



*Exiting the last part of the canyon after portaging three kilometres*

## Horton River – 2008

**Story by Bill King**

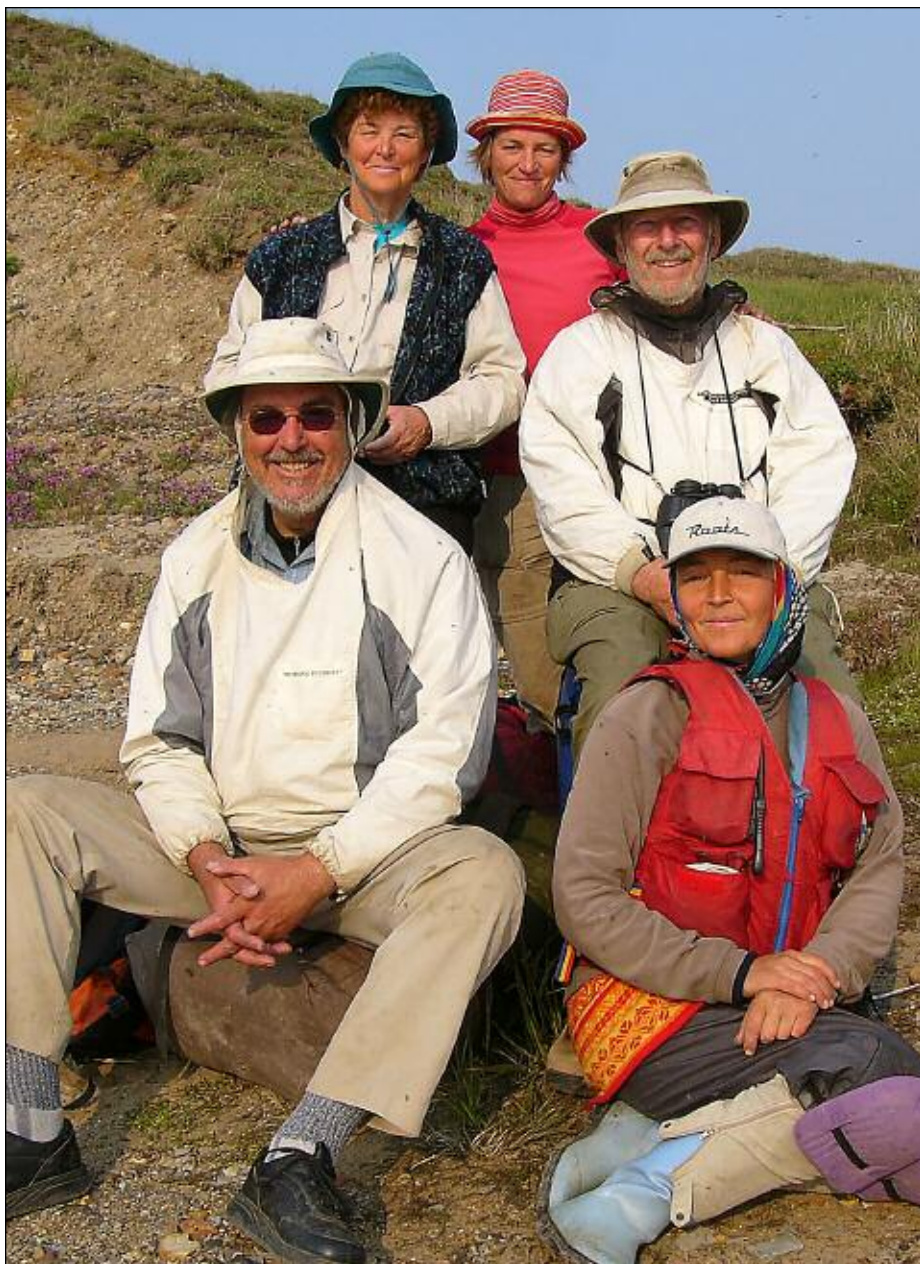
**Photos by Barbara Burton, Iva Kinclova and Joan King**

“Join us for a pleasant float on a gentle northern river. Enjoy great weather, minimal portaging, abundant wildlife ...,” reads the brochure of Horton River Vacations. (HRV is an entirely fictitious adventure travel company on whom we blamed every adverse event.) Hmmmm, I thought, sounds perfect for a group including three seniors – not too demanding on mind or body.

Well – not exactly! Let me explain. First, this is not a classic trip report. Those who would like day-to-day details should refer to the reports referenced at the end of the article.

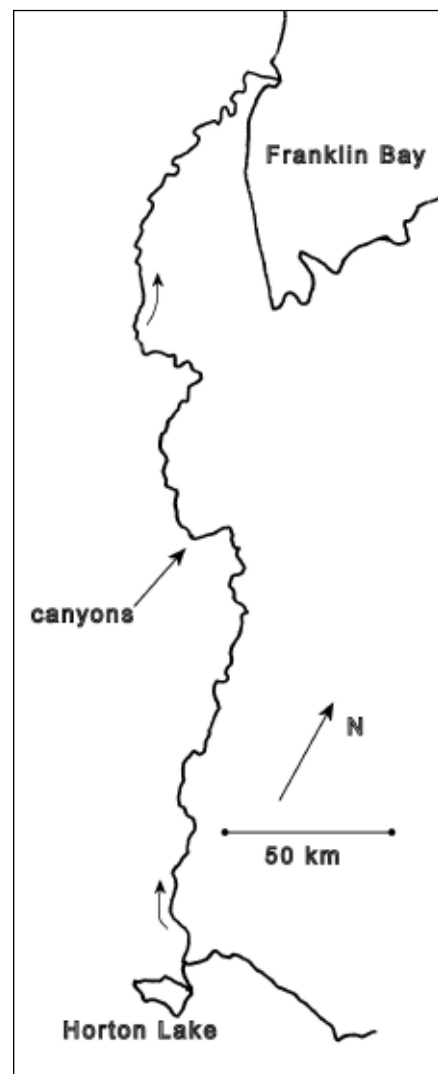
However, I would like to include some logistic details.

Access to the Horton River is anything but straightforward. A flight of some sort is mandatory at both ends of the trip. The quickest (about 2 hrs.), cheapest (but not cheap) and easiest (but not easy – see below) mode of entry is to take a floatplane from Norman Wells to Horton Lake. North Wright Air has a Twin Otter based there and the carrying capacity of a Twin is ideal for six people with a mountain of gear. We used North Wright’s services throughout and were pleased with them.



compromise, we incurred substantial overweight baggage charges.

Exit from the river is only marginally less complicated. Again, there are alternatives. As mentioned before, there is no large float plane presently based in Inuvik. The distance to Inuvik from the mouth of the river at Franklin



However, there is a catch! Norman Wells, at least in summer, is inaccessible by road. None of the several options is attractive. You can fly from Inuvik (where the pickup flight will go, in any case) to Horton Lake, but it is much more expensive as there is no large plane based there which is equipped to land on water. You can take a commercial flight to Norman Wells, but that raises the problem of your equipment. The ability to talk your way onto a commercial flight with several hundred pounds of gear is a pretty good measure of whether you were paying attention in charm school! You

could also arrange to have your gear shipped to Inuvik and then barged to Norman Wells. However, I suspect that the logistical difficulties of making such an arrangement would be formidable.

We compromised. George Drought and Barb Burton left early (all right for us retirees!) and drove their RV to Inuvik with most of the heavy gear. They then took North Wright's scheduled flight to Norman Wells to meet the rest of us (Iva Kinclova, Sandra Hepditch, Joan, and myself) who came from various points of the compass on commercial flights. Even with this



Bay means that a Cesna can carry no more than two people and, at that, with a sharp eye to the weight of their gear. Aklak Air has a Twin Otter in Inuvik which is equipped with tundra tires, but using it for pickup means stopping at a gravel bar rather than at the river mouth and missing the interesting last few kilometres of the river. This plane could also be used to fly in to shorter Horton River trips but there is no suitable, terra firma, landing site near the origin of the river. The website of a longtime outfitter in Inuvik (now, alas, out of the business) suggests the possibility of paddling from the mouth of the river to Paulatuk where a scheduled flight could be accessed. However, from my reading of the topo maps, this would probably involve paddling the shores of Franklin and Darnley Bays all the way around the Parry Peninsula – not something which I would care to undertake.

So, having committed to your choices, you find yourself flying over the northwest corner of Great Bear Lake and descending on Horton Lake. We had the usual concerns respecting ice and shallows, which no amount of map study can resolve but, while the



*One of the two wolverines we were fortunate to see*

great majority of Horton Lake was ice-covered, there always seems to be an area of open water in its northeast corner (due, no doubt, to the current in the outlet creek), sufficient to land a float-plane. One then connects to the Horton River via two unnamed creeks and an unnamed lake – no problem in the high water of early July.

The Horton River is not easy to define, even in some very basic parameters. For example, how long is it? While the length is most commonly given as approximately 600 km, I have seen figures ranging from 450 km to 530 km and on up.

Horton Lake, while the usual starting point for Horton River trips, is not actually its source. That lies some 50 km or so to the northeast and at least one group (see Lentz, below) chose to start nearer the source. Their trip length would obviously be different. But still!

