



CHE-MUN

(Ojibway for canoe)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 49

CHE-MUN

SUMMER 1987



Try a kayak

We did!

Pages 4 & 5

Nick Nickels

1906-1987

Page 8

His final column - Page 6

See! Kayaking . . .!or rather sea kayaking. But don't worry, Che-Mun is still the magazine for wilderness canoeists but we tried something different and we want to tell you about it. Sea kayaking and canoeing have a lot in common and both will appeal to wilderness lovers. Though many paddlers use these craft on Lake Superior they're best suited for the ocean environment where the really big waves can roll. Here, Lisa Halliday edges her kayak into a slit cave near Windy Bay in the South Moresby area. There are also many group tour operators that offer an easy way into the sport. For a full report see Pages four and five.



Summer Packet



Stewart Coffin has a rather morbid request for Che-Mun's knowledgeable readers:

"Recently two Boston area canoeists were killed by a train while standing on a bridge over the Quaboag River and scouting rapids. The complete explanation of how this happened is not known at this time and may never be.

"I have the impression that several canoeists have been killed by trains. I am trying to compile a list of them, together with the circumstances, with the idea of perhaps being able to avoid such mishaps in the future.

"The only one I know of was the Ridgeway accident. I believe he was portaging a canoe at the time. Have there been others in Algonquin? On a trip on the Chamouchouane River many years ago, one of my companions was almost hit by a train while portaging a canoe around Salmon Falls. He had upset earlier and was in a rather bad state of mind. He was facing the train and the headlight rather than the sound was what alerted him. You might expect the sound of the train to supply ample warning but evidently this is not always the case - especially near rapids. What a way to end a trip!"

Please send reports of train accidents to Stewart Coffin, 79 Old Sudbury Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773.

The ubiquitous and always outspoken Robert Hess formerly of Inuvik but now living at 209 Bestwick Ct. E., Kamloops, B.C. V2C 1R9 wrote several months ago but we mislaid his letter. So here, better late than never, are Robert's reactions to Outfit 46:

"One of my recollections of the foreign canoeing tourists I met when I lived in Inuvik was that I never met one who had a fishing license or who obeyed any of the fishing regulations. This includes Alan Kesselheim and his party.

"I don't understand the attitude of American and European tourists who act like they're above the law. Stories about German and Swiss tourists catching ridiculous numbers of fish and letting them rot or shooting bear and sheep and letting them rot are common knowledge in the north.

"I'd like to see your magazine speak out on these issues and ensure that at least your foreign readers are aware that they are guests in this country not 'explorers claiming land for their king.'

"An article I question was the letter from a Swedish canoeist (Ed. Note - actually Danish paddler Carl Traeholt.) going on and on about the poor camping equipment available in Canada. The writer is . . . typical of a certain type of European canoeist who delight in putting down Canada while taking advantage of our hospitality.

"Hope you haven't written me off as a

crackpot yet. I'm afraid that living in the north gives one a different view of canoeists than one gets living in a big city like Toronto."

Well, that Danish canoeist has a few second thoughts about his article and wrote to clarify some things.

"I recognized that my article apparently has raised a bit of ire among the readers of Che-Mun. Well, I didn't mean to criticize it that much. I didn't expect it to be so 'straight cut' and without compromise that it would cause people to react so strongly. Obviously I chose a subject that is really touchy. The purpose was, of course, NOT to dictate what equipment is right and wrong and that everything used in Canada is wrong.

After all I only disagreed heavily in your choice of stoves. In tents, we did see a lot of poor construction in Canada but the ones you used on your Journey Across the Barrenlands were very good. With the article I obviously hoped that some type of response would turn up. I thought it would be nice to see what stuff is on sale here and there. I think we ought to learn from each other, surely nobody is the master yet. I'm sorry that what was meant to be simply an alternative look raised the ire of my fellow canoeists in North America."

Carl Traeholt is at Hjallesvej 68, 5320 Odense M, Denmark.

