



Winter 2006

The Journal of Canadian Wilderness Canoeing

Outfit 123



Photo: Peter Marshall

Lake of the Woods to the mouth of the Coppermine in a mere 124 days Page 6

Winter Packet



The author of last issue's Naskaupi River trip, **Philip Schubert**, has released some very interesting info relating to the famed Hubbard and Wallace expeditions. He wrote the following on the Canadian Canoe Routes website (www.mycr.com) and a couple of e-mails followed privately after Che-Mun ventured a question on the unpublished manuscript by Dillon Wallace. We now catch up on the entire e-mail exchange.

Philip got the ball rolling with the following message dated February 14.

"A friend and I have put a manuscript by Dillon Wallace on the internet, complete with photos. It is book length and describes his 1913 canoe trip back to the site of the Leonidas Hubbard's death in 1903. In my opinion, It is as exciting and moving as the books by Wallace on his 1903 and 1905 trips in Labrador, although it has never been published. Click on the following link: [http://www.magma.ca/~philip18/Wallace1913\[url\]](http://www.magma.ca/~philip18/Wallace1913[url])

Che-Mun followed with this response.

"Thanks Philip for a very interesting and, unknown to me at least, part of the Hubbard and Wallace saga. It continues to amaze and surprise.

I would be very intrigued to know why this book was never published. Since his first two (Lure of the Labrador Wild and The Long Labrador Trail) went to several printings, surely there was interest there. What did Wallace say about it? Did it have something to do with the impending First World War? Or was it a blow to Wallace and another victory for Mina. I look forward to reading it. Thanks for the efforts of you and Rudy.

Philip responded to Che-Mun:

"I checked with Rudy and Ann McKendry (Dillon Wallace's daughter) to see if they knew why the manuscript was never published in book form: Rudy's thoughts to Ann on this were:

"My own feeling is that your father felt it was not a big enough work to put in book form, and chose instead to use parts of it in the various pieces he did for *Outing* and *Field and Stream*, culminating in the three-part *National Sportsman* magazine story of 1929."

Ann's thoughts to me in an email message just received are:

"I agree that he doubtless felt it wasn't big enough for a book. He wrote several magazine things about it, and looking at the list of his story books and their publication dates, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, etc. which were selling well, he was busy doing that!

"Later on, when I was growing up and hearing him tell groups of people the 1903 Lure story, or the 1905 LLT trip, he often told also of the 1913 venture up the Beaver and over to the Rock. From this I have always felt that though the canoe overturned and the plaque lost, when they got to the Rock and got the memorial message inscribed thereon by dint of their own efforts, the mission had been accomplished and so left the story with a happy ending. They had persevered in spite of all! It certainly was not a "blow" to him. I remember well Judge Malone who visited us often through the years.

"I have no idea of any reason why World War I might have influenced him not to publish in book form the 1913 trip—never heard any such intimation, nor does it make any sense to me, though I didn't appear upon the scene until 1919. I do recall his story "John Adney, Ambulance Driver", about the war, not Labrador as other stories had been, he considered did not sell well because the war was over before it got on the market (published 1919).

"And how in the world would the 1913 trip be "another victory for Mina"? Makes no sense at all to me."

So there you have it Michael, probably as much as can be known at this stage about the manuscript and why it never went any further at that time. Later editions of the Lure had an addenda with more or less the chapter on the arrival of Wallace at the rock in 1913.

Our final reply to Philip followed;

Many thanks Philip for asking those questions. I will include this in the next issue. As for the Mina "victory" comment - what I meant was; did the fact the book was never published amount to another PR victory for her? Perhaps Wallace or someone had felt that story wouldn't or couldn't be published in light of Mina's status or position.

As to the War, it took many men from the north, such as John Hornby, and completely sev-

ered the traditional and modern eras of northern travel with the introduction of the airplane. It is the major dividing line.

This is all just fascinating historical conjecture to me 100 years on . . . but obviously much more than that to many others . . . and after all these years. That's what makes this story so interesting.

We heard from Norwegian paddler **Kjartan Bergsvaag**. They paddle a birch bark canoe (!) and are planning the Rat River ascent this summer. He told us about his last trip after we inquired about their experience. We are awaiting photos.

I have always enjoyed outdoor life, and read many books as London, Service, Berton etc. So from early age on, I dreamt of going to Alaska and Canada. So I did when 20, and totally got the crush for the land up north—paddled some rivers, lakes and worked on farms. This was my sixth time. Well we took a freightship to Montreal from Europe, traveled by train to Churchill, wanted to travel on surface the whole way. Was not able to get a boat to take us from there to Chesterfield Inlet, had to fly that part. Picked up the birch bark canoe in Sudbury from Tom Byers who made the it.

So finally in Chesterfield Inlet we started paddling early July towards Baker Lake and from there portaging just west of Thelon through some small lakes to Schultz Lake. Further on half way on Aberdeen, portaging about 12 km. over to Marjory and followed Dubawnt river up to Mosquito and Sid Lake. Then back on Thelon, Lynx, Whitefish and down Snowdrift to Lutselk'e. A tough route but I would recommend it going from Baker to Lutselk'e. We used 8 weeks, because of our maintenance of our canoe, spruce-gum etc. Gathering firewood, hunting and fishing, we probably used a bit more time than necessary.