The figure of 530 km was mine, calculated in the early '90s using a measuring wheel and 1:250,000 topographic maps. Allan Jacobs, using the same technology but 1:50,000 maps, calculated the length to be 588 km. Just for fun, when I returned to civilization, I used Google Earth's ruler function (a higher-tech, if not necessarily more accurate, method of measurement) to recalculate the length and got 576 km. I have absolutely no idea what method was used in the otherwise-useful anonymous report (see below), which stated the length to be 450 km. I do know that they relied, at least in part, on 1:500,000 maps – rather small scale



*Caribou*





us in camp on the shore of Horton Lake for the night of Day 1 and all of Day 2, we enjoyed mild temperatures, bright sunshine, and gentle following winds from Day 3 to Day 5. Had we known that we wouldn't see the sun again for any substantial period until Day 24, we would have been more appreciative. We had rain on about 80% of the intervening days which, combined with single-digit high temperatures and relentless "northish" winds, made this the worst northern trip, from a weather perspective, which any of us could recall. We had four days when we couldn't travel at all – not exactly the read-a-book-and-work-on-your-tan sort of days off we had envisioned – and two others on which we were reduced to tracking the canoes up the shore to make progress against the headwinds. Our second last night, near the mouth of the river, was spent in a genuine sandstorm, despite the fact that the nearest sandbar was several hundred metres away.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in view of all the rain, we reckoned that water levels were high by comparison with other people's trip reports. This was a mixed blessing. Others reported sections, particularly in the upper river, where they had to drag their canoes through shal-

*Giant raptor nest on cliff, first week of trip*

for wilderness travel. My wife, Joan, pointed out, with perfect truth, that the fact that one has to paddle from side to side of the river to find flotation amid the gravel bars makes any map calculation of the length essentially irrelevant.

Then, there's the weather. The Horton River region is, officially, a "semi-arid" zone, on the basis, I assume, of average annual rainfall. That reminds me of the parable which tells the story of a man who drowned in a stream whose average depth was only 20 cm! July, 2008, in the Horton River Valley (as in much of the rest of Canada) was anything but "average."

After riding out a storm which kept



*The start of the major (second) canyon, which we had to portage due to high water levels*



lows. With the exception of a couple of instances of channel misjudgment, we were able to stay in the boats. However, the waves in some of the rapids (Grade 1 in normal years), which we ran unscouted, raised a few eyebrows.

In the mid-course of the Horton River there is a 30-km section of canyons, reported variously to number two or three (We never did distinguish a third canyon distinct from the second).

Travellers are alerted that there may be serious rapids, particularly in Canyon 2. We found the rapids in Canyon 1 to be navigable, lining one section which we judged inadvisable to run. Four rapids came in quick succession in the middle of Canyon 2, two of which appeared to us to be “suicidal” at these water levels. Others had been able to run straight through or had portaged as little as 50 m. Our portage covered about 3 km, up the canyon wall, across two gullies and one stream, and down a descent sufficiently steep that, after one fall where serious injury was avoided by the purest good fortune, we resorted to lowering the canoes and the heavier gear by rope and pulley. Having packed gear for a “float,” the portage took us a day and a half. The ordeal was enhanced(?) by a fresh hatch of blackflies. Another letter of complaint to HRV was composed.

And what of the wildlife? Well, I



*The first accessible entry back into the canyon after the long portage. We used ropes to lower some of the gear and boats after someone was nearly bowled over by a runaway barrel*

can report that the Horton River Valley is excellent sik-sik (Richardson ground squirrel) habitat and that the mosquito population is in full vigour.

But what of the creatures that most of us go to the north to see? I am happy to report that we saw two wolverines – my entire previous experience of this uncommon animal was a single sighting. While we didn’t see any of the legendary herds, we did see numerous smaller groups of caribou. Indeed, one

night when we had camped in an area which had obviously been a caribou crossing, we were awakened by the sound of hooves passing right between the tents. Our experience of muskoxen was limited to a single sighting when two of our group, making a late-evening second portage, spotted a single animal on the other rim of the canyon. We also saw one rather-somnolent arctic wolf stretched out on a gravel bar.

Particularly disappointing was the absence of grizzlies. We had been informed that the Horton River was “good bear country.” One previous trip reported seeing fifteen! We even packed along a shotgun – something which I have never done on any previous northern trip – although we hoped desperately that we would never have to use it. We didn’t actually see a bear until the second last day of the trip and he took off as soon as he became aware of our presence as if all the furies of hell were after him.

Bird life is abundant and we saw all the examples – golden and bald eagles, hawks, falcons, tundra swans, arctic loon, etc. – which would be on most







Of prime importance in the Barren Lands is adequate rain protection and shelter. While the former is a matter of individual preference, I would counsel that it is not a good place to economize. Good tents are a must; they will have to withstand strong winds and driving rain, often with little shelter and poor anchorage. We used Eureka K2-XT's and found them well designed, roomy and essentially impervious both to wind and rain. The one incident occurred when, at a campsite lacking the usual means of guying down the tents, an exceptional gust of wind blew one unoccupied tent into the neighboring willows.

Another piece of equipment which verges on being a necessity is some sort of group shelter. While a tarp may serve to protect against wind and rain or a net shelter against bugs, we felt our Eureka Tunnel Vision tent to be a

northern birders' wish lists.

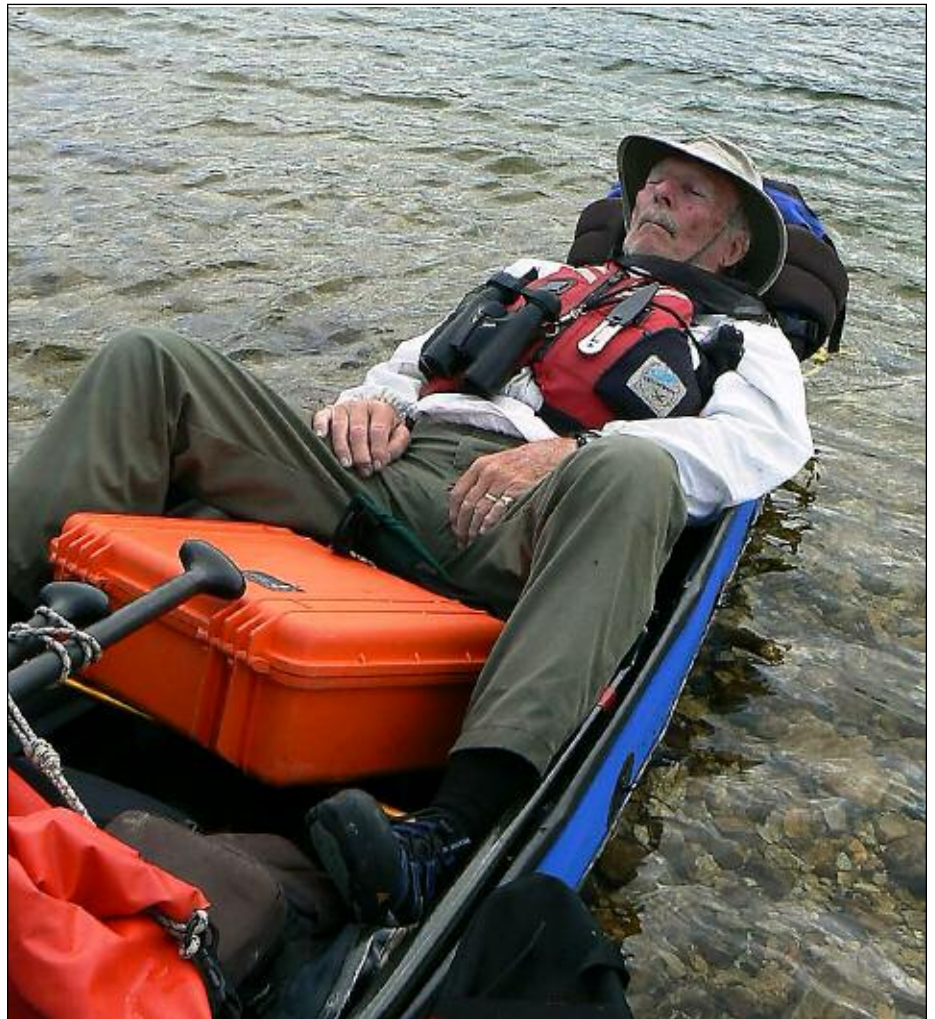
There is also a profusion of flora, enough, even in this cold summer, to keep the most avid "flowerphile" happy. Another positive is that the Horton River, while entirely above the Arctic Circle, is just at the edge of the tree line, meaning that wood (or sometimes driftwood) is available for campfire cooking throughout its length.

A few words about gear.

We used three Pakboats and were very happy with them – not just with the floatplane dollars which they saved us – under all circumstances but one. On the portage they were awkward and wanted to take flight in anything more than the lightest breeze. We also had spray covers for each boat. Their use varied (by participant) from constant to not at all. I think I can say that, on the Horton River, they are of more value in keeping people (or, at least, their lower halves) warm and dry than for their intended purpose of keeping out waves.

