



Winter 2007

**The Journal of Canadian Wilderness Canoeing**

Outfit 127

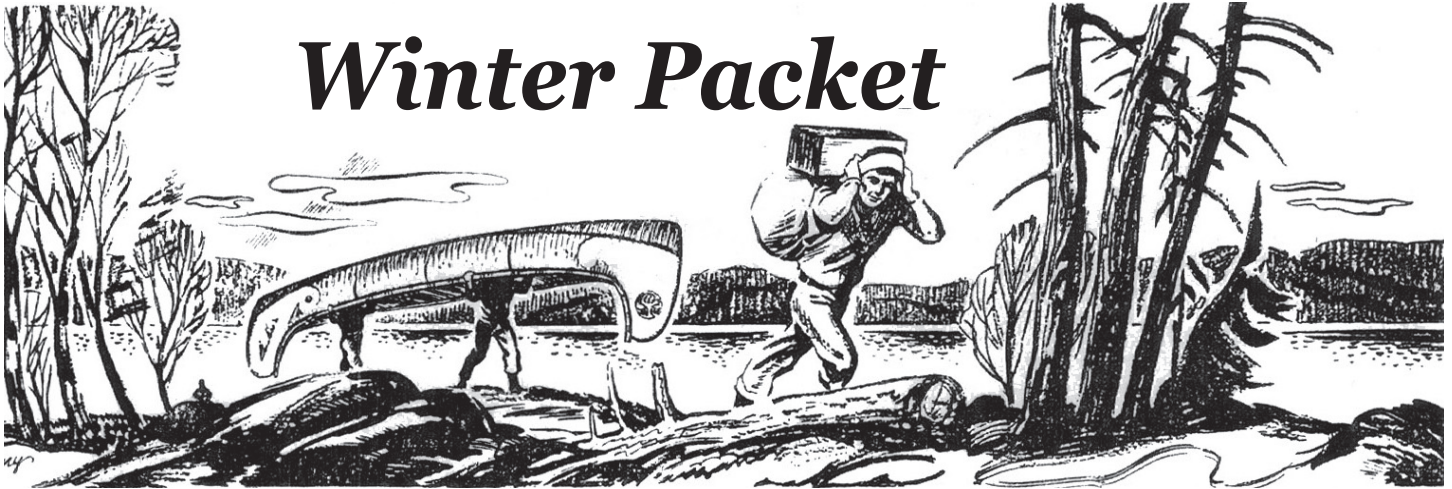


photo: Philip Schubert

## Coming Close to Being History on a Swollen River

*On the shores of the swollen upper George River in Ungava, Philip Schubert stares at his own camera, his face perhaps showing some of what much have been great consternation. In his third year of re-tracing the century-old Hubbard and Wallace expeditions he got a little too much of the thrill of re-creating a trip when he tackled the George River in very high water in a 14-foot canoe - solo - and dumped four times. His candid comments and photos on Pages 6 & 7.*

[www.ottertooth.com/che-mun](http://www.ottertooth.com/che-mun)



# Winter Packet

**Max Finkelstein**, noted paddler from Ottawa, wrote with urgent news of impending mining development in the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary.

**T**he upper Thelon is under threat. The threat is uranium mining. The Thelon River flows through one of the largest and last true wilderness areas left in Canada and the world. For wilderness paddlers, this is the river that is the most popular answer to the question: "If you could do only one more long canoe trip in your life, which river would you choose?"

The caribou of the Beverley herd, once some 400,000 strong, migrate along the Thelon twice annually, as they wend their way from their calving grounds on the barrens north of Baker Lake to the boreal forests of the upper Thelon, and back to the calving grounds in spring. This herd has been in decline for the past few years, and further disturbances will increasingly disrupt their migratory patterns. Outside of the wildebeast migrations of eastern Africa, this is the largest remaining overland migration of mammals left in the world.

In addition to caribou, this area is known for the concentration of wolves that use the eskers that crisscross the upper Thelon as denning sites. The boreal forest extends up the Thelon valley far beyond the contiguous tree-line, providing nesting sites for raptors, such as Gyrfalcons, and other birds of prey.

The water of the Thelon is as pristine as any water imaginable. Anything that threatens the water quality of the Thelon should be seriously questioned. The river supplies drinking water for not only for the community of Baker Lake, but also for all the wildlife it supports.

The cultural significance of the upper Thelon is of utmost importance to the Dene people. Here can be seen the greatest concentration in the north of remains of campsites, communities, travel beacons, hunting blinds – tangible evidence of the presence of a people that dates back thousands of years.

Just downstream from the proposed uranium

development area lies the Thelon Game Sanctuary, established by the federal government in 1927. Any negative impacts to the Thelon's water quality, or migratory wildlife, would extend into the sanctuary. Also, as the greater ecosystem of the Thelon country extends outside the current boundaries of the Sanctuary, ecological impacts of development would clearly extend into the Thelon Game Sanctuary.

But most important of all is the value of wilderness to the identity of Canada as a nation. . My son, whose middle name is Thelon, was baptized with Thelon River water. That's how deep this river has worked its way into my heart. As the Dene as a people draw their strength, their sense of identity, from this land, so do all Canadians. The existence of 'wilderness' – large undisturbed tracts of land – is central to the concept of Canada as a nation. We have a heritage of wilderness. Our nation was built on the fur trade, an economic venture that depended on large tracts of undeveloped land, and indigenous peoples who had the knowledge and skills to live with the wilderness. Without the combination of vast wild lands, a partnership with peoples who lived in these lands for millennia, and rivers for transportation, Canada as the nation it is today would not exist. If we, as Canadians, lose sight of the value of wilderness to Canada, then Canada and Canadians will cease to exist. We may be still called Canadians, but we will have lost our identity as a people and a nation.

So, I'm asking you as a wilderness paddler, as a supporter of First nations' self-determination, as someone who has written about and travelled the Thelon, as someone who has tried to be a voice for rivers and wild places, but mostly as a Canadian, to add your voice to protect this last, vast, great wild area. In wilderness, there is clearly salvation for this troubled world. In uranium, I don't think so.

Send your letter to the attention of Martin Haelele at the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (mhaelele@mveirb.

nt.ca Start your letter with: EA 0607-003, UR-Energy proposed uranium exploration at Screech Lake

The Thelon thanks you, and so do I.  
Max.

*I asked Max for some more concrete detail about opposition to the plan and he obliged with a second letter.*

I may be jaded, but have any big projects been cancelled because of environmental reasons? Has an environmental assessment been the reason to cancel any mega-project? I don't know, but I can't think of any examples.

Lots of mitigating measures, for sure, but cancellation? The only megaprojects that have been actually deferred or cancelled have been because of massive public outcries, loss of markets due to a massive publicity campaign (eg. the potential buyers won't buy the electricity, uranium, oil, etc) because of the publicity campaign regarding the environmental or social impacts. Gee, look at the Rupert Diversion. Can you get a bigger environmental impact than diverting a major river? Loss of fish habitat, change in coastal ecosystems, loss of traditional travel routes, major flooding, those are big impacts, just to name a few. Just how big an impact do you need?

