

TRIBUNE MEDIA SERVICES

USA AND CANADA CONTENT DELIVERY SITE

Search for

Welcome, photo2@stevehaggerty.com

Company registration code: TMS_USA_and_Canada_Site_Editors

[Home](#) | [My Sources](#) | [My Account](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Logout](#)

Advisories

[One Shot Advisories](#)
[TMS Advisories](#)

My Sources

Advice

[Ask Amy: Advice for the Real World](#) UPDATED
[Tales from the Front](#)

Astrology

[El Horoscopo de Linda C. Black](#)
[Linda Black Horoscopes](#)
[Omarr's Astrological Forecast](#)
[Omarr's Weekly Astrological Forecast](#)

Business

[Auto Letters](#)
[Banks vs Money Funds](#)
[Global Economic Viewpoint](#)
[Global Economic Viewpoint - Spanish](#)
[Interpersonal Edge](#)
[Joyce Lain Kennedy - Careers Now](#)
[Kathy Kristof](#)
[Kids & Money](#)
[Kiplinger Money Power](#)
[MIT Sloan Management Review - Pagination](#)
[Money Fund](#)
[Money Fund - Short Retire Smart](#)
[Successful Investing](#)
[Tax Free Fund](#)
[Tax Free Fund - Short Test Drive](#)
[The Credit Card Chart](#)
[The Savings Game](#)

Entertainment & Pop Culture

[Film Clips](#)
[Hot Press](#)
[Inside The Video Games](#)
[Liz Smith](#) UPDATED
[Pop Culture Package](#)
[Rush & Molloy](#) UPDATED
[Scopin' The Soaps](#)

Food

[Foodstyles](#)
[Wolfgang Puck's Kitchen](#) UPDATED

NORTH ON THE MACKENZIE RIVER, ON THE GOOD SHIP NORWETA: ADVENTURE IN CANADA'S WESTERN ARCTIC

By Anne Z. Cooke, Tribune Media Services,
[World's Fare](#)

GREAT SLAVE LAKE, Canada -- If the good ship Norweta, cruising on the Mackenzie River in Canada's Northwest Territories, had arrived earlier, we wouldn't have missed the wedding.

But it was nine o'clock on a July evening when we disembarked at Fort Good Hope, 25 miles south of the Arctic Circle. By that time, the bride and groom, dressed in their best beaded moccasins, had already left the church and walked to the park.

In southern climes, the celebration would have been half over. But here in the western Arctic, where the summer sun shines 22/7, the party was just beginning. The guests, gathered at picnic tables, stared in surprise at the strangers suddenly in their midst. A bonfire crackled and strips of moose sizzled on a dozen barbecues. On the dance floor, a low wood deck, the musicians had started to play.

"C'mon, let's dance," whispered Adele Ciilli, the Norweta's cabin stewardess, a member of the Dene (Athabaskan Indian) people. She smiled shyly and tapped her foot as nine wiry men, each holding a large, flat, hand-held drum, began to pound out an insistent rhythm.

"I have a second cousin here and they've invited us," she said, tugging on my sleeve. In a minute we'd met the newlyweds and were circling with two dozen other dancers to the thundering beat of a traditional dance.

A wedding was the last thing we'd expected when we booked a cruise on the 103-foot Norweta, sailing from mid-June through July on the Mackenzie River, or Deh Cho, "Big River," as the Dene people call it. But surprise is what makes this cruise so unusual.

"These are communities, not tourist destinations," said Margaret Whitlock, 68, the Norweta's co-owner and a fourth-generation resident of Hay River, on the south shore of Great Slave Lake. "We're never sure what we'll find until we get there, but it's

- **WORD COUNT:** 1674
- **POSTED** 07/31/2008 at 11:00 am EST
- **FOR RELEASE** 09/01/2008
- [E-MAIL THIS](#)
- [PRINT THIS ARTICLE](#)
- [SEND TO EDITORIAL SYSTEM](#)
- [DOWNLOAD FILE](#)

SUPPORTING

This content accompanied by:



FEATURED PROVIDERS

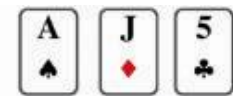
Click on an image below for the feature description and archive.



