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Image from Google Earth

Canadian Canoe Museum: Behind the Build

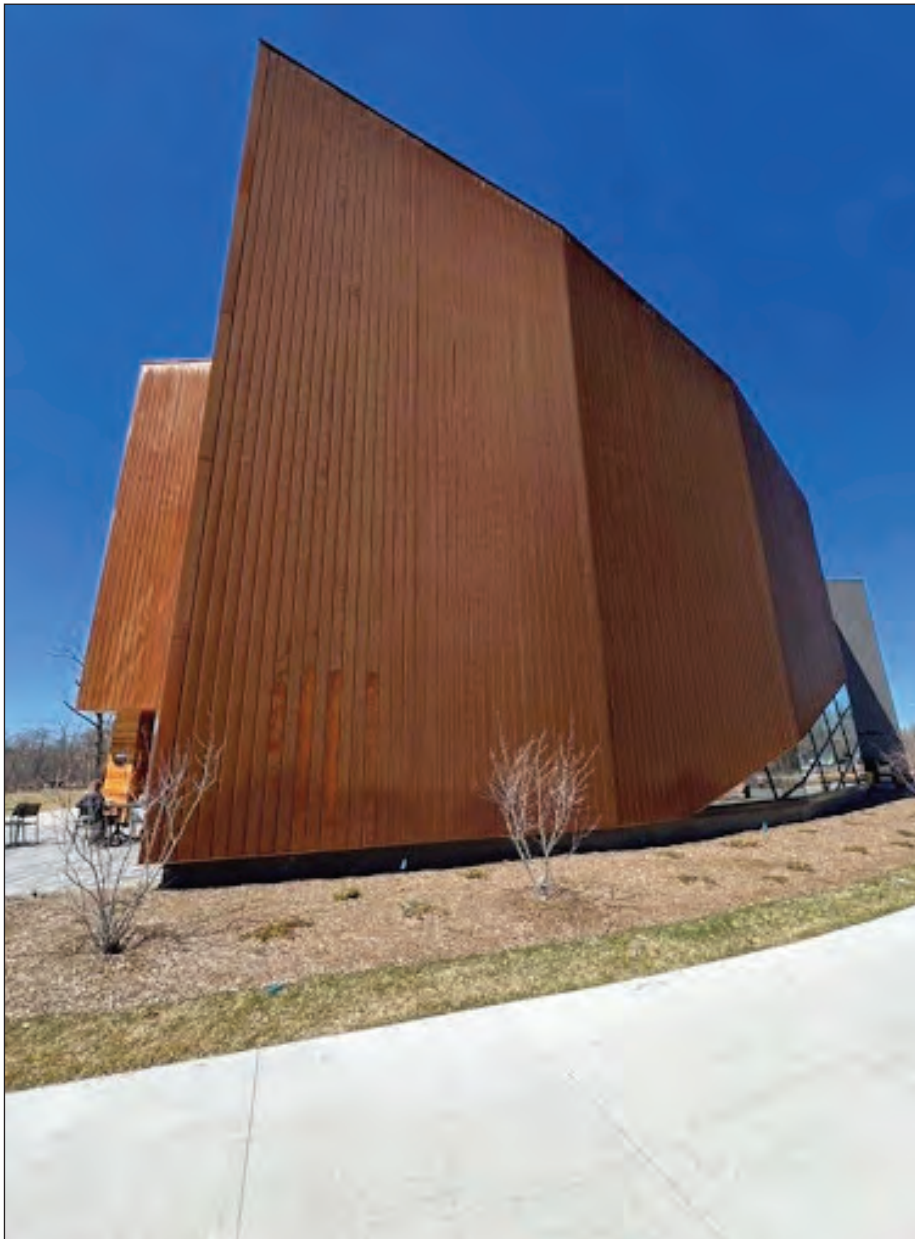
Story by Jeff Latto

Prologue: My background as a professional architect (retired) with an interest in canoeing led me to think an article on the new Canadian Canoe Museum would make a provocative subject for *Nastawgan*. My intention was not to write the definitive story on the making of this museum, but rather to see what the architects behind the project had to say and how this may tie into our shared love for canoeing and kayaking.

The Canadian Canoe Museum started as the Kanawa International Collection of Canoes, Kayaks and Rowing Craft in 1957. It was established by Kirk Wipper in various wooden buildings at Camp Kandalore, north of Minden. In 1994 this collection was transferred to an abandoned outdoor motor factory in Peterborough under the name of the Canadian Canoe Museum. Then in 2024 the new purpose-built home of the Canadian Canoe Museum opened on the shores of Little Lake, in downtown Peterborough..

It is important to note that when the original design competition for an architect was cancelled in 2020 (see below), the Museum still needed to find an architect to complete the project quickly or risk losing funding for the project. In fact the plans were to start construction in the following year of 2021, with a new design at a new location. They chose to work with Unity Design Studio, a local firm that had placed second in the original competition and had the credentials to do the job.

Earlier this year on April 17, I met and interviewed these architects. The firm of Unity Design Studio in Peterborough was established in 1968, originally as William Lett Architects, then in 1973 as Lett Smith Architects, in 2004 as Lett Architects, and recently in 2024 as Unity Design Studio. The founder's son, Bill Lett, along with fellow partner Michael Gallant joined me at their offices for this interview. Note that this transcript has been edited and shortened from the original interview.



Curving entrance fascade. Photo J. Latto

In the discussion you will find references to the following terms and individuals:

The original competition: Heneghan Peng Architects (Ireland), working with Toronto's Kearns Mancini Architects, won a design contest for the new museum in 2016. The competition was open to international architects who would need to partner with an Ontario architect. However, the museum terminated its original lease agreement with Parks Canada after discovering the project's proposed site was "no longer viable" because of the presence of various indus-

trial compounds in the soil. The cost to remediate the soil was not feasible within the project budget.

Cut fill requirements: When building in a floodplain, requirements dictate that no new structure can impede the flow of high water or cause potential damage to properties upstream. As such there is a need to balance off any new obstruction (like a new museum) with increasing the floodplain capacity (such as by removing an existing berm).

Integrated Design Process (IDP): Design of an architectural project whereby all stakeholders are involved in

all aspects of the project. This requires decision making to be based on consensus amongst designers, consultants, owners, and builders. This process is different from the traditional architect-client driven design process which is then tendered out to secure a builder once construction drawings are complete.

Jeremy and Carolyn: Carolyn Hyslop, Executive Director, Canadian Canoe Museum and Jeremy Ward, Curator, Canadian Canoe Museum.

Bing Thom: Celebrated Canadian architect working from Vancouver. He was born in Hong Kong in 1940 and passed away in 2016.

Jeff Latto (JL): I was thinking I would structure the conversation going from macro to micro, so the first question is of course the site itself. Please talk about your initial response to this location as you worked on the project.

Michael Gallant (MG): The site selection is interesting to take that first part of the question and then I can talk about the site design strategies once we landed out of the original design competition.

At the time of the competition, we were dealing with a different leadership team, but we spent a lot of time and effort trying to understand their needs. They remembered that so when the pivot had to happen while we were in the midst of Covid (and people couldn't travel including the winning international architects of the competition) there were a series of phone calls about whether we'd be interested in helping them find a new site for the museum.

JL: You were doing early sketches for them as well?

