



nastawgan

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Fog rolling out of a fjord

COASTAL KAYAKING IN EAST GREENLAND

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Photos: Alan Stummer, Farley Lewis, Heike Robinson

East Greenland is a less populated side of already very thinly populated Greenland. This section was not discovered by Europeans until about 100 years ago, but the Inuit have lived there for a very long time.

In July of 2001, I went on a kayak trip in East Greenland through a Canadian tour operator with a diversified group of two Dutch (Marijke and Berry), a German/American (Heike), two Americans (Farley and

Brad), one Canadian (me), and two Canadian guides (Rob and Joanna).

Day 1

We flew directly from Reykjavik, Iceland, to Kulusuk, that has somehow managed to become a tourist spot. Two planes a day fly this two-hour trip, taking people over the icebergs and pack ice and then to the airport, known for

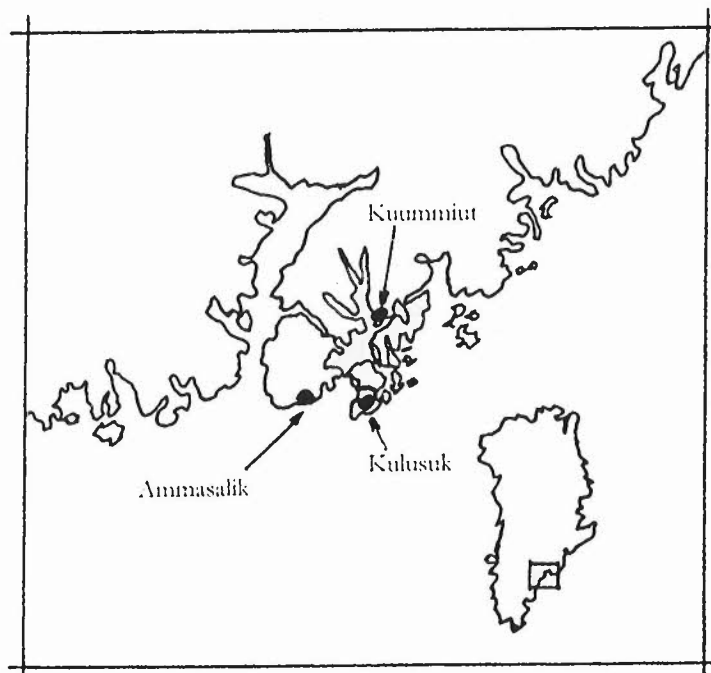
its terrible approach. Later the same day the planes fly back to Iceland with a side trip first up Ammasalik Fjord, then very low over the Knud Rasmussen glacier. I felt out of place, like on a flight over Niagara Falls. There is a hotel on the airport land for those that want to stay the night, or are stranded if the winds shift and the planes cannot fly. Some tourists walk the three kilometres to the town of Kulusuk and nervously glance at the few hundred people who live there.

The town can be a culture shock. After the relative affluence of the airport run by the Danish, the walk ends in another world. There are roads but only a couple of trucks. Sled dogs are chained up everywhere, puppies run free. Every path or road goes steeply up or down and then gets steeper still. Graves can be found in the cemeteries or by themselves marked by small white wooden crosses. The houses are small one or two story wood frame, painted all colors of the rainbow. There is enough electricity for lights but nothing else. No TV, only one radio station, four telephones in town. No plumbing; water is carried from the central water tank, toilets are a bucket in a room. There are communal showers at the store and community centre. Garbage doesn't decompose for decades, so dumps are useless; garbage is everywhere. The natural tendency is to compare "them" to "us" and imagine us living like that. The Inuit do the same with us.

People are hanging out in groups, chatting, smoking, watching the tourists. The Greenlandic Inuit have the same problems as many Canadian Inuit, mostly the result of the huge cultural changes since the coming of the Kabluna. This is a win-lose situation: life expectancy has more than doubled but at the loss of the traditional way of life. A dilemma if there ever was one. The dogs are kept only for the sleds to hunt seals in winter because the Danes have wisely prohibited snowmobiles from going on the ice. This is not just for safety reasons but because anyone could then wipe out all seals in the area. After the hunt, the seals are kept in the natural refrigerator, the cold water of the harbor, until needed. Skins have no value and are just thrown away. Be careful not to slip on them.



Local Inuit kayak inspectors



We spent a good part of the first day assembling the Feathercraft folding kayaks. Our first night was in a house in town, now owned by a local Dane trying to run an outfitters business.

Day 2

We were back struggling with the aluminum oxide on the kayak frames. All the time there were kids running around, playing in the partially assembled boats, just being kids. All spoke the Inuktituk dialect called Greenlandic; they were also taught Danish and some knew a few words in English. After watching one pretending to paddle a kayak, I showed him the proper way, which he picked up fast.

By 7 p.m. the three tandem and two single kayaks were loaded and ready to go. Being a stone's throw from the Arctic Circle and three weeks after the summer solstice, the sun was still high. There was lots of ice in the harbor but no wind. We set off dressed very warmly but I was soon surprised how warm you can be paddling past ice in calm air. I dressed lighter after that.

After a couple of hours paddling over dead-calm water, we arrived at a campsite in a short valley. It was a beautiful night, sunny and clear. The sun set around midnight and rose a couple of hours later but it was always easy to write my journal anytime. The campsite was on a slight slope covered by the usual tundra mosses, lichen, little flowers, and some low scrub brush.

Day 3

We woke with a fog bank covering the fjord. By the time breakfast was finished and the kayaks packed, it had cleared. With wind at our backs we made good speed. By

mid-afternoon, the wind and choppy waves were up, so we stopped for lunch in a cove. Getting back onto the water was tricky because the tide was out and the ice was stranded in the cove. We backed out, bouncing gently off the floes. After less than an hour, the choice was to continue paddling for at least two more hours to the next campsite, or stop by a large sand beach. We chose the beach. The temperature was 3°C.

The beach area had been well visited in the past. Besides the tiny hut used by hunters, there had been some vehicle like a backhoe that had to have been taken there by barge. This could have been during WW2, when there was an American army base north of here, or somehow from Kulusuk or the big town of Ammasalik more to the west. There were large tire tracks all around a place where only two scoops of gravel had been dug from a riverbed. Looks like government work. The moss by the river was a black marshmallow type that gave the impression of walking on thick foam. We found a large piece of driftwood. It was about two metres long and five centimetres thick and because it was so twisted and gnarled and ground-hugging to stay out of the wind, it had to be from Greenland. It was the largest tree by far we saw on the whole trip, a Douglas fir by comparison to the regular "trees." I cut off a section and back home with a microscope counted 208 rings.

Ammasalik Fjord is about 50 km long and several km wide, enclosed by islands covered with mountains of about 1000 m, so flat land is scarce. Over the millennium, anyone in the area—Inuit, Norse, or Westerner—would stop in the same places. Almost everywhere we stopped there were leftovers from previous visitors. Did you know that the Norse tended to throw all their garbage into piles beside their houses? We found lots of small animal bones in the moss where it had been undercut.

Day 4

A motorboat went past the cove on its way back to Kulusuk, probably from the town of Kuummiut further north. We left mid-morning with the wind still at our backs. The paddling was easy. For lunch, we stopped at a cove with a small rise and a protected valley behind. The valley was several degrees warmer, the flowers grew higher, and there were a couple of barely visible Inuit campsites. The Inuit dug down slightly in the centre of their tents while the Norse didn't. Good tip to remember: I checked for whales with a hydrophone but only heard icebergs grinding against the bottom and also surface noise.

After lunch, things went from good to better. The afternoon turned into the day we all dream of, a magical time. First we stopped at a point to examine some Norse ruins, about five small buildings made of stone and moss with the timber roofs caved in or missing. From there we paddled up the coast and into an ice field. In dead calm air and slack water, we paddled through the leads in the ice. Being mostly new pack ice and therefore low, we could

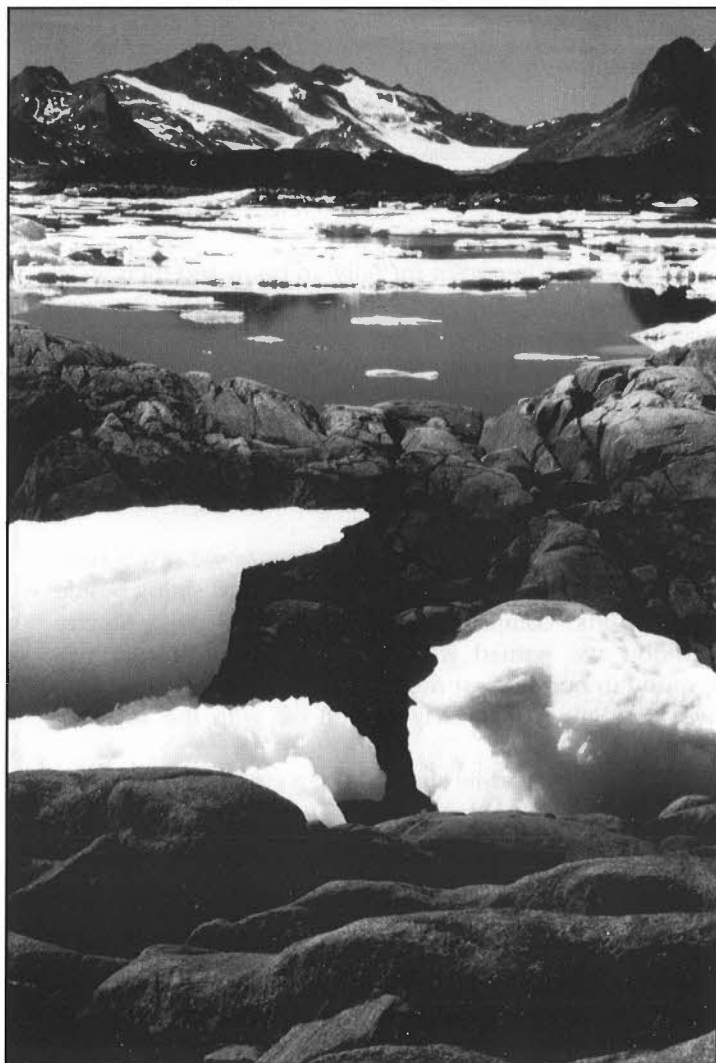
see over it as we paddled around aimlessly. The whole situation was surreal. It would also foreshadow the times to follow.

So far the only signs of wildlife were some gulls and ravens. We would not see anything for several more days. Of course there were insects because we were camping.

Day 5

I was up early and tried the hydrophone again but there were no whales. Probably the ice covered too much of the fjord and so they stayed away. We never saw or heard any. There were many small fish about one centimetre long close to the shore and one well camouflaged 25 cm monster lurking around looking for a meal.

We paddled through the large leads in the pack ice and around the bergs for about an hour, then the pack ice thinned with only a few chunks to avoid. About six kilometres along, we stopped for lunch at an interesting site. Along with the usual leftovers modern people drop were a whale vertebrae (small, probably minke), a caribou skull with antlers, a Norse grave with two partial skeletons still visible, and eight Norse buildings. A couple of them had



Ice stranded at low tide

two or three tiny rooms about one metre by two metres and one had an unusual 3–4-m-long entranceway. This latter may have been a bit of a copy from the Inuit. All of the roofs had collapsed hundreds of years ago. Where the peat beside the houses had become exposed from underneath, small animal bones could be seen sticking out, some large enough to maybe have been from foxes.

From there we paddled across a small fjord into the town of Kuummiut. The fish processing plant—all for Japan—kept some of the locals busy and employed, making this a relatively more affluent town than Kulusuk. However, along with that silver lining comes the dark cloud of drink, which became very obvious to us.