That being said, environmental impacts always seem to be considered in isolation. . . in this case, you can't just look at the impacts of this mine, but at the impacts of this mine in relation to all the other impacts of mining, development, climate change, etc. that are happening in this ecosystem. When you look at impacts in isolation, they are all relatively minor and mitigatable.

In this case, the uranium may (and this is total conjecture) be used as a cheap source of fuel to run the oil sands project in northern Alberta, which is a giant environmental disaster waiting to happen, and already happening. Currently, this project runs on natural gas, which is running out as a cheap fuel in Alberta, and so they are looking for an alternative fuel source.

◀ Continues on Page 11





## Editor's Notebook

The fears of global warming have been lately replaced by those of personal warming as the frigid winds of February have chilled our part of the world lately.

The Arctic air makes for a better research season, which besides hockey and skiing, is what winter is all about. We have some great news on that front as the digitization of the world's libraries and artwork finally gets serious and the rare books of yesteryear are available to a huge audience. Not that a huge audience would care much about Dr. Richard King's musings on the Franklin Expedition - but we sure do and were thrilled to find a PDF of that rare book online. See Page 5 for more info on this very worthy benefit of the Internet.

Please note on Page 11 that we have been forced to raise our subscription rates for the first time in more than a decade. But we're also adding a new free service that we hope many will like and take advantage of.

We had previously mentioned the reprinting of *Lands Forlorn* and it finally seems to be happening. I had been approached to help with the Foreword but that task has now fallen to the very competent Robert Cockburn. Look for *LF* to appear later in the year from Heron Dance. We'll keep you up to date on that.

On another note, *Che-Mun* was recently asked to (obliged to, actually) contribute to the Library & Archives of Canada collection of periodicals. Nice to be noticed after 23 years!

And finally, after a five year hiatus for the worst of reasons, the Hide-Away Canoe Club is, somewhat tentatively, planning another online canoe trip in July. You'll read more about it in the Spring Outfit - and since we have announced a new trip before and had to cancel, I do so with some trepidation. But you have to just keep your eye on that next point of land and keep paddling - you'll get there. Look for more about *Northern Crossing/On Thompson's Trail* coming your way.

Michael Peake.



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## Canoesworthy

Proofreaders are putting the finishing touches on an Inuktitut version of the Old Testament. The Inuit land claims organization is helping to finance the project, a partnership between the Anglican Diocese of the Arctic and the Canadian Bible Society. Since the draft version was completed in 2002, a team of Inuit Anglican ministers has been double-checking every word of the translated Old Testament — all 577,000 of them.

At present unilingual Inuit are not able to read the Old Testament. The team of translators is also working on a study guide for the Old Testament, also in Inuktitut. The Inuktitut version of the Old Testament should be available by 2008. The New Testament was translated into Inuktitut syllabics in 1992.

The Davis Strait polar bear population is much more numerous than originally expected, says a preliminary report conducted by Government of Nunavut biologists. There are some 2,100 polar bears in the Davis Strait population, says the report, which is part of a three-year study currently underway. That's a big jump from an estimate of about 850 Davis Strait polar bears made by the Canadian Wildlife Service during the early 1980s.

The latest findings confirm what Inuit hunters have said for a long time: polar bears who live along the southeast coast of Baffin Island, Ungava Bay in northern Quebec, and the northern coast of Labrador are healthy, and growing in numbers.

Inuit hunters revised the Davis Strait population estimates one decade ago to 1,400, then up to 1,650 in 2004, based on the number of bears they encountered on the land. Scientific knowledge has demonstrated that Inuit knowledge was right but that hasn't always been the case. In western Hudson Bay, which covers the southern Kivalliq and northern Manitoba, Inuit, backed by the GN, claim the bear population has risen from about 1,200 animals to 1,400.

But scientists claim that between 1987 and 2004, the western Hudson Bay population dropped from about 1,200 animals to 935, a 22 per cent decline. That's led some to argue that growing numbers of polar bear sightings doesn't necessarily mean there are more bears — in some cases, polar bears may be hungry, and venturing closer to communities in search of food.

That could be due to shrinking sea ice levels, which force polar bears to spend more time on dry land, without easy access to food, making them weaker and less healthy. Stirling and his collaborators say fewer cubs and young bears now survive the lean times of a lengthening summer.

But some say experienced Inuit hunters should be given more credit for their observations, and dismisses the theory that polar bears may simply be more visible, rather than more abundant, as a view that sees these hunters as "so simple, and so childish, they could be fooled."

For the last two summers the study has been underway, government biologists, with help from their Nunavik and Labrador counterparts, have spotted record numbers of bears in the Davis Strait range. During a good survey, field biologists will manage to spot and capture between 160 and 180 bears. In the summer of 2005, when the current study began, researchers found 635 bears. The next summer, they found 842.

The Nunavut communities of Pangnirtung, Iqaluit and Kimmirut hunt the Davis Strait population. These communities share 46 tags annually. Labrador hunters take about six Davis Strait bears a year. Nunavik hunters can take as many Davis Strait bears as they want.

As the Arctic sea ice shrinks, the number of killer whales spotted in Arctic waters has dramatically increased over the past six years. That could be bad news for anyone who enjoys the taste of beluga, narwhal or bowhead whales. That's because killer whales love eating these sea mammals, too, they put away more than 500 pounds of food a day.

In particular, the number of killer whale sightings in Hudson Bay has increased to 30 over the last six years, compared to only six sightings throughout the entire 1990s. The 1980s only had six as well. Before then, reported sightings per decade were even lower.

These figures come from research conducted by a group called Orcas in the Canadian Arctic, which began in 2005, as a collaboration between researchers from University of Manitoba, the

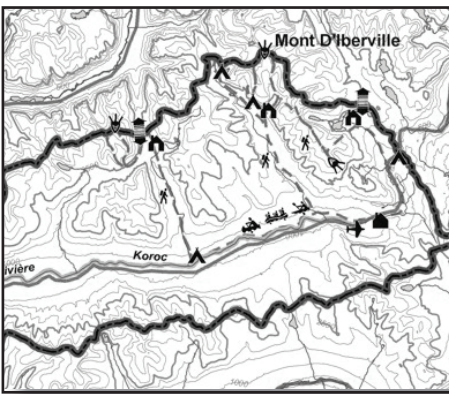
◆ CANOESWORTHY continues on Page 11



## Korok Park Planned

The remote northern Quebec location where two canoeists were killed and likely died of exposure in 2004 may soon boast an airport, sleeping huts and a visitor centre. The province of Quebec has unveiled a plan to create a park out of what is essentially the watershed of the Korok (Koroc in French) River in northern Quebec. The park includes the French peak, Mont D'Iberville, the Quebec side of the border mountain it shares with Labrador.

The park, still years away from approval, is



scheduled to be called Kuururjuaq National Park, it being the Inuit name of the Korok River. There is an excellent website with some superb maps of the area and the plans for development marked. See [www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/parcs/projets/Kuururjuaq\\_en.htm](http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/parcs/projets/Kuururjuaq_en.htm) for more info. The photo above is from the map detailing proposed services to complete the park's accessibility.

