



*Sugar Island is an  
ACA Property located  
on the St. Lawrence  
River, Gananoque,  
Ontario*



## The Sugar Islander

Vol. 1 Number 2

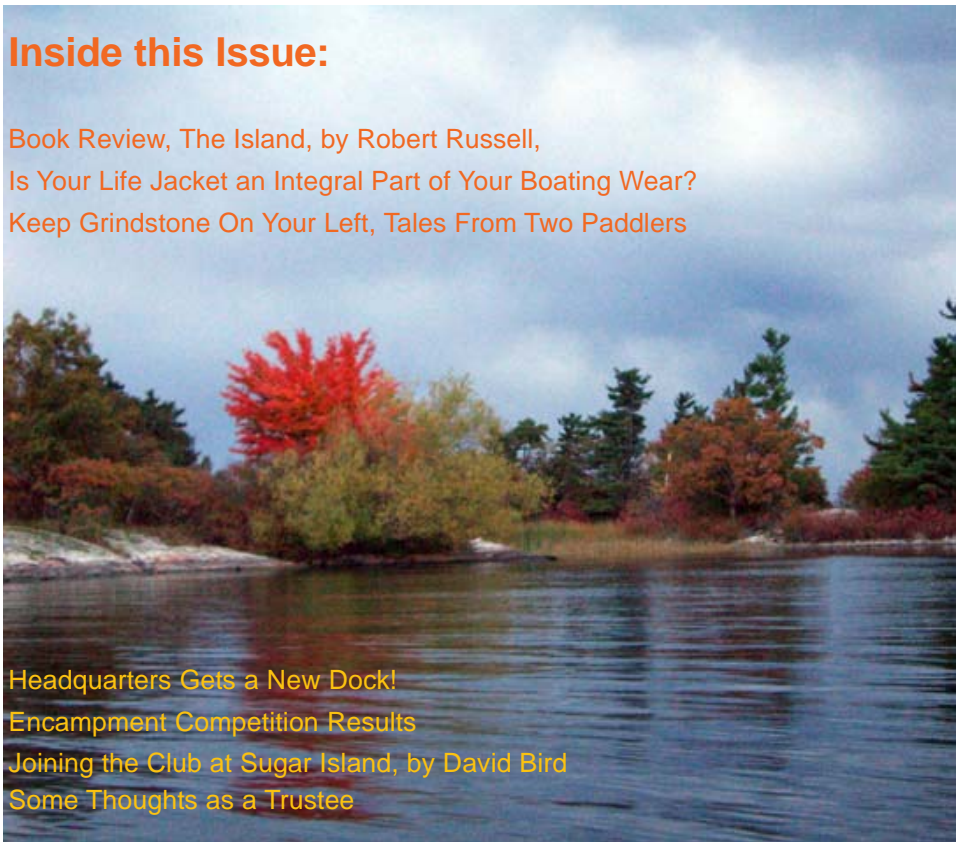
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# SUGAR ISLAND

## 2006 - BOARD OF TRUSTEES - 2006

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Robert Cassar – Secretary  
John Gudas – Treasurer  
Pearse O’Doherty – Past Chairman

