



Beaverdam

INTERIM NEWSLETTER - WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION - VOL. I, NO. 1, APRIL 1974

LATE LAST YEAR, AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, A SMALL, DIVERSE GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS GATHERED IN A BARE CONFERENCE ROOM IN ORILLIA, STARED BLANKLY AT ONE ANOTHER AND, HAVING NOTHING ELSE IN COMMON, FORMED THE WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION.

WELL . . . IT DIDN'T HAPPEN EXACTLY LIKE THAT, BUT THE RESULT WAS THE FORMATION OF A GROUP OF CANOE PEOPLE INTO AN ASSOCIATION WHICH WILL, HOPEFULLY, CONCERN ITSELF WITH A NUMBER OF PRESSING ISSUES FACING ANYONE WHO TRAVELS BY CANOE: DEDICATED WILDERNESS TRIPPER, WEEKEND PADDLER, OR THE COTTAGER WHO VENTURES OUT ONLY RARELY FOR AN HOUR OR TWO -- AND WHO WANTS TO DO IT SAFELY . . .

THE NEED FOR AN ASSOCIATION HAS NEVER BEEN GREATER.

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRAVELLING BY CANOE IS INCREASING ENORMOUSLY. MANY OF THESE PEOPLE HAVE NEVER USED A CANOE BEFORE AND THE IMPLICATIONS, IN TERMS OF SAFETY ALONE, ARE OBVIOUS. THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE WILDERNESS CONCERNS US ALL.

AS CANOE TRAVELLERS, WE FACE OTHER PROBLEMS. PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT IS THE PRESSURE ON OUR WILDERNESS AREAS FROM COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS KIND OF DEVELOPMENT IS CRITICAL TODAY. GOVERNMENT HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WILL HAVE TO BE ENVIRONMENTAL TRADE-OFFS TO PRODUCE ENERGY. AS A CASE IN POINT, ONTARIO'S ENERGY MINISTER RECENTLY SAID THAT PLANS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF HYDRO FACILITIES ON NORTHERN RIVERS ARE BEING REVIEWED. ONCE DISREGARDED ON THE BASIS OF ECONOMICS, THESE

PLANS MAY BE VIABLE TODAY BECAUSE OF INCREASING COSTS AND DIMINISHING SUPPLIES OF ALTERNATE POWER SOURCES USED TO GENERATE ELECTRICITY.

WHILE OUR AIM MUST BE TO OPPOSE UNNECESSARY DEVELOPMENT OF OUR WILDERNESS, OUR EFFECTIVENESS LIES ENTIRELY IN BEING UNITED, WELL-INFORMED AND IN TAKING ACTION IN A BALANCED, RATIONAL WAY. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT SOME ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE GROUPS HAVE DONE THEMSELVES MUCH HARM WITH APPEALS BASED MORE ON EMOTION THAN ON RATIONAL THINKING, APPEALS WHICH FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THE INEVITABLE TRUTH THAT THERE MUST, AND WILL, BE SOME DEVELOPMENT, SOMEWHERE, SOMETIME.

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THESE INEVITABLE TRUTHS AND MAKE OUR OPPOSITION STRONG -- BUT CONSTRUCTIVE -- STRESSING ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS LEADING TO MULTI-USE CONCEPTS. WE MUST INTELLIGENTLY CONSIDER THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS; TOO FEW ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS DO.

TO EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH PROBLEMS WE CAN REASONABLY ANTICIPATE, OUR MEMBERS MUST COMMUNICATE THEIR VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES. AS JOE CHARLES REMARKED AT THE FOUNDING MEETING, THE STOCK-IN-TRADE OF ANY ASSOCIATION IS INFORMATION. WE NEED A POOLING OF VIEWS. AS A MEMBER, PLEASE RESPOND. ONLY IN THIS WAY CAN WE BRING A STRONG, REASONABLE FORCE TO BEAR ON A GIVEN PROBLEM. AND IT IS ONLY THROUGH STRONG, REASONABLE VIEWS

Birth of the Abitibi freighter

By Murray J. Martin

ONE YEAR AGO I started this series of test reports on canoes that are sold on the Canadian market. The first canoe that my son Dave and I ran down through the curls rapids of the South Muskoka River was the Pinetree Abitibi 16 foot twin pointer. I found the craft one of the most amazing products that has graced the waterways.

