



On Faber Lake near the "Bear Portage"

NORTH OF GREAT SLAVE LAKE

Part 1: Going up

Herb Pohl

In spite of dramatic increases in recreational canoeing in the Northwest Territories in the last twenty years, there are still large areas which are lightly travelled and about which — apart from the reports of the Geological Survey of Canada — little has been written. For me, this in itself constitutes enough justification to want to take a closer look at such a region. In this particular case an additional impetus was a fondly remembered trip in 1988 which took me from Slemon Lake to the mouth of the Coppermine River (see *Nastawgan*, Autumn 1989).

During the following years other parts of Canada's great northern playground beckoned and delayed the return to the

Northwest Territories. Nevertheless, in that interval, and after many trips to the map library, I decided that the route shown on the map best satisfied several of my criteria: inexpensive, variety of terrain, away from popular routes. The most important criterion of all was the ability to fly supplies in via scheduled carrier to the two Indian villages along the way (total cost for 50-60 kg was \$62). This allowed me to exceed the five-week limit which the carrying capacity of my boat imposes. It also meant that the loads on the portages could be a little lighter and more appropriate for the aging frame.

I arrived in Rae in the first week of July 1994. Because

of several reports of the high incidence of vandalism in the community, I visited the local detachment of the RCMP and asked whether I could leave my car in their care during my absence.

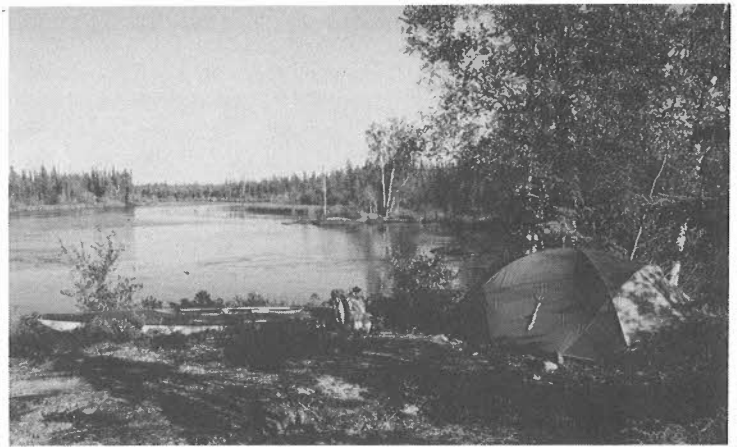
"No problem," said the man at the desk, "as long as you understand we take no responsibility. We also have to know exactly where you are going and how long you are going to be away. Just in case we have to go looking for you." "Well," said I, "it's a bit complicated, but in bare outline, my first target is Rae Lakes, then Rawalpindi Lake, Snare Lake, and back here. As to time, somewhere between seven and ten weeks." That seemed to be exact enough and was duly entered into the computer.

Rae is located on a small peninsula near the southern shore of Marian Lake, a large, shallow body of water nearly forty kilometres long, northwest of Yellowknife. It receives the waters of the Snare River, which enter from the west, and the Marian River at its northern extremity. These waters are then dissipated into Great Slave Lake through several short channels. My immediate goal was to reach the mouth of the Marian River and follow it upstream to Mazenod Lake.

As always at the beginning of a trip I was anxious to get started but my departure was delayed by the brisk wind which had churned up the silty lake bottom and turned the water into grey-brown soup. By the evening of the second day, with no change in sight, my patience — never my strong suit — was gone and, with some misgivings, I pushed off. I only made it to the first island some seven kilometres away before courage failed me, but at least I was under way.

In the morning the wind blew with unabated vigor out of the southeast and pushed me with surprising speed towards the mouth of the river, past an abandoned Indian village, into an environment which changed little over the next few days.

Near the end of the last ice age the whole region from Marian Lake to just south of Great Bear Lake was occupied by a huge meltwater lake. The run-off from the ice sheet centred near the headwaters of the Back River brought with it a great amount of sediment which settled on the lake



Marian River

bottom. With the disappearance of the lake the region is now a huge plain through which the highest elevations of the underlying shield protrude in sculpted grandeur. In its lower reaches, the Marian River has carved a course through the sediments of the old lake bottom in a process of continual erosion. Much of the surface beyond the river-banks is occupied by shallow bodies of water, a veritable haven for fish and fowl, muskrat and beaver, as well as their predators — eagles, otters, and wolves. The predominant tree species are poplar and birch which are gradually replaced by spruce and jack pine as one travels upriver.

The Marian is a small river with a gentle current, which makes upstream travel easy. By mid-afternoon the hot sun and plain fatigue had produced the lethargy which has one looking for a campsite. When I reached the base of the second falls on the river I decided to pitch the tent. For a while a pair of wolves on the opposite shore watched the proceedings before sauntering off into the bush. It was the first of a number of encounters with wolves; all of them were in splendid condition and not overly concerned about my presence.

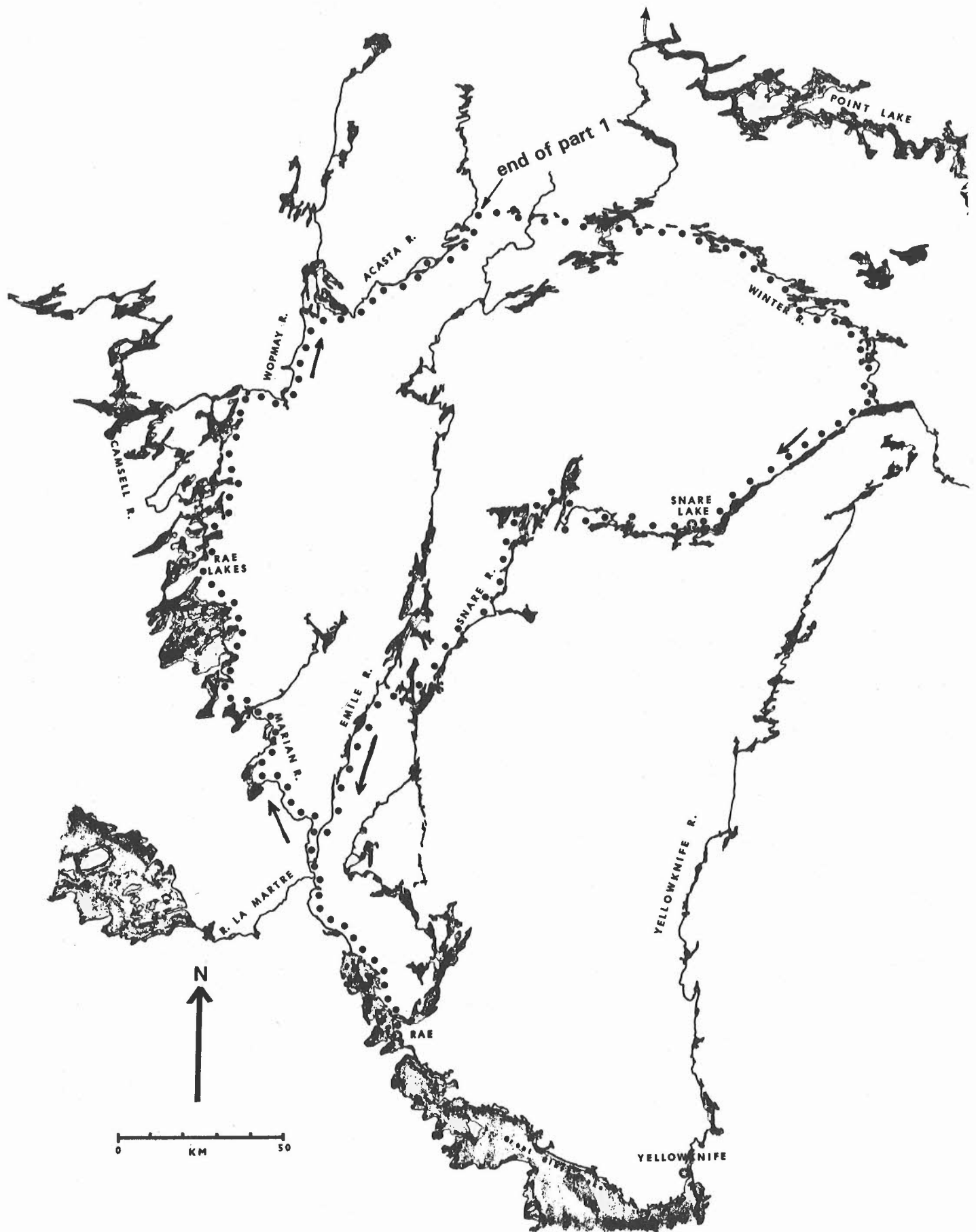
By the end of the third day I had passed the two major tributaries of the Marian, the Emile River and Rivière La Martre, and several trappers' cabins, one of which had been used until very recently and contained "homemade" snowshoes, toboggans, and what is referred to as a "ratting canoe" by the Natives — perhaps three metres long and very slender, enough to carry one person and little else.

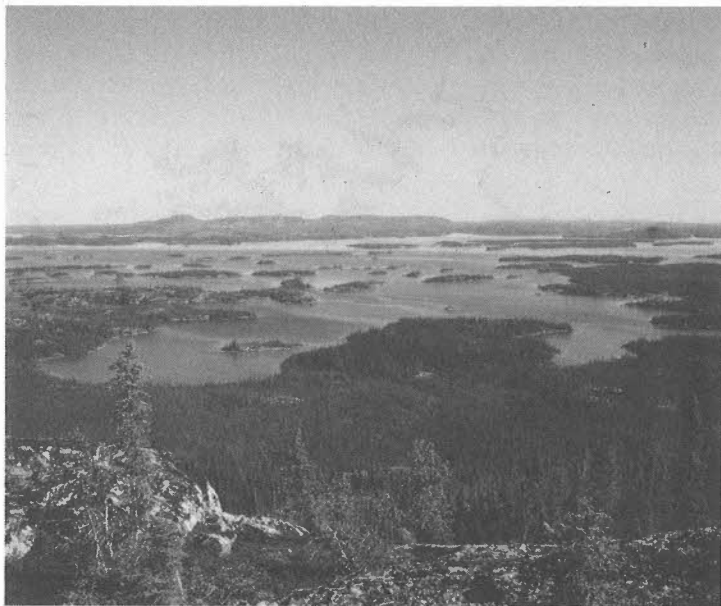
Upstream from the confluence with the Emile River the Marian is reduced to a tiny, muddy trickle. The mud is due to the activity of literally countless muskrats and beavers which continuously stir up the silty riverbanks. I normally don't worry about water quality, but here I drank only tea. Further upstream, the river not only gets cleaner but, surprisingly, also larger. Presumably the boggy sections act like a sponge during periods of low precipitation.

After a succession of short carries across well-maintained portages I reached Hislop Lake and camped at the base of a high hill on the western shore. I had planned to get to the summit with the first light of dawn and come away with some decent pictures. Alas, by morning the haze of a distant forest fire obscured the horizon, a forerunner of things to come which dogged my efforts at photography throughout my trip.



Marian Lake





View from the top of Mossy Island (Faber Lake), looking east

Above Hislop Lake the river is a delightful mix of placid stream and boisterous drops, the shield rock becomes more prominent, and at several points the stream separates into two or more rocky channels. Wading and dragging the boat over the many shallows and ledges soon proved to my dissatisfaction that the abrasive quality of the shield rock was excellent. Finding portages became more time-consuming as well and I was glad when, at the end of the first week, I reached Mazenod Lake. This is a beautiful, island-studded sheet of water. The largest of the islands rises steeply to a flat summit some 70 metres above the lake. It provided not only a lovely campsite, but afforded a remarkable overview of my "kingdom for the day." A pair of bald eagles soared and dipped in the stiff breeze; the flecked and streaked surface of the lake — almost black when viewed in one direction — was magically transformed into liquid silver when looking towards the setting sun. Could heaven be any better than this?

In contrast to the majority of wilderness trippers, who insist on gathering as much information about their intended route as possible beforehand, I consciously limit myself to a careful examination of existing maps; the rest of the information-gathering process starts after the trip. This approach maximizes the "discovery" aspect of the journey. It does occasionally incur the expenditure of nervous and physical energy which could be avoided by a thorough information search (so could of course staying home).

The next portage was a case in point. The watersheds of the Marian and Camsell rivers have their closest approach between Mazenod and Sarah Lake. I had spent a great amount of time staring at the map to try and anticipate where the old native portage was likely located. There was no doubt that one existed, but I had no idea how easy it would be to find and follow it. At any rate, I was prepared for a three-kilometre carry. It turned out that instead of one long carry, the old trail crossed several small ponds and was quite painless, exactly as shown on the map produced by the Geological Survey.

The Camsell River is the connecting link between a number of large lakes, remnants of the ancient meltwater lake, which are in very close proximity to one another. The most prominent landmark in this land of distant horizons is Mossy Island which rises 160 metres above Faber Lake, a fabulous lookout well worth the effort needed to climb it. A short river channel connects Faber Lake with Rae Lake and is the standard route of the Natives today. My interest, however, was piqued by a portage route indicated on the 1:50,000 topo map which reaches Rae Lake from a deep bay in the northeast corner of Faber Lake.

