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Canoe News

PARACANOE 2016
WENONAH CANOES AT 50
OUTRIGGER RACING HAWAIIAN STYLE
& MUCH MORE!!!

Spring 2017 Vol. 50 No. 1





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From the Editor:

Spring is the season of change: the weather is warming, plants are blooming—and boats are being dusted off and reintroduced to their native habitat! In like manner, Julie and I are introducing a bit of an updated look to Canoe News, hoping to bring you a top-notch paddling publication with more color and some cool graphic stuff. Hopefully you like it. We're still amateurs, but we're learning! Be sure to welcome Rebecca Davis as our new USCA President; it's exciting to have one of our younger—and faster—members take the helm!

Keep paddling strong!

Steve

*Front Cover: Paracanoer racer Nik Miller. Photo courtesy of Scott Areman Photography.
Back Cover: La Paz Bay, Baja, Mexico. Photo courtesy of Steve Dresselhaus.*

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VIEW FROM THE STERN

USCA PRESIDENT REBECCA DAVIS

2017 is just one year shy of the 50th anniversary of the USCA, and coming out of the cold winter months (for those of us in northern climates) into this new year of paddling leaves us filled with giddy anticipation. Many follow the American tradition, and travel to Florida for Spring Break... with boats, paddles, lifejackets, and electrolyte powders in tow.

My particular version of Florida centers on the Suwannee River, a place relatively unknown to tourists but a hidden gem for paddlers. It may not boast the picturesque beauty of some of the spring fed rivers to the south, but it provides the opportunity of paddling THREE different rivers without ever having to get into the car. The State Park doesn't have room service or high class amenities, but it does have clean bathrooms, hot showers, electric hook-ups, and a washer/dryer. What more could a girl ask for?

Paddling in Florida is one of my favorite parts of a season. It's not the sun, or the whole week that I get to spend on the water that makes the week so great- although those things do help a lot. The best part is getting to see all of the other

paddlers- old and new- after a six month hiatus. The camaraderie of the camp is something you can't find too many other places. There are people from all over North America hanging out. Nobody is racing, there are no commitments for the day after the paddle is over, it doesn't matter where somebody finishes. We stop for lunch breaks, swim breaks, and have "points" for taking not-so-great short cuts, or touching a turtle before it leaps off its sunning log.

We do paddle hard, and people are scouting out potential partners, but with a whole week of paddling in front of us, it's a chance to jump in with people that there wouldn't be the opportunity to otherwise. At lunch, most of the top guys switch partners, giving those that are not as fast or experienced the chance to really go. Maybe the fast guys don't know what they are giving to the rest of the group by doing this, but it really is one of the appeals of the camp. No partner is too unattainable for this one week.

We also make a point to do a women's paddle, which is probably my favorite day. With all of the women paddling together, we

make a point to try different partners, "fight" over who gets to be in the bow, hone our skills, and laugh a lot. Its confidence building, as many of us don't spend a lot of time paddling women's because we are "too slow" or don't live close enough, but once we hit the water we realize that the men aren't too much faster, or any more skilled and stable.

I'm not trying to sell my version of Florida (although please join us!), but I think it does some really good things to develop our sport, and keep us connected. The camaraderie, skill training, willingness to change partners, and the welcoming of new people, are not always at the forefront during the racing season. It's not about "sacrificing" every race or training day, but really going out and having fun on the water, offering help where it is needed, cheering on our competitors, and having perspective in both triumph and disappointment during the coming season. The challenge for our 50th year is to look ahead and see where we can reach out to share the joy that paddling brings.



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THE QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI OUTRIGGER CANOE RACE

TOM THOMAS



Roxanne Barton racing OC6 with an all-women's team at the Catalina race in California. OC6 racing is extremely popular in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific Rim.

Most marathon canoe racers are highly familiar with the single hull marathon racing canoes we typically use for competition on lakes and rivers. We deal with rapids, boat wakes, wind produced waves, and people asking us "is that a home-made canoe?" But another type of canoe racing has captured the fancy of many marathon paddlers: outrigger canoe racing.

Outrigger racing is a sport primarily associated with ocean racing along coastal areas and the

Pacific islands, but it is growing in popularity in inland areas. One notable example of this growth is the recently added OC1 class to our USCA Nationals. In spite of this growth, outrigger canoe racing remains a relatively unknown sport in the contiguous United States. Head out to the Pacific islands, however, and this all changes: outrigger canoe racing is a major sport in these regions. It is the State Sport of Hawaii and is very popular- and heavily participated in- throughout the Pacific Rim.

The two major outrigger races in Hawaii are the Molokai Hoe (or Channel Race) which is a 40 mile race from the Island of Molokai to Waikiki Beach on the Island of Oahu, and the Queen Lili'Uokalani Race which is an 18 mile race along the Kona Coast of the Big Island of Hawaii. The Queen's Race is billed as the world's largest outrigger canoe race and attracts outstanding crews from all over the world. This race was originated in 1972 to honor Queen Lili'Uokalani, who was the last reigning monarch of

the Kingdom of Hawaii. She reigned from January 1891 until the overthrow of the Kingdom two years later in 1893. The race is well attended by crews from Hawaii, the US Mainland, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, United Kingdom plus other countries and Pacific Islands.

The Molokai Hoe race was first held in 1952 and is considered a championship race; it is raced by some the world's best crews. The outrigger paddlers first got a taste of what Marathon/Olympic paddlers could do in this race when the 1980 Olympic Team raced and had the lead off the start. But a half hour into the race their ama (the outrigger) broke and they had to stop for over 8 minutes to fix it by using large rubber bands made from bicycle inner tubes to strap it back together. By the time they were done they were in last place, but pursued the other boats with water spraying off the repaired ama. Even with the drag of the repaired ama, they passed all but the team from Tahiti and ended up in 2nd place, only 2 minutes behind the winners. Roland Muhlen, who was a member of this crew, gave me a play by play description of this race which was filmed by ABC Wide World of Sports. Then in 1985 the "Illinois Brigade" crew of nine elite marathon paddlers consisting of Everett Crozier, Mike Fries, Kurt Doberstein, Tim Triebold, Serge Corbin, Jay Mittman, Al Runquist, Joe Johnson, and Bruce Barton came from behind to resoundingly win the race and really shock the outrigger

world. (See a video of the Molokai Hoe race filmed in live in 1985 by going to: <https://youtu.be/ZgeripgIc2M>)

The following year (1986) a group of marathon women paddlers (including Roxanne Barton) put together an OC6 team that took 2nd overall in the Molokai Hoe race. These gals were tough as heck in their own right and served as an inspiration to many female paddlers. These race performances inspired other marathon paddlers to race the Molokai Hoe, including our own past USCA President Peter Heed. It also sparked the interest of marathon paddlers to participate in the Queen's Race.

The Queen's Race is a fantastic race and takes place over the Labor Day weekend. The main OC6 race is 18 miles long and extends between Kailua, Kona, and Pu'uohomua o Honaunau (Point Refuge) National Historical Park. The women's race is in the morning and starts in Kailua (site of the Ironman World Championships) and finishes at Point Refuge. The men's race is in the afternoon and starts at Point Refuge and finishes at the pier in Kailua. There may be up to 150 men's OC6 crews and 150 women's OC6 crews, making the starting lines up to a mile long and creating one heck of a mass start!

On the second day there are Double Hull, OC1, OC2 and SUP Races. These are shorter 4 or 5 mile long races making them near-

ly a sprint and very intense. In the Double Hull Races the ama and the iako (the arms that attach the ama to the outrigger hull) are removed from the OC6 canoes. The hulls are then catamaraned together with two 4 by 4's and paddled by a 12 person crew. The Double Hull Race and all the other second day races start and finish by the pier and seawall where the swim start is for the Ironman World Championships. This is a fairly congested place for the large number of Double Hull rigs to start; starts are frequently very wild and hazardous. Collisions off the start occasionally occur. A Double Hull with the 12 person crew weighs well over a ton so a collision can cause damage to both boats and crew.