Kuummiut

We were in Kuummiut for only an hour, and then were back on our way up Ammasalik Fjord. Most days the temperature was 8–15°C and I paddled without gloves and only a couple of layers. Cold was not a problem for us. We camped in a bowl in a bay with two glacial streams, after slinging the kayaks 100 m up the sand and gravel beach.

Day 6

This morning was the first of several times we saw a large iceberg, which looked just like a 50–75 m cat sitting beside its litter box, complete with pointed ears. With literary abandon we named it “the cat iceberg.” It had run aground in our bay last night at low tide but it was visible over the hills as it slowly moved off with the morning flood tide.

The morning paddle started with a crossing at a narrow section near the north end of the fjord. We followed the far coast, then north again up a smaller fjord. The sides were all quite steep, so after a couple of hours we pulled into a niche for lunch. From a perch higher up we could see how the sides continue to be steep for a long way so we decided to turn back. The charts are good but not always detailed or accurate, so what we saw overruled.

Back in the boats, we crossed this fjord and paddled back along the opposite shore. All of the possible campsites were very rocky, not level enough for tents or had no

water, so we pushed on along the shore. From a place with water but no landing site, we filled a couple of dry-bags with fresh water and took the best available spot.

Today's excitement came from an iceberg. As the group was skirting around the only one in the area, we heard the sound of running water and saw a little river of meltwater flowing off it. This must have unbalanced it because it started to roll. The huge berg, the size of several houses, kept going in slow motion for half a minute until it was 90° over from before. It paused, then rolled back, scooping water in the little caves and crevasses as it came up and poured the water off as it went further over. Back and forth it went for several minutes while we all watched with fascination. This is almost never witnessed from such a grandstand view. After all, icebergs can last for years in this climate and do not break up too often. We blamed the break-up on the wake from our kayak as we shot past it.

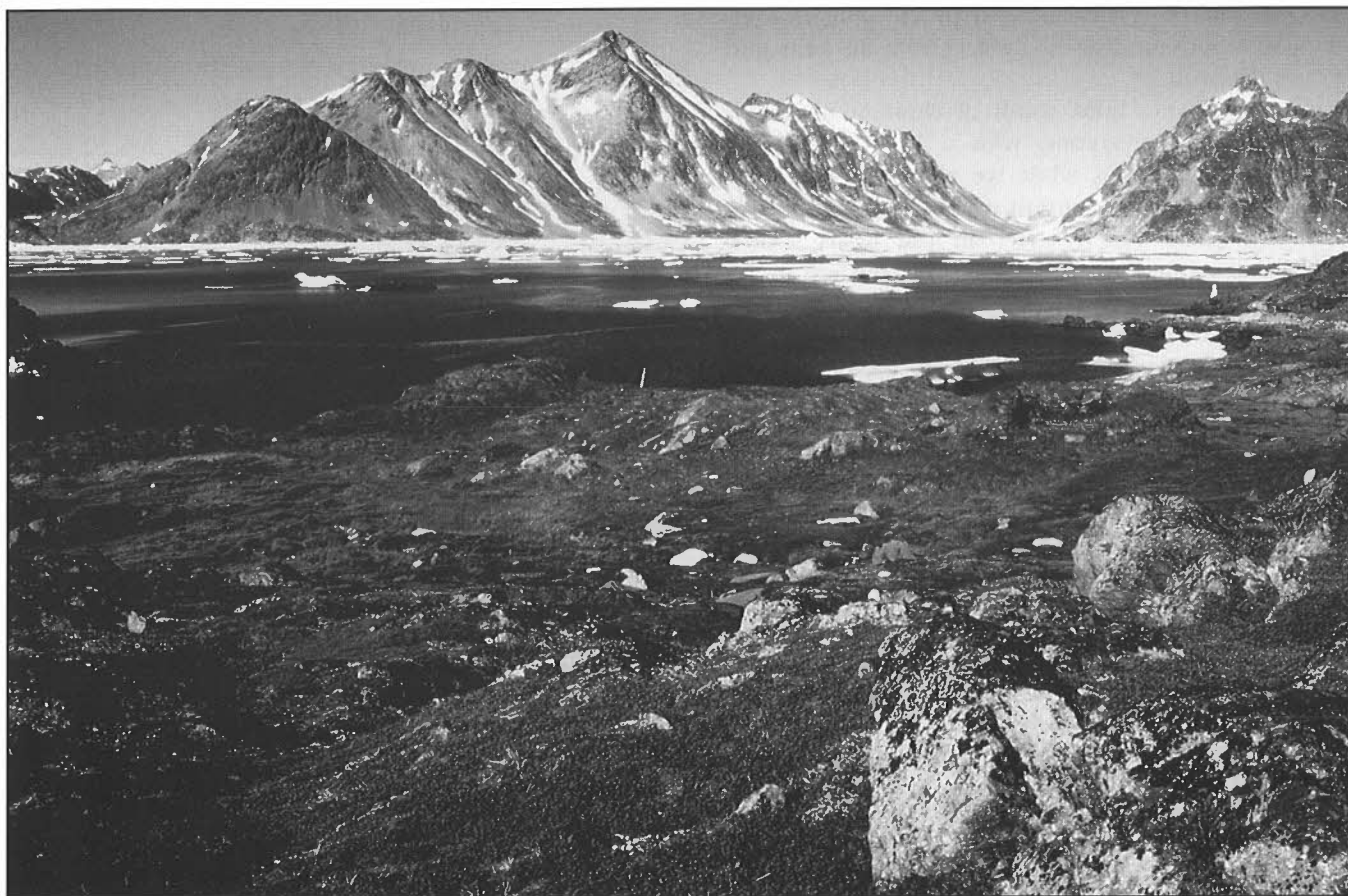
Day 7

A layover day. There was a small stream hidden in the tundra mosses, so the site was better than expected. The flies and mosquitoes had found us too. We hiked up a ridge and found a small lake. A snow bunting warned us away from his ledge. The cat iceberg reappeared on the other side of Ammasalik Fjord after hiding for a day, wherever a giant ice cat hides. A few seafood lovers collected a pile of mussels and converted the rest of us.

The mosses and lichen come in a variety of colors and textures. They can be dark green with a fine smooth surface, black like an ink spot, tiny hard orange leaves, black puffy marshmallows, pale green that looks like dried mud, dull red, or much more. They may be the size of your hand or many square metres. Although most ground is just bare rock, our area was covered by short grasses. Also common is a shrub growing hand high but forming a circle 2–4 m across. Sometimes the centre has died and the outer ring continues to slowly grow.



Paddling on a millpond



Norse site, glacial valley

Day 8

After a day of rest we were ready to paddle back across the fjord towards the cat iceberg and Kuummiut. The wind was coming up the sound and we turned slightly into it. In mid-fjord we passed a large but low iceberg and took pictures of ourselves with it in the background. We were getting nervous about being too near it, especially because one overhanging house-sized chunk looked precarious. So we didn't linger. Two minutes later, that chunk did indeed break off. The guides yelled for us to paddle away from it but the waves broke up before reaching us. As the iceberg rolled, a second, then a third chunk broke off. The remaining iceberg rolled back and forth a few times before settling down. As I said before, you rarely witness such an event up close. The kayak wake theory was becoming believable.

Past Kuummiut again, we paddled up the smaller Forsskåtak Fjord. The wind made this quite a slog. Although the charts showed this as a dead end, the U.S. army had blasted through the narrows into the next fjord. The current was running with us at several knots and the guides scouted the narrows. The water was fast but smooth all the way and the passage was not long at all. We kept well clear of the entrance and entered one kayak at a time. In a minute we were through but kept clear of the strong upwelling turbulence near the shore. Being a manmade passage into former shallows or even dry areas,

the depth was quite dependent on the tides and winds. Marijke and Berry led the way out and eventually we all passed into deep water. We camped on a large windy peninsula just a few kilometres south of the Arctic Circle.

An Arctic fox walked by dressed in its summer fur. It was small and looked young but was probably an adult. Our camp was in the way of its scavenging rounds, so it just went through, stopping to snack on the scraps from the dishwater and fearlessly examine us from a couple of metres away. It had strange eyes, dark, hazy looking. The fur was dark grey, almost black. After it was satisfied we were too big to eat, it went on its way, disappearing over a ridge.

Day 9

The tide was out so the mud flats were between the water and us. With our trusty slings—everyone with an end of one of the three slings plus one on each end of the kayak—we carried the boats one at a time for 100 m across the mud. The tide soon came in enough to float our kayak but it blew as expected into a corner of the bay. Just before lunch we stopped across the bay from the U.S. military base that was suddenly abandoned at the end of WW2. This place, Fangthus, is not very high but has a clear view of a large area. There was an old hut, wood with tar paper, the sides were falling off, no doors or windows left, a sleeping platform took up half the three-

metres-square inside, probably used by the Inuit as shelter when seal hunting. Rob fit right in with his bear gun slung over his back.

Lunch was on the fjord south of Kuummiut. It was busy; seemed that everyone with a boat was going through there, at least six while we were watching. The tide was flooding and the current was pushing a lot of ice through. We spent lunch watching the boats weave through the ice as it slowly crashed and crunched in the narrows at the entrance.

The seven-kilometre trip down the fjord was great. We shot through between two large icebergs, blissfully wove through the pack ice, and eventually camped in a reasonably well-sheltered bay. Another fox crossed the camp. It was half the size of the one we saw yesterday.

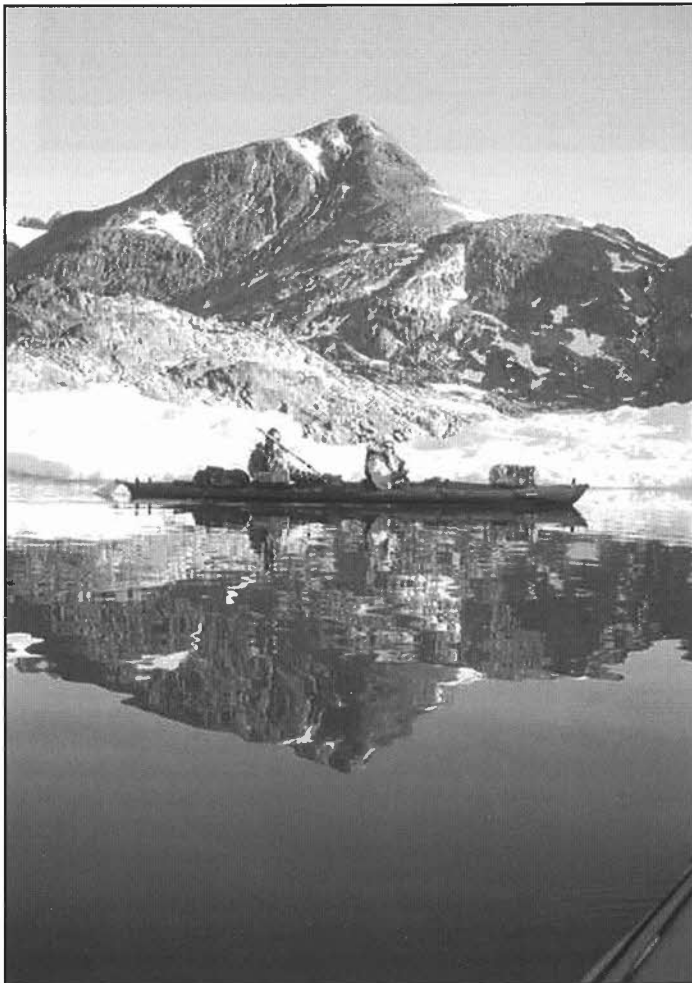
Day 10

The fox was back in the morning. After hovering around our camp for a while, it chewed a strap on Berry's knapsack, then tried to steal it. We watched and let Berry chase it away.

