

**HIGH ADVENTURE CANOE TRIP  
NORTH COUNTRY CANOE OUTFITTERS**

**TROOP 636**

**JULY 19 – JULY 27, 2003**

**CARPE DIEM**

**“SEIZE THE DAY”**

**THE CREW**

**Mr. Joseph Fariello - The Old Man  
Mr. Scott Malinconico - Mom  
SPL Brian Malinconico - Bait Retrieval Boy  
Michael Fariello – Bite Me  
ASPL Alex Carver - Goofy  
ASPL Keith Dalick - Fire Marshall Bill  
Keith Rebarber - Knuckles  
Michael O'brien - Oh Bee One**

**This journal is a history of our canoe trip through the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in Minnesota and Quetico Provincial Park in Canada. The crew of eight earned their nicknames during the course of the journey. All of the events are true – some recorded as they happened and some from memory.**

## Why High Adventure?

A High Adventure program is the culmination of all the things that Scouting should have taught a boy: character development, citizenship, personal fitness, leadership and outdoor skills. It is the ultimate in outdoor experiences; beyond the exciting, but lower keyed summer camp programs.

Every program, whether Scouting or elsewhere, has a goal. It is the thing to strive for, the prized for a job well done. In the outdoor portion of Scouting, that goal is the privilege of taking a high adventure trip. It gives the boy the opportunity to put into real-life practice all of the camping, cooking, first aid and outdoor skills. It is the reason for the "patrol method: function as a team, or flounder separately." The monthly, weekend camp outs get stale after a few years. Older boys need more from the Scouting program than newer boys do. High Adventure can help fill that need.

## Why Minnesota and Canada?

Carved by glaciers at the dawn of recorded time, the canoe country is a wilderness of lakes and forests stretching for 150 miles in northeast Minnesota along the Canadian Border, between Lake Superior and Voyageurs National Park. These waters, first paddled by the Sioux and Ojibway Indians, were later explored by Europeans like Grosseolers and de Noyon. In the summer of 1660 Pierre Radison wrote "out there we were kings, the richest men in the world!" Portages between the lakes used by the French trappers and voyageurs of the Hudson's Bay Company remain unchanged.

The lakes and rivers in this wilderness area show endless variety. Some lakes are over 20 miles long and 250 feet deep. Others have turned into shallow marsh ponds. Cliffs rise 200 feet over some waters; white sand beaches border a few. Rocky islands and peninsulas are common landmarks for paddlers. Waterfalls and rapids roar as water passes from one lake to the next. To bypass these hazards, a paddler trades places with the canoe: now you must carry it rather than it carrying you. After traversing the portage (French for "the carrying place"), you will again paddle the waterways which would eventually lead you to Hudson's Bay.

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and Quetico Provincial Park are both preserved in natural state without roads, shelters, electricity, telephones, trash cans, or other amenities offers in most camping areas. As part of the National Wilderness Systems, the BWCAW is the only lakeland wilderness area in the United States.

How the lakes got their names.

Some lakes retain their original Indian names or are known by a French or English translation of the original native names. Plant and animal names may refer to food sources for native people. Lake names sometimes describe a natural feature, as if the lake had named itself. Many lakes are named for the men who traveled or worked there or the woman they loved. Several area lakes had their names changed as recently as the 1960's. For others, the origin of their names is shrouded in mystery.

Many area lakes have had several name changes. Lake names were systematically changed when lakes with the same names existed in neighboring counties. A few off-the-beaten-track lakes remain unnamed. They are often referred to as "that little pothole lake" next to a named lake. People who visit such lakes have their own names for them. Perhaps the names will stick and become official someday. For now, though, you can enjoy something of the sense of wilderness that the original travelers experienced going to a lake with no name.

For instance, Knife Lake is the English translation of the Ojibway "mokoman sagaigon". A blue-black, siliceous rock nearly as hard as flint was quarried here by native people for sharp tools. The rock, which is found in beds or ridges, fractures in a way that makes a very sharp edge.

In Quetico Provincial Park, many lakes are named for the early rangers who patrolled the park. These are legendary figures, traveling hard through the rugged country in the middle of the park, summer and winter, to discourage the poaching that was reducing the moose population to feed lumberjacks and miners. It would be easy to imagine that the large, picturesque lakes with woman's names – Agnes, Sarah, Isabella, Louisa – would have a history of their namesakes recorded poetically by an old time logger or woodsman. But the man who loved these women appeared to have stopped their romantic writings with naming the lakes. Who these women were and who they loved remains a mystery.

## VOYAGEUR HISTORY OF THE CANOE BORDER COUNTRY

The route between Grand Portage on Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement (now Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada) was one of the most important routes of the early fur trade. There were two rival companies in the early days, the Hudson's Bay Company (British) and the North West Company (French). They later merged into the present day Hudson Bay Company. The post at Grand Portage was originally built by the North West Company in 1756 and thus started the trading in the area.

The portages used by these early Voyageurs and their Indian guides are the same that were used by our crew. The Voyageur who trod those portages was usually of French origin and small in stature (being tall meant the long legs used up too much valuable storage space in the canoe). He was strong and enjoyed his life as a wilderness traveler. His life style was much like that of the people he traded with. He wore skin clothing (until cloth was available) and most of all, he sported a bright colored sash and usually an equally bright cap or chapeau. His possessions were few and consisted usually of a knife, small hatchet, a pipe and gaily decorated tobacco pouch. These items and his religious mementos made up his personal belongings. When a Voyageur signed up for a trip, he was given the comfort items necessary for the voyage: boots, blankets, a tin cup, etc. Most of the Voyageurs stayed the winter in the north country or the Pays en Haut and were called Hibernauts meaning "Winterers." This was a name given them in a ceremony at the height of land. The height of land is the continental divide between the waters flowing to the Atlantic Ocean through the Great Lakes to the east and Hudson's Bay to the north. This point is located on the Grand Portage route. At this ceremony, they were sprinkled with water from a cedar bough and then took this oath: "I swear to never kiss another Voyageur's wife without asking her permission."

The Voyageur's day was long, usually 16 hours of paddling. His food was meager; dry corn, pea soup, dried fish and salt pork made up the bulk of his diet. The life of a Voyageur was hard but gave him a sense of being, and a reward that meant a life of true High Adventure.

