



Summer 2006

The Journal of Canadian Wilderness Canoeing

Outfit 125

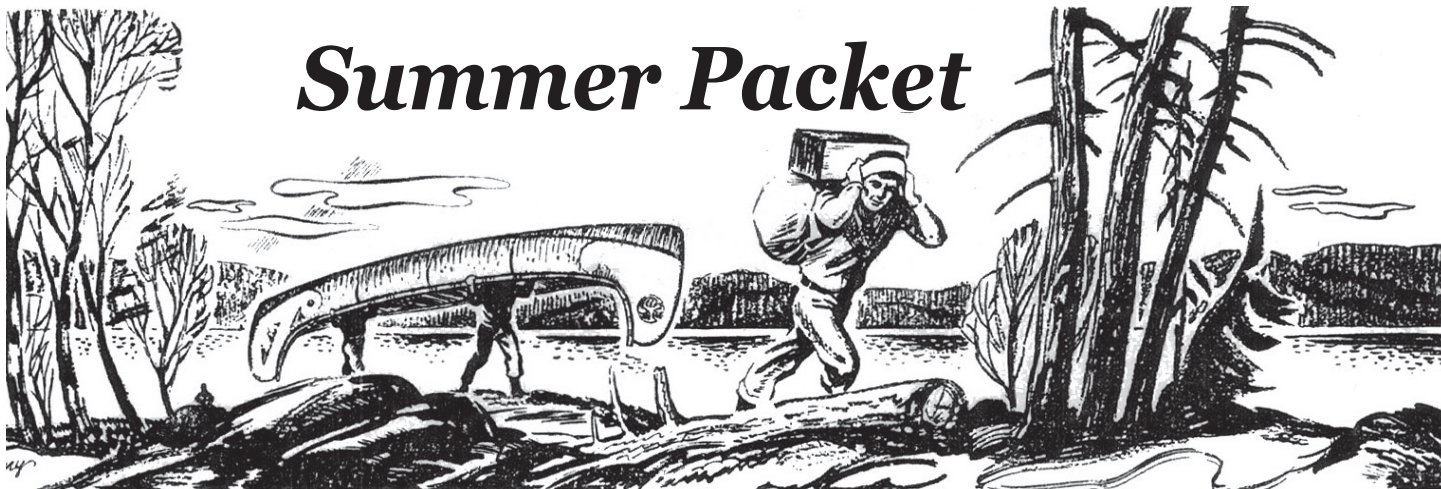


Photo: Larry Ricker

REMEMBERING HERB POHL

THE HERB SUPERB-- *This is quite likely the last photo ever taken of Herb Pohl - paddling east on Lake Superior en route to Michipicoten. Larry Ricker and friend Jose Joven spent a night camped along those rugged shores with a man they had never before met. It was a chance encounter with a legendary paddler shortly before he perished. Ricker's thoughtful story appears on Page 6 and he sent a print of this beautiful photo of Herb receding into the mist was presented to his widow Maura.*

Summer Packet



We heard from subscriber **Paul Chivers** in North Bay, Ontario, close to the historic La Vase Portages linking the French and Mattawa river systems. Paul and a group of volunteers have been trying to save the route for years.

There's been a bit of development on the La Vase that might be able to use your assistance. The landowner adjacent to the La Vase Portages Conservation Area has threatened to charge anyone crossing his property with trespassing. This despite the fact that several old maps clearly show the portage extending across his property, and apparent protection under the Public Lands Act.

Chris Mayne of the group Friends of the La Vase Portages (mayne@onlink.net) is leading a push to have the Ministry of Natural Resources recognize and enforce a provision in the Public Lands Act that protects right-of-passage for canoeists. Section 65.4 of the Ontario Public Lands Act states, "Where public lands over which a portage has existed or exists have been heretofore or are hereafter sold or otherwise disposed of under this or any other Act, any person traveling on waters connected by the portage has the right to pass over and along the portage with his effects without the permission of or payment to the owner of the lands, and any person who obstructs, hinders, delays or interferes with the exercise of such right of passage is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine."

The local district office was unable to make that determination and has passed the issue to the higher-ups in Peterborough for a decision on how to proceed. I think it may be a good time to bring a bit of pressure to show that this is a precedent-setting situation for canoeists. Would you be willing to put out a call to petition MNR, outlining the significance of this important historic trans-continental route and demanding they enforce the Public Lands Act?

ORCA/Canoe Ontario was involved in a Public Lands Act court battle many years ago over the Reid property on the Credit River, a case that was lost because it could not be shown that a portage existed before the dam was built (and patent granted on the adjacent

lands).

The La Vase is a different story altogether. There are records of passage dating back to the 1600's and patents were not granted until the late 1800's.

As a bit of background, it should be noted that this particular portage is recognized in the master plan for the La Vase Portages - Mattawa River Canadian Heritage Rivers designation. It is also part of the Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route, a route officially endorsed in 1991 and 1992 by the premiers of the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and by then-prime minister Jean Chretien in 1995. It appears on several survey maps from the mid-1800's, long before any patents were granted. The portage route was used extensively between 1615 and 1820 as the primary transportation route for exploration and later the fur trade. More background information can be found at:

www.interlog.com/~erhard/LaVase.htm
www.interlog.com/~erhard/pruling.htm
www.city.north-bay.on.ca/lavase/index.htm
www.nbmc.ca/LaVase_News.htm
www.amvr.org/page4.htm

Concerns and letters of support should be directed to Randy Morrison, Area Supervisor, Ministry of Natural Resources, 3301 Trout Lake Road, P1A 4L7, telephone (705) 475-5550, or email at: randy.morrison@mnr.gov.on.ca

It has been a busy summer for the newly retired-from-teaching Cliff Jacobson. He had some Canada Customs misfortunes which he outlined to his many paddling acquaintances - one of whom is Che-Mun.

Well, my worst nightmare has materialized at last. This Fond du Lac River trip was to be my last "retirement" trip. It certainly was. Here's how things played out. When we arrived at the border (War Road, MN), the customs official immediately asked me if I had a "work permit". I said I didn't need one 'cause these were my friends. Big mistake. We were interrogated

for four hours. I showed them the letter I had from the chief immigration honcho that said only hunting and fishing guides need a work permit and eco-tour guides were exempt. "No matter, you lied to us," they said. And of course, I had. Then she said she could put me in a van right now, haul me to Winnipeg and put me in jail. It was awful. Then they called Winnipeg for advice. Ultimately, they turned us around and sent us back to the States. They put a note in my "file" about the incident and said next time I came through, if I ever lied again I'd go right to jail. It was awful. So I'm back home in River Falls right now.