News & Notes

Royal Paddler . . . There is a strong indication that the postponed royal canoe trip is on again. Last summer, as reported in Che-Mun, Prince Andrew, now the Duke of York, cancelled his planned N.W.T. canoe trip and decided to get married. Andrew was introduced to Canadian canoeing ten years ago while a student at Lakefield College School near Peterborough. He has subsequently travelled the Nahanni and Coppermine Rivers and was presented with a beautiful cedar strip canoe made by Walter Walker while at Lakefield. The new royal couple will be touring Canada this summer and the final item on their official itinerary is a 12-day "private holiday in the Northwest Territories". The rumour is that not only will the Duke be heading out - so will

the Duchess! The word is that Sarah will accompany her husband on a Barrenlands canoe trip. Be assured that Che-Mun report on their trip. We wish them lots of luck and few bugs!

...

WIN ONE . . . LOSE ONE . . . Canada's national Energy Board recently vetoed Hydro-Quebec's proposed sale of power to the New England Power Pool that was to have commenced in 1990. The deal called for sale of 70 billion kilowatt hours of power over a 10 to 14 year period. Quebec failed, according to the board, to determine if other Canadian provinces needed the power first, before it was exported. The decision is not negotiable though Quebec may re-apply later. Following the decision they indicated they will do that and would ask other provinces if they are interested in purchasing power. Hydro-Quebec then added that if there was a Canadian demand they would continue their plans to sell to the U.S. and go commence with the building of additional power generating stations in the north. The utility has a 20-year forecast for future development with several rivers in the hit list.

Continued on Page six

A new Bay in town

Copies of the following letter were sent to the New York Times and Che-Mun by William B. Hoyt.

Mr. Kenneth Thomson,
President,
Woodbridge Company, Ltd.
65 Queen St W,
Toronto, Ontario,
CANADA M5H 2M8

Dear Mr. Thomson,

Is nothing sacred anymore, sir? Is all tradition to be banished and exiled, nullified in favor of one's full purse? Is 317 years of robust Canadian history to be thrust aside simply to quench the insatiable thirst of a coterie of Yonge St businessmen who hunger for the bottom line? Apparently, the answer is yes. The news of the sale of the venerable and ancient Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Stores Division to some pusalanimous thing called the Mutual Trust Company of Waterloo comes like some fireball in the night to all of us who know and love the tradition of the Company in the Arctic. In consequence, I have hung my Hudson's Bay flag, bartered, incidentally, in 1979, in Yellowknife, not only at half mast, but upside down, as an international symbol of distress. Shame. Shame. Shame.

The Erie Basin Sons of Ahab (EBSOA) of which I have the honour of being president (self-appointed), will, at its next meeting (unscheduled), consider adopting a resolution censuring the top management of the HBC for this most dingy and tawdry decision. And should you not be aware of the EBSOA, we are a group of 70 wilderness canoeists, American and Canadian, who have paddled over the years on those mighty and noble streams and waterways that comprise Canada's Arctic watershed. But, take heart Mr. Thomson, we will not flee, as you are, Canada's great lonely northland. No, we will continue to push our canoes, no longer rented from the Bay's U-Paddle Service, as that was jettisoned several years ago, down the Coppermines and Missinaibis,



The Bay passes away

The dark cloud that recently carried news of the sale of the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Stores Division may have a silver lining.

That, according to George Whitman, Manager of Public Affairs for the newly formed company. It is pertinent to note that Mr. Whitman held exactly the same job for the old company. In fact, so did everyone else in the organization and they plan to continue giving the same service to the north that they always have. Only the ownership has changed.

The decision to sell off the always profitable Northern Stores came from the Hudson's Bay office in Toronto in January. The Bay is controlled by the Thomson family, headed by Kenneth Thomson, who also runs the world's largest newspaper chain. The decision to amputate their historical links was no doubt a "business" decision made by some of the bottom-line boys in a company that has its eyes on urban shopping malls. As one Bay executive put it, "You can't sell history."

The new company which has the right to use the name Hudson's Bay Northern Stores for two years was put together by Mutual Trust

Company. However, they have no majority shareholder, no debt load and a free hand to do what they wish. Mr. Whitman stated that a new name is being planned but they didn't want to move too quickly.