The subject of the best canoe-tripping footwear is always good for starting a debate. Our group was evenly split between the rubber-boot party and the sandals-and-water-socks party, and both factions seemed equally pleased with their choice (except on one occa-

sion when I very nearly lost a sandal after stepping out of the canoe into some extraordinarily tenacious silt).





vastly superior alternative. It has an excellent wind profile and is easily erected, well ventilated and spacious, ample to accommodate the six of us, even allowing room to cook (very carefully!) in extreme conditions. I don't know what they cost (Eureka was a trip sponsor) but, without any doubt, there were numerous occasions when ours would have seemed cheap at any price.

While driftwood is available throughout the Horton Valley, good stoves are essential, if not as the primary means of meal production, at least as backup when conditions make wood-fire cooking difficult or undesirable.

So, are we going to apply to HRV for a refund? Is this a river I could recommend to others? While the Horton features in few explorers' journals (Steffanson excepted), the beauty of its geography more than makes up for the lack of history. The "smoking hills" (a long section in the lower river where spontaneously-combusting lignite deposits have been burning – probably for hundreds of years) are unique in my experience of the North. Also, the difficulty of access should ensure that a



*Melting permafrost river bank just before the Smoking Hills, end of third week of trip*

trip on this river will remain a true wilderness experience for the foreseeable future.

Despite the negative aspects of our experience, the Horton remains a great northern river and I would not hesitate to recommend it to oth-

ers – perhaps younger and fitter than myself. Just go prepared for anything and don't pack along too many preconceived notions.

For more information:

1. *Stalking Stef on Grizzly Shores* by John W. Lentz in Che-Mun, Spring 2002, a report of a 2001 trip, with some interesting historical references, by one of the "Deans" of American wilderness canoeing (great cover picture of a canoe in the canyon rapids)

2. *Horton River* ([www.mycr.com](http://www.mycr.com)); Allan Jacobs' precise and info-filled account of their 2000 trip

3. *30 Days on the Horton River* ([BigBlueSky.ca](http://BigBlueSky.ca)); Katherine Suboch's trip log from their 2005 trip, charmingly written with lots of great pictures

4. [www.explorenwt.com/resouces/northernlibrary/PDF/hortriver.pdf](http://www.explorenwt.com/resouces/northernlibrary/PDF/hortriver.pdf); an anonymous, reference-type guide to the Horton containing some interesting (if not always accurate) information on history, geography, and other physical features

5. *My Life with the Eskimo* by Vilhjalmur Steffanson; interesting reading by one of the few "big-name" explorers to have spent time (mostly in winter) in the area of the Horton

6. *Tundra* by Farley Mowat; doesn't deal specifically with the Horton but contains many interesting excerpts from the writings of the explorers of the northern Canadian mainland



*Crenelated river bank in the final river bends*



CPM #40015547  
ISSN 1828-1327

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

## Editorial

While we're reading this issue of *Nastawgan*, we're thankful to Elizabeth Sinclair for what she has done to keep our journal flourishing these last few years. Unfortunately, for personal reasons she will be unable to continue her involvement with *Nastawgan*. Elizabeth, everybody in the WCA wishes you luck and good health in the future. Thank you so much for what you have done for us.

From this Winter 2008 issue on I am again in the editor's seat, at least for the time being, but now with a small, highly capable, and dedicated team behind me. Send in your stories and all the other material we fill our journal with, so the team will be kept busy. The deadline dates for submitting material for the next four issues in 2009 are: the first day of February, May, August, and November. Problems? Contact me; addresses on the last page.

**Correction** On page 1, last sentence, of *Nastawgan's* last (Fall) issue the name Double Ledge Rapid should be changed to: Tight 'Round the Bend Rapid. This improbable name is mentioned in Hap Wilson's guidebook *Rivers of the Upper Ottawa Valley*, page 50, Rapid no. 9.

**Welcome back** "Hey, Ness, I'm back...tremble, TREMBLE!" is how Toni announced his return behind the helm of *Nastawgan*, this time as the interim Editor. After almost three years away from the editor's desk and busier then ever with his own projects, Toni allowed himself to be persuaded into taking on the challenge of creating his beloved Quarterly Journal of the Wilderness Canoe Association again! I invite you to welcome Toni back. As a gift, send him that story you've been sitting on, before you get a phone call urging you to do so. If you wait too long, you may find yourself in Bill's company...trembling! Thank you, Toni – from all of us.

Aleks G

### Praise!

I had a chance to visit the WCA's site to retrieve and print the current edition of the Journal. There is only one word to describe the WCA's site: unbelievable! Congratulations to all involved and those who approved the budget to fund it.

Regards, Jean-Claude Lessnick

*Thanks for the good work, Jeff! (ed.)*

## Fall Meeting October 2008

Just a brief note to thank all of you who participated in the Fall Meeting at the Madawaska Kanu Centre on 3 – 5 October. A special thanks to our presenters on Saturday evening. They all did a masterful job under very tough circumstances (with that rude stopwatch dude looking over your shoulder!). We saw brilliant presentations that spanned the continent from Baffin Island to Horton River, from Romaine to Nahanni. Many members wrote to encourage us in continuing with this idea in the future; people loved the presentations. Doug & Daniela Bell, George Drought & Barbara Burton, Emmy Hendricks, Dawne & Dave Robinson, Milijan Lukic, Gilian Mason & Anne Bradley, Dave & Barb Young – Thanks!

Paddling was something else! Great water levels at Chalet and Palmer Rapids, fun run down the Lower Mad, quiet paddle on Bark Lake. You name it, it was there for the taking. And then the colours! Just beautiful, out of this world.

Lastly, you people. It was great to see familiar faces again and also to meet new members. Heck, even kayakers (sorry Marty)! I can't describe the feeling of mutual respect and admiration. Let me share the impression expressed by one of our newest members, Barry Hodgins: "Patti commented on the friendliness of the group and their interest in an active lifestyle. She and I are looking forward to getting to know more people."

I'll leave you with an invitation (some might say "challenge"): write a short article about your experiences at the Fall Meeting! We'll publish one or two in a future issue of *Nastawgan*. Any photographs you may want to share will be much appreciated. Please send everything to the editor.

Aleks Gusev



## Is the WCA dying?

If you're shocked by these words, I'm glad. Because I tell you – the WCA has been on “life-support” for some time now. And I've got numbers to prove it! If not for the incredibly (and unreasonably) high level of involvement by a handful of Board/Committee members, there would be no WCA to speak of. However, this way of running our organization cannot be sustained much longer. People simply burn out. This, in turn, discourages others from becoming volunteers.

So, I want to ask you, again: What do you really want?

I say “again” because the same question was posed in the summer 2007 Membership Survey. Back then, those of you that responded (25% of members that have online access) supported the following initiatives:

- Creating a more interactive website
- Digitizing back issues of *Nastawgan*
- Archiving back issues of *Nastawgan* online
- Creating a more extensive online routes database
- Making the current version of *Nastawgan* available in PDF format

Most of those initiatives are in place now. However, they require ongoing engagement by many people in different support roles. Fewer than five members responded positively to the survey question, “Will you be able to volunteer help?” And none responded to the plea for volunteers from the Chairman's Report published in the Spring 2008 issue. Last time I looked we had between 400 and 500 paying members. Get the picture?

We are a non-profit association that relies solely on the volunteers' time. I feel we have made important strides towards making the WCA more attractive to the members and public at large in the past 12 months. For instance, we secured a sizable Trillium Grant aimed at providing financial backup for the activities we agreed to pursue. But in order to be able to pursue those activities, we need help. And herein lies the catch – the WCA is being kept alive only by the superhuman strength of a few people. This cannot go on for much longer.

To carry on forward in the direction that you, the members, seem to support in words (based on the 2007 survey results), requires that YOU now must talk-the-talk and volunteer your skills and time.

The alternative is to relinquish the objectives this Board has set forth and to make no further efforts to rejuvenate the WCA. I, for one, have no interest in that.

So, come forward and help us save the WCA from dying. To volunteer for one or more of many initiatives on the 2008/2009 projects list, please contact me or any other Board member. Contact details are on the back page of this Journal. If you live outside Toronto or even outside Ontario, don't despair. Advancements in computer technology have made it possible for you to help our Association in many ways.

Aleksandar Gusev, Chair

## Outdoor Adventure Show

Mark your calendars: the WCA will have a booth at the upcoming Outdoor Adventure Show. The show hosts hundreds of vendors under one roof. It will be held on February 20 – 22, 2009 at the International Centre, Hall 5. For further information contact Doug Ashton at [doug.ashton@rogers.com](mailto:doug.ashton@rogers.com).

## Nastawgan Editor(s) Wanted

We know you're out there, somewhere. Perhaps you read a similar ad in *Nastawgan's* Fall issue, but needed some time to think about it. We understand; it's an important decision. After all, we're talking about *Nastawgan*, our very own wilderness canoeing journal.

The job itself is all about responsibility and no pay. Yet it offers the most amazing and gratifying experience. Think about it. First, you get to rub shoulders with Toni Harting while you're in training. Just try to imagine things Toni read, did, and edited during several decades of putting together *Nastawgan*.