The main 18 mile race on the first day can be very grueling due to the heat and sometimes the water can get very choppy with no real "bumps" to ride like in the Molokai Hoe. The 2016 race was exceptionally hot and after the race I ended up being carried to the first aid tent and having an IV stuck in my arm. The finish line can be seen for the last 9 miles of the race, so it can become a mind game to keep your concentration and not fixate on "the line doesn't seem to be getting any closer" as you are hammering away in the heat and in time with the other 5 paddlers in the boat. We marathon paddlers are not accustomed to paddling in the same boat with 5 other paddlers but we always seem to match-up really well. You have to stay focused to stay in time

and not “zone out”.

I first paddled this race in 2005 as part of Everett Crozier’s Great Lakes Brigade crew. Over the years since then we’ve assembled other crews of marathon paddlers and while paddling as Everett’s “Great Lakes Brigade” we won our age group 4 times and were second another year. We also won the Double Hulls race in our age group a few times as well. Everett’s crew was winning before I got involved, so it wasn’t me making the difference. It has been great paddling this race with such marathon paddling standouts as Everett Crozier, Roland Muhlen, Mike Johnson, Rich Rankinen, Ron Williams, John Casale, Charlie Bruno and other outstanding marathon paddlers.

The outrigger paddlers we come up against in this race can’t believe we don’t practice together all the time in an OC6 and that we come out to Hawaii and win our age group. About the only time we would get in an OC6 was when we went to Kona to race this race. They ask if we are in large paddling clubs and they can’t comprehend a canoe without an outrigger on it. Many have never heard of marathon canoe racing, so we do our best to educate them. Since I’ve been involved, we’ve raced in the 60-64 class then up to the oldest class of 65+. We are hoping that they will come up with a 70+ class. Our planned crew members (as it now stands) for the 2017 race are all over 70 and consists of Roland Muhlen, Charlie Bruno, Bob Allen, Shaka Madli (a Native Ha-

waiian from Honolulu and our Crew Captain), Jerry Franklin from San Diego, California (our steersman in seat 6), and me. Our crew name is “Shaka’s Fossils,” an appropriate name for us fossilized old goats! We have been “Shaka’s Fossils” for the last 3 years and have won our age group twice and came in second once. I hope we can kick some butt this year!

Many years ago this race was primarily a 9 person race where there were 6 paddlers in the boat and 3 in a power chase boat, as is done in the Molokai Hoe. They would switch out paddlers every 20 minutes or so allowing paddlers to get a rest. That changed about 15 years ago when an elite crew of only 6 marathon paddlers captained by Everett Crozier paddled the race the whole way without switching out. They were the winners of the race in their age group in addition to defeating all the other men’s crews in their age group who were paddling with nine man crews! Nine man crews are normally much faster than six man crews where there are no switches in paddlers. There were complaints but the race rules were not broken. The rules said there had to be nine man crews, but didn’t say that the crews actually had to switch out. So, the same 6 guys paddled the whole race and left the other 3 on the chase boat. As a result, in subsequent years, more crews started racing Iron (only 6 in the crew and not switching out) and today, most crews race in the Iron Class and only a small percentage race in the

9 person class. Way to go guys, you changed the world’s largest premier international outrigger canoe race and gave them a jolt on what marathon paddlers can do!

After the second day of racing, the race sponsors put on a big luau as part of the awards ceremony with great food and free beer. It doesn’t get any better than that! So, if you want to do a great race in a beautiful area, try the Queen’s race and have one heck of a racing experience. Spend a few extra days and tour around the Big Island and go to Volcanoes National Park. Drive up Mauna Kea and hike up Mauna Loa. If you want to see what the Queen’s Race is all about, go to <https://www.kaiohua.org/ql-blog.asp> and click on “Videos” under the Queen Lili’Uokalani header and watch great videos of the 2012 men’s and women’s races. Also on this blog are listings for many crews looking for people to fill seats for the Queens Race. So if you are interested in doing the race but don’t want to organize a crew, you could possibly get picked up by one of these crews. You can also put your name on the blog that you are looking for a crew and possibly get picked up that way as well. I followed the latter method for 2 years when we didn’t put a crew together and got picked up by a crew from Florida and another from Hawaii.

Enjoy!

PADDLE LORE AND BENT SHAFT PADDLES

GLEN F. GREENE WITH RECOGNITION TO JOHN ZIEGLER



Painting of Māori warriors and waka taua war canoes in 1827 [Photo out of Copyright]

Paddle Lore

On the third floor of the *American Museum of Natural History* in New York City in the “Margaret Mead Hall of Pacific Peoples” there are several antique Māori paddles that were built with a bent shaft. These paddles were created by using the branch of a tree to form the paddle shaft and by hewing the blade from the attached trunk of

the tree. Captain James Cook brought back these Māori bent-shaft paddles to England while mapping the complete coastline of Aotearoa (Māori name for New Zealand) in 1769 during the first of his two voyages in which he circumnavigated the globe.

The Māori settled in New Zealand around A.D. 1280. Māori oral history describes the arrival of ancestors from Hawaiiki

(the mythical homeland in tropical Polynesia) in large ocean-going Waka taua. For long ocean trips these Waka taua's were outfitted with dual amas and sails, but paddling seems to have been the primary mode of propelling these boats. The Māori tribesmen were noted to be competent paddlers, able to move their boats fairly rapidly when they had their paddle timing down (often aided by singing). It may

well be that as competent seamen the Māori figured out the advantages of a bent shaft paddle, possibly by accident.

Waka taua are large war canoes up to 130 feet in length consisting of a main hull formed from a single hollowed-out log along with a carved upright head and tailboard (typically carved and adorned ornately). The entire boat is usually carved and decorated elaborately as well. They are manned by as many as 100 paddlers. They were sometimes referred to as waka pītau, which describes the perforated, spiral carving that supports the carved figurehead in the tauihu (prow).

The waka taua are of a similar style to the historic 55-

paddler Swan Boats carved out of a single 100 foot Thakien tree which were raced a thousand years ago in Siam, and the ancient 110-foot 550 B.C. Chinese Dragon Boats manned by 100 paddlers. Note that all these "long-boats" have a prominently carved head on the bow and a flowing tail on the stern. Swan Boats and Dragon Boats have both historical and religious symbols in addition to being used in competition. This is also true of the waka taua war canoes.

The Māori long-boats are also endowed with a spiritual status that endures to this day; many Māori tribes have specific rituals to determine the use of their waka taua.

Detailed information on Maori war canoes can be found at: <http://www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-BesCano-t1-body-d2-d6.html>

Contemporary Paddling

In North America canoe racing circles it is commonly understood that Gene Jensen came up with the concept of using a bent-shaft paddle for racing canoes in 1971. In interview by Chuck Weis in 1993, Gene Jensen said, *"I decided, well, maybe the best thing to do is bend that shaft back a little so that the blade comes in at the beginning of the stroke rather than further back."*

The Māori people were a tough bunch. During Captain Cook's second round-the-world expedition Captain Tobias Furneaux who commanded a companion ship, lost some of his men during an encounter with the Māori. Captain Furneaux returned directly to England after that encounter, while Captain Cook continued on with his voyage to try to find the mainland of Antarctica. When Captain Cook stopped by Hawai'i in 1779 during his third round-the-world expedition he was killed on a beach by Hawaiian villagers.

That's how the whole thing got started. The first one I did had about a seven-degree bend in it. I got down the river with that all right. I remember a friend looking at me and saying, "There's Jensen with another gimmick.."

