

Chapter 12

Adventures? NAY! Close Encounters? YEA!

Part 1 -A Change of Venue

"What caused you to end up in Newfoundland?" That's a question the old-old man is frequently asked.

"I shudder at what 'end up' really means," groans the man, "since asking an elderly person this question is a classic symptom of the *Ageism* disease which afflicts our society. When I arrive in Newfoundland after six months elsewhere, I blanch when people say, 'Shore am glad to see yee're still around, me b'ye!'"

"Why did I pick Newfoundland? The answer to that question involves some ancient history," continues the man. "My desire to experience northern wildernesses started years ago while flying over the Scottish Hebrides. I suddenly felt a tremendous urge to walk or crawl over those rugged terrains and shorelines. Later, I visited and admired the Scandinavian countries, touched down on the Faroes, and stayed several days in Iceland. I longed to see Labrador, and the island of Newfoundland, but there were no emergency landings. The flyovers were either at night, or when things below were masked by clouds or fog."

As previously narrated, the man and his dog-friend Dora, arrived in Alaska in May, '92. They toured and camped extensively, were impressed with the beauty of the place, but left there with much concern over the uncontrolled development trends, and the bedrock red-necks who frequented the place.

Fortunately, the splendid scenery remained intact, the City of Fairbanks retained some of its character, and the narrow mud and gravel roads that wound up and down through mountains to the ice clogged Yukon River, provided an overdose of fear and excitement.

"OK! Okaaaaay, olde man," shouts Ed, "get to the bloody point if there is one, or get to the bloody point even if there ain't none."

"Patience, you nagging figment of my imagination," replies the man. "I decided that the Province of Newfoundland offers more than enough space and beautiful scenery, and the friendly people make it comfortable to be here. I used to think the Scandinavian countries should have been models for Alaska and Newfoundland, but globalization is profoundly changing these northern countries, so I'm no longer sure."

"'nuf said, about what happened in 1992, and your modest observations concerning development of Alaska and Newfoundland," jibes Ed, "but this is May 29 of the twenty-first century. Tomorrow we blast off from Turner's Corner, and you seem more disturbed and unpleasant than usual."

"I have much reason to be disturbed. Thet fetchin' attractive info-dishing-out woman person back there in Waterton shore scuttled my dreams of high adventure in the higher

north," whines the man, as he sits inside his trailer on his comfortable office chair, and wheels back and forth between computer and stir-fry, underway. "She predicted the Alaskan Highway will be bogged down with hoards of giant motor homes, veritable mansions, each towing a car, in caravan formation, Alaska bound."

"But as Confucius say, '*They plenty way remove cat fur*,'" misquotes the man, "so now I must dream up a secret Fallback and Regroup Plan that will head them easy riders off at the crossroads. But there you have it, Theodore, Alaska is *out, kaput, fini*."

"Woof!" says Theodore.

Part 2 - THE MACKENZIE CORRIDOR SOLUTION

"Nice going, Olde Farte." interrupts Ed. "Must you tell that fleabag everything about our plans? He's likely to yap the details to every dog within hearing distance, including those aboard the motor homes you're so anxious to avoid. Do you actually believe he hankers for the places Dora visited, considering he usually played 'dead-dog' while you yackety-yakked about her adventures?"

"Adventures! Now you've said that dirtyed word. That's where the canker binds!" exclaims the man, "That's why I'm sorely tried, by that overused, misused, misinterpreted word, 'ADVENTURE', and even worse, that travesty called **ADVENTURE TOURISM!** Gentle Readers, how I regret the free use of that word in earlier chapters of this manuscript. "

"nuf sed, Ed," says the man, "Here's my fall-back plan which is best understood by referring to this report, entitled, *Mackenzie Valley Development: Some Implications for Planners*, by Forth, Brown, Feeney, Parkins, Government of the Northwest Territories for the Environmental-Social Program Northern Pipelines, January, 1974 :



Page 15 contains a map showing locations of communities of the Mackenzie Region. The Mackenzie River is sometimes referred to as the Mississippi River of the North, and has had considerable impact on Indians and Eskimos living in the area. Quoting liberally from the text - Chippewyan territory was east of Great Slave Lake, the Dogrib Indians occupied the area between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes, the Yellowknife Indians in land northeast of Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes.

In 1823 a war between the Dogrib and Yellowknife tribes resulted in almost total annihilation of the Yellowknives. From the 18th. century on, the Slaves occupied both banks of the Mackenzie River from Great Slave Lake to Fort Norman. The Hare Indians occupied the land west and northwest of Great Bear Lake. The Nahanni Indians roamed the Mackenzie Mountains, while the Kutchin or Loucheux Indians occupied territory extending from central Yukon River eastward to the Mackenzie.

The map shows the Canadian government's *great expectations* (in 1974) concerning the movement of oil from the Prudhoe Bay region. Where'd it go? It went thataway instead , south through Alaska.

The Mackenzie River powerfully meanders northwest from Great Slave Lake , crosses the Arctic Circle, and empties into the Beaufort Sea . In the following illustration, the proposed development was indicated by heavy broken lines for the highway, light broken lines for the pipeline, and crossed lines for the railway.