After running the 16 foot Abitibi I talked the manufacturers of the Pinetree canoe into building me a 17 foot "Y" stern freighter close to the same design embodied in the Abitibi model. We talked over my needs of bow height, stern height, depth mid-ship, and the stern design.

Joe Charles the president of the company put the figures together on his drafting board. The final colouring of fire-birch, a special red colour with birch bark design worked in, and the freighter became a possession.

From the day I first saw the freighter on the drawing board I had made up my mind that although the South Muskoka River offered all that was needed as a test run for canoes, the first water the Abitibi would see would be the "Ten Mile Rapids" of the Groundhog River in the Artic Watershed of Ontario's northland.

In April 1973 the core of the Abitibi freighter slowly started to take shape. I visited the Pinetree factory as often as possible and watched the sleek craft grow and whenever I could I would lend a hand in the building of the core. Hours of molding went into the building of the core plus days of constant sanding. On the second day of June the core was finished. A shiny black surface that was so highly polished that you could see your face in it, shone under flood lights that were constantly turned on so that the manufacturers would be able to detect any defects in the core.

At nine o'clock June 15th the wood centre ridge was laid along the keel and the layers of fibre glass started to build up. I found that there was no easy way to build a mold for Joe Charles and Evert Mösse, the two partners of Pinetree Canoe Enterprises. The mold had to be done to perfection, and I must admit that it took far more patience than I have.

Finally on September 2nd the mold was finished and at three a.m. the next morning the final wedge was driven to split the two piece mold apart. The inside of the mold shone with a bright orange colour, it was as expected, "perfect" in all aspects.

Now the mold was ready. Mrs. Charles, Joe's mother, who does all the artistic birch bark design on the Pinetree canoes painted the first fire-birch design on the mold.

Once the special paint job was finished the first layer of epoxy was laid into the mold. Next a special core was molded in followed with the difficult task of molding a re-enforcing structure of metal that goes into every canoe of the Abitibi line. Another filler core layer and then the layer of polyester. A special rib structure was added to the construction and the mold was moved under the cure oven for six hours.

Those of us who had watched the freighter grow from the first two by four that was cut for the plug, gathered at the factory to watch the freighter being broken free from the mold. I had the honour of driving the last wedge into the centre section of the mold to break the two piece mold open.

The big mold opened up and the fire-birch Abitibi 17 foot freighter was free from its mold.

If you love to paddle a canoe as much as I do, you may well understand the feelings of a dream all of a sudden becoming a reality. Ash thwarts and gunwales were secured to the shell. Webb seats were secured to a low position still allowing ample room for the feet to fit back under.

The 17 foot freighter was being specially built to run the Groundhog under a load and that meant a strong re-enforced stern section, whereby reverse power could be applied to slow the freighter's forward motion in the rapids. A wooden stern section was molded into the freighter that would more than serve the purpose. Next came a very important feature for any canoe that is to be used in white water: a buoyancy tank that could be used for more than just floating a capsized canoe.

The mold was designed to still give necessary room for the feet to come back, second a tray for fish tackle and being a freighter a splash tray that would trap any water that might come over the stern when under power. When the rear buoyancy tank was finished it served all purposes.

Now the 17 foot fire-birch Abitibi was ready for the test run in the Ten Mile Rapids of the Groundhog River. It meant a 500 mile trip north and a 16 mile trip in through a bush road before we finally stood looking down over the white waters of the Groundhog River.

The Abitibi and two larger freighters were lowered down over the high banks into the rapids. We put the motors on the larger freighters and made our way up over the ten mile rapids pulling the Abitibi behind us. A week of moose hunting, sturgeon and walleye fishing and then the run back down river. We took the larger freighters down through the rapids first.

Now the test for the Abitibi freighter was at hand. The freighter was still a good two mile walk back up through the bush, around a river bend. My three hunting partners wanted to portage the 17 footer. They didn't like the idea of running this particular section with anything smaller than the two larger freighters. To relieve their consciences I told them that I had actually wanted to run it myself, but that I needed a camera man to snap pictures from the shore.