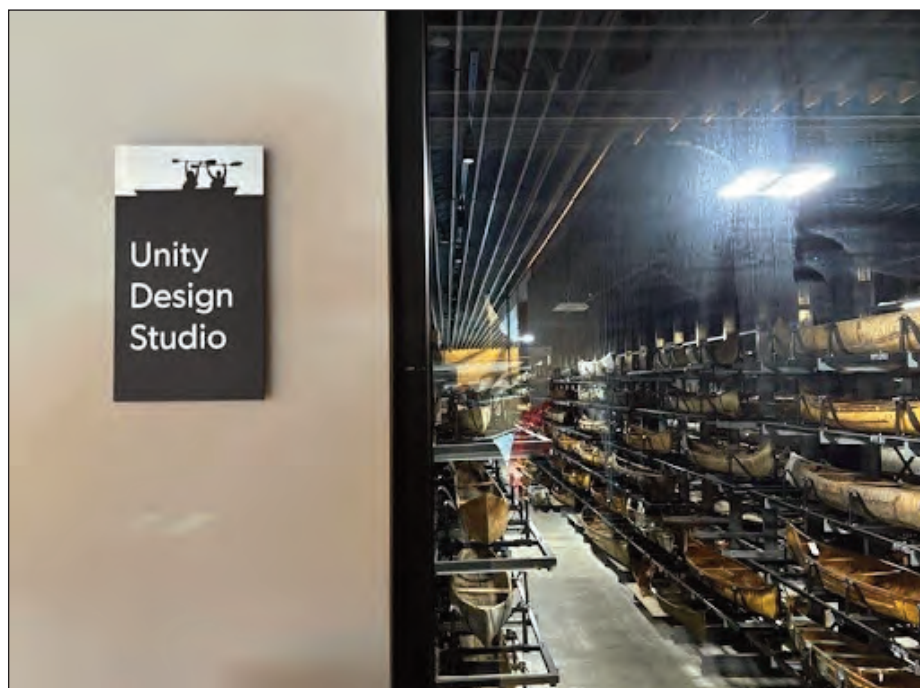
MG: Yes. We were quickly engaged with them because they had commitments from upper levels of government for funding and from large donors, and all of these had a shelf life. Therefore, in addition to working through a pandemic was the fact they needed to secure the funding and build as quickly as possible. Finding land that's on the waterfront in Peterborough isn't easy to come by. There's only a small number of sites available so the initial discussions involved a tour with Caroline and Jeremy. We went to every place we could think of as potential property, none of which the Museum owned, all of which we would need to approach developers who

we knew or the city who would have owned these properties. We did a lot of high-level analysis for each of these potential sites looking at pros and cons. The tour included the Johnson property (which was selected as the final site), which was municipally owned. It was open space and had been previously disturbed going back in history. At one time it had a rail line running through it, in fact one of the first rail lines into Peterborough was used by some of the first industry in Peterborough, including the Peterborough Canoe Company.

We had to do the cut fill calculations to make sure that because we're close to the floodplain that we weren't imposing any harm downstream. It was the berm from the old rail line that helped us to make the balance of the site work. If the berm had not been there it wouldn't have been possible to build that museum on this site in the first place. One of those totally ironic but serendipitous aspects which was fantastic.

With the site selected we met with the town to determine whether the property was available. The reality was even though this site was largely open space it was very poorly maintained, and the forest was in disrepair. There were only about three trees that were in good shape, which we maintained. Most of the wood was ash that had been devastated by the Emerald Ash Borer, as such, we harvested a bunch of ash to be used in the Museum, for instance the exterior benches.

The building requirements were larger than the footprint so inevitably the building had to push up to have multiple floor levels. In addition to the site constraints, we had some budget constraints as well as the time constraints that we talked about earlier. These were the kind of moving macro influences that were really forcing the design of the project at this early point. This is when we started a conversation about construction and procurement which pushed us into integrated project delivery (IPD). Bill and I and Unity have become experienced with having done several IPD projects, but when we're doing rapid design through IPD, it's a bit more challenging than the typical project because your client isn't just the owner anymore. It's now everyone (client, contractor, engi-



View into Collection Hall. Photo J. Latto

neers, architects) who is around the table that must agree on what we could build based on time and money. Every design move had to be heavily justified. The value needs to be clear right away so with certain design things, we started in a very pragmatic way. The roof is a single ridgeline; the section of the building from the north to the south is essentially the same, and you can see that in the Exhibition Hall there were things like the Hudson Bay outpost building that is placed where the ridge is highest. So, the height of the Exhibit Hall was tailored to that exhibit, knowing that it would have to fit in the space. There were other simple moves that we did which were effective but not overly costly such as the curve at the front of the building. Keeping the same ridgeline and the same building section it's just a slight curve that starts to evoke some of the elegance, the canoe shape perhaps, without necessarily adding too much cost. It's just one move on a small fraction of the overall, but since it houses the main circulation of the building and the view from the road approaching the Museum, this rounded end has a very high impact. This was our sales pitch to the IPD team and how we started to move forward with the building form.

JL: Two-thirds of the building feels compact and that's the Collection Hall and the Exhibit Hall together. They're kind of black boxes if you will, with no direct windows to the exterior. The other one third is the open areas of the Lobby and Cafe. It's very clear that in the latter you had some license for architectural expression. One can understand the circulation flow very clearly. Yet it doesn't feel simple in experience. How did you do that?

MG: The other piece in the building form that I should've mentioned previously was the collection hall. Because of the overall collection size, 650 watercraft, 500 of which are in the collection hall, from a functional program point this was going to consume the most real estate on site. There isn't a similar collection anywhere in the world that we could base our planning upon. So, we started with what made sense. For instance, moving the collection between floors would be challenging from an operation standpoint, so having the Collection Hall on the ground floor made a lot of sense. However, the ground floor is where everybody comes and goes and as such we spent quite a bit of time really focussed on figuring out the minimum size of the Collection Hall so there would be



Entrance Lobby. Photo J. Latto

decent area left for the public areas. To do this we had to figure out the racking system as one of our first jobs. Working through all the inventory along with Jeremy and modelling every racking system option, we knew quickly that the Collection Hall needed to be 7.6 meters tall based on the efficiency we could find in the racking system.

JL: So, the racking system is custom and has set the world standard for heritage small craft collection?

MG: Correct. When we were starting the design, we walked to the previous museum with Jeremy and Caroline to understand the collection. I remember the

drama of entering through the big sliding door that led into this area of 500 canoes. It's the scale of the collection that you see all at once that is powerful. We talked a lot about how cool it would be for the public to experience the awe-inspiring scale of this collection. When we started talking about the procession up to the Exhibit Hall (i.e. above the Collection Hall) we had to figure out how to make this long trip up 7.6 meters eventful and not a tedious climb. Walking up to the Exhibit Hall you get an exposure to everything that there is about the Museum and what is done behind the scenes. The visitor first comes

into the Workshop on the ground floor at the start of the main stair and sees people carving canoes, elders building, and there's a cultural essence to that space. As you rise you have a view into the Collection Hall. It's 10 feet above the floor and you're kind of mid-rack in height. You can see the whole breadth of the collection. Then you circle back and have a different view of the entrance, with different views to some of the canoes that are suspended in the lobby. At the top of that stairs, through the Multipurpose Room, is an elevated view west over the Lake. This procession gives you a full exposure of what makes up the Museum before you even get into the Exhibit Hall.

JL: How was the shape and materiality of a canoe or kayak brought into the conversation of the Museum's design?

MG: We wanted to use timber construction across the whole building but right away we knew it just wasn't affordable. There's a clear line in the building where the back 2/3 are collections and exhibits in their black boxes and steel construction was the most appropriate, and then the remaining 1/3 front portion which is most of the public space and the Lobby could be timber construction. The circulation is all timber, and that was based on economics. But wood also aligned with the program because if you're spending the money on timber construction you want it to be in a location where it will be most appreciated and remembered. We were balancing the line between housing and representing the collection, and there were moments where we questioned if we were balancing that well enough. We were candid in our office, and I remember some of our design team members saying the Museum looks like a canoe, which it does at certain angles. However, if you do it in a subtle way or respectful way, it is appropriate. We were aware of that balancing act and revisited it often, such as the choices for materials, where there are curves, and where the wood slat ceiling superimposed above the ribs of an upturn canoe. All of those things were thoughts that speak to the materiality, the construction, the geometry of a canoe, but not attempting to be overly literal like a Disney Park and I think it's successful in that regard.



View of Entrance Lobby ceiling and suspended canoes. Photo J. Latto

JL: The use of wood is very much how Canadian architects, past and present, use wood. It's not trying to be a big canoe. You understand the legacy of wood in Canadian architecture as much as we understand it in the making of canoes. There is an inherent connection that doesn't need to be underlined. You have some nice details such as the stair handrail, the steel balustrade, the wood steps. These aren't things that you just thought up for this project, or are they?

MG: They are designed for this project, and I think it's really a reflection of the model used to deliver this project. We were able to determine this building could be built for this much money and in this much time because we had the builder, all our consultants, key trades and mechanical electrical trades all on board in the same room. Bill's dad

started this business over 50 years ago and as such we have a long history of working with the trades in Peterborough. A lot of the details we came up with we developed with trades that were on board, and I think that was where lessons were definitely learned.