The Voyageur brought trade items from all over Europe to the natives of North America. They traded these items for the pelts of the beavers, common to the north. The beaver, lynx, marten, muskrat, bear, rabbit, fox and wolf were some of the most popular pelts. Farther west, the buffalo, caribou and elk were important. These furs were collected, pressed into 90 pound bundles and shipped to Europe for sale.

The trade goods were just as varied as the pelts: iron goods including knives, axes, ice chisels were some of the most important but also guns, ammunition, beads, mirrors, blankets, cloth, pots and pans and various wines and liquors were also important.

The Voyageur and fur trade opened much of North America and changed the life style of its native inhabitants. Traveling along the border you will relive some of the earliest history of North America. You will follow in the footsteps of such famous men as La Verendrye, David Thompson, Alexander MacKenzie, Peter Pond and many others. A canoe trip in the border country is a true High Adventure experience!

### **THE FAR NORTHLAND**

It's the far Northland that's callin' me away,  
As take I with my packsack to the road;

From Lake Agnes, by Louisa, to Kawnipi I will go,  
Where you see the loon and hear his plaintive wail;  
If you're thinkin' in your heart there's a swagger in my step,  
Then you've never been along the Border Trail.

It's the flash of paddle blades a gleamin' in the sun,  
Of canoes softly skimming by the shore.  
It's the tang of pine and bracken comin' on the breeze,  
That calls me to the waterways once more.

From Lake Agnes, by Louisa, to Kawnipi I will go,  
Where you see the loon and hear his plaintive wail;  
If you're thinkin' in your heart there's a swagger in my step,  
Then you've never been along the Border Trail.

Day One July 19, 2003

Everyone supposed to meet at 4:45 AM at Fort Lauderdale Airport Terminal Three. Everyone on time except Keith R who arrives late.

Air Tran was our carrier. Smooth check-in. Mr. Malinconico had checked-in the entire crew, on-line. We already had our boarding passes.

All checked luggage was run through x-ray. But wait. Danger, Will Robinson, Danger!!!!!!

Matches detected in Mr. Fariello's checked luggage. Screener determined that they were "strike anywhere" matches, which are not permitted. The matches, which were not "strike anywhere" matches, were removed from the suitcase. Mr. Malinconico had same matches in his bag and they made it through screening. Whatever!!!!!!!!!!

Keith R cut himself shaving on plane. Investigation revealed that he was just using a dry razor on his face. Not good, not good at all. Can you see how he might be earning his nickname? Trying real hard not to make this journal all about Keith R. On time arrival in Atlanta and changed planes. Arrived Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport (MSP) at 10:20 AM, Central Standard Time. Mr. Malinconico rented our two vans while everyone else retrieved their luggage.

11:10 AM – Depart MSP. Five hour drive to Ely, MN. Nice drive through the Minnesota countryside. Passed the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame. Boys tired and most slept en route. Stopped for lunch at McDonald's.

3:45 PM – Arrived North Country Canoe Outfitters (NCCO). Registered and set-up bunkhouse. One room with two beds (adults) and one room with six beds (boys). Received briefing, menu and description of gear from NCCO personnel.

Went to downtown Ely (two traffic lights) and had dinner at Cranberries. Tried to get into the Ely Steakhouse, but too long of a wait. Cranberries was good – The Last Supper. A few other troops were there also having dinner.

Returned to NCCO. Went over proposed route with owner, John Schiefelbein. The route that we had designed was very similar to the route outlined by John. What a co-wink-e-dink. Saw first wildlife – red tailed squirrel.

Everyone re-packed their bags and left behind what they did not need. Boys played cards and adults relaxed, went over the route again and read their books. When the troop made a similar high adventure trip in the summer of 2001, the BSA Northern Tier was the outfitter. They furnish an interpreter, i.e., a guide who is trained on navigating the many lakes. We would not have a guide on the trip this year. We were on our own, voyageurs venturing at our own pace. So, in preparation, we went over the route and maps many times.

Conversation while boys were playing cards:

Keith R – “I can hold my breath for five minutes.”

Michael F – “No you can’t. You can hold it for 16 seconds.

Mr. F – “That’s about five minutes.”

Michael O – “Yeah, give or take five minutes.”

10:00 PM – Lights out.

Day Two – July 20, 2003

Sunrise 5:29 AM (Although it was already light out at 5:00AM)

Went over proposed route again.

7:00 AM – Boys up, ready to go. Breakfast furnished by NCCO – hot oatmeal, coffee, juice, fruit and hot chocolate. Packed all gear into NCCO van for drive to put in point. NCCO is on White Iron Lake, but our BWCAW permit was to put-in on Moose Lake. A limited number of permits are issued per day at each put-in point.

8:20 AM – Put in at Moose Lake. Public boat/canoe ramp approximately 100 yards from BSA Northern Tier. Carry all gear down to waterfront – personnel gear, cook gear, food and canoes.

N 47° 59.342'

W 091° 29.894'

Mr. F carried a Garmin Hand-Held GPS unit that would be used to record portages, campsites and other significant areas. Everyone had at least one waterproof camera to record the images from the trip.

Moose Lake is tree-lined and very wide in spots. It is one of the larger lakes on the U.S. side and one of the few that allows boats with small outboard engines. The majority of these small boats are used to transport people and canoes to Prairie Portage, the main entry point into Canada. The small boats are equipped with canoe racks to haul the canoes. Some small boats belong to local fishing lodges.

Canoe Teams: Brian/Michael O  
 Michael F/Alex  
 Keith/Keith  
 Mr. F/Mr. M

9:20 AM – Newfound Lake and then into Sucker Lake  
 Narrow lakes that still had quite a bit of boat traffic. Now mind you, a lot of boat traffic in these parts is about nine or ten boats that are used as shuttles between a Moose Lake put-in and Prairie Portage.

10:20 AM – First Portage of the trip. 5 Rods into Birch Lake

N 48° 02.820'

W 091° 24.590'

We had 15 items to carry among eight people – 4 canoes and 9 gear/food bags. Plus paddles and fishing poles. Eight people need to move 15 items across a portage. How? How indeed?

