

## CanoeSki Spring News 06

**If** you're in the habit of listening to CBC radio around 6:45 am, you may have heard me on their "good question" feature a couple of months ago. While documenting the flood waters coursing through Saskatoon early last summer, I ended up high above the river weir, on the train bridge walkway. What I saw was uncanny. The flood water was level with the top of the weir at the west end, but still falling at least a foot or more at the east end. Any logical explanation eluded me, but I thought it might be a good question to pose to CBC. However, the idea didn't resurface till early February when a proposal was unveiled for turning the weir into a whitewater park. The weir was suddenly in the news, so how apropos to explore the mystery of the off-level dam. So, I called CBC. Well, they talked to a City engineer, who figured the phenomenon was an optical illusion. My camera wouldn't agree! So, I'm still on the hunt for a good answer. If you're on the hunt for the latest scoop on Saskatoon's whitewater park follow the links in [What's New](#).

**In** mid-May, well before the South Saskatchewan River hit flood level, The Globe and Mail was looking for travel material to flesh out a piece on the two western provincial centennials. Laura Robinson, a well-known Toronto journalist in women's sports, hopped on board a CanoeSki tour to capture a [River impression](#) of the historical Northwest Resistance events and landmarks. Justin Scott, an Aboriginal cultural interpreter from Beardy's First Nation was also on board, so she got the full meal deal!

**Another** river in partial flood last summer -- the Churchill -- hosted another successful Women & Waves canoe trip last August. It turned into a remarkable mother-daughter affair with 4 family teams on board. Kelly Warden from Regina, who booked the trip to celebrate her birthday with her 3 daughters, parlayed her journal entries into an awesome [Personal Odyssey](#) of the trip.

**Another personal journey** -- short and sweet, just like this fascinating fall trip on the South Saskatchewan -- was contributed by Christine Varnam of Saskatoon. You can relish the freshly roasted corn, the flocks of noisy cranes, the nature hike with Anna Leighton and floating downstream in a valley of changing colors. Read her impressions of last September's [Cranes & Colors](#) trip.

**Moving** to upcoming events, on the topic of centennials, it's Saskatoon's turn this year. To get paddlers in the mood, CanoeSki is offering a [Centennial River Run](#) to celebrate 100 years of South Saskatchewan River history. To help pull this off, we're delighted to have Bill Waiser, famous Saskatchewan historian and author on board the early summer tour. On the fall tour we will feature another local historian and City archivist, Jeff O'Brien. Join us to celebrate the Saskatoon Centennial with a river twist!

**The** only discouraging piece of news I have relates to that paddler's paradise - the Churchill River. Its status as paradise is in more jeopardy than ever with the government's release of its draft land use plan for the north central region. It's no secret that industrial interests have dominated the planning process with the result that the Churchill has been left open to logging and mining development, subject to unspecified environmental conditions. If you value the Churchill and all it represents for Saskatchewan paddlers, take a look at the [CanoeSki Critique](#) of the draft plan and the [CPAWS Critique](#), and then fire off a letter to the Premier, telling him that if the government really wants to go green, giving the Churchill River the full protection it deserves would be a good place to start.

**Not** to end on a bad news note, the [Wilderness Navigation Course](#) is set to kick off the instructional season in late May. In spite of increasingly sophisticated tools like GPS, interest in time-tested map & compass skills is not waning because these tools are as elemental as a canoe & paddle to the wilderness experience. [Paddling Courses](#) are slated to go in early June. These programs are great for getting introduced to the world of canoeing or to brush up on technique for

the summer of Canoe Tours that follow later in the season. Hope to see you with paddle in hand soon!

Cliff Speer

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