Old and now unused portages are sometimes difficult to locate and follow; I find the process extremely stimulating and satisfying, although in this particular case the script was not entirely to my liking. The barely recognizable trail traversed a marshy region with shallow ponds and the remnants of old winter camps. Along the way I had stopped again and again to feast on blueberries. On my approach to the end of the portage with my last load, I found a black bear engaged in trying to extricate one of my food packs from the boat. What concerned me more than the impertinence of the action was the fact that the creature only moved off about 25 metres.

Well, I had a cure for that!

I had brought along a little plastic flare pistol for just such an occasion. It makes quite a loud report, akin to a shotgun. I quickly loaded it and fired the flare out over the water, all the while keenly observing the bear.

I instantly recognized this animal had a problem, there was absolutely no reaction — obviously this was a dumb creature. At this point I decided that one of us had to move and so I purposefully tried to launch the canoe. As the devil wants to have it, the water was rather shallow; even 50 metres out it was barely deep enough to float my conveyance. Worse still, the bear had moved closer and was matching my progress step for step. It would be an understatement to say I was nervous.



Wopmay River

Damage assessment revealed a badly shredded foodpack, several punctured containers, and a crack in the boat; nothing that duct tape couldn't handle. Later that day I retrieved my food supply for the next 25 days in the village of Rae Lakes, a native community of approximately 200 inhabitants. It was an excessively hot day and I wasted little time getting back onto the cool water. For the next two days my route took me through Rae Lake, Lac St. Croix, and Margaret Lake to the Wopmay River. Many parts of these lakes have shallow, marshy sections well populated with moose. The boulder-clad hills of bedrock show old scars of forest fires. I was getting increasingly concerned that my way might be blocked by one of the many fires which were burning at the time, as smoke frequently obscured the landscape. As it turned out it was a needless worry.

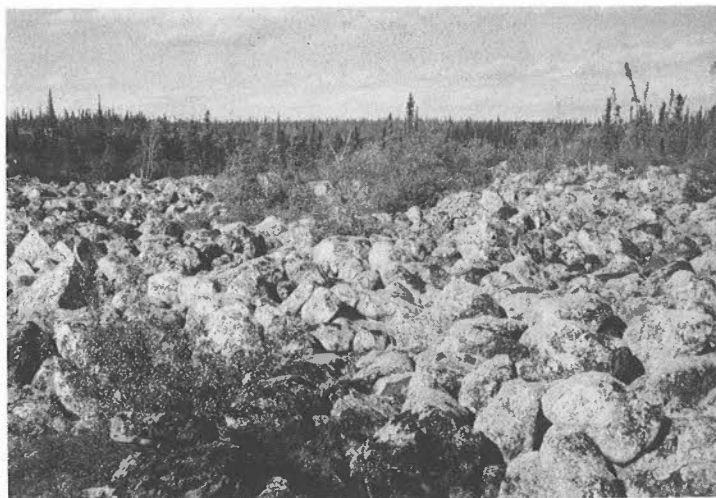
The Wopmay River is the major tributary of the Camsell and carries a substantial amount of water. It's a drop-and-pool river with very little current in-between drops, at least



Little Crapeau Lake; Acasta River entering from the east

as far upstream as I travelled. The 1:50,000 maps indicate portages around many of the obstructions. The actual existence and location of these portages rarely coincides with the map location. The condition of the trails appears to depend on the local fauna — if there are moose in the region, the old trails are well maintained, if not, they are almost impossible to find.

Just below Grant Lake I left the Wopmay and followed the southern branch of the Acasta River to Little Crapeau Lake. With it I entered into a noticeably different landscape. The lower river valley is an enormous collection of sand — the plain of an old lake floor interspersed with partially eroded sand-eskers is flanked in places by high vertical cliffs of frost-shattered rock. The dark lichen-covered rock and the bright sand provided a curious contrast, a metaphor of evil and good. It was here that I came across an old Indian encampment, seemingly a canoe-building site, for I found many canoe components including pieces of birchbark beautifully stitched together with spruce roots.



The valley at one time was a gigantic spillway of meltwater

Further upstream the land bears all the markings which indicate that this was a gigantic spillway of meltwater. Large fields of boulders, of distant origin and tightly packed, lined the shallow and poorly defined valley floor. The river became a succession of obstructions and I spent very little time paddling.



Three days of almost continuous portaging

It took three exhausting days of almost continuous bush-whacking to reach a wide, marshy plain. All along, the country had been attractive in a wild sort of way, but here a sense of tranquillity reigned. From one of the low hills one could see the glittering outlines of bodies of water stretching to the far horizon and feel the soothing silence of the place.

At the far end of the plain the sluggish and circuitous flow of the river assumes a more purposeful pace between banks of gravel and sand, and trees are more abundant. I watched the passing scenery with a growing mix of apprehension and excitement because I was approaching the point where my route would leave the river and strike out overland towards Rawalpindi Lake. All of a sudden I wasn't so sure it was a sensible undertaking.

— to be continued ...



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Published by the Wilderness Canoe Association — Editor: Toni Harting
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

It has taken a while, but I have finally achieved limited understanding of the intricacies of fax-modem in my computer. Thanks to Richard Culpeper's endless patience I can now in principle be reached via this (to me) still tricky method of communication. So if you want to send articles or other information to the editor to be included in our journal, it should be possible to do this by fax-modem. But please voice-phone me first at (416) 964-2495 and we will try to establish a working link.

DON RIVER PADDLE Metro Region Conservation and the Wilderness Canoe Association invite you to our 2nd Annual "Celebrate the Don" on Sunday, 7 May 1995. Bring your canoe, paddles, and life preservers, and paddle the Don River from Serena Gundy Park on Eglinton to Harbourfront. Transportation back to the cars is provided. For more information call: Bill King (WCA) at (416) 223-4646, or Beth Williston (MTRCA) at (416) 661-6600 ext. 334.

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

THE CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM is inviting all canoeing/boating friends to become a member of this important organization. Box 1338, 59 Clementi Street, Lakefield, Ontario, K0L 2H0.

HOME FOR CANOEING The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA) is continuing its "Home for Canoeing" campaign (Oct. '91 – Oct. '95) to build/purchase an Outdoor Education/Environmental Learning Centre at which the Association's office would be located. It would also serve as a centre for outdoor and environmental education, slide shows/seminars/guest speakers on canoeing/kayaking and the outdoors, a "Wall of Fame" area to pay tribute to great Canadians who have made outstanding contributions to canoeing and kayaking, a place to find information about paddling in Canada, and much more. Donations sent to the CRCA — designated for the "Home for Canoeing" campaign — will receive charitable donations tax receipts and will be recognized in perpetuity at the new "Home for Canoeing" as well as in Kanawa Magazine. Contact: CRCA, 1029 Hyde Park Road, Suite 5, Hyde Park, Ontario, N0M 1Z0; tel. (519) 473-2109; fax (519) 472-0768.

NEWS BRIEFS

NASTAWGAN MATERIAL AND DEADLINE Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think might be of interest to other readers, are needed for future issues. Submit your contributions preferably on floppy computer disks (Word-Perfect preferred, but any format is welcome) or in typewritten form; contact the editor for more information. Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request; please follow these guidelines as much as possible to increase the efficiency of the production of our journal. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue: Summer 1995 deadline date: 1 May 1995
Autumn 1995 6 Aug. 1995



PARTNERS WANTED

TWO FAMILY TRIPS For the past three years, we have been taking our boys, now aged five and seven, for easy canoe trips in Killarney Park. Last year we spent five days in the interior and this year we plan on six. The trips have been wonderful experiences for all of us, and after much reflection we've decided that only one thing could improve them: the company of another family.

If you have a family and you'd like to explore the possibility of joining us this summer, why not get in touch so we can begin discussing? Richard Todd, 68 Chemin des Pins, RR.3, Wakefield, PQ, J0X 3G0; phone/fax (819) 827-3175; Internet: Richard.Todd@Banyan.dgim.doc.ca.

KILLARNEY A nine-day trip in the first or second week of July. A moderately easy loop with a dozen or so portages, two of them long. There will be two layover days for hiking in the magnificent LaCloche mountains that overlook the lakes. Limit eight people.

TEMAGAMI flatwater trip 19-27 August. Exact route to be determined but will probably include the northwest arms of Lake Temagami, Obabika Lake and River, and some points to the south. Some portaging. Limit eight people.

COCHRANE RIVER In the summer of 1995, I am planning to do a trip on the Cochrane River from Wollaston Lake to Reindeer Lake. The trip will be about 600 km long although you would be able to shorten it by flying out at intermediate points. If you are interested, contact Peter Verbeek, 24 Romulus Drive, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 4C2; tel. (416) 757-3814; Internet: verbeek@io.org.

ANY TRIP JULY 1995 I'm looking for companions to join me for a one-to-four-week trip possibly in July '95. I'm competent in all aspects and enjoy a variety of paddling activities including whitewater and wildlife, creeks and cooking, lakes, fishing, and portages. I have both solo and tandem craft. Dave Gendler, 1115 Hawthorne, Ypsilanti, MI 48198, USA; phone (313) 482-0690.



Photo: Bryan Buttigieg

Announcement of W.C.A. Membership Dues

Over the years, your various Board of Directors have kept our fees as low and as stable as possible. We want to make certain that the WCA remains affordable to all. Thanks to many countless hours of volunteer help by members plus a frugal fiscal approach to expenditures, dues have not changed for a very long time.

Recently, we have been faced with a dilemma that the Canadian Dollar has lost considerable value against some other currencies, especially the American one. This has adversely affected our cash flow because many more members outside the country are taking advantage by converting their fees at the prevailing exchange rate. For example, when the Cdn.\$ equals .75 U.S.\$, we receive a cheque for \$26.25 U.S. (\$35 Cdn. times .75). In the past this did not happen. The vast majority of people simply paid their full membership dues in American funds, i.e. \$35 U.S.

To compound the problem, one of our biggest costs are related to mailing of the newsletter. These differences in expenditures will be greater once we have worked out the details with Canada Post for lower charges. Unfortunately, we had to make a decision where dues will remain the same in Canada and members who live outside the country will pay in American Dollars, without conversion benefits.

Effective January 19, 1995, the membership dues will be:

For residents of Canada	Single	\$25 Cdn.
	Family	\$35 Cdn.
For residents outside of Canada	Single	\$25 U.S.
	Family	\$35 U.S.

We trust that you will appreciate our predicament and recognize the reasons behind our position.

Earl Silver
On Behalf of the
Board of Directors

(Presented as submitted. Ed.)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

An article in the Winter-1994 issue of *Nastawgan* has prompted this letter, namely "Beer Becomes the WCA."

At a time when it is more difficult to attract young people to respect the laws, WCA members are touting drinking in parking lots.

We, as a club, so quickly criticize others with less outdoors experience for breaking environmental etiquette, i.e. "Respect the Land" (*Nastawgan*, Winter 1994, p.7). Perhaps we should review to see if we practise what we preach.

The WCA and its members, we believe, are supposed to be known as educated outdoor enthusiasts and considered by some to be respected leaders for other canoeists. How is it possible to gain and maintain respect when we publish photos and articles that highlight and seem to condone actions which are to the contrary?

Bev Lewis-Watts Noel Lewis-Watts
Brian McDonald Renee Fontaine

CANOEING AND WILDERNESS SYMPOSIUM

A standing ovation from a sold-out house of almost 800 people was George Luste's just reward at the conclusion of this again very successful symposium, the 10th in the series. This time the presentations did not have any geographical constraints but were collectively called "A Northern Overview." They were made by wilderness lovers from Canada, USA, Japan, and Germany.

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|--|---------------------|
| * Inuit Perspectives and the Korok Tomgats | David Annanack |
| * Endless Northern Summer by Canoe | Sara Seager |
| * Death and Resurrection on the Dubawnt | George Grinnell |
| * Unsung Northern Travellers, 1874-1974 | Gwyneth Hoyle |
| * From the Bay to Ungava to Labrador | Tija and Tait Luste |
| * Northern Labrador Visitations | Brian Bursey |
| * In La Salle's Historic Footsteps | Ken Lewis |
| * South of the Arctic Circle | Rudy Wiebe |
| * George Back, an "Arctic Artist" | Ian MacLaren |
| * "Where Rivers Run" Revisited | Joan McGuffin |
| * "One Incredible Journey" Revisited | Verlen Kruger |
| * "Magnetic North" Revisited | Peter Souchuk |
| * A Grandmother's NW Passage by Kayak | Victoria Jason |
| * Solo Winter Crossing of the Barrens | Pat Lewtas |
| * Trans-Polar Ski Trek | Max Buxton |
| * Ellesmere Island National Park Reserve | Rene Wissink |
| * Arctic Tales by Lydia and Hans | Lydia Schneller |
| * My Solitary Northern Sojourns | Akitoshi Nishimura |
| * A Northern Reading | Robert Perkins |

Note by George Luste: In the past I had thought that ten years was a probable end-point for this series of symposiums but I've changed my mind. With every seat taken in the auditorium, it is evident that many value these events. And

value and quality are attributes that should be nourished, not abandoned. If ten years isn't an end-point, then maybe it should be a check-point. Maybe it would be helpful to change or modify the program or its structure in some way, and to explore something new or different. Change always adds challenge and thus might make it more interesting for me (and less like work) to do it. I'm undecided on the specifics at the moment. Any and all suggestions from you, the readers, would be welcome: (416) 534-9313 (ev.).