Then, you'll have access to the most incredible collection of articles describing every river in Canada you can possibly imagine. A gold mine, really. You'll have access to people that wrote many canoeing books you love, folks that traversed rivers and lakes far and wide.

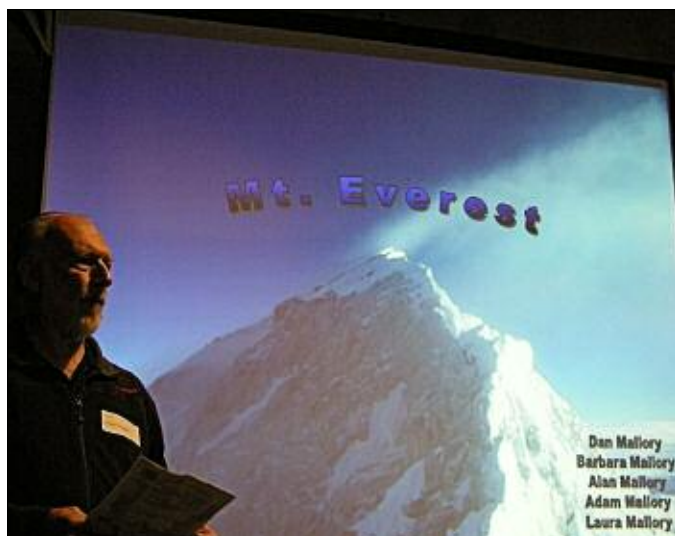
To take advantage of this opportunity, you need a good knowledge of the English language and strong motivation to produce a journal worthy of the WCA tradition. You must have a knack for soliciting new and relevant material, both amongst members and others. Familiarity with the wilderness canoeing universe (environment, people, organizations) is assumed. Excellent organizational skills, ability to delegate, coordinate, and present relevant content are required. And you must feel comfortable working with computers. While it would be convenient for the editor(s) to reside in Toronto, the current state of computer technology does not make that a mandatory requirement.

So, what do you say? If you think you could do a good job as the editor, or maybe as a member of the editorial team, please submit your name and credentials to the present Chair (see back page for addresses).

WCA Board







*George Drought introducing the speakers*



*The Mallory family*

## WCA Fall Party

The annual Wine & Cheese Party on Saturday, 8 November 2008, was a lively event, attended by almost 80 members and their friends. It was good to mingle over munchies and see so many familiar and new faces, and hear about various summer adventures.

The evening, instead of focussing only on canoeing, featured another, highly unusual, outdoor pursuit. We had an inspirational and fascinating presentation by Dan Mallory, who – together with his daughter Laura and his sons Adam and Alan (who were all – shared with us how they fulfilled their dreams, and in May of this year, accomplished the ascent of Mt. Everest. The Mallorys' story of the climb to the summit was accompanied by awe-inspiring photos, interspersed with video clips. We learned that reaching the summit of the highest mountain on earth was not just an incredibly hard climb with breathtaking vistas all around, but also involved a lot of hardships: stomach infection, exhaustion, avalanches, fierce burning sun, bitter cold, shifting crevasses, dangerous terrain, and doubts about having put themselves into all of this.

The Mallorys did not only dwell on the challenges of ice and snow; we also got glimpses of lush valleys, beautiful flowering trees, and colourful birds. The reward of standing on top of the world was clearly a tremendous feeling of accomplishment. We learned that Laura was the youngest Canadian female ever to summit this mountain.

The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer period, and it transpired that Dan Mallory – although he insisted they are 'just an ordinary family' – is anything but. They stay fit by a healthy lifestyle and, whenever their time allows, by canoeing, cycling, and just enjoying the outdoors. Dan and at least one of his family members – including his wife – has summited every peak on the six continents; their next goal is to tackle the Vincent Massif in Antarctica in 2010. We wish them the best of luck!

After all, they live in Utopia, Ontario!

Gisela Curwen

### WCA Annual General Meeting Saturday, February 28, 2009 Peterborough, Ontario



Join us this year for our AGM at the Canadian Canoe Museum with Special Guest Speaker Paul Mason. Details and registration form are printed on the back cover of *Nastawgan* or check the website





## Food for Paddlers

The following recipe comes from Diane Lucas. My husband and I paddled the lower Madawaska with Diane and her partner, Rick Sabourin, this summer. Dave and I were impressed with their culinary prowess and asked them to submit a recipe for *Nastawgan*. Here is one of their favourites:

### Creamed Tuna with Ginger over Noodles

6 tbsp butter  
1/3 cup flour  
3 cups milk (or use reconstituted milk powder)  
3 tbsp slivered fresh ginger root (or 2 tsp ground ginger)  
\_ pound fresh mushrooms (or \_ ounce dried mushrooms)  
3 cans tuna (170 g each) (or freeze-dried or vacuum-packed tuna)  
1 tsp salt  
1/2 tsp ground black pepper  
12 ounces egg noodles, cooked al dente and drained

Melt the butter in a large pot. Stir in flour to make a smooth paste, then gradually add the milk, cooking and stirring over low heat to make a smooth and thickened sauce. Stir in ginger, mushrooms, tuna, salt, and pepper. Simmer until heated through. Serve over noodles.

If you use the freeze-dried or vacuum-packed tuna and dried mushrooms, first soak them in enough water to cover, then proceed as directed above.

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



*A scene from the 2008 Symposium*

## Wilderness Canoe Symposium 2009

Get rid of the mid-winter blahs and prepare for the next paddling season by joining fellow WCA members and paddlers from across the continent for George Luste's 24th annual Wilderness and Canoeing Symposium, to be held on 13 and 14 February 2009 at Monarch Park Collegiate in Toronto.

The symposium's three main threads are the landscape (including its fauna and flora), the experiences of those who visit there, and the native peoples and their history. It offers also the companionship, for an evening and a day, of hundreds of persons who share the passion for our wilderness and the joy of experiencing it first-hand, mostly by canoe and kayak, but also by foot and snowshoe.

Detailed information, including registration forms and a list of speakers with the titles of their talks, is available at [www.wcsymposium.com](http://www.wcsymposium.com). Alternatively, you can request information by email to [allan.jacobs@sympatico.ca](mailto:allan.jacobs@sympatico.ca) or by phone to 416-424-1871.

## Greenwood Outdoor Club

### An Opportunity to Give and to Clear Your Basement!

My name is Iva Kinclova. I started an outdoor club at Greenwood Secondary School in Toronto where I teach. In spite of the language challenges (all our students are recent immigrants to Canada), about 20 students signed up in September. They have been really excited about learning outdoors skills. We have been learning how to read a map, use a compass, how to dress, and playing a lot of fun team-building games.

The students keep asking me: "Miss, when can we go on a trip?" And I answer: "When you are properly dressed." We meet one time a week after school and spend as much time as possible outside. However, our students don't have clothes that are warm enough.

If you can part from any unused clothing and gear, could you please consider giving it to the Greenwood Outdoor Club.

We are looking for the following items: winter jackets / fleece tops and pants / sweaters / winter pants / hiking boots/ winter boots / hats / gloves / mittens / neck-warmers / tents / mattresses / backpacks / smaller packs / pots / stoves / life-jackets / canoes / cross-country skis and boots / snow-shoes / skates

Please bring your donations to the WCA Symposium on 13 and 14 February 2009. There will be a drop-off place in the entrance area. For more information, you can contact me at [iva.kinclova@tel.tdsb.on.ca](mailto:iva.kinclova@tel.tdsb.on.ca).

Thank you.





## **Kirk Wipper, still at it**

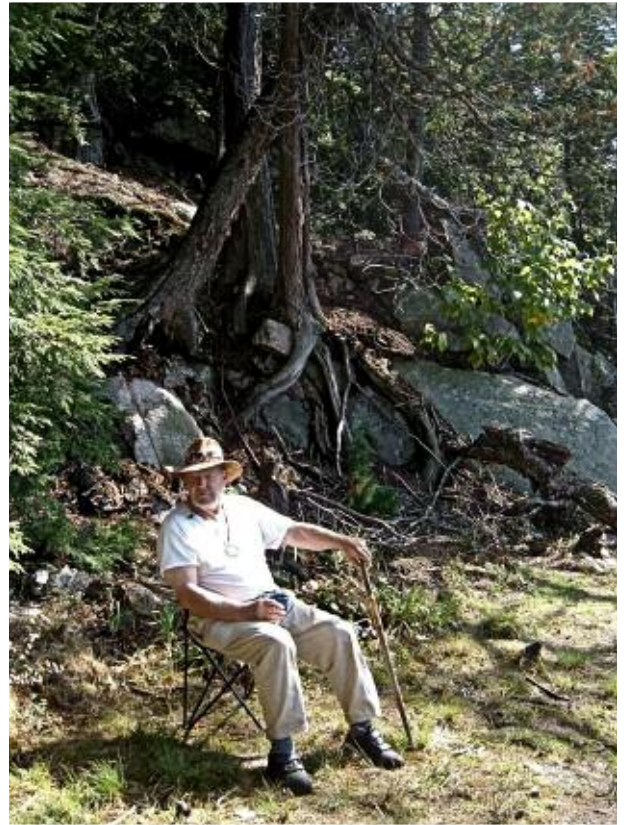
He is in his mid-eighties now, but Kirk Wipper happily accomplished a four-day canoe trip in Killarney Provincial Park last September, with a few friends in tow. This devoted outdoors-man feels completely at ease when tripping in a canoe and still does his share of paddling, portaging, and camping. And of course he always thoroughly enjoys those animated around-the-campfire discussions where he can thoughtfully express his love of the past and hope for the future.