The man has overlaid this map with **place names and other information** to show the approximate location of places he planned to visit in this huge thinly populated historic region.



"Now Ed," says the man, "you must say nothing about this alternate plan to follow the less traveled, sometimes dusty, muddy, gravelly roads to escape the monster motor home onslaught. Until we complete our journey, this map of the Mackenzie Region where we are going, must be kept out of unscrupulous hands: Those fake adventurers! Those comers and goers! Those high rollers! Those sightseers, rubber-neckers, madcaps, turfhunters! If given this chart, someone might assemble a giant caravan and follow in our wake."

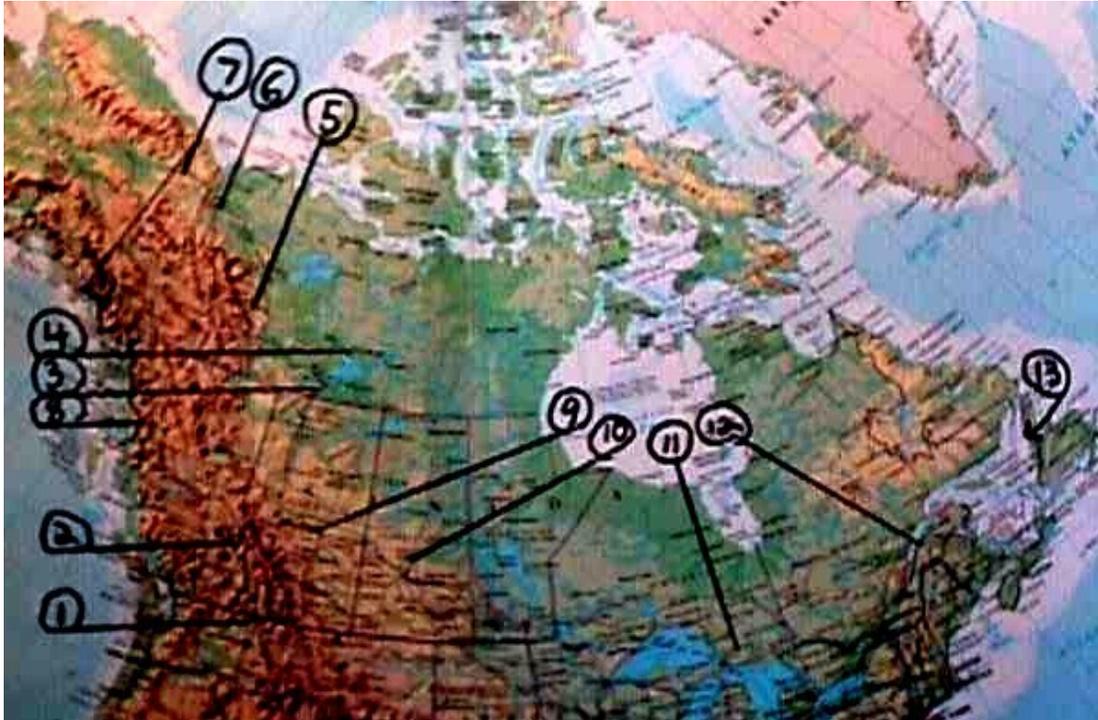
"I THINK YOU'VE GOT IT!" sings Ed, "ADVENTURE IS OUT, CLOSE ENCOUNTER IS IN."

Part 3 - Hither and Yon

"Oh my," sighs the man, "I'm plain tuckered and drived out, and so's my new van with 16,254 miles on its odometer, and two months since we left North Carolina. Well, here we are, parked alongside the harbour in North Sydney, Nova Scotia, awaiting the ferry."

Last night we slept in the parking lot attached to the toll booth, south of New Brunswick, and tonight we'll slumber here, before boarding."

Now they can unveil their map for the whole world wide web to see. The numbers show places in Canada that were their goals, beginning in Waterton, Alberta (01), and ending in Cow Head, Newfoundland (13):



Waterton, Alberta (01)

"Now hold it man, we were in Waterton before Turner's Corner. Have you forgotten the nice info lady who shattered our dreams about lazying north along wilderness highway to Alaska?" shouts Ed.

"How can I forget that close encounter with reality, her early warning signals about hoards of R/V's, which we later found were worse than anticipated," replies the man. "Later, when we drove around that gingerbread town and saw the motor homes and their towed cars, obscenely jam-packing the park alongside that lovely sparkling lake, we could see the signs for ourselves."

So they fled northward from Tucker's Corner, and eventually reached Banff, so beautifully situated with its mountain backdrops that its tourist overburden could be forgiven. Parking a van and small trailer was a breeze, since the town was dollar-wi\$e tolerant of the recreational vehicle trade, and there were occasional spaces between motor homes.

The man apologetically put a leash on Theodore and they walked through the business section, hungrily eyeing/sniffing the restaurants and looking/sniffing at the obviously multi-national crowds. They were intercepted by a group of Japanese tourists who

explained they had never seen a Golden Retriever. They politely begged to be permitted to hold Theodore's leash and be photographed with him.

