

Diary of the Second Waterborne Expedition, to Algonquin Provincial Park.

Undertaken in the summer of 1999, commencing on the 12th day of August.

Under the pen of Robert Thomas.

**Crew: Robert, Simon, Richard, Anthony,
Andreas, Cecilia**

**To Strive
To Seek
To Find
And Not To Yield**

Thursday, August 12

A leader is often called upon to be resolute. Two revolts by the enlisted men were put down but with difficulty. We set out last evening from North York at a later hour than we anticipated, due to unforeseen circumstances. After several hours of driving, the men began to agitate for a motel room. To this I responded that we must reach our objective, this being Seymour's establishment at Algonquin Portage Outfitters, where we were scheduled to encamp for the evening.

So after much complaining we finally arrived, delayed only temporarily by a false turn attributable to Richard's erratic driving (his propensity to steer with his pinky finger drives his brother Anthony to distraction), and hastily erected our tent on Seymour's spacious green, having roused the occupants of other tents by the blast of our high beams, the ferocious sound of the Laser's high-performance engine, and much obstreperous carousing besides.

Now for this morning I had planned a breakfast of fresh fruit, to be taken at the Ackray launching point, while we awaited the arrival of Cecilia and Andreas, whom unforeseen circumstances had compelled to depart from Etobicoke only very early this morning. The quantity and variety of the fruit was more than ample, for I laid out a feast of fresh pineapple, mangoes, oranges, apples, pomegranates, breadfruit, tangerines, fresh figs, water melon, seedless grapes, Japanese pears, kiwi fruit, red grapefruit, papaya, bananas, honeydew melon, cantaloupe, and whole dates newly plucked.

The enlisted men are accustomed to their baked beans, and promptly snubbed the nutritious repast placed before them. And since Cecilia and Andreas had not yet arrived, calls went out for an excursus to Pembroke for the purpose of obtaining baked beans and corn bread, and of searching out a country still for moonshine gin. It is the duty of a leader to rise above the base cultural appetites of the mass of ordinary men, and I steadfastly resisted these entreaties.

Now Simon, one of the principal agitators and an all-around trouble maker, who formerly applied his devious wit to the study of law, jumped up on the picnic table and delivered the following harangue:

“The soft and juicy flesh of the mango does not mean jot to men like us, raised on the march and accustomed to hardship. What kind of effeminate luxury is this, to be presented with orange segments and newly-plucked figs? The Romans conquered the world on a diet of salt-pork and diluted vinegar, and we are sent to vanquish the Barron River Canyon stuffed to the throat with tropical dainties! We need meat and fat, and beans cooked in grease, not the red seeds of the pomegranate or the pulp of the grapefruit. Did we come here to be dieted like vegetarians, while battling nature and beast for very survival? If the leader of this expedition is unable to provide us with provisions fit for men, then I suggest we cannot be held liable for our actions. In which case, let us take these piles of fruit and toss them into the lake, then seize possession of the Laser, and make our way into Pembroke, where men are men and the beans are fatty!”

These words caused a general stir among the rabblement, and I began to fear for my safety. However, remaining calm in the face of peril, I rebutted Simon’s harangue in the following way:

“It is the curse of simpletons to blame their leader for every mishap. The fruit shall protect you against scurvy and other wasting ailments, and fortify you with all kinds of nutriment. So you see that in presenting the various fruits, I am solicitous of your health and longevity. As for the beans, have you no concern for the implications of such a diet? The tent shall become unbearable, with all of the consequential flatulation, whereas the fresh fruit will clean out your intestines. You of the common soldiery are at liberty to think only of your stomachs. I have to be mindful of the overall situation and think strategically. It is Cecilia and Andreas’ late arrival that has caused you to make such commotion, for you have become idle and therefore restless. Be content, and eat the fruit for now. They will arrive with *landjaeger* sausage in the food sacks. And give no credence to the words of a rabble-rouser!”

My rebuttal restored a measure of calm, and I was greatly relieved when, at long last, I beheld Andreas’ black Durango. The enlisted men mobbed the vehicle, extracted a food sack and pounced ravenously upon the packet of *landjaeger*, chanting “Meat and fat! Meat and fat!”

Thereafter we organised the baggage and readied the boats for launch. A brief portage brought us from the Grand Lake into Stratton, a long and narrow reservoir. From thence we proceeded to Dog Leg of Stratton and reached its terminus. The distinctive sound of falls could be heard as we disembarked. Anthony and I explored further, and to our astonishment came upon a series of natural pools fed by cataracts, surrounded by rocky embankments. At one point the angulature of the overflow from one pool to the next has had the effect of creating a natural water slide. One precipitates oneself down the water slide into the churning mass of liquid below.

Elsewhere the tumbling of the water and the shallowness of the pool combine to produce a natural Jacuzzi, and one is able to sit just beneath the oncoming flow, which gushes about the head and shoulders. There are several larger pools, though, and these are of sufficient depth to enable headlong dives from the rocky ledges. The whole complex has its termination in one great

fall, about ten metres top to bottom, and even this can be negotiated most of the way down, in such a fashion that a convenient sill is available where one can sit, the mighty cascade of water pelting down as a forceful shower.

So much for the High Falls, quite spectacular beyond our expectation. It now remained to take the portage from Dog Leg to High Falls Lake, the body of water just to the north, fed by the outflow. The only problem was this: that the portage from Dog Leg into High Falls Lake did not exist. We had studied the route at Ackray, and I was advised by my colleagues that High Falls Lake seemed to be directly accessible from Dog Leg, via the established hiking trail. I doubted this, having assumed that High Falls Lake could only be reached via St. Andrew's Lake. However I decided to consult the duty ranger at the lodge, asking whether "High Falls" was accessible from Stratton, to which he replied most emphatically in the positive. In fact he advised me to avoid St. Andrew's altogether, for it would lead to the wrong place, a remark that I found rather perplexing.

He then proceeded to describe the "swimming area" in quite effusive language, commenting on its great scenic appeal, the salubrious pools, the spectacular formations of rock, the large number of people frequenting on weekends, the optimal sites for a picnic luncheon, etc. etc. etc. Now I found all this intriguing, but at length the disquisition became tiresome, for I was only interested in the question of access to High Falls Lake. The rest we could discover in due course. Little did I realise that he assumed I was looking for precisely that, the swimming area at High Falls, not High Falls Lake itself.