"When we notified various governments of the impending change in ownership everyone was very concerned with the effect on the native communities in the north who had known The Bay for generations," he said.

The new company acquired all the assets of the old including their ship - The Kanguk, planes and shipping terminal. They will continue to operate a full service in the north and that is good news to canoeists who used The Bay posts as vital staging and information areas. It is still possible to ship canoes to and from Northern Stores posts. The ability to do so is of logistical and financial benefit to wilderness canoeists.

The Hudson's Bay Company didn't part with everything though. The extensive northern art collection was not included in the sale. And the most contentious point of debate - indeed the very essence of The Bay - is the original Royal Charter.

Continued on Page eight.

the Nahannis and the Bonnet Plumes, the Mackenzies and the Natla-Keeles, albeit with black crepe around our paddles, and we will swap stories and anecdotes of the legendary factors and traders that have so distinguished your company's history. And we will weep . . .

What would Prince Rupert, Count Palatine of the Rhine, first Governor of the HBC, exclaim upon hearing of the demise of the Northern Stores. Why, he would turn to his cousin, Charles II, and plead that a bar sinister be imprinted across the crest of the now bes-

mirched company. And what of John Rae, the heroic Chief Factor who, in 1846, marched northward (yes, always northward) at the behest of Her Majesty's Government, in search of Sir John Franklin and his lonely sailors, ice-bound in their quest for the Northwest passage. Or Robert Campbell, who led a mighty band of traders up the Liard River, defying death at the Rapids of the Drowned, lining and portaging over the height-of-land and into the headwaters of the Pacific-bound Yukon River. What of Samuel Hearne, Chief Factor at Fort Prince of Whales, who trekked for three years in search of whispered "copper deposits", finally discovering the Coppermine River. Or Alexander Mackenzie, granted a Nor'Wester, but whose company, thus its history, you inherited in 1821, who reached the Pacific Ocean in 1793, 11 years before Lewis and Clark.

How shall we break the news to Robert Service and Jack London, the great chroniclers of the north? Gently, I think. Yes, oh so gently. Surely Sam McGee would be roused from his boiler and sent packing south to his home in Tennessee. And White Fang, upon hearing the news, would be reduced to a whimpering lap dog.

May the wolves of the Dismal Lakes forever howl above the corporate lustings of your board meetings; may the herd of muskox horns eternally pierce your corporate shield; may the legend of John Hornby starve your next bond issue; may the Windingo snatch your debentures skyward and shred them into the mists over Virginia Falls; may a thousand beavers invade your shareholders meeting and slap their tails - a capella - during your annual report . . .

Sincerely yours,

William B. Hoyt, President,
Erie Basin Sons of Ahab,
Buffalo, New York.

Jewel of the Isles

Queen Charlotte Islands

They're called the Canadian Galapagos - a rugged and beautiful range of islands that lie 80 miles off the northern coast of British Columbia.



By Michael Peake
Editor, Che-Mun.

SANDSPIT, QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS.—The sheer indulgent luxury of soaking in your own private natural hot spring after a hard day's paddling is difficult to top. After all, aren't hot springs the kind of thing you have to wait in line for, pay admission to so you can wedge yourself in between other tourists?

That may be the case elsewhere but for now Hot Spring Island in the Queen Charlottes is a relatively private haven for sea kayakers and adventurous boaters. The two pools, one for two couples (barely) the other for up to 30 bathers, have been nicely "touched up" in a rustic style by the local Haida Indians and maintained by the good manners and respect of all visitors.

The Canadian Galapagos—that's what the Queen Charlottes are known as. These ruggedly beautiful group of 150 islands, home to many unique animal and plant species, lie 60 miles off the northern coast of British Columbia. But they're world apart. Untouched by the last glaciers they're an ecological afterthought. Star fish, sea stars, sea cucumbers, urchins, anemones are everywhere. The marine-rich narrows by Burnaby Island are believed to contain the greatest amount of protein per square meter in the world.

