

CHE-MUN

(Ojibway for canoe)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 44

CHE-MUN

SPRING 1986



Spring into action!



*Mason
makes it.*

*University River
Page 4*

A letter from
Athabasca *Page 5*

*The Trans Canadian Canoe
Expedition Report*

This scene of VIA's Canadian picking up a canoe party at White River will soon become a reality as canoeists get ready to run off to the run-off.



Spring Packet

The winter mailbag is perhaps the most eagerly read one. We're all thinking of the upcoming paddling season and letters on the subject are read and re-read with the anticipation of adventures yet to unfold.

Bill Hoyt, 70 N. Pearl St. Buffalo, N.Y. 14202 (716/847-3100) was one of those involved with the film *On to the Polar Sea* (Outfit 41). The film chronicled a trip down the Bonnet Plume and Peel Rivers in the Yukon Territory and was seen on WTBS and PBS in the U.S. and CBC in Canada. Bill writes to mention the film won two "Golden Sheaf" awards at the Yorkton (Saskatchewan) Film Festival recently - for Best Cinematography and Best Film in Sports/Recreation. The story on how the film was made appears in the February issue of *CANOE*.

Bill also has a query for CHE readers. He is looking for info or trip notes on the Mountain River, N.W.T. It flows into the Mackenzie south of Fort Good Hope.

Another request for info from knowledgeable CHE-MUN subscribers comes from John Wilson, 37 Fairglen Ave. Brampton, Ontario, L6X 1K5. John is trying to gather info on the Seal River in Northern Manitoba and would appreciate hearing from anyone who might help. John has tripped the Pipestone, Kopka, Albany and Winisk

Rivers of Northern Ontario. His request was at the end of a very flattering letter to CHE-MUN. One of several from our readers, we are very happy to say.

John's writing was also something of a true confession. "You will notice I have enclosed a cheque for a two-year subscription. I have cheated for the last little while by reading it at the (Metro Toronto Central Reference) Library. But now my conscience has gotten the better of me. I have found your publication to be unique and of genuine interest. I look forward to a long association with CHE-MUN." Likewise, John.

A member of one of the most remote Barrenland trips from last year has crossed paths with CHE-MUN. R.C. Davidson, 2432 Kenwood Manor #5, Sioux Falls, S.D., U.S.A. 57104 wrote a letter chock full of interesting tid-bits. Dick and his group travelled down the Back River to Pelly Lake and then headed north to reach the Armark River which drains into Queen Maud Gulf.

"We, like many, had an interest in the Back after the article in *CANOE* by David Harrison and articles by Perkins and Peyton in other publications. We also like to do a little exploring in areas previously explored only by native Americans or Canadians. It is also rewarding for us to follow a few or many footsteps behind a

George Back or Cal Rutstrum. Our '85 trip was a mixture of these interests.

"We had no food drops and carried the full 42 days from the start. While on the Back, from near Beechey to Garry, we did a goose survey for the Canadian Wildlife Service. We sent a map showing general locations of wildlife sightings to Environment Canada as requested in our permit to cross through the Queen Maud Gulf Bird Sanctuary."

Dick had written to John Lentz and Fred Gaskin in his preparation for this difficult trip. They had no sponsorship and Dick adds they are still trying to catch up on the trip costs.

The Nottingham Canadian Canoe Club is one of CHE-MUN's newest subscribers. Steve Read, Grindstone, Litton Mill, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 8SR, England is a member of that far-off club and possesses the longest address label of any CHE subscriber.

Steve writes, "I have just been introduced to your excellent newsletter by a friend from Vancouver Island. It is very difficult to get recent information about canoe trips in Canada when you live as far away as Europe, so CHE-MUN is like a breath of fresh air." Steve's connections span thousands of miles - his letter was postmarked in St. John's Newfoundland.