PLAYING IT SAFE

How to register a trip with the authorities

Most canoeists, before starting out on a trip, leave a copy of their schedule with a responsible person. In the North, such advice is sometimes given to local authorities. However, there have been some problems in this area.

Two recent examples. One time I registered with the RCMP in Yellowknife. When I got to my end-point, I reported to the RCMP there and asked them to advise the RCMP in Yellowknife that I had arrived. Of course they did not do that and a week later I got a phone call at home from the Yellowknife RCMP asking about me. And the well-known Japanese adventurer Akitoshi Nishimura had registered with the RCMP at Stoney Rapids, who never passed on the information to the RCMP in Baker Lake. Nobody was concerned even after he became 12 days overdue.

To do it properly, you yourself must advise the RCMP at the end-point of your trip, and do it BY MAIL. In the letter you should include pertinent details about every person in your party: name, home address, home phone number, date of birth, and also the names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least two next of kin. You should include height, weight, and hair color of the people involved, and also the length and color of canoes, and if you use canoe covers, the color of the cover. Include the color and shape of your tents. Include a

copy of your paddling schedule. Most importantly, give instructions to the RCMP as to what you want them to do if you don't show up on the appointed day. Without instructions, the RCMP will do nothing. Upon reaching the end-point of your trip you must personally go to the RCMP and report that you have arrived; don't do it by phone and don't depend on others to do it for you. The best way to do it is to hand the RCMP a copy of the letter that you sent them previously, on which you note the day you arrived.

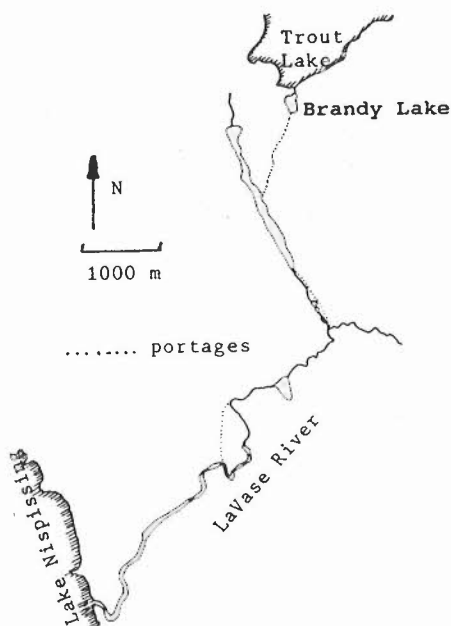
Peter Verbeek



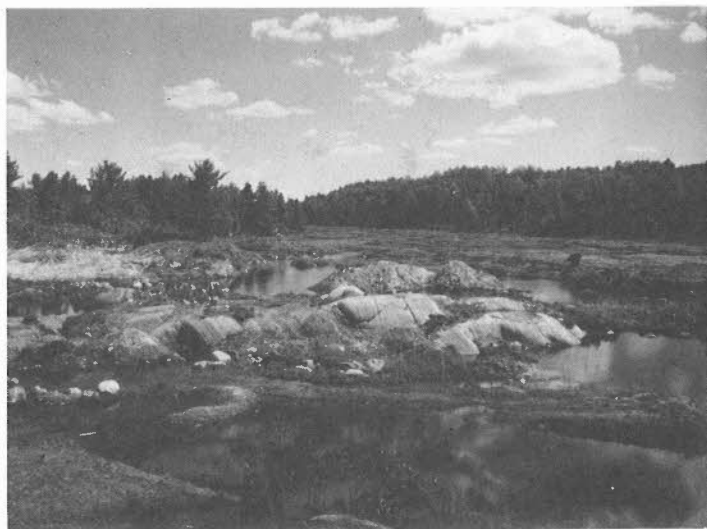
LAVASE PORTAGES UPDATE

(See *Nastawgan* Autumn 94, p.11.)

A \$45,000 grant from the Ontario Heritage Foundation has given a major boost to efforts to re-establish the historic LaVase Portages in North Bay, Ontario. The grant will be put toward the purchase of a 96-acre parcel of land on Hwy 17 at the city's eastern edge. The property includes Brandy Lake, a small pond connected to Trout Lake and also the northeastern terminus of the LaVase Portages.



The portage route forms the height-of-land crossing between Trout Lake and Lake Nipissing, headwaters of the Mattawa and French rivers respectively, and was once part of the cross-country canoe route used by early explorers and later the fur trade. The LaVase Portages is the only section of that original route from coast to coast where modern-day travellers have been forced to detour, many finding themselves portaging along the streets of North Bay instead.



The Restore The Link Committee (RTLCL) is attempting to re-establish this link by securing this key piece of land and placing it in the trust of the North Bay — Mattawa Conservation Authority, and using the growing public support for the project to negotiate clear passage between the two river sources.

The committee is continuing its private-sector fundraising in an effort to raise its \$40,000 share. Private and corporate donations, service club pledges, and the sale of souvenirs are hoped to account for the balance. A stone cairn



with a plaque listing those individuals who supported the project with a donation of \$100 or more will be placed on the property. Donations can be forwarded to:

The North Bay — Mattawa Conservation Authority
RR#5, Site 12, Comp.5
233 Birchs Road
North Bay, Ontario
P1B 8Z4

Please make cheques payable to: The LaVase Project/CA.

Photos: Toni Harting

Submitted by Paul Chivers (705) 476-1977.

PARTY TIME ON THE SAUGEEN RIVER

Barb Young

Our family has ventured onto the Saugeen River for two trips now. It is a great waterway for families starting into canoeing. However, there are certain times to avoid this river.

Last year we packed up and drove from Brampton to Walkerton on the Friday evening of the May long weekend. As we pulled into the privately run campground in Walkerton we had a major shock. The campground was teeming with young people, tents, and canoes. My first reaction was to turn around and go home but the rest of my family convinced me to stay. We managed to find a spot to set up our tents which we did just before sunset. Even while we worked, cars and trucks loaded with canoes continued to pour in. I was dreading the whole weekend.

As we settled into our sleeping bags, I was prepared to be awake all night. To my surprise, I got a fairly good sleep. Everyone seemed to be up early the next morning, eager to set off. A group of scouts were the first group packed and away. I felt like we were in a race and started to develop a herd mentality. We were finally loaded up and ready to launch. This would be our first trip together as a family of four in two canoes. On our first trip on the Saugeen we had managed in one canoe.

I was apprehensive about sterning since I hadn't had much experience in that position. We planned to travel approximately 32 km to McBeath - a canoe-in conservation area. The weather was gorgeous - hot and sunny. Memories of that first day include: lots of beer drinking all around us, jostling for position to get through some small rapids, an overloaded canoe piled with lawn chairs, overweight paddlers, and coolers swamping as it went through 15-cm waves, OPP officers pulling over canoes checking for liquor violations and life jackets. This was all within the first two hours.

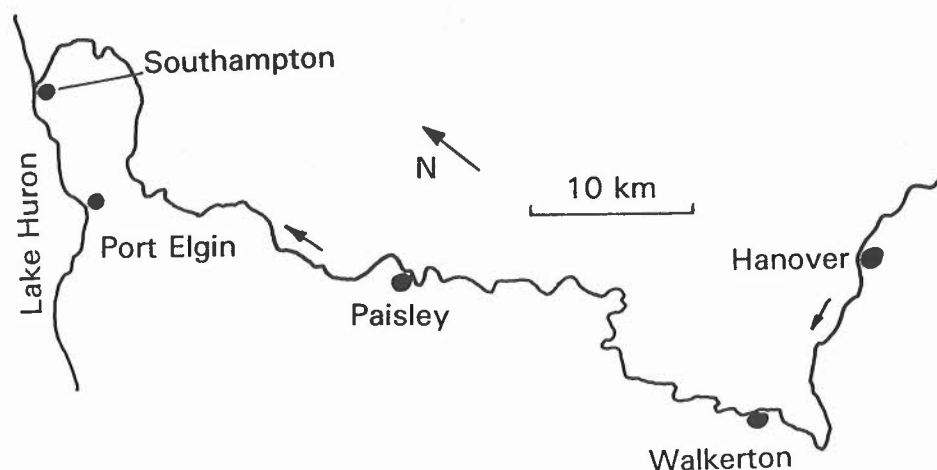
The majority of the quasi canoeists were busy drinking and getting sunburned, opting to float down the river rather than paddle. By paddling we managed to get by most of the revellers. As the ranks began to thin I started to hope that we were the only ones that knew about McBeath and that everyone else would camp on farmers' fields or at the Rotary campground in Paisley. (On our first trip we had had McBeath to ourselves but we had seen lots of party types coming out of the Rotary campground).

As we pulled into McBeath, the scouts were already there. This group, although noisy, were at least not beer drinkers. "Good," I thought. "The partyers certainly aren't going to want to camp with a family and a bunch of scouts." However, as the afternoon wore on and canoe after canoe of drunken young people pulled up I became resigned to the fact that this was going to be an evening to remember. We definitely began to feel out of place. Everyone seemed to know each other and the party continued to escalate. We made a small attempt to fit in by begging two beers from some passersby. As darkness fell, the games began and we were treated to a fireworks display among other things. I remember the blasts of air horns as I drifted off to sleep.

The next morning I felt vengeful. I wanted to get up early and make lots of noise to wake up the partyers. To my surprise, lots were already up. They had either never stopped drinking or had started again already. The day was beautiful and sunny. We paddled to Paisley and pulled in at the dock. We stopped for lunch and dropped in at Cowan Canoes to make arrangements for our pickup the next day. The rest of the day was relatively uneventful, although we continued to be amazed by the numbers and types of craft on the river. This included several floating docks, one equipped with lawn chairs, umbrella, radio, and cooler.



(photo damaged by water)



We only had a short paddle before we reached our next campsite at Saugeen Bluffs Conservation Area. The day turned out to be almost too hot. To cool off, my daughters donned life jackets and floated down the shallow river. After dinner, to get away from the drunks which were becoming increasingly obnoxious, we went for a hike. Saugeen Bluffs is a beautiful campground. The hiking trail climbs the bluffs and you get a wonderful view of the river. The woods were filled with trilliums. The evening was much quieter than the previous one, although we had to ask some young people smoking some funny smelling cigarettes to move away. Our campsite was right on the river's edge. There was a small mud beach between us and the river which they had decided was a private party spot.

The next day we were up and packed and ready at 10 a.m. for our pickup by Cowan's Canoes. Mr. Cowan arrived on time and helped us load our equipment. He was very friendly and entertained us with stories on our trip back to Walkerton. He has been in business in Paisley for nine years and builds his own canoes. As well, he offers canoe trips in war canoes for groups.

We would certainly recommend the Saugeen River as an easy beginner river - shallow with small rapids and no portages from Walkerton to Southampton. A good description of the route is in *Canoeing Ontario's Rivers* by Ron Reid and Janet Grand. As well, a guide is available from the Saugeen River Conservation Authority. We recommend, however, unless you're a party animal to stay away on holiday weekends.

BLACK FLIES

Somewhere north of 53.

Black flies bad this year. Very bad. Swarming the face and neck from the first pull on the tent zipper in the morning. Day after day it continues. On past trips there was some let-up when on the water. Not this year. Even in the middle of the river still pursued by the black flies.

The buddies praying for wind. Can hear them wailing. Day after day it continues too. Had to caution the buddies several times when the decibel level of the prayers rose too high. Don't implore too hard for wind. You might get what you ask for.

Shore stops that should be welcome breaks from paddling and a chance to stretch the muscles are now dreaded. Each stop a test of strength between the black flies and us before we are driven back to the canoes. Even the final stop for the day becomes a race to set up tents and build a fire so that the battle can be fought on even terms or a retreat to the tents a strategic possibility. The 40 square feet of sanctuary in the tent paid for with the bodies of dozens of black flies. Neither side willing to take prisoners.

Can't reconcile this killing frenzy that we have with black flies and the gentle touch that we try to have as we travel in the wilderness. Wilderness travellers are as the wind on the land. They breeze by and leave no sign of their

passing. All life has the right not to be harmed by these briefest of visitors. A blade of grass, a branch of a tree, lichen on a rock; all have the right to be as they were after the wilderness canoeist has passed by.

However, like most of life, there are compromises. A couple of fish kept for dinner, a bush or two cleared out of the way for a tent site, a tree limb broken off on the portage trail. It adds up.

Now late evening. Tents set up and supper is boiling. Bean soup. One of our favorites. Sticks to the ribs. Downside of supper is that not all of the protein that makes its way to the stomach comes from the beans.

Thinking of going out to the point to eat overlooking the river. Better view, room to move around, sound of the river moving by. Decide not to. The wind has died and the black flies are back. An excursion from the safety of the tent or the smoke of the campfire is a trip into enemy territory.

Black flies tapping on the cheeks and ears. Gently shake the head and shoo them away. Something a moose would probably do. No attempt made to kill them.

More than co-existence. Much more.

This land belongs more to the black flies than to us. The traveller comes to meet the wilderness on its terms. And the terms include black flies.

Greg Went

REVIEWS

These are two reviews of the same book. (Ed.)

A DISCOVERY OF STRANGERS, by Rudy Wiebe, published by Alfred A. Knopf Canada, Toronto, 1994, hardcover, 317 pages, \$27.00.

Reviewed by Joanne Culley.