A short time later I shifted the 500 pounds of gear around in the freighter and then nosed the bow out into Ten Mile Rapids. My eight inch wide blade bit into the white water and the 70 pound freighter responded as man, paddle and canoe all seemed as one. I nosed the Abitibi with its blazing fire-birch exterior into the worst section I could find. Although the trip down through those white waters took only minutes it seemed as hours of pure pleasure. The 17 foot freighter responded without fault. Not only as man, paddle and canoe as one, but also the three foot white waters seemed to fit in the Abitibi proved she could handle the rest of it.

The 17 foot freighter paddles and handles equally as well in calm water whether under a load or whether empty. The two ash thwarts are located so that two paddles can be secured into position for portaging. The freighter works ideally with a four horsepower motor.

The freighter is rated to carry 1,600 pounds. The heavy duty model that I have weighs 84 pounds with the standard model weighing ten pounds less.

This is an ideal freighter for the fisherman or hunter and although in the freighter class it can be handled easily by one paddler. The Abitibi freighter comes in a choice of colours pre-arranged with the customer prior to being custom built. Already the Abitibi freighter is being booked for the coming spring. It comes highly recommended by this writer. . . .

PORTAGES WE HAVE LAID OUT A ROUTE HAVING NEARLY SIX MILES OF PORTAGES. THESE ARE ALL RELATIVELY SHORT, THE LONGEST ONE BEING ONLY 1,250 YARDS." SURE . . . JUST SKIP RIGHT ACROSS!

AT ISSUE

STILL ON CANOE ROUTES: AT THE FOUN-
DING MEETING, CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED
ABOUT RIGHT-OF-WAY ON PORTAGES WHICH
CROSS PRIVATELY-OWNED LAND. SEVERAL
MEMBERS MENTIONED CASES IN WHICH
ACCESS WAS DENIED. THIS ACTION IS
CONTRARY TO LAW, WHICH PROVIDES FOR
RIGHT-OF-WAY, INCLUDING PORTAGES,
ON RECOGNIZED CANOE ROUTES AND NAVI-
GABLE WATERWAYS.

PETE EMMOREY IS CURRENTLY CONCERNED
WITH THE MATTER AND WILL SHORTLY
HAVE COPIES OF THE LEGISLATION IN
QUESTION. IN THE MEANTIME, WE NEED
AUTHENTICATED ACCOUNTS OF SIMILAR
INCIDENTS. THEY MUST INCLUDE NAMES
AND DATES, ACCURATE MAP REFERENCES
AND AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE.

WHEN WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO ASSESS THE
PROBLEM, THE ASSOCIATION CAN TAKE
APPROPRIATE ACTION. THE POSSIBILITY
OF TEST COURT CASES WAS MENTIONED
AND IT MAY BE THAT THIS WILL BECOME
NECESSARY. BEFORE THAT, WE SHOULD
ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM THROUGH
LIAISON WITH PROPERTY OWNERS, AND
DISCUSSION. WE MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER
A PROGRAMME OF POSTING SUCH PORTAGES
WITH A WCA SIGN POINTING OUT THAT
THE PORTAGE CROSSES PRIVATE PROPERTY
AND THOUGH RIGHT OF ACCESS IS GUARAN-
TEED, CANOE TRAVELLERS SHOULD TAKE
CARE TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF THE
OWNER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND, UNDER
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, LEAVE THE PORTAGE
CLEAN AND GREEN. SIMILAR LIAISON
HAS WORKED WONDERS ON THE BRUCE, AND
OTHER, TRAILS. SO PLEASE WRITE. WE
MUST HAVE DETAILS.

MEMBERSHIP

COME ON, GUYS AND GALS . . . GET OFF
YOUR THWARTS AND GET OUT AND RECRUIT!
WE WANT MORE MEMBERS. THE MORE OF
US THERE ARE, THE BETTER ABLE WE WILL
BE TO MEET OUR AIMS. SEND THE NAMES
OF ANY PROSPECTS TO ALEX STODDART SO