NEWS & NOTES

HISTORY RE-DISCOVERED . . . A fascinating new book will be of interest to northern historians. *A Fur Traders Photographs* by William C. James details life around the turn of the century in Great Whale River, Quebec, on the east coast of Hudson Bay. The post is still an important one and even today retains the unique quality that makes these photos fascinating. Great Whale is the dividing line between the Cree and Inuit lands and both groups still live in separate parts of the town. The photos by A. A. Chesterfield, the young HBC Factor, were uncovered by James in the attic of his office at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The pictures show many traditional activities of both groups and are analyzed in detail by the author. Interesting reading for Hudson Bay/Ungava canoeists. The book is published by McGill-Queen's University Press and sells for \$24.95.

PELLY PARTY . . . A four paddle rating to the book party thrown by publisher David Pelly to celebrate the book *Nastawgan* (see review in CHE 43). Most of the authors of the different chapters of this excellent book on Canadian wilderness travel were there. Special guests of honour were Pamela and Eric Morse. Among those swapping stories were George Luste, C.E.S. Franks and the book's editor Bruce Hodgins. Everyone was generally quite happy with the book which has received very good reviews from the critics. A Barrenground buffet of Caribou stew and Arctic Char complimented the talk of far-flung adventures. A wonderful mid-Winter canoeing get together.

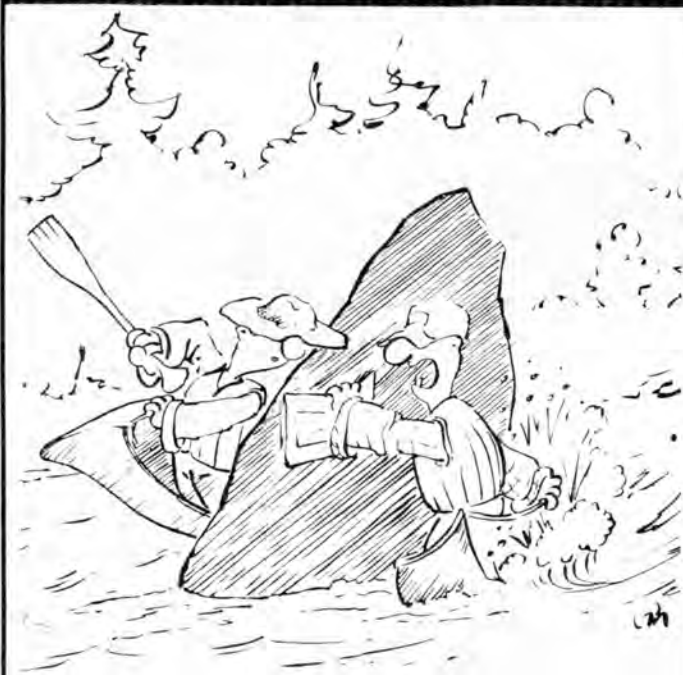
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SUPERMUGS II . . . Many thanks to reader Sig Magee from New Haven CT. for his card about where to get the Supermug described in CHE-MUN 43. The 12 ounce insulated mug, an indispensable tripping item, can be obtained through Aladdin Nashville, TN. Their product number is 120ZM and costs \$2.50 (US) Americans can order toll free at 1-800-251-4535. Canadians will have a harder time. They are available at Eddie Bauer's in Toronto but they are not directly imported by Aladdin's Canadian distributor. Not yet - anyway. The cups come very highly recommended.

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Continued on Page six

Paul Mason's . . . **CANOETOONS**



SEE, PAGE 37!
BOW PADDLER JUMPS OUT!

Summer '86

This is a list of some of the major canoe trips planned this summer by the readers of CHE-MUN.

Clearwater/Leaf Rivers - HUDSON to UNGAVA/From Bay to Bay - is the title of the trip planned by the members of the **Hide-Away Canoe Club** across Quebec's Ungava Peninsula. Starting at Richmond Gulf on the east coast of The Bay and heading up the Clearwater River eventually to Minto Lake. From there they will paddle down the Leaf River to Ungava Bay. The 400 mile trip is expected to take 25 days.

Dubawnt/Kazan Rivers. The second half of the **Trans Canadian Canoe Expedition** heads down the Dubawnt and Thelon Rivers. They will be doing the relatively unused crossing from Carey Lake to the Kazan River via Lake Kamilukuak and down to Baker Lake. This route was done by Eric Morse and friends in 1968.