Winner of the 1994 Governor-General's Award for fiction, *A Discovery of Strangers* is the fictionalized history of the events surrounding the Franklin expedition of 1819-1822. During this time, John Franklin and his party travelled down the Coppermine River to the Coronation Gulf, then proceeded eastward along the coast to Bathurst Inlet. They returned overland to their winter base camp at Fort Enterprise on Roundrock Lake, all the while mapping their route.

Many of the chapters in this book are prefaced by actual entries from the journals of members of the party - Dr. John Richardson and midshipman Robert Hood. The chapters that follow these entries flesh out the known facts with a rich account of the lives of the English and Yellowknife Indians, from a variety of perspectives. Wiebe has consulted historical sources, both native and white, to weave an intriguing account of the day-to-day life and dream experience of the people involved.

Wiebe tells of the first encounter of whites and natives and their almost total incomprehension of each other, despite the fact that their words are translated to each other by a "two-speaker." The English rely heavily on the Yellowknife Indians for their food, clothing, and guidance, but treat them like slaves. The natives, however, treat the "Whitemuds" (their name for the English) as their "guests," whom they save from starvation numerous times. The native elder Keskerah advises the others of his tribe who are hankering after the trade goods the whites offer, "... no one changes their whole life, for guests." - a truly prophetic assertion.

To the English, everything they see and experience is "wrong," the land is not as they expected, conditions are not what they imagined they would be, and food is not as readily available as they thought. They seem completely at odds with their surroundings, wearing tall beaver hats, conducting religious services, and upholding the English social order. By contrast, the Yellowknives are in tune with the land and seasons, and busily prepare for the winter ahead, gathering provisions and skins for the barren times.

Woven throughout the story is the effect that one young Yellowknife woman, "Greenstockings" (as the English have named her) has on those around her. Documented by fact, Wiebe tells of young Hood's affair with her and Hood's and George Back's thwarted "duel" to win her affections. Wiebe's book is valuable because of the representation of the native voice - something lacking in most conventional histories of the period. And to those who have canoed in the area, there is the added dimension of being able to visualize exactly where the events in the book are taking place.



A DISCOVERY OF STRANGERS

Reviewed by Seán Peake. (Courtesy of *Che-mun*, Outfit 77, Summer 1994)

After reading Rudy's last book on the Arctic, *Playing Dead* (see *Che-Mun* Outfit 57), I looked forward to reading his latest endeavour on the far North. This, especially after his now-famous encounter with W.P. Kinsella on CBC's *Morningside* with Peter Gzowski. These two authors had rather harsh words to say against the other regarding "misappropriation of voice," (placing words into the mouth of one who is neither of your gender nor race) the current PC buzzwords sweeping through the academic community - but this is another story. *A Discovery of Strangers* is set during the 1819-1821 Franklin expedition - one of the most harrowing misadventures ever played out on Canada's Barrengrounds. The main story revolves around Robert Hood, George Back, and Greenstockings, a young Yellowknife native woman, who caught the eye of these two young British officers. Intertwined in this love story is the murder of Robert Hood, by Michel Terrohaute, the Mohawk voyageur, near Obstruction Rapids in 1820. These elements could have combined to produce a compelling story. They could have, but don't.

A Discovery of Strangers is the springboard from which Wiebe sets out to vent all his pet peeves: European imperialism, the Christian faith, misogyny, chauvinism, and the fur trade. In true 90's fashion, he whines about all that's wrong and how we've been screwed by others. His characters mouth the slogans of the politically correct - voyageurs are "paddle slaves," the English are always "killing, killing, killing" animals.

He also appears to lack knowledge of the fur trade - he should have spent time researching his subject rather than using a bibliography from Peter C. Newman's HBC history. To run a post in winter requires the efforts of every man to hunt and fish for provisions. The amount of meat consumed by the men, especially the voyageurs, is staggering. According to David Thompson, voyageurs required between five and eight pounds of meat per day, not to mention the daily consumption of flour, sugar tea, chocolate, dogs, cats, and other foods. With an average contingent of between eight to 15 men, with their families of three or four, at a winter's post, a 400-lb. adult caribou or deer reduces to 175 of useable meat per animal, which wouldn't last long. Any meat left over was put into a hoard and saved for travel in the spring.

Besides, if he really had done his homework, he would know that the main re-provisioning and recruitment centre on the Orkney Islands for ships departing for the HBC factories on Hudson Bay was Stromness (not Stormness).

Unfortunately, Wiebe has failed to see through the eyes of the writers from whom he borrowed his material. I, too, have been guilty of this practice but was set straight by the dean of Canadian historians, W. Kaye Lamb. I had mentioned to him my dislike of Elliot Coues, an early editor of Lewis and Clark, Alexander Henry the younger, and David Thompson. Lamb said that I must always remember the attitudes of the writer or editor at the time of writing, and I have always kept this in mind when consulting historical texts.

Social values change, and to judge the words or actions of someone 90 years ago is to be as blind as the author or editor himself.

His book may receive adulation from those at Canlit cocktail parties or the adoration of young co-eds, but for someone seeking truth and an understanding of life in the North at that time, it crashes and burns.

DUMOINE: AAHHH, WILDERNESS!

"... it was obvious that the reputation of this area was well known. We had already seen two groups depart and were beginning to wonder about this 'wilderness'." Cam Salsbury's words from his September-1979 trip report in *The Wilderness Canoeist* came back to haunt us as we paddled down Lac Laforge in August 1994. Our harried pilot had informed us that he had 28 flights that day; some into Lac Benoit and others into Lac Dumoine. The roar of the plane was a constant companion as group after group of whitewater adventurers was dropped off.

Upon reaching Lac Benoit we were seconds ahead of another group rushing toward the same campsite. As our own party of four tents was too large to make do with a small clearing in the bush, we informed them of other campsites on the lake but were told they were all taken. We had just passed a smaller vacant site but assured them that if it was unsuitable for their party to come back and share this one. Luckily they never came back, but for another hour or so the plane continued its discharge of happy canoeists into this "wilderness."

Our days were ruled by the ever-present competition for campsites; so, on the water by eight o'clock and head for that day's destination, hoping the site would not be taken. "We hated those driving before us; We dreaded those pressing behind; We cursed the slow current that bore us..." (Robert Service: "The Trail of Ninety-Eight.") Later that day we were passed by two groups so we camped early at Little Steel Rapids and had a leisurely afternoon watching another group unpin one of their boats.

As more and more groups passed us we hoped that the competition for sites would be eased for the next day. Up at dawn again, on the water by eight, and on to Sheerway and a beautiful campsite below Z rapids. Our race to Grande Chute the next day sandwiched us between two large parties, but we agreed to share the Red Pine site if necessary with the group behind us. However, upon finding a beautiful site on Lac Robinson, we made camp at one o'clock and spent a relaxing afternoon watching other groups "race for Red Pine." Our last day on the river was the most relaxing because the mad campsite dash was over. We finally had the river to ourselves.

Rita Ness



Lisa and Doug Ashton running Red Pine

Photo: Bill Ness

ENJOYING THE GRAND

The weather on 16 October was beautiful: sunny and fairly warm. A small group of us had gathered in Cambridge for a day paddle on the Grand River, planning to finish at Paris.

The water level in the river was adequate to canoe in and the fall colors on the leaves were still very attractive. The route took us through some farm country and well-wooded sections of the river valley. We saw a number of bicyclists riding what used to be a rail line alongside the river.

We had lunch beside the remains of an old mill just north of Glen Morris. Some of us admired the architecture and stonework that remained and mused about what the place was like when it was operating. Young Tyler Ashton thoroughly enjoyed the ground floor.

Later in the afternoon, we paddled up to an unusual object. A medium-sized boulder in the middle of the river had a hole right through it. Water entered from below and then spouted out from the top of the rock. It looked like a drinking fountain in a park although nobody was tempted to try it.

It was a grand day on the Grand.

Michael Jones

THE MIGHTY MISSISSAGI

Lynette Crawford

Grey Owl called this the king among rivers. *Canoe Routes of Ontario* warned that dangerous rapids and waterfalls and a deceptively fast current are hazards on the 50-kilometre stretch from Bark Lake to Rocky Island Lake. The Ministry of Natural Resources official whom we had called for information on the route said that he had done the trip a week previously with his girlfriend and that neither of them were really experienced canoeists.

So I didn't know what to expect from the mighty Mississagi River as we loaded our gear into a rented ultra-light kevlar canoe at the Fulton Township bridge at 4:30 in the afternoon on a rainy Saturday for a week-long trip early September 1993. We were off to a very late start as the drive to the drop-off point traversed a rugged logging road which was washed out at one point, forcing us to take a lengthy detour. I said a silent prayer (the first of many) for the shocks on my car as we were bouncing along the road in a desperate attempt to get to the water and be at our first campsite before nightfall.

We silently watched my car drive away, our pre-arranged chauffeur giving us a friendly honk as he zoomed off down the dusty road. My canoe partner, Marc, wanted a total wilderness experience and as we stood in the grey drizzle watching the tail-lights of my car disappear in the distance, I had a feeling that he wasn't going to be disappointed. A quick glance at the map verified that we were in the middle of nowhere, approximately 70 kilometres southwest of the small town of Biscotasing. Our drop-off point was roughly 12 kilometres south of the height of land between the Arctic and the Atlantic watersheds.

The Mississagi has a rich history; it was first paddled by Indian tribes and then by fur traders in the early 1700s. It served as a trapper's highway in the 1800s and easy access was later provided by the Canadian Pacific Railway. It has been promoted as a tourist destination since the early 1900s. Despite this notoriety, the Mississagi still offers a remote and secluded wilderness setting.



The river itself is protected by Wild River Status and is now a Waterway Provincial Park, but much of the surrounding land has been logged by E.B. Eddy Company and resembles a moonscape. For Marc and me, the severity of this assault on the natural landscape was compounded by a chance encounter with some gun-toting, bear-hunting guys in a four-wheel drive. A pack of anxious hounds stuck their wet noses over the back of the tailgate as the proud hunters stopped to tell us they'd successfully bagged a black bear that day.

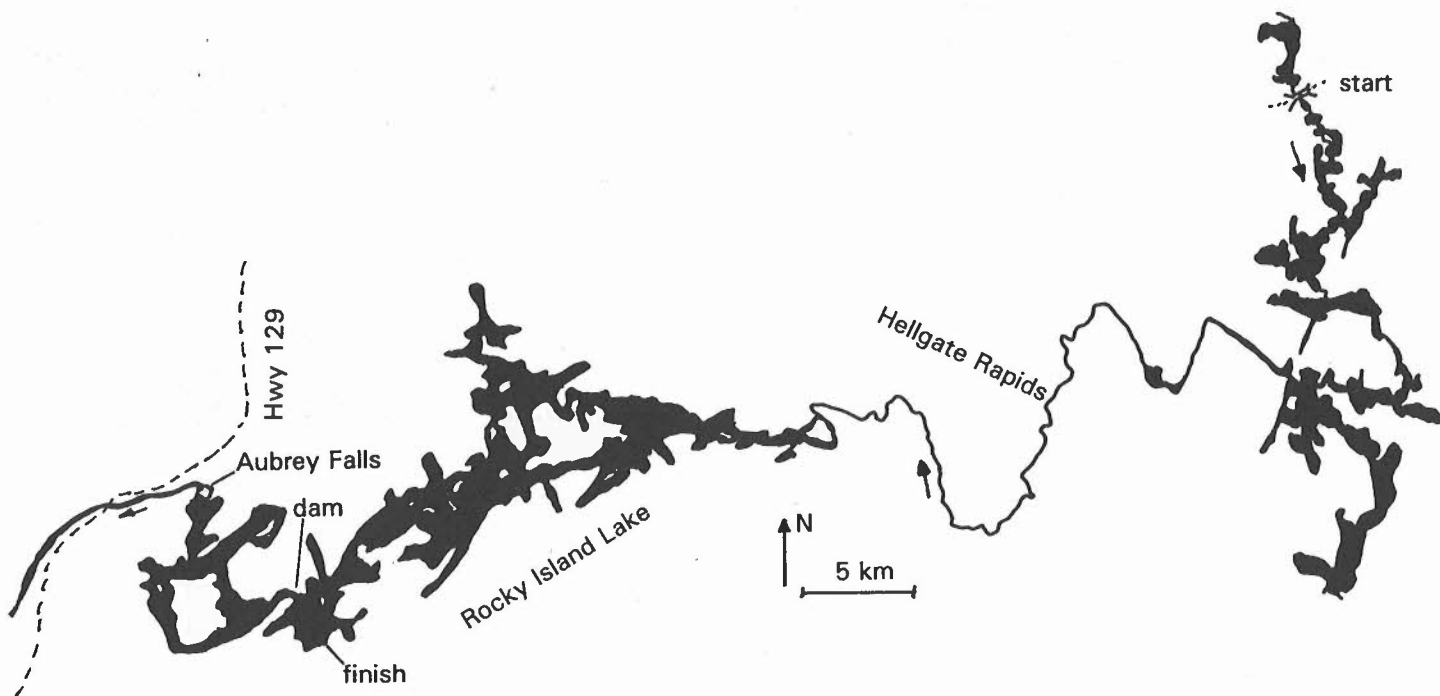
The first morning of our trip broke sunny and warm. The night before we had paddled a short two hours from our starting point and camped on a small island in the north end of Kettle Lake. After a hearty breakfast, Marc sat on a rock at the edge of the misty lake studying the map and plotting the distance we'd travelled the day before. Although I am usually nocturnal in nature, as a wilderness tripper I quickly learned to love mornings. Not only are mornings a celebration of having survived a night in the wilds; they are the beginning of a day's adventure and the quest for the next perfect campsite.

