

A TRIP TO CJ 77 BY LOCAL VENTURERS

# 1,000 miles of water and fun

By MAGGIE HANNAH  
Herald staff writer

The first Georgetown Venture canoe trip to Prince Edward Island is over but the stories won't all be told for days and days.

The Powell home on Airside Court was busy when The Herald called on Venture advisor Howard Powell to hear how their trip had gone. It seems a great number of Georgetown residents are as curious as our reporter.

Financially they are in good shape, Howard says. Although he has not finished totalling bills he expects them to be in the red by about \$100. The trip cost over \$7,000.

The only disappointment the boys expressed was with the lack of support from the CJ 77 officials at Cabot Provincial Park. They were not officially recognized, and the plaque presentation to the mayor of Georgetown, P.E.I., had to be made back stage so as not to interrupt the well-regulated program set up to open the jamboree on July 6.

Howard points out that they were merely guests, not registered delegates and so they weren't entitled to much fuss.

It may have been a great experience and a lot of fun as well as work but the first Georgetown Venturers all give credit to the man who led them.

"We could have been in big trouble if Howie wasn't so good at reading water and weather signs," Brian Hastings said.

"One day we were paddling along really enjoying ourselves. The water was good and everything seemed to be right for us. Howie told us to get ashore in a hurry. We were mad at him but we hardly got to land before the storm hit. It was a bad one with lightning and all. It would have been really serious if we'd been caught on the water."

The Venturers left Kingston on June 18. When they stopped for the night at the Thousand Islands they found Walter Duppaine and the Callaghan family waiting for them. They had brought boys to Kingston for the departure on Saturday, then decided to see how things were going before they headed back to Georgetown. Since it was raining and all the canoeists were soaking wet, the parents took everyone's clothes to the laundromat and dried them out for a fresh start Monday.

The second night the Venturers made camp at Ogdensburg on the American side of the river. The police came along to check that they had everything they needed and stayed long enough to swap some scouting badges and give Howard an American flag. One of the officers turned out to be an American Scout leader and invited the entire group to an American jamboree later in the year. When the boys first saw the police approaching they were nervous, Howard says, because they expected to be in trouble for not going through customs. What the paddlers hadn't realized was that Rob Heaton had taken the van carrying all their equipment through customs and the authorities knew to expect them later in the day.

They didn't hit big waves until they reached Valleyfield, Quebec. There are special locks there for pleasure craft, Howard says, and they tried to use them. All the way down through the canal they could hear the authorities yelling for the Venturers to start. Then suddenly as they got almost to the locks someone came running down to the edge of the canal and yelled that they couldn't go through. Apparently only motorized craft with a minimum weight can use the locks and the Venture canoes didn't meet the requirements.

Back they went to the start of the canal and Howard went to meet the lockmaster. After filling out special forms requesting assistance they were helped to portage around the locks.

When they reached Montreal they camped at the base of the Lachine rapids and everyone went into town for supper and a quick look around.

That was the day they had rocks thrown at them, Brian Hastings says. The incident occurred as they were passing through the reservation just west of Montreal.

Three Indian boys about 10 years of age began throwing rocks almost the size of teacups at the canoeists. The boys followed them for about a hundred feet along the river heaving the rocks but no one

was hurt although there were some "near misses", Brian admits.

No one in the group can account for the youngsters' actions, "unless they didn't like us in canoes" someone quipped. A sign saying Indian Reserve Only - no outsiders had been spray painted on a rock wall beside the river, they said.

From Listelux, Quebec, the canoeists paddled 52 miles to Three Rivers in one day. They stopped at Vercheres and lunched at the monument erected to Madeline Vercheres, a French girl who held a fort against the Iroquois for eight days with only her two young brothers and a handful of old men to help her. They first noticed the tide at Three Rivers.

The next day they found the current was good and the tide was right and they were able to make 60 miles and spend the night at Quebec City. Up to this point they had travelled at least 35 miles each day.

The day they left Quebec city they started hitting big waves. It was windy and cold and they were forced to stop after only making 25 miles. Since their van driver had been told to make for St. Michael-de-Bellechase which was some distance further down river they sent Marty Boyle and Tom Hastings to hitchhike ahead and find him. He came back and took them to where the camp was set up. Then in the morning he brought them back to the beached canoes and they headed on again.

That was their first day of really rough water, Howard says, and grins. He found out afterwards that the boys in the other canoe were all saying, "Honourable Howie, sir, are you out of your cotton pickin' mind?" because they thought the river was too rough to travel on.

The Venturers lost two of their crew at Village de Aulnaies. Jasper Megelink and Kevin Baxter had to turn back in order to be home in time for their summer jobs as Junior Forest Rangers in Northern Ontario. They came back by train on June 27.

It was sunny and warm and there was no wind that day so the canoeists made 51 miles to Riviere de Loup. They also saw porpoises which they mistook for whales that day. Howard says they came a little closer than he liked to the canoes and they were "big".

The following day was very windy and cold and they had to stop 17 miles short of camp. The weather the next day was even worse. Rob brought them back to their beached canoes and took off to set up the evening's campsite at Mount Jolie. When the Venturers struggled out of the water 2 1/2 hours later they had only gone five miles. The river was about 30 miles wide and the banks were 25 to 30 feet high rock walls at this point so they walked along the shore until they found a road going out. Once again they sent their van driver but this time they weren't so lucky. They wound up sleeping on the rocks that night, eating the peanuts and raisins they had in the canoes as emergency rations and doing without sleeping bags or tents. Some boys who had been sent to look for a store found the van driver and spent the night in relative comfort but the ones specifically looking for him never saw him at all.