We did not appreciate our blunder all at once, however. The swimming completed, we proceeded back to the landing and took up the impedimenta. At first, carrying the canoes, the winding trail for hikers was obligingly negotiable, but at length we found that it did not actually lead anywhere in particular. And there we stood, overlooking a rocky and well treed slope which led down to a small intermediary lake, the actual trail simply tracing a plateau on which we found ourselves quite stranded.

Discussing the matter in caucus we formed a committee, and spent some time drawing up terms of reference. Richard then requested an Action Plan, but I said that this was inappropriate. If we were going to do this properly, I declared, first we need a mission statement and a vision. Then we should proceed to the Statement of Priorities, as we do at the Commission, on which we would have to consult with stakeholders, i.e., other campers, the park staff, Seymour who rented us the canoes, and various wildlife. Cecilia made some crude remarks which we decided to overlook. Andreas urged that we truncate the process of deliberation and consultation in consideration of extenuating circumstances, and the failing light. We agreed to this and instead declared a state of emergency, suspending civil liberties and abolishing private property without compensation.

We descended with our canoes down the perilous slope to the edge of the water, overcoming deep chasms, impenetrable stands of oak, bottomless precipices, enormous boulders, and impassible brambles of thorn. I decided to conduct a reconnaissance on foot while the others rested, running ahead along the edge of the small lake. Woody growth gave way to a firm and

gentle slope of rock. Then there was another minor fall interceding before another small lake, where the rocky surface gave way again to grasses and shrubberies. Beyond this second lake must lay High Falls, I adjudged, although I could not see it directly.

I hurried back and made a full report. We decided not to embark but to continue the portage to the second interceding lake, and then to assess the situation. The map seemed to indicate that High Falls must be just beyond this lake, although incomprehensibly there was some debate on this point. And so we executed the impromptu portage with dispatch and efficiency, overcoming the most severe conditions imaginable. Once Richard and Anthony, the forward element, reached the second lake with boat and impedimenta, they at once launched to investigate the far side, where there must of necessity be a point of ingress to High Falls. Simon and I watched intently, I surveying their progress with my Bushnells, as they paddled across, and probed the rocky inlets. With great relief did we behold Richard and then Anthony jump out of their canoe, and haul the shell through a narrow defile with no apparent difficulty, disappearing beyond. And when Simon and I in similar fashion made the opposite point on the lake, the defile came into view, the merest rocky passage, accommodating a beaver dam, which gave access to the expanse of High Falls beyond.

So the three boats entered the lake of destination, a very nice and lovely reservoir bespeckled with picturesque islets. We claimed what seemed to be among the better of the sites, wide and rocky with gentle slope down to the water. The state of emergency was cancelled and private property restored, except that an exemption was declared for Andreas' Alpenbitter, which the committee decided should be expropriated by the state in the name of the Queen.

This night we feasted on pork chops fried, on instant potatoes, and on sauteed fungus. Anthony and Simon organised a foraging expedition by canoe to collect firewood, the site being picked clean. Some long dead trees, well dried, on a baron islet had caught the attention of Anthony, who insisted on organising a party. Richard and I admired Anthony's pluck and determination but declined to join him, I because of my exhaustion from a full day of vigorous leadership and decision making, Richard from general lethargy. Simon, however, was keen, and they set off with my collapsible saw. On returning with a quantity of ligneous material they began to process it, whereupon the saw broke, the blade fast snapping clean. I was furious because the saw was new, and had seemed quite a sturdy implement. Anthony, however, rigged up a fastening by means of the modification of a tent peg, with the help of his Letherman pliers. The arrangement was so ingenious that the assembly could be safely collapsed again.

The depredation of the chipmunks was horrific. They came in swarms, set upon the commissariat and pillaged the foodstuffs, and made off with morsels from the repast. Sometimes they would execute a flanking manoeuvre, one division of chipmunks making a frontal charge in wedge formation, causing us to form defensive phalanx two men deep, while a second division of chipmunks, using their numerical superiority to advantage, circled around the rear and made a pincer toward the granola bars. Andreas became furious, and made ready his machete, honing its blade with a wet-stone, uttering intently to himself in German. He volunteered to organise a counter attack, and I consented, wishing him God speed, and placing all able-bodied men under his command. Cecilia was detailed to prepare tea. And so, with Andreas in the forefront

brandishing his machete, Anthony on the right flank with the Gerry-rigged saw, I on the left flank with my multiplex camping utility implement, Richard in support with his canister of bear repellent, and Simon in reserve with his flask of bourbon, we raised a Teutonic battle cry, charged the chipmunks headlong, pursued them to their hideouts, and routed them. The spoils of battle, consisting of quantities of hoarded acorn, we divided among ourselves. The chipmunks who had fallen were fried lightly in olive oil and consumed as a protein supplement.

Taking tea and tobacco around the campfire, we consulted the maps and assessed the itinerary for the following day. Richard tabled his "Portage Circumvention Plan A". His words were these: "The first portage out of High Falls Lake is marked at 530 metres. Yet it seems that the river here is continuous, but for the indication of a minor rapid. Let us forego the sinuous portage, which abuts the riverine course, and continue on the surface of the water, proceeding directly to the smaller portage beyond, marked at 20 metres. Thus we save labour, time, and effort. In the event of an attack of aquatic bears, I shall have my bear repellent at the ready, holding it aloft, that the mere sight of it will fill the beasts with chagrin." I did not think the plan feasible, but happy to see initiative among the enlisted men, I encouraged Richard and agreed that his ideas might have merit. Anthony then articulated the following syllogism: "Socrates was a man. I am a man. Therefore I am Socrates." This too seemed quite unfeasible. But happy to encourage philosophical discourse among the soldiery, I became ostensibly surprised to have learnt that Anthony was, in fact, Socrates himself.

Mentioned in dispatches:

Anthony, for ingenious reparation of the collapsible saw.

Simon, for boosting morale by his humorous remark, when Anthony and Andreas had suspended the food sack a mere several feet above the ground, that this was only a "Bear Pinata", causing general merriment.

Andreas, for bravery and valour beyond the call of duty in leading the counter attack against the chipmunks, and for his adeptness and dexterity at skinning and gutting dead chipmunks with a machete.