I like the most to travel as environmental friendly and old-style as possible, have a great fascination for Indians, voyageurs, trappers and there way of 'simple' traveling. No sponsors, we are two persons traveling light, a bit too light across the tundra. Ended in Wrigley beginning of November, had problems with ice the last bit. The canoe is stored in Wrigley, friendly people there!



Editor's Notebook

A long-promised project has finally been completed. So many people, myself included, have asked why there was not an index for *Che-Mun*. There is a back listing but until now - no proper index.

That particular flaw of ours is remedied and you can see Part I of it on pages 10 and 11. We will also e-mail it to anyone interested and print the rest in Outfit 124.

I am happy to report an update on the *Lands Forlorn* republication I wrote about last Outfit. I was asked to pen a short blurb for the intended back cover of a new edition of LF. Rod MacIver of *Heron Dance* and Robert Hildebrand of Arizona, a former GSC geologist and now photographer (check Google) who owns the copyright, are combining to bring it out. Not sure when but by summer I expect. Stay tuned.

Also I must thank and credit avid amateur Douglas scholar Aleksander Gusev of Toronto for supplying the "mystery" photo of George M. on the cover of the last issue. Also, I was reminded of that so-called mystery by the sharp and remembering eye of Dr. James Raffan:

"It was Plate 40 in Enid Mallory's 1989 book *Coppermine* from Broadview Press. The caption reads, "In January Hornby and Sandberg attempted to go to Fort Norman for the mail but found themselves unable to withstand the Arctic winds and cold. After they turned back, life in the two cabins settled into frozen routine. Here George sits by the table in the crowded quarters." (p. 82) The shot was also rendered in sepia on the back cover of the dust jacket. I remembered it for the freaky eyes but also for the two different hand-sewn pockets on the outside of GMD's vest."

Still trying to get caught up with our publishing timeline and it is starting to get closer. We have had several readers ordering large numbers of back issues, for which we thank you. Some Outfits have run out but we always supply a photocopied version.

Spring is coming!

Michael Peake.



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Canoesworthy

The following is an open letter from the Canadian Canoe Museum:

The Canadian Canoe Museum has recently acquired a craft significant to the history of canoeing and canoe safety. The Pere Lallemand was one of four Chestnut Selkirk canoes involved in the 1978 St. John's School tragedy on Lake Timiskaming, and was given initially to Andrew and Barbara Greaney by St. John's School, who asked for it and received it after losing their son, David, in the tragedy. In May of 2005, the Greaney family gave the Pere Lallemand to the Museum, on permanent loan, with the understanding that it will be conserved and used to help educate people about the tragedy in particular and canoe safety in general, particularly the changes in canoeing safety standards and school canoe tripping policies that occurred as a result of Timiskaming.

Over the coming months, the Museum will be developing an exhibit around this historic craft, and we are seeking comment and input from Timiskaming survivors and family members of those who died, as well as from others affected by, or with a connection to, the tragedy. Although this event happened nearly three decades ago, we are aware that this remains a sensitive issue for many. Our intention is to be absolutely respectful to the memories of the thirteen people who died in the tragedy, as well as to the craft and its legacy. As we shape the messages around this new exhibit, we seek your comments and input. You can write, email, fax or phone, and I would be pleased to communicate with you directly (and in confidence, if that is more comfortable for you) about your thoughts on how and with what messages this canoe should be presented to the public.

The Canadian Canoe Museum is located in Peterborough, Ontario and is home to the largest collection of canoes and kayaks in the world. We are an independent Museum, a not-for-profit corporation, with charitable status, governed by an elected volunteer Board of Directors. There is no doubt in our minds that this is exactly where Pere Lallemand should be to have the maximum educational impact on visitors from across Canada and around the world. Depending on how things evolve, there is a possibility that, once developed, this exhibit may travel to other locations. For more information about us, please visit www.canoemuseum.net.

As a mother and grandmother, I know that the Pere Lallemand carries with it a very difficult story. As manager of a national Canadian museum, I know that this is an important Canadian canoe that represents a turning point in the development of safety standards and practices for canoeing. It is important to me, to the Canoe Museum Board, and to our staff and membership that this exhibit be done properly, and we hope you will take a moment and give us your input to help us do it right.

Sincerely,
Janice Griffith
Manager, Canadian Canoe Museum

Film maker Norman Cohn continues his marketing campaign for *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen*, his \$6.3 million movie shot last year in Igloolik. The film has nabbed the prestigious opening night spot at the next Toronto International Film Festival in September.

It also may be chosen for Cannes, and if it is well received by influential critics at the festival, the movie stands an excellent chance of repeating the international success of *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, Cohn and Kunuk's first feature film, which won a top award at Cannes in 2001.

If the movie manages to win over critics at Cannes and other festivals, Cohn will be able to strike lucrative distribution deals in the U.S. and Europe. In Canada, the film will be distributed by Atlantis Alliance Odeon. Distribution deals have also been made in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland through Barok Film, a Danish company which co-produced the film with Cohn and Kunuk's Igloolik Isuma Productions.

Targeting influential critics at film festivals enables the small Nunavut production company to compete with the tremendous budgets and marketing efforts of Hollywood studios. But for Cohn and Kunuk, a series of screenings in Igloolik is every bit as important, in its way, as Cannes. The movie, like its predecessor, *Atanarjuat*, will be shown to everyone in Igloolik who wishes to attend. That's likely to be every one of the 1,200 people in town.

