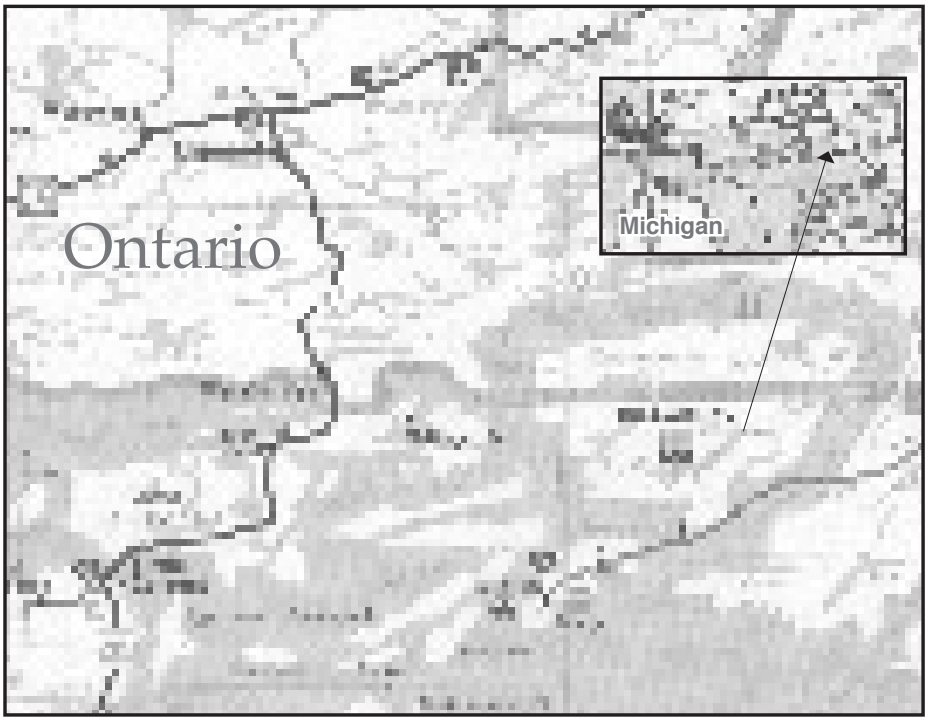


# Great Lakes Newsletter of the Great Lakes Sea Kayak Club Sea Kayaker

Volume 15, Number 5 • December 2001

## Over in Killarney

By Sandy Finsilver



**O**n September 6, 2001 I went with my paddling buddies, Kei TaXetani and Jim Stillman to Killarney, Ontario for a few days of paddling. This was my third trip with Kei and Jim. I have been trying to get to Killarney for several years and I particularly wanted to see the La Cloche Mountains. I had heard they were beautiful white quartzite mountains.

The usual Killarney paddle is from Key River to Killarney. Since I wanted to see the La Cloche Mountains, I designed the trip so that we would started

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# Great Lakes Sea Kayaker

A publication of the  
Great Lakes Sea Kayak Club

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## Great Lakes Sea Kayak Club Purpose and Goals

The Great Lakes Sea Kayak Club is an organization of kayakers united by their interest in kayaking on the Great Lakes, in the safe and responsible propagation of their sport, and in the preservation of the Lakes' environment.

*Activities* – Club activities include: a winter meeting at which directions and plans for the forthcoming paddling season are formulated, a May rendezvous at a location chosen at the winter Meeting, organizing the Great Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium (an international event staged annually in July at Grand Marais, Michigan on the spectacular Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore of Lake Superior), a September rendezvous at a location chosen during the Symposium, and the Gales of November rendezvous on the northeast shore of Lake Superior at Agawa Bay, Ontario usually on the first weekend of the month.

*Safety* – The Club has fostered a cadre of instructors trained in the British Canoe Union coaching system. This cadre has tailored a program of instruction designed for the Great Lakes Sea Kayaker and a network of instructors has been established to facilitate instruction in the Great Lakes Region.

*Environment* – Club members use, enjoy and appreciate the Great Lakes environment. As a means of supporting “and giving back” to the environment, the club has committed to make a financial contribution to a worthy environmental cause each year. The recipients of this donation will be determined by the club’s officers with input from the membership. Additionally, club members have been instrumental in efforts to preserve and maintain our Great Lakes environmental treasures and recreational resources.

*Organization* – The GLSKC is a not-for-profit organization under the leadership of a six member board of directors. Two of those members will be elected each year, beginning in January/February 2000. Officers include a president, 1st and 2nd vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer.

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## From the Board of Directors/Newsletter Staff

This newsletter represents an effort by the Board of Directors/Newsletter Staff to involve more club members in the Newsletter’s production and to provide useful, interesting information for members. In order to be successful in our goals as a Newsletter staff we need three things from members:

1. What can we do to make the Newsletter better?
2. Your participation – Note the Members who have contributed to this Newsletter, both “staff” and those mentioned in the credits on page 3. We can publish five Newsletters per year that will be as good as any in the world with help from the immensely diverse and talented members of the GLSKC! Send us reports of your trips, experiences, issues that need discussed, questions... We’ll put it all together in the Newsletter for the benefit of all and for the betterment of the sport.
3. Money! – Publication and mailing of the Great Lakes Sea Kayaker depend on your membership dues. Membership in the GLSKC/Subscription to the Newsletter is \$8 and runs for the calendar year.