I doubt that Gene Jensen copied the idea of a bent-shaft paddle from the Māori culture, but who knows, Gene may have been a world scholar as he was clearly a man of many talents. More than likely though, Gene probably developed the concept of a bent-shaft paddle on his own. Whatever the case, Gene Jensen was the person who brought worldwide attention to the concept of a bent-shaft paddle. These more efficient, ergonomic paddles have become increasingly popular with recreational paddlers and canoe racers. They have even been reintro-



A waka taua war canoe displayed at the Otago Museum, Dunedin, New Zealand [Photo released under the GNU Free Documentation License]

Some have taken the bent shaft concept a little further in the quest for optimum ergonomics: paddle shafts sometimes incorporate multiple bends. Brad Gillespie claims to have originated the double angle paddle. (See <http://gillespiepaddles.com/About.aspx> for more info.)

duced to outrigger paddlers in
P o l y n e s i a .

In addition to paddle and canoe concepts, Gene Jensen was involved with innovating the call “Hut!” to signal switching of sides while paddling a canoe. In that same interview with Chuck Weis in 1993, Gene said that in 1949 his canoe partner, Tom Estes, came up with the canoe switch signal “hut” from Estes’ service

time in the military. Tom Estes said the military used ‘hut’ column right, hut; left flank, ‘hut’ during marches. When Jensen and Estes raced in Quebec in 1949 not one person said a word during their switches, except them. After Gene and Tom won the 1949 Canoe Classique, “The next year in 1950 in Quebec, it was ‘Hut, hut...hut, hut, hut!’ by everyone.” (Past USCA President, Peter Heed, recalled that George Walsh from Maine, the great whitewater champion, was credited with bringing “hut” switch signal to New England.)

The signal “hut” then went worldwide. In 1960 when I first started racing aluminum canoes in the Boy Scouts while growing up in Michigan, we used “hut” as a signal to switch sides. This tra-



Māori bent-shaft paddles - American Museum of Natural History [Photo by John Ziegler]

dition of saying “hut” continues today among most C-2 paddlers.



Te Toki-a-Tāpiri is one of the last of the traditional waka taua (war canoes) remaining from the 1800s. It is 25 meters long and carried up to 100 people. It was built around 1836 for Te Waaka Tarakau of the Ngāti Kahungunu tribe. Before it was completed it was presented to Te Waaka Perohuka of Rongowhakaata who, along with others from his tribe, carved the prow, the sternpost, and the thwarts. From here it passed through the guardianship of the Ngāpuhi people, then Ngāti Te Ata and Ngāti Whātua, until it ended up in the hands of the government. It is now on display in the Auckland War Memorial Museum. [From the New Zealand Government website: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waka-canoes>]

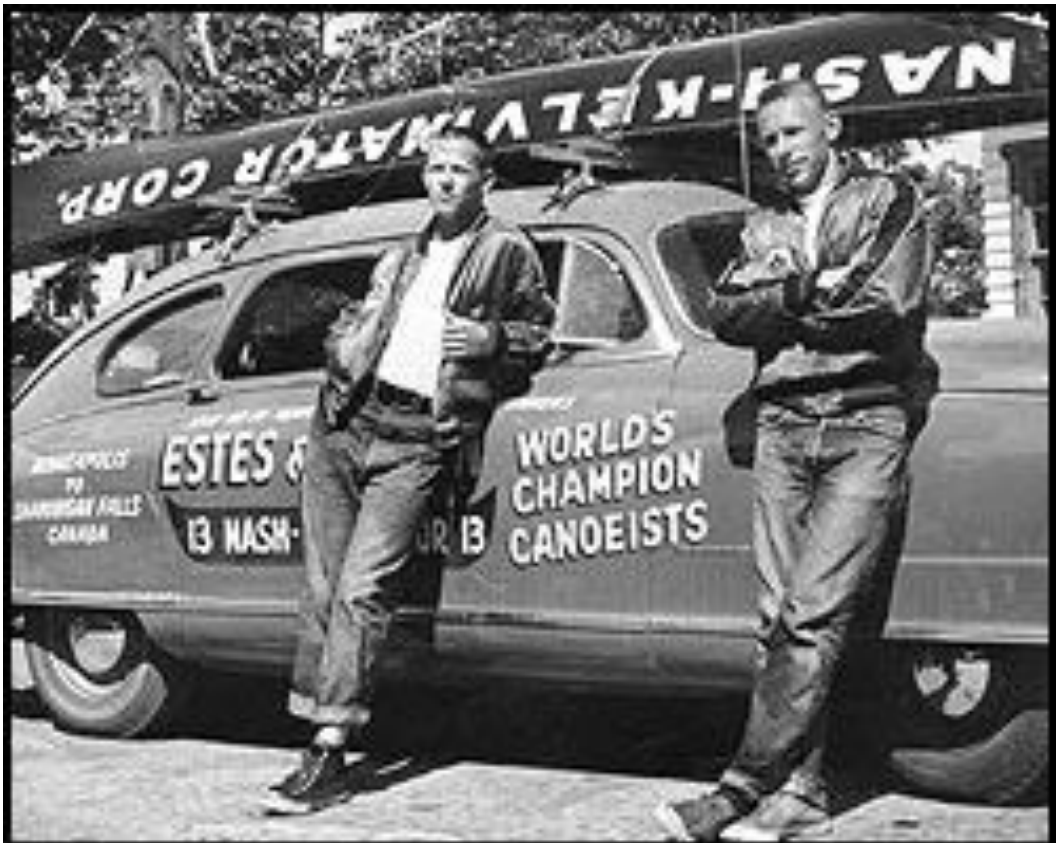


Māori bent-shaft paddles received by Captain Cook 12 October 1769 - American Museum of Natural History. The shaft is a branch of a tree and the blade was carved out of the trunk connected to the branch. <http://tinyurl.com/guyeqma> [Photo by John Ziegler]



Modern day bent-shaft paddle [Photo from the 2016 Zaveral Racing Equipment catalog]

“Eugene Jensen (1928 - 2004) was a renowned canoe racing competitor (he won the Shawinigan International Classic four times) and was a “foremost designer of racing hulls - his Jensen-designed canoes have dominated both professional and recreational marathon racing for years.” (*Canoe Journal* 1997)



PADDLER PROFILE: CALVIN HASSEL

BY STEVEN HORNEY



Calvin Hassel & Lynn Capen paddling C2 Mixed at the 1999 USCA Nationals.

CN: Calvin – you’re well known among USCA paddlers and canoe racers across this nation as one of the most accomplished canoe racers in North America. How did you get your start in paddling?

Calvin: I’m a native of Nebraska, and I’ve always lived in Grand Island, near the Platte River. My family got involved in canoe racing in 1970. The Mid-

west Canoe Association held a circuit of events in Nebraska and Kansas. I did my first race in 1974 at the age of 10. I paddled in this area for a few years, but in 1978 I went to my first Nationals. This was one of the races that had the biggest impact on me; I had only raced small races in my own area prior to that, so being at the Nationals and seeing the level of

competition opened up a whole new world that was fascinating to me. At my first Nationals I raced in the Fledglings kid’s race after racing C2 men’s with my father. I also raced Junior Cruising. I was 14 at the time. One memory that sticks out in particular from my first Nationals was watching the finish of the C1 race. C1 was just starting to get popular at the time, and watching the race really sparked my interest in C1 (my prior experience was all in tandem boats), which is what I primarily race now. It was good to see the depth and capabilities of all the paddlers from all over the country. I remember watching Bruce Barton win in C1 that year.

CN: With your interest in C1 racing sparked, did you immediately set out to become a top dog?

