



Autumn 2012    The Journal of Canadian Wilderness Canoeing    Outfit 150

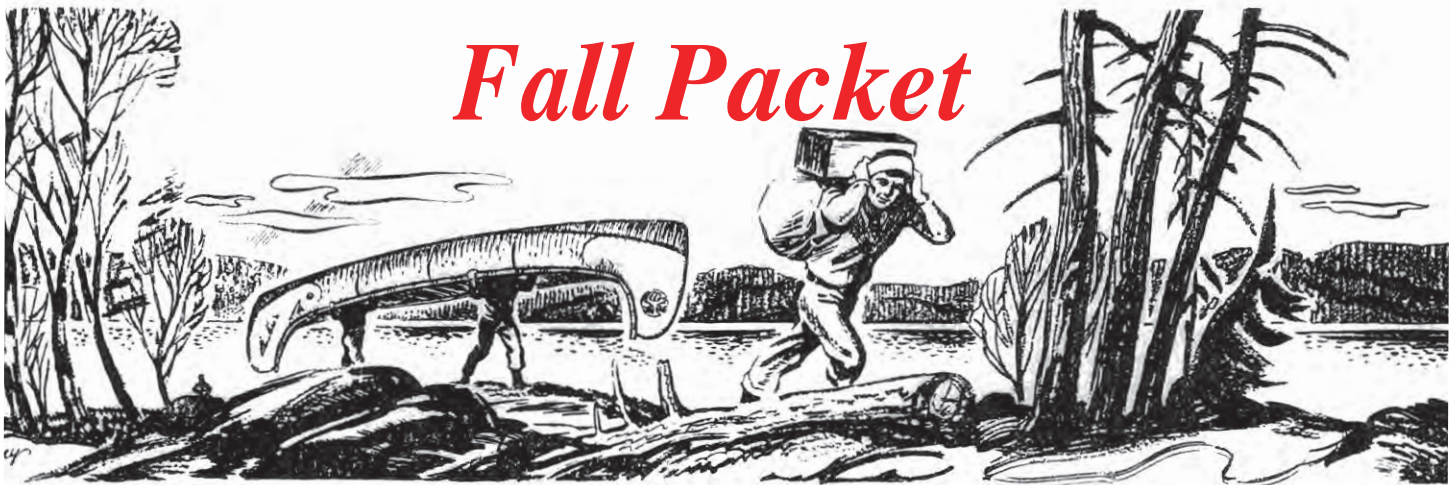


photos: Michael Peake - digital composite of two photos

**THE RUPERT REMEMBERED - OR NOT? --** When: June 1982. Where: The Rupert River - when it flowed freely. Who: Geoffrey and Sean Peake. What: First Canyon Chute. All these elements were present on that beautiful day in June '82 as the mighty Rupert river brawled its way to the sea. We ran many of those rapids but not this one for obvious reasons. But even if we didn't isn't it OK to show that we did? Our thoughts on Page 3. Note the photo credit for an idea of where we stand on this.

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# Fall Packet

Intrepid subscriber Bob Henderson was reconnecting some Stefansson dots last summer.

John Lentz in *Che-Mun Outfit 108* describes finding Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Rudolph Anderson's cabin on Coal Creek about one kilometer off the Horton River – though the more important route for them was the land link to their Langton Bay base on the Arctic Coast. Lentz describes a wooded area just north of Coal Creek. Should be easy to find, we thought? There was even a picture in the *Che-Mun* issue showing a bit of a slope behind the cabin. A clue.

The Stefansson – Anderson Expedition 1908 – 1912 had the following intention. To live with the “Eskimos” and animal life was their goal; Stefansson the ethnologist, Anderson the biologist. When at the Coal Creek cabin, Stefansson was “living the dream”. He was content to record his Inuit companion's stories and further develop his language skills. Anderson had no facility with the Inuit language and therefore travelled widely at this time from the Coal Creek cabin.

*“Our thesis was this: that we were not looking for any waste places, but for land occupied by human beings; if those human beings were there at all, they must be Eskimo supporting themselves by the most primitive implements of the chase; and it seemed clear that if Eskimo could live there, armed as they must be with bows and arrows, and not only live there but bring up their children and take care of their aged, then surely we, armed with modern rifles, would be able to live in that sort of country as long as we pleased and to go about in it as we liked. Of course the thesis was bound to prove out.”* This passage certainly highlights the different times of 1911 for Arctic travellers as one thinks in a then and now manner that one is want to do over years of *Che-Mun* reading.

Stefansson in *My Life with the Eskimos*

(1913) describes the cabin which was “thirty or so miles to Langton Bay”:

*“... we all put in two days in building a house frame and sodding it over roughly. The*



**Checking the remains of Stef's hundred year old cabin.**

*sodding was so poorly done that we later on had to do it all over again. The building was a simple affair. There were a pair of vertical posts about twenty feet apart and nine feet high, across the tops of which a ridgepole was laid. An essential feature of the walls was that they were not vertical, but sloped in, so that earth, no matter how carelessly it was thrown against the house, would fit in and not cave away as commonly happens when you try to build vertical walled houses in white men's fashion”.*

From the Horton, we discussed the logic of this particular geography and a winter cabin location. Andre Francois Bourbeau was our leader in this discussion. Andre is an outdoor survival educator. Safe to say, he sees the land differently than me at times, and here, his insight was invaluable. We discussed a distant hill edge spur that would offer easy access onto the plateau to the north. This would facilitate access to the hunting grounds on a more “long vista” terrain. The cabin must be close to the river (Coal Creek), must be in a well-wooded area, and must be sheltered from the exposed Horton River corridor yet close to the same for

easy travel again. Finally the cabin site should be flat and perhaps close to a wooden downhill lie to drop trees easily.