The islands got their name from Capt. James Dixon's ship when he visited the islands in 1787, nine years after Capt. Cook had been through. Queen Charlotte was the wife of George III. It is estimated that the Haida Indians and their descendants have been inhabiting the island for 6,000 years. The Haida's numbers were decimated around the turn of the century after making contact with white man and his germs.

There is no better way to see these islands than in a sea kayak. These slender, sturdy boats are beautifully adapted to the often tranquil, sometimes violent, Pacific Ocean. The most popular kayaking destination is the area around the main southern island in the Charlotte group—South Moresby. Graham Island to the north is where the majority of the island's 6,000 inhabitants live.

South Moresby has recently been the focus of a much publicized battle. The fight between the Haida Indians and environmentalists against the logging companies has been a bitter one. The area has been heavily logged for many years and there has been a big push to save the last virgin stand of spruce and cedar in the untouched Windy Bay watershed on Lyell Island.

Negotiations are underway for the formation of a national park in the South Moresby area, in particular Lyell Island which was the scene of the logging protest by the Haida Indians that resulted in the arrests of many protesters.

A growing number of tour companies are offering sea kayaking trips in the Charlottes—primarily along the more protected eastern coast in the Lyell Island area.

The best weather is usually found in July, August and early September. Kayaks are quite different than canoes and at first may seem tippier. But once you get the feel they are a far more seaworthy craft. Most tour groups do not travel very far each day and are in protected waters for the most part. The more adventurous and experienced will be interested in the rugged west coast where the waves roll across the open Pacific and the next stop is Japan. Interestingly, there is no continental shelf off the west coast and the sea bed plunges quickly to the many thousands of feet deep.

The name of the game isn't distance travelled but sights seen and the Queen Charlottes have a lot to offer. Bald eagles abound—the second highest density in the world. Seals, seal lions and whales (Orca and Gray) inhabit the rich ocean environment and are a guaranteed sight for the kayaker. The world's largest species of black bear, a rotund and jet-black cousin of our smaller version, can be seen beachcombing. And the Charlottes are home to half a million pairs of nesting seabirds, many unique.

The scenery is unbeatable, too. Snow capped mountains only a couple of miles from the ocean glisten over the many beautiful small coves and inlets that have been carved into this rugged coast. Huge trees, western red cedar and sitka spruce, are still in ample view despite previous heavy logging operations.

The past is still alive in the Charlottes. The moss has covered and the forest is gradually consuming the remains of the once-flourishing ancient Haida civilization. The Haida were a very advanced and artistic culture who lived in total harmony with their environment. They got everything from the forest from huge sea-worthy dugout canoes to incredibly soft, silk-like clothes made from the inner cedar bark. Their abandoned villages, Tanu, Ninstints and Skedans, complete with sunken longhouses and totem poles are protected places now—though they were much plundered earlier this century. In fact there are more totem poles in the Smithsonian than remain in the Charlottes. However, the Ninstints site on southern Skungwai Island is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and being fully protected. The Haida's highly advanced civilization was almost totally wiped out by smallpox and other diseases; falling from 6,000 inhabitants in Capt. Dixon's day to 588 in 1915. The Haida are still a



Calm, kelp-filled channels and fog - shrouded mountains await the sea kayaker in the Queen Charlotte Islands. Numerous

protected channels or plenty of open ocean challenge will appeal to both novice and expert.

strong presence on the islands which they call Gaawa Hanas and are fighting to preserve much of it.

Windy Bay, the focal point of the environmental battle, is a must-see. What strikes you when you paddle into the beautiful lagoon of Windy Creek is not just the serene beauty of the place. It's the size. Windy Bay is not that big - perhaps two miles across and three deep. It is hard to understand why there would be an objection to keeping this area preserved as a living reminder of a untouched coastal rain forest. Incredibly thick moss coats everything that isn't growing straight up. This green carpet cushions a hiker's feet though the still and pristine river valley. A mouthful of crisp, cold water from Windy Creek is as refreshing as the smell from the verdant forest. This is nature left alone. And it is wonderful.