*Board of Directors (Office, Term expires)* – Wendy Beckwith (Vice-President, 2004) 248-349-7466, Ema Chladek (2nd Vice President, 2002) 248-644-6909, Stan Chladek (2004), Jon Hansas (Treasurer, 2004) 734-692-3048, Todd Leigh (President, 2001) 517-333-9716, Larry Merx (Secretary, 2002) 734-439-0049, Heinz Topol (2000) 248-348-5361.

*Symposium Committee* – Board of Directors and: Sanford Finsilver 734-665-5828, Steve Francis 231-932-0366, Nancy Hogan 847-798-8810.

# Calendar of Events 2002

Date	Event	Location	Contact	Phone/e-mail/Web site
3-12 Dec	Okefenokee Swamp Challenge	St. Marys River FL	Steve Isaac	(727) 524-4172
2 Feb	Wilderness Symposium† (p 4)	Toronto, ONT		glska.cjb.net
2 Mar	Quiet Water Symposium** (p 4)	East Lansing, MI	Karl Pearson	(517) 628-2890/qws.homestead.com/index.html
9 Jun	Kids' Kayak Day	Windsor, ONT	Dwight Phillips	d-mphillips@home.com
15 Jun	You Can Paddle! Day††	Menominee, MI	Paul Hoefgen	(906) 863-3991/hoefgen@cybrzn.com
18-21 Jul	Great Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium	Grand Marais, MI	Larry Merx	(734) 439-0049/lmerx@nkfm.org

Get your calendar items in now for 2002!

†GLSKA (Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association) event, \*\*LOAPC Event (Lansing Oar and Paddle Club), \*Mad City Paddlers event, TAPS (Trade Association of Paddle Sports), †† Windsor-Essex County Canoe Club Event

## T-shirt Contest

**Design the T-shirt for the 2002 Great Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium in Grand Marais!**

Submit pencil or pen drawings or digital art by June 1, 2002 to have your work considered. We will consider art for both front and back of the t-shirt. Plan for one color ink and suggest two different colors for the t-shirt itself (one for staff and one for participants).

Winners will receive:

- 1st Place 50% off 2002 symposium registration, two pastie dinners and a two year membership in GLSKC (includes subscription to this newsletter).
- 2nd Place Two pastie dinners and a one year membership in GLSKC (includes subscription to this newsletter).
- 3rd Place Two pastie dinners and a one year membership in GLSKC (includes subscription to this newsletter).

Submit your art and color choices to Larry Merx (Address, phone and e-mail below). Judging will be done by an independent agency.

## Great Lakes Sea Kayaker



*Great Lakes Sea Kayaker* is published in five issues each year: February, April, June, August/September, November/December. The Newsletter is an organ of the Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Club and dedicated to disseminating information of interest and importance to club members in areas related to the purposes and goals of the club.

Submissions from club members are welcomed and encouraged.

### Deadlines for Submissions

February/March	February 10
April/May	April 10
June/July	June 10
August/September	August 10
November/December	November 10

Submissions to *Great Lakes Sea Kayaker* can be made by letter or computer disc (Macintosh or IBM), by fax (please not between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Eastern unless arranged prior to transmission) or by e-mail.

*Deadline for next Issue:*

**November 10, 2001**

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## Wilderness Symposium

The 17th annual Wilderness and Canoeing Symposium will take place Friday February 1 (evening) and Saturday February 2 (all day), 2002, at Monarch Park Collegiate in Toronto. Sponsored by the Wilderness Canoe Association, this symposium is an opportunity to share an appreciation of our wilderness heritage.

This year the theme will be Northern Travels and Perspectives, a celebration of wild places, and notable travellers from the past and present. There will be some 18 presentations from individuals who represent a broad mosaic of experiences, understanding and knowledge of the north.

Admission is by reserved seating, and generally sells out well in advance. Tentative prices for this year's event will be \$40 before January 1 and \$60 thereafter. Optional meals are available on Saturday. Complete information and registration packages will be available in late November; please write to: Symposium, P.O. Box 211, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S7, or check the News page at the GLSKA web-site, <http://glska.cjb.net>, where a link to the Symposium web-site will be posted as soon as information is available.

## Quiet Water Symposium

from Karl Pearson

This year's seventh annual Quiet Water Symposium will be held on Saturday, March 2, 2002 from 9-5 at the Pavilion on the campus of Michigan State University.

The symposium will include five dozen hand-built boats, demonstrations, exhibits and presentations.

Presentations will include Verlen Kruger's record setting race down the length of the Mississippi River in 2001, the WomenQuest all woman trek to the North Pole in 2001 and Gary and Joanie McGuffin presenting and promoting their new book.

Contact Karl at (517) 628-2890, or at [aslub@home.com](mailto:aslub@home.com). Check the web site at <http://qws.homestead.com/index.html>.