Bill Lett (BL): There was just so much goodwill and pride of workmanship that you don't find in a typical project which made all that stuff so much easier. I don't think we've had many projects where the trades are that invested, even suppliers were significant here in Peterborough. When we were thinking of using a single panel of Corten steel siding for the full height of the Museum there was a lot of banter with the trades, but it's kind of fun to have those discussions especially if you are trying to do something special.

JL: If anything, this probably allows you to do an architecture that is based on craft because you have firsthand knowledge about how things are made, and they have a firsthand knowledge of what you're trying to do as a designer. On another matter, was there any discussion around the future growth of this Museum at all?

BL: There's a lot of discussion now about ownership and the Museum knows that it's going to take quite a long time to resolve because they're going to be giving parts of the collection back to communities that deserve those pieces. There are also some pieces that are duplicates. So, there will be a reduction in the collection size over the next five to ten years. Maybe there's more of a thought about expansion now that the Museum has been so successful being open for



Suspended canoes at entrance to the Exhibition Hall. Photo J. Latto

only a year. There are other matters to deal with as well such as expanding the café. The Museum is working on a new strategic plan engaging with 43 different indigenous communities across the country. I think the future will be more about enriching the experience and not growing the collection.

MG: Very much too because operationally, the museum has never had programs on the water. Last summer was the first year that they've had summer camps and day trips and things like that that get people on the water and start to do more of this experiential relationship to the collection. There might be more investment in programming the site more. It's an incredible site location. It ticks all the boxes.

JL: I know that *Nastawgan* readers will be interested in knowing just a little bit more about you both and your experience with the outdoors, with canoeing, and how much was designing the Museum a personal project.

BL: It goes back to being a very young boy, in going to Bancroft and Lake Baptiste. That's where I started that connection to canoeing which continued while attending Lakefield College just north of here. At Lakefield, where I spent my middle school and upper school years canoeing almost every week, plus a huge part of my learning included places around the world, and tripping companies in the north. I got my Duke of

Edinburgh award after I paddled 21 days in Quebec. I feel like this has been a big part of my life.

MG: I grew up in Bethany southwest of here, on a farm. My experience with paddling isn't quite as diverse as Bill's, but I had grown an appreciation for the outdoors. We had a 130-acre farm in Bethany so I would often spend time in the woods. I have been in Peterborough since 2009, and I've been community focused. I've been the chair of the downtown business board where we've done several projects with local indigenous communities on place making projects. I was around when we went after the first design competition for the Canoe Museum, and we spent hours preparing our submission. We knew we were the underdog cause we're just this little Peterborough firm, but we were partnered with Bing Thom. I remember just being so devastated after we didn't get it. Bill says he's always a fatalist and in this case, it was true when the Canoe Museum came back and we started these discussions. This is totally a passion project. It's where we've anchored our community. We have family and kids here so it's a big deal to try to make this the best that it could be. There's no dismissing the fact that it's an incredible opportunity for us as a business too, you don't get opportunities like this very often.

JL: Thank you both.

Epilogue:

My appreciation for the new Canadian Canoe Museum is heavily weighted to the collection on display. How could it not be? The treasures stored within the museum are priceless and bring a strong emotional appeal with them. I found myself leaving with an even greater appreciation of our canoeing and kayaking history, not to mention inspired for my next trip. These are objects that embody so much about Canada and our identity as a nation, and our love for wilderness. This museum building does a good job of not getting in the way of appreciating the collection itself. Like many successful museums and galleries, you can't quite remember them as buildings, but you definitely remember what was inside.

Lastly, for me at least, there needs to be appreciation for how quickly and successfully the museum was conceived and built, particularly during Covid and its associated restrictions. The architects at Unity Design Studio tip their hats to the Integrated Design Process. But equally you could say it was the community of trades and suppliers, designers and owners, who looked upon this project with tremendous pride and persevered through difficult challenges to create a place that honours the long history of canoeing and canoe-making in the Peterborough area.

How to Paddle with Your Dog

Adventurer sees the Nahanni through the eyes of a Golden Retriever

by Jim Brunow, originally published in May/June 1998 issue of Arctic Traveller

“Doing the Nahanni” is no longer the exclusive experience it was in the days of pioneers. You can still run this mountain river without seeing many people. But the trilingual signs – English, French and German – in Nahanni National Park Reserve indicate how accessible this region has become to hundreds of visitors from around the world.

And the occasional dog.

Moondance is a golden retriever. She loves people, fun, activity and adventure. She hates discipline. Three weeks on what may be the most famous waterway of the southwestern NWT didn't change her personality.

It just fueled her sense of adventure and left her with a few obsessive traits that she now inflicts on the animals around the southern Ontario farm where we live.

Moondance and I paddled the Nahanni with six friends one recent September. A couple of months before our departure, I had contacted the park headquarters to ask about bringing my dog into the area. Officials would much prefer people leave their pets at home. (Dogs tend to chase bears then turn tail and lead them back to camp, not to mention harassing other wildlife.) I was nonetheless reluctantly granted permission to include Moondance in my adventure.

From the experience, I've developed a set of guidelines for travelling with your dog that should apply to most wilderness experiences.

Rule 1: Let the chase begin. Our Nahanni trip began in Fort Nelson,

British Columbia. From there, we drove over the border to the NWT community of Fort Liard and flew with Deh Cho Air to Island Lakes, just outside the park boundary. Moondance had never flown before but took to it immediately. By the time we landed, she had checked out every inch of the plane.

Her investigations continued when we landed and she discovered the first of her new obsessions: red squirrels, a rodent in which she has never displayed any interest. She must have interpreted their high-



pitched squawks as personal taunts. Now, back at home, she angrily gives chase to every squirrel she sees.

Rule 2: Keep up with the Joneses. The sixth member of our group, my canoe partner, Dave, wasn't due to arrive until the second week of our trip. That meant deciding where to put Moondance during seven days of paddling wasn't a problem. She sat in the front of my canoe. Soon after we set off, Moondance began to whine pitifully. When that failed to elicit the desired response, she switched to loud crying. We couldn't figure out what was wrong. Three weeks of would-be torture.

After a couple of days, we solved the

problem. Because I was paddling solo and the others were in pairs, I'd invariably fall behind on the slower sections of the river. Whenever that happened, Moondance launched into her mournful song. She had to be at the front of the pack. She couldn't tolerate the second-hand view. I got a workout that week, probably two.

Rule 3: The bear facts. During our first week, we took an 18-kilometre overnight hike to Glacier Lake. It was a wet miserable day. The supposed “five- to six-hour round of moderately strenuous trekking” turned into a grueling five hours of bush-whacking, and that was just one way. Only Moondance completed the trip in good spirits. Dogs don't have to worry about wet clothes and tents.

Our troubles, however, disappeared as we settled for the night next to the blue-green waters of this beautiful lake. Just after sunset, Rick, a member of our group, noticed a commotion. A grizzly bear was

chasing a bull moose through the shallows along the far shoreline. Spray was flying everywhere. We eventually lost sight of the chase and returned to our pastimes. Rick, diary in hand, was pondering how to capture the scene in words when he looked up to discover it wasn't over yet. The grizzly was swimming directly into the camp we had set up beside a cabin used by Deh Cho Air. This was obviously one mean bear.

Rick gave the alert as he raced to retrieve an old ladder he had noticed in the woods behind the cabin. I grabbed a log, leaned it against the cabin roof and scrambled up. The other four followed up the ladder. As the bear swam closer, we yelled and made enough noise to be



We were to rendezvous at a place called Wrigley Creek, but all missed the meeting due to strong river currents and “haystacks” in the water. When the group finally re-assembled, I heard a story that made my trip through the Figure Eight pale in comparison.

Moondance was travelling with my friends Jerry and David through a strong current when their canoe tipped. While Jerry and David struggled to right the canoe, Moondance slid into water. She bobbed up several times, but the current had a firm grip and repeatedly pulled her back under. She began to cry out in such fear that Jerry and David were convinced they’d never see her again. Moondance, however, is a very strong swimmer. She made it to shore and hopped back onto the spray skirt when the canoe pulled in to pick her up.

The rest of the trip was a walk in the park as far as Moondance was concerned.

heard in Vancouver. Its response was to veer away and swim rapidly to shore a few hundred feet further down. He came out of the water on the fly, glanced over his shoulder at us and took off.