In the hot sun, it seemed like a long hunt at the end of a full day of canoe tripping. Energy was waning and the group had divided into two when Andre and others, staying true to the original assertion, found the cabin remains close to that same dominant spur we had seen from the Horton. The search was made harder by the fact that the Coal Creek watercourse was completely dry and quite braided with troughs in mid August.

As expected, first saw marks and axe cuts were found in what proved to be close proximity to roof remains (five to seven logs lashed together). These saw/axe markings were covered in lichen, showing their old age. There were no walls evident. The sod dominant indented wood walls were not evident. No door, no windows. This was a one winter throw up tilt.

Such a quest is an exciting bonus to any canoe trip. The Horton is not a significant historical travel-way given its proximity to the Mackenzie to the west. Stefansson sledded on the Horton River from Dease Bay on Great Bear Lake, December 1910 returning to Coal Creek. He travelled in an interesting circle via boat and sled from Coal Creek – Langton Bay east to Coronation Gulf onto the Coppermine and to Great Bear Lake via Dease River returning to the coast again on the Horton. And we thought our 600 kms of river tripping was a long route. Visiting Stefansson's cabin on Coal Creek opens the door to his travels. We had something tangible to connect to. I, for one, began reading his books in earnest following our trip. And a little piece of the Arctic and another time lingers in one's mind and remains a little closer to one's consciousness. All this thanks to *Che-Mun 108*.



## Editor's Notebook

**O**ne of the allures of northern canoeing is that the traditional activity is still, well, pretty traditional and remains largely the same as has been for millennia. But the business of presenting it certainly has changed.

We had the honour of helping a very ambitious trip by Camp Wanapitei in Temagami this past summer. A dozen teens went from Tulita to Kugluktuk by going up the Great Bear River - à la George Douglas and across Great Bear Lake and up the Calder River and over to the Coppermine River and down that great river. Impressive.

When Shauna Kearns and Tobin Leckie, the trip guides, sent me a link to a movie about the trip by one of the kids I expected to see some nice images and lots of Go-Pro shots from various angles. What I saw was an amazing short movie from a digital SLR that equalled almost anything I had ever seen. Humbled? For sure. Awed? Definitely.

You can check it out for yourself on YouTube - just look for "V2 52 Day Arctic Canoe Trip". The paddler/artist just graduated high school in Toronto. He has the vision of an true artist - not doing the commonplace - rather he expressed himself in a unique way - but there were some troubling aspects. He is all artist - but no journalist.

When I saw a spectacular wide shot of three canoes running Bloody Falls, which is really a Grade IV-V rapid I was really surprised. Some kayakers have run this historic set but I would think camp trips would avoid it. We never even thought of running it. When I mentioned it to Shauna, she said they did not do it but it was imaged in. She also acknowledged that he should put a disclaimer in. He most definitely should.

Like our cover photo in this outfit, the problem with using technology's easy tricks so freely is that people will not know what is real if you don't tell them - and you MUST. I don't want to single out the paddler, he's just a kid with a prodigious talent. However, in my job as a newspaper photographer such editing is a firing offense. The viewer/reader needs to know what he sees is real unless he has been told it isn't. There is a real difference.

- Michael Peake

## Canoesworthy

**N**unavut's culture and language minister James Arreak says the Government of Nunavut (GN) wants to see the Ukkusiksalik Kuunga, known as the Back River in English, added to the Canadian Heritage River System.

But Nunavut MLAs, meeting in early November in the Committee of the whole, said they want to make sure the Inuktitut name is used when the GN nominates the river.

Baker Lake MLA Moses Aupaluktuq said he welcomed the nomination as a future Canadian Heritage River for Ukkusiksalik Kuunga, which lies close to his community.

"Our future is full of possibilities, with the recognition of the river as a Heritage River, and the residents of Baker Lake will be quite proud of this status since, even without it, the Inuit of Baker Lake are already quite attached to it today," he said.

Other Canadian Heritage Rivers in Nunavut include Harvaqtuuq (Kazan River), the Kanajuup Kuungat (Thelon River) and the Kuujjuak (Soper River).

The Coppermine River has also been nominated to the Canadian Heritage River System for its natural heritage, cultural heritage, and recreational values.

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System was established in 1984 by federal, provincial and territorial governments "to conserve rivers with outstanding natural, cultural and recreational heritage, to give them national recognition, and to encourage the public to enjoy and appreciate them."

Today, there are 42 Canadian Heritage Rivers (37 designated, with another five nominated) across Canada, says the Canadian Heritage Rivers System website.

**I**f there were money to build a \$1.2 billion all-weather 1,200-kilometre road linking Manitoba to Nunavut, at least engineering studies could point the way.

A preferred route has been selected for the road, said Richard Danis, director of transportation policy and service development for Manitoba. So, this means that the road, when or if it's built, would join the existing Manitoba highway system at Gillam, roughly 250 km south of Churchill, with that port town, Arviat, Whale Cove and Rankin Inlet linked in by feeder routes.

But don't hold your breath. "No new work is under way," Danis said in an update. "The Nunavut-Manitoba all-weather road initiative must be recognized and promoted."

The earliest time you'll see that road built is at least 20 years from now, although Danis said there has been talk about building a winter road as an interim measure. Construction of the road would take 15 years after five years of preliminary planning and engineering.

It could also be an attractive project for a public-private partnership.

The business case study for the road, which he recapped, highlights a number of benefits to Manitoba and Nunavut, such as a reduction in the high cost of public services in the North and an increase in the opportunities for large-scale resource development.

