

WOLF'S



EYE

Vol. 1 No. 11

ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK, HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN

November 15, 1957



THIS MONTH'S COVER

It is impossible to have been aboard the Tonawanda and not recognize the character and attitude so ably drawn into the cover sketch of Joe Colombe by Bobbie Bermel. We tried to think of a few words for a caption, but no words would do justice to either the subject or the artist. Mrs. Bermel (Bobbie, to all who know her) has spent two summers on Isle Royale with her husband, Peter, who has conducted the recent extensive topographic survey of Isle Royale. Thanks, Bobbie, for the splendid work!

OUR FRIEND JOE

This is the month when Joe Colombe heads south to warmer climes for the winter. And this is the month, as you all know, that Joe Colombe officially retires from the National Park Service and his duties at Isle Royale. This is just about unimaginable to us here at Isle Royale and to many of you who have come to Isle Royale at one time or another.

Sometime ago, when it was learned that Joe was retiring this winter, letters -- many, many letters -- began to arrive at the Park from Joe's friends all over the country. Many recount a certain trip on the Tonawanda with Joe at the helm, many congratulate Joe for having done such a marvelous job, many recall that Joe has been here since 1935 before Isle Royale was even a full-grown National Park, and all speak of a sincere friendship with a man who always has a good word for the other fellow, who's always ready to help out a friend in need. At first we thought we could reprint some of these many letters here, but there are too many to choose from, and, on second thought, they should remain as Joe's personal property -- which they are now -- all bound into a book and presented to Joe.

There are many stories that Joe likes to tell and many that have become legend concerning Joe. While the following formed parts of the letters to Joe, we believe they're appropriate here.

The first is a story that Joe never tells all at once -- just a little at a time. It concerns the birth of the Tonawanda. The Year -- 1947. Joe and Bill Pakkala left Houghton in April bound for Aberdeen, Maryland, where they were to pick up two boats -- one was a tug and the other a smaller boat which they would tow back. After some Washington red tape was cut through, they began on their homeward trek. When they hit the Atlantic it was rough, but they went ahead with the small boat in tow. The trip up the Hudson River was delightful -- especially after they struggled with rain, fog and lousy compass on the Jersey shore. There was one "gate keeper" along the Barge Canal who wouldn't open up the bridge until some arguing was done. At Tonawanda, New York, ice kept

them stranded for 19 days. From all descriptions this was a real 19 days and you can imagine the anticipation of when the ice might go out. It was here in Tonawanda, N.Y., iced in for 19 days, that Joe gave the name "Tonawanda" to the tug. From ice to a stormy Lake Erie was the next step. Out in about the center of the lake the going was especially rough and the small boat in tow (since named the "Atlantic" and now in service at Rock Harbor Lodge) was nearly lost several times; Bill Pakkala almost got lost in the battle, too. Finally, in Lake Superior, Mr. Baggley came to the rescue with a canvas that covered the little tow so she wouldn't sink on the last stretch home.

Maybe Joe has forgotten all about this next story -- related by Pete Edisen:

"Then there was that time I was coming into the Daisy Farm dock and a CCC boy who was helping me jumped to the dock too soon and instead of landing on the dock he could only hang on the edge. If the boat would have hit him he may have been killed, but you shoved him down so hard that he went under the dock and came up on the other side."

Perhaps one of the most legendary of stories is this one told by Bob Linn:

"...I remember that night very well...you know, the one when we were looking for that plane that went down in the lake. There was Ed Kurtz, Frank Taddeucci, you and I. We started out from Mott in the late afternoon and it was one of those "hazy" days. Before darkness fell we were headed just about due south toward Keweenaw and then swung to make a zig-zag coverage of the lake. When darkness came, so did fog -- about 50 feet of it right on top of the water. We must have been somewhere near the steamer lanes at that time. We started on a general course back to the island -- very slowly and cautiously, tooting on that confounded mouth-blown horn of yours. Remember those islands we kept seeing? That's when you shut the engine off entirely and decided to just drift for the night. These "Islands" would come toward us faster and faster and just when it looked as if we were doomed to the rocks, the "islands" would float over the top of the Tonawanda -- just clouds or something. All in the process we were using the AM radio down in the hold for communications. Suddenly there was a blaze from the set -- a

a dynamotor, I think it was. But a handy fire extinguisher settled that. The boys at Mott were all hot and bothered about why we didn't come in. They were all over Mott Island with lanterns and lights. Someone was on top of the water tower with a handie-talkie saying he could see the stars and moon and therefore you could surely find Middle Passage OK. Your sage remark, "Hell, I ain't going to the moon," has since become a part of the legend of Joe Colombe. The next morning the sun shone brightly on Saginaw Point and another adventure came to a close."