Mountain River, N.W T. Bill Hoyt and group are looking into this seldom travelled river which drains the Mackenzie Mountains into the Mackenzie River. Hoyt did the Bonnet Plume in 1984 which drains the other side of the Mackenzie's.

Back River. There are at least two trips on Captain Back's River planned for this summer. Solo paddler Mike Bunn will be making a run from Great Slave Lake to Chantrey Inlet. Also Back-bound are Joss Haiblen and seven others. Haiblen, a legendary guide for many years at famed Taylor Statten's Camp Ahmek, now lives in Australia. His group of eight will make the expensive round trip from Canberra.

TRIP TIPS

CHE-MUN presents the second half equipment evaluation from Journey Across the Barrenlands trip (see Outfit 43). The 55-day, 1,000 mile trip traversed the Northwest Territories and gave us a good opportunity to test and evaluate clothing and equipment under a wide range of conditions. CHE-MUN's last issue covered canoes, tents, and some clothing.

CLOTHING We were very careful in our choice of rainwear. As experienced canoeists we realized the importance of good rainwear and the misery caused by inferior products. Having tried breathable fabrics we concluded they weren't tough enough for an extended trip. Patagonia's new line of thoughtfully designed, premium rainwear caught our eye. The Patagonia company gave us an expedition discount and five of our six paddlers took advantage of it. No one was disappointed.

Although expensive they do the job and that is the bottom line when it comes to rainwear - or indeed - any piece of vital equipment. The rain jacket and pants are well-made with many excellent design features. One of the best being the hood, which does up to prevent the wind and rain working their way into your dry interior.

Other important and critical additions to our clothing bags included; Pendleton wool shirts, sturdy, well-cut masterpieces, thick wool toques and gloves, and pile gloves which are very warm and dry out quickly. Footwear remains the final and most divisive item of apparel. Most of us went with two pair. Usually a waterproof pair of boots with Vibram lug soles (i.e. L.L. Bean Hunting Shoes with modified soles), and a pair of canvas shoes which would dry quickly. Either way you look at it - if you want to canoe you'll have to live with wet feet. A good idea we practiced was to have a pair of moccasins that were saved for dry conditions ONLY - such as in the tent or at dry campsites. Of course several pairs of Wig-wam wool socks (six in our case) were vital, dry feet being one of the great pleasures of a canoe trip.

PACKS (Woods and Camptrails) As canoeing traditionalists we are firm believers in the classic Wood's pack. These particular, Canadian made, HEAVY canvas bags have been on our trips for 10 years. There are new packs which look the same but don't have the workmanship and same heavy quality canvas. Even Wood's don't make them like they used to. Our veteran packs came through a very rugged 55 days in great shape. We didn't hole one or even break a strap. That did require care in handling, of course. Camptrails supplied us with several of their large volume Cordura nylon canoe packs. These are bigger and sturdier than their earlier models. They performed well though they were not subjected to the same loads as the Wood's packs. We kept the food and equipment in the Wood's and clothing in the Camptrails packs.

SLEEPING BAGS. Mountain Equipment Co-op of Toronto supplied us with their Khumbu sleeping bags. Made of Quallofil these bags were warmer than we needed for most of the trip but came into full use as we approached the Arctic Ocean. For some of us "down only" canoeists they were a revelation. The Quallofil stuffs down very well and is comfortable and durable. We also carried something we always considered a luxury - Therm-a-Rest inflatable sleeping pads. Therm-a-Rests are only a luxury until you use them once - then they become a necessity.

INSECT PROTECTION. Bugs are a constant and dominating factor of canoeing in the Northwest Territories and we prepared ourselves accordingly. Naturally Muskol was in great supply. We also used bug jackets from Uncle Keith's in Churchill, Manitoba and the proverbial Asian headnets. Also used were mosquito coils such as PIC. Timely and small applications of these smoke rings make your tent a quiet haven from winged protein.

