



*Lining from shore when possible*

## RIVIÈRE MISTASSIBI, NORD-EST

**Larry Durst**

**Day 0** 7:30 a.m. on July 21, 2004, saw six people, three cars, three canoes, a dog, and a ton of gear loaded and ready to depart from Markham, Ontario. Destination: the Rivière Mistassibi, Nord-Est. The participants were: Doug Durst, Larry Durst, Peter Durst, Shawn Mitchell, Helen Murray, Don Warwick and Nimbus, a standard poodle.

This journey had started months earlier. My brother, Rick, had often stated that one of his "all time bests" had been a trip on the Mistassibi, Nord-Est, which flows south into Lac St. Jean in the Saguenay region of central Quebec. So, in spite of it being on no one else's To Do List, or perhaps because of that, I started planning. Rick

had the fond memories but no maps or trip reports. However, the website [www.CanadianCanoeRoutes.com](http://www.CanadianCanoeRoutes.com) was very helpful for obtaining maps, logistics, and a sense of what this trip would entail. The map showed a route of about 130 km long with 80 distinct rapids, 12 ledges, and many runs of up to 12 km of class 1-3, all with no portages! How could we resist?

The next challenge was getting a group together. Four boats would have been ideal to optimize our flight costs but clearly this is not a river for everyone. It is over 1,000 km from Toronto plus 140 km of dusty, rough logging road, and requires an expensive floatplane flight just to get to six or seven days of paddling. For me, however, every

day of travel is an adventure. Traversing Montreal with summer construction going on was a good warm-up for adrenaline junkies. The boredom of expressways was offset by the lovely Mauricie Valley and Lac St. Jean districts.

Once in Dolbeau/Mistassini north of Lac St. Jean, we quickly found a campsite by the Chutes de Mistassibi. The site was clean, surprisingly not noisy, and close to a "Mikes" for dinner and a gas station where, in the true "Belle Province" tradition, one can pick up beer for a late night wind-down. As we turned in, Helen was expressing concern that the chutes, seemingly only slightly less awesome than Niagara Falls, could be on the same river that we were to paddle with no portages. "Sweet Dreams, My Love."

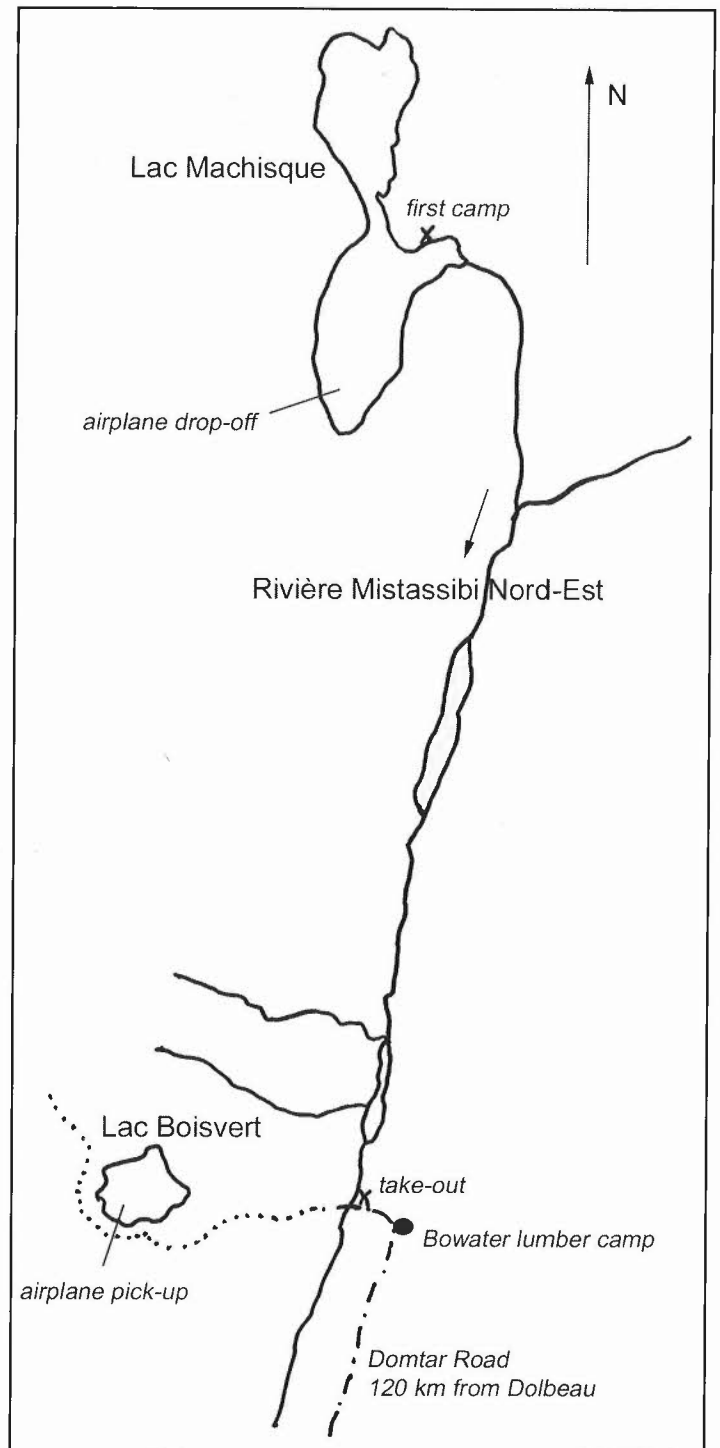
**Day1** The next morning we were up at six, had breakfast at Mickey D, and then drove north on the Domtar Road, with me thinking we had plenty of time to spare. We were to meet the plane at noon on tiny Lac Boisvert. The first 120 km was relatively smooth but redefined the expression "eat my dust" as huge logging trucks with precariously piled logs careened past us every 15 minutes. Like the flow of the river, the flow of trees to the mills never stops. The view later from the Otter aircraft confirmed a massive clear-cut, except along the river's edge.

The final 20 km of driving could have been our undoing had there been rain. The road to Lac Boisvert is an abandoned logging road that's narrow, steeply hilly, and incredibly rocky. It's a perfect habitat for SUVs of which we had none. These last 20 km also took about one hour and we were no longer ahead of schedule.

I was now also convinced that we should try to negotiate with someone at the Bowater lumber camp to shuttle the drivers, so we could leave all the vehicles at the take-out near the Bowater offices and not have to make any more tortuous trips across the boulder garden of this abandoned logging road. We were already down one exhaust system ... hmmm, a noisy drive home for Shawn and Don.

While dodging boulders, I had become aware of what I saw as interesting symbiotic relationships: We, the Anglo tree-huggers, were venturing into the heartland of separatist Quebec and forest rape. But we, the environmentally sensitive, needed the logging roads, the logger's guidance, and even their transportation to access our sport and recreation. It helped to have a bilingual Shawn and \$100 in pocket! I am also reminded that my southern values are noble, but entire communities rely almost solely on this industry. I, like most of us, do buy newspapers and build wood fences. It is in the end, all about balance.

Bush flights for me are always "that something special," elevating the trip to the next level on the exotic scale. They become even more special when you get to see much of the river that you will paddle from an elevation of about 100 m. The denuded forest with a spider web of logging roads was, however, a less enchanting sight. I suspect it was at least part of the



reason for the high water levels that we were to encounter.

The pilot, after dropping off the second group on the beach of Lac Machisque, put on a great show. He swooped in low, barely clearing the trees behind us, the shadow of the plane and roar of the rotary engine spooking the dog, and then, with a wagging of wing just above the water, he rose to clear more shoreline trees. We had goose bumps and big grins all round. But now there was no turning back.



*Air Saguenay Otter on Lac Boisvert*

We may have been alone on the lake but we shared a beach with deer and moose flies. I don't know if the latter is a correct term but they were similar to deer flies but the size of small bumblebees. It was the first of a long torment for Nimbus ... yes, named after the black clouds, not the Harry Potter broomsticks. Behind a very narrow strip of sand there was an extensive bog, prolific with pitcher plants in bloom. No doubt, as carnivorous plants they had plenty of flies to feast upon. It was black flies, not deer flies or mosquitoes, however, that would be the greatest nuisance for us on this trip. Fortunately the weather was generally cool, which gave respite from little critters in the evenings and mornings.

Meals were a mix of fresh, dried, and canned with no packaged freeze-dried. We always eat well on our trips, with tasty meals including hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and so on. With canoe tripping, at least for moderate distances, one does not have to sacrifice in this regard. Each boat carried a food barrel. I never count on fresh fish as I seldom fish and catch even less, but on this trip, thanks to Doug, we were treated three times to tasty, grilled pike, which got served as a supplement to the regular fare.

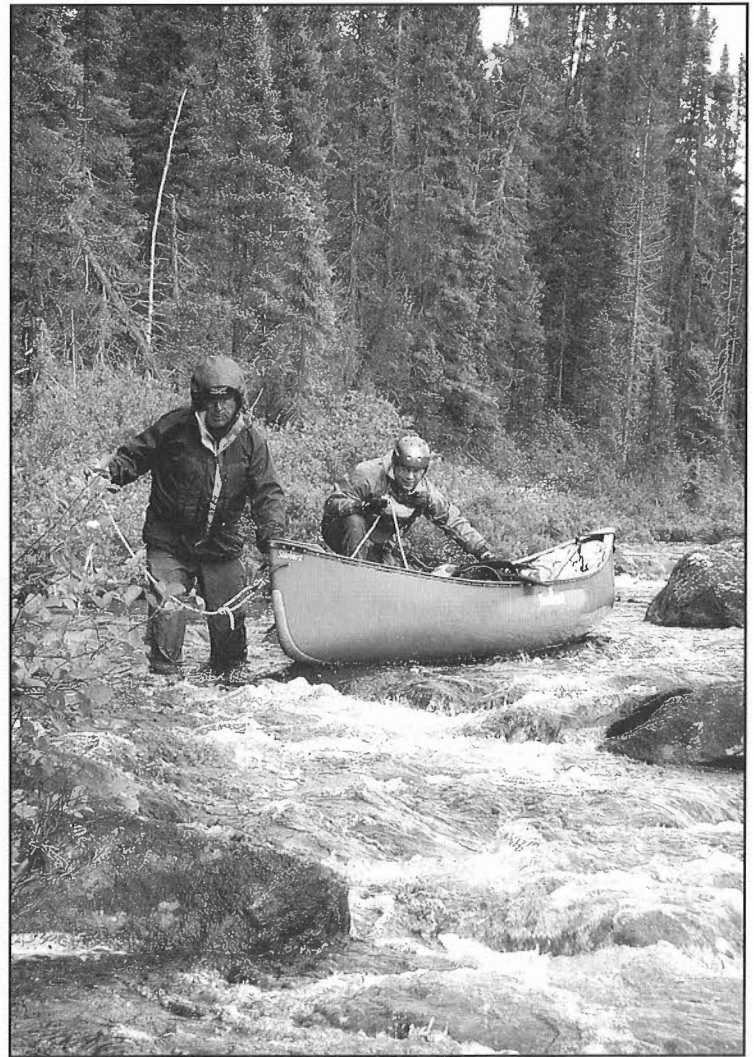
While Helen primarily managed the food—from the menu, to a list of ingredients, to shopping, to packing—everyone had input and everyone provided one favourite dinner menu and led its preparation. Having only one person pack the food from a list however cut down on the disappointed, “but I thought that you took the bacon out of the refrigerator!” Besides, now it can never be my fault, although it did take us a while to find the dog food. No system is perfect when dealing with “senior moments.”

Helen also decided that this was the trip to start using a more environmentally sensitive method of handling Toilet Paper. We had been introduced to the “red bag” on a Black Feather Mountain River trip. The used TP goes into a brown paper bag to be discreetly burned in the fire pit. It is after all the TP that is most likely to be a reminder for future visitors, even if the whole mess is and can be properly buried into bacterially rich topsoil. In that regard, we found the campsites to be lightly used with little or no evidence of human waste. The same could not be said for

the fire pits, which on a couple of occasions delighted the dog with leftover treasures. This was not only a messy nuisance for us but also an unnecessary hazard had animals been attracted.

