



September 5, Turtle Island (Victoria Island): morning smudging ceremony with Evelyn Commanda and Max Finkelstein prior to launch of the canoe and departure



September 7, Montebello: Nick and Marise load the canoe while the mayor of Montebello, a teacher, and his class come early in the morning to see us off.



September 9, Lake of Two Mountains: heading under the Highway 40 Ile aux Tourtes Bridge to Montreal



September 10, Montreal: paddling through downtown Montreal via Lachine Canal



September 12, Sorel: heading up the Richelieu River, Liz Elton setting the stroke

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Grandfather Commanda would also have liked that we met so many people in so many different places who cared about the health of their waterways, be it the Ottawa, the Hudson, the Delaware or the Potomac. He would have liked that the people we met shared his concern for the earth's ecological health, regardless of their national or political affiliations. It made no difference if they were American or Canadian, Repub-

lican or Democrat. From beginning to end of the trip, this generous support was unexpected and inspiring. In one of our last campsites, a Tea Party supporter took some of our heaviest gear in his car to our next campsite, a long way down Chesapeake Bay, and left us an enormous bucket of delicious fried chicken sitting on top of the packs. When we were storm-bound on the northern end of Lake Champlain, a Republican lent us his family's mag-

nificent "farm" house (he had another residence) for three days while we waited out the storm. I surmised he was a Republican because there was a framed thank-you letter from President Bush on the wall. There was the lady in a small town on the border of Vermont and New York State who opened up her closed cabins and cooked us a wonderful supper. It was difficult to get her to accept even a token payment for this wonderful kindness, which



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1. From Ottawa River to the Lachine Canal, passing Petrie Island, Montebello, Carillon Lock Station, and Hudson, Quebec
2. St. Lawrence River downstream to Sorel to go up the Richelieu River/Chambly Canal to Lake Champlain, passing through US customs and near Burlington, Vermont and French-built Fort Ticonderoga (Fort Carillon in French)
3. Navigating the 12 locks of the Champlain Canal to the headwaters of the Hudson River, passing Troy, Albany, Kingston, Poughkeepsie, Stony Point, Sleepy Hollow, Yonkers and on to Manhattan via the tidal strait called the East River and Hell's Gate
4. Around the inside channel off Staten Island to the Raritan River in New Jersey, then overland from New Brunswick to the Delaware River.
5. The 14-mile (22.5 km) Delaware-Chesapeake Canal to Chesapeake Bay
6. Chesapeake Bay, to the Potomac River, to Washington D.C. and the Washington Canoe Club, passing Point Lookout, St Catherine's Island, Caledon State Park, Pohick Bay Regional Park

saved us all from a long night in tents under a drenching rain.

These random acts of kindness were not only greatly appreciated, but I am not sure that we could have made it to Washington without them, for they often came at key moments when exhaustion was overcoming the stoutest heart. It caused me to reflect a good deal on our politics, both north and south of the border. Why is it that people from all walks of life care that their rivers and waterways be clean? Why is this priority not reflected in our governments?

And it was clear that governments can make a difference. When we arrived in Washington on October 17, 42 days after leaving Ottawa, there was a celebration on Capitol Hill to mark the 40th anniversary of the American Clean Water Act. Every-

where we paddled we met biologists, fishermen and local residents who told us that rivers and lakes were now cleaner than they had been prior to the passage of the Clean Water Act. We saw the act at work on the Hudson and Delaware rivers, where very large federal projects were underway to clean up the river bottoms, removing PCBs and other toxic substances. At one site, I counted 18 diesel shovels at work, and the good news is that, mostly, we found the water reasonably clean. Fish were jumping, fishermen fishing, big raptors including bald eagles were flying in the sky courtesy of another government act prohibiting the use of DDT.

Nonetheless, we're not there yet – for only at the ocean end of Chesapeake Bay did we find people catching and eating fish, rather than catching and releasing. And it was here that our last random act of kindness happened.

Beach fishermen gave us a handsome catch of fish and some charcoal to start a fire; that night we dined on pan-fried fish. Delicious!

