

How to survive a three-day canoe trip on \$10

What did I do during my summer vacation? I went canoeing of course. Equipped with a 17 ft. Kevlar (compliments of Hikers Haven in Oakville), I spent four months paddling Haliburton's wild rivers, Kawartha's chain of lakes, and the endless inlets of Georgian Bay. It seems I have developed a habit during the last few years of dropping everything come spring (including my job), to take advantage of the open waters. Of course, just as always, I spent the summer rich in spirit but poor at the bank. From May to September I traveled like a true outdoor writer - with paddle in hand and lint in the pocket.

Throughout the summer there was a number of occa-

sions when I found myself forced back into the bush for no other reason than lack of funds to survive our high priced society. One trip I'll never forget was in mid-July. Brian, a canoe companion I've mentioned in previous columns, wished to join me on a three day canoe trip along the Black River. Excited about my old friend joining me once again I blindly told him I would supply our wilderness venture and to meet me at the access point early Saturday morning equipped with just his personal pack.

The day before our trip I walked down to the bank to withdraw some cash for purchasing food for the three days and to my horror I discovered my monthly debts had dwindled my bank account quite drastically. I had a mere \$10 to spend on food for the canoe trip.

Call it pride or stupidity, but I went ahead and prepared for our trip without telling Brian of my poverty. With the \$10 I

Nature's Way

By
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bought a small block of cheese, pita bread and a package of porridge. After tearing my kitchen apart, searching for any useful leftovers, I came up with one package of freeze-dried seafood given to me two Christmases ago as a stocking stuffer, flour, baking soda and good old peanut butter.

I met Brian the next day and packed the canoe, making sure my canoe companion didn't search the packs for my prescribed meal plan. Lunch came early. We only paddled three small lakes and Brian suddenly stopped paddling and said, "Boy am I hungry." A lump formed in my throat as I pre-

pared lunch, slicing the cheese as thin as paper and cutting the pita bread in quarters.

My prayers were answered when Brian hooked into a four pound largemouth bass - our first dinner was free of charge.

The next day, after a breakfast of baked bannock with blueberries, Brian and I paddled another five lakes and ate the rest of the cheese and pita bread. For dinner I cooked up the two year old package of freeze-dried seafood and for dessert we soaked bannock and peanut butter in cinnamon tea. Brian even caught another big bass, but we were actually too full to cook it up, so he let it go.

The third and final day I resorted to boiling up the porridge for breakfast (I should have kept Brian's bass) and washed it down with pine needle tea. I had planned to be back to the launching site before 11 a.m. but a heavy wind delayed our crossing of the last lake. The extra paddling didn't bother me, but I knew the longer we

stayed out on the lake sooner or later Brian would crave something I didn't have - lunch!

By 1 p.m., just as we were halfway across the lake, we closed in on a perfect picnic island and Brian, tapping his growling tummy, turned to face me in the stern and said, "What do ya say about lunch on the island before we head for home?" Well the time had come. I had to tell my hungry canoe companion the truth. "Believe me Brian," I exclaimed, "I wish we could, but we kind of ran out of food early this morning."

He wasn't upset about missing lunch that day. In fact Brian seemed a bit relieved once I told him we were depending on Mother Nature's larder during most of the trip. My faithful canoe companion just thought I was a bad cook.

By the way, the last trip Brian and I went on he insisted on purchasing and preparing the meals which proves that an outdoor writer may be poor, but he's not stupid.

Mountsberg surpasses \$100,000 in fundraising

The Halton Region Conservation Foundation has now surpassed the \$100,000 level of a fundraising program for improvements to the Mountsberg Wildlife Centre located just west of Campbellville.

The campaign, which began a year ago, will mark the start of its second year with a special ceremony at the Mountsberg Conservation Area this Sunday at 3 p.m.

The ceremony includes a cheque presentation from the Friends of the Environment Foundation, Burlington Canada Trust Chapter. The Friends of the Environment will be contributing \$10,000 to the Mountsberg project to kick off the next phase of the fundraising program.

The Foundation will also draw the winning ticket for a \$5,000 canoe and paddle that is being raffled to support the Mountsberg project.

"Spellbound" is the name of the midnight blue 16 foot cedar strip canoe created by renowned craftsman Mike Shumaker. The winner of the draw will also receive a bird's-eye maple paddle with an original Warren Jacklin painting titled "In Flight Wood Duck" on the blade.

The Foundation is aiming to raise \$600,000 over three years, to support major improvements to the Mountsberg Wildlife Centre. The funds will be used to enlarge and update the nature interpretive centre at Mountsberg which was recently renamed the R. Ross Craig Centre in honor of a long-time Foundation director; to improve the birds of prey rehabilitation program; to improve the bird banding program, and to improve the exhibits along the park's Wildlife Walkway.

The Mountsberg forests, fields, wetlands and lake make up one of the Halton Region Conservation Authority's most popular parks. Attendance at Mountsberg is about 75,000 annually, including more than 20,000 school children who learn about conservation and the environment on field trips with their schools.

This Sunday, October 6, is also the park's annual Friends of a Feather event where visitors can participate in guided hikes, bird banding demonstrations, horse-drawn wagon rides and a bird of prey free flying demonstration at 3 p.m.

Visitors can also purchase canoe raffle tickets during the day until 4 p.m. when the Spellbound draw will take place.

The Mountsberg Wildlife Centre is located on Milborough Line about four km west of Campbellville.

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