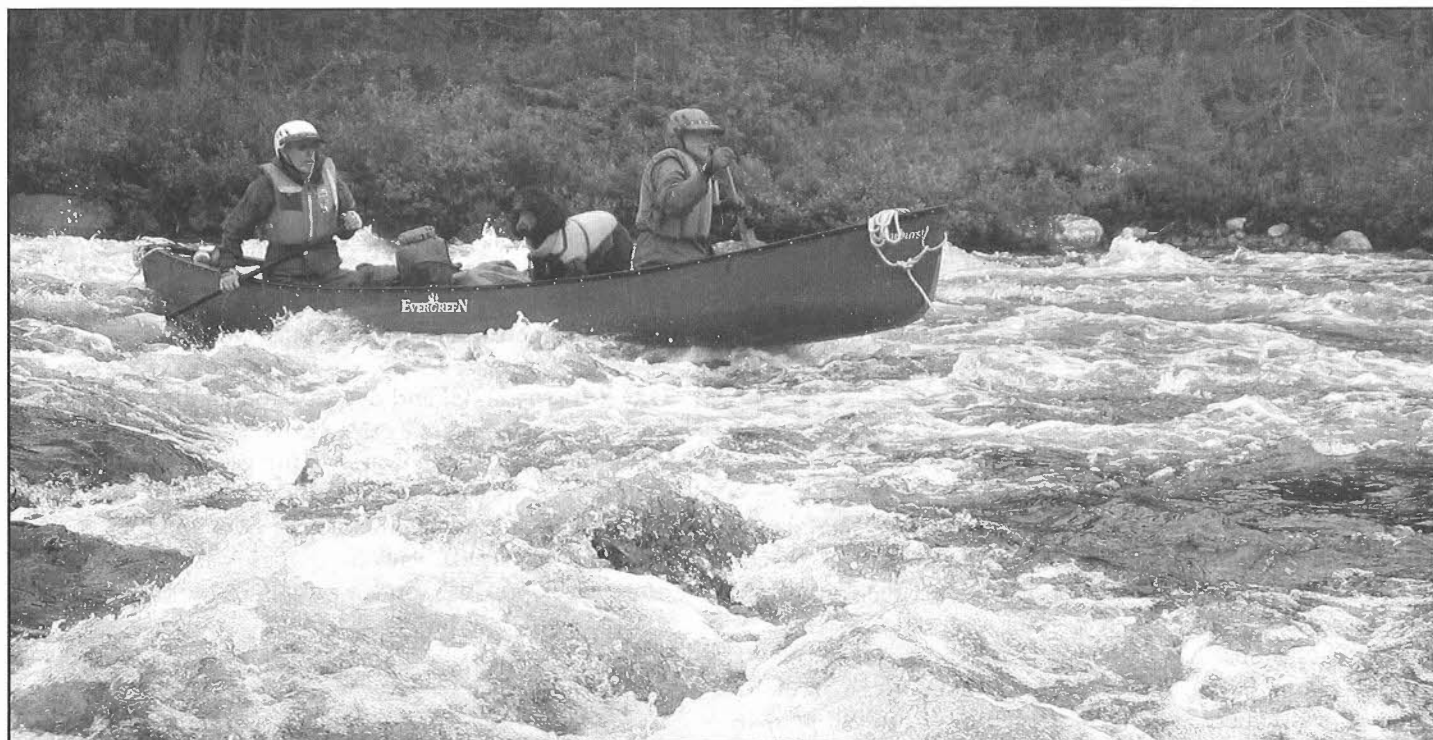
In that regard we needn't have worried. We saw an osprey and were serenaded by white throated sparrows and raven alike, but as for the four-footed variety, we struck out. We saw only one squirrel and some moose droppings. Is this the legacy of the clear-cut so close to the river? On a positive note, we had no encounters with the two-legged variety of mammals either.

Day 2 dawned cool and overcast. While the group was in no hurry and savoured extra coffee and lots of chatter, I was impressed that we were on the water before 9 a.m., a pattern that was to hold for the duration of the trip. A short paddle found us entering the river and then the first of about 80 rapids. The first ledge was a reality check, however. Supposedly only a class 2, it was big! The water



*Lining the hard way*





*Typical class 2 – 3*

level was right up to the Labrador Tea. There was no exposed shoreline and it was evident that the map ratings were, if anything, low. Each of us took the only line over that ledge and then eddied out across the river to bail. My confidence was starting to ebb. With long class 2s and 3s shown on the map, this could be more than what the group would be comfortable with.

With no shoreline, scouting was difficult and lining, more often than not, consisted of wading along the shoreline while being dragged around and over rocks. We could take nothing for granted. The class 2s were actually 3s and the class 3s were long with serious consequences.

Then the mutiny started. Some wanted to get up at 5 a.m. to put in longer days. Others argued that we could only paddle so many hours regardless of our start time and again others noted that the location of campsites, of which there weren't many, would dictate how far we paddled in any day. In the end we agreed that we should stick together when scouting, so that group decisions could be made on the spot and we should spend less time debating dubious lines. A review of the map also indicated that, as we proceeded, there would be long runs of class 1s and 2s, with fewer ledges, which should make for better daily mileage.

On **Day 3** we made 18 km, which included 26 sets of rapids, eight ledges, and only about four kilometres of flat-water. In retrospect, it was also the most challenging from the point of view of difficulty, and the most memorable.

One ledge will remain with us forever. I had deferred map reading to Doug and Don who, as bowmen, were keeping track of where we were. Generally, I felt like the Allstate Man ... "In Good Hands." We had just run a four-kilometre section with high class 2s and 3s and two class 2 and a class 3 ledge thrown in to keep our adrenaline at a boil. In a classic error, we had lost track of exactly where we were. In our defense, this is a river with no waterfalls

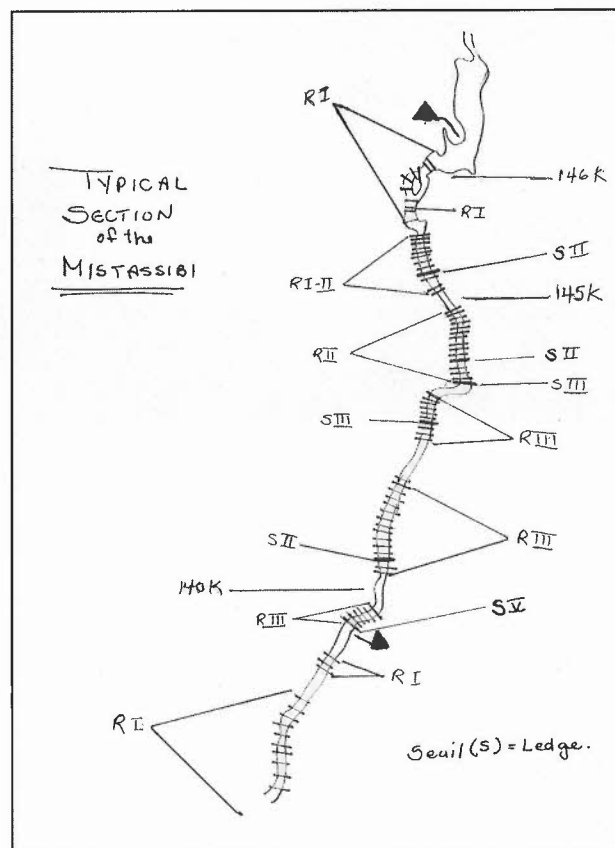


*Assessing the next run*

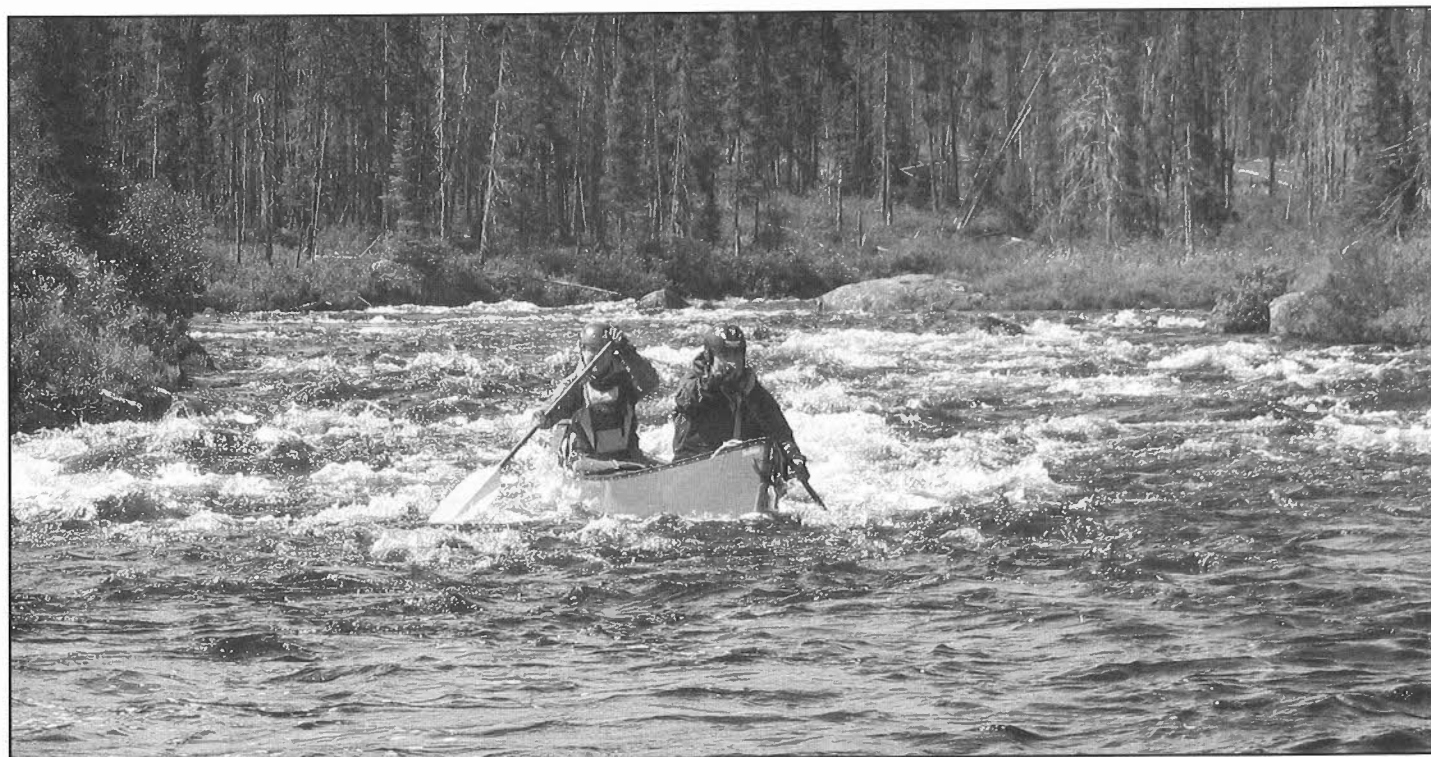
and no portages. However we had an e-mail correspondence that broadly broke out sections of the river and it pointedly cautioned us of the next hazard:

*Special attention is required to the third rapid at this segment. It is shown on the map as RIII with a SIII (S means "seuil", French for ledge) in the middle. Most of the flow goes over the left part of this SIII, where the drop is class 4-5. Fast moves are required to go to the right where the drop is class 3. However it is still a two-metre drop and narrow.*

You would think that we would have remembered this! Shawn, Don, Helen, and I proceeded to the left as we were following a tongue of water that was in theory to lead us past all the trashy stuff ... not a ledge in sight. I knew the plan was not working when the lead boat disappeared and then reappeared without paddlers! Then I saw the drop. I did not cry out, "Mommieeeee!" but did say something not printable, followed by "POWER!" We dropped over a big ledge and almost immediately over a second one of similar size. To make things really exciting, the boat twisted sideways in the hole and I found myself looking up at a two-metre wall of water on my right side. I screamed, "down-stream lean and draw" and that was just to the dog! To give full credit to the boat and Helen, they responded and we slipped out of the hole and over a third ledge, which fortunately was not as high as the first two. By now our boat was half full of water but still stable enough that, with careful balancing, we negotiated the remaining 75 metres of rapids and recovered the renegade boat too. Doug and Peter came down the "preferred" right shore route and



were able to rescue some errant gear that had not been tied in. After bailing, they went to the left shore to pick up two "shaken and stirred" paddlers. No serious harm was done beyond some bruises and a lost paddle and bailer.