Calvin: I enjoyed paddling, but I didn’t train seriously for a while. It took me some time to become fast. Every year I would step up my training and I kept improving little by little. In 1984, my first year out of Juniors, I set my goal on a top 10 finish in the C1 Men’s class and ended up 7th. I kept improving



Calvin Hassel & Bob McDowell at the 1994 Clinton.

after that point and finally broke into the top 3 in 1987. In 1989 I won the C1 Open Class at Nationals; I won C1 Man and then won C2 Man teamed up with Bruce Barton. It was a great experience to race with Bruce at that point; he was a top paddler when I was growing up. Nationals pretty much peaked in the late 80's and early 90's for depth and level of competition, so it was quite an honor to win in that era.

The 90's were my best decade for paddling; I was very consistent at Nationals, and managed 23 Open Class wins in a row. My challenge became to win the 3 days of National races (C1 Man, C2 Man, and C2 Mixed). In 1985 Al Rudquist was the first guy to win all 3; he was one of the top racers in the 80's and 90s. Al gave me some technique comments in 1987 that really helped me move up to another level. I managed to

win the 3 days of Nationals for the first time in 1991. Al and I are the only two men to have accomplished this; Al did it 3 times and I did it 11 times. I've now competed in the Nationals 38 years in a row, and it is still the main race I focus on. I have

won 54 open class titles: C-1 Man 24 times, C-2 Mixed 16 times and C-2 Men 14 times.

CN: Nebraska is not currently thought of as a hot-bed of canoe racing. How do you train to keep in such top shape?

Calvin: Living in Nebraska definitely makes it more challenging to stay competitive. It requires significant travel to all the major races, and I have to train by myself. There are no other racers that live in my area. High intensity workouts are difficult without the benefit of training with other paddlers. One bonus for my training is living near the Platte River; it's a sand bottom river and very shallow, with a moderate amount of current. It's a tough river to go



Calvin Hassel (stern) with father George Hassel (bow) at the 1983 Mississippi Classic.



Calvin Hassel ahead of Serge Corbin at the 2001 Canton.

fast on; you have to pop the boat constantly. This makes it a very good training river and a great workout—as long as there’s enough water. I paddle a lot of hours for my primary training. Our winters are cold but we rarely have a lot of snow. At least one of the 4 channels on my river is usually open so I can paddle almost year round. I also lift weights, run for cross-training, and cross-country ski when we have snow

CN: In which other major races have you competed outside of the USCA Nationals?

Calvin: I have competed in over 800 races, so I have been to a lot of different places thru the years. I have 33 finishes in Triple Crown races; 20 finishes in the General Clinton (held in NY in May); I’ve paddled the July Au Sable race in MI 4 times,

and the Classique in Quebec 9 times. The C-1 Pro Race at Canton NY is also one of my favorites. It is one of the few races where many of the top Canadian and US paddlers all race C-1. I used to love competing against

Serge Corbin there. It was quite exciting to paddle against such top talent. I used to do other types of racing as well, including dragon boat racing and outrigger racing (mostly OC6 along with a few OC1 races). Greg Barton had an OC6 team out of CA; I raced OC6 with him periodically. I also did a few races in Hawaii and Tahiti. Other racing I’ve done includes competing in 2 Dragon Boat World Championships held in Yueyang, China and in Nottingham, England. I also tried Swan boat racing in Thailand. Although I’ve owned a kayak for years, I’ve never raced kayaks. I have an Olympic K1, but never competed in it. There were no kayak races in my part of the country in the past.



Calvin Hassel, Steve Rankinin, & Serge Corbin at the 1998 Canton.



Greg Barton, Calvin Hassel, & Bob Rapant at the 1993 USCA Nationals.

CN: With such a high level of competition and quite a vast experience, have you had any issues with injuries?

Calvin: I've had the "usual" injuries: primarily some back and shoulder problems. Nothing that has required surgery but stuff that has bothered me for a while at various times. I've usually been able to paddle through it. These days I really enjoy paddling and training. Now I'm at the age where I am focusing on just maintaining as much of my speed as I can. I pick a few big races to go to every year, the Nationals and a few others, but with all the travel required I have to limit myself. I try to paddle enough to stay competitive. Paddling is a great way to keep in shape.

CN: Do you switch boats often, looking for the "optimum" set-up?

Calvin: I've paddled a similar design for the last 25 years. I raced a Crozier J200 for a number of years, then switched to the Crozier J203 in the late 90's.

That type of boat works well with my paddling technique.

CN: Has your family continued in your competitive paddling tradition?

Calvin: Paddling was a family thing when I grew up. I raced with my dad, mom, sister, cousins, etc. I paddled with my wife quite a few years before we had kids and then my kids paddled with me in the sprints at Na-

tionals. My wife and kids haven't continued the tradition, however, so it's pretty much just me at the moment.

CN: Any final comments you'd like to make about your canoe racing?

Calvin: Paddling is a really neat sport. It's too bad the numbers aren't where they were in the 80's and 90's. It has given me the opportunity to travel to many unique places and to compete in a lot of challenging races. I've met a lot of interesting paddlers thru the years and would love to see more people getting involved in such a terrific sport!

CN: Thank you so much for your time. You're an inspiration to canoe racers everywhere!



Calvin Hassel (in yellow shirt) at the 1989 Shawinigan.

DES PLAINES RIVER STEWARDSHIP

PAUL KLONOWSKI



Potentially unknown to most Des Plaines River Canoe Marathon participants, the Lake County (Illinois) Forest Preserve District has a group of volunteers who have been dedicated to cleaning up the Des Plaines River in Lake County, for the last 15 years -although we've also been known to cross jurisdictional borders and do some cleanup work in Cook County as well. Watersheds don't recognize human-made boundaries.

In 2016, this crew held more than 75 work days involving 30 active regular volunteers and 53 "one-timers," including people from two corporate groups, Prai-

rie State Canoeists, a Boy Scout's Eagle Scout Project, and a volunteer we borrowed from McHenry County Conservation District's Education Volunteer corps. The combined efforts for 2016 resulted in the collection and removal of an estimated 6170 pounds of trash from the river and its flood plains, including one of our biggest single-day trash hauls ever, estimated at 1400 pounds! All told, we logged 1382 hours of volunteer time, which is a record year for us!

Trash items of interest include: a wading pool, a large tradesman's style truck rack, 2 wood duck houses, a truck bump-

er & body panels, a length of chain link fence, a hypodermic syringe (with no needle), an unused condom (still in its package), an Adirondack chair, the trunk lid from an old car, a live fish on an abandoned troll line (we released the fish), most of a Big Wheel Tricycle, a sign post, 2 (empty) moonshine jugs, a large highway sign, a STOP sign, a 30 gallon oil tank, a broken blue sink (which matched the blue toilet taken out





a few years back), a broken green toilet, a trash can (it was handy), a “lunch litter” site behind Liberty Auto City, bones from what we think was a horse, parts of a blue pickup truck, a hub cap from a De Soto automobile, a couch, the remains of a cardboard boat, an inflatable raft, a fresh bag of grocer-

ies, 2 pallets, more truck parts, a large picnic cooler bucket, a pile of slate shingles, an unusable wheelbarrow, a small roll of carpet, a 55-gallon trash barrel, 3 or 4 deck chairs, a 1000-gallon fuel tank, a 12 foot section of culvert, 2 dead chickens, and 23 coconuts!

In addition, we collected 52 tires of various sizes, and cut through or did some maintenance trimming on 41 log jams. We also identified one old dump site that will require LCFP Operations to clean up: it contains at least 20 truck tires and several large truck parts, half-buried in the banks of Half Day Pits, in Lincolnshire. On December 30th, we found an old dump site in the Gurnee area that we’ll clean up after the ground thaws.



The crown jewel for the year was the final removal of the remains of the 1948 Chevy pickup truck, in the Gurnee area. Eighteen Boy Scouts & Scouters can move a lot of heavy stuff, very quickly...