THAT CHARMING GENTLEMAN CAN BEGUILLE
THEM INTO PARTING WITH THEIR CASH
AND JOINING US. IT SHOULD BE
ENTIRELY POSSIBLE FOR EACH ONE OF
US TO BRING IN ONE NEW MEMBER.
AFTER ALL, JUST THINK HOW MUCH
THE GREAT CANOEING PUBLIC REALLY
NEEDS US! THOSE MEMBERS MOST suc-
CESSFUL IN RECRUITING WILL BE
INVITED TO JOIN THE EXCLUSIVE
"LOG BOAT, BLIND BAY AND PLASTIC
COCKTAIL" CHAPTER OF THE WCA --
AN EXPERT, LONG-RANGE GROUP OF
CANOE TRAVELLERS WHO MAY NOT BE
ABLE TO NAVIGATE BUT ARE, AT
LEAST, DOUGHTY DRINKERS. SERIOUS-
LY THOUGH . . . WE DO NEED NEW
MEMBERS.

PRODUCT TESTING

ABOUT DOWN BOOTIES.

DOWN-FILLED BOOTIES ARE CONSIDERED
BY MANY TO BE AN UNNECESSARY LUXU-
RY. BUT FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO suf-
FER WITH COLD FEET, OR ARE WINTER
CAMPERS, THESE BOOTIES MIGHT BE A
WISE INVESTMENT, IN SPITE OF THE
COST. THE PAIR PURCHASED FOR THIS
TEST COST ABOUT \$21.00, INCLUDING
TAX.

THE OUTER SHELL AND LINING ARE OF
RIP-STOP NYLON AND THE WEIGHT OF
100% DOWN FILLING IS MORE THAN
ADEQUATE. THEY COME IN 3 SIZES
AND HAVE LEATHER SOLES AND A LACE
TIE.

WE FOUND THE BOOTS WORK BEST WHEN
THERE IS LITTLE WALKING TO BE
DONE. WORN INSIDE WALKING GEAR,
THERE IS LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR
THE DOWN TO LOFT AND, WHERE IT
COMPRESSES, IT OFFERS LITTLE INSU-
LATION VALUE. CONSEQUENTLY, THEY
ARE AT THEIR BEST WHEN USED AS
SLEEPING OR LOUNGING GEAR. IN A
DOWN BAG, ON A WINTER CAMPING
TRIP AT 20 DEGREES BELOW ZERO, THE
BOOTS WORKED WELL AND EARNED THEIR
PURCHASE PRICE.

THINGS TO WATCH: THE LEATHER SOLE
DOES NOT BREATHE WELL AND THE
BOOTS SHOULD BE AIRED AFTER USE,

ALONG WITH THE SLEEPING BAG. IN ALL OTHER RESPECTS, BREATHABILITY WAS EXCELLENT. WE FOUND THE SINGLE TIES TO BE INADEQUATE AND SEWED IN A FINE NYLON ZIPPER, WHICH IMPROVED THE BOOTS' HEAT-KEEPING PERFORMANCE.

WHEN YOU BUY THESE BOOTS, WATCH THE SEAMS. IT'S ADVISABLE TO TURN THEM COMPLETELY INSIDE OUT AND MAKE SURE THE INNER SEAMS ARE SECURE. IF PROBLEMS DO DEVELOP, AND DOWN STARTS TO PIERCE THE SEAMS, SLAP ON A LITTLE STICKING PLASTER. IT WILL STAY ON FOREVER, AND MAKES A PERMANENT PATCH.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN THIS PRODUCT, THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE MANUFACTURER WILL BE SUPPLIED ON REQUEST.

NEXT ISSUE WE WILL RATE TWO BLACKS' TENTS. WE'D BE INTERESTED IN HAVING MEMBERS REPORT THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH OTHER EQUIPMENT, AS WELL.

