



Polar Bear

SEAL RIVER

by Allan Jacobs

Photos by Allan Jacobs, Charles McLandress and Hugh Westheuser

Route:

From Chatwin Lake on the North Seal River, to the junction with the South Seal at Shethanie Lake, to Hudson Bay; 4 to 27 July 2006.

Overview:

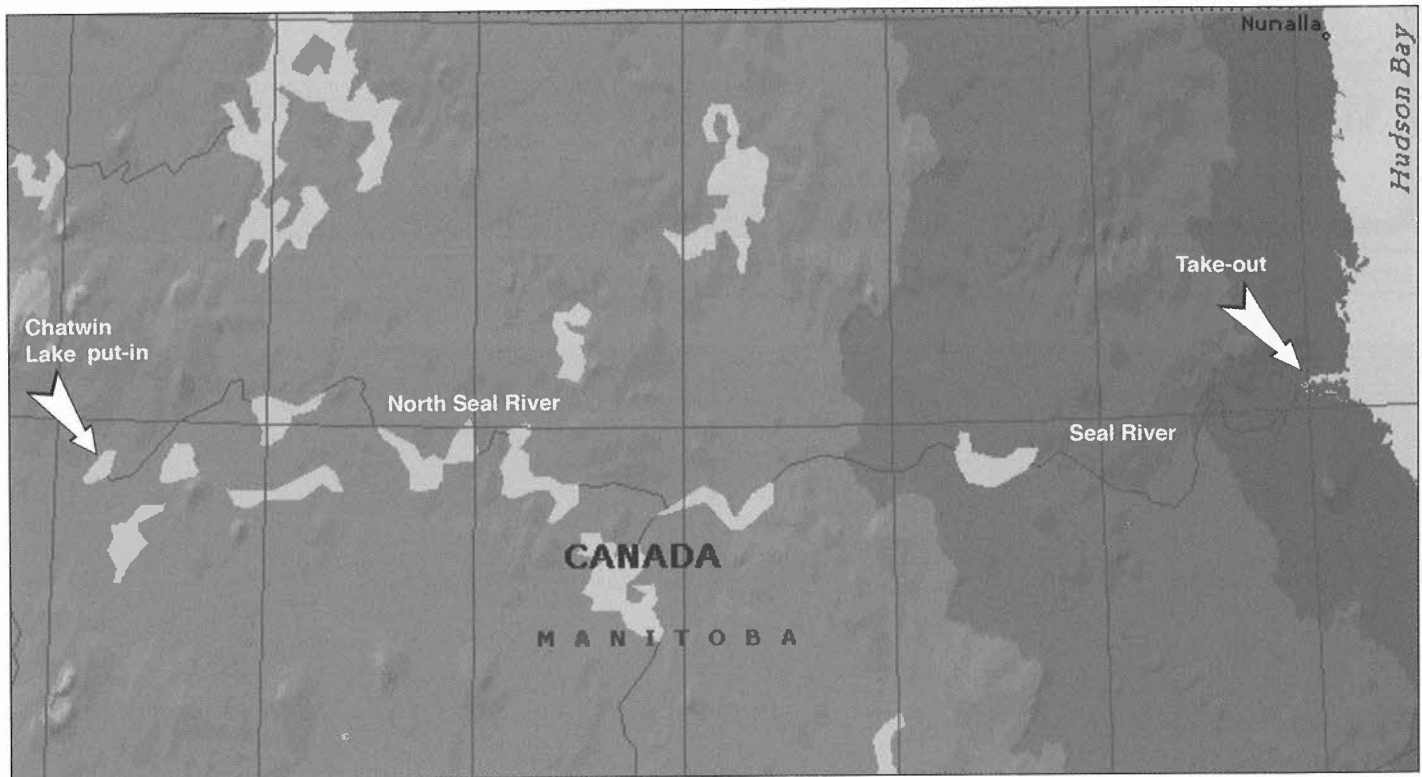
Unguided trips on any part of the Seal require good whitewater skills.

Campsites are not abundant on any part of the river; expect to spend time most days discussing where to stop. Forest fires swept through large parts of the Seal country in 1994 or so; some find the results unattractive.

The North Seal has many eskers; they offer few campsites, but excellent hiking.

The Seal is well named; most parties see their first one 200 km above the Bay. You should see polar bears at the Bay and perhaps well upstream from it; most parties report multiple sightings.

Only one rapid, Nelson Rapids between Minuhik and Egenolf Lakes on the North Seal, requires a portage; it is two km long (feels like more). We lined a second rapid on the North Seal and part of another on the lower Seal. All other rapids were runnable on the course we took; please note the



Seal River Route

qualification. Several rapids require lengthy scouts from shore.

The North Seal (Chatwin to Shethanie Lake) is a pool and drop river. Several lakes have more than one exit; taking the wrong one may get you into big trouble.

The lower Seal (Shethanie Lake to the Bay) is mostly fast water and you can make good time. Wilson-Aykroyd's description of this stretch is better than mine.

Major wind delays are possible on the lakes and open stretches, especially on the North Seal.

Trip Participants:

Barbara Burton and George Drought (from Hamilton), Allan Jacobs, Iva Kinclova and Charles McLandress (from Toronto), and Hugh Westheuser (from Kelowna).

Background to the trip:

We had hoped to do the Manitoba traverse, starting from Kinoosao (oo as in moo) on Reindeer Lake, portaging over to the North Seal (which we wanted to paddle independent of the traverse since it is little travelled by canoeists) and finishing at the Bay. But due to time and health considerations we could start no

higher than Chatwin Lake on the North Seal, though we might have started a lake or two above Chatwin on the Marks River.

We allowed a lot of time for the North Seal since we had very little information on it; indeed, the lack of information was part of the attraction. We allowed too much time though; we had 11 days to get from the esker at the narrows in Shethanie Lake whereas one guided trip took seven days.

Charles had paddled the Seal in 1973, starting from where the road crosses the Churchill, passing through Tadoule Lake and finishing at the Bay; the others hadn't paddled any part of it.

Thanks:

- Gene Chorostecki (advice on rapids and campsites);
- David DeMello (advice on North Seal rapids);
- Stan & Muriel Good and Ralph Lloyd of Gangler's North Seal River Lodge (the world needs more such kind, gentle people);
- The Transwest people in Lynn Lake, especially Colin (who evacuated George and Barbara in adverse conditions);
- MaryAnn of Lynn Lake Hospital and

other medical personnel who assisted George;

- Les Fretterly (truck shuttle from Lynn Lake to Thompson);
- Jack Batstone (pickup from the mouth);
- Jim McLandress and Hendrik Herfst (hospitality in Winnipeg);
- "jmc" of Canadian Canoe Routes (exceptionally knowledgeable, ever helpful)
- "recped", "Hugh", "idylwyld" and "wapoose" of CCR for their comments on fires in Manitoba.

Water level:

The North Seal at Bain Lake was about one metre lower than at the same time in 2005, possibly because breakup was three weeks early in 2006; the water was, however, high in 2005. [Source: Stan Good of Gangler's].

The mid-July level below Great Island was 0.4 to 0.5 m lower than in 2004 and 2005

[Source:<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/environment/hydrology/currentwaterlevels>].

Information sources (publicly available):

1. Hap Wilson and Stephanie Aykroyd, "Wilderness Rivers of Manitoba", Cana-

dian Recreational Canoeing Association, Merrickville, Ontario, 1998, ISBN 1-895465-26-5. Denoted in the following as WA.

Comment 1: This should be your primary source for background information on the Seal River area in general, and for rapids and campsite information for the stretch from Tadoule Lake to the Bay. It is almost a must-take-along for Seal paddlers.

Comment 2: Perhaps due to our low water level, we found some rapids easier than reported in WA.

Comment 3: I'm confident in my values for distances, which are consistently about 10% smaller than WAs.

Comment 4: I saw nothing in my reading of Hearne's journal to justify WA's identification of his campsite as near 528/152 on topo 64J16. WA must have other sources.

2. Sydney Augustus Keighley, "Trader, Tripper, Trapper", subtitled "The Life of

a Bay Man", Watson & Dwyer, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1989, ISBN 0-920486-36-3.

Comment 1: This largely autobiographical account provides a perspective on the fur trade in the first half of the 20th century. It is of interest to paddlers more for the information it provides on life in the area not so long ago.

Comment 2: Keighley did not wait for the native people to come to him with their furs; he "made regular visits to their camps with sled or canoe loaded with the goods they wanted, and returned with their traded furs". The "Tripper" of the title refers to these travels, not our kind of tripping.

Comment 3: Keighley mentions Father Egenolf, a priest active in the area from at least the early 1920's "till he died in 1957, aged somewhere in his nineties"; I would be surprised if Egenolf Lake on the North Seal were not named for him.

Comment 4: WA took a copy of

Keighley's book with them on their Cochrane-Thlewiaza-Caribou trip. Their write-up mentions the HBC post, on the Caribou River, that Keighley ran from 1931 to 1937; compare the sketch on page 167 of Keighley with the map on page 144 of WA. The building from Keighley's time seems to be still standing; compare the photos on pages 138, 150, 164, 168 & 175 of Keighley with that on page 145 of WA.

3. "Nuhoniyeh (Our Story)", VHS, Treeline Productions, Sayisi Dene First Nation, Tadoule Lake, Manitoba, Telephone 204 684 2022.

Comment 1: This is well worth viewing; it is of considerable historical interest, especially on the relocation of the Sayisi Dene to Churchill, their experiences there, and their return to the land.

Comment 2: It contains a photograph of Keighley, the same one as on the cover of his book.

4. P. G. Downes, "Sleeping Island", Western Producer Prairie Books,



Deaf Rapids



Esker Hiking

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1988, ISBN 0-88833-256-4.

Comment 1: This is mostly an account of his 1939 trip; the area travelled is best described by listing the chapter titles: "North, Where", "Pelican", "Reindeer Lake", "Brochet", "The Cochrane", "The Little Lakes", "Fort Hall Lake and the Kasmere", "Nueltin Lake", "Windy", "Days in the Barrens" and "South Flight". Although he did not pass through the Seal area itself, his description of life and customs likely applies there also, again not so long ago. Downes was a thinker as well as a good writer.

Comment 2: Of interest also to Seal paddlers may be his passing reference to the Maria Lake trail starting from the Cochrane, and that he too refers to Father Egenolf (whose picture faces page 138).

5. You can find lots of qualitative Seal information on the web.

Our logistics:

Barbara, George, Iva, Charles and I drove from Hamilton, and Hugh from Kelowna, both starting on 30 June. We

met in Thompson on 2 July and drove to Lynn Lake the next day.

We left the two vehicles with Les Fretterly (Esso station 204, 356, 8692, 3568711 AT mts.net) for later shuttle to Thompson (cost \$100 per vehicle.)

On 4 July, Transwest (204 356 2457) flew us to Chatwin Lake in a single Otter (turbo), with all our gear, in one flight.

George and Barbara were evacuated on 11 July. The other four reached the Bay on 27 July.

Jack Batstone picked us up the next day and boated us to Churchill where we stayed overnight.

On 29 July, we took the evening train to Thompson.

Hugh picked up his truck at the airport (where Les had left it) and headed west with Iva.

Charles and I had planned to drive back from Thompson with Barbara and George; instead, we returned to Toronto by train, via Winnipeg (where we stayed one night), arriving at 3 a.m. on 3 August.

Alternative logistics:

There is daily bus service from Thompson to Lynn Lake; call the bus depot at 204 356 2918. You can get to Thompson by Grey Goose Bus Lines

(204 677 0360), or you can fly in. The highway map shows a rail line to Lynn Lake but the train from The Pas doesn't go past Pukatawagan any more; and you can fly in.

The Lynn Lake web site <http://www.lynnlake.ca> has more information.

You can fly out from Churchill, but most people take the train.

Alternative routes to the North Seal:

The following provides a non-exhaustive list of other ways to access the North Seal. I have no first-hand knowledge of any of them. I believe that all are highly demanding.

Starting point 1. Kinoosao (road access from Lynn Lake) or Brochet (air access), both on Reindeer Lake; paddle up the Cochrane River.

Starting point 2. Lac Brochet (air access); paddle down the Cochrane. WA describes the Cochrane in the region of interest (Reindeer Lake to Lac Brochet). Break east from the Cochrane at Thuycholeeni Lake.

Starting point 3: One can fly in to Easton Lake, as in the Paddle Manitoba write-up. Maria Lake, where Gangler's has a lodge, must also be accessible by float plane. I don't know whether float planes can land on any of the other lakes.

End point 1. The North Seal about 6 km below the outlet from Maria Lake. The route goes through Kelso and Sulyma Lakes, as described in the brief write-up (Booklet C-03) at Paddle Manitoba: <http://www.paddle.mb.ca/mr-cawebsite/index.htm>

End point 2. Maria Lake about 12 km above the outlet. The route goes through Kelso, Hlowayazi and Gard Lakes. The North Seal just below Maria is reported to be brutal.

End point 3. Morrow Lake (headwaters of the North Seal). This one (I haven't heard of anyone doing it) is likely more brutal than the previous one. Perhaps fortunately, we couldn't try this one due to time constraints.

Boats:

We had two PakCanoes and a Blue Steel hardshell. The PakCanoes saved us maybe \$1,000 on the flight in; even one more hardshell would have required a second flight. And they saved \$1,500 on

the evacuation; Barbara and George, taking a PakCanoe, got out on a 185 rather than the Otter that would have been needed if they had taken the hardshell.

Wildlife:

We saw six moose (two cows each with one calf and two bulls), one black bear, nine polar bears (two adults within 80 metres, the others with glasses), one red fox, several mink and zillions of birds (including dozens of bald eagles).

Gear:

- A tarp is highly desirable; we had a lot of wind and rain.
- I filtered my drinking water; the others didn't and suffered no ill effects.
- We cooked mostly on wood; we used stoves for baking bannock.
- We carried several cans of bear spray, bangers, flares and a shotgun (with "crackers" and solid slugs).
- We had also two GPSs, a VHF radio and a satellite phone (necessary in any case to arrange the pickup, it likely saved George's life).

Maps:

The 1:50k topos required are 54L13, 54L14, 54M2, 54M3, 54M4, 64I13, 64I14, 64I15, 64I16, 64J14, 64J15, 64J16, 64K15, 64K16, 64N1, 64O3, and 64O4. You can purchase them at Federal Publications, 165 University Avenue, Suite 102, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 3B8, 416 860 1611.

We used copies, many of the 1:50k topos and several of the 1:250ks. I did mine (11" by 17") at the Toronto Public Library (789 Yonge Street, Toronto); topos are easier to access at the Robarts Library (5th floor, University of Toronto) but the big copier there has not worked for a long time.

Suggestions:

1. Be careful! This is a remote, unpopulated area; help may be days away.

Apart from Gangler's staff and guests on the North Seal and four native people on Shethanie Lake, we saw only Colin (Transwest pilot who did the evacuation) until we were picked up at the mouth. Jack Batstone told us that a large canoe party (6 boats?) would finish at the mouth the day after us.

2. Check out the forest-fire situation at the web sites given in CCR /Forums/Manitoba Canoe Routes, thread "Fire Situation in N Manitoba."

3. Try to learn what other parties are on the river, especially those upstream from yours. Jack Batstone can likely help here.

4. Don't forget to buy a fishing license in Lynn Lake.

5. Before you leave home, prepare a form to leave with the RCMP in Lynn Lake. It should give the number and colour of your canoes, the number and colour of your tents, next-of-kin contact information, your travel plan, the number of your satellite phone, plus other information such as whether you are carrying a VHF radio. And don't forget to log out with the RCMP in Churchill.

6. Carry a satellite phone; you will need one anyway to confirm your pickup at the mouth. Ignore the armchair paddlers who argue that carrying a phone actually makes the trip more hazardous; on ours, it likely saved a life. A PLB is a reasonable backup for the phone. A VHF radio might be useful; it was for us.

7. Take along a copy of the information you leave with the RCMP in Lynn Lake; take also the phone numbers of the

RCMP detachments in Lynn Lake, Tadoule Lake and Churchill, of the medical facilities in these places, of your charter operator and of Gangler's North Seal River Lodge.

8. Do not carry an EPIRB or an ELT. Setting off either will cost the Canadian taxpayer about \$50,000 and earn your group the scorn of the Canadian paddling community; check issues of Kanawa if you doubt either statement.