Tom and Brian Hastings and Laurence Eutenier found a

sheltered crevice, built themselves a fire, and got quite comfortable for the night. Then about 2 a.m. the tide came in and they had to scramble for higher ground.

Despite the cold and misery the boys discovered an old, handcrafted axe and survey stakes buried in the cave they sheltered in and are now proud of the souvenir they have to show for their bad night on the river bank near St. Simon.

In the morning they set out again and went 12 miles to where their campsite was located at Baie du HaHa to pick up the rest of their crew. Howard says it was difficult halancing the canoes because they had only four people in each instead of the usual six.

From there they continued to St. Flavie, a distance of 36 miles, where they took the canoes out of the water to portage across Gaspé.

Since that was July 1 and the leaders wanted the boys to celebrate Canada's birthday, Walter Soroka, a Mississauga Scouter and Howard Powell's old canoeing buddy, arranged to provide a steak dinner for the Venturers. He gave Howard the money to buy the supplies but laid down some conditions. The boys must sing O Canada. And they must have flowers on their table. The flowers were the prettiest weeds they could find, Howard says. The neckties were

everything from a log on a hunk of rope to a dead lobster on a string. O Canada came out reasonably well. All they were missing it seems, were shirts. But then, nobody said they had to be too formal.

Carl Martino and Sam Atabia of Oakville, who belong to the Fourth Trafalgar Boy Scouts, drove down in a van especially to help the Venturers transport one of the canoes across the Malapedia Valley. The drive was made on July 2.

On July 3 they started across Miramichi Bay. They were half an hour off shore when a squall struck. The waves were 20 feet high and the wind must have been 32 to 38 miles per hour Howard says, because that is the Beaufort scale reading for the type of water conditions they were facing. By the time they reached shore some of the boys were so tired they collapsed.

Monday, July 4 they decided to change their route. Originally they were to head along the coast of the Maritimes and make a crossing on the ferry at Tormentine. They decided instead to go 24 miles across the ocean straight from St. Thomas to Prince Edward Island. They canoed from 6:30 a.m. until 9 p.m. that day.

A storm came up very soon after they left shore and Howard decided to go back and wait for it to let up. When they

tried the trip again an hour later they were meeting long rolling waves 20 feet high but nothing serious like the storm on Miramichi. Howard admits he was worried when he got out of sight of land. He had worked out his readings and allowed 10 degrees for land drift and landed right on target at Cape Egmont, P.E.I.

Carl Martino picked up the Venturers and transported the canoes across to Malpec Bay the morning of July 6. Then they merely had a short haul of 10 miles to arrive at CJ 77 on July 6 in time for the official opening ceremonies complete with Governor-General Jules Léger, the Lieutenant-governors of the four Maritime provinces, Anne Murray, a CBC television crew, and the Canadian Armed Forces air demonstration team, the Snowbirds.

"During the break in the ceremonies the Venturers presented a plaque from Ontario to the Mayor of Georgetown, P.E.I.

Harry MacConnell, the mayor of Georgetown, P.E.I. presented each boy with a post card of his town and a pennant. He also gave them a plaque from his Georgetown to ours. It was presented to Mayor Tom Hill.

Georgetown, P.E.I. is a town of about 800 on the eastern shore of the island where the Cardigan River empties into Cardigan Bay off the Northumberland Strait. It is a

tourist town.

A highlight of the trip was a birthday party for Tom Hastings on July 5. Howard had the van driver, Rob Heaton, buy eight chocolate cakes and hide them in the van as a surprise for Tom after their evening meal. They even had candles, he says.

The worse part of the whole trip was getting up every morning to face wet socks and sneakers. Howard says, although he is glad to point out that they had no accidents during the whole trip, not even so much as a cut finger.

The 38-year-old Venture advisor was born in Springhill, Nova Scotia, and arrived in Ontario in 1959 after serving three years in the army. He has been in the scouting movement about ten years, since his son Dale was old enough to join the Cubs. Dale has a twin sister, Deborah, who also likes to canoe although "not on a long trip like that." Howard has been canoeing for roughly nine years but so far he has not gotten his wife Ruth broken in to being a member of his canoeing crew.

"I have friends who tell me I'm crazy not to go along on their trips," Ruth chuckles. "Not me. I'd rather stay home. I'm scared to death in a canoe. Now they want to make this trip to Kilarny in the fall and they want to make it a co-ed trip so they want me to go along to chaperone the girls."



Venturers Dale Powell, Mike Dickson, Dave Lince, Mark Barnert, Todd Beckett, Laurence Eutenier, and Bruce Callaghan, were awarded first aid certificates Sunday that the boys earned before their eastern canoe trip. The boys were treated to a free meal at McDonald's Restaurant, and other comrades who joined in for the fun were Robert Heaton and Howard Powell team advisors. Some of the crew were away on holidays and were unable to join in. Away were Doug Dupand, Marty Boyle, Dave Nichols, Brian and Tom Hastings, Kevin Baxter and Jasper Megelink. Liberal MPP Julian Reed was also present to congratulate the boys on their exciting trip.



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