A sea kayak's great mobility is a big plus. You need only about four inches of water to manoeuvre in which means you can sneak into the shallowest coves and at two feet wide into the most interesting caves. Just be careful. It's a unique holiday for the adventurous in Canada's the jewel of the isles.

All the trip operators rely on customers to get to Sandspit by themselves. For those with some time and looking for something different the ferry ride from Port Hardy on the northern tip of Vancouver Island is very interesting. The ferry travels up the beautiful and protected Inside Passage to Prince Rupert where you can later catch a ferry to the Charlottes.

A canoeist's view

For a none too petite wilderness canoeist a kayak is more than something you sit in. It's something you wear.

That was the feeling for this novice kayaker as I slide into the slender shape of an ocean kayak - 16 feet long, 24 inches wide and a few inches off the water. There would be no worries about which way to sit - legs crossed, knees bent or kneeling. These are decisions you don't have to make when you sea kayak. That's because there's only one way to sit. Flat with legs straight out. That's something that takes a little getting used to.

The initial instability combined with a certain claustrophobia tends to make the first few strokes less than joyous. But wait a minute. The native peoples didn't develop these craft without good reasons. They are FAST. They cut into wind beautifully. They are warm - the lower half of your body in snug inside the spraycover. The initial balance problems fade. Like learning to ride a bicycle the instinct is soon picked up.

Not that I would want to trade in my canoes. They are still the ultimate in transportable craft. But these sea kayaks are unbeatable when used in their own element.

We had one of bad day weather while we were in the Queen Charlottes. A stiff, pounding wind drove across the Hecate Strait which separates the Charlottes from the B.C. mainland, throwing eight-foot breakers into which we would not venture. We were windbound for 8 hours

near the end of a headland that we had to round. The wind finally died and we headed out into the rolling sea. Many of the waves were still breaking and it was certainly the biggest stuff I've ever been out in - BY FAR!

But the kayaks did their job beautifully. They needed to be persuaded from surfing in the big stuff and it was an instant clinic in riding the high-toppers. Very few canoes would have survived out there.

The problem of numb-bum is a very real and constant one in a kayak. You just learn to live with it. Another concern is storage. As one normally used to dipping into my spacious Sport Safe waterproof camera box the harsh space realities of a kayak meant that all photo materials were either lashed to the deck in a waterproof bag or stored deep inside. This meant that there was greater chance of missing a good shot.

Space is at a premium. The whole science of packing is different. No bulky Duluth or Wood's packs. Everything in small sacks - preferably waterproof. There is also no way to carry the same amount of gear that would be normal on a big canoe trip. Since there is no portaging you have to re-think many of the canoeists rituals.

There is a definite place for kayaks in a wilderness canoeist's world. For paddling wild, ocean places like the Queen Charlotte Islands there is no better craft. But keep 'em away from the Barrens - that's where canoe is still king.



NICK NICKELS NOTEBOOK

The Pointer passes

I dly reading on the sundeck of the family cottage on Stoney Lake in the Kawarthas, a summer or so ago, I was jolted to full alertness by the roar of a 50 h.p. outboard motor attached to the stern post of a pointer boat being deftly steered through Lovers Lane channel and rocky reefs.

The pointer (read York Boat) was top loaded above the gunwales; six men, two huge spools of wire, coils of rubber cable and assorted gear and tools. The motorman waved. The passing of the boat caused a surprisingly small wash wave as it arrowed out of sight.

The appearance of the Yorker brought back some fond memories of the craft, back to 1916 when I accompanied a boy friend to the last timber drive down Eel's Creek.

There we balanced on the bobbing logs, gratefully accepting warm pie from the cook on the wanigan and learned a lot of new cuss words from the river hogs who herded the logs into booms for towage to the mills.

Many journalistic years later I wrote a feature story and took photos of the building of York boats at a small yard in Pembroke on the banks of the Ottawa River.

My press clipping file reads that the craft was built with pine planks and tree-bent white cedar ribs. The bow and stern posts were angled at 45 degrees and the shallow keel bottom was shaped outward and upward from the centre to enable the ungainly boat to be spun with one tug of an oar in any direction. The boats were built 28 or 40 feet long and were ten feet beam, finished inside and out with two coats of India red paint.