Cecilia, for calmness at preparing tea in the heat of battle.

Richard, for his aspirations to staff-level planning, in developing on his own initiatives and proposing the "Portage Circumvention Plan A".

Demerits:

Richard, for forgetting his personal torch (500 points).

Richard, for forgetting Anthony's wine skin, and to purchase vodka to fill same (2,000 points).

Friday, August 13

Last evening the sky was clear and starry, but while we slept it gave way to the ominous overcast. All the same we observed tradition and I prepared kippers and eggs for breakfast. Afterwards, as Simon was cleaning the fry pan, the attachable handle broke, the solder fast snapping clean. I was furious because the pan was new, and had seemed quite a sturdy implement. Andreas, however, rigged up a handle by means of his Leatherman pliers.

Soon after setting out, the rain commenced, lightly at first. The initial portage was overcome, and Richard, discovering that the river, far from being navigable here, was an uninterrupted course of jagged rock, reassessed "Portage Circumvention Plan A", and agreed to shelve it for the time being. However, Richard redeemed himself, and Anthony too, by the following actions. Now as I said, Richard and Anthony, on account of their expertise at canoeing as a team, their speed and efficiency, and their elan as a unit, serve as the "Forward Element" of the armada. So they set off to the next portage, and at its terminus, being equipped as part of their accoutrements with tarpaulin and cordage, erected a Forward Temporary Base, as per the field manual. We came upon them when the base was already set up, a most welcoming site, the tarpaulin cleverly suspended over a well-drained section of slopping ground. There the party ensconced, partaking of *landjaeger* sausage, and cheese and biscuits, and then chocolate, granola bars, Brandy and Alpenbitter, hoping that the precipitation would abate. It did not, and after almost an hour, we were compelled to continue the journey, morale having improved nevertheless. I took the occasion to don my excellent and capacious rain poncho with hood, which kept me very dry. Simon, the sturdy bloke who ignores discomfort, threw off all of his outer garments, and declared that he might as well not care, being already soaked through.

It was a fortunate thing that as we emerged into the Barron River gorge, the rain had ended. So we could appreciate the opulent scenery in relative comfort, a gentle mist having formed on the surface of the river. As usual, Richard and Anthony, the Forward Element, scouted ahead for a vacant site, Simon and I following, Cecilia and Andreas bringing up the rear. The site chosen was some distance down the river, Richard and Anthony applying what appeared to be a sound criterion, that is, were there enough trees at the site, and suitably placed in relation one to another, to facilitate suspension of the tarpaulin in event of continuous rain? For as I said in a previous memoir, Anthony is a past master at suspending tarpaulins, and, with a tarpaulin of sufficient size, can hermetically seal a given area, containing it against rain, sunshine, and air. The site was nice, though not appropriate for swimming. It was well-wooded but also had a rocky clearing with fire pit, some of the outcrop forming a convenient emplacement for the kitchen. There was a good launch for the canoes, and also a rocky shelf for washing dishes and sun bathing. Here we proposed to remain not for one night but for two, in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

I prepared the Kraft Dinner and it was taken with gusto, supplemented with bread and peanut butter. An ample supply of firewood was collected and a sufficient blaze ignited and fed. And then, just as the clean-up was complete and we came to relax around the pit, producing whiskey, chocolate and smoking paraphernalia, the rain began anew. Anthony and Richard immediately set to work suspending the tarpaulin over the fire and seating area. Now the tarpaulin was six by

eight feet. That's 48 square feet, or eight square feet per person, not including the fire. If the fire takes up, say, four square feet of the surface area of the tarpaulin, then the available surface area of the tarpaulin is in fact six by four feet, or 24 feet square, which gives each camper four feet square of protection against the pelting rain. Now allow that a perimeter around the fire, of say one foot, must be vacated due to the intensity of the heat. Then the fire needs three feet by three feet, or nine square feet altogether. Subtracting three feet by three feet from six feet by four feet gives exactly one foot by three feet. Three square feet of tarpaulin must therefore be divided among six campers. This gives exactly one half of one square foot per camper, or six inches by six inches. In which case, each camper has the protection of exactly thirty-six square inches of tarpaulin. Given that the human head is on average, say, six inches in diameter, then there was sufficient tarpaulin to cover approximately the top of each person's head. Sensory organs, including ears, the nose and eyes, were exposed. Shoulders lacked protection altogether.

After I made these calculations the matter was discussed, and consensus was reached that protecting only the very top of the head was not sufficient. Coverage was needed as well for the shoulders and extremities, such as the arms, legs and fingers, and for the sensory organs, being the eyes, the ears and the nose. So we retired to our tents, happy to know that the fire was completely protected, and that the very tops of our heads had similarly remained completely dry. Richard suggested that for the next expedition we should perhaps obtain a larger tarpaulin that protected a larger area of the top of the head, perhaps a ten by twelve foot tarpaulin, and that it should be made of thick, heavy canvass instead of nylon. When I remarked that this would be rather burdensome, Richard volunteered to carry it himself, to which I agreed.

So we repaired to the tents, Cecilia and Andreas to theirs, where they giggled incessantly, and the rest of us to our own, where we drank liquor and exchanged stories of past exploits. Richard kept the large canister of bear discouragement spray at hand, taping it around his wrist. He suggested that a session of target practice be held next day, but I vetoed this for the effect it would have on morale, if people apprehended that a bear attack were imminent. Anthony lamented the essential comforts of home, missing especially his shoe horn. Simon wanted to discuss pension issues, and proposed to walk us through a complex windup application, from effective date to surplus distribution. We thanked him politely and declined, asking him to commit his thoughts to writing.

We placed wagers on how long the fire would last in the rain, even if sheltered completely by the tarpaulin, and a sizable purse was accumulated, including a quantity of *landjaeger* sausage, which in the wilderness functions as a form of currency. For what is currency but a measure of value, and therefore a store of wealth and a means of exchange. *Landjaeger* sausage is certainly of immense value in the wilderness, and can be readily traded for other necessities.

When the electric candle was finally extinguished, there was pitch black all around, and no sound but the rain and thunder, with the occasional flash of prodigious lightening. I announced that it was "like the Depths of Hell". This had a deleterious effect on morale, as did the fact that the tent had been pitched on a perceptible incline, and we slid inexorably toward the water.