We paddled our first rapids that day — a small set almost too shallow to attempt — and then portaged an unavoidable 20 metres to a stretch of river that would take us to Bark Lake. For the first two days of the trip, the Mississagi tamely runs through a series of lakes. After Bark Lake, it opens up into the wide, grand river we'd read about, swiftly carrying its travellers towards more turbulent sections including the ominous sounding Hellgate Rapids.

Bark Lake is a huge, spidery lake with long arms that stretch off in all directions. It would be very easy to become lost on this lake, as was indicated by the many pieces of flagging tape tied to trees and rocks so that fishermen wouldn't lose their way. Frontier Lodge of Elliot Lake runs a fly-in fishing outpost on Bark Lake. We'd had a particularly unpleasant experience with its surly owner on another trip and laughed that there seemed to be no escaping him even in the wilderness.

From Upper Bark Lake we could have taken two portages totalling 600 metres to reach our next campsite where we would pick up the Mississagi again. Instead, we chose to paddle the long way around, adding an extra nine kilometres to our trip. The scenery was ruggedly spectacular. Tall pines lined the rocky shoreline which gave way to beautiful sand beaches in spots. The weather teased us with sunshine and then produced grey clouds so that we were constantly taking our sweaters off and putting them on again.

It is almost impossible to describe our feeling of remoteness. Aside from the odd float plane buzzing overhead, we were just two people in a loaded canoe in the middle of nowhere. Or so we thought, until a pair of enthusiastic fishermen spotted us and came barrelling over in their little aluminum boat as if they hadn't seen any other humans for days. They seemed genuinely intrigued that we were travelling by canoe and took a few minutes to tell us how the



fishing was before zooming away in the direction they had come.

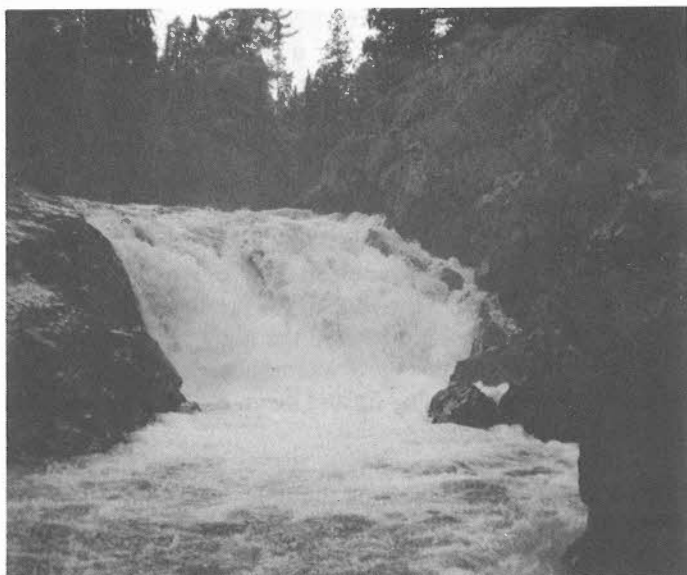
We finally reached our campsite at 4:00 p.m. after paddling 21 kilometres with only a short break for lunch. The campsite was a cosy little spot on a rocky point, almost directly across from an uninhabited MNR outpost which included a cabin that was built by the legendary Grey Owl himself.

We had plenty of time to make camp and Marc did some fishing while I barbecued steaks for dinner. More and more we use an ultra-light backpacker's stove for cooking, but the cool weather made the warmth of a campfire irresistible and we grilled our steaks over glowing coals instead. Marc caught his token fish — a large pike which he let go. He never seems to be able to catch more than one fish per trip and neither of us has the stomach to kill and clean it, so it's safe to say the fish supply will never be threatened by our presence.

Later we sat by the campfire and listened to the last haunting calls of the loons before the sun disappeared over the horizon. Some previous campers had built a little figure out of large stones on the rocky point in front of the fire pit, strangely making us feel protected.

The next morning I was startled awake by the call of a loon who was fishing for its breakfast just a few yards off our campsite. It was the loon's turn to be startled as I crawled out of the tent, and with an indignant squawk it dove down into the water, leaving behind only a few ripples which sparkled in the early morning sunshine.

I'm not an overly brave wilderness tripper, and I sometimes find the nights a little long as I lay cocooned in my Thinsulate sleeping bag with only the rip-stop nylon walls of the tent to protect me from the threatening creatures that surely lurk in the forest (although I have yet to see any). I take immense joy in a sunny morning and I find the presence of loons to be remarkably comforting. I'm sure I echo many



similarly proud Canadians when I say that the mysterious and melodic call of the loon is one of the most beautiful sounds in the world and an incomparable symbol of all that is precious about the Canadian North.

After a disastrous breakfast of pancakes that could have passed for Elmer's Glue and another visit from the friendly fishermen, we packed up and paddled over to check out Grey Owl's cabin. Disappointed that it was boarded up, we climbed back into the canoe and headed off down the Mississagi for a day of solid paddling against a fairly strong headwind. We came up to a rather challenging-looking little rapid that wasn't mentioned in the route description or on the topo map. We scouted it out, then ran it, and were pleased with ourselves for missing a large rock that bore the signature of many other canoes that had not missed it.



We spent two nights at the next portage where two sets of swirling rapids formed an impressive little waterfall with a 1.5-metres vertical drop which bubbled out into a peaceful, tree-lined bay. It was a beautiful spot, and we revelled in the luxury of having a whole day with no pressing duties. We took a quick dunk in a section of the rapids that formed a small whirlpool, and then practised some ferrying across the rapids.

The second night, after my favorite dinner of campfire spaghetti, we turned in early in anticipation of a strenuous day running rapids. Just as we were crawling into the tent, we heard a strange clanking sound coming from the woods. I was already nervous about running rapids the next day and in no mood for unidentifiable noises. It was a metallic-sounding clunk and therefore a man-made noise. You don't expect to hear man-made noises in the middle of nowhere, far from civilization.

The next morning Marc cheerfully announced, "Well, the Clunk Monster didn't get us!" as we packed up and set off to face a challenging day of rapids. We ran three sets before arriving at the infamous Hellgate Rapids. There was no question of running these! The Hellgate Rapids are better defined as a waterfall in the middle of a chute of teeming rapids with water furiously rushing around and over huge boulders.



We lugged our equipment 680 metres uphill and then down to the other side of the rapids, stopping half-way to sign the register left there by the Ministry. We noticed that a group of Americans had come through several weeks before us and they used the register to rail against a local resident who had dropped them off 20 kilometres north of their intended starting point. Marc and I read this and looked at each other in relief because we had almost had this same local resident drop us off at our starting point, but ended up making other arrangements.

As seems to happen quite frequently to us, it started to rain when we were at one end of the portage and our rain gear was at the other. By the time we got back at the start of the portage and dug out our rain gear, we were soaked. After either portaging or running several more sets of rapids, we arrived at a campsite where we planned to stay the night. Tucked into the dark woods, with difficult water access and no view whatsoever, it was not one of the nicer campsites we'd seen but we were exhausted and grouchy from being wet so we didn't even contemplate going any further.

On the portage trail which led us around a shallow set of rapids to where the campsite was, Marc pointed out some bear droppings which set me into a panic (as he knew it would). He was then forced to spend the next half hour reassuring me that the feces was quite old and that it was perfectly safe to camp there.

We gathered kindling for a fire to dry out our damp bones, and it was then that we solved the mystery of the Clunk Monster and explained the presence of the bear. The forest which lines the Mississagi River is only a few hundred metres wide. One minute we were gathering wood under towering trees in a plush forest that looked and felt like it was right out of Hansel and Gretel; the next minute we were standing in a treeless wasteland. The logging company had timbered right up to the edge of the provincial park boundary. The clunk noise we heard the night before must have been logging equipment. It was no wonder there were numerous bears travelling up and down the river — they had nowhere else to go!

The next day poured rain. We ran the last of the rapids and paddled 27 kilometres through marshland in a fairly swift-moving current. We arrived at Majestic Marsh around 4:00 p.m. and spent half an hour or more paddling around

looking for a campsite that Marc had read about in *Canoeing Ontario's Rivers*. He was determined to find it, even though it must have been at least ten years since the author had stayed there.

We eventually gave up and made camp across the river, setting the tent on the edge of a sandy bank so that it faced out over the marsh. We were determined to see a moose and thought our best chance would be in the early morning mist of Majestic Marsh.

My closest brush with nature, however, came late that night as I was startled awake by some nocturnal creature rustling precariously close to our tent. Marc snored loudly as I shivered in terror listening to a noise that distinctly sounded like something being dragged. I imagined our bear absconding with our food pack, or worse, a crazy psycho dragging a dead body by the tent. Morbid? Maybe. But you only have to see *Deliverance* once to let your imagination run amok in the wilderness!

The next morning, the mystery of my late-night visitor was solved by the presence of fresh beaver tracks on the river bank. The industrious worker had chopped down a small tree and dragged it by our tent and into the river in the middle of the night! "Those pesky beavers" is a phrase that comes up often in our canoe trips and this beaver had managed to increase the parameters of its peskiness. Usually we are thwarted by a badly placed beaver dam which we must portage around, but rarely are we terrorized in the night by them.

After a breakfast of pancakes with freshly picked blueberries, we were starting to pack up when two solo canoeists stopped to say hello as they passed by. They were the second group of people we had seen in a whole week and even though we usually hope we won't run into any people at all, we were strangely pleased to see them. They weren't hunters or fishermen but wilderness trippers just like us who were out there to appreciate nature, not to "conquer" it.

The wind was strong that day, and rain drizzled intermittently, forcing us to keep our rain gear on all day. We paddled into Rocky Island Lake, constantly seeking out sheltered coves along the way where we could take a break from the wind. We paddled with all our strength, hugging the north shore of the lake as we could see whitecaps out towards the middle.

We presumed that this lake must have been formed by the dams that were built on the south Mississagi. We were literally gliding over the tops of drowned trees, and once in a while one of them would scrape the bottom of the canoe like a gnarled hand reaching up out of the water to grab us. The north shore was lined with beautiful sandy beaches and more driftwood than I had ever seen in my life.

We were only one hour away from the access point where my car would be waiting for us when I decided that I could go no further. It was freezing cold and we hastily made camp in a semi-sheltered bay where a lone, shivering duck was also paddling around, trying to escape the wind. The unexpected sight of us caused him to leave and we felt sincerely bad for having scared him out of his shelter.

The next day we left at the break of dawn to get across the lake before the wind picked up. A group of fishermen

were lounging outside of their motorhomes at the access point. They stared at us in interest as we landed our loaded canoe on the sandy shore and started moving our gear up to my car. We felt worthy of their curious stares. We were grimy and exhausted, but proud, relative beginners who had managed rapids, headwinds, pouring rain, and freezing, cold weather with no mishaps.



My father often asks me if this is really how I like to spend all my vacations. I answer that I couldn't imagine anything better. Wilderness tripping, done properly, inspires tremendous self-confidence by forcing you to accept that you have only yourself (and your partner if you have one) to rely on for survival. I have learned how to read a compass and build a fire in the pouring rain. I understand how to read a topo map and can cook everything imaginable over a campfire. I am only 1.5 metres tall, but I can grudgingly carry a 40-kilogram pack two kilometres. I have found strength I never knew I had to paddle a canoe in strong headwinds, and I have learned how to draw hard in a rapid to avoid ramming into a rock, timing it just right so that my stern paddler has time to bring his end of the canoe around as well.

These are all things which, two years ago, I would never have believed I could do. Now I feel like I can do anything. I have learned to acknowledge and respect my own ability. That's not something you get drinking Margaritas in Mexico.



MISSINAIBI RIVER, Thunderhouse Falls area

Aerial photograph taken in 1972

LETTER TO BILLY

Dear Bill,

It is raining in T.O. in November. The gear is packed away, the canoes covered for another winter. All that remains handy are the maps and the slides. And the memories.

There are new rooms in my house. They are full of cold wind, rain, and snow. Others have unimaginable clouds and clear blue skies. There are some of the most beautiful lakes, rivers, and islands I have ever seen. I look inside and see a rugged, beautiful land. I can follow the progress of two canoeists as they set off in the falling snow and dark. Nineteen miles of portaging in two days. Wind and rain storms. Going down to the creek for water and experiencing 'no sound.' No bugs, no wind, no water, no birds. Not a voice or car or aeroplane to be heard. How many people have experienced that simple pleasure? Nature holding her breath. The same breath that blew us down McKenzie Lake to a campsite, that, in the misty dawn as we set off, appeared to float in the clouds. The owl that saw us off before the sun rose.

