



THREE BOOKS ON OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP

Reviewed by: John Winters

The Canoe Guide's Handbook

Author: Gil Gilpatrick

Publisher: Delorme Publishing, \$7.95

The Spirit of Canoe Camping

Author: Harry Drabik

Publisher: Nodin Press, \$6.95

The Wilderness Handbook

Author: Paul Petzoldt

Publisher: W.W. Norton & Co., \$6.95

When I first led a canoe trip for Scouts, I had the vague idea that all I need do was increase the supplies to suit the number of participants, decide where to go and proceed as if it were just another of my own personal trips. Such are the dreams of babes. I am now a bit wiser from experience but still feel a need to learn more about the "art" of leading wilderness trips. So, when I found these three books, I thought I would finally get the low down on the business. After all, Drabik and Gilpatrick are professional guides of apparent success and Petzoldt is the founder of the National Outdoor Leadership School and with the ~ credentials their books should be just what the doctor ordered. Unfortunately only one of the three lived up to expectations: Petzoldt's.

Drabik's and Gilpatrick's books are worth a quick read through if only to see what their attitudes are towards the wilderness. No doubt you will also find a few tid-bits of information that you had never known before, but for the most part these books contain little that has not been covered in one or more of the better books on camping and canoeing. (I am thinking of The Complete Wilderness Paddler by Davidson and Ruggie, The Canoe and Whitewater by Franks and The New Complete Walker by Fletcher as being the "better" variety). I suspect that both Gilpatrick and Drabik have more to tell than is found in their books, but they don't seem to have much success in passing it on. Their discussions of gear hint at experience with a lot of equipment but we never

find out what that experience was or even why they choose Brand X over Y. They seem satisfied to tell us that they like what they use and if you want to try something different, well go ahead. Not the attitude one expects in a "how to" book is it?

There was very little mis-information although one might take issue with Drabik's description of how to do a "J" stroke or his opinions on canoes (There are no other kinds for him but aluminium.); and Gilpatrick is guilty of recommending the use of nonbiodegradable soap pads and canned food plus a few photos of people running rapids in fully laden canoes while not wearing life jackets. We are supposed to know better, but still... Simply put, these are the kind of books you want to check out of the library and read once, they are not what you would want to buy for reference.

Such is not the case with Petzoldt's The Wilderness Handbook. That canoes are never even mentioned is beside the point. Nine of the thirteen chapters contain information of value for any wilderness expedition. (The other four are strictly for mountaineering types.) Everything Petzoldt's says has the ring of extensive experience as well as the input of many knowledgeable people. Best of all, he explains the "why" behind it all. Granted, there is a bit of duplication with other books but the chapters on expedition behavior and outdoor teaching are unique. To my mind, this book is must reading for anyone planning an extended trip with other people.

# rideau waterway

Ingeborg Dodds

For a fall trip this year Jack and I decided to canoe half of the Rideau Waterway, from Kingston to Smiths Falls. The length of this trip, including a side trip into Tay Marsh is about 105 kilometres. We normally prefer white water, but decided upon this route because we knew there would be ample water following an unusually dry summer.

The weather was beautiful and the autumn colours were brilliant; and even though this waterway is a very busy one for motor boats until Labour Day, we enjoyed all the privacy of wilderness canoeing at its best. The added attraction of this particular trip is of course its historical interest. The canal was built under the supervision of Colonel By of the Royal Engineers, and was finished in 1832. The dams and over 40 locks constructed at that time are, for the most part, still in operation.

Portaging around the locks is an easy matter, and it is an exciting event when a lockmaster lets you go through the lock as happened when we came to the electric lock at Newboro. Drinking water may be obtained at the locks, and with the permission of the lockmaster you may camp on the well-kept grounds that surround the locks. The kindly lockmasters go home at 16:30, but if you get there before they go, they will leave you a key to the clean washrooms that have warm water.

We parked our car on a Saturday afternoon at a private campground situated on Cunningham Road on the west side of highway 15 a couple of kilometres north of Kingston Mills locks. We had viewed these locks beforehand but the lockmaster advised us that the car would be safer at the campground than at the locks.

We stayed overnight at various locks: Upper Brewers, Chaffeys and Beveridge, the latter being situated on the Tay Canal leading from Perth to Lower Rideau Lake.

The highway is never far from the waterway, although you can never see it. You may be able to stop at night and have your dinner at a nearby inn or hotel. Otherwise there are picnic tables at all lock grounds, and you must bring your stove to cook on. On our last evening (Tuesday), when the wind had changed to blow from the east and the air was saturated with moisture, we were able to portage from the lock at Smiths Falls right into the Lockview Motel; the bus station is immediately opposite and if it is not the Express, the bus will stop for you at Cunningham Road where you can pick up your car. Within 2 1/2 hours you can be back at the motel to pick up your canoe and gear.

Useful maps and information may be obtained at the locks or by writing to Environment Canada in Ottawa. A very handy and interesting pocket book is Kenneth McNeill Wells' Cruising the Rideau Waterway (McClelland & Stewart). For a more thorough description get Rideau Waterway by Robert Legget (University of Toronto Press); it is a fascinating account. You definitely need the topographical maps (31 C/8, 31 C/9, 31 C/16) as one morning we had to rely entirely on compass navigation due to dense fog. Also many lakes are fairly large with numerous islands.

This canoe trip on rivers and canals, through lakes and exploring the Tay Marsh was very exciting and for us a beautiful way of ending the 1983 canoeing season. We are looking forward to doing the rest of the trip from Smiths Falls to Ottawa.