Mentioned in dispatches:

Andreas, for his ingenious reparation of the collapsible pan.

Richard and Anthony, for erecting the Forward Temporary Base, as per the field manual, on their own initiative.

Leatherman Co., for producing and marketing a most invaluable implement, which saved us from the want of both saw and fry pan.

Demerits:

Richard, for failing to execute "Portage Circumvention Plan A" (100 points)

Saturday, August 14

The sky was cloudy on rising but cleared after breakfast. This was a sumptuous repast of pancakes and bacon, with syrup and butter and ample supplies of coffee. Spirits were high generally, and as the sky cleared this gave way to a state of euphoria. Richard told of a dream he had the night before, not about bears and repellents, but about tarpaulins. He dreamt that we had a *massive* tarpaulin, fully 25 by 50 feet, made not of nylon but of thick, double ply canvas. This great covering, he dreamt, had been stretched by Anthony over a *vast* area, providing the downtrodden with refuge and resort against the cruel world without. "The glorious awning," he said, his eyes glazing over, "was a metaphor for peace and justice and equity, finally holding sway over the wicked, protecting the innocent and the victimised." We were astonished and agreed that the world was a cruel place, and that the wise camper must steel himself against it or be trampled underfoot. Richard then insisted that for the next expedition, we obtain a tarpaulin at least 25 by 50 feet in dimension, made of thick, double ply canvas. When I remarked that this would be extremely heavy, Richard volunteered to carry it himself, to which I agreed.

Consulting the map we planned our day. It was to be a day of adventure and discovery. Just a short distance up river, a small tributary creek fed into a swampy delta. Turning inward and following the creek, we would come upon, according to the map, a plateau of land called "The Turret", with sheer drops all around and only a narrow place of ascent. We four of us, minus Cecilia and Andreas, proposed to sojourn up the creek and scale The Turret, and discover the nature of its plateau, its geography and attitude, the character of the surface, and the view it commanded.

We equipped ourselves lightly, my utility belt being packed with compass, multiplex implement, repellent, iodine tablets, pipe and cavendish, large scale map, and several granola bars. My Bushnells were strapped to the belt's outer webbing. For my utility belt is a special prerogative of command, and is not allowed to be worn by any enlisted man. Others brought various necessities: a zip-lock of gorp, quantities of dubage, reading materials, and the folding game sets. Each member of the party brought as well his water skin. Simon had the foresight to include in his back pack the flask of bourbon whiskey. Richard, of course, made ready his cannister of bear repellent, and went through various drills to make sure he could remove the safety clip, aim, and discharge a well-aimed shot in under five seconds.

Cecilia and Andreas stayed behind, the former sending us off with the following words. "You men go. Andreas and I will stay here and tidy. Also we want to sunbathe on the rock. Let us know what happens. Commit all memorable events to the diary. We want a full accounting. If you get lost, yell. Andreas will rescue you. If you are injured, the blood may attract bears. But yell. Andreas will canoe to your aid. We will remain attentive to calls of distress, and Andreas will answer such calls. In the meantime, Andreas and I will spend some quality time together. We will tend the laundry lines, sweep the site with Andreas's collapsible broom, assemble combustibles, and perform our ablutions."

We landed due west of the swampy delta, on the way discovering an unmarked site with fire pit, quite contrary to the regulations. We noted its coordinates for camp authorities. Having beached the canoes at a suitable spot, we penetrated inland, toward the creak, Richard leading the way, bear repellent at the ready. We came upon the brook at last, after negotiating thickly wooded and uneven ground. Proceeding thence a short distance along the creek, we discovered a most serene and salubrious place. The bubbly cascade of crystalline water gently tumbled over the rocks, at places swirling effervescently beneath minor cataracts. Here, the trees formed a light canopy, and larger stones and outcrops formed places to sit or recline, no sound save for the rustling leaves and the bubbling eddies.

We gave in, noticing that there was no continuous path beside the creek leading to our destination, and that The Turret was still, in probability, some distance away. So we ensconced ourselves, broke out the tobacco, the gorp, the bourbon and scotch, and the dubage, and simply relaxed. And the rushing waters, well oxidised and aerated, provided excellent opportunity to fill our water skins, now much depleted, to capacity. Richard produced the folding backgammon set and he and I had a match. Simon immersed himself in his issue of *Harpers*. Anthony beheld the clear blue sky and wondered aloud whether our fortune would last. "It is hubristic" he said "to enjoy such good weather indefinitely. I fear the gods have something ill in store for us. We must not tempt fate." At this he took up a stick and unsheathed his camping blade, and began to whittle a totem to appease the sky god.

At length I became restless, and began to reassess our earlier consensus with respect to continuing the expedition toward The Turret. Richard, too, was inclined to probe further up the creek. Simon was too absorbed by his readings, and bade us proceed. Anthony was carving intently and would not be distracted. So Richard and I set out, and to our astonishment, after a not too demanding trudge along the creek bed, discovered a magnificent site. The rock at this point smoothed out into a wide platform, over which the water rushed in a most idyllic fashion, made glittery by the shafts of sunlight percolating through the forest canopy. Above this, more pools and eddies, giving way to swampy flats in a wide clearing. Richard was so taken that he had to go back and bring up the others, explaining to them what marvellous things we had found. So he set off. I continued, and, to my utter astonishment, discovered a long disused campsite. My archaeological instincts were at once stimulated. The stone fire pit, carefully laid, had become overgrown with mosses and grass. In the centre of the pit grew a delicate sapling. The trees had been cleared from the site, and the ground was a gentle covering of thick grasses. I could make out, by studying differential growth, the probable location of the tents. There were two clearings

side by side, almost like a figure 8. Who had encamped here, I wondered, park rangers? aboriginals? It was clear that the site had been used many times before being abandoned, perhaps seasonally. How interesting it would be to do a survey and scan for artefacts.