A CHE-MUN Trip

Report by

Bill Mason



They say a picture is worth a thousand words. So in lieu of my thousand words on the Dog (University) River, here is my charcoal drawing of Denison Falls.

This place says it all. Anyway, I never was much for words. A two page double fold-out spread will do just fine. Anything less would be selling the place short.

It is the most spectacular place in Ontario. Maybe the world.

Did you know logging is beginning in the area? We need lots of people writing in to the Ministry of Natural Resources requesting no cutting along the river corridor and no bridges or roads along the side of the river.

PLEASE.

The management plan avoided this issue. it would be criminal to disturb the shores of this river.

Bill

The University River flows almost due south into Lake Superior just north of Michipicoten Island. From there canoeists can paddle the 30-odd miles into Michipicoten harbour or head up to Marathon along some of the most spectacular scenery in Canada - Pukaskwa National Park.

Page four

University R.



Concerned canoeists who are interested in helping preserve this unique and beautiful river can put down their paddles and pick up a pen. The advent of roads and bridges along the University will significantly detract from the river's allure.

Write to the Honourable
rio, Minister of Natural
Whitney Block, Queen
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1W
an accompanying letter to
lard, Executive Co-ordinator
Recreation Group.

The Trans Canadian Canoe Expedition

Letter from Athabasca

The following are excerpts from the letters of Alan Kesselheim who, along with Marypat Zitzer, makes up the Trans Canadian Canoe Expedition (see CHE-MUN Outfit 40)

AUTUMN. Greetings from the eastern end of Lake Athabasca. Phase II of our expedition officially began on October 3 when the owners of the fishing camp we will reside in for the winter took off in their plane, leaving us (Marypat, myself, and the camp dog, Bandit) for the winter. We will live here in a small cabin (16' x 20') until next June when our canoe expedition will enter its final stage.

The first summer of our journey was gratifying in that we encountered few logistical surprises and travel proceeded essentially as planned. In our transect of Canadian land from the jagged Rockies of Alberta to the spruce-lichen Shield country along the N.W.T. border we met a number of Canadians who, without exception, expressed interest in our endeavour and were friendly towards us.

We had tea and blueberry muffins with two white trappers, one of whom had lived in the bush alone for 28 years and the other for 17; were befriended by a pilot in Ft. McMurray who gave us a place to stay and fed us delicious walleye fillets; and we ended the summer by making friends with the owners of Athabasca Camps, where we have set-up our winter living quarters.

We are experiencing what seems like an honest cross-section of Canada. Spectacular mountain scenery and awesome displays of northern lights are juxtaposed in our memory with the serious pollution of the Athabasca River at a pulp mill in Hinton, Alberta and the placid farmland of central Alberta.

Upon our arrival at Athabasca Camps, we were immersed in the camp. The transition from our quiet, solitary, travel style to camp life, with as many as 25 fishing clients, barbecue nights, and hot showers was a severe one. As time passed, however, we began realizing new

The route of the Trans Canadian Canoe Expedition has changed. Originally it called for travel down the Dubawnt River to Beverly Lake and then down the Thelon, eventually to Chesterfield Inlet. The new route will take them down the Dubawnt to Carey Lake then eastward to connect with the Kazan and down to Baker Lake. You can contact Alan Kesselheim and Marypat Zitzer c/o General Delivery, Stony Rapids, Saskatchewan, S0J 2R0 before June 10. They'd love to hear from you!

rewards. We helped build our winter cabin and pitched in on numerous construction projects, were able to stock up on fish for the winter, and got to know a number of the local Chipewyan Indians who work for the camp. Now we head into another prolonged period of quiet life. Except for some local social life which we hope to capitalize on, we expect to be alone for months at a time.

The fall has been beautiful with flaming stands of poplar and larch, flocks of geese, snow buntings, and a variety of ducks heading south, and clear, crisp weather. While the snow hasn't stayed on the ground yet, we have had one morning of minus 9 F., and a skim of ice has formed on the bay in front of the camp.

We need little additional motivation to stockpile a whopping stack of wood by our cabin. This trip has underscored our basic need as social animals and we've come to treasure our relationships more than ever.