Filming is to begin this summer on *Before Tomorrow*, which is based on a novel by the Danish author Jorn Riel. As Cohn describes it, the plot revolves around "a grandmother and grandson who

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Three Rivers

The Yukon's Great Boreal Wilderness

Edited by Juri Peepre and Sarah Locke

148 pages

Harbour Publishing, 2005 \$49.95

ISBN: 0-7735-2924-1

Books reviewed by Michael Peake

Three Rivers is essentially a trip report. And a very beautiful trip report to be sure. In the summer of 2003, three

simultaneous trips

filled with artists and authors travelled the Wind, Snake and Bonnet Plume rivers of central Yukon.

This book details the area travelled - and a truly spectacular one it is. The photography, which is the staple

of such tomes, is very good and many times great. It is a bit uneven but considering the time window the pictures were shot in - they're quite good. I was particularly struck by the work of Jannik Schou whose photos of a gyrfalcon overseeing his empire, a passing lynx and a fox by a watery sinkhole are arresting. They were no doubt taken by remote control as the camera is quite close to the subjects, especially the thick-footed lynx who is inches from the camera.

The gorgeous cover shot by Fritz Mueller is best shown in its full-width beauty on pages 12 and 13 - truly breathtaking scenery.

These trips were organized by the Yukon Chapter of the Canadian Park and Wilderness Society to raise awareness of an increasingly threatened area. In fact, they are pushing for protection of what they are now calling the Three Rivers Wilderness. While these rivers are well off the beaten track, they are clearly in the sites of geologists as the world's search for more oil continues relentlessly. With a Mackenzie pipeline seemingly a certainty and more mining throughout the north, the environmental

groups gave their work cut out for them in defending our northland from predatory practices.

Beside the photos there is a great selection of paintings by eight artists who capture the area according to their various eyes. The different chapters of the book describe what each group went through often with the help of expert biologists who can spot that tiny carnivorous flower (the *pinguicula*) you almost stepped on. The pair of 'celebrity' authors, Margaret Atwood and John Ralston Saul, were not with the groups on the rivers. Both went on separate trips and

indeed Saul's contribution is adapted from a CBC radio interview.

The 37 trip participants had a giant Gathering on the Peel River at the end of their journeys, meeting with local Gwich'in for a grand feast and chin wag along the shores of

the Peel River 75 miles upstream from Fort McPherson.

There is a, rightfully, strong aboriginal component to the book as many are still very active and attached to their land. This area was also remarkable because of the native builders of incredible moose skin boats that they would take down to the Mackenzie River to trade. Once there, the boats were often eaten by the dogs and the people would make their way back on foot.

It is very clear to see the Three Rivers area is something very special. And while the idea of "packaging" them together smacks of marketing, it makes good sense in any effort to preserve a larger contiguous area.

While largely devoid of any 19th and 20th century historical exploration, this area is attractive to northern canoeists for what it simply is; an area rich in abundant wildlife, large beautiful mountains and lots of trees making it a paradise for those living off the land.

Three Rivers may be made for that coffee table - but it's best accompanied by a big mug of it - as you are swept along deep inside this Yukon paradise.

A Paddler's Guide to

Killarney & the French River

By Kevin Callan

168 pages, 55 colour photos, 13 maps

Boston Mills Press, 2006 \$19.95

ISBN: 1-55-046-460-4

Well, let's see. It is spring in Canada. The birds fly north, the sap runs south, and Kevin Callan comes out with another book. Yup, sometimes it's nice to know all is right with the world.

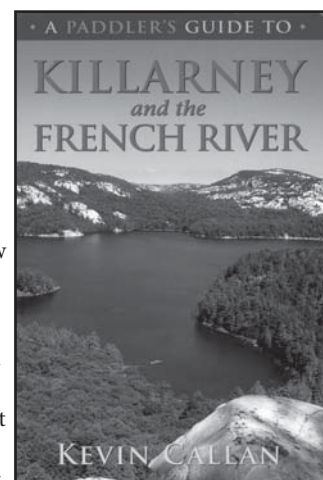
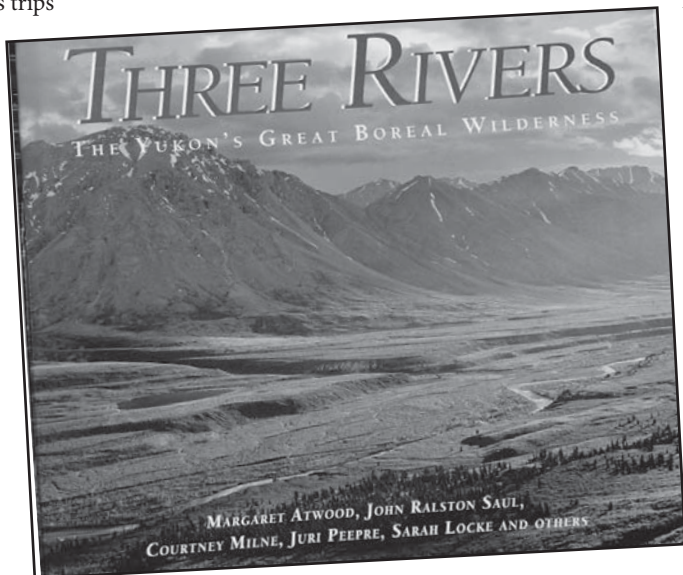
I knew that Kevin was working on updating his 14 year old Killarney book as he was up at the great Ontario