Man and dog returned to the van, shared a can of sardines and crackers, and headed north on that superhighway that bisects and is breathtakingly loomed by the Rocky Mountain range.

"Oh my!" says the man, "Only a few hours of daylight and we'll soon reach Lake Louise, another overloaded 'must see' place. Well, here's a highway that heads west, let's go."

"Wonderful, beautiful, spectacular," crows the man, "that left turn promptly took us into British Columbia, towards Radium Hot Springs. Nearly deserted road, and a place for Theodore to have a rest stop."

"Danged dawg," shouts the man, "He's dipped into a pond and, oh my, oh my, he's splashing a young couple who are obviously preoccupied and resentful of the interruption."

"Pardon me, sir," says the man, "Please tell Theodore to 'sit' and then grab his collar so I can put a leash on him. No, Theo, no jumping. Oh my, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. He's gotten you all wet."

Icefields near Athabasca Glacier (2)

Our heroes visited Golden, BC (a sign said, 'The City of Golden Opportunity'), and shopped groceries in an IGA store. Their bakery bread, sold in open brown bags, was multi-grain, chewy, and much better than the straw-textured varieties offered by supermarkets in the States. While driving east into the Rockies, man and dog chewed happily on this fresh bread and chunks of cheese.

"Mosquito Creek Campground. It appears to be the last campground for many miles, and the weather's not much to brag about," thinks the man. "Almost missed it! I don't even see a camping sign. It's deserted, but at least the central area has been cleared. The rest is snow covered, but there are primitive outhouses---now that will feel great on my butt tomorrow morning."

Not long after their arrival, two women arrived in a car with a small travel trailer in tow. The man helped them back into a sheltered spot. They asked about the Wildegeist logo, explained they were from Holland and that "Wildegeist" is a Dutch word which means "Wild Spirit".

The temperature was below freezing, so the man connected the generator to a heater in the van, and turned it on, then retired to the trailer to cook dinner.

After that, he and Theo munched through snow between trees and buried camp sites, and then looked forward to relaxing in the warm van. But they were interrupted by the sudden appearance of a whole caravan of motor homes. They circled around the center of the campground and settled down for the night.

The man was the only one up and about the following morning, ready to capture the sunlight as it suddenly illuminated the mountain tops.



Hay River, Northwest Territories (3)

"This has been a long, uneventful drive from Slave Lake over to the Mackenzie Highway, then hours and hours later, we have reached the 60th. parallel, the southern border of the Northwest Territories." crows the man, "Dora and I were here in 1992 and a nice woman at the Visitor's Center gave her a certificate for her services as a brave travel companion."

"There you go again," says Ed, " reminiscing in front of Theodore, who has turned from red to green with envy."

"Here's the Welcome Center, Ed" replies the man, "and I've just checked inside. The same person is in charge and she has now awarded Theodore a certificate suitable for framing and hanging in his den. Also, I arranged to camp here tonight, then go to Hay River."

"It was in a campground near Hay River that I met Dorothy Manderfield, two tug boat captains and others, who were having a picnic," recalls the man, "Dora and I were invited to join them. The captains were almost ready for departure to Arctic destinations: To supply isolated villages and industrial operations during the brief summer months. At that

time, Dorothy was in charge of the company commissary. She turned out to be a faithful correspondent, so I'm anxious to drop by for a visit."

"How frustrating," muses the man, "Dorothy has written such wonderful letters and described places few people have visited. Perhaps in future I can ask her to supply details of her very real adventures to include in the *Wildegeest!* story. "

"Well, we've arrived at the Northern Transportation Company Limited (NTCL) office building. This brochure has a statement from the company president, Cameron Clement, which includes this paragraph:

NTCL is proud of its northern ownership and its 65 year tradition of providing reliable marine services across the Arctic. Throughout our history, despite low water, late springs, early winters, smoke, fog or ice infested waterways, our customers have always known we will deliver."

"I'm looking for Dorothy Manderfield," the man informs the receptionist.

She laughs and replies, "She's sitting over there, behind you."

A hugging welcome, then Dorothy asks the man to come back after lunch. She has an appointment with her boss concerning her summer assignment.

Meanwhile the man cruises the shipyard where these massive shallow draft tugs are being readied for summer duty. There are hundreds of barges in another area. Finally he meets Dorothy who then has him climb a very long ladder from the ground to the deck of the vessel. This will be her home and workplace this summer. She will be the cook, and the only woman aboard.

The barge deliveries include Yellowknife on the Great Slave Lake, isolated localities along the Mackenzie River including Inuvik, and many tiny villages.

The man tells Dorothy that he plans to cross the Mackenzie River on his way to Yellowknife, and that eight years ago he had attempted to go there, tore up a tire and turned back. This time, she says, you may be delayed by ice flows. The ice bridge is melted, so you'll have to take the ferry. She presents the man with a NTCL hat, which he wears with pride.