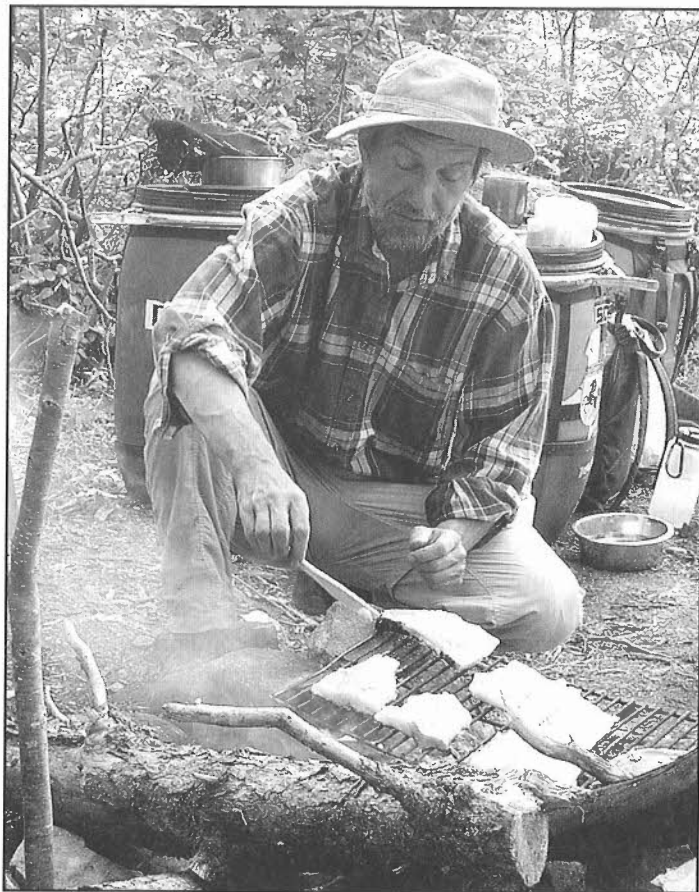
*And still more fun*



*Camped above a class-5 ledge*

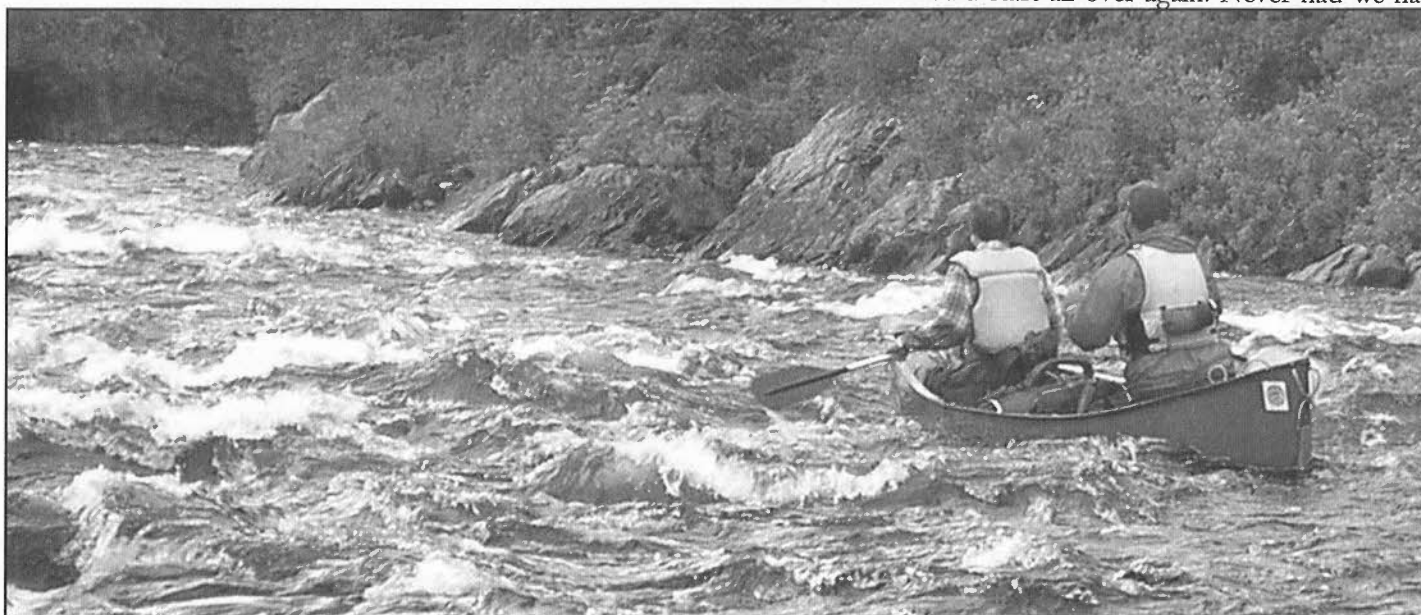
The river gods had let us off easy, and if one is a little spiritual one could link these events with what we saw that night: the most spectacular display of aurora borealis that any of us had ever experienced. A gift and a blessing and one of those things that can make tripping so special. This was also our best campsite on a river that provides only the most basic accommodations. The site was steeply tiered above a beautiful class 5 ledge/waterfall that with the afternoon's heroics was to be admired only.

**Day 4** brought a change in pace. We started with a virtually continuous 10 km of solid but fun class 2s, which was a nice relief and confidence builder. Then we paddled 11 km of flatwater into a substantial breeze as the river widened into a narrow lake. It was a tiring grunt where we worked the shorelines to try for some windbreaks. I don't expect much sympathy from any reader however. This *was* a canoe trip and we had been spoiled. We did, however, enjoy a swim at our night's stop. With the hard work that afternoon, we all needed a good rinse.



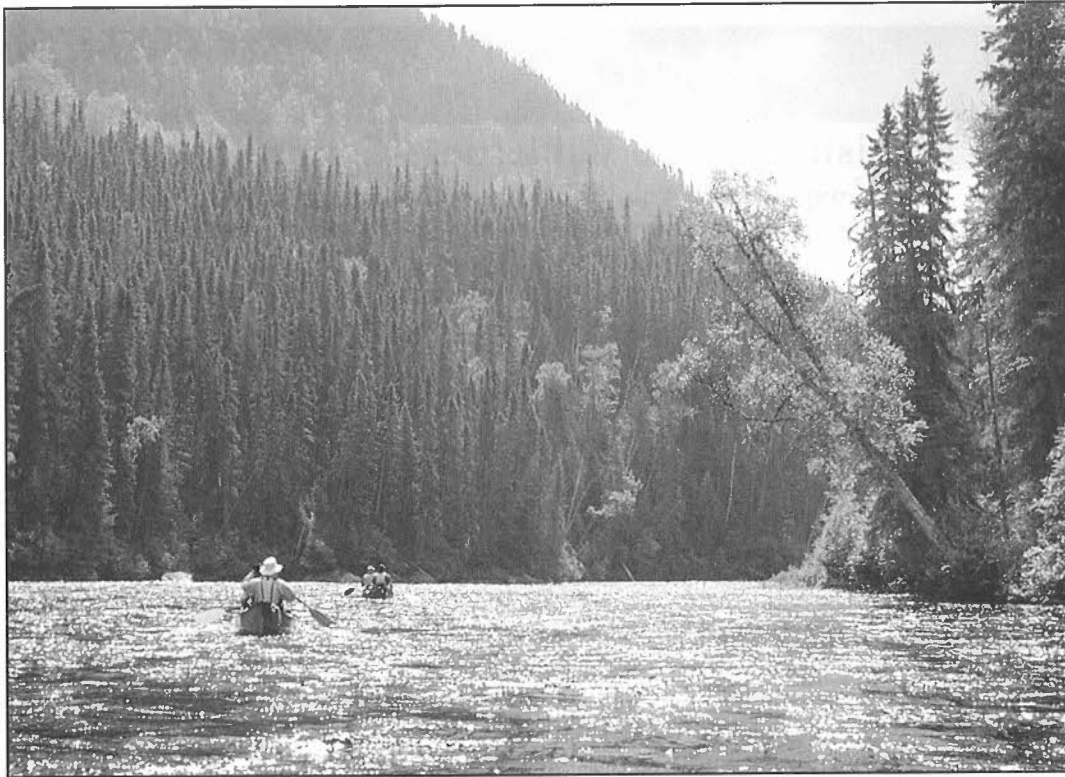
*Grilled pike*

**Day 5** presented us with another long run of almost continuous rapids that, while mainly solid class 2s, included three sets of class 3s, requiring extra diligence and some "sneak/line/and then shoot." It was amazing to have kilometre after kilometre of river unveiling itself before us with an apparent steep pitch until the next bend in the river and then it would start all over again. Never had we had



*12 km of grins!*





*A rare afternoon of flatwater paddling*

such long continuous runs. The “perma-grins” were beginning to harden into place. By lunch we had done 20 km, but to pass what was to become our final night’s campsite would have left us by late afternoon without a suitable site with the exception of narrow sand bars as a last resort. Stopping at this point, however, meant that our final day would require more than 40 km and, as you can tell, we are not inclined to imitate the voyageurs.

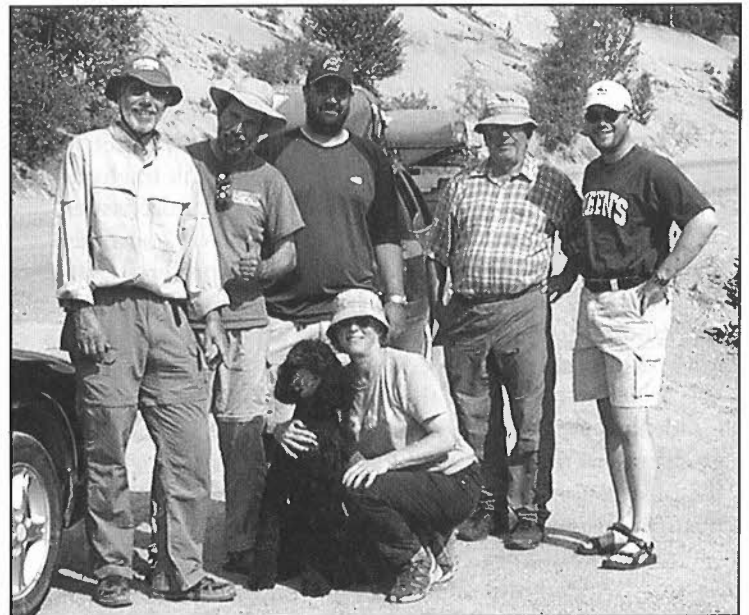
A review of our material showed that most of the remainder of the river would be with good current and rapids not requiring scouting. Decision made! We stayed and lounged that afternoon doing what we could to avoid the bugs. Nimbus and I had an afternoon nap with clear conscience.

**Day 6** In the morning we were all psyched up for the long paddle and on the water a little earlier than usual, 8:20 to be exact. We were in for a pleasant surprise, doing 30 km by lunch! The current had been strong and for most of the morning we had rapids that required alertness and even occasional bailing but for the most part we were just “motoring.” The map for the latter part had shown only an arrow to the entire section, with the notation “suite de RI-II.” We had not dared to hope for such good fortune.

The river’s features had been evolving from the beginning, even with only 130 km of travel. At the outset the valley is wide and the riverbed punctuated with bigger rocks. Most of the rapids end in fanned rock gardens, even at these higher water levels. Over time, the valley narrows, with continuous class 1s and 2s, and with the rocks

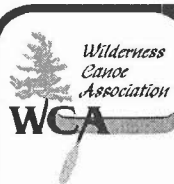
getting smaller and giving way to gravel and then to sand as the valley widens again. There is still current to the end but more braiding, requiring quick decisions as to the best channel.

At lunch, on a gravel bar, knowing that we would now be finishing the trip early afternoon, I had the audacity to ask if anyone was willing to skip camping on the island across from the take-out as planned. We could drive south into town and take a room at a No-Tell Motel for a proper shower, have a beer with a meal and no bugs, a good night’s sleep, and be on a paved road early morning for the long trip home. I was almost trampled in the stampede to the boats!



*The whole gang ready for home*

There is a Zen expression that one cannot observe something without changing it. I don’t know if we change what we trip (we try hard not too), but for certain, what we trip changes us. For me it is a connection with nature and a renewed appreciation of the basics that enrich our lives. This truly was a marvelous river with companions that made it a marvelous journey. Some of us may return. All of us will have priceless memories.



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Nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning "the way or route"

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

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

The new members of the editorial team are gradually gathering experience and learning the trials and tribulations, and rewards, of being a *Nastawgan* editor. What is urgently needed next is an editor responsible for the illustrations (photographs, maps, drawings); see the announcement on the next page. And don't forget that all this new young blood needs material to work with; so send us your articles and other items for them to work their magic on. Thanks!

## 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 (MS Word or WordPerfect 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-in-chief (address etc. see WCA Contacts on the backpage). 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 2005	deadline date:	May 1
	Autumn 2005		July 31

**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 popular annual event in Toronto will take place on Sunday, May 1. Participating canoes and kayaks will again launch from the E.T. Seton Park (Leslie Street and Eglinton Avenue) and paddle to

the river mouth at the Keating Channel. Canoes are launched in flight from approximately 9:00 to 12:00. The paddle takes about two hours. Although the WCA is credited as one of the sponsors of Don River Day, the main organizing is done by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The contact person at the TRCA this year is Brent Bullough (416-661-6600-X5392). Pre-registration is required and there is a limit, so it might be worth to register early.

**MAINE CANOE SYMPOSIUM 2005** will take place June 11, 12, 13 at Winona Camps - Moose Pond - Bridgton, Maine. Information: Maine Canoe Symposium, c/o Winona Camps, 35 Winona Road, Bridgton, ME 04009; [www.maine canoe symposium.org](http://www.maine canoe symposium.org).