Wilderness Park when last June, when we were there, though I never saw him and now I know why. He was busy discovering closeted corners of one of the busiest wilderness parks in Ontario, if that's

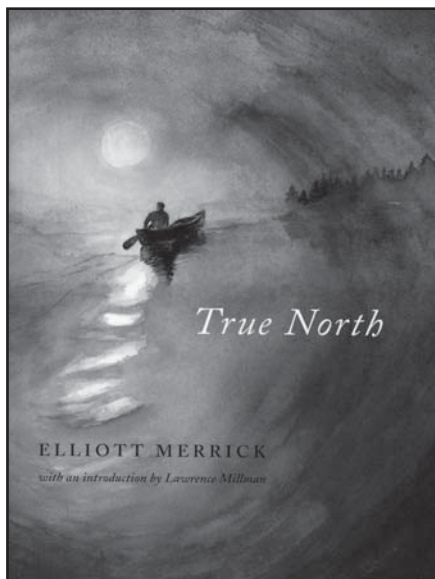
not too big an oxymoron to swallow. Having long avoided Killarney and knowing how hard it is to get a reservation for, I was surprised at how much of its delightful wilderness character remains.

It is a hard park to portage in once you get out of the three main lakes, where most of the traffic is, but it is well worth it. The area is incredibly beautiful, its distinctive feature being the white quartzite hills that drew famous artists like A.Y. Jackson. Indeed, one of the main lakes is called O.S.A. for Ontario Society of Artists. And when you throw in the nearby and historically-rich French River area you have got yourself a canoeing treasure trove - albeit bordering on cottage country - Kevin helps you find the hidden corners. One thing missing from Kevin is more info on the 50,000 acre expansion that is being added to the park northwards and south to the French River.

In updating the *A Paddler's Guide* to series, all the hallmarks of a Callan production are present; great maps, solid photos and a wonderfully witty and self-deprecating style that, like canoeing itself, keeps us all coming back for more.



Three re-issues from Heron Dance



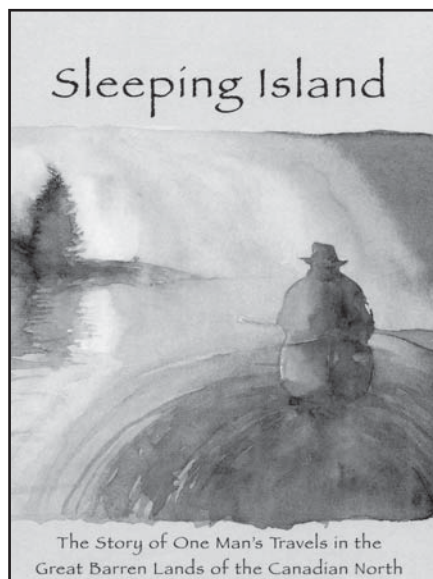
True North By Elliott Merrick

Heron Dance is a rather unique and prospering publication run by Rod MacIver in the U.S. Like Che-Mun, he started out with 90 subscribers to a blend of watercolour paintings, nature writing poetry and history. Unlike Che-Mun, Heron Dance has grown to 27,000 subscribers and is a non-profit publication success story.

As a sideline to their journal, they have begun publishing books in addition to selling the beautiful watercolour paintings by MacIver. As mentioned on Page 3, Rod will be bringing out Lands Forlorn again. He admits that this type of niche publishing is not the most successful part of his burgeoning empire but he does it out of a conviction to great northern writing and a love of history.

Three of his recent selections of interest to che-Mun readers are pictured above.

Sleeping Island and *True North* are true classics of the same pre-WWII vintage though placed in two distant parts of Canada. P. G. Downes' travels in the little sticks country of northern Saskatchewan, Manitoba and southern Nunavut and surrounding area make *Sleeping Island* still quite a great read despite obscure geographic references imposed by censors in order to not aid a potential WWII enemy. That was also why no map, apart from northern Canada, was included.



Sleeping Island By P. G. Downes

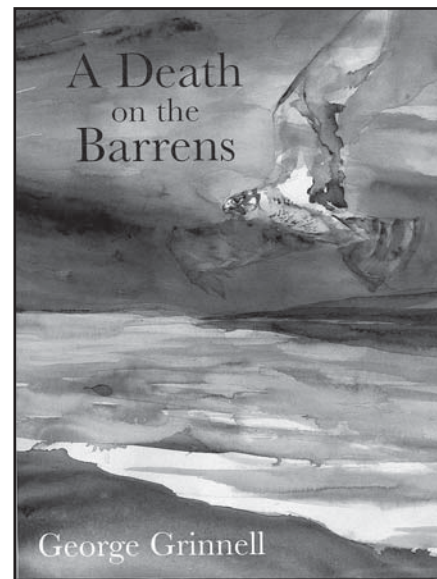
While the book is reprinted as first presented, two key additions are thoughtfully added by Heron Dance. Downes scholar, and another initialed gentleman, R.H. Cockburn has added an insightful and fascinating foreword to the book as well as a number of photos taken the following year in Brochet and featuring some of the characters mentioned by Farley Mowat in his recent memoir of the region, *No Man's River*. There were no pictures in Downes' original book.