Talking about a life well spent! Kirk is not only founding father of the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, he is also, first and foremost, a superb and inspiring teacher, showing paddlers young and old what it can mean to feel truly at home in nature.

Thanks, Kirk, you're doing great, keep it up.

**Photos by Allan Crawford and Mike Heaton.  
Text by Toni Harting.**







# The Chapleau

Text by Gillian Mason

Photos by Anne Bradley and Karen Bonham



*Lunch at end of portage*

So, you have one week and a hankering to get out of town, run a little whitewater, and spend some time in the great outdoors. And you'd like to go somewhere that hasn't been done a thousand and one times before (that you know of). Well, here's a thought: try Northern Ontario's Chapleau River from Chapleau (about 120 km east of Wawa) north-north-east to the whistle-stop of Elsas, a lovely 100-km trip. (Our trip was shorter, about 70 km, because we started just north of a bridge over the river.) To help you with your decision, we have set out here an account of our adventure down the Chapleau in mid-July 2008. Eight of us, including two Americans (our ostensible guides, insofar as they had done the river twice before), planned and executed one of the most relaxing yet enchanting trips possible in six very pleasant days. The members of the trip comprised a congenial group: Larry Snyder and Wendy Champness, Ray Laughlen and Elsie Carr-Locke, Derek Lancaster and Gillian

Mason, Anne Bradley and Karen Bonham. All of us had tripped together in different combinations over the years.

We began by meeting at one of the two train stations in Sudbury (the down-

town one) at 7:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning. We collected all of our gear – canoes, paddles, packs, lifejackets, and much more. – in a pile under a pagoda at the yet-to-open train station. Clashed tightly in our hands were the train tickets purchased months before for the budd car to Chapleau. Once we were sure we had all our gear out of our vehicles (a truck, a van, and a couple of cars), our ride (a cousin of one of us) arrived to assist us with a short shuttle of the vehicles to the other Sudbury train station, the one to which we were to return six days later. Shuttle completed, we paced the train platform until the much-anticipated budd car finally hove into sight.

A two-car(!) train, it of course parked so that the baggage car was a good 60-m portage along the platform away from where we had assembled our gear. Oh well, start as you mean to continue. Just as we were about to move the paraphernalia to the opposite end of the platform, the station master advised that the train would move so the portage we faced was not so long. "How accommodating," we mused. Little did we know that this flexibility would be offered not only to us,



*North end of Shewabik Lake*





*Take-out*

but to everyone who had a whim to stop along the line. The resulting delay meant that the starting point of our canoe trip would be debated and readjusted innumerable times, as we gathered around the maps in conference over the next six hours and the train fell further and further behind schedule.

Long story short, we arrived in Chapleau a good two hours later than planned. We were met as prearranged by the outfitter, Missinaibi Headwater Outfitters, who was to transport our canoes and our gear and, as it turned out, only six of the eight paddlers, to the river. A kindly trainman jumped into the breach to offer, for a reasonable stipend, to take the extra passengers to the start of our adventure. Another hour passed as we strapped on the canoes, loaded the gear, and waited for our friendly train-

man to return, showered and changed, with his truck.

Given the hour, we went for Plan 'H' (we'd moved through each letter of the alphabet, starting with 'A', for each \_ of an hour that the train had fallen behind schedule), and started the trip at a handy put-in 80 m from a bridge downstream from Racine Lake. It was about 4:30 p.m. We paddled down the river and shortly arrived at the first and longest portage of the trip (600 m). It was mucky, uneven, with a few fallen trees and overhanging branches thrown in for good measure. The one thing working in our favour was the length of the day.

When Derek and Gillian started boiling the water for the first dinner of the trip at 7:00 p.m., we knew we still had two and a half hours before sunset to set up tents, cook and eat dinner, and clean



*Steep climb*





### Falls

up. We decided to leave the canoes at the start of the portage until the following morning. The site was buggy, noisy (the rapids, don't you know), in a stand of cedars, and a bit mucky. Nonetheless, it served us well for the first night. As much as we had enjoyed the novelty of the curious train trip, we were all delighted and relieved to be on the river.

Awake early the next morning, some of us headed back over the portage to

collect the canoes, while others struck the tents, tidied up the site, and lugged our packs to the river's edge. By 10:00 a.m. we were on the river. What with one night in a tent and many bug bites under our belts (literally), we were truly under-way.

One feature of tripping with this particular group of WCA members that we have always enjoyed is the shared responsibility for the dinners. As in all of our other WCA Ontario trips, each boat took on one dinner consisting of an appetizer, one main course, and one dessert for all. Those whose turn it was to cook the following night were responsible for the dishes that night. And on nights five and six, the dinner became a shared responsibility between two boats, one supplying the main course, and the other the appetizer and dessert. My goodness, we ate well as each boat was diligent in assuring the sustenance that hard-working paddlers would require at day's end. A healthy supply of Scotch and wine (the plastic bladder with wine supplied by Larry and Wendy) kept the evenings

around the fire jovial and story-filled.

The next five days provided plenty of that for which many of us seek the wilderness: quiet, gently-flowing waters, fun rapids (class I and II with a touch of III), well-marked and reasonably well-maintained portages, pretty lunch spots including one divine granite island smack in the middle of the river with plenty of sunshine when we happened by. It also featured decent campsites, a bit snug for five tents at times, but picturesque, each with a fire pit and some decent swimming.

We were also treated to the most extraordinary showing of wildflowers. Presumably the conditions of near-daily rain this summer in combination with lots of sunshine, albeit intermittent, created optimal growing conditions for certain species of flowers. A front garden of roses, bushes of white, pink, and blush, greeted us at our campsite the second night on Shewabik Lake. Blue Flag Iris were abundant in clutches along the shores, a startlingly civilized site against the cedars and pines that lined the river's



### Pictographs





*Running whitewater*

edge. Wood Lilies, wonderful single-stemmed orange flowers, started popping up towards the end of the trip, and again provided a front garden to our final campsite next to a lovely flowing rapid in which we all had a nice swim.

One of the highlights of the trip was an exciting portage around a rock-sided falls. The take-out itself was only 15 m from the top of the falls. Not only was there just enough room for one boat at the take-out at a time, but once you had the boat out of the water, the portage was straight up, practically vertical, and straight down the other side. Neither the approach to the portage nor the trek over to the put-in was for the faint of heart. We accomplished all without mishap but did have throw ropes at the ready for anyone who might have slipped in the process of landing and unloading.

Although the flora was fantastic, this was not a trip for those craving the sight of wild beasts. In fact, we did not see a single four-legged creature during the entire trip but we had some decent bird sightings (a barred owl flew across the river in our path one day and we were awakened by a Swainson's Thrush every morning). On the plus side, we were not to see any other two-legged creatures (that'd be trippers) either.

We arrived right on schedule for our final challenge – crossing Kapuskasing Lake – that would bring us to the B&B we had booked in Elsas for our final night. A light headwind ensured that our finish was not a breeze, but we made good time nonetheless and pulled up to the dock at 5:00 p.m. There the inevitable dog, and our friendly host, Ron Quigley,

greeted us. We loaded our gear into his pick-up truck, which Ron kindly drove up to our cabin, a distance we would have happily portaged half a day earlier but gleefully forwent for the luxury of motorized transport at this point in the trip. Ron suggested we leave our canoes up near the railway tracks. That would reduce the amount of hauling we would be



*Great day for drying*





Ray - Anne - Larry - Elsie - Karen - Wendy - Gillian - Derek

obliged to do when the Intercontinental VIA Rail train from Vancouver stopped to pick us up early the next morning.

We each partook of a reviving shower, a beer (or two – you can buy them by the case from the Quigleys) and our final group dinner before falling into our bunk beds for a well-earned sleep. Our host woke us early and cooked us a hearty bacon-and-eggs breakfast the next morning. He also kept us abreast of the progress of the train which was, as it had been regularly for the past six years, about two hours behind schedule.

When the train whistle finally blew, we raced like excited children down the hill to the tracks and boarded the Transcontinental, greeted by fellow passengers as though we were exotic travellers from a strange land. A rare treat at the end of a canoe trip, we spent the next five hours on the way back to Sudbury chatting with our trip-mates and recounting our trip, making plans for the next trip, and making a gentle transition from the wilds of Northern Ontario to civilization.

In short, we would all recommend this trip to anyone who has but a week, wants the feel of a real getaway, is seeking some very pleasant whitewater runs (particularly in the high waters of this summer), with the added fun and unpredictability of quirky train travel, and only a few hours from Toronto.

