

What better thing to do with a new canoe than use it.

Looking for a halfway point between my residence in Ottawa and my sister Judy's home near Barrie, we decided on celebrating the Canada Day weekend in a very logically Canadian way - canoeing in Algonquin Park.



Getting dirty at the access creek. Our chosen route was a three-night loop in the highway 60 southern corridor of the park circling Cache and Smoke Lakes and portaging through the ponds connecting the two.

Finding the access point was no problem. But starting our journey without getting dirty wasn't quite as easy since the snaking creek leading to Cache Lake was a muddy quagmire that's probably stolen its fair share shoes.

Nevertheless I jumped into the muddy water with gusto and soon enough we were bunkering down for our first night on Cache Lake.

The next morning Judy and I faced two tough portages totalling 2675 meters on our first real day. The length of the portages wasn't so bad, but midway through the first of them we reached a boggy swamp in the middle of the trail - with a fallen log as the only route through to the path on the other side. Thankfully I didn't fall, but boy did my shoulders ever ache that second night. Judy, all 110lbs of her, helped me out with the portages the third day and we were rewarded at the end of our final portage with our first-ever moose sighting on Smoke Lake.

We camped on Smoke Lake that final night before heading home the next day.