Jonah Goldberg



Kakuro



Poker by Steve Rosenbloom

CREATOR HEADSHOTS

[Download headshot images](#)

TMS SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

Name-brand content for purchase a la carte or by subscription for use by newspapers, magazines, retailers, corporate websites, newsletters, nonprofit organizations and others seeking targeted content. We also offer custom orders, high-quality design and localization of stories. Go to [TMS Specialty Products](#).

MCT DIRECT

Comprehensive news, photo, graphics and OnePage services featuring U.S., international, college campus, regional or industry-specific content from McClatchy-Tribune Information Services. Go to [MCT Direct](#).

TMS LICENSING



TMS Licensing delivers some of the biggest, brightest and most beloved comics characters and content anywhere to provide value to advertising, promotional

Wolfgang Puck's
Kitchen - metric
UPDATED

Health & Fitness

Harvard Health Letter

Harvard Heart Letter

Harvard Men's Health
Watch

Harvard Mental Health
Letter

Harvard Women's
Health Watch

Medical Edge from
Mayo Clinic UPDATED

Premium Health News
Service

The Medicine Cabinet
UPDATED

Humor

Andy Rooney

Dave Barry Classics

Mark Bazer

Mark Russell UPDATED

Today's Chuckle

Lifestyle & Family

Ana Veciana-Suarez

Daily Bridge Club

Goren Bridge

My Pet World

Poker with Steve

Rosenbloom UPDATED

Tuesdays with Mitch

WomanNews

Political Commentary

Alvin and Heidi Toffler's
Beyond Future Shock

Arianna Huffington

Bill Press

Cal Thomas

Carl Hiaasen

Clarence Page

Foreign Affairs

Garrison Keillor

Global Viewpoint

Global Viewpoint -
Spanish

Henry Kissinger

Ian Bremmer

Jesse Jackson

Joe Galloway

Jonah Goldberg
UPDATED

Jules Witcover UPDATED

Leonard Pitts

Mary Sanchez UPDATED

Nobel Laureates Plus

Paul Samuelson

Paul A. Samuelson -
Spanish

Paul Greenberg

Paul Kennedy

Robert Koehler

always interesting, and definitely historic."

The ship's eight- and 10-day cruises, between Great Slave Lake and Inuvik (in-NOO-vik), an Inuit town on the Mackenzie River Delta, follow the historic route pioneered in 1789 by explorer Alexander Mackenzie.

Along the 1,000-mile journey, the ship docks at a half-dozen sleepy outposts -- Dene and Gwich'in villages, historic forts and towns built around former fur trading posts -- where we and the other 18 passengers disembarked to explore.

In Norman Wells we found a small but attractively designed museum with detailed exhibits and a shop selling beaded moose hide moccasins, hand-knitted hats, jewelry and baskets. In Fort Good Hope, we visited the church, decorated with classic folk art designs, and recently restored. In Tsiigehtchic (TZIG-eh-chik), where the Arctic Red River flows into the Mackenzie, we arrived just in time to watch a local hunter pull up to the shore with a moose -- just shot -- stuffed into his motorboat.

The Mackenzie River, North America's second-longest river system (after the Mississippi,) is a mammoth body of water, draining one-fifth of Canada. Flowing from southeast to northwest, it bisects the Northwest Territories, a region twice the size of Texas but with a population of just 45,000.

In an odd twist of fate, the river was busier in the 19th century than it is now. Travelers heading downstream wrote of seeing Indians fishing from their canoes, trappers laden with furs for the trading posts and riverboats ferrying cargo and passengers. But as the fur trade vanished, so did the traffic. The advent of the airplane put the riverboats out of business.

Today, the trip is a wilderness adventure, past mountains, cliffs, islands, and forests, where trees grow in the trillions. There are so many trees, in fact, that each summer, 30 or 40 lightning-started forest fires burn at any one time, fated to smolder until winter snows put them out.

"No one pays any attention to them, not unless they're threatening a town," said George Whitlock, 73, the Norweta's co-owner, and Margaret's husband, as he scanned the smoke on the horizon. "It's part of the natural cycle. But there isn't much else out there, you know. Just a few hunters."

The Norweta, with four decks, is a small but functional ship, built for deep water but maneuverable on the river. The engines and crew cabins are on Deck 1, below the water line. The 10 guest cabins, on Deck 2, have large private bathrooms with showers, built-in furniture, and drawers for clothes. Screens on the portholes keep out mosquitoes. You can close the inside hatch to block out the midnight sun, or pull the curtains.