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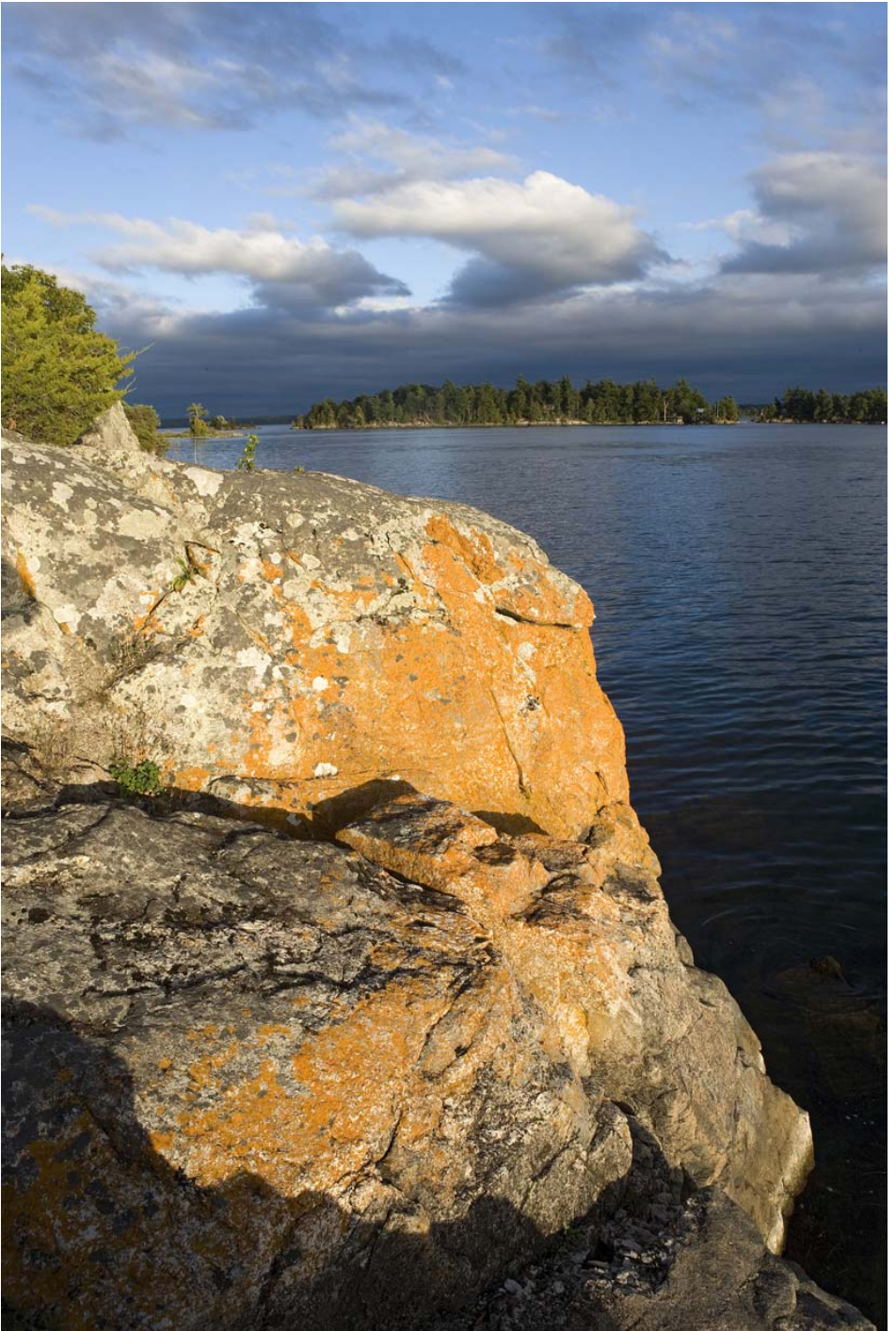
**SUGAR ISLAND**  
**AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION**  
**TRUSTEES MEETING – OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2006**

**IN ATTENDANCE: TRUSTEES:** Dick White (Chair), Bob Cassar, Marilyn Vogel, Scott Andrews Jack White, Russell Dermond, Dale Jeffers, John Gudas, Pearse O’Doherty **GUEST:** Leslie White – ACA board member

**Tele-conference** – 6:00 PM EST Note: Vote totals vary due to Trustees coming in late or leaving earlier from the meeting.

- Bob Cassar made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006 Trustees meeting held in Allentown, PA and the July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006 Trustees meeting held on Sugar Island, Ontario, Canada. Marilyn Vogel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by the vote of 5-0.
- Discussion was held regarding new Trustees for the coming terms. This being an even year, Trustees are appointed by the current board as per our by-laws. Bob Cassar made a motion nominating John Nowicky and Kathy Kempson for the terms starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 and ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. Pearse O’Doherty seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by the vote of 8-0.
- Discussion was held regarding next year’s encampment dates. Scott Andrews made a motion to hold encampment from Sunday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to Friday, August 10, 2007. Marilyn Vogel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by the vote of 8-0.
- Discussion was held on the pending Cabin Lease proposal regarding applicant requirements and lease purchase fees. Bob Cassar made a motion to set the starting minimum lease purchase fees at \$15,000 US for the Klecka Cabin and \$12,500 US for the Hasse Cabin. If there is more than one applicant for either cabin, sale will be held by competitive bid. Marilyn Vogel seconded the motion. The motion passed by the vote of 8-1. Dale Jeffers will edit the final draft of the lease proposal for presentation next month to the ACA Board of Directors.
- Discussion was held on permanent site applications. Scott Andrews made a motion to award a permanent campsite near New York Bay to Dagmar Lewellyn. Jack White seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by the vote of 8-0. The Blomquist/ Phelps Sunrise Point campsite application and the K. Nowicky and Rich Cassar platform applications were tabled until the next meeting.
- The next meeting is scheduled to be a tele-conference on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at 6:00 PM.
- Bob Cassar made a motion to adjourn. Chick Dermond seconded the motion. The motion carried by the vote of 7-0.

10-8-06 rcc



Photograph by Bill Hecht





# The Island

by Robert Russell, Published 1973

Review by Marilyn Vogel

October 2006

Robert Russell, from Lancaster, PA. fell in love with fishing, the St. Lawrence River and his wife. He wanted to fish and enjoy the fresh air and relaxed, natural ambience of island life. They settled on Hay Island for the summers every year since the late 1950's or so.

Although he and his family were not wealthy, they found ways to establish a summer home, a dock, have a boat and get things done.