But a lot of ground work still needs to be done, including a variety of studies and high-resolution aerial mapping.

The idea for the road first started circulating in earnest back in 2001 when Nunavut and Manitoba agreed to look together at the benefits and feasibility of the all-weather road. But a lot of ground work still needs to be done, including a variety of studies and high-resolution aerial mapping. The idea for the road first started circulating in earnest back in 2001 when Nunavut and Manitoba agreed to look together at the benefits and feasibility of the all-weather road.

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# A BIT OF CLIFF HANGING

*Now in his early 70s, Cliff Jacobson continues to be an icon in the canoeing world. Always a great crowd-pleasing speaker who would draw the biggest crowds at Canoecon and other mid-west paddling events, Cliff has recently expanded his canoeing horizons to Europe. What follows is an interview for his new publisher FalconGuides that we thought we would share with Che-Mun readers.*

**How did you first get into canoeing? What was it that drew you in and kept you coming back to it time and again?**

**I**t began in 1952 at the age of 11 at a rustic Boy Scout camp set deep in the Michigan woods. The canoes were wood and canvas—and magical! Those who’ve paddled wooden canoes will understand. The canoe was a ticket to the wild in wilderness. Yes, one could hike to remote places, but it was faster and easier by canoe. You can carry more gear than a backpacker and thus live more comfortably. On a long backpacking trip you’ll travel super light and “rough it,” but a canoe will “smooth” the way.

I read every book on canoeing and camping I could find. I doted on the adventures of the northern explorers. Names like Hudson Bay, Coppermine, Churchill, and the Northwest Territories called my name. If there’s a “wilderness gene” I have it.

The canoe has a beauty and grace that is unmatched by other watercraft. The same canoe that can carry you on a picnic down a placid river can float you to the Arctic Ocean. Some highlights of trips that keep me

no threat; watching seals, which are nearly as long as my canoe, skitter by; paddling among beluga whales; being chased downriver by a polar bear; catching huge lake trout, the size of which anglers dream.



**Tell me a little bit about your first multi-day expedition? What did you learn and take away from that first trip?**



coming back for more? Paddling among thousands of caribou, stroking their backs with my paddle; talking quietly to bears, telling them we are

**I**t was a 21-day trip from Folyet, Ontario, to James Bay (300 miles), via the Groundhog, Mattagami, and Moose Rivers in Ontario. It rained every day for 17 days; the river was flooded; the bugs were horrendous; the rapids were frightening and the topography wasn’t all that pretty. We didn’t see a soul the entire trip. Of all the northern routes I’ve done, this is my least favorite, and one I would never do again. But it was very adventurous; it tested my skills and it encouraged me to keep learning. I learned that there are few second chances on these tough northern rivers. Doing things sloppy or merely “good enough” is not GOOD ENOUGH! Some of my readers have accused me of being opinionated in my methods. In reality, successful explorers follow much the same pattern of planning and executing a canoe trip. Yes, they may use different style packs or paddles or foods, but they follow strict procedures on waterproofing their gear, scouting and running rapids, portaging, storm-proofing their camp, etc. It takes years to develop the proper respect for a wilderness river; you can’t rush it. Those that try usually don’t survive very long.



**When planning out a new canoeing trip, what is it that first draws you to that trip?**

I love remote rivers, especially those in northern Canada and Alaska. On some rivers it's the challenge of the rapids; on others it's the wildlife—caribou, musk ox, wolves, dall sheep, and grizzlies. Still others are noted for their intense beauty or magnificent campsites. Recently, I've turned my attention to American desert rivers like the

**looking to make this their lifestyle and work, what would that advice be?**

**M**y best advice is to always remember that "skills are more important than things." You can get by with mediocre gear if you know what you're doing. If you don't, you're in serious trouble, even if you have the best gear. Learn first, buy second!

Knowledge makes the difference. Read every canoeing and camping book you can find, even those that are long out-of-print and belong to the last century. There are things you can learn from the old-timers; don't dismiss old knowledge as bad knowledge. New isn't always better; it just sells well. Case in point: In the early part of this century, Horace Kephart, in his book "Woodcraft and Camping," wrote that insect headnets should be colored black so you can see through them. Today, most tent screens and bug nets are in colors other than black. These colors reflect light into your eyes and reduce visibility. For the same reason, automobile steering wheels and dashboards should also be black. Manufacturers would be wise to reflect on proven ways

*To learn more about Cliff Jacobson and his many books, check him out [here](#) or on his website, [cliff-jacobson.com](http://cliff-jacobson.com).*



Green, Missouri, and Rio Grande (it's awesome!). Last year, I canoed two remote whitewater rivers along the border of Norway and Finland. What a rush! Every place has its unique challenges and beauty.

**Is there a particularly memorable trip that always pops up first when reaching back into the memory bank? What was so memorable about that trip?**

**Y**es, the Hood River (Province of Nunavut, Canada), north of the Arctic Circle. I've done it twice: On the first trip (1984), we encountered nearly 100,000 caribou, some so close you could touch them with your canoe paddle. We also saw over 300 muskoxen and two grizzlies. On the second trip (1992). Sue Harings and I were married at Wilberforce Falls on the Hood River. It is the only recorded wedding at this spot. Wilberforce, by the way, drops 160 feet through a 3-mile canyon; the U.S. Niagara Falls, by comparison, drops 167 feet. The Hood has one of the most spectacular waterfalls on the continent. There are just two ways to get there—by canoe or by pricey chartered bush plane that's outfitted with tubby tundra tires.