The following pictures show Dorothy welcoming the man aboard her summer home, at the foot of the ladder, and then introducing him to the ship's engineer:



Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (4)

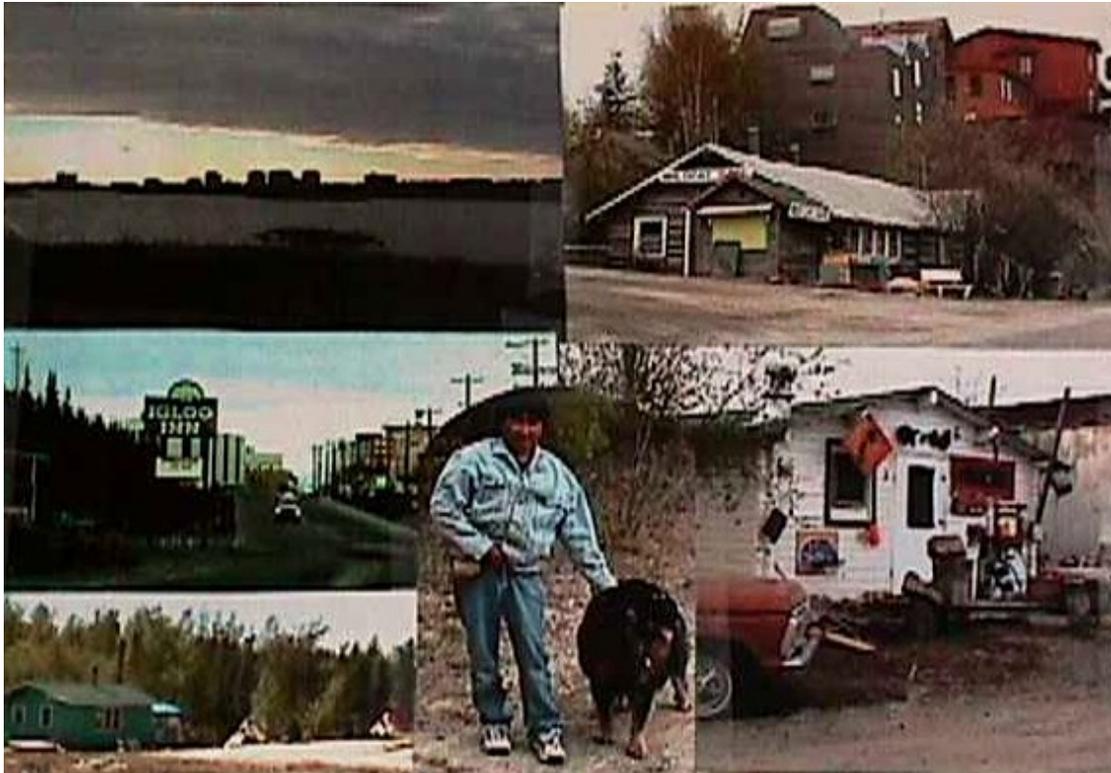
"Well, that ferry crossing was smooth and without incident." reports the man, "Only a beaten-up truck, driven by a man who works on the highway. After the lines were cast off by the Indian woman crew, I was invited to join them in the small waiting room, for coffee, *on the house*."

The man was relieved to hear that the highway had been paved, most of the way at least, so he could probably make it this time, without having his tires slashed by sharp shale. However, the last eighty or so miles, remained under construction, so van and trailer reached the well paved outskirts of Yellowknife completely coated with mud and dust.

The man's overall impression of Yellowknife was that it qualified as a neat, well run Canadian City with attractive legislative and museum buildings. He indulged his usual wish for Chinese cooking by trying a restaurant on the main street that cuts through the 'down town', and wondered about the absence of natives. The proprietor of the restaurant was of Chinese parentage. He apologized for the mixed cuisine and explained that his customers preferred pizza over *Chinese*, two to one.

A busy, overloaded Laundromat provided additional information. "Oh them," said a harassed woman, as she clung to two small children and folded laundry, "Drive a few kilometers outside the city and you'll see all of them you want to see."

"Come to think of it," replies the man, "I saw Indian houses along the highway, some with tepees in their yards. Once when I rest-stopped alongside the road, an Indian and his dog appeared out of the bush. He threw his gun on the ground to reassure me, pointed to his cabin across the road, and was quite friendly. Perhaps we had two things in common - a liking for our dogs and a desire to communicate."



Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories (5)

Our heroes returned to Port Providence, a neat Indian town on the Mackenzie River, then bought gas at the Big River Service Center, Ltd., not far from the ferry landing. Ian and his boss invited the man to park "anywhere you like and spend the night."

An ideal spot, and after dinner the man and dog wandered down to the river bank where Ian and his wife, and another man were fishing. Theodore took a dip while the man held his breath. Not far out, the river appeared to be flowing at about eight knots. If Theodore had gone swimming he would not have been able to return to the shore of that mighty river. Soon a three pound flopping pickerel was yanked ashore, and the man was promised, later received, fillets for their tomorrow's dinner.

At that parallel, daylight would continue for many hours, but suddenly mosquitos invaded in bright sunlight. Man and dog raced to the van, closed all the windows, but left the two screened roof ventilators wide open. A few hours later, Theodore was sick, and begged to

go outside. Something he must have scavenged in Yellowknife, with its limited space for active dogs to run free, surmised the man.