In those days he was not the type of man who would get on the telephone and call a plumber or electrician to do repairs. Each chapter has a problem to be solved, which becomes a challenge, an adventure, and researching someone else's wit to solve the need.

For example, he was able to get a bank loan to buy a place on Hay Island. He never expected to get a loan but thought it wouldn't hurt to ask! But, the bargain dream house he bought at Hay Island had the plumbing of the Honeymooners' apartment, a boat landing from hell, although lots of ambience.

Bob Russell liked to solve challenges by himself but when things got tough he went to the bar in Gananoque and met the River Rats who worked on the islands. From there he would enlist help from friends and neighbors and family only if necessary. He found it necessary to invent solutions to getting a dock, sneaking off to fish alone in the boat without the children, rock blasting and boating under adverse conditions.

He and his wife wanted to see that their four children would have good memories when they got older. Russell is very reflective about meaning in life, nature's testing of humans, and solving problems. The reader learns about island culture in the St. Lawrence and the Hay Island community.

Not bad for a man who was blind most of his life! He was also head of the English Department at Franklin and Marshall College and earned a PhD equivalent at Oxford University in England.

Russell is also the author of the highly acclaimed *To Catch An Angel*.



# PFDs for PA Boaters (Proposed new rules)©

By Chuck Sutherland (E-mail: [skimmer@enter.net](mailto:skimmer@enter.net))



Efforts are under way in the U.S. (PA, MA) and Canada to make PFD use mandatory for folks on the water in small boats. The public comment period for the proposed rule changes in PA will run from October 14, 2006 to November 14, 2006. Rule making decisions will be made in January 2007 and will take effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

There are two possible options currently on the table. In the lesser case, boaters in watercraft under 16 ft and all canoes and kayaks will be required to wear PFDs at all times on the water in the cold months of the year (October through May). Alternatively, the PA Fish and Boat Commission may vote to require boaters to wear their PFDs year round on the water (see item #188 at [www.fish.state.pa.us/reg398.htm](http://www.fish.state.pa.us/reg398.htm)).

## Statistics and dissent

In spite of years of effort in the U.S. and Canada, state and federal agencies have been unable to convince the boating public to wear PFDs on the water. At present, PFD use by adult boaters remains low (21% Canada, 13% in the U.S.). In the U.S., many adults won't wear PFDs even to set a good example for children in their boats. In this way, we are training the next generation of boaters to carry on their disdain for PFDs.

Some US statistics indicate that 7 of 10 boating fatalities occur with boats under 20 ft in length. Drowning is the most common cause of death and in nearly 85% of all boating-related drownings the victims were not wearing PFDs. Alcohol was involved in about a third of those cases and 9 of 10 victims were male. Most drownings occurred within 10 feet of shore or "safety". The largest percentage of deaths, relative to the number of boats on the water, occurred during the off season when the water was cold.



Drowning occurs in an average of 20 seconds for children and in less than a minute for adults. Extensive data on these matters indicate that swimming ability does not correlate strongly with survival in the water. This may be because panic-induced or cold-induced gasping (inhaling water) precludes swimming even if the victim briefly returns to the surface. To rephrase that, without a PFD and regardless of their known swimming ability, some victims do not return to the surface after accidental entry into the water.

Arguments against PFD use include confidence in one's swimming ability, lack of comfort or mobility in a PFD, and fear of the "wimp" factor. PFDs are considered "too hot" in summer weather. Boaters "don't need PFDs" because they are staying near shore, they are expert boaters, they have had boating courses, they are with other boaters, etc. Statistics, no matter how dramatic, will never convince the U.S. boating

public to routinely use PFDs on the water. For information on PFD use, carry out a Google search [pfd use U.S. Canada].

**A recent sad case**

On September 19, 2006, at Avon Beach on Cape Hatteras, NC, a 35-yr-old man borrowed a “Sit-on-Top, SOT” kayak (short, stable boat with a large outside cockpit) from a neighbor and went out to do a little surfing. He capsized on the first wave about 50 yards offshore. His friends said... “He was thrown from the boat”. They saw him holding onto the boat and went down to the beach to help him. When they got there, they saw the kayak, but the victim could not be found (information provided by District Ranger John McCutcheon, Cape Hatteras National Seashore).

The wave height was 3-4 feet breaking across a bar, water temperature 71 ° F, air temperature 78 ° F, with light SSW (along shore) wind. Visibility was clear to the horizon. The victim was a novice paddler, a weak swimmer, was dressed in knee-length shorts and was not wearing a PFD. He had had some alcohol earlier in the day. His body was recovered a few days later.

The most dangerous moment in the unfolding of an accident is the moment when the victim enters the water. Without a PFD, momentum drives the victim underwater and momentary surprise and panic often causes the victim to gasp, even in warm water. The victim’s ability to swim can not prevent rapid drowning. There is no going back for the PFD.