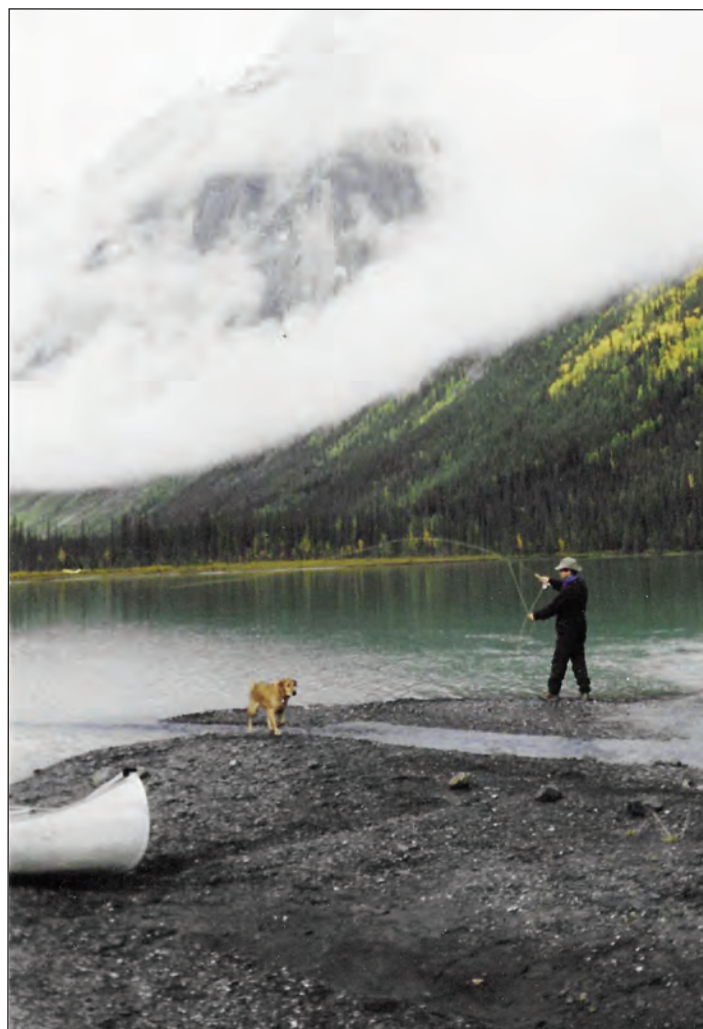
So where was Moondance during our encounter? No one knows. But being a smart dog, it was obvious she didn’t stick around. She just reappeared when we felt it was safe to climb down from the roof. I wouldn’t mind learning her secret.

Rule 4: If the dog won’t eat, then don’t eat it. I’m often asked where Moondance slept and what she ate during the trip. She slept anywhere: under the stars, by the fire, in the woods and under the vestibule of my tent. She ate kibble for part of the trip. When that ran out, she shared our fish and dried food. The only thing she would not eat was a particularly vile pot of porridge we concocted one morning. Dogs have their standards — even when ours fail.

Rule 5: Be ready for a good scare. Dave, my paddling partner, arrived as we began the second week of our journey. Dave is one of Moondance’s favourite people, sort of a case of one-party animal recognizing another. She greeted him with what looked like a big smile that said: Let the good times roll. At one point, Dave and I decided to run a particularly tricky stretch of whitewater known as the Figure Eight rapids. I had already taken Moondance down whitewater of varying difficulty and she maneuvered through them from her position on the skirt of the canoe without mishap.

The Figure Eight rapids were a different class. They’ll spin your canoe 180 degrees.

We felt it was best to leave her with the rest of the group, who had decided to portage.



Friends of Dumoine

By Wally Schaber, Director, Friends of Dumoine.

Bill Mason loved the Dumoine and all Wild Rivers.

He was one of the great influencers in my life. He was my friend, paddling partner, right winger in hockey games, business supporter and helped form in me a wilderness philosophy I've tried to translate into Friends of Dumoine.

Bill believed it was essential to build in others a value system that translated into serious support for preserving wilderness. He believed there were many venues to accomplish this. The strongest way was taking people into the wilderness and teaching them the skills and behaviour necessary to enjoy wilderness travel but leave a small footprint.

Bill and I agreed the segment of the population that can/will do a wilderness journey is too small a voting bloc to influence decision makers. At that time, I felt I could best influence people through teaching skills, guiding trips, offering high quality outfitting and doing public speaking (this was pre social media).

Chris Harris and I and hundreds of Black Feather and Trailhead staff over the 40-year history of Trailhead/Black Feather, directly guided or outfitted 50,000 paddlers on the Dumoine in canoes and on skis. Both companies continue to do that on a smaller scale today.

An eclectic paddler, Bill's skills extended to writing, film making, public speaking and painting. Through these media he influenced hundreds of thousands of people worldwide and continues to do so, five decades after his death.

Inspired by Bill, when I retired in 2015, I wanted to give something back to the Dumoine. I lobbied beside John McDonnell and CPAWS to establish Aquatic Reserve status for both the Dumoine in 2008, and the Coulonge and Noire in 2024. The Poussiere, Fildesgrande and Kipawa Rivers are next.

But my skills are more grass roots. A group of veteran Dumoine canoeists felt the footprint of canoeists in the 2000s was disrespecting the Dumoine, and if we set a high bar of cleanliness for

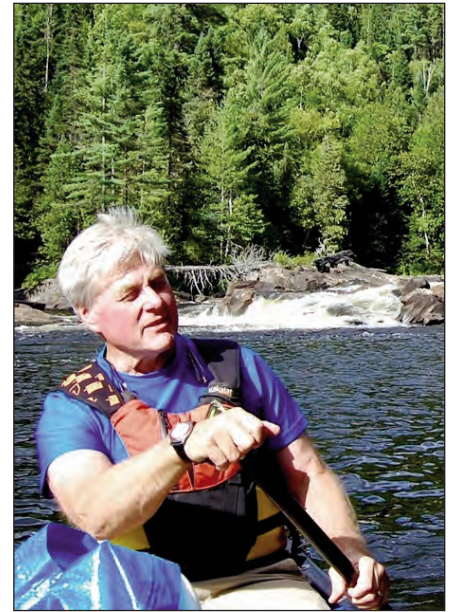
campsites and portages perhaps others that followed would get the message.

From 2016 – 2019 we built 50 thunder boxes. Creatively painted by local artists, and with the help of shuttle drivers, retired guides (doing second generation family trips), camps and guiding companies, we delivered/installed one box on each campsite followed by a thorough cleaning and rebuilding of each. It worked; a high standard of campsite etiquette exists today on the Dumoine.

In 2019 we embarked on a hiking trail building project with Zec Dumoine and CPAWS. The trail was a re-creation of a trail first cleared by Zec Dumoine in 2000 but was first built as a supply road for a lumber camp in 1840.

Our thinking was threefold:

1. To have a strong voice when lobbying for our types of water and land trails we need more self-propelled users involved in appreciating/contributing to the Dumoine Valley, as opposed to the development of snowmobile, ATV, truck and hunting trails. Hikers are the largest self-propelled user group in the world. They could be a new type of traveller contributing to the Dumoine's support and economic impact, thus generating local support for preservation of our type of Dumoine experience.
2. The rich history of the Dumoine Valley is a fascinating reflection of Canada's history. Every type of traveller, motorized or self-propelled, loves to learn about this history. We are creating the trail in a manner that tells this history through artifacts, maps and photos. Some artifacts are left in place where we find them, while others are returned to the trail from places where they were stored. The majority are displayed at the north and south entrance of the trail where welcome centres exist to house these treasures.
3. Our partnership with Wolf Lake First Nation, CPAWS and Zec Dumoine, brings together expertise to tell the first history of the Dumoine and reintroduce



Wally Schaber

the First Nation youth to their traditional territory.

CPAWS provided the guidance to protect and interpret the natural environment.

Zec Dumoine helps us balance the recreational use of the Dumoine watershed with a voice for all.

Friends of Dumoine sees itself as the "boots on the ground volunteer workforce". Our volunteers clear the trails, maintain the campsites, write, research, translate and erect the historic signs and man the two welcome centres: one at the north is a cabin at Grande Chute; a second we are building this year at the southern entrance on the Ottawa River.

We need your help either physically clearing and building or as a writer, translator or donor of dollars or materials.