**I know you're an avid outdoorsman with many pursuits. If you could impart one piece of advice to the next generation of avid outdoorsmen (and women)**

**Photos (Clockwise from below) Susie Harings and Cliff get hitched at Wilberforce Falls on the Hood River in 1993; Cliff lining the Latiseino River, Norway where he has been paddling recently using the PakBoat folding canoes; Resting along the Thlewiaza River in Nunavut; and Cliff in his element - in a crowd of canoeists - here on the North Knife River in northern Manitoba.**





# Tracking Mr. Tyrrell

*As part of an epic 1000 km trip from the headwaters of the Thelon River to Hudson Bay last summer BRIAN JOHNSTON takes Che-Mun readers inside a part of that trip on two remote rivers with a great historic connection.*



photo: Jim Gallagher

**Following the Tyrrell's 1894 route, the party lines down the edge of a wide rapid, where the Ferguson River descends into Quartzite Lake.**

**By Brian Johnston**

For decades, canoeists have explored and enjoyed northern rivers with many past and contemporary canoe trips coming to fruition because of air charters. All trips require a jumping-off point and small aircraft have lessened the time and effort required by extending access beyond that of the traditional northern communities.

I had been contemplating a trip in the Ferguson River area for several years. My interest began after reading the travels of Tyrrell but lack of access and information continues to thwart such an expedition. Although there are several communities along the Hudson Bay coastline, securing a suitable aircraft has proved difficult.

Not one to sit idle, my desire to travel welded well with the reality of the trip. Similar to Tyrrell, we started our journey, far from the Ferguson River. In our case, we chose Yellowknife, a common departure point for northern canoe trips. By utilizing a float plane, we began our canoe trip at Lynx Lake on the Thelon River system. From Lynx, we traversed eastward via rivers and lakes, as well as over divides, before reaching the novel Ferguson River. In short, we were bound for 'The Bay'. At times, this seemed to be an elusive, faraway place.

In fact, the Ferguson River and Hudson Bay lay 800 and 1000 kilometres respectively from Lynx Lake. Besides following and crossing numerous watercourses, we had to contend with over 10 kilometres of portages through mostly bushy divides before reaching the Ferguson watershed. As is commonplace, we contended with strong winds.



Before venturing out, I received advice from other learned trippers. For example, Bill Layman stated, “This I expect will be a ball busting spirit crushing exercise but doable. Read Tyrrell’s account for the gory details. Also be well aware that the Ferguson River can easily be without water or very low.” Thus, it is not surprising that during the trip, repetitively, my optimism met doubtful ears.

Our odyssey would be a name-dropping trip encompassing major rivers including the Thelon, Dubawnt, and Kazan as well as big lakes, such as Lynx, Carey, Kamilukuak, Nowleye, Angikuni, and Yathkyed. It would embrace the history of J. B. Tyrrell’s epic journeys. More importantly, our quest included two almost unknown river gems—the Ferguson and Wilson. As it happens, Tyrrell named the Ferguson River and its Munro Lake after the Governor-General’s Aides-de-camp, Robert (Bob) Munro Ferguson.

How poorly known are Ferguson and Wilson Rivers? Ask not your canoeing crowd nor your local club. Chances are no one has canoed either river. However, consult a watershed map and you will find that they both name a watershed. At least they have the appearance of being navigable rivers. Further, turn to the authority on northern river canoe travel, *Canoeing North Into the Unknown*, A Record of Canoe Travel: 1874 to 1974

(by B. Hodgins & G. Hoyle) and you will find four entries for the Ferguson but none for the Wilson. Although one party recorded elsewhere in the book did canoe the Wilson.

The first two accounts were working trips for the Geological Survey of Canada. In 1894, J.B. Tyrrell and R.M. Ferguson completed an epic journey that included canoeing down the Ferguson River. Years later, in 1930, D.F. Kidd explored part way up the Ferguson River.

Next came the recreational paddlers. In 1974, Hugh Stewart and Bob Davis set out to follow Tyrrell’s route down the Ferguson. Finding themselves short on time, they altered northward and instead of following the Ferguson, used the Wilson River to reach the coast. Not included in the Ferguson listing but in the same decade as the previous entry, Jay and Carolyn Pritchett, Jim Abel, and twenty-four canoeists canoed the Ferguson River. In a similar fashion, they did not follow the Ferguson River to Hudson Bay. Rather they headed south to the Maguse River.

The final entry, dated in question (1976?), was a canoe party who canoed the Ferguson River from Ferguson Lake to the Bay. Of course, since then others have canoed the Ferguson and Wilson Rivers. Our pre-trip research yielded only two other recreational canoe trips in the vicinity (David DeMello and a women’s YMCA party from the Twin Cities, I assume Menogyn or Widjiwagan).

It appears that there are two ‘common’ routes to the Ferguson from the west. The most well-known is Tyrrell’s route, which some people call the 12-portage route. This route starts on the Kazan

River past the first set of falls north of Yathkyed Lake. There is usually water in the lakes on this portage route. Tyrrell hired local Inuit to help with the portaging required on this route, an option most likely not available to recreational canoeists.

The other known route is from the Tyrrell Arm in the southeast corner of Yathkyed Lake. This route involves longer portages albeit fewer than a dozen of them. This was the path travelled by our group in 2012.

Other routes from the Kazan to the Ferguson exist. During our planning stage, we briefly looked at a route that lies between the Tyrrell’s 12-portage route and the route out of Tyrrell Arm. It links



Trip member Lee Sessions captured this amazing aerial view with his kite aerial photography kit.

tiny tundra ponds similar to the 12-portage route but is twice as long.