**Cold water immersion**

As water temperature falls, another factor enters the picture. Boaters dressed in street clothes, who are suddenly immersed in cold water, experience a reflex (involuntary) gasping response. Without a PFD, the victim inhales water while briefly submerged. As in the Cape Hatteras case, victims are also then seen for a minute or two at the surface before disappearing from sight. Even nearby boaters can not respond quickly enough to save or even reach such victims. The gasping response, along with immediate increases in heart rate and blood pressure, is called cold shock.

**Conclusions**

In the U.S., Canada and many other countries, there is wide spread stubborn resistance to wearing PFDs on all manner of small boats throughout the year. This is the case even though there can be no justifiable argument on any grounds for at least wearing them when boating on cold water. Accidents don’t provide Fair Warning! Instead, they catch us when our backs are turned. Despite our best efforts, such accidents can not be eliminated. The best we can do is to prepare ourselves to respond effectively to the challenge. I routinely wear my PFD on the water. I refuse to die without a fight!

**References:**

PFD use studies . . . . . <http://www.wearalifejacket.com/>  
. . . . . More: under Google Search enter [pfd use U.S. Canada]  
Cold water boating . . . . <http://www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety/TP/Tp13822/menu.htm>  
. . . . . <http://www.enter.net/~skimmer/coldwater.html>

# Competition Results from the Sugar Island Encampment 2006

## Open Canoe Sailing Race Results 2006

### Around Sugar Island 5 Meter      Around Sugar ACA Class

- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Tom Uebel     | 1. Larry Zuk |
| 2. Larry Haff    | 2. John Depa |
| 3. Marilyn Vogel |              |

### 5 Meter (C Class) Championship Series

1. Tom Uebel
2. Larry Haff
3. Marilyn Vogel
4. John Depa

### ACA Class Championship Series

1. Tom Uebel
2. Marilyn Vogel
3. Larry Haff
4. John Depa

### 2006 Sugar Island Race Results

Swim Around the Island Thursday July 28

- |                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| 1. Lindsay Carroll .....   | 39 minutes |
| 2. Russell Walsh .....     | 42 minutes |
| 3. Zara Nematollaahi ..... | 56 minutes |
| 4. Peg Warrick .....       | 58 minutes |
| 5. Jackie Pitts .....      | 60 minutes |

### Tilting

1. Wayne and Kevin Cassar
2. Kristina Nowicky and Mike Koch
3. other  
    Chris Mincher and Kaye Powell  
    Russ Walsh and Zara Nematollaahi

### “Miss Canada”

The American Canoe Association Northern Division, which is all of Canada, has been blessed over the years with Lillian Claire from Gananoque. She has attended Sugar Island

since the late 1940’s or so. Since then, she has helped keep the Northern Division on a steady keel as an officer of the Division. Now, however, she has relinquished her position for health reasons and has moved to Kingston, Ontario. We wish her well and we wish the Northern Division well also.



Sugar Island is a member benefit of the American Canoe Association.  
Springfield, VA To join the ACA you can use a credit card for the website

\$40.00 individual member

\$60.00 family membership

**Sugar Island Canoe Club membership \$(+\$10)**

ACA Annual Membership Meeting

November 2006 Springfield, VA

[www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org) -- for more information!



**AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION  
Sugar Island Encampment 2007**

**Camp will officially open noon, July 29<sup>rd</sup>, 2007**

**COLORS DAILY:**

8:45 AM Assembly / 9:00 AM Colors

7:45 PM Assembly / 8:00 PM Colors

**Camp will officially close noon, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

All times report for camp schedule will be:

**Eastern Daylight Savings Time**

**Misc. Information**

**Storage:** The storage of private goods is not permitted in the main storage building.

**Fishing:** A fishing license is required if you intend to fish. This may be obtained in the Town of Gananoque.

**Transportation:** Transportation to the island, if needed, can be arranged for a fee through Misty Isles Lodge, RR #2, Landsdowne, Ontario, KOE 1L0, Gayle McBride (613) 382-4232 e-mail: [mistyisl@kos.net](mailto:mistyisl@kos.net) or the Bay Street Dock Water Taxi in Gananoque.

More information about the 2007 Sugar Island Encampment will be in Spring 2007 Issue of the Sugar Islander, and on the web page forums at

<http://sugar.islandertalk.com>



**Your Best Shot**

We have photo albums of Sugar Island camping over many years. To keep it current please send photos of your camping at Sugar Island with a description

To: Marilyn Vogel, 2210 Finland Road, Green Lane, PA 18054 USA  
or E-mail: [seashell@entermail.net](mailto:seashell@entermail.net)

## **JOINING THE CLUB AT SUGAR ISLAND By DAVID BIRD**

February 28, 1982      DAVID BIRD is a reporter for The New York Times.