KNOTTY PROBLEMS

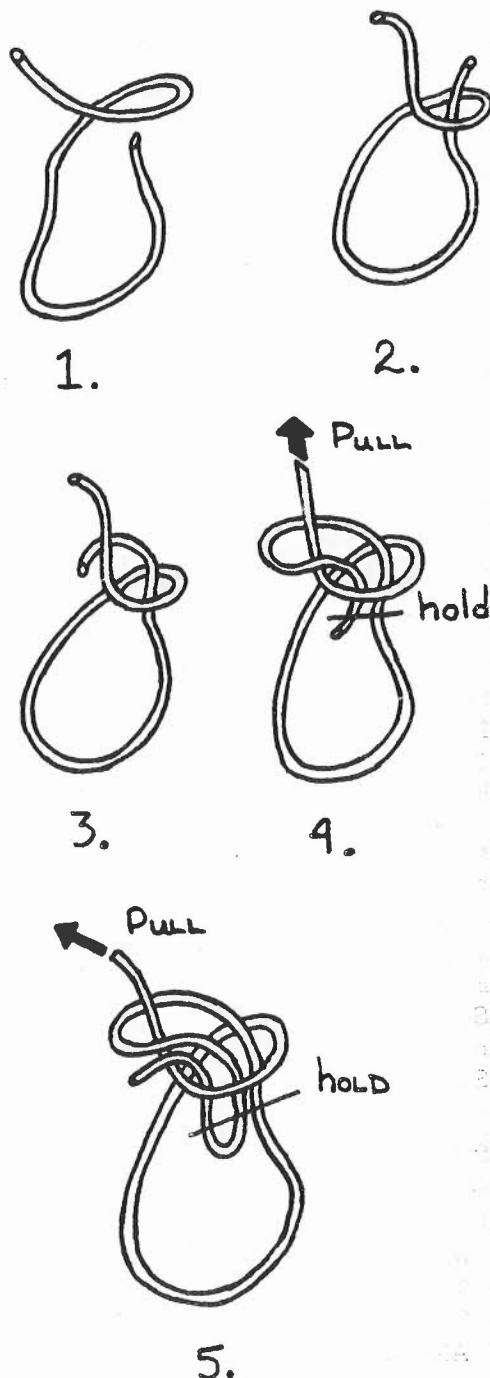
KNOWLEDGE OF A HALF DOZEN OR SO KNOTS WILL IMMEASURABLY INCREASE YOUR ABILITY TO SECURE YOUR CANOE FOR TRAVELING, TO QUICKLY STORM-LASH A TENT, TO RIG TARPAULINS, CLOTHESLINES, OR TRACKING LINES AND OTHER RIGS. AT ANY RATE, IT'S ONE MARK OF THE PROFICIENT OUTDOORSMAN. WE'LL CONSIDER ONE OR TWO IMPORTANT KNOTS IN EACH ISSUE.

THE BOWLINE

MY ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF KNOTS SHOWS MORE THAN 40 WAYS TO TIE THE BOWLINE, OFTEN CALLED THE KING OF KNOTS. THE BOWLINE'S PURPOSE IS TO PUT A LOOP INTO THE END OF A LINE: ONE WHICH WON'T SLIP AND IS EASY TO UNTIE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. WE FIND IT INVALUABLE IN NUMEROUS APPLICATIONS, FROM CAR-TOPPING A CANOE TO TRACKING LINES AND TENT RIGS.

SHOWN IS THE BASIC BOWLINE AND, IN ILLUSTRATION 5, THE SLIP BOWLINE. THE SLIP BOWLINE CAN BE RELEASED INSTANTLY, EVEN WITH PRESSURE ON THE KNOT. IT'S EXCELLENT WITH WET, SWOLLEN LINES (SHOULD YOU BE USING A

NATURAL FIBRE ROPE). HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE USED ONLY WHEN TENSION ON THE LINE IS CONSTANT, NOT WHERE IT IS BEING ALTERNATELY RELEASED AND TIGHTENED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SLIP BOWLINE SHOULD NOT BE USED TO TIE UP A BOAT WHICH MIGHT BE CONSTANTLY SNUBBING. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, THE KNOT MIGHT SLIP ITSELF LOOSE. (AT ANY RATE, THERE ARE KNOTS BETTER THAN THE BOWLINE FOR SECURING A CANOE TO A DOCK-RING OR STANCHION.)



ABOUT OUR NAME

THE NAME "BEAVERDAMN" WAS WHIMSICALLY CHOSEN BY THE EDITOR AS AN INTERIM NAME FOR OUR NEWSLETTER. WE WOULD WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FOR A PERMANENT NAME, AS WELL AS A SYMBOL FOR THE ASSOCIATION. DON'T WORRY ABOUT DOING A PROFESSIONAL JOB OF DRAWING YOUR SYMBOL. ONCE ONE IS CHOSEN, IT CAN BE DRAWN UP BY AN ARTIST. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THE IDEA. SEND ONE IN. THE WINNER OF THE GREAT SYMBOL CONTEST WILL BE AWARDED MEMBERSHIP IN THE "LOG BOAT, BLIND BAY AND PLASTIC COCKTAIL" CHAPTER.