According to customs, any type of remuneration qualifies you for a work permit. "Free food or free gas" is enough. I tried to explain that by this definition, nearly all canoe trips that come from the States are "guided", and that canoeing Canadian rivers requires real skill—not like going to the BWCA, and that US paddlers want to go with someone they know and trust. Usually, one person does most of the work or furnishes essential gear etc., and the crew says, he doesn't have to pay his share of the plane fee or gas or whatever. This is no longer tolerated.

There's more to the story. I declared six cans of pepper spray and a rifle at the border. I was told to "get out of the car—stand over there, don't touch anything!" Then the customs agent ascertained the declared bear mace. "Where's the gun?" she asked? I pointed and moved toward the side of the van where the unloaded, cased rifle was kept. "Stand over there, don't move," she ordered. Then she found the rifle and took it out of the case. "Come with me," she said. From that point on, things continued to deteriorate until four hours later we turned around and headed back to Minnesota.

There are some other stories: Two weeks earlier, Steve Johnson, Piragis's top guide, drove the Piragis van across the border at Roseau, Minn. for a trip on the Cree River. He was asked if he had a work permit. He said no. They turned him back to the States and told him, "Don't try another entry point—we'll put you in jail if you do!"

◆Continues on Page 11



Editor's Notebook

In many ways it all was so fitting. There are few better places for a paddler to perish than Lake Superior. After all, it almost claimed the life of Bill Mason as dramatically illustrated in *Waterwalker*.

Having seen cancer take its toll on several loved ones recently, it is certainly the way I would prefer. And somehow I think it was the way Herb Pohl would too – and he'd get an ironic chuckle out of it at the same time.

I last saw Herb this past January. I was in a role he often and ably filled; guest speaker at the John Rae Lecture for the Hamilton Association. Over dinner with Herb beforehand we complained about the exigencies of old age. He gave me a preview of what to expect 22 years hence.

I also vividly recall our first meeting. In 1983, the newly formed HACC was speaking for one of the first times at the Wilderness Canoe Association AGM at the now-defunct Frost Centre, northeast of Toronto. My brother Geoff and I were there scoping out the empty room where we would talk later and were running a few slides to test the projection.

"You're not going to show those, I hope," piped a voice in the back instantly deflating our stellar presentation. "They're boring."

The HACC had just met Herb Pohl.

We quickly realized he possessed the same warped sense of humour as we did and became instant friends. We still echo his words of advice to one aspiring northern paddler who ask him about a particular river.

"Vell, the Nahanni is flat water trip."

You had to be there to see the twinkle in his eyes. And what a twinkle it was. His bone dry sense of humour was a favourite of the Symposium crowd and his startling resumé of northern paddling is legend.

We dedicate this Outfit of *Che-Mun* to Herb Pohl. And to what he stood for; the enduring urge to explore what is lost beyond those ranges and never, never give in to the hand of time.

Michael Peake.



Che-Mun is produced by the Hide-Away Canoe Club and published four times annually. We acknowledge the help of the Publications Assistance Plan in defraying postal costs on issues mailed in Canada.

Canoesworthy

Besides our tribute to Herb Pohl elsewhere in this Outfit, we are reprinting the news story that announced the passing of a fond canoeing acquaintance of *Che-Mun*, not to mention a subscriber. Herb Pohl died while finally paddling the beautiful stretch of the Pukaskwa coastline on Lake Superior he had long wanted to do.

An Ontario man who canoed and kayaked Canada's waterways for four decades and frequently spoke of his travels has died in Lake Superior. Herbert Pohl, 76, of Burlington, was found dead near the Michipicoten River shortly after noon Wednesday July 19.

OPP Const. Karen Farand says divers found his body in about six metres of water near where his kayak was discovered Monday. Pohl was not wearing a lifejacket.

Farand was unsure whether Pohl got caught in cross-currents that form where the river enters the lake, creating treacherous conditions. Pohl long wanted to traverse Superior and got his wish when he left Pukaskwa National Park July 11, said his wife, Maura Pohl.

She said earlier this week that the last time she heard from him was last Wednesday.

A long-time acquaintance with a Hamilton cultural group expressed shock he was not wearing a lifejacket.

"He always said he never took risks," said Aurelia Shaw of the Hamilton Association for the Advancement of Literature, Science and Art.

In addition to holding executive positions with the association over the years, Pohl was a frequent speaker, last appearing in January 2005, Shaw said. She said Pohl saw his planned two-week Superior trip a relatively short jaunt, compared with lengthy kayaking adventures he took in Labrador and the Arctic. She said he also camped frequently in Algonquin Park, winter and summer.

As sailors and soldiers made ready to return home from a major Arctic sovereignty operation, a small military plane remained stuck in the mud in Pond Inlet on a bluff overlooking the Northwest Passage waiting for rescue or winter, whichever comes first.

Four Inuit reservists were ordered to stand guard nearby to protect the Twin Otter from polar bears, while the air force scrambled a crew north to try to free it from the soft ground it landed in. However, the aircraft could stay stuck until the Arctic winter freezes the ground solid enough for it to take off for its home airport in Yellowknife, 1,200 miles away that could take a month.

A small group of soldiers and reservists called Canadian Rangers had set up an observation post nearby to monitor shipping through the entrance to the Northwest Passage as part of Operation Lancaster, which brought 450 soldiers, sailors and air crew to the Far North over the weekend.

a coast guard icebreaker and three navy vessels joined a CP-140 Aurora maritime patrol aircraft, a Griffon helicopter and two Twin Otters for several days of patrolling the waters of Davis Strait, Baffin Bay and Lancaster Sound.

On the ground, soldiers and Rangers watched from three observation posts, looking for signs of activity in a Northwest Passage that Canada is struggling to maintain control over. The United States claims it as an international waterway free from Canadian law, and global warming has made future shipping an increasing possibility.

Growing numbers of cruise ships have already started to ply the frigid waters.

The operation nonetheless exposed some of the navy's weaknesses in operating in the Arctic, a place it has largely ignored for two decades. The stuck Twin Otter which landed in part on the advice of helicopter pilots drove home the need for pilots to do their own reconnaissance in the Arctic.

The government of Nunavut will provide funds for eight communities in the territory to dispose of empty oil barrels. Many communities in the north are littered with 45-gallon steel drums, mostly spent fuel drums that have piled up in dumps.

Typically, hamlets have trouble getting the barrels cleaned and shipped south. Now, Nunavut's Department of Environmental Protection is stepping in. The department is accepting expressions of interest for cleaning and removing the barrels from eight of the territory's communities.

◀ Continues on Page 10



The Arctic Voyages of Martin Frobisher

An Elizabethan Adventure

By Robert McGhee

200 pp McGill-Queens Press Books, 2006

\$29.95

ISBN: 0-7735315-5-6

Reviewed by Michael Peake

The travels of Martin Frobisher were at the beginning of the age of North American exploration and his name

has receded from most minds. It was a name that was prominent for a time as the town of Frobisher Bay was in use for many years up until the mid-1980s when it was changed to Iqaluit.