## Rum Runner Update

Mon, 19 Nov 2001

By Ron Smith

Suzie and I just made it home and I wanted to thank you all for your support and encouragement. Words can't describe the sense of accomplishment that Steve Bailey and I feel for completing the Rum Runner.

For me it may well represent the pinnacle of my paddling career. I was in first place in my division after the first day and was able to hold onto a second place finish in the Men's Masters Seakayak 16' - 19' Division. 105 miles from Key Largo to Key West in three days gives justice to the Rum Runner Challenge by line of "Paddle or Die".

It was also very gratifying for me to see Steve tough it out for a fifth place finish in the division as well. Some of you may know, Steve and Liz Bailey were beginning students of ours 18 short months ago. To see Steve finish such a demanding event only added to the elation I felt yesterday afternoon standing on the beach at Key West. Steve has developed outstanding skills in a very short time.

We finished the race tired and worn but strong of spirit and with refined paddling skills that only ocean paddling can bring. I think I can speak for Steve and myself when I say I think we both exorcised some "demons" on the paddle. I know the 7 mile open crossing between Marathon and Big Pine Key along 7 mile bridge was giving me some anxious moments.

Bill and Patty Pape along with Suzie and my sister and brother in law provided us with outstanding support and encouragement.

There are many stories to share about the Rum Runner many will be shared over the upcoming holidays and in future gatherings. It is a fantastic event and I'm sure Patty, Bill and Nancy Thornton, who joined us for the last day, will provide you with additional details from the spectator's view. Suffice it to say that it was one hell of a paddle.



This is a free service to all Newsletter subscribers. If you have equipment to sell please send relevant information on the item(s) as well as your name, address and phone number (if desired). NOTE: ads will be printed only in the next Newsletter after we get your request. If you need to continue your ad, you must notify us to renew.

# Over in Killarney

*Continued from page 1*

near Whitefish Falls and cross MacGregor Bay. This way would be in the Mountains the whole time.

On the drive up we stopped at the Serpent River Ojibway Reserve near Spanish. Their gathering was held the month before, in August. As Kei is very interested in Indians he inspected the teepees and then pledged he would try to come next August and participate. We spent the first night at a campground in Willisville on the land bridge between Espanola and Manitoulin Island. The drive into Willisville is spectacular with the white La Cloche Mountains set against Froot Lake. Willisville is the westernmost access point to Killarney Provincial Park. We set up camp and made supper. That night it rained.

The second day we paddled down and back the length of Charlton Lake, a total of 12 miles. The lake ends at the back door of Killarney Provincial Park. The lake is also surrounded by the La Cloche Mountains. Charlton Lake begins as a substantial body of water, but after a few miles narrows down to a stream, eventually ending altogether. At the end is a portage into Killarney Park and Murray Lake. Murray Lake, perhaps due to low water, is no more than a swamp. The portage trail is rather short perhaps 100 yards and seems very well used. I could not understand why it is well used; since Murray Lake seemed both inaccessible and unattractive; perhaps it is used by fishermen.

The weather on the second day was changeable. It would be hot and sunny then it would be hot and sunny for a while, then it would start to blow and rain, then it would be hot and sunny again. When we arrived back at Willisville, it started to rain very hard. Rather than make dinner, we drove to Little Current to eat. On the way I was looking for a launch site on MacGregor Bay for the next day. I found a perfect boat launch between Birch Island and Little Current at a place called Okeechobee Landing.

Next morning, the third day, we packed up and drove to Okeechobee Landing. The day seemed perfect for paddling, sunny with one to two foot waves and 5 to 10 knot winds. The problem was that the weather radio said 30 knot winds with 45 knot gusts. We discussed this, decided they must be talking about someplace else and launched. We crossed the mouth of MacGregor Bay and paddled into Frazier Bay the wind was brisk out of the south and on our beam. The scenery was all I'd hoped for. Several of the islands looked like jewels, sparkling with white quartzite. We stopped for lunch at a white island at the mouth of Bale Fine. One problem with eastern Lake Huron is there are no good landing spots. Usually you are landing on rocks, as was

the case here. We spent an hour having lunch then finished our crossing of Frazier Bay at the Rat Portage where we found a campsite.

After dinner Jim and I took our kayaks across the portage into Killarney Bay. The wind on Killarney Bay was 15 to 20 knots with 3 to 4 foot chop, much different from what we had had all day. The Rat Portage is very short, about 100 yards, with very little gradient. 50 yards of the portage is a lake with a very high stone cliff. It is quite beautiful. The portage actually separates the North Channel from Georgian Bay since Frazier Bay is part of the North Channel and Killarney Bay is part of Georgian Bay.

The morning of the fourth day we again listened to the weather report and again heard about 30 knot winds and 45 knot gusts. We crossed the Rat portage again and Killarney Bay was clear and the water was flat, a very easy crossing. Killarney Bay was even more beautiful than

MacGregor Bay. The mountains seemed more substantial than on MacGregor and Frazier Bays. We paddled into the channel at the village of Killarney and landed next to the Sportsman Inn.

The village of Killarney is quite small. It seems like an island town; very small, quaint and remote. The entire town is only one block long. They have a general store, a few marinas, and a bed and breakfast or two. The prime locations are the Sportsman Inn and Mr. Perche's World Famous Fish and Chips.