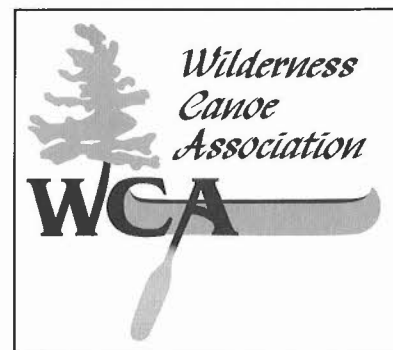




## NEW WCA LOGO

Not so long ago, under the direction of the WCA Board, Doug Ashton was asked to look after procuring fleece jackets with a symbol of the WCA on the left breast. He came up with a colourful and attractive emblem on very appealing clothing, sales of which proved to be excellent. So it was not long before the Board started to think that it might be a good idea to replace the existing WCA logo, which has been around since pretty well the inception of the WCA. The idea was consolidated late last year and for the first time is shown here in this issue of *Nastawgan* as a half-tone in black and white. When it comes to decorating clothing and other artefacts it will, of course, be in colour.

George Drought  
(Chairman WCA)



## ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR WANTED

As mentioned in the Editorial on the previous page, *Nastawgan* requires an editor who will be responsible for the photos, maps, and drawings in the journal. In co-operation with the contributors and the other volunteer editors in the team, she/he will use appropriate image editing software such as Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, Paint Shop Pro to prepare the black-and-white illustrations for publication.

The successful candidate will have sufficient practical knowledge of the processes involved to be able to handle the mostly routine but sometimes difficult problems. After a period of training and increasing responsibility, the illustrations editor will take over the job starting with the spring 2006 issue. If you have the necessary experience and are willing to become our new illustrations editor, please contact the present editor-in-chief (see backpage for addresses, etc.).

## SYMPOSIUM: NORTHERN TRAVELS AND NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES IV

An enthusiastic crowd of more than 650 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 February 4 and 5. The following presentations were made:

- Rendezvous With the Wild
- Victoria Island - Fox Traps to Diamond Mines
- Arctic Inuit Perspectives
- Group Solidarity & Poetic Journeys
- Together, Alone in the Arctic
- Yellowknife to Baker Lake - by Two Rookies
- Stikine River
- Canoeing Northern BC Wilderness Rivers
- R.M. Patterson's Travels in BC
- Dog mushing in the NT
- Winter Walk 2003, 60 Days Snowshoeing to Ungava Bay
- Northern Quebec Canoe Trip
- Heb Evans and the Crees of N Quebec
- Hubbard Redux - Retracing 1903 Labrador
- Arctic Canoe Travels
- Paddling With the Past - Kayaking in Greenland
- Tornat Tragedy in Northern Labrador
- What the Wind Says

- James Raffan
- Will Lange
- Jose Kusugak
- Dave Robinson
- Bev & Joel Hollis
- Charlie Mahler
- Marilyn Sprissler
- Laurel Archer
- David Finch
- Kieran Moore
- Rollin Thurlow
- John Fallis
- Brian Back
- Jim Niedbalski
- Ted & Freda Mellenthin
- Richard Alexander
- John Howie
- Rob Perkins



Photo: George Drought

In addition, a number of Northern Songs were performed by Dave Hadfield and Della Grigsby.

# PADDLING IN GOGAMA COUNTRY

## Dividing Lake to Kenogamissi Falls

Jay Neilson

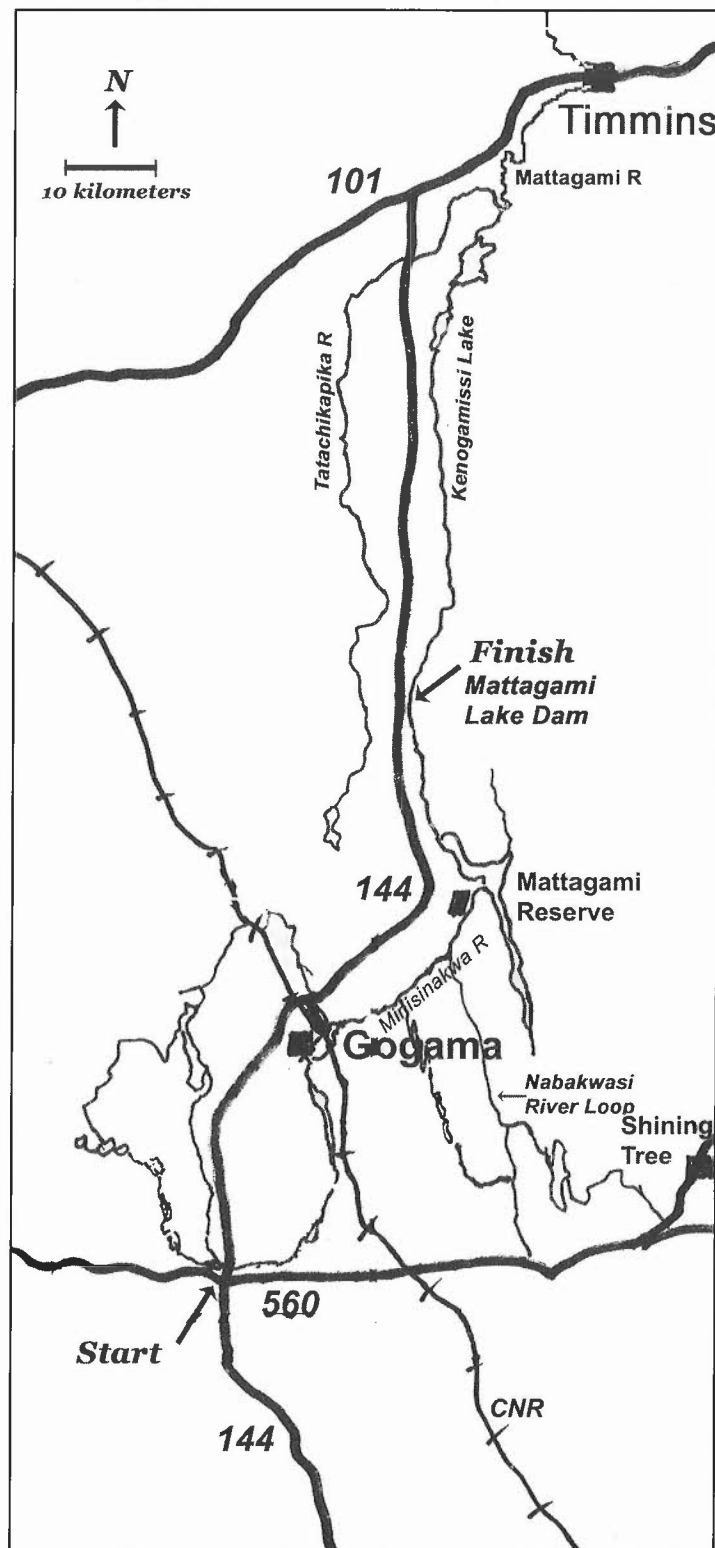
My March-2003 winter expedition to Gogama, which is located 150 km north of Sudbury on Hwy.144, detrained in the backwoods beside the railway, 25 km south of Gogama, on a reasonably warm evening (this trip is mentioned on page 16 of the winter-2003 issue of *Nastawgan*). That night the thermometer plummeted to -40C, then even colder to -50C on the second night, which I spent comfortably at a Gogama motel, recovering at the local bar from minor facial frostbite.

I returned to explore this beautiful area in Gogama Country during a September-2003 heat wave, and enjoyed two weeks of remote paddling from Dividing Lake, following the west circuit of the 4M Canoe Route to Gogama, then down the Minisinakwa River past the Mattagami Reserve village and down Mattagami Lake to the Mattagami Lake Dam, where I discovered a kilometre of class 2 - 3 whitewater, runnable all summer.

The **4M Canoe Route** is named after lakes Mesomikenda, Makami, Minisinakwa, and Mollie. At the Dividing Lake put-in at the Mollie River bridge on Hwy.144, there is a nearby restaurant with a phone, and a large campsite used by junior rangers, where I camped at midnight, after discovering all of Gogama was booked for the long weekend. (I didn't see the \$50,000 camping fine notice until later!) The MNR recommends overnight camping at Wizard Lake, less than five kilometres before Gogama. An alternative access to paddling in Gogama Country is to arrive by train, and inquire at the local restaurant for a driver to transfer gear to Minisinakwa Lake, or portage about 1,500 m from the station to the lake.

At Dividing Lake the watershed drains northeast off the Canadian Shield dome, following the Mollie River through lakes Minisinakwa, Mattagami, and Kenogamissi to Timmins and ultimately to James Bay, hence the name Dividing Lake. However, on the western section of the 4M Canoe Route, which I paddled, the watershed divide is puzzling. Three Duck Lake flows south into Dividing Lake. Schist Lake flows south into Bagsverd Lake. Instead of lining my canoe with the current, I found myself slog-ging along portages until finally the flow reversed, so that the divide seems to occur at Schou Lake.

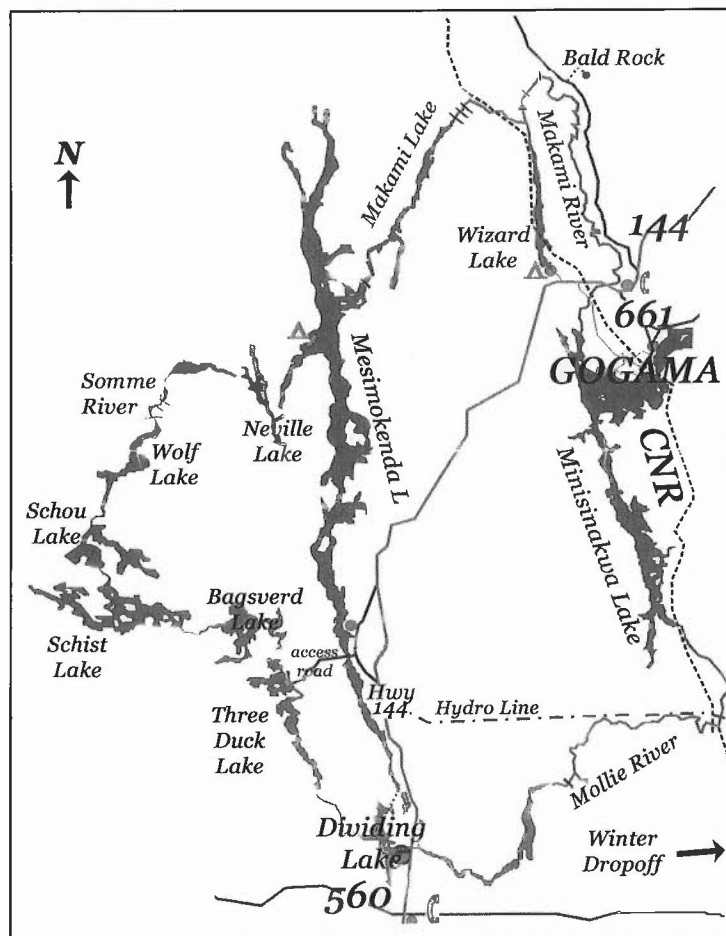
The portages are all short, less than 500 m, and well used. For experienced trippers the portages are not as difficult as indicated in the 4M Canoe Route pamphlet, with the exception of one ugly 229-m portage on the Makami River where blow-downs had not been cleared. Campsites and portages were often not marked. There is also an access road to Three Duck Lake, which could be used for winter expeditions.





Somme River

The **Mesomikenda Lake** crossing was a scary three kilometres in a solo canoe, which went well with favourably light winds. The last campsite after Neville Lake, on the west side of Mesomikenda Lake, is very scenic and large enough to hold a couple of windbound canoe parties.



The campsite high on the sandbanks of the Makami River, which accesses **Bald Rock Walk Trail**, is unmarked and small, visible only as an unusual critter path barely indented up the bank. Campfire use there is hazardous and caution should be exercised. Have a large pot of water handy to extinguish sparks early, as the river is a difficult scramble down a steep sandbank for more water.

### Minisinakwa Lake

Finishing the 4M Canoe Route at Gogama, my

plan was to paddle the Minisinakwa River past the Mattagami Reserve and then down the Mattagami River, perhaps to Timmins. Minisinakwa Lake was calm as glass, with beautifully mirrored fall colours and a blue, blue sky—a memorable day. The Noble River on the Nabakwasi River Loop enters the Minisinakwa River in some of the widest marsh terrain in the Near North. The MNR in Gogama has a free map for the Nabakwasi River Loop, which is a more remote canoe route loaded with challenging portages. The Minisinakwa River is wide and slow, allowing vast marshes to grow (big pike country), before cascading violently over a falls located just before the junction with the Nabakwasi River. The extremely rugged portage around the falls on the west side is well worth the view, but definitely NOT worth the portage. I camped at the falls, investing hours in trail maintenance before slogging in the food barrel. Masses of blueberries at these falls were delicious, and a young bear and my dogs were very curious about each other ... all night long. This bear was not leaving that berry patch! Further trail investigation convinced me to return upriver the next morning, to find the safer 1,500-m portage, as I was alone. There is an unmarked campsite at the upriver end of the longer 'snowmobile' portage, around the falls on the east side of the river. As this portage is located before a short rapid, I had to slog back up a rapid, which has no portage. This rapid is class 1 or class 2, with no significant obstacles and plenty of take-out manoeuvrability before the falls.