This soft-cover reprint of a 2001 book looks at the Frobisher activity on Baffin Island and holds up a

distant mirror to the past to reveal many of the same practices going on today.

Essentially Frobisher's voyages were a mining operation, a way to make money that attracted several prominent investors including Queen Elizabeth I. (She was in for £1000).

Martin Frobisher and his ships first landed in what is now called Frobisher Bay in 1576. After a somewhat successful initial contact with the local Inuit population things grew tense when five of Frobisher's men disappeared with some Inuit and were never seen again. Inuit tales relate how the men were cared for over two years before setting sail in their small boat to an obvious demise. It was one of several somewhat violent incidents with the locals often followed by an abduction of a Inuk by the Europeans.

Frobisher returned to England with his "token of possession" – some mica-flecked rocks. The Queen named the land Meta Incognita (Unknown Boundary) which formed the basis for the British claim to North America. Frobisher himself thought he had arrived in Cathay.

But it was the rocks themselves that would attract the most interest. The mineral assayer at the Tower of London pronounced them commercially worthless. But subsequent, and less reputable, assayers found large amounts of gold and silver in the samples. This led to speculative investing and a return trip to mine the ample quantities of New World rock.

The entire venture is compared in some detail, with many striking similarities, to the infamous Bre-X mining scandal a decade ago. Both featured distant mines, far from their corporate homes declaring fabulous riches waiting to be dug from the ground and dubious on-site assaying.

And both were scams. But communication and science being what they were, Frobisher's Follies took a bit longer to play out.

He and a greater number of sailor (miners?) made another journey to the New Land and returned with hundreds of tons of ore. They also brought

with them four Inuit who were a subject of great curiosity, set-up in a quaint cabin in Bristol until they died of measles and assorted ailments.

Robert McGhee has clearly spent much time in the area and as curator of the Arctic Archaeology at the Canadian Museum of Civilization he has ready access to a great deal of rare source material. The book contains photos of some fascinating artifacts including a beautiful Mercator map and numerous artifacts of the era.

McGhee draws on several excellent sources of information from Frobisher's time. His voyages were clearly controversial and McGhee even prints the full list of 23 charges against Frobisher after the scam was discovered. One of those charges is that Frobisher never constructed the settlement he promised. As McGhee points out – that was a good thing. Sixteenth century Europeans had no real chance of surviving on the cold and stony shores of Baffin Island for very long.

Robert McGhee offers an illuminating light on a very dimly lit era of northern exploration.

Beverley Anne Peake 1956-2006



We are extremely saddened to announce the tragic passing of Bev Peake at the age of 50. Married for 24 years to Sean and the loving life force he so longed to return to after each northern canoeing excursion.

Together they had three children; Kaitlain, 23, Emily, 19 and Ginny, 11. Bev's 11 year fight with lymphoma ended Sept 4, 2006 – two days after the couple's 24th anniversary.

Bev was the rock Sean built his life on. While he pursued his many interests and historical projects such as editing the five volumes of David Thompson's journals, Bev kept the everyday world running with efficiency and love.

Bev was a fitness instructor, who didn't need a canoe trip to stay in shape. She was closely connected with their North Toronto neighbourhood, a fact that was evident when more than 400 mourners and many children packed the local church for an emotional and touching service.

She was also the 'big sister' to the three other Peake brothers, who loved her so.

Once again, HACC Chaplain, Peter Scott, presided over the service, the fourth such Peake family funeral in 26 months. And we hope the last for a very, very long time.

Sean wrote those poignant words for his beloved Bev in the newspaper death notice.

"Every love story comes to an end. But those who have found true love must suffer the cruellest ending of all because they must eventually part. For the one left behind, however, there is comfort in knowing that while the ache of loss never leaves, neither will the love they shared. True love has no end."



Battles with *Barrenland Bob & Co.*

We received this nightmare scenario letter in August and want to open the discussion to any subscribers who have had similar problems or can offer help/suggestions to help this thwarted paddler. At press time we learned that their request for assistance was received by the NWT Tourism authorities and they were told they could expect an answer in a few weeks. We'll keep you posted. Kully also stated the people at Tourism were very helpful, professional and responsive in all their dealings with them.

"Greetings from New Hampshire, I should be on the Coppermine River instead of sitting in front of a screen, but I need some help.

"On July 31, my party of four was supposed to fly into the Coppermine. Unfortunately, the airline lost/delayed a folding canoe and it took 48 hours to locate it. When we flew into Yellowknife on July 30 2006, the outfitter (*Ed. Note: who for legal purposes we'll just call 'Barrenland Bob'*) related that he'd be unable to fly us in next day, our scheduled date. We said that the delay might work out okay as the airline had mishandled one of our bags (our Pakboat folding canoes). By the end of the following day, when the boat was forwarded along, he informed us that we had missed our "window of opportunity" and he couldn't help us because he had too many other flying commitments. He never informed us of the "window" until after it had closed.

He offered an unacceptable initial settlement (\$1500), which is when we took steps that led us to a series of meetings with NWT Tourism officials. We learned that the NWT government has a Deposit Assurance Program to cover for shaky operators that might otherwise give NWT Tourism a bad name. My understanding is that some unfortunate incidents may have prompted legislation leading to the creation of this fund sometime in the 1990's.

They encouraged that we apply to the fund. It seems they have had concerns about him from before. We have 90 days from July 31 to make our case in writing. We would like to network with any other trippers who have had a bad experience with 'Barrenland Bob' to strengthen our case that there is a pattern of lack of good faith.

Unfortunately, we learned at the Wilderness Paddlers Gathering at Hulbert Outdoor Center last March that 'BB' had a terrible reputation, but only after having shelled out a non refundable 50 per cent deposit. We heard from a couple of prominent and experienced canoeists who had warned us about dealing with this person.

Thank you,
Kully Mindemann
Harrisville, NH
wjhill@worldpath.net

The following are excerpts from Kully's submission to the Deposit Assurance Fund. We will keep you updated on his progress but this serves as a painful lesson for all northern travellers. You are really at the mercy of your fly-in person and they are usually great folks - but clearly not always!

We sent a deposit (\$3230 Cdn) to 'Barrenland Bob' in November 2005 for a package to include air charter into South Redrock Lake on the Coppermine River, gear rental, satellite phone rentals and four First Air tickets from Kugluktuk back to Yellowknife, from July 31 to August 17, 2006.

We arrived in Yellowknife on Sunday evening July 30 and phone 'X' ('Barrenland Bob's' associate), whose number BB had given us as our trip contact. X informed us that flying in the next day as scheduled was unlikely as the weather didn't look favourable and "BB had a lot going on." I told him that one of our bags, a folding canoe, was delayed by our airline and

that a delay would work out fine for both of us until the bag could be sent along to YK.