What are some of the highlights in Joe's past both before and after Isle Royale? Louise Fretter has some knowledge of that:

Joseph E. Colombe was born at St. Seyville, Quebec, Canada, on January 11, 1888, his parents immigrating to this country at the turn of the century.

Joe first began employment as a mechanic assigned to work in Camp Siskiwit of Isle Royale National Park (Proposed) on August 28, 1935. The next season he was employed as a boat operator, and, with the exception of 1940, he has served in this or a similar capacity at the Island every year since.

Joe's previous experience made him well suited for the responsibilities he assumed at Isle Royale. He had been a boat operator for a number of seasons in waters off the coast of Florida and in the Gulf of Mexico. In the summers he operated cruisers for various Houghton residents in local waters. In fact, his employment record shows that he is as much at home on the water as on the land! He has held a boat operator's license since 1910.

Joe is a migratory person, spending his summers in the north and his winters in the south. We strongly suspect that the local businessmen time their spring sales campaign "Suddenly It's Spring," not with the arrival of the first robin nor the blooming of the first crocus, but with the news that runs like a blaze the length of Sheldon Ave. --- "Joe Colombe's back in town!"

There's probably no one among us who expects Joe to disappear from Isle Royale now that he's "retired." At least, we hope not. Best of everything to you, Joe, and may a million unexpressed "thank you's" combine to bring you much happiness.

ALL HANDS IN

Ranger II removed all personnel from Windigo Ranger Station and Mott Island -- returning to Houghton on Sunday, November 17th. The last trip actually started on Tuesday, November 12, when the Ranger left Houghton for Windigo. By Wednesday night Ranger II had arrived at Mott Island and was to have left for Houghton on Friday, the 15th. More wind and storms were predicted, however, delaying the Ranger's arrival until Sunday. Those who returned on this trip were: John Murn, Salem Lahti, Ben Radeka, Andrew Zeigler, Frank Taddeucci, Bill Forsell, Dave Kangas, Roy Stamey, John Markham, and Joe Colombe -- all from Mott Island. Those coming in from Windigo were: Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Pizzi, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Johnson and 3-year-old son, Mark.

Hyposonic, but still FAST -- WIND

In these days of fast moving objects obtaining speeds of 18,000 MPH or more, 65 MPH seems pretty tame -- even dull. Sixty-five was the approximate gust speed of air over Isle Royale and most of Lake Superior on November 8. This was a real gale that turned all harbors and bays into what appeared to be ice cream. Many faithful old trees were parted from their shallow soil sites, some broke in half, and a number of them fell against the new power line on Mott Island.....the line held, however.

At Windigo about 1000 feet of electric line went down by virtue of trees falling against it. Fortunately the Windigo line was not the brand-new variety. No other damage of major consequence is known to have occurred, but it was exciting.

Since this first real storm of the season, wind and snow have been a common occurrence. Houghton now has a snow cover ranging from 5 to 10 inches and drifts of several feet.

NOTES FROM AND ABOUT THE ISLE ROYALTY

A note just arrived from the Stimsons. Their address: 340 Main Street, Bar Harbor, Maine. Dave is now acting District Ranger at Acadia National Park until spring when he plans to return to Isle Royale. Kay says in her note that no snow is there yet and that they have found a very nice apartment for the winter. They both seem to be enjoying their temporary assignment.

The Bob Johnson's have returned to Two Harbors, Minnesota, until next spring when Bob resumes his work at the park -- operating the Park's crane, piloting the Tonawanda, and what have you. Bob acted in District Ranger Stimson's stead at Windigo during October and November. This winter Bob will work with his dad, Milford, and brother, Frank fishing for herring out of Duluth and Two Harbors -- a real cool (traditional, not slang, sense) job. Bob and Ruby now have this address: PO Box 684, Two Harbors, Minnesota.

From Paris, France, comes a letter from Tom Smith who has been Seasonal Ranger at Windigo for the last couple of years. Says he: "While we are basking in the sun on the Riviera, I will be thinking of you all away over there under two feet of snow." Smug, ain't he?! Tom's address: until December 19: American Express, Rome, Italy. Then until latter January: American Express, Madrid, Spain. This is the first time that WOLF'S EYE has been mailed to Rome and Madrid.

