

# Canoe News

*Yesterday*



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*From the Editor:*

*The 50th Anniversary is a special occasion for almost any event: marriage, employment, years without a cavity, etc. But it's doubly special for a volunteer organization based on the love of paddling and racing. This year marks the 50th Anniversary for the USCA, humbly started in the living room of a few enthusiasts in Indiana in 1967 and taking off in 1968. With that in mind we're dedicating this issue specifically to the celebration and remembrance of these past 50 years, with a forward look to the next 50. In addition we intend to have special articles and interviews in each of our upcoming issues this year related to our 50th. So Celebrate!!!*

*Keep paddling strong!*

*Steve*

*Front Cover*

*Top Photo: Roxanne (Triebold) Barton (photo center) and Beth Schluter (photo right), 1977.*

*Bottom Photo: Briana Fitzgerald at 2016 Nationals, courtesy of BillAmosPhotography.com*

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# VIEW FROM THE BOW

USCA PRESIDENT REBECCA DAVIS

Since I was six years old I have been a stern paddler. Over three quarters of my life has been spent following the paddler in front of me, calling switches, and learning how to get the most out of my partner. I have loved every minute of it. It is my comfortable place. I want the control of running my own boat. Even as a younger paddler, I knew that I would be a stern paddler for life. There was no point in *spending time in the bow*, because who would go with me then?

During the 2017 season, I did something I had never even considered in the past. I committed to racing the Au Sable River Canoe Marathon in the bow. I was nervous that I might not be strong enough to hold up my end of the bargain, and fizzle out over the later stages of the race. I was anxious that I wouldn't have enough experience, or intuition, and make things more difficult on my partner than they needed to be. I was terrified of running to the river, and jumping off of the dock.

Part of the reason I made this decision is that it was scary for me. I wanted to be challenged. I needed to see how I

could do. I have quite a few races under my belt, and this was a way to keep it fresh. I trained hard, paddled with people who had way more experience than I did to get feedback, and tried my hardest to relinquish control. I spent many hours adjusting my stroke mechanics and cadence. It was brutal.

By the time I started paddling with my partner I knew I was ready. We had probably the best race (definitely in the top 5) of my career thus far. It might stand to be the best I ever have, but I will keep working to top it. I learned how to be more assertive, how to communicate better, and I experienced the struggles that my partners have to endure. It was absolutely a positive experience.

This year, I hope to spend some time in each seat, although I will always call the stern home. Racing up front has made me think about how trying something different can really change our perspective, and cause us to grow as athletes. It makes me excited for the women's race that is happening at the General Clinton Canoe Regatta this Memorial Day. Many women will be paddling bow for the first time in a



major race, or maybe racing women's for the first time ever. It will be scary, daunting, and maybe even intimidating, but we will get to share the experience with other women, and other paddlers. We won't be out there alone.

2018 is a good year to challenge ourselves. We can race with someone new, check that bucket list race off of the list, mentor a fledgling paddler, do a big C-1 race, try a different end of the boat, or maybe try a new one altogether. We can't do the same thing year after year and expect to improve. Find the joy of discovering something new, set goals, play, and have fun. Let's make this the best year yet.

Rebecca

# OUR USCA: A 5-STAR PROGRAM?

BOB ALLEN

Our USCA. Fifty years facilitating the organization of marathon competition. At our inception in Indiana, although marathon racing was our focus, our "Founding Fathers" adopted a 5-star program of competition, camping, cruising, conservation, and camaraderie. How has that worked out? How are we to proceed with the non-competition elements in our sights?

We have to remember that our organization was formed with a primary goal of promoting marathon competition. The USCA has no paid staff and our members today are obviously focused on competition. Our members also have work, family, and other non-canoeing activities in their lives. Not surprising that the remaining four stars receive little or no conscious attention from our membership. So, given the meager 24 hours in each day, it is unrealistic to expect us to be capable of highlighting such diversity in our lives. HOWEVER, most of our members do pay attention to all five stars in different ways - ways which highlight each of the other stars, largely without realizing it. Let's take a closer look.

**\*Competition:** This is our obvious focus. Similar to individual zones of faith in religion, every one of us has an individual zone

of focus for our racing. Our individual focus zones determine our motivation levels for training and racing. Gifted athletes might be motivated to condition and train to beat all comers. Mere mortals like myself condition and train to be the best we can be, given our genetics. Others may overcome a previously sedentary lifestyle, bringing nature into better focus along with healthful fitness. All of us do the best we can for the shape we are in, and have a joyful time.

**\*Camaraderie:** We have great camaraderie with our fellow paddlers. It is important. Judy Jeans once handed out stickers for our boats with "Camaraderie" written in red letters. Mine is still on Tim's and my 30+ year old Kevlar Crozier V-1. Canoers and kayakers are friendly folks, freely helping fellow paddlers improve .... sometimes getting passed by those they have helped. A shared passion yields great camaraderie. Most of us do not even think of it as such. We merely enjoy it.

**\*Camping:** Here we see an element of canoeing that can become a time consuming activity all by itself, leaving little or no room for racing. Or not. A significant number of our racers beat-feet to local campgrounds at

every one of our Nationals. Tom Thomas this year travelled with a friend of his from Indiana to the Maine woods for a week of camping in September: a disastrous rainy, windy, boat sinking skirmish on Moosehead Lake; followed by an equally disastrous windy, rainy, drought-infested low water scraping trip on the Alagash River. Fun! In the late 80s, my son and I teamed up with Ted Kenyon Sr. and Junior on an adventure canoe camping trip to the Lake George, Lake Champlain, Lake Champlain barge canal area. It's an area full of French and Indian War and Revolutionary War history. A friend of Tim's joined us in our 18' wood canvas Old Town Guide boat and we had a great time attacking Fort Ticonderoga, Mount Defiance, and Crown Point from the water. One of my first race paddling buddies, Jim Lehman, and I took a canoe camping adventure trip each September/October for years. I had done OC-1 slalom and downriver races with/against him for years, plus I raced my first and 21st 70 with Jim. *Talk about camaraderie!* Many great opportunities for long weekend family/friend adventure camping treks are made even more enjoyable through our paddling-strength lives.

**\*Cruising:** What's a cruise? As Bill Clinton so succinctly stated,

“It depends on your definition of what cruising is” ..... or something like that. Training fits the definition of a cruise in my book - especially when training/cruising with others. Training is a performance paddling cruise with lots of nature all around, good camaraderie when with others, and fitness as a plus. My guess is that most paddlers of our ilk look for fitness opportunities when on a cruise with non-fitness oriented folks. Over the years, the training cruise folks in our area have seen moose, mink, fox, deer, beaver, otter, a bear swimming across the Connecticut river, eagle, hawk, osprey, chickadee, and various humanoids in very compromising conditions. We cruise like no others.

**\*Conservation:** We do more for conservation than the multitude of other boating aficionados whenever we “start our engines.” Our “engines” don’t spew oil and gas mixtures into our waters. Considering joining a conservation group? This is certainly a good idea and some of us do, but our actions when on the water, and our desire to keep our waters clean for our forays on—and sometimes in—the water creates a big desire to pay personal attention to the water purity around us.

Now I’ll add a 6th star:

**\*Safety:** Most of our folks have the normal humanoid desire to stay alive in this world. Paddling safely is obviously the best way to highlight life as opposed to maiming ourselves or meeting

our maker. Our USCA stresses safety with various publications and at the Nationals. Members most likely do what I do when we see folks probably unaware of risky actions - such as recreational paddlers paddling right out into the middle of a lake when water and/or air temps are hypothermic-cold. I nicely ask them if they have thought about the risk of capsizing away from the shore. The usual response is: "Thank you. I never thought of that." When worded right, we will never get a "mind your own business" reply. I haven't yet! My son and I spent mucho time explaining river reading and paddling strategies to avoid strainers, etc. to a high school Cooperstown cousin and his friend doing the 70 in a rec boat for the first time. It paid off. Almost all senseless canoe/kayak accidents involve new (or intoxicated) boaters who fail to evaluate risks before taking their uninformed leap of faith. My guess is that we mitigate this equation through our awareness of safety issues and speaking up about them.

So we really do pay attention to all five stars, and even a sixth. We do it through our focus on competition. Too often we USCA folks feel a sense of guilt about not giving the non-competition stars their due, if we think of them at all. We probably feel that by listing the other four stars, we have the responsibility to jump feet first into the throws of each star. God did not create that many hours in a day. We truly do as well today as we did back 50 years ago.



# YESTERDAY: FOUNDING MEMBER BOB STWALLEY

INTERVIEW BY BETSY ARNOLD

*(Interviewed March 2010 and written October 2010)*

Bob Stwalley is a spry, leprechaun of a man, with a pronounced twinkle in his blue eyes. At almost 80, he has more energy than most teenagers. Bob is never still. If he's not paddling or building a boat, he is hunting deer, making venison sausage or showing a group of friends the Sand Hill cranes that rest from migration, near his farm. Doing farm repairs, welding and working with the backhoe fill his spare time.

It is impossible to imagine him apart from the land in Crawfordsville, Indiana some of which has been in his family since 1825. He knows the curve of the fields, the creatures upon them, and every bit of history in his chunk of the world. He will share all of this with you. He will fix your boat and won't take a dime. He'll build a new seat for your kayak and ask only that you do a kindness for someone else, when you can.

What Bob won't tell you is that the USCA was conceived in the living room of an 1860 brick house on the rolling prairie of western Indiana. When I probe this, with my pen in hand, he spouts a list of names of the people who were there. He can tell

you what they said, but he won't tell you what he said. Bob is worried he'll forget someone, as he reels off names: Charlie Moore, Doc Runnells, Lynn Tuttle, Dr. LaSalle, Bob Demoret, Howie LaBrant, and Clint Wilkins.