Very short portage. Double portage, i.e., everything could not be carried at once. The crew carried gear to end of portage and then returned for more gear. Single portages would be difficult since NCCO sends you out with more gear than the BSA Northern Tier. No problem – we have nothing but time.

**por·tage**

Pronunciation: 'pOr-tij, 'por-, 3 is also por-'täzh

Function: *noun*

Etymology: Middle English, from Middle French, from *porter* to carry

Date: 15th century

**1** : the labor of carrying or transporting

**2** *archaic* : the cost of carrying : **PORTERAGE**

**3 a** : the carrying of boats or goods overland from one body of water to another or around an obstacle (as a rapids) **b** : the route followed in making such a transfer

**por·tage**

Pronunciation: 'pOr-tij, 'por-; por-'täzh

Function: *verb*

Inflected Form(s): **por·taged; por·tag·ing**

Date: 1836

*transitive senses* : to carry over a portage

*intransitive senses* : to move gear over a portage

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Portaging was one of the rewarding experiences of the trip. Each canoe weighed 62 pounds; some of the packs weighed about 40 pounds and some were a bit lighter. The crew learned how to most effectively portage all the gear, i.e., carry the gear from one lake to the next. Portages are basically trails that connect the hundreds of lakes in the area. The trails vary from easy walks through the woods to difficult maneuvers over hill and dale.

We are generally headed in a northeast direction.

Numerous campsites along Birch Lake.

11:40 AM - Checked one campsite, not so good.

N 48° 03.925'

W 091° 21.836'

Checked another campsite, very good. The site was on a bit of an incline, but was directly on the water.

N 48° 04.000'

W 091° 21.585'

12:00 PM – Set up camp

N 48° 04.000'

W 091° 21.585'

8.16 miles covered, as the crow flies. In other words, if you were to go straight from the Moose Lake put-in to the campsite, 8.16 miles would be covered. On the water, because of twists, turns and the portage, 9 miles were paddled.

Lunch – Brian and Michael O served, assisted by Mr. M. Peanut Butter and Jelly on bread with lemon drink. Not enough jelly for two sandwiches. Only PB for second sandwich.

Everyone in dry clothes.

Mr. F and Mr. M fishing from canoe. Keith D, Brian and Michael O also fishing from canoe. Michael F was fishing from shore. Keith R swimming and Alex napping. Good call Alex !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Uno Game – Camp rules – he who is in camp, makes the rules.

Keith D builds camp fire. While foraging for wood, Keith D finds a rather nice hatchet. Excellent and very useful. Came in very handy.

Dinner – 8 ounce Angus steak with hash browns cooked over an open fire. Delicious. Chocolate pudding for dessert. All prepared by Brian and Michael O assisted by Mr. M.

Keith and Keith had clean up duty.

Keep wet stuff wet and dry stuff dry. Light sprinkle of rain so everybody puts their wet stuff back on and secures their dry clothes and shoes inside tents. You do not want to have two sets of wet clothes. Not much rain and it passed quickly.

7:40 PM – Keith D pulls a Keith R and burns a hole in his sock on campfire, while attempting to dry the sock. Builds campfire, finds hatchet, burns hole in sock. Fine, your nickname is Fire Marshall Bill.

Bugs not bad – great campfire prepared by Keith D.

Bear bags set up by all. The food had to be elevated and suspended between two or three trees. At this point, we had three food bags. A small diameter line is attached to a rock and deftly heaved over a tree branch that is at least 12' feet off the ground. This small diameter line is then tied to 50' of a heavier line, which is then attached to the food bags. The bitter end is then used to pull the food bags up off the ground. This line is tied off to a tree, to keep it secure. This method alone will keep the food raised off the ground, but still close to a tree, which can be easily climbed by a bear. So, before lifting, another 50' of line is secured to the food bags. This line is then pulled in the opposite direction and now the food is not only elevated, but away from all trees. All food and toothpaste is secured in the bear bags – none in tents.

Sunset 8:58 PM

9:30 PM – lights out and everyone in tents.

Mr. F improved his anti-Mr. M snoring device by bringing along his own tent. Nothing personal Scott, but dude, you sure can snore. So, Mr. M had his own tent furnished by NCCO and Mr. F had his own tent furnished by his private stock. Boys had two tents – Brian/Alex/Keith D in one; Michael F/Michael O/Keith R in the other. Nice digs.

Our route dictated that this campsite be our home for two nights.

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So many lakes, so much water, but could we drink it.

The water in the boundary waters is some of the cleanest in North America. However, you should not drink the water without first treating the water. Especially, since the water may contain the *giardia* cyst. The cyst attacks the intestines and can make one's life miserable.

The crew would always treat their drinking, cooking and cleaning water. How? Two ways.

We carried six small bottles of iodine tablets. Each bottle contained 25 tablets and two tablets would treat one gallon of water. Water from the lakes would be obtained in the various pots and treated with the tablets. After one hour, the water could be used safely.

The second method was through the use of Polar Pure. Polar Pure water purification comes in a glass bottle. In the bottom are iodine crystals that continuously saturate the water in the bottle. For normal water you put two capfuls of iodine solution per liter of water. You can easily make two or three liters of water at a time. Then you fill the Polar Pure up with water again, and the iodine crystals in the bottom saturate the new water with iodine.

Over time, the iodine crystals eventually are used up. But one bottle of Polar Pure will make about 2,000 quarts of water. A small plastic trap in the Polar Pure bottle prevents the crystals from fall out when you pour the iodine solution into the cap. The crew carried two bottles of Polar Pure.

There is even a small thermometer on the side of the bottle to tell you have many capfuls of iodine to put in. The reason for this is that the warmer the water temperature, the more concentrated the iodine solution in the Polar Pure Bottle. The cooler the water, the less the concentration. It's basic chemistry.

Polar Pure was the preferred method of water treatment, especially when we were underway.

Day Three – July 21, 2003

Sunrise 5:30 AM

Scott M up early. Boys up at 7:30 AM.

Breakfast – Scrambled eggs, made with real eggs, bacon, coffee, Tang and hot chocolate. Brian and Michael O were cooks.

