
The White Chair

Grace S. Grose - September 25, 2023



Vacation Anticipation

In mid-September, my husband - Tucker - and I were able to tear ourselves away from harvesting our gardens on our small farm. We loaded up our 16' motorboat, aluminum canoe and camping gear to travel several hours north and stay a few days at the Red Goat Lodge.

Red Goat Lodge has camping sites, as well as a few small cabins, and is located on the shore of Eddontenajon Lake. We had been there several times, enjoying the fishing and relaxation, and were looking forward to this time away.

All went well in setting our camp up in the evening. We went to bed, anticipating the fun we would have the next day.



The canoe, a video of the events, the boat whose motor was kaput

A Day On The Lake

Morning arrived with a bit of cloud cover. After a leisurely breakfast, we got our boats in the water. The plan was to tow our canoe with the motorboat, then canoe through a small, shallow river to an adjoining lake. Once we reached the other lake, we would explore it in the canoe and look for future hunting places. We wanted to discover the perfect spot to get a moose!

Our first inkling that there may be a problem came when we found out the boat motor battery was dead. As in D - E - A - D. No life. Nada.

Optimistic and undeterred, Tucker pull-started the motor and we were off. The canoe towed behind the boat beautifully, the lake was calm and the scenery was spectacular. The trees had the first of their leaves changing colors and the mountains surrounding us beckoned with potential hunting spots.

The lake zipped by as we traveled the approximately 13 kilometres to the south end where the river mouth was flowing out. We parked the motorboat in a secluded spot, moved our gear to the canoe, and paddled away.

Getting to the other lake was easy. We spent a couple of hours checking out “moosey” looking spots, occasionally going ashore to look for moose sign. We found lots of tracks and scatological evidence that moose were in the area. This was hopeful indeed. We had the bonus of catching several fish as we paddled around, which only added to our enjoyment.

The wind began to pick up, so we turned around. We managed to paddle upriver without too much strenuous effort until we arrived back at our waiting boat.

Problems

It didn't take long to put our gear back in the boat and reattach the canoe.

Trouble started when Tucker tried to pull-start the boat motor again. He tried and tried, taking a few breaks in between to examine the inner workings of the motor, all to no avail.

Uh oh.

It was 4 pm.

We were on the far side of Eddontenajon Lake, at the extreme south end.

The other side of the lake, which the highway ran alongside, was a LONG ways away.

And there were very few boat launches that we were aware of, even if we could get to the other side.

Our camp was over 13 kilometres away, across a now-vast expanse of water.

Brainstorming

The level of our concern grew as the reality of our predicament set in. We had the equipment to be able to spend the night, but it certainly wouldn't be comfortable. We prayed for divine guidance.

We began tossing out ideas.

- Row the boat to the closest part of the far shore, towing the canoe.
- Leave the boat and take the canoe across.
- Use our Inreach to get ahold of someone to help us find a person with a boat to tow us.
- And other ideas.

We finally landed on attempting to row the boat and tow the canoe.

Until we realized we hadn't put the oar locks for the oars into the boat. They were still at home.

Peachy. Just peachy.

Time was ticking away. In lieu of any better idea, we then decided to tow the boat with the canoe. We re-arranged the boats and our gear before beginning the mad paddle to the distant shore.

From where we started, the far shore looked like an unbroken wall of greenery. However, as we got closer, we noticed a white object sitting on the shoreline.

Tucker got out his binoculars and said, "It's a white chair. Head for the chair."

We headed for the chair.

The White Chair

Thankful that the lake was still calm and the wind hadn't picked up, we kept paddling.

The white chair drew steadily closer. We kept going, even when it felt like our arms would fall off. Eventually, we reached our beacon of hope - the white chair.

It sat serenely on the shoreline, placed who-knows-how-long-ago, to welcome us.

A Surprising Find

Beaching the boats only took a few minutes. We shook our arms out to get the blood flowing properly and rewarded ourselves with a granola bar.

Tucker tried once more to get the motor started while I explored the area. We were at an old abandoned campsite with a roofless cabin, dilapidated outhouse and outdoor kitchen.

I kept poking around and discovered — oh happy day! — an old boat launch. It had a fallen tree across the entrance and bushes growing in the road, but it could be made serviceable. Our truck could easily winch the tree off the road.

That is, if we could somehow get back to our truck.

Tahltan John

After more looking around, I found a road that led directly to the main highway.

Giving up on the boat motor, Tucker took a few things and prepared to hitchhike back to our campsite while I stayed with our gear. We had no idea how many hours this might take, since we were out in the boonies.

Tucker hiked to the road. I loaded a rifle as a precaution against predators and prepared to wait.

Much to my surprise and relief, Tucker came driving up with our truck and boat trailer after only 40 minutes. It seems that as soon as Tucker had reached the highway, a fellow we dubbed "Tahltan John" picked him up and delivered him to our campsite.

I danced around and thanked the Lord!

Then, we got busy winching the tree off the road and loading the boats on the trailer.

Reflection

Back at camp, full of delicious fried fresh fish and potatoes, we reflected on the series of answered prayers and happenstances that delivered us safely home.

At a point in time, someone had put a white chair on the shoreline to gaze out at all the amazing beauty that surrounded us. While the campsite disintegrated, that white plastic chair remained, giving us a fixed point to paddle toward.

That fixed point included a boat launch we had no idea existed. The nearest boat launch we knew about previously was 5 kilometres up the lake.

There was quick access to the highway and “Tahltan John” to provide a lift.

Then, “wham, bam, thank you truck winch,” a hindering tree was removed and boats got loaded.

Our gratitude overflowed.

So, what about you? How many “White Chair” moments have you had in your life?

Remember, and be grateful.