Drenched in *repellent*, the man followed the dog around the station grounds. It was 2:00 AM, and still daylight. At last, Theodore vomited a hugh ball of grass, and declared himself fit for duty by taking a dip in a drainage ditch.



They crossed the *big river* early next morning and reached the intersection where the Mackenzie Highway turns into an extension of itself. The man reexamined his maps and considered an assured safe passage versus a riskier one. Take a left, and drive on paved highways all the way to the Alaskan Highway, or turn right on this lonely gravel road that appeared to stretch to infinity.

"Not much choice, Theodore," said the man, "this gravel road will take five hundred miles off the mileage required to access the Alaska Highway, We can visit Port Simpson, an isolated community on the Mackenzie River, and then head south through British Columbia to Fort Liard, and then, Lord willin', Fort Nelson on the Alaska Highway."

"The builders of this gravel highway sure knew how to provide luxuries," exclaims the man. "bush country with nary a soul in sight, so they constructed these cozy little refuge huts at frequent intervals. Look inside, Theodore, a bare pallet to repose on, an oil drum converted into a stove, a tiny small window - what are they telling us? It's to keep someone from freezing, if caught out there in the wintertime. I assure you, dawg, it won't happen to us, but I must admit it's the real thing when it comes to primitive camping."

Hours and hours later, they camped alongside a lake, near Fort Liard, and were warned by an RCMP to look out for bears and buffalo. He assured the man that the remaining road was passable, and that they stood a good chance of making it to Fort Nelson and the Alaska Highway.

Destination Inuvik, aborted at Mackenzie River - Fort MacPherson (6)

"Paved highway at last," crows the man, "Can this be the Alaska Highway I traveled eight years ago? Lots of paving has been done. Now it's a pussycat, except for the heavy traffic heading North, traveling too fast to enjoy the scenery, but what's a fat cat to do?--- ***This two hundred grand motor home not to mention towed car, cost me a bundle, gotta use it (never mind the gasoline shortage and air pollution), gotta go see, have adventures, sorry - can't linger, must get back to work, or to something real.***"

"Canada was certainly a more relaxed place when I crossed the country in 1992," thinks the man. "Now the economy is booming for some Canadians, at least, and there's that great surge of pleasure seekers that caused me to flee the United States . Let 'em eat cake. Let 'em pig-out on prosperity, and to hell with the basic values of a well-ordered life."

"Dawson City, with its muddy streets, chilly fog, frequent rain: After so many miles, I can hardly remember the places we passed after Whitehorse, except where we finally left the Alaska Highway. Then the endless winding road, up and down, frequently past burned out forests, to Dawson City crowded with motor homes," whines the man, "All I needed. for goodness sake, was some insulating tape to stick around my trailer door, to reduce dust. The hardware store was an unreasonable facsimile of one in the 'Gold olde daze' and so was the breasty woman, in bonnet, pinched in waist, flowing flowery skirt."

"Now lookee here, me good woman," says the man, "what's a nice girl like you doing in a hardware store, and even worse, working in one? Do your parents know what yee're up to?"

"Yee're right, old sod," she replies, jumping into the spirit of the thing, "me fodder says it's either here, or the mines. Here I'm dry and warm. Now what th'hell you after?"

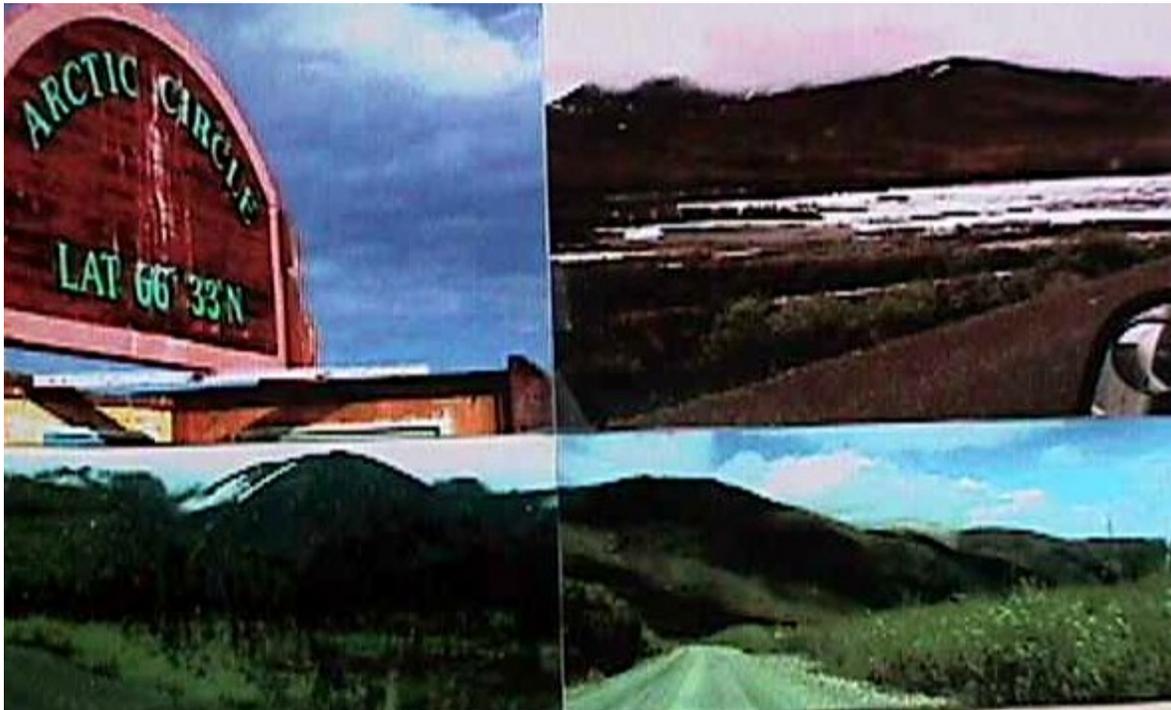
Forty miles back through the Klondike to meet Harold, the man's friend from Cow Head. They plan to go to Inuvik together, via the Dempster Highway, then Harold will drive his well equipped truck to Skagway and backpack the Shilkoot Trail. He's an experienced outdoor man whose background includes Canadian Army career and Park Warden. He loads his sleeping bag and rifle aboard the van.