9. Carry a GPS and know how to operate it.

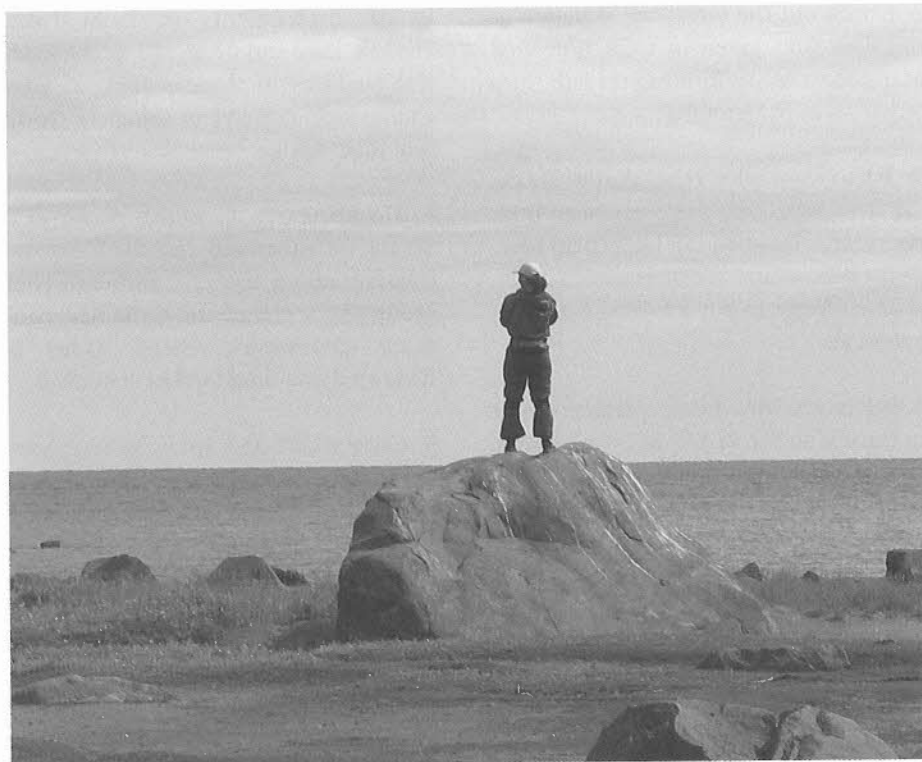
10. Do not attempt to paddle from the mouth of the Seal to Churchill; more than one party of paddlers has died on the way.

11. Jack Batstone of Churchill (204 675 2300) does the pickups from the mouth; the cost in 2006 was \$500 per canoe. Reserve your pickup well in advance. Jack built the cabin, maintains it and repairs the bear damage; drop any thought of arranging a pickup with anyone else. Jack is reliable but the weather is not.

He cannot boat you to Churchill if the wind is up so leave some slack in your schedule. In fact, he had two boats prepared to pick up the next party on 29 July but had to postpone the trip because the wind was due to come up that day.



Evacuation



Watching Belugas

12. Plan to reach the mouth at high tide; tables are available at <http://www.water-levels.gc.ca>.

13. Take normal precautions against black bears.

14. Signs of polar bears have been seen three days' travel upstream from the Bay [Source: Peter K. post at [http://www.mycr.com / Forums / Manitoba Canoe Routes, thread Seal River](http://www.mycr.com/Forums/Manitoba_Canoe_Routes/thread_Seal_River)]. Almost every party reports multiple sightings at the mouth. There are ethical and practical concerns related to carrying a firearm for protection. Some of what you hear about polar bears may be just urban legends. And which is the greater danger, the firearm or the bears? From speaking to Jack, I estimate that something like a thousand paddlers have stayed at least one night at the mouths of the Caribou, Seal and Knife rivers; to the best of my knowledge, there have been no bear attacks.

If you carry a firearm, the only reasonable choice seems to be a pump-action shotgun, for it allows loading non-lethal cartridges as well as business ones. Take bangers and slugs; forget the trap/

skeet/bird shot unless you want to give your group practice in assembling, loading and using the firearm. Use the bangers first, and then only when the bear is close by, say under 100 m; we don't want bears to learn to ignore the sound. Use the slugs only as a last resort, when necessary to save a life. The rule I've heard is "20 feet and charging". And you might try to find rubber slugs. BTW, you should expect a serious interview with the RCMP should you kill or harm a bear.

15. A shotgun is pretty cumbersome to keep ready except in camp, and not a little dangerous. Carry also or instead bear bangers and a launcher (a spring-loaded pen-like device). Friends who have had bear encounters report that pepper spray is highly effective. On the other hand, there's a story, perhaps true: Native person to paddler: "What do you carry for bears?". The paddler pulls out a can of spray. Pause, then "Make bear mad". Some people carry flares for protection, "I don't know why" [Mimi].

16. Immediately on arrival at the mouth, check for bears; set up the ladder that Jack has provided and send someone to the roof while others unload the boats.

Be careful walking around; bears swim in from the bay as well as walk along the shore.

17. Your last camp above the Bay should be at 765/393 (map 54L14) or upstream from it; we saw no sites below it although two of us looked for them.

18. Carry snippers/shears to ease your way through the brush when trying to get to campsites; bug shirts are precious and easily torn.

19. The water at the Egenolf end of the portage from Minuhik Lake is pretty murky; best carry ample water over from Minuhik.

20. Mosquito coils may be useful for your stay at the cabin.

21. If you leave Churchill by train, better reserve your seats well in advance; it is pretty full some days (I think weekends are the worst).

22. The best place we found to eat in Churchill is Gypsy's.

Emergencies:

1. Gangler's North Seal River Lodge is on Egenolf Lake, to the south of the canoe route. Gangler's has also satellite camps on Burnie Lake (portage in from Kee...maw Lake), Bain Lake (on the route), Maria Lake (pronounced Mar-eye-ah locally; for those doing the hair-shirt trip from the Cochrane) and Stevens/Nicklin Lakes (well off the river).

2. There are buildings, perhaps an active exploration/survey site; we were on the other side of the river and didn't go over to investigate whether anyone was around.

3. From Shethanie Lake you can paddle up the South Seal to Tadoule Lake.

4. Seal River Lodge is located on the coast, 3-4 km north of the mouth.

5. If you have to call out, have your coordinates ready in longitude-latitude format; I haven't yet met or heard of a pilot who uses UTM's.

River information:

Your primary source for rapids and campsite information on the South Seal (Tadoules Lake to Shethanie Lake) and for the lower Seal (Shethanie Lake to the Bay) should be the book by Hap Wilson and Stephanie Aykroyd. We found it invaluable, especially for campsite locations.

In the following, I give rapids & campsite information for the North Seal (Chatwin Lake to Shethanie Lake) and for the lower Seal; my campsite information especially is less complete than WAs for the latter. I give UTM locations for campsites in the format: topo map; easting/northing (nominal accuracy plus/minus 50 m). This campsite information may be useful also in assessing your progress down the river. More detailed information (for example UTM locations of rapids, etc) is available on request to the writer.

I provide also distances from campsites to the Bay. I found them by wheeling out, twice, copies of the 1:50k topos; I corrected for the 1% reduction (and verified the reduction by wheeling out 100 km). Again, my distances disagree with WAs.

I've included some details on our routes, for example which way we went around islands; note especially which exit we took from several lakes.

Rapids:

1. Please forgive the preaching and butt-covering, but you are responsible for your own safety. Although I took care in compiling the information, I almost certainly made errors, some perhaps serious.

2. Whitewater experience is necessary for unguided travel on the Seal. Avoid, like the plague, prospective partners with something to prove.

3. This is a remote area and caution is required. Where possible, scout the big stuff; unless you're sure you can run it safely, portage or line it. But it is not feasible to scout all the rapids from shore; for some, you must be able to scout from the boat.

4. I make no recommendations as to what you should do at the rapids, except for comments like Scout!, which means get out and walk the shore. My remarks are descriptive (what we did), not prescriptive (what you should do). Be wary; parts of some rapids will literally swallow the foolish.

5. If your water level differs much from ours, the information given below may be useless, even seriously misleading. It may be that you should scout some rapids that we did not.

6. Our party agreed on the rapids ratings given below, but these are inexpert, personal, perhaps inconsistent opinions; they are not adjusted for runout or remoteness. In short, don't take them literally. Since our assessment of the difficulty differed markedly from WAs in too many cases, I decided to denote the difficulty by D1, D2, etc rather than CI, CII, etc.

7. Spray covers are pretty well mandatory for the entire Seal. We put them on the first day and left them on until we finished.

8. Finally and most importantly, don't trust the topos, or WA, or any trip report (including this one); in the final analysis, you must rely on your own judgement.

Campsites:

Campsites are not plentiful on any part of the Seal and so they will figure large in your daily planning. WA lists many more sites than I give, but none for the North Seal.

Having looked at Google Earth and seen all those eskers (especially above the exit from Shethanie Lake), we expected many great campsites. But many eskers are heavily wooded and offer no place to camp; and thick shore brush makes access difficult to others. I recommend that you bring snippers/shears.

Campsite N1 means the site on our day 1, etc.

Campsite quality is rated, inconsistently, on a scale from A (superb: worth stopping early, or pushing to reach, or staying over) to E (avoid if at all possible); criteria used were ease of landing

and loading, distance from the water, views, hiking, flatness, dryness, size, sand (ruins zippers), litter, how tired or wet we were, and others I've forgotten.

Abbreviations:

C: centre. L: river left. R: river right.

D: degree of difficulty (for example, D2 is roughly equivalent to Class II).

N (North) E (East) S (South) W (West)

Trip summary:

Barbara, George, Charles, Iva and I left Hamilton at late in the afternoon of 30 June, Hugh from Kelowna the same day. We met at the McCreedy campground (recommended) in Thompson. Hugh stayed there in the back of his truck. The weather was looking bad, so the others chickened out and stayed at the Meridian hotel (183 Cree Road, recommended) in town.

3 July:

We drove on to Lynn Lake, rather a sad place since the mine closed, with many houses boarded up. We registered with the RCMP and made some last-minute purchases, including a fishing license. We left the two vehicles with Les at the Esso station in town, for later shuttle to Thompson. We overnighted at the Transwest base; Barbara and George slept inside, the others in tents just off the parking lot.

4 July:

We assembled our stuff and moved it down to the dock. There we were met by a very friendly mutt (with more than a little Golden) adopted by the Transwest people from a nearby reserve; its hindquarters are in really bad shape (perhaps something hereditary, ...) and it can hardly walk. We loaded the single turbo Otter (pilot Ted) and took off around 8 a.m. On the way, we passed over smoke, from fires to the NW, I guess. We landed on Chatwin Lake somewhere between the mouth of the Marks River and the peninsula with tip at 923/264. We had difficulty unloading our stuff and getting it and us through the shore brush to a moderately clear area. After hot, buggy work assembling the gear and the PakCanoes in a burned out, brushy area,

we paddled several km up the North Seal to a site just downstream from a cabin.

Campsite Class C. Area badly littered; tent spots good; very small space for unloading and loading boats; near the cabin, there's an outhouse with however a low entrance (ouch!); esker with some hiking; sound of rapids from not far upstream. 482 km to the Bay.

5 July:

A thunderstorm came through after breakfast and we returned to the tents. We got on the water at 11. We spotted several beachy sites (possible campsites), at least one with a boat, on the N shore. We exited Chatwin Lake on the L side of the island.

Rapids: D2- (not marked). D2- (not marked). D2- (not marked). D2- (not marked). NS stretch. D1+ (not marked). Lakey section. Turn to the E. Several swifts (marked), followed by a D4.

Scout! D4 (marked). We scouted it on the R and then lined it (we were already in position) rather than run the slot. Several swifts (not marked) after the D4.

A stiff head wind came up and we decided to look for a campsite; given their scarcity so far, we took the first reasonable one.

Campsite Class C. Difficult unloading and loading; long carry up very steep hill; good tent spots; some hiking on esker; view marred by dead trees; no place to wash up. 461 km to the Bay.

6 July:

On Kee...maw (sic) Lake (known locally as Long Lake; even the topographer is unsure how to spell it), we met Ralph Lloyd of Gangler's and two US fishermen; they had walked in from the Gangler's outpost lodge on Burnie Lake.

Campsite Class B. Good tent spots; on esker; fair walk from the water; nice view. Ralph and the fishermen dropped by for a talk. 442 km to the Bay.

7 July:

Scout! D2+ (marked) at the exit from Kee...mau (sic) Lake. We scouted from the R shore where fisherfolk from Gangler's have made a good trail. On the scout, George tore ligaments in his left knee, with consequences later. We

passed the pond, then ran rocky swifts (marked).

The wind came up and we struggled to reach the beach at the start of the portage around Nelson Rapids. It is named for a Canadian soldier who died in the Netherlands near the end of WWII; Google Nelson Rapids North Seal River for details.

Campsite Class B. Beach; good swimming, hiking and tent spots; some litter; used by fisherfolk from Egenolf Lake. 426 km to the Bay.

All but George and I went hiking, starting from the Gangler's road to Egenolf Lake. We were thinking about portaging 1 km across the peninsula at the narrowing, rather than starting at its base and heading east along the road; this might save a lot of effort, and the topo suggests that the worst of the rapids is upstream. Barbara and Hugh scouted this route and reported that it is a no-go.

8 July:

We did the portage; it looks to be two km long on the map, but it felt more like three. Most of it is easy going on the road Gangler's has put through for its guests; their buggy had broken down close to the (upper) west end. Tip: watch for the old portage trail breaking off to the left from the road; it cuts off a loop. George's knee was in bad shape and he could get only himself and his daypack across. The portage ends in a damp area with not much space for loading boats; you have to paddle out to get good water.

We loaded up and headed out across Egenolf, seeing several Gangler's boats; we didn't see it, but Gangler's main lodge lies to the south, down the channel. We pulled in at the first marked esker, rather than push on to the one at the narrows (498/461). This was a good decision since, as we learned the next day, the latter has no campsite; if we had continued, we would have had to carry on at least as far as the beach.

Campsite Class C. Good tent sites; view OK; small beach. 411 km to the Bay.

9 July:

A stiff SW wind came up. We threaded our way through the islands, crossed to the tip of the peninsula and turned NE,

hugging the left shore as we wallowed along. We pulled in and waited out the wind at the beach near 516/482 (with bear-hunt camp); some of us spoke to a Gangler's party at the cove (519/480).

The wind dropped a bit after lunch so we headed out, again threading through the islands.

Route note: We took the south (right) exit from Egenolf Lake. This decision – the correct one – was made on the advice of David DeMello and the Gangler's guides, and on our own reading of the topo (the marked rapids are longer on the R channel). There are several D1s and swifts (marked) in this channel. The upper part is shallow (most of the river seems to go left; recall though that we had low water) but we had no difficulty anywhere. It was a nice route actually, fast but gentle. At the bottom of the R channel, we caught a glimpse of the L channel; it looked like a very tough piece of whitewater.

Some of us saw a dead moose just below the junction. A storm was coming, and we were unsure whether we could find anything better, so we pulled in at a small beach and camped; most of the storm missed us. Again we made the correct decision, for next day we saw no good campsites immediately downstream.

Campsite Class D. OK tent sites back of the beach. 395 km to the Bay.

10 July:

Rapids: D1+ (marked) at the start of the R turn; we cut hard L at the bottom. It is followed by a short stretch of fast water, then a D2+.

Scout! D2+ (marked). After a long scout on the L, through heavy brush, we started C, then cut hard L.

Route note: We took the first exit (no problem) from Blackfish Lake, then the narrow channel to the S of the island.

Rapids: Swift (marked). Two riffles (marked). Upper lake 269 (may be campsites at several beaches). D1- (marked). Three swifts (not marked), then a D3+.

Scout! D3+ (marked). After a long scout on the R, we did a D2+ run on the far R, a tricky route requiring sharp turns; the bottom was OK.

Rapids: Several swifts and tricky gravel fan (none marked). Lake 259. Several swifts (not marked). D1+ (not marked). Several swifts above the lake.

After considerable discussion and fruitless searching, we found an OK site.

Campsite Class D. Barbara, George and I camped by the water, the others up the hill. 363 km to the Bay.

11 July:

We woke to a stiff north wind.

George was in very bad shape and it was obvious that he needed medical attention ASAP. Here are the symptoms, etc. as Barbara reported them over the satellite phone: slow breath, pale, short of breath, sweaty, always conscious, mental sharpness in and out, can walk but limps badly, believes he tore ligaments in his left knee, thinks pacemaker wire may have been damaged.

The ways we thought of to get him out were:

1. Call in a float plane from Lynn Lake.

2. Ask Gangler's to send a motorboat up from Bain Lake, take him back there and fly him out.

3. Paddle down to Bain Lake and get him flown out from there; this was the last resort, for it would have taken most of a day to get there. We didn't know how serious the intervening rapids were, and the trip might well have strained his body beyond the limit.

The first option was clearly the best, if it could be arranged.

We called Transwest and talked things over with Bryce and others. After establishing our location (we had longitude and latitude ready), we talked about the aircraft, cost (\$3,124 for the turbo single Otter, \$1,580 for the 185), weather in Lynn Lake (closing in, with stiff wind, too windy for small plane?), pilots, weather conditions at our site, landing conditions at our site (we were in a rocky bay, but the plane could land on the lakey part nearby), the VHF frequency to use, etc. George was alert enough to suggest that we send out my PakCanoe rather than the Blue Steel. All parties agreed on the 185; the flight time would be about 1.5 hours.

Please note that all these arrange-

ments were made by satellite phone; had we not had one, we would have had to chance the paddle down to Bain Lake.

While waiting for the 185, we folded up my PakCanoe and sorted through the gear and especially the food. We spoke over the VHF radio with the Transwest pilot Colin as he was flying in. After he arrived and taxied in to the bay, there followed a lengthy, awkward business loading George, Barbara and gear in a strong wind (needing two of us to hold the plane). That old dictum about safety in numbers came to mind; in those conditions, a smaller group could not have gotten someone out. The weather closed in on the flight to Lynn Lake; Colin got them back though, in highly adverse conditions (he got his location in part from the old mine chimney).

Colin's willingness and ability to fly in adverse conditions may have saved George's life. The rest of us kept our cool and did what needed doing. Barbara and George deserve special praise here; each put on a remarkable display of sangfroid, like no other I have witnessed. We learned later that he had suffered a pulmonary embolism, perhaps more often fatal than not; a blood clot had formed in his knee (from binding it too tightly, too long, both?), passed through his heart and lodged in his lung. The doctor told him: "You were very lucky".

The wind stayed up and then the rain came down. Not surprisingly, after that morning and in those conditions and thinking that we might not see George again, we stayed put. In hindsight, maybe paddling would have relieved the worry, at least for the moment.

Campsite: Same place. 363 km to the Bay.

12 July:

Rapids: Swift, D1 and swift, none marked. We had lunch at an island. D1+ (marked, two parts); we ran the top part R of C and the bottom part L of C. D1+ (marked); we ran it R of C. The L channel looked pretty dry.

We met Stan and Muriel Good on Bain Lake; Stan runs the Gangler's outpost lodge there. Ralph Lloyd (we met him on day two) had emailed them that

we were on our way; they had expected six people though.

Campsite: Island in Bain Lake. 340 km to the Bay.

13 July:

We talked to some of the Gangler guests. One who had been down to the next set of rapids was surprised that we would run it. A friend of another had paddled the North Seal some 30 years before; I tried to find out the name but failed.

We headed east down the river, passing several possible campsites on the L shore, then turned to the SE.

Rapids: Maybe some swifts before the opening; nothing at the contour-line crossing. The last 6 km before Copeland Lake have a lot of fast water. D1+ (marked). D1- (not marked). Swift (not marked). D1+ (marked) at the "island" (we didn't see the right channel). Swift (not marked) at the end, where we went L; the R exit looked pretty boney.

We saw a possible campsite on the first island in Copeland Lake, but it looked big-time littered. We pressed on and headed for a promising region on the south shore. Just before we landed, a black bear strolled out of the brush, heading for a drink I guess. It was not aggressive, but neither was it frightened of us. After taking some pictures, we continued on our way, looking back occasionally to see which way it was walking. After a little fast water, we camped on the R shore above Ireland Lake.

Campsite Class E. Badly littered; bad tent sites (not level, not dry, well away from the water); drizzle; enough already, why write more? 302 km to the Bay.

14 July:

After an overnight rain, we headed out and entered Stony Lake. A west wind came up so we stayed close to the L shore, getting what shelter we could, but wallowing badly. We pulled in at an island for shelter and lunch. The wind was bad enough that we decided to camp as soon as possible, at the beach about 3 km to the east.

Campsite Class C. Good tent sites; beach; sheltered but buggy cooking area back in the burn-out. 285 km to the Bay.

We spoke to Barbara over the phone.

George had been flown to Winnipeg from Lynn Lake; she had driven there. He was better and recovering at the hospital; she was staying at the place they have for relatives. We arranged to speak again a week later.

15 July:

We paddled out onto Stony; the west wind came up and we were soon wallowing again. We pulled in at the east side of the spit for shelter, a rest and some hiking on the esker (good views). There are campsites on both sides of the spit. There appeared to be an exploration site on the south side of the river.

Route note: As David DeMello had advised, and as we inferred from the topo (the L channel has longer marked rapids than the R one), we decided, correctly, to take the left (north) exit from Stony Lake. Do NOT take the right (south) channel.

Rapids: D2- (marked). D2+ (marked); maybe you should scout it. Then a D3-.

Scout! Long D3- (marked) starting just below the D2+. After a lengthy scout from the R shore, we went down hard R and then swung L at the bottom, picking our way through the rocks.

We stopped for lunch at the L end of the right (south) channel, near 385/245. From the bottom, the right channel looked very bad; don't even think of running it. After lunch, we ran a swift, then went R around the island at 463/223.

The west wind was getting ever stronger; we didn't want to paddle out into Shethanie Lake, but campsites are scarce in this area. Fortunately, just before Shethanie, we spotted a small beach on the R.

Campsite Class D. Small beach at the end of a small bay; OK swimming; ugly tent sites behind the beach, in the middle of a major burn-out, but sheltered from the west wind; short walk over to look at Shethanie. 256 km to the Bay.

16 July:

After two, consecutive forced early stops due to the wind and facing a day's paddling on Shethanie, we got up at 5 a.m. Good idea but no cigar, for the west wind came up again.

All too soon we were wallowing in big

waves so we kept to the S shore just in case; we barely got around the point at 640/187 before turning SE down the channel and getting some shelter from the wind. We saw a cow moose with calf on the R shore. We did the U-turn at the tip of the esker and found four young hunters from Tadoule Lake camped at the site there; they had shot a moose, dressed it and were taking it back for the community. We stopped in for a chat; they told us of another campsite farther north so we headed up that way. We weren't sure where the site was so we pulled in at a possibility and walked around, some to the north, others back to the west side of the point. We went N and camped. The hunters motorboated past and went down the lake, stayed there a while, came back for some fishing near the point and then took off back to Tadoule.

Campsite Class B. No beach; excellent tent sites; nice spring-fed pond at the back with creek at exit; better in every respect than the site at the tip of the esker; good hiking. We discussed trying to get out in four fewer days but decided to stick to our schedule. 230 km to the Bay.

17 July:

It was such a good site, and we had so much time left for the trip, that we decided to stay another night. The afternoon saw shotgun practice, assembling, loading, firing, unloading, disassembling – the works (with though with cheap light shells). I wish I had done as the others and worn earplugs. I've fired shotguns in the past without a problem; maybe I sighted with my cheek too close to the barrel.

Campsite: Same place. 230 km to the Bay.

18 July:

We got up to find two sets of fresh bear tracks (black bear size, one large, one small, likely a sow and cub) on the sand to the north, less than 50 m from our kitchen tarp. They changed direction sharply and went around us; I picked the tracks up again by the creek from the pond.

After a lazy breakfast, we took off

again, for once without a strong wind. We ran two rocky swifts (marked, as one) easily on the R. We had lunch on the L shore, at the campsite marked in WA. There are several beaches (possible campsites) on the south shore in this area. We then ran a rocky swift (at most a D1-); guess our low water reduced the difficulty from the CII rating in WA. We turned left into the cove, pulled in and camped.

Campsite Class B. Stiff climb to camping area; far from water; water in bay not so good so must walk down to current; excellent views; lots of hiking on the esker; trails over to the other sites upstream. We looked for but couldn't find the Bill Mason plaque mentioned by Gene. 200 km to the Bay.

19 July:

We decided to stay over, for the same reasons as before. I think it was this day (didn't want to remember I guess) that I tried to cook with my dehydrated beef. It tasted so bad that we burned most of it (quite a stink); Hugh, though, soldiered through.

Campsite: Same place. 200 km to the Bay.

20 July:

Rapids: Swift (marked). D1+ (marked), run C. We saw our first seal here, 190 km from the Bay. Swift (marked). D1- (marked) on R channel around first island. Swift (marked) on L channel around second island. D3- (marked), big splashy waves with rocks to miss. D2- (marked), waves only. The a D3.

Scout! D3 (marked). We scouted from the L shore (recommended). A ledge extends from the R almost all the way across. We did a D1- run down the far L.

Rapids: D2- (marked), boulder. D1+ (marked, waves) on the L side of the second island. Rocky swifts (one marked) on the L sides of the islands, from near the end of the second island (of six) to the end of the fourth.

Comment: Gene's notes show a campsite near 203/303, one not shown in WA.

Rapids: D2- (parts marked, waves). Rocky swift (marked), cleanly run on L. D2+ (marked, rocks and waves) on R side of island. D1+ (marked). D2-

(marked, rocks and waves). D2- (marked, rocks and waves).

We pulled in and camped at the Great Island site shown by WA.

Campsite Class A. Good tent sites; good beach; good hiking on the esker across the river. I think this is where the others saw the fox. 160 km to the Bay.

Route note: I haven't heard of anyone who has paddled the Lavallee Channel. The first rapid, not far downstream from our site N17, looked bad but we saw it only from a distance. Lavallee sure looks bad on the topos.

21 July:

Scout! D3- (marked). We scouted from the L shore. We started R of C, turned L and powered to reach the diagonal tongue, went down it and then bashed through big waves to the bottom.

Rapids: Swift (not marked) on the L side of the island. Swift (not marked) at the constriction. Long D1+ (marked) starts after the high islands.

Route note: We went down the L side of the island at 345/260.

Rapids: D2- (marked, waves) on the L side of the island. Swifts (not marked) and a D1 (not marked).

Scout! D3 (marked). Bastion Rapids, Big waves in the C. We hugged the R shore, went R of the island, landed on the R shore (across from the island) and climbed to the top to scout (good view); a rain squall came through. After an easy run around the island, we turned sharply into the main current and kept to the R side through big waves. It was a D2- (waves) as run.

Scout! D4 (marked). Peninsula Rapids. Ledge on L. We landed on the L shore, just before the point and scouted. We ferried upstream to the other point, crossed, turned, ran R of C down the tongue, and then powered hard L to miss the boulders. It was a D3- as run.

We camped just before the next rapids.

Campsite Class B. Steep climb through thick brush (snippers would have been nice to have); good tent sites; good view; no bathing. We knew about the campsite thanks to Gene; it was hard to find though. To reach it, land at 408/237, just past the last point before

the rapids, and struggle up. 143 km to the Bay.

As arranged, we spoke with Barbara over the satellite phone. She was at home, having driven with George back from Winnipeg. George was OK but their car had been broken into while parked at the hospital in Winnipeg; they lost cameras, photos and other stuff, including valuables belonging to Charles. She had made arrangements to get Charles, me and gear (including the Blue Steel) by train from Thompson to Toronto. She saved the worst for last, that Herb Pohl had died on Superior; she and George had driven through that violent storm in the same region, the same day. What a bummer! We could do no better than drink to Herb; this we did.

22 July:

Scout! D3 (marked). We scouted this one from the campsite; we ran it R of C, with ledges on both sides. It was a D1+ as run.

Scout! D4 (marked). 9-bar rapids (name from old topo?); 4 km long. We landed on the L, high up; after a very long scout, we ran a stretch of D3- (rocks, waves, sharp course changes), then pulled in again on the L. We decided to stay L rather than cross through all those rocks. There followed a stretch of D1+, then calm water, then some D2- to the point on the L where we landed and scouted the last part. We lined the boats through (Charles and I unloaded the barrels from the Blue Steel first), then finished off with a D2-. Some parties cross over and line the last part on the right.

All this took a lot of time and we decided to camp. We saw several possibilities; the first was OK and we stopped there.

Campsite Class B. Good tent sites, up a long steep hill though through thick brush (why didn't we bring snippers?); far from water; good view; no beach. 129 km to the Bay.

We watched the seals sunning themselves on the rocks. A bad storm came up; the others watched it from the tents, but I got caught down by the water and walked up through heavy hail, tearing my bug shirt in the brush.

23 July:

We passed the water survey station without dropping in.

Rapids: Fast water (marked). Long rocky swift (marked) with much toing-and-froing.

We chose the slot and did the swift at the end of the island. We stopped in at the campsite at the N end of Daniels Island.

Rapids: Fast water (marked). First sight of tundra on the left. Fast water (marked) on the L side of the island, then a rocky swift (marked).

We stopped for lunch at a beach on Lavarie Island, then ran a D1+ (marked). Looking for a campsite, we took the small channel on the L (as suggested by WA), a pleasant paddle but no cigar. We ran a D1- (not marked), then some swifts.

The river below figured to be slow due to several rapids and we started looking in earnest for a campsite; the ones shown in WA were not obvious from the water though. Charles found a site, but we figured from the WA map that the WA site had to be downstream; we realized later that we should have stopped. After this fox's paw, we worried that we would miss the WA site at the R turn and pulled in at a point.

Campsite Class C. Very unappealing at first sight but OK; camped on low brush. I broke a tent pole setting up and tore the sleeve for good measure; Iva fixed the sleeve and I the pole. 97 km to the Bay.

24 July:

After passing what looked to be a WA site at the rocky point, we pulled in for a scout at a point on the L.

Scout! D2+ (marked, lots of rocks and big waves). Then a D1- (marked). After some fast water at the turn to the L, we pulled in on the R and scouted.

Scout! D3- (marked), about 3 km long. We scouted it from the R shore. We started R of C, went farther R, cut to the C, then cut L at the end to avoid a line of rocks; the D3- stretch ends in a D1+ at the runout. It is difficult to scout more than the first bit from shore; after that, you have to improvise (aka do a blind probe).

At the bottom, we watched the seals for some time, then stopped at the peat island for lunch and some picture taking. Seals were plentiful both above and at the island. There followed a long stretch (2 km?) of continuous D2- (marked). Both boats started in the C and then went L; one stayed L, the other went far R.

We did a long slog to the N in a moderate headwind. We were looking for the WA site on the L but stopped maybe 100 m too soon. We passed the latter the next morning; it is larger than our site but I don't know that it is any better. The sandy area on the R shore looks good to the eye but not so good through glasses.

Campsite Class D (sand). 69 km to the Bay.

25 July:

We did a long slog to the N in a moderate headwind, stopped off at a campsite on the R shore for lunch, then slogged some more. The wind was coming up, as was a long string of rapids, and maybe we were tired of the wide river, so we pulled in.

Campsite Class B. Beach, with hiking on the tundra behind. We camped on the tundra. 44 km to the Bay.

26 July:

We headed out with a stiff north wind, but it was at our backs once we made the turn.

Rapids: D1- (not marked) on the L channel around the island. D2+ (marked); centre rocks, moderate waves. Then, right away, a D2- (marked); I think we ran it C; a few rocks to be avoided. Several swifts. D1+ (not marked); think we ran it C. D2- (marked); think we ran it C; a few rocks to be avoided.

Tambanay Rapids (marked); about 3 km long. It was a D2- run on the route we took. We started hard R and stayed there for the most part, swinging L at the bottom to avoid a line of rocks from the point.

Scout! D3. Deadly Rapids (not marked). Big waves in the C. After scouting it on the R, we ran it very hard R; it was a D2- run (D1+ except for needle-threading between two rocks).

After Deadly, there's a long stretch of shallow water with many boulders, sev-

eral D1+s and swifts; figuring out where you are is not easy.

Campsite Class C. Marked on WA map; at NW corner of island. Grassy on top; small landing area; difficult unloading and loading; fairly sharp but short climb; no bathing. Last known site on river. 25 km to the Bay.

We had considered taking our chances on a campsite farther down; we were very glad that we had pulled in, for we saw nothing below it although two of us looked fairly hard the next day. Someone had gone to a lot of trouble to clear the site; I trimmed some dead stuff to make the site more conspicuous from the water.

27 July:

Trying to reach the mouth around high tide, we got up at 4:30 and hit the water a little after 6, another good idea! We stayed close to the L shore. The trees stop about the start of topo 54M3. We missed Prayer Rock, not having time to stop; according to Gene, it is in open country, 250-300 yards from the river, easily visible from there. My notes don't mention the marked rapid.

Route note: The main channel is fairly easy to spot, except in fog (which Charles had in 1973).

There's a spot where you can see the Bay clearly, but you have a lot of work to do before you get there; in fact, we had fast water and rocks to dodge all the way to the cabin. It helps to have a GPS handy as you roll along. Deaf Rapids must be scouted; we improvised the rest. On the way, we spotted strange-looking objects out on the Bay; they turned out to be hull-down, whale-watching boats from Seal River Lodge.

Rapids: D2-, followed by a D2+ and then a D3-, largely as marked in WA; we were traveling too fast to figure out where we were or to take GPS readings. Be very wary from this point on, for you come to Deaf Rapids suddenly.

Scout! Deaf Rapids. CV. The rapids are marked but you must get L well before then. Even with lots of warning, we were still surprised by how fast we came upon Deaf; we could have gotten into big trouble had we not gone around the L side of the small island at 939/498 and scouted.

If you go R of the island, there's a good chance you will get caught in the flow and have to wing it through a CV with a big hole. In 1973, in the fog, Charles didn't see the rapids until too late and had a bad dump.

We took the shotgun on the scout. Even in low water, Deaf was very impressive; the centre is really dangerous. We returned to the boats and did a bump-and-grind, D2+ run hard L; Charles and I got hung up at one point. At the end, we turned R to avoid the shallow water and thought we were finished with the tough stuff. Surprise! We had to power L immediately to avoid a bad ledge coming out from the R, another D2+ run.

We had ww action all the way to the cabin. We arrived at 11 am, a little after high tide; we unloaded, opened the cabin and set up for the day. Jack has kept his place in good shape, under adverse conditions; bears, fearsome weather and thoughtless paddlers all do their share. One window was broken (we didn't find out how) and the interior was littered with glass, so we swept the floor carefully.

Some of us strolled toward the Bay and looked around from atop a high rock.

The main interest was the many belugas, blowing away. Seal River Lodge was visible to the north and Point of the Woods (on I guess the tree "line") to the south, with The Knoll providing some elevation to otherwise level ground.

We went back to the cabin and had lunch on the porch, which is on the side away from the Bay; a green-winged teal with five or so youngsters came by and attracted our interest. I'm not so much a birder and chanced to look around the corner of the cabin.

A polar bear was about 80 m away, on top of the rock where we had stood to watch the belugas, sniffing it intently (Hmmm, what a funny smelling seal?) and apparently looking inquisitively in our direction (Hmmm, what a funny looking/tasting seal?). But the wind, really a light breeze, was blowing toward us and the bear may not have been aware of our presence; still, we were afraid that it would smell our food (which was out)

or us. We threw all our stuff into the cabin. Hugh has a lot of experience with black bears and grizzlies, and has spoken about white bears with many Inuit hunters, who respect them highly and take absolutely no chances; this governed his thinking more than anything else. He decided that if the bangers would get it to move away from our immediate area, that would be the best solution; he did not want it to investigate our presence. He fired the small banger, which moved the bear up the coast, to the north. It was not so frightened that it ran, but moved in the typical slow walk of polar bears. He decided to try a second banger from the shotgun. This was far more effective; there was the noise from the shot when fired, and the second explosion (when the banger got close to the bear) hurried it away. But soon it settled into a lazy, scouting stroll. I want to emphasize that it was a considered decision to use the bangers, made after careful thought conditioned by knowledge and experience; it was not a move done in either panic or sport.

After that experience, we set up the ladder that Jack has provided and mounted a watch from the roof. We watched bear number one for a long time. Over the day, through the glasses we saw five more bears on the other side of the channel, one single and one mother with three cubs.

Hugh was cooking supper when we noticed number seven, a larger animal that he thinks to be a prime male, eating a seal not far past the high rock. Our guess is that the seal had been stranded in a tidal pool or sunning itself on a rock. We think that we would have seen the bear if it had walked along the coast, so likely it swam in. As the evening went on, the bear dragged the seal up the beach (toward us), and continued to feed on it, taking the occasional rest, and cleaning its bloody front legs; they show up well on Hugh's photos.

After we had eaten, and the breeze had died down, the bear showed ample evidence of being aware of our presence, but also seemed reluctant to leave the seal to investigate the smells coming from the cabin. There was no reason to

use a banger, and in any case the bear had food that it was unlikely to leave in any circumstances; we kept a close watch though.

Hugh was confident that we would be safe in the cabin for the night, primarily as this animal had food; I, for one, was not so sure. We went to bed, taking what precautions we could. Hugh put a banger in the breach and a slug in the magazine; I think that we slept better as a result. Answering the call in the middle of the night was worrisome though. A helicopter buzzed us around midnight, perhaps on its way to Seal River Lodge, perhaps dropping off a bear from Churchill.

Campsite: Jack's cabin. Good place. 0 km to the Bay.

28 July:

We packed up, then strolled down to where number seven had been eating. Some skin was left and also some drag marks. Likely the bear had been scared away by the helicopter; it sure wasn't going to abandon those numnums. From the roof, we could see two bears on the south shore, one (maybe number seven) apparently eating.

Jack arrived a bit early. We paddled out several hundred metres to meet him and loaded his boat. After a splashy ride (have your rain gear handy) we arrived in Churchill just before noon, after less than two hours, passing a pod of belugas in the harbour. I was surprised to see only one ship at the dock, more so that it was a cruise ship (with Russian crew); I had expected to see deep-sea ships loading grain. As things are, I wonder whether Churchill without tourists would be a viable community.

Iva and Hugh stayed at Jack's shed. At Jack's suggestion, Charles and I stayed at the Ice Berg Inn, \$25 per person per night; it's a good clean place but some clientele have had a rough time. The four of us got together for supper and walked down to the Lazy Bear, only to discover that it is not licensed. We ate at a place I won't name; Iva was sick afterward. We had all our other meals at Gypsy's (recommended).

We saw two helicopters heading

north, perhaps carrying bears away from town.

29 July:

After moving everything to the train station, we went out on the town. Sights include the Eskimo Museum and the Parks Canada exhibit at the station. Early August is a good time to see belugas, but not bears. A South African woman staying at the Ice Berg was disappointed.

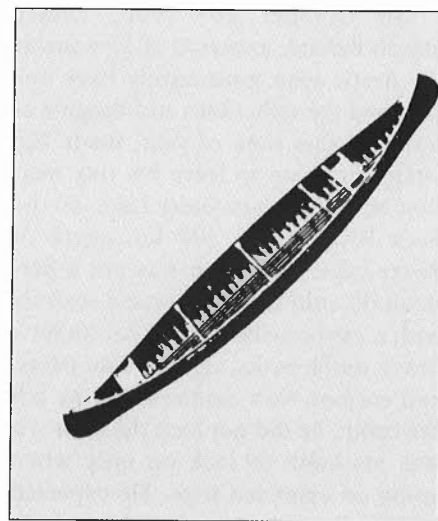
The train left pretty well on time. It was almost full though and we didn't sleep so well, not being able to stretch out; Iva even curled up in the aisle.

30 July:

We arrived in Thompson about noon, several hours late; most passengers got off there. The tracks are in bad shape and getting worse since there seems little interest in keeping them up or money to do so. Hugh took a taxi to the airport, picked up his truck (shuttled there by Les) and raced back to the station to get stuff left by Barbara after the evacuation. Hugh and Iva left by truck for the west. Charles and I continued on the same train to Winnipeg, another all-nighter; we stayed there at his brother's.

3 August:

After two more nights sleeping on the train, we arrived in Toronto at 3 a.m., seven hours late. Barbara, The Angel, was there to meet us and drove us home before heading back to Huntsville.



The Mysterious Disappearance of Father Buliard, O.M.I.

Garry Lake, Back River, October 1956

Text and photos by David E. Pelly

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View Buliard's cabin and beach

Late October on the Barrenlands is a stormy time of year, the wind howling and the early snow of winter whipping across the frozen tundra and newly-formed lake ice. It is a difficult time for travel – not enough snow on the land for easy sled travel, and lakes where the ice can be precariously thin.

On October 24, 1956, Father Joseph Buliard, a veteran of 17 years in the Arctic who must surely have understood the difficulties and dangers of travel at this time of year, made the fateful decision to leave his tiny mission on an island in Garry Lake, on the Back River, some 300 km north of Baker Lake. Though it was not a particularly cold day, he dressed warmly with a caribou-skin inner coat under a heavy, duffle parka, caribou-skin pants, and caribou-skin qammiqs. As he left the cabin, he did not lock the door – it was his habit to lock up only when going on extended trips. He expected to be absent only a few hours. He

hitched his six dogs to the sled, ready to depart.

Emerging from his tent a hundred metres away, John Adjuk noticed the missionary's preparations and approached to talk. (Father Buliard spoke fluent Inuktitut.) Adjuk expressed concern that the weather was deteriorating. As he remembers, there was already a white haze enveloping the landscape and a light snow was falling; that, combined with the warm air, offered a warning sign – a blizzard was coming, thought Adjuk. It was not a good day for travel, even a short distance, implored the Inuk. There are fish in the net and the dogs are hungry, countered the priest. He was determined to go, despite the weather and the warning, and his own weaknesses.

Shortly after his arrival in the Arctic, many years earlier in 1939, Father Buliard fell through the ice near the Repulse Bay mission and severely froze his hands. Though his fingers were all saved, they were never the same: he suf-

fered terribly from cold hands and a loss of dexterity. That, on top of his extremely poor eyesight, made him ill-suited for travel alone in Arctic conditions. He had, in fact, become lost and disoriented on more than one occasion. For several years prior to 1956, while based at his mission in Garry Lake, Father Buliard had been more than a little dependent on his guide and companion, Anthony Manernaluk, to keep him safe and comfortable. Although they had travelled hundreds, if not thousands, of miles together by dog-team, it was always Manernaluk's skill that kept them alive.

Manernaluk, who is now 69, living in Rankin Inlet, remembers his years with Father Buliard fondly; he speaks of him as he would a father, more so than a Father. "Before, he was always cold, hands and feet," recalls Manernaluk, who came to live with the priest as an orphan at age 15. "But when I travelled with him, he was never cold. I kept his mitts and qammiqs clean, no snow, not

frozen.” Always, when they stopped for the night, Manernaluk built their iglu in great haste – the priest never managed to acquire this skill – so Father Buliard could take shelter inside while his young Inuit companion fed the dogs and organized the camp. By the time Manernaluk crawled into the iglu, “Father Buliard had tea and bannock ready,” he adds with a telling smile.

They did a lot of travel, south to Baker Lake, and north to the Arctic coast, from Cambridge Bay and Perry River in the west to Gjoa Haven and Chantrey Inlet in the east, visiting Inuit camps along the way, ministering to the priest’s flock of newly converted Roman Catholics. “Normally when he went to a camp, he would stay two or three nights with them and then go to the next one,” remembers Manernaluk. “We’d have prayers and services with them, and teach them and if there were children who needed to be baptized, he baptized them, so we had to spend some days at the camps. The Inuit around Hanningajuq were happy about Father Buliard living with them.”

Father Buliard was, without question, a dedicated missionary. He once wrote “I do what I can, I pray, I set good example, I am kind to everybody; I visit often, on

occasion I say a word about religion.” He stood confident that he did God’s work. “Good Lord, to whom nothing is impossible,” he wrote in his diary, “grant them the light and the courage to come to us. Break the influence of Protestantism and build up your Church!”

In the summer of 1956, Manernaluk became so seriously ill that he was flown out to Baker Lake, and then Churchill, where he was diagnosed with TB. “When I was in that hospital in Churchill, Manitoba, and when the doctor told me that I had to be sent down to Brandon, to hospital, I tried to tell the doctor that I didn’t want to go. I knew that Father Buliard won’t make it on his own and I wanted to be with him, so I tried to force the doctor to send me back home.” But to no avail, with the result that Father Buliard was left to fend largely for himself.

Adjuk and his wife – in need of religious education so she could be baptized – came to camp nearby the mission. Another young man (identified in RCMP reports alternately as Andy Semigia or Anthime Simigiak, who himself perished in a storm a year later, while hunting, at age 19) stayed some of the time with the priest in the mission. But none of them were as devoted to helping and caring for Father Buliard as Manernaluk had been

full-time. So it was that, on October 24, 1956, when he set off to check his nets for fish, Father Buliard travelled alone.

“I tried to tell him that a storm might be coming,” said Adjuk, who survived to over 90 with the memory. “But Father Buliard said he needed food for the dogs, and he left anyway. Shortly after, a blizzard started. The winds were very strong, so that the snow was blowing. He didn’t make it back home. He was never seen again. If he had listened to me, he would not have died.” At that, Adjuk, sitting in a wheelchair in his Whale Cove home just last year, gazed out the window lost in thought, remembering.

There has been much speculation about what happened to Father Buliard. The first version of events – ultimately proved incompatible with the facts – came with the news of Father Buliard’s disappearance, which reached the outside world only several months later. An Inuk reported the third-hand details to the mission in Gjoa Haven, whence Father Pierre Henry sent word south in January 1957, saying: “This is the story. Anthime Simigiak had been visiting Father Buliard’s mission. Before nightfall, Fr. Buliard accompanied him home with the dogs of the mission. Anthime’s father, Sabgut, had his tent set up on the oppo-



Buliard's mission

site shore of Garry Lake. On returning, after having accomplished this kind deed, the missionary turned away on glare ice proceeding towards the mission. Unfortunately, the dogs went straight ahead, without taking the detour to avoid the undercurrent which freezes only very late in the season. That is how the catastrophe took place.”

Adjuk, who was closest to the scene, by his own account actually saw Father Buliard after Simigiak had departed the mission. Apparently the last to see the priest alive, Adjuk told it this way to the RCMP, an account which he has repeated on many occasions over the past 50 years. After the missionary left with his dog-team, the wind picked up, and the snow started drifting. Visibility reduced such that the priest could not be seen, even though his nets were, on a clear day, within site of the mission, just a few miles away across the ice. The next morning, Father Buliard had still not returned, and the storm continued. Nevertheless, Adjuk walked out to where the nets were, and found nothing: no sign that anyone had been there, the ice apparently undisturbed, the nets untouched. There were no tracks visible; the blowing snow had obliterated whatever clues the dogs and sled had left. Worried, he walked to Sabgut's camp on the mainland, where he told Sabgut that the missionary had not returned. Over the next few days, Sabgut and Adjuk made some effort to search on foot for Father Buliard, or at least for some clues to his disappearance. They found nothing and, as Inuit would, accepted his loss as part of the delicate balance between life and death on the barrenlands. In one Inuk observer's words, at the time, “We accept death from causes such as starvation, drowning, freezing to death, much easier than white men do, as we live with it all the time.” As Sabgut later told the RCMP, the dogs probably smelled some caribou and chased after them. Then the Father, with his poor vision, could not find his way back home. Perhaps, he suggested, the

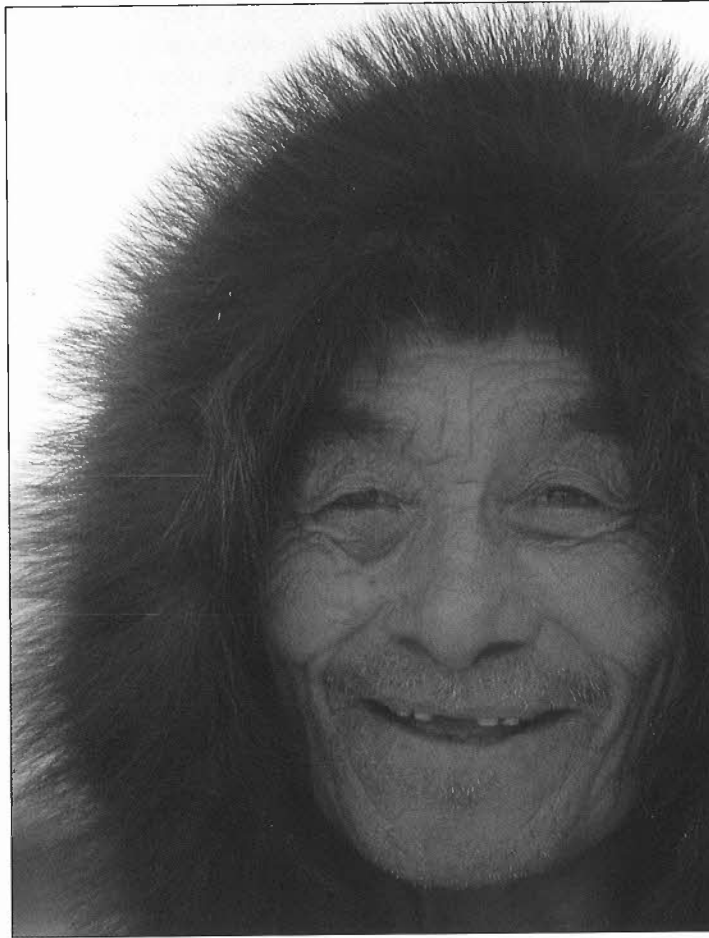
dogs had run away with the sled – it was known that Father Buliard was adequately but not highly skilled with the dogs. Nor could he build an iglu. Probably, he froze to death, lost on the tundra. Not only Adjuk, but almost everyone with whom you might speak today, accepts this account.

There are, however, other theories, which may reveal nothing more than the

RCMP tried in vain to confirm through repeated investigations, a self-declared shaman named Kukshout plotted to murder the priest. (Kukshout was undoubtedly a powerful figure in the Garry Lake area but, according to Adjuk, he did not perform any “wonderful” acts, as befitting a shaman.) Kukshout had had disagreements with Father Buliard, according to the priest's diary, even though he was baptized Roman Catholic and had, previously, served as a guide for the missionary. The police based their rationale for motive on Kukshout's desire to remove Father Buliard's influence which, they argued, served to diminish Kukshout's power over “his” people. The RCMP claimed to know, absolutely, that “Fr. Buliard while at Garry Lake always slept with a loaded rifle next to him at all times,” because he feared attack from someone in the area.

The police theory held that Kukshout intercepted Father Buliard on the ice, en route to his nets, shot him dead, and then – with the help of two other men, Sabgut and Simigiak, who both lived in the same camp as Kukshout – put his body through a hole in the ice, where it disappeared, never to be seen again. To a significant extent, this thinking is based on what happened to the priest's dogs. Sometime later (there is confusion about whether it was days, weeks, or months later), five of the dogs returned to the mission. No one ever said they were coated in ice. They were no longer attached to a sled. Someone, theorized the RCMP, had released them. And clearly, they had not plunged through thin ice, taking Father Buliard with them. One thing is clear in the RCMP reports – a year later, Kukshout was using these dogs as his own. That, it might be argued sensibly, was only practical.

The other curious circumstance



Ikinilik

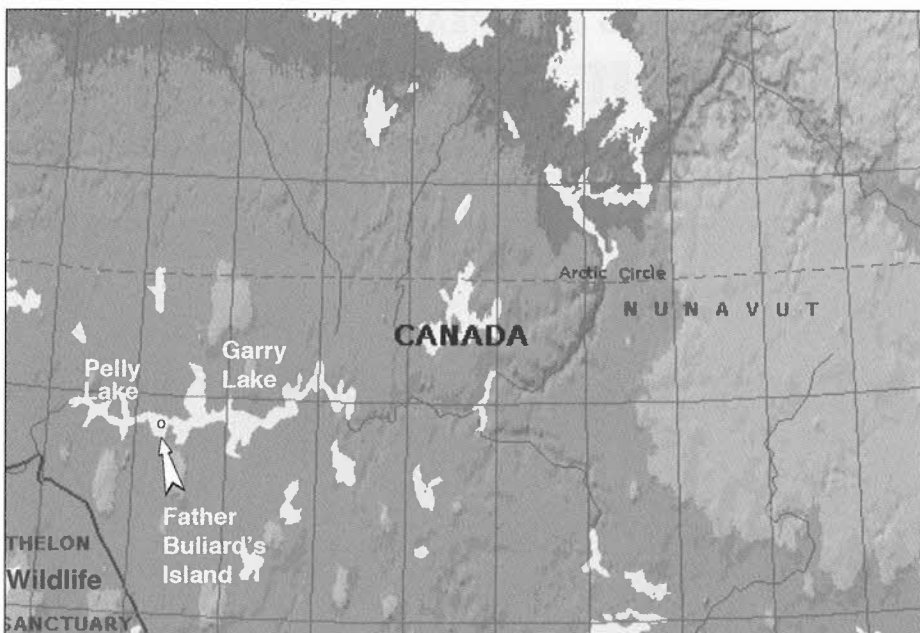
vivid imagination of some non-Inuit writers and RCMP investigators, but which must nonetheless be told. Adjuk dismisses them unequivocally: “A person who was not there to see, wrote about someone drowning Father Buliard, wrote lies about the Inuit. This liar wrote that some Inuit men drowned Father Buliard. It was his imagination. He had never even been to Garry Lake.” Adjuk was referring to a book, *The Howling Arctic*, written by Ray Price, published in 1970, several years after the events, which contains a chapter about Father Buliard's disappearance. By this account, which the

which the police offered to support their theory was the untimely disappearance of Simigiak, one of the supposed witnesses, while out hunting a year later with Kukshout, who returned to camp with Simigiak's rifle in hand. Many years later, in 1978, Sabgut reportedly committed suicide, tortured, some said, by allegations that he played a part in the disappearance of Father Buliard. At the very least, it all adds up to suspicious. Not until the winter of 1979/80, a few months after the passing of their principal suspect, Kukshout (who, paradoxically, died as a result of breaking through the early-winter ice on a lake near his home in Whale Cove), did the RCMP close their file on this case.

There have been other, even wilder, rumours. An officer in the Canadian Army, who was responsible for retrieving Father Buliard's diary from the mission in 1961 while engaged in a northern mapping survey, reported hearing that the priest's body – with a knife still stuck in the back – had been found 300 kilometres downstream, where the Back River reaches the ocean.

Some people suggested that an Inuk who disliked or envied Father Buliard had placed a curse on him and, when he died, a sense of responsibility befell those around Garry Lake who knew of the curse. An RCMP document records this idea and adds: "When Buliard became lost and did not return, this particular [Inuk] spread the word that his wish had been obeyed by the spirits and that he had gotten rid of the Father." Still others suggested that it was an Anglican plot to undermine the competition.

On the other hand, one police officer wrote: "To my knowledge there is no support for the rumour that Fr. Buliard was murdered." He goes on to describe other times the priest was lost on the land. "It was almost an annual occurrence with this wandering Priest, to go missing. Emergency messages were dispatched over the CBC Northern Messenger programme to the effect that 'Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Fr. Buliard travelling somewhere on the Barren Lands please contact your nearest RC Mission as soon as possible.' There was hardly a spring passed when the aforementioned did not happen. The fact this Priest would disappear and succumb



Garry Lake

to the elements of the Arctic is no surprise to me. It was surprising to me indeed that he survived as long as he did."

There were several reports that Father Buliard predicted his own death. "Sooner or later," he told his fellow missionaries, "I'll finish by going through the ice, the rivers up there are so tricky in so many spots." One of his closest friends and his biographer, Father Charles Choque, reflects that "his idea was that time was short and he had to really do the preaching as much as he could in his life. He knew that something would happen to him. Because of the way he was living, he knew that one day something would happen." Adjuk's wife recalls that Father Buliard told her, not long before he disappeared, that the "next time he became lost, he would never come back," and he asked her not to worry, only to pray for him.

Father Choque, who served in Baker Lake during the time that Father Buliard had his mission at Garry Lake, has clearly given much thought to what happened on that tragic day in October, 1956. "We don't know," he said recently. "We don't know exactly what happened, because we didn't see anything." Then, in what was perhaps a moment of surprising candour, he added, "Personally, I think that he was killed."

Most Inuit, however, and in particular those who knew Father Buliard, say that simply could not be. Adjuk, who

was living beside the mission in 1956, points out that Inuit needed Father Buliard; he was a source of tea and ammunition, and "because of this, we were happy about him being up there."

"We loved that man," said Madeleine Makiggaq, who was named at her baptism after Father Buliard's sister. "When I think back and start remembering him, I still feel compassion for him." Everyone who lived around Garry Lake, who survives today, says he was well liked and respected; no one speaks the slightest ill of him, or believes his death was anything but accidental.

None more so than Anthony Manernaluk, who was perhaps closer to the missionary than anyone. "When I heard of Father Buliard being lost, I felt I lost a parent." Asked to explain why the RCMP entertained their suspicions for so long, Manernaluk is blunt. "I don't know, and it's not true."

WCA member (30+ years) David Pelly has visited the remote island where Father Buliard had his mission and, like almost everyone else who goes there, felt touched by the mystery of his disappearance.

David is an author, historian and photographer and principal feature writer for *Above and Beyond*. His website is:

www.davidpelly.com

THIS OLD EUROPEAN DREAM OF GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL: THE ROMANCE OF KECARPOUI

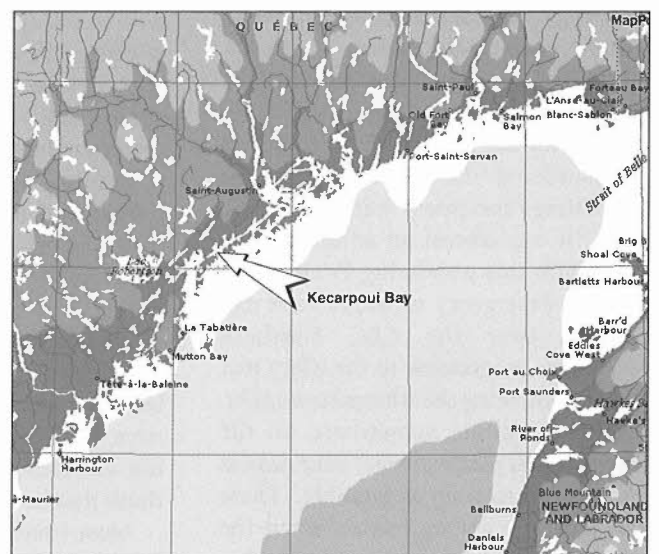
Text and Photos by Bob Henderson



Bay view behind the caribou camp

Imagine heading for the Maritimes (from Montreal to the Gaspé Bay to New Brunswick to Newfoundland) with a canoe atop your Volkswagen. You have no clear prescribed future to return to and you are hoping to find a place to settle down well suited to coastal and interior canoe/kayak travel. The year is 1970. At Norris Point/Gros Morne, Newfoundland, Brigitte says, "This is it, the most beautiful, remote site we have seen. Land is cheap. Gros Morne is not yet a National Park. Let's settle here." Elmar says, "No way, this place is too spectacular. Some day it will be a tourist haven. Too civilized! Let's move on."

So you/they buy a 24-foot fishing boat, head along the Northern Peninsula across the Strait of Belle Isle and along the lower north shore of the St. Lawrence to a remote, rugged beautiful bay known as Kecarpoui. This place makes Norris Point/Gros Morne look like Quebec City at Carnival time. You had heard of this bay with choice salmon fishing and an interior river/lake system from St. Augustine trappers working at a fishing lodge on the George River the summer before. Kecarpoui: beautiful, rugged, remote. Certainly not too civilized. Bingo. Love at first sight, to use



North Shore

Brigitte's words. You fell your first tree the next day and soon a cabin is born and perhaps a livelihood.

So begins the Kecarpoui Outpost of Brigitte and Elmar Engel. Imagine! Kecarpoui has seen more than 1,000 guests, mostly German, between 1972-1999. It is also the site of many of Elmar's films and books – dozens of books, to quote Brigitte, including their German translation of Bill Mason's, *Path of the Paddle* (with their own pictures). This German version is now in its seventh printing, with approximately 50,000 copies sold. The Kecarpoui Camp is a great story that begins for me with the oft-asked question in the Canadian bush: "I wonder what the story is behind this cabin?"

Most of this story I learned from Brigitte herself. I had been sea kayaking with friends and guides with Expedition Agaguk along the lower north shore between the deep bays and many islands between LaTabatière to and beyond St. Augustine. This is a hauntingly rugged and remote coastline. Having been wind-bound for about 36 hours after starting out in LaTabatière, we paddled comfortably into Kecarpoui in a dream-like calm. Wandering to an old fishing cabin set well back in the forest, we enjoyed a can-



Brigitte and Engel

dleight dinner out of the bugs. The fishing upriver was good. The hiking above shoreline trees into open country was revealing of an immense country of connecting ponds and streams. The place was empty. We stayed for a rest day – day three, too pleasing to leave. Bingo! Kecarpoui had worked for us too.

Eventually I turned my sights to an odd cabin high off the water across the bay. Certainly an odd location. The cabin proved to be a sauna with a great view from the porch. A larger, oddly shaped, multi-extension cabin with another great seaward view proved to be the centre-piece. A boardwalk with handrails joined cabin and sauna, easily 50 metres. Wow. Now my curiosity was fully tweaked. I must learn who lived here. Gilles of Agaguk knew of the German couple who ran a small-scale, word-of-mouth, German-based fishing camp at the rivers mouth. This was their personal camp. I dug deeper.

Brigitte Engel and I now have enjoyed many letters and phone chats. We hope to tour the Canadian Canoe Museum together in the near future. Elmar sadly died of cancer in 2001. Thanks to Brigitte, my curiosity for the story is satisfied and my desire to return to Kecarpoui is heightened. Here is their story.

Elmar had been an ardent kayaker since the early 1950's. He preferred the traditional Klepper bummler fiberglass

kayak. Elmar met Brigitte in Paris. Another love-at-first-sight. He was a commercial interpreter for a steel producer. They came to Canada in 1966 with two folding kayaks.

In 1967 they traveled across Canada by car, paddling along the way. The big trip that summer was down the Liard to the Nahanni, up the South Nahanni with a Dene-man (who was looking for moose). Then they slowly returned to Nahanni Butte by kayak, a four-week trip. One of Brigitte's photo images was later distributed to all Canadian embassies as a Canadian poster. These were early days on the Nahanni. In 1968, they paddled the MacKenzie to Tuktoyaktuk. From Tuk, they chartered a plane for three trips including the Bell and Porcupine Rivers. In Brigitte's words: "After this Canada experience, we did not dream of our trips down the Spey, Tweed rivers in Scotland or the coast of Scotland or Northern Ireland anymore."