The combination lounge and dining room are on Deck 3, with a narrow promenade deck around the perimeter. The Sun Deck, behind the Bridge on Deck 4, is surfaced with artificial turf and equipped with deck furniture. Because of the ship's small size, the cabins near the engines can be noisy. We were prepared, however, since earplugs and noise-canceling earphones are now part of our standard travel kit.

The meals, mostly American cuisine, are delicious but not fussy, prepared with first-class ingredients and served restaurant style.

and business partners worldwide. Go to [TMS Licensing](#).

TMS BLENDER

A daily buffet of the best in TMS content. Download any of more than 150 features in the TMS catalog for immediate use in any publication -- print or online. Go to [TMS Blender](#).

TMS REPRINTS

Order TMS articles, images, comics and puzzles in marketing and corporate communications materials, newsletters and textbooks. [Go to TMS Reprints](#).

Robyn Blumner
UPDATED

Ross Mackenzie

The Oppenheimer
Report UPDATED

The Oppenheimer
Report - Spanish
UPDATED

Victor Davis Hanson

William Pfaff UPDATED

Real Estate & Home

Ask The Builder

Design Line

Do It Yourself or Not?

Real Estate Matters
UPDATED

The Smart Collector

Religion

God Squad

My Answer UPDATED

Science & Technology

Sports

Latest Line UPDATED

Mitch Albom - Sports

Superstats UPDATED

Travel

Celebrity Travel

Ed Perkins On Travel

Rick Steves' Europe

Taking the Kids

The Travel

Troubleshooter

World's Fare

Editorial Cartoons

Chan Lowe

Chan Lowe - Color

Dan Wasserman
UPDATED

Dana Summers
UPDATED

Dana Summers - Color
UPDATED

David Horsey

David Horsey - Color

Dick Locher

Dick Locher - Color

Don Wright

Drew Sheneman

Jack Ohman UPDATED

Jack Ohman - Color

Matt Davies UPDATED

Matt Davies - Color

Paul Combs

Paul Combs - Color

Paul Conrad

Walt Handelsman
UPDATED

Wayne Stayskal

Comics

9 to 5 UPDATED

Late evening snacks, of cookies, cake and fruit are also laid out. You can purchase wine, beer or mixed drinks.

If you don't get enough exercise on shore, the ship has a treadmill, or you can walk on the promenade deck, where 22 times around equals a mile. Owing to space limitations, most onboard activities are necessarily sedentary: board games, cards, reading, crossword puzzles (bring your own), birding (bring binoculars) and conversation.

We brought a couple of best sellers and our laptop. Other passengers brought knitting, stationery and trip diaries. The ship's library has a nice collection of regional histories, Canadian travel, animal identification guides, nature references and a few best sellers.

There was always something to see as the scenery rolled by, from mountains, rock formations and the Ramparts river gorge, to the occasional cargo barge going the other way, Coast Guard vessels and eagles in the treetops.

The most interesting stop was Fort Simpson, a former trading post built at the confluence of the Mackenzie and the Liard River, which offered a choice of onshore activities.

"We're a real town," said guide 82-year-old Steve Rowan, whose dry wit and wry smile enliven his historic walking tours. "We have shops, a Visitors Centre, a museum and a well-stocked grocery store where you can buy film. We even have a Historical Society -- with two members, including yours truly."

He stopped next to an old clapboard house built 40 feet above the river. "It didn't take long for people to realize they couldn't built next to the water," he said. "One year the river ice jammed up during break-up and rose all the way up into this front yard."

Fort Simpson is also the jumping-off place for flight-seeing trips west to the 300-foot-high Virginia Falls in Nahanni National Park Reserve, a Mecca for kayakers and rafters. If the weather is clear and the planes have space, splurge on this one (rates run about \$300 per person); later on, you'll be sorry if you didn't.

My favorite shore tour was the trip to Tuktoyaktuk, an Inuit village on the Arctic Ocean. Here we visited Maureen Pokiak, 51, who served us caribou soup and introduced us to the Inuit (Eskimo) culture.

"I came to Tuk to teach school, where I met and married my husband. He is a native Inuit, who grew up here, and a hunting guide," she explained. Together they raised a family, and Maureen learned how to prepare muktuk (whale blubber), dry fish, skin muskrats and sew fur parkas, traditional skills she integrated into her family's otherwise modern lifestyle.