Mr. Lewis has just returned from California where his mother has been seriously ill. Returning from the island on November 10, Mr. Lewis flew directly to the west coast and returned here November 20.

Pete Bermel and his two U.S. Geological Survey assistants, Ed Sheldon and Julie Feeler left Isle Royale aboard the Voyageur on Sunday, November 10. Pete has been doing a magnificent job at Isle Royale producing a topographic map for the U.S. Geological Survey. The field work is now completed after two years in the doing. Maps will not be

available to the public for a year or two, however.

Harvey and Hazel Sinclair also left Isle Royale on November 10, aboard the Ranger II. Harvey has been with us for the entire summer from the NPS Eastern Office of Design and Construction as electronics engineer on the Mott Island to Rock Harbor Lodge electric system. Hazel has added some inspirational recipes to the files of some of the womenfolk at Mott Island -- especially her SUPERB Italian sauces for spaghetti and pizza. ~~MMMMM~~! The electric system, incidentally, did not quite get finished because some last minute switch gear did not arrive as per schedule.

P.S.: Last minute note from Glendive, Montana: on their way to Seattle, thence to Los Angeles. Blizzard is forecast, but they're still going strong (Nov. 19).

THE GIBBS' MAKE ANOTHER MOVE

We have word from several sources that Bob, Mary, Patty, and Johnny Gibbs have made a transfer from Great Smoky Mountain National Park to Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area, where Bob is now Superintendent.

Cape Hatteras NSRA was authorized as such on August 17, 1937, and there followed many years of project status. Included in the area are 24,705 acres of Federal Land (mostly donated for the purpose by the State of North Carolina). Many interesting historical and natural features make the Cape Hatteras area nationally significant. First of all it is one of the only few remaining undeveloped stretches of coastline along the Atlantic seaboard. The coastline, incidentally, is mostly that of the islands which are found off North Carolina's coast. The famous Cape Hatteras Lighthouse is located here, which was built to warn mariners that they were near the Atlantic's "graveyard of ships." Oh, yes, and there's a great abundance of mosquitoes in this area, too!

After the Gibbs' are settled (we think they moved about November 5) we hope they will give us some first-hand observations on their new home.

TED SCOTT -- FROM FELDTMANN TO LAKE MEAD

We know that all of the Isle Royale will be glad to know that Ted Scott has been placed in a permanent status position with the National Park Service -- as Park Ranger at Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Arizona and Nevada.

Ted first came to Isle Royale in 1954 as a Fire Control Aid at the "loneliest spot in the world" -- Feldtmann Lookout tower. Twenty minutes after Ted arrived at the tower for the first time, he looked back down the trail he had just hiked over (6 miles from Siskiwiit Bay) and there was a smoke. The smoke turned to visible flames and a contingent of fire fighters started out from Windigo Ranger station and from Mott Island. The Tonawanda was in Siskiwiit Bay with a group of inspecting "brass" and they headed from Wright's Island toward the smoke. Many of us will never forget that little fire. No, Ted wasn't smoking along that trail; lightning had struck a tree 10 days before and just smoldered along waiting for the fire guard to show up. Ted is one of the very few elite who was willing to stick-it-out and DID stick-it-out for one whole season at Feldtmann tower. In 1955, Ted came back as fire control aid stationed at Mott Island. Near the beginning of the season, however, a Seasonal Ranger's position became vacant which Ted then filled for the remainder of the season.

Again, in 1956 and 1957, Ted filled the seasonal Ranger-Naturalist position at Rock Harbor. During these two years Ted did a lot of work helping to make the interpretive program at Rock Harbor a workable and interesting one. Visitors to Rock Harbor Lodge will not soon forget Ted's friendly informality nor his excellent photography and intimate knowledge of the park's wildlife.

Before Ted came to Isle Royale he was already acquainted with Marilyn Holly, but we can't help but believe that Isle Royale played some part in making Mrs. Ted Scott of Marilyn Holly. Just slightly over a year ago the Scotts became parents of a daughter, Gail Lynn Scott, who is the youngest Charter member of the Isle Royale Natural History Association, and who spent a large part of her first year on Isle Royale -- a good start.

Thank you, Ted, for your fine work here at Isle Royale,

and may your labors of the future be rewarded by many good results and hapiness.