We went southward across the small fjord, then down the east side of Ammasalik Fjord again. The ice was thick



On day 10 we got trapped in this pack ice eddy



Paddling through calm pack ice

and in one place we had to push through near the shore when we were boxed in. One nice thing about ice is that it eliminates all waves. Of floating ice, only 10% is visible; about 9% in a small bay where the melting ice has reduced the salinity. Ice comes in two flavors: pack ice and icebergs.

Icebergs are from glaciers, which calve as they reach the sea. They can be the size of a building above water, most are very craggy, some have smooth faces. Parts that were underwater at some time can be streaked where they scraped along the bottom, or pockmarked like a golf ball. They are an endless source of images: cats, dolphins, birds, mushrooms, and Mt. Blanc. Often they have mysterious perfectly round holes as if someone had gone wild with a monster drill. Most are white, some have black from gravel, a few are distinctly blue. Chunks can hang at all angles and are dangerous to be near, in case they break off. Danger also comes from a rolling iceberg because 90% can't be seen and may come up underneath you. Occasionally, underwater chunks may break off and attack from below. Tiny bubbles are always rising to the surface as the ice melts and trapped air is released.

Pack ice is usually only 0.5–1 m above water and can be the size of a plate or cover the area of many houses. The edges mostly overhang because of waves undercutting them. They are less dangerous than icebergs but can still damage a kayak when they break up. We estimated the size of the larger ones to be around 1000 tonnes. Being only a few metres thick, they can become grounded at low water and break up under their own weight.

After lunch we had an adventure in the ice we wish we never had. We had spent lunch discussing the hydrodynamics of the one-kilometre-wide eddy in front of us, formed where the small fjord empties into Ammasalik Fjord. I said it was laminar with turbulent edges, Brad and



The iceberg broke up just after we passed it

Heike said it was turbulent throughout. We packed up and left, picking our way through the dense ice pack. As the path by the shore became blocked, we moved further out into clear leads. Soon the leads were changing fast and Heike and I were cut off from the rest. With Rob's help from the other side, we pushed a chunk out of the way and rejoined the group. But that did not do much good, now we were all trapped in the same lead. The shore was moving past but not the ice around us, so we were in the eddy. Sure enough, that lead was closing but another one started to open off it, so we all manoeuvred into the new one. It fit the five kayakers but with little room for comfort. Joanna told us to pop open the spray skirts and be prepared to climb out onto the ice if the ice closed in on us. We would have about one minute to get out before the colliding ice floes crushed anything between them. Better to be stuck on the ice with no boats, if none could be pulled out, than the unthinkable. I was afraid that not all of us would safely make the transfer. We remained calm and worked well as a group, Rob probing possible leads while Joanna watched his back and we watched other sections of ice for possible escape routes. Several times large pieces of pack ice did collide nearby in a slow-motion crunch, crumpling and splintering their edges.

For over an hour we tried to move to the edge of the eddy but were always thwarted. Eventually the lead we were in was gradually closing with no way out. As the sides moved closer bit by bit, the floes behind opened a little. Rob explored the possibility of escape and we all shot through it. By now the eddy had rotated us back past our lunch spot. Open water to the shore was visible past the next section of pack ice. So near and yet so far. When two floes edged apart, Joanna went through first to see if it was passable. Her boat got stuck and Rob wisely told her to get out right away. She was at the best possible spot where the edges were straight with no overhang. She jumped out, then quickly pulled her kayak up on the ice before it could be crushed. We waited. Brad and Farley got cut off when the ice closed.

We were now in two groups and with one person on the ice; this was not good. We waited. Brad and Farley rejoined us. The gap hinted at opening again. Joanna

stood and watched, then called us to try going through. Marijke and Berry went through first. I forgot that the rudder was up and Heike and I pinballed through the gap. Brad and Farley, then last of all Rob came out and finally we were in open water near the shore! Joanna lowered her kayak into the water. Rob steadied it as she climbed in while Brad and Farley held his. Heike shot a short video of this. We were home free, feeling like even smaller dots on a large globe.

Except for the obvious dumb fact of getting stuck, we did almost everything by the book. No one panicked, we stayed as a group, watched for leads, prepared for abandoning the boats. A couple of us were feeling the shock of what could have happened, some took a day or two for it to surface. That hour and a half is one that none of us will ever forget. Ironically, the ice at slack water later that day looked so harmless we wondered how it could have been so dangerous just a few hours earlier. Not surprisingly, that night we camped there.

Day 11

The fog forced us to wait and we missed the morning slack water at low tide. When we did get out, the ice was starting to get thicker. We hugged the shore; no more adventures into those tempting leads just a little way out. Rob got out on shore a few times to scout. Three kilometres of manoeuvring in several hours resulted in only 1.5 km of progress from last night's camp. Brad caught an ugly fish while waiting for one of Rob's reports. The ice was jammed ahead so we pulled into a very rocky shore, just a rockslide in a crack in the rock, but it was the best available. At least the sun was shining and the temperature was nearly 15°C.



Paddling through light pack ice

After lunch and at high tide, we packed and loaded the boats one at a time and left. Less than one kilometre along, the ice was jammed up again. Even with yesterday's experience, the ice changed so much that Heike and I were cut off from the group once for a minute. Rob climbed up high to scout but could not see a safe way though. We turned around and worked back to the rockslide. It was the only game in town, so we played.

The kayaks were (wo)manhandled over the boulders and lashed and jammed into spaces around the boulders and a couple onto a snowdrift. If the lines let go, the boats might launch themselves into the fjord. I never thought to bring ice screws and climbing gear on a kayak trip. The tents were on a lumpy plateau 50 m above the kayaks. We trekked up and down the rockslide carrying the gear. The back of my tent went out into space, but I always did like living a bit on the edge.

Things could have been much worse. We had tents, food, people to talk to, and mosquitoes. The view from up there was magnificent. Looking back to where we had come from today, the ice had jammed up and completely blocked our path. Today's 1.5 km was well fought, only 25 km more to go.

Day 12

Another day, another kilometre. With an early start on the high tide we managed to paddle one kilometre along the shore before being iced in. A surface layer of fresh water on the sea had frozen in places and I annoyed Heike by paddling through it. We stopped in a small bay covered in flat but sloping rocks. There was no fresh water but some snow nearby and a stream not too far. The ice did not change enough to enable us to cross the next bay to what

seemed a better area, let alone the next island, so we made camp. The agenda called for us to be back in Kulusuk tomorrow and time was running out. We had to make an important decision. Plan A was to paddle the 24 km to Kulusuk. Plan B was to call on the satellite phone for a boat to come and take us out. Plan C was for us to hike back to the flat area from two nights ago and have a helicopter pick us up.

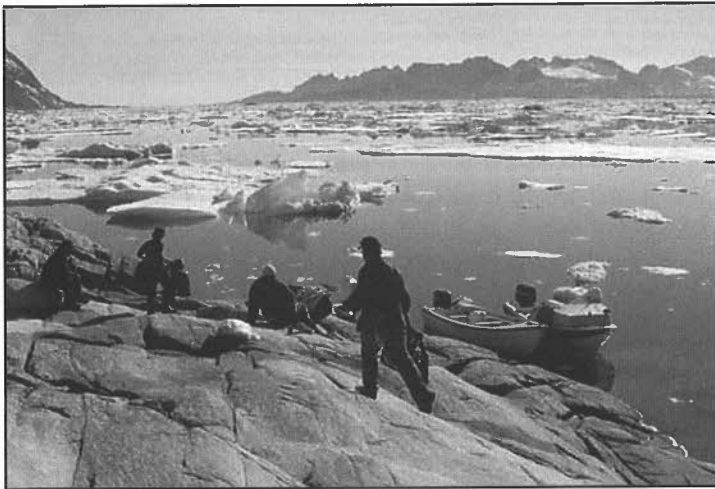
Not a cloud in the sky, barely a breeze, even hot in the sun. If you have to get stranded, we hit the jackpot. With the grandstand view of all the ice flowing by and crashing, we named this spot the Costa del Glace. Bring on the margaritas but don't bother about the ice!

Day 13

The ice was as thick as ever. The next crossing was about five kilometres across a side fjord and it was choked with moving ice. The currents moved the ice up and down Ammasalik Fjord but it was always present. Once an iceberg grounded in front of us and we watched as the pack ice rammed into it in an ice rush-hour traffic jam. We watched and waited. No luck on the boats to take us out, Kulusuk was completely iced in. A few boats could be heard and sometimes seen through binoculars weaving through the thinner ice on the far side of the fjord.



Ice-jammed fjord



Loading the boats which took us back to Kulusuk

By the afternoon, Marijke and I had prepared for a hike up the closest mountain. With backpacks on and about to leave, word came by the satellite phone that two boats had left Kulusuk 45 minutes ago and should be here in an hour. The linguistic and cultural differences could mean that the boats would arrive today, or tomorrow, unless a family matter came up (who has their priorities right?). Fortunately, two open runabouts arrived in half an hour while we were still striking camp. There was no room for the kayaks, so we pulled them well up on shore. A group from Sweden was arriving in a few days to use the kayaks so Rob wanted them left assembled. Both boats were fibreglass with 40 hp Mercs, one had a small partial cabin. The Inuit wove the boats through the ice with precision and an excellent understanding of ice. We went well out into the fjord where there were open spaces to speed up in. For an hour we tacked through, constantly finding clear areas. This would have been impossible to do in a

kayak. Not only could powerboats go out far enough to find clear water, but also the moving ice did not affect them much.

About two kilometres from Kulusuk as the crow flies, the ice became thick and the Inuit had to search for passages. A supply ship was on its way out of the harbor and it too was manoeuvring. The ice closed in behind the ship so there were no simple passages left for us. Half a kilometre from town, with a good part of the town watching from shore, we hit a dead end in the thick ice. The two boats parted ways; I got the impression that there was more to reaching the dock first than just reaching the dock first. Our boat tried muscling between two floes while the other chose another place. With the aid of an all-purpose seal-and-ice hook, our Inuit attempted to push the ice away. We lost, the other boat broke free first and we followed them to the dock. That evening, one of the Inuit went to Kuummiut for a visit and on the way back picked up a couple of the kayaks and a seal. The latter went into the former, scarlet billows started to spread, creating quite a mess.

The ice had thinned out today. Two days ago it had come right up past the solid concrete docks onto shore. In so doing, it had decapitated two of the seals in the water by the dock; not that anyone cared much. The ice had stopped all boat traffic from moving. The tourist helicopter had broken down, or possibly the pilots had used up their time, depending on who you asked. The airport was filled with tourists, the hotel was full. We had dinner at the hotel and one by one left to have the much-discussed showers. Two weeks in the Arctic without a shower is better than two weeks in the Tropics, but it still is two weeks. We had another night in one of the houses. Visitors came in the middle of the night but were unsure about barging in on Westerners. They were probably looking for drink, from the sounds of them.

Next day we all managed to get onto the flight back to Reykjavik. That was a culture shock—cars, houses, shops, people who don't look at you when you pass. For some reason I always find the transition into a foreign culture much easier than going back into my own. Much can be said about the way of life in East Greenland. With all the outside influences and today's mod cons, the average Inuit in East Greenland knows far more about us than the average Westerner knows about them. To see ourselves through another's eyes is always scary. We are very concerned about appearances, yet dress drably and conservatively; we live for the future and less in the present; we strive for success, for goals, almost ignoring what is around us. Yet we are the same as the Inuit, and everyone else, in that we want shelter, food, family; and whatever is considered the good life. Plus que ça change, plus que c'est la même chose.