Sleeping Island is the tale of his 22-day 1939 trip from Reindeer Lake to Windy River Post on Nueltin Lake. As Cockburn points out, a trip that with modern maps and equipment can now be made in much less time - and much less mystery. The year before in Great Slave Lake Downes ran into two northern legends, George Douglas and Charles Camsell, who, as Cockburn informs us, both recognized Downes' twin talents - an ability to travel hard and a great knowledge of the history of the area.

Elliott Merrick's *True North* also captures an era now lost - of the 1930s Labrador trapper and those who made a good living on the harsh land there.

This volume contains a short introduction by Merrick's friend Lawrence Millman, who has written for this journal.

Merrick met and married a nurse working at



A Death on the Barrens By George Grinnell

the Grenfell Mission in Labrador and together they stayed for several years. The highlight of that period was a 300 mile winter trapping trip made with legendary bush man John Michelin.

In 1933, *True North* appeared after Merrick had moved back to the US. In 1941, he wrote *Northern Nurse* about his wife Kate's experiences with him in the remote Labrador woods.

The final selection, *A Death on the Barrens*, is a much more recent book telling the very eerie tale of a 1955 trip on the Dubawnt River - the one mentioned in Outfit 122 - by Arthur Moffatt and his band of young, inexperienced men. George Grinnell was one of those men and while his in-person talk on the trip is mesmerizing, the book is less so as it gets bogged down in a lot of extraneous matters. Nevertheless, Grinnell was an eyewitness to a modern canoeing disaster, one that saw Moffatt drown on the Dubawnt in mid-September. His grave lies in Baker Lake.

The crew was an unsettled grouping and Grinnell certainly captures what is the darkest tale of northern adventure from the 20th century. Interesting, but ultimately quite depressing.

All three books are illustrated by MacIver's lovely watercolours. See www.herondance.org for info on ordering.



Lake of the Woods to River of the Arctic



From Lake of the Woods to the town of Kugluktuk at the mouth of the Coppermine River at the Arctic Ocean, in a mere 122 days and over 2700 miles. Brothers Peter and Alex Marshall from Minneapolis managed to paddle across the width of Canada, have the summer of their lives - and avoid getting jobs

DUDE, WHERE'S MY PORTAGE - The oft photographed Alex Marshall enjoys the view on Lake Winnipeg in both photos. Their camera stopped working along the way - but they didn't.

Story and photos by Peter Marshall

According to all maps, trip accounts and reports, the Coppermine River is accessible only by plane. No roads or rails can cheaply bring you to any point along the river's course and if you wish to paddle this classic of Canadian rivers, the pocketbook must be full, fat and ready to be emptied to front the cost of a charter flight. There are ways to pare this cost, and each year a few groups of intrepid travelers extend the adventure by around three weeks and reach the Coppermine via an overland route from Yellowknife. Yellowknife however, is a long way from my home

in Minnesota, and the low point of any canoe trip, the point were all the excitement and anticipation felt in the months of planning and preparing plummets into the cramped spaces of an overloaded vehicle, the frustrations of car problems and the anxiety of border crossings, is of course the long drive to the put in.

Last summer, my brother Andrew, 24, and I, 22, decided we would avoid the headache of the long drive and cost of a charter flight and paddle the Coppermine anyway. Five months before we left on our planned 125 day trip, I graduated from college and took a job working customer service for a large company in St. Paul, Minnesota. The slow, dreary months

spent in the cubicle and answering phones was tolerated only by the thought that this unfortunate result after four and a half years of studying literature and philosophy was necessary only to finance the trip.

Andrew had been living in Portland, Oregon the past four years. He had taken various hiatuses from college; traveling in South America and Europe, changing majors and now skipping the Spring Quarter to go on the canoe trip. Andrew and I had been canoeing since we were 16. A teacher at our school, Fred Rupp, ran an organization that brought high school kids to central Manitoba for three and a half week canoe trips. Since then we had both



been on our fair share of canoe trips. Trips to the Hudson Bay and James Bay, more trips into central Manitoba and into the eastern tundra; but despite these experiences, we had never paddled with one another since we took our dad's aluminum canoe out on the Mississippi eight years before we left on our trip. Despite having traveled through much of the world, indulged in most all outdoor pursuits, rock-climbing, hiking and skiing, but nowhere have I found the magic and adventure that I have on canoe trips through the wide waterways and bare rocks of Canada.

Since I found out that there were enough connecting waterways to make it possible to canoe across Canada, my brother and I had been talking about making a grand trip from the US/Canada border to the Arctic Ocean. It wasn't until about one year before we left that we seriously began to plan for the trip. After some months of planning, shabby attempts to secure sponsorship and free gear from companies, packing and shipping food to three re-supply points along our routes and a six hour drive from our Mom's house in central Minnesota to Lake of the Woods, we set out on a roughly 2450 mile overland canoe route from The US/Canadian Border to Red Rock Lake on the Coppermine River.