We kept X, who was in 'Barrenland Bob' at his base of operations in another NWT settlement, informed of our situation throughout Monday July 31 by phone and in person, although it seemed odd that at some point on Monday X suggested calling Air Tindi. We told him that we paid 'Barrenland Bob' in full and that without hearing from BB with his assurance of a total refund and no further cost liability on our part, it made no sense to make that call.

When the lost bag was finally located on Tuesday morning, August 1, to be flown into Yellowknife

that evening, we called X after trying unsuccessfully to reach 'Barrenland Bob'. X related that our 'window of opportunity' was fast closing and asked us again if we had called Air Tindi to make alternate arrangements, making some vague reference that 'Barrenland Bob' would probably refund 'some of your money'. We heatedly responded that 'Barrenland Bob' had the sole responsibility to handle the arrangements we had fully paid for, to either call Air Tindi himself, or provide a full refund. We also asserted that we were taking steps to protect ourselves. Repeated attempts to reach 'BB' were unsuccessful, as his line was always busy.

"We also asserted that we were taking steps to protect ourselves, including getting legal counsel. Repeated attempts to reach BB were unsuccessful. We finally reached him Tuesday evening (even though he had my cell phone # and could have called). He informed us that his "window of opportunity" to fly us in had closed, that he had too many other flying commitments. We couldn't believe it. After heated exchange, he offered to refund \$1500 toward a flight in with Air Tindi. The next day he offered to settle for \$3000 (not the full deposit amount) with the condition that we write NWT Tourism saying that he had done nothing wrong, that we were satisfied with the settlement and would not pursue further action against him.

The discussion broke down, with him hanging up on me after yelling, "I'm coming to New Hampshire to see you, you fucker!"

Out of pocket expenses: Deposit paid in November: \$3230 Cdn, Balance paid June 19: \$3008 Cdn.

Other lost trip expenses: \$5576 US four round trip tickets from New Hampshire to YK, \$464 US for food, \$230 US Cell phone charges trying to clear this up, \$400 Cdn Misc (maps, motels, etc.)



Canoe fly-ins are an exciting gateway to adventure but only if you actually get on the plane.

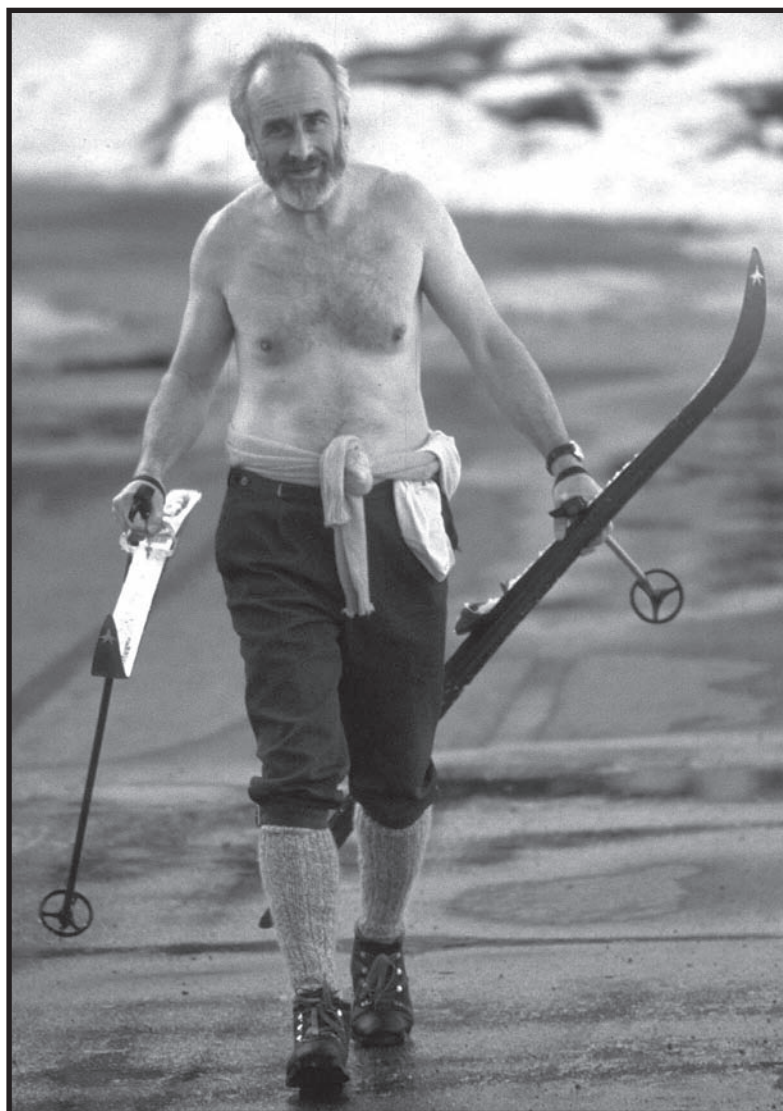
A Superior Night with a Legend Now Lost

American paddler Larry Ricker and his tripping partner Jose Joven had a chance encounter with canoeing legend HERB POHL along the shores of Lake Superior in Pukaskwa National Park just two days before Herb drowned. Here, Larry eloquently recounts that moving experience and illustrates why Herb was such a special person and paddler. Larry also took our cover photo which was likely the last ever taken of Herb. And how fitting a photo it is; showing Herb paddling off into the mists of time and memory and legend.

BY LARRY RICKER
Photos by Michael Peake

It had been a hard day's travel for Jose Joven (Hoz) and I with winds and waves building ever since we'd left Pukaskwa Depot that morning. Our chosen destination was a cove known as the Wheat Bin, just beyond Chimney Rock Point -- at least, that was the destination we chose after finding out just how rough the lake was getting to be. It was an ever increasing battle and just as we were nearing the point, I "eddie'd out" in a small cove to wait for Hoz to catch up. As soon as he got within ear shot -- pretty close with the wind howling and waves crashing -- he shook his head and yelled "I'm done!". We headed into the little cove which Hoz quickly named the "Rice Bowl".

We decided to wait and see if it calmed any towards evening so didn't set up camp right away, instead, wiling away the time snoozing, shooting pictures, listening to the weather band, checking the height of the waves crashing to shore. We had just decided to go ahead and camp and Hoz went off into the woods to look for a suitable bear tree. Shortly after, a man approached from pretty much the same



Herb Pohl returns from an afternoon ski at the Wilderness Canoe Association AGM in February 1983. Also attending were Jim Raffan, Bob Davis, Pamela Morse, Angus Scott and John Lentz.

direction -- I assumed to start with that it was Hoz returning but the clothes were all wrong, as was the height and width. About the time I figured out it was someone else, I heard; "Do you know where on the map we are?"