2017 is off to a grand start with ten (10) new volunteers lined up for this year, so far! If you are in the area, we welcome all the help we can get...

Should we have a USCA Cleanup Day?

All photo credits go to Rob Ratz, by the way. He's the only one in the group who remembers to bring his camera... thus, he's never in any of the pictures. pk



BUILDER PROFILE: MIKE CICHANOWSKI & WENONAH AT 50

BY STEVEN HORNEY



We·no·nah

With the celebration of **CN:** Congratulations Mike on in Jr. High and High School, in Wenonah's 50th Anniversary this the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Wenonah Canoes! It's great to touch base with you and to find out more about the beginnings of this iconic company. How did you get your start into paddling, and ultimately into building canoes and other watercraft?

Mike: I was a Boy Scout throughout most of my youth, and I did a lot of Boy Scout stuff

cluding paddling. Also, my Dad had an old aluminum canoe we took out frequently for some paddling fun. One of my earliest paddle racing memories involves a race that was put on by the Boy Scouts in my town of Winona, MN. The Boy Scouts had a canoe race using 6 man teams, run as a relay race with two scouts paddling the tandem canoe in each of the 3 legs, switching out at each

time to interview Mike Cichanowski - the owner and founder of Wenonah Canoes, the largest manufacturer of Kevlar canoes in the world. Wenonah has long had close ties with the USCA, with many of their racing designs coming from the fertile minds and experienced hands of accomplished USCA racers.

leg change (this was a 3-day / 75 mile long race). I was always looking for ways to improve the speed of our boats in these races, so we made some big wooden paddles with my Dad in an effort to get a jump on the competition.

After this I began making wooden boats, trying to improve boat performance over that aluminum canoe. Then I began to experiment with fiberglass. My first attempt at a fiberglass canoe involved making a mold of one of the wooden pleasure boats I built while in High School (that boat, by the way, still hangs in our Winona County Historical Society Museum). Eventually I produced a rough mold and made some rough fiberglass boats. 4 friends and I took the first two boats we finished on a 500 mile canoe trip retracing an old fur trading route through Wisconsin. We planned to load the boats on an old car, and then try and sell it before the start of our trip. We sold the car for \$75 and then started our trip back home with 3 people in one boat and two in the other. Amazingly, the trip went off according to plan, starting in Michigan and finishing in Minnesota. At the time I was bagging groceries, and despite my pleas my boss wouldn't let me off work for this trip, so I quit my job. That's the last time I ever worked for anyone else.

I started making boats and selling them, doing repairs, and doing odd jobs in fiberglass to make ends meet while I was in college. I rented an old ware-

house in town to do the work so I wouldn't be doing fiberglass work in my mom's house (she took a dim view of such things). Rent on the warehouse was \$75/month, but when urban renewal began to focus on our town my space was in danger of being displaced. I was urged to talk to the Small Business Administration to see if I could obtain a loan to build my business on another property. I borrowed \$50,000 (while still in college) and bought my first piece of property and built the first building of Wenonah Canoes. I think the bank was more surprised than I was that the SBA loan was approved!

With the new building we were doing anything we could do out of fiberglass to pay the mortgage. In order to expand the business I began establishing a dealer network, which took a long time, but eventually the dealer network paid off. We started out building a couple of models of pleasure canoes. I was really enjoying canoe racing, and during some of those races I got to know Gene Jensen. Gene was not a conventional boat designer, but he had a very good feel for things that made a boat perform well. Gene and I had a very good relationship for decades, and Gene designed a lot of very good boats for us – racing, tripping, and pleasure. Gene was a deep thinker and remarkable builder; he could build a wooden boat in a week or so. After building a boat Gene would have friends and competitors test it so he could get

feedback and further refine the designs. I also got to be good friends with Ev Crozier, another noted canoe designer/builder who designed some excellent boats for us as well.

CN: Running a successful business is known to be a time-absorbing activity. Were you able to stay active in canoe racing as you built Wenonah Canoes?

Mike: As my daughters got older we started sponsoring an Explorer post that really became a canoe racing club. We competed in lots of races all over the U.S.A. With my older daughter we were the first USCA Nationals adult-youth champions with a girl as the youth. My younger daughter was the youngest to ever win it. We made special "whale tail" boats to help with the balance. I raced all the divisions through the years in the USCA races, and I particularly loved C1 racing. I've raced outriggers and dragon boats in places like Africa and Hawaii (including racing the Molokai Hoe race 7 or 8 times). I was part of some OC6 teams with many noted Marathon paddlers; we didn't know what we were doing early on in the OC6 races, but we improved significantly over time until we became pretty good.

CN: How much of Wenonah's product line is currently dedicated to racing boats? And how did Wenonah get involved in building kayaks and other watercraft?

Mike: We still make racing boats, but only 1 or two a week.

Most of the market is in pleasure and tripping boats these days. We found the kayak market was really taking off so we started making touring kayaks as well. I bought Current Designs out of British Columbia and ran the operation in Canada for 5 years before bringing it into the US. We also now make SUP's. One of my former race friends in Hawaii (Todd Bradley) started making SUP's and asked us to make long paddles for him. We were the only ones making long paddles for a while, but now there are something like 80 manufacturers. I bought Todd's business and now we have an extensive line of SUP's called C4 Waterman. With that addition we now cover 3 markets: canoes, kayaks, and SUP's.

Wenonah produces boats in a variety of materials as well. Kevlar canoes are 90% of our business. We were one of the first builders of Kevlar canoes in the 70's (along with Mad River and Sawyer). We are pretty much the only ones really mass producing Kevlar canoes at the present time. Racers want – in this order – the best design in the world, sufficient strength and stiffness to hold that design, and lightness. The greatest challenge in learning to produce light, strong composite canoes was learning to get the foam core molded in right. We started using weights, water bags, and then vacuum bagging. Back then this was very new. All of

our composite canoes and kayaks are vacuum bagged now.

We also make roto-molded canoes and Royalex canoes (T-Formex – identical to Royalex - is now available and we're building with it again). Before Royalex was taken off the market a few years ago we were the biggest producers of Royalex canoes in the world. Our Current Designs business builds composite kayaks of fiberglass and Kevlar, as well as rotomolded kayaks (plastic kayaks). We run our ovens 20 hours a day and employ around 100 people. Most of our boats are still built in the USA; we do have some mid-priced recreational kayaks made overseas.

We made a few OC1's and OC2's, but the demand is limited locally. Years ago I build a boat with Greg Barton called the Speedster – a fast, tippy surf ski that predated the current line of Epic skis. The surf ski market is really elevated from where it was years ago, with a broad variety of skis for all levels. Our current surf ski, the Ignite, is a good fitness boat that almost anyone can paddle.

The tripping side of the canoe business is really going strong. Our canoes are very popular in the Boundary Waters and in the Adirondack, valued because of their light weight, paddling efficiency, and load carrying ability. The Minnesota III came about because the Boundary Waters came out with a rule that you

could have 9 in your party but only 3 boats. With the Minnesota III a 9-person party and their gear fit conveniently into 3 boats. The Minnesota IV was initially intended to be a “war canoe” for what used to be called war canoe racing, but it's become very popular for C4 racing.

We sell to dealers (both large and small), camps, universities, and anyone who wants to paddle. We ship a lot overseas, with full containers going to many countries. The Boy Scouts buy a lot; there is a Boy Scout canoe camp in Ely, MN that has roughly 250 Kevlar tripping canoes. The Boy Scout Jamboree site out east has over 200 of our kayaks.

We still produce some Kevlar ICF canoes, but nearly all go to England now. In the U.S. this class has gone away.

CN: You've obviously been very successful in the boat building business. To what do you attribute your success?