We departed from Lake of the Woods on May 11. The water, freed from ice only a few weeks before, hovered just above freezing. The trees stood naked, waiting for spring to arrive. We made our way north through the dam choked reservoirs of the Winnipeg River to Lake Winnipeg. The lake was immense and empty of all but a few friendly commercial fishermen who skimmed its shallow waters in deep hulled motor boats and would insist on giving us more fish than we could eat. We were warned that because of Winnipeg's size and shallowness, huge oceanic swells could come out of nowhere. I was terrified when I thought of the several long crossings that would bring us miles from the shore and leave us exposed to the moods of the lake. My fear turned into frustration after we safely made our crossings, only to be pinned by the wind for four days in a row. The day the wind let up, we were determined to get off the lake as soon as possible. We paddled some 45 miles through the night, not stopping until the sun began to crest the horizon and we were both well past exhaustion. Two days later we were off Lake Winnipeg and began to move across a series of lakes and streams to our first resupply at Cranberry Portage.

The Sturgeon Weir River marked the beginning of our great upstream pull. The water on the Sturgeon Weir ran in a near continuous

slide of fast water and rapids. Several 15-hour days were spent in chest deep water dragging the canoe against the current, making our way to Frog Portage and onto the Churchill River. Because of the drop and pool nature of the Churchill, travel was considerably easier. Even so, the river was flooded by the highest water levels in thirty years. Rapids swelled past the end (for us, the beginning) of portage trails, and drowned the shoreline. After long weeks battling the flooded current, paddling up the swampy and miserable La Loche River, we came to the Methye Portage – a historic twelve mile path linking the Churchill River region with the Clearwater/Athabasca Valley.

Historic, or not, this was an unpleasant, painful ordeal. We were paddling a 20 ft, 105 pound, Old Town Tripper XL. It was a beat up, 20 year old boat, supplied to us by a friend. A boat we aptly dubbed, "The Beast." We worked out a system where we would carry the two personal packs for twenty minutes and then go back for the canoe and a condensed food pack. Every five minutes we would switch off the canoe. After two and a half days of filtering muddy puddles of water and putting up with the legions of mosquitoes, we descended onto the Clearwater River. By this time, I could hardly walk from the shooting pain in my knee. My foot felt like it was cracked down the arch. Our reward after the portage and after four weeks of upstream travel was to finally be going down river with several fun sets of rapids to keep things interesting.

From our second re-supply at Fort McMurray we were treated to the ease of the wide, meandering Athabasca and Slave Rivers, what I liked to call the North Central Canadian Speedway. Here we effortlessly made 50 miles a day and in no time, more than made up for the days lost on Winnipeg. The days were admittedly monotonous, but the lull was a much needed period of rest after the arduous travel upstream. When we came to the Great Slave Lake, dramatic granite outcroppings again rose from the earth, heralding a welcomed return to the shield after the long, muddy stint through the boreal forest.

After several days spent waiting out the wind on Great Slave Lake, we arrived in Yellowknife on August 13. We paddled up the Bathurst Outfitters, where our final resupply was held. There we met Boyd Warner, who we arranged the resupply with. Boyd was an energetic, loquacious man who sat us down, poured us some coffee, and exchanged his impressive knowledge of the region for a few of our stories from the past 95 days.

Two days later, on August 15, around the time of year most groups try to be off rivers in the far north, we paddled into the grey drizzle of the morning to commence the final leg of our summer. The Yellowknife River, like all rivers in Canada that year, was running high. Our freshly loaded packs, heavy with provisions for five weeks, forced us to make three trips each time we had to portage the ill-defined trails or uneven piles of boulders. The days were long





and felt as though we were spending more time walking and carrying than paddling. We would usually arrive in camp with less than an hour of sunlight, soaked to the waist from pulling the canoe up rapids. These were cold, tiring days and in the mornings when the alarm sounded, emerging from the warmth of my sleeping bag only to slip on wet pair of pants, unzip the tent and greet a foggy morning encrusted in frost was a near impossibility.

But it was, in every sense of the word, an adventure. We were entirely isolated in the heart of a wilderness that provided what was without a doubt, the most difficult outdoor traveling I had yet done. Steep cliff, waterfalls and high eskers running along the river built a wondrous world. Each day was met with a sort of wild enthusiasm I would not have expected to feel after 100 days on trail.

Despite the new found sense of adventure, there was mounting conflict. We annoyed each other more, repeated stories and conflict brewed more readily. One morning, a small disagreement from the night before over what to put in the supper pot carried over into morning. Andrew spit on me, I threw my bowl of oatmeal on him then rushed him. We grappled arms, wrestled one another onto the small boulders by shore and into the shallow water. Abruptly it ended. The bear spray had stayed in the holsters and neither of us were hurt. No matter our feelings, there was little we could do. We talked little the rest of the day, made our miles and allowed the incident to wear off.

After ten days of exhausting portages and grinding our boat through boulder-strewn rapids, we crossed the tree line and entered the land of shrubs and willows. The colors were changing. Orange and red blazed into the green landscape. Leaving the Yellowknife, we progressed up the Winter River. Lakes were aptly named lakes, "Starvation" "Last Fire" and "Boot Soup Lake". Almost September, the heat from the shortening days and stillness of the air brought an unexpected visitor this late in the year.