To encourage tourism, the visitor centre will be in Kangiqsualujjuaq at the mouth of the George River and access will be by plane and snowmobile. Park status also means conservation takes precedent over commercial interests such as mines, many of which are in the works. Also no roads are planned. It should also be noted that while called Kuururjuaq National Park, this means 'national' in a Quebec context only and it is not part of the truly nationwide Parks Canada system of nature preserves.

In the summer of 2004, Susan Barnes and Daniel Pauzé, whose canoe was cached on the shores of the nearby Korok River, were killed when bad weather set in on them as they neared the summit of Mt. Caubvick/D'Iberville, the highest point in Eastern Canada. Their attempted search and rescue was hampered by bad weather and the remote location. Their bodies were eventually brought out the next summer.

## Trans-Arctic Summer

Our community of northern paddlers is a generous one. We often share information and when the Hide-Away Canoe Club first began we were the generous recipients of help from noted northern luminaries Alex Hall and Eric Morse. It is a tradition we are both bound and honoured to continue.

In that vein, we had a visit in frosty February from Jeremy Harrison from the U.S. who is leading a trip this summer that not only will accomplish some significant paddling goals - it is also raising money for the World Wildlife Fund and helping to protect the very area they are privileged to paddle through.

The Trans-Arctic Canoe Expedition developed from the passionate wilderness experiences gained by its six members at Camp Kooch-i-ching, a canoeing and wilderness camp based in International Falls, Minnesota. Their plan is to start in Great Slave Lake and follow the traditional route up through into the Hanbury and down the Thelon. They will then follow the HACC route into and down the Morse River and then down the Back to

Chantrey Inlet.

As their website states: "To achieve our goals we have developed an expedition through the arctic to raise awareness about environmental issues in the area and to raise money for World Wildlife Fund - Canada, an organization devoted to protecting habitat, fighting climate change, and combating pollution in the arctic. Our mission is to raise awareness about the dangers threatening the delicate arctic region, particularly by mines and oil prospecting, climate change, and toxic pollution. Our goal is to raise \$30,000 for WWF-Canada. In addition, we plan to donate much of our equipment to Camp Kooch-i-ching upon completion of the trip." So far they have raised over \$10,000.

The trip features Jeremy and his two sons and three other, young and strong, twenty-somethings. I reminded Jeremy of the ill-fated, and similarly age-structured, Moffatt Expedition in 1955. He assured me they would keep to a good schedule and not still be hanging around in September. The website is [www.transarcticexpedition.com](http://www.transarcticexpedition.com).

## Snow Tour of the Territories

We seldom, if ever, write about mechanized northern travel, especially snowmobiles, as they are way out of season for us paddling types. But we were made aware of an interesting expedition that is heading out in March.

We received an e-mail from Dr. Matthew Sturm who is leading a group of five Americans and three Canadians on a 50 day, 1800 mile traverse of Alaska and Canada from March 15 to May 1. The nine man team will travel by snowmobile and leave from Fairbanks, Alaska and are planning to finish at Baker Lake.

The nature of the trip involves climate and snow research; many of the team are scientists and the group includes two climate researchers from Environment Canada. But a big part of the journey, and what is of special interest to us, is the visiting of towns and historical sites along the way.

Matthew got in touch with us for info on Fort Confidence and the Douglas and Hornby connections to that area of northeast Great Bear Lake. We gave him whatever we had

and he remarked in an e-mail, "It is proving interesting to learn how this sort of historic information (or some might say minutia) is kept alive by a few interested or fanatical people." Guilty as charged, Matthew!

A key part of the trip is sharing their experiences and encouraging school kids across the North to share as well. The group will carry posters, photos, and greetings from classrooms in the U.S. and share these with schools in Canada. They will also share their travel experiences more widely via the website and a book to be published after the trip.

The route has been designed to pass through as many historic locations as possible. They will visit the towns of Old Crow, Ft. McPherson, Kugluktuk and travel along the Yukon, Mackenzie, Porcupine, Rat, Dease, Coppermine and Thelon Rivers. From the trail, they will post dispatches, pictures and audio clips related to the history and natural systems.

The web link is [www.barrenlands.org](http://www.barrenlands.org) - a well put-together site that features an interactive map and historical and scientific links.





# The Sound of a Billion Pages Opening

For those of us, dear reader, who revel in re-discovery and re-exploration these are the months of study. A warm fire and a cold tale are the stuff of many the preamble of a northern canoeing expedition.

And there is a dictum among researchers - both scholarly and recreational - and that is - 'go to the source'. Go as close as you can to the original source material for historical info on the trip you are researching. The ultimate in that quest are the actual field notes and journals. In many case there are quite rightly locked away in universities and libraries. But the second best bet is the original publication itself.

There are basically two kinds of northern book collectors. The first are title-baggers who crave that elusive and rare tome. Many are leather lovers for whom a well worn calfskin is the ultimate reward. The second type are those who thirst for the information contained therein. The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

For those of us in the latter state, while admitting the fondness for some moldy Moroccan, it's the story that is the most important. And now, with the help of the omnipresent and powerful search engine Google, that hidden past is unlocking at a Googlishous rate. Their plan to scan the world's library's was met with much umbrage by those who hold copyright - and with much justification. But in the dusty world of 18th and 19th century historical northern travel, copyright is as long gone as the era they wrote in.

It is a massive job, digitizing the collected works of mankind, but Google seems up to it. In keeping with their company mantra of "Do No Evil" even their legal language is a refreshing change. Instead of dire and lengthy boilerplate they basically say - do no evil - use the info in a non-commercial manner and respect the Google Book project.

The whole technology is incredibly profound. This is primarily about ideas and thoughts - not about money, though many can not grasp that. The idea that many rare books can now be read and searched is incredible.

We have put a few of the interesting quotes directed from the scanned pages of some notable books. Much like maps, books give you a certain level of knowledge - a level that is magnified considerably by the direct applica-

tion of that info to the place it is written about.

In other words, walking the shores of the Coppermine River at Bloody Fall is a far more complete experience when reading Hearne or Franklin and their direct expediences there in mid July 1771 and 1821-50 years apart exactly! And what lifts this experience to a greater height is that, unlike virtually all similar exploration tales, the land in much of Canada's north is exactly the same. The rivers are there, the falls, Bloody or otherwise, are there - the people, however, are gone - but they live on though the pages of these great historical texts.

Check out [google.com/books](http://google.com/books) and note that there is a search option for Full Texts. Even the dusty and academic Champlain Society is digitizing its rare collections. Their small-run imprints are very costly but of great interests. You can find their searchable database at [www.champlainsociety.ca/cs\\_publications-printed.htm](http://www.champlainsociety.ca/cs_publications-printed.htm). A whole new world is opening up an entire old one. It is the ultimate democracy. Power to the paddlers!

he now proposes. Let them send forth this little band of venturous *voyageurs*, with Dr. King at their head, to shout the glad *halloo* of coming help along the desert plains, and amid the mountain bergs of the ice-bound world of waters. Thus let us prove that the lives of our enterprising countrymen are more dear to us than even clique and party-prejudice and jobbing, dear as these are to the hearts of Englishmen,—a fact demonstrated in every act of public life, wherever we have influence, 'from pole 'to pole.' ”

**Dr. Richard King traveled with Franklin and Back and proposed in 1847 to mount a rescue mission for the overdue Franklin. The above is from the preface to his rare book *The Franklin Expedition: From First to Last*. The excerpt is from *The Times*, June 14, 1847, one of many publications to comment on King's rescue plan.**

we found that it was ~~possible~~ without difficulty. We marched to a late hour in search of fuel to cook some deer's meat, which McLeay had procured in the course of the day, and were fortunate in at length finding a wooded valley on the banks of a small stream, that fell into the chain of lakes which we had crossed. It is probably this river, and chain of lakes, that the Indians ascend from the Coppermine River in canoes to the height of land which they cross on their route to Bear Lake.