Mike: The Boy Scouts instilled in me a love for the outdoors and the confidence to do things. I am a Distinguished Eagle Scout. Scouting also helped develop my interest in paddling. I describe myself as “Born to Paddle.” I still paddle a lot these days, primarily to keep fit. I also cross-country ski – I've skied the Birkebeiner (the largest cross-country ski marathon race in North America) 39 years in a row, and I've done over 30 ski marathons in Europe.

The USCA has been really pivotal to my success: the USCA led me into greater involvement in racing, and the racing circuits brought me into contact with many who have been instrumental in the success of Wenonah. Racing is like running a business; you have to be internally tough to overcome all the obstacles and to hang in the long, hard slog to win.

CN: What do you see as the biggest challenges facing Wenonah these days, and what do you see for the future?

Mike: One of the biggest challenges we see is getting kids out in boats. Youth involvement is way down in our current era. We just sold boats to a city trying a boat sharing program in an effort get people out on the water. Small dealers are struggling these days. Used boats are everywhere and are easy to buy.

For the future we're always trying new things, new materials, and looking at new boat designs. It's both challenging and exciting! For updates on some of the new things happening with Wenonah, check out our Facebook pages for

Wenonah Canoe, Current Designs Kayaks, and C4 Waterman.

CN: Thank you for your time, Mike. Wenonah has a lot of impressive achievements from the last 50 years, and by all accounts it looks like a bright future for the next 50!



Mike Cichanowski with the original Wenonah Canoe



C1 1982 USCA Nationals L to R: Mike Cichanowski Angus Morison Mike Johnson Terry Kent, & 1982 Champion Bruce Barton





PARACANOE WOMEN: 2016

ANJA PIERCE



2016 was my toughest year *three times a day*. Morning and nutrition right, writing grants, of training and competition yet. evening sessions were spent and napping! From the time I returned from increasing cardiovascular fitness the “Eventos Teste” in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in September of 2015, I trained harder than I ever have and made sacrifices on the home and work front to focus all my resources and all my energy on this one goal: the Paralympic Games 2016. *Instead of going back to work full time I chose to reduce my work load to part time in order to go to the gym* on the bike, hand cycle, or kayak ergometer once outside paddling became unreasonable. My lunch hour was spent lifting weights and I religiously followed a training program that progressed from low weight with high repetitions to explosive lifting with heavy weights in its last phase of training. The rest of the time was spent getting the my

Even though I consulted a lot of books and coaches, I still managed to make plenty of mistakes. I ignored a bilateral elbow tendinitis, masking the pain by taking anti-inflammatories on a daily basis. I trained mostly alone and only took time off from training when the weather forced my hand, not when the training plan called for

a day of rest. Last, but not least, I spent too little time preparing for the race mentally.

When team trials arrived in April, I was both relieved and discouraged. *Relieved* because it would provide an opportunity to measure where I stood but also *discouraged* because I felt unprepared with only minimal water time compared to any prior World Championship preparation I had ever performed in the past. Despite great conditions, I came in second in the KL-3 race (in V-1, I again raced unopposed) but I felt confident that the difference between Kelly Allen and me was not beyond reach if I trained harder and got some more water time.

Back in Rochester, it felt like the shortest two weeks before it was time to pack for Germany. Duisburg: take-two. Familiar with the race venue from Worlds in 2013, I knew some paddlers

locally with whom Debbie Page, (the US Paracanoe head coach) and I stayed which made our early arrival in Duisburg very efficient; it also provided some focused pre-race training on the water. But winning, which included crossing the finish line before Kelly, remained elusive - in two weeks she had gotten a lot faster and I had slowed down some. *Being soundly defeated and trying to accept that loss graciously, taking stock of the accomplishments of four years of racing and training and reflecting on the experience are still on-going challenges.* It was no consolation that I placed third in the VL-3 race, a non-medal direct final (due to low number of participants).

With my mind in a fog, and the elbow tendinitis full blown, I headed back to work to finish out the school year as a pediatric physical therapist. The beginning of the summer arrived too quickly

and with no daily training regimen, no World Championship to prepare for or training and racing at Lake Placid to look forward to, it felt strongly empty and "wasted".

It was a God-send for my low-spirited self when an invitation from our Duisburg hosts arrived to invite me to compete in the Porquerolaise: a 65km open ocean race off the coast of France. Within hours of accepting the invitation, I had my flight booked back to Europe and found new excitement and motivation to go out and train - and ignore my screaming elbows again. Racing in a V-6 with a team of 9 men and women was a novel experience but one that gave me inspiration to formulate new paddling goals and a vision for more challenges to come. Rather than contemplating retirement from the paddle sport, I see myself transitioning to long distance team races and hope to serve the Para-canoe sport as support staff and medical classifier.

I remain deeply grateful for all the support I have received over the years from the USCA which has enabled me to develop my paddling skills, connect to people in the paddling world, and represent the US in World Championship races.

Anja Pierce



PARACANOE MEN: 2016

NIK MILLER



Thank you to Jan and the USCA for your support during the 2016 racing season. The support helped me in training full time at Lake Lanier. I spent 30 hours a week on the water, and 12 hours a week in the gym. The rest of the time I had to continue on with the rest of life's chores.

My routine was to wake up and travel to the training facility which was 25-35 minutes away. I would then get in the boat for the first session which would average 40 minutes with an additional 20

-30 minutes for warm up and cool down. I would then have to get my body situated in the prosthetic and back in the boat for the high intensity interval training workout that took up the rest of the morning. From there I would eat some food as I made my way to the gym for strength training. I would travel to the place I've been staying and unpack my wet clothes, pack new paddling clothes, shower, eat, and try to get a bit of rest before I then headed to the club for afternoon training that lasted from 4-6pm. After-

wards I would often go to the local Y and use their sauna. Then it was off for the house where I would cook dinner/lunch for the following day, shower and usually fall asleep before the room became dark once the lights were turned off. During the months of February and March I spent time in Florida training where I had a similar training routine. The one benefit was consistent weather and I was not driving the 2 hours a day like I had to in Lanier.



them that it is and I have different musculature, possible to but I am not different. I train, I achieve your race, I compete, I have a healthy dreams with a mind and body thanks to the little support. I want the world to know that paddling has helped turn my life around after a devastating injury. I have gotten into great shape; I have a healthy mind and body. I was able to carry over my military discipline from the Marnie Corps

Now that I have a foundation in paddling, I look forward to building on that foundation with focus on helping other paddlers while I race towards the 2020 Paralympics.

Change is inevitable, growth is optional. Racing on the US team has helped me embrace the change and grow to become the person I am today.

Thanks again for your help and support.

Nik Miller

*Photos courtesy of Scott Areman
Photography*

Racing for the US is a huge honor and a way for me to give back to those who have supported me over the years. I also do it to help motivate people and show

and racing is a great outlet for me. I also have mobility on the water. I am "able" and I no longer see myself as disabled. I have a unique set up in the boat for me,



PARACANOE MEN: 2016

JAN WHITAKER / DANZIG NORBERG



Jan: 2016 was an exciting year for Paracanoe, both abroad and in the United States.

Twenty-two year old, Danzig “Ziggy” Norberg placed first in the KL2 classification and second overall in USA Canoe/Kayak Paracanoe Team Trials. In his second trials since moving across the country from Minnesota to Washington State in order to train year round, Norberg continued his growing success with a personal best time of :56.213. This was his best time yet in the kayak and the first time he claimed the KL2 national team spot since World Championships in 2012.

While kayak was the focus of the Paracanoe world in 2016, there were some national team spots to be earned in the “va’a” discipline, where the focus was on 2020 and the possible inclusion of va’a in the Paralympic Games in Tokyo. Coming in third overall and first in the VL2 category was Danzig Norberg. With a time of 58.562, he became one of only a few athletes who earned the top spot in both disciplines at trials.

