



Winter 2011

The Journal of Canadian Wilderness Canoeing

Outfit 143



CHAR-MING FISH - This magnificent 25-pound Arctic char in spawning colours was caught (and released) by Donn Wolf in 1998 during one of Brian Gnauck's 40 Years of Northern Tripping canoe adventures which you can read about beginning on Page 6. They were running the Hayes River which flows into Chantrey Inlet east of the Back River in a remote corner of Nunavut. The American-based group has paddled all across northern Canada and continues to do so.

Winter Packet



While we are not in the business of printing job advertisements, our friends at Nastawgan, the official organ of the Wilderness Canoe Association, requested our help which we are happy to provide this excerpt from their journal.

Nastawgan Editor(s) Wanted

As mentioned in the Editorial on the previous page, our wilderness canoeing journal should have a new editor (or a small team of editors) by the middle of next year.

In order to accomplish this, volunteers need to come forward from the WCA membership willing to undergo a training period of approximately half a year, covering two or three issues of the newsletter. This will prepare the trainee(s) to take over this important, demanding, rather time-consuming, un-paid, but ultimately highly satisfying job to produce a journal worthy of the WCA tradition. Being involved with the creation of this world-renowned outdoors journal offers the most amazing and gratifying experiences, because you'll have direct access to information and people closely involved in what the WCA is all about: understanding, enjoying, and protecting the canoeing wilderness.

To take advantage of this opportunity, you need a good knowledge of the English language and you must have a knack for soliciting new and relevant material, both amongst members and others. Familiarity with the wilderness canoeing universe (environment, people, organizations, WCA) is needed but will improve while on the job. Good organizational skills and the ability to delegate and coordinate are required. And you must feel comfortable working with computers, text as well as images. While it would be convenient for the editor(s) to reside in Toronto, the current state of computer technology does not make that a mandatory requirement.

If you think you could do a good job as the

editor, or maybe as a member of the editorial team, please submit your name and credentials to the Chair, Aleks Gusev - aleks@gusev.ca
Ed.Note-As someone who has done that job for 26 years, the only suggestion I would make is that there be one editor. Teams of people are great for canoe trips, less effective for publications.

There has been some great reaction to the new colour Che-Mun. And they sometimes come with added info such as this from **Jon Berger**, co-author of the *Canoe Atlas of the Little North*. He comments on Tim Farr's article in *Outfit 142 - Wabikimi Wanderings*.

Beautiful job on the current digital edition. We all carry our own fiction on each trip. The Savant was never used for York Boats- the main post was at Osnaburgh

The fur trade route that passed near to Savant Lake went from Nipigon Bay on Sturgeon Lake- into the English and then to Lake Winnipeg.

As for the wide York Boat trail- across the peninsula at Velos Lake- I actually cut that trail- or should I say walked on the short game portion before the open rocks in the early 70's! It later became enlarged by motor boat guys flown into the Falls of the Savant.

Not that it really matters as our canoe landscapes are those of the mind anyway.

Hope all is well

We have a sad update from Stephanie Silbar, the daughter of John Silbar who was featured the back cover of *Outfit 138*. Our thoughts are with his family.

John Silbar, 51, left for his next big adventure on Saturday January 8, 2011. With his wife and three children by his bedside they wished him well on his journey. John knew since August of 2009 that his days would soon come to an end. After finishing a solo trip

from Norway House to Oxford House, a trip cut short because of weather and health conditions, John returned home to Wisconsin, USA to learn he had stage IV pancreatic cancer.

The cancer was caught too late but chemotherapy was able to give John more time than he would have otherwise had. Every chance John had he would still take his canoes out, one time even camping by himself overnight while undergoing treatment. His last big canoe trip was a day trip he took with his wife and oldest daughter for his daughter's birthday. Even with the fatigue of the disease and the treatment John still loaded all the canoes and gear into his truck.

John's ashes will be spread into the wind on his birthday in June of this year in one of his favorite hiking spots in the United States. He wanted his family to know that every time they feel the wind blowing, that it's him and he's right there with them. It was important for him to go back to the earth and live forever in the great outdoors.





Editor's Notebook

Well, after 26 years we have cut loose our Canada Post mailbox which over the years was our vital link to you wonderful subscribers.

That link has been largely replaced by the Internet and the rest will now be a handled by our vintage home mailbox which is even bigger Canada Post's. We have mail re-direction for a year so we shouldn't miss anyone's subscription payments - I hope.

It's been a snowy January here in Toronto which we hope will bode well for Spring water levels. As many of you are aware, I am guiding the incredible Keele River this summer for Canoe North Adventures after photographing it for them last year. I will be accompanied by longtime paddling partner Peter Scott.

Peter and I are also planning a spring trip that is at the core of every historically-aware northern paddler's DNA. And we are taking the next generation along. Peter along with son Ethan, 13, and me with son Tom, who will be 15, are heading to the classic French River for a May trip down the cold and fast waters of the Voyageur Channel to Georgian Bay. Eric Morse was very involved in identifying the channel the Montreal voyageurs took enroute to the *pays den haut*.

We are just doing a short four day trip from the highway down and back but it will be a rite of passage for two men and their sons. Both boys canoe at their respective summer camps and we hope they will be able to join us on a few Hide-Away Canoe Club northern trips before we're too old - or I am anyway!

We are thrilled to feature the 40 years of paddling remembrance by Brian Gnauck in this Outfit. He has done many routes that we have but he has managed to go with incredible regularity. The Michigan professor turns 70 this February and is wondering about his future. That gives me a dozen years to prepare to worry.