Through the mist the mail boat slapped across the windswept water. As it neared the island it slowed, making a long curve toward the old wooden dock. At the dock the mailman lifted the lid on a small box and dropped in one letter. Then he turned and sped off.

That arrival of the mail boat every day gave me a sense of how isolated Sugar Island was. The island is one of the Thousand Islands, that scattering of rocky outcrops in the broad reaches of the St. Lawrence; some are only a few feet across, others are measured in miles. Sugar Island, just across the border into Canada, is 35 acres of mostly wilderness. It has no electricity and no telephone service.

Sugar Island has been owned since the turn of the century by the American Canoe Association (Box 248, Lorton, Va. 22079; 703-550-7523). It is not a public place but anyone can join the association for \$20 a year and, in effect, become a partial owner of the island.

There is canoeing, of course, and sailing. There is also swimming and fishing in the clear fresh water where you can see a good 10 feet down. On the island itself you can hike unmarked trails to secluded coves or break through the forest on a trip of your own discovery.

We had heard about Sugar Island three years ago when we bought a folding kayak and the dealer suggested we might want to join the canoe association because it had interesting group outings. We joined and among the association's literature was a mention of the island. It said members were entitled to camp there for a small fee and that, except for the two weeks a year when the Commodore was in residence, the Commodore's Cabin was available at \$45 a week.

Last summer my wife and 7-year-old daughter and I decided to try the island, camping out one week and then moving into the Commodore's Cabin for another two weeks.

Even though the island intrigued us we had no idea what to expect. We worried that it might be too clubby, too singlemindedly concerned with canoes and maybe a little cool to newcomers.

We left our home in New York City early in the morning for the all-day drive to Gananoque, Ontario, the jumping-off spot for Sugar Island.

We had made reservations at the Thousand Islands Village Motel (613-382-4232), which is three miles east of Gananoque and the closest landfall to Sugar Island. The motel is run by Jim and John Salisbury, who provide a launch service out to the island for \$9 if you don't want to make the passage in your own craft.

Our first glimpse of the Thousand Islands was from the bridge that arches magnificently across the river between the United States and Canada. I drove slowly so we could take in the endless spread of rocky, forested islands arrayed across sparkling blue water.

The view was mostly the natural greens and browns and blues of leaves and wood and water. But the Thousand Islands has long been a tourist attraction and the more garish colors of man-made attractions were also evident. From the bridge we could see one island that had been developed into an amusement complex featuring a giant circular slide built into the side of an artificial mountain.

The slide, and the breathless signs advertising it, seemed an intrusion but we didn't dismiss it completely. What if the stillness or the isolation of Sugar Island was stupefying? It might be nice to have a little artificial excitement if the wilderness palled. I tucked away a mental note about the artificial slide.

The sunset was beautiful and we bedded down with hopes for a perfect tomorrow.

It was raining the next morning. I looked out the window and ducked back under the covers, finding it a little too hard to handle right away the thought of assembling the kayak in the rain, then paddling out to the island in the rain and, once there, setting up a soggy tent in the rain.

Mercifully, the rain dwindled. We set to our task and soon my wife and I were digging in to paddle our heavily laden kayak to the island. Our 7-year-old daughter sat high on the mountain of camping gear between us. Our first contact with the people of the island came when an outboard chugged by and a woman, sensing where we were heading, asked if she could help by giving our daughter a ride.

We declined - our daughter didn't want to be separated from us then - but the woman's offer gave us a warm feeling of friendship on a damp day.

When we arrived at the island there was more warm friendship. One of the association's officers suggested a place where we could pitch our tent - a high promontory on the island's south shore overlooking a beach. It was a beach of massive, glacially smoothed boulders that were mostly light gray and shot through dramatically with brighter bands of a reddish rock.

The woman who had hailed us from the outboard came over and said there was a family dinner planned at the headquarters pavilion for that evening and wouldn't we like to join in.

The pavilion is a wood platform with open sides and a roof. Tables had been set up there with hot dogs, salads, breads and a large tub of ice stuffed with bottles of Canadian ale. Outside, fresh corn was boiling in a large pot over a wood fire. We ate ourselves silly. The cost, including beer, was \$3 each for my wife and me and \$2 for our daughter. I was amazed that more than 100 people turned up because the island had seemed so thinly populated.

We bedded down in our tent that night, stuffed and happy. But the fresh air gave us plenty of appetite the next morning as we emerged and set about pouring out bowls of homemade granola. Advised that there were no stores on the island we had brought with us a variety of food - canned goods, cereals, bread and hard boiled eggs.

But before we took a mouthful of granola a neighbor from a tent 50 yards away came over and asked if we would like some fresh fish. He had caught more than he could eat. We are not much at fishing but we had seen fish jumping from the water as we were paddling over to the island and were eager to try a meal of them.