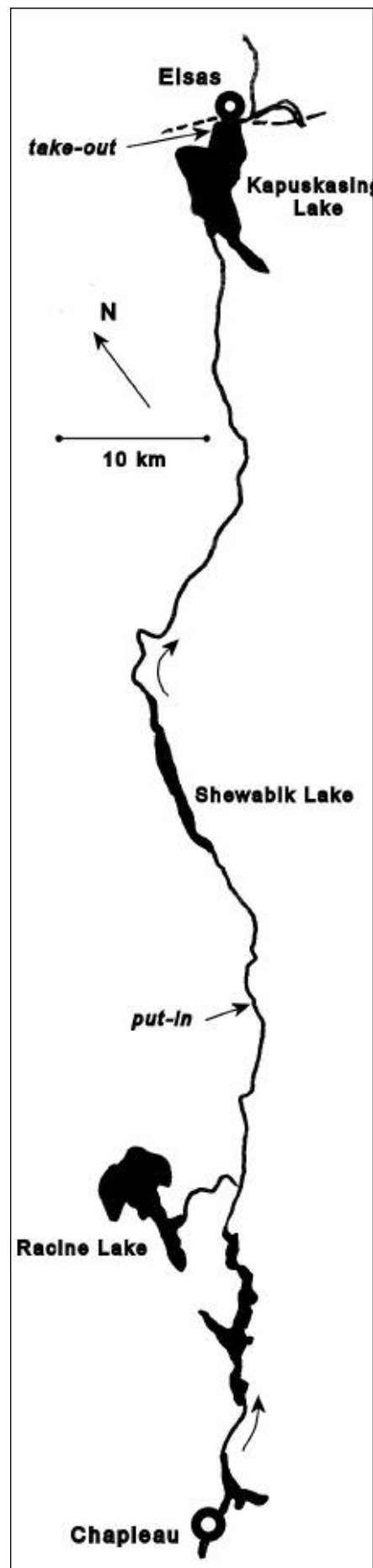
Excellent references include: *Canoeing Ontario's Rivers* by Ron Reid and Janet Grand, and *Chapleau-Negemosa Waterway Park* brochure from MNR Chapleau office, and from [www.missinaibi.com/chap-nemo.htm](http://www.missinaibi.com/chap-nemo.htm).

Larry Snyder provided some more info:

There are three possible start points for the trip: the town of Chapleau, Racine Lake, and the bridge on the Racine Lake Road. Racine Lake is about 45 km north of Chapleau by road. The Racine Lake Road turns east off the Missinaibi Lake Road and continues past Racine Lake Campground another 20 km or so till it crosses the Chapleau River. If you begin from Chapleau, the trip should take 6-7 nights on the river and one night in Elsas waiting for the train the next morning. From Racine Lake count on 5-6 nights on the river and one night in Elsas. From the bridge on Racine Lake Road, count on 4-5 nights on the river (we took five) and one night in Elsas.

The Bud train leaves from Sudbury Station in downtown Sudbury on Saturday morning for Chapleau and doesn't arrive till the afternoon. The Transcanada Via Rail comes through Elsas on its way to Sudbury Junction Station (note: a different station) on Friday morning or Monday morning so, if you only have one week and want to use the trains both ways, you may want to start from Racine Lake or the Racine Lake Road bridge. You can also drive to Chapleau and get off the Transcanada in Folyet and get shuttled back to Chapleau.

A written description of portages etc. on the Chapleau River trip compiled by David Morin, the former owner of Missinaibi Headwaters Outfitters, can be found at <http://www.missinaibi.com/chapleau.htm>. The new owner of Missinaibi Headwaters, Matt Howell, can be reached at 705-607-0276 and [matt@missinaibi.com](mailto:matt@missinaibi.com) for shuttles, etc. The Bed-and-Breakfast owners in Elsas, Ron and Jeannie Quigley, can be reached at 705-325-0438 and [dolittle@vianet.ca](mailto:dolittle@vianet.ca). They don't have a phone or internet access in Elsas so they have to check their calls etc. when they happen to be in Folyet.



# Winter Trekking in Algonquin Park

Jay Neilson



Another glorious season of winter trekking in Algonquin Park is upon us. Snowshoers and skiers can enjoy the ultimate deep-snow trekking conditions, plunging into soggy marshes, slogging across slushy lakes in non-waterproof winter boots good to -40C (wrong decision!), struggling through thickets, searching for lost trails, trying to sleep between snoring bodies, snugly wrapped in layers of warm down, listening to heavy rain(?) on the tarp, you name it.

Last winter, Herb Pohl was sadly missed while his positive spirit kept us in good humour as intrepid probes opened up a few of his favourite winter trails to Olive Lake and Linda Lake. When winter trekking at Achray, a beautiful sunny

day bedazzled as we skied to Andrew's Lake Falls. Our Algonquin season ended with a challenging winter camp destination at awesome Greenleaf Lake Cliffs, across beautiful Carcajou Lake, following the footsteps of the Achray Hills wolves crisscrossing the terrain, their howls echoing in the silence of the cold night.

Due to the permanent shut-down of the Pembroke Smurfit-Stone pulp mill (Black Friday, November 2008), which was producing photographic paper, all logging roads on the east side of Algonquin Park will close by Christmas. Saw logging in Algonquin continues but without the benefits of winter road access for winter camping as the demand

## Remember

Thinking about the wilderness canoe trip we did this past summer. The portages don't seem so tough now. I can hardly remember the two-kilometre push through the bushes with no portage trail, the carry on the cliff that had a steep drop down to the river, or the one on shale rock where every time you put your foot down you were in danger of crumbling to the ground.

What is it that I do remember? I remember the run that was too dangerous but the alternative was a gruelling over-the-hill carry. I remember the carry that ultimately got you a hundred metres above the river because it was a sheer-walled canyon with a waterfall. I remember the portage past the first stretch of three continuous waterfalls that, by golly, took four grown men two days to complete. Yes, I remember now. So much so that I want to go back.

It's because I remember other things. Sandy beaches that may never have seen a human print. Trout pools that held monsters who could take your line and run with it and keep it. A glorious five-kilometre run that skirted a huge rapid. A rivulet around the lee side of an island that produced a run in water so shallow that it couldn't possibly be dangerous and avoided a major rapid to boot. The approach to a waterfall in the rain with the roar of the water pounding in your ears that was extremely dangerous but also made your adrenalin flow so hard you knew you were alive and you wanted it to continue forever.

Yes, I remember.

Greg Went

---

for saw logs will be filled by Christmas. Of the interior access roads, possibly only Bissett Creek Road out of Deux Rivières may be open to service the radio telescope at Lake Travers. Check with Algonquin Park.

Safety in the backwoods in winter is always a priority. Last year a runaway sled turned lethal as it brutally ran over its master, lying flat-faced on ugly rocks. Winter sled design engineering is a major challenge.





# A Master Builder Reflects on 100 Years of Paddling

**Roy MacGregor**

“I’d like to be five years younger,” Walter Walker says. “More would be good – but five will do.”

Five, of course, would put him back only to 95 – Walter turned 100 last fall – but he figures if he were only 95 once again he’d know he had at least one more canoe in him.

Right now he just thinks he does. But first things first.

If you want to reach Walter Walker at his home in Lakefield, Ont. – say even if you are Prince Andrew wishing a happy birthday to the man who built the royal’s treasured Canadian canoe – you have to pick your moments. He naps in late morning. He naps in late afternoon. And in the evenings, if the winds are not too high, he heads out in his own canoe to fish.

But if you want to see Walter Walker, you might pick this coming Thursday

evening, when the 100-year-old Master Builder intends to celebrate National Canoe Day by joining other canoeists in packing the famous Peterborough Lift Lock for a rise up and down the Otonabee River that also runs through little Lakefield.

This second-annual event ([www.nationalcanoeday.net](http://www.nationalcanoeday.net)) is a creation of the Canadian Canoe Museum following last year’s CBC contest that named the canoe one of the Seven Wonders of Canada.

(Perhaps you recall when Canadians voted on the Internet and then three judges declared the canoe, the igloo, Niagara Falls, Old Quebec City, Prairie Skies, the Rocky Mountains and Halifax’s Pier 21 the Seven Wonders – brilliantly making Thunder Bay’s Sleeping Giant, the leading vote getter, world famous by neglecting to give the magnificent Giant his due.)

The naming of the canoe led to the first National Canoe Day – declared not by the Governor-General or the Prime Minister, but by ordinary people who simply like paddling – and this year they have added a new ... stroke.

A dozen numbered paddles will be handed off to a dozen interested paddlers whose only obligation is to use it, records that use in words, photographs or video, and then hand on the paddle to someone else until the paddles reach the three Canadian oceans.

That, of course, would involve a lot of portaging – which brings us back to Walter Walker.

Walter has been on the phone talking about his choice of canoe: cedar strip, of course, and canvas-covered if necessary. But he has never in all his 100 years had anything to do with a canoe made from modern materials.



"They can bang 'em around all they like," he says. "I've never had one."

He has talked about his personal choice of paddle: handmade (by him, of course) and soft maple because it's "light and strong."

He has talked about the curse of the outboard motor, which Ole Evinrude was still tinkering with the year Walter was born, and how he was witness to what Evinrude eventually did to canoeing.

"People got lazy," he says. "They just started roarin' about, not paddling at all."