**Mattagami Reserve** After a long paddle enjoying a light westerly and more of that great September heat wave, a hearty beef soup and tall tales with some elders made the stop at Mattagami Reserve memorable. They told me the location of a small tent campsite on the east side of Mattagami Lake, about six kilometres after the Reserve village, and less than two kilometres after the lake narrows—where smooth rocks descend to the water.



*Quiet campsite on Schist Lake*

Absolutely the best swimming location in Ontario! Beyond the Mattagami Reserve the tangled shore allows few camping opportunities and there are some cottages. The vast area of Mattagami Lake and the large marshes of the Minisinakwa River provide a grandeur that does not exist

*Reversed reflection*

in southern Ontario, where the rivers and lakes tend to be smaller.

**Kenogamissi Falls:** Due to a minor injury, the trip ended at Kenogamissi Falls at the Mattagami Lake Dam, which is rather close to Hwy.144. At the dam the shorter 1,000-m portage requires at least 500 m of fast class 2, which looked fun to run. The MNR indicates that Kenogamissi Lake has gravel/sand shoreline camping opportunities, though possibly too overgrown for comfort. It is a long paddle to Timmins and the noise of Hwy.144 does get irritating, but the road provides contingency back out. Snowmobile trails accessing the Mattagami Reserve offer rugged winter tripping and there are some cozy lodge destinations.

Logistics: Gogama is accessible by railroad and by road. The 4M Canoe Route takes about five days, but can be shortened for weekend trips, or extended for longer trips. It is best paddled north from Dividing Lake, clockwise in the direction indicated by the Canoe Route map, due to rapids on the Somme River. The Mollie River is slow, and could be negotiated up-river with some wading. The campsites were accurately marked and did not appear to be heavily used. Unfortunately the river favoured by Grey Owl, the Tatachikapika, is spoiled by the proximity of Hwy.144.

The MNR office in Gogama has free, detailed canoe route maps for the 4M Canoe Route and Nabakwasi River Loop. Larger Outdoor Adventure maps (1:100,000) detailing routes and some campsites are available for the Gogama and Timmins Districts for \$8 each.



*Still water and harvest moon on Minisnakwa Lake*

### **Still Water**

A boy waits all day to go fishing,  
    their boat echoing in the distance...  
a cloudless sunset, illuminates still water,  
    pastel colors fading to purple...  
a harvest moon rises,  
    glowing orange...  
a pack of wolves sing,  
    this long howling song...  
of intimate lakes and vast waters,  
    of northern Ontario grandeur.



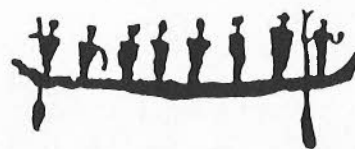
*Still water sunset on Schist Lake*



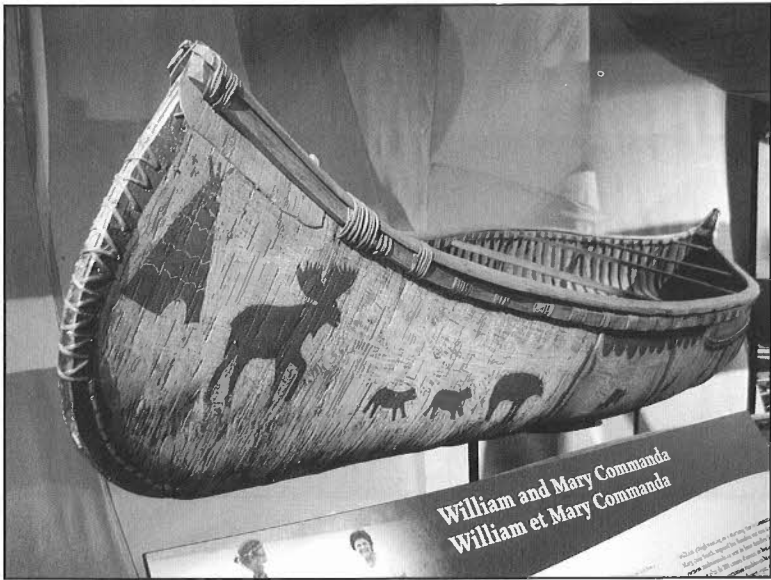
# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

February 12, 2005

CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM







Photos: John Yip

## FOOD FOR PADDLERS

### RISTORANTE ON THE RIVER

One of our favourite tripping meals is **SPAGHETTI**.

*At home:* Dehydrate 700 ml Classico Sun Dried Tomato Sauce (or your favourite spaghetti sauce). We use a commercial dehydrator, which has a solid plastic tray. Spread the sauce thinly on this tray and dry until the sauce has turned into a pliable leather. Package in a ziplock bag. Dehydrate mushrooms

*At camp:* Rehydrate the sauce and mushrooms while frying garlic and onions (we don't bother dehydrating these but you could). Mix together and serve with cooked spaghetti noodles and parmesan cheese. Don't forget the red wine and candles for a lovely meal.



If you don't have a commercial dehydrator you can use your home oven. Set the temperature at 140 degrees F and leave the door propped open two to six inches. I haven't tried it but I would think spreading the sauce on a cookie sheet would work. You can make your own dehydrator using a cardboard box, aluminum foil, and a light bulb; see: <http://www.alpharubicon.com/prepinfo/dehydratorstryder.htm>

**We get mail:** The following e-mail was received from Chris Laverty from Lansing, Michigan, in response to Robert Perkins' question re. chicken breasts that are shrink-wrapped and slightly preserved but not dehydrated (Autumn 2004 *Nastawgan*, p.24).

"I have acquired these from [www.cachelake.com](http://www.cachelake.com) in the past. They also carried Turkey Italian Sausages, Turkey Hot Dogs, and Turkey Ham. They came precooked in a vacuum pouch and are supposed to last three years. Unfortunately, they may not be available right now and I think it is because they are used in MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) for troops overseas..... However, supermarkets here are now carrying vacuum-sealed, heavy foil pouches of salmon, tuna, turkey, ham, and chicken. They are great for sandwiches, soups, and one-pot meals. They have been available for 1-2 years and are very good. The only drawback is the foil is too heavy to burn and must be carried out. Cache Lake has several other products that I highly recommend. I enjoy *Nastawgan* very much!"

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



*French River 1985*

## REVIEWS

**RENDEZVOUS AT THE STRAITS: Fur Trade and Military Activities at Fort de Buade and Fort Michilimackinac, 1669–1781** by Timothy J. Kent, published by Silver Fox Enterprises, P.O. Box 176, 11504 U.S. 23 South, Ossineke, Michigan, 49766, USA; 2004, two volumes hardcover 8½ x 11 in., 661 pages, prepaid US\$89.95 plus US\$ 7 shipping or C\$120 plus C\$15 shipping.

With this impressive two-volume work, independent scholar and lecturer, Tim Kent, has researched, written, produced, and self-published an exceptional book that greatly advances our knowledge of numerous civilian and military activities taking place during the fur trade era. Although focussed upon the Mackinac area, at the junction of lakes Huron and Michigan, the information presented is relevant to what happened in the vast region between the St. Lawrence in the east and the far west and northwest where the fur traders roamed in their birchbark canoes. Using more than 50 original French documents he located and translated, as well as many previously published ones, Kent provides countless fascinating details of life in these turbulent times, including rampant prostitution and widespread trade in slaves. As is the case with his previous publications dealing with the fur trade, this book presents a valuable and wide-ranging collection of information on events crucial to North American history. *Rendezvous at the Straits* should be of great interest to professional and amateur historians alike who want to learn more about the historic foundations of Canada and the USA.

**SLEEPING ISLAND** by P.G. Downes, new edition published by Heron Dance Press, Hummingbird Lane, 179 Rotax Road, N. Ferrisburg, VT 05473, USA; [www.herdance.org](http://www.herdance.org); 2004, softcover, 306 pages, US\$19.00.

In the summer of 1939, a 30-year-old, white Bostonian made an arduous canoe trip to then-unmapped Nueltin Lake on the border of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. His book describing this trip, *Sleeping Island*, was published in 1943 and has become one of the most famous books in northern exploration literature, a true classic. What makes it so special are the author's love for the country he travels in and his respect for the native population who accept him in their lives as a trusted friend. In spite of its success, the book was never reprinted until this new edition by Heron Dance Press, which includes an extensive and informative foreword by R.H. Cockburn who also provided the revised photo section and nine pages of notes. From the foreword: "But all of Downes' travels were invigorated also by his intellectual curiosity, by his consuming interests in fur trade history, geography, geology, and Indian cultures, interests that animate and enrich the book." We should be grateful this marvellous book is again available to show us what wilderness canoeing can be.

Reviews by Toni Harting

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## THE ATTAWAPISKAT RIVER

Winter.

Looking at a booklet, *Northern Ontario Canoe Routes*, from the Ontario provincial government. It was published in the early seventies. Has it really been that many years since I bought the booklet? It says: *The Attawapiskat River provides one of the best opportunities to view the geological and glacial history of northern Canada.*

It's a long river, 800 or so kilometres from the put-in at Hwy. 808 on the Pickle Lake road to the community of Attawapiskat village at the edge of James Bay. The put-in, right where the road crosses the Otoskwin River, is the only road access on the entire river system. For a relatively low cost, a canoeist can access an immense wilderness stretching almost completely across the province of Ontario.

Gradually, as you drop down to James Bay, you leave the granite of the Canadian Shield and flow onto the limestone overburden. This limestone is younger rock laying on top of the granite. During the glacial retreat the sea invaded this area and deposited a layer of mud and organic material over the granite. As the land rose because of glacial rebound, this hardened mud became limestone, now exposed above sea level.

In the last 400 km of the Attawapiskat you paddle through this limestone. You travel in one to one and a half metres of water over flat limestone shelves for long distances. The river is very wide and there are many channels cut into the

limestone. High sheer walls border each channel. Lots of fast water everywhere you look. However, the rapids are easy to pick through. By staying close to shore, you can jump out and work your way around tough spots. This last stretch of the Attawapiskat is called The Labyrinth.

Stepping anywhere on shore here is a rock hunter's paradise, because of the fossils in the limestone. I'm holding a fossil now that I collected from the lower Attawapiskat.

Getting late. It's time to put the fossil back on the bookshelf and try to get some sleep. However, I suspect the main reason I need to put the fossil back is because it brings memories of the Attawapiskat River too close to the surface. It's a lot like looking at pictures of your children. Pictures taken before they moved out and started their own families. You can't go back and capture the moment that is reflected in the picture. It's the same with our trip down the Attawapiskat. You can't go back and capture the moment that the fossil is conjuring up.

The fossil holds more than just the remains of a creature that once swam in a warming sea. It holds my past also.

Greg Went



# BRANT TO BUFFALO BY CANOE

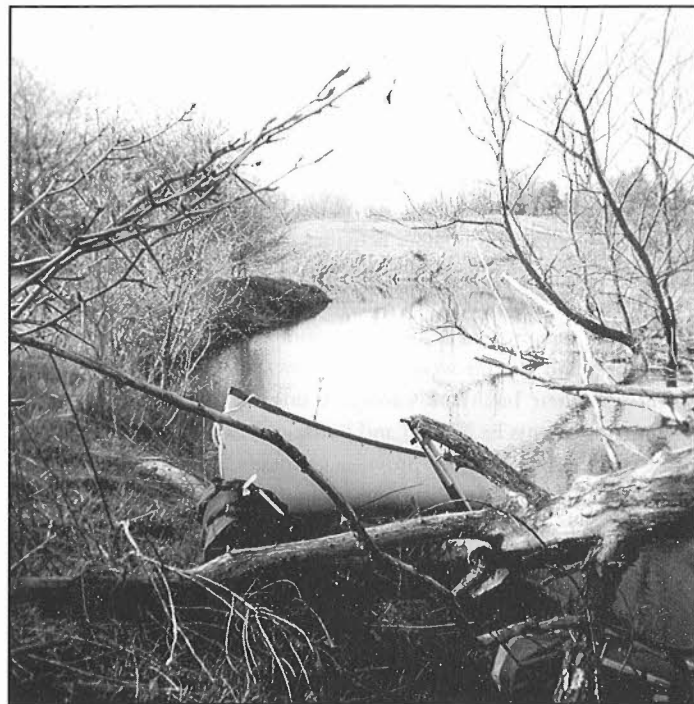
Tom Elliott

I have driven to a suburb east of Buffalo, NY, many times to visit my Mom, and I was intrigued by the thought of canoeing the waterway connection from my house (east of Brantford, Ontario, in Canada) to hers. I wouldn't be the first to have paddled there—according to Brant area archeologist Art Howey, Native people probably had used the route for 4,000 or 5,000 years.

What is bizarre about such a trip is that it's not your ordinary wilderness trip of the type I have done since 1978. Travelling in this highly populated area requires a different approach.