8:00 AM – Michael O – “Where can I find a plate to put the bacon on?” Hey look, I already have one in my hand. Michael O, with wise words of wisdom he says always. Okay, your nickname is Oh Bee One.

9:00 AM – depart camp. Journey to Thunder Point on Knife Lake. Since we were going to camp again at the same site on Birch Lake, most gear remained at camp. Only gear in canoes were lunch items and fishing gear. We took three canoes and kept one back at camp. Duffer in two canoes. A duffer sits in the middle of the canoe and sits on his, well, duff. Brian, Michael F and Michael O in one canoe; Alex, Keith and Keith in the other.

Had 40 Rod Portage from Birch Lake to Carp Lake and a 25 Rod Portage from Carp Lake to Melon Lake. A series of small and rather peaceful lakes with no other canoes in site. Small deer observed as we approached 40 Rod Birch Lake portage. The deer was not easily spooked. Beautiful.

9:51 AM – 15 Rod Portage from Melon Lake into Seed Lake.

N 48° 04.172'

W 091° 19.928'

Winds were increasing, but no much of a problem on small lakes.

Had 15 Rod Portage from Seed Lake into Portage Lake.

10:25 AM – 15 Rod Portage from Portage Lake into Knife Lake.

N 48° 04.406'

W 091° 18.924'

Traveling along U.S./Canadian border. Winds increasing from northeast, directly on bow of canoe. Slow paddling - about one mile per hour.

11:40 AM - Lunch on Knife Lake. Small island on U.S. side, east of Robins Island.

N 48° 04.672'

W 091° 15.941'

Cheese sandwich. Alex and Michael F were cooks. Cook a cheese sandwich?  
One slice of cheese per sandwich. Yummy!!!!!!!

Boys kept busy throwing rocks into the water. Not just small rocks, but huge rocks that they would throw onto the cliffside and watch as the big rock disintegrated into many smaller rocks. Why? Why not!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Found metal stake in ground labeled "U.S."

Due to heavy winds, crew decided not to proceed to Thunder Point. Would have taken two more hours to get there. Not worth the effort. That's one of the good things about having a great crew. Plan had to be changed, but no big deal. Need to be flexible. Headed back to camp.

Walked/rode canoes through rapids at Melon Lake – Seed Lake Portage, instead of carrying. Lots of fun. Easy to do, since we had minimal amount of gear. Basically you walk or swim next to the canoe as you go through small rapids. Boys had fun. Oh yeah, so did the adults. No problem walking through the rapids until you found those spots where the rocks were just a little bit deeper and wham, you're over your head. At end of portage, Keith R swam to Canada. How? The portage was on the border, so he was able to swim about 20 feet to land on the Canadian side.

3:00 PM – Arrived back at camp. Bath day. Everyone in the water with soap and/or shampoo. Someone's soap floated away (any idea who's soap). Mr. F recovered. The crew was now nice and clean.

8 miles paddled today.

Michael F – falls off log, trying to do lumberjack roll (I guess). Everyone has a good laugh. Oh, bite me. Which, incidentally was written on the hat that Michael wore for the entire trip. All rightly then – your nickname is "Bite Me".

5:30 PM – Dinner Bratwurst, mashed potatoes, green beans, peanut pie. Brats were outstanding, cooked on an open fire. Alex had Bratwurst and jelly. Bratwurst and jelly? That's a bit goofy.

Keith R pulled a move we all pulled as kids when we did not want to eat our green vegetables. Remember? We would either hide them under the rim of the dinner plate, under the napkin or feed the dog. Well, Keith said he was eating his beans, when upon Mr. F's closer inspection; he was hiding the beans on the ground, under a log. Oh yeah, then he spewed the beans and potatoes that he did eat. Why? No reason. Keith R, it is now official. Your nickname is "Knuckles".

After dinner, Brian and Mr. F went fishing in canoe. Score was Brian 4, Mr. F 3.5. That's right, 3.5. One fish didn't quite make it into the canoe, so it wasn't "landed". Of course Brian caught one that was smaller than the lure, but that's okay, a fish, is a fish, is a fish.

Rest of crew was rock throwing and skipping rocks. Someone had 11 skips and someone else had 13 skips.

Alex broke Mr. M's fishing pole while fishing from camp. (Can you see how Alex earned his nickname? See Bratwurst and jelly). Also, Alex wore a "Goofy" hat during the trip. Let's make it official. Alex, your nickname is "Goofy".

8:57 PM – Sunset

9:00 PM – Bear Bags secured.

9:30 PM – Everyone in tents.

Teams were assigned for meals, clean-up and water. Two person assignments were for three meals – lunch, dinner and breakfast. You and your partner cooked, cleaned or obtained water for the three meals. Crew had four, two-person teams, so one team actually had no duties.

Day Four – July 22, 2003

Sunrise 5:31 AM

The first two days of our journey were spent in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), which lies on the United States side of the U.S./Canadian border. A permit is required to enter Quetico Provincial Park, which lies on the Canadian side of the border. Only so many permits are issued per day. You must call five months in advance to reserve an entry permit. All the outfitters and private parties burn up the telephone lines at the five month mark in an attempt to get a permit. Our outfitter was unable to get a permit for the first two days of our trip, but was able to secure a Quetico entry permit for today. As fortune would have it, this worked out very well.

What is the difference between the BWCAW and Quetico? Both have designated campsites. In the BWCAW, you must camp at designated campsites, which have a fire grate and latrine. In Quetico, there are designated campsites, but it is not mandatory that you use them. You can camp anywhere that is suitable. There are no fire grates or latrines, although many campsites do have established campfire rings. Portages in the BWCAW are generally shorter and easier. Many of them are maintained by youth organizations. Portages in Quetico tend to be more rugged and they are not maintained. The farther you canoe into Quetico, the more remote it gets.

So, today was the day we would make entry into Canada or as the boys called it Canadia – after all the natives are called Canadians. Early rise and shine.

6:00 AM – Up an at 'em. Hot oatmeal and bread for breakfast. Coffee and Tang. Food was re-packed to put all breakfast items in same bag, etc, etc. One bag eliminated by re-packing. One less item to carry.