We went into the Sportsman Inn for breakfast and they let us use their hot tub located on the porch next to the Channel. Imagine, a hot tub in the middle of a kayak trip; it doesn't get any better than that. We then went to Mr. Perche's for the world famous fish and chips. They were great.

We left Killarney around 2 pm. The weather was still fine the wind and waves had picked up slightly but that only made the crossing more interesting. We crossed the Rat Portage and started paddling back to MacGregor Bay. About 5 pm a storm was clearly visible on the horizon. We were reaching the mouth of Bale Fine and we located a campsite that we had not seen the day before. We discussed whether to try to outrun the storm and paddle back to the car at MacGregor Bay or to make camp here. We listened to the weather radio and it was still telling us about the 30 knot winds and 45 knot gusts. It further said that they were out of the south and would change to out of the west tonight. It also said that they would continue for a couple of days. We decided to stay, not because outrunning a storm is a bad idea, but because staying would give us an extra day of paddling. I was hoping to have some time to explore Bale Fine.

*The campsite was one of the best I have seen. It was located on a point and opened to both the south and west, with beaches on both sides I set up my tent on some flat ground above the south beach. Jim set up in a tree near the point and Kei set up his tent behind some trees protected from the south but exposed to the west.*

## Over in Killarney

The campsite was one of the best I have seen. It was located on a point and opened to both the south and west, with beaches on both sides I set up my tent on some flat ground above the south beach. Jim set up in a tree near the point and Kei set up his tent behind some trees protected from the south but exposed to the west.

It started to rain while we were setting up our tents. After that we set up a rain fly over the picnic table and made dinner. We finished dinner by 7:30 when the wind started to blow. The 30 knot winds finally found us. We enjoyed the breeze until about 9 when the sun went down. My tent, exposed to the south, was being blown down on me. I could not sleep this way. I got up, Jim and Kei were still walking around even though it was dark. They helped me move my tent behind Kei's tent where it was protected from the south wind. I put rocks on the south side to hold down the tent against the wind. Jim seemed to enjoy experiencing the full fury of the storm, from his tent's exposed position.

About 4 am the wind shifted west. I awoke and realized that the only thing holding down my tent was me. I had not put down rocks on the west side of my tent since it was dark and the wind was out of the south. I had forgotten that the weather report called for the wind shift. I thought of calling to Jim or Kei to see if they could get some rocks, but I knew that they would be having the same problem as me. About 4:30 I decided to count the seconds between gusts. That way

I could run out between a gust and gather some rocks to stake down the west side of my tent.

The morning of the fifth day we changed the picnic table's rain fly to a wind fly. The wind had not let up at all. In addition to getting no sleep because of the wind, Jim and Kei both got wet since their tents did not have full rain flies.

*About 4 am the wind shifted west. I awoke and realized that the only thing holding down my tent was me.*

The wind was straight out of the west and that was exactly where we wanted to go. Had it been from a different direction, we could probably have paddled. About noon we decided to give it a try, I packed my kayak. Jim and Kei said that

if I could paddle, then they would pack. It was fun playing in the chop, but we made no progress against the winds. After that we all sat down behind a rock on the beach and just absorbed the sun. Jim reflected that there is something exciting about being this vulnerable to the elements. Around three it started to rain and blow real hard (the promised 45 knot gusts). I told Kei and Jim that we should offer incense, if we planned on paddling today. We all lit some incense and placed it on the west beach. I told Kei that incense offering generally takes at least an hour to work. I was sitting in Jim's tent when Kei came to report that the horizon was finally clearing. Around 4:30 Jim and Kei started to pack and around 5 pm we left. By 5:30 the Bay was totally flat. As we paddled back across MacGregor Bay I had a hard time getting Kei to paddle since he preferred to idly enjoy the sunset on the La Cloche Mountains.

# The Lure of Labrador

By Wendy Killoran

*Reprinted from QAYAQ, newsletter of the great lakes sea kayaking association, Vol 13, No 3, Autumn 2001*



Jung Chao

**L**abrador is a land of superlatives. It is a land that truly can awaken your heart and soul as the Newfoundland and Labrador tourism slogan promotes. Its stark beauty betrays the hard realities that hardy individuals endure in this land of vast natural splendor. I'd come to Labrador to paddle with whales and icebergs. I'd come to experience Labrador both naturally and culturally. I would not go home disappointed.

Two days of travelling, five flights and ten stops later I had arrived in Cartwright, Labrador, but without my luggage. I spent two days awaiting both the arrival of my camping gear and for the gale force winds to abate. A warm-up paddle on my second day in this nondescript, unkempt town of about 800 was aborted as fierce winds pummeled our small group into Cartwright's harbour. Ironically, the land would not let me easily commence my paddling journey yet the beauty was astounding as a vivid rainbow swept across a stormy sky.