Two of the best winter canoe symposia are once again happening. The big one - WCA Wilderness Symposium takes place in Toronto Feb 18 and 19 and its offspring the Wilderness Paddler's Gathering is on in Vermont March 4-6. Each offers terrific speakers on a wide range of northern topics. They are places dreams are born and also shared with other dreamers.

Michael Peake.

Canoesworthy

An international bestselling American author is the latest to speak in support of a former Nunavut outfitter. Alan Weisman of Cummington, Mass., wrote *The World Without Us*, which was published in 34 languages. It was Time Magazine's Nonfiction Book of the Year in 2007 and spent 26 weeks on the New York Times bestsellers list.

For the portion of the book set in Canada, Weisman said he is deeply indebted to wilderness outfitter (Tundra) Tom Faess, who expertly guided him to key spots in Nunavut and the NWT.

Faess had his licence revoked this past year due to customer complaints and is still awaiting the outcome of his appeal to Nunavut Economic Development and Transportation Minister (ED&T) Peter Taptuna.

Weisman said in his experiences with Faess, he was a terrific tour guide who always did his best to accommodate his clients. He said Faess ran a solid operation and was an expert in many valuable areas.

Weisman said when he needed extra research, Faess would fly him and his photographer to places he didn't often take tourists. He said Faess's knowledge of the area was exceptional, even when asked for very specific things.

"I wanted to see the gravesite of an explorer who's famous in Thelon history and Tom knew exactly where to go. I needed to talk to some Dene and when he took me to Lutsel K'e, it was incredible how he was welcomed there and how many people knew him so well.

"The local people were obviously very fond of him and respected him, and his presence opened the doors for me to interview some really significant people."

Weisman said he never saw a single instance of Faess cutting a corner at the expense of his party's safety.

If anything, he said, it was the exact opposite.

"Safety was foremost with Tom at all times, in any situation.

"I've corresponded with a lot of former clients of his and he was not just respected by people who went out with him and had a great wilderness experience, but by numerous professional writers, journalists and photographers at the top of their professions. Their combined impression is that Tom is one of the best. I can't say enough about how good he was and how much we knew we were in good hands."

A spokesperson for ED&T said Faess's appeal is running its course and the department can offer no further comment until after the minister's decision is made.

A lawyer representing seven Inuit who were taken from their homes in the 1950s and '60s to live in Canada's South says the federal government is arguing that the so-called experimental Eskimo project is too old to bring to court.

"They aren't prepared to allow the file to get before a judge," Steven Cooper said. "They've indicated that they intend to rely on the Limitations Act and not allow us to get to court on its merits, and for that reason we haven't been able to advance the case beyond the initial stages."

The seven were taken as children from their eastern Arctic homes — in what is now Nunavut and the Nunavik region of northern Quebec — to live with foster families and go to school with the goal of assimilating them into mainstream culture, Cooper said.

Peter Ittinuar, a former MP, was a 12-year-old when he was sent to Ottawa with two other boys. Ittinuar, who says the term "experimental Eskimo" came directly from official documents, said the move had a negative impact.

"When you've lost your identity, you go through a lot of personal turmoil, and it manifests itself in various ways — perhaps drinking and other behaviours that are not really conducive to a normal, good life."

◀ CANOESWORTHY continues on Page 11



Time to Packboat it in the Twin?

By MICHAEL PEAKE
Editor

It has often been observed that the cost difference for a three week northern canoe trip and a six week trip are roughly comparable. The reason? The cost of air travel is the most significant part of your budget and if you paddle further you can reduce or eliminate your costly flight out.

One of the best and time honoured methods of maximizing charter costs is to be able to put three canoes, (say Old Town Trippers at 17' 2") into the cabin of a venerable Twin Otter. By using the method of putting the boats in one at a time and filling each with gear as you go, it leaves room for the six paddlers down the other side of the cabin. That was what passes for cost effectiveness in Canada's north.

But the times may be a changin'. Already, major carrier Air Tindi out of Yellowknife, no longer will allow ANY rigid canoes to be carried inside a Twin Otter. The reason cited is that the smaller door on the starboard side of the plane at the back is not easily accessible to all passengers. There are three other doors, one by each pilot and the large cargo door shown in the photo (right).

This could be a boon to Packboats - the company which makes folding boats up to 17-feet in length that can easily be carried inside a Twin. They are rated for a 900 pound load vs 1500 pounds for a Tripper. The cost is approximately \$2000 vs \$1500 for the Old Town Tripper.

I have not used them but noted several favourable reviews by respected northern paddlers on their website. Alan Kesselheim, Bob Dannert, Jim Baird, Will Lange, Laurel Archer and Shawn Hodgins all put various Packboats through their paces on extended northern trips and were very happy with the results. Not sure how the HACC upstream rock drags would work but if George Douglas did it in cedar strips anything is possible.

The photo below shows the Hide-Away

Canoe Club unloading at Goose Bay, Labrador in 2001 from our long charter flight from Prince Edward Island enroute to Saglek Fjord. When we told Air Labrador about our plans to carry the canoes the base manager said we would not get three of those boats in a Twin. It was tight but we did it and the

result in a 100 per cent reduction. But no doubt the complaining would start from another quarter.

We attempted to get some clarification from Transport Canada. As you might expect, the rules for civil aviation are thick and long and no simple question gets a simple answer. With regard to carrying canoes inside a Twin Otter I was told by Melanie Quesnel, a Transport Canada media relations advisor, that "if canoes fit inside a Twin Otter then the carry-on baggage regulation applies."