7:00 AM – En route Prairie Portage.

8:15 AM – Arrive Prairie Portage

N 48° 03.082'

W 091° 26.166'

Prairie Portage is one of the entry points used to access Quetico. It is not the only entry point, but certainly the closest entry point for crews going out of Ely, MN and certainly those starting on Moose Lake.

At one time, a Canadian Customs Officer would be on hand to inspect all arrivals. However, that is no longer the case. Before the trip, Mr. F and Mr. M both obtained a Remote Area Border Crossing Permit or CANPASS. This is the method that Canada uses to gain entry into the country at remote areas. A permit application is completed and mailed along with copies of two forms of identification to a Canadian Immigration Station.

Siblings of applicants are included on this application. The Canadian authorities then process the application, along with \$30.00, and return a permit via the mail. All others on the trip are included in a youth manifest. 48 hours prior to the trip, the CANPASS and Youth Manifest are faxed to a Canadian Immigration Station. The crew is then required to carry the CANPASS and copies of everyone's identification. Canadian law enforcement officers and rangers may ask the crew at any time for this paperwork.

At Prairie Portage, there is a ranger assigned. All crews must see the ranger before they proceed into Quetico.

Mr. F hustled through the 20 rod portage with one gear bag and then got on line to see the ranger. The rest of the crew portaged everything else. We were third in line to see the ranger, who opened for business at 8:30 AM.

Once we got to see the ranger, we paid our per night per person camping fees and Mr. M and Mr. F both obtained Canadian fishing licenses. The boys could fish under the adults fishing license. By the way, Mr. F and Mr. M both had obtained Minnesota Fishing Licenses, on-line, prior to the trip. No problems with the ranger, nice and smooth.

Canoe assignments today were Mr. F and Mr. M; Keith D and Michael O; Michael F and Keith R; Brian and Alex. Boys changed their canoe assignments every day. Mr. F and Mr. M canoed together and would alternate who drove.

9:30 AM – Depart Prairie Portage

Canoe through Inlet Bay and Bayley Bay, both of which are part of Basswood Lake, a huge lake on the Canadian side. Inlet Bay is rather small, protected bay; Bayley Bay is wide open with little protection, especially from the west. No problem this day, since the winds and seas were calm.

10:25 AM – 84 Rod Portage from Bayley Bay into Burke Lake.

Portage was located at a nice, clean, sandy beach. While the portage was very rocky, there no hills. Basically a walk in the park – of course with a canoe and/or pack on your shoulders.

Bayley Bay side of portage

N 48° 05.464'

W 091° 28.233'

10:55 AM – Burke Lake

Burke Lake side of portage

N 48° 05.696'

W 091° 28.260'

Saw a beaver swimming along.

11:10 AM – Lunch on island just inside of Burke Lake.

N 48° 06.036'

W 091° 27.841'

Summer sausage and bread. Keith D and Keith R prepared lunch. Told Mr. M to stop helping. The boys can do it, Mom. Okay Mr. M, your nickname is Mom. Keith R, as predicted, hated the summer sausage. Everyone else in crew cherished the moment when Keith R went ballistic and morphed into some pretty strange faces after tasting the summer sausage. We made the mistake of reading the ingredients. Surprisingly enough, there is some meat contained in the sausage, but also, a whole bunch of chemicals/preservatives.

12:18 PM – Singing Brook Portage - 5 Rods into Sunday Lake.

N 48° 06.504'

W 091° 26.731'

Excellent teamwork by the crew. They observed that it was a very short portage, so they kept all the gear in the canoe's and used a four man carry to transport each canoe over the portage. Well done, young men. Working as team.

1:15 PM – “B” Portage

N 48° 07.137'

W 091° 23.763'

We are paddling towards Agnes Lake and must negotiate the “B” and “B” Portages. Our outfitter gave us a heads up and warning as to why they have the “B” and “B” names – you figure it out.

The first of the B's brought us into Meadows Lake. 196 rods (0.6 miles) of pure portaging hell. Rocky, hilly, muddy, narrow, rocky, hilly, muddy and narrow. And then there were these rocks and hills and mud pits. Not small rocks, but big, imbedded-into-the-ground rocks.

Boys came up with a plan. Everyone would carry what they could as far as they could and then put it down. Turn around and go back, pick-up something else and carry that as far as they could. The plan worked fairly well and the goal was met. It took about one hour to move everything from one end of the portage to the other. Some carried the canoe the entire way, like The Old Man, Mr. F (Okay, I think we have one more nickname to go.) You're on a mission and you want to complete that mission. So you push and you reach your goal.

This was a portage where you felt very good about your abilities. Rewarding experience. Longest and hardest portage of the trip. One “B” portage down and one to go.

2:30 PM – Depart Meadows Lake side of portage.

N 48° 07.053'

W 091° 23.130'

3:00 PM – Established camp on island on Meadows Lake. Meadows Lake is a relatively small lake that contained an island. Very picturesque. What an extraordinarily beautiful campsite. Absolutely picture perfect, something you might see on a postcard. High off the lake with a wonderful view of the water and surrounding, tree-lined and cliff-lined area. From the water, the campsite looked very rocky. However, once on top, there was a 30' by 40' grassy hollow surrounded by moss-covered trees. This clearing that was absolutely perfect for the tents.

N 48° 06.477'

W 091° 23.226'

11.5 miles paddles today.

Boys swimming and having fun. Mr. M and Mr. F taking baths. Michael F and Mr. F then went fishing from canoe. Michael F - 2, Mr. F - 1.

Meadows Lake had some low-lying areas, but also had some high cliffs along the shoreline.

Every day we would have a snack in the afternoon, usually once we set-up camp. The snack consisted of cookies that had to be rationed so they would last the entire week. Today, everyone was allowed two crème filled cookies each. Plus we had two cookies left over. Two crew members did not want any more cookie, so we had to split two cookies, six ways. How do you divide two crème filled, Oreo-type cookies, six ways?

Be prepared. Mr. F takes out his Buck knife; twists the top off the cookie and gives that to one person; scrapes the filling off with the Buck knife and gives that to another person; takes the bottom of the cookie and gives that to the third person; repeats the process with the second cookie. Problem solved.