In 1969, they paddled their Kleppers from Montreal to Quebec City. (The St. Lawrence is too big, Brigitte claims). That year, they also flew to Sept Isles and traveled to Schefferville to paddle down the DePas and George rivers. It is safe to say that Canada had gotten under their skin. With dwindling finances they would head for the Maritimes with that old dream of Europeans to get away from it all. This dream was finally actualized at Kecarpoui. Entrel Belvin helped the

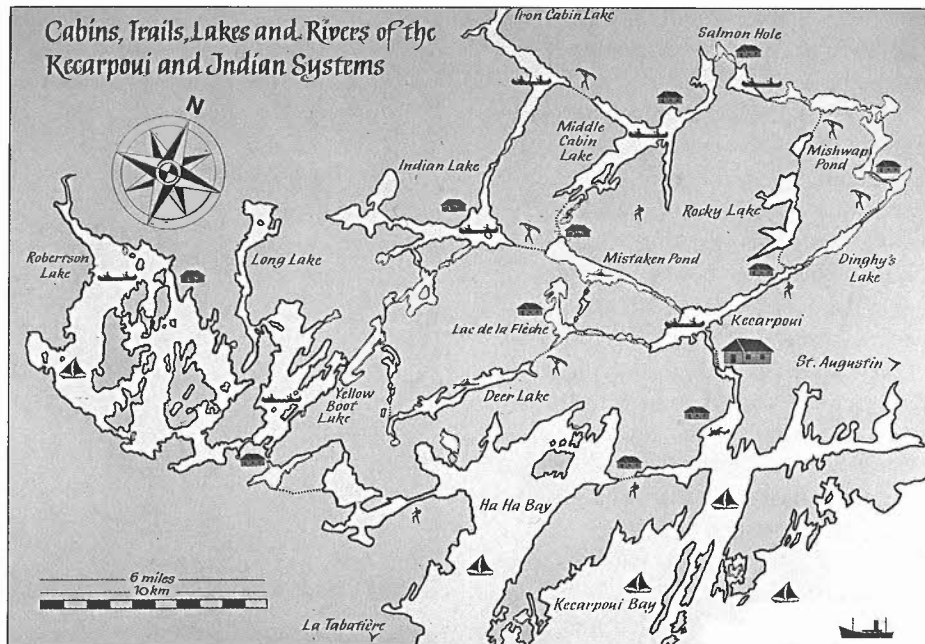


First cabin built by Brigitte and Engel 1970

Engels build a modest fishing outpost and friends/clients from Germany soon followed. No advertising needed. Entrel showed them his trap line amongst the canoeing rivers and fishing/hunting-rich lakes. Later the Engels would create a system of modest huts with up to thirty canoes placed strategically along the routes. Their hope to help create a Provincial park similar to Algonquin was way ahead of its time. A hydro dam later affected the Kecarpoui system. The Engels fought this.

Once set at Kecarpoui, they ran a successful outfitting business, now sold to others. The dream of an uncomplicated life is evident as we poked about at their cabin and sauna. We sunned on the stunning porch, hiked back into the open hills and explored a library that would be the envy of any English and/or German speaker. The Engels only stayed two winters at Kecarpoui. They have stories of bears too close for comfort, crazy guests, and further travels (Cape Chidley to Blanc Sablon by sailboat.) The remaining three seasons were spent at Kecarpoui and coastal communities.

Brigitte spoke to me of enjoying life according to Rousseau and Thoreau. As a teacher with a portrait of Rousseau on the wall above my desk, I knew I had found a kindred-spirit philosophically. Brigitte also noted that while they lived in a remote setting (by any standards in Canada) they were connected to the outside. They kept up magazine subscriptions, ordered books, had short wave radio and later ran a laptop. Power



Kecarpoui Map

sources included car batteries, a generator, solar cell power and human power, and lots of ingenuity. Kecarpoui was a productive workspace. Brigitte also noted the importance of the sauna to their lives. She quoted the Finnish saying: "What is left after the sauna is just the original self." A healthy mix of work (mainly films/books and hosting clients) and leisure remains evident still with an on-site visit.

I could go on. One of Germany's top bankers had a great time constructing our first outhouse which is still standing. Bill Mason apparently loved the Engels photo to accompany the German version

of *Path of the Paddle*. Then there are Elmar's books, among them a half-fictional set of novels about a relative who immigrated to Canada in the 1850's. The stories spilling out from Brigitte go on and on, like the sauna view.

It has been three years since I visited Kecarpoui and started a correspondence with Brigitte. Thoughts of Rousseau's moving-closer-to-nature philosophy and the Engels' unassuming serious travels fill my mind in idle moments. I know I will go back to Kecarpoui. And like so many others, I will keep asking that all-important worthy question: "I wonder what the story is behind this cabin?" Beware the simple question.

I have learned much from Brigitte. We haven't met them yet, but suffice it to say, she and Elmar are an inspiration. Their camp above Kecarpoui Bay has a Walden-like promise for me to stay put for a while. (I have a running invite). Their story deserves to be told. It is a classic European meet bush, learn from locals, teach Canadians a thing-or-two story. It is also a fine example of the quest to tell the story behind the cabin. By the way, Brigitte sold the fishing camp down by the river mouth, which still receives German repeat guests. Brigitte moves between Kecarpoui, Mutton Bay on the coast and Germany. She tends to avoid the bugs of summer at Kecarpoui.

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UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER

By Beth Kennedy

Photos by Fred Lum

Reprinted with permission from Rapid Magazine, Spring 2001



WCA paddlers watch as Barry Godden works his way down Rosy Cosy Rapids

Whitney, Ontario is the last town you pass through on Highway 60 before entering the east gate of Algonquin Park. Home to the Algonquin Ski Club and many MNR employees, Whitney's other outstanding feature is its proximity to the Upper Madawaska River.

A leisurely 9:00 a.m. breakfast meeting at the Algonquin Lunch Bar/Shell station in Whitney (adjacent to the river) is recommended. They have a great greasy-spoon breakfast and if your group is large enough, sit at the big, round table in the corner and they'll bring a thermos of coffee and leave it for you.

Leaving the lunch bar, you now have two options. The usual run of the Upper Mad starts at Whitney and finishes at the town of Madawaska, a route that's about 27 km (by the river, not the highway) and a very long day trip. If you want less

hustling and more playing, a great alternative for a shorter day starts further down the river at the hydro lines and finishes at Devil's Elbow, a distance of about 10 km. This shorter trip uses the railbed road to bypass the first seven kms of river, including three km of flatwater on Rapid Lake.

Familiar to many paddlers is the hydro line road, about four km east of Whitney at the wires crossing the highway. The road runs under the lines to the put-in for the shorter day trip. Last spring a large I-beam blocked the road, and it may or may not still be there. Taking the railbed road from Whitney may be your only choice.

To access the railway bed road from the lunch bar, head east about 100 metres and turn left onto the road at the small municipal building. Turn left just

after the building, go left over the bridge and immediately turn right. After 1/2 km you will be facing a trail-riding barn and on your right, a short slope takes you down to the railway bed road.

While it's mostly flat, being a railway bed road, conditions do vary—potholes, ice and other obstacles can make it hazardous. If you encounter an obstacle, please try to clear it. Also the road is used heavily by ATVers, trail-riders, etc. — more good reasons to drive carefully. Evacuation and portaging options are readily available as the road closely follows this section of river.

After about 7.5 km, you'll come to the put-in at the hydro lines. On the right you'll see the road that travels under the hydro lines from Hwy 60. Straight ahead, about 9.5 km down the railway bed (set your odometer,) is the take-out at the

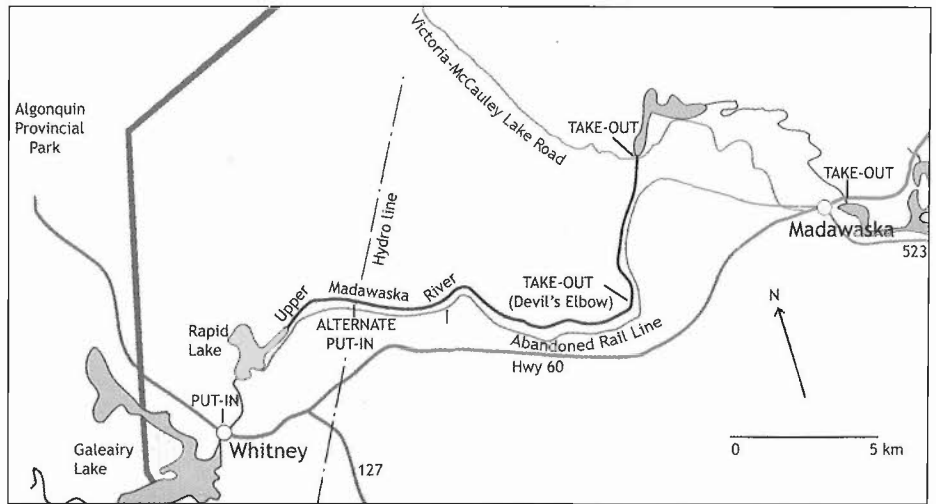
rapid known as Devil's Elbow.

The Upper Mad from the hydro lines to Devil's Elbow has all the beauty of neighbouring Algonquin Park with towering pines, rocky shores and no cottages or motorboats. If you want to stay overnight on the rivers, campers have been found at Hermann's Chute and further down at Bear Trap Chute, but there are no designated campsites.

George Drought's guide to the Madawaska River and Opeongo River, in my experience, is largely accurate and I recommend taking along a copy of it. You can purchase it at most outdoor stores.

Most of the rapids between the hydro lines and Devil's Elbow are a few hundred metres in length with ratings between class 1 and 3, along with the odd c4 to keep you alert. At higher water you'll find some large, friendly surf waves as well as lots of big standing waves that can toss you around. At all levels there are plenty of eddies.

A scenic lunch spot near the halfway point is Hermann's Chute, probably the best known rapid on the Upper Mad. It's apparently named for Hermann Kerkoff



Upper Mad Map

of Madawaska Kanu Centre and is a mandatory portage for most paddlers.

The Upper Mad is great for open boaters and kayakers alike. Novice paddlers will definitely want to be with an experienced group. Devil's Elbow is the last significant set and the recommended place to take-out for the short day trip. Here are two mandatory portages, some

swifts and 3.5 of flatwater to the alternative take-out near the town of Madawaska.

Spring and fall are usually the only seasons you can paddle the Upper Mad but check the water level from the bridge in Whitney – if there are standing waves and it looks like a fun run, then the rest of the river will be as well.

THE ISLAND

Pulled into the tail end of an island to check out a possible campsite for the night. As we were paddling by we saw a nice flat spot with a gentle slope to the water. There were some large sheltering trees in back of the flat spot to frame the campsite and to block the wind from every direction except the one facing the water. There was also lots of exposed granite for spreading out the gear. Even from canoe level, we could tell that the island would be a good place to spend the night.

Pondered for a moment the question, "Why do wilderness canoeists like camping on islands?" My guess is it's because an island is a small enough piece of land. There's less terrain on an island. You can possess it for a while. You can know the little a little better.

Camping on shore instead of on an island probably offers more protection from the weather. There's more firewood, lots more room to spread out, and less risk of being trapped by a big blow from a bad direction. But the shore has so much that you can never explore it all. Kilometer after kilometer of it. It's just too big.

How many have been on this island since the big thaw? Hard to tell, but the campfire ashes say that there have been – others. I run the ashes of their campfires through my hands. We build our fire on the same spot that built their fires. The ashes of our fire mix with the ashes of their fires. Through this union of past fires and present fires, we come to an understanding. Not verbally, but we are communicating. They too have suffered the cold, the mosquitoes, and the rain as we have. They too have made the same portages and worked through the same rapids as we have. They too have passed this very island and stopped for the night.

Deep communication of soul to soul is lacking in our era. We move too fast, and we have no time. This meeting of past and present on the island is another great benefit of wilderness travel. Travelers from two different eras can communicate at the same time. Not verbally, but heart to heart anyway.

Greg Went, gregwent@msn.com

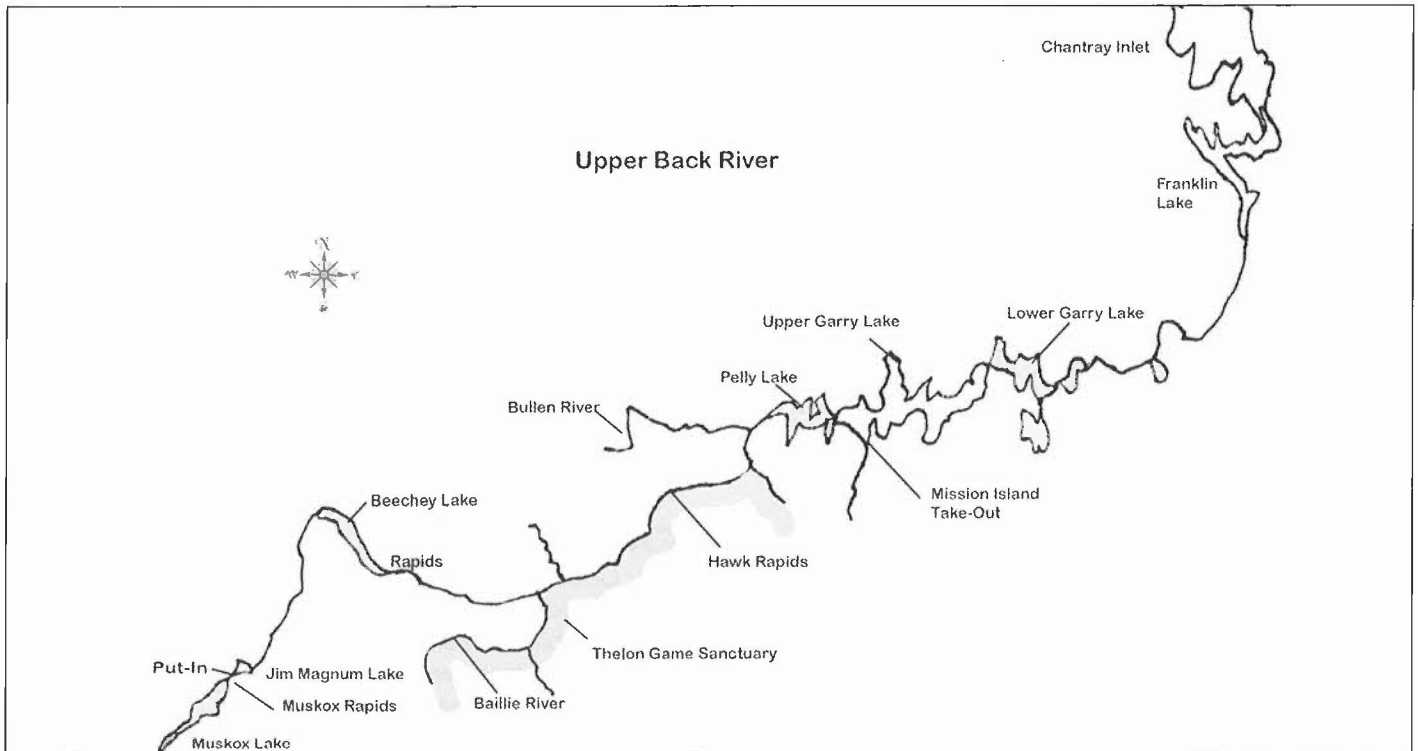


Blair Richardson and Ian Malcolm in high water

Lead photo appeared in the Winter 06 Issue in **RUNNING THE FOND DU LAC RIVER** by Blair Richardson. Photo Credit above photo: Austin Marshall. All other Photos: Ian Malcolm.

PHOTO FAUX PAS

Adventure on the Upper Back River, by Daniela Kosch-Bell, Photos by Doug Bell (appeared in the Winter 06 issue as photos by Marily Sprissler.) Map by Daniela Kosch-Bell.



Upper Back River

Food for Paddlers

If you would like to share your favourite tripping recipes, please contact Barb Young, 12 Erindale Crescent, Brampton, Ont. L6W 1B5, or youngj david@rogers.com.

Cooking with Herb

The following article first appeared in Nastawgan Spring 2001. It is being reprinted now as a continuation of our tribute to Herb.

Herb Pohl is one of the Wilderness Canoe Association's much-revered members. He has traveled solo in many remote areas of Canada. His wonderfully written articles in Nastawgan are always looked forward to, and his slide presentations are very slick and highly entertaining. But, you may ask...can he cook? Well, he certainly can, in his own way.

Cooking with Herb

Breakfast favorites: bacon and pancakes

Lunch favorites: bacon and cheese

Supper favorites: bacon, potatoes, and onions (see recipe below)

As this menu suggests, Herb likes bacon.

According to Herb (and those who know), fat is the best source of energy. Fat packs nine calories of energy per gram compared to four calories per gram for protein and carbohydrate. So if you expend energy like Herb does on a canoe trip, bring lots of bacon. Herb is a definite carnivore and eats meat at most meals. Herb buys a heavily-smoked and salted bacon that is partially cooked and he packs about 1.5 pounds per week. It can be eaten without cooking if fires are scarce. He also enjoys salami and sausages which he has vacuum-packed for the trip. Dehydrated extra-lean ground beef and dehydrated chicken (1/4 pound per serving) rounds out his meat allowance. Herb favors cheeses from Holland with a wax coating such as Edam, which keep well. Along with potatoes, he enjoys pasta and rice. To spice up his meals he packs some curry sauce. Herb doesn't have much of a sweet tooth

– his only desserts are granola bars or fruit bars (those whose wrappers are easily burned).