**Dr. Richardson's 1826 comments coming up the Coppermine enroute to Great Bear Lake to rejoin Franklin on their second voyage. He finds the route west via the Kendall and Dease rivers, both named after expedition members. He notes it is a native route - later used by George Douglas who probably read this book.**

The direct distance travelled this day was about twelve miles. We saw many gray Arctic marmots (*Arctomys Parryi*), sporting near their burrows, and a little terrier dog, which had been our fellow voyager from England, showed much dexterity in cutting off their retreat, and succeeded in catching several of them. The dog's long confinement in the boat rendered the exercise he now took very fatiguing, and when we halted for the night he was the most tired of the party. Many young

**One of the delights of reading the original texts and not just a distillation of them, is finding little incidents which, though hardly historic, are very human. Like this tale of what was probably a Jack Russell traveling with Richardson's men who was set free to run along the banks of the Coppermine they were ascending on foot.**

# A Wet Brush with History

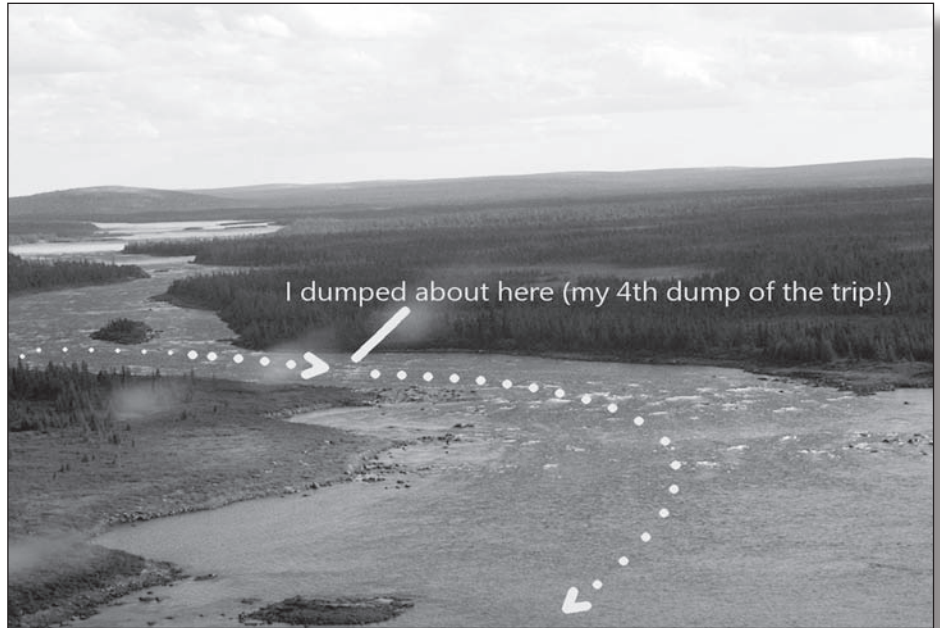
By PHILIP SCHUBERT

**W**e had just struck the white water... when the canoe, at its middle, hit a submerged rock. Before there was time to clear ourselves the little craft swung in the current, and the next moment I found myself in the rushing, seething flood rolling down through the rocks."

It was July 23, 2006, and here I was, solo, at the same location where the nightmarish scene above took place 101 years earlier on the headwaters of the George River, as described in Dillon Wallace's book, *The Long Labrador Trail*. I, too, was a hundred miles or more from the nearest humans. There, in front of me, as I stood on the shore was a ferocious standing wave. On my right was the seething flood and the rocks, and finally, a quarter of mile below me, was the small island where Dillon Wallace, Clifford Easton and their flooded canoe washed up. To my extreme right was the forested area where Wallace struck his last match, which sputtered into life and saved them from death by hypothermia.

I had been retracing the Hubbard and Wallace saga since 1999. In 2003 I spent five days carrying a heavy pack through the same forest that George Elson struggled through in the snow in October 1903, at the tragic end to Leonidas Hubbard, Dillon Wallace and George Elson's attempt to travel from North West River to Ungava Bay. On my third day of the hike I broke through to the Susan River at approximately the spot where the trappers had found Wallace near death in the snow. At mid-morning on the 6th day I found myself standing in front of the rock at the beginning of the Susan River which had served as the backdrop for the sad scene described by Wallace in his first book, *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*, as he and Elson said goodbye to Hubbard for the last time.

In 2004, I portaged solo over the 400 metre high Innu Portage, making a total of five carries. Wallace described this portage: "...we scouted ahead and found that the trail led to a small lake some five and a half miles beyond our camp... the brush was pretty thick and the trail was difficult to follow...exceedingly steep, the hill rising to an elevation of one thousand and fifty feet above the Nascapsee River in the first two miles...We were all of us completely exhausted that night. Stanton was too tired to eat, and lay



On his flight out Philip had a view of the rapid that ate him and noted his route on his website.

down upon the bare rocks to sleep."

In 2005, as part of my trip down the Naskaupi River, I did the 17-kilometre portage of trails and lakes around the gorge below Maid Marion Falls over which Job Chapies guided Mina Hubbard and rest of their team in 1905. [See *Che-Mun Outfit 122*.]

As I stood in front the rapid on July 23, 2006, trying to imagine the scene from one century plus one year before. I was 90 miles north east of Schefferville, 120 miles north of Churchill Falls and 225 miles north west of Goose Bay. I doubted if there were any humans closer to me than this.

I had begun my trip 10 days earlier on Lake Adelaide, just north of the Smallwood Reservoir. Marco Valcourt, an Air Saguenay bush pilot, insisted I autograph the side of his Beaver, after we had unloaded my 14-foot canoe and packs. It was already late in the day and I started carrying my packs to the campsite that Marco and I had located from the air. Thus I was caught completely unawares and missed a great picture when Marco's Beaver roared straight at me after taking off, pulling up at the last second and going over at tree-top level.

Air Saguenay staff had met me at the train

station in Schefferville the night before in the pouring rain and had driven me to a hotel. This was after taking what has to be one of the world's friendliest trains in travelling from Sept-Îles to Schefferville with my canoe and packs.

This was my first experience in Quebec's part of the north and it had turned out that the people were just as friendly and helpful as they had been in Labrador. Marco told me that he would try and over fly me if he were in the region in the coming days.

However, by the time I left I had established that my first point of contact in the event that I got into serious trouble should be the 24-hour telephone number of the Kativik Regional Police in Kuujjuaq, with whom I had duly registered with details of my trip. The RMCP in Goose Bay had served this purpose during my trips in Labrador. Thus I had a variety of phone numbers programmed into the satellite phone that would always be with me in its waterproof box in the light backpack which I would always wear under my lifejacket.