So roughly used in the timber trade the Yorker might last for four seasons but could be easily replaced in small yards such as Pembroke's. The industry lasted out the pioneering era in eastern Canada but the York boat was established much earlier and more widely used elsewhere.

First off, the York boat was designed and built by the Hudson's Bay Company's Orkneymen servants at York Factory on Hudson Bay. Construction began as early as 1826 and they were used in the transportation of trade goods via the Hayes, Nelson and Saskatchewan Rivers to Fort Edmonton.

Crewed by eight middlemen, a bowman and a sternman who toiled for 16 pounds a season, each oarsman had to stand up to begin each stroke and sit down to finish the motion. They tugged heavily loaded boats across portages with ropes using log rollers. A few men were crushed to death by runaway boats. The only respite from their galley-life existence occurred when they hoisted a square canvas sail while crossing lakes in following winds.

The York boat quickly replaced the canot de maitre used by both the HBCo. and earlier by its rival the Northwest Company. The shipyards at Fort Edmonton built and launched five boats a year and each season carried huge tonnages of trade goods as far as the Athabasca country and the eastern rim of the Rockies. Included in the lading were 90-pound "pieces" of pemmican, Indian-made from pounded buffalo meat flavoured with native berries and encased in hide.

I have seen the occasional York boat in use at Norway House, Manitoba and Churchill harbour in the early '60's but they, too, have rotted away on some lonely shore.

As a Che-Mun column pointed out in Outfit 48, remarking on the sale of 170 HBCo. Northern Stores, places so familiar with wilderness canoeists, "another transition of Canada's north is ended."

More News & Notes

TO RUSSIA WITH PADDLES . . . John Lentz has done it again. The veteran Washington, D.C. paddler, who has an impressive list of first descents in the river running game, is off to do his thing in the Soviet Union. Lentz and a group of seven others, including a National Geographic photographer, will be paddling the Katun River in the eastern U.S.S.R. The river rises at the Katun Galcier at the base of 14,783-foot Mt. Belukha in the Altai Mountains which separate the U.S.S.R. from China and Mongolia. The river flows 430 miles where it enters the Ob River near the town of Biysk. The Soviets are assisting the expedition and is the first time they have allowed western canoeists access to Soviet rivers. The Katun is used by Sovintersport for rafting expedition but Soviets are unfamiliar with canoes particularly those capable of doing such a trip which involves many falls, rapids and gorges. John Lentz hopes that Che-Mun readers might be interested in possible trips to the area in years ahead. Lentz has been interested in doing something like this since 1965 and credits the recently improved political climate with this breakthrough but he adds at the end of his letter to Che-Mun, "I'll be back paddling Canadian streams soon." The group will be off in mid-July and expect the trip to take up to six weeks. They will carry the flag of The Explorers Club. Che-Mun will keep you updated.

...

WILD RIVERS . . . To many paddlers the old Wild Rivers series of canoe guide books were a great starting point for exciting trips. The series of 11 small books came out in the mid-seventies with each book presenting five or six rivers from a particular area such as the Barrenlands, James Bay/Hudson Bay, the Northwest Mountains. The books were cheap, often had faulty information but generally interesting reading. They disappeared in the late seventies when a major error (an unrunnable canyon marked OK) was discovered in one of the books - it's now a collectors item. Well if you missed out on these books the first time you can have another crack at them . . . if you speak German. Ferdi Wenger of Hefley Creek, B.C. is a Che-Mun subscriber and wilderness paddler (Liard, Churchill, Hanbury-Thelon) and has obtained the German rights to the Wild River Series. Ferdi has just produced a two volume work on canoe routes of more than 60 Canadian rivers partly based on the Wild River books. Che-Mun will report publishing info when it is available.

...