An old route connects the Kazan River below Kazan Falls to the Ferguson River via Parker Lake. The Inuit lived on the land and traveled throughout this region—first on foot and by kayak, and more recently by canvas canoe. The Ferguson River was a logical route between the coast and Baker Lake.

As wilderness canoeists, we seek simplicity in our experiences—the opposite of our value-added culture. We desire the escape of uncertainty and adventure. Without a single trip report, we ventured into the Ferguson watershed. What would we find? How would the river receive us? What would the land reveal? How would the environment treat us?

During July, we spent weeks in the transition zone between the subarctic and the barren lands as we slowly progressed eastward towards the Ferguson River. There were consequences to starting a trip hundreds of kilometres away and several watersheds beyond. Often we were under arduous environmental conditions and



confronted by stressful situations. We put in long days to catch up after being delayed and weather bound. We performed physically demanding activities with tired bodies and beat down spirits. Our successful progress required teamwork when carrying out tasks such as tracking upstream and running whitewater. Our empty food packs and rum bottles were constant reminders of events and divides that had come to pass.

When we left the major river systems, we referred to unnamed lakes by their elevation. We continued to see signs of previous travellers,

including tent rings. After we carried the height of land into the Ferguson watershed and started to descend a river, it felt as though we were pushing off into the unknown.

We navigated a single blue line (river) chocked full of rapids.

It was a beautiful section with steep walls, scenic bedrock outcrops, and runnable rapids. Caribou along with either bugs or wind

were our steadfast companions. Finally, the shallow river section led us down into Ferguson Lake.

It was a relief to be on Ferguson Lake after so much work. We could see something visible off in the distance, presumably Ferguson Lake Lodge. The fishing lodge is no longer in use though Starfield Resources Inc. had been using it as an exploration base. The site includes a 600-metre airstrip. We could also see Starfield's new camp to the west.

Now that we were on the Ferguson River, we had the pleasure to canoe Kaminuriak, MacKenzie, Victory, O'Neil, Quartzite, Snug, Munro, Helika, and Last Lakes. Be forewarned that Last Lake is incorrectly labelled as Lost Lake on one of the 1:50k topographic maps.

Instead of following the Ferguson River to Hudson Bay, we chose to portage overland to the Wilson River. The Wilson empties into Wilson Bay on the backside of the Whale Cove Hamlet. In doing so, we paddled our way through Maze Lake and enjoyed the scenic Whiterock Lake. The wisdom of yet another watershed

crossing (our fifth) lay in avoiding a long paddle on the Bay. This lessened our exposure to the coastline and dealing with tidal flats, colder water, wind exposure, salt water, finding drinking water, and polar bears.

The Ferguson-Wilson route was rich with old trapper cabin sites and numerous Inuit stone sites (tent rings, inuksuit, meat caches, hunting blinds, and kayak stands). It was not pristine, as we saw the all too common old fuel drum caches.

In addition to the bountiful human history, the river ed-

dies and lakes were alive with fish including grayling and lake trout as well as seals. Arctic Char and beluga whales had not yet arrived for their fall visit when we paddled through Wilson Bay.

I do not recall a day without the sound of sand-hill cranes—our unwavering sidekicks (more heard than seen). Similarly, caribou were with us round-the-clock.

Overhead eagles,

peregrine falcons, and rough legged hawks flew. Swans circled on the tundra ponds.

On the land, we nibbled on cloudberry and blueberries. One of the crew harvested a double batch of cloudberry for jam (sugared and sugar free). I gathered a pot full of blueberries to complement our apple crisp dessert.

The rivers were kind to us. Although the water levels were comparatively low, much lower than the high water we encountered on the Kazan system, we ran most of the rapids. It was a pleasure to run down several miles of river—all easy going rapids and current. At other times, sections that were more difficult were portaged and lined.

One day I wrote in my journal, "At 7:50 a.m., we set sail, so to speak, into the river current. The first 10 miles of our day were river, before we emptied into a western arm of Quartzite Lake. The river is most wonderful to float down—scenic smooth shield. It is very pleasant to have some land elevation after the low laying land of the geese flats, as it is easier on the eyes as well as on the navigation. We passed many tipped up rocks and as is often the



**Author Brian Johnston shown paddling along in a canoe loaded for 1000 kilometres.**

Photo: Lee Sessions





case, they were marking the windy river route.”

Another day I noted the stillness of a weather system.

“It was a hot night. The evening temperature finally started to drop once a light breeze blew through the tent. It was after 9 p.m.

I woke to the sound of rain, different but very similar to the pitter-patter of bugs on the tent, which is what we fell asleep listening to.

“Our 5:30 a.m. wake-up routine was too early in spite of the fact that I was asleep before 9:30 p.m. The rain had just ended when I exited the tent and started breakfast preparations.

“After eating, the bugs were fierce and again it had started to rain. Oh yeah, rain suits with head nets! For the first time in over a month, I did not brush my teeth. Once on the water, it was difficult to see obstacles through the rain and head veils as we ventured downstream.”

**E**ven though the weather is not always favourable, the Ferguson and Wilson Rivers are ideally suited for canoe travel.

When we were crossing from the Ferguson River to the Wilson River, a portage ended near some sik sik diggings. The excavations revealed seashells—signs that the area was once a shoreline or sea bottom. Two members of our party found good-sized seashells.

Several days later, we were approaching the mainland side of Whale Cove. We were on the beach long enough to pull up our canoes when community members arrived, all saying, “Welcome to Whale Cove.” The mayor, COA, CO, student RCMP, school kids, various works, elders, and so on all visited. The hamlet was very welcoming!

Kids tried out paddles, throat sang, and asked us many questions.