The neighbor produced a bowl of finely filleted, white-meat fish. We quickly scrapped the idea of granola, started up the stove and soon were enjoying tender, lightly fried fish. After breakfast it was time for a swim. We dove into the deep, cool water and then soaped ourselves off on a rock. There is no running water on Sugar Island; the river is the only bath. Toilets on the island are outhouses, rustic natural wood on the outside and freshly painted white inside.

Our daughter soon found young playmates and was off getting lessons on how to paddle a canoe. While she was busy my wife and I went paddling. We had been told that

there was a small island off Sugar's north point that had a 27-foot promontory where one could jump off, splashing grandly into the deep water.

We nosed the kayak to the foot of the cliff and I picked my way to the top. Twenty-seven feet looks a lot higher when you are up looking down. But I had to do it. I closed my eyes and jumped. It was a grand surging sensation, plunging into the water. The second time was easier.

Every evening Sugar Islanders gathered by a campfire next to the pavilion. Nights are cool and the fire was welcome for warmth as well as companionship. Even though most of the people had been coming to the island for years there was no exclusion of us as newcomers. We were welcomed easily into every group.

The next day we decided to try the new sail we had bought for the kayak. After rigging up, with instruction sheet in one hand and line in the other, we eased tentatively away from the shore. Just in time, an old Sugar Island hand we had met at the campfire, came out to the dock with a gentle warning. "Wind's pretty heavy," he said, "if you don't mind a bit of advice, I'd wait for it to die down a little."

We waited for the next day, when the sailing was ideal. We wanted to explore and there were plenty of opportunities, with dozens of islands and passages stretching out in all directions to the horizon. We chose Grindstone Island for one trip, an international journey because Grindstone is on the United States side of the boundary. We marveled at how easy it was to cross the unmarked international border compared with the highway where customs and immigration officers had grilled us closely.

The State of New York runs a campsite on Grindstone. It is similar to Sugar Island in being isolated, accessible solely by boat. But, as we poked about after tying up at the dock, differences became obvious. The Grindstone campsite had the usual marked spaces for camping, signs with long lists of rules, and litter baskets. There were none of those intrusions on Sugar Island. Apparently they were not needed. Everyone seemed to have an individual sense of responsibility. Despite the complete absence of litter baskets on Sugar Island we saw no trash detracting from the island's natural beauty.

In a few days, despite the gift of fish, our food supplies were running low so we set out one morning on an expedition to the town of Gananoque. It was about three miles away and it took us a good two hours tacking into the wind.

After the wilderness of the island, Gananoque was a contrast of teeming civilization even though it is only a village of slightly more than 5,000. We weren't sure where we could make a landing, the place seemed so busy. There was the large dock where the big tour boats moored, but that seemed high and forbidding and we avoided it just as we had steered clear of the churning wakes of those towering white boats out on the open water. We finally eased into a marina, squeezing into a small space next to a seagoing sailboat that seemed to be a mile long.

In town we lingered over a meal in a Chinese restaurant and then stocked up on groceries at a chain supermarket, liquor at the Government store and loaves of fresh bread and chocolate chip muffins at Pete's Bakery. I couldn't believe our kayak could hold so much - we figured we had enough for a week's meals. But the supply had to be replenished before then because three more family members, all young adults, arrived. We had moved into the Commodore's Cabin before the others arrived so there was plenty of room, and we parceled ourselves out to sleep in the cabin as well as in the tent. The Commodore's Cabin measures 18 by 18 feet wide, essentially a large room with a three-bunk sleeping alcove.

We all gathered for meals in the cabin, which had amenities lacking at the tent site. There was a gas refrigerator and a gas stove with an oven, both fueled from a pressurized tank.

Even though the cabin was a comfortable gathering place, we often wandered over to the pavilion. There was usually some kind of activity: Bingo games, for example, under electric lamps powered for the occasion by a small portable generator. One night there was a costume party where people dressed in things like bits of old life preservers, lines and sheets. There was also dancing at the Commodore's Ball and a treasure hunt.

When it came time to leave we were surprised at how the time had gone. There had never been even the hint of having to dig out the artificial slide idea; it stayed tucked away there in the mind.

Editors Note: The above writing was found on the WWW. I am in awe at the prices, the remainder of the experience is the same today as it was documented over 20 years ago, and for decades preceding that. Sugar Island is a special place!



The past few years we have been concerned about Sugar from a financial and political agenda, which has overshadow the history and passing of tradition so integral to the heart of the Island.

Our particular family has been attending encampment since 1984. Our children then were age seven, five and three years old. This last summer encampment, our then seven and five year old are married and new mothers. It was such a thrill to introduce our two new grandsons to Sugar. They participated in canoe and kayak trips, short hiking trips by backpack and padding and splashing in the river with their rubber boats and they never missed colors. This is a major part of the Island tradition to pass down love and reverence for this beautiful place so they will cherish and preserve it for the future.