She did laugh when I said they surely would not fit under the seat in front of you or in the overhead bin. The link she gave me had a raft of rules but pertinent one was: "All carry-on baggage shall be stowed so that it does not obstruct access to safety equipment, exits or the aisles of the aircraft." That's where in interpretations begin as three Trippers will mostly block the smaller starboard side rear exit.

We have also been told increasingly by some carriers they were no longer allowed to carry canoes outside the aircraft. According to Melanie, "Carrying an external load is considered an aircraft type design change that requires approval. The Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs) prohibit air operators from carrying an external load, except where carriage of an external load has been authorized in the aircraft's Type Certificate, or by means of a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC).

An STC approving the carriage of an external load also identifies any conditions necessary to provide for safe operation. Therefore, Transport Canada regulations do permit aircraft operators to carry external loads, such as canoes, as long as the necessary conditions are met."

Twin Otters, despite their size do not take canoes on pontoons as the engines are directly above the cargo. Beaver and Otter aircraft have carried thousands of canoes over the decades and should easily be able to continue to do so.



manager even came out to watch us unload to learn the process for their own use.

Now the ever-creeping bureaucracy is reaching North and the word is that Transport Canada will be slowly disallowing the practice across the north. It is the same type of mindset we see in city politics. Any bad eventuality is possible. I foresee the day when all pedestrians will wear helmets and jockstraps to prevent potential injury. It could happen. Well, anything could happen.

The best way to avoid canoe accidents would be to not go canoeing. That would



Unearthing a Treasure in a Storage Shed

BY LAUREN GILCHRIST
Peterborough This Week

It's a curator's dream come true. A 250-year-old birch bark canoe found in a British shed is making its way to Peterborough's Canadian Canoe Museum.

And staff at the museum are anxiously awaiting the arrival of this rare piece of Canadian history.

Jeremy Ward's jaw dropped when he heard about the find.

"It's very exciting," says Mr. Ward, curator at the Canadian Canoe Museum.

"As far as birch bark canoes go, this will be the oldest we have in our collection."

He says it's amazing the canoe was not only found but a part of its history is known.

"That is a dream for a museum," he says.

The story begins with the Enys Estate near Cornwall, England. The estate has been owned by the Enys family since the 13th century.

In 1770 British Soldier Lieutenant John Enys was sent overseas with the 29th Regiment to fight in Quebec during the American War of Independence. After the military campaign it's believed that Lt. Enys then toured around Eastern Canada where he likely bought the canoe.

Mr. Ward says what is currently known about the canoe is that it reflects the work of a tribe of the Maliseet First Nations who they believe lived in the Maine and New Brunswick area during that time. Mr. Ward says Lt. Enys likely brought the canoe to England as a kind of memento or keepsake from his trip to Canada.

The canoe was recently found on the Enys Estate by descendants of Lt. John Enys when they were cleaning out a shed on the property.

The family then contacted the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall to find out more about treasure. And last January Mr. Ward was contacted by the museum to help uncover a little more of the canoes past.

Mr. Ward says in the course of the last year the Enys family became aware of the Canadian Canoe museum in Peterborough and decided that they would like their canoe to be a part of the museums collection, which boasts some 600 canoes.

The canoe will stay at the National Maritime Museum in Cornwall, England until the fall of 2011 when it will make its way to Peterborough where it will be displayed at the Canadian Canoe Museum.

Mr. Ward says the National Maritime Museum is currently cleaning up the canoe and stabilizing it for transport to Canada.

The 18-foot canoe is actually broken into two pieces, likely from weather damage. Mr. Ward says the future goal is to somehow realign

the two halves of the canoe without compromising the integrity of the boat.

"We have some interesting possibilities for transporting it across to Canada and to the museum," he says.

"We're a long way yet on deciding on a treatment plan for the boat," he says.

With his background in Canadian history and Native studies from Trent University, Mr. Ward says this project appeals to him on a personal level and is very exciting. He notes there will be a formal unveiling of the canoe when it arrives next fall.



It's a delicate task, shipping a 250-year-old damaged canoe across. And Beth Stanley, artisan program co-ordinator for the Canadian Canoe Museum, admits with a laugh that she's not too sure how it's going to happen.

The canoe is currently resting in a Cornwall, England, maritime museum, she said.

It was picked up by a British soldier touring the Atlantic provinces about 250 years ago.

When the soldier's tour of Canada was complete he, and the canoe, returned to England, where the canoe was stored in a barn for the next two centuries. The soldier's descendants approached the Cornwall museum and eventually decided to return it to Canada.

Stanley said that museum recommended that the canoe go to the Monaghan Rd. facility.

The canoe won't be shipped over until after September 2011. It's being cleaned and will be on display in Cornwall until that time.

The canoe isn't in great shape. If not for its historical significance, Stanley said, the museum likely wouldn't display it.

The bow and stern are fine, Stanley said, but much of the middle section has been damaged.

It would be used as a "research canoe," she said, studying to see how it was built, and how it was repaired. The canoe is made of bark, and Stanley explained that bark canoes were built using tension and pressure.

One piece relies on another piece, and when one section falls apart, the whole canoe can unravel, she said. "It's like a spring."

Stanley said it's hard to say if the boat will become the oldest in Canadian Canoe Museum's collection. It certainly is the oldest with a provable historical record, she said.

But there are many canoes in the museum's collection that haven't been carbon dated, she explained, so there's no real way of knowing how old they are.

Stanley said the museum will hopefully get some of those canoes dated within the next few years.