While in Whale Cove we all walked around with kids in tow. Some on bikes, some with slingshots, and some peddling carvings or mukluk crafts.

We had arranged to stay over-

night in the school. In return, we gave three presentations to the school kids. The children called out oohs and aahs to our wildlife images and told us the animal names in Inuktituk.

Our transition back into civilization was fitful. Between the floor hockey in the nearby gym and accompanying music, the ten o'clock curfew siren, and the refrigerator compressors in the cooking classroom we slept in, a good night's sleep was elusive. After one night, we were yearning for the tundra.

**I**f you desire more than the Ferguson River then head west and canoe the well-known rivers and lakes to gain access to the wonderful waters of the Ferguson and Wilson Rivers. Alternatively, if you want a shorter trip, there are a couple of airstrip options on Ferguson Lake—one at the old lodge and another at the newer exploration camp. Other access possibilities include Keith Sharpe's camp on Kaminuriak Lake, and possibly Henik Lake (St. John family of Arviat). Also, consider off-strip esker and tundra landings as well as water landings.

**Try contacting the following outfits**  
Arctic Skies Outpost, Shawn Maley, Rankin Inlet.

Henik Lake Adventures, Ryan and Dorothy St. John, Arviat.

Kenn Borek Air, Rankin Inlet.

Oopik Air, Boris Kotelewetz, Baker Lake Lodge, Baker Lake.

Wings Over Kisissing, Thompson or Churchill base.

Suggested winter reading to learn more about Tyrrell

**Tyrrell, J. B., Report on the Doobaunt, Kazan and Ferguson Rivers (1897).**

**Heather Robertson; Measuring Mother Earth: How Joe the Kid became Tyrrell of the North.**

For more photos and a map of the trip check out [www.hacc.ca](http://www.hacc.ca) and see Che-Mun 150



**A 1000km trip can get you into amazing shape. Rolling this boulder around proved easy work after weeks on the trail - or so they said**



**If you are doing a Tyrrell trip there is a great historical connection with large boulders. This one from Carey Lake on the Dubawnt River in 1893 was the site of their August 1st cairn. In 1985, the HACC wanted to recreate this shot in July but ice blocked our way and when we climbed a nearby hill we could see Carey Lake was covered in white and we had to portage around it through a series of lakes as we were heading west at that point. Tyrrell called this spot Caribou Camp owing to the tens of thousands of animals in the vicinity. In the cairn placed on top of the boulder, they put a record of their travels to that point and J. B. Tyrrell says in his book, Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada, they left their flag there too which appears to be the Union Jack. No word of whoever came across these valuable historical tidbits - but someone likely did - and who knows where it ended up.**



## CANOESWORTHY *continued*

Thousands of barrels of thick, black, toxic crude oil are spewing into Nunavut's waters every day. Satellite radar imagery has detected a number of oil slicks off northeastern Baffin Island — and some have even been photographed by scientists. The largest slicks cover more than 250 square kilometres, with at least 50,000 barrels of oil dancing on the surface of the water.

That's what Dr. Gordon Oakey, a marine geophysicist for the Geological Survey of Canada, said at a Nunavut Petroleum Workshop in Iqaluit.

But how does the oil get there?

Oakey presented a slide that explains it all — it's nature.

That slide showed a crack in the ocean floor at Scott Inlet, about 130 km north of Clyde River.

The slide showed black oil bubbling around an orange starfish lying at the bottom of the ocean floor — making its own way to the surface naturally, Oakey said.

"What I'd like to point out is the scale here," Oakey said. "Some of these slicks [from this oil] are about 40 or 50 km around, and when you consider the thickness of an oil film, each one of these slicks represents 25,000 to 75,000 barrels of oil sitting on the sea surface at any one time."

Geologists don't know whether this is due to a constant seep of oil from the sea-floor, or from once-in-a-while seismic activity that pushes oil up from inside the earth's crust beneath the sea floor and into the ocean.

Oil slicks were first recorded on the sea surface offshore from Scott Inlet in 1976 by a scientific team from the GSC.

Extensive surface slicks were mapped and observed in several locations off Scott Inlet and Buchan Gulf.

These naturally occurring oil spills could help people understand what might happen if a spill took place during offshore oil or gas drilling.

But Oakey's presentation, and many others at the petroleum workshop, also tells a tale of great significance — that Nunavut is sitting on top of a rich trove of oil, waiting to be extracted.

But these Nunavut-based resources aren't likely to be developed any time soon, despite a recent flurry of exploration on the Greenland side of Baffin Bay. No firms have done any exploration work in Nunavut waters since 1985, for a long list of reasons, including the complex regulatory system, high costs, and little interest on the part of the federal government.

Jan Wanggaard, the manager of "Maud Returns Home" project, was back in Cambridge Bay to continue scoping out the sunken hulk of the Maud, the ship once sailed by the famous Norwegian polar hero Roald Amundsen, which Wanggaard and his Norwegian backers plan to bring back to Norway in 2013. On Aug. 5, Wanggaard and a fellow diver from Norway managed to lift "some grand old planks from the seabed" that had fallen off the Maud.

Those planks, about two by six feet long, appeared to be in excel-

lent condition after 80 years in the Arctic waters, Wanggaard told *Nunatsiaq News* in an Aug. 6 interview from Cambridge Bay.

The two divers also found the anchor of the Maud — also known as *The Baymaud* by people in Cambridge Bay. When Wanggaard visited Cambridge Bay in 2011, with no export permit in hand, he didn't have permission to disturb the Maud.

But that state of affairs changed last March when Canada's cultural property export review board decided that while "the Maud is of outstanding significance to Canada, but that its loss would not significantly diminish the national heritage," the Norwegians could apply for an export permit to take the Maud back to Norway.