WINTER. We are in the third month of our winter isolation here on Other-side Bay. The cabin we helped build this fall has become familiar as any home I've ever known.

A good stretch of winter has passed, but a long stint of it remains before we haul out the canoe and limber up the paddling muscles for the final 800 miles of our journey. In the meantime the shape of our winter routing has become fairly clear.

We have daily chores to attend to - breaking ice for water, filling our lanterns with fuel, working with wood to keep the stove fed, making meals. We have plenty of time for personal pursuits and a healthy part of each day is spent writing, drawing, reading or simply thinking. And we also get out everyday for a walk.

Bundling up against the cold, we shuffle out onto the now-firm ice of L. Athabasca or wander through the snowy woods, following game trails and watching the Otherside River slowly succumb to the stranglehold of the ice. It is beautiful, quiet country and we are fulfilling our goal of seeing the full cycle of the northern seasons.

Late summer paddling was a great treat - few bugs, profuse berries, and nice temperatures. The fall was special as well. The land was splashed with colour, northern lights danced in the dark sky at night, and we stayed busy constructing our cabin and hauling firewood out of the forest.

Now winter has us in an icy full-Nelson hold. November seemed colder than was strictly necessary. We keep general weather data and the November stats are impressive: average daily high temperature minus 2 F., ave. daily low minus 21 F. We hit minus 40 to 50 on six nights during the month and had 15 days when the temperature never reached zero.

The cabin is on the brisk side some mornings when we rise to stoke the fire, and sitting in the outhouse at minus 40 is a crisp experience. All in all though, we are comfortable and don't have to worry about starting the car, freezing pipes or other civilized hassles. We even have a radio and pick-up CBC broadcasts. We have become enamoured with commercial-free, innovative programming Canadian-style.

Our winter accommodations are hardly as rigorous as old-style travelers in the north. Still, the romance of wintering over withers a bit when the sun is a glimmer in the south and the cold has the land in an iron grip.

Continued on Page seven.

Vince Ker-
Resources,
's Park,
and send
Tom Mil-
Outdoor



NICK NICKELS NOTEBOOK

LAKEFIELD - I attended a ceremony in the village recently hosted by the 1st Canadian Light Field Hospital, CAF. The occasion marked the finish of ceremonies celebrating the unit's centenary.

Mrs. Frances Douglas, Lakefield, was presented with tokens of appreciation for her part in the celebrations for her father-in-law Surgeon Major Campbell Mellis Douglas, V.C. (Victoria Cross) the unit's first commanding officer who paddled his way into Canadian history.

In 1885, in a 12-foot folding canvas canoe of his design and make was paddled by the major for 200 miles on the South Saskatchewan River from Swift Current, then carried overland north to Saskatoon where casualties awaited his attention, following a skirmish between the Royal North West Mounted Police and the Metis.

The canvas canoe presented by Mrs. Douglas was a duplicate of the original canoe named CAPELLA built by her husband, the late explorer George Mellis Douglas, the major's son.

The original Capella saga:

Following the first skirmish of the Northwest Rebellion at Fish Creek, the federal government wired Major Douglas to assemble, find equipment and personnel within five days. The new unit took off by the established rail service through the United States as far as Minneapolis, then still by rail to Winnipeg with the new Canadian Pacific Railway at Winnipeg and extending westward.

They detoured at Swift Current where a railway car served as hospital. Major Douglas continued on to Calgary, returning immediately to Swift Current to find the inexperienced O.C. had sent the hospital unit forward by steamboat Northcote which seemed to have disappeared up the South Saskatchewan River. He followed it and found the boat and two barges, his crew and some troops marooned on a sand bar.

The major pushed on in Capella spending five days and five sleepless nights afloat, paddling 200 miles. Major Douglas, with the Capella folded under his arm, made it overland to Saskatoon to care for the wounded soldiers there. The survivors were shipped back east for hospitalization in Winnipeg.

When the rebellion ended abruptly the medical field service disintegrated and was not revived until 1899.