With Trials over, the eight athletes who comprised the US National Team went home and made the final preparations before going to Duisburg, Germany to compete at

the 2016 ICF Paracanoe World Championships. After a few days of acclimation, it was time to race. First up to race for the Americans was Danzig Norberg in the KL2 men's heats. Norberg, despite some mechanical issues in his heat, was also able to get through into a semi-final round but was unable to advance to finals this time around.

Soon it was time for the va’a athletes to showcase their skills on the world stage. Each athlete, while likely disappointed by their discipline’s exclusion from Rio, was hopeful that their continued dedication would lead to its

inclusion in the 2020 Games in Tokyo, Japan.

Competing In the category of VL2 men, it was up to Danzig Norberg to shake off a harrowing experience in the kayak and move on to his bread and butter, the va'a. In 2015, Norberg fought his way to a win in the semifinals and a 7th place finish in the final. He was able to improve on this result in Duisburg, winning the semi-final for the second consecutive year and moving up to a 6th place in the finish. Danzig Norberg is certainly one of the young American paddlers to watch. Only three and a half seconds from the bronze medal position, he is on the cusp of being one of the elite athletes in his category in the world.

Danzig: The 2016 ICF Paracanoe World Championships were a great success. When all was said and done, Kelly Allen, Alana Nichols, and Ann Yoshida were able claim their spots to the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Although no medals were won, they all represented well in the inaugural Games for the sport. Now the focus turns to 2020 and Tokyo. With the impending inclusion of va'a into the Paralympic program and the rising profile of Paracanoe as a Paralympic sport, it is safe to say that we can expect even more success in the years to come. 2016 was probably one of the most exciting years in the history of para-

canoe. I would be sorely remiss if I didn't extend a sincere thanks to the

organizations and people who have helped elevate this sport to where it is today. In particular, a big thank you goes out to Jan Whitaker and

USCA for their support of Paracanoe in the United States.



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THE OTHER CANOE MARATHON

REBECCA DAVIS



Sometimes I decide some- non-stop over 77 portages, down a thing sounds really fun, and I just canal, a river, and onto the tidal have to do it. The Devizes to section of the Thames, finishing Westminster Canoe Race (DW) is beneath Big Ben in London, a 125 mile race where teams race UK. The race is run as a time trial,

as each team must pick their start time based on when they will hit the tidal portion of the Thames 17 miles before the finish line. Of course for me this sounded like an irresistible adventure. Unfortunately for my husband Mike, who often gets dragged into my crazy schemes, the DW sounded like a cold, wet, long paddle when we had little boat time for the year, and a logistical nightmare with which he would inevitably have up-close and personal experience.

Mike and I decided to do the DW about one year before we made it to the starting line. We met four British paddlers: James Prowse, Shirine Voller, Mike Thornton, and Mark Peterson at training camp in Florida in March of 2015. After learning about the DW I decided it was something we would have to do. Looking ahead to 2016, Easter weekend was in March which fit perfectly into our already full Marathon Canoe Racing Schedule. We would have two months to recover between the DW and our next long race, the General Clinton Canoe Regatta. Once we decided to race, it was all about figuring out how to get there and how to make the most of our trip.

We spent some time talking to our American friends who had done the race before, gleaning any information we could. Neil Weisner-Hanks told us to really practice the portages, and Mike Vincent told us to take a good light and do a time trial upon arrival in the UK in order to figure out our start time. Mike and I both paddle quite a bit year round, but Michigan winters suit Nordic skiing much better than paddling, so we did our usual ski program all winter hoping that the conditioning would serve us well. We were a little concerned about the boat stability, since we had never even paddled a Wenonah Mach 1 before. My parents (Bruce and Roxanne Barton) have an ICF C-2 we could practice in, but it wasn't stable enough to use all winter and definitely didn't feel stable enough to race for 20 hours. Finally we were able to track down a Wenonah in Michigan to try for a day and that settled our fears about boat stability. Now we had to find one to race!

Neil helped us get into contact with Richard Bennett from the Canoe and Kayak Store, and he graciously offered to loan us a boat for the race. The biggest questions about our race had been resolved, so we bought our tickets and contacted James, Shirine, and Mike to let them know we were going to make the race. They had already decided to be the core of our support crew. With the addition of Sue Prowse, Laura Thornton, and Alan Farrance we were in the best of care.

We arrived in London on a Friday just over a week before the race, and immediately drove to pick up our canoe from Richard. Upon arriving at the Canoe and Kayak Store we found a brand new boat waiting for us! This was far more than we were expecting, and we were nervous about putting the first scratch on it (something that would be inevitable during a 125 mile canoe race.) Another concern was getting the boat set up for Mike (6'3" and solidly built) and me (5'5" and girlish) with a 50 lb.+ weight difference. Mike always paddles the bow, and I always paddle the stern, so switching ends to make the boat work for our weight difference wasn't really an option. We decided to move the stern seat back about 10 inches, which allowed us to finally get stern heavy - a must for such a long race. As we weren't supposed to glue or otherwise permanently affix anything to the boat, moving the seat back was probably not what Richard wanted, but after much deliberation we decided it was worth the risk and we would pay for the damage our new seating had caused if necessary.

The week before the race involved getting the boat set up, scouting the course, and learning how to portage. Nick Prowse and Alan took time out of their days to shuttle us around the Thames River and the Kennet-Avon Canal in order to help us prepare. After scouting about 35 miles of the course we realized we weren't going to remember most of the portages; we would just have to think on our feet. James, Mike, and Shirine

would paddle with us and give us pointers on strategy and portaging. We got fast enough to almost stay with them on the take outs and put-ins, but we were worried that having to get in and out so many times would really wear on us. Mike and I decided we would run all of the portages that were close together, instead of getting in and out multiple times. With our ski training we were confident that our legs would hold for the additional running and that it wouldn't cause us too much extra fatigue. In a meeting with our support crew, we made the decision to set our projected pace just ahead of the canoe record. It looked like the wind and rain was going to be against us, so we didn't know if we would be able to hold the pace but it gave us the opportunity to do it.

We were so excited to get started when the race day finally arrived. Neither one of us had done a C-2 time trial race before, so we didn't know how we should feel before the start. We decided to prepare like any other long race, warming up by running for 10 minutes. After we felt loosened up we got our tracker and took off.

Unlike most of the other teams in the race, we were looking forward to the longer stretches with no portages. The first 14 miles flew by and even though it was windy and rainy, we knew that we were moving well. Both of us were surprised at the number of teams we caught before the first portage, and by the number of canal boats that were travelling in

the rain. In the first hour our support crew told us that we were already 5 minutes ahead of our goal pace. We relaxed, although fully aware that we would need that time on the portages.

Hitting the first portage, we were ready to get into the meat of the race. We started off trying to run hard and then realized there was too much mud. We couldn't get any traction and we fought hard to stay on our feet. The second and third locks were close, so we ran them as one portage. It was awful. The run felt long, hard, and unsustainable. I didn't worry

came in with a kayak that decided to run all seven portages. This would show how much we were giving up by putting in after each lock. The kayakers had been able to outrun us on the single portages up until that point, but the tow-path was so muddy that we were able to gain by paddling.

Once we hit Newbury, we knew that the portages would be less often. We felt that we had passed the most difficult part of the course. We had a few bad portages at dusk before figuring out what setting to run our light on, but most of this part of the race

feel even better and we found out that we were still a few minutes ahead of our projected pace. Getting on the Thames felt more like paddling at home and we had fun looking for the next portage ahead (now spaced every 30 to 60 minutes of paddling.)