This year, Wanggaard plans to measure the ship from every angle and retrieve some of the debris now lying around on the seabed. In 2013, "the focus will be different," Wanggaard said.

That's when the plans involve raising the Maud with balloons, dragging the hulk over to a barge made from the legs of a former oil platform and then towing it from Nunavut back to Norway — a 7,000-kilometre journey.

There, the Maud will be exhibited at a futuristic museum in Asker, a suburb of Oslo — where anything to do with Amundsen remains a huge draw.

Amundsen, the first European adventurer to travel the Northwest Passage in 1906 and the first person to reach the South Pole in December 1911, left Norway in 1918 with the Maud, planning to drift with the ice across the Northeast Passage westwards and over the North Pole.

But his crew never got into the westward current, although the expedition did produce some excellent scientific results — mostly after Amundsen had given up and left the ship.

Creditors sold the Maud in 1925 to the Hudson Bay Co., which renamed it the Baymaud. The ship ended its days as a floating warehouse and radio station, and sank at its mooring in 1930.

Quebec's wildlife department, the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, has released the results from its survey of the George River migratory caribou herd population.

But there's not much good news in the survey carried out this past July by Quebec, the Newfoundland and Labrador Government's Department of Environment and Conservation, the Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research and the Torngat Wildlife, Plants and Fisheries Secretariat.

"The recent survey confirms an ongoing decline of the George River migratory caribou herd population over the past few years," a recent news release from Quebec said. The total George River herd population is currently estimated at about 27,600 animals.

Biologists, who plan to continue monitoring other health indicators, such as adult survival rate and calf recruitment rate, believe the herd's population could fall to fewer than 25,000 animals by October. That's about a third of the roughly 74,000 caribou which were estimated to be in the herd two years ago and much lower than the 385,000 caribou spotted in 2001.

Given these results, Quebec plans to consult Nunavik's Hunting,





## CANOESWORTHY *continued*

Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee and the other parties to prepare a caribou management plan identifying management measures aimed at restoring the herd.

Last December, Quebec decided to close the sports hunt of the George River herd in three different areas for the 2012-13 sports hunting season. The most recent news is another blow to a \$20-million caribou outfitting business, which was a mainstay of Nunavik's economy for more than 20 years, pouring money into local stores and airlines from August to October.

In a good year, about 3,000 to 5,000 hunters would come mainly from the United States to Nunavik for one-week hunting packages and a chance to bag two caribou. The caribou from the George River herd were particularly prized for their large racks of antlers. Biologists also say the Leaf river caribou herd is in decline.

**T**he Nunavut Impact Review Board issued its final report Friday night allowing Baffinland's Mary River iron project to proceed, with conditions.

The board's decision is the culmination of a four-year assessment of the project, in which Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation plans to build a massive open-pit mine at its Mary River site about 160 kilometres south of Pond Inlet, Nunavut, along with a railway and port that would allow icebreakers to ship the ore through Arctic waters year-round.

The 17,000-hectare mine will cost about \$4 billion to build. "Obviously NIRB recommended in the direction we were hoping they would," said Baffinland spokesperson Greg Missal. "Now we have to spend a number of days looking at the document and looking at the terms and conditions."

The decision comes with close to 200 terms and conditions, most of them focused on monitoring and minimizing some of the negative environmental and social effects of the development.

**C**harges have been dropped against three international climbers who BASE jumped off Mount Asgard on Baffin Island in Canada's eastern Arctic Nunavut territory and made an acclaimed film about it.

BASE jumping — a sport where people use parachutes to jump from fixed objects such as mountains — is illegal under the National Parks Act.

In 2009 Leo Houlding, Sean Leary and Carlos Quiroga Suarez parachuted into Nunavut's Auyuittuq National Park, climbed Mount Asgard, and then BASE jumped off the mountain. Their film *The Asgard Project* won awards at film festivals around the world, including the Banff Mountain Film Festival. Indra Bhagga, a crown prosecutor in Iqaluit, said it was a matter "taken very seriously" by the federal prosecution and Parks Canada.

The charges against the three were dropped this week in exchange for each paying \$1,000 to an environmental damages fund and publishing apologies in two adventure sport magazines. They also had to write letters to two film festivals.

"The film was wonderfully made and after we heard about the trouble, we received a letter of apology," said Jonie Cooper, with the Banff Mountain Film Festival.

Two Australians are scheduled to appear in court in November to face charges after paragliding off Mount Thor in Auyuittuq this summer.

**T**wo women in Nunavik had an unusual encounter while berry picking in October.

Maggie Cruikshank Qingalik, who is from Akulivik, Que., said her friend saw some kind of creature out in the wilderness. She said at first, they thought it was another person picking berries. Then they noticed it was covered in long, dark hair. She said it was walking upright along the side of a hill, and was taking long strides. They said it would also sometimes crawl. "We weren't sure what it was first. It is not a human being, it was really tall, and kept coming towards our direction and we could tell it was not a human," she said.

Qingalik said the creature was 10 to 15 feet tall. Pictures posted on Facebook show the alleged footprints are 40 centimetres long. The women said the creature didn't appear vicious, nor did it appear interested in them.

Understandably for such a sighting, the women got scared, hopped on their ATV, and headed back to the community to warn people about what they saw.

The International Cryptozoology Museum in Portland, Maine, has been studying sasquatch and Bigfoot sightings in North America for more than 50 years.

"Coleman said Bigfoot or sasquatch tend to be six and a half to eight feet tall. He said they have been spotted throughout the U.S. and Canada since the 1800s.