FIVE BOAT CONVOY

On the same day that Ranger II left the island for the last time (November 17), five other boats returned to the Minnesota shore. First, the Jeffrey brought the Crystal Cove Johnsons to Rock Harbor where they took Pete and Laura Edison aboard, and then proceeded to Siskiwit Bay. There, Ed and Ingeborg Holte also got aboard. Meanwhile the Voyageur had taken on Jack Bangsund at Rock Harbor. And here's where we get a little lost in details. (Because of a recent storm in the Lakes area, many telephone lines are of the temporary type and the connection between Houghton and Two Harbors, Minn., was very poor.) We do know that the Rudes got to Duluth OK and that the Sivertsons and others from Washington Harbor got in, too. In all, five boats (Jeffrey, Voyageur, Disturbance, Rita Marie, and Nee Gee) made the crossing from Washington Harbor to the North Shore and that all but the Voyageur went on to Duluth (after, possibly, stopping at Grand Marais enroute). So far as we know, there's no one on the island at this time.

UTNIKS

Someone was reading in a magazine last week about a radio telescope in England receiving impulses from a star which was one billion light years away. Thinking that all WOLF'S EYE readers would be very interested in this fact and associated facts, WOLF'S EYE "staff" got to work to work to determine just how far one billion light years was. Starting with the premise that light travels about 186,000 miles per second, we went on with our higher mathematics. We now know EXACTLY how far one billion light years is:

3,916,656,000,000,000,000,000 miles

(that's: 3 sextillion, 916 quintillion, 656
quadrillion)

We thing this is real news. Look at the news sensation Sputnik & Mutnik made when only from 200 to 900 miles away.

"OUR RUTH"

The postman brought news recently of the marriage of Miss Ruth Marie Sanders to Mr. William D. Bardes, of Detroit, Mich., in Louisville, Kentucky, on Friday, November 1, 1957. After a honeymoon spent along the eastern seaboard, the Bardes' will make their home at 2804 Coolidge Highway, Royal Oak, Michigan. Ruth and Bill have the fond wishes of all their Isle Royale friends.

HAKALA'S OFF ON A NEW ADVENTURE

Since Bob Hakala left Isle Royale, the Hakalas have been at Prince William Forest Park, Virginia -- a part of National Capitol Parks. Bob did a good job at Prince William and has now gone on to greener pastures. Bob and Jean and kids stopped in at the Houghton office recently enroute to the west coast. There, Bob will head-up the West Coast Branch of the Museums Branch of the Park Service -- formerly found only in Washington. Bob is the first director of the western branch of museums which speaks well for Bob's ability and we're sure he'll do a fine job.

DAVE-OF-ALL-TRADES

Need a good camp cook? someone to bake you an angel-light loaf of bread? someone to help unload a cargo from Ranger II? someone to help inventory government property, type out a letter...or anything else that needs doing? And with a smile, yet? It came to our attention this past season that Dave Kangas is the guy you're looking for -- a "Dave-of-all-trades."

PARAPHRASE OF
THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

The Lord is my Pilot, I shall not drift.

He lighteth me across the dark waters.

He steereth me in the deep channels.

He keepeth my log.

He guideth me by the Star of Holiness for

His Name's Sake.

Yea, though I sail 'mid the thunders and tempests
of life, I shall dread no danger; for Thou art
with me.

Thy love and Thy care they shelter me.

Thou preparest a harbour before me in the Homeland
of Eternity.

Thou anointest the waves with oil, my ship rideth
calmly.

Surely sunlight and starlight shall favor me on
the voyage I take, and I will rest in the port
of God forever.

..... Captain J. Rogers
Merchant Marine

WOLF'S EYE COVER-FOLDERS

Attached below is an order blank for 1957 and/or 1958 WOLF'S EYE cover folders. The covers are now ready and will be shipped to all purchasers as soon as the shipping boxes are received -- about two weeks.

A breakdown of the expenditures for each 50¢ purchase looks like this:

Mailing container for each cover	\$0.15
Postage for each cover	0.06
Cost of cover and WOLF'S EYE annual publication expenses	0.05
WOLF'S EYE postage per person per year.....	0.24
	<u>\$0.50</u>

On the order form, place a circle around the year of the cover that you wish to purchase, tear off at perforated line, fill in your name and address and send with remittance to the address printed on the order form. We can bill you for the amount if you wish.

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