The black flies, despite the frozen mornings, had survived through the summer and now came out in swarms. Late one night, an hour or so after the sun had set, we were scrambling to finish a portage and get into camp. I was making my way back for the last pack. I looked off into the faint, last dying light of dusk and saw a cloud flies. I looked down at my pants, covered by thousands of black flies that made my pants more black than khaki.

The day after the portage we found the

fly-in caribou camp Boyd ran and had circled on our map. At the camp we were fed delicious food, given a heated cabin to sleep in and a celebrity-like status by the hunters. After leaving the camp, the weather took a turn and the temperature fell and stayed below freezing for a week. We were being forced into camp earlier as the days continued to shorten. In camp, it was with controlled effort that the cold metal on the stove was dialed and the lighter struck to cook meals. In the tent I would watch my warm breath arise and freeze under my headlamp while I wrote in my journal.

The entire landscape was now bathed in a red, autumn flush. The days continued in much the same fashion. The frequent getting out of the canoe to push up shallow rapids, or portage around big rapids continued. I had grown tired of this kind of travel; the adventure was wearing on me. I thought of all the accounts of the autumn weather that came across the north, the constant, freezing drizzle, whipped into fierce winds that would not let up for weeks at a time.

On August 31st, the weather began to change and we spent the day making 8-9 portages between the Winter and Parent rivers. Somehow, over the course of the portaging, I had lost my raincoat. We were two days from the Coppermine, traveling at a time of year when weather would be deteriorating rapidly into winter and one of the most vital pieces of protection I had against the sapping cold, was gone. Fortunately, a plastic pack liner, a lot of duct tape and a little ingenuity fueled by much necessity, can fashion some decent rain protection.

After a day where the clouds swirled overhead, letting loose an occasional sprinkle, we paddled onto Red Rock Lake. In the morning, there were no clouds. The next seven days on the Coppermine were clear. The air was cool and the weather the definition of what would be called perfect. Sparse populations of green pines grew at the edge of the river's bank and mixed some color into the iron red foliage that had spread across the land. The submerged trunks of the willows told us the river, even this late in the season, was still running high. After threading and bumping our way through the shallow and narrow channels of the Parent River, the volume of water crashing and piling over the curves of the river made for an amazing ride.

Between the excitement of the rapids and beautiful stretches of flat water paddling, we saw a variety of wildlife. Lone caribou, stragglers from the herd, frequented the shores. Wolves ran along the descending slopes and

howled into the night. From the safety of our canoe we watched a grizzly sow and two cubs observe us. Most spectacular was when we saw a wolf and a grizzly, dancing in play with one another.

Not trusting the weather to hold, we made long days and many miles. The most spectacular paddling of the trip awaited us as we descended into a dramatic canyon and maneuvered through such classic rapids as Sandstone and Escape, eventually making our final portage of the trip around Bloody Falls. Andrew had the honors of carrying The Beast the final time, and I of slipping on the slick rock and falling on my ass for the final time. On the last full day of paddling the fog that normally came in the morning and burned off after a few hours of sun rise, stayed with us the whole day. It retreated high enough to make the river features visible, but hovered like a thick wet blanket over us the whole day. Damp and cold from the long day of paddling through the misty valley, we camped a few miles outside of town.

In the morning the final bit of paddling was completed and we pulled up to the hamlet of Kugluktuk. After an estimated four million paddle strokes over 122 days and 2700 miles, through four provinces, two territories and one amazing country, we had come to the Arctic Ocean. The canoe was traded for a pair of wolf-fur mitts and caribou mukluks. We flew back to Yellowknife after spending two nights in town. From the window in the plane I saw a seemingly surreal sight as I looked down at the thousands of lakes and the land I just recently spent so much time on. In Yellowknife I had awkward thoughts about returning to the world of four walls and predictable ease. I did and I didn't want to go home. I wrote out a list of books I wanted to read, movies to see, food to eat and beer to drink.

Andrew and I took the bus from Yellowknife to Edmonton, at which point we split ways. I continued the long bus ride to Winnipeg, where my Dad picked me up and Andrew caught a plane to Portland. At my mom's house I shaved off the untrimmed, matted beard that had grown on my face over the past four months and re-familiarized myself with doors, microwaves, girls... a whole list of things I had seen little of in the last four months. As I write this I am now living in Minneapolis, tossing pizza and slinging coffee grounds. Winter passes slowly and occasionally I unfold my map of Canada and trace my fingers over those rivers that run far from the reach of modern convenience. I find myself wondering how I might be able to paddle these rivers, and not pay for a charter flight.



find themselves possibly being the last two people alone in their world.”

The budget for this film is \$3.5 million, much less than for *The Journals*. The relatively modest budget, Cohn explained, reflects much lower costs for a small cast, rather than any projections for the commercial prospects of the project.

Cohn is vague about just where the movie will be made, saying only that it will be “somewhere in the Arctic.” That may reflect the rocky relationship that his production company had with the Nunavut’s film bureaucrats over labor credits and other issues for *The Journals*.

An anthropologist with Memorial University says the provincial museum should intervene in the sale of a special coat made from caribou hide. A collector in the United States wants to pay more than \$200,000 for the coat, made by Naskapi Innu artisans in the late 1700s.

It is currently owned by Toronto antiquities dealer William Jamieson, who restored it after buying it in 2004 from a descendant of a Welsh owner.