**A**fter nearly two decades of work and a few stumbling blocks along the way, Nunavut's fifth national park is entering the final stage of the approval process.

The proposed Qausuittuq National Park would be near Resolute, Nunavut and encompass most of Bathurst Island and a few surrounding islands. The Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement negotiations for the park have been completed. Parks Canada expects the agreement will be approved and signed in 2013. The park will protect habitat for wildlife like Peary caribou, Arctic wolves and muskoxen as well as the vegetation they need to survive.

The 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement said national parks would be created in each distinct ecosystem of the territory. There are already four national parks in the territory.

Goadamee Amagoalik, who has represented the community in the negotiations since 2009, said the only opposition community members expressed was over the proposed boundaries.

He said he believes Ottawa wants to limit the park boundary because of nearby resources. But Amagoalik added Resolute residents are happy more jobs and a visitors centre are coming to the hamlet.

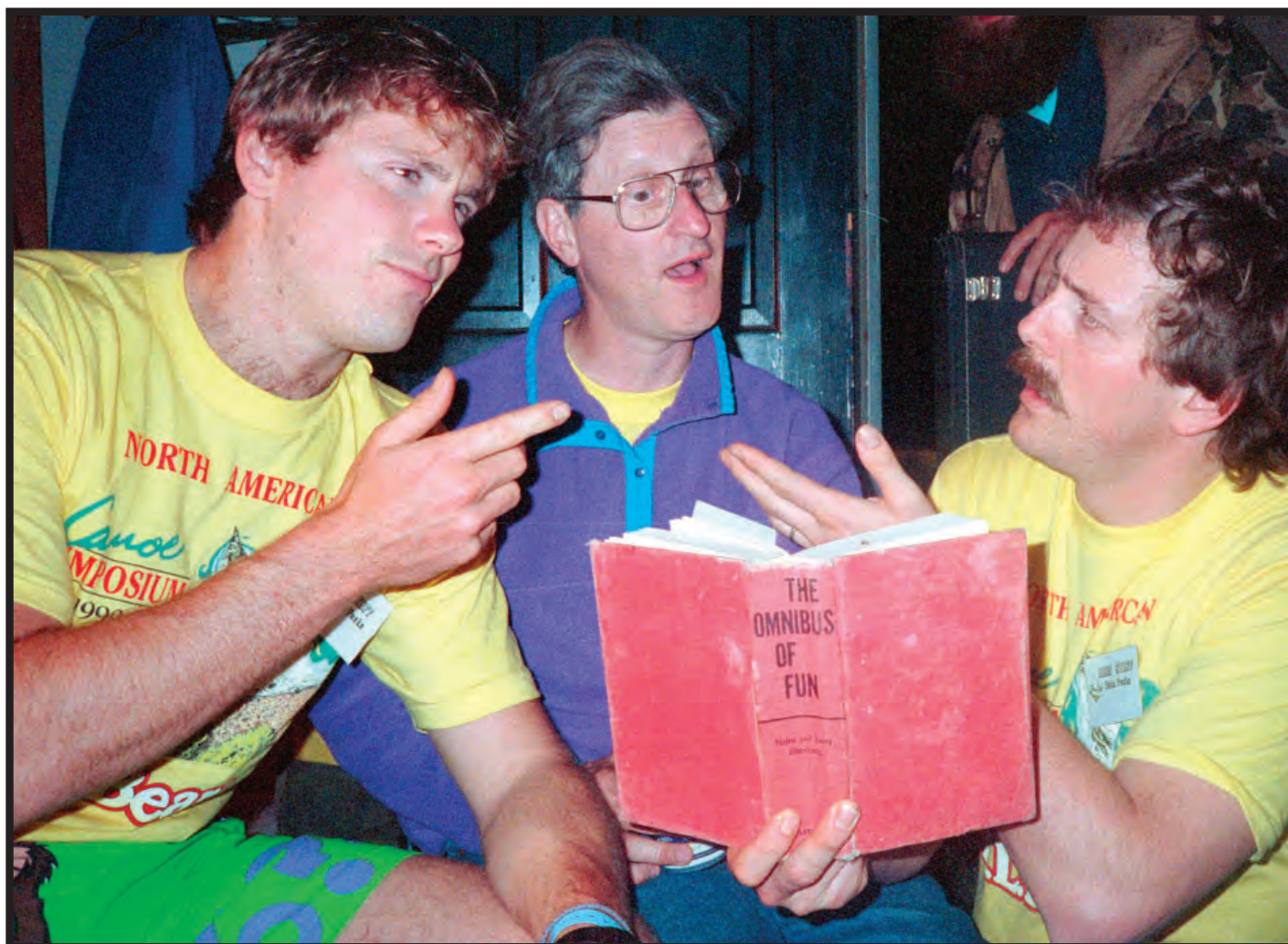


photo: Michael Peake

**THE PHYSICAL CLIFF --** In the glory days of the Maine Canoe Symposium we ran into and got to know one of our heroes, Cliff Jacobson, and he has remained a friend to this day, though we seldom get to see him in person. He has an eternal bond to the Hide-Away Canoe Club because we were the ones who found the pack he had left behind at the Air Tindi base in 1993 when we went on his Hood River trip in 1993 where he was to get married at Wildberforce Falls (Page

5). The missing pack contained the wedding dress (hopefully his wives!) which as he always tells us - without it - the wedding was off. We were both speakers in Maine in 1990 when he posed for the above shot with Geoffrey and Sean Peake and a book we found in the Camp Winona library and thought would make a funny shot explaining the nature of humour - or humor to Americans. It still makes us laugh as do the many memorable moments spent with Cliff Jacobson.

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