However, no one besides myself saw these things. For at length I heard Richard call for me, and I was obliged to turn back. As I got closer, Richard yelled "Anthony has sustained a horrible injury!" I reached the party in due course and was fully debriefed. While carving his totem to propitiate the sky god, Anthony slipped, and deeply incised his index finger. But he remained calm, announcing to Simon "I think I cut myself." Simon, however, did not look up from his magazine, thinking a mere cut of little consequence. "Indeed" he said. Anthony retorted "No, truly. I have cut myself terribly." To which Simon responded, still reading "Verily." Anthony continued his entreaties: "My index finger is badly gashed. The blood is profuse." And Simon said back, not turning his head: "Flesh wound surely." Anthony responded: "My clothes are soaked in blood. The pain throbs unbearably." Still not diverted from the printed page, Simon said "Do be careful." Whereupon Anthony yelled in despair: "By Hercules, I am faint and delirious from pain! The blade has penetrated to the bone! I cannot stop the flow of blood, and the creek is turning red from its effusion! My hand is numb. I am on the point of collapsing! Get help! Find Robert and Richard! Summon Andreas with distress calls! By the gods, man, do not abandon me in my extremity!" At this point Simon looked up from his magazine, and at once appreciating Anthony's predicament, flew into action. A section of Anthony's shirt was cut away to form a tourniquet, the rest being used as a brace to immobilise the finger above Anthony's head. A large shot of bourbon was administered, to staunch the pain. At this point Richard arrived to assist, and I was beckoned by repetitive yells.

Assessing the situation I issued commands. We had to leave at once, and evacuate Anthony back to the main camp. I examined the totem Anthony had been carving. It was in the shape of a phallus. This was his downfall. "Anthony" I said, "if you can hear me in your delirium, listen. Your iconography was wrong. Consult the learned before engaging in such practices. The phallus is used to appease the god of fertility, in particular Priapus, who is always depicted with an abnormally large phallus, and sometimes with several phalli. The symbol of lightening is employed to propitiate the god of the sky. You should have carved the stick in the shape of a lightening bolt. The sky god became enraged that you would appease him with a phallus, and caused your hand to slip." At this we carried Anthony out and poured him into the canoe mumbling incoherently, and proceeded with all speed back to the main site.

On the way back, I regretted my leniency in allowing the enlisted men to pursue their base superstitions. "I try to indulge the men by allowing them to worship their own gods, but no good will come of it. By permitting them to follow their own peculiar religious practices, I hope to improve morale. But in the end there is catastrophe, because the men are unlettered, and know not what they do." Richard and I then discussed alternative therapies. A course of hot cups, applied to Anthony's backside by means of hot air, might purge his evil humours and restore balance to his temperament. Or a good bleeding followed by a strong emetic. The hot cup treatment, bleeding and emetics had restored Tom's health the previous year, when he was out of sorts.

When we arrived back at the camp and carried Anthony up to the site, Cecilia and Andreas were utterly flabbergasted. When they inquired what had happened I said that Anthony had injured himself while carving a phallic totem. We cleared an operating theatre and set Anthony down. I suggested that the wound should first be flushed with running water, then disinfected, then treated with ointment, then bandaged. Failing that, a course of hot cups should be administered. Andreas advised strenuously against cleaning the wound. Instead, it should be stuffed with dirt and impurities, and allowed to fester. The advent of maggots would clean out the puss, and gangrene would absorb infection. For Andreas had taken medical training in Germany. Cecilia announced quite proudly that Andreas had once delivered quintuplets in an elevator, and surely knew how to treat a flesh wound. This was amazing. I immediately appointed Andreas Field Medic on the spot. Once Anthony's wound had been thus contaminated and sealed, Richard volunteered to administer the bleeding. Andreas rejected this as untimely. First the infection must be allowed to develop, and then, once Anthony was weak and febrile, a good bleeding would be appropriate.

Cecilia pronounced that the wound was critical, and advised that Anthony be evacuated. By smoke signals, by the arranging clothes in the shape of an SOS, or by the making of loud noises, a passing aeroplane or helicopter could be attracted. If the former, it could report our coordinates to the rescue authorities. If the latter, it could land and evacuate Anthony directly. The rest of the expedition was not amenable to this plan. Simon's words were these: "Granted Anthony has lost a great amount of blood. Granted that he is delirious from pain. Granted also that his constitution is weakened. Yet the expedition must continue. Exploration and discovery cannot cease for the sake of a man's finger." Andreas was inclined to agree, but suggested that we plan an alternate route, in case the expedition had to be aborted. Now I like to encourage strategic thinking among the enlisted men, and Andreas had gained some standing for having led the attack against the chipmunks. So I acquiesced in the planning of a "contingency route", according to which the expedition would be cut short by 36 to 48 hours, and we would canoe non-stop by the shortest possible route back to Ackray. The five of us would occupy two canoes, discarding superfluous food and equipment, each boat running a tow-line back to the third canoe, where Anthony would lie and convalesce. It seemed unworkable but I knew the plan would never eventuate.

Cecilia and Andreas soon decided to detach and explore on their own, by canoe. In particular, they wanted to investigate the sheer rock cliffs of the canyon. We four of us remained, to provide Anthony with moral support and otherwise to relax. The afternoon did not prove unprofitable. It happened that our camp was situated at a rather narrow part of the river, interspersed with projecting beams, for there had once been a log run here. After some preliminary investigation we had also pronounced against the insularity of a projecting promontory of land directly opposite. So it was easy enough to set up a toll station. We stopped passing canoeists in the name of the Queen, levied tolls and inspected goods for the Dominion revenue. When the canoeists inquired what it was about, I replied, "In these times of fiscal stress, it is more than usually desirable to levy taxes on the citizenry. Where money is not readily available, as in this case, we exact revenue in kind." So where they could not supply ready cash, we took fresh water, foodstuffs, medical supplies, *landjaeger* sausage, and other goods.

The dinner this night was veritably a gourmet feast. I made red Thai curry from a packet of thick paste. It needed coconut milk, so clever that I am, I mixed in coconut puree and water. This was served with Pilau rice and papadum. Now to make the latter, Andreas hit upon a brilliant stratagem. Olive oil was not proving adequate for the task, so Andreas recommended that we impress into service the bacon fat which, fortunately, and against the exhortations of Cecilia (for it clogs the arteries) we had preserved from breakfast, in case it should prove to be of some use. So we enjoyed dinner amid cries of “splendid” and “formidable”. For dessert, Cecilia had been keeping in reserve for this night a special pre-made camping treat, of the kind you purchase at the outfitters, called as I remember Up-Country Chocolate-Oatmeal-Coconut Instant After-Dinner Harvest-Home Cookie-Chew Yum-Yum. She volunteered to make it, with the help of some of the others, that I might relax from my culinary duties. So I withdrew while the others cooked the desert, and all was reduced to chaos. Pans went missing. Richard and Anthony began arguing vehemently over whether dessert mixtures should be stirred in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction. Andreas insisted on converting all the measurements to metric, which disrupted quantifications, and Simon kept spooning out the hot mixture to taste, which also disrupted quantifications.