After another 10 portages, we started to feel the distance. Our paddling muscles hurt and our hands were sore from carrying the boat. We shouldered the boat on the rest of the portages. At about this point we started catching a lot of teams. This was encouraging on the water but it made the portaging really slow. We had to wait sometimes a few minutes to put in. On top of our fatigue we felt that the record was beginning to get out of reach. Each portage was wasting precious minutes and for the first time we dropped behind our projected pace. Our crew kept cheering us on, encouraging us to keep pushing. When we got to Teddington, the final lock, we could feel the dawn coming. Our crew was there to tell us that we hit the portage 2 minutes ahead of schedule- about 7 minutes ahead of the record! We also learned that there were only 10 boats ahead of us and they challenged us to cross the finish line first.



Mike and Rebecca enduring the challenge of a muddy portage.

about how long we had to paddle, but I felt how daunting the portages could really be. Upon getting back into the boat Mike and I agreed we would paddle between every lock, no matter how short the run to save energy. When we hit the Crofton flight (a stretch of 7 portages in under a mile), we

was uneventful. It seemed like in no time at all we were in Reading and the rain had finally stopped! We decided to stop at Dreadnought—the only “unnecessary” portage (where the race officials have a check point as the boats enter the Thames) - to change into warm, dry clothes. This made us

Even through all of the pain, we were able to rally and push hard by the first 3 teams. The surroundings started to look like a city and we were scanning the horizon for the London Eye, even though it was still early. Our support team lined up

on the side, cheering and telling us "only an hour to the finish!" and "you are still on pace to break the record!" The last hour is always the hardest mentally, and we rounded a corner into a tough headwind. As the waves started to build, the finish felt a million miles away. Fortunately it was only the one straightaway that had such a tough wind and we had made it through. We had worked all the way up to the 4th finishing team, and made a pass. They were a fast kayak and were hanging on to our wave. We really decided to push and finally saw the London Eye. Our support team was standing upstream of the bridge, shouting that we were going to "smash" the record. It was then a sprint for the bridge and then through the finish line. Elated, Mike managed to find a little more and we dropped the kayak. We crossed the line 4th, in a time of 18 hours, 23 minutes, and 48 seconds, good for the record, first C2, and 3rd place overall. Walking up the steps was euphoric. Sue directed Mike and me to stand in front of Big Ben for our finish picture. We came to realize later that she posted a video on Facebook waiting at the finish line, explaining that if we crossed the line before Big Ben showed ten past seven we would have the record. Our finish line picture shows Big Ben at seven o'clock.

We were able to enjoy our last days in the UK by celebrating our great finish and Mike's birthday. It was a whirlwind week we will never forget and we can't wait to head back and try it all

again. The race was fantastic and the people were even better. Trying something new is rarely what we expect, but this one

Mike and Rebecca Davis in London with Big Ben at 7:00 a.m.



THE LEGEND OF JEAN MARIE CARDINAL

EARL BRIMEYER

Jean Marie Cardinal may be the greatest unknown canoeist to live in Dubuque, Iowa! Historical records from the time of the Revolutionary War are sketchy, but research by author John Tigges, determined that Jean Marie was the only "Iowan" killed in the Revolutionary War.

Jean and his partner Tibot were trappers that originally worked the trap lines out of what is now Prairie Du Chien, Wisconsin. At that time the British claimed the eastern shore of the Mississippi and all its territory. Jean Marie and Tibot killed Abraham Lansing and his son, British subjects who had hired Jean and his partner as guides, in an argument apparently over poaching furs from their trap line.

Jean Marie paddled downriver to Dubuque Area with his Native American wife and 3 daughters and a sickly son. He settled in Dubuque, started a farm, and besides trapping, also mined lead.

This period in his life appeared to be most prosperous except that his son was prone to

pneumonia and other illnesses. It has been recorded that in the winter the family traveled to St. Louis for a warmer climate and better medical care.

Returning with his growing family to the Dubuque area to mine lead and trap, Jean received a warning that the British fort in Prairie was recruiting Native American allies and planning to march down the West bank of the river to claim the land for Britain then choke it off as a supply line for the Americans. They were also planning to attack Spanish settlements. Jean Marie Cardinal suspected that if he was captured he would be hung for the murder of the British trapper.

At the news of all of this coming down river, Jean Marie packed up his canoe immediately told his wife and family to follow him down river as soon as they were able. The historical record has Jean showing up three days later in St Louis filing a deed for farm land.

From here the legend continues that Jean Marie paddled his canoe 280 miles to St. Louis in 3 days and warned the

Spanish & French Fort. Even more amazing is the fact that most Voyagers did not travel at night because the river was too dangerous! Jean's warning gave the Fort a chance to prepare for the attack, permitting 29 regular troops and 281 citizens to repel an attack by a 1500 man British & Native American Allied force. However, when the British Soldiers and their allies were defeated at the Fort at St. Louis, Jean Marie was captured by the British and later shot trying to escape.

Jean Marie Cardinal could be thought of as a true "Paul Revere" of Canoers!

"Even more amazing is the fact that most Voyagers did not travel at night because the river was too dangerous!"

Looks like canoe paddling has come a long way since 1783!

See you in Dubuque!

Mark your Calendar!



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DUBUQUE, IOWA

ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

AUGUST 9-13, 2017

**Contact Earl Brimeyer, Event Director
563.583.6345; ebrimeyer@aol.com**

**Rebecca Barton Davis, USCA President
517.227.4794; canoe_run_ski@hotmail.com**

A FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT

Event Dates

- Thursday, August 10th: Youth Sprints, Adult/Youth Sprints, and Paracanoe Sprints.
- Friday, August 11th: K1 Sea Kayak, C2 Mixed, and C2 Junior/Adult Junior Short Course.
- Saturday, August 12th: C1 Woman, K1 ICF, K1 Unlimited Woman, OC1 Man, C2 Men, and K2 Men. C1 Woman Jr, K1 Woman Jr and C2 Men Junior on the short course. C4 Unlimited trial event in the afternoon.
- Sunday, August 13th: C1 Man, C1 Stock Man, K1 Unlimited Man, OC1 Woman, C2 Women, and K2 Women. C2 Woman Jr, K1 Man Jr, C1 Man Jr, and SUP Unlimited on the short course.



Thank you for your service to the USCA Peter Heed!
See you again when the weather is a little warmer, eh?



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Standing Committees for 2016

Adaptive Paddling – Jan Whitaker

Auditing – Larry Latta

Barton Cup (Sub-ctee, Youth Activities) - Pam Fitzgerald & Teresa Stout

Bylaws Review - Harold Theiss

Camaraderie – Open

Camping/Cruising - Bob Allen

Competition – Norm Ludwig

Competition / Dragon Boat - Robert McNamara

Competition / Kayak – Ron Kaiser & Lloyd Reeves

Competition / Nationals Awards – Barbara Walls

Competition / Orienteering – Stephen Miller

Competition / Outrigger Canoe – Hype Mattingly

Competition / Adult Sprints – John Edwards

Competition / Youth Sprints - Lloyd Reeves

Competition / Standup Paddleboard - Lloyd Reeves

Competition / Swan Boat - Glen Green

Conservation - Open

Education - Lynne Witte

Historian - Joan Theiss

Instruction Certification – Open

Insurance Oversight- Joan Theiss & Scott Stenberg

International - John Edwards

Marketing – Open

Membership – Harold Theiss

Merchandise Sales – Open

Nationals Coordinator - Don Walls

Nominating –

Publications – Steven Horney

Publicity & PR – Open

Safety – Glen Green

Technical Inspection – Bill Corrigan

USCA Bylaws/Rules/Regulations Review & Oversight – Joan Theiss

USCA/IC F Grants – Priscilla Reinertsen

Youth Activities – Pam Fitzgerald & Teresa Stout

Webmaster- Larry Latta

Women's Interest – Open

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USCA Marathon Coordinator to USACK Marathon Committee -Kaitlyn McElroy

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