First, in the previous winter I skied portions of the creeks at the beginning and end of the trip, to scout and determine the best route to take. Another consideration was US Customs and Immigration. For some of my water supply, I made a cache of three four-litre jugs of water in Brant County and three in the Buffalo area in advance. These were hidden under bridges. To avoid theft of my canoe, a lock and chain was used to secure it to trees. In the wilderness, animals are not a concern for me, but on this trip possible danger from people did bother me, as did having to camp on private land occasionally. I camped in private woodlots and conservation areas along the way. The Buffalo Police said to avoid being in the central city area at night. Also, in "civilized" areas there is risk of man-made objects in water and on land, which could damage the canoe, my outfit, or myself. In contrast to much of the Canadian wilderness, which is a clean environment, most creeks and rivers on this trip are a muddy affair.

The 162 km route looks like this: Start east of Brantford, tributary to Big Creek, Big Creek, Grand River, north shore of Lake Erie, Buffalo River, Buffalo Creek.

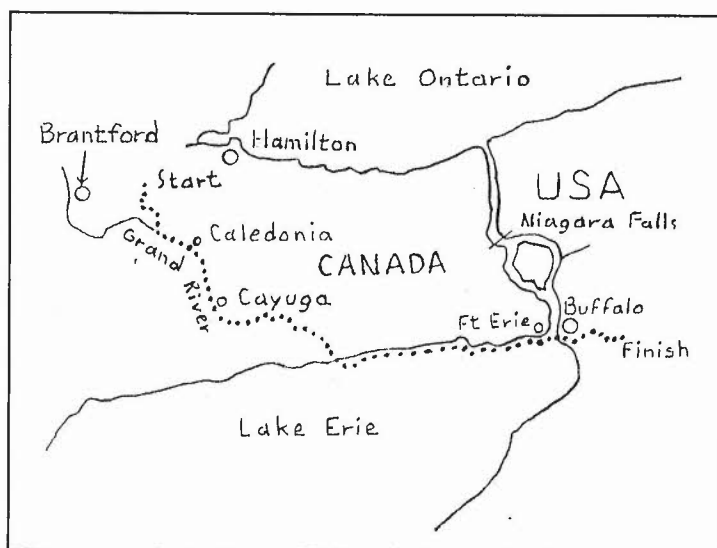


*Put-in at Earl's Pasture*

The nine-day trip had its challenges. Especially challenging was to get out of Brant County on the small creeks before water levels got too low. My annual reforestation work delayed my departure to a time when there was barely enough water. Lake Erie is shallow and hazardous in bad weather. I would be very vulnerable in my 17-ft open Miller canoe. Getting around exposed points in the lake and crossing just above the mouth of the Niagara River from Ft. Erie to Buffalo harbour could be risky. I wondered how difficult it would be to go up fast and shallow Buffalo Creek. For security reasons, the 17 km from Ft. Erie to West Seneca, NY, had to be done in one day to get safely past Buffalo city centre.

The idea was to travel in a self-sufficient manner as in wilderness tripping, carrying all that I needed and camping along the way. My outfit including canoe weighed 70 kg and required two trips on portages. I used a 2.7-metre-long, double-bladed, take-apart Mohawk paddle most of the time. This was my first solo trip by canoe. I had done only one other solo trip, seven days snowshoe-camping in northern Ontario.

After meticulous planning, it all started on April 28, 2004, with a 900-m portage to where the little tributary had enough water to paddle. From my house I simply walked out of my driveway with my outfit down Holditch Road, across two farms into a pasture (with a lift over one fence), where I put the canoe into the water. The tributary





*Camping at Morgan Point*

was less than one metre wide in places. Both the tributary and Big Creek had a lot of fallen trees, beaver dams, and logs to slide over or portage around, and in some instances I sawed fallen trees to make room for the canoe to go through.

Day One was a hard nine-hour day on the trail. This area of Brant County was the only "wilderness" of the trip and was truly spectacular with lovely scenery, quiet and much wildlife. Especially interesting were the old bridges over Big Creek. Most repulsive were about 30 dead chickens and two bloated dead goats someone had thrown off a bridge into Big Creek. I asked my wife to report that to the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Next came the Grand River, a really grand experience. If one can overlook all that mud and brown water, the scenery and historic sites, old buildings, quaint towns, old farms, and bird life are wonderful to see from the perspective of the river. I had lunch on the steps of Ruthven, a historical mansion, and stopped to see each town along the way. In contrast, the stretch from Dunnville to Lake Erie is like mobile home city with numerous mobile home parks. Not pretty to look at.

The next segment was Lake Erie. It was refreshing to paddle on that spacious and beautiful lake. With clear weather, much of NY State made a silhouette on the horizon. From the lake, the view of Buffalo was stunning. Except for a few conservation areas, the shoreline of Lake Erie was less interesting, with wall-to-wall cottages and homes and a variety of mostly unattractive shoreline protection structures. Port Colbourne's waterfront (start of the Welland Canal), with thou-

sands of nesting birds and extensive breakwalls, was impressive. I climbed a tree to rescue a cormorant speared by a sharp branch, just dangling there. I got it down, but it couldn't possibly live.

Of particular interest were Sherkston Beach (previously a recreation area) and Crystal Beach (previously an amusement park), both now residential and drastically changed since I was there in my youth. I spent time at the now-dilapidated dock where the *Canadiana* used to dock at Crystal Beach, recalling the many boat trips from Buffalo with juke box, jitterbuggers, soldiers and sailors with girl friends, and big fun at that amusement park. I could imagine hearing the great big bands, which I stood for hours listening to in the 1950s—Tommy and Jimmy, Les, Billy, Woody, and Stan.

A windbound day at Erie Beach, Ft. Erie, gave me a chance to explore the fascinating ruins of an amusement park closed in 1912. It is a beautiful Carolinian wooded area slated for development.

On Day 9, a 13-hour day and the last one of the trip, I was paddling before sun-up in order to race across to Buffalo harbour before the wind came up. The US Coast Guard base was the only convenient place on my route into Buffalo Harbour that I could see from which to phone to report to Customs and Immigration. Boaters normally go to nearby marinas, which would have been out of my way. The clearance took almost two hours. With heightened security, there was much questioning and some searching of me and my outfit. The Coast Guard also inspected my canoe to check its seaworthiness. They were impressed that I had an extra paddle, excellent DOT-approved PFD, and two whistles. They asked if I had flares; I said only on wilderness trips. They wanted to know the make and model of my canoe. That was a bit difficult since Russ Miller didn't indicate such data on his canoes and put a serial number in a hard-to-read place under the deck.



*Sherkston Beach*



*U.S. Coast Guard station, Buffalo*

The Coast Guard personnel were friendly and helpful, phoning US Customs and Immigration for me. They said a storm was coming and seemed sorry to delay my trip. Since their base is not a legal entry point, they had to call Border Patrol. The Border Patrol captain was quite grumpy. He was about to arrest me for entering illegally until it came out in the questioning that I was both a Canadian and US citizen. The officer was embarrassed and advised that when entering the US, if I am proud to be an American, I should say I am an American. Proud? Throughout the rest of the day, the thought of being proud haunted me, as it was shortly after the news of the Abu Ghraib debacle.

As expected, the paddle through Buffalo harbour and river was spectacular. With little activity and being in a state of decline it had an eerie quietness about it. It was a trip into the past with abandoned, dilapidated, towering grain elevators like concrete canyons, wharves, railroad tracks, industrial buildings, old machinery, junk along the river, and vacant land. At lunch I ventured into an eleva-

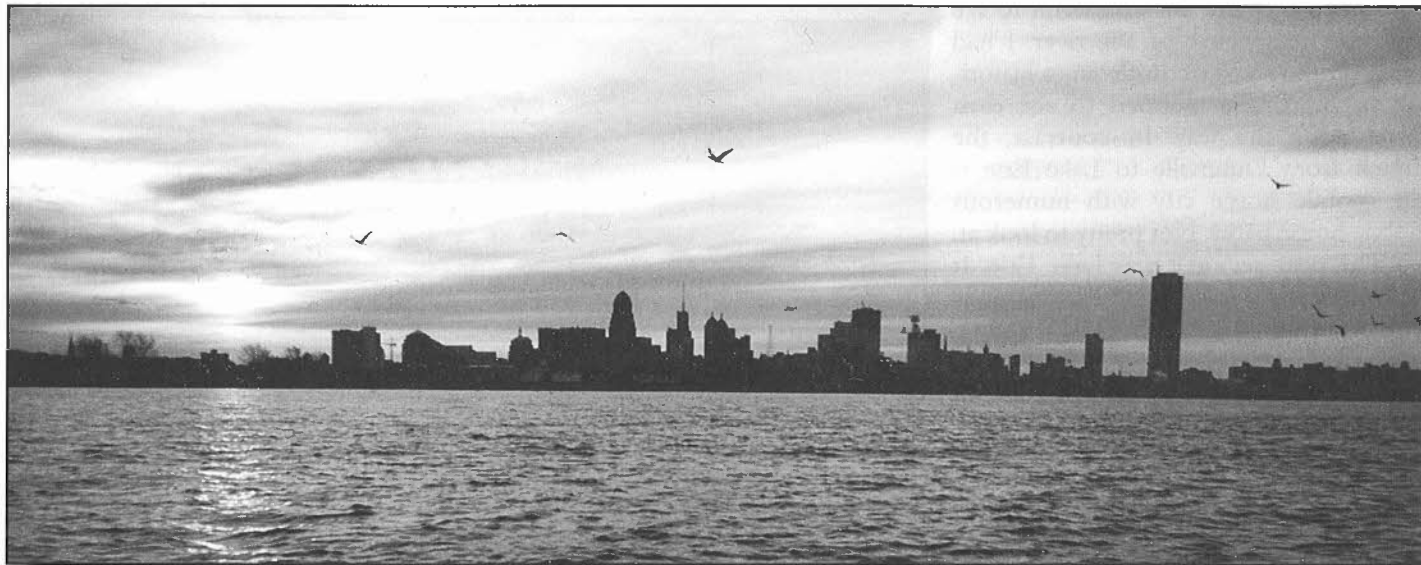
tor. Lift bridges were impressive structures to see. There were two Navy vessels, a few tug boats, one lake freighter. I felt quite out of place in my yellow canoe. Canoes belong in wilderness. Seeing a wild turkey watching me from shore was a surprise.

Further on, Buffalo Creek provided a quick change of scenery, back to nature, trout darting around in the clear water, people fishing, beautiful trees just budding out, and in one area a variety of nesting water fowl. I resisted the temptation to stop at Tim Hortons at Clinton and Harlem. By this point, the creek was too shallow for paddling. It took several hours to walk, pulling my canoe upstream. Tedious work. I fell into the creek twice. A few short portages were required to get over five low-level dams. The old churches and buildings at Gardenville were charming. Gardenville was the home of watercolour artist Charles Burchfield. The Burchfield Park and Centre are there.

Finally I took out at Transit Road - Route 20, West Seneca, and portaged 400 m on a sidewalk, walking into the backyard of our family home (since 1930) where my worried 97-year-old Mom and her dog, Pepper, were ecstatic to see me. That was it then: walk out of my yard, paddle, and walk into my Mom's yard nine days later. Mission completed.

There was a strange peacefulness and quietness about the entire trip. With all the presence of habitation and civilization, and the distant sounds of highways, trains, aircraft, lawn mowers, and industry, I rarely saw people and there were seldom any other boats on the water. That could have been because of cold weather with some rain. I cleaned up rubbish along the way, mainly where I camped and in remote areas.

Having done many magnificent wilderness expeditions, this short and unusual trip was as good as any. It greatly enhanced my knowledge and appreciation of where I live and have lived. A new perspective.



*Buffalo skyline*



# TONI HARTING LIBRARY

## Official Opening on June 11, 2005

### The Lodge at Pine Cove, French River

Join us in honouring Toni Harting and his tireless achievements in helping to preserve Canadian history, promote wilderness paddling and nature photography, assist in the creation of The Lodge at Pine Cove, and all his other accomplishments on behalf of Canada by attending the opening of a new library at The Lodge at Pine Cove, located on Wolseley Bay of Ontario's French River.

The Toni Harting Library will celebrate and foster the knowledge of Canadian history. The focus of the library will be to establish a collection of books, photographs, maps, and reference sources both print- and web-based that will centre around the history of First Nations, early exploration, and fur trade within Canada, while concentrating on the canoe from the First Nation's original use of this means of transportation to the recreational uses we enjoy today. The aim of the library will be to encourage all visitors to The Lodge or The Lodge's website, and anyone else who is interested in Canadian history, to learn more about our nation by using the library's resources as a base of knowledge for general interest and academic research.

The library has already benefited from a number of donations of relevant books and other material including the research material for his book, *French River, Canoeing the River of the Stick-Wavers*, that Toni recently donated to the library. The number of books and materials in the collection needs to be increased and catalogued, and a multi-year plan will be developed in order to improve the library's value. A board of advisors for the library will be set up; anyone interested in being advisor is asked to contact Toni Harting or Alex Strachan (contacts see below). The library will operate as a trust or foundation in order to preserve the integrity of the collection.