At length I intervened to restore order, assigned new duties to some, adjudicated the stirring dispute, and gradually reduced the mixture. In the end, after all the trouble and chaos and disruption, the Cookie-Chew Yum-Yum was deemed unpalatable. However, it was kept aside for alternative uses. This was fortunate, for we lacked the cola syrup which Tom had brought along the previous year, and which had proven efficacious as a super-adhesive. The Up-Country Chocolate-Oatmeal-Coconut Instant After-Dinner Harvest-Home Cookie-Chew Yum-Yum was more than serviceable as a caulking, as a hot compress for wounds (as Anthony discovered), as a sealant, and as insulation. It might even be traded for other necessities.

Mentioned in Dispatches:

Andreas (Field Medic), for planning a contingent route for evacuation, for medical expertise beyond the call of duty, and for skillful deployment of bacon fat.

Cecilia, for pointing out (after puffing some Cavendish) that pipe smoking will blacken one's teeth.

Simon, for noticing Anthony's predicament before he bled to death.

Demerits:

Anthony, for confusing his iconography and propitiating the sky god with a phallus (500 points).

Richard, for employing the collapsible saw as a fire stoke (1,000 points).

Sunday, August 15

This morning we achieved a record in the breaking up of camp. This was accomplished by 10:30 am. We enjoyed the full grandeur of the canyon in the morning sun, the sheer cliffs, the pine forested summits, the red iron gloss of the towering rock face. We proceeded slowly, to appreciate the opulent scenery to its full extent. Cecilia and Andreas left us at Brigham Lake, for they were obliged to return a day earlier, and would make directly for High Falls Lake. Andreas mapped out the contingency route with red crayon, in case Anthony's condition should become exacerbated. Cecilia then said to me, her eyes watery, "Give us guidance, Oh Leader, on how to avoid mishap and survive these wilds unharmed, unmolested." And Andreas, concurring, protested "Yes, Robert, we need words of practical wisdom and panaceas for trouble." I collected my thoughts and said: "Adhere to these simple precepts. Keep the Alpenbitter at hand, and your machete blade keen. Do not eat the *landjaeger*. You know its value. Use bacon fat instead of olive oil. Avoid bathing. Dirt mixed with perspiration makes you waterproof. Fresh fruit is proof against scurvy. If confronted by a female bear, do jumping jacks. If by a male, yodel." They thanked me profusely for these words of wisdom and set off up river.

From Brigham Lake to Opalescent Lake was a portage of some 740 metres, the longest with which we had to contend this expedition. At the end of this portage, I was made aware of a simmering dispute between Anthony and Richard. While portaging, one would place his end of the canoe on his right-hand shoulder, and the other on his left-hand shoulder. Neither would agree to place his end of the canoe on the same shoulder as the other. I asked how long this had been going on, and was told that it had been an issue for some time. Than Anthony accused Richard of being "bossy and ill-tempered", and Richard accused Anthony of being "lazy and insensitive". I was very concerned because these tensions would have a deleterious effect on morale generally. Also it reduced their speed and efficiency at the portage, and it was important that the repute and élan of the Forward Element not be diminished.

I retired with my pipe to think about the matter, and after turning it over for some time, I came back and rendered the following decision: "Every boat has, of necessity, a bow and a stern. Richard places the bow or the stern, whichever he is carrying (for it is not an issue *who* carries *which end* of the canoe, but *how* the respective ends of the canoe, these being the bow or the stern, *are carried and in what manner*) on his left shoulder, and Anthony places the bow or the stern, as the case may be, on his right shoulder. The bow or the stern on the left or the right is equivalent to the stern or the bow on the right or the left, and vice versa. And the bow being the front part of the canoe and the stern being the back part is equivalent to the stern being the reverse of the front and the bow being the reverse of the back, or the reverse. The bow and the stern are connected by gunwales on the left and the right, these the equivalent of the port and the starboard, so Richard carries the stern or the bow to port and Anthony the bow or the stern to starboard, being in respect of the gunwales on the right or the left respectively, and hence the gunwales on the port or the starboard and the bow or the stern to the front or the back should be supported by the shoulder on the left or the right except that where the bow or the stern are placed in respect of one's head to the right or the left then the gunwale on the left being that to the port is either on the outside to the right or inside to the left and the gunwale on the right being that to starboard is on the outside on the left or if not then on the inside to the right, and vice

versa or the reverse. Am I not right?"

This sounded authoritative and had a technical slant, so being civil servants both, Richard and Anthony had no further comment and accepted my advice, whatever it may have been.

So we arrived at Opalescent Lake and reconnoitred with my Bushnells, which were very efficacious. I immediately spotted a sight in the distance which was very desirable, and bade we make haste to occupy it. But Richard and Anthony were partaking of a "peace pipe of dubage", their dispute having been resolved, and we were somewhat delayed. By 1:30, however, we had secured perhaps the best site but one. It was wide and rocky and salubrious, like a projecting promontory, and for once had excellent swimming. The lake is called "Opalescent" on account of the greenish hue of the waters. For we had entered a remote and fantastic region rarely frequented by man. The sites we saw were marvellous and perplexing: rock spiders two feet long, which spat an acidic poison with uncanny accuracy; enormous water serpents that could entwine a canoe in seconds and drag it down to the depths; insects which were more like hideous birds, with stingers three feet long and enormous antennae; huge snapping turtles with rock-hard carapaces ten feet in diameter, which could lunge onto shore and tear off a man's leg.

It was a glorious summer day. We erected the encampment at leisure, finding a suitable grassy spot, well back, for the tent. There was an ample supply of uncut deadwood and the collapsible saw was deployed. Wood was collected, sorted and piled according to the "Doctrine of Progressive Combustibility", whereby sections of ligneous material are categorised by thickness and weight, each with its own role in the combustion process, from minor twig used for kindling to sizeable log for significant conflagration once a bed of coals had been consolidated. Simon dismissed the Doctrine as "merely common sense", but I took exception. It was a major contribution to camping science and one of my greatest achievements in the field. My principal innovation was to theorise on the usefulness of the explicit separation of materials of different inherent combustibility into identifiable and clearly segregated stockpiles.