We are also looking for hosts at the Grande Chute cabin for 4-7 days May-October. This involves living in the cabin and donating 3-4 hours a day to maintenance or hosting projects. The rest of the time is yours to explore, paint, write, stargaze, hike, canoe, or just ...relax.

For more details on how to get



Grand Chute, Dumoine River

involved send us a note at dumoine-friends@gmail.com.

To participate in any activity, you must be a member of Friends of Dumoine.

\$40 Individual

\$80 Family

\$100 Institutional

Pay by e-transfer to: dumoine-friends@gmail.com.

Below is part of a story that first appeared in *'The Last of The Wild Rivers'*, 2016, about my travels with Bill Mason and our flights with Ronnie Bowes, the legendary pilot that flew everyone into the Dumoine, 1969-2002, in the Beaver CF ODA.

Bill Mason And Ron Bowes

The spring tradition for ODA began as soon as the ice went out. Ronnie would call me to announce he was taking ODA to Swisha. I would immediately call Bill Mason and a few other friends, and we'd drop everything to be Ron's first flight of the season into the Dumoine. Just like the timber drivers, spring for us was the time to explore some tributary that was only runnable at the highest water level. The Fildegrande River, Poussiere Creek, or Sucker Creek were our favourites. Bill Mason, a celebrity to many, was my friend, my neighbour, my hockey teammate, and my bowman. He was the touchstone that kept our business, Trailhead, authentic.

When I first met Bill in 1974, he was beginning a decade of work to produce a series of movies and books on canoeing: *"Path of the Paddle"*, *"Song of the Paddle"*, and finally *"Waterwalker"*. They ignited a bonfire of interest in canoeing and wilderness conservation. At the same time, through Trailhead, Chris Harris and I were developing a series of whitewater canoeing courses and, through Black Feather, a collection of wilderness whitewater adventure trips. Both the courses and the trips dovetailed perfectly with Bill's work and influenced his book. We shared information from each other's discoveries and collaborated on whitewater teaching techniques. Chris and I were teaching every weekend with a different rookie in the bow, while Bill always paddled with his son Paul or daughter Becky, both experts. The novice paddlers we were working with



Colourful Thunderboxes



1930s photo of Hector Meilleur Ranger and his daughter at the cabin we are restoring at the mouth of the Dumoine



Friends of Dumoine Grand Chute Cabin before reconstruction

were the same people who would be watching or reading Bill's work. Our communication and teaching techniques evolved rapidly. We helped each other along, benefitting from each other's experiences.

In the spring of 1979, Bill and I decided to use the first spring flight of ODA to explore Sucker Creek, a tributary that flows into the Dumoine six kilometres above Grande Chute. Ron greeted us warmly as usual, which was nice because it was cold and grey. "It will be sunny up at Sucker Lake," guaranteed Ron. I winced. On the previous year's spring trip, he similarly guaranteed the rain that day would stop. Good to his word, the rain, as predicted, stopped – unfortunately, he didn't predict it turning

into snow! I could see he was silently querying our decision to explore a new route without a second canoe to help if trouble emerged. Ronnie offered to detour our flight route up the creek to show us what we were in for. Lots of whitewater and sweepers (trees that had fallen from shore and half blocked the creek) were visible but no serious waterfalls, so we continued with our planned route. I had allowed a day and half for Sucker Creek and a day for the trip down the Dumoine to the Ottawa River.

Bill was 5'2" and 140 pounds of muscle, enthusiasm, and energy. I was 21 years younger and 60 pounds heavier than Bill. At 28, I felt invincible in a canoe with Bill in my bow. More than once on that trip down Sucker Creek, we

had to backpaddle hard enough to stop the canoe dead and then reverse into a back ferry to avoid a sweeper. With leans and perfectly timed matching strokes, we snaked our way down miles of rock gardens, and even past a startled moose. All day, we paddled in sunshine, and we reached Robinson Lake on the Dumoine below Grande Chute by the first evening.

Even though he had thoroughly enjoyed paddling all day in a modern canoe made of Royalex, a new flexible plastic, vinyl, and foam sandwich material just on the market, Bill was all about tradition. He set up his canvas Baker tent for us to enjoy, lit a fire in front of it that reflected heat gloriously into the tent, and slipped on his deer-hide moccasins and woollen shirt.

In all his movies, Bill paddled his favourite Chestnut cedar canvas canoe. That spring, the Chestnut Canoe Company had just declared bankruptcy, and Bill was in mourning. Over the next few years, he encouraged Trailhead and others to make a sixteen-foot and seventeen-foot Chestnut Prospector replica out of modern materials. The resulting Trailhead Royalex Prospector seventeen foot went on to become one of the most reliable expedition whitewater canoes in the North; and our sixteen-foot kevlar and fibreglass models became one of the most popular flatwater canoe tripping crafts in the south.

Bill's gear was packed in a traditional canvas Woods canoe pack. I was experimenting with a sixty-litre plastic barrel with a wide mouth lid and waterproof clamp. I'd found it at a trade show in Britain; it was being used as a garbage can. I knew instinctively it was the perfect size to fit inside our canoes. This blue barrel became the standard for waterproofing food and gear for canoe trips across Canada and is Trailhead's greatest contribution to canoe tripping comfort and safety.

I was half asleep in the Baker tent sipping a coffee with a lot of Bailey's in it. Bill was studying the maps and enjoying his coffee (with my special "coffee-mate"). "Ron seemed busy today," Bill commented. I agreed, but suspected some of those flights were detours just to check on us. This was Ron's River, and he wasn't going to let anything happen on his watch. Bill noted that we had

some extra time now that we'd reached Robinson Lake early. "It's just a mile portage over to Otter Lake then another to Cullen and another to the Fildegrande above Devil's Chute. If we repack more efficiently and both take two pieces, we can do the portages in one trip." This was typical Bill: Nothing was too hard when the reward was another day of exploring a new river. I don't want to give you the impression he was not capable of relaxing. Comfort camping, as defined by his beloved Baker tent, was a high priority for Bill. His painting and film trips were legendary for taking as much time as necessary to capture the perfect light or scene. His painting *Light on Dumoine Rocks* suggests that very theme.

The next day, we did the portages to Cullen Lake and paddled across to the trail leading to the Fildegrande. In 1979, all these trails were still in good shape due to regular use by fishermen, hunters, and canoeists. The fire rangers' trails had yet to be reclaimed by nature. New roads and ATVs would change all that. As we paddled across Cullen Lake, I looked toward the southeast and admired a classic log cabin nestled under the pines. It had



Friends of Dumoine Grand Chute Cabin post construction



Friends of Dumoine Grand Chute Cabin



Dumoine Tote Road Trail

been built in 1934 by one of the earliest members of the Dumoine Rod and Gun Club, Mr. Raymond Prime, and I am sure that many a good story or fishing fable was told around its wood stove. In 2002, I became the third owner of that cabin and now add my own exaggerations to the tradition.

But on that morning in 1979, I had no other plan than to enjoy the day. It was to be our first trip down the Fildegrande River, and with two sets of falls marked on the map, we approached each rapid with more caution than on Sucker Creek. It was a glorious spring day, early enough in the season that the leaves and blackflies had not yet emerged. The

weather, the new experience, the high sense of discovery and anticipation made every aspect of the descent — including portaging, tracking, or running a rapid — as exciting as a first date with someone you’ve wanted to meet for a long time. Finally, Sandbank Rapids spit us out onto the Dumoine, directly opposite Bald Eagle Cliff. The sun reflected off the wetted spots on this smooth, five-hundred-foot black granite face. Bill and I floated by it in silence, knowing no words could improve on the day we had just experienced.

Back at Swisha, Ron greeted us and inquired if I noticed anything interesting on the Fildegrande. Obviously, he’d ob-

served our detour. I told him about the many remnants of log chutes and rock walls built to keep the logs moving downriver, and the signs of a major logging camp at Devil’s Chute. “Does ‘M. Bell Velone, 1917’ mean anything to you?” I asked. “We found it carved into the rock at Devil’s Chute.” Ron shook his head, but I knew he’d be in there some time with his metal detector to research the site on his own. There are two other spots on the Dumoine where someone chiselled a name into the granite with a spike and axe. Below the second drop coming out of Lac Laforge, called Manitou Chute, is a tribute to “B. Paquette, Jun 26, 1887, Papineau.” Perhaps it is a memorial to a drowned comrade.