The actual opening of the library will be celebrated on the afternoon and evening of June 11 when a banquet will be held in Toni's honour. Weather permitting, we will organize a paddle on the French River on the 11th and possibly again on the 12th. The Lodge will donate the use of its 34-ft Montreal canoe to the weekend and, if there is sufficient interest, we will take it to the Blue Chute or Five Finger Rapids for a picnic lunch on the 11th and maybe also the 12th. Roy Paul, an Algonquin, will entertain us with native drumming and singing. In the evening of the 11th, Toni will present his celebrated slide show, exploring some of the history and beauty of the French River. Other speakers and activities during the two days will be announced on The Lodge's website.

**Rates:** To assist all those who would like to attend this celebration, The Lodge at Pine Cove is offering special rates. Participants may take advantage of the two-night

special rates on any of the nights of June 10, 11, or 12. (All prices per person.)

*Deluxe accommodation:* beautifully designed private cottage (with shower and toilet), meals, taxes, and gratuities: \$143.00 per night (minimum two-person/two-night stay). As we have limited accommodation, we will give preference to those booking two- and three-bedroom cottages with full occupancy, i.e. four or six people, or those willing to share with other visitors.

*Basic accommodation:* rustic cabin, meals, taxes, and gratuities, bring your own sleeping bag: \$105.00 per night (minimum two-person/two-night stay).

*Single night rates:* Deluxe package: \$217.00 based on double occupancy. Basic package: \$162.00 based on double occupancy. (Owing to the significant costs associated with one-night stays, they are not subsidized.)

For those planning to attend only the library opening and the banquet on June 11, and are not staying overnight, the rate for dinner is \$25.00 plus tax and gratuity but not including liquor. If those attending the library opening are not staying at The Lodge but wish to participate in the day's activities on the river, please let us know in advance. Because of the expected large number of guests, it is advised to book as soon as possible.

**Contact information:** *Alex Strachan:* The Lodge at Pine Cove, P.O. Box 91, Noelville, ON, P0M 2N0; e-mail [info@frenchriver.com](mailto:info@frenchriver.com); website [www.frenchriver.com](http://www.frenchriver.com). (As we are not at The Lodge until early May, it would be appreciated if e-mail or regular mail is used to contact us.) *Toni Harting:* 416-964-2495; [aharting@sympatico.ca](mailto:aharting@sympatico.ca)

\* \* \* \* \*

#### *A word from The Lodge at Pine Cove*

Without Toni's encouragement, support, and generous donation of photographs, books, ideas, and time, The Lodge would not have been the same place it now is. A few years ago I asked Toni if we could name the library after him and discussed with him the idea of promoting Canadian history. It is my sincere belief that history is 'the glue that binds a nation' and we as Canadians need to do more about its promotion. Toni and his wife, Ria, have become great friends of mine in the process and I am honoured to be able to give back to Toni in this way. The library is starting modestly but has the potential to grow into something of value to us all.

Alex Strachan  
(owner/operator of The Lodge at Pine Cove)

# WCA OUTINGS

**WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT  
PRESENTED IN THE SUMMER ISSUE?**

**Contact the Outings Committee before May 1.**

*For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Outings, contact the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca; Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca; Geri James, 416-512-6690, geri.james@barclaysglobal.com; Scott Card, 905-665-7302, scottcard@sympatico.ca*

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

Over the past winter we have had a few personnel changes to our outings committee. After many years as a valuable member of our team, Barry Godden has decided that it's time to move on to do volunteer work with another paddling club. Barry's exceptional knowledge and dedication will be sorely missed. We wish Barry all the best. We'll see you on the river, Barry.

We have been fortunate to find two very capable and enthusiastic new committee members in Geri James and Scott Card. In addition to Geri and Scott, our Outings Committee includes Gisela Curwen and Bill Ness. If you have any comments or questions about the WCA's outings program, we welcome your feedback.

With the support of our club members, we have put together a varied program of activities for the upcoming season. Regardless of your favourite type of paddling, you'll find something here to enjoy.

Please also regularly check the WCA website for changes and additions to our outings schedule. We have an excellent website regularly updated by our webmaster, Jeff Haymer. Take advantage of it to post new trips at any time. We also have several organizers who are on the water nearly every weekend through the season, and who have given open invitations to join them on their weekend jaunts. Take advantage of their offers. You'll be glad you did.

If you've recently joined the WCA but haven't yet participated in our club outings, we would like to take this opportunity to personally invite you to come out with us. We're a very friendly, welcoming group. Our organizers are individuals who enjoy seeing new

members on their trips. Before you know it, you'll feel like one of the gang. You'll meet new paddling companions and find friends to plan future trips with.

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

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

Wishing you all safe and happy paddling. Looking forward to seeing you out there with us on the waterways and portage trails this year.

WCA Outings Committee

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## All Season HAVE PADDLE WILL TRAVEL

Scott Card, 905-665-7302, scottcard@sympatico.ca ----- Mowing the lawn this weekend because you don't have any trips planned? I paddle whitewater nearly every weekend from spring break-up through as long as the water remains liquid in the fall (or winter). If you want to get out on a river any weekend, just call me to find out where I'm headed. I go wherever there's good water. Longer trips also a possibility. Trip difficulty levels vary from intermediate to advanced. Open canoe, C1, or kayak welcome.

**March - May BLACK (WASHAGO), HEAD, MOIRA, ETC. RIVERS**

Fred Lum, 416-482-3774 ----- The Black near Washago and the Head a little farther southeast have some very interesting whitewater sections if you catch them at the right levels. Both are quite different despite their close proximity. The Head is a technical little creek with a number of small ledges that will test a good intermediate's route finding and precision boat-handling skills. The Black has some super surfing waves that make for a day full of fun even for experienced novices. Down Belleville way, the Moira has a very challenging upper section at Lost Channel, requiring solid intermediate skills to negotiate a series of ledges with large waves. There is also a roller-coaster-ride section farther down through long, easy rapids from Chisholm's Mill to the take-out at Latta that all paddlers from skilled novice up will enjoy. If there is interest, I could run a trip down the Upper Salmon, which is a step up in difficulty with many class 2 to high class 3 rapids. I keep my eyes on water levels and go when things look good. If you want to get on my call list for these trips, just send me an e-mail to roocnu@wepaddle.com.

*Note:* Paddlers must have drysuits or wetsuits, helmets, and at least one throw bag per boat. All cars should be equipped with roof racks capable of carrying MORE than one boat so they can help out with the shuttles.

**March 19 PADDLERS' POTLUCK EVENING**

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

**March 25 MOIRA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before March 18 ----- This is our season opener and a chance to recover our skills after a long winter.. We will start at Chisholm's Mill and finish at Latta in the morning, eat lunch in our vehicles and run Lost Channel in the afternoon. This is a good opportunity for new spring paddlers to introduce themselves and demonstrate their competence. The river is not particularly technical and we will only be about an hour from our cars. This trip is open to anyone who doesn't mind swimming in ice-cold water. Tandem canoes must have a centre airbag. Wetsuits or drysuits are required. Limit of six boats.

**March 27 LOWER CREDIT RIVER**

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book before March 20 ----- A classic early spring trip for Toronto area paddlers. We'll catch the river in Streetsville and run down to the mouth at Port Credit. The river is a delightful continuous class 1 to 2 with lots of play spots. However, as sweepers can present a hazard and the water will be cold, participants should be at least intermediates, and wear a wetsuit or drysuit. Limit of six boats.

**April 2 MOIRA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before March 25 ----- Please see March 25 description above.

**April 9 BEAVER CREEK**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 2 ----- This will be a challenging whitewater run suitable for advanced-level whitewater paddlers with fully outfitted canoes and proper cold-weather attire. Note: if the river isn't open yet, we could switch to the Moira. Limit five boats.

**April 10 UPPER BLACK RIVER (TWEED)**

Steve Bernet, 519-837-8774, or sbernet@golgen.net, book before April 3 ----- The Upper Black from Cooper to Queensborough is one of the most challenging technical runs in Southern Ontario. For strong advanced paddlers it makes a superb day's outing. Cold weather gear and a fully outfitted whitewater boats are musts for this trip. Limit five boats.

**April 10 ERAMOSIA RIVER**

Dave Sharp, 519-846-2586, book before April 3 ----- This is a relaxed, easy, moving-water trip through the spring countryside near Guelph. The trip is suitable for novices, and great for anyone looking for a gentle introduction into moving water. Limit six boats.

**April 16 BEAVER CREEK ENCORE**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 9 ----- Please see April 9 description above. You had so much fun with us last week that you want to come back again; and besides, you have to pick up the Thermos that you left at the lunch spot.

**April 17 LOWER BLACK RIVER (TWEED)**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, book before April 10 ----- We will run the lower section from Queensborough to Hwy. 7. This is an interesting run for solid intermediate to advanced paddlers, with frequent technical class 2-3 rapids. Wetsuit/drysuit and full canoe flotation are required. Limit five boats.

**April 23 UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 16 ----- A day of whitewater excitement for advanced paddlers. The upper Madawaska is a fast-flowing pool-and-drop river with quiet stretches interspersed with some very serious rapids. All rapids can, and some must, be portaged. Wetsuits or drysuits, helmets, and fully outfitted whitewater boats with full flotation are musts. Limit six boats.

**April 24 ELORA GORGE**

Dave Sharp, 519-846-2586, book before April 17 ----- Join me for a spring run down the Gorge. This makes a good spring outing for intermediates wanting to practise their moving-water skills. At normal levels for this time of year, there are a series of grade 1-2 rapids; along with a more challenging chute at the midpoint that can be easily portaged or run by the more adventurous. Limit six boats.

**April 30 UPPER MADAWASKA RIVER-TAKE TWO**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 23 ----- Please see April 23 description above. A chance to hit the eddies and surf the waves you missed last week.

**April 30 - May 1 SPENCE'S CELEBRATED SALMON-MOIRA WEEKEND**

Glenn Spence, 613-475-4176, book before April 20 ----- 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. The Moira has larger rapids possibly up to class 3. You can bivouac at my house and enjoy a potluck dinner. These are two of Southern Ontario's finest spring rivers. Intermediate paddlers welcome. Limit six boats.

**May 1 MINESING SWAMP**

Ray Laughlen, 705-754-9479, rlaughlen@hotmail.com, book before April 24 ----- This will be a slow-paced float trip along Willow Creek down to Edenvale. Join us for a relaxed spring cruise while we check out the local waterfowl, herons, and early spring migrants. Limit six boats.

**May 13-15 SPRING TRIPPING IN ALGONQUIN PARK**

Andrea Fulton. Contact Andrea at afulton@sympatico.ca before May 1 ----- Friday night optional stay at Tea Lake Campground off Hwy. 60. Early start on Saturday morning through Canoe Lake to Burnt Island Lake. The Sunday trip back to Canoe Lake includes a stop for brunch at Arowhon Pines (bring your credit card!). Suitable for novice paddlers and families. Limited to six additional trippers.

**May 14-15 BEAUSOLEIL ISLAND, GEORGIAN BAY**

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca, book by April 30 (preferably by e-mail) ----- A leisurely overnight trip starting from Honey Harbour. We hope for calm conditions on our paddle over to make base camp at Tonch Point or Chimney Bay, from where we will explore the shoreline - subject to wind conditions - and/or hike the trails of this lovely Parks Canada island. Hopefully the spring flowers will be out and the migrant birds have returned. We will try to locate the heron colony. Suitable for experienced novices. Limit four canoes.

**May 20-23 ALGONQUIN PARK: HAVE RESERVATIONS, WILL TRAVEL**

Glenn or Carlene Croucher, 416-283-4335, or glenn@olympic.on.ca, book as soon as possible ----- If you would like to share our base camp in the Canisbay area for a long weekend of leisurely paddling, give us a call. We have no set routes in mind as of this date.

**May 21-23 MADAWASKA RIVER**

Larry Durst, 905-415-1152 or larry.g.durst@snapon.com, book as soon as possible ----- Join us for the fifth annual spring paddle/wine-and-cheese party. We paddle from above Aumonds Bay to the take-out at Griffith, a distance of only 28 km. The pace is leisurely with only the Sunday being a full day of paddling, and most of that spent on the Snake Rapids section of the river. Lots of time to play, chat, and nibble! Rapids will range from grade 1 to 4 and there are a couple of short portages around falls. Water levels are likely to be quite high and the water cold. In the past we have had sun, rain, hail, and snow, so participants will need to dress and pack appropriately. Suitable for intermediate-level paddlers. Limit six boats. To view a sample of previous year's fun, go to [http://ca.pg.photos.yahoo.com/ph/durstlg/my\\_photos](http://ca.pg.photos.yahoo.com/ph/durstlg/my_photos), click on "Madawaska," and then click on "slide show." No purchase required!