Dinner tonight was spaghetti, beans, corn, bread and strawberry cheese cake. The cake was delicious. The corn we would see again later. Keith D and Keith R prepared the meal.

Speaking of seeing the corn again later, here's how you go to the bathroom in Quetico. First you take the toilet kit, which consists of a trowel and roll of toilet paper; you walk deep into the woods and find a nice secluded, peaceful spot; you dig a hole at least 6" deep; you squat over the hole; you take care of business; you spend a few quality moments by yourself, thinking about life and the beauty of the surrounding wilderness; you think about how nice it would be to have a magazine or newspaper to read; you cover the hole; you return the kit for next person to use; you wash your hands.

Keith D gets a great, roaring fire going, as usual. The fire ring looked like a blacksmith's forge. Mr. F pulls a Keith D and leaves his wet sock near the fire a little too long. Burned hole in heel.

Sunset – 8:56 PM

Day Five – July 23, 2003

Sunrise 5:32 AM

Pancakes, bacon, coffee and tang for breakfast. Keith R and Keith D were the cooks.

Mr. M would maintain the inventory of the food items and whenever he could, he would eliminate more food bags. This certainly lightened the load.

9:00 AM – Depart camp en route to second “B” portage.

Canoe Teams:	Keith D/Alex
	Michael/Michael
	Brian/Keith R
	Mr. F/Mr. M

140 rod (0.4 mile) portage from Meadows Lake into Agnes Lake

N 48° 07.025'

W 091° 22.944'

This portage was a tough, but not as bad as the 196 rod yesterday. Still, it is understandable why it is a “B” portage.

When we approached a portage, there were times that there were other crews present, getting ready to move their gear. The boys remarked how many of these crews knew exactly what to do when they reached the portage – who carried the canoe, who slung a pack on their back, who transported the miscellaneous gear. When we reached a portage, we were a bit disorganized. Crew members were not sure what to take. Some boys (and sometimes the adults) had a tough time getting the canoes up on the shoulders. So, they came up with a plan. When we hit a portage, Brian, Alex, Mr. M and Mr. F would carry the canoes. The rest of the crew would carry the packs and miscellaneous gear. Once you reached the end of the portage, return to the beginning and get something else. Some boys were able to carry two packs at once – one on their back and one on their chest. Michael F especially liked this method, because one pack balanced the other and you were able to walk upright. Some had to “double” portage, while others just made one trip.

The boys had tried this plan on an earlier portage, but they failed to provide specific assignments. This time, everyone knew what they were going to do before they ever reached the portage. This really brought the crew together as a team. Well done young men, well done.

Now, when we reached a portage, everyone knew what had to be done. At times, Mr. F had trouble lifting the canoe, but never a problem carrying. So, he would have one of the boys lift the bow of the canoe, while he got under and rested the portage thwart on his shoulders. This system worked well.

Agnes Lake side of portage

N 48° 07.267'

W 091° 22.711'

10:15 AM – Louisa Falls

N 48° 07.340'

W 091° 21.962'

What fantastic sight. Louisa Falls drops about 60-70 feet in three cascades. The middle cascade ends in a pool accessible from an adjacent, nearly vertical portage trail. The pool formed at the middle is about four feet deep, 20 feet in diameter and blocked by a natural rock wall so it truly forms a small swimming pool. There are thousands of gallons of water pouring into this pool. Surprisingly the water is warm coming down from Lake Louisa and feels great. Most of us find a spot in the rocks where we can lean back into the waterfall and get pounded: a wonderful massage on sore shoulder and back muscles! Many group photos were taken. We then walked up to the top; we discovered that a small pond feeds the waterfall – amazing. Then we went back down and spent some more time in the pool. Brian and Mr. F had tried to reach this point two years ago. However, we did not have the right maps with our crew, so we could not get there. Today, we did. Totally, enjoyable.

11:15 AM – Depart Louisa Falls

11:50 AM – Lunch on Agnes Lake

N 48° 10.537'

W 091° 21.658'

Peanut butter and jelly on burrito shell. Mr. M and Mr. F prepared.  
Brian pulls a Michael F and slips off log (another lumberjack roll?). He's a lumber jack and he's okay.....

Bald eagle soaring high above the lake. What a beautiful and majestic sight.

*I am the eagle, I live in high country  
In rocky cathedrals that reach to the sky  
I am the hawk and there's blood on my feathers  
But time is still turning they soon will be dry  
And all of those who see me, all who believe in me  
Share in the freedom I feel when I fly*

*Come dance with the west wind and touch on the mountain tops  
Sail oer the canyons and up to the stars  
And reach for the heavens and hope for the future  
And all that we can be and not what we are*

Agnes Lake was a very long lake that stretched for miles and miles. The topography of this lake varied from low tree-lined areas, to rocky shore lines, to high cliffs. At certain points, the lake was narrow, but it then widened and then narrowed again. Very interesting and beautiful lake. One route had us returning through East Lake, Jeff Lake and West Lake into South Lake. However, the portage from Jeff Lake into West Lake was through a marsh. So, we decided to venture further up Agnes Lake and return south through the “S” chain.

According to the map, there should have been an Indian pictograph on Agnes Lake, north of our turn to Silence Lake. We were unable to locate the pictograph, so we turned around and headed for our portage that would take us off Agnes Lake. We have reached the farthest point north on our trip and are now beginning our turn back towards Prairie Portage. We would not retrace our course, but instead, take another route.

2:05 PM – 8 Rod Portage from Agnes Lake to Silence Lake.

N 48° 14.303'

W 091° 21.654'

One Mr. F's goals this trip was to see a moose. After completing the portage, Mr. M yells for Mr. F “Hey, Joe come here, come here.” So, Mr. F sprints back (yes, that's right, sprints) as Mr. M is saying “Over there, in the clearing, there's a moose”. Well. There certainly was. A moose skull, sitting on a rock. You got me Scott.

Nice paddle on Silence Lake. As we are steadily making our way south, three canoes are seen in the distance, paddling north. People. The crew really hates seeing people. The more remote, the better, and except for Louisa Falls, we have not seen many crews.