On the ride back to Kulusuk

(More pictures and also sounds can be found at: <http://members.rogers.com/astummer/>)



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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.

NEWS BRIEFS

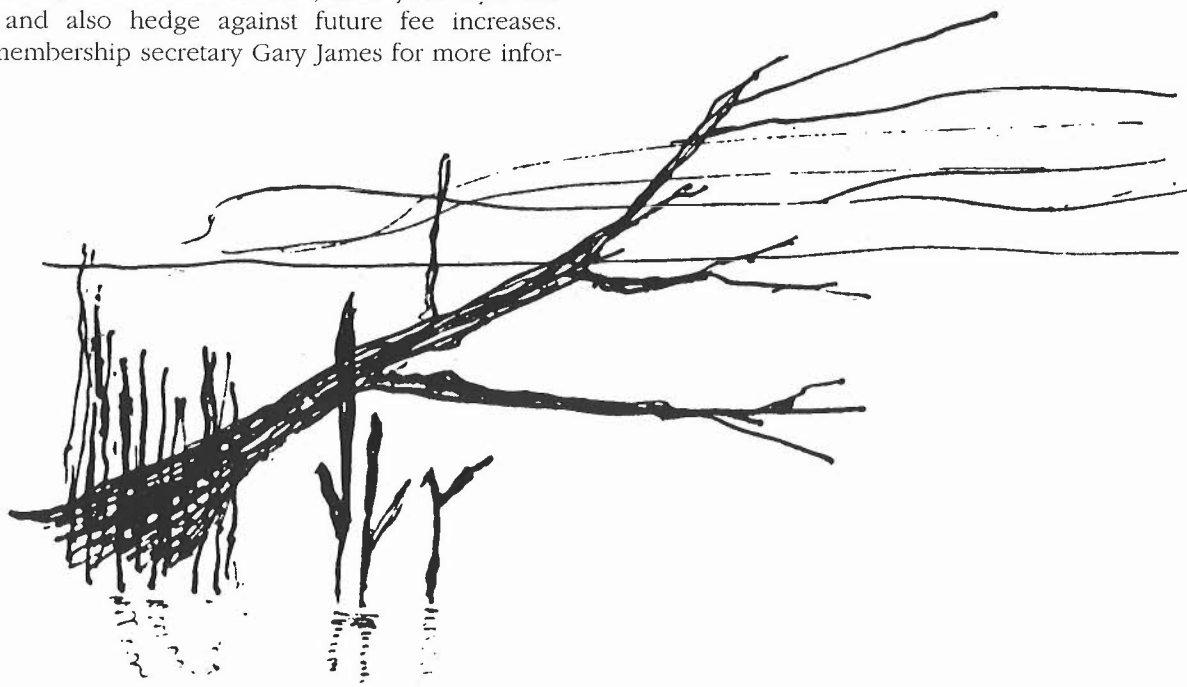
NASTAWGAN MATERIAL AND DEADLINE Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think might be of interest to other readers, are needed for future issues. Try to submit your contributions by e-mail, on computer disk (WordPerfect or MS Word or text files preferred, but any format is welcome), or in typewritten form, but legibly handwritten material will also be accepted. For more information contact the editor (address etc. see WCA Contacts on the back page). Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request; please follow these guidelines as much as possible to increase the efficiency of the production of our journal. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue:	Summer 2003	deadline date:	4 May
	Autumn 2003		3 August

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

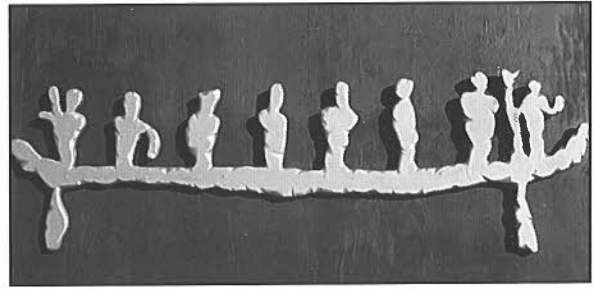
PADDLE THE DON! This year marks the tenth anniversary of the popular annual Paddle the Don event in Toronto, which will take place on Sunday, 4 May. Participating canoes and kayaks will again launch from the E.T. Seton Park (Leslie Street and Eglinton Avenue). For further information, please contact Amy Thurston at the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 416-661-6600 ext. 5283.

CANADA'S NATIONAL RIVERS DAY All paddlers are invited to come to Toronto's Gzowski Park and the historic Humber River for an all-day celebration of National Rivers Day on 8 June. This event demonstrates the city's commitment to fresh air, clean water, and reduction of solid waste, as well as environmental stewardship, and presents a special focus on youth and children. For more information, please contact allancrawford@sprint.ca



WCA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year, the AGM was held in a very special place, The Canadian Canoe Museum, which is conveniently located near the centre of Peterborough. On 15 February, about 80(!) members and non-members of the WCA attended the business meeting in the morning, which was followed by a tasty lunch. In the afternoon, James Raffan gave a lively presentation on his book *Deep Waters*, which deals with the 1978 Lake Timiscaming disaster. During the day there also was ample opportunity to visit the beautiful museum and admire many of the more than 600 canoes and other boats that make up the impressive collection of this largest canoe museum in the world.



Photos by Gary James and Toni Harting

SYMPOSIUM: NORTHERN TRAVELS AND NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES II

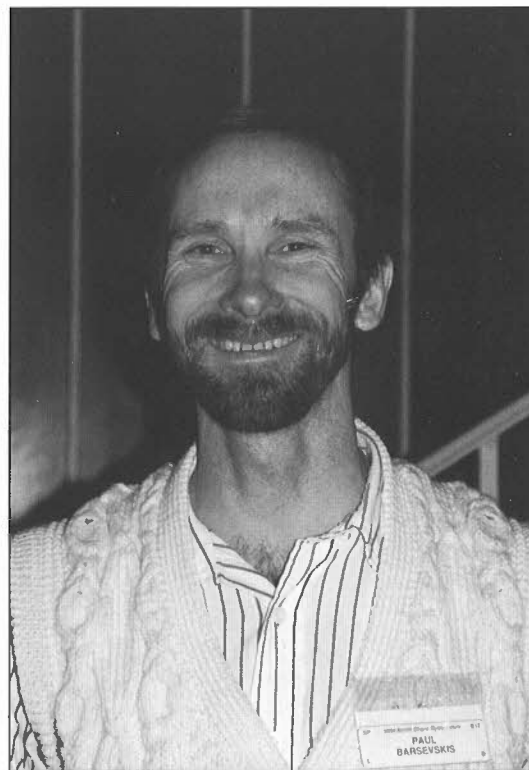
An spellbound crowd of more than 700 paddlers and other lovers of the outdoors thoroughly enjoyed the 18 presentations made at this annual symposium, organized by George Luste and sponsored by the WCA, held in Toronto on 31 January and 1 February. The following presentations were made:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| - My Northern Sojourns—40-Year Retrospective | George Luste |
| - Going with the Floe: Filming at the Floe Edge | Caroline Underwood |
| - Polar Bear Ecology—Past, Present, & Future | Andrew Derocher |
| - First Long Arctic Trip | Levi Waldron |
| - From Resolution to Bathurst Inlet | Bob Johnston |
| - Solo to the Arctic Ocean—Bathurst Inlet | Bob Dannert |
| - The Canadian Canoe Museum and the Canoe | John Jennings |
| - An Artist in the Barrens | Don Morrison |
| - Watercolors from Canadian Canoe Trips | Bill Hosford |
| - A.P. Low—His Life and Career as a Canoe Traveller | Jim Stone |
| - Across Quebec on the Trail of A.P. Low | Max Finkelstein |
| - Richmond Gulf | Herbert Pohl |
| - A Trip with James Clouston | Phil Lancaster |
| - With George Nelson's Canoe Brigade in 1822 | Sylvia Van Kirk |
| - Isobel Hutchison—a Singular Arctic Traveller | Gwyneth Hoyle |
| - An "Overland" Canoe Trip | Rosi Kerr |
| - To Hudson Bay and Back, 1962 | Eric Sailer |
| - Remembrance of Lorne Haacke | Doug Gardner |



PAUL BARSEVSKIS

On 31 January, Paul Barsevskis died peacefully in his sleep after a long battle with chronic myelogenous leukemia. He was only 52. With his passing, the canoeing community, and in particular the WCA, lost a dedicated outdoors man who has made numerous trips on lakes and rivers near and far in search of the unique experiences wilderness canoeing can bring. Paul will be dearly missed by his numerous friends in the WCA, of which he had been an active member for many years. Our thoughts are with his wife, Lyn, and his young sons, Mark and Peter. The WCA will make a memorial donation to the Canadian Canoe Museum, which had been a many-year interest of Paul's.



Paul at the 1994 Symposium

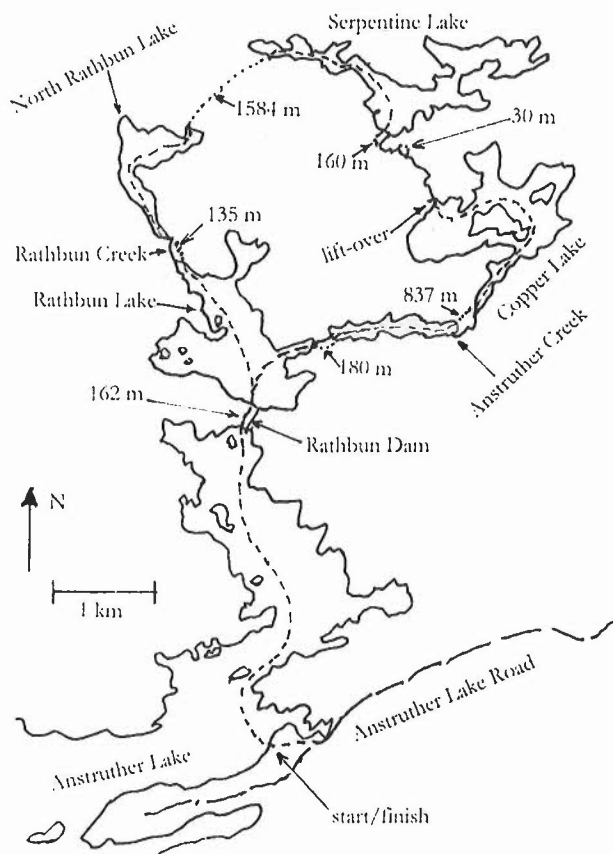
TALKING TURKEY ON THE SERPENTINE LAKE LOOP

Gary James

Three of us—Anne Lessio, Joe Pace, Gary James—decided to do a special kind of trip on the Anstruther/Serpentine Lake Loop in the Kawartha Highlands on the Thanksgiving long weekend, 12–14 October 2002. After much discussion this simple plan developed into a Thanksgiving food festival with all the trimmings, with just a side order of canoeing. We found our chef—Bill Caswill, now affectionately called Turkey Bill—at the Fall Meeting at Killbear Provincial Park. We also talked Ray Laughlen into joining us by making an appeal to his taste buds.

Day one

As the sun rose on Saturday morning, the rain stopped long enough for the five of us to unload at the government landing on Anstruther Lake. There's lots of room for tents if you can make it Friday night, and a B&B is also nearby for late arrivals. The parking lot is big and the shoreline is good. The rain started again as we left shore. Ray paddled solo since we had an odd number at the last minute.