In the summer of 2014, I discovered a third name beautifully carved into a rock on the east shore below the triple portage: “P.A.M & co 1912.” This carving is more professional and not located at a spot where a logger would have been stationed. In 1912, Paul Malouin and Paul Joncas, two young Quebec land surveyors and recent graduates of a new forestry program at Laval University, were part of an effort by the Quebec Department of Lands and Forests to survey the natural resources of Quebec forests. They conducted a survey by going up the Dumoine, Little Dumoine, Fildegrande, Poussiere, Sucker Creek, and the L’Original River from April to June 1912. To try and experience what they and others faced travelling upriver, I did the Dumoine upriver trip in September 2013. For the most part, it was pleasant; but the two days from the Dumoine Club to where I found this carved name above Lac Benoit is exhausting. I feel Paul Malouin must have taken a day off here to enjoy some excellent fishing and rest. “P.A.M. & co 1912” I believe is his work. I’m sure there are more pictographs to be discovered on the Dumoine.

There were many more memorable trips with Bill. In July 1988, Bill and I shared a Nahanni River trip together with other close friends and family. It was his last request to enjoy one more great river while he had the strength. Bill died in October 1988. Every time I paddle by Bald Eagle Cliff, I think of him and that perfect day on the Fildegrande.



Opening of the Tote Trail – Summer of 2023

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Nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning “the way or route”

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

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

The WCA Experiences Change

Words and Pictures by Gary Ataman and Joe Tobin



From the Past Chair – Gary Ataman (2018-2025)

In 2010, I joined the WCA and was invited to join the Board in 2013. I had launched various club events over the years, ranging from one day easy paddles to multi-week hard core adventures.

On April 9, 2018, I was voted in as our chairman by the Board's executive.

One of the first things I took on was to clean up the website and streamline the membership process. In those days,

we had 365 membership renewal dates where everyone's renewal date was based on when a member signed up. This created a lot of missed renewals and loss of revenues for the club. As a result, I spearheaded a change to create only one renewal date for everyone.

I am a big believer in consistent branding (ie one club logo). The Board agreed and we looked at establishing this on all documentation and on all websites (ie WCA, CCR, YouTube, Facebook, etc.). In late 2019 our historic retro WCA logo was re-introduced and we began to use it throughout the face of the Association. This logo was originally created in 1976 by Barry Brown (*The Wilderness Canoeist*, June 1976, Volume 3, No 1.). In the same year, we opened our brand new WCA YouTube channel. I and others have since created a lot of the content found on the channel.

The year 2019 was a turnaround year, with 509 members up from 382 in 2018, and 51 events up from 25 in 2018. Additionally, this was the first year the club operated in the black after the previous 6 years being in the red.

The Covid-19 pandemic hit the world in Spring 2020 and all WCA activities immediately were shut down. Over the next 2 years the club in-person events went to zero, but to keep connected with our members the WCA turned to Zoom for presentations and workshops to keep our membership engaged.

In late 2022 we climbed out of the Covid-19 pandemic, and as a result we returned to a live Mike Wevrick Memorial Presentation (Wine and Cheese). Our guest speaker that year was Hap Wilson. This was also the first time we simultaneously broadcast the event via Zoom to about 50 online WCA members across the US and Canada.

In 2023 we began the rebuilding process: 10 Zoom presentations and 17 in-person events, membership peaked at 484 – more or less back to pre-Covid-19 levels. The Wine and Cheese event that year was the first to broadcast on YouTube LIVE. People from around the world watched the evening's

presentation.

In late 2023, we decided to partner with a small group of highly relevant paddling industry brands, that was to help generate *Nastawgan* ad revenue to help offset its rising printing and mailing costs.

In 2024, I identified we needed a better financial buffer for the WCA to bring it in line with future expenses. The website needed a future upgrade and the *Nastawgan's* production costs were continually rising, which led to a necessary increase in the WCA membership dues. But at the same time, that year saw 12 Zoom presentations and 21 in-person events to carry on the rebuilding process.

Also, in the same year the Board decided to make a WCA donation to Paddler Co-op (a not-for-profit organization) so that they can buy their facilities property and ensure future access to Palmer Rapids for generations to come. Many of our members have used the facility over the years. A push to do more outings with Paddler is envisioned to be a win-win relationship for both of our organizations.

In 2025, after 7 years serving as WCA Chairman (the longest in the club's history), I have realized it is time to take a step back in my position on the Board. During this time, I have met some great people, some friends for life, and have appreciated the great team of volunteers and event organizers that have stepped forward to make the club what it is now. Today the WCA is stronger, more resilient, and together with the Board I've pushed for a significant website upgrade (the original was developed in 2010), that should be rolled out by summer of 2025. Moving forward I will serve as membership secretary and plan to help Joe Tobin spool up into the chairman's position.

From the New Chair – Joe Tobin

It's an honour to introduce myself as the newly elected Chair of the Wilderness Canoe Association's Board of Directors. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the extraordinary leadership of my predecessor, Gary Ataman, who guided the WCA through seven years of growth, stability, and community-building, despite a large portion of that time taking place during a persistent COVID-19 environment. I'm grateful for his example and for the strong foundation we now build upon.

Many of you know me through shared river travel, club events, or course instruction. Whether we've paddled together or not, I've long admired the spirit of this community: self-reliant, supportive, and adventurous. I'm excited to help lead the WCA in a way that strengthens our core values and ensures our relevance and vibrancy into the future.

As Chair, I'll be focusing on three priority areas in the coming year:

Member Engagement.

At its heart, the WCA is a community. Our strength lies in the connections between members – on trips, at events, and through shared knowledge. We'll be exploring ways to make

it easier for members to get involved, whether that's by leading trips, contributing to *Nastawgan*, volunteering behind the scenes, or even attending a social gathering. Expect to see renewed energy around club outreach, development opportunities, and outings.

Paddler Development.

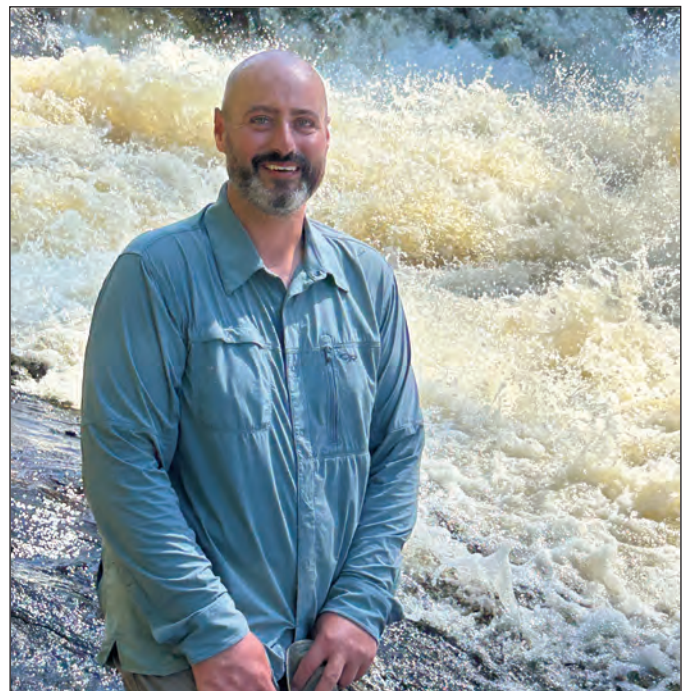
To maintain the health of our club, we need to introduce new paddlers to wilderness canoeing. That can be an intimidating prospect without the right contacts. I therefore see a key part of our mandate as helping new paddlers take their first strokes and supporting more experienced paddlers to grow their skills and confidence. From flatwater to whitewater, from navigation to wilderness first aid, the WCA can be a hub for lifelong learning. We'll be working with trip leaders, instructors, and like-minded organizations to offer more accessible training, with a particular focus on welcoming newer paddlers and broadening participation across all experience levels and paddling disciplines.

Safety.

Canoeing inherently involves risk – but as a community we can help each other manage it. This year, we'll be highlighting best practices, offering skill refreshers, and promoting a culture where safety planning is simply part of good paddling. Sharing lessons learned, being honest about our challenges, and supporting each other's growth are all part of this ongoing work.