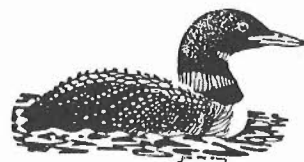
I can make the same exhilarating walk to the next room, the octopus Kawnipi. Eight-armed, and possessing many more moods. I can spend days exploring the bogs and bays. I can see the two of us watching a mink, barbecuing steaks, sitting in a bog, listening to those weird noises at midnight, the paddle afterwards. Ah, that paddle! Two canoes gliding across molten glass, an owl hooting, stroke and stroke, through the mist, full moon over our shoulders, bright enough to navigate by, until ... where are we? The hearts pound, realizing the possibilities. Pebble beaches backed by imposing stands of pine, rearing out of the dark... in the wrong place. Well okay, if this is here, then that hill is over there. I hope. The person that never risks anything will never know the feeling of release when the danger is past. That night will stay in a room by itself for a long time.



The next room is 14 miles across and contains a glorious blue sky and a tailwind. It marks the beginning of the return trip. But more wonders yet. A slope that must be 60° tempts us, and we climb it to a reward of a panorama of lakes and forest. Black water flows past the keel as the canoes wend their way through Shelly and Keats lakes. Black night falls on Chatterton with low cloud, fog, and a thin chilling drizzle, removing any possibility of travel tonight. The dark is impenetrable. No detail of the lake is visible from our makeshift

campsite on the rocky bluff. Russell Lake will have to wait.

And waiting it is, behind the next door, with a wind howling out of the west into our faces, daring us to leave the beach and enter its tender embrace. And hours later we lunch in Sturgeon Narrows and look north, where the easy paddle up Sturgeon leads to Deux Rivières and the entrance to the old lady, Pickerel Lake.



The funny thing about mud is that even at a depth of two and a half feet there are still plenty of sharp stones and sticks to torment bare feet. The other funny thing is that a canoe is not as easy to drag across as one might think, given how slippery the mud is when trying to walk on it. I'm sure the group of beaver responsible for the lack of water found us quite amusing, trudging to the dam. A Solitary Sandpiper amidst a flock of Lapland Longspur and Rusty Blackbirds mocks my inability to get a free hand for the bins. I think this creek should be renamed Pas de Rivières. But the rewards....

Twin Lakes are a pair of nearly identical lakes that form a butterfly, and near the body of the butterfly is a site high on a ridge with a magnificent fireplace and trees towering overhead. The night was so still, wolves howling what must have been miles away were at the very edge of audibility.

The next morning, the lakes were glass. It seemed a crime to put the canoes in, but time pressed (it always does) and it was time to go. As I was first through the narrows, I waited to snap a picture. As you came through, the eagle 20 feet overhead surprised me so much, I missed the shot, to my chagrin.

So begins the last day, a leisurely paddle after the deceptively long Deux Rivières portage and the delightful Pine portage. Round about sunset, crossing a bay at the east end of Pickerel Lake (which graced us with the easiest day's travel we ever had on her), the lake glassed out, the breeze died, and quiet descended. We paddled on and on, like flies stuck in amber. Time elongated. We had reached ludicrous speed. You know, those times when you paddle effortlessly and appear to go nowhere? (Not to be confused with those times when you paddle very hard and go nowhere.) This happens frequently to me at night.

All of a sudden we were at the beach in front of the Pines, a site that could easily host a troop of Scouts. A glowing peaceful sunset bid us adieu that night and we rolled in to prepare for the marathon trip back to T.O. the next day. The doors close behind us, but when the trucks get too loud and the sirens wake us up at night, there is always solace behind those doors.

'Till next time.

David Edwards

THE WCA SEWER SURFERS

A Short History by John Winters

There were three of us - all honorable members of that noble brotherhood that follows the Path of The Paddle - swapping lies at a gathering of paddlers and amateur photographers. The slide shows were over and the lies at their imaginative best when a wilderness-slide-show-circuit-rider crept into our little group. You know the type. They begin by asking if you have ever paddled such and such a river. If you have, by some misfortune, a nodding acquaintance with the stream in question, they mention another and another until one is found that is unfamiliar to you. The trap sprung and experiential superiority established, they close in for the kill with a rambling account of the river, the trip, and, usually, their skills. The more accomplished don't even have to consult the river list written on their cuff.

This was one of the accomplished types. I can't remember what river it was but none of us could claim intimate knowledge of it and he was off and running with the salient details of access, camp sites, wildlife, and rapid after wearisome rapid. A few minutes into the tale P. smiled in the quiet supercilious manner of one who knows his adversary and, furthermore, knows his weakness, and asked our antagonist: "Have you ever paddled the Bathurst sewer?"

You could have dropped a skunk on the dinner table with less effect.

P. dove into the silence. "I remember it well. It was a particularly dry spring. None of the usual spring rivers had reached stimulating levels and we were suffering that peculiar sense of deprivation that comes to all who miss the tonic of an icy swim in the Credit or Salmon, or one of the other baptismal ditches.

"Then, in answer to prayers muttered over gardening tasks and similar domestic slavery, a sudden rain storm brought a flicker of hope. It was only a flicker. Despite great sound and fury it lacked that part that distinguishes a storm of noble character from those of inferior antecedents. It didn't have much rain. What there was the parched ground sopped up like spit on a blotting paper.

"It was then that it occurred to me that all that rain landing on the sidewalks and streets was not being absorbed and had to go somewhere and wherever it was there was sure to be ample flow. Being careful not to draw attention to myself I surreptitiously lifted a nearby manhole cover. There, unseen below the mean streets of Toronto, was a whitewater torrent leaping and crashing its way to freedom and Toronto Harbour."

He paused, sipped his wine and surveyed his audience to see if we were still with him. Finding that we were and that our nemesis had contracted something akin to lockjaw, he continued. "I called some friends and within the hour we were surfing waves the like of which I had not seen for years. You remember that don't you, John?"

Mother didn't raise a complete dolt. "Do I ever," I replied. "What about those diagonal waves at Bloor Street? I thought you bought the farm on those."

L., the third member of our original group, picked up the tempo with a harrowing account of a huge souse hole that required virtually superhuman skills to escape. The tale grew to epic proportions. Other well remembered sewers sprang to mind and were discussed in minute detail. Our protagonist grew fidgety. He could lay claim to not one sewer and, somewhere between the massive Chicago system and the highly technical Des Moines sewers, he excused himself claiming a prior engagement.

P. smiled in triumph. "Sewer surfing sounds like tremendous fun. Shouldn't there be an organization to promote it?" And so, the WCA Sewer Surfers were born. We are a small group within the WCA with no membership cards, no annual meetings, no dues and no rules. The only membership requirements are a sense of humor, a fertile imagination, and a love of paddling.

As for our friend who has paddled everything and everywhere. He hasn't been heard or seen since and you have the WCA Sewer Surfers to thank for that.

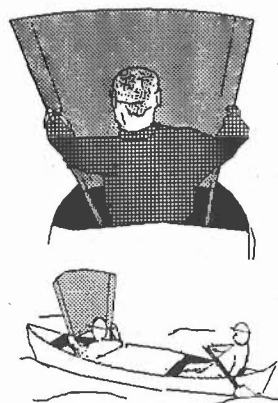
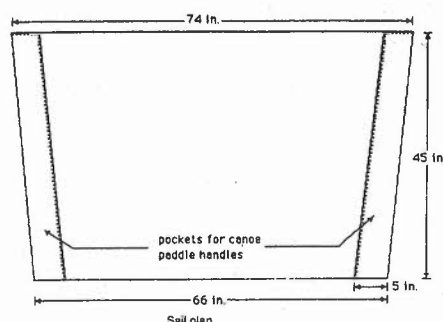
SAILING ON CANOE EXPEDITIONS

William Hosford

The occasional tailwind is most welcome, especially after battling headwinds. The thought of harnessing a tailwind to help propel the canoe seems most natural. Our present method of sailing is an evolution of our first attempts to use the wind.

Originally, if a favorable wind arose, we would pull to shore, cut poles, and then lash a poncho or ground cloth to them. Because this procedure was time consuming, we sailed infrequently. Now we carry nylon sails which are of our own

design, made from a trapezoidal piece of light-weight nylon. Along each side pockets are sewn, closed at the top and open at the bottom, wide enough to accommodate the handle of a canoe paddle. When there is a favorable tailing breeze, the handles of two canoe paddles can be quickly slipped into the pockets and used as hand-held masts to take advantage of the wind. The blade of the paddle can be rested on the seat or on the bottom of the canoe, as seems appropriate. The sails weigh 6 oz. or less and fit easily into a pocket of the pack so



as to be ready whenever a favorable tailing breeze blows up. They have taken us many miles across lakes, relieving the monotony of paddling.

Canoes can be sailed solo or two canoes can be sailed together catamaran-style. The latter allows a chance to socialize, plan strategy, or lunch while underway. When we first tried this, the two canoes were held close together by lashing poles or paddles to both canoes. The disadvantage of lashing, however, was that the canoes could not be separated quickly. On one occasion this nearly caused a catastrophe. We were sailing on Wunnummin Lake in northern Ontario catamaran-style with the canoes about six inches apart. As the tail wind picked up we thrilled at our speed until someone noticed that the water between the canoes was welling up so high that it was at the level of the gunwales. Before we were able to unlash the canoes, we had actually shipped some water.

Having the canoes rigidly lashed together can also be a problem when, as on a shallow rock-filled lake or river, there is danger of one canoe running aground. Now we hold the canoes together with two paddles, the ends of these being held to both canoes with the legs, freeing the hands. One bowman can hold the sails and one sternman can steer. The others can get out the lunch and distribute it. Disassembly, if necessary, can be almost immediate in case of a sudden change of wind or if one canoe grounds. Indeed, once when one canoe did run aground, the other kept on sailing.

Sails of this type are effective only in a tailing wind or one that is within about 45° of tailing. One cannot tack or even run broadside to the wind. However, there are enough times when sailing is possible to make carrying a sail well worthwhile.

CANOE EXPO 1995

Canoe EXPO is Canoe Ontario's annual canoe/kayak consumer show which features displays, seminars, and demonstrations for the most experienced paddler to the cottager who just likes to paddle around in the summer.

EXPO-goers will see the Etobicoke Olympium filled with many exhibitors retailing items from outdoor wear and paddling accessories to the paddle craft themselves. Within the 50-metre Olympic-size swimming pool consumers can get a pre-season paddle in the latest equipment without any high-pressure sales people. The boats on display will include whitewater and recreational canoes, kayaks, and sea kayaks. Canoe Ontario has "stocked" the pool with provincially and nationally recognized instructors to give all the paddlers a few tips and help them select the best boat for their needs.

Besides being Canada's largest and most popular annual canoe/kayak consumer show, Canoe EXPO is also an educational exhibition with strong instructional, informational, and environmental aspects. It presents seminars and demonstrations from expert guides, authors, and adventurers.

The show runs from Friday, 7 April, to Sunday, 9 April 1995 at the Etobicoke Olympium in Etobicoke, Ontario. For more information regarding EXPO 1995, or any other program run by Canoe Ontario, please call (416) 426-7170.

CANOE EXPO 95
Canada's Largest Paddling Adventure Show!

- White Water Canoe And Kayak!
- Free Try-Outs In The 50 Meter Pool
- Tips And Demonstrations
- North America's Leading Outdoor Experts

Etobicoke Olympium
590 Rathburn Road, Etobicoke Ontario
April 7th from 5-9 pm
April 8th and 9th from 10 am-5 pm
Adults \$8, Students and Seniors \$6, Weekend Passes
For more information contact the Canoe Hotline-(416) 426-7170

*Tales from the Campfire***FUN ON THE GULL**

The weekend on the Gull River near Minden, Ontario, started when John, a workmate of mine, told me that he and his father-in-law, Ted, had paddled the Albany and other northern rivers and were interested in improving their whitewater skills. Ted had a cottage near the Gull so we set up a weekend of luxury cottage-based canoeing. The rest of our group were Martha and Simon, and Rosemarie and I. Simon was a member of the WCA and had been on a number of whitewater courses and trips with us. I had met Martha on the Nahanni on a Trailhead trip. She is a gung-ho paddler who never gives up. My most vivid memory was seeing her paddling furiously back up the Nahanni to reach a great surfing wave, yelling encouragement to her partner, who was paddling just as furiously backward to stay away from the wave. Martha almost won.

When we arrived at the put-in on the Gull just below the Falls the river was running as high as we had ever seen it. Rosemarie and I started first with a plan to pull in at the first big eddy on the right. The strength of the current surprised us, we were swept very low on the eddy before getting our bow into it, then were pulled back into the main current. We tried a series of frantic front ferries before finally holding on a tiny eddy behind a rock protruding from the shore. We then pulled our canoe back up to the main eddy to wait for the others and provide assistance if needed. The current's speed and force were amazing.

