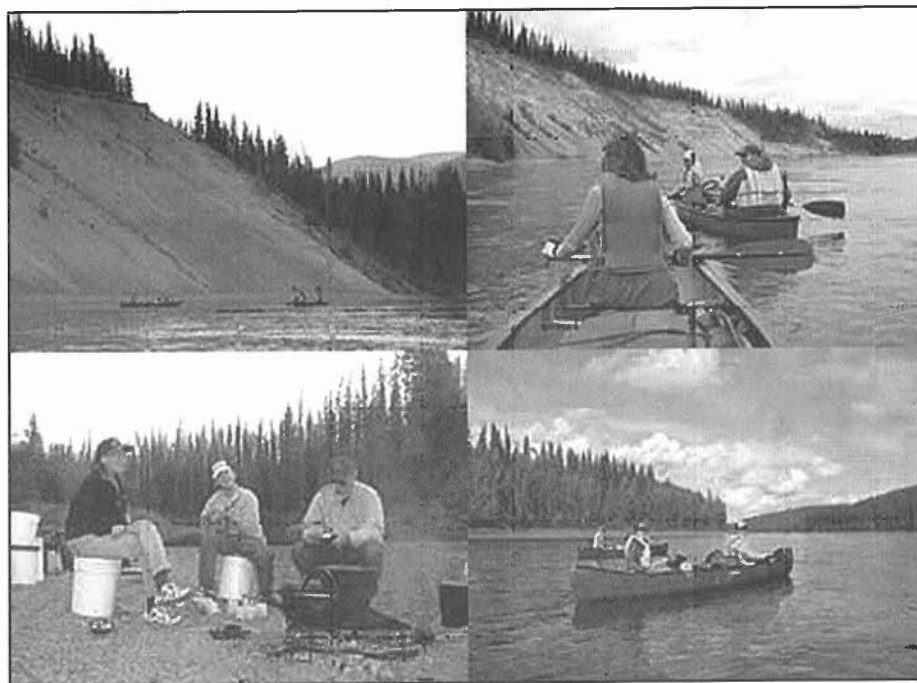
onto the big screen and bringing the tall tales and anecdotes from its pages to life. Raffan, host of the events and consummate story spinner, will be joined at various stops along the way by some of the paddlers of the river journeys and contributors to the book. Cathy Jones, Berens River paddler, will share her account of her first wilderness canoe trip at the Toronto opening, while Justin Trudeau, Nahanni River paddler, will speak at the Montreal launch. Candace Savage and Laurel Archer will recount their adventures on the Churchill River at the Saskatoon gala.

With such a cauldron of talent to draw on, including surprise special guests, True North Wild and Free will be a brew infused with warmth, colour, and humour—a great reminder of the importance of the boreal forest. This show is not to be missed by nature lovers and paddlers across North America. All proceeds go to CPAWS to support their continued work to protect Canada's boreal forest.

*Schedule of Events:* Toronto, ON—Nov. 3; Edmonton, AB—Nov. 5; Yellowknife, NWT—Nov. 6; Whitehorse, YT—Nov. 8; Vancouver, BC—Nov. 10; Saskatoon, SK—Nov. 11; Winnipeg, MN—Nov. 13; Thunder Bay, ON—Nov. 15; Montreal, PQ—Nov. 16; Ottawa, ON—Nov. 26.

For updates on special guests, event details, and contacts see: [www.cpaws.org/boreal/english/wild/events.html](http://www.cpaws.org/boreal/english/wild/events.html).

Information submitted by Laurel Archer



Photos: Laurel Archer

## FOOD FOR PADDLERS

Rolf and Debra Kraiker made a wonderful presentation at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Wilderness and Canoeing Symposium on Jan.31, 2004. One of their last slides displayed a feast they prepared on the final day of a long trip. The feast included bread which they baked using a collapsible oven designed by themselves. See their website for plans for making the oven: [www.blazingpaddles.on.ca](http://www.blazingpaddles.on.ca)



Try the following recipe using a reflector oven:

### Spanish River Dessert

- Spread margarine on a flatbread/tortilla - use one per person.
- Sprinkle with brown sugar, sliced apples, raisins, cinnamon, and walnuts.
- Roll up the tortillas, place in a baking pan, sprinkle with brown sugar, cinnamon, and margarine.
- Bake until crisp.
- Enjoy.

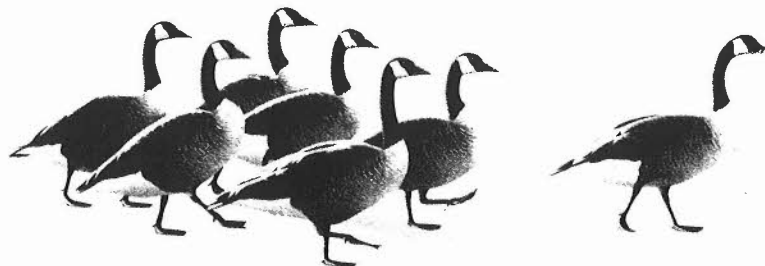
(Submitted by Helen Murray, Larry Durst, Jon McPhee, Dian Connors.)

\*\*\*\*\*

*We get mail:* Robert Perkins is trying to locate an item he had several years ago and has lost track of. He is looking for chicken breasts that are shrink-wrapped, and slightly preserved, but not dehydrated. They were reputed to last indefinitely. Does anyone know where Robert might get these?

\*\*\*\*\*

*If you would like to share your favourite tripping recipes, please contact Barb Young, 12 Erindale Crescent, Brampton, Ontario, L6W 1B5; [youngj david@rogers.com](mailto:youngj david@rogers.com).*





# WCA OUTINGS

**WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT  
PRESENTED IN THE WINTER ISSUE?  
Contact the Outings Committee before November 7**

*For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Outings, contact any of the members of the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca; Barry Godden, 416-440-4208; Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca*

*WCA outings and other activities may have an element of danger of serious personal injury. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety and well-being when participating in club events.*

+++++

All Season

## HALIBURTON COUNTY/FROST CENTRE

Ray Laughlen, 705-754-9479 ----- Seasoned tripper living in Haliburton willing to help organize leisurely paced trips in this area. At participants' request may become involved with some equipment, logistics, 'base camp' meals, etc. Willing to share information on tripping and camping techniques. Not limited to weekends; I am often free during the week. Suitable for entry or novice level but all others welcome.

All Season

## BLACK (WASHAGO), HEAD, MOIRA, ETC. RIVERS

Fred Lum, 416-482-3774 ----- The Black near Washago and the Head a little farther southeast have some very interesting whitewater sections if you catch them at the right levels. Both are quite different despite their close proximity. The Head is a technical little creek with a number of small ledges that will test a good intermediate's route finding and precision boat-handling skills. The Black has some super surfing waves that make for a day full of fun even for experienced novices. Down Belleville way, the Moira has a very challenging upper section at Lost Channel, requiring solid intermediate skills to negotiate a series of ledges with large waves. There is also a roller-coaster-ride section farther down through long, easy rapids from Chisholm's Mill to the takeout at Latta that all paddlers from skilled novice up will enjoy. I keep my eyes on water levels and go when things look good. If you want to get on my call list for these trips, just send me an e-mail to: roocnu@wepaddle.com.

September

## MINDEN WILD WATER PRESERVE

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005 ----- I'm frequently at the Gull River on weekends through the summer, so if you would like some paddling companionship at Minden, give me a call. I'm sure that you can persuade me that paddling is more important than staying home to paint or to mow the lawn. You need to be at least a strong intermediate to run the lower course, but the bottom can be played by novices. Happy to provide informal instruction for novices needing some moving-water practice or to give you help in rolling your canoe or kayak.

September 24 – 26

## KILLARNEY PARK

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471 or gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca, book immediately ----- We will meet at George Lake Campground and set up our tents there. On Saturday, we will paddle on a day trip into OSA Lake through Killarney Lake, and experience the magnificent scenery in fall colours. Sunday we will hike to The Crack for one of the most spectacular views in the whole of the Park, over Killarney and OSA Lakes, where we paddled the day before, and out to Georgian Bay. If you can portage, you can handle the scramble up the rocks to The Crack! Limit of four canoes.

Sep. 27 – Oct. 2

## NIPISSING RIVER

Ray Laughlen, 705-754-9479, book by September 20 ----- Join me on a leisurely trip in Algonquin Park, going down the Nipissing River and back up the Tim River. Hopefully the leaves will be in colour. We will likely see moose, otter, and a full moon. Suitable for novices who can enjoy portages of up to 1,370 m. Limit four canoes.

October 2 – 3

## ALGONQUIN PARK – LITTLE BONNECHERE RIVER

Anne Lessio at 905-686-1730 or alessio@istar.ca or Gary James at 416-512-6690 or wca@sympatico.ca, book by September 15 ----- This trip will take us from the Algonquin Basin Depot to Round Lake. See Kevin Callan's *Further Up the Creek* for additional information. Listed as perfect for novice canoeists, with maybe three portages, the longest one being 520 meters. Limit four canoes.

October 17

**ELORA GORGE**

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005. Book before October 10 ---- When the days get too short and the weather too unpredictable to go further afield, there's always the Gorge. Even if there isn't a lot of water, it's still a pleasant paddle, and it sure beats putting the boat away for the season. At normal water levels, this makes a fun outing for novices or better, followed by a munch and gossip at one of the local eateries.

January 28 – 30, 2005

**ALGONQUIN CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING**

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471 or [gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca](mailto:gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca), book before January 1 ---- Experience Algonquin Park in winter, and slide over portages without canoe or heavy packs! We will spend a full day on the beautiful Leaf Lake Trailsystem, and ski Fen Lake or Minesing Trails on the other day, or do some snowshoeing or hiking, depending on weather and mood. We will stay two nights in a heated yurt on Mew Lake. Limit five.

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*FOR SHORT-NOTICE TRIPS, CHECK THE WCA WEBSITE BULLETIN BOARD*

Suddenly find yourself with a free weekend and want to go paddling? Need a partner for an upcoming trip? Take advantage of our website bulletin board (<http://www.wildernesscanoe.ca>) to post notices for impromptu trips or partners required. Also, bookmark this page to regularly check for new posted outings. This service is a valuable addition to our regularly published quarterly outings list. We encourage members to use it. However, please note that only members may post notices. As these activities are not pre-screened by the Outings Committee, they are considered privately organized affairs and we can take no responsibility for them.

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*Adapted from the June 2004 ORCA Canews Letter*

## **CANOE MUSEUM REOPENED MAY FIRST**

The Canadian Canoe Museum reopened on May 1 after it had been temporarily closed for financial reasons since October of 2003. With the strong support of the City of Peterborough, Ontario, a new business plan was established leading to the reopening, which even now relies on a multitude of volunteer help. The May 15 Spring Newsletter of the Museum gives much of the background and present situation. Below are listed some of the items from the Newsletter:

- A new paying and voting membership has been established at a general meeting on March 25.
- The Museum Store, operated by volunteers, continues to produce revenue.
- A generous donor allowed the bank debt to be reduced by two-thirds.
- Janice Griffith has been hired as Manager. John Stevenson resumed his full-time custodial and conservator role in April.
- Donated service by Quid Novis Internet Productions allowed the website to continue in the period of closure.
- A donation by Hudson Bay Company History

Foundation has enabled the resumption of the museum's public and school education program.

- A group of students from the Museum Program of Sir Sanford Fleming College is doing conserving work and working with Kirk Wipper on the documentation of the craft.
- Several teams of volunteers run the store, the front desk, guided tours, and many operating functions.
- The CCM began in 1994 and opened to the public in 1997.
- Open Houses took place in December (600 people) and two in March.
- CBC National and CBC Newsworld Sports Journal produced two separate pieces that aired in January and have been rebroadcast.

Visit the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough and become a Member!

Phone: 705-748-9153, toll free: 1-866-342-2663

E-mail: [inquiries@canoemuseum.net](mailto:inquiries@canoemuseum.net)

Website: [www.canoemuseum.net](http://www.canoemuseum.net)

## 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:

- Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, ON
- Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str., Hepworth, ON
- Smoothwater Outfitters, Temagami (Hwy. 11), ON

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

**MEMBERS' DISCOUNT** Peterborough-based outfitter, Human Heights, who is also the Ontario sales representative for Esquif canoes, will provide a club discount for WCA members who want to buy an Esquif boat through him. Contact Bill Ness for special WCA price list: [bness@look.ca](mailto:bness@look.ca)

**WCA MERCHANDISE** We have a wide selection of WCA merchandise available for purchase at all WCA events (but not by mail order). Items available include WCA mugs (\$5), crests (\$3), and decals (\$1). We also have WCA clothing in a range of colours and sizes. Each item is a high-quality product that has been embroidered with a colourful WCA logo. At your next event plan to purchase one of these garments and proudly represent your organization. Golf Shirts:\$30; Fleece Vests:\$40; Fleece Jackets:\$60. (Cheque or cash only.)

**GEAR FOR SALE** Wave Sport X kayak (like new) \$700; Dagger Vengeance kayak \$350; Werner Ococee kayak paddle (brand new, 203 cm, 45 degree twist) \$200; Salomon downhill ski boots (size 10, red) FREE! Contact Barry at 416-440-4208.

**CANOE FOR SALE** Mad River Flashback, Royalex, pedestal seat, airbags, grab loops, vinyl gunnels. Good condition, great for smaller solo paddlers. \$500. Sandy Harris, 416-489-8980, [sandyandroger@sympati-co.ca](mailto:sandyandroger@sympati-co.ca)

**DRYSUIT FOR SALE** Kokatat Multisport drysuit, new 1996, used twice, stored cool and dry, Oxford nylon with urethane laminate coating, size XXL, suitable for 6-ft tall or more, front entry, zipper from chest to shoulder, Dynat zipper lube included, grape and red colour, over-cuffs and collar protect the latex gaskets. Paid USD\$396 from Kokatat, firm price now CAD\$225. Phone 905-792-2436, evenings please, (Brampton).

**STOVE FOR SALE** Collapsible sheet metal stove with carrying case, damper, set of stove pipes and spark arrestor, suitable for winter tent with stove pipe opening, used carefully, well maintained. Price negotiable. Phone 905-792-2436, evenings please, (Brampton).

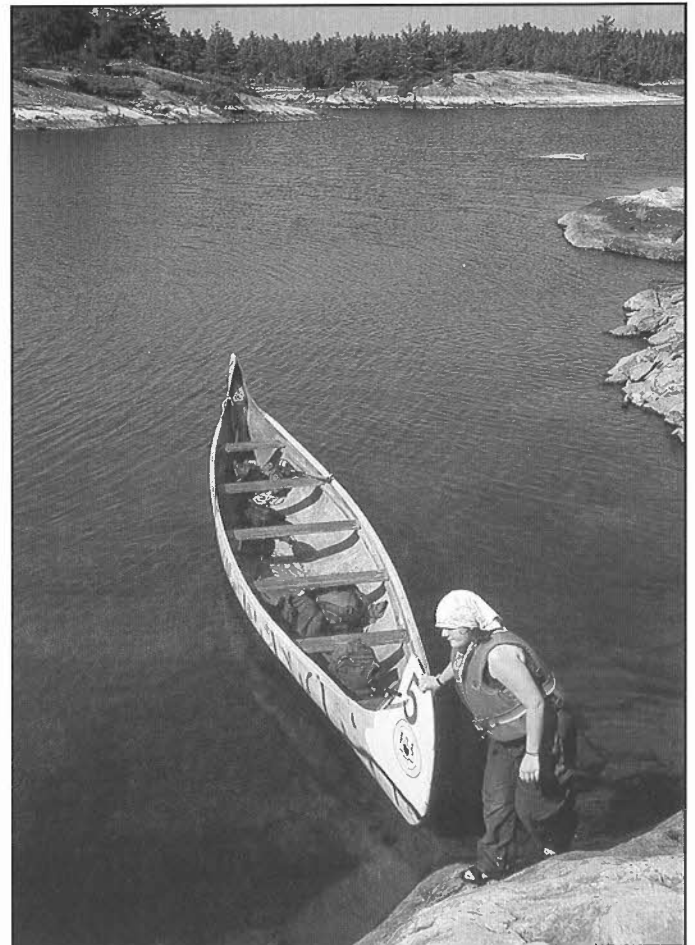
**CANOE END FLOAT BAGS FOR SALE** used carefully in Mad River ABS Explorer. Price negotiable. Phone 905-792-2436, evenings please, (Brampton).

### ADVENTURE PADDLING

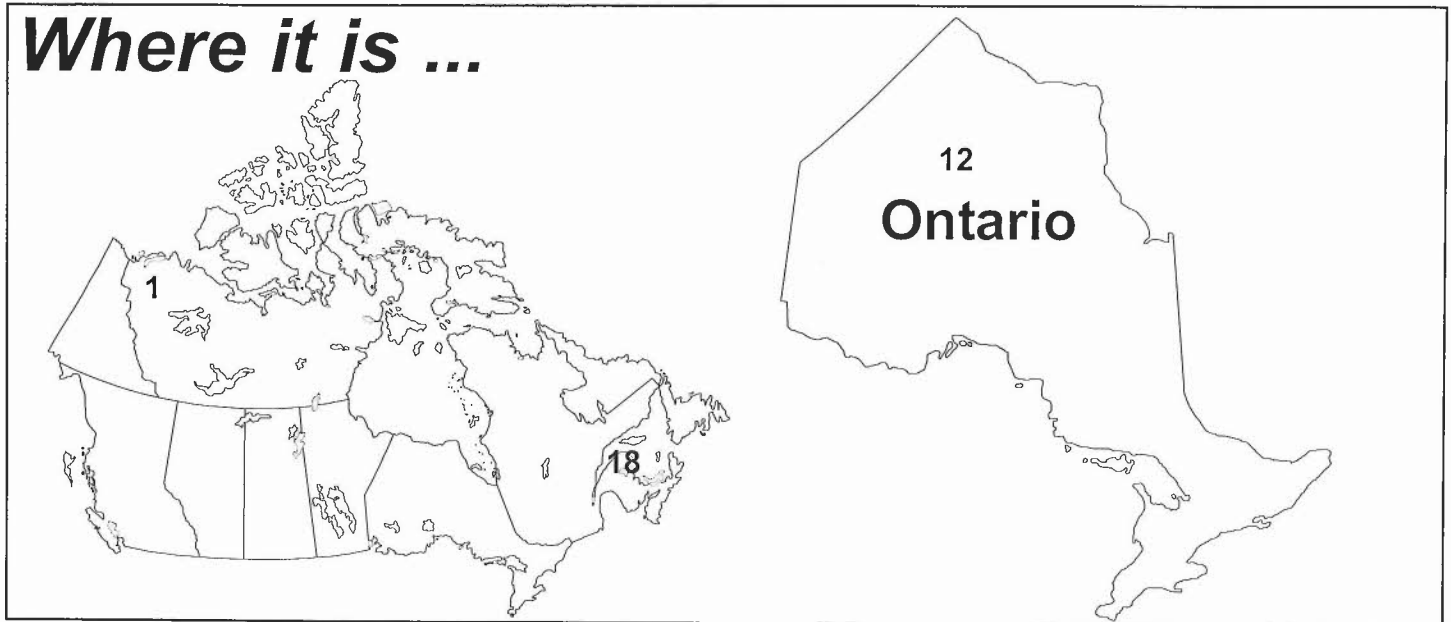
— Anyone having done the Caniapiscaw River from Schefferville (via Swampy Bog River) to Kuujjuaq, please contact Werner at [www.adventurepaddling.com](http://www.adventurepaddling.com) with details.

— Adventure Paddling Inc. provides ORCA and WO certified canoeing and kayaking instruction in both flat- and whitewater. Check out our website at [www.adventurepaddling.com](http://www.adventurepaddling.com) for details.

**ONE MAN'S JOURNEY** Three films by Robert Perkins, to be aired by PBS in 2004. Check [www.gotrob.com](http://www.gotrob.com) for show times.



# Where it is ...



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