"Welcome aboard, Harold," says the man, "We planned this meeting over six months ago, and here we are, on the Dempster, destination Inuvik. I camped out here last night to observe the traffic, and it appeared light. Don't let the pavement fool you. It turns to shale, a genuine tire killer, in about a mile."

"Here's something on the Internet that says, 'Dempster Highway is a feat in itself. It is almost entirely of SHALE, brought in by barge. As to mileage, the only public facility is the Eagle Plains hotel and gas bar at 226 miles; then at mile 250 - cross the Arctic Circle;

then mile 292 - cross Yukon/Northwest Territory border; then mile 380 - Mackenzie River crossing by ferry to Fort McPherson; and finally, mile 460 - Inuvik.

"We camped next to the Eagle Plains hotel the first night," reports the man. "Then, the excitement of crossing of the Arctic Circle, and the less scenic, more intimidating road north of the Yukon Territory. Bad news was awaiting us at the ferry crossing to Fort McPherson. It was closed, due to flood conditions and floating trees. So we regretfully gave up on reaching Inuvik, and returned to Eagle Plains that evening, to camp and drown our disappointment in the bar."



The man liked the bar at the Eagle Plains Motel because it was "dog friendly." When the waitress served the beer, she placed an ashtray in front of Theodore to use in lapping up his share.

That night a bear invaded the camp, but the man wasn't quick enough with his camera to record the incident. This was one of the longest days of the year, so Harold stayed up and watched the sun set and reappear. The man, wrung out from driving at tree-level over the shoulder less roads, and well adjusted to *sacking-out* in broad daylight, missed the entire event.

Theodore and Companions Fly to Old Crow, Northwest Territories (7)

The man was bitterly disappointed at their failure to reach Inuvik, so he drove to the Dawson City Airport to check out a consolation prize. Graham, the pilot, suggested an alternative to Inuvik - spectacular scenery, good weather, and fuel available for the return flight - three hours each way, to Old Crow on the Porcupine River and return. Theodore could go too, no sweat, "I'm used to special add-on orders from mining camps, *'While you're at it, bring a live pig and some chickens for a barbecue---and a few cases of beer.'*"

"So Harold and I , and Theodore, had a chance to see a great deal more of the Arctic, the Ogilvie mountains at eye level," reports the man, "and then the tundra, endlessly beautiful and scary if you imaged a forced landing. Harold rode co-pilot while I had room in back to handle cameras and Theodore." Harold and the man walked the length of Old Crow, met one of the three RCMP's stationed there, a visiting Anglican Church minister, some of the Indian children, but the adults usually turned their heads away. Theodore had a chance to swim in the river and was wet when he returned to the plane under Graham's disapproving glare.



Central Yukon, then several days south to Hyder, Alaska (8)

Harold departed for Alaska, and the man drove south and then east for an unplanned visit to Mayo, where he was surprised to find a Chinese restaurant that offered an excellent dinner. A young welder urged him to visit Keno, along the "Silver Trail". Said he would meet him there later - *cause it's the only place to buy beer on Sunday.*

A long lonely trail, almost as beautiful as the Dempster Highway scenery, and lightly traveled. Finally, a completely deserted ghost town, "Elsa", with houses, school, factory buildings intact. Then the trail continued to Keno, with its mining museum, a variety of old houses, one constructed entirely from bottles, and the thirsty young welder.



"While traveling south, I enjoyed a full day at Whitehorse." says the man, "It's the capital of the Yukon Territory, with an impressive legislative building, next to the city library, and across the street, a large tourist information building. As in Yellowknife, they have lots of colorful murals on the sides of buildings, some of which I photographed with my digital camcorder. An attractive place, but now I'm back on the Alaskan Highway, headed south. How can I escape the heavy tourist traffic? Hark! A gravel pit, they won't stop there."