Back in civilian life once more, Surgeon Major Douglas made and sold many collapsible skiffs and canoes, travelled widely selling them in eastern North America and Great Britain. He died in 1909.



During the summer of 1985, 25 corpsmen of the 1 C.F.L.H. followed the Douglas canoe route in eight canoes but not before posing for a pic with the presentation Capella in the foreground. I cannot recall any one canoe receiving so much current publicity - but where there's a will, and lotsa government bucks - there's a way.

May the '86 winds be at your backs most of the way.

MORE NEWS & NOTES (Continued)

WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN' GOING ON . . . It has been a turbulent year in one of Canada's most spectacular canoeing parks. Nahanni National Park has been re-classified and declared an earthquake zone following several significant tremors in the region over the last year. The most recent being a 5.1 tremor in February. The experts say there is a significant chance of a serious earthquake occurring there. Since the area is generally remote it won't affect any areas of population but it is certainly another consideration for canoeists. That could mean Hell's Gate rates a III on the river scale and a 6.5 on the Richter scale!

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L. CHE-MUN . . . Following in the wake of their four years of successful Sea Kayaking Symposiums, L. L. Bean of Freeport, Maine will be doing the same for canoeists. June 13-15 will see the first Maine Canoe Symposium held on the shores of Moose Pond in Bridgton, Maine (about an hour west of Portland, we're told.) The weekend will cost \$40 and will feature a series of lectures and workshops on all aspects of canoeing - tripping, racing, poling, building and much more. CHE-MUN will also be there! Michael and Geoffrey Peake have been asked to talk on wilderness expeditions and have happily accepted. Other participants include Jim Davidson, Harry Roberts, Harry Rock and many others. For further info contact: Maine Canoe Symposium, L. L. Bean Inc. Freeport, Maine, U.S.A. 04033.

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ELLESMERE ELSEWHERE? . . . A land claims group representing 15,000 Inuit in the eastern Arctic is threatening to thwart the federal plan to establish a national park reserve on Ellesmere Island. Inuit are unhappy that the wildlife management agreement which has not been approved by the Ministry of the Environment. The agreement calls for wide-ranging Inuit influence in game management and hunting in the east Arctic. Parks Canada is unlikely to proceed on the park without native support. The "top of the world" park as it is dubbed lies about 83 degrees North. The many rugged peaks and variety of flora and fauna would be of great interest to naturalists and climbers but of limited interest to canoeists as the ice-free season is very short.

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HERITAGE RIVERS . . . The first designated heritage rivers have been named. Ontario's French River and the Yukon's Alsek River were the first two rivers officially named by the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. The program, set up in 1984 by the federal government, honours rivers for their cultural and historical features and was designed to protect important waterways from development. About a dozen rivers have been nominated for the designation. The French, which flows into Georgian Bay is a major link in the Voyageur Highway and remains a popular and beautiful paddle. The Alsek drains the south part of Kluane National Park and empties into the Pacific in the Alaska panhandle.

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LUSTE'S CANOE LAB . . . Veteran wilderness canoeist George Luste hosted an all-day Quebec & Labrador slide and movie marathon on March 1 in Toronto. As the name suggests the focus was on rivers in the north shore and Ungava Regions. Many of the most widely travelled and respected canoeists attended; including Stew Coffin, John Lentz, Dick Irwin, Hubert Yockey and Garrett Conover. More than a dozen trips were shown. One of the most interesting was the slide and movie presentation of the Churchill River - before the dam was built. George and Linda Luste paddled it in 1968 as did a separate group which included Dick Irwin and Stew Coffin. The majestic size of the falls was awesome and the later shot after the dam - a joke, with a mere trickle of water remaining. Other rivers featured were the Moisie, Mecatina, George, Whale, Romaine, Ugjoktok, Notakwanon, and a couple of winter sled trips over the Labrador Plateau.

In an attempt to explain . . .

Following an appearance with Eric Morse on CBC Radio's *Morningside* with Peter Gzowski, CHE-MUN Editor Michael Peake wrote a letter to Gzowski to more fully explain the allure of wilderness canoeing. The letter was read on the air by Peter Gzowski a week following the interview and was an attempt to fully answer the question

Why did we name a river after Eric Morse?