The crews of the three canoes continue to approach and are paddling strong in unison – even the duffer in the middle is working. They are in rhythm and cruising. Are they Boy Scouts? Are they a group of experienced canoeists? Are they wayward voyageurs? Getting closer and closer and they are

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The crew did a wonderful job of portaging. They had the drill down to a science. Everyone knew exactly what they had to do and they all did it well.

Paddled through winding marsh that led into North Bay. Numerous campsites in this area and a few already had campers.

2:35 PM - Found very nice camp site on island at north end of North Bay.  
 N 48° 09.310'  
 W 091° 28.246'

7.0 miles paddled today.

Boys swimming. Mr. M and Mr. F took baths, but then again they took baths every day.

Brian and Mr. F fishing from canoe. Brian rigged an anchor with some line and a large rock. Worked very well. Michael F, Michael O fishing from land. Mr. F caught a four footer\*\*\*\*, by far the biggest catch of the trip.

Winds were still a bit high, but we were camped on the leeward side of the island. Relaxing site. Napping, reading, talking.

Eagles nest high up in a pine tree. Mother perched on a tree limb above the nest. As sun was falling, mother leaves the nest, swoops down into the lake, picks up a fish and brings the catch to her babies. Discovery Channel and National Geographic – wish you were here.

Gold Bond powder was one of the key supplies for the trip. Basically. Your feet were wet all day. After swimming and/or bathing and just before you put your dry shoes on, Gold Bond on the feet felt great. Same thing in the morning. Putting Gold Bond on your feet, before putting on the Jungle Boots, was very nice. But that's where it should be used. Tonight, Knuckles used the Gold Bond in an area where, let's just say, if you are going to use it here, it should be used in extremely small quantities. Not Keith R. He poured it on and then entertained the crew with a grotesque dance, as that burning sensation developed. He was forewarned, but why start listening now, right Keith.

Brian and Alex used Brian's anchor rig to fish from canoe. They caught some small fish. Michael F, Michael O, Keith D and Mr. F fishing from shore. Keith D took canoe and fished. Not much luck.

Oh yeah, Brian stabbed himself in camp.

\*\*\*\* Four foot fishing rod. Yup, Mr. F caught an intact fishing rod and reel.

Mr. F's fishing rod catch was a blessing in disguise. Sometime during the trip, probably on a portage, Keith R's fishing rod broke. His reel was still good, but he retired his pole in one a campfire. So, he took Mr. F's new found pole and put his reel on it. Now, he could fish again.

Winds were fairly high and we were facing a lot of open water as we headed down North Bay tomorrow. Winds are generally light in the morning and increase as the day wears on. Crew decided to get an early start in the morning, in an attempt to get as far along as we could before winds increased.

Sunset 8:54 PM

Day Seven – July 25, 2003

Sunrise 5:35 AM

Cold breakfast prepared, so the crew would not have any cleaning to do and we could break camp early. Breakfast was bread and trail mix bar.

7:33 AM – Depart camp. Head south through North Bay.

Canoe assignments: Michael O/Keith D  
 Alex/Keith R  
 Mr. M/Brian  
 Mr. F/Michael F

8:40 AM – 16 Rod Portage into Burke Lake

N 48° 07.867'  
 W 091° 28.180'

As predicted, the wind was light but was increasing. Light chop in bays. Goal today was at least to make Prairie Portage.

9:15 AM – 84 Rod Portage into Bayley Bay. This is the same portage we walked on July 22.

9:41 AM – Bayley Bay end of portage. Mr. F carried a canoe and a pack on this portage.

Boys decide that instead of stopping for lunch, we would press ahead and make camp early, then have lunch. Good call. Boys worked hard today, fighting the increasing winds.

10:40 AM – Arrive Prairie Portage. Photo session at Prairie Portage sign. Mr. F portaged a canoe and a pack simultaneously at the same time.

11:30 AM – Arrive Island on Canadian side of Birch Lake.

N 48° 03.215'  
 W 091° 24.967'

8 miles paddled today.

Set up camp. Then Alex and Michael F. made lunch. Pancakes and bacon. The Pancake Marathon. Pancakes made and made and made until all the batter was gone. Man size pancakes, Alex-size pancakes. Michael F ate a half-pounder. Seems like we spent hours cooking these pancakes (actually we did). Slow going on a one burner stove. No biggie because you know what we had plenty of – time.

Mr. F. pulled a Mr. M. - Hey where the heck are my glasses. Gee wiz, I better find those glasses or ..... Oh wait, they are in his pocket.

Nice campsite. Another bath day for everyone. Swimming and relaxing. Fishing from camp.

6:00 PM – Dinner prepared by Michael F and Alex. Beef Stroganoff. Lemon pudding goop like stuff for dessert. Mr. F and Mr. M had chocolate pudding.

One thing about these freeze dried dinners. The veggies tasted better before they were hydrated. Just like eating popcorn. After hydration, they turned to mush and lost their flavor.

After dinner. We must have Uno game. Keith D gets his typical roaring fire going again. Last game of the trip – knock out drag out, all bets are off. Draw two's were flying. Somebody got hit with a draw eight, i.e., two draw fours piled on each other. Many draw two penalties for, well basically, for nothing. A lot of fun.

The crew needed water, so Mr. F, wearing his dry clothes, takes canoe with Michael F and gets water. Loads empty pots and figures what the heck, might as well go fishing too. Fish around island (no luck), then fill pots with water and return to camp. Remember – keep your wet stuff wet and your dry stuff dry. While getting out of canoe and attempting to keep dry stuff dry. Mr. F slips and right foot goes into water. FSCS, !\*#^%!, FSCS, etc, repeat.

Mr. F then uses stick and holds what is now a wet shoe, over fire to dry. It works. Dry stuff dry again. Shoe is a bit smoky and darker than the left shoe, but that's okay.

Sunset 8:52 PM

9:15 PM – everyone in tents.

Day Eight – July 26, 2003

Sunrise 5:36 AM

Last day on the water. Bummer. What a glorious morning. Everyone up at their leisure.

Mr. F solo fishing from canoe. Coffee and fishing and relaxation on the Boundary Waters of the United States and Canada. Pinch me – I must be dreaming. Checked GPS – canoe on Canadian side, casting into U.S. side. Cool.