Any wilderness trip is going to test your limits and I had been tested physically on my earlier trips. I had always planned to accomplish more than I was usually able to pull off and had





had my morale restored after one of my earlier ventures by two old-timers from North West River who congratulated me on “knowing when to turn around”.

I kidded friends by telling them that this time, the trip would be all down hill. Down hill it was, with rapids of progressively increasing difficulty as I headed north from Lake Adelaide. I had only dumped twice in all my earlier trips, but dumped on my first day out after hitting a submerged boulder on a wave filled lake, the water made inky black due to over-cast skies.

The names of the lakes comprising the headwaters of the George River resonated with me as I came to them, having read about them for years: Hubbard, Elson, Cabot, Lacasse, Resolution and Advance, all of them named by a determined Mina Hubbard a hundred years before, who had stolen the march on Wallace, including in the naming of lakes. I ended up wind bound twice on some of these lakes just like the two teams in 1905.

The first rapids between the lake expansions were rock gardens where the only option was to line, walk, pull and lift your canoe. My second dump resulted when I was forced to try and run a section of rapid after running out of any of the above options, including portaging, after getting half way down. It had “looked runnable” but fortunately I was able to get myself and my upside down canoe stopped near the bottom of the rapid where I was able to bail out the canoe in spite of the fast water, and get underway again.

It was interesting detective work finding the rapid where Wallace and Easton had dumped. I initially planned my trip using the guide on the George River prepared by the Fédération Québécoise du Canot et du Kayak. It uses the notes prepared by Stewart Coffin from his trip down the George River in 1967, overlain on the 50,000 scale topographical maps from Energy, Mines and Resources, Ottawa, and directs one along the George River passing to the east of Lake Advance. There is a photo on the HACC George River online site by Coffin, said to be where Wallace and Easton dumped. It can be found at: [http://www.canoe.ca/GeorgeRiver/pic\\_coffin5.html](http://www.canoe.ca/GeorgeRiver/pic_coffin5.html)

It was Wayne Halley who told me that Coffin's photo seemed to be of the Three Gorges

and that there was no way that Wallace and Easton could have gone through there alive.

Wayne also pointed out that the two teams in 1905 had in fact travelled by Lake Advance rather than continuing north after Lake Resolu-



**The rapid that claimed Wallace above the Three Gorges lies behind Philip's boat.**

tion along what is marked as the George River on today's maps. Further, the notes that Wayne had prepared for me from his epic trip with Carl MacLean in 2004, as they became the first team to have retraced the 1905 trips in one go, indicated there were three rapids between Lake Advance and the Three Gorges.

These rapids in fact are not marked on the 50,000 scale topographical maps and thus one would never know that they existed. The third one was not deemed to be runnable, even by a team as skilled as Halley and MacLean in their 17-foot Old Town canoe. In *The Long Labrador Trail*, Wallace and Easton canoe several rapids after being wind bound on what seems to be Lake Advance and then are overturned on the last rapid before an expansion. Wallace provides a clear description of the Three Gorges, which they came to next and portaged, after recovering from their brush with death.

When I at last reached the anonymous third rapid identified in Wayne's notes, I saw that it would indeed present a big challenge to any team of canoeists. It had a small island directly below it, had one isolated stand of forest to the right of the island and widened into a slow moving stretch of water. I was quite confident that I had found the rapid in question.

Several kilometres later, one comes to the canyons and thundering water of the Three Gorges

where Wallace noted “Just below this canyon another river joined us from the east, increasing the volume of water very materially”. This latter river is clearly the above-mentioned George River, passing to the east of Lake Advance before combining with the flow out of the Three Gorges.

The joining of the two flows indeed turns the George River into something fearsome and big. I spent a day navigating 10 or 12 rapids down the George after portaging past the Three Gorges, lining most, running two and then came to my first 2.5 kilometre long monster. I started by canoeing a kilometre-long side channel recommended by Wayne, which they had found to be an easy paddle. It turned out to be an express ride with standing waves for its full length. I then proceeded to line back to the main channel and, at the main channel, found that the depth of the water and alders precluded further lining or portaging. The rapids ahead

looked deceptively runnable, so off I paddled. Deceptive it was and I dumped while crossing a short stretch, which had been below the horizon and consisted of five-foot criss-crossing standing waves.

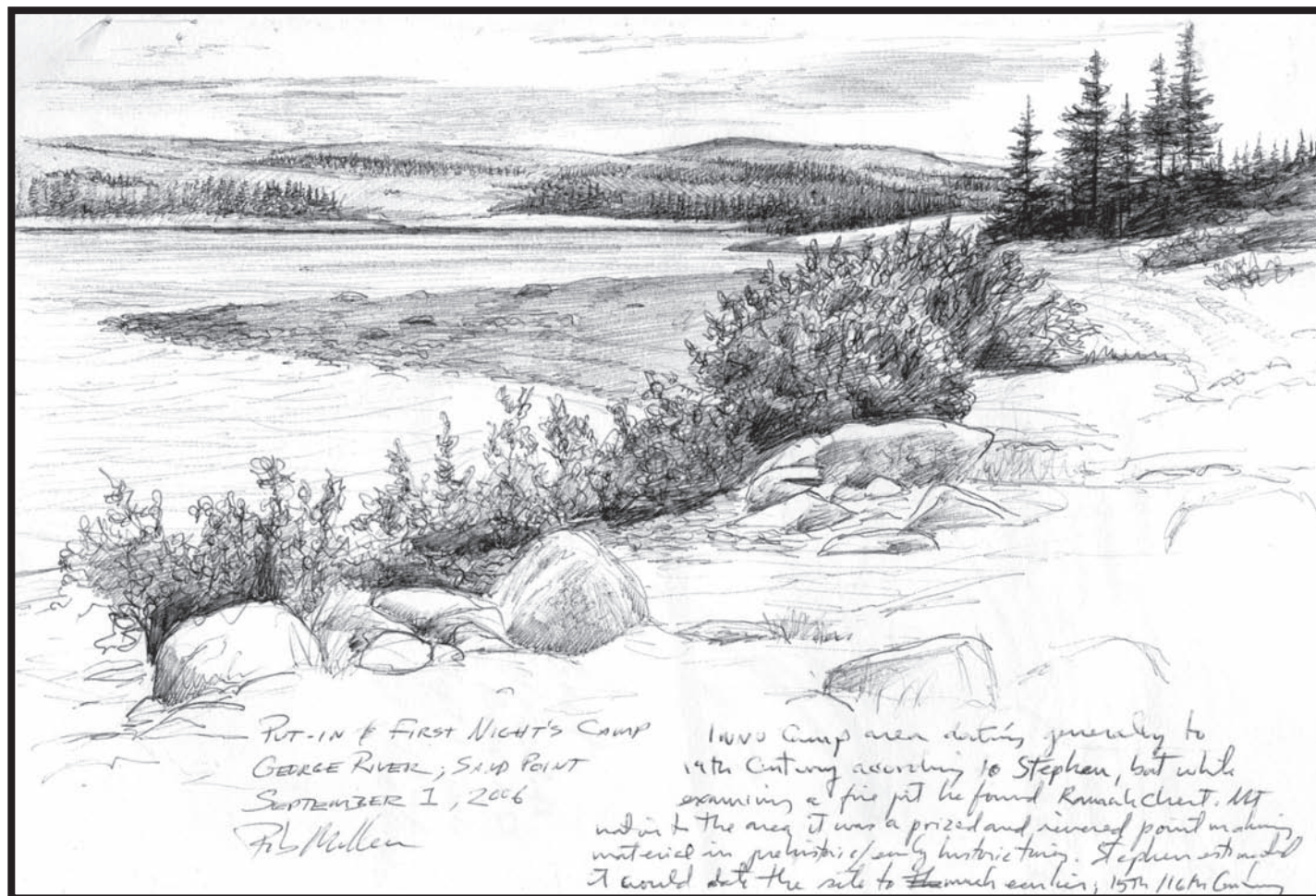
I experienced being washed down canoe and all through the “rushing, seething flood” and then being pushed out into a kilometres long expansion where there was no island immediately below, unlike in Wallace's case.