Martha and Simon were next; they had seen our run and tried to get into the eddy higher up, but with little success, perhaps three feet higher. Martha, in the bow, typically started paddling furiously trying to pull the boat into the eddy by sheer strength and determination. Simon, in the stern, saw

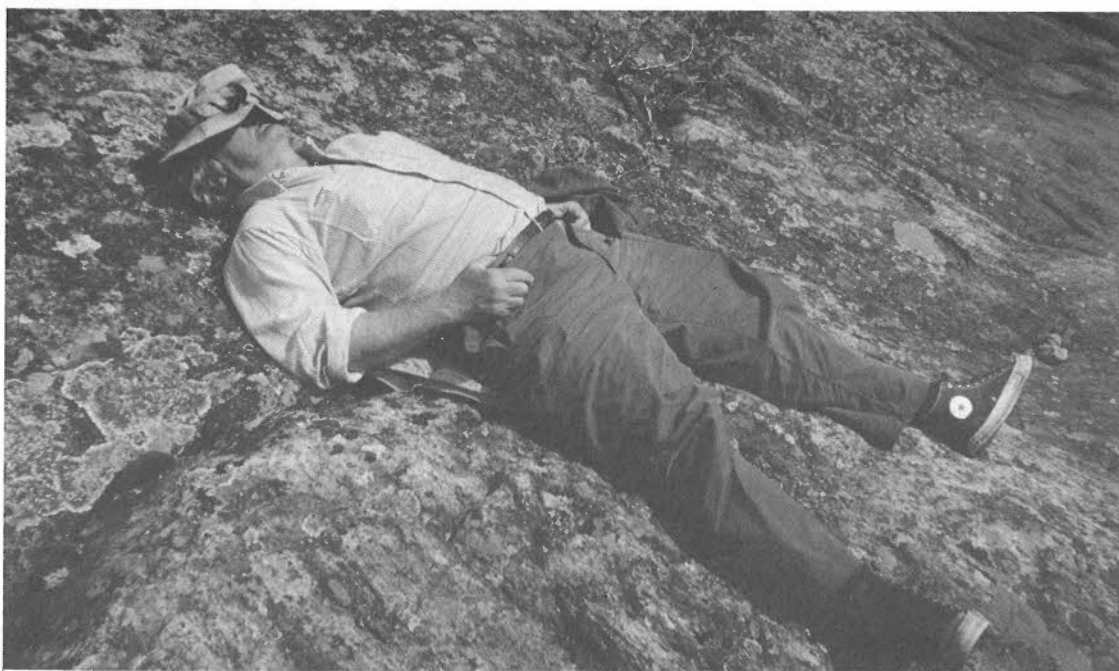
that they were losing ground and leaned out of the canoe to grab a rock on the shore. The current tore him right out of the canoe. Martha continued paddling, gradually slipping backwards until she recognized her partner sprawled on the shore hugging a rock. Her expression was priceless. But she continued paddling, alone in the bow, until all the water in the stern swamped the boat on the next wave. We raced down the shoreline, grabbed the boat, and brought it back to the eddy.

I looked upstream. John and Ted had already started by entering the current facing downstream, not peeling out. I knew they were in trouble, grabbed our throwbag while running across the rocks, and made a lucky toss to them. John grabbed the bag, then grabbed Ted - they were now both on the line. And I was in the air. It flashed through my mind: "My knees are together, my legs straight, ankles locked, hips high, this is a perfect pike." Then I crashed into the river face first. Somehow I got turned around feet downstream, grabbed a rock, and managed to swing them into an eddy. So much for all my teachings about prepared rescue positions.

John's aluminum canoe was swept downstream and pinned against the shore at the canoe-eater above the Otter Slide. It was badly bent but with the aid of some other boaters, one of whom was of substantial size, we spread the canoe between some logs and had our new big friend jump up and down doing some crude but effective panel work.

We spent the rest of the day playing safely at the bottom.

Jim Morris



Editor at work

Photo: Ria Harting

WCA TRIPS

For questions, suggestions, or anything else related to the WCA Trips, contact any of the members of the Outings Committee: Bill Ness (416) 321-3005; Mike Jones (905) 270-3256; Ann Dixie (416) 486-7402; Tim Gill (416) 447-2063.

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

26 March **OAKVILLE CREEK**

Tim Gill, (416) 447-2063, book before 24 March.

Narrow and winding, this is a run that requires accurate manoeuvring on swiftly moving water. Put-in and take-out will be determined by prevailing conditions. This can be a long day paddling and has been known to be a cold and wet trip. Limit five canoes or kayaks. C1s accepted.

2 April **GRAND RIVER**

Dave Sharp, (519) 846-2586, book before 26 March.

A gentle flatwater trip starting at Cambridge and, depending on water levels, ending at Paris or Brantford. An excellent trip for novice moving-water paddlers. Limit six canoes.

2 April **ELORA GEORGE, IRVINE CREEK**

Harrison Jolly, (905) 689-1733, book before 26 March.

This could be a rip-roaring trip, depending on water levels. Suitable for advanced or experienced intermediate paddlers who have cold-weather gear. Limit five canoes.

2 April **UPPER SALMON RIVER**

Steve Bernet, (519) 837-8774, book before 26 March.

This trip could provide the whole spring canoeing experience, if the lake is frozen the start is a hike/wade. Experienced whitewater paddlers in fully outfitted boats must be prepared for the unexpected. Limit six canoes.

8 April **UPPER CREDIT RIVER**

Paul Hamilton, (905) 877-8778, book before 2 April.

An early paddle down from Ingleside to Glen Williams. The river will be fast and cold with some small rapids. Canoeists should wear wet/dry suits and be prepared for "wet" conditions. Limit six canoes.

8-9 April **OTTAWA SEWER SPECTACULAR**

John Winters, (705) 382-2057, book at once.

This spring we will paddle the historic Sparks St. Sewer on Saturday and the more modern Greenbank Road Sewer in Napean on Sunday. Sparks St. is a classic limestone block sewer with several technical sections and steep drops. Raw sewage from the parliament buildings was once dumped into the sewer so it has deep historical significance. The Greenbank sewer is of modern concrete wall construction with a steady gradient. Nevertheless tricky manoeuvring is still required. For experienced and fit sewer surfers with appropriate gear and current vaccination certificates. Limit four closed canoes.

15-17 April **MOIRA WATERSHED WHITEWATER**

Dale Miner, (416) 489-2067, book before 8 April.

Precise routes will be chosen with regard to weather conditions, water levels, and the skill of the group. The Salmon, Moira, and/or Beaver Creek are on the list. The Salmon is the easiest of

the three but this early in the season the cold waters demand caution. The Moira is larger with significant waves, and Black Creek is a narrow river that challenges even experienced paddlers. Participants should be dressed for cold, wet conditions and have properly equipped canoes. Limit six boats.

16 April **UPPER AND LOWER BLACK RIVER**

Del Dako, (416) 421-2108, or Steve Lukasko, book before 9 April.

From Cooper to Highway 7. This river offers strenuous paddling through a series of demanding rapids. The rapids will be scouted from our boats as much as possible. Participants must have fully outfitted boats and be comfortable paddling Class-3 rapids. Limit five canoes with advanced paddlers.

22-23 April **BEAVER CREEK**

Barry Godden, (416) 440-4208, book before 15 April.

Narrow and demanding, Beaver Creek can test the skills of expert paddlers. Cold water requires properly outfitted paddlers and boats. Limit five canoes.

22-23 April **SALMON AND MOIRA RIVERS**

Glenn Spence, (613) 475-4176, book before 16 April.

Just north of Belleville these two rivers offer exciting whitewater and fine scenery. The Salmon is the more gentle but has some ledges to practise your skills. The Moira has larger rapids possibly up to Class 3. This is one of Southern Ontario's finest spring rivers. Intermediate paddlers welcome. Limit six canoes.



23 April **ERAMOSA RIVER**

Dave Sharp, (519) 846-2586, book before 16 April.

Join us on this relaxing spring float through the southern Ontario countryside. The Eramosa is mostly gentle current, with some easy swifts and a little portaging so that you can stretch your legs. This trip is a great introduction to river paddling for novices and a fine family outing. Limit six canoes.

29 April **ELORA GORGE**

Mark Raffman, (905) 898-4043, book before 26 April.

At this time of year there should be lots of water flowing through the Gorge, making this an exiting trip for good intermediates. However, the weather will have warmed up enough to make for pleasant playboating. Limit six canoes.

29 April **MOORE FALLS TO HEAD LAKE**

Rob Butler, (416) 487-2282, book before 21 April.

Ten hours of paddling and portaging through untravelled lakes and rivers. A great workout with a short car shuttle. Limit five canoes.

29-30 April MISSISSAGUA RIVER, EELS CREEK

Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005, book before 23 April.

On Saturday we will paddle the Mississagua which is a classic pool-and-drop run. The river is a series of Class-1 to Class-3 rapids separated by flat sections, and some scenic falls (Class 4-5). All major rapids can be easily portaged making the trip suitable for intermediates. The next day we will run Eels Creek, which is similar to the Mississagua but narrower. Paddlers must be able to manoeuvre well in fast water as sweepers are always a potential hazard. Limit six canoes.

**29-30 April UPPER MADAWASKA AND OPEONGO RIVERS**

John and Sharon Hackert, (416) 438-7672, book before 22 April.

Two days of whitewater excitement for advanced paddlers. The Upper Madawaska is a fast-flowing pool-and-drop river with quiet stretches interspersed with some very serious rapids. All rapids can, and some must, be portaged. The Opeongo contains long stretches of continuous riffles plus several significant drops. Portaging is more difficult here and in high water this can make for a quite a strenuous trip. Wet suits or dry suits, helmets, and fully outfitted whitewater boats with good floatation are a must. Limit six canoes.

30 April GIBSON RIVER — HUNGRY BAY LOOP

Tony Bird, (416) 466-0172, book before 25 April.

A day trip of approximately 25 kilometres, starting at Gibson Lake, paddling up the Gibson River, then portaging over to Lost Channel, and returning via Hungry Bay. This is an exploratory trip for the organizer who expects some rough portaging. This is basically a flatwater trip with some moving water. Limit four canoes.

7 May WILLOW CREEK

Mike Jones, (905) 270-3256, book before 1 May.

Novice paddlers are welcome to participate in this scenic trip on a gentle river. Limit five canoes.

6-7 May UPPER MADAWASKA AND OPEONGO RIVERS

Tim Gill, (416) 447-2063, book before 28 April.

Please refer to description for April 29-30. The only difference is that the previous weekend was cold and wet, this weekend is sunny and warm. Limit six canoes.

7 May MOIRA RIVER

Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005, book before 1 May.

By early May the level on the Moira is usually just right for experienced, enthusiastic novices who want to begin paddling intermediate rivers. There are some excellent play spots at this level to challenge the beginner and delight the veteran whitewater paddler. Limit six canoes.

13-14 May PALMER RAPIDS INTERMEDIATE WHITEWATER CLINIC

John and Sharon Hackert, (416) 438-7672, book before 6 May.

This tandem and solo clinic is designed for those who have previous whitewater experience and want to further develop their skills. The emphasis will be on having fun and playing in whitewater. We will practise surfing, jet ferries, and eddy turns across a strong current differential. Participants should have an ABS canoe outfitted with thigh straps and full floatation. Helmets and wetsuits are required. Limit five canoes.

13-14 May MAGNETAWAN RIVER

Tim Gill, (416) 447-2063, book before 6 May.

We will run the Magnetawan from Ahmic Lake to Maple Island twice, both on Saturday and Sunday, camping overnight near Maple Island. This is a fun whitewater trip for solid intermediates. Wet suits or dry suits and fully outfitted whitewater boats are required. Limit six canoes.

19-22 May RIVER AUX SABLES

Karl Schimek, (705) 487-0172, book between 8 and 15 May.

This scenic river flows a little west of the Spanish River. We will spend Friday night at Chutes Provincial Park and begin the trip on Saturday. Suitable for intermediate paddlers. Limit four canoes.

20-21 May CROW RIVER

Bob Shortill, (705) 277-3538, book before 14 May.

Following an absence of 10 or 12 years, this must be considered an exploratory trip for the organizer. The Crow is narrow river that begins near Apsley and flows south through some very pretty country. With spring water we should find numerous runnable rapids, most of which seem to have sharp right-angled bends halfway down. We will also come across several body-breaking waterfalls that appear in the most unexpected places. Fortunately most obstacles can be passed by well trodden, if rugged, trails. Campsites are scarce and small, therefore the trip is restricted to 4-5 tents. We will meet at Havelock and arrange the car shuttle between Leswade and Cordova Lake.

20-21 May ISLAND LAKE LOOP

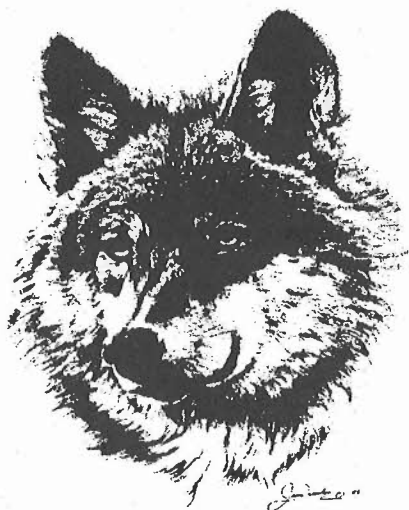
John Winters, (705) 382-2057, book before 1 May.

This is my annual spring trip to Island Lake, this time via a portage on an old logging road north of the Canal Rapids. One long muddy portage. Last summer a new beaver dam at the outlet from Island lake lowered levels in Farm Creek causing difficulty in shallow sections. Not a trip for the unenthusiastic. Limit four canoes.

20-22 May THAMES RIVER

Don Caragata, (416) 252-8501, book before 8 May.

We will do three day trips in the London area from a centrally located campground. Communal cooking is anticipated. Suitable for experienced novices or better. Limit four canoes.



20-22 May **FRENCH RIVER**

John and Sharon Hackert, (416) 438-7672, book before 15 May.

From our beautiful campsite on The Ladder we will play at Blue Chute, Big Pine, The Ladder, and Big/Little Parisienne. Suitable for all skill levels. Wet suits, helmets, and floatation are required. Limit six canoes.