(Traced from Kevin Callan's *Cottage Country Canoe Routes*)

There are three hills and eight portages in this trip. If you do the loop clockwise, the first hill, at the Rathbun Dam, is the only big one you have to go up, the other two are downhill. The first one is repeated again on the way out but it is now downhill.

It rained most of Saturday and everything looked the same: wet, dark, and cold. Anstruther Lake is very nice with high rock faces on the eastern shore line. The first portage to Rathbun Lake is easy with docks at both ends. The second portage to Rathbun Creek is short and has a nice area at the end for lunch. We met up with another couple out for the weekend and found out they were searching for a canoeing organization. So we exchanged names, websites, and e-mail addresses. By the time we arrived in North Rathbun Lake the rain had stopped and the sun was shining. The fall colors were great everywhere you looked.

We stopped at the start of the next portage to eat lunch for the energy required to complete the portage, and also to lighten our load as much as possible. This is the longest portage of the trip. It is not difficult but a long one, about 1.5 km. Gary had been on this trip before and made the mistake of following the skidoo trail looping right back to Rathbun Lake again (a very long portage). But Ray also knew the route and led the way. About a quarter of the way you turn left off the skidoo trail; hopefully you will see the small rock cairns and little yellow P portage signs on the trees.

While in the bush on the portage trail it didn't seem to be raining, but arriving at Serpentine Lake we were loading in the rain again. Somewhere along the trail one canoe was put down for a rest and it picked up a large fishing lure in one of the ropes. Gary found that out the hard way with a sharp sudden surprise, when reaching in to load the canoe. At the end of this portage is the second hill of the trip. Off we went into the drizzle of the day to find a camp site as darkness was approaching.

We were surprised all the marked campsites were taken. We pushed onward back into a small bay that Ray had explored and camped at before. Not the best for five tents, but the rocky shoreline and view were great. It was decided we were home for the night.

The first night's stew took forever to prepare and cook because a lot of heat was lost in the cool high winds. Dinner was finally consumed as the rain started again; the first night was unusually warm.

Day two

Sunday started off with high winds and rain again. It was Turkey Day and we were serious about controlling Mother Nature's temper. Does anyone know how to put up a tarp?

How many WCA members does it take to put up a tarp right? We will never know the answers. The four guys had four tarps and a canoe strung up at all angles on the rocky shoreline. Each tarp was strung differently with different effects and all required continuous adjustments. We were semi-successful and semi-wet. We turned Ray's canoe over, resting one end on the rocks and making the other end into a tripod with two long dead tree trunks. A tarp was tied to the top and down to the ground. It looked like an upside down canoe with a large sail. And did it sail! The wind was so strong it was lifting the large rocks used to tie down the tarps.

Mother Nature finally ran out of rain but kept up the wind. The sky cleared and the sun came out a little; we were finally able to dry off a lot of our wet gear and clothing. Bill got out his top-secret oven and gave us the run-down on how it works. This serious but simple home-made gadget is described and illustrated in the following pages.

Cooking a turkey at camp in this oven over a campfire is an all-day event. Gathering wood in all sizes is required to keep up the necessary heat and to prepare the fire with a nice bed of coals. The frozen turkey had thawed and was ready to be prepared by Anne, who had made a great stuffing and had all kinds of spices to add. The sky was clear and dry; Ray, the wizard with a fire, was ready; Turkey Bill was ready with the oven, and in the defrosted bird went. Then it was time to sit back and enjoy the cooking process. Anne and Joe started the feast with soup, vegetables, and dip. Every 15 minutes we rotated the turkey and stoked the twig fire. Two hours later, it was a perfect bird, golden brown and with an outstanding aroma.

Furthermore, we had gravy, cranberries, potatoes, yams, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, and stuffing. The feast was washed down with lots of wine and good cheer. To top it off, a pumpkin pie and fresh whipped cream were provided. We had a small pumpkin that Ray had carved. A Halloween witch that did not survive the gale-force winds, a small fall scare crow, a chief's hat, and a pumpkin candle that melted on the hot rocks of the fire before it was dark enough to light it.

We had used every stove and pot to create this feast and it had been worth it. The dishes were stacked and washed as the sky darkened. No sooner had the dishes and food been put away, than the rain started again and that was the end of the evening. It was a long night with darkness at 7 p.m. and rain until it became light at 7 a.m. next morning.

Day three

Monday morning was a damp and chill start of the day. Ray had to scrape the frost off one of his packs he had left out, but he quickly had a fire roaring to heat the black pots for the required coffee, treating us to a healthy breakfast. How many WCA members does it take to make instant powdered mash potatoes? What a debate to find the right consistency! The sky was clear and quickly



warmed us up when the sun came out. We dried off the tents in the sun and wind before packing for the trip out. Ray had explored this area before and he knew where to go. We were taken to a large bog of fresh cranberries, which were great when eaten raw. Too bad we were unable to pick them for the dinner last night.

On the way back we stopped at some of the many campsites to check them out for future trips. Being the last off the lake, we cleaned up some of the garbage left behind by others. We did not get a chance to check out a possible new portage that the hunters, fishers, skidoos and avers seem to be making out of Serpentine Lake into Copper Lake.

Copper Lake was ablaze with the colors of fall on this perfect day. At the end of the lake we found a hunter's cabin appropriately named Apsley Holiday Inn. We ate lunch across the river from the cabin. The portage is again tricky as you don't start along the river bank but up a road and turn left into the bush. The third hill is found here and is not hard to do, a little up and a lot down. Again the distance mentioned in our research was longer than it seemed. If you are as lucky as we were to have to make several portages, hang right on the way back and take the skidoo trail down to the river and waterfalls. You can then walk back along the river bank to the Holiday Inn and your second pile of equipment.

When arriving at Anstruther Creek we found that previous canoeists had built a floating dock of logs out into this bog. We thank you! This creek was alive and healthy; Bill found floating fresh-water sponges, and tadpoles were still swimming around too. Ray, soloing way out in front, came upon four otters. He was able to sit and watch them through his binoculars. The curious animals were very playful and very interested in us. They made several attempts to approach us before ducking under the water. We hissed back at them as we approached. They didn't see Anne and Joe's dark green canoe because they came up right beside them. We could not believe the size of

Spring 2003

these otters, each appeared to be about three to four feet long from nose to the tip of the tail. They added one more check mark to our prefect trip. Further along, we found a turtle sunning itself on a log.

A short portage out and we were back in Rathbun Lake. This lake was now ablaze with colors in the sunlight that we had missed on the first day.

The hill on the portage back to Anstruther Lake was now downhill. The shadows of the late day added depth to each crack in the rocks along the eastern shore of the lake.

Arriving back at the cars, we loaded up in the setting sun. The temperature was dropping quickly. Fond good-

Nastawgan

byes and promises were made to repeat the feast on another river. We are now accepting applications for next year's trip.

Information

- Topographical maps 31D/09 and 16
- *Cottage Country Canoe Routes* by Kevin Callan
- Previous trip reports by Anne Bradley, Ray Laughlen, and Gary James
- Paudash Trail Blazers Snowmobile Club map
- Kawartha Highlands Signature Site; Recommendation Report



MORPHOLOGICAL INCENDIARY APPLIANCE

Turkey-cooking oven for Thanksgiving canoe trips

At home

1. Get two hemispherical stainless steel mixing bowls as large as you can. Drill vent-holes into the bottom of one which becomes the top of the apparatus.
2. Find a large steel pie plate (I use the ECO brand).
3. Make a steel cage-wire ring about four or five inches deep to fit the pie plate. One-inch squares are good.

At camp

1. Start a fire about two hours before so that you have at least three inches of coals ready to cook on.
2. Put an inch of coarse sand or gravel into the bottom mixing bowl.
3. Heat it over the fire until the moisture is driven off.
4. Add 1.5 inches of hot coals to the bottom bowl using a trowel.
5. Push the cage-wire ring down into the gravel and the coals and put the pie plate in place.

6. Unwrap the turkey which has been defrosting over the past day.
7. Place the turkey on the pie plate and place the top bowl (with vent holes) upside down on the lower bowl.
8. Sit back and keep a small twig fire going around the rig whilst sipping wine and eating the appetizers, telling campfire stories for about two hours.
9. Every 15 minutes, turn the apparatus 45 degrees using the leather mitts you remembered to bring. Start on the soup and have more wine. Don't peak; only baste the cook and company, not the turkey.
10. In about two hours you will have a perfectly succulent turkey browned to an exquisite condition.

Design and presentation: Bill Caswill

(See also the next two pages.)



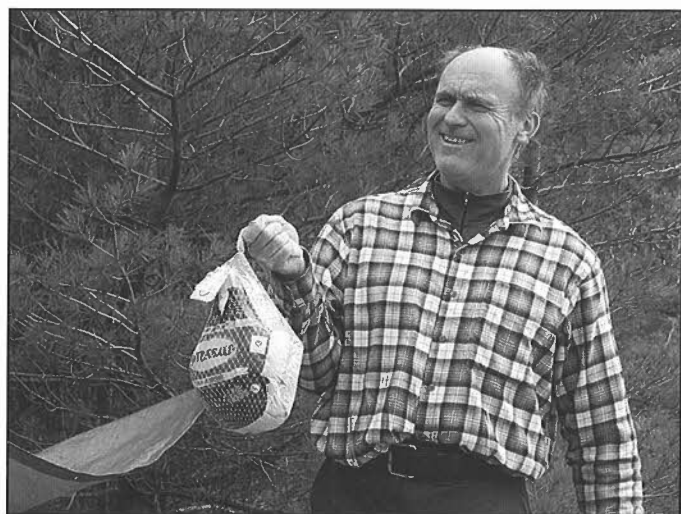
a. Burn off water from gravel in large steel bowl



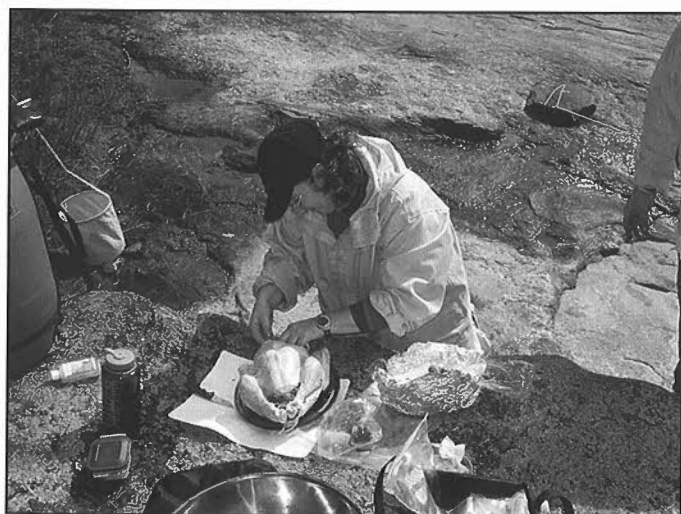
b. Wire cage to support baking plate; add 1.5 in. of hot coals



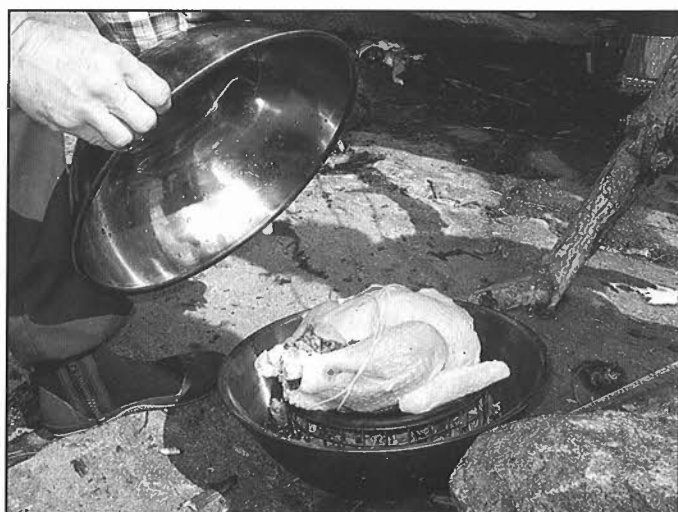
c. Baking plate



d. Turkey Bill and friend



e. Anne preparing turkey



f. Tied and ready to go



g. On twig fire for two hours



h. Bill, Anne, and Joe watching miracle happen



i. Ray turns oven every 15 minutes



j. Two hours later

k. Turkey feast with wine!