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Years Paddling Canada's North

By BRIAN GNAUCK

Forty years ago, in 1970 at the age of 29, I undertook my first wilderness canoe trip. Four of us ran Quebec's Harricana River to James bay. It was an exhausting, but exhilarating experience which started a life-long avocation of running Canadian wilderness rivers. Since then I have been fortunate to make 40 major trips north and 18 minor ones. Clearly, the definition of major is subject to lots of interpretation. Most would agree, however, that the Big Five in the Northwest and Nunavut Territories (Coppermine, Dubawnt, Back, Kazan and Thelon) are long in miles and time and are major rivers, but length is only one attribute that defines "major".

The Mountain River in the Mackenzie Mountains of the Northwest Territories at only 160 miles was a demanding adventure, especially if you run the river near flood stage. Using North Wright Air's Platus Porter to fly-in was one of the most memorable fly-ins I have ever experienced. The scenery of the mountain, especially for a flatlander like me, was jaw dropping in character. The six canyons were beautiful, exciting, and assured us a major adrenaline rush.

Another measure of 'major' is the rate of drop and the velocity of the river. In more recent years, crew members have used their GPS and say we are going at 9, 12, or 15 mph through a given stretch of fast current or whitewater. I am sure those are accurate statements, but they typically apply only to a block or two of river. At one point on the Mountain we were at a beautiful tributary coming into the river and I thought it would be a nice place to camp. I asked the crew, "Do you want to camp here or should we go ahead to an area where we might see Dall Sheep?" All voted to go ahead. It was 22 miles downstream. Two hours later we were at camp. It was an amazing 11 mph for 22 miles!

Major can also be defined by hard to get to rivers like the Kuujjua and the Nanook on Victoria Island and the Walker/Hayes and Quoich northeast of Baker Lake.

In 1986 eight of us ran the Kuujjua. I coordinated with Northwest Territorial Airways (the commercial airline at the time) to fly

Fond du Lac



us, our gear and canoes, in at the same time. Eight men, one canoe, and gear arrived on a flight from Winnipeg, Manitoba to Yellowknife and then on to Cambridge Bay. Instead of carrying our other three canoes, the plane was loaded with beer, evidently for sale in Cambridge Bay. We were, however, very fortunate. That night, Northwest Territorial Air flew in the remaining three canoes on a DC-3 flight. On the Kuujjua we saw over 450 musk ox and many, many caribou. The scenery of the Kuujjua was spectacular. A quotation from the Kuujjua canoe log best describes this river.



Thlewiaza

"Andy Latham and I walked about three miles to a high peak. It took about one hour and fifteen minutes to make it to the top of this hill. The hill was 1200 ft. in elevation, about 450 feet above the river. It was really a spectacular view from the top. The country was dotted with mesas typical of the southwest part of the United States. Straight north from our location were the Shaler Mountains. These mountains weren't high, approximately 2000 feet, but they were rather rugged. In places vertical cliffs of 100 to 150 feet occurred. Often the bottom of the cliffs were covered with huge masses of



Nahanni



snow. In fact, about 10 percent of the land was snow covered. The landscape was spectacular and the views majestic. The Kuujjua was a ribbon of pastel blue in a land of pastel browns, yellows and reds.”

Another great adventure was the Walker/Hayes. We actually started the Walker on 10 July 1998 on a big island in the north end of Walker Lake. Walker Lake lies northeast of Baker Lake in Nunavut and the Walker River flowing out of Walker Lake is officially not named. It was an exciting river to run. It had two canyons and two major falls and lots of lining and some nice rapids to run. However, the major excitement of these rivers was the



Natla

arctic char fishing. We incurred two major runs of char. At one point all six of us were catching and releasing 10 to 17 pound char. These were beautiful, big, silver females and bright orange bellied hook-jawed males. Later on the trip Donn Wolf caught a monster 25-pound char. This brilliant, light orange char was the catch of a lifetime (The fish was released unharmed).

I must mention our 330 mile Quoiich River trip in 1997. This was an outstanding river if you like big runnable whitewater. There were many Class II and III whitewater runs. It was home to

the largest number of Inuit artifacts I have ever observed. In fact, it held more Inuit artifacts than all other tundra river trips I have run combined. On this trip we incurred a 5 day blow that had winds 30 to 55 mph day and night, cloudy or sunny – it was a scary experience.

If major means big rivers which have massive gorges, cascades and falls, run the rivers on the east side of James Bay. The Rupert was an outstanding river to observe big whitewater. Rupert Gorge, Oatmeal Falls and the The Fours were all spectacular. However, as of 2010, about 70 percent of the Rupert’s volume has been diverted to the La Grande hydroelectric project.

The Broadback, a short distance south of the Rupert River, still runs free. But most of the other great rivers of the east side of James Bay up to the La Grande are either gone or significantly changed. I must also mention Quebec’s George River. It was a giant river flowing at about 30,000 cfs. Below Indian House Lake we were fortunate to run all of the rapids except Helen Falls. The hills and the mountains along the river were just simply spectacular.

The most unique aspect of the George was experiencing the 32-foot tide, once you reached the estuary of the river. We arrived at Ford Island at approximately low tide. We pulled up the canoes only to have to do it *four* more times to get them above high tide. Thirty-two vertical feet is a lot. We saw over 800 caribou on this trip and experienced some fine fishing for lake trout and Atlantic salmon.