Next morning, just down the road and before Watson Lake, a turn off and suddenly they are in 'naturally beautiful ' British Columbia. It will be a three day drive, over paved or unimproved highway, mostly through wilderness and mountains, about three-quarters the distance to Vancouver, and including another consolation prize - Hyder, Alaska (8). So Theodore was able to visit Alaska after all.

Hi ho," says Ed, "I see you're beginning to skip over many happenings and long distances. You must be as weary and bored as your readers. Get on with it, tale-teller, and don't spare the horses."

Edmonton, Alberta (9)

"Point taken, Edward," replies the man, "but I must mention that in 1992 I met an Edmonton man on his way to Whitehorse to look for a job. He was cooking a hamburger alongside his old car, so I invited him to prepare his meal inside my trailer, and after that we spent a pleasant evening. He had served in the Canadian army and had

plenty of tales to tell. This time, while in the vicinity of Edmonton, I managed to reach him by phone, and was invited to stay at his new home. It turned out to be a beautiful place in a small town near Edmonton. We camped in their drive way, next morning were served a delightful breakfast."

"I was pleased," continued the man, "to have renewed this chance encounter. I was not pleased when I compared how I perceived him then, and now. While down on his uppers, he was a man who bravely and cheerfully endured adversity without complaint. Now he seemed a greedy man, not satisfied with his adequate possessions, intent on acquiring things. Oh Lord, Let me have more, more, and more!"

Prince Albert to Esterhazy, Saskatchewan (10)

"Theodore, me darling, I'm about to blow this here Trans Canada Highway, a major artery that carries essential, and an overabundance of unessential traffic (such as us) hither and yon, and go seek something meaningful," says the man.

"*My darling you have traveled far,*" sings the man, "*Way beyond the western star!*"

"Spare me and spare me eardrums," begs Ed, "no more of that awful warbling. Just tell us what kind of prickly burr is under your saddle this morning."

"We've been traveling for weeks in search of *Last Places* and now I suspect that the best of all worlds can be reached closer by - here, there, everywhere," sighs the man, "Take Saskatchewan, for example."

"Closer by? In Saskatchewan? Do you know this province has as many square miles as Texas, and only four vs their seventy-five people per square mile?" replies Ed, "So get to the point, man."

"So much the better. At least there's room to stop, look and listen, without fear of being smushed by a travel trailer. So here we go, through this exit, north bound, destination unknown."

The untouched beauty of this province, miles and miles of it! Plenty of places to stop and walk around, and camp. They stopped in a small village and were approached by a restaurant owner, asked the meaning of *Wildegeest* and invited to partake of a free homemade soup and sandwich. That afternoon they arrived at Prince Albert, much too commercial, so they fled south along a narrow road, reached a truck stop at a cross road, stayed the night, buffeted by rain.

Next morning was, bright, sunny, and the land well-scrubbed. Here and there a tiny community and Ukrainian church domes. They parked along a farm road and hiked between fields of canola plants with bright yellow blooms. Theodore found a ditch full of water, and wallowed in it.

Towards evening the man pulled into Yorkton and Mr. Goodwrench agreed to service the van while he inquired if anyone knew a man named Alvin Holinati, who lives near Estrahazy.

The man told the Service Manager that in 1992 he was parked by the road, studying a road map and wondering where to camp, when Alvin pulled up alongside the Jeep and trailer, offered assistance and invited him to spend the night near his house. The manager managed to get Alvin on the phone and was given directions concerning the numerous side roads to follow to get to the Alvin and Wendy Holinati residence and farm.



While carefully following the directions, which involved a complicated network of narrow farm roads, the man recalled that Alvin's parents, Ukranian background, were visiting at the time, so he was invited to join them for a perogie dinner. Their children, Clarissa, Cardell and Nathan, now eight years older, were still wonderfully friendly, and much more 'growed up'.

A high protein diet seemed to work well for them. The children raised the animals that entered into their diet, and hunting added to the meat supply. Wendy was still at work, so Alvin brought out a mountain of coiled venison sausage and baked it in the barbeque along with potatoes. What a feast - with no mention of cholesterol.

After dinner, Clarissa, Cardell and his girlfriend, and Nathan, showed Theodore and the man their horses, and cow, and Clarissa demonstrated some training techniques.

Alvin is a welder, employed in a nearby potash mine. Wendy has a beauty parlor in Estrahazy. Together they have achieved a wonderful family centered life style which also gives their children much freedom, and ability to look outward as well.

Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario (11)

"Cut off me legs and call me Shorty!" whines Ed, "I thought after we bypassed 'Whineypig', and skirted the flooded woods, fields and pig farms of Manitoba, it'd be clear downhill sailin' to the Maritimes. Now you say there's Ontario to cross., and then we must learn to speak French in Quebec."

"Hush yo' mouf', Edward, I run a taut ship even if it's only a half-ton van, and I must keep this here crew under tight control," replies the man, "You'd better let this travel experience broaden you, and if that fails, learn to eat fast foods. And now a geography lesson concerning the size and rockbound state of some Canadian provinces recently contacted," continues the man, " Saskatchewan and Manitoba are about the same size, while Ontario is 1.6 times larger than either of them. Immediately ahead of us is the Cambrian Shield which is gonna be endlessly beautiful and tiring."