ANOTHER PINNED CANOE ON THE WHITE RIVER

I read with interest the article "Pinned Canoe on the White River" in the winter 2002 issue of *Nastawgan*. I too had a pinned canoe on the White River in August '02. However, it was farther downstream. The three of us, Brad Slaughter, Geg Allion, and I started at White Lake. We had intended to have a party of four, but the fourth man dropped out the week of the trip. Brad decided that he could paddle solo.

Greg and I were in a Kevlar Mad River Explorer, Brad in his solo canoe. We put in after 6:00 p.m. and paddled about a half mile. The next morning we had a very long paddle on flatwater. Brad then ran the first rapid and Greg and I portaged. Shortly afterward we came to another rapid. We pulled our canoes up on a granite ledge, just upstream from an uprooted aspen extending out over the water. After scouting the rapid, we decided to run it. Brad went first. I remember telling Greg that we should paddle upstream quite a ways to get a good approach angle to start running the rapid. However, I had underestimated the strength of the current where we were beached. As soon as we pushed off, the current turned the bow and swept us into the downed aspen. As we drifted into the tree, I thought, "Oh no! The classic trap!" The canoe rolled under the trunk of the aspen with me in the stem.

The next recollection I have is trying to hang on to the trunk with my right arm—my head just about six inches below water level. I struggled to free my legs and then tried to pull my head up to the surface. The current was so strong I just couldn't do it. I thought, "This is it!"

The next thing I knew I was floating on my back feet first down the rapids, safe. I must have let go of the trunk and the current carried me under the tree. After 100 yards or so I was able to get to shore. I ran back to find the canoe still under the tree. Brad who saw me, followed with one of our water bottles and a paddle. Greg was out on the end of the tree, untying the packs and working them

toward shore. Fortunately, all the gear had been tied in.

After unloading the canoe, I got a saw out of my pack and then tied the stem painter to the trunk. We slowly sawed one limb after another off the trunk and then the end of the trunk. The canoe floated free and swung downstream to a position where we could pull it ashore. Then we discovered that the inwale (inner half of the gunwale) was broken where the center thwart was attached. The rear seat was also broken. However, the canoe was still floatable. After finding something to prop up the rear seat, we reloaded and ran the rapids—rather poorly, bouncing off rocks all the way. I had lost my glasses and Greg had lost a bottle.

We made camp below the next series of rapids, three in quick succession. Our campsite was on a sloping rock with our tents up a steeper climb. We hung everything out to dry and left it out all night. It rained during the night. At 8:00 a.m. I was at a low point. I was lying in a depression at the extreme side of the tent and very uncomfortable. The canoe seemed almost unusable and there was a steep descent down slippery rocks to the water.

I finally faced the day. We made a temporary repair on the canoe by splitting a small cedar to support the inwale and winding cord around it. The thwart was disconnected and more cord was used to tie the two gunwales together. However, the canoe could no longer be portaged by one person since there was no longer a middle thwart. The rear seat prop had to be rearranged after each portage.

On the rest of the trip we dumped again and Brad dumped twice. Other than that we were able to finish the trip to Hatties Cove on Lake Superior without other incidents, in the six days we had allotted for the trip.

Bill Hosford



FOOD FOR PADDLERS

Most bannock recipes are essentially the same; however, there are many different methods of cooking them. The following are two different recipes and methods of cooking that were shared at the Food Seminar hosted by Doug and Lisa Ashton. (See *Food for Paddlers* in the summer 2002 issue.)

Bannock #1 - from Gisela Curwen

1 cup white or mixed white/wholewheat flour
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt

Mix with enough water to make a stiff dough (pour water into a ziplock bag in which the above ingredients are premixed). Optional additions, according to availability and taste: sugar, any berries (dried or fresh) or dried herbs. This is enough for two people, and can be doubled etc. as needed.

Method of cooking: Oil a round cake tin, pour in dough, cover with another cake tin, and clamp them together with two bulldog paper clamps to keep the lid on firmly. In this way, the bannock bakes inside the “oven.” When the bottom of the bannock is nicely browned, either flip the bannock over in the bottom tin to brown the top, or oil the inside of the lid and just flip the whole clamped-together “oven” until both sides are nicely brown and crisp.

Bannock #2 - from Blair Richardson

2&1/2 cups whole wheat or white flour
1/4 cup skim milk powder
2 tablespoons egg powder (optional)
½ tsp salt
4 tsp baking powder
3/4 cup water
1 tablespoon margarine

Sift the dry ingredients into a bowl and mix together well. Add water and margarine, then knead slightly. Form into a ball. Optional ingredients: raisins, blueberries.

Method of cooking: Grease a cast-iron frying pan and put a “ball” of dough into the pan, pressing it down so the bannock covers the entire cooking surface, like a fat pancake. Put the lid on the pan and put it on a grill over a fire with embers only. (If there are flames the bannock will burn.) After 10 minutes or so (time will be variable), flip the bannock and brown the other side. Test of doneness: hit the bannock with metal spatula—if it sounds hollow it is cooked through.

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



THE RIDEAU CANAL

Rob Butler

Several reports written by Max Finkelstein (of Heritage Rivers Canada) of his trips on this canal between Ottawa and Kingston had raised my curiosity enough to persuade me to experience it myself. Descriptions made it obvious that this would be no "wilderness" trip; it is often referred to as "serene." Peter Verbeek and I chose early June to avoid the boat traffic. To benefit from any prevailing west wind, we put in at the Cataraqui Canoe Club in downtown Kingston just north of the La Salle Causeway bridge (Hwy 2) at Lake Ontario for an expected mundane transit to Ottawa.

Wow, very soon I was euphoric. This is no canal in the usual sense. We were paddling through large wetlands, a meandering river often over a kilometre wide, and lakes that appeared to have been formed in the shape of massive octopuses. The views are surprisingly diverse: wetlands, tributaries, islands, cliffs, lowlands, forest, clearings, bush, spacious cottages through parts of the Rideau Lakes and monster-mansions on the outskirts of Ottawa. This was prime wildflower time and aquatic wildlife was constantly attracting us. Of the 202-km paddle, only 19 km is "canal" and most of that is in Ottawa itself. A more informative description would be The Rideau Waterway.



The Rideau is dammed and divided by 24 lockstations comprising 47 locks. The last drop before meeting the Ottawa River has one lockstation with eight locks for a portage of about 200 metres. The height-of-land is at Newboro, 47 metres above Lake Ontario and 87 km up the Cataraqui River. There is virtually no current in this clean waterway. The locks serve the paddler as wonderful





intermissions to stretch the legs and marvel at the results of seven years of construction in the 1820s. Each lockstation has a Lockmaster's House which provides a wash-room, picnic tables, water re-supply, and some have a telephone. Camping is available on every lockstation lawn except the last one when entering the Ottawa River at Ottawa. The usual lockstation take-out and put-in is identified by a blue line along the dock side; just a push-up to heave out of the canoe. No portage seemed longer than 300 metres. The lockmasters are all friendly, helpful, and in awe of their heritage worksite. We must be forever grateful to the Government in Ottawa for the superb maintenance of this engineering feat. There is road access to each lock, parking at all locks except those in Ottawa, and sometimes accommodation and food. Any fees are modest.

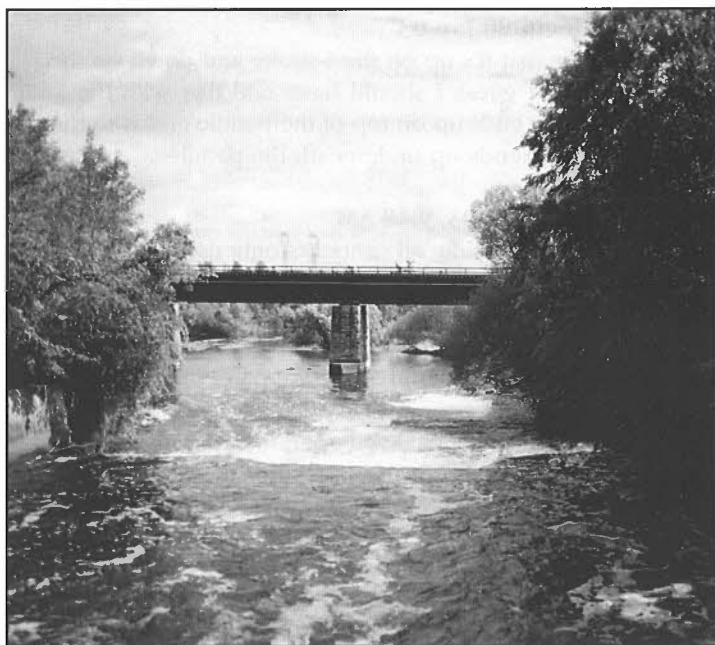
A week to ten days is suggested for the total length. However, the many options and side trips allow for extra outings of one or more days. Throughout, we had ideal conditions with just a little rain to calm the waters. We travel very lightly and are inclined to keep our paddle in the water, so it took us just under four days (32 hours).



Rather than float through the locks, we chose the lawn-paths to make the quicker and short portages.

While our six topo maps were of some assistance, channel red and green marker buoys identifying the route are a great help, provided one's eyesight is good. Before late June and after mid September are the best times for canoe travel; most of the time we were quite alone. Mid-summer would be a power-boat-wake manoeuvring occupation. Pre-trip research reveals the ample opportunities for side-trip destinations, fine dining, and interesting accommodation; Westport, Seeley Bay, and Perth being popular options.

This is an excellent route to encourage a reluctant partner into the joys of canoeing. As the two of us progressed through this surprisingly pleasant paddle, we concluded that it does indeed define "serene." Every paddler who appreciates tranquillity, diversity, and options en route should add the Rideau waterway to their spring or fall agenda.



Information:

- Jenda Paddle Sports, Osgoode: car shuttles, advice, canoe rental, custom-designed trips. Very helpful, reasonable prices, flexible, and reliable; 613-826-0922; jane.fordham@jenda.com; www.jenda.com
- Friends of the Rideau: maps and statistical info; 613-283-5810; rideaufriends@hotmail.com; www.rideau-info.com/friends
- Parks Canada Rideau Canal Office: maps, fees, statistics; 1-800-230-0016; rideauCanal_info@pch.gc.ca; www.parksCanada.pch.gc.ca/rideau
- Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association: super riverside canoe store, rentals, parking, camping in delightful Merrickville; 1-888-252-6292; info@crca.ca; www.cerca.ca

A STROKE IS A STROKE IS A STROKE

Some slightly edited responses to Brett Hodnett's "The J-Stroke" on page 16 of the previous issue of *Nastawgan*:

– Ueli Meyer (Switzerland); 5 Jan 03

I'm sure much can be said in favor of either the J-stroke or the so-called Goon-stroke. By the way, I'm wondering how the latter came by its name; as far as I know, a goon is not exactly a savory character. Over here we call that stroke the "DeppenSchlag." A Depp is somebody who maybe does not exactly have the highest IQ. Anyway, I use both strokes regularly, the J for easy flatwater travelling, the Goon in whitewater for its tremendous prying effect.