It was clear to me at this point that a solo 14-foot canoe was not enough to take on what the George River had now become. A call to Air Saguenay the next day on my satellite phone and I, canoe and packs were shortly on our way home. It has been a great experience reliving some of the parts of the Hubbard and Wallace saga, but the “go on or die” part is definitely not for me and fortunately, today, we have options.

Those interested in my trips retracing the saga can see photos, maps and explanations by accessing my website at <http://www.magma.ca/~philip18/HWSaga/>

I turned 61 shortly after getting back from the George River. I suspect though that my 14-foot canoe and I have not yet ended our adventures up north. The north's pristine, if sometimes harsh, beauty is irresistibly attractive and the pleasure in experiencing it solo, but in relative safety, thanks to today's technology, is immense.

# Different Strokes for Painterly Folks



The George River was home to another unique expedition last summer as a prominent group of artists and paddlers traveled from Indian House Lake to Helen Falls on an 17-day trip starting September 1, 2006.

Combining art and science with adventure, the Wilderness River Expedition Art Foundation (WREAF) provides artists with intimate, intense and “real” experience of wilderness to inspire their work. It mobilizes artists in a unique way to contribute to the public discussion of conservation. Following the expeditions, WREAF organizes group shows and exhibits that showcase the resulting art.

The first expedition organized under the aegis of WREAF was the September 2005 George River Recon Expedition run in preparation for the main expedition in 2006. Sponsored by Mad River Canoe Company, along with numerous other additional sponsors including governmental, corporate and private entities the complex expedition was a complete success.

WREAF’s focus is the Boreal Forest ecosystem, the largest intact forest on Earth. Critical for climate, water, habitat, native culture,

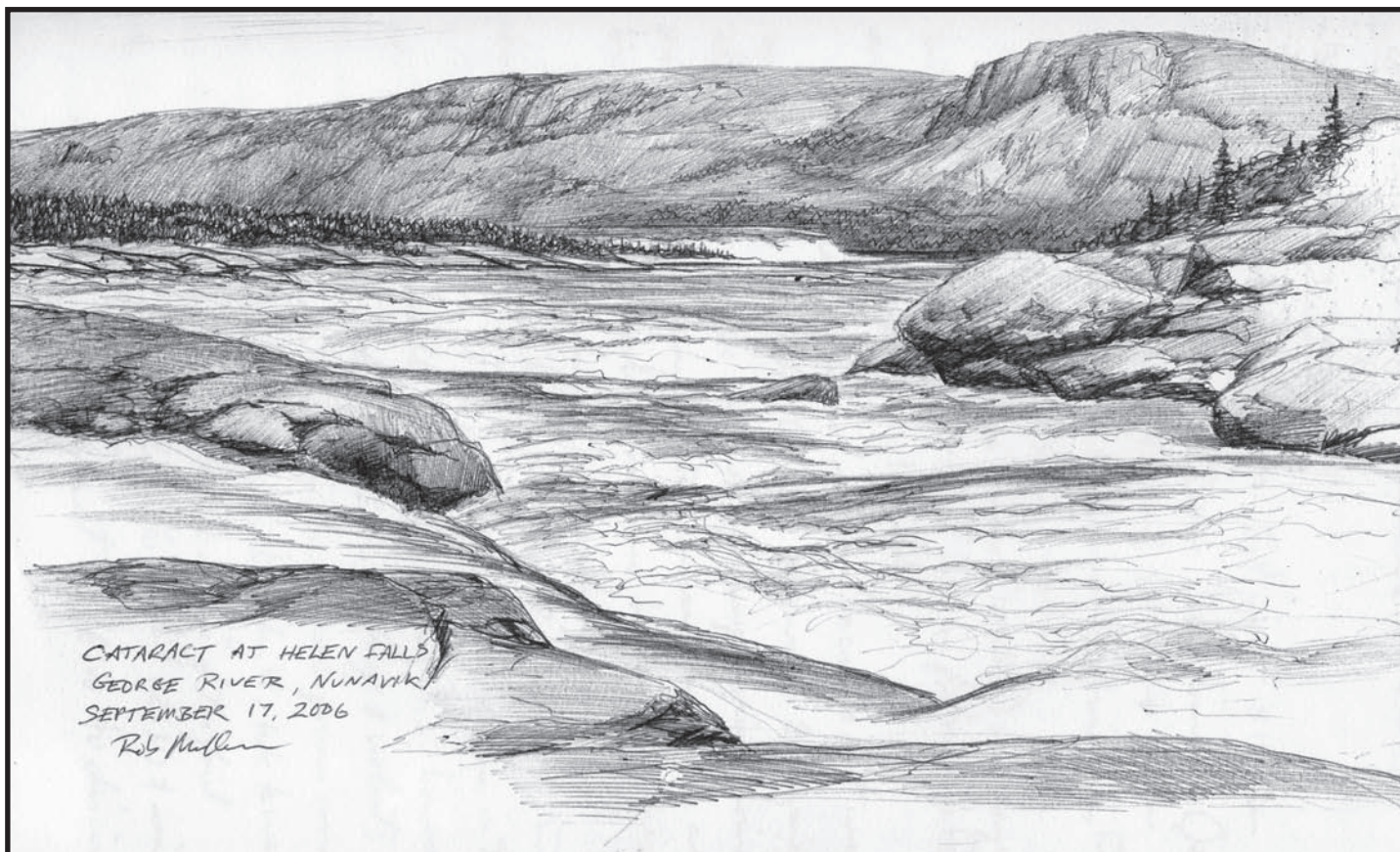
timber, minerals and energy, it is nearby, unappreciated, and threatened by unsustainable development making it one of the greatest and most pressing conservation opportunities in the world.

With world-class artists and paddlers, the world’s largest museum, expert researchers, and the romantically wild rivers of the north, WREAF has an opportunity to significantly add to the public awareness and discussion of conservation issues affecting the Boreal forest.