The Canadian government, which reviews the export of all known cultural artifacts, in December placed a six-month stay on the transaction. Catherine Jensen, a director in the Department of Canadian Heritage, said a note was sent to more than 200 museums in Canada, advising them the coat would be exported unless a Canadian buyer could be found.

Ben Michel, president of the Innu Nation, says his people need to keep their history close to home. Madeline Michelin, 74, says she remembers her great-grandmother painting on caribou skin with bone tools and natural pigment. She doesn’t know the meaning of the coat’s intricate lines and shapes that resemble caribou antlers and hunters.

Anthropologists say such patterns may be an attempt to communicate with the animals’ spirits and bring good luck to the wearer. Innu artisans still decorate caribou coats, but now use beads and thread. Fewer than 100 such examples remain, mostly in European museums.

A year after Nunavut increased its hunting quotas for polar bears, the United States government is going to review the numbers to see if any changes should be made to its trophy hunt policy for the territory.

American officials will take a close look at Nunavut’s polar bear hunting quotas in a meeting with representatives of government, Inuit organizations and the scientific community in St. John’s, NL.

The U.S. will use information gathered at the annual Polar Bear Technical Committee meeting to determine if bear populations now approved for U.S. trophy hunts are being managed properly. American hunters are now allowed to import trophies – the hide and skull – from about half of the 12 separate polar bear populations in Nunavut.

But hunting quotas in Nunavut increased by 28 per cent last year and the U.S. says it needs to determine if those populations still meet its criteria.

Scientists say less than 1,000 bears now roam that region, while Inuit hunters maintain the population is on the rise. Arviat MLA David Alagalak, whose community is in the Western Hudson Bay region, says the sport hunt brings a lot of economic benefit to his community. Arviat uses a third of its 22 tags for trophy hunters.

“There’s thousands of dollars being provided to the community per tag,” he says. “That’s putting close to \$100,000 of revenue that goes to the community.”

Alberta Premier Ralph Klein and Saskatchewan Premier Lorne Calvert announced in Lloydminster that a \$45-million all-season road will be built, connecting La Loche to Fort McMurray over the next three years.

La Loche Mayor Georgina Jolibois said her citizens are ecstatic.

The all-weather, 105 mile road linking La Loche and McMurray has been called a “centennial project” by both premiers. The money for the project is all new money, coming from a special centennial fund.

Jolibois is happy to see the centennial helping to put the Northern Village of La Loche on the map.

Currently in place to connect the two communities is a winter road, which makes travel to Fort McMurray difficult and usually pricey when snow is not on the ground.

The road will take three years to complete, with construction beginning this Spring. Most of Alberta’s \$40-million share of the cost will be spent on building a bridge over the Christina River.

Officials estimate the warm-weather drive from La Loche to Fort McMurray, which now takes between 10 and 12 hours, will take about two on the new road.

Jolibois said getting health care can be a headache in the non-winter months, as the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre could be the most used health facility for the La Loche community.

Music of the Wild II: A fabulous benefit concert to launch a new 14-song compilation CD called *Canoesongs Volume 2* at the Canadian Canoe Museum.

Live performances by David Archibald, David Hadfield, Lorraine McDonald, Paul Mills, Shelley Posen, Nancy White, & other musical mystery guests, with host James Raffan.

Hear folk music at its very best, and support the Canoe Museum. The night will feature stories, songs, and door prizes. Tickets are \$15, all proceeds to CCM. For tickets call 1-866-34-CANOE (22663)

The featured artists on the CD are David Archibald, Cindy Church, Ross Douglas, David Essig, Mike Ford, James Gordon, Dave Hadfield, Lorraine McDonald, Night Sun, Shelley Posen, Tanglefoot, Ian Tamblyn, Yael Wand, and Nancy White. There will be fourteen cuts eight of which were recorded especially for this collection.

For details or to purchase a CD go to www.canoesongs.ca or visit the *Canoesongs Live Stage* at the Cottage Life Show at the International Centre in Toronto, March 31-April 2.

The World Wildlife Fund is travelling to Nunavut’s Kitikmeot region to talk to hunters about polar bears and climate change. The international conservation group is concerned polar bears could face extinction by the end of this century if the earth continues to warm at its current rate, says Julia Langer, who is conducting the study.

Warmer weather is melting the sea ice the polar bears need to survive, she says. Langer, along with a video cameraman and a researcher, will visit Kugaaruk, Gjoa Haven and Taloyoak in April to talk to hunters.

“Really, it’s about meeting with the people who can tell us something about climate change and what might be done in the face of climate change to protect the species,” she says.

Gjoa Haven Hunters’ and Trappers’ Organization chair Louie Kamookak says four years ago they interviewed local hunters about the animals.

Now he wants to hear from Kugaaruk and Taloyoak hunters.

“They would be the people that knows the climate changes and the movement of the wildlife because they are the observers of the area at all times,” he says



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photo: Peter Marshall

HAVE FEET, WILL PADDLE -- A canoeing journey of 2700 miles includes many steps. And while a major trip is hard on most of the body, the feet really can take a beating hauling heavy loads over rough trails and smashing and slipping on the innumerable rocks in rivers one must ascend. So it was for the mighty Marshall brothers en route from Lake of the Woods to the Arctic Ocean. Here, Alex Marshall rests his feet along the foot-friendly shores of Lake Winnipeg.

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