The Leaf River, run this past summer, in Quebec had great whitewater (Class I, II, and III), beautiful scenery and outstanding fishing for speckled trout. We were able to run all the rapids that the Leaf had to offer. Some were big so inspection might be wise if one has doubts. From Good-bye Rapids to the Village of Tasiujaq was 17 miles of ocean with one low tide ledge (rapids). It is a 6 to 10 foot drop called Bottle Neck Rapids. It is two miles wide at this location so be careful. This area is prone to strong winds and canoeists must approach the ocean and the tide with caution. We received a very warm welcome by all the people we encountered in Tasiujaq.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the great rivers of Pukaskwa National Park and vicinity on the northeast side of Lake Superior in Ontario. Whereas these did not constitute major wilderness canoe trips, they held lots of fun and excitement for six to ten day adventures. The White (which is now dammed), the Cascade, the Pukaskwa, the East Pukaskwa and the University all drop 800 to 850 feet, over a distance of 35 to 45 miles. They held spectacular whitewater which was exhilarating when run in a solo boat. One six-mile section of East Pukaskwa dropped 33 feet per mile. However, it was very runnable whitewater with standard canoes equipped with decking. It was an exciting ride!

Northern Ontario had some fabulous big rivers. The Severn, the Pipestone/Winisk, the Otoskwin, Attawapiskat, and the Albany all had sections of big whitewater and great fishing for speckled trout,



walleye and northern pike. Lots of these trips were long extending 500 miles plus. I must mention the Attawapiskat. A variation on this name means "crack in the rock." In its lower reaches the river enters canyon-like areas which were filled with over 50 islands all in the canyon structure. These canyons were runnable (Pick your route carefully, some may not be runnable). This stretch of river was truly one a kind to experience.

The Churchill is gone, but we were fortunate to have run it from Pukatawagan Falls to Churchill, Manitoba. This was a 500 mile plus trip. We experienced the river in 1974 in the highest water since 1939. It was a "barn burner" of a run. At God's Rapids six men caught and released 36 northern in 40 minutes in the 10 to 20 lb. range while a giant moose swam across the river. The lower canyons were spectacular in the high water.

Then there were the mountains of western Canada. The South Nahanni has one of the most continuous runs of whitewater out of the moose ponds one can find. We ran it in 1980 with five, 17-foot Grumman canoes. It took us 4 ½ days to run the 25 miles of continuous whitewater. If you like whitewater, every hour, all day, every day, run the Nahanni from the moose ponds down. This river, however, is not for the novice!

Everything that can be said has been said about Virginia Falls. In my mind it ranks as one of the great cascades of the world. I would class it with Niagara and Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River in Africa. The lower canyons of the Nahanni were truly magnificent and clearly unique.

The Natla out of O'Grady Lake was a whitewater boaters paradise. Pay attention. We incurred a lot of Class II and III whitewater especially if you experience it in high water. The scenery and the speed of the Keele was breathtaking. The Keele ran a yellow-brown, but don't let that deter you. One of the most unique things to do on the Keele was put the handle of your paddle to your ear and listen to the rocks tumbling downstream as this big river literally charged to the ocean.

On our Keele River expedition we arrived at Fort Norman, now the Village of Tulita, on the giant Mackenzie River, and chartered a plane to Great Bear Lake. Then we proceeded to run the Great Bear River. This 65 mile run back to Tutila was spectacular fishing for Arctic grayling.

The Horton River northwest of Yellowknife about 600 miles

was a river that ran through the taiga. Thus, we had wood all along its course. It has a beautiful canyon, most of which we ran. There were two highlights of this trip. One was what we called "Grayling Bend." The river made a turn and many fresh water springs flowed into the river at this location. At these springs hundreds of grayling sat waiting for food. If you fish, please use barbless hooks and catch and release. It is a very fragile ecosystem.

Another truly unique thing about the Horton was its smoking hills. As the river neared the ocean, we observed coal deposits that have burned for thousands of years. These burns turned the rocks and soil to pastel colors of orange, brown, yellow and red. They were absolutely beautiful. The coal turned the water to a

dark brown black color. The smell in the burn areas was of rotten eggs and the smoke was acrid.

The upper Horton was the cleanest water I have experienced in all of my river tripping at its beginning and the most awful water at the end. The flow when it entered the Arctic Ocean was a thick, gooey mud.

Saskatchewan's Thompson was a beauti-



Attawapiskat

son was a beautiful river. In my mind, however, the Striding (in the Northwest Territory) a tributary of the Porcupine (in Saskatchewan) were far more challenging and exciting rivers that have Class I, II, III, IV and V whitewater. The Cree is a wonderful 125 mile run which would be appropriate for beginners or a family.

The Abitau in south central Northwest Territories was a challenging river. When we ran it, we had to blaze and cut all of the portage trails. It had not been run for many years. However, to camp at the bottom of Stratton Falls on the border of the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan made it all worthwhile.

The best river for lake trout fishing would be the Dubawnt. The Dubawnt was an exciting river because you travel from boreal forest to taiga to tundra. This was my first experience paddling out of a forest ultimately to the tundra.

The two Back River expeditions we made also had spectacular lake trout fishing. On one of these trips we saw 22 wolves.

The Thoa, Tazin and Taltson were three great rivers in south central Northwest Territories. These rivers provided a great opportunity for seeing lots of wildlife (primarily moose and wolves).

The Elk River which like the Horton ran through taiga, had



good fishing, beautiful taiga scenery, great whitewater and lots of opportunity for taiga and tundra walks.

The Ellice was a great river of the high Arctic which was classic tundra. Some of the granite outcroppings along the river were truly unique. We saw one polar bear on this river.