YOU'RE INVITED . . .

THE 1974 CANOE SEASON OFFICIALLY OPENED FEBRUARY 15 WITH A TRIP THROUGH THE ORANGEVILLE SWAMP AND WAS RE-OPENED ABOUT MARCH 15 WHEN A HANDFUL OF MEMBERS (ALLEGED TO BE DEMENTED) PADDLED THROUGH A BLIZZARD AND HIGH WINDS ON THE NOTTAWASAGA RIVER, TRAVERSING THE MINESING SWAMP.

MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO AN OVERNIGHT TRIP TO BREAK IN THEIR NEW GEAR, THE LAST WEEKEND OF APRIL. IT STARTS AT ANGUS, ONTARIO (WEST OF BARRIE) AND FOLLOWS THE NOTTAWASAGA 14 MILES OR SO, THROUGH THE UNIQUE MINESING SWAMP. OVERNIGHT CAMPING WILL BE AT THE CONSERVATION AREA ON THE NOTTAWASAGA AT EDENVALE.

PLEASE CONTACT PETE EMMOREY IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN JOINING US. NO CANCELLATIONS DUE TO WEATHER.

SAME SUBJECT: ANY SMALL GROUP INTERESTED IN TAKING A REPLICA OF THE FAMOUS FUR TRADE "NORTH" CANOE ON A TRIP, PLEASE DROP A LINE TO THE EDITOR. THE NORTH CANOE (NICKNAMED "THE BEAST" BY PAT ARMSTRONG AND OTHER ASSORTED PADDLERS) IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE. THE IDEAL CREW IS SIX OR EIGHT PEOPLE + DUNNAGE. THE BEAST IS 26 FEET LONG, LEAKS, AND WEIGHS IN AT A DELIGHTFUL 400 POUNDS. THE EDITOR WOULD BE HAPPY TO ARRANGE WEEKEND -- OR OTHER -- OUTINGS WITH TEEN-AGE MEMBERS (OR EVEN NON-MEMBERS). PLEASE WRITE. INCLUDE DATES IN WHICH YOU ARE INTERESTED.

ABOUT YOUR OWN TRIPS: IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR TRAVELLING PARTNERS, LET US KNOW. WE MAY BE ABLE TO MATCH YOU UP.

SWAP COLUMN

PETE EMMOREY HAS FOR SALE, OR SWAP FOR OTHER CAMPING GEAR: 1 OPTIMUS 8R, SINGLE BURNER, CAMP STOVE. WELL USED, BUT IN GOOD CONDITION; INCLUDES REPAIR KIT (NEVER USED); SIZE: 5" x 5" x 3". WEIGHT 24 OUNCES. GOOD STAND-BY EQUIPMENT OR FOR YOU 'NO-TRACE' CAMPERS WHO DON'T LIKE CAMPFIRE. NOT RECOMMENDED FOR WINTER USE. ORIGINAL COST, ABOUT \$19.00.

AND: 1 LIGHTWEIGHT NYLON TENT, ORANGE; SLEEPS THREE (OR FOUR VERY GOOD FRIENDS). NO POLES. GOOD CONDITION; SMALL TEAR IN MOSQUITO NETTING. SEWN-IN FLOOR. GOOD FOR CASUAL CAMPING; NOT BUILT FOR HEAVY STORMS. ORIGINAL COST, \$35 - \$40.00.

PLEASE SEND DESCRIPTIONS OF ANY SWAPPABLE MATERIAL YOU MAY WANT TO LIST.

PRODUCTS

FROM TIME TO TIME, WE WILL BE RATING CAMPING AND CANOEING EQUIPMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, REPRODUCED IN THIS ISSUE IS AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY MURRAY MARTIN FOR THE ONTARIO FISHERMAN & HUNTER, IN WHICH OUR CHAIRMAN RATES THE ABITIBI CANOE, BUILT BY PINETREE INDUSTRIES OF ORILLIA. FUTURE ISSUES WILL CONTINUE MURRAY'S TEST SERIES.