William Commanda was never a rich man in "things." There are no great buildings or statues or physical wealth to commemorate his life, but I felt we were doing what he would have wanted to preserve his legacy, for it is one best measured by how we live and what we deem important. I am sure that he would like to know that the people we met from

Ottawa to Washington along 1,800 kilometres of waterways would all have shared his desire for reconciliation among peoples and his ecology concerns for preserving ancient forests like the South March Highlands and sacred places like the Chaudière Falls.

Formerly a municipal councillor, Clive Doucet engages with the world as a poet, author, blogger, avid cyclist, rower and now somewhat seasoned paddler.



September 15-19, Isle La Motte, Lake Champlain: windbound at Turner Farm, drying out gear.



September 24, Champlain Canal: campsite on the Champlain Canal

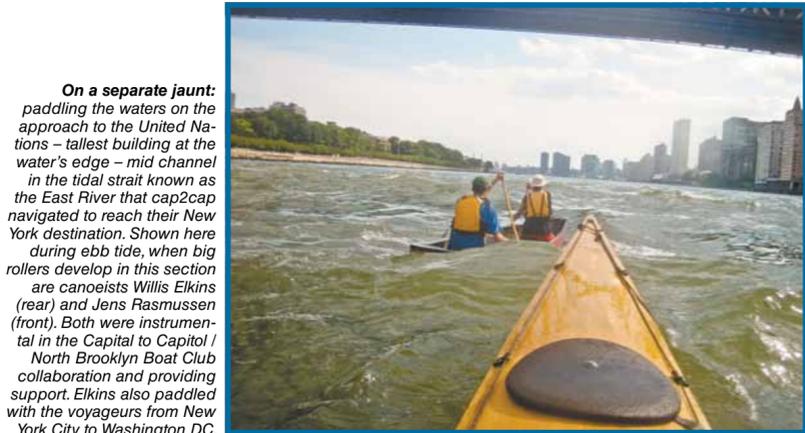


September 28: a Stony Point Paddler escorts the Canadian crew and voyageur canoe from Cold Spring to Stony Point on the Hudson River.



October 1, New York City: on the East River, in front of the United Nations building.

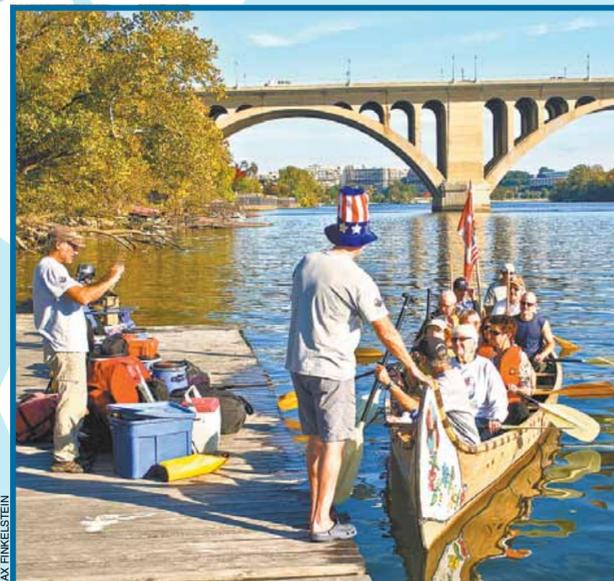
Washington D.C.



On a separate jaunt: paddling the waters on the approach to the United Nations – tallest building at the water's edge – mid channel in the tidal strait known as the East River that cap2cap navigated to reach their New York destination. Shown here during ebb tide, when big rollers develop in this section are canoeists Willis Elkins (rear) and Jens Rasmussen (front). Both were instrumental in the Capital to Capitol / North Brooklyn Boat Club collaboration and providing support. Elkins also paddled with the voyageurs from New York City to Washington DC.



October 4, Delaware River: after overland transport of canoe and equipment from New Brunswick, New Jersey, the crew makes an impromptu stop at a river festival on the Delaware River near Philadelphia. Then it's on to the Delaware-Chesapeake Canal, the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River.



October 17: celebrating our arrival with members of the Washington Canoe Club who played host to the capital to capitol by canoe crew in Washington D.C.



October 17: Clive Doucet and Max Finkelstein bring the trip to a close with the ceremonial mixing of the waters of the Ottawa River with the Potomac. Sage and tobacco bestowed on the paddlers by Evelyn Commanda on September 5 in Ottawa, are scattered on the waters of the Potomac.