A SUPERCOOL IDEA . . . The fastest growing area of modern science today appears to be in the world of superconductivity where there's a new breakthrough almost every week. The idea is to utilize elements that reached a superconductive state is not new but the technology is rapidly improving the ability to do so. When something is superconductive it functions in a very efficient state such as the ability to transmit power at 100 per cent efficiency. More than 20 per cent of hydro-electric power is lost during its transmission in, for example, the James Bay power lines. As the technology improves and they are able to make superconductive material at higher temperature and lower costs it becomes a feasible option for many uses including greater hydro efficiency. Scientists are stating that this will be one of the greatest science breakthroughs of all time. It could mean that fewer rivers will need to be dammed and when dammed all the power will be utilized and not evaporate over the heads of passing wilderness canoeists. It's nice to know that some technological breakthroughs might save a river or two. We'll see.

...

PADDLER PROPOSAL . . . My friends at Paddler Magazine which is a quarterly canoeing publication covering the whole range of the canoeing world would like Che-Mun readers to know that they can obtain a free sample copy of Paddler simply by asking for it. Write Paddler at 158 Silver Birch Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M4E 3L3.

L.L. Bean's Maine Canoe Symposium

MCSuccess!



Bill Mason - a big hit.

The second annual Maine Canoe Symposium was again a rousing success. The event, sponsored by Maine mega-retailer L. L. Bean, was again held at Camp Winona, a picturesque, 80-year-old, boy's camp nestled among towering 100-foot white pines in southern Maine.

A full crowd of 275 people flocked to hear about every possible aspect of canoeing from a wide variety of paddling experts. Bill Mason, author of *Path of the Paddle*, and director of an impressive series of paddling movies, was the star attraction. Bill presented a series of clips from many of his films particularly *Waterwalker* his latest and final work-a feature length film.

Bill also presented a slide talk detailing many of his favourite canoeing places. It was hair-raising - and somewhat shocking - to hear the author of correct and safe canoeing practices talk about some of his escapades.

He showed a recent trip down the beautiful Hood River in the Northwest Territories which was detailed in the book *Wild Waters*. Bill and his paddling partners decided the forbidding canyon below formidable Wilberforce Falls looked runnable. Showing slides of the canyon that certainly didn't look runnable to anyone watching, Mason described the inevitable dumping and subsequent cold scramble to the rim of the canyon. It was a close call. Had they not been so experienced the outcome could have been tragic.

Bill later admitted that he always seems to end up doing some rapid swimming on his trips. Though he does travel with very experienced people, like himself, they obviously like to test themselves wherever possible.

Also attending MCS2 were Canoe magazine bosses Dave Harrison and wife Judy talking about canoeing with kids. Irrepressible Mike Galt, U.S. "freestyle" paddler - as they call it down there - was there again. Poor Mike was the subject of much verbal and physical abuse from the three Peake brothers Michael, Sean and Geoffrey. However he gave back as much as he took. Mike was paired for the seminars with Harry Roberts, former publisher of *Wilderness Camping* and formerly with *Sawyer Canoe*, who is starting a new publication called *Canoesport Journal*.

Those pushy Peake's showed slides from their trans-Ungava trip last summer and gave seminars on preparing and executing a northern Canada canoe expedition. U.S. National Whitewater coach Ken Stone gave hands-on clinics in whitewater techniques, Maine Guides Garrett and Alexandra Conover demonstrated their unique and traditional camping techniques including a beautiful display of a Maine Northwoods campsite complete with pack baskets, wanigan and just-baked biscuits and bread fresh from their unique reflector oven.

Canoe builder Jerry Stelmok re-canvassed a Maine Guide canoe, Tom and Sue Sebring talked about their high-tech approach to paddling, and there were numerous other talks including first aid and canoe repair. There were also continuous hands-on clinics.

An incredible array of canoes were available for all to paddle. Bill Mason tried out one of Mike Galt's Lotus solo boats and - true to his prediction - promptly dumped, which made a lot of the lesser lights feel much better. Jerry Stelmok's Maine Guide canoes were there - both 18 and 20 foot models. Old Town and Mad River both had all types of paddle craft for use and there were even kayaks and sailing canoes.