The 2006 George River crew included famed Canadian painter Robert Bateman and *Che-Mun* subscriber Dr. Stephen Loring of the Smithsonian Institution, who has done extensive travel and anthropological work in Ungava. Gary and Joanie McGuffin, noted paddlers and photographers helped lead the trip - both are directors of WREAF. Rob Mullen, artist and project leader, was kind enough to allow *Che-Mun* to see some of the work he did last September.

“Combining art and science with adventure, provides artists with intimate, intense and “real” experiences of wilderness to inspire their work. It mobilizes artists in a unique way to contribute to the public discussion of conservation,” says Mullen,





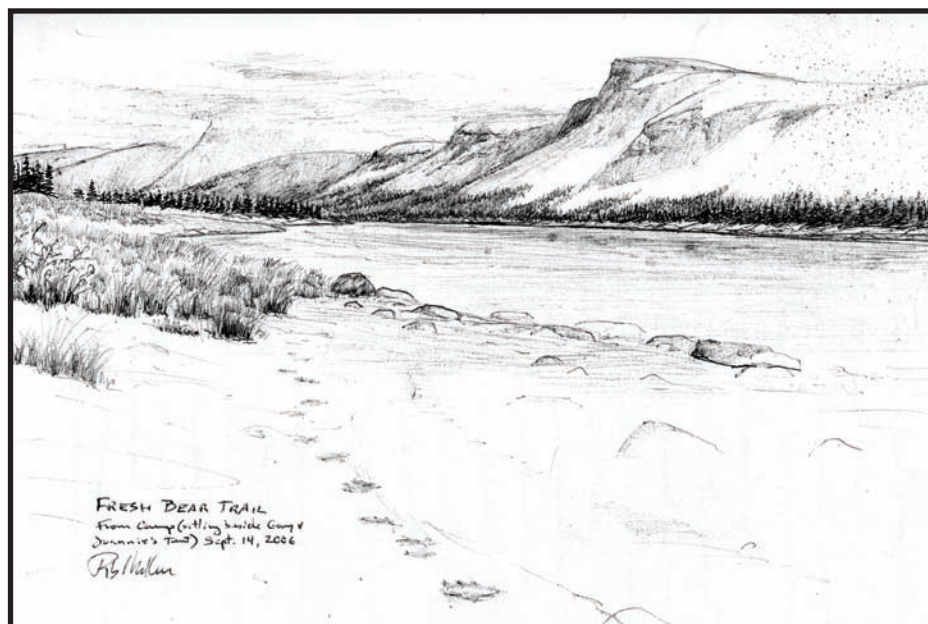
In order to allow time for painting and ease of travel, they ended the trip at Helen Falls, the only real major portage on the trip. Below here, the river widens extensively and tidal influences are felt.

The trip's focus was the Boreal Forest, the largest intact forest on Earth. Critical for climate, water, habitat, native culture, timber, minerals and energy, it is under appreciated and threatened by unsustainable development making it one of the greatest and most pressing conservation opportunities in the world. It is increasingly playing a part in discussions related to Global Warming as the Boreal Forest is a massive carbon sink. September was also the time of the migration of the George River caribou herd, the world's largest at nearly one million animals.

The journey will be the basis for a major art exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in 2008 and plans for a touring exhibition, which will include Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Minneapolis, Denver, San Francisco, and New York, are also underway.

## Artwork by Rob Mullen

[www.robmullen.com](http://www.robmullen.com)








# Time for the GNWT to 'Fess Up'

THE FACE OF THIS CHEQUE HAS A COLOURED BACKGROUND - NOT A WHITE BACKGROUND



**Government of the Northwest Territories**  
CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND ACCOUNT  
COMPTÉ DU TRÉSOR

**Royal Bank of Canada**  
Yellowknife, NT


Box 876  
Fort Smith, NT  
Canada X0E 0P0

CHEQUE NUMBER N° DE CHEQUE	
FS021971	

PAY TO THE ORDER OF  
PAYEZ À L'ORDRE DE

Mindemann, Karl  
PO Box 876  
Fort Smith, NT  
X0E 0P0

DATE	AMOUNT MONTANT
21/DEC/2006	\$*****6,238.00

  
 MINISTER OF FINANCE - MINISTRE DES FINANCES

We are able to sort of update readers on the BB aka 'Barrenland Bob' (or Taiga Terry?) outfitter problems we wrote about in Outfit 126. The outfitter, known for his alliterative nickname now works out of another town on the south side of Great Slave Lake. Here's the letter we got from Kully Mindeman.

I did receive a full restitution from Tourism (above). When I asked Lloyd Jones, regional superintendent for Northwest Territories Tourism, if BB was still a licensed operator, he said he couldn't answer because of confidentiality. Perhaps it is in process, the wheels grind slowly if at all.

I'm sure that Tourism felt the heat on their feet to know that this case had become very public. I'm not sure if you caught wind of the Taiga Terry (TT) "thread" on Canadian Canoe Routes website. The original posting stated that TT had been fined \$5000 in October for failing to have the proper commercial aviation license. Others, including myself, weighed in with various comments. Then TT entered the fray, and it became quite heated. Abruptly, the thread was pulled, with an explanatory note from Richard Munn, website proprietor, that he had received a letter from TT's attorney threatening legal action if the thread was not pulled immediately. Of course he couldn't afford this kind of grief, and he complied.

Meanwhile I received Christmas greetings from Taiga Terry (after Christmas - how typical). The guy doesn't even clean his data base. At first I thought it would be a sarcastic greeting but it's just his marketing in full spin. I love how he starts out "everything is just great up here, snuggled into our cosy office on the shores of Great Slave Lake..." or something like that. "2006 was a great year, looking for an even better 2007..."

There is a website operated by NWT govt that provides a listing of licensed outfitters in NT- [www.explore.nwt.com](http://www.explore.nwt.com). Homepage lists outfitters, apparently. I still haven't checked it to see if he's still listed. He certainly spares no effort to put his best 'web' foot forward. Shameless.

I would think since my restitution came from public funds, that there would be some sort of public access to the itemized expenditures. Let me know if I can provide further assistance. I'm am sending you a photocopy of the cheque I received from Tourism- it might be a good graphic for the next packet. - Kully.

*Che-Mun was asked by a public affairs person in the government of the NWT to provide a copy of our story on 'Bob' which we did and asked if his*

*real name could be released or was noted somewhere. Here's what we got back from the Tourism Policy Director.*

Thank you for sending us a copy of the *Che-Mun* article. We had seen a copy of what had been submitted, but did not know if/what had been published.

Could you please send me some information about *Che-Mun*? Is it an on-line magazine only or do you print hard copies? What is your circulation? Are your subscribers generally Canadian or international as well? What sort of articles do you publish? Is it largely articles sent in from members? Are there opportunities for advertising?

With respect to publishing names or information about specific individuals, we cannot provide you with advice on that, and suggest you may wish to contact your lawyer about what information could/should be published.