Thank you for the trust you've placed in me to lead our Wilderness Canoe Association. I'm looking forward to meeting, listening, learning, and paddling alongside many of you in the months ahead.

Wishing you all the skill for the rapids, the strength for the portages, and the wisdom to choose between them.



Leading From the Front

Myth: “The guy in the stern drives the canoe”

By Rob Dale

This may apply for canoes on lake travel or when paddling with a beginner. Heck, it can apply for well scouted and planned runs on pool-and-drop rapids. However, on fast moving rivers with technical rapids, it's best to yield control to the person in the bow.

Challenge the myth. Put your most experienced river-reader in the bow and in charge. As stern-man your new job is the helmsman. Follow your partner's lead and turn the stern as required.

It was 2016. Veteran paddler, Iva Kinclova, was recruiting for what would become my first Arctic canoe trip on the Hood River. Our group's pre-trip warmup was a whitewater run on the middle Madawaska River, just south of Barry's Bay, Ontario. By chance we were paired up; Iva in the bow and me in the stern.

Part way through the day I noticed a strange silence. There was none of the classic shouting and yelling typical of river running. If Iva planted a relaxed draw stroke or cross-draw, it meant a slight course correction was needed. A more committed stroke meant it was time for an evasive turn. I was learning to read my partner, not just the river.

The Facts:

1. Better Vision.

The person in the bow will always have the best view of the river. The first to see the hidden pillow rock. The first to see the braid with the deepest channel. The first to see the dryline.

2. Gesture Instructions.

Voice commands can be misinterpreted or not even be heard over the noise of whitewater. Whereas the bow person can provide gestures: Pointing their paddle to a safe channel or by planting a draw stroke or cross-draw to indicate it's time to start turning the canoe right or left.

Personally, when I'm in the stern I follow up the gesture by shouting out acknowledgement. 'Ok, I see it. Turning the stern'. In some cases, I say 'Angling the stern', meaning we're going to angle the canoe and use power strokes for a lateral move across the river.

3. Indecision is Dangerous.

In the middle of a rapid there is no time for discussion. If the stern-man is aiming Left and the bow-man says, 'No, let's go Right'. What do you do? Just yield and go Right. It's that simple.



Indecision risks getting pinned on a rock. Just yield the control. Trust their judgment. Your bow partner has the best line of sight.

It's a debate. When is someone ready to go from beginner-in-the-bow to an intermediate-in-the-stern? They must be confident with their ferry angles, eddy turns, and be clear & concise with communication.

If your bowman isn't ready, still give them author-

ity to dodge pillow rocks. Left or Right, I honestly don't care. Just don't hit the rock.

It's now 2024. Iva and I are back on the Hood River. This time we are paired up and it's our turn to be the lead boat. It's literally been 8 years since we have shared a canoe. However, this dance works because of total trust. I trust Iva will find our line from the bow. In turn she puts her trust in me, even though she will never be able to see or critique my maneuvers.

The Hood River is a surreal place. A lone caribou stops to watch us in puzzlement as we paddle by. The river is starting to pick up speed and it is fun. The confidence builds as we complete another rapid with minimal words spoken. Nearing the end of the river, we decided to go for it and run the canyon!

Rob Dale is a multi-discipline paddler in Toronto. Urban or wilderness, kayak or canoe, he's just happy to be on the water.

Powdered Eggs – Are What They're Cracked Up to Be

Preamble by Iori Miller

Recipe and Photos by Heather Ataman

Many are daunted by the idea of preparing a yummy breakfast when going back country camping/tripping. On a recent Yukon trip our organizing meal spreadsheet tab had many interesting meals scheduled but when our paddlers arrived on the trip, they informed me that they'd decided at the last minute to just bring Oatmeal. Half of the breakfasts were to be Oatmeal.

Or, as I like to refer to it: Bloatmeal.

There is no reason to suffer the slimy goo of Oatmeal every day. There are plenty of interesting creations that can be made, and powdered eggs is a great foundation to build around. Below are two sample recipes provided by Heather Ataman.



The Reflector Oven and the Ingredients.



Preparing the ingredients in camp.

Potato Frittata

Equipment:

reflector oven, non-stick round cakepan with parchment paper, mixing bowl (pot?), whisk

Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cups whole egg powder
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 can of thick cream (approx. 1/3 cup)
- 1 1/2 cups grated cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup dehydrated sliced potatoes
- 1/4 cup dehydrated mushrooms chopped
- 1/4 cup sun dried tomatoes chopped
- 1 package bacon bits

Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

1. Rehydrate potatoes, mushrooms and tomatoes. Potatoes can take awhile so best to do the night before.
2. Place rehydrated vegetables in a lightly oiled cakepan.
3. Whisk together eggs and water in bowl.
4. Mix in cream, 1 cup of cheese, bacon bits, salt and pepper (in #3)
5. Pour mixture into the cakepan and sprinkle remaining cheese on top.
6. Bake in the oven, rotating the pan a 1/4 turn every 6 minutes so it cooks evenly. Depending on conditions, the frittata should be done in 30-40 minutes

Notes:

This recipe will feed 4-6 people. Accompany the frittata with toast and dried fruit if you wish.

You can easily make 2 frittatas since you only used ½ the can of cream. Just double the ingredients for everything else.



Ready to be cooked.

Otherwise, you can use the cream for another baked good.

You can use any variety of vegetables, meats, cheeses, and seasonings you wish as long you keep the same egg, water, and thick cream ratio.



The Frittata is ready to eat at last!

Breakfast Burrito (4 servings)

Ingredients:

- 4 - 10 inch wraps
- 1 cup of whole egg powder
- 250g block of cheese
- 1 package of pre-cooked bacon strips or bacon bits
- 1 cup of fresh or rehydrated veggies
- 1 cup of rehydrated black beans

Method:

Scramble eggs with 2 cups of water. Cook on an oiled frypan. Rehydrate any veggies and/or beans in a small pot. Grate cheese (if a cheese grater is unavailable, thinly sliced will do). Layer eggs, cheese, bacon, veggies and beans on the wrap. Fold the wrap tightly and place fold side down on the grill or frypan to toast. Flip to toast the other side. Carefully remove from the heat and allow to cool to touch.

This is a hearty and delicious breakfast option and one of Gary's favourites and mine! You can keep it simple and it's equally as good with only the wrap, eggs, cheese, bacon and perhaps a side of dried fruit. If you have big eaters on your trip allow for 2 wraps per person and double your ingredients. Enjoy!



Searching For Kawartha on the Trent Severn Canal

by Iori Miller

Photos Cheryl Stoltz and Iori Miller

In the summer of 2023, I paddled the Rideau canal from Kingston to Ottawa. I posted the trip on the Wilderness Canoe Association's (WCA) website and invited anyone who wanted to join me. After, many of those who went on the Rideau showed an interest in paddling the Trent Severn (TS) Canal during the summer of 2024, so I organized a trip from Georgian Bay (Port Severn Lock) to Lakefield, where I presently live. When that was done, I was encouraged to finish the TS canal this summer, and so I launched a trip on the WCA website for the last week of May 2025.

You never know what a trip will look like until you are on it. Compared to most of the back country wilderness trips that WCA members undertake, paddling Ontario's great Canals are best described as 'glamping'. There are nice flat grassy lawns and bathrooms!

I chose to run this year's trip right after the opening of the Canal, the last week of May. When we looked at the weather App's available just before the trip they predicted a week of rain. Yuck! I fully expected a few people to drop out and I did hear rumblings of such in the



last days before we were to begin. The plan was for everyone to meet in Lakefield the day before our first paddle day, shuttle most of the cars to Trenton (Bay of Quinte), and then return to camp that night at Lakefield's Lock 26. But when I saw the weather was to be miser-

able, I offered the floors of my little home in Lakefield. A few people, as it turned out, had already booked a room for the first night in motels and Air BnB's in Peterborough, but I did end up with 9 people in sleeping bags and air mattresses in my rainproof abode.