During my wind bound days I explored the community of Cartwright on foot. It curves around a sheltered bay and is connected to the rest of the world by boat and plane. This is changing as I write, as a coastal roadway is currently under construction connecting Red Bay, site of an early Basque whaling station, to Cartwright. It is predicted that in three more years the road will connect with Happy Valley / Goose Bay which connects with the Trans Labrador Highway, referred to as the Freedom Road by locals. I walked past the Cartwright Medical Clinic, built on the site of the original Grenfell Mission. Dr. Wilfred Grenfell established a mission in St. Anthony, Newfoundland, in 1890 and served the isolated communities in northern Newfoundland and Labrador. Cartwright, at the mouth of Sandwich Bay, was named after George Cartwright, an 18th century merchant and adventurer who spent 16 years in the wilds of Labrador. It is now one of the service centres along the Labrador coast served by the ferries *M.S. Bond* and *M.V. Northern Ranger*. Small, wooden boxy houses border the dusty, rutted gravel road which curves around a small part of Sandwich Bay. Komatiks and ski-does lay idle, awaiting another cold

winter season.

Fortunately I was no longer idly waiting to paddle. On my third day in Cartwright, we slipped our loaded kayaks into Favourite Tickle in Sandwich Bay, ready to explore the vicinity at the crack of dawn. I was paddling with Pete Barrett, her son Tom Barrett, both from Newfoundland and Tricia Kinsey, a nurse in Cartwright who was originally from Australia. I was thankfully out of my hotel room, which was adorned with glossy blue walls, and kitsch curtains and quilts resembling the Labrador flag. The bottom blue stripe represents the waterways, the green the land and the white band on top, the snow. The spruce twig, common to all regions of Labrador, represents the people of Labrador; the Innu, the Inuit, and the European descendants. Labradorians are proud of their heritage. I was simply happy to be paddling, ready to have my senses tantalized as only nature can do.

Paddling under sunny, calm skies, our four kayaks left Favorite Tickle. (A tickle is the Newfoundland word for a passage of water between land.) Wooded, low, rounded humps of islands appeared. A slight tail wind gently urged

us to make a six and a half kilometre crossing to Huntingdon Island easily with the aid of the falling tide. Pete, a sailing aficionado, tied her homemade neon-red nylon sail to her paddle and let the wind work to her advantage. The power of the ocean was noticeable immediately as I usually paddle the Great Lakes. The water was a dark, impenetrable colour. I was on the water but couldn't see through the water. Scattered summer homes, weather worn but functional, occupied sheltered grassy shorelines. I was surprised at the number of summer homes, but as recently as two to three decades ago locals lived in these places to fish during the summer months.

Near Indian Head on Huntingdon Island, we disembarked for the first time on the trip. I was introduced to the "Wendy Wiggle", a drama of squirming to extricate myself from my newly purchased dry suit, a worth while investment when paddling the cold waters of the Labrador Sea which never warm over 4 degrees Celsius. I emerged looking like Cousin It from the Adams Family, as Tom commented. I was in olfactory heaven with the heady scent of tundra carpet baking in the sunshine.

At Old Man's Cove on Huntingdon Island, I roamed amongst a couple of summer houses and then enjoyed my Labradorian dinner (at home, my lunch) of flummies fried in the grease of bacon. Flummies, also referred to as river cakes or stove cakes, became a staple of my diet and are simply a mixture of flour, baking powder, salt and water. *There's even a group of Labradorian musicians called The Flummies!*

The tide had ebbed and we carried our kayaks about twenty metres to water's edge to resume paddling. We made a three-kilometre crossing to Newfoundland Island (not the large provincial island) also known as Prisoner Island, as a man who had killed a fellow sailor on a schooner had been left to fend for himself, completely isolated, for the duration of a summer on this island. To reach Newfoundland Island, we group-sailed part of the way, all four kayaks in tight formation with a tarp as our sail.

At Dumpling Harbour, we beached our colourful flotilla on a sandy strip festooned with marvelous streaked metamorphic rocks filled with burgundy garnets, some as large as two centimetres in diameter. We walked over seaweed that snapped and crackled to Tricia's summer house, an old, grey two storey fisherman's salt shed on stilts. The upstairs, with large picture windows, afforded us a panoramic view of Dumpling Island across the tundra with a dispersion of summer homes on land void of trees.

I wandered on foot westwards and discovered a gnawed caribou antler, a supplementary calcium source for rodents.

Orange lichen splotches painted the visually appealing bedrock. As we returned to the kayaks, a dramatic, threatening sky loomed in the west. Soon spatters of rain plunked little radiating circles on the inky black water but it was short-lived. The wind had picked up and my kayak bobbed over some playful waves.

Landing at Pigeon Cove, on Newfoundland Island, we set up our tents on a height of land behind Gordon and Barbara's

well kept home. Gordon and Barbara were relatives of Pete; with a total Labrador population of only 30,000 most Labradorians know or are somehow related to just about everyone. We were invited to make ourselves at home while the owners went fishing for sea trout and salmon.

I climbed a nearby hill with Tricia, over a carpet of Arctic vegetation, partridge berries, blackberries, bakeapple

berries, mosses, and grasses, to be rewarded with an expansive view to the north of cathedral icebergs drifting southwards in the Labrador Current. Small, stunted spruce trees hunkered in depressions, some merely thirty centimetres high and probably over one hundred years old.