Annice O'Doherty



Before:



After:



## I Love Sugar Island Contributions for the new dock Kudos!

Thank you very much for your generous donations to the “I Love Sugar Island Fund!” Several thousand dollars were raised, enough to buy wood for a new dock, new ramp, and have the wood transported to Sugar. If there is any money left over it will be needed for other maintenance projects such as a new roof for the storage building.

Thank you to the volunteers on the September 30 work weekend who cleared the trails and built a new dock and ramp:

Pearse O’Doherty, Kevin and Susan Dermond, Jan Brabant, Chickie and Joan Dermond, Peggy Hart, (from Hay Island) Rich Cassar, Louis Mengersen, Dick and Leslie White and Kathy Kempson.

Your tax-deductible donations designated for Sugar Island are always welcome. The island needs to be self-sustaining and financially independent. Camp fees are not enough to pay for the property tax, insurance and maintenance of the island. Most of the structures you see on Sugar, such as the pavilion, A. Ireland Memorial Cabin, flagpoles, tables and benches, previous docks, and the storage building, were donated by previous campers, Lovers of Sugar Island!

If you would like to donate to Sugar Island, and get an income tax deduction, it is never too late. Contributions should be sent to the American Canoe Association, attention:

Kathy Schmiesing,  
Office Manager,  
7432 Alban Station Blvd., Suite B-232  
Springfield, VA 22150  
and payable to ACA / Sugar Island.

Or you can donate online at [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)



Thank you Sugar Island Lovers!  
Plan early to spend a fun, working weekend on Sugar Island this coming season. Work weekends are generally Memorial Day weekend and July 4 weekend and Encampment and Columbus Day.



## **Keep Grindstone on Your Left** **by Peggy Hart**

By phone from Hay Island to Sugar Island, Kathy Kempson and I conferred early in the morning of July 31. The weather report was cloudy with periods of sun and forecast to be very hot the following day. We decided it was a go and met at 8 at the Punts, which are a small archipelago of islands on the Canadian side, with a lighthouse making it a convenient rendezvous spot and also the hypotenuse of the triangle between Sugar and Hay. It was already very warm and I had to jump off the dock to get wet before I headed out to the meeting spot.

Kathy had made the strategic decision to paddle it counterclockwise, to take advantage of going downwind on the American side, which is the bigger water. We paddled along the Grindstone shore, past Potter's Beach (empty at 8 AM) and past sprawling old summer houses set on long beaches. With a view of Hickory to the right we elected to paddle under a footbridge between Watch island and Grindstone. We continued around the far western end and stopped to stretch backs near a collection of docks, sprawling house, and friendly family. Assorted kayaks, motorboats, sailboats, small children etc. littered the shore.

Now we could see the mainland (America, America!) and we started to surf a bit on the waves from the prevailing wind. Kathy pointed out the tower on Calumet island, from which "Skip" Rawson broadcasts updated weather bulletins from information gleaned from a camera there.

We continued working our way up the south side of Grindstone; past Aunt Jane's Bay and the town landing where a large military looking barge stopped to off-load something large, then passed in front of us on its way to unload another large something to a private dock. At this point it was obvious that there was a lack of public ice cream facilities on Grindstone, though with a detour one could paddle to Wellesley island and find it there.

We continued along the shore, wind abating as we went, our goal being lunch at Picnic Point. Soon we were in the channel between Picton island and Grindstone. The flavor of cottages changed with the topography: smaller and perched high on the steep slopes. There was one with an elaborate stair and a rail system for bringing up supplies.

We reached Picnic Point close to noon, a lovely vantage point looking east to Big Gull and Little Gull islands. Picnic Point was a historic destination for fishing parties and other century old expeditions. The original gazebo there was lost, but has been rebuilt in recent years through the efforts of friends of Grindstone. There are two public docks, one reserved for fishing parties. One may also walk a trail from Canoe Point, the easternmost tip of Grindstone. We had the requisite picnic and a swim, and met some folks who had walked the mile from the campground.

Launching the kayaks for the last leg, we rounded Canoe Point (where Kathy's son had worked last summer). We admired the cabins and then headed over to Sugar island. The sun had prevailed over the clouds by now and it was time for another swim.

From Sugar we paddled up through the Lake Fleet islands to complete the tour. It was about 18 miles, we guessed and we slept well that night but rose again to paddle the next day!