Eric, Blair Fraser and their fellow 'Voyageurs' represent what wilderness canoeing truly is. A fondness for paddling certainly - but there's so much more that wilderness canoeing embodies. Many of these qualities were apparent to us during last summer's canoe trip to name a river after Eric.

The final days before we reached the Morse River were all aware of travelling through an incredibly special setting. We had to pass through the Akiliniq Hills, north of the Thelon River, in order to get to the Morse. These barrenhills, green and gently rolling, had been the meeting place for generations of Inuit until 30 years ago when the 20th Century barged in - bringing with it, disease, starvation and an end to their traditional lifestyle.

These hills are untravelled today for it is inconvenient to do so. Small lakes and narrow streams create a passage that exists only in the mind of those travelling through it. Much portaging is required over the soggy, spongy Barrens. Hoards of hulking Arctic mosquitos were constant companions throughout the long days. Despite the gruelling routine, high temperatures and our cloak of insects we revelled in the purity of this place.

One Akiliniq afternoon, in particular, was unforgettable. It was Day 36 of our 55 day trip across the Barrens and the fourth straight day of difficult overland travel. This afternoon brought us a surprise.

It was as though we had entered the inner chamber of a wilderness labyrinth. A gentle sun shone through wisps of cirrus cloud. Plump lake trout were feeding on the still surface of those pure, glistening waters. A lone Muskox, in a shaggy shawl, glanced up from his grazing to watch us pass. We were travelling where none of our race had ever paddled - in a land that was only briefly ours. We were all conscious of being in a special place.

Tracking our canoes up the final, small streams leading to the height-of-land, we were enveloped in a perfume of Arctic wild-

flowers carried on the gentle breeze. It was more than the scenery - more than the simple look of the land - it was a feeling of the essence of wilderness. Perhaps it had taken the land those 35 days to prepare us for this benediction.

The reality of the scene was re-enforced when, in a few hours it was over. As if to break the spell, purple clouds drifting in from the west brought rain. And like a rainbow, our enchanted afternoon dissolved - but as with a rainbow, we appreciated its beauty and looked forward to another.

At Blair Fraser's funeral a reading from his book *In Search of Identity* was the eulogy. "What held people together was not love for each other, it was a love of the land itself, the vast empty land, in which, for more than three centuries, a certain type of man has found himself uniquely at home . . . It is something within reach of every Canadian, urban or rustic - an empty area of forest or plain in which a man can still enjoy the illusion of solitude."

Much of the "vast and empty land" is rapidly being pushed beyond the reach of every Canadian and out of the minds of many. Let us hope we will be able to preserve and enjoy at least that "illusion of solitude" before it, too, dissolves.

C.P.C.G.N.

The Executive Secretary of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographic Names (CPCGN) was the first person we contacted regarding the naming of a river after Eric Morse. Alan Rayburn's response - "Eric deserves a river named after him", was just the optimistic boost we needed. In his recent letter to CHE-MUN, Alan Raymond writes, "I met Eric Morse several years ago and discussed with him several aspects relating to canoe routes and the naming of geographical features associated with Canadian rivers and lakes. I have come to admire his solid reputation for courage and audacity in challenging the mighty rapids of numerous Canadian rivers and in surmounting the many portages in the Canadian wilderness.

"A proposal to name a geographical feature for a living person is usually turned down by various provincial and territorial authorities. In this instance, I believe the Northwest Territories Council made a wise decision in honouring a man with a national reputation on canoeing, who also has received great respect among Canadian canoeists.

"The names officials have a preference for names with some relationship to the area concerned. Such names should be drawn from an historical event or incident, legends and names of the native people and landscape phenomena. It would be appreciated if you could publish a note in CHE-MUN about naming geographical features, and invite your readers to submit their preferences for new names and corrections to existing names to my office - Geographical Names Secretariat, 615 Booth Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E9".