He has delighted in recent decades to see the canoe make such a comeback that, this coming weekend, more rooftops will be capped with canoes than bikes or luggage racks.

"With a canoe," he says, "you can go wherever you want to go. You can't with a boat and motor."

(He does admit, however, to owning an outboard, a 1.5 horsepower Johnson so old that he must first wrap a rope around the flywheel in order to start it – but he uses it only on the canoe and only to fight the wind.)

And he has talked about yokes – the wood-carved, shoulder-fitting thwart that allows Canadians to turn into Mr. Canoeheads and take to the back trails.

"Never bothered with one," he says.

How do you portage, then? He is asked.

"Don't. I've never portaged – except maybe from the boat-house to the water."

He says he came to canoe-building by accident, setting out to be come a toolmaker and running smack into the Depression.

He eventually heard of work in Lakefield, and he and Maxine, now 86, moved so Walter could sign on as a "helper" at the local canoe company.

The helper, over time, became the absolute master, the man who built the famous Peterborough canoe until the company shut down in 1961 and has been building canoes ever since – including one commissioned by Prince Andrew when he was a student at the nearby college.

"This guy has seen pretty much the entire history of the carpenter tradition of canoe building," says expert James Raffan.

"He carries that tradition in his hands."

Last November, at a packed gathering at the museum to cele-



brate Walter's 100th, they asked the deeply religious builder to make a speech. He walked to the stage with his toolbox, held them up and explained what they were for, and then held up his hands to show his proudest feat: all 10 fingers still intact.

He also said that he figured he still had enough wood lying around to try one more canoe before he actually retires to a life of leisure.

As for the revelation that the Master Builder has never portaged one of his own creations, Mr. Raffan can only laugh. "It just goes to show," he says, "that Walter has great management skills as well."

Previously published in *The Globe and Mail*, June 23, 2008. Used with permission.

\*\*\*\*\*

## LAKEFIELD CEDAR STRIP CANOE

At the last WCA annual Wilderness and Canoeing Symposium, organized and presented by George Luste on 8 and 9 February 2008 in Toronto, a wonderful example of Walter Walker's superior craftsmanship was exhibited. This 16-ft wooden canoe, owned by John Jennings who had brought it with him to the enthusiastic delight of many present at the Symposium, was built by Walter Walker in 1978. (The photographs of this treasure were made by Toni Harting.)





# WCA ACTIVITIES

WINTER 2008/09  
SPRING 2009

## WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT PRESENTED IN THE SPRING ISSUE?

Contact the Outings Committee before February 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@gmail.com; Scott Card, 905-665-7302, scottcard@sympatico.ca; Mary Perkins, mary.perkins@sympatico.ca, 905-725-2874

Our ability to offer an interesting and diversified activities program depends on our trip organizers' generous donation of their time and enthusiasm. We appreciate the important contribution these members make to our club. If you are an active paddler, please help us. Become an outings organizer.

*WCA outings and other activities may have an element of danger of serious personal injury. You are responsible for determining if your equipment, skill, and experience are adequate to participate safely in a club activity. Participants are ultimately responsible for their own safety and well-being when participating in club events.*

*All moving-water trips rated intermediate level or higher require participants to have fully outfitted whitewater canoes (thigh straps, air bags filling the boat, throw bag, secured spare paddle), and to be wearing helmets and weather-appropriate clothing (wetsuits or drysuits for winter, spring, fall trips).*

**Below is a summary schedule of our upcoming club outings and activities.  
Full details and descriptions can be found in the outings section of our website.**

### All Season **WINTER IN HALIBURTON COUNTY**

Ray Laughlen, 705-754-9479, rlaughlen@gmail.com ----- Ski/snowshoe Haliburton County area. I'm willing to provide help with guidance, logistics, organization, equipment, etc. Weekends or weekdays.

### All Season **SKI XC?**

Gary Norton, 416-918-5050, gnorton@rogers.blackberry.net(Preferred) ----- I'm fortunate enough to have time during the weekdays to get out skiing. If you would like to join me, please get in touch. Let's wax-up and hit the trail.  
Kolapore is a favourite destination, or ????

### All Spring **WEEKDAY WHITEWATER**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, jon.mcphee@rogers.com ----- I like to paddle during the weekdays. Favourite destinations are the Black and Head near Washago, as well as the Hwy 7 rivers. Call me if interested, and I'll put you on my contact list.

### January 17 **PADDLERS' PUB NIGHT**

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@gmail.com, contact by January 8 to register so we can book sufficient room. Join other paddlers for an evening of food, drink, and good cheer to chase away the January blahs. It will be a great chance to get together and plan next season's adventures and re-live last summer's outings, or just watch a few paddling films running on the big screen in the background. As in the past, we are organizing this evening together with members of the Ontario Voyageurs Kayak Club. Meet 7.00 p.m. at Toronto's Bow & Arrow Pub, 1954 Yonge Street (second floor), just north of Davisville subway station.

### Jan. 30-31-Feb.1 **WOMEN'S WINTER ACTIVITIES WEEKEND**

Emmy Hendrickx, cmpczy@hotmail.com, book as soon as possible ----- We have the use of the Girl Guide facilities at Camp Wyoka, north of Clifford, off Hwy 9. Cost is \$150 per

person for rental of a full-amenities building, snowshoes, and food. We arrive Friday evening and sleep in the building. On Saturday we will build a snow mound shelter, or quinzee. The morning is spent preparing the snow mound, then we can spend the rest of the day snowshoeing, tobogganing or cross-country skiing. Snowshoes are included in the fee. Later in the afternoon, we will hollow out our snow mountain and prepare it for the night. While sleeping out is optional, it is an exhilarating experience to sleep outside in comfort and an opportunity you shouldn't miss.

### January 31 **KOLAPORE WILDERNESS SKI TRAILS**

Gary Norton, 416-918-5050, gnorton@rogers.blackberry.net(Preferred), book by January 25 ----- Backcountry skiing near Collingwood. Suitable for strong intermediate to advanced skiers.

### January 31 **CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING FIVE WINDS TRAILS**

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@gmail.com, book before January 20 - ----- Backcountry skiing on marked, ungroomed wilderness trail system in the scenic Gibson River area. Varied terrain. Limit six intermediate skiers.

### February 6-8 **WOMEN'S WINTER ACTIVITIES WEEKEND**

Emmy Hendrickx, cmpczy@hotmail.com, book as soon as possible ----- See description above.

### February 13-14 **WILDERNESS AND CANOEING SYMPOSIUM**

Get rid of the mid-winter blahs and prepare for the next paddling season by joining fellow WCA members and paddlers from across the continent for George Luste's 24th annual Wilderness and Canoeing Symposium at Monarch Park Collegiate in Toronto. See full information elsewhere in this issue and on our website.

### February 13-15 **WINTER ACTIVITIES WEEK-END**

Emmy Hendrickx, cmpczy@hotmail.com, book as soon as possible ----- See description above- except this week we're going coed. We've opened it up to the guys as well.

### February 20-22 **WINTER ACTIVITIES WEEKEND FOR WOMEN AND TEENS**

Emmy Hendrickx, cmpczy@hotmail.com, book as soon as possible ----- See description above. This is a special weekend for outdoorswomen who want to introduce their daughters ages 12 to 17 to winter outdoors activities.

### February 21 **KOLAPORE WILDERNESS SKI TRAILS**

Gary Norton, 416-918-5050, gnorton@rogers.blackberry.net(Preferred), book by February 15 ----- Backcountry skiing near Collingwood. Suitable for strong intermediate to advanced skiers.

### February 28 **WCA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM**

Join us in Peterborough for our AGM at the Canoe Museum. Special Guest Speaker- Paul Mason. See details and registration form on the inside of the cover of this issue, and on our website. Register today!

### March 21 **MOIRA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca ----- Book as soon as possible. We will start at Chisholm's Mill and finish at Latta in the morning, then run Lost Channel in the afternoon. Non-technical Class 2-3. For intermediates or better. If weather/water conditions are unsuitable, we will postpone the trip. Limit of six boats.

### March 21-22 **ALGONQUIN XC, WILNO**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net, book by March 15 ----- Wilno, south of Algonquin Park, will be our destination; exploring trails along the Opeongo and Madawaska Rivers



#### March 22 **LOWER CREDIT RIVER**

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca, book before March 16 ----- We'll catch the Credit in Streetsville and run down to the mouth at Port Credit. Class 1 to 2. If we have a late break-up, we'll move the trip to March 29.

#### March 28 **MOIRA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca ----- Book as soon as possible. This is a repeat of the March 21 trip.

#### April 4 **CREDIT RIVER**

Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835 or annebradley@sympatico.ca, book before March 28 ----- Inglewood to Glen Williams. Requires some moving-water competence. Limit six canoes.

#### April 4 **BEAVER CREEK #1**

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 paddlers. If the river isn't open yet we could switch to the Moira. Limit five boats

#### April 5 **ELORA GORGE**

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca, book by March 29. ----- This time of year the gorge should provide a challenging intermediate run, packing a lot of interesting Class 2 to 3 whitewater into a short distance.

#### April 11 **BEAVER CREEK #2**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, 416-438-7672, book as soon as possible ----- See description above.