We enjoyed a lazy afternoon. After a good swim we relaxed on the rocky promontory under a shining blue sky, where we read magazines, smoked, drank brandy and scotch, snacked on peanuts and chocolate, and conversed on the state of the universe, on politics, and on philosophy. In particular, Anthony, who had figured out by clever syllogism that he is in fact Socrates, began waxing philosophical, and put forward his Theory of the Inevitability of Eventuality. According to this theory, eventuality is inevitable, that is, what is eventual will be instantiated inevitably, being the form and substance of "The Eventual", which is a formative principle of the universe, or put another way, one of the essential elements of the cosmos. Richard retorted that this was a good start but only speculation, which could not be supported without reliable observation. I stated that while the Theory of the Inevitability of Eventuality was a working basis for discussing the origin of the planet, the Doctrine of Progressive Combustibility was well proven. Simon said "I reject the notion of The Eventual as one of the cosmic Forms. I reject all first principles, just as I reject fresh fruit. Not of it is practical."

At length we tired of philosophy and turned to war. The camp ground we originally wanted was just across the lake, now fully occupied. We were outraged by the very sight of it, as if as a

beacon to mock us, and resolved to annex the place by main force. First we cut large beams and assembled a counterweight trebuchet, using the furthest extent of the rocky promontory as an artillery emplacement. Then we assembled piles of rocks to use as ammunition, adapting the Doctrine of Progressive Combustibility to warfare, and piling the rocks by different respective size. The smaller stones would be lobbed first, to soften resistance and disrupt supply, and then huge boulders would be thrown across on a high trajectory, to smash tents, boats and equipment. Richard and Anthony would carry out an amphibious landing in their canoe, under cover of the barrage, and secure a beach-head. This done, Simon would follow up for the exploitation, also bringing up bourbon whiskey.

As we were making these arrangements, I sent Anthony across under flag of truce to offer terms. The occupants of the site, having taken it over in a most aggressive fashion and without justification, must evacuate at once, leaving all food and equipment behind, for they were lucky to escape with their miserable lives. The parley was ineffective, however, and I received responses to the effect of "Up yours", "Go to Hell" and "Come and move us you arrogant bastard", combined with various gestures. The men were furious at this insolence, and I gave orders to count down to H-Hour.

It was then, however, that the whole operation was aborted. For we suddenly remembered that the machete, the principal weapon of the first wave, had been taken away by Andreas. So I sent Anthony across again under flag of truce to inform the enemy that I was willing to be magnanimous, and would allow them to remain at their campsite, but only for as long as they decided to remain there, and no longer. With my Bushnells I spied Anthony talking to the enemy at some length, in a most animated fashion. But eventually he turned round and came back, and when I inquired why he had taken so long to deliver a simple message, he said that the enemy, too, thought that the Theory of the Inevitability of Eventuality contained certain flaws, which they voiced using strong language, and that he would go away and work on a corollary.

The kitchen arrangements were the best yet. For there were several quite wide and stout logs, which were turned upright and placed side to side. Also the fire was among the best we had yet constructed, in no small measure due to my Doctrine of Progressive Combustibility. The meals, however, are becoming progressively bland. This night we dined on pollentia fried in olive oil and butter, and seasoned with either honey or with pepper and Parmesan cheese. This course was followed by Kraft dinner, liberally coated in Parmesan and fortified with copious butter, and then by peanut butter and honey sandwiches. We took after-dinner coffee, brandy and cigars down by the lake.

It was now that we were accosted by an enormous turtle with a huge dome of a carapace. First the water by our feet churned and bubbled, which we initially thought might be an effusion of methane gas. Then, to our astonishment, this great beast lumbered out of the water, up the very ramp of stone from whence we had dived into the lake that afternoon. We retreated in disarray. The hideous reptile extended its scaly head and hissed at us menacingly. We brandished torches in order to repel it, lest he raid the camp and pull down the tent. But it was quickly over, and the creature retracted its neck before withdrawing back into the depths from whence it had come. After recovering our senses we had another belt of scotch and thanked our good fortune that we

had not been torn to pieces. The rock spider two feet long, which all day had perched contemplatively on an inaccessible ledge of rock, made neither advance nor retreat, but only sat in perfect stillness waiting for prey. We had become accustomed to its silent companionship, even coming to admire its grotesque but elegant form.

Mentioned in Dispatches:

Cecilia, for asking the expedition leader for sage advice at the appropriate time, so that he would not have to offer it on his own initiative.

Demerits:

Anthony, for insisting that his wound be cleaned instead of polluted, thereby subverting medical science and setting aside the instructions of Andreas (Field Medic) (500 points).

Andreas (Field Medic) (retroactively), for taking the machete to use as a tool and causing us to abort our amphibious assault (500 points).

Simon, for mispronouncing “pollentia”, and declaring publicly that, while he may look slightly Mediterranean, he is in fact very British, and that fortunately there were no Italians in our expedition (500 points).

Richard, for discovering that he had not actually forgotten his personal torch, but rather forgot that he had placed it in the very bottom of his back pack (1,500 points).

Monday, August 15th

We rose rather late, at 8:00 am, instead of 6:00 as scheduled. Something happened to the alarm mechanism in my camping watch. One theory is that copious flatulence had caused the mechanism to corrode and malfunction. We broke camp efficiently, taking a breakfast of porridge and coffee. Leaving behind this fantastic region we took a 650 metre portage into Ooze Lake. As the name implies, this was a very salubrious place, and we were tempted to take our lunch here, knee deep in standing swamp water, surrounded by reeds and bracken, the air abuzz with the tintinnabulation of mosquitos and black flies and heavy with the smells of rotting vegetation, the waters alive with methane bubbles. Anthony would have none of it, however, for he feared it would make him ill, saying “I am fearful of the onset of malaria, originating in the unwholesome vapours which have their prevalence in the rank and febrile miasma of the tarn.” So we continued, took the portage out of Ooze Lake, and into the even more picturesque High Falls Lake, site of earlier misadventures. We passed by our old site, beheld the native monument just beside it, consisting of piled stones, and wondered aloud where Andreas and Cecilia had encamped, how far away they were from us at the present time, and whether my words of sage wisdom had been taken truly to heart.