"I'm living in two cultures," she said, standing in her modern kitchen. She sliced off bits of smoked and steamed whale and offered us a taste. "Go ahead," she said, with a mischievous smile. "Tell me what you think. Really."

In Fort Norman, our tour guide, Jim LaFleur, picked us up in his truck -- bringing a cuddly new puppy along -- and showed us the town's half-dozen streets, past the 1880s log cabin that served as an Anglican church, the cement-block community center and his house, a pre-fab cottage perched high on the bluff overlooking the Mackenzie.

"I came out here a long time ago," he said. "Before that, I was a

Amor Es... UPDATED
 Animal Crackers
 UPDATED
 Animalitos Locos
 Annie UPDATED
 Bliss UPDATED
 Bottom Liners
 Bound & Gagged
 UPDATED
 Brenda Starr
 Brewster Rockit
 Broom-Hilda UPDATED
 Dick Tracy UPDATED
 Dick Tracy -Spanish
 Gasoline Alley UPDATED
 Gil Thorp
 Housebroken
 Loose Parts - Panel
 UPDATED
 Loose Parts - Strip
 UPDATED
 Love Is...
 Pink Panther UPDATED
 Pluggers
 Raising Hector UPDATED
 Sylvia UPDATED
 The Middletons UPDATED
 Viva y Vea - Spanish

Crosswords
 Los Angeles Times Daily
 Crossword Puzzle
 Los Angeles Times
 Sunday Crossword
 Puzzle
 Observer Crossword
 Quote-Acrostic
 THE Daily Crossword
 THE Daily commuter
 Puzzle
 THE Sunday Crossword
 Package
 The TV Crossword

Illustrations & Caricatures

Op Art UPDATED
 Taylor Jones

Games & Puzzles

Boggle BrainBusters
 Daily UPDATED
 Boggle BrainBusters
 Job Search
 Boggle BrainBusters
 Sunday
 Boggle Brainbuster
 Chicago Tribune
 Daily Jumble
 Crosswords
 Jumble - That
 Scrambled Word Game
 Jumble for Kids
 Kakuro Daily
 Kakuro Sunday
 Kids Across/Parents

farmer in Saskatchewan. Here I was the janitor at the school, but I'm retired now. I never get tired of looking at this river."

Afterward, some of us decided to walk back along the beach. Here we met some town kids, Mandy and Arlene, both 12, and Steve, 9, who'd built a campfire and were swimming and splashing in the river. As curious about us as we were about them, they asked where we lived and if it snowed there. Enchanted by their smiles and friendly courtesy, we lingered longer than we should have.

"Bye," they called, as we headed back to the Norweta. "Come back soon."

IF YOU GO:

THE CRUISE: For complete information about the cruise itinerary, the ship, recommended dress, choosing a date, booking a cabin and making airline reservations, visit the Norweta Website, at www.norweta.com, then call Margaret Whitlock directly at 1-866-NORWETA.

Prices (in Canadian dollars) start at \$4,914 per person for a cabin with two single beds, and \$5,229 for a cabin with a double or queen bed. All meals are included. Alcoholic beverages and Canadian taxes are extra. Most shore excursions are free; the Tuktoyaktuk and Nahanni National Park Flight-seeing trips cost extra.

ARCTIC TRAVEL: For maps, pamphlets and other information about Northwest Territories tourism, call 1-800-661-0788 or go to www.explorenwt.com. For national parks information see www.itl.gov.nt.ca/. For Inuvik, or visits to Maureen Pokiak, go to www.arcticnaturetours.com.

GUIDEBOOKS: Lonely Planet's "Canada" guide offers a concise introduction to the Northwest Territories. Also see "The Journals of Alexander Mackenzie," a diary of the explorer's 1790 and 1793 river trips; Narrative Press, at www.narrativepress.com.

(Anne Z. Cooke and Steve Haggerty explore the world from Venice, Calif.)

(c) 2008, Anne Z. Cooke Distributed by Tribune Media Services, INC.

ACTIONS

[Download File](#) | [Send to Editorial System](#) | [Email this](#) | [Print This Article](#)

PREVIOUS DOWNLOADS OF THIS CONTENT ITEM

USER	DATE/TIME	METHOD
This item has not been downloaded.		