## **Keep Grindstone On Your Left**

**by Kathy Kempson**

Grindstone Island is either the third or fourth largest island in the Thousand Islands, I can't exactly recall, and I don't think it is that important which one it is, rather that you get the idea that it is one of the larger islands. There is no ferry to the island, but there are year round residents. Many islanders get around by mountain bike or 4 wheelers. It is about a 15 mile paddle around it. It is a lovely paddle around it. The shorelines vary as you cruise by. In a paddle craft one can get close enough to see the differing geological formations and other shoreline features that may be missed from a distance. There are undercut cliffs, sand stone that has washed away from underneath granite boulders, there are miles and miles of cat tail marshes with insect and bird life a plenty. There are sheer steep cliffs that are home to a wide variety of vegetation. I often wonder how it survives the years. There are bays that scream put a dock here, I will shelter your boats from the storm. There are majestic homes with breathtaking views and smaller abodes with views alike. State parks and wooded shoreline also treat the eyes as you coast by.

The time was 7:30am one early August morning. I got in my kayak and headed west from Sugar Island. I met a friend, Peggy Hart who stays on Hay Island, about 3 miles north west of Sugar Island, and about 3 miles due north of Grindstone, both in Gananoque, Ontario. We planned our meeting at "The Punts", a group of 4 or 5 islands, westerly of Sugar Island and south of Hay Island. One or two of "The Punts" are large enough to inhabit and others are just chunks of granite laying in wait to host whatever wild life will grow on them. An early morning departure was a wise move, as we paddled westerly the wind was quiet. We passed Potters beach about 8:30 am on a Monday morning. Potter's Beach, which is a gathering spot for larger boats, was empty and quiet with the exception of a lone rowing skiff. Around the head of Grindstone Island offered clear waters with beautiful views of the shoals and the sandy bottom of the river. Between paddling and wonderful conversation, we made our way along the shoreline while sight-seeing, the next thing we knew, we were closing in on the turning point, ready to follow the south shore of the island, heading down river and with the wind. With Clayton on our right, we coasted past Calumet Island. A large barge came out from Clayton to make some lumber and other supply deliveries to a couple homes on Grindstone. I am sure the Captain saw us, but when in a small boat, you still want to make sure. This barge may very well have been a military surplus vessel. A unique boat indeed. Our paths crossed several times as we both followed our courses, we were sure to keep in sight of the pilot and also keep our distance..

We rounded the corner into Picton Channel in what seemed to be no time since we had started heading down wind. One of the things that draws me to kayaking is the ability get "lost" in thought and time. It is almost as if when the wind takes you along, it takes your thoughts and puts them in a deep freeze, clearing your mind. We paddled on to Picnic Point in time for lunch and to stretch the legs and a short dip in the river. After a short self guided land tour of the state park, we returned to our boats to complete our journey. It was smooth sailing until we rounded the north east point of Grindstone known as Canoe Point. We were now pointing in to the wind. With the heat, it was a pleasure to encounter the soft winds. Up river, up wind we paddled, but headed towards Sugar Island, for short rest and refreshment. We again boarded our boats and paddled back toward our meeting point, and then Peggy and I parted ways, each of us returning to our own temporary island homes to await future paddling adventures.



About this newsletter:

Sugar Island is steeped in tradition. There is no place like it else where in the world. It is not just a chunk of land in the middle of a river. It is people, memories, family, history, paddling, sailing, swimming, fishing, stargazing, nature watching and so much more.

This newsletter has been designed to be informative and fun. It is for the benefit of the members of the American Canoe Association and their guests who visit or plan to visit Sugar Island. Or for those who wish to learn more about it. This newsletter is by, for and about the people who know and love Sugar Island. The Sugar Islander is published twice annually. This newsletter's primary distribution is in electronic format, (pdf, viewable with free software from ADOBE.com). It is available online at the Sugar Island Web Pages. <http://sugar.islandertalk.com> OR on the island online forum at: <http://www.islandertalk.com/forum>

Submissions, suggestions, photos, tidbits, any and all ideas and of course cold beers are always welcome. Please send them to [kathy@islandertalk.com](mailto:kathy@islandertalk.com)

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If you wish to advertise in this newsletter, please contact the editor. (All proceeds go directly to Sugar Island)





Some thoughts from a Trustee.....

As I near the end of my term as a Trustee of Sugar Island I want to say thank you to some special people. About 20 years ago when I first started coming to Sugar, I met an older couple who took me under their wings and instilled in me the values of volunteerism and stewardship. They taught me a lot about the history and traditions of Sugar Island and urged me to continue on with them. So to Adolph and Ruth Springel, I say thank you very much. I would also like to thank Bill Banholzer and Chuck Sutherland for bringing me on the Board of Trustees and for believing that I could make a difference and carry on these traditions. My family and I have had many wonderful vacations on this island and hope for many more to come. My children wouldn't miss their time at Sugar for anything. We have made many friendships over the years that I hope will last forever. I will continue to help out whenever I am able and may someday get back on the Board of Trustees. Sugar Island is a wonderful place and we must all do our part if we want to always have it. So to all the Sugar Islanders, I say thank you for doing your part to keep Sugar the pristine, natural wonder that it is. See ya at Sugar.....

Bob Cassar

Sugar Island Trustee 2001-2006

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