"That's Chimney Rock Point" I explained pointing in the general direction "The Wheat Bin is just the other side".

"Oh, I was hoping I'd make it to the Wheat Bin tonight" was the reply. "Do you guys mind if I camped here with you tonight?"

By this time, Hoz had returned and we both consented.

The skies were starting to threaten so I decided to put up my tarp, a modern version of

a Baker Tent dubbed the "Lean2" by its maker, Dan Cooke, just in case it rained. I approached the stranger and told him that, if it started raining, he was welcome to take shelter under the

Lean2 with us. Shortly afterwards, the rain started and the stranger took me up on my offer.

Sitting under the blue nylon, we made our introductions. The stranger introduced himself as Herb Pohl, from Burlington, Ontario. He appeared to us to be in his 70's and things that he said throughout the evening seemed to confirm this. At that time, the name meant no more to Jose

and I than I'm sure ours did to him but knowing names meant we were no longer strangers.

To most people, including many paddlers, a canoe is simply a means of transportation; a vehicle to take one to fantastic scenery, perhaps a platform to fish from. To a certain breed however, the canoe transcends all that; becomes part of their being, their way of life. To them, the bow of a well made canoe slicing through the water -- whether it be raging whitewater or the glassy surface of a calm lake -- is pure ecstasy. The scenery, the fishing, even the camaraderie of fellow travelers take a back seat to the sheer joy of canoe and canoeist flowing



as one across the liquid surface.

It quickly became apparent that Herb Pohl was one of those who was so blessed -- or cursed.

It turned out that he and Hoz had traveled many of the same rivers and they compared recollections of their trips. Herb also told of rivers and waterways that neither of us had traveled. I felt like a teenager again, listening to stories of far off places, fascinated, not just by the words but also his Canadian accent with a strong Scottish lilt and also overtones of his original Austrian. He also talked of past trip partners, most of whom couldn't travel any more, either because of personal health or responsibilities for aging spouses. Many of his friends had passed away. He talked of organizing trips and having partners drop out one by one until he ended up going solo in the end.

When we asked him about the craft he was using for this particular trip, he said it was "one of a kind". "Did you build it?" we asked. "No, a friend, who has passed away, built it many years ago." It was a canoe, "C1" hull I think he said, with a deck. "I know my canoe can handle anything" he said, "I'm just not sure that I can." I commented about how, even though his friend had passed away, by using the canoe, he was bringing a part of his friend along with him.

He railed a bit about technology. "Computers!" he spat out with disgust "what good are they anyway. We got along just fine without them before". Digital cameras were also a target. He bemoaned the lack of good Egyptian cotton for pack and gear making. Complained about modern tent design. He was definitely, delightfully, "old school" when it came to clothing, equipment, and methods.

He also talked about aging; "Things don't taste as good as they used to. Sunsets aren't as brilliant, a hangover is just a hangover without a good buzz the night before".

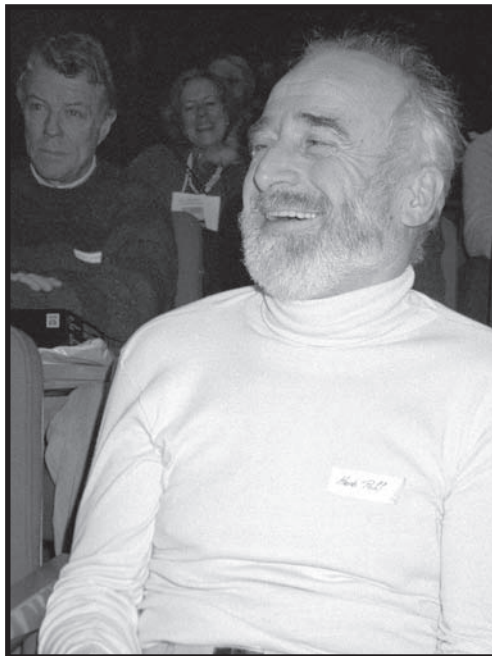
As many of us who are bitten by the canoe and wanderlust bugs, he experienced the dichotomy of the need to travel versus the guilt of leaving loved ones at home. He was very appreciative of a wife who let him travel throughout the years without complaint, a wife who understood his need for the rejuvenation of soul that traveling in the wilderness provided.

But mostly, it was the trips. Stories related with a melancholy, far away look in his eyes. He knew time was running out.

Too soon, as far as I was concerned, the light rain ended and Herb went back to his campsite for supper and to turn in. My stint

as a teenager vanished with the rain as I went about my camp chores and settled down to bed.

The lake had calmed considerably by morning but a fog was starting to drift in as we tore down our respective camps. Hoz and I each took a separate break from our preparations to bid Herb farewell. He asked me "By the way, what do you do for a living?". I told him; "I kind of hesitate to say, but I'm an electrical engineer with a computer company". Herb chuckled, shook his head and said



Herb at the WCA meeting with Angus Scott in behind.

"maybe I should know more people like you, eh?". He told me about a camera that someone had loaned him for the trip. "All computerized. I can't figure it out. No matter what I do, it displays 'EE' which, I assume, means 'error'." I didn't get a chance to see if I could help him figure it out.

Jose and I shoved off, eyeing the fog warily, hugging the coast and thankful that the lake was calm enough that we didn't have to worry about reflected waves. Soon, Herb came flying past in his red and white, decked canoe and disappeared into the fog. I managed to take one photo of him broadside to me then he quickly became a small dot and vanished.

An hour or so later, we passed a group of kayakers heading in the opposite direction. "Did you see the old man by himself?" we enquired. "Yeah, he's about a mile, mile and a half ahead of you" was the reply.

Two days later, July 17, we were wind-bound at the mouth of the Ghost River in a

place known as "The Flats" when we heard on the weather band that a red and white "kayak" had been found and that they were looking for the owner. With the location they gave, miles away Michipicoten Harbour, we didn't give much thought that it could be Herb's canoe. We thought it was some daytripper that had gone out into the rough water and run into trouble. We, of course, hoped fervently that the owner, whoever it was, had made it safely to shore somewhere and would be located and rescued.

It wasn't until a couple of days later, when we met up with a group of kayakers at the Dog River, that we started wondering about Herb. The kayakers had been visited by a helicopter out of the park. The theory was that the "kayak" had blown miles down the shore where it was found. They were looking for people who had seen a solo traveler in a red and white kayak to help them narrow the search.

Hoz thought that Herb's canoe had been red and white. I couldn't really remember what color it was but, I knew I had that picture of him paddling in the fog. Thanks to the digital technology that Herb so detested, I was able to take a peek. Sure enough, red and white!