On the Kognak (eastern Nunavut) we camped near an Arctic fox den and were treated all evening with the fox and its kits jumping in and out of their den. Later in the evening a wolf walked right through camp. The Kognak in its upper reaches had some spectacular lake trout fishing.

The Thlewiaza/Seal trip was quite an adventure. We ran the river in 1978 and started our trip too early (especially for that year). We ran into major ice problems. Snyder Lake was half ice when we landed. At Kasmere Lake we hit solid ice. There were 3 or 4 leads but we had no idea which to take. However, while we were contemplating what to do, a exploration helicopter landed and the three stern men; my brother Gary Gnauck, Fred Nelson and I were invited for a ride. We flew down the ten mile section of the lake and found one lead went all the way. The pilot went up to 10,000 feet and we could see that all of the lakes of the area were frozen solid. We returned to the crew and paddled as fast as we could and made it through Kasmere only to find solid ice at Nueltin Lake.

My brother and I had planned to spend one day fishing with our my Dad, who at the time had coordinated a fishing trip at Bill Bennett's Nueltin Lake Lodge. We were fortunate to do so and then started our journey 80 miles overland by creeks, lakes and streams to the flowage of the North Seal. Keep in mind, 1978 was prior to GPS and satellite phones. All we had were some of the maps going south. The North Seal and Main Seal were in spring flood. We reached the Great Island on the Seal and ran out of maps.

Fred Nelson, and I each drew the shape of the last 100 miles of the Seal as we remembered it from a viewing of the maps. We combined these maps into one and proceeded to the ocean. The last rapids of the Seal had 12 to 14 foot waves. We then waited for high tide and paddled south. We headed to shore as tides started to go out and were confronted by a polar bear so we had to make a decision: scare off the polar bear (we did not have a weapon) or paddle Hudson bay at night! The air temperature was 41 ° F, the ocean water was 38 ° F and the west wind was blowing at about 10 knots.

We decided to paddle out into the open ocean. We paddled all night. At one point in our evening's paddle we saw the lights of Churchill and spirits rose dramatically. We paddled at these lights for quite awhile and finally they weakened and went out. We asked ourselves whether we were following a ship on the open ocean? We very quickly turned the canoes southwest and paddled as hard as we could arriving four hours later at some shoals. Each canoe had been outfitted with emergency food. We had been underway for over 12 hours. There is lots more to this tale, but we finally arrived on land about 10 miles south of Churchill. We were able to secure a ride in from a local fisherman. It was truly an adventure.

The Burnside was a spectacular trip in Canada's high north. We started our trip on an unnamed river to the northwest of Contwoyto Lake. On our third day a grizzly was at the water's edge chewing on the carcass of a caribou. This was a small river so we were

closer than we would have liked to have been.

It was interesting to observe the different behavior of bowmen versus sternmen. As we approached the bear, the bow men were back paddling while the stern men were paddling forward. It is amazing what a difference 5 feet makes especially if there is another Homo sapien between you and the bear.

The lower part of this river provided fabulous whitewater. The closer you got to Burnside canyon the bigger the rapids.

I will always remember seeing Bathurst Inlet for the first time. The portage around the canyon was a gentle sloping hill. The canyon portage required about a 3-mile walk so you very slowly walked up the hill to the pass, then you slowly dropped to the sea. As we walked to the top of this pass, Bathurst slowly presented itself. The inlet with its islands and scale 75 miles deep was a fabulous sight. The sun angle and the sparkling water almost took my breath away. I dropped my backpack and just tried to absorb the beauty of the moment.

Iwould be remiss if I did not mention the Coppermine. It was a grand trip from Lac de Gras to the ocean. The Coppermine has forest, taiga, and tundra. I still have a dead 2 inch diameter piece of black spruce that was aged at 194 years old. Rocky Defile was spectacular from both its scenery perspective and whitewater. Out of Red Rock Lake on this trip I casted 3 times and caught three 3 pound grayling. In addition to grayling, we caught Arctic char and lake trout.

We, as most parties, ran lots of whitewater on this trip. The last 100 miles is a canoeists dream as the river drops 10 feet per mile. Escape Rapids was big. We saw lots of caribou and entered Coppermine two years after a massive migration of about 10,000 caribou came through the area. There were hundreds of dead carcasses laying about that had not been butchered.

I mentioned at the beginning of this article the Harricana. This river was our first eye opener to the north. It was 1970 and we were all novices. Dale Graff, Fred Nelson, Carl Schmieder and I knew the basics about canoeing, but we were not seasoned trippers. Much of our gear was inappropriate. For example, we had a big family tent that weighed 90 pounds when wet – yes, it was always wet. One of our two canoes was *fiberglass*. Everything was packed into black plastic duffle bags – you get the picture. Plus, the Harricana was in flood stage. It was a physically demanding 220 mile trip, but it sparked a lifetime hobby of wilderness canoe tripping that still is ongoing.

In February of 2011 I will turn 70 years old so my tripping years are as the song says "In the September of its lifetime" (maybe it is really the December). I plan to continue for a few more years. The problem with age is that all of your friends age too and many exit the hobby. I have always argued that four things are required to execute wilderness canoe tripping – time to do it, interest and skill to do it, money, and health. So far, I have been fortunate – all four are with me.

I thank Michael Peake for the opportunity to share some of my lifetime of tripping with the readers of *Che-Mun*. Until the next time you all have the opportunity to dip their paddles into the pristine waters of the high north, my best to you.

iPaddle with an iPad

The topic of digital maps has come up over many years as technology merges with imagination. We first wrote about it in Outfit 59 which was more than 20 years ago! Well, it seems the future is finally here.