Supper (my dinner at home) consisted of baked beans sweetened with molasses and brown sugar, and sweet and sour moose meatballs, a true cultural gastronomic adventure, cooked over a wood stove. Another ramble over the hilly tundra afforded me another splendid view of the parade of icebergs and brought me to a patch of snow at sea level in July!

Listening to the murmuring wind on the ocean in the distance and a chorus of songbirds, sleep came easily as I was camped on the soft, spongy tundra. The sun still rested in the western sky. A few mosquitoes hovered around my tent but weren't present in fierce, voracious numbers.

A curious harp seal peered at me from Pigeon Cove in the morning as we departed in calm, glorious weather to Pack's Harbour on Hamilton Island. Hardly a soul was there. In years past, bustling fishing activity would have filled the harbour.

We paddled towards Tinker Island and the open, exposed ocean while gentle, rolling swells placidly rocked our kayaks. A galaxy of millions of tiny transparent jellyfish pulsed in the dark water below the hull of my kayak. I was mesmerized to watch this magical world beneath me. Northwards, like tiny specks, colossal icebergs floated southwards, born in Greenland and melted by the time they reach the southern shores of Newfoundland.

We paddled along the south shore of Horse Chops Island, covered in wooded hills, and very flat and mesa-like

*At Dumpling Harbour, we beached our colourful flotilla on a sandy strip festooned with marvelous streaked metamorphic rocks filled with burgundy garnets, some as large as two centimetres in diameter. We walked over seaweed that snapped and crackled to Tricia's summer house, an old, grey two storey fisherman's salt shed on stilts. The upstairs, with large picture windows, afforded us a panoramic view of Dumpling Island across the tundra with a dispersion of summer homes on land void of trees.*

in appearance. Dead calm waters intoxicated me as I paddled and noticed shafts of light pierce the water, penetrating and converging deep below. These light shafts travelled through the jellyfish, illuminating them in iridescent sparkles of intense, brilliant colour. I couldn't believe the profusion of life pulsating below me.

Paddling southwestward toward the strand, referred to as the Wunderstrand in the Viking sagas, we crossed a three kilometre stretch of shallow water. Normally resounding surf pounds the world's longest, continuous beach, but today's calm unfurled a lulling ebb, and a scintillating dance of light gyrated in a marble pattern on the sandy bottom as I approached this wondrous, sandy shore.

This beach excited the Vikings enough to be recorded in their epic sagas as they travelled to the present day World Heritage Site at L'Anse Aux Meadows at the northern tip of Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula. Apparently natives found this area conducive for habitation as the astounding depressions beyond the beach, filled with curious cobble-like paving, are replete with archaeological artifacts. A team of archaeologists was arriving within the month to study the area, which will become the eastern extremity of the proposed Mealy Mountains National Park. Hopefully the proposed logging of the oldest boreal forest in the world north of the proposed park boundary will be aborted. How can anyone support the destruction of such a natural treasure?

A lengthy walk along the strand occupied me once we arrived on this sea grass fringed wonder in this predominantly rocky landscape. Fog shrouded Horse Chops Island in tendrils over the hilly tops and wisps of fog raced over the sand on the strand. Colus, mussel, and clamshells were strewn over the beach. Up on the rim of the embankment, dead, silver bleached spruce trees sculpted by the forces of nature stood naked and exposed. Bear scat, purplish in hue and filled with berry skins and pits, were plopped in numerous spots and trails of cub prints and caribou tracks were freshly imprinted in the sand. The sandy embankment gave way to dark brown sandstone, no longer sand but brittle to the touch, not quite yet stone. The beach had me spellbound but it was time to return to camp for another filling feast.

We enjoyed the warmth of a campfire and folkloric tales and stories of how life used to be, as loons swam close to shore. Pete has a vivid imagination and captivated me with her ghost yarns of the area.

In the dim light of a foggy morning, our group wandered through the intoxicating tundra landscape, pockmarked with sandy depressions and stone-filled basins. Had glacial retreat caused this unique landscape? We puzzled over our find and then paddled through the lifting fog to Sandy Point, the southern part of the Porcupine Strand. Here we explored

a small cemetery situated in a grassy meadow on the very tip of the peninsula. The graveyard was testimony to the Spanish flu epidemic brought on supply ships which had decimated the Labrador population in 1918, killing approximately one third of the entire population and devastating entire families. Headstones indicated that several family members had died within days of each other in the late autumn of 1918 here at North Campsite at Curlew Head River.

I wandered the western beach of the point and noticed very fresh bear prints once again. Our group paddled up the North River, banks enclosed by dense black spruce forests. The day had warmed up considerably, enticing Tom and me to loll in the water off a sandy shoal in our dry suits. How refreshing!

We set up camp on the summer house lawn of Bill and Joyce, along the north bank of the North River. A black bear ambled along the shore as we arrived. Fresh sea trout was caught and fried to complement our supper of fishermen's brewis; a hearty meal of salt fish, hard bread (soaked all day in water) and smashed potatoes, another traditional Labradorian meal. The evening was spent visiting Doris, a local woman who was very hospitable and taught me more about life in Labrador. Cell phones are nonexistent in this part of the world and I listened to Doris take a radio call, along with the rest of Labrador's coastal residents!