#### April 11-12 **BEAVER, BLACK, OR MOIRA**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net, book by April 5 ----- We will be paddling Beaver Creek, or the Moira, or the Black Rivers, with exact destinations depending on water levels at the time. Moira is suitable for intermediates, Beaver and Black are advanced-level trips.

#### April 19, tentative **BLACK RIVER (WASHAGO) & HEAD RIVER**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, jon.mcphee@rogers.com, book by April 5 ----- Date will depend on water levels.

The short stretch we paddle is a fun run where paddlers can practise eddies, ferries, and surfing. For novices with moving-water experience. If the water level is suitable, and there is interest, we can drive over to the nearby Head River. The section we run is small and technical, with a number of Class 2-3 ledge rapids and is best for skilled intermediates. Limit five canoes.

#### April 25-26 **RANKIN AND BIGHEAD RIVERS**

Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835 or annebradley@sympatico.ca, book before April 18 ----- Scenic trip in Bruce and Grey Counties. Saturday we will paddle the Rankin and Sunday the Bighead. Suitable for novices. Come for one or both days. Limit four canoes.

#### April 25-26 **SPENCE'S CELEBRATED SALMON-MOIRA WEEKEND**

Glenn Spence, 613-475-4176, book after January 25 ----- North of Belleville, these two rivers offer exciting whitewater and fine scenery. The Salmon has some small rapids for you to practise your skills. The Moira has larger rapids up to Class 3. You can bivouac at my house and enjoy a potluck dinner.

Intermediate paddlers welcome. Limit six boats.

#### April 26 **LOWER BLACK RIVER, TWEED**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, jon.mcphee@rogers.com, book by April 12 ----- The Lower Black northwest of Tweed runs from Queensborough to Hwy #7 in a series of Grade 1 to 4 rapids. The more serious ones can be portaged. Solid intermediate level technical whitewater skills are required. Limit five canoes.

#### May 2-3 **SPRING IN MUSKOKA**

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@gmail.com, book before April 15 ----- We will paddle some lakes yet to be decided, where we will experience the returning birds and discover other flora and fauna emerging from hibernation. We'll hike and explore the surrounding area and clean up portages and campsites along the way. Limit four canoes.

#### May 2-3 **OPEONGO & UPPER MADAWASKA RIVERS**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net, book by April 26 ----- The Opeongo has long sections of Class 2-3 rapids, making it suitable for solid intermediates or better. The Upper Madawaska is one of the most challenging rivers in Ontario. The big drops can be portaged, but it still requires advanced whitewater skills.

#### May 2-3 **BLACK RIVER (WASHAGO)**

Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835 or annebradley@sympatico.ca, book before April 25 ----- The Black River drops slowly, with few lengthy rapids, so it is an ideal trip for those who prefer flatwater or lack the experience to tackle more remote rivers. Limit four canoes.

#### May 9-10 **NOIRE RIVER**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net, book by May 3 ----- We will shuttle to 50:50 Rapid which can be played all day. On Sunday we will run down to the bridge. Participants should have strong intermediate skills to successfully paddle the Class 2 rapids. There will be lots of opportunity to practise on the Class 3-4 ledge at 50:50 Rapid.

#### May 16-18 **BIRDING AT POINT PELEE**

Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835 or annebradley@sympatico.ca, book before 9 May ----- Enjoy the spring warbler migration. We will camp at Wheatley Provincial Park and wander the trails of Point Pelee and Hillman Marsh. Flatwater padding opportunities available. Binoculars mandatory.

#### May 16 -18 **MAGNETAWAN RIVER**

Alan James, silvernerd2004@yahoo.ca, book by May 10 ----- I will be paddling on the Magnetawan River for the long weekend in May and would enjoy some company. This is a four-day trip suitable for experienced whitewater trippers.

#### May 16-18 **LOWER MADAWASKA RIVER**

Larry Durst, 905- 415-1152, ldurst@devoncommunications.com ----- Book as soon as possible. Join us for the 9th annual spring paddle/wine-and-cheese party. We paddle from above Aumonds Bay to Griffith. The pace is leisurely with lots of time to play, chat, and nibble! Rapids will range from Class 1 to 4, with portages around all major ones. Suitable

for intermediates. Limit six boats. Book early as this trip "sells out" every year.

#### May 16-18 **PETAWAWA RIVER**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net, book by May 10 ----- Join us on the classic run from Lake Travers to McManus. This outstanding whitewater river has loads of Class 2 to 3 paddling, with portages for all five Class 3-4 rapids. Participants should have strong intermediate skills.

#### May 23-24 **UPPER ROUGE RIVER**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net, book by May 17 ----- An exploratory trip for us. We've heard this is a great spring run. We are rating this trip as requiring advanced whitewater skills since we are not sure what we will encounter.

#### May 29-31 **INTERMEDIATE WHITEWATER CLINIC**

John & Sharon Hackert, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 19 ----- This is the twelfth year of our clinic, which is designed to help improve your basic skills. We will paddle the Lower Mad on Saturday and practise our basic 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 practise self-rescue techniques. Open to solo and tandem canoes. We will camp at our cottage.

#### June 6-7 **WOMEN'S WHITEWATER WEEK-END**

Johanna de Bruijn, johanna.debruijn@sympatico.ca, book by May 8 ----- A women's whitewater weekend on the Lower Madawaska for experienced and novice paddlers, featuring instruction by Beth Kennedy. For tandem and solo paddlers. Fee is \$65 / person for the two days, for a minimum of 8 participants. Fees will be slightly higher if fewer paddlers participate. Participants are responsible for their own equipment. Some rentals available from Paddler's Co-op.

#### June 20-28 **ASHUAPMUSHUAN RIVER**

Jay Neilson & Frank Knaapen, 613-687-6037, jneilson@nrtco.net, book by May 24 ----- The Ashuapmushuan River is located north of Lac St Jean in Quebec. This is a challenging Class 2-3 river that requires confident ferrying and eddy skill in big water. Fully outfitted white-water boats, including spray decks, are mandatory.

#### **ADDITIONAL TRIPS**

Check our website at [www.wildernesscanoe.ca/trips.htm](http://www.wildernesscanoe.ca/trips.htm) for additional trips. Members may submit additional trips to the Outings Committee anytime at bness@look.ca. If you miss the Nastawgan deadline, your trip will still be listed on the website. Also, check the bulletin board at [www.wildernesscanoe.ca/bulletin.htm](http://www.wildernesscanoe.ca/bulletin.htm) for private, non-WCA trips or partner requests.

#### **NEED A PARTNER?**

If you're a tandem canoeist in need of a paddling partner, whether for a single trip or on a more regular basis, our website provides a valuable resource to help you connect with other members who want to get on the water. If you need a partner, please submit a message for posting to our website giving details.



## Where it is...



## ...in this issue

- |                    |                        |                       |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Horton River     | 9 Outdoor Adv. Show    | 12 Kirk Wipper        |
| 8 Editorial        | 9 Editor Ad            | 14 Chapeau River      |
| 8 Welcome          | 10 WCA Fall Party      | 19 Winter Trekking    |
| 8 Correction       | 10 WCA AGM             | 19 Remember           |
| 8 Praise           | 11 Food                | 20 Master Builder     |
| 8 Fall Meet Report | 11 WC Symposium        | 22 Outings-Activities |
| 9 WCA Dying?       | 11 Greenwood Out. Club |                       |

### WCA Postal Address

P.O. Box 91068  
2901 Bayview Ave.  
Toronto, ON M2K 2Y6

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Aleksandar Gusev  
(Chair)  
8 Valiant Road  
Etobicoke, ON  
416-236-7079  
aleks@gusev.ca

Martin Heppner  
Toronto, ON  
416-465-1558  
mheppner@anchor  
securities.com

Linda Gordon  
lindaanngordon  
@hotmail.com

Doug Ashton  
doug.ashton  
@rogers.com

Jon McPhee  
jon.mcphee@  
rogers.com  
905-640-8819

Gisela Curwen  
Toronto, ON  
416-484-1471  
gisela.curwen@gmail.com

### WCA Contacts <http://www.wildernesscanoe.ca>

#### Secretary

Bill King  
45 Hi Mount Drive  
Toronto, ON M2K 1X3  
416-223-4646  
lyonrex@rogers.com

#### WCA Outings

Bill Ness  
194 Placentia Blvd.  
Toronto, ON M1S 4H4  
416-321-3005  
bness@look.ca

#### Interim Editor

Toni Harting  
7 Walmer Rd. Apt. 902  
Toronto, ON  
416-964-2495  
aharting@sympatico.ca

#### Treasurer

Barb Young  
youngjdavid@rodgers.com

#### Webmaster

Jeff Haymer  
Toronto, ON  
416-635-5801  
jhaymer@primus.ca

#### Membership and Computer Records

Anne Bradley  
annebradley@sympatico.ca

#### Conservation

Jeff McColl  
mccolls@sympatico.ca

### Editorial Team:

Toni Harting, (Interim) Editor-in-Chief  
Barb Young, Food Editor  
Bill Ness, Outings Editor  
Bob Henderson, Resource Editor

Printed by Grafo Print Media