The Maine Canoe Symposium is here to stay. The event was sold out this year and will be a big draw every year. It's a unique event that features many of the leading experts in their particular fields and allows people to talk and learn from the speakers at a relaxed and informal weekend. Che-Mun was very proud to be a part of MCS and would like to congratulate the people at L.L. Bean's for their hard work in organizing a great canoeing weekend.

We'll publish details of next year's symposium in the spring. As this year's event was a complete sell-out it would be wise for all those interested in attending this wonderful weekend to book early for 1988.



The MCS canoe demonstration area was a very busy spot.

Nick Nickels

1906-1987

Nick Nickels founder of Che-Mun and the gatekeeper to thousands of canoeists seeking information on paddling destinations died May 10. He had been in poor health for the last two years due to a severe heart condition.

As Che-Mun readers are aware Nick travelled Canada's northland in the forties as part of his work for northern airline companies. He was also the author of several books including *Canoe Canada* in 1976 which listed hundreds of canoe routes and source material. The book was a natural outgrowth of his lifelong interest in canoeing and his canoeing newsletter Che-Mun which he started in 1973.

Che-Mun was an outgrowth of his tripping service which offered canoe route information to those planning a trip. Nick ran Che-Mun until 1983 producing 37 issues. Che-Mun will present in *Outfit 50* a retrospective of the first fifty issues including a look back into the origins of the newsletter.

Though Nick was never took part in major northern canoe expeditions his intense love of the sport

kept him involved at all levels. Indeed, in the early 1920's Nick met his wife to be, Clarice, while they were both paddling canoes on his beloved Stoney Lake near Peterborough in the Kawartha Lakes district of Ontario.

Nick was born in Toronto in 1906 but spent most of his years well north of that big city.

On a personal note, though I met Nick only once in person I feel I knew him well through our many written and telephone conversations. When I was in the process of buying Che-Mun he was most encouraging. I will always remember what he advised about our readers. He told me to not forget the person who isn't able to get away on these far-northern trips.

"Remember the people who share the interest and love for the north and canoeing that you do. For while they may not be able to get out to all the wild places, they care deeply about it, too."

I feel that Che-Mun does that. And because we do, Nick Nickels will always be a part of these pages.

Michael Peake

The Bay *cont'd.*

Granted by King Charles II on May 2, 1670 this piece of historic parchment is as much a part of Canadian historical fabric as any maple leaf. Today this charter, which granted the company full rights to utilize and own all the lands which drain into Hudson Bay, still hangs in the boardroom of The Bay's corporate offices at the corner of Yonge and Bloor Sts. in Toronto-

and will remain there. And that makes some people angry.

Among them is noted Canadian author Peter Newman who is currently working on a second volume of a three volume history of the company. Newman believes the charter should be transferred to the new owners.

"They're the ones who are fulfilling the charter," he said. "The charter talks about the lands draining into Hudson Bay. It

doesn't say anything about Yonge and Bloor."

One source said that Mr. Newman's opinions on the recent changes will be forcefully reflected in his final volume of *The Bay* history. It should make for interesting reading.

In the meantime northern canoeists can keep their traditions intact - and still depend on a vital and historic link to the past and the future.

Subscribers note:

This issue of Che-Mun is late - our apologies. The current rotating mail strikes in Canada are not helping the situation. Again, to remind subscribers, if you have \$87 on you mailing label you subscription expires with this issue.

We are planning to bring you a special *Outfit 50* - a 12-page issue looking back at the early issues and origins of Che-Mun. This is especially fitting with the recent death of Che-Mun founder Nick Nickels. We welcome your letters and comments and if you know someone you think would like Che-Mun just drop us their name and we'll send along a free issue.

CHE-MUN

Founded by Nick Nickels

**The International Newsletter for
Canadian Wilderness Canoeists**

CHE-MUN is published quarterly.

**Box 548, Station "O"
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M4A 2P1.**

**Subscription rates:
One Year \$10
Two years \$18**

**CHE-MUN is owned and published
by The Hide-Away Canoe Club.**

Michael Peake, Publisher.