Following a flummy breakfast, filled with scraps of meat, which in years gone by would have been game meat like caribou or moose, we paddled under grey, somber skies which made the undulating Mealy Mountains look drab and dark. The cold convinced me to don neoprene gloves and a fleece headband, which quickly changed to my bright yellow homemade sou'wester hat as a deluge of rain was released from the sullen sky. The lengthy downpour was entrancing. Each drop of rain bounced like popcorn popping as it smacked the glassy smooth grey water in Sandwich Bay. Each drop sent a

small circle of concentric rings radiating from the droplet that appeared momentarily like a floating glass bead before it mixed with the salt water.

We circumnavigated Diver Island and returned to Cartwright where the outgoing tide pulled us to our take-out location. A garden of sea kelp pulsated in the water off Shermoks Point. At night, in the Barretts' shabin (cabinshack), I enjoyed George Barrett's resonating voice singing Labradorian tunes, as he played his classical guitar around the susurrus purring of the propane heater.

The second week of paddling took me eastward from Cartwright. A cold, brooding day awaited. My breath condensed as I exhaled. A damp mist permeated everything and the breeze had a cold bite to it, coming from the cold Labrador Current. I wore two or three layers of fleece to stay warm. Apparently it was abnormally cold while I visited

*In the dim light of a foggy morning, our group wandered through the intoxicating tundra landscape, pockmarked with sandy depressions and stone-filled basins. Had glacial retreat caused this unique landscape?*



Donna Griffin-Smith

Labrador. The benefit of such cold conditions was the almost complete absence of black flies and mosquitoes, which can be quite the nuisance when present in droves during July and August.

Pete, Tom and I paddled to Cartwright island, an eight hour paddle. At Venison Head, we stopped to refuel our bodies. Rounding Venison Head, marked by inuksuit, a seal surfaced a few metres in front of Pete's kayak. East of Curlew Head, two icebergs appeared in the distance, one resembling a cat with its front legs stretched out. A few puffins bobbed on the calm, placidly rolling ocean. A silver sheet of entrancing water undulated hypnotically. It was a euphoric paddle, far from land which was barren tundra. In Blackguard Bay our three kayaks, side by side, lifted and dropped on the swells like a child's slinky. A guillemot with frantic wing movements, a white circle on top of each wing and red feet pointed back, circled us numerous times.

We camped in a sheltered cove midway up the western shore of Cartwright Island. Ferried by long boat, a couple from Newfoundland, Kelly and Alec Feltham, joined our group. A wind buffeted my tent walls, set with an expansive view. Following supper, I ventured to the northern tip of the island where I found an enormous stone ruin. Was it Cartwright's house or was it pre-Cartwright as the lichen on the massive rocks would suggest? A raised beach was near the ruin, flat shingle stones encrusted fully by extensive, dark lichens. While walking, the cold wind reminded me of the harsh realities of this stark, unforgiving land. The silence and space around me were mind boggling. Solitude was easy to find.

The wind next day blew from the southeast and the waves were quite choppy once we were out of the lee of Cartwright Island. We stopped for dinner at Toomie Point

*We stopped for dinner at Toomie Point and here we became wind bound as the relentless wind increased in velocity. A mussel bake ensued and we found minuscule pearls in some of the mussels Alec and Tom had gathered. Rain came and went all day. After dinner, we walked up the hill and found what appeared to be a rock ruin in a circular shape, rocks covered thickly by lichen. Who knows what it was or who built it? The land contains so many silent,*

and here we became wind bound as the relentless wind increased in velocity. A mussel bake ensued and we found minuscule pearls in some of the mussels Alec and Tom had gathered. Rain came and went all day. After dinner, we walked up the hill and found what appeared to be a rock ruin in a circular shape, rocks covered thickly by lichen. Who knows what it was or who built it? The land contains so many silent, puzzling secrets.

A southeast wind continued to blow the next day, and vigorous paddling into choppy waves that sent the bow of my kayak plunging in the troughs got us across Curlew Harbour. With my sail raised on my paddle, I surged forward as waves and wind propelled my kayak. At this point, near the western tip of Curlew Head, a pod of four Atlantic orca whales surfaced, spouting large plumes of water and displaying enormous black, curved dorsal fins. They were about 150 metres off my port bow but it was nevertheless a powerful moment.

At Curlew Head we settled in Sam Holwell's summer house and stoked the wood stove to dry out our drenched gear and clothing. Colourful paddling paraphernalia festooned the panelled walls and soon the seaside window steamed up from the humidity. Wind bound again, Kelly, Alec and I went adventuring by foot. I had remarked that it would be exciting to make a great find. Remarkably, we did! After traversing tundra and descending and ascending a gorge, and climbing a gently sloped hill, we came across a circle of stones laid like tiles, again fully covered by lichen. Nearby, we chanced upon a community of building foundations in ruin and

covered in bunchberry vegetation, looking identical in nature to the unexcavated ruins at L'Anse Aux Meadows. Had we made an archaeological discovery? No locals had spoken of the site and it was not indicated on the maps produced by Helge Ingstad and Anne Stine Ingstad, renowned archaeologists credited with the L'Anse Aux Meadows Viking ruin discovery. Had the Vikings passed by here from the Wunderstrand to L'Anse Aux Meadows? Quite possibly!