It certainly arrived for me this Christmas with the surprise gift of a much coveted Apple iPad tablet from my beloved Jan. A surprise because we labelled this uber-trendy device an intentional sacrifice to the altar of fiscal prudence following the construction of our beautiful new home last year on the edge of the Don Valley in Toronto, well, not the edge but pretty close.

First off, as millions of others have discovered, the iPad is a brilliant device - as I thought it would be when it was announced a year ago. Efficient delivery of digital media is the holy grail in my business and Apple seemed to nail it first as they often do.

So how does all this relate to wilderness canoeing? Since topographic maps being the winter life's blood of even aging northern canoeists this new technology has merged into something wonderful. We have previously written about the free download availability of Canada's topographic maps electronically. While very cool and neat, it was still problematic to print them in a usable size unless you have access to a commercial printer.

Now with the iPad and its thousands of Apps or applications a new door has opened to digital delivery. While there is still nothing that equals poring over the smooth skin of a freshly unrolled topo map, unless you have thousand of dollars and unlimited storage space it's not too practical.

One of the free apps that is available has the catchy title *Topographic Maps Canada*. This simple but brilliant app, developed by Canadian David Crawshay of Calgary, will download whatever Canadian topo map you want and

stitch them together.

"The Topographic Maps Canada app was originally intended for my own exclusive use for exploring the backcountry of Alberta and

months. That is nothing new, what this thing does is stitch them all together for you in a very portable format. And when you come to the end of the map you are looking at and fall off, it asks if you would like to get that one too and will immediately download and place it if you wish.

It downloads a bit-mapped versions of the typical topo map designed for mobile uses. They do not contains the written info on the borders of traditional maps which are also available via download.

I merrily spent many hours downloading various river systems and began profiling the rivers. Since with the iPad you can widen and narrow the image you can easily zoom right into the river and then mark where each topo line crosses as you profile the drop of the river. There is also a ruler which measures the distances. You can plant a flag anywhere to signify a camp or contour.

The first river I did was the Keele River where I will be guiding a group down this great river again this summer. It is a very cool tool and very addictive. It is also a great way to explore and check out new features.

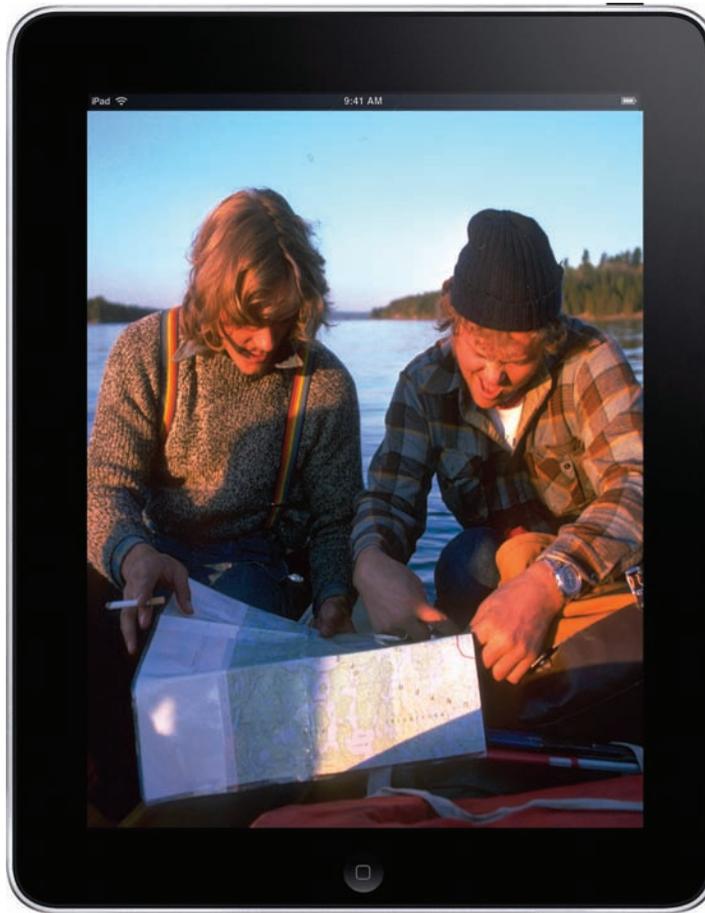
As is the mind-boggling Google Earth. For a really wide ride, hold down the Shift key to allow you to get oblique views so you can almost fly down the canyons. It is truly amazing. And also available for iPad.

Now of course, no one is advising perching an iPad on the thwart

mid-rapid but for me it certainly is a ley part of the cherished research process. Another great use for the iPad is marine charts that enable you to download whatever charts you require. This will be great for ocean paddling and cot-tagging. The iPad is also a much better format for viewing info with its large and very high quality screen.

The web link for the GeoGratis page at Natural Resources Canada is <http://geogratis.cgdi.gc.ca/geogratis/en/index.html>

- Michael Peake



Sean and Michael Peake inside an iPad from our first northern trip - Quetico 1976.

BC with my mountain bike and on foot," David Crawshay said in an email to *Che-Mun*. "I found the app so useful that I decided to distribute it on Apple's AppStore so other people can enjoy it.

"I also use this app for kayaking, cross-country skiing, and occasionally for road navigation. I often add flags (waypoints) to the maps to save locations that I discover so they can be viewed in Google Earth at home.