**May 21-23 RANKIN RIVER RENDEZVOUS**

Bill Caswill & Oya Petts, 519-934-2013 or du12paddle@bmts.com, book by May 16 ----- We are planning a relaxing day of river paddling with lots of time to observe wildlife. Dinner will be roast beef cooked in the infamous turkey oven. Limit six novice paddlers.



**May 28-29 INTERMEDIATE WHITEWATER CLINIC**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before April 23 ----- This is the tenth year of our clinic, which is designed to help improve your basic skills. We will paddle the Lower Mad on Saturday and practise our basics skills at Palmers Rapids on Sunday. The emphasis will be on front ferries, eddy-outs, and peel-outs. Your paddle strokes will be critiqued. You will also have an opportunity to practise self-rescue techniques. Open to properly outfitted solo and tandem canoes. Wetsuits or drysuits will be needed. We will camp at our cottage.

**June 11 GRAND RIVER**

Doug Ashton, 519-620-8364, doug.ashton@sympatico.ca, book by June 1 ----- The Grand River offers a local leisurely day trip from Cambridge to Paris where it passes through scenic farm country. This trip is suitable for novice paddles with some moving-water experience. An excellent family trip. Limit six boats.

**June 30 - July 3 OTTAWA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before June 23 ----- 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. Limit six boats.

**July 1-4 KILLARNEY: HAVE RESERVATIONS, WILL TRAVEL**

Glenn or Carlene Croucher, 416-283-4335, or glenn@olympic.on.ca, book as soon as possible ----- If you would like to share our base camp for a long weekend of leisurely paddling, give us a call. We have no set routes in mind as of this date.

**July 1-4(5?) RIVER AUX SABLES**

Scott Card, 905-665-7302 or ScottCard@sympatico.ca, book by June 15 ----- the River aux Sables is west of Sudbury, near Massy. This is a long drive from Toronto but well worth the trip for whitewater aficionados, with some of the best technical water in Ontario (class 2 to 4 with some class 5 falls for the adventurers). Suitable for strong intermediate to advanced paddlers. The Seven Sisters canyon section is only runnable by skilled advanced paddlers. Fully outfitted whitewater boats required. Limit six boats.

**July 2-17 MISSINAIBI RIVER**

Gary & Geri James 416-512-6690, or wca@sympatico.ca, book by April 15 ----- Plans are in the works to canoe the upper section of this famous Canadian Heritage River from Missinaibi Lake to Mattice. Give us a call for details. Limited to four canoes.

**July 9-10 INTRODUCTION TO MOVING WATER**

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, and Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book before June 30 ----- This is a two-day workshop for flatwater paddlers who want to develop basic moving-water skills. It should be of interest to trippers who want to become more comfortable negotiating the moderate moving-water they often encounter on river trips, and to canoeists who want to determine if whitewater paddling could be for them. We will focus on the basics of moving-water boat control and manoeuvres, water reading, and safety. Both tandem and solo paddlers are welcome. The weekend will be spent at Palmer Rapids on the Madawaska River, one hour northeast of Bancroft. The location offers some of the best novice to intermediate whitewater in Southern Ontario. In order to be able to work closely with participants, registration is limited to six boats.

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

*Recommended:* While not required, a wetsuit will make floating in the river more pleasant. Reviewing a whitewater instructional book or video before we meet will familiarize you with the important concepts so you can get the most value out of your river time.

**July 22 to 24 CANOEING CHRISTIAN ISLAND**

Richard Steinberg, 416-262-2785, or work 905-671-5495, or Steinberg.Richard@Emeryworld.com, book as soon as possible ---- Leave Friday evening. Enjoy a relaxing weekend on Georgian Bay, day tripping from my cottage property over to Christian Island. Picnic and swim before returning to my cottage. Flatwater with the possibility of rough waves.

**July 29 - August 1 GEORGIAN BAY**

Richard Steinberg, 416-262-2785, or work 905-671-5495, or Steinberg.Richard@Emeryworld.com, book as soon as possible ---- We will be leaving Friday evening to explore the scenic 30,000 Islands area north of Parry Sound, Bayfield Inlet area. It's mostly flatwater but, but winds can make it rough even in summer. You need to be a strong enough paddler to cope with this possibility.

**July 30 - August 1 OTTAWA RIVER**

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, or jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before July 23 ----- 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. Limit six boats.

**August 6-14 KILLARNEY-GEORGIAN BAY CANOE CAMPING**

Richard Steinberg, 416-262-2785, or work 905-671-5495, or Steinberg.Richard@Emeryworld.com, book as soon as possible ---- An exploratory trip into this region. Route not finalized at time of publication. Open to ideas or if you know this area. Please call to indicate interest. As Georgian Bay can be rough at times, you must be a strong paddler. Food will be communal.

**August 11-17 FRENCH RIVER/GEORGIAN BAY**

Don Andersen, 716-873-4476, dhandersen@aol.com, book before July 15 ----- Join us on an exciting trip that will be honouring the history of canoeing in Canada by exploring the Western Outlet of the French River, taking the Old Voyageur Channel, connecting to the more remote areas in the Cross Channel and then to Georgian Bay. Depending on conditions we will be spending some time on the nearby Bustard Islands and then return via the Pickerel River to our starting point at Hartley Bay. In addition to reviewing the history of the region, we will be looking for goatsuckers and cranes. This trip is suitable for competent novices who can manage windy conditions, waves, and lift-overs. Limit six canoes.

**August 26-28 ALGONQUIN PARK FAMILY CAMP**

Geri and Gary James, 416-512-6690 or wca@sympatico.ca ----- We are unable to confirm date and site until March 26, please check the WCA website for additional information. Join us at the Whitefish Group Campgrounds on site # 17 where we will circle the tents on a large site to ourselves for games, canoeing, and hiking. Limited to 40 people, so let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in attending.

**September 3-5 OTTAWA RIVER**

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

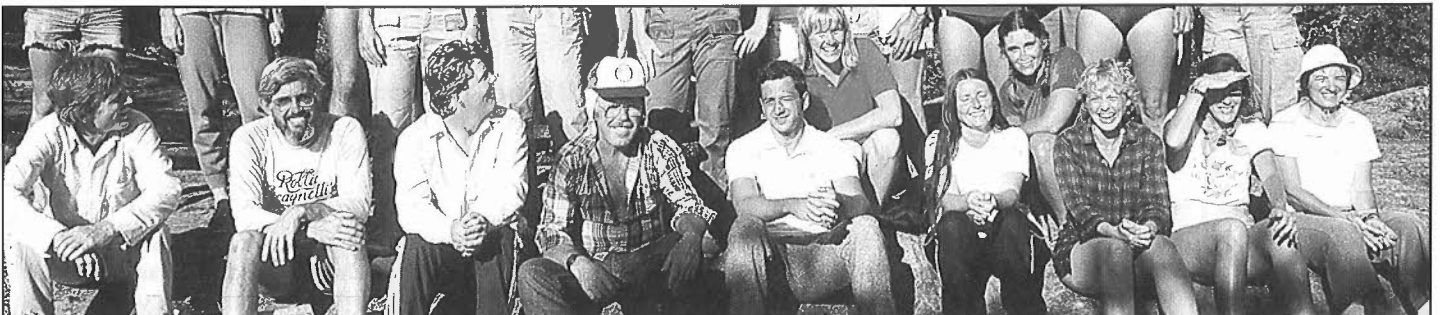
**September 30 - October 2 CROTCH LAKE - THANKSGIVING TURKEY DINNER CANOE TRIP**

Anne Lessio, 905-686-1730 or alessio@istar.ca, or Gary James 416-512-6690 or wca@sympatico.ca, book by July 15 ----- Crotch Lake is described in Kevin Callan's book: *Gone Canoeing* on page 109. Last year we explored this beautiful lake and found a nice large island site that would hold 20 people. We are going to once again cook a full turkey dinner. Check out the spring 2003 issue of *Nastawgan* if interested in a review of our last celebration. Advance food planning and equipment is needed for this trip, so book early.

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**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://www.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.



*French River 1985*

## 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:

- 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.

**MEMBERS' DISCOUNT** Peterborough-based outfitter, Human Heights, who is also the Ontario sales representative for Esquif canoes, will provide a club discount for WCA members who want to buy an Esquif boat through him. Contact Bill Ness for special WCA price list: [bness@look.ca](mailto:bness@look.ca)

**WCA MERCHANDISE** We have a wide selection of WCA merchandise available for purchase at all WCA events (but not by mail order). Items available include WCA mugs (\$5), crests (\$3), and decals (\$1). We also have WCA clothing in a range of colours and sizes. Each item is a high-quality product that has been embroidered with a colourful WCA logo. At your next event plan to purchase one of these garments and proudly represent your organization. Golf Shirts:\$30; Fleece Vests:\$40; Fleece Jackets:\$60. (Cheque or cash only)

**CANOE FOR SALE** Wilderness Workshops Model Otter 16 ft cedar strip tripping canoe in mint condition, red hull with varnish inside, cane seats, cherry deck plates, and Teal yoke. This hull design has good freeboard and rocker. \$1500. Contact Paul Hamilton: 905-877-8778, [paul@capsnplugs.com](mailto:paul@capsnplugs.com)

**CANOE AND DRY BOX FOR SALE** Wenonah Whitewater X, kevlar 18 ft tripping canoe; little used and in good condition; with Dry Box. Total US\$650. Call 517-223-8135.

**DRIVE-IN SHUTTLE SERVICE** is available for the Dumoine, Noire, Coulonge, and Petawawa rivers. ACCOMMODATION is available at the Eddy Inn. Contact Valley Ventures at 613-584-2577 or [vent@magma.ca](mailto:vent@magma.ca)

**CLASSIC SOLO CANOEING CLINICS** From May until October, Becky Mason runs solo paddling clinics at Meech Lake in the Gatineau Hills, Quebec. Contact her at P.O. Box 1735, Chelsea, Quebec, J9B 1A1 or 819-827-4159 or [redcanoe@istar.ca](mailto:redcanoe@istar.ca). Also find information about her Classic Solo Canoeing DVD at [www.redcanoe.ca](http://www.redcanoe.ca)

**SLEEPING ISLAND** The Story of One Man's Travels in the Great Barren Lands of the Canadian North. P.G. Downes' classic tale of his 1939 canoe trip to Nueltin Lake. New edition published in 2004 by Heron Dance Press; US\$19. To order, go to [www.herondance.org](http://www.herondance.org) and enter Sleeping Island in the search bar.

For up-to-date information on these and other Products and Services items, go to the Bulletin Board of the WCA website:  
[www.wildernesscanoe.ca](http://www.wildernesscanoe.ca).

### INFORMATION WANTED

I am looking for somebody who has canoed the Upper Broadback River. Please contact Iva Kinclova at [iva.kinclova@sympatico.ca](mailto:iva.kinclova@sympatico.ca) or 416-461-6000.



## Where it is ...



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### WCA Postal Address:

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

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

George Drought (Chair)  
43 Brodick Street  
Hamilton, ON, L8S 3E3  
905-528-0059  
gdrought@wildernessbound.ca

Doug Ashton  
Cambridge, Ont.  
519-620-8364  
doug.ashton@sympatico.ca

Elsie Carr-Locke  
Toronto, Ont.  
416-463-9019  
elsiescot@yahoo.ca

Bob Bignell  
Dundas, Ont.  
905-627-3730  
thebiggys@hotmail.com

Gillian Mason  
Toronto, Ont.  
416-752-9596  
gmason@capam.ca

Martin Heppner  
Toronto, Ont.  
416-465-1558  
mheppner@anchorsecurities.com

### WCA Contacts

**SECRETARY**  
Bill King  
45 Hi Mount Drive  
Toronto, Ont. M2K 1X3  
416-223-4646  
lyonrex@aol.com

**WCA OUTINGS**  
Bill Ness  
194 Placentia Blvd.  
Toronto, Ont. M1S 4H4  
416-321-3005  
bness@look.ca

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

**JOURNAL EDITOR**  
Toni Harting  
7 Walmer Road, Apt. 902  
Toronto, Ont. M5R 2W8  
416-964-2495  
aharting@sympatico.ca

**TREASURER**  
Howard Sayles  
Toronto, Ontario  
416-921-5321

**WEBMASTER**  
Jeff Haymer  
Toronto, Ontario  
416-635-5801  
jhaymer@ionsys.com

**MEMBERSHIP and  
COMPUTER RECORDS**  
Gary James  
27 Canary Cres.  
North York, Ont. M2K 1Y9  
416-512-6690  
wca@sympatico.ca

**CONSERVATION**  
Erhard Kraus  
Scarborough, Ont.  
416-293-3755  
erhard@interlog.com

### EDITORIAL TEAM:

Editor-in-Chief: Toni Harting  
Associate Editors, Text: Elizabeth Sinclair, Mike Wevrick  
Associate Editor, Food: Barb Young  
Associate Editor, Outings: Bill Ness