Brett says that the Goon-stroke, being the opposite of the J-stroke, leaves the paddler with the thumb (of the upper hand) pointing downwards. I'm afraid I do not agree; at the end of the Goon stroke, the thumb points upwards. Should it be turned downwards, then it is the J.

– Brett Hodnett; 28 Jan 03

To me it seems that it's up on the J-stroke and down on the Superior-stroke. I guess I should have said that with the J-stroke the thumb ends up on top of the paddle and with the Superior-stroke it ends up underneath the paddle.

– Fred Argue; 9 Feb 03, 9:48 AM

In Quebec, where I reside, all canoeists only use the J-stroke and I don't know if at this late stage in life if I'll be able to switch over to your Ontario "formerly-known-as-Goon-stroke." It would be my wish to look in synch when paddling with WCA members whom I believe are predominantly from Ontario. For the past couple of weeks I've been practising, with a child's paddle, your new Superior-stroke in the bathtub—pulling my thumb upward instead of pushing it downward as accustomed. At the moment the Superior-stroke is feeling awkward, but with daily practice I think I'll have it ready for the spring. If not, I guess I'll just have to stay on our Quebec waters this summer.

– Allan Strader; 9 Feb 03, 10:23 AM

I feel compelled to write, lest you be misled into believing that the Goon-stroke is anything other than an object of ridicule to most Ontario paddlers. In fact, I have long believed that it was invented by a Prime Minister from Quebec. I strongly urge you to continue to practice the J-stroke in your bathtub during the winter months and leave the Goon-stroke to, er, well, Quebec Prime Ministers.

– Fred Argue; 9 Feb 03, 11:50 AM

Thanks for the assurance that the J-stroke still garners favor in some quarters in Ontario. The *Nastawgan* article of winter 2002 promoting and endorsing (???, Ed.) the Superior/Goon-stroke had me thrown for a moment. The one proponent of the Goon-stroke in Quebec (not a Prime Minister) some time ago moved to Ontario where I think he set a trend that somehow seems to have caught on, and hence the spread of the Superior/Goon-stroke to Brett Hodnett and onwards right through the Wilderness Canoe Association, it appears. Without mentioning a name, this Québécois later moved from Toronto to Victoria, but I hear he has recently moved to Vancouver. The next thing we should hear is that this form of steering will be spreading like a virus along the West Coast and referred to as the BC-stroke.

Thanks, Al, for your informed opinion on this important matter. You have again demonstrated that there can never be enough lawyers in this world. At this point I think I'll take my paddle out of the bathtub and wait to hear from the WCA Paddling Standards Committee as to which stroke (Superior vs J) I should be practising through the winter.

If Penny will let me, I'll permanently move to the bow where I won't be confused.

– The editor; 18 Feb 03

Imagine the heated confusion if we would have had a discussion about the pros and cons of *bent-shaft paddles*!

WANTED: SENIORS WHO LOVE CANOEING!

Are you 55 years of age or older, an outdoors enthusiast, who, in addition to canoeing, also probably loves camping, hiking, cycling, or cross-country skiing? You may canoe infrequently, or perhaps you are an experienced canoeist who has led multi-day trips into the wilderness.

We are the Seniors for Nature Canoe Club (SFNCC) and we are actively looking for new members. Club activities include scheduled outings throughout the year. Daily outings are held each Tuesday and Thursday and include canoeing, hiking, cycling, and cross-country skiing. In addition, multi-day canoe trips of varying lengths are

scheduled to provincial parks and wilderness areas. The Club can supply some canoeing and camping equipment. Training is available as is the opportunity to find a canoeing partner.

It's widely accepted that exercise can add quality and perhaps even years to your life. If you are interested in more information or a membership application, send an e-mail to sfncc@rogers.com, or send a letter to SFNCC, Box 94051, Bedford Park P.O., Toronto, M4N 3R1. Our website is www.sfncc.org

REVIEWS

JEWEL OF ONTARIO: THE PETAWAWA RIVER, VHS video by George Drought, produced by Wildernessbound Video Productions, www.wildernessbound.com, 2003, 40 minutes, \$29.95

Reviewed by Toni Harting

The Petawawa River in northeastern Algonquin Park is indeed a fine jewel in the crown of Ontario's wild rivers, and certainly worth a closer look. That look has now been provided in this well-crafted production by the multi-faceted Drought who over the years has contributed some very interesting films to the growing list of canoe tripping documentaries. In this latest of his creations, certainly his best one to date, he pays attention to the whole Petawawa River, from its source in the western Algonquin highlands to its merging with the Ottawa River near the town of Petawawa.

Knowing Drought for the whitewater expert that he is, it is not surprising he places most emphasis on the river's whitewater, the numerous rapids and falls that form a major part of its attraction. However, for the slow travellers among us—who "do" Traverse to McManus in two weeks instead of three days!—it would have been nice to see a few more minutes devoted to the poetic magic of the river, the quiet moments when nothing much actually happens but when the tripper's soul becomes one with the natural surroundings.

The technical quality of this production is excellent, including the clarity and crispness of the sound. Les Stroud's music, performed by the composer, provides fine accompaniment to the images, and contributes to the appeal of the film.

The video has won the coveted Heritage Award at the 2003 Waterwalker Film Festival.

BIRD SONGS OF THE GREAT LAKES audio CD by John Neville, produced by Neville Recording, 138 Castle Cross Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2G2, www.nevillerecording.com, 2002, 73 minutes, \$23; (also available on cassette, \$14)

Reviewed by Toni Harting

What delight to relax at home and listen to the 98 different bird songs presented on this CD. It is amazing how much variety and diversity there is in the language of our feathered friends, from the almost inaudibly high tones of the tiny pine siskin to the "prehistoric" clackety-clack of the huge sandhill crane. John Neville has done a fine job of recording these birds and presenting their songs for us to enjoy; he also narrates information about the birds and their songs, habitat, and behavior. He has grouped the birds by habitat: backyard, deciduous hardwood, mixed woodland, boreal forest, night sounds, marshes, field, alvar, and lakes.

Taking the CD along on a field trip, together with the appropriate portable player, gives bird watchers an excellent tool to help identify and study many of the birds populating our skies and woods. Any canoeist who wants to increase their awareness of the outdoors and takes the time to do so should enjoy this CD. It is the latest one of a series of sound recordings presenting songs and sounds by birds of the Kootenays, the Creston Valley BC, the Okanagan, the Canadian Rockies, Canada's west coast, and now the Great Lakes.

THE DEVIL'S BATHTUB

It's on the Bigstone River system. In Manitoba. The Bigstone flows into the Fox River which in turn flows into the Hayes River. The Hayes empties into Hudson Bay at York Factory.

The Hayes River system was one of the main fur trade routes into the interior of Canada. Probably THE main fur trade route. At least in terms of volume of cargo moved and numbers of people transported. The old post building at York Factory is still standing, the oldest wooden structure on permafrost in all of Canada.

Somewhere on the Fox River as it is heading down to join the Hayes, you come across the Devil's Bathtub. You'll know it when you see it. The river drops neat into a circular cauldron. An eight-metre drop into a perfectly round pool. The pool is about a kilometre in diameter. Ringed on all sides by cliffs. The outlet back to the river is on the other side of the cauldron, opposite from the waterfall. At the other end of the diameter line.

The portage around the falls is on the right side. Short carry. Just a straight drop from the top of the cliffs to the bottom. After we got the canoes down we saw that we were standing at the edge of what looked like a giant bathtub. Water moving around and boiling up as the waterfall fills the bathtub. Most of the water moves clockwise around the circle and we followed the movement by watching the foam on top of the water as it moved. Mist rising from the bathtub only added to the mystery and awe of the place.

We sat for awhile and soaked up the beauty of this special wilderness spot. Only the urgency of covering ground forced us to push on in the late afternoon. To get back out to the river we had to walk the canoes along the right shore next to the cliff wall until we could overcome the force of the back eddy.

That night as we camped several kilometres downriver, I tossed it around whether I should share this fantastic place with anyone else. Should I let more people know about the Devil's Bathtub and try to drum up support for its preservation? Or by doing that, will I just be speeding up its ultimate desecration?

I really want to keep it a secret. Just like a fisherman who won't divulge his glory holes. The world is awfully crowded now, and I'm afraid that the more people who know about a special wilderness place, the higher the probability the place will be developed into a tourist attraction.

But I don't know. If people are not aware of them, how can places like the Devil's Bathtub be preserved for future generations? It's a tough decision. Not really sure what is the right answer. Need to look deep into my soul to find out.

Should have checked for a mirror back there. To help with the look into the soul. Most bathtubs have one close by.

Greg Went

WCA OUTINGS

**WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT
PRESENTED IN THE SUMMER ISSUE?**
Contact the Outings Committee before 11 May

For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Trips, contact any of the members of the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca; Barry Godden, 416-440-4208; Ann Dixie, 416-512-0292, adixie0405@rogers.com; Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca

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

+++++

22 March

OAKVILLE CREEK

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book before 15 March ----- Oakville Creek is a smaller, more technical version of the Lower Credit to its west. It's pretty much continuous Class1-2, with some metre-high waves in spots. If the water is high, its tight turns and the risk of sweepers make it a challenging run for good intermediates. However, the watershed is small, and participants are required to pray for rain or run-off earlier in the week to ensure the trip goes. Limit six boats.

23 March

LOWER CREDIT RIVER

Barry Godden, 416-440-4208, book before 16 March ----- From Streetsville to the golf course, the Credit can provide some exciting challenges for intermediate paddlers. The fast-moving, icy water requires properly equipped boats, and wetsuits or drysuits. Limit six boats.

29 March

MOIRA RIVER

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 22 March ----- A great early spring whitewater run for anyone who has a good wetsuit/drysuit and isn't adverse to a swim in cold water. We will only be an hour from our cars at most if the weather turns cold or you need and après-swim warm up. The technical difficulty is about a class 2. As long as you have protective clothing for swimming in cold water, the river isn't a problem. This is a good river to paddle to get experience for more difficult rivers. Tandem canoes must have full flotation bags. Limit six boats.

30 March

LOWER CREDIT RIVER

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book before 23 March ----- A repeat performance for those who missed Barry's trip, or enjoyed it so much they want to do it again. Only difference is that I paddle down to the mouth. Limit six boats.

April-May

BLACK RIVER

Fred Lum, 416-482-3774, book anytime in April or May ----- Get warmed up on this Black River which is near Orillia. This paddle is suitable for novices with moving-water experience. Wetsuits or drysuits are required as are properly outfitted canoes and a helmet. The date we paddle will be determined by water levels. Limit six boats.

April-May

BRONTE CREEK

Harrison Jolly, 905-689-1733, book anytime in April or May ----- Join us for a scenic paddle down the Bronte Creek. This creek has easy access and the outing is suitable for beginners in any type of canoe. The date we paddle will be determined by water levels. Limit six boats.

5 April

BEAVER CREEK

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 30 March ----- This will be a challenging whitewater run suitable for advanced-level whitewater paddlers with fully outfitted canoes and proper cold-weather attire. Limit five boats.