To counter his bacon diet, Herb drinks lots of tea and Tang. He consumes 7-8 cups of tea per day. He prepares two flasks per day mixing orange pekoe and orange zinger tea bags along with black currant and mint. He premixes Tang with sugar (two parts Tang to one part sugar) and spices (cinnamon and ground cloves) and packs this in milk bags. For each 10-oz cup he adds three heaping teaspoons and drinks this either hot or cold.

Herb's recipe for bacon, potatoes, and onions:

Cut bacon into snippets and fry this along with chopped onion. Boil one large baking potato, chop this, and add to the frying pan. Voilà...a feast fit for a king!

Notice Board

MORRIS, James Gordon "Jim" – at home on Tuesday, March 13th, 2007; at the age of 71. Jim Morris, of Hawkestone, beloved husband of Hilary (nee: Grundy). Loving father of Stewart and his wife Denise of Oakville. Dear brother of George of Scotland and Bobby and his wife Helen of New Zealand. Following cremation, a Celebration of Jim's Life will be held at the Mundell Funeral Home, 79 West St. N., Orillia, on Wednesday, March 21st at 1 p.m. If desired, memorial donations to the charity of one's choice would be gratefully appreciated. Messages of condolence are welcome at www.mundellfuneralhome.com
Photo Gallerie: http://gnu.295.ca/~peak/jim_morris.html

SOUTH NAHANNI TRIPPERS WANTED

Two experienced trippers seeking other experienced paddlers to participate in a self-guided expedition down the Nahanni from Rabbit Kettle Lake to Nahanni Butte in July or August 2007. Our hope is to have 2 to 4 other people join us in our journey on this world heritage river. The plan is to take a leisurely 14 days on the river. We would like to hear from anyone with knowledge of logistics in planning a trip on the Nahanni.
Contact Barry at 519-886-3739 or barry.cull@rogers.com

ARCTIC TRIPPING CANOE FOR SALE OR RENT Pre-positioned on the banks of the upper Thelon (between Eyeberry Lake and the Sanctuary), ready for your trip down to Baker Lake. Save on shipping and air charter costs. This is a seasoned, large-volume, 17' kevlar boat, with lots of dents and scratches, but entirely serviceable. Price negotiable. If it's not spoken for by the end of May, it will be picked up and flown out to Fort Smith in late June. For details, contact: dpelly@sympatico.ca

WCA TREASURER Join the group of expertise and volunteer your skills. This job requires mostly banking and some possible bookkeeping. Email aleks@gusev if you would like to contribute to your club.

CANOE FOR SALE Mad River TW Special.Green. Very Good condition. At 18.5 feet and weighing in at 65 lb. in Expedition Kevlar, this is an outstanding tripping canoe for big lakes and non-technical rivers. Very fast even with a heavy load, yet stable enough for a couple of kids. \$1700. Toronto area. Contact Bill Ness, bness@look.ca.

CANOE FOR SALE 17 ft. ABS Mad River Explorer. Asking \$350. Contact Steve at (905) 276-8285

Noteworthy Events

NATIONAL LAUNCH OF THE LURE OF FARAWAY PLACES

by HERB POHL

Edited by James Raffan

Saturday, May 12, 2007 at 3:00 p.m

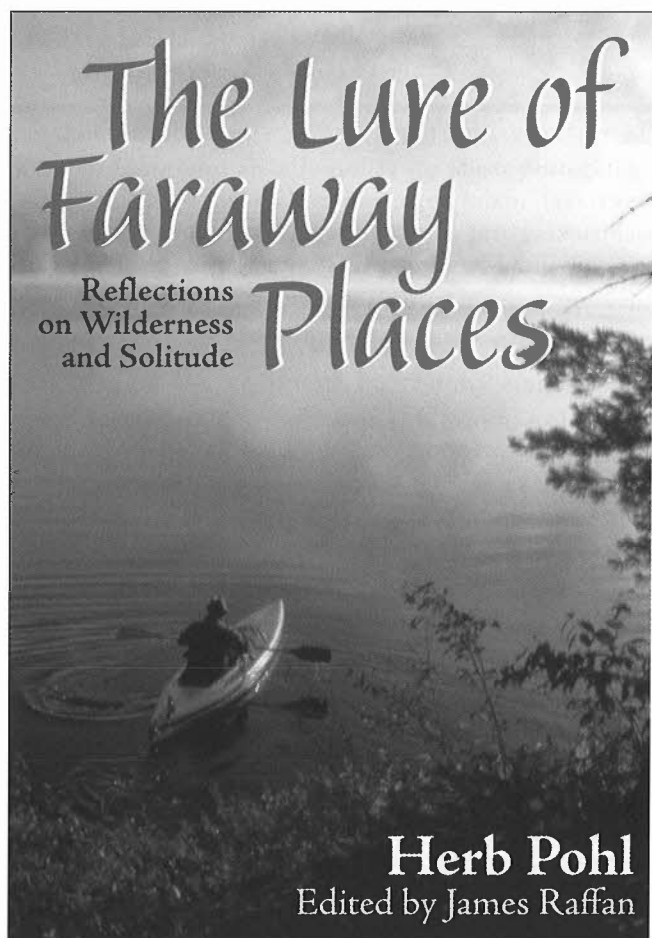
The Canadian Canoe Museum
910 Monaghan Road
Peterborough
Ontario K9J 5K4 (705) 748-9153

Direction to the museum at www.canoemuseum.net.

The event will include:

- Welcome from Janice Griffith, General Manager of the CCM,
- A presentation about the book by editor (and CCM Curator) James Raffan,
- A formal handover and celebration of the donation by Herb's wife, Maura, of Herb's canoe, paddle, journals, books and photographs to the Museum,
- Fellowship and refreshments in the CCM Education Centre.

The event will be hosted by Barry Penhale of Natural Heritage/Natural History Press, a member of the Dundurn Group, in conjunction with staff and volunteers of The Canadian Canoe Museum.



The Lure of Faraway Places

PADDLE THE DON

Sunday, May 6, 2007

All canoeists paddle the Don River. Canoes will be launched from E.T. Seton Park at Leslie St. and Eglinton Ave. For more information or to register on-line, please visit www.paddledon.ca or

Amy Thurston, B.Sc. (Env.)
Project Manager, Don/Highland Creek Watersheds
Watershed Management Division
Toronto and Region Conservation
5 Shoreham Drive
Downsview, ON M3N 1S4
P: 416-661-6600 Ext. 5283
F: 416-667-6278
URL: www.trca.on.ca

See the WCA Outings Calendar for a special WCA Don River event on April 29, 2007

WILDERNESS FIRST AID TRAINING

2-day program

- Toronto (14-15 April), and
 - Palmer Rapids (09-10 June)
- for those who'd like to combine some paddling on the Madawaska with WFA training).

Customized for WCA members by CWMT (Canadian Wilderness Medical Training).

Cost \$160.00 includes course manuals, certification and of course excellent instruction.

Course details available at www.paddlerco-op.com under Rescue & First Aid.

To sign up, contact Elsie Carr-Locke (elsiecot@yahoo.ca) or Aleks Gusev (aleks@gusev.ca).



CPM #40015547
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Published by the Wilderness Canoe Association
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 fac-

ilitate 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.

Letters to the Editor

To Wilderness Symposium Attendees:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many attendees at the Wilderness Canoe Symposium who took a few minutes to read and sign one of the Temagami Integrated Planning (TIP) comment letters that we had available.

The planning process for the Temagami Area Parks, Conservation Reserves and Crown Lands has now reached the management options phase and this was our last opportunity to provide serious comment before the recreation options are finalized for approval by MNR management.

Thanks to attendees, we got back 102 signed letters which I forwarded to MNR staff for inclusion in the official comments. Your efforts will help to preserve canoeing opportunities in Temagami.

Sincerely,

Ed. MacPherson, Guelph, ON

(See our Feature Article, The Mysterious Disappearance of Father Buliard, O.M.I. by David Pelly)

I'm writing in response to the interesting article by Daniela Kosch-Bell, "Adventure on the Upper Back River," in the recent winter issue.

I thought readers might be interested to know that the "long-abandoned Inuit hunting camp" on Pelly Lake, which this group of canoeists visited, is in fact still used every year by people from Baker Lake. It is used exclusively in winter, which perhaps explains its appearance in summer; when snow-covered the "less picturesque reminders" of previous occupation are rather less evident. The cabin there was built by my friend Jacob Ikinilik in the 1970s, when he decided his family should return to living on the land. They did exactly that for several years. He still goes there most winters, as do several other hunters whose families descend from this region. The actual site – used for eons, as Daniela says – is known as Kangiararviarjuq, and as a result of a mapping project we completed last year, that name is now in the Gazetteer and will appear on future topographic maps of the area.

Along the same lines, past and future travellers might be interested to know that the rapids just downstream from there – which Daniela also mentions – where the lake drops into Garry Lake, another traditional camping and fishing place, where there is open water all winter long, is known as Illiviaq. Some people have theorised that Father Buliard died here, by drowning in the open water, but all the evidence I've seen suggests that is unlikely.

The priest did disappear in 1956, and some aspects of the event remain mysterious. The last person present at that time, John Adjuk, died last year in Whale Cove. Not long before he passed away, I recorded several hours of

tape with him; I am confident he told me all he knew. He was the last person we know of to see Father Buliard alive, when the missionary left his cabin to go check his nets, alone, against Adjuk's advice. He never returned. (Through access to information, I have read the RCMP file, which I tried to correlate with the oral testimony, and as a result published what I believe is a comprehensive summary of the "mystery" – if anyone would like a copy, they can email me at dpelly@sympatico.ca and I will send a PDF.) Officially, for the RCMP, the case is now closed, as all the "suspects" have passed away.

A final note, the "Pelly Monument" to which Daniela refers was in fact created as a Territorial Historic Site by the government of the NWT in 1977, the year I first paddled on the Back River, and was involved in erecting the original cairn, to commemorate my great-great-great-grandfather. Responsibility for the site has now, of course, been transferred to Nunavut. As a matter of interest, many friends in Baker Lake have visited this site also, and tell me (some-what to my surprise) that they like having the association it represents to them, given our contact over the years. The name in Inuktitut for this location is Pualri'narijuq, meaning "looks like a big shovel." It is, indeed, a beautiful location.

This section of the Back River, where it flows through the big lakes, is known as Hanningajuq. I had the pleasure, a couple of years ago, of recording the oral-histories of all those still alive who formerly lived in the area, [possible future *Nastawgan* entries] until the starvation and evacuation of 1957. Their stories were remarkable in so many ways, none more so than the strong sense of connection with this land which they hold onto yet today.

David F. Pelly
www.davidpelly.com



Above: Symposium Set

2007 Canoe Symposium

Photos by Aleks Gusev

Another huge success, based on the fact that "we keep registering year after year." It's thanks to you, George.

The 22nd annual symposium this year was particularly special in its tribute to Herb Pohl and its emphasis on environmental issues. The line up was as follows:

George Luste chaired and introduced the event. Speakers were:

Brad Bassi: Northern Ungava Canoe Expedition

Pat Lewtas: Heaven in the Land of Wind

Larry Ricker: Herb and Lake Superior

Mary-Jo Cullen: Michipicoten Bay

Jay Morrison: From the Atlantic to the Arctic

Evan Ferrari: Caribou: the Untold Story

Ken Harper: In Search of Nancy Columbia-An Inuit Girl from Labrador

Heather Robertson: Bonnycastle in the North

Gwynneth Hoyle: Guy Blanchet in the North

Iva Kinclova: Crossing the Continental Divide

Tom McCloud: Notawkwanon, Labrador

Eric Leroux: East Natashquan, North Shore

Ian Merringer, Romaine River, Paddling - The Politics of Power

Merrilyn Lindsay: The Rupert - Heritage Lost

Seth Gibson: Memories of the Rupert Region

John McInnes: Herb's Northwest: Trails and Reflections

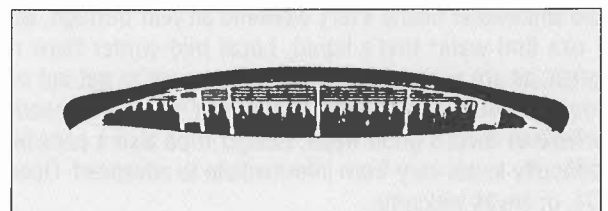
James Raffan: The Lure of Far Awa Places

Rob Butler: Herb Pohl the Adventurer - From Exhilaration to Consternation

Bill King: Herb Pohl, Amiable Misanthrope; Is That A Contradiction?



WCA Booth



WCA OUTINGS

MARCH - SEPT. 2007

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

For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Outings, contact the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca; Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca; Scott Card, 905-665-7302, scottcard@sympatico.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.

It's paddling season again! Time to evict the squirrels from their nest under your boat. Our organizers have come through again with a highly diversified offering for your paddling pleasure. We've got relaxed lake trips and white-knuckle whitewater, educational workshops, and on-the-water skill-development clinics. If you've recently joined the WCA but haven't yet participated in our club outings, we would like to take this opportunity to personally invite you to come out with us. We're a very friendly, welcoming group. Our organizers are individuals who enjoy seeing new members on their trips. Before you know it, you'll feel like one of the gang. You'll meet new paddling companions and find friends to plan future trips with.

If you are a more-seasoned WCAer, please consider becoming an outings organizer. We are very short of regular organizers at this time. The club would really appreciate your willingness to share your experience with other members by organizing outings. Over the years, as we develop our own personal circles of paddling buddies, we sometimes forget how much we benefited from the generosity of those who came before us in providing opportunities for us as new paddlers to get out on lakes and rivers we had never seen before. Please help us ensure that those same opportunities remain for those joining the WCA today. Find just one free day or weekend this year and volunteer to organize an outing for fellow paddlers.

Just a reminder to our organizers and potential organizers that the WCA does have an outdoor education benefits program to reimburse you for approved outdoor-ed course fees. It's one of our ways of letting you know how much we value your contributions to the club. Why not take advantage of it to help pay for that wilderness first-aid or river-rescue course that you'd really like to attend? Please see our website for program details.

Wishing you all happy paddling, hiking, biking, etc. Looking forward to seeing you out there with us on the trails and waterways this year.

All Season **HAVE PADDLE WILL TRAVEL**

Scott Card, 905-665-7302, scottcard@sympatico.ca — I paddle whitewater nearly every weekend all year through, as long as I can find water that's liquid. Local mid-winter thaw runs are great, as are winter trips south. If you want to get out on a river any weekend, just call me to find out where I'm headed. I go wherever there's good water. Longer trips also a possibility. Trip difficulty levels vary from intermediate to advanced. Open canoe, C1, or kayak welcome.

All Season **FROST CENTRE CANOE ROUTES**

Ray Laughlen, 705-754-9479 — There is some superb lake paddling in the routes out of the Frost Centre near Dorset. As I live in Haliburton and have a flexible work schedule, I visit the area frequently, especially during the week. If you would like to paddle with me, give me a call. Outings are suitable for novices.

March 23 **PADDLERS' POTLUCK EVENING**

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca, book by March 1 — This is an occasion to get together at the end of the winter and swap tall tales of past trips, exchange information with other paddlers, hikers or skiers about that specific adventure you always had on your list, or just have fun seeing old and new friends again and plan an outing together. Bring along pictures, stories and food to share with others.

March 24 **MOIRA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before March 17 — This is our season opener and a chance to recover our skills after a long winter. We will start at Chisholm's Mill and finish at Latta in the morning, eat lunch in our vehicles and run Lost Channel in the afternoon. This is a good opportunity for new spring paddlers to introduce themselves and demonstrate their competence. The river is not particularly technical and we will only be about an hour from our cars. This trip is open to anyone who doesn't mind swimming in ice-cold water. Tandem canoes must have a centre airbag. Wetsuits or drysuits are required. If winter is late and weather/water conditions are unsuitable, we will postpone to next Saturday. Limit of six boats.

March 25 **LOWER CREDIT RIVER**

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca, book before March 18 — Just leave the boat on the car after the Moira and join me on this classic early spring trip. We'll catch the river in Streetsville and run down to the mouth at Port Credit. The river is a delightful continuous class 1 to 2 with lots of play spots. However, as sweepers can present a hazard and the water will be cold, participants should be at least intermediates, and wear a wetsuit or drysuit. Limit of six boats.