Mr. Rayburn added that when the proper notification of the Morse River naming is received he will ensure that it is made available for new maps of the area when they are next corrected.

With respect to our naming of several small lakes between Carey and Barlow (Outfit 42) that we had named after pet cats he added, "Such naming is invariably rejected by various naming bodies in Canada." For the record, those names were strictly for our amusement and the unofficial recognition of the Hide-Away Canoe Club.

Athabasca letter

Continued

For us, the romance withers dramatically every Saturday. Saturday is shower day. We rig up a Reliance shower bag with spray nozzle and lather up once a week. It's a nice contrast to the partial satisfaction of a sponge bath. The problem is that the only place with adequate room for the shower is outside of the cabin! So, weekly, we set up the facility and enact our frisky drama. The coldest shower to date was taken at a sharp minus 26 F.!

We receive the occasional visitor at our cabin, but also go weeks at a time without any contact at all. We've become friendly with some local Chipewyan who trap nearby and drop in from time to time. A side benefit of this relationship is that we get gifts of fish, moose and caribou to add to our supplies.

They are usually accompanied by the animals they've trapped; martin, mink, otter, weasel - frozen stiff as pieces of firewood. Last week they had a lynx that was still warm. A beautiful animal that we wished was still alive, roaming the quiet forest.

We have seen wildlife near the cabin as well. Most notably, a pack of four wolves that have come as close as 50 yards. Willow ptarmigan populate the area by the hundreds and we see tracks of all manner of northern beasts in the snow.

Christmas was a memorable one for us. We went in to Fond-du-Lac and visited some of our Chipewyan friends. We attended midnight Mass at the church, spoken in Chipewyan. It was very nice and we returned with a mountain of Christmas mail.

Often at night we get out next summer's maps and talk about the challenges and adventures that await us. Our journey seems to race by and we sometimes wonder if it will be over before we are really ready.

We've invited my brother Craig Kesselheim and his wife, Beth Dilley, to join us on next summer's leg of the expedition. We are pleased that they have accepted. We agonized over the decision (purity of the expedition and all that), but realized that we would really like companions to share adventure with after a year of solo.



A new version of the white stuff - Caboganning!

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MORSE RIVER COAST TO COAST . . . Eric Morse and Michael Peake appeared on the popular CBC radio program Morningside to talk about Canadian canoeing and Eric Morse's role in it. The program is heard on more than 400 stations across the country. Host Peter Gzowski was a friend of Eric's fellow Voyageur, Blair Fraser, who died on the Petawawa River in 1968 and he appeared very interested in the subject. He even gave CHE-MUN a plug on the air - and is now a subscriber! Eric mentioned later that he received numerous letters and phone calls from across the country following the broadcast. Eric added that several years ago he received an unusual letter following the publication of an article in which he talked about his home on the Precambrian Shield north of the Nation's Capital. The letter was addressed to "Eric Morse, Somewhere on the Precambrian Shield, near Ottawa". It was delivered.

COMING TO A BOIL . . . The water question, as predicted here, is really heating up. Canada's envoy to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade talks is already on record as supporting the selling of Canadian water to the United States. Simon Reisman supports projects like the Grand Canal scheme envisioned by Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa. This plan would seal off James Bay and divert the fresh water, from rivers flowing into the Bay, southward. (See CHE-MUN 41) The project also has support from many high-level mandarins and lobbyists in Ottawa where a \$30,000 grant towards a feasibility study was recently handed out by the federal government. This despite a 20-year-old study of a similar proposal found "ecological effects were probably so detrimental that it was probably not worth proceeding with." Those opposing the mega-mega-project are starting to be heard from. These include the Cree and Ojibway of the Nishnawbe-Aski nation of James Bay and numerous environmental groups. In a recent statement the plan was branded an "environmental Frankenstein."

CHE-MUN OUTFIT 45

The Big Rivers. A look at how the major Canadian Northern rivers compare in size and drainage area.

Wild Rivers. The Canadian Heritage Rivers System. Who they are and what they are trying to do.

Early Summer. CHE-MUN 45 will be published earlier in order for both reader and publisher to do some paddling.

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