6 April

MOIRA RIVER

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book immediately ----- The Moira River north of Belleville is a fun trip for confident intermediates. We will put in at Lost Channel and paddle down to Latta. The Lost Channel section where we start is the most challenging. However, you can easily carry around the bigger stuff if you don't like what you see. The rapids on the rest of the trip feature large roller-coaster waves but they don't require any precise manoeuvring to navigate. Just hang onto your hat and enjoy the ride. Limit six boats.

12 April

BEAVER CREEK ENCORE

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 5 April ----- You had so much fun with us last week that you want to come back again; and besides, you want to run Fiddler's Rapid this time.

13 April

UPPER BLACK RIVER

Barry Godden, 416-440-4208, book before 6 April ----- This Black River near Madoc has two sections you can paddle. The Upper Black requires advanced paddling skills. Helmets, wetsuits, or drysuits as well as full flotation are needed. Limit five boats.

18 April

MISSISSAGUA RIVER

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book by 11 April ----- One of the prettiest rivers in the Kawarthas, the Mississagua drops from Mississagua Lake to Buckhorn Lake in a series of falls and rapid connected by short flat sections. Most of the rapids are Class 2-3. However, there are several Class 4-5 drops in high water, if that's your cup of tea. The great thing about this river is that all rapids can be easily portaged, making it a trip that any intermediate will enjoy. Limit six boats.

18 April

BEAVER CREEK ONCE MORE

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 11 April ----- What an awesome creek! We hope it's still running. See 5 and 12 April.

25-27 April

ALOGONQUIN SPRING HIKE AND CANOE

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, book by 18 April ----- Come and enjoy the Rain Lake area at the west end of Algonquin before the crowds arrive. Our base will be the Rain Lake ranger cabin, which should keep us dry and warm at night this early in the season. We have the choice of exploring the lakes and rivers by canoe or, if the ice is not out yet, hiking the backcountry on the Western Uplands Backpacking Trail.

26 April

UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 19 April ----- A day of whitewater excitement for advanced paddlers. The Upper Madawaska is a fast-flowing pool-and-drop river with quiet stretches interspersed with some very serious rapids. All rapids can, and some must, be portaged. Wet- or drysuits, helmets, and fully outfitted whitewater boats with full flotation are a must. Limit six boats.

26-27 April

SPENCE'S CELEBRATED SALMON/MOIRA WEEKEND

Glenn Spence, 613-475-4176, book before 19 April ----- Just north of Belleville, these two rivers offer exciting whitewater and fine scenery. The Salmon is the more gentle run, with some small rapids for you to practise your skills on. The Moira has larger rapids possibly up to Class 3. These are two of Southern Ontario's finest spring rivers. You can bivouac at my house and enjoy a pot luck dinner. Intermediate paddlers welcome. Limit six canoes.

3 May

UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER AGAIN

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 26 April ----- Just can't get enough of the Upper Mad. Join us for a repeat of last week's exciting adventure.

3-4 May

SPRING IN THE KAWARTHAS

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, book by 24 April ----- We will paddle a route still to be decided, experience the returning birds and discover other flora and fauna emerging from hibernation. On past trips, we have encountered anything from cranberries to turtles, and last year we even woke up with snow blanketing our campsite! We will hike some of the exposed ridges surrounding the lakes and, as on previous outings, clean up portages along the way. There will be prizes for the best junk collected. Limit four canoes.

10 May

ELORA GORGE

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book by 2 May ----- Close to home with exceptional scenery and no black flies, the Gorge makes a wonderful day training trip for novices and intermediates wanting to sharpen their moving-water skills. At normal water levels for this time of year, expect Class 1-2 rapids that provide great opportunities to work on ferries and eddy turns. There is an intimidating though benign Class 3 chute at the midpoint for those who are up for a little excitement. Otherwise, it is easily carried around.

10-11 May

MAGNETAWAN RIVER

Barry Godden, 416-440-4208, book before 3 May ----- The Magnetawan is an exciting whitewater river containing Class 2-3 rapids, as well as some falls. We will paddle from Ahmic Lake to Maple Island both days. This is a great trip for strong intermediate paddlers. Wetsuits or drysuits, helmets, and properly outfitted boats are a must. Limit six boats.

11 May

HIKING ALONG GREEN RIVER AND DUFFIN CREEK

Bill King, 416-223-4646 ----- Why not celebrate Mothers' Day with Bill King who would like to re-explore a much-loved-but-long-neglected hike which follows the valleys of the Green River and Duffin Creek, northeast of Pickering? The group will plan a car shuttle and will lunch *alfresco, en route* (This is the WCA's first trilingual outing!). Call Bill to arrange meeting time and place.

17-19 May

LOWER MADAWASKA RIVER

Larry Durst, 905-415-1152, Larry.G.Durst@snapon.com, book by 10 May ----- Join us for this classic spring paddle from above Aumonds Bay to the take-out at Griffith, a distance of 28 km., with only the Sunday being a full day of paddling and most of that spent on the Snake Rapids section of the river. Rapids will range from Class 1-4 and there are a couple of short portages around falls. However, all rapids can be easily portaged. Water levels are likely to be quite high and the water cold. Participants will need to dress and pack appropriately. Suitable for intermediate level paddlers. Limit six boats

24-25 May

INTERMEDIATE WHITEWATER CLINIC

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 10 May ----- Saturday will be spent on the Lower Madawaska and Sunday the clinic will move to Palmer Rapids. Participants can camp overnight on Saturday at our cottage. This clinic will focus on refining the skills of intermediate moving-water paddlers, teaching them more advanced open-boat skills. Wetsuits or drysuits, helmets, and properly outfitted boats are required. Limit six boats.

1 June

GRAND RIVER

Doug Ashton, 519-654-0336 or 416-453-4653 or doug.ashton@sympatico.ca A day trip for novice moving-water paddlers on the scenic Grand River. We will begin the outing at the south end of Cambridge and paddle to Paris. For directions and further details contact Doug.

14-15 June

PALMER RAPIDS BEGINNER TANDEM WHITEWATER CLINIC

Al and Debbie Sutton, 905-985-0261, book before 1 June ----- Build your moving water skills and confidence. ABS canoes with proper outfitting required. Helmets highly recommended. Limit six boats.

5-6 July

PALMER RAPIDS PLAY WEEKEND

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book by 27 June ----- The best park-and-play whitewater boating for novice to intermediate paddlers in southern Ontario is found at Palmer Rapids. There's a little sand beach for the kids, making this a great family location for a summer weekend. If you took one of the instructional courses here earlier in the season, why not come back for some more practice. No limit to either the participants or the fun.

31 July - 6 August

GEORGIAN BAY

Don Andersen, dhandersen@aol.com, 716-873-4476, book before 1 June ----- Exploring the islands and inlets between Byng Inlet and Snug Harbour. Camping on islands including Head Island, Pointe au Baril Islands, and McCoy Islands. Sheltered waters used whenever conditions require it. Suitable for competent novices who can manage windy conditions and waves. Limit seven canoes.

2-4 August

OTTAWA RIVER

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 26 July ----- We are fortunate to have access to the most beautiful campsite on the river. The Ottawa is big water and many of the rapids are quite difficult. You should be at least a strong intermediate paddler to safely enjoy it. We recommend that you join us on some of our spring trips to develop and practise your skills before attempting this river. Helmets and properly outfitted boats are a must. Limit six boats.

11-15 August

EASTERN ALGONQUIN PARK FAMILY TRIP

Roger Townshend, 416-425-4706 or 416-981-9454 or rtownshend@oktaw.com, book by 15 July ----- Eastern Algonquin Park is quite distinctive, with long lakes, sandy beaches, and the spectacular Barron Canyon. It's a beautiful spot to spend an August week. Please join us on this leisurely flatwater trip designed for families with children. Our entry point will be Achray (via Pembroke). You don't have to bring children, as long as you enjoy a slow-paced outing that will have assorted activities interspersed with paddling. The relaxed itinerary is perfect for those who like to mix swimming, photography, painting, nature studies or ??? with their paddling.

30 August-1 September

OTTAWA RIVER

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 36 August ----- Please see 2-4 August for details.

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

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

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 nonsale times at:

- Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, ON
 - Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str., Hepworth, ON
 - Smoothwater Outfitters, Temagami (Hwy. 11), ON
- Members should check at each store to find out what items are discounted.

CANOE FOR SALE 16-foot Kevlar & S-glass tripping canoe, 43 lbs, blue, shoe keel. Used mainly for annual week in Algonquin; in great condition. Call Don Hamilton at 905-336-0326.

CANOES FOR SALE Two Montreal canoes, one North canoe, with trailers, pfd's, and paddles, all in excellent condition. Also six used teepees of various sizes. Contact Rick at
Coureur De Bois Adventures, 705-272-3273 or www.coureurdebois.com

CANOE WANTED Family-size canoe wanted; lightweight preferred. Please call Edith Baragar at 416-769-6379.

BIKEHIKE ADVENTURES offers multi-sport adventures for earthlings addicted to the outdoor life. We specialize in small-group worldwide adventures including rafting, rock climbing, mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, and sea kayaking in exotic destinations in South and Central America, Canada, the Pacific, and Africa. We are committed to sustainable/eco tourism practices and we never run adventures exceeding 12 passengers in order to leave minimal ecological impact upon the places we visit. Trips can be customized with a minimum of two travellers. Trips are graded at three levels: easy, moderate, and challenging, which suits the needs of all adventurers. For more information, contact our main office at 1-888-805-0061 or rachel@bikehike.com

SPRAY DECKS AND TARPS If you are planing a white-water or Lake Superior trip or a remote expedition, this may be the year you may decide to order a spray deck from Outdoor Solutions for your canoe, or a top-of-the-line tarp. We make expedition-grade spray covers in PVC nylon or lightweight marine polyester. And for the first time this year for those WCA members who wish to sew their own spray cover or Buckley's Dryfly or other tarp

designs, we offer these products in a kit form. We will supply the plans, instructions, and PU Nylon 420D or 210D and all other materials needed to complete the project. Or you may just wish to order the plan and instructions for a small charge. We offer 7.5% discount for WCA members until further notice for all our products. You can contact Thomas Benian at: thenianosworks@sympatico.ca or check out: www.outdoorsolutions.ca or call: 705-461-9668.

WOMEN IN THE WILDERNESS Adventure travel, usually by canoe, for women of all ages. Coming canoe trips: Clarke and Thelon rivers, Lake Superior. Also planned: trip in Amazon rain forest. Get your free e-newsletter. Contact: Women in the Wilderness, 566 Ottawa Ave., St. Paul, MN 55107, USA; 651-227-2284; judithneimi@lakevermillion.com

WRITER'S WORKSHOP IN ICELAND This is the fourth annual workshop for experienced or new writers: travel writing, creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry. With writers David Arnason, Bill Hulm, Judith Neimi. In Hofos, North Iceland, with visits from Icelandic singers and writers. Included are boat tours, Icelandic ponies, and a total eclipse of the midnight sun. Contact Judith Neimi, see item above.

THE LODGE AT PINE COVE is the ideal starting point for a short or long visit to the heart of the French River east and west of Wolseley Bay. The completely renovated lodge has a number of rustic log cabins nestled on the heavily forested shore of the serene cove. The facilities include: log cabins and rooms, restaurant and pub, showers, canoe rental and launch, guided trips, swimming, fishing, complete outfitting, interest tours (astronomy, birding, flora, etc.). The Lodge at Pine Cove, Box 91, Noelville, ON, P0M 2N0; tel. 705-898-2500; alex@frenchriver.com; www.frenchriver.com; www.frenchriveroutfitters.com



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