By this time, there was no longer any mention of the kayaker on the weather band. Either they'd found him, or his body, or they'd abandoned the search. From then on, we were dogged by the questions. Had it been Herb? Had they rescued the kayaker, whoever it was? The uncertainty clouded the remainder of the trip. It wasn't until July 21, when we arrived safely at the landing in the Michipicoten River, that our worst fears were confirmed. Yes, it was Herb's canoe and yes, Herb's body was found nearby. It was also then that we started to discover what a significant person he was in the paddling community.

Although Hoz and I only spent an evening with Herb, he touched our lives in a very special way and his passing has left a gaping hole. I feel very blessed to have known him and to have shared a campsite with him -- probably the last to do so -- but I also feel deep sorrow to have lost a friend. I can only imagine the loss felt by those who were close to him. His family and the paddling community at large will greatly miss Herb Pohl. But, as long as there are paddlers, the spirit of Herb Pohl will live on. I know he will definitely be part of all my future trips.

Before we parted the morning of July 15, Herb said; "You need to do the Nahanni River someday, the scenery is out of this world."

Herb, someday I will. And, I'll count on you to show me your favorite spots.

Killarney: Three Score . . . and Son



one of only three Wilderness Parks in Ontario which also includes Quetico and Polar Bear provincial parks at the mouth of the Winisk River.

Along with a co-worker Al Craig, we did several trips into Killarney, learning the meaning of hard portaging and enjoying the great views from the top of its quartzite mountains.

All that activity led to 20-plus years of northern paddling that has been a great experience. I suppose naming a river after Eric Morse was the highlight along with two trips down each of the Coppermine and George rivers, the crossing of the western cordillera via McDougall Pass and an trip

The Killarney Park Loop: 30 years, 12,000 km

By **MICHAEL PEAKE**
Story and photos

It was one score and ten years ago, to put it in an age-relevant phrase that my northern canoeing career began. The seeds were planted at Camp Temagami from 1962-64 but it would be 12 years



A portage is a great place to practice the art of paddle twirling which we hear will be in the next Olympics.

later, after I had landed a full time job, that I finally began to canoe in earnest and 17 years until the Hide-Away Canoe Club began northern trips.

Killarney Park was my second destination in 1976 after a return visit to Temagami where I discovered all the great campsites I remembered had cottages on them. Killarney was a revelation to me and I don't remember where I first heard about it.

This rugged



The spectacular north shore of OSA (Ontario Society of Artists) Lake which was saved from logging by Group of Seven painter A.Y. Jackson and others.

through the Torngat Mountains in Labrador.

But all that is past and this year's trip involved returning to those Killarney roots and routes with my son, Tom, who is now 10. Canoeing is not something we have done as a family to any great extent. My late wife was not a tripper despite a game attempt before we were married. And our Hide-Away Canoe Club trips were far too arduous for kids - and likely us now too!

So this June was the first real canoe trip Tom and I had done and thus was appropriately small - just four days. There had been car camping and visits and paddles but this was the "real thing". Part of the reason was to get Tom ready for his first season of camp. He

120,000 acre park, at the top of Georgian Bay southwest of Sudbury is



attended the superb Camp Hurontario this July. Camp Temagami had long-since folded and Hurontario has been thriving since 1947 - an all-boys camp situated on an island in Georgian Bay, it is an old-fashioned camp. No computers, no e-mails, no GameBoys no iPods. Herb Pohl would have definitely approved!

Our Killarney route was very basic. I wanted to keep it easy and simple since once you leave the three main lakes; George, Killarney and OSA, you are in for some serious portaging.

There are several lines of thought regarding continuing a family tradition. How much do you push a love of something onto the next generation? The Peake boys' parents never even got into a canoe, and I figure we still ended up pretty competent. And

after all, canoeing, or whatever, should be something your kids want to do not have to. But there is no template for all this, fate often determines whatever happens.

Our first day out it started raining. This was a good omen to me as it showed Tom the other side of tripping - various stages of discomfort which would always evaporate from one's memory under the steady stream of positive memories. As I awaited the inevitable cries of

water running down a sleeve or down a drippy neck, I was somewhat shocked when the whimpers of grief didn't happen. The little guy just kept paddling away in the bow through marshy Freeland Lake down to the portage into Killarney Lake.

Was it the years of watching slides of his Dad and uncles slog over half-frozen lakes, portage through mountains or brave hordes of biting beasts? Possibly. Or more likely it was the stash of bubblegum in

they weren't. The bugs were light and only mildly annoying. The water was quite swimmable. Not warm mind you. But certainly swimmable. During one of our plunges a large loon drifted about 30 feet

away. It was the closest I had ever been to a loon while in the water and we both watched in wonder.

As trips go it was pretty small. But it was another in a continuum for me and the first of many for my son. Perhaps it was the 30 year stretch that made me think about this short journey in somewhat different terms.

From the ancients to the Lion King, the theme of the Circle of Life is a natural and constant one. The only real time is the present and that

is hurtling forward at an ever-constant rate. And we rarely pause to look out of the window of our time capsule. That is one of the biggest benefits of wilderness canoeing - it creates a much needed pause in hectic society and a return to more natural rhythms.

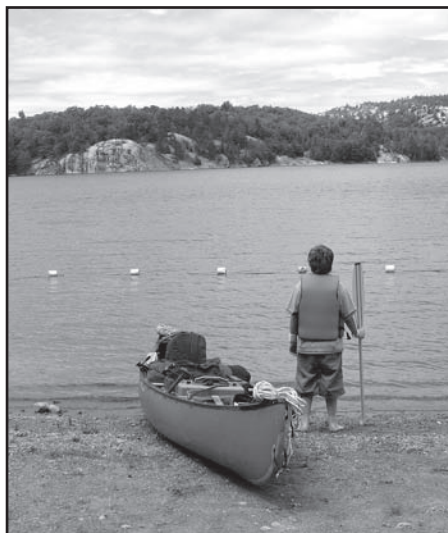
At our takeout heading back into Freeland I noticed a tree that looked familiar. And then I remembered, I had posed there three decades ago - almost exactly - in mid-June of 1976. I was carrying my brand new Pinetree Kevlar canoe which weighed a paltry 48 pounds. (I need it more now than then.) So I posed Tom, who was not yet ready to carry our 17-foot 80-pound-plus Old Town Tripper, next to that same tree. Killarney had not changed. Everything else has. And that's why we keep coming back to tripping. It never changes but it's never the same. It pulls us back to a time before memory, to a place we've never been but long to return to.

Tom absolutely loved everything about camp and will have many years ahead at Hurontario. For me the best part was the letter home from his counsellor 'Shorty' Besides acknowledging Tom's love for the place, he added that Tom was, "a really well-rounded tripper, who paddled well and was always there to help out."