March 31 **MOIRA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before March 17 — A repeat of the previous Saturday's trip.

April 1 BLACK RIVER-WASHAGO

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, book before March 23 ——— See Black River: Washago at <http://www.boatwerks.net/whitewater/running.php>

This section of the Washago Black River is a short run from the concrete bridge on Hwy 169 south of Washago to the first concession road west. It's a short stretch of river, but we will take about 3 hours of paddling, working the river. It is an easy, fun run where paddlers can practice eddies, ferries and surfing, with little or no consequences (except for the COLD water). There will probably still be some snow in the bush and the water will be cold. Tandem canoes must have a center airbag. Wetsuits or dry-suits and helmets are required. Limit 5 canoes.

April 6 BEAVER CREEK

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, 416-438-7672, book as soon as possible ——— This will be a challenging white-water run suitable for advanced-level whitewater paddlers with fully outfitted canoes and proper cold-weather attire. Note: if the river isn't open yet, we could switch to the Moira. Limit five boats.

April 8 LOWER BLACK RIVER-TWEED

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, book before March 30 ——— See Black River - Queensborough at <http://www.boatwerks.net/whitewater/running.php>. This is not the same river as the Black River at Washago.

This Lower Black runs from Queensborough to Hwy #7, north-west of Tweed, and east of Madoc. It is 10.5 km of grade I to IV rapids. The more serious ones can be and at least one will be portaged. The river is primarily pool and drop, but a number of the rapids are longish and narrow and require the ability to manoeuvre a canoe at an intermediate level in white-water. There will be some eddies that you must hit, and some definite lines that you must run. The book 'Eastern Ontario White Water Rivers' ranks this river as the next step above the Moira. If you are not comfortable running the Lost Channel section of the Moira, you will not be comfortable here. On the other hand, it is a fun run on a pretty section of river. There will probably still be some snow in the bush and the water will be cold. Tandem canoes must have a center airbag. Wetsuits or drysuits and helmets are required. Limit 5 canoes.

April 7 BEAVER CREEK ENCORE

Jay & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, book as soon as possible ——— Jay & Frank will be running Beaver Creek on Saturday for those who prefer a slower pace with time to scout. If you don't like what you see, you can always portage it. We're out to enjoy ourselves. We're in no rush. Fully equipped whitewater boats with wet/dry suits required.

April 14 BEAVER CREEK FINALE

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, 416-438-7672, book as soon as possible ——— See our description above. You had so much fun with us last week that you want to come back again; and besides, you have to pick up the Thermos that you left at the lunch spot.

April 14 BAYFIELD RIVER

Fred Oliff, 519-624-2328, foliff@gto.net, book before April 07—

Please join us for this classic southwestern Ontario spring run; a gem not many folks from the Toronto area know about! This is 35 kms of fun ending at the Albion Hotel & Pub in Bayfield on Lake Huron. Intermediate paddlers with outfitted boats only. There is a limit to 6 boats.

April 21 BIGHEAD AND BEAVER RIVERS

Fred Oliff, 519-624-2328, foliff@gto.net, book before April 14— Please join us for these classic southwestern Ontario spring refresher; these short sections are not that familiar to those from the Toronto area who prefer to go east for their Beaver Creek fun! The Bighead section drops about 125 feet in the 5 kms from the put-in to the take-out at Meaford on Georgian Bay. The Beaver River is a little longer and we run the section from the lowhead dam (which can be run) from Slabtown to Thornbury. We may or may not do the Bighead first as it demands a fresher brain. We usually end our fun at the Lecky Canoe restaurant in Meaford. Intermediate paddlers with outfitted boats only. There is a limit to 6 boats. These two rivers will both be done on the same day and are completely water-level dependent.

April 21 MADAWASKA RIVER

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before 14 April ——— A day of whitewater excitement for advanced paddlers. The upper Madawaska is a fast-flowing pool-and-drop river with quiet stretches interspersed with some very serious rapids. All rapids can, and some must, be portaged. Wetsuits or drysuits, helmets, and fully outfitted whitewater boats with full flotation are a must. Limit six boats.

April 28 UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER AGAIN

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before 21 April ——— Please see description above.

April 27-29 SPRING TRIPPING IN ALGONQUIN

Andrea Fulton, Email Andrea Fulton, 416-726-6811, book as early as possible. ——— Let's get out there before the black flies do! Join me and my two teenage daughters for an easy weekend trip in Algonquin Provincial Park. This will be an easy flatwater trip with a few portages. I plan to camp Friday night at Arrowhead Provincial Park, just north of Huntsville off Highway 11, and then do a quick overnight trip into Algonquin's interior on Ralph Bice Lake for Saturday and Sunday. Limited to 9 canoeists.

April 28-29 SPENCE'S CELEBRATED SALMON-MOIRA WEEK-END

Glenn Spence, 613-475-4176, book after January 25 ——— Just north of Belleville, these two rivers offer exciting whitewater and fine scenery. The Salmon is the more gentle run, with some small rapids for you to practice your skills. The Moira has larger rapids possibly up to class 3. You can bivouac at my house and enjoy a potluck dinner. These are two of Southern Ontario's finest spring rivers. Intermediate paddlers welcome. Limit six boats.

April 28-29 SPRING IN MUSKOKA

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca, book before April 10 ——— We will paddle some lakes yet to be decided and experience the returning birds and discover other flora and fauna emerging from hibernation. Maybe we will find the first turtles or the last cranberries, as in previous outings. We'll hike

and explore the surrounding area and clean up portages and campsites along the way. Limit four canoes.

Saturday, Apr. 29 **DON RIVER CLEANUP**

Bill King, 416 223 4646. Want to give the Conservation Authority a hand? Clean up the portage around weir 2 on the Don River prior to Don River Day (May 6). We'll meet at 10:00 at the parking lot north of Pottery Road and west of the railroad tracks. If you miss us, just walk up the tracks to the portage. Bring a lunch and any useful tools (saw, axe, bulldozer, etc.)

Organized by the Toronto and Region Conservation, this annual event (May 6) invites all canoeists to paddle the Don River. See the notice in Nastawgan's Notable Events section. Canoes will be launched from E.T. Seton Park at Leslie St. and Eglinton Ave. For more information or to register on-line, please visit www.paddledhedon.ca

May 5 **UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER-LAST CALL**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before 28 April ——— Please see description above. The water should be a little lower, making it more technical-but still cold, so the usual cold water gear is necessary.

May 5 **MINESING SWAMP**

Ray Laughlen 705 754 -9479, rlaughter@gmail.com ——— Join us for this slow-paced trip downstream from the Willow Creek put-in to Edenvale. We can check out the heronry, osprey nest, early spring migrants and maybe some furry critters. Suitable for any paddlers.

May 12-13 **OPEONGO & UPPER MADAWASKA RIVERS**

Jay & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, book as soon as possible ——— The Opeongo is a safe (no waterfalls) huge fun river with lots of Class II rapids, suitable for strong intermediate paddlers. We will run the Upper Madawaska River on Sunday depending on water levels. This is a more difficult river requiring advanced skills. Fully equipped whitewater boats with wet/dry suits required.

May 12-13 **POINT PELEE WOMEN'S TRIP**

Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835, annebradley@sympatico.ca, book before May 4 ——— Camp at Wheatley Provincial Park and hike the trails of Point Pelee looking for migrating warblers you may see or hear on your summer canoe trips. A wonderful way to spend Mother's Day with your daughter. New WCA members welcome. Bring your binoculars.

May 12-14 **SPRING CLEAN UP VOLUNTEER WEEKEND**

Andrea Fulton, Email Andrea Fulton, or call 416-726-6811 Book as early as possible. ——— Nancy Maddock and Kevin Callan have organized a Spring Clean Up weekend and are calling on volunteers across the province of Ontario to come out this weekend and do what you can to clean up our canoe routes. I encourage all WCA members to do our part! Although there is a prize for the largest group participating, I prefer to minimize campsite impact and will limit this outing to 9 participants. There are other prizes as well for such accomplishments as the most garbage collected, longest portage cleaned, etc. For more information contact paddlerscleanup@rogers.com. Or, if you you'd like to join me on my trip, contact me directly!

May 19-June 2 **RIVIERE COULONGE**

Jay & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, book as soon as possible ——— Drive to the put-in at Park LaVerendrye and paddle 270K to the Ottawa River enjoying the 69 rapids. These are predominantly ledge type descents with ample opportunities for ferries and eddy turns according to Hap Wilson. Fully outfitted whitewater boats with wet/dry suits required. To join us, give us a call.

May 26-27 **INTERMEDIATE WHITEWATER CLINIC**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 21 ——— This is the tenth year of our clinic, which is designed to help improve your basic skills. We will paddle the Lower Mad on Saturday and practice our basics skills at Palmers Rapids on Sunday. The emphasis will be on front ferries, eddy-outs, and peel-outs. Your paddle strokes will be critiqued. You will also have an opportunity to practice self-rescue techniques. Open to properly outfitted solo and tandem canoes. Wetsuits or drysuits will be needed. We will camp at our cottage.

Jun 2-3 **EELS CREEK WOMEN'S TRIP**

Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835, annebradley@sympatico.ca, book before May 25 ——— A relaxed trip for women of all ages. New WCA members welcome. Need a partner? Need a canoe? Call and we'll try to partner you with someone. Trip will combine paddling with a hike to Petroglyphs Provincial Park.

June 4-24 **LOWER MISSINAIBI RIVER**

Gary James 416-512-6690, gary.james@sympatico.ca, and Mary Perkins 905-725-2874, mary.perkins@sympatico.ca, book by Feb. 15. Plans are in the works to canoe the lower section of this famous Canadian Heritage River from Mattice to Moosonee. Dates include time in Moosonee and Cochrane at end. The start and return dates are flexible. Must have some previous whitewater and wilderness tripping experience. Give us a call if interested for details. Limited to four canoes.

June 9 **GRAND RIVER**

Doug Ashton (519) 620-8364, doug.ashton@rogers.com, book by May 31. ——— This popular trip down the Grand River offers a local leisurely day from Cambridge to Paris where it passes through scenic farm country. This trip is suitable for novice paddlers with some moving water experience. An excellent family trip without any portaging.

June 10-23 **MISSINAIBI - PETERBELL TO MATTICE**

Jay & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, book immediately ——— After a gorgeous Missinaibi trip last summer, Jay & Frank will be paddling again in higher water - exploring beautiful Peterbell Marsh and running rapids. Whitewater tripping boats advisable, though there are portages for anything technical. Drivers meet in Gogama, on Sunday June 10th and/or detrain at Peterbell on Tuesday June 12 (VIA train Toronto / Gogama / Peterbell).

June 30-July 2 **OTTAWA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before June 22 ——— We are fortunate to have access to the most beautiful campsite on the river. The Ottawa is big water and many of the rapids are quite difficult. You should be at least a strong intermediate paddler to safely enjoy it. We recommend that you join us on some of our spring trips to develop and prac-

tice your skills before attempting this river. Fully outfitted white-water boats are required. Limit six boats.

June 30-July 8 or July 7-15 **COULONGE RIVER**

Cheryl Stoltz or David Atkins, 905-830-0720, canoe@rogers.com — We have paddled the Dumoine and Noire and want to finish up this year with this last “jewel” of the Ottawa Valley. Dates will be determined in late March by our baby-sitting arrangements. Give us a call as soon as possible and let us know your preference. Must have previous whitewater and wilderness tripping experience. Will be a cost for the shuttle. We look forward to our escape from the kids, work, and need to “rest” up before the Canadian Jamboree (6,000 kids in the hills of Tamaracouta celebrating 100 years of Scouting). On the water at 9, off at 3 or 4 to a good book and hammock. Will try to build in a layover day. Limited to 4 canoes

Late June/ July **ADVANCED SOLO WW COACHING WEEKEND**

Scott Card 905-665-7302, ScottCard@sympatico.ca — Take your paddling skills to the next level! An advanced intermediate solo whitewater coaching weekend in late June or July under the direction of a highly qualified guest instructor. Exact date and instructor to be determined. We will be covering advanced river reading and running as well as playboating. The weekend will be on the Ottawa or the Gull River depending on water conditions. Participants must have their own boat and be comfortable with class III water. Limit 6 boats.

Late June/ July **NOVICE/INTERMEDIATE WW COACHING WEEKEND**

Scott Card 905-665-7302, ScottCard@sympatico.ca, book as soon as possible — This clinic on the lower part of the Minden Wildwater Preserve on the Gull River will be of interest to ambitious and aggressive newer whitewater paddlers who already have good basic moving water skills and who want to move up to more demanding technical whitewater. We will work on river reading, boat control, strokes and any special skills participants would like to focus on. This workshop stresses learning by doing and watching, and we will practice group and self-critique extensively as a learning tool. Participants must have a properly equipped whitewater boat—meaning thigh straps and full flotation. Since the Gull's rocks can be tough on people's anatomy, a wet suit and gloves are recommended protection. A helmet is mandatory under the Preserve's rules. Maximum of 6 boats.

July 7-8 **TO TANDEM MOVING WATER**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, and Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca, book as soon as possible — This is a two-day workshop for flatwater tandem paddlers who want to develop basic moving-water skills. It should be of interest to trippers who want to become more comfortable negotiating the moderate moving-water they often encounter on river trips, and to canoeists who want to determine if whitewater paddling could be for them. We will focus on the basics of moving-water boat control and man oeuvres, water reading, and safety. Both tandem and solo paddlers are welcome. The weekend will be spent at Palmer Rapids on the Madawaska River, one hour northeast of Bancroft. The location offers some of the best novice to intermediate whitewater in Southern Ontario. In order to be able to work closely with participants, registration is limited to 5 boats. Jon is

an ORCA certified instructor, and participants successfully completing the course will receive an ORCA 1A certificate. There will be a fee of \$20.00 per person for this certificate course.

Prerequisites: Participants must be able to steer a canoe competently on flatwater. A Royalex canoe with supplementary flotation (air bag, air mattress, inner tube, etc.) to simplify recovery when you capsize is mandatory. If you need to rent a canoe, you should register and reserve the boat immediately as there are very limited numbers available with outfitters. Vest-type PFD's, helmets, and square-bladed, T-gripped whitewater paddles are necessary. Lastly, you must feel at home in the water to enjoy these workshops.

Recommended: While not required, a wetsuit will make floating in the river more pleasant. To manage time, we will review a whitewater instructional book or video before we meet will familiarize you with the important concepts.

August 4-6 **OTTAWA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before July 27 — We are fortunate to have access to the most beautiful campsite on the river. The Ottawa is big water and many of the rapids are quite difficult. You should be at least a strong intermediate paddler to safely enjoy it. We recommend that you join us on some of our spring trips to develop and practice your skills before attempting this river. Fully outfitted white-water boats are required. Limit six boats.

August 21-28 **GEORGIAN BAY – PHILIP EDWARD ISLAND/ FOX ISLANDS/KILLARNEY LAKE**

Don Andersen, dhandersen@aol.com, 716-873-4476, book before July 15th — Join us in exploring the Collins Inlet, Mill Lake and the South Shore of Philip Edward Island. We will be either base camping on the Fox Islands or canoeing/portaging into Killarney Lake in Killarney Park for the last several days/nights of this trip depending on the group's wishes. We will be initially putting-in on the “Chic” river in Killarney Park. Due to the camping restrictions of Killarney Provincial Park the size of this group is limited to five canoes but more can be added if we remain on Georgian Bay at the Fox Islands. Suitable for competent novices who can manage windy conditions, waves and some short portages. Please be prepared for some hiking and photo opportunities. Families with teens welcome and encouraged, as are retired folk. Please book and commit as early as possible.

Sept. 1-3 **OTTAWA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before August 24 — We are fortunate to have access to the most beautiful campsite on the river. The Ottawa is big water and many of the rapids are quite difficult. You should be at least a strong intermediate paddler to safely enjoy it. We recommend that you join us on our spring trips to develop and practice your skills before attempting this river. Fully outfitted whitewater boats are required. Limit six boats.

NOTE: The OTTAWA YMCA/WYWCA POSTS THEIR SPRING EVENTS/RUNS at www.yccc.ca or contact esinclair@golden.net or jon.mcphee@rogers.com for a list.

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