Breakfast – Western Omelet. Also made French Toast Western Omelet – talk about a bad idea gone real bad. Michael F and Alex were cooks.

09:20 AM – underway to Moose Lake. No more portaging.

Keith/Keith

Alex/Michael O

Brian/Michael F

Mr. F/Mr. M

Nice leisurely paddle – no hurry. NCCO was not going to pick us up at Moose Lake Boat Ramp until 2:00 PM. A lot of canoe and boat traffic on Moose Lake. Keith and Keith almost get t-boned by a small motor boat coming around one of the narrow turns.

12:00 Noon – stopped at BSA Northern Tier. Visited with Jimmy Flannery – he looks great; lost about 40 pounds. Purchased two Northern Tier bolo's at BSA store.

12:25 PM – arrive at boat ramp.

6 miles paddled today.

Lunch – eat all leftovers, including bread, burrito shells, trail mix, beef jerky etc, etc. Keith R just being Knuckles – finally had to put him in “time out”.

1:50 PM – NCCO picks up crew and transports back to outfitter.

2:30 PM – stop at U.S. Customs and clear by leaving a copy of the Canadian Quetico Camping Permit. That's it – our borders are secure.

2:45 PM – Arrive at NCCO. Oops, Michael F does not have his fishing pole. Mr. F and Michael F take one van and drive back to boat ramp and find pole just where it was put down – in the weeds.

Everyone at camp takes showers and shaves. NCCO/Troop 636 shirts worn. We look good.

Settle into bunkhouse. One room with four racks (Mr. F and Mr. M) and one room with six racks for the boys. Mr. M went on-line and checked the crew in with Air Tran for tomorrow's flight.

5:30 PM – Dinner at Cranberries in downtown Ely. Blueberry Arts and Craft Festival on going. 30,000 people flock to Ely. Good dinner – two ladies also having dinner. Not sure which one had the worse wig. Bad. (Bad as in bad, not bad as in good).

6:45 PM – dessert at little Homemade Ice Cream Shop.

8:00 PM – at NCCO. Relaxing.

9:30 PM – Lights Out

Day Nine – July 27, 2003

Last day of trip.

7:30 AM – Depart NCCO. Stop at “Choke and Puke” in Ely for breakfast.

Five hour drive to MSP.

11:15 AM – Stop at White Castle for lunch. Yes!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!  
Belly bombers. Alex buys a sack full of burgers, ten, and eats them all. The first one he swallowed whole. Alex, U Da Man!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

12:50 PM – Check in at MSP. Return vans and get through security.

3:38 PM – Depart MSP en route Atlanta.

6:26 PM – over Tennessee

Arrive Atlanta. Send boys are their way to get dinner. Mr. F and Mr. M find Sports Bar and have dinner and cocktails and cocktails and oh yes, did I mention cocktails. Yankees/Red Sox on ESPN – waiting for connecting flight to Fort Lauderdale, having a beer and/or Captain and Coke, watching one of the storied rivalries in baseball. Perfect.

Eventually we would have to leave, while the Yankees were winning, and get on our flight. Spoke to another Scoutmaster from a troop in Saratoga, FL. That had also just completed a trip through the BWCAW.

Shortly after midnight on July 28, 2003, arrive at Fort Lauderdale Airport. Crew met by mothers, fathers and wives. Waiting at carousel for luggage. No luggage, none, nada, zilch, not a piece. Air Tran representative contacted. Luggage being stored in Air Tran office. Our luggage had made it on an earlier Air Tran flight from Atlanta. Everyone claimed their bags and went home.

THE END

FINAL THOUGHTS

A crew of eight went on a journey one day  
To the North Country far away.  
An adventure of sorts that would test their skills  
And bring them together lets say.

A land unspoiled by man  
With history and legends throughout  
To toil and work and paddle and portage  
Over rocks and hills all about.

The home of the Siuox and Ojibway  
That remains as it was long ago  
Where trappers and voyageurs traveled and traded  
And toiled through rain, ice and snow.

The lakes here are many  
Some far and some near  
Some long, some short, some wide and some narrow  
All testing the crew with no fear.

They went as eight and came back as one  
They truly worked as a team  
To overcome obstacles, problems and change  
And achieve what was once a dream.

**SUMMARY OF PORTAGES**

1 Rod = 16.5"

1. Sucker Lake – Birch Lake	5 Rods	
2. Birch Lake – Carp Lake	40 Rods	
3. Carp Lake – Melon Lake	25 Rods	
4. Melon Lake – Seed Lake	15 Rods	
5. Seed Lake – Portage Lake	15 Rods	
6. Portage Lake – Knife Lake	75 Rods	
7. Knife Lake – Portage Lake	75 Rods	
8. Portage Lake – Seed Lake	15 Rods	
9. Seed Lake – Melon Lake	15 Rods	
10. Melon Lake – Carp Lake	25 Rods	
11. Carp Lake – Birch Lake	40 Rods	
12. Sucker Lake – Inlet Bay	20 Rods	(Prairie Portage)
13. Bayley Bay – Burke Lake	84 Rods	
14. Burke Lake – Sunday Lake	5 Rods	
15. Sunday Lake – Meadows Lake	193 Rods	("B" Portage)
16. Meadows Lake – Agnes Lake	140 Rods	("B" Portage)
17. Agnes lake – Silence Lake	8 Rods	
18. Silence Lake – Sultry Lake	40 Rods	
19. Sultry Lake – Summer Lake	16 Rods	
20. Summer Lake – Noon Lake	5 Rods	
21. Noon Lake – Shade Lake	5 Rods	
22. Shade Lake - ???? Lake	None	
23. ???? Lake - ???? Lake	4 Rods	
24. ???? Lake – West Lake	4 Rods	
25. West Lake – South Lake	12 Rods	
26. South Lake – North Bay	14 Rods	
27. North Bay – Burke Lake	16 Rods	
28. Burke Lake – Bayley Bay	84 Rods	
29. Inlet Bay – Sucker lake	20 Rods	
Total	845 Rods	

845 Rods = 13,942.5' = 2.64 Miles

Total journey (paddling and portages) = 62.64 Miles