And that's really all this Dad can ask - and hope - for!



2006:1976. Father and son at the same spot 30 years later. Portage from Killarney Lake into Freeland L.



Starting out - at the George Lake Campground.

his pocket.

After that rainy interlude the weather improved for the next three days. In fact it was perfect from then on. I mean, this was mid-June, one of the rare times one can get a Killarney interior canoe trip permit largely because the bugs are biting and the water was still frigid. But



Kevin Callan's excellent Killarney Adventures provided some great bedtime reading - for both of us!



CANOE SWORTHY continued from Page 3

Select communities will have to submit plans outlining contaminated sites and how they will collect and clean the barrels.

In Coral Harbour, a community of about 720 people 715 kilometres west of Iqaluit, hundreds of barrels can be seen around town. Residents there are said to be definitely interested in the program. The program targets some of Nunavut's largest communities, including Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay and Iqaluit.

The Kativik Regional Police Force pulled its constables out of Umiujaq Hudson Bay community of 350 people. The Inuit word is pronounced Oom-ir-ak). The force was relocated to nearby Kuujuaapik, because the Umiujaq officers have no place to live and are fed up with the situation.

The KRPF withdrawal caused panic in Puvirnituq, (formerly called Povungnituk) where the Inuulitsivik health board, which is responsible for providing health services along the Hudson Bay coast, chartered a plane to send a security team for its nursing station in Umiujaq.

According to information from the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau, Umiujaq has few empty social housing units. This means police must vie with desperate locals for social housing.

Next summer, Umiujaq is to receive six new social housing units. There's been a new police station in the community since 2002, but no staff housing has been built for the officers who work there.

In August, after being asked to leave a private residence, police in Umiujaq were to bunk down at the women's shelter above the social services office, but social services didn't want two constables to stay there during the day, because clients might feel hesitant to drop by.

Rather than move again, the decision was made to pull out to Kuujuaapik. The same desperate housing situation for police exists in Kangiqsualujuaq, where constables are staying in a vacant teacher's home temporarily.

Police agreed to return to Umiujaq after an offer was made to temporarily house them in a vacant room at the airport. But they planned to leave again if no permanent solution was found to their housing crisis.

Umiujaq's mayor said if they have to leave once more, he will understand, although he doesn't want them to.

This past July and August, a crew of about 55 scientists and support staff with the Houghton-Mars Project camped at the Houghton Crater, an inhospitable swath of polar desert on Devon Island, chosen because it resembles the landscape of the red planet.

For the last decade, the Houghton Crater's similarity to the landscape of Mars has drawn scientists and wannabe space explorers to the site. The summer camp receives support from NASA, the Canadian Space Institute, the Mars Institute, and SETI, the Search for Extraterrestrial Life Institute.

Most years these scientists are accompanied by a gaggle of wannabe Mars explorers who spend a month poking around the crater in "sim" — that is, pretending they're actually on Mars, dressed in space suits and driving souped-up ATVs.

But this year the Mars Society voted against sending their entourage to Devon Island, because they hope to save up cash for an unprecedented four-month expedition next year.

For scientists, this summer was a busy one, wrapping up old experiments and beginning new tests. They continued testing an automated drill used to collect rock and soil samples up to five meters below the surface, provided by NASA, for the third and final year.

Their decade of research has also taught them a thing or two about

the crater itself. For instance, last year a study showed the Houghton crater is in fact 38 million years old — rather than 23 million years old, as previously imagined.

And while giant meteors crashing into the planet's surface are generally seen as bad for evolved creatures, such as humans, these cataclysmic impacts could actually be good for smaller, less-evolved life.

Microbes have been found to thrive in the warmth and shelter found in broken rocks and thermal vents. In fact, Lee said craters could be "central to the origins of life" on Earth.

He also said research on Devon Island could challenge the belief that Mars was once far warmer. The Houghton Crater shows similar thaw and melt patterns as found on Mars can be created in a cold climate.

If you're lost in the far north, don't count on fancy gadgets that use global positioning satellites to lead rescuers to you. Instead, you'd be a lot safer packing a device that's more than 20 years old, called a personal locator beacon.

That's according to a report published in May by the Government of Nunavut that evaluates two tracking units that use global positioning satellites, or GPS, as replacements for the old personal locator beacons.

One unit tested was the made-in-Nunavut product, the Sedna Satellite tracker.

The Sedna tracker's bright orange, heavy-duty plastic shell houses a satellite phone and GPS tracker rolled into one. But the Sedna tracker flunked the government's tests.

The report's authors found the gadget only worked well as far as 65 degrees north, which means it wouldn't be much use in the more northerly areas of Nunavut. They also found the device's batteries drained far more quickly compared to other tracking products.

At an average temperature of 26.6 degrees Celsius, the Sedna tracker ran for two days. In comparison, a rival unit lasted for seven days with alkaline batteries, and 43 days with lithium batteries. But the Sedna tracker's biggest flaws were revealed during tests in Grise Fiord, which revealed a distress call could face delays as long as 14 hours.

That's because the satellites used by the Sedna tracker were never designed for receiving emergency transmissions that far north.

After satellites receive information from transmitters like the Sedna tracker, they bounce the message back to a ground station on Earth. But when the Orbcomm satellites move over the far North, and out of range of the company's ground stations, they stop transmitting, and save that message for when they move back into range.

The report also evaluated another product, the Guardian Mobility Sentinel, which first came into use to track trucking fleets across North America. Unlike the Sedna tracker, the Sentinel gives no confirmation that an alert has been successfully sent. That could be a worry, because during tests, seven transmissions did not go through, the report says, and the manufacturer couldn't offer any explanation.

Also the Sentinel only provides coverage below a latitude of 70 degrees, with coverage further reduced anywhere near mountains. Another drawback of both trackers is they both need a clear view of the sky to work consistently, the report said.

No surprise, then, the report recommends the government keeps using personal locator beacons. Personal locator beacons use a satellite system called COSPAS-SARSAT, launched in 1982 by the Soviet Union, the United States, Canada and France to provide an emergency alert system for ships at sea, aircraft and wilderness travellers.

Distress alerts are received almost instantaneously through the system, from any corner of Nunavut, the GN's report says. A total of 39 countries use the system.



Summer Packet continued

One of the guys on our trip drove to Canada alone and was supposed to meet us in La Ronge. He was about two days ahead of us. At the border he was asked where he was going: He said: "On a canoe trip.: "Where?" "Fond du Lac River". "Who's guiding it?" "Cliff Jacobson". "Who is he associated with?" "Piragis". It was all on the computer and they were waiting for us.

I learned that the Scouts are having trouble getting work permits for the Quetico this year and it is playing havoc with their trips.