20-22 May **UPPER MADAWASKA AND OPEONGO RIVERS**

Mark Raffman, (905) 898-4043, book before 8 May.

Please refer to description for 29-30 April outing. At medium water levels these rivers become technically challenging and make for some fun paddling. If you did this trip last month, come back and enjoy a different experience on the same rivers. Limit five canoes.

20-22 May **OTTAWA RIVER**

Barry Godden, (416) 440-4208, book before 12 May.

The Ottawa is our largest local river and in the spring has a powerful and intimidating flow. The rapids are large with appropriate holes. This is a trip for expert whitewater paddlers in fully outfitted boats. Be prepared for swimming in cold water. Limit five canoes.

27 May **BASIC FLATWATER WORKSHOP**

Doug Ashton, (519) 654-0336, book before 19 May.

This workshop is being offered to new members who wish to develop their basic paddling skills. We will discuss and practise strokes, portaging, and canoe safety as it relates to flatwater paddling. The day will be paced to allow for plenty of practice time. Participants will be expected to provide a suitable canoe, PFD's, and paddles. Registration is limited to twelve current members.

27-28 May **MISSISSAGUA RIVER**

Pat and Brian Buttigieg, (905) 831-3554, book before 19 May.

Extending this day trip into an overnight outing will allow us to spend more time in the rapids. We will camp overnight on the river. Limit five canoes suitable for intermediate paddlers with moving water experience.

3 June **NEW MEMBERS OUTING**

Earl Silver, (416) 486-7402, or Bill King, (416) 223-4646, book before 26 May.

A chance for new members to meet each other and some of the old "fogeys." Come out to a barbecue at Humber Bay Park in Etobicoke just west of Toronto; hamburgers and hot dogs supplied. Bring your canoe or come alone.

17-18 June **NEW MEMBERS WEEKEND**

Glenn Spence, (613) 475-4176, or Bill King, (416) 223-4646, book before 9 June.

A get-together at Presqu'île Park near Brighton, Ontario. Bring your canoe or bicycle or just come to socialize. New campers welcome.

10-11 June **MOIRA RIVER**

Don Caragata, (416) 252-8501, book before 23 May.

This will be a weekend trip from Tweed to Canniston. Low water levels may require some wading. Communal cooking at the campsite. Limit four canoes.

17-18 June **WHITEWATER COURSE AT PALMER RAPIDS**

Hugh Valliant, (416) 699-3463 (ev.), assisted by Anmarie Forsyth, Jim Morris, and Debbie Sutton. Due to the course's immense popularity, it's filled up within the first week for the last several years. So phone IMMEDIATELY. There is a possibility, as in previous years, that a second course will be arranged.

We will meet at Palmer Rapids on the Madawaska River for an exciting and instructional weekend. The emphasis of the course is on the strokes and techniques necessary to safely negotiate a set of rapids. Palmer rapids is considered Class 2. In this controlled and structured environment where the pace is slow, there will be plenty of time to practise and perfect your strokes. You will learn how to control a canoe in moving water so that you can go where you want to go (most of the time). The river will no longer control your canoe (all of the time).

To feed your hungry appetites there will be a group BBQ on Saturday night featuring a real salad, a real steak, and real potatoes using real charcoal. A deposit of \$24 is required to secure your spot on the roster.

Open to experienced flatwater, novice or beginning whitewater paddlers. Preference will be given to those who need it. Friends are more than welcome to Saturday night's activities. Limit eight canoes.

Pileated Woodpecker



19-24 June **NORTH SHORE GEORGIAN BAY**

Gerry O'Farrell, (519) 822-8886, book before 5 June.

This trip will take us from Kilamey to Highway 69. We will be exploring the Bustard Islands and anything else that looks interesting. Novices welcome.

24-25 June LOWER MADAWASKA RIVER

Tim Gill, (416) 447-2063, book before 15 June.

From Latchford Bridge to Griffith via one of our finest pool-and-drop rivers. We will be camping on the river. An exiting whitewater weekend for intermediate paddlers with suitably outfitted boats. All the rapids can be portaged. Limit six canoes.

24-25 June FRANKLIN ISLAND

Doug Ashton, (519) 654-0336, book before 16 June.

Franklin Island is a large crown land island located on Georgian Bay near Parry Sound. The area offers exceptional scenery, open campsites, opportunities for exploration, and interesting waterways. We will meet early Saturday morning and put in at Snug Harbour. Weather conditions will dictate our ability to paddle around the island; however, there is an inland waterway that will allow access to and from the island if the conditions are unco-operative. Participants should be comfortable paddling in large, open water. Limit four canoes.

1-3 July FRENCH RIVER OR LOWER MADAWASKA RIVER

Hugh Valliant, (416) 699-3464 (eve.), assisted by Anmarie Forsyth, Jim Morris, and Debbie Sutton. Book before 20 June.

This is a continuation of the Palmer Rapids weekend (17-18 June), presenting an excellent opportunity to practise and further refine and hone your whitewater skills in more challenging rapids. The location of the course will depend upon summer water levels.

Suitable for novice or beginning whitewater paddlers. Preference will be given to those who attended the Palmer Rapids weekend. Limit ten canoes.

1-5 July RAIN LAKE AND GRASSY BAY LOOP

Doreen Vella, (416) 285-1322, book before 25 June.

Five days of glorious canoeing and camping in the western region of Algonquin Park. Wildlife abounds. An easy trip, longest portage only 925 metres. Limit three canoes.

5-7 August OTTAWA RIVER

John and Sharon Hackert, (416) 438-7672, book before 31 July.

We are fortunate to have access to the most beautiful private campsite on the river, right where we take out. On Saturday we will paddle the Middle Channel; on Sunday the Main Channel; and Monday the Middle again. Suitable for paddlers with intermediate whitewater skills who are prepared to portage if they choose to. We will scout most rapids. Boat floatation and helmets required. Limit six canoes.

2-4 September OTTAWA RIVER

John and Sharon Hackert, (416) 438-7672, book before 28 August.

See previous description. Wetsuits recommended.

STRENGTH TRAINING

Preparing physically for canoeing

In the beginner flatwater classes which I teach each year, a severe lack of upper body strength is the biggest difficulty novice paddlers face. Canoeing makes strength demands when paddling, portaging, and placing the canoe on the vehicle. Women, starting from a lower strength base, will be affected more than men.

The power for all forward motion is transmitted through the wrist and the hand gripping the paddle. A large percentage of beginners do not have the power in their wrists, forearms, and hands to grip the paddle firmly and tend instead to lightly hold it with their fingertips like a paintbrush or a pen. Naturally this type of grip results in extreme fatigue and aching muscles with relatively little forward motion.

Lack of strength is independent of cardiovascular fitness levels or flexibility. Being fit in a cardiovascular sense will prevent you from having a heart attack during a one-kilometre portage, but strength allows you to pick up and carry that pack in the first place.

Anyone who likes to paddle can benefit from a program of strength training aimed at developing power and muscle tone. In six months, training one hour every other day, your strength will likely increase 50%. The cost of a health club or gym should be in the \$30 a month range. Make sure that they will design a program for you that should include about 10 exercises per session and has exercises for all the major muscle groups. Women must be careful when setting their

program. Some gyms will give women a program that is designed to only build the bust and take the flab from the triceps but lacks the balance paddlers need.

Learn how to exercise using correct form. Buy a book and become knowledgeable. After all, it's your body. Start by using very light weights and be very careful. Many beginners strain their ligaments and tendons by overtraining. Strains take about a year to heal. If you are injured you can't train, and if you can't train you can't improve. Measure your progress on a monthly, not weekly, basis. An 8 % improvement each month will result in a 50% improvement in six months. Patience is the key to success.

The video "Keys for Weight Training" by Bill Pearl is an excellent video that takes a beginner through a three-month program using about \$60 worth of equipment. It emphasizes proper form and safety. The video also provides a philosophy of weight training that will appeal to an active person.

Ironically, women benefit more from weight training than men and men could use more flexibility and aerobic training. But we rarely see women in the weight room or men in aerobic classes. But if you want to go on canoe trips or make the activity less physically demanding, increasing your physical strength will pay big dividends.

John Hackert

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This PRODUCTS AND SERVICES section is available, free of charge and on a first-come, first-served basis, to members as well as non-members for their announcements regarding items for sale, special products, discounts, services, courses, etc. Contact the editor if more information is required.

DISCOUNTS ON TRIPPING SUPPLIES WCA members who present a membership card will receive a 10-percent discount on many non-sale times at:

ABC Sports, 552 Yonge Street, Toronto,
Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight,
Ontario,
Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph,
Ontario,
Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str. (Hwy. 70), Hepworth,
Ontario.

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

CANOES WANTED Used ABS canoes, tandem or solo; should be in good condition. Outfitted for whitewater is preferred but not essential. Please call: Wayne Gignac at (905) 278-4719, John Hislop at (905) 627-3280, John Rudolph at (905) 648-3343.

CANOE FOR SALE Solo canoe Sawyer "Summersong." Fast — streamlined — fantastic glider — kevlar — 30 lbs — specialty-order reinforced hull below waterline — can use kayak paddle. Excellent condition. Asking \$1500 firm (\$3000 value). Howard Sayles, (416) 921-5321.



FLEET REDUCTION SALE Curtis Dragonfly solo canoe, fibreglass, whitewater/flatwater, good condition — \$675; Mad River ME, ABS, with Perception saddle, very good condition — \$625; Mad River Explorer, Expedition Kevlar, contour cane, deluxe outfitting, excellent — \$1450; Mad River Flashback solo, ABS, with bags, very good condition — \$475. Prices are in US\$. Beth and Dave Buckley, R1 West Valley, NY 14171; phone (716) 942-6631.

CLASSIC SOLO CANOE COURSES Two lessons totaling four hours instructed by Becky Mason at Meech lake, basic or advanced. Maximum three per class. *All equipment provided. Fee \$60. Contact Box 126, RR#1, Chelsea, PQ, J0X 1N0; tel. (819) 827-4159.

IMPROVE YOUR MOVING WATER PADDLING SKILLS The Grand Canoe School runs ORCA accredited moving water classes in the Guelph area as well as wilderness trips in Algonquin Park. For a brochure, please phone (519) 763-3394 or (416) 440-4208, or write to: The Grand Canoe School, 17A-218 Silvercreek Parkway N., Suite #101, Guelph, Ontario, N1H 8E8.

TEMAGAMI WILD Smoothwater Outfitters offers a range of energizing courses and workshops. We cater to artists, photographers, and paddlers with a passion. From ORCA to AGO, we've got an exiting program. We're also available for just canoe outfitting. Ask for our '95 brochure. Smoothwater Outfitters, Box 40, Temagami, Ont., P0H 2H0; tel. (705) 569-3539.

BIRCHBARK CANOE-BUILDING COURSE Join bark canoe builder Mike Ketemer at the Wanapitei Wilderness Centre in Temagami for this unique opportunity to build a 26-ft fur-trade canoe. This will be a hands-on course from start to finish. Participants will build, from the ground up, a genuine replica of a Canot du Nord. The skills learned will be directly transferable to the building of smaller bark canoes for personal use. Dates 1-30 July 1995. Cost \$3000, including food and lodging. Contact: Wanapitei, 393 Water Street, # 14, Peterborough, Ont., K9H 3L7; tel. (705) 745-8314.

TAMARACK ON THE GRAND is a collection of 13 songs written and performed by the folk trio Tamarack about the history of its own backyard, Ontario's Grand River, released on CD and cassette in the USA on the Folk Era label, and received enthusiastically world-wide by lovers of rivers and music. For more information, contact: SGB Productions Inc., Box 714, Guelph, Ontario, N1H 6L3; tel. (519) 767-0142; fax (519) 824-9289.

POLAR BEAR INFORMATION AND ITEMS Cracker shells and rubber deterrents available as well as information for safely managing travel to Polar Bear country. Contact: Allister Keene, (416) 693-2939.

TUCKAMOR TRIPS offers a unique summer camp canoe tripping experience for youths 14 to 19 years of age. Trips of two to four weeks include the Mississagi, Spanish, and Moisi rivers and a hiking trip in the Rockies. Trip leaders include instructors, educators, and foresters. Company also offers canoe, hiking, and "hut-to-hut" cross-country ski trips for adults in spring, fall, and winter. Contact Bill Pollock, Tuckamor Trips, 7123 Lac Noir, Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, PQ, J8C 2Z8; tel./fax (819) 326-3602.

CANOE TOONS
PAUL MASON



Where it is ...



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Wilderness Canoe Association

membership application

I enclose a cheque for CDN \$25 (single) or CDN \$35 (family) for membership in the *Wilderness Canoe Association* (for non-residents US \$25 or US \$35). I understand that this gives me/us the opportunity to participate in WCA trips and activities, and entitles me/us to receive *Nastawgan* and to vote at meetings of the Association. I also understand that WCA trips may have an element of danger and that the ultimate responsibility for the member's safety is his/her own.

PRINT CLEARLY!

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

☐ New member Member # if renewal: _____

☐ Single ☐ Family

Phone Number(s):
() _____ (h)

() _____ (w)

* This membership is valid for one year.

Postal Code: _____

Ext. _____

* Send completed form and cheque, payable to the WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION, to the membership secretary at the WCA postal address.