We arrived at St. Andrew’s Lake at 1:00, the great boomerang-shaped pivot between Stratton and the Barron watershed. Richard and Anthony had, naturally, gone ahead to scout a site, Simon and

I having been slowed somewhat by the desire to fill our water skins from the clear water of High Falls Lake. They eventually found a site, which, though not really comparing to those on High Falls or Opalescent, which were by consensus the very best, nevertheless had its good points. The ground was very sandy, not uncommon for this region of the park, instead of hard and rocky. The frontage was broad, and mostly overgrown with deciduous flora, except for an area of sandy beach. The site itself was busy with a tall stand of trees, the ground being clean of vegetation. So you camped under a serene canopy which, playing with the wind, produced a continuous and symphonic willowing, which combined with the cracking and creaking of the swaying trunks.

We beached the canoes and brought up the equipment and impedimenta. We then snacked on peanuts, English muffins, peanut butter and honey. For the commissariat was diminishing and the luxury snacks of chocolate and halva had long since been consumed. We then fired the propane element and prepared a large cauldron of curry-prawn chicken soup, which more than sufficed to sate or hunger. The rice cakes, which I had insisted on bringing as an experiment, were not well received by my colleagues. I was the only one who would partake of them, being their sponsor, and then only on sufferance. However, we conceived of a brilliant use for the rice cakes. This area being rather deciduous and sandy, the population of chipmunks was everywhere in evidence. Indeed they veritably greeted us with a welcoming committee. We assumed they had not yet learnt of the great defeat of the chipmunks on High Falls Lake several days before, or if they had, paid no account of it, being bold and overconfident.

For a time were at our wits end, for they would attack, not in formation, but in small groups, using the trees for cover, darting from trunk to trunk, snatching a morsel and then retreating to the nearby shelter of the bush. So we opened negotiations. I erected a flag of truce and was taken before the assembly of chipmunks. Reminding the assembled host that we had defeated the chipmunks before, and that they should not tempt fate, I offered them an abundance of rice cakes if they would stop molesting us. Otherwise, they would be visited by war, pestilence and ruin. They consented, and we brought the rice-cakes to an agreed-upon place in the woods. It was a good thing, for I doubt we could have mounted a second coordinated attack on the chipmunks without Andreas and his machete, especially since Richard and Anthony, being the Forward Element, are trained in reconnaissance and unaccustomed to pitched battle.

Relaxing on the beach afterwards, we saw a helicopter flying past on the opposite end of the lake, rather close to the tree tops. This must, we thought, be a medevac helicopter arranged by Cecilia and Andreas, to evacuate Anthony from the park on account of his grievous injury. We were grateful, but unable to flag it down in time, and it disappeared. This was unfortunate because Anthony had started cleaning the wound and it was therefore getting progressively worse, and the possibility was entertained that the entire arm might have to be amputated. The severed limb, we thought, could also be given over to the chipmunks, or to their allies the field mice, to seal our pact of peace with a gesture of goodwill.

By now we were all quite tired. Our original plan of using the afternoon to sojourn back to the High Falls Pools and enjoy a swim was in stages abandoned, for sadly the sky was cloudy, which materially affected our enthusiasm. We made a perfunctory attempt at local exploration but it proved unexciting and we soon came upon occupied campsites. So one by one we sat down on

our sleeping bags and nodded off. Simon and Richard were the first to succumb, initially ensconcing themselves to read and then being overtaken by sleep. Then Anthony himself, normally quite eager to be up to some activity, gave in and joined the general slumber. At length I too became horizontal on my sleeping mat, having secured my camping pillow, and hibernated soundly beneath the swaying canopy.

After several hours we awoke one by one, and then getting organised we set to work. Richard and Anthony, pursuant to the standing order, pitched the tent. I arranged my kitchen. The emplacement was again excellent. This time, not only was there a good, stoup stump, but this was surmounted by a wide, flat rock, which, though not perfectly even, at least made my work somewhat easier and proved an optimal location for the propane burner, spices and accoutrements. The hanging electric lantern was then suspended from a nearby tree, so that the food preparation area was not only well planned and ergonomic, but also independently illuminated.

Firewood was, at first, quite thin on the ground. So while I began to arrange dinner, the others went out on a foraging expedition. At length they returned very well laden. For they had found a small tree which was quite dead but which had not yet collapsed. This they cut down and dragged back to the site. Here, the collapsible saw was used extensively, and the tree was systematically cut up into a number of individual logs, each light and airy, on account of its deadness, and therefore combustible, but of sufficient dimension to provide significant fuel. These logs were piled separately, again pursuant to the Doctrine of Progressive Combustibility, and other smaller pieces were collected and stacked for kindling, each according to its size and weight.

Dinner was the plainest and the most drab of meals to date. It consisted of spaghetti with a covering of butter, olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper, and a pot of instant rice consumed with soy sauce. For dessert there was nothing, and some of us actually regretted the Cookie-Chew Yum-Yum, and upbraided Anthony for using it all as a compress for his wound. But our attentions were soon diverted. For having an ample supply of fire wood, and a good stone-lined pit, we outdid ourselves by igniting a most magnificent conflagration. It was a prodigious fire which lit up the entire lake. At one point we were forced back, on to the beach, that we may appreciate the blaze without being singed. The atmosphere being festive and jovial, and this being our last evening, I announced "Splice the Main Brace" and distributed the last of the Brandy. The others took this with their coffee, to fortify it, but I took it neat, as is my custom, as an accompaniment to my last cigar. We toasted a fine expedition and drank down.

Demerits:

Simon, for declaring quite casually the next morning that, on account of our haste to get back to Ackray, no one's lips should touch coffee, tea, water, or food of any kind until we had left the park (1,000 points).

Some restaurant in Pembroke with an unpronounceable German name, for disappointing our hopes for a good meal back in civilization, and for not even knowing how to cook Schnitzel

properly (10,000 points).

**This has been the diary of our Second Waterborne Expedition.
The events herein recounted have been set down faithfully and accurately,
without bias, passion or embellishment.**