Another story: Paul Shurke has been leading trips into the Arctic for 15 years. This time, customs officials told him he had 10 people (he always does) and therefore needed 2 guides—that he would have to certify someone in his group as a guide. He certified his daughter who is, I think, about 22. Ordinarily, this costs \$300 but since the custom officials were kind enough to do the certification, the cost was \$600.

In June of this year, Jim Mandle, Larry Rice and I canoed the Steel River in Ontario with Gary McGuffin. They took us apart at the border (Thunder Bay). They tried everything to find something that was illegal. After about an hour they let us go.

It appears that they are targeting canoeists this year. If you have a boat on your car, you may be grilled about where you are going. Evidently, Canadian outfitters aren't getting enough business from US canoeists. Either that, or our president's version of "foreign relations" has caused Canadians to hate us, like every other nation in the world.

Anyway, right now, I am bitter about Canada. But like most things in life, I suspect this too shall pass. At any rate, I have been duly encouraged to pull the plug. I'm gonna have a huge garage sale this fall and sell off everything. I'll keep the big trailer plus enough stuff to outfit four people. That's all. End of era. Beginning of a new one.

And here is Part II

Thought you might like to see the letter

I received (in response to the letter I wrote) from Canada immigration, regarding our aborted trip on the Fond du Lac River this summer. Nice letter and I appreciate the personal reply. What's interesting here is that the Immigration Program Manager refers to my August 25, 1995 letter regarding the decision

Canadian flag on our porch next to the stars and stripes. As you know, I have decided to retire from leading commercial canoe trips. This was my plan before our aborted trip. In September, I'm having a huge garage sale, selling off most of the community gear. I'm dumping 3 canoes—a *Dagger Venture*, *Dag-*

ger Legend and an *Old Town Tripper* with covers, an ancient beater canoe trailer, most of the canvas packs, paddles, PFD's etc.

I'll keep the big trailer plus enough stuff to outfit a crew of four. And of course, I would never sell my solo canoes. I haven't given up canoeing, just outfitting and guiding trips. Earlier this summer, I canoed the Steel River in Ontario with a group of friends in our solo canoes. I had a really good time.

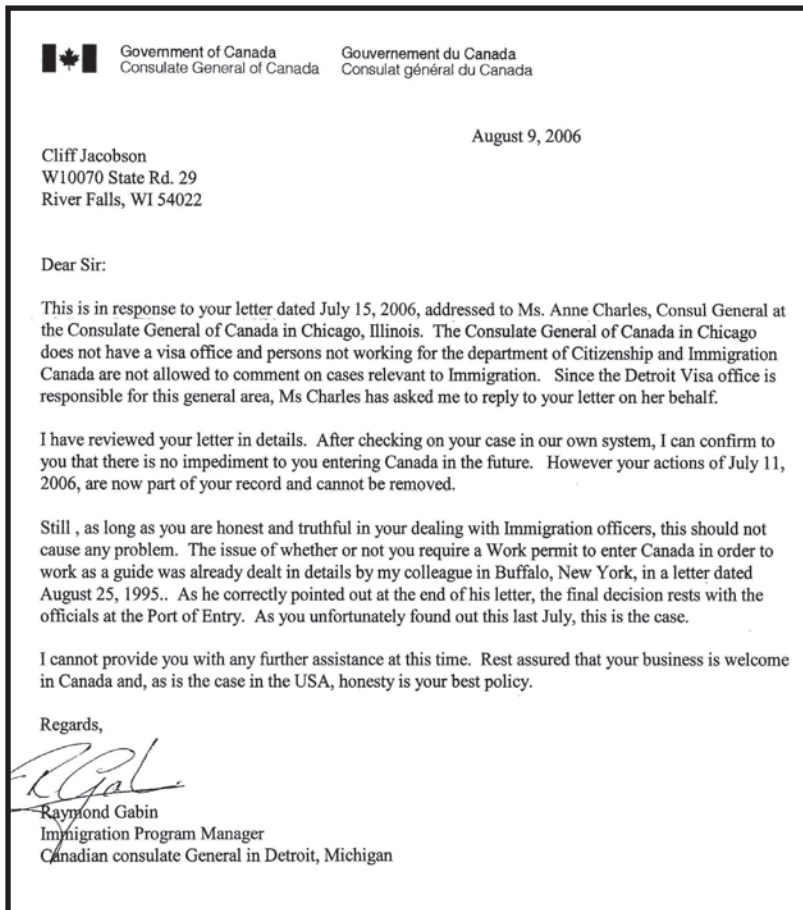
It was just wonderful to go with friends and not be responsible for anyone but me. I hope I'll see you all on the water, somewhere, some time, all smiles.

My apologies again to all of you who shared this summer's dreadful experience. Sadly, we would have left over \$10,000 in Canada on that trip and had a very good time. I remain as disappointed as you.

Enough. Time to move on and watch the new sun rise.

By the way, I am seriously thinking of starting a new adventure. I have approached Piragis Northwoods Co. with the idea of starting a wilderness canoeing school. If we can work out the details, I will be offering a 5 day course at a natural area (hopefully, a nearby camp or resort) outside Ely next spring, around the time of Sunsplash. My plan is to teach everything I know about canoeing and camping—from navigation with compass and GPS to the art of paddling, packing, food preparation and more. Possibly end with a three or four day canoe trip in the BWCA (with nine people max), or, if we can get this work permit thing solved, on a nearby Ontario River.

We'll see. The Piragis' web-site will keep you posted.



on the "Work Permit" issue which, as you recall, says that tour guides don't need a work permit—as long as they're not guiding anglers or hunters.

Mr. Gabin says the final decision rests with officials at the Port of Entry, which is also stated on the bottom of my 1995 letter. I find this confusing: I still don't know whether or not a work permit is needed to guide an eco-tour canoe trip (no guided fishing or hunting) in Canada. According to Canada immigration's web-site, you must be offered a job by a Canadian company in order to apply for a work permit. Our canoe trips don't fit in this category.

At any rate, despite the awful experience in June, I feel much better about all this now. And Susie can go back to hanging the



photo: Michael Peake

The initial portage you face in Killarney Park is very misleading. The carry from George to Freeland lakes is a short and very well-trodden 80 yards past an old logging dam. Most of the portages in this spectacularly beautiful provincial park are much more arduous, some downright brutal. This photo taken June 14, 2006 shows Tom Peake waiting for his pack mule father at the dock(!) in George Lake. An older father and son from Holland are seen paddling in to the portage in their rental kayak. The pair were on a cross-Canada jaunt taking in various samplings of real Canadiana. And like most European visitors were amazed by the size of it all. Come to think of it, we are too!

Che-Mun

Box 548, Station O
Toronto, ON Canada M4A 2P1
E: che-mun@rogers.com
T: 416.221.3225

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