Returning toward Cartwright, the wind at our backs, was now in our favour. What had taken us two days of tortuous paddling to attain, we regained upon our return in one hour! We paddled next to a patch of snow. Eider ducks with their fluffy ducklings often swam nearby. We sighted razorbills, murres, and black-backed gulls often. A lone minke whale silently surfaced and disappeared next to Pete's kayak in a fluid, fleeting moment.

East of Hare Island, Tom and I paddled to two "berg bits", small icebergs which were grounded. Thunderous

waves pounded and smashed the sculpted ice, perhaps thousands of years old. At times glimpses of sun peeked from the grey cloud cover, making the berg glow and sparkle an iridescent icy blue. It was magical. The berg was open in the middle, with a tall wall with fluted columns like an organ pipe. It had made its solitary trip from Greenland and now was disappearing back to the ocean. I enjoyed the diversion.

We camped on Hare Island, a heavily forested height of land. Black spruce with dangling tufts of black "dead man's beard" lichen dominated. While enjoying fish and brewis for supper, I once again saw a minke whale surface. We bushwhacked up the towering hill beyond our campsite, thrashing through tangles of black spruce and cushioned underfoot by mosses. Fog rolled in and I was content to return to the warm and inviting campfire.

On the final paddle to Cartwright, wind, waves and tide were all in our favour. Our kayaks surfed down the front faces of the waves. A harp seal peeked at us near Curlew Hill. My paddling adventure provided me with an opportunity to experience Labrador in a fulfilling way. My efforts were rewarded with profound and sublime landscapes. My contact with the people of Labrador endeared me to their way of life. The land of Labrador is compelling. It has awakened my heart and soul with its grandeur.



As a condition of participation in Great Lakes Sea Kayak Club activities a copy of the following Waiver of Liability form will need to be completed and kept on file at the site of all club functions. You may complete the waiver below and take it with you to club activities or fill the form out upon your arrival.

## Great Lakes Sea Kayak Club Waiver of Liability

### Assumption of Risk

I understand and accept that sea kayaking exposes me to hazards. Some of the dangers and risks which may be present or occur include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The hazards of traveling in a kayak in rough water conditions;
- Water hazards including waves, waterfalls, undercut rocks, rapids, surf, rocks, boulders, trees and other obstacles;
- The forces of nature including storm conditions, high winds, lightening and extremes of heat and cold;
- Man made hazards including piers, pilings, breakwaters, wrecks and other debris;
- The hazards of other watercraft ranging from other kayaks to commercial freighters;
- Swimming/floating in unfamiliar and sometimes turbulent and cold water;
- Using paddles, towlines, ropes and other paddling equipment;
- The physical exertion of paddling and swimming and carrying kayaks and equipment on land; hiking or walking in rugged terrain including slippery rocks;
- Exposure to cold water including hypothermia;
- Injuries inflicted by animals, insects, reptiles or plants;
- Accidents or illness in remote places without medical facilities;
- Travel in a vehicle not driven by me.

I choose to participate in this paddling activity in spite of these named risks and unnamed risks which are inherent to this activity. I am solely responsible for deciding to participate in this paddling activity, for deciding to participate or continue on this kayaking trip, and for participating in any rescue or recovery of equipment. I assume these risks and understand my responsibility in decision making.

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I have read the assumption of risk statement and fully understand there are certain elements of danger inherent in sea kayaking which are beyond the control of the guides, instructors, officers, group leaders and members of the Great Lakes Sea Kayak Club (hereafter referred to as GLSKC). I understand that participating in a sea kayaking trip, lesson or activity entails unavoidable risk of loss of life, personal injury and loss of or damage to property.

In consideration of GLSKC furnishing the opportunity to enable me to participate in a sea kayaking trip, lesson or activity I hereby assume all risk of injury or loss of life to myself and loss of or damage to property arising from participation in such activity, including hazards associated with any defect in a manufacturer's product. I specifically release the GLSKC officers, group leaders and members from any and all liability, including negligence (active or passive) as to any right of action or claim for relief that may accrue either to me or to my heirs or personal representatives for any such injury, loss of life or loss of or damage to property which I may suffer while participating in such recreational activity including activities preliminary to or subsequent thereto.

I further hold GLSKC officers, group leaders and members harmless for any and all liability, actions, causes of actions, debt claims and demands of every type and nature whatsoever which I now have or which may arise from or in connection with my trip, course or participation in any other activity related thereto.

I further understand that GLSKC officers, group leaders and members carry no insurance for protection of participants in outdoor recreation activities, and any insurance coverage existing with respect to GLSKC officers, group leaders and members shall not alter the terms of this waiver nor impose any liability on GLSKC officers, group leaders and members.

## Great Lakes Sea Kayak Club Waiver of Liability

### Assumption of Risk

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT AND FULLY UNDERSTOOD ITS CONTENTS. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian's signature (if under 18)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
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