"I've got you there," teases Ed, "Cambrian' ain't on your road map because it has something to do with the Paleozoic era when algae and marine invertebrates were the predominant life form. I hope you aren't calling Canadians invertebrates."

"No comment, Ed, 'cause I gotta concentrate on this here narrow winding road that has introduced us to Ontario," replies the man, "Since you insist on bugging me, I'll cool you off by telling you we have 1240 miles to go, before we reach Capital City (Ottawa). Now I'm longing to park somewhere and stay the night."

"This is a resort area, plenty Sunday traffic," he continues, "It's July, every suitable turnoff for overnight parking has a sign which says: 'This Space Reserved for Snow Plow'. Now it's getting dark and here's a place with a well worn tractor-trailer on it."

"Hey Driver!" says the man, with the confidence of one truck-driver addressing a fellow truck driver, "Looks like we found a good place for the night."

As the driver climbs down from his rig he tells his woman companion that he will be right back. "Now listen here, Bucko," says Driver, "WE ain't stayin' the night, I am! so git yer ass and that crazy dog out of here. Can't you see we're relaxin'? See that pile of gravel 'side the road? All you gotta do is gun yer engin' and cross it to thet old road, 'hind them trees, and you and yer mut can spend the night in peace, ey?"

Next night, deep in the mountains, a blessed gravel pit, just past a bridge that crosses a gorge. "OK, Theodore," says the man, "no more exploring. Time to beddy-by".

Much later, Theodore growls, is told to "cool it, bloody dawg, GO-TO-SLEEP." Next morning, the man discovers a big pickup truck and horse trailer, parked just fifty feet away. A man and woman are walking two horses, and the smell of manure blends

pleasantly with the fresh mountain air. They're from Fort McMurry, Alberta, which they say 'is half full of Newfoundlanders' and are delivering the horses to a place near Toronto.

"Ever since we passed Nipigon that dawg has been sniffen and figgetin'," the man remarks to Ed, "Do you reckon it's somepin' he et?"

"Are you permitting me to talk to the Driver, whilst he has his eyeballs glued to the road, oh master?" jibes Ed, "If so, try looking to your right and you'll see that mighty expanse of glistening Lake Superior water. Theodore's acting like a fish out of water, and begging to be thrown in the drink."

"Now see what you've done, Ed," shouts the man, "out the door and up the beach to where those teen-agers are playing catch in shallow water. Now he's stolen a T-shirt from their pile of clothes. "

"Sit Theodore, sit you bloody hound." begs the man, "Please give me that T-shirt. There! Got you on the leash. Theodore! It's time to go. Please get back in the truck."

Much later. "I'm plum tuckered out. Sault Sainte Marie looks OK to me." whispers the man, "Good night Ed. Good night Theodore. Good night Jonathan, if you're somewhere about."

"Good night, Theodore," says Ed.

"Woof," says Theodore.

"Pax vobiscum, Ted" whisps Jonathan.

Rimouski, Quebec (12)

"OhmyGod," gasps Ed, "We survived your driving through Ottawa, then center city Montreal, deafened by your frightened groans, until you spotted that inconspicuous Rt. 20 exit sign that carried us across the St. Lawrence River, and thence to an Irving Station with space behind the tractor trailers, across from Quebec City, where we spent the night, I would have thought, exhausted from our triple by-pass encounters with civilization ."

"Instead," continues Ed, "you're pouring over road maps when all we have to do is head south for New Brunswick Province, when we get to Riviere du Loup."

"Quiet Edward," replies the man, "I'm thinking of phoning Jackie and Max in Wabush, near Labrador City, and dropping by for a visit. After all, Dora and I crossed Labrador on rough unimproved roads, but now it's a breeze to go from Lab. City to Goose Bay, and then a few relaxing days on the ferry to St. Anthony, Newfoundland."

"Another thousand miles to drop by for a visit?" screams Ed, "Ain't you had enough traveling?"

"Calm down, Edward," soft talks the man, "Their phone doesn't answer, so that's that. How about circling the Gaspé Peninsula? That would only add eight hundred miles."

As it turned out the driver had to give in to his rebellious travel weary crew - Theodore tore his sleeve, Ed tickled his eardrum, and Jonathan hissed insulting epithets.

So the man slipped by the Rivière du-Loup turnoff while Ed wasn't paying attention, then added only one hundred miles by visiting Rimouski. He longed to continue along the Gaspé Peninsula (I guess it will have to be another time), and instead, turned south for New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Cow Head, Newfoundland (13)



"Two months and one day since we left Newport, North Carolina, and here we are at our cabin," exclaims the man, "A fifteen thousand mile detour, driven all the way by a competent eighty-six going on eighty-seven year old driver."

"Yes, you're very very good, and be it understood, you command a right good crew," sang Ed and Jonathan, with an occasional woof from Theodore.

"Yes, I'm very very good, and be it understood, I command a right good crew," replied the man.