2025 Itinerary

Day	Date	Location	Mile Marker	km/day	Ice Cream Locator
Put in	23-May	Lock 26-Lakefield	161		Stuff'd - Lakefield
Camp 1	24-May	Lock 20-Ashburnham	145	16	
Camp 2	25-May	The Old Burrison Homestead (RV Park)	109	36	Wildwood Cottages - Ottonabee River
Camp 3	26-May	Lock 18-Hastings	80	29	Willowood Camp - Rice Lake/Sweet Bee's Ice Cream - Hastings
Camp 4	27-May	Lock 15 - Lower Healey Falls	58	23	Woodland Estate Resort (RV Park) - Seymour Lake
Camp 5	28-May	Lock 8 - Percy Reach	40	18	The Ice Cream Cafe - Campbellford
Camp 6	29-May	Lock 6 - Frankford	12	28	Glen Ross General Store - Glen Ross/Frankford Tourist Park Ice Cream Shop - Frankford
Take Out	30-May	Port Trent - Trenton	0	12	



Leaving a Lock on the Ottonabee River

Every time I have posted a canal trip on the WCA website I've had people saying they're interested because it's something of as a bucket list trip they've wanted to do. I had already written a general article on Canal paddling a few years ago in *Nastawgan (Tripping Ontario's Two Great Canals, Nastawgan, Fall, 2022)*, but after this trip I thought it might be worth a few words about this summer's trip as there are a few different details about it when compared to when I soloed this route back in the fall of 2022.

The Canals can be paddled any time, but they are officially open between mid-May and thanksgiving. It is important to be prepared in the shoulder seasons to experience higher than normal water flows. Coincidentally, I have now paddled this section of the Trent Severn twice during these times.

When I posted this trip in mid-winter, I thought the canal would have been open and running normally at the end of May. Initially it was, but on the morning of our second day Peterborough's Ashburnham Lock Master suggested we quit our pursuit as they were formally closing the canal to the south. This was because they wanted to increase the water flow due to high water levels up in the lake section of the Kawarthas. Most of my group, other than myself, had lock passes and they were expecting to easily ride through each lock! I had promised



Putting in after Portaging a Lock on the Trent River

glamping, right?! If we were to continue everyone would have to portage each and every lock. That not only meant portaging the remaining 18 locks in our route, but it also meant we might run into 'unmanned' locks with locked washrooms.

So now the gods were promising miserable weather and Parks Canada was unpromising to provide bathrooms and running water.

Yet, no one quit.

The route was to be about 160 km, with one big lake to tackle. Rice lake is an east-west lake of nearly 25 km in length. It is shallow too. These parameters can lead to some pretty rough waters, depending on the weather/wind direction (normally from the west!). Fortunately for us, the weather was only miserable on the first day of our trip. When we were paddling the Lake, the weather was dead calm and easy to paddle, and the sun was actually beating on us through a clear blue sky. We actually had to seek out shade that day (that's what weather is ... most times barely predictable).

There was one thing about our trip that was unforeseen. On day 2, while paddling the Ottonabee just before Rice Lake, we came upon Wildwood Cottages and their copious variety of Kawartha Ice Cream. This was supposed to be our longest day (36 km), and this discovery helped us make it across Rice Lake to our camping destination that night. Little did we know that the very next day we would also discover Willowood Camp on the shores of Rice Lake, and their Kawartha Ice Cream helped us survive the beating sun as it baked us during our traverse of Rice Lake. This theme actually continued throughout the rest of our trip. Kawartha ice cream reservoirs appeared out of nowhere. We would paddle around the corner of a bay, and there would be that familiar and welcome Kawartha Ice Cream picture on a stick, indicating the compass direction to find our needed respite from paddling. It became our purpose to try out as many flavours as we could squeeze into the cones that drew our pocket books; Moose Tracks, Bordeaux Cherry, Chocolate Peanut Butter, Death by Chocolate, Dockside Cappuccino, Kawartha Candy Cane, Muskoka



The Group at Willowood Camp - Rice Lake

Mocha. I could go on, but I think the reader gets the point. We tried as many as we could. Other than ducks and geese everywhere we didn't see a lot of wildlife, but we saw a lot of ice cream.

I will try to summarize a few of the significant details of the trip.

- * We camped at locks every night but one. Parks Canada charges a paltry \$5.50/night for camping and normally provides washroom facilities with that, and a promise of freshly cut 'park-like' grassy areas to pitch your tent on. With that you can count on the presence of Canada Geese Droppings too. It's not a bonus feature, but it is pretty much the norm. The hefty buggers love lawn grass.

- * The distance between Lock 19 (Scotts Mills in Peterborough) and Lock 18 (Hastings) is about 65 km. Too far for a day paddle. When I soloed the route first 3 years ago, I made a campsite in some Alder Bush at the side of Rice Lake. For our group, I found a place (The Old Burrison Homestead – RV Park) that was willing to host us — on the Rice Lake's south shore, directly across from the Ottonabee River that lead us down from Peterborough. They rented a Porta-Potty for us and asked for \$375. For 10 campers that was a lot more than a Lock's camping cost, but it solved

our distance problem between Lock 18 and 19.

- * The Trent-Severn Canal is nowhere near as canoe friendly as the Rideau Canal. In the section we paddled, the take outs and put ins sometimes have a 2-to-3-foot drop from the concrete canal banks to the water. This makes it very difficult to load and unload a canoe when the locks are closed and one has to portage. Unlike the Rideau, there rarely are platforms provided to help paddlers load and unload.

- * We shuttled our 6 cars to Trenton and stored them in a locked yard with Trent Port Marina (their long-term boat storage location) for the week we were paddling. It cost 10 people about \$24 apiece for peace of mind (a few dollars were also given to the driver who shuttled drivers back to Lakefield).

In conclusion, the weather was actually really good for most of the trip, we found porta-potties when needed when the Canal first shut down, and the few Lock Masters we found often called ahead and arranged to have open washrooms for us. We paid for camping every night even when there was no Lock Master to pay (we just paid later). It was a great trip after all, and the plethora of Kawartha Ice Cream more than made up for all the portaging we had to do.

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Hiking the World's Longest Escher
Story and photos by Dwayne Waghmough

The Thlewiaza, or Escher, winds its way through the heart of the Thlewiaza River valley. It is a river that is not only a source of life but also a source of inspiration. The river is a source of life for the people who live along its banks. It is a source of inspiration for the people who live along its banks. The river is a source of life for the people who live along its banks. It is a source of inspiration for the people who live along its banks.



Thlewiaza 2017: Exploring Sleeping Island and No-Man's River
Part II
Story by Chris Rush
Photos by Chris Rush and Jenny Johnson

The Thlewiaza River is a source of life for the people who live along its banks. It is a source of inspiration for the people who live along its banks. The river is a source of life for the people who live along its banks. It is a source of inspiration for the people who live along its banks.



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Cat River Canoe Trip
Story and Sketches by Jon Berger

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The River Of A Hundred Ghosts
The Mississagi River from Spanish Lake to Aubrey Falls
Story and photos by Erik Thomson

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A Winter Ski Crossing of Algonquin Park
Story by Erik Thomson

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Discovering Alex Hall's Secret and Favourite River
Lorne Fitch, P. Biol.

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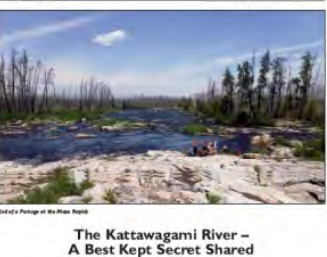
A Letter To My Son: The Hayes River
By Bear Paulsen

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Bon Adventure!
by Isadora van Rensburg

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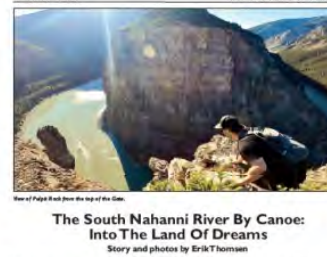
The Kattawagami River – A Best Kept Secret Shared
Story by Erik Thomson

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Hugh P. MacMillan's 1970 Canoe Brigade: The Intractable Retracing of a Fur Trade Route
Story by Mark Sides

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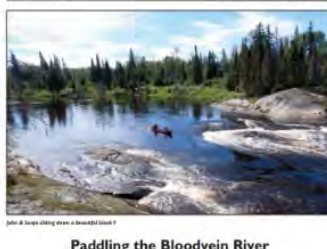
The South Nahanni River By Canoe: Into The Land Of Dreams
Story and photos by Erik Thomson

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Paddling the Bloodvein River
Story and photos by Cindy Chandler

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Wandering the Tundra
Dwayne Waghmough

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The Green River: A Travel Back in Time
Photographs from various trip members

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