"The app is free because I wanted it to reach as many people as possible. The app has been downloaded over 22,000 times in the past six



CANOESWORTHY *continued*

Four women were sent south later, including Leeseq Qaqasiq of Pangnirtung, in what is now Nunavut. She was sent to Nova Scotia in 1966 at six or seven years old. In a 2008 interview, she talked about returning home and not being able to communicate with her mother, because Qaqasiq could no longer speak Inuktitut.

Cooper filed a lawsuit on behalf of the seven in 2008. They're seeking compensation from the federal government and hoping to reach an out-of-court settlement. A federal spokesperson said the government is still in the discovery process and won't comment further on the case at this time.

They may be small and cute but in the Arctic food web, lemmings are a mighty keystone species whose future depends on snow — and plenty of it. If some climate models pan out, suggesting that areas of Nunavut will get more snow thanks to global warming, the ubiquitous hamster-like creature will flourish.

But shorter winters, and perhaps more rain — which is what some climatologists predict — could spell disaster for lemmings, the furry snack of choice for many northern predators.

Models reveal only possible outcomes, of course. No one knows for sure how much snow will fall in the coming decades, and where. For now, lemming populations here are healthy and thriving, says Frederic Bilodeau, a PhD candidate at the Université Laval, who presented his Bylot Island research at last month's recent conference in Ottawa.

Studies from Scandinavia show that warmer temperatures have encouraged the march northward of new predators, causing a decline in lemming numbers there. In Russia, it's the influx of voles that are outcompeting lemmings for food.

The tiny mammals live under the snow nine months of the year. They make tunnels in the pockets of air between ground and snow, relying on a thick cover to hide from predators, have babies, get access to vegetation for food and shelter themselves from cold. Lemming populations naturally fluctuate, peaking in numbers every three to four years and crashing in between. Though they have been studied for 100 years, it's still unclear to scientists exactly what causes that cycle.

Annual fluctuations in predator populations are directly linked to the abundance or scarcity of lemmings.

Some avian predators actually refrain from laying eggs in the year following a lemming shortage. According to the federal government's 2007 *From Impact to Adaptation* report, precipitation in northern Canada has increased by 1.4 per cent a decade from 1900 to 2003, with more pronounced increases across the tundra and in the mountain regions of Baffin Island where Bylot Island is located.

Warmer temperatures also mean earlier spring melting and shorter winters. This makes climate change a good news-bad news story for the lowly lemming.

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. will challenge in federal court a decision by Fisheries and Oceans Canada to ban the export of tusks and other narwhal products from 17 Nunavut communities.

NTI president Cathy Towtongie said the ban violates the Nunavut land claims agreement. "In NTI's view, they have based their decision on questionable data. DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans)

research shows the population is thriving, and harvest numbers do not threaten the species."

The dispute centres on DFO's decision not to issue "non-detriment findings" — which certify that hunting won't harm a species population—for narwhal in four Nunavut areas: Admiralty Inlet, eastern Baffin Island, northern Hudson Bay, and around Parry Channel.

In its court application, NTI argues that DFO ignored the authority of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board to regulate hunting in the territory.

NTI also argues that DFO acted unfairly by not consulting Inuit groups before issuing the decision and "deprived Inuit of the opportunity to respond and make submissions on a matter that directly affected their interests".

But DFO maintains some narwhal populations are at risk and the ban is needed to comply with the terms of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Speaking to reporters in Iqaluit Jan. 14, Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq said she tried to help broker a resolution to the dispute before the matter went to court. She said she sympathized with frustrated Nunavut hunters who face mounting international pressure against hunting the Arctic animals that are also staple Inuit foods, like narwhals, seals and polar bears.

The increasingly late freeze-up of sea ice on Hudson Bay has forced one Arctic community to take new measures to protect itself from the growing number of polar bears roaming its streets.

Bears have always been common around Arviat, along the western shore of Hudson Bay. The hamlet is on the bears' migration route as they return to their sealing grounds on the floe edge of Hudson Bay after spending the summer on shore. But sightings of the fearsome predators — known to stalk and kill humans — have become increasingly common over the last few years in the community itself.

There used to be no polar bears going into town. Now, they have seen a polar bear one foot away from right among the houses. This winter, bears had to wait until early December to hit the ice — weeks later than usual. And because they eat little during the summer and must live off the fat from the winter's seal hunting, those bears are hungry.

Although Arviat, once known as Eskimo Point, has long used watchmen to warn children and adults when a bear is visiting, it was becoming clear that something more was needed.

This fall, the Nunavut government and the World Wildlife Fund brought in two large metal shipping containers in which people can store their seal and caribou meat. Smaller metal bins can be used to keep meat for dog teams safe. Hunters have been given wire mesh to wrap around their food caches out on the land. Dog teams have been encircled by electric fencing.

The worldwide population of polar bears is estimated at between 20,000 and 25,000. Of the 19 populations around the globe, eight are considered to be declining, three are stable and one is increasing. There isn't enough known about the other seven to assess their status. The Western Hudson Bay population is estimated at about 1,000 bears and is considered in decline



NEVERMORE? - This remote scene is at the confluence of the Back and Consul rivers at the top of the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary, August 1995. At the end of the 50-day Arctic Land Expedition, which started in Lake Athabasca, the four Peake brothers are getting ready to load the Air Tindi Twin Otter with two canoes for the 430 mile flight back to Yellowknife. Will new regulations mean no more canoes inside a Twin Otter? Incidentally, on this trip the group stopped in to visit the site of the cairn marking the naming of the Morse River in 1985. It was too windy to land at the headwater lake so the foursome jumped into waist-deep water while the Twin Otter ferried in the strong winds.

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