

moose hoof craters. An icy crust on the snow made control difficult and backslip a problem.

That night I ate the potato cheese soup with a lump in my throat thinking that my dogs--long-time faithful travelling companions--had deserted me to join one of the famed Algonquin wolf packs. It would be a hard life of borderline starvation, struggles of dominance and subordination within the pack, and ruthless survival of the fittest. But if that was their choice, then so be it, I decided philosophically.

We skied back to the truck with heavy hearts the following day through 15 cm of wet, new snow. The toboggan was no longer a nimble, quick craft, but a heavy barge that listed badly to one side and caused us to curse as we attempted to keep it from turning over as we hauled it. I whistled more and more desperately as we approached the Caroe Lake landing. It seemed my dogs had been swallowed up by the vast wilderness, and now that their tracks were covered in snow, there was nothing left but memories, two stainless steel bowls, and four kilograms of Kibbles in the bottom of a pack.

I brushed the snow off the windshield of the truck and found a yellow folded paper under the wiper. "Great," I said, "just what I needed to brighten my day, a parking ticket." In fact it was no ticket at all. It was a note from Park Warden Barton. It said: "Your animals are at the Huntsville Animal Shelter; you may claim them there."

It seems that the dogs had wandered all the way back to the truck and just sat there, apparently having had enough of Polar Trekking. This was a dog's way of saying: "You guys go on ahead. We'll be okay." The Warden who happened to be driving by took pity on them, and Jerry who chanced by at



the same time had identified them as belonging to us. The Warden had generously transported them to the Huntsville Animal Shelter where they had spent the next three days.

We rejoiced in the reunion of the entire expedition, and quickly put aside any hard feelings toward the mutinous mutts who had left us pathetically stranded on the gateway to Polar triumph.

Next year we hope to continue the expedition, beginning anew at Teepee Lake. We will carry five days supply of food and some strong aircraft cable to moor the dogs to the campsite each night.

## high tech yuppie paddling

(With apologies to Tom Sebring and Canoesport Journal)

Tom Daytona

We were three hours into bureaucratic Boondoggle Park when we spied a lone tent on the shore of Tactless Lake. My Yuppie sweetheart in the bow pointed and sniggered, "That guy looks like something out of an old movie. Look at that tent!"

It was unique, a canvas type that I didn't even know they still made. He was dressed in wool pants and a red and black wool shirt. Surely this was a reincarnated lumberjack. His canvas-covered canoe must have weighed 50 kilograms. My wife is the friendly sort and wasn't put off by his appearance so, without waiting for an invitation, we pulled into his camp. "Hi," said the love of my life.

"Hi," said he.

"We just came from Tinkerbelle Lake only three hours ago. That's almost 27 kilometres and we weren't really pushing either," I told him, knowing he would be interested.

We were paddling an 18 and 1/2 foot Madsawnah Eclipse. Eighteen kilograms of lethal-looking Kevlar and aluminum that bore more than a passing resemblance to a marathon racer but was still capable of carrying 500 kilograms of dressed moose and withstanding the worst nature could dish out. There aren't many canoes like this around and even fewer people wealthy enough to own them. These canoes are not made for weekend canoeists. Only the truly enlightened to whom paddling is an art form are at home in these magnificent machines and then only in the waters of North America's premier canoe country where no ordinary canoeist would show his face.

When ashore I lifted the canoe to my shoulders with a single smooth motion using only one hand. "Bet you can't do that with your canoe."

"No, I can't," he answered.

I'm sure he thought it was a racing canoe from the translucent natural Kevlar hull and the large Madsawnah decal running from bow to stern. Certainly the contoured, molded seats with carbon fibre reinforcing helped the image as did our custom-made \$100 paddles autographed by a famous racer that weighed less than 100 grams. Some people think they are fragile but we have never damaged one and we really don't go out of our way to protect them. While my love showed our new friends our Patagonia foam-padded paddle case that we carry them in on portages, I unloaded some of our gear to show him. He seemed really eager to see how we could travel so efficiently.

"What'd you think of our paddling style? It's called American Touring Technique by the really "in" paddlers. We do 40 to 65 strokes per minute and can cover 50 kilometres a day easy. We invented it in the US of A, you know."

obviously bewildered by so much culture shock.

"You bet, and it's a lot better than those old-fashioned strokes. What about these fantastic lightweight packs? Bet you can't get those canvas ones in fuchsia. Whatcha eatin'?"

"Oh, just some bannock and a couple of trout."

"Yeh, we'd eat fish too but we prefer this freeze-dried stuff. Had Cream of Truffle soup, Poussins aux Vin Blanc, Pommes de Terre Espagnole, and Glace à la Framboise last night for dinner. Only weighed 120 grams before my wife rehydrated it. She's a real whiz around with our MSR very expensive stove."

He looked us up and down. "Those are pretty fancy clothes you're wearing."

That was just the right question! Nothing we like more than talking about clothes. We were wearing quick-dry cycling shorts with baby pink T-shirts emblazoned with the logo of a very trendy manufacturer. My sweetheart slapped a few blackflies as she pulled our other clothing out of the pack to show him. You could tell he was impressed by the Perception Paddling Jacket and Eddie Bauer Gore-Tex rain gear. While I showed him those, Pumpkin modelled her Royal Robbins climbing pants and Patagonia windbreaker. I had to restrain my wife from stripping down to her LIFA undies and jogging bra. After all, we had no idea how long he had beer out there.

While my wife repacked everything, I showed him what a real tent was like. Ours sets up in only four seconds and was used in the last ascent of Mount Everest.

Time was running short and, as much as we liked helping out a fellow canoeist, we had to get on our way. We clipped the gear down to the tie-down straps molded into the hull (it's the little things that make a canoe "work"). We waded out a ways from shore and got in, exploding away in a burst of speed. Just off shore, Sweetie executed a perfect crisp port bow post as we did a full 270° turn and then cruised past his camp at 8 or 10 km/hr. We would cover another 24 kilometres before dinner.

My wife turned and smiled. "Well, I guess we taught him a thing or two about canoeing and camping."

"Yeh, I feel sorry for guys like that who don't know how to camp properly. What did you say his name was?"

"Mason, I think. Yeh, it was Bill Mason."

(Who else but the sharp-witted John Winters could have produced this little gem?)