Sonya Saunders  
Director, Policy, Legislation and Communications  
Industry, Tourism and Investment Government of the NWT  
[Sonya\\_Saunders@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Sonya_Saunders@gov.nt.ca)

*Thought we would leave Ms Saunders contact info there just in case anyone felt like getting in touch with her. It seems like she was more interested in finding out how many people may have read about it and what impact Che-Mun's modest circulation might have had, as opposed to letting the public know about someone who ran afoul of their own rules. It would appear to us the issue is being swept under the lichens.*

*The reluctance of the NWT Tourism people to reveal or expose a former outfitter who has been dealt with is one thing. It is quite another to withhold his identity when he continues to actively solicit business from a new location across the lake and to all appearances be operating as usual. In fact, he is still listed on the government's list of approved and active outfitters. Does that not kind of make you worry about some of the others. It should make them worry!*

*The man is also wrapping himself up in the emerging debate over uranium mining in the Thelon Basin. This is a big issue that has been pending for decades and finally appears to be a legitimate threat. It does not serve to have a discredited and unreliable character involved in this whole process.*

*We are not publishing his real name. Like many of his type, he is very litigious. And we surely know this sort of person is often hoisted on their own petard eventually.*





## Fall Packet *continued*

How's that for environmental impact?

What is the position of government?: Usually, the Canadian government is split on these issues. NRCAN (Natural Resources Canada) is pro-mining; Department of Indian and Northern Affairs is usually both for and against, depending on which branch you talk to;

What is the position of First Nations?: The Dene people are involved in negotiations for Treaty 8, which will set aside Dene lands from development. There is also a national park proposal in this area, which the Dene are supportive of. So there is a lot of land partitioning going on right now. The Inuit in Baker Lake have come out in favour of uranium mining in the recent years

Why has the issue cropped up? Well, above, I outlined my conjecture of a cheap fuel source for the oil sands project. If you want to get rich, buy shares in uranium!

That's my financial advice to you. the world price of uranium is going up. Rumour has it that the ore deposits on the upper Thelon are among the richest in the world.

Where is this exploration to occur: I don't know where Screech lake is either. Maybe Monica Krieger does. All I know is "upper Thelon". How's that for a start?

## New Subscription Rates

Dear *Che-Mun* subscriber,  
Please note that effective February 8, 2007, for the first time in 11 years, subscription rates increased for *Che-Mun*.

With increased postage and printing costs we are forced to raise the subscription for one year of *Che-Mun* to a single \$25 per year rate for all new and renewal subscriptions. US subscribers will continue to pay in US dollars as postage costs for foreign mail have skyrocketed.

With these new rates, our subscribers will also be entitled to receive, by request and at no extra cost, a PDF version of each new *Outfit*, emailed to your computer. This PDF will also include colour photos and illustrations that are too costly to print on paper. Please note the price of back issues will not change. We hope you understand our situation. The obvious other way to go is to fill our pages with ads. But then - we'd be like everyone else. And that's something we never have been - nor plan to become. Thank you for your continued support.

- Michael Peake, Editor.

## CANOESWORTHY *continued*

federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Government of Nunavut.

Killer whale sighting forms have been distributed to hunter and trapper association offices across Nunavut asking anyone who sees a whale to report it. Killer whales were never seen in Repulse Bay before the 1940s, according to historical research.

During Knud Rasmussen's fifth Thule expedition, from 1921 to 1924, Magnus Degerbol and Peter Freuchen reported that Inuit near Repulse Bay had not seen killer whales, but had heard of them from others who lived further east. There is also the story of an Inuit elder in Repulse Bay during the 1940s who, before he died, predicted that residents would see a new kind of whale. Sure enough, within two years, the first killer whale was sighted in the area.

Anglicans in Salluit finally have a spacious new church to hold their services. The new St. James Church, which is 100 by 60 feet, can seat 288 worshippers. And, despite stormy weather, its pews were filled to capacity when the first service was held on Dec. 10.

The existing church had become too small for the entire congregation to attend big events such as holiday services, funerals or marriages.

The new church cost \$2.19 million. Its construction fund was given a big boost from the nearby Raglan Mine, which now provides profit-sharing to Salluit through the Raglan Agreement. Local parishioners designed the new church, which includes a kitchen, office, storage area and special Sunday school room. A large, lit cross stands above the altar.

The official consecration for St. James will take place on Sunday, March 18. Air Inuit has agreed to provide discounts to residents of other Nunavik communities who wish to come to Salluit for the consecration, Papigatuk said. The Anglican mission in Salluit was established in 1955. Two years later, the community's first church was built, although it was torn down years ago. Salluit's second church was built in 1979, but it's been sold to the local cooperative association, which plans to use the space for storage.

Other communities in Nunavik are also eager to build new churches for their growing congregations. Holy Trinity Church in Kangirsuk has received financial assistance from Makivik Corporation and the Anglican Foundation towards the construction of a new church. And St. Matthew's in Puvirnituq also wants to renovate its church or build a new, larger one.

Cumberland Resources Ltd. has obtained all land rights necessary to advance construction of a 70 mile all weather access road to its Meadowbank gold project located 40 miles northwest of Baker Lake, Nunavut. Cumberland and the Kivalliq Inuit Association signed the required land and quarry leases to initiate road construction on Inuit-owned lands.

In January, Cumberland signed land and quarry leases with the Government of Nunavut and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada allowing initial construction to commence from the community of Baker Lake. To date, total conventional road access achieved is 12 miles, including 8 miles of new construction. The Meadowbank project, designed to produce an average of 330,000 ounces of gold per year over an eight year mine life, will become one of Canada's highest output gold producers.

A road made of frozen lakes in the Arctic opened in late January for very light truck traffic, and diamond mining companies have started transporting crucial supplies needed for their remote mine sites. The winter road, which runs 355 miles and is open only when it is cold enough for lakes to freeze solid enough to support the weight of a truck, is the only ground route for companies to move fuel, explosives and equipment to remote mining sites in the NWT and Nunavut.

By the start of February the ice was 27 inches thick and two trucks would leave every couple of hours. At full-load capacity, the ice needs to be 42 inches thick and two trucks would leave every 20 minutes. Managers of the ice road took extra precautions this year after unseasonably warm weather in 2006 melted part of the road and forced companies to pay more to fly in supplies.

Only 75 percent of the 9,200 loads made it up the road last year. Diavik had to cut up its large shovel so that it could fly it in. De Beers had to delay the transportation of its crusher and scrubber, two pieces of equipment that were each about a foot too long and too wide to fit on a Hercules. Last year's setback, combined with the fact that nearly 10,000 truckloads are expected this year. Road makers started checking on the ice in December and changed some of their equipment. One machine that is normally used to measure ice thickness was used as a snowplow. As the machine was lighter than a regular plow, operators were able to get on the ice before January 1.



*photo: Michael Peake*

Quebec's George River is a formidable piece of water. The river itself is not technical but it's big with long rapids and powerful holes and when water levels are high the forces are incredible. As Philip Schubert found on, on Page 6, it's a tough place to be for a solo paddler in a 14-foot boat. The above photo was taken on the last HACC trip down the George River in 1997. It was the first year of our onriver.online series of trips and called North to Ungava. We chose it for our first hi-tech trip because we knew the river having paddled it in 1983. This is one of the relatively few portages on the river, around a small falls/large ledge on the upper river not too far from where Philip had to pull out. The photo show crew members, from left, Geoffrey Peake, Peter Brewster and Tom Stevens on the 200m portage through the open taiga on this marvellous river.

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