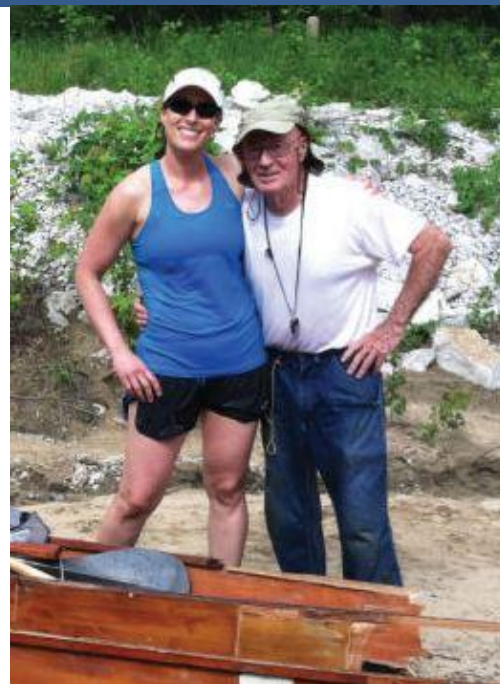
"These men were discussing the fact that most races had no rules. The Indiana Canoe Racing Council had leveled the playing field in the area with the 4 at 32 rule, yet we were only one state. The American Canoe Association had no interest in long races.

"Marathons were the orphans of the paddling world," says Stwalley. "What we need is a national organization. Let's give it a go and call it the United States Canoe Association." "The original idea was to have everyone come out, so anyone can race," Bob says. He reports that on that fateful day, the two World War II bomber pilots looked at each other.

Clint asked Charlie, "Do you think we can do it? It's a helluva step."

"I know we can," replied Charlie. And the rest is history.

The first organizational meeting was held at Turkey Run State Park in Central Indiana on Sugar Creek. The year was 1967. Bob spouts names again, adding



*Ellen Biddle & Bob Stwalley  
Sugar Creek Race 2013*

the names of Thor Ronemus, Roland Muhlen, and Leroy Weesaw from the American Indian Center to the folks that were present at the USCA's conception.

Expansion of the organization came from Ohio. Bob throws out the names Mike Fremont, Scott Gallagher, Hank and Emma Freeman and Jean Turck. "The Saint Charles Canoe Club out of Chicago came along. Michigan didn't come in because they raced 3 by 27's. We were racing 4 by 32's, which were almost as fast.

Bob continued. "The first National was held on the south fork of the Cumberland River in Oneida,



Tennessee in 1968. Charlie Moore had worked on their Chamber of Commerce. I went with him on his first trip to Oneida for a noon lunch. It's always a thrill to ride with a former bomber pilot who thinks he's still in an airplane.

"It was a good place for Nationals. You had to portage Angel Falls and run Devil's Jump. The river narrowed to a 30 foot chute in the mountains and emptied into a pool. I was running with Sandy Jones. The Tuttle Cruiser was our boat. I told her, 'You do everything I tell you and we'll go through.' Sandy got over the bow seat and in front of the center thwart, on her knees. I was on my knees in the stern. We were the first and only boat not to swamp out. When we got through, I asked Sandy, 'What did you think?' 'I don't know,' she replied. 'I had my eyes shut'."

Bob is laughing as hard as anyone at the table. When the laughter dies away, Bob's face wears a somber expression. "Shortly after that, I got away from racing. I had my boys to raise, and they kept me busy." Bob pauses and looks at Di and Roger Crisp, who are seated at the table with us. Di and Roger, along with Patt Oakley, pulled me back in, in the 1980's." The friends share a smile.

"What do you love about paddling?" I ask. Bob answers without missing a beat.

"Paddling lets your mind focus. It puts us back in nature and takes us back in time...we can be like the French Voyageurs. We can see what the Native Americans saw,

beaver, otter, and eagle. Paddling keeps you young. I'll be 80 in November, you know." (I didn't know and find it difficult to believe.)

"Racing Nationals makes me feel like a kid."

In addition to racing both canoes and kayaks, Bob is a boat builder. "I'm still trying to design the perfect boat, that'll run by itself. The designs are getting so narrow, I can't stay in them," he laughs.

Bob built the 'Inuit Princess', a wood strip sea kayak, based on an Inuit design. His next design was the 'Inuit Princess II', in which he changed the water line. "The Cotton Wood Babe" followed. "She's the first and last boat I'll ever build out of cotton wood. It's too darn heavy and hard to work with." Bob built the 'Wabash Cannonball' which is a Diller canoe without the wings. Most recently, he built the "Fancy Nancy," named for his wife. "It's a Lynn Tuttle design touring kayak, 20 feet long and 18 inches wide."

"How'd you get interested in building boats, Bob, and how did you learn?"

"Mostly I learned by trial and error. I'd try something and see if it worked. When I was seven years old, Daddy dammed up the stream and created a pond. Back then, I took a bath in a wash tub. That got me thinking about the bull boats of the Mandan Indians. They were round boats made of buffalo hide with a willow frame. I don't know how they paddled them. I used a Model T tire tube around the wash tub for flotation and it turned 90 degrees with every stroke. "

"My first canoe, ever, was a Thompson Canoe, that had been bashed up. I traded a Springfield single shot rifle for her and hauled her home on a mud boat hitched to Dad's old Belgium mare. I heated tar and used burlap gunny sacks to make repairs. When it was finished, I painted her bright green. She weighed at least 150 lbs. and was lopsided in the water, but that's what I started with."

"Racing and competition is fun, but people come first. If you get to a place where people don't come first, that's a problem."

"In the early days the races were longer than they are now, 20 to 25 miles was the norm. Those distances discouraged people and races have gotten shorter. Back then, we raced both Saturday and Sunday. There was plenty of competition on the water, but off the water we had a lot of camaraderie."

Bob is the race sponsor of the Annual Sugar Creek Race in Crawfordsville, Indiana. This race has been run consecutively since 1963. Thanks, in large part, to Bob's dedication. The race is now a mere 12 miles.

"Bob, what advice would you give to young paddlers? "

"Safety comes first. Be careful and know what you're doing. Find someone to teach you the basics. The river is a friend, but she doesn't give a hoot. Wear your life vest," he says, shooting me a look that's full of meaning. If you paddle alone, tell someone where you're going. You must use your head. There are simply times that

you just shouldn't paddle. Always keep safety in mind."

"Learn about nature," says the man who can name every bird, fish and tree we come across on Sugar Creek. He can also give you the history of the old mill that is finally being restored on the creek bank. I now know they made cloth for the Union Soldiers' uniforms in that mill, because Bob told me. He probably wanted to make sure I knew that, because I spent so many years in the South. Bob likes to tease me about that. Once, during race awards, he gave me a 'Confederate Quarter'. Two dimes and a nickel, held together by duct tape, that looked a bit like Mickey Mouse. His laughter rang the loud-

est, when I called him a "damn Yankee." Bob didn't say we should learn the history of the creeks and rivers we paddle, but that is certainly the example he sets. He also gives and takes a good bit of light hearted teasing.

"Stay amateur, so it's fun," Bob says. "Money taints things, and besides, there's not that much money in Marathon racing."

Finally, Bob is grateful for the age divisions at Nationals for kayaks. "I love to run a boat, but I can't run against 60 year old kids, like Tom Thomas."

Bob's the kind of man who will invite you to join him and his wife for

dinner, at a lovely restaurant, on the first night of your first Nationals, when you have travelled alone all day. He will fill you in on the race course, sharing all the information he's scouted. He'll give you tips to ensure you have a successful race. He won't let you touch the check. I wish I had a Confederate Quarter for every time Bob has left me with nothing to say, except, "Thank you."

Bob is an extraordinary man, posing as an ordinary farmer from Indiana. He is a true ambassador for marathon paddling.

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# CONFESSIONS OF A CANOE RACER

PETER HEED

***“There is magic in the feel of a paddle and the movement of a canoe, a magic compounded of distance, adventure, solitude, and peace.”***

Sigurd Olson

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the United States Canoe Association. The USCA came to life after a meeting of Midwest canoe racing enthusiasts during January 1968, at Turkey Run State Park in the State of Indiana. The organization was an outgrowth of the Indiana Canoe Racing Council and the Illinois Paddling Council, and it was the result of the rejection by the ACA of a proposal to establish a National Activity Committee to promote and regulate the sport of canoe cruising/racing. Those who helped create the USCA were visionaries, and they knew something that we have all come to appreciate - the sport of canoe/kayak racing and cruising is indeed special and it has a unique capacity to impact our lives and alter the way in which we view the world.

When you consider these past 50 years of paddle sport, you come to realize that although

there have been many changes in the designs and the materials of the craft that we paddle, the essence of the sport remains the same. The boats may be faster and made out of carbon fiber, and many folks may now be “standing up” to paddle, but the special joy of using a paddle to propel a small craft through a liquid world continues to attract people of every age. Like Sigurd Olson, one of America’s most influential conservationists, they feel the “magic” of paddling.

I know that for me personally, the special sensation of making a canoe go fast is a big part of what draws me to the water. Paddling a racing hull at speed, feeling the boat as it seems to “dance” across the water, is a special thrill. In these intimate craft there is an extraordinary connectedness between hull and water - so intense and immediate. Just a short single bladed paddle makes the racer feel one with the water and provides all the motive power. This is so unlike the sensation generated by the relatively giant oars of a rowing shell or the awesome but sometimes overwhelming force of the wind in a sailboat.

Just a canoe and a paddle: a simple craft and a basic tool. Yet, as Sigurd Olson knew so well,

there is indeed magic in the feel of a paddle propelling a canoe through the water. Even when sprinting a racing canoe at top speed, we are not making the boat go particularly fast in relative terms - perhaps 7 to 9 mph. Yet within the confines of the canoe, it seems as if you are flying!

I have often reflected on the source of this feel of “magic” that comes from paddling a sleek racing hull, but have never been able to put my fingers precisely on it. Still, the magic is undeniably there, and it is one of the primary reasons that I became and remain a canoe racer.

Let me confess some of the major reasons why I love to paddle and race marathon canoes. For most people, the first experience canoeing is usually limited to kneeling uncomfortably in a heavy recreational canoe of less than inspired design. “Bruisewater” is what the late canoeing guru Harry Roberts liked to call them. Whatever you call them, they are not particularly fun to paddle. Unfortunately, too many of the recreational canoes you find in backyards are heavy, slow (read “inefficient”), and just plain dull to paddle. If you are looking for the magic, you will not find it there.

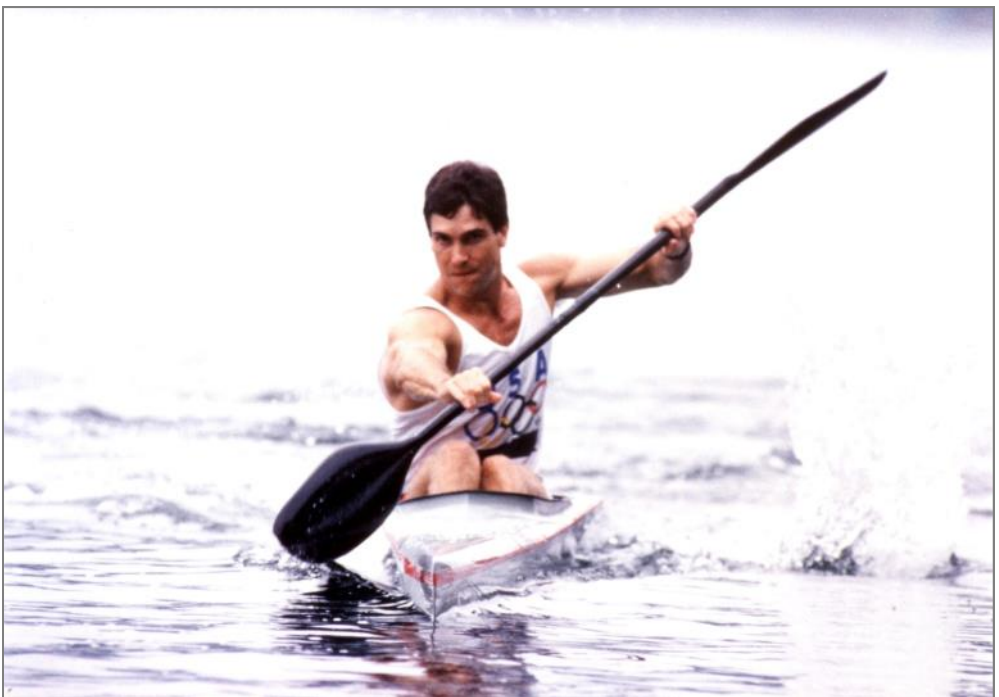
Instead, try climbing aboard a “racing canoe,” which is really nothing more than a light, sleek, well-designed canoe with comfortable bucket type seats. Grab a lightweight bent shaft racing paddle and take a few strokes in this slender hull. That’s all it will take to start to feel the magic. You have just done the equivalent of changing from work boots to running shoes, from a pickup truck to a sports car, from a plow horse to a thoroughbred. Just a few minutes in one of these racing canoes or kayaks and you will know exactly what Sigurd Olson was talking about.

Another source of canoe magic is the historical origins of the craft itself. Paddle any canoe for any significant distance and you are partaking in one of the oldest transportation rituals on the North American Continent. The versatile canoe has undergone surprisingly few changes from the early Native American designs many hundreds of years ago. As author David Harrison points out in his marvelous book *Canoeing Skills for the Serious Paddler*, “No other craft except possibly the Eskimo kayak, combines so well the elements of speed, maneuverability, lightness, and load-carrying capacity.” Because the canoe is so versatile its essential design has remained intact over the centuries. The similarities between Henry J. Rushton’s beautiful designs of the late 19th century and those of our modern racing hulls are striking. It is clear that today’s

canoe racers are not the first to feel the magic.

Canoe racing is unique in all the world of sports in that it provides endurance competition where the focus is exclusively on the muscles of the upper torso, shoulders, and arms, combined

champion paddler and owner of Epic Kayak Company. Greg, who won two gold medals at the Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, in both the K-1 and K-2 events, became the first American to reach the podium at the Olympics since the 1950s. I first met Greg many years ago, long before his Olympic days.



*Greg Barton in the 1988 Olympics*

with the cardiovascular system. What other endurance sport relies totally on the upper body for propulsion? The classic endurance sports such as running, biking, cross-country skiing, and triathlon combine cardiovascular endurance with muscular endurance primarily of the lower body, especially the legs. Only in canoe racing is the upper musculature stressed exclusively and totally, for hours on end. This great sport is, in fact, the last and best haven for the non-running endurance athlete.

One of the best examples of this truism is Greg Barton, world

He was paddling marathon canoes at the time (and still does race them on occasion), and what initially struck me were his calf muscles. They were obviously atrophied, and he appeared to have difficulties running. I learned later that Greg had suffered from a club foot type birth defect. His lower legs were in stark contrast with the rest of his incredibly muscled body and he clearly never allowed leg issues to interfere with his athletic goals or his determination. Not only did Greg go on to become an Olympic champion, open ocean surf ski champion, and one of the fastest paddlers on earth, but he remained a modest and

unselfish person, so typical of the majority of folks who participate in the sport of canoe racing.

No, you do not need great leg speed to be a successful canoe racer. In fact, except for portages, running ability is just about irrelevant. Not the fastest kid on your block? Have a gimpy knee from an old football injury or too many miles running the roads? The sport of canoe racing is for you.

Another source of magic in Canoe racing for me is the fact that serious injuries are so rare. While the term "low impact" is the current rage in athletics, even that description is too severe to describe canoe racing. Try "no impact." In canoe racing your body weight is totally supported by the boat, and you are propelling your slender craft forward by using the paddle to pull yourself through the water. To be sure, there can be stresses to the muscles of the back, shoulders, and arms, but you generally do not encounter a jarring or heavy impact type experience. In nearly 50 years of competitive paddling, I know of only a handful of racers who have suffered significant enough injuries to require more than a month or two of rest and/or rehabilitation.

Canoe racing is also a relatively safe sport. With the exception of Whitewater racing, the bodies of water which make up most marathon race courses are generally placid, either lakes or flatwater rivers. While it is wise to always wear a Coast Guard approved PFD, the consequences of a cap-

size are usually limited to getting wet and damaging the ego. Yet canoe racing is not entirely without danger. There can be rocks, fallen trees (strainers), dams, power boaters, and cold water to contend with. But you are not going to get run over by a truck, nor are you going to come crashing down on the pavement after a bike crash. Almost all the serious dangers associated with canoe racing are easily avoided with an application of common sense and basic safety precautions.

**"I spent my first 20 years in canoe racing trying to prove that I'm a man, and the next 20 years trying to prove that I'm a boy."**

With each passing year I have come to appreciate another source of canoe racing magic - the fact that the sport is so safe and impact-free that it is perfect for the mature athlete. Canoe racing's largest growth in recent years has come in the seniors (ages 50 - 60) and veterans (60 plus) classes. Due to the fact that paddling is a weight-supported activity and does not stress the cardiovascular system quite to the extent that running or cross-country skiing does, you find that there is very little drop-off in performance until paddlers get well into their 50s. For example, the fastest overall C-1 men's time at the 1991 USCA Nationals was turned in by Michigan's Ken Kolonich - a master's age paddler nearly 50! Calvin Hassel, now in his mid 50's, continues to place in the top 3 overall at Nationals!

Gene Jensen, the famous canoe designer and racer who won several C-1 Veterans age group championships, represented the attitude of most mature racers when I heard him comment, "I spent my first 20 years in canoe racing trying to prove that I'm a man, and the next 20 years trying to prove that I'm a boy."

A crucial part of canoe racing's magic for me, and I think for most racing paddlers, is that the training experience can be so darn pleasant. No matter how many competitions you enter each season, the majority of your time will be spent training. There is simply no better way to relax and get alone with your thoughts than to be out in your canoe or kayak on some river or lake. It is a restorative and life enhancing activity which provides you with the opportunity to be close to nature while experiencing the sensory pleasures of gliding through a liquid medium.

I am sure every paddler has noticed how different and lovely the world can look from river-level. While paddling an intense training session, you can often see blue herons, geese, feeding deer, or rising trout. Even when rivers flow through residential and urban areas, the perspective from your canoe seat is so different that you will normally feel isolated from the hectic day-to-day activities of the modern world. Time to break away from the cell phone and email! To me, canoe training is

not only good for the body and the soul, it is aesthetically pleasing. No matter how rigorous my workout has been, I never fail to feel revitalized when I step out of the canoe.

Lastly, one of the most special aspects about the sport of canoe racing is the high level of camaraderie and good sportsmanship exhibited by nearly all competitors. This was one of the first lessons for me early on in my canoe racing experience. Competitors would often come up to me after races and give me suggestions on how to improve my technique or my training. This was certainly not what I had grown used to in other competitive sports. Canoe racing is, by and large, a self coached sport, and most of the best paddlers will tell you that they learned how to race with the help and guidance of other racers. This “helping your competitor” attitude is one of the great traditions of our sport.

This was dramatically reinforced for me during the General Clinton 70 Miler pro race in the early 1990s. It was at a point a little more than a third of the way into the race, at about the three hour mark. My partner Paul Fac-teau and I were packed up with two other canoes, battling for seventh, eighth and ninth positions. As we approached the Goodyear dam portage, I saw - too late—that Paul had thrown away his drink jug. He apparently thought we were being resupplied at the end of the portage. In fact, we were not going to meet up with our



*Greg Barton (bow) and Mark Rimer (stern) racing in the early 70's*

feeder team until the next portage, at Oneonta, about an hour downstream. Being without liquid for an hour at this point in a long race would normally be disastrous. I was sure that Paul would become dehydrated and we would probably have to drop out of the race.

After the portage, the teams wake riding with us became aware of our dire situation. I expected that they would use the opportunity to put the hammer down and leave us to languish in our dehydrated condition. Yet that did not happen.

In an unselfish display of sportsmanship, Bob Wisse and Jeff Shultis, two of New York State's top pro racers, volunteered to help. Bob, paddling bow, handed his drinking tube to my partner, who proceeded to suck down the much needed liquid. Watching it from the stern as we moved down the river, I was reminded of

two jets refueling in-flight. Bob and Jeff helped us in this manner all the way down to the Oneonta portage, and literally saved our race. Paul and I eventually finished in ninth place - all thanks to a team of our closest competitors. (Wisse and Shultis did beat us in the end, by one place. Poetic justice!)

As you have figured out by now, I confess that I'd rather be out paddling a racing canoe than just about anything else in the world. Cynics think that's probably because I'm not real good at anything else; others think that I just like to get away from the stresses of work and everyday life. The truth is simple. Like Sigurd Olson, I feel the magic. I am sure you do as well.

Peter Heed

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# BREAKNECK SPEED, DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS

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LINDA TENCH & CAROL RABUCK



## **BREAKNECK SPEED**

**By Linda Lensch**

A year ago today I underwent emergency discectomy & fusion surgery after I leaned forward and sat up too soon, striking my head on a low railroad bridge's steel beam at high tide while canoeing. The impact broke my neck.

Thankfully we had only taken 2-3 strokes from a dead stop, so we were nowhere near full speed (although it took only those few strokes in that smooth Wenonah pro racing boat to be gliding nicely). I heard a loud metallic bong and a horrible crunching, and reached up to make sure I hadn't cracked my forehead open. There was momentary

pain to my forehead. My head felt intact, but then I lost the grip on my paddle. While trying to make sense of what just happened, attempting to react appropriately as a bow paddler, being upset at myself for letting go of the paddle, and at the same time thinking about how much it would cost to replace, both of my arms and upper body went limp.

No matter how strongly I willed it they would not move. It was as though a circuit had been shut off. The paralysis moved down my arms to my hands and fingers in split-seconds. There was a

noe for balance. Tipping over would have been catastrophic. I did not know if the paralysis would continue down my body, shut down my breathing, etc. This is what I've trained for at

pulse had dropped to 50 bpm, which I later learned was indicative of a spinal chord injury. The SCI was confirmed at Hackensack University Medical Center. I'd damaged my C5-C6 vertebrae and disc, and completely severed my anterior longitudinal ligament: the strong, thick band that supports the spine and allows you to hold your head up. From what I've read it's pretty rare to do that. It is more common to sustain a tear, not a full "disruption of the ALL." The doctor said there was no guarantee the paralysis would go away. He removed the disc, replaced it with a spacer, and installed a plate with four screws through an incision at the front of my neck.



*The fateful railway bridge*

sense of disbelief yet I was very grounded, focused and stayed in control.

To avoid unnecessary movement I laid down in the boat with my head and neck supported on my seat. An overwhelming sleepiness overcame me. I wanted to close my eyes, put my head down and checkout into that quiet darkness, away from this reality, but I remember consciously fighting through it until that feeling passed.

Gil Ross was there to ensure I survived. He told me to put my feet out on both sides of the ca-

work where I'm a police officer - to survive. I was a training officer for a while and I've been to a ton of survival seminars and courses. I've run possible scenarios through my mind for years, I just never expected one to be in a canoe!

Gil paddled our C2 to the river bank while yelling for help. A man walking in the park heard us and phoned for an ambulance. Once we got to shore Gil further supported my upper body with his paddle while he crouched in the water to stabilize the canoe. I remained alert and very calm. My

I wore a rigid collar for about 2 months. I did months of physical therapy 2-3X per week. In the beginning I could not move my arms and I had severely restricted range of motion due to the pain. For what seemed like forever my progress was very slow and I was beginning to lose hope. Depression worsened to the point where I needed medical intervention for a while. It was a long winter in front of the TV. For 8-9 months I was not allowed to exercise or lift anything heavier than 15 lb. I was limited to stretching, massage and very minor exercises at physical therapy. I even tried acupuncture to find a way around the pain that was blocking my progress. The surgeon wanted me to do nothing but rest. I was not allowed anti-inflammatories as





they interfere with bone growth to heal the fusion. I've been an athlete all my life, primarily in fast-pitch softball, tennis and in recent years paddling. My body tone quickly atrophied. There was nothing I could do about it. As the muscles receded I became aware of bones and structures under my skin that I've never felt before. My dominant, right arm was useless. I had to learn how to eat left-handed. It is not as easy as it might seem, especially balancing peas on a fork. Bathing, shampooing, also not easy. Same for dressing yourself and lots of other things we fully functional types take for granted. How many of you can remove your own sports bra in one fell swoop with your off hand? That's just one of the new skills I honed.

A few friends from California to Philly to Long Island and elsewhere who have undergone serious injuries and long-term rehabilitation reassured me. They advised me to not rush back, to not push, to just let the body heal and give myself time. I was not used

to that. They bluntly warned me to learn from their mistakes. I felt stalled, stuck. I had to learn to stop, to slow down.

One of the most difficult things was finally telling my mother, who

lives in Florida. We had kept the news from her until I was stabilized. She took it hard. She always used to admonish me when I was a kid, for running, jumping and playing rough, that if I didn't calm down I would break my neck. Well....

In January I decided to try out a local aquatic center for early morning open pool sessions with a group of senior citizens and others working their way back from knee replacements, etc. That was when I started to signif-

icantly improve. I finally began to push through the pain and improve my flexibility. I used pool noodles and foam barbells, especially for ROM. I did what loosely resembled push-ups, planks and slow pull-ups in a few inches of water, 3 ft. of water, 5 ft. of water, using the pool ladders or hand railings. I could not swim. I still can't effectively raise my right arm enough for a freestyle stroke.

I had a low resistance ZRE paddle made with a 4in wide blade that I began taking to the pool to slowly work on relearning my stroke. Just a little at a time. I did feathering exercises to work on my bracing. I really felt in my heart that once I could resume paddling my body would remember and the healing would accelerate. I believe that is what happened. As my perspective improved I asked my doctor to wean me off the antidepressants which had done their job and gotten me over the emotional hump.



I could not drive by myself for months. Friends drove me to doctor's appointments and physical therapy, to the supermarket. I am indebted to them. We had to be careful with potholes and bumps in the road especially while I still had the collar on. Once, while being driven under a very high railroad overpass, I freaked out, PTSD I guess. That has subsided but I still get taken aback when paddling or driving under bridges. My first time back on the otherwise very safe and protected D&R canal at Washington's Crossing was nerve-wracking as it is crisscrossed with quaint but low bridges.

When I eventually did get back in a canoe, a C2, I was really nervous. Even using the thin paddle I could not maintain for 5 minutes due to muscular fatigue and pain. For the longest time I could not get my hand up on top of the grip when I hutted from right to left. I had to grab the shaft for one stroke, bring the paddle down and slide the grip into my hand for the next stroke, much like that one-handed baseball pitcher who would throw the ball with the glove tucked under the stump of his other arm and then quickly slide his hand into the glove. You figure it out, you adapt, you keep moving in the right direction hoping for perfection. It is much improved but still not 100%. Pressing down works; lifting up the arm has not returned to full strength. So sometimes the blade doesn't fully clear

the water upon exiting and I splash the bow paddler (sorry Gil and Carol). I saw the steel I-beam where I struck my head. I've paddled under it a few times since. Still an eerie feeling. In terms of cognitive skills I had to practice computer games for verbal and memory skills in the early stages of my rehab, with an occupational therapist. That too is almost 100% recovered. I still have issues with short-term memory and can't seem to remember the names of people I don't see every day.

I lost a year of training and paddling but I am still alive, and thanks to the advice for patience, and the support of friends, I'm doing really well considering. On the flip side I completed a year of coming back, incrementally, from not being able to lift a small plastic sandwich bag partially full of sand out in front of me for more than a few seconds to competing in races again. It used to be about the stopwatch, but that's not the clock that matters. Slowing down has allowed nice things to happen in my life. Silver linings.

During those months on the sofa I tried to remember the feeling of a good catch, gliding across a lake, feeling a breeze, hearing the water drip off my paddle or ripple off the stern. At times I wondered if I would ever get to feel that again. I was fortunate enough to experience that yesterday with some dear friends. I tried to bank it away knowing

that I will draw on it when January and February come around again.

I don't take one moment of that for granted anymore.

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## THAT TIME I DIED

**By Carol Rabuck**

I don't remember that day very well and it took a while for my memory to work again. It was the 24th of July, 2016. The last I can recall I was pulling in to the Wawa off of the New Jersey turnpike, well before I got in the C4. I found a receipt in my car months later: blueberry muffin, coffee, Trident gum, and nearly half a tank of regular. I don't remember the canoe club or the road into it by the giant elephant in front of the concrete company, the double railroad tracks, and the winding industrial road following the river beyond. The missing pieces have been filled in by the people who were with me and later on by my brother and my housemate.

My friends Linda Lensch and Susan Williams had found a four man canoe, a C4, for us to use in an upcoming 90 mile marathon: the Adirondack Canoe Challenge. We were excited to be able to borrow it in July for the race in September. Susan would be away at another marathon so Linda had asked another Jersey paddler, Gil Ross, to fill in for our first practice. Our fourth was Betsy Ray, a young twenty-four year old for-

mer junior national team kayaker who had turned canoeist, lucky for us. Linda is former dragon boat team member and outrigger paddler who I'd met through Susan. Susan is a canoeing expert with a wealth of knowledge about rivers, boats and anything to do with all things canoe. On this day I was missing her presence but I was meeting Gil for the first time and had heard nothing but great things about him. He'd been on the U.S. Olympic high kneel canoe team in 1980 when, sadly, it was decided the U.S.A. would boycott the games. He was a seasoned steersman and would guide our practice.

Linda has told me I helped get the boat out and had instructed how to put it on the wheeled dolly. The dolly would be strapped into the boat during our race. It was critical for timing sake that we practice getting it on and off quickly and securely as the next steps of the race involved moving the boat between lakes and rivers, otherwise known as a portage. Linda said I'd done a great job describing what to do. We then took our seats: me in the bow, then Betsy, Linda and Gil steering in the stern. I'm told we paddled down the river towards an old submarine and close by, the Von Stueben house. We had agreed to go at an easy pace to get used to each other and the new boat. Most of us usually paddled a two man or C2 or a single C1. On this day it was a lucky miracle we were in a C4. These boats are light weight carbon fiber or Kevlar. They tip

over easily if you make a mistake. About 45 minutes in we decided to rest and Linda said she asked if I wanted to head out into a wetland bay area or go back to the smaller channels. She said it was I who chose the smaller channels: another stroke of miraculous fortune. If we had gone in the bay there would have been no way to get back to help. When we started off again she said I had taken the rate up and was almost at race pace. She stopped the boat again in hopes that I would start off slower the second time. She had asked me what I wanted to do and I'd said "Eh, just piddle-paddle," a non-sensible answer and certainly not one I recall.

Before we started off again I started to slump forward. Linda called for us to go and told me to stop fooling around but I now was leaning to the left and my head was inches from the water, then the top of my head was in the water. "She's not fooling around. Something's wrong," Linda had said and she screamed at Betsy to pull me up by the back of my shirt as she dove in the water to push me back up. She said my lips were blue. We floated now nearby a concrete bridge where Linda often saw two fishermen. Gil moved up and Betsy back as Linda scrambled to get back in the boat without tipping it. For any one who has ever been in a marathon C4, that feat, in and of itself is miraculous. Gil was reaching around me and slamming his closed fist on my chest. Both of them placed

my upper back across the seat and took turns doing chest compressions as Betsy took Linda's phone out of the dry bag to dial 911. As Gil and Linda worked on me the boat bounced up and down, rendering the effectiveness of their efforts by half. "Is anyone there? Fishermen are you there?" Linda called out. Suddenly the two fishermen friends she had met while paddling appeared and readily jumped into the water to hold the boat steady. The tide was such that they stood in chest deep water. Had this happened at a different time during the tide, who knows if I would have survived! Over five minutes had passed. Betsy was becoming hysterical on the phone with 911. She was unable to give the operator an address because there was no address. There are no addresses on the river! The bridge led to an old factory no longer in use. The operator was threatening to hang up. Ten minutes went by. Linda could feel she was losing me and so she grabbed me by the front of my shirt and screamed at me "I need you to stay with me! You have to stay with me, Carol!" They continued CPR and it was now fifteen minutes since they started.

There was nowhere to take the boat. The sides of the canal were steep and lined with overgrowth. They had to stay where they were and hope for the best. Betsy was successful in relaying our location and help was on the way. but it would take another ten minutes. I found out much later that nearly

half of the Hackensack Fire Department answered my call. Months later I drove down the narrow winding road their rigs had to travel. It reminded me of an old carriage lane, nearly wide enough for one vehicle. The EMTs threw a portable gurney with straps down to the boat. Linda and Gil strapped me securely in and I was hoisted up onto the bridge. A month later at home I suddenly remembered hearing a voice. It was a woman's voice and she was telling me that "these people are going to take care of you now. We'll see you at the hospital." They didn't know if I had a pulse or not.

I was put into critical care at Hackensack hospital where my condition was grave. Standard procedure is to put the patient into hypothermic suspension, a chilling of the blood, to prevent brain damage. It was six days before I was fully conscious and non-combative. (I kicked and fought, cursed out the doctors and nurses and was a general terror!) It was another seven days before I went home. Towards the end of my hospital stay I received a surprise visitor named Jodi. She introduced herself as the supervisor in charge that day the EMTs came for me. "You had a pulse when you were put in

the rig but we had to resuscitate you three times en route to the hospital. We used a new compression machine on you. It was the first time we used it." Later on I would see Jodi again at the Hackensack Fire Dept. annual awards dinner and I would have the wonderful and unique privilege of meeting the men and women who worked to save me. I presented them with recognition awards for their service in saving my life. The source of my cardiac arrest was a 96% blockage in the main artery of my heart. The difference between a heart attack and a cardiac arrest is: a heart attack occurs when the blood supply to part of the heart stops and thus causes a section of the heart muscle to begin to die; whereas a cardiac arrest occurs when the heart stops beating as a whole. By all

indications, I should have had a heart attack, but instead I had a cardiac arrest and as a result I have very little damage to my heart. The culprit in my case was a higher than normal level of Lipo-protein A in my blood which elevated my cholesterol. This showed as "slightly elevated" on a regular test. A month after I was home I received a call from Susan saying she had some news about Linda. There had been an accident and she had hit her head beneath a bridge - THE SAME BRIDGE - where I'd had my cardiac arrest. She had severely injured her neck and was in the hospital due for surgery. I was depressed to hear this and felt guilty that I was fine and the person who helped save me was injured.

*Linda Lensch (left) and Carol Rabuck (right)*



Three months into my recovery I experienced more chest pain: angina. This time I knew what it was and I went immediately to my cardiologist who told me to take a cab the two blocks to the hospital. I'd need another catheterization to see what was going on. I was admitted and it was found the artery had closed again, so I opted to have a single bypass surgery to correct the problem and spent another two weeks in the hospital. Two months later I started cardiac therapy. I was monitored while using an elliptical, treadmill, recumbent bike, and weights. I was anxious to make my way back to paddling. In February there was a break in the cold weather and I was invited to the river to use Coach Bob McNamara's OC1 for a while as he paddled with his son. He kept an eye on me and we had a great time in the sun on the Schuylkill River. By April I was cleared and ready to start training. Linda and I decided we would do the Little D on the Mon-

acacy race near Frederick, MD. She had been healing, getting physical therapy and felt ready to come back. We did the short race which was about 6 miles with me in the bow with her steering the C2. We were stoked! It was a great day with many friends who congratulated us and celebrated our respective recoveries. We went on to do the 16 mile sprint race in Wells Bridge, NY the day before the General Clinton Canoe Regatta even though we had to enter as a men's crew. We just wanted to race. A great friendship formed in and out of the boat. Linda designed a jersey for us to wear with two cartoon skeletons on it and the phrase "Drop Dead Gorgeous" and "Breakneck Speed" below. We worked together to scout the river and prepare for this longer race. We agreed to be conservative in



our approach even though we both had hopes for getting back to our old competitive selves. This would be a season of rebuilding. We did the Dash for Cash and I wasn't mad at her when she accidentally tipped me out of the boat before the start. We actually won some cash! Later on that summer I was also able to race with Gil Ross at the Mantua Race in Wenonah, NJ. Linda and I would go on to do the Adirondack Canoe Classic with Susan Williams and newcomer Nessa King. It has been a wonderfully blessed season.



*Susan Williams, Linda Lensch, Vanessa Bowman, and Carol Rabuck paddling C4.*

I am continually amazed by the support we have received from the paddling community. My family remarked about the support of paddlers who called them to check on me when I was in the hospital, sent cards, emails and followed up. I'm so thankful for Linda, Betsy and Gil and for a second chance to experience my life to the fullest. Thank you for looking out for me and for each other.

# ADVENTURES ON SUGAR CREEK

TOM THOMAS

Having grown up on Sugar Creek just a mile or so north of the Narrows Covered Bridge and canoeing it many times over the years, I've had the pleasure of many an adventure on the stream.

Besides wading Sugar Creek fishing and reaching under rocks for catfish when I was a kid, my buddies and I used to dive off the rocks at the Narrows and have a blast swimming in the creek and running the hills through Turkey Run. It was a grand time and I've continued the love affair with Sugar Creek ever since.

While in college at Indiana State in the late 1960's and early 1970's I would many times take dates up to Turkey Run and hike the trails along Sugar Creek. At the time I was on the gymnastics team at Indiana State. One time I decided to try showing off for my date while crossing the swinging bridge over Sugar Creek in Turkey Run. I put my hands on the handrails of the bridge and swung up to a handstand. She was duly impressed, but thinking back on it, it was a damn fool thing to do and I was lucky that I didn't bust my you know what.

That would have really impressed her...

While in graduate school a few years later in 1973, a friend and I were enjoying a beer or three one night when we decided it would be fun to launch a canoe just upstream from the Narrows at the Brush Creek canoe launch point and paddle all the way to New Orleans. It didn't make any difference that neither one of us had ever been in a canoe. Most bright ideas like this thought up while in our condition are usually forgotten about the next day. But, I was in-between graduate school semesters and my buddy wanted to take some time off his job, so we decided to "just do it". We bought a cheap 17 foot plastic canoe and paddled it a few times on Sugar Creek trying to learn how to handle it. We were not that good at it, but one day in early summer we loaded it with camping gear and supplies and set out under the Narrows Covered Bridge.

It ended up being a month long adventure dealing with storms, mosquitoes, deer flies, swirling flood waters, wind produced waves, boat wakes, camping on mud banks, being nearly bit by a seven foot rattle snake and nearly

trampled by a herd of cattle while camping on a sandbar. We paddled down Sugar Creek to the Wabash River, spent a week dealing with heavy rains while paddling down to the Ohio River, then hit the Mississippi River which was thirty feet in flood stage. The Mississippi has no locks and dams from St Louis to the Gulf of Mexico and since it was in flood stage it was moving fast. It only took us two weeks to make it from Cairo, Illinois to New Orleans. In New Orleans, we sold the canoe to a canoe livery and hitchhiked back to Indiana. Two years later after finishing my MA, I took my 17 year old nephew to Bemidji, Minnesota and we spent six weeks canoeing the Upper Mississippi River from Bemidji down to Cairo, Illinois. That was one wild adventure, involving portaging ten dams between Bemidji and St Cloud, Minnesota and locking through the twenty seven lock and dam systems between Minneapolis/St Paul, Minnesota and St Louis, Missouri. These two trips are wild stories in themselves.

In graduate school I was majoring in Physical Geography. Since I really enjoyed Sugar Creek, I decided to do my MA thesis on Sugar Creek and assess its

magnetism for recreational canoeing. Part of the research was spending sixteen weekends at Deer's Mill Bridge counting canoeists and documenting where they were from. One day while counting canoeists a large group of college guys and girls were getting ready to launch their canoes. A large water snake swam up to the small beach where canoes were being launched. Everyone stood back from the water in a semicircle looking at the snake. Well, fancying myself to be the great white hunter, I wasn't afraid of any little o'l snake. In an effort to impress the girls (again), I walked down to the snake and stood over it. I very quickly bent over and grabbed the snake just behind the head. I only had on an old pair of cutoff jeans. As I swiftly bent over, the back seam split wide open from crotch to belt line in a loud ripping pop. I gave the crowd a beautiful moon shot. As I quickly stood up and spun around to face the crowd, still holding the snake, I could feel the air on my bare butt. All the guys and girls were either smiling, laughing or snickering. At that point I felt like, and was, a damn fool. The girls were not duly impressed.

Several years after that, a friend and I were on a two day canoe/camping trip from Crawfordsville down to Cox Ford Bridge. We stopped at Deer's Mill to watch canoeists launching their boats. Many were first timers and we were enjoying watching their

problems getting going. Many turned over first thing or ran into rocks or the shore. While all this launching was going on, again a large water snake swam up to the small beach where the canoeist were getting their canoes in the water. Again they all started standing back from the snake. My buddy and I were standing in the covered bridge watching the show out of the window. I wasn't about to be the great white hunter again, so I yelled down at the canoeists "Look out, it's a Copper-headed Rattle Moccasin"! Those city folks didn't quite know what to think about that. They stayed back until the harmless water snake lazily swam away. My buddy and I had a great laugh.

As the years went by I eventually began racing canoes and have been racing now for forty years. I've participated in races from Hawaii to Massachusetts and from Canada to Florida. I've been on many canoe/camping trips including a trip through the Adirondacks in New York on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, the AuSable River in Michigan, the Current River in Missouri, and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway in Northern Maine. The Sugar Creek Race remains one of my favorite races and I've done it many times. Still today at the ripe old age of 72, I enjoy doing canoe workouts on Sugar Creek every chance I get. I'll launch at Cox Ford Bridge and paddle my carbon fiber C1 racing canoe sev-

eral miles upstream then turn around and paddle back downstream. Sometimes it requires dodging many recreational canoes and plastic inner-tubes and people yelling "stroke, stroke, stroke" as I go by, but on solitary paddles I have opportunity to observe a lot of wildlife, including turkeys and eagles.

One time a flock of approximately thirty turkeys flew right over the top of me. Another time while paddling upstream, I saw something large swimming downstream just below the clear water surface. It was a large catfish with a head 8 to 10 inches across. It was the biggest catfish I had ever seen on Sugar Creek. As it swam by me, I could see large scratch marks down it's back. Wondering what had happened, I looked upstream about seventy-five yards and saw three juvenile Bald Eagles sitting on rocks by the stream. Apparently they had tried to get this catfish, but it was too big for them to handle.

I'm sure the adventures will continue and it's great just being an old retired river rat. Life just doesn't get any better than that!

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*Editor's Note: Thank you Tom for sharing these great examples of the USCA 5 Star values — and on the creek where it all began!*

# USCA OLD PEOPLE

BOB ALLEN

"Old people. They're everywhere. And some of them don't even know they are old." A quote from the movie *A Sixth Sense* - substituting "old" for "dead." Dead is not good, so we'll focus on old.

All of us are getting old....er. That, unfortunately, is an element necessary for life. I remember in the 1950s and '60s seeing a majority of folks hitting their 40s and 50s seemingly either ceasing to exercise with any intensity or stopping altogether. That has changed drastically in all sports and activities. Our USCA has an ever increasing number of members racing until a physical issue grabs them by the neck. Phil Cole, who died from Alzheimer's at 92 raced well and then continued paddling until his condition overwhelmed him. And now, Mike Fremont at 95 (that's right 95!) raced doubles in our Nationals, and raced both singles and doubles last year in 90 degree heat. AND, he raced the Clinton 70 this year with a partner, in rainy conditions and temperatures in the 50s. "Holy Crap Batman." I believe that makes Mike the oldest paddler to ever have completed the 70. What a great attitude and joy Mike exudes. All of us older folks continue to experience great camaraderie and personal satisfaction from our yearly Nationals event. This is the only event where it makes sense to create classes with five year divisions in age, after a member reaches the age of 60 - a system Ken Gerg presented and got passed several years ago.

"Fit as a Fiddle at 80 and beyond.....will you and I be?"

(Quote from a 2016 General Clinton 70 Mile Canoe Race Story)

That brings us to looking at two of our 80+ year old guys. Looking back at the 2016 General Clinton 70 mile canoe race, we see that little notice was given to a gargantuan accomplishment in that race. Two long-time USCA paddlers, Ken Gerg from PA and Laverne Young from FL were both 80 years old. They teamed-up in a Savage River Susquehanna Stock boat and muscled their way down the race course in a time of 9 hours 56 minutes. There have been paddlers in their 80s who have teamed-up with younger paddlers in the past, but this is the first time two paddlers over 80 have completed the race together.....and their race time was impressive for any age. First of all, congratulations! Secondly, what can be learned from Ken and Laverne's rare accomplishment? How could they accomplish this physical challenge, when so many of our general public their age and younger can not?

Well, a book can be written about that topic, but not here. Ken and Laverne and their lovely wives have been friends for years and years. Ken has completed the 70 miler 28 times now and Laverne thinks he has "around 7 or 8 finishes." After the 70 mile General Clinton race, they both competed in the USCA National Championships in Massachusetts, and then took on and completed the 90 mile Adirondack Canoe Classic in the Fall. Impressive.

For so many paddlers and aspiring paddlers in the upper Susquehanna

River area of New York and well beyond, the race weekend sponsored by the Bainbridge Chamber of Commerce is "a happening"- a weekend full of races from Friday evening through the 70 itself on Monday. Hundreds of boats appear paddled by Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, adult/youth teams, friends, and family members looking for a challenge; plus great camaraderie for local friends, clubs, and businesses in the relay teams. Some paddlers are serious racers using canoe racing as a fitness sport, like runners and bikers in their own sports. Others, enthusiastic but not so serious, are looking at the challenge as just that.....a fun challenge with friends and family. Hundreds have become hooked on these races, increasing their fitness levels and setting a goal of getting their names added to, and published in the 700 mile club by completing 10 races. As Ken and Laverne have demonstrated, this is a fitness sport/activity with which a person can grow old. It is an ideal transition activity for runners and other "leg sports" enthusiasts when the legs no longer function as advertised by the maker. This year, although he is still very fit, Laverne chose not to enter the 70. Ken, however, at 81 raced the stock class with Pierre Picard. Laverne continues to race in the Florida area. Both have raced in our USCA Nationals every year.

Would Ken, LaVerne, Phil, and Mike have been capable of racing like this at their ages if they did not follow Mother Nature's health rules in their lives - especially regular exercise? Again, a book can be written about that, but not here.



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## LIFE LESSONS ON THE RIVER: MY TEAMMATES, MY SONS

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PETER HEED

The USCA is celebrating its 50th anniversary, and I have been active in paddle sports for about the same number of years. It has been a remarkable journey and as I pause to look back on many years of competitive marathon canoe racing, I begin to realize what a significant impact this sport has had on my life. Along the way there have been many highs and just a few lows, but the perspective of many years has helped me come to appreciate one of the most distinctive and positive aspects of paddle sports which make it so unique and special - the opportunity to share the competitive experience with your son or daughter, as a team, together.

Like most parents, I have enjoyed introducing my children to sports and physical activity of all types. This usually involves the kinds of things we all do as parents - teaching your children basic physical skills such as throwing, running, swimming, riding a bike, batting, etc. It also usually involves signing up our children for activities and youth teams and driving them to various lessons, practices, or games. It means being there for them, cheering them on when things go

well and supporting them when they don't. It means washing uniforms, baking brownies for the bake sale, and perhaps taking the team out to McDonald's or Burger King after the game.

I know that many parents with a particular interest or skill also enjoy the experience of coaching a team of young people, often including their own children. Some of my most rewarding experiences came from coaching the youth soccer teams, lacrosse teams, and cross-country ski teams on which my two boys competed. Coaching is one of those precious life experiences that can strengthen the bond between parent and child. We can teach them; we can coach them; we can support them; we can be there for them.

Yet we cannot actually hit the pitch for them, or take the shot on goal, or run the race for them. These are things they must learn to do without us. We as parents are thus all - to a greater or lesser degree - spectators in the sporting lives of our children.

The world of paddling sports, however, provides a radically dif-

ferent opportunity. A special opportunity. A chance to share a totally unique experience and perspective with your child. When you race with your child in a canoe or kayak, you take a huge step beyond the usual role of supporter and/or coach. Although you are still both of these, you are now something more - you are TEAMMATES! You are in this together, in every sense of the word. You will have to work together as a team. You will need to practice together. You will need to agree on goals and strategy.

Whether paddling bow or stern, you will each need to understand and appreciate not only your own responsibilities, but those of your partner as well. There will be no "captain" - each of you will have to hold up his or her end of the canoe. You will be true teammates. Both of you will share equally in the final result, knowing that the effort you both put into the race will be all the reward you really need. Racing together with a young person is not only a sharing experience, but it is also a learning experience of the most vivid kind. The best teaching/coaching is often done by example, and nowhere is this more true than with an

adult/youth team in a canoe or kayak race.

As you compete together, your child will watch to see how you handle the numerous triumphs and disasters which are likely to occur during any canoe or kayak race. No longer are you the one simply handing out advice from the sidelines or the grandstands. You have talked the talk. You must now walk the walk. Your child will be watching to see how you handle yourself when things go wrong, your reaction when you finish somewhere less than in first place, and your attitude toward your fellow competitors - as well as toward your partner.

Most importantly, your child will watch and learn from your actions what your true views are towards the concepts of sportsmanship and fair play. Do you always give it your best? Do you remain positive when things go wrong? Do you blame your partner? Do you race fair? Do you stop and help when someone needs assistance? And do you compliment your fellow competitors on a good race? Ultimately, do you demonstrate by example that competition is fun and positive, no matter where you ultimately place in the results?

Rest assured that the lessons your child learns by being your teammate will have a profound and lasting impact. As one picture

is worth a thousand words, so is one race together with your child worth years of advice from the sidelines.

A truly special thing about training and racing with your children is that often you will discover that you are as much student as you are teacher. You may find that you are the one that has something to learn about good sportsmanship and the value of positive competition. I know that my two sons have astounded me often in this way. I too could learn a few things - from them. The experience can be a game changing moment in life.

Two particular instances remain vivid in my memory. One of the most fun adult/youth races we enjoyed as a family was the annual "Generation Gap" races which take place during the weekend of the General Clinton 70 miler in upstate New York. This particular year, my younger son, Ethan (who was 10 at the time) and I raced together. It was one of his first races after learning to paddle in the stern. There was a large field of adult/youth teams. We did our best and finished in about the middle of the field. No sooner did I have the canoe up on shore, when I realized that Ethan was already giving high fives and congratulations to all of his young fellow competitors - those who finished both in front and behind us. He did not need me or any

coach to tell him to do this. He just did it on his own, and I was proud of him. My hope was that his genuine good sportsmanship came naturally, perhaps because he had observed his parents do similar things. The pure fun he was having was obvious, and his respect for his fellow competitors was sincere and heartwarming.

Another very special memory for me involves a fun race that takes place every year on the Smith River in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. For many years, my wife Tricia and I would each team up with one of our sons. This particular year we decided that I would paddle with 13-year-old Travis, while Tricia would race with 11 year-old Ethan. Both boys were at the point of gaining confidence in handling the stern of a racing canoe, and this low-key race had just about everything you could want to pack into 4 1/2 miles including: three lakes, two river sections, a stretch of easy class II whitewater, and two short portages! Each of our canoes had to have sandbags in the stern to assist with trim, so that I knew the portages would be challenging!

When we arrived at the registration table to fill out our entry forms, I mentioned to Travis that we should enter the junior / senior class. My son pulled me aside. "Let's go against the men in the open class," he suggested. I

told him that I didn't think we had much of a chance of a medal in the open class, but Travis told me that he wanted to go against the best competition, and he also wanted to give his younger brother a better shot at an award in the junior/senior class. He told me that it was just going to be a fun race and that he didn't really care about getting an award. I knew then that my son had already learned more about sportsmanship and positive competition than most adults. With probably a bit too much obvious pride, I told him that I thought he was right and that we would enter the open class.

The race itself went pretty well. It was a close race. We did particularly well in the whitewater, but had a little trouble on the second portage. We did not win, but we were competitive. The race was a blast. We both learned a lot. We had fun. And Ethan did indeed get an award with Tricia in the junior/senior class.

One thing I know for sure. A whole lot more goes on between a parent and child in a canoe or kayak than simply learning the proper strokes. These humble craft provide us all with the unique opportunity to compete,

and learn, and build memories with our children together. *Teammates!* I also know that as I move along in this life, I will not ever think about the hours I left early from work in order to paddle with my family. I will not recall or care how I finished in the blur of hundreds of races over the many years. Yet I will always remember and cherish that day when my 13 year old son and I teamed up in our canoe and "went against the men" — together.

Peter Heed



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# TODAY: BRIANA FITZGERALD PADDLER PROFILE

INTERVIEW BY JULIE HORNEY



The future of women's paddling looks bright with Briana Fitzgerald in the boat. This young lady embodies the 5 Stars of the USCA as she graduates from the Youth Division to the Adult Women's Division this year. I just had to interview this incredible athlete after seeing her on the podium at Nationals year after year, including the Barton Cup Award in 2017. Here's her story from her dorm room one evening in Upstate New York.

*Tell me about the first time you got in a boat?*

My first race was at age 3 in Canton, NY in C1 with my mom, Pam Fitzgerald. Initially, canoe racing wasn't really a "race" for me. Being young, I would just paddle when I felt like it and just be in the canoe for the ride. I first competed in the USCA Nation-

als at age 5 with my mom in Adult/Youth Sprints. I didn't have a serious interest in racing until age 11 or 12 when I found out how fun competitive canoe racing can be! I primarily raced C1 and C2 because they were available to me. Since then I have competed in SUP at the USCA Nationals for the past 3 years, a C4 race in PA, and a C8 War Canoe event in NY.

*What got you interested in competing in paddling? Racing?*

When I watched my mom compete in the pro class, I noticed a clear line between recreational paddlers and racers; I saw what you can get to when you apply yourself. I wanted to get to the same level as the other professional canoeists. My mom supported me, showed me how to train, and helped structure my train-

ing into a schedule so I could get better results. She has always inspired me and pushes me along to do better.

When I first got competitive, I was still playing middle school and high school soccer. After soccer I would go out on the Mohawk River to canoe with my mom from our river front property. We switched positions each practice, so I am skilled in both (bow and stern). My mom was already racing before I was born. She used to do judo and had an injury that ended her judo career when our neighbor, Bob Cooley, introduced her to canoe racing and the canoe community. While I always have some days when I kind of feel restless, I expect that paddling will always be a part of my life. I don't



*With Dennis Carey at the General Clinton 70 Miler in 2016*

think I could ever permanently stop paddling.

*What are your greatest achievements in paddling and racing to date?*

Completing my first 70-miler Clinton in 2015 with mom as an Adult/Youth pair. We had an earlier start time so it was a lot calmer and less hectic than racing amateur or pro. It was a good first experience. My next event was with Dennis Carey in mixed amateur and we had a sprint finish with the first place boat to earn us second place. I did not complete the 70-miler. My mom and I got into a tricky spot at Nichols Bridge and flipped over. I went underwater with the upturned boat that trapped my head underwater; I swallowed mouthfuls of water until I got out from under the boat and to the surface. I was so shaken up after that experience that I knew I

couldn't finish the race, my mind was not in the right place. After that, it took me awhile to feel confident about canoeing again . . . due to the mental blocks. Encouragement from other paddlers really helped. I haven't had any other experience like that. I was committed to the 70 miler and the AuSable Marathon this year but my partner unfortunately backed out. I am currently looking for a new partner for both races this year. I am also looking for training partners and a pit crew for the both races.

*What other interests and hobbies do you have?*

I enjoy relaxing, hiking, crafting, keeping busy in general. I competed

for my high school's cross-country ski team from my sophomore to senior years. It went really well, I liked it, and it was good cross-training. I've always had fun racing and competing!

*Any college or career plans?*

I am studying for my Bachelor of Science degree at the State University of NY of Environmental Science and Forestry, majoring in Environmental Resources Engineering. It's a specialty college with all of the majors focused on the environment. Future jobs could be in waste water treatment, storm water management, agriculture systems, environmental restoration, or surveying.

*How did you get interested in the area of conservation?*

I have always loved enjoying the outdoors. As I got older, I realized that the environment was being damaged by a variety of things. This major combines my love of math and science with an engineering degree for the benefit of the environment.

*Who are your mentors for paddling and to help you to do your best?*

My mom is definitely number 1. She has always helped me with training and been there for me in every way a mom can and as a coach. Bob Allen and Jeffrey Defeo paddled with me on many occasions, especially when



*With Mom, Pam Fitzgerald, at the 70 Miler in 2017*

younger, teaching me the more technical aspects of canoeing. I have also looked up many strong female paddlers such as Holly Reynolds, Rebecca Barton, Gloria Wesley, and Emma Ellsworth.

*Where do you practice and how do you get there?*

At home I practice on the Mohawk River which is the most convenient but not my favorite. I like small, fast, winding rivers such as the Upper Susquehanna River in Cooperstown, NY (which is the start of the General Clinton). Also like the Ashuelot River in New Hampshire. For most races I drive up with my mom or carpool with other paddlers. Right now, I am landlocked in Syracuse NY because my college doesn't allow freshmen to have a car on campus. Later, I plan to have my car on campus and hopefully I'll be able to store my boat at a nearby paddler's house.

*Any funny stories from racing, travelling to events, or practicing that you would like to share?*

I have always had fun paddling even if not participating in that race. I've met some of my best friends from paddling and through the USCA. One friend in particular is from Michigan that I met at Nationals, in between youth races. We still keep in contact.

*What are the main differences as you see them between girls and boys paddling? Racing?*

It bothers me sometimes that men get paid more for placing in their classes and events than the women. Unfortunately if you want to have a shot at winning some money, you have to ask a guy to paddle with you. He gets a bigger shot (at a bigger

purse) if paddling with another male. It's a stigma of inequality that I have come to observe. Many of the spring races have purses, like the 70 miler; some races have equal awards but it seems that less have equal awards.

In general there will always be more men participants than women. Due to low women's participation, sometimes there isn't even a purse for women. The community in New England is starting to speak up and point out these flaws. It all depends upon whose race it is and how open they are to the idea (of equality).

*Any racing tips that you have found especially helpful?*

One of the best things to do in races is to *wake*: knowing when to drop back, when to step it up, and when to push yourself to beat them to the shallows. *Waking* helps to conserve energy. Cross training helps to have your muscles built up over the winter so you can more easily work your way back into the season. Weight training is important as well: keeping up on cardio, intense sprints, and heavy lifting. I don't have a set regimen or structure, I just followed my mom's lead. To train for the AuSable I will be adding endurance paddles for 4 hours, keeping myself in the boat and keeping arm muscles moving to get ready.

*Favorite canoe?* I race in a Corban canoe, practice in a JD Pro.

*Favorite paddle?* LeVas Paddles as they fit my hand better.

*Any special dietary or nutritional strategies that help you on race day?*

My favorite cereal that I eat every morning is from the Love Crunch brand (love all of them!). I had to

practice eating in the boat for my first 70-miler, and I practiced eating with mini leftover pancakes. So now I have a tradition of eating mini pancakes in the boat for long races.

*Do you have a least favorite event?*

I don't like to paddle in open, large bodies of water especially on windy days.

*What do you think more adults should know about girls who race? Boys who race?*

Take into consideration how important that we are to the future of your sport. Try and make us have an enjoyable experience to the point that we fall in love with the sport.

For example, in a C4 "equalizer" race, the organizers gave out points to different types of people who were in each canoe: woman, under 18, or older 65; an older woman got senior points. The unique structure created benefits for scoring. You earn points for placing, timing, plus bonus points for who was in your boat.



*With Joe Schlimmer at the General Clinton Generation Gap in 2017*

I don't think there is too much of a difference between guys and girls, just push us to try and be competitive. During an event when paddlers take the time to paddle with me, express wanting to race with me, or tell me that I did a great job, "it makes you feel like gold." We have think about the people who are starting from the bottom, to help them fall in love with the sport. In the future we will just keep giving back.

*Any advice for girls interested in getting involved in competitive canoe/kayaking?*

Stay committed. Take it in stride, and tell yourself that you are doing really well at it. You are strong, you are committed. It became my own hidden unique sport (not just a large plastic canoe or kayak) and is different from (stereotypical youth) activities; a unique quirky thing. It can be really special that you have a sport that a lot of people really don't understand.

*What are your plans for racing next year?*

USCA Nationals, AuSable, 70 miler; plans won't change too much. Nationals will be in C1 Women's Open against already established canoers. I did the Sprint races for fun as a kid and found it easier to get involved since it isn't as long. You don't have to keep focus for longer than 250 meters! I am glad that the USCA keeps the Sprint races. It helps encourage young paddlers to keep paddling.

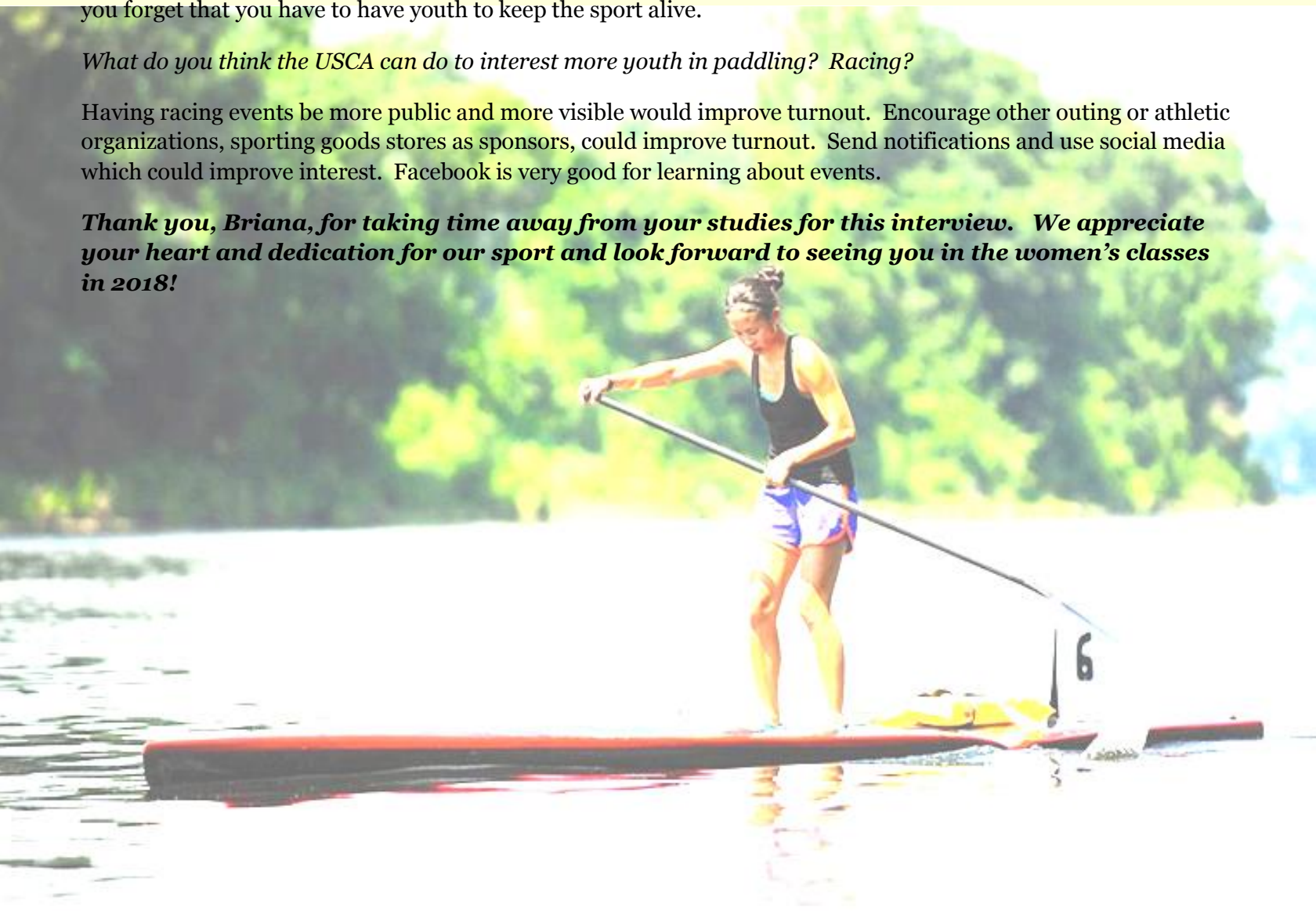
*What influence has the USCA has had on your paddling?*

Overall it's been positive with the USCA but frustrating when USCA wanted to take out youth sprints in 2014 or 2015. You can't convince an 8 year old to doing a long race but you can convince them to do 250 meters! Eventually it got scheduled and should stay (in the future). Sometimes with large organizations . . . you get caught up in the logistics . . . it's a sport people do for fun. If you get wrapped up in planning around the logistics sometimes you forget that you have to have youth to keep the sport alive.

*What do you think the USCA can do to interest more youth in paddling? Racing?*

Having racing events be more public and more visible would improve turnout. Encourage other outing or athletic organizations, sporting goods stores as sponsors, could improve turnout. Send notifications and use social media which could improve interest. Facebook is very good for learning about events.

***Thank you, Briana, for taking time away from your studies for this interview. We appreciate your heart and dedication for our sport and look forward to seeing you in the women's classes in 2018!***





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# 50 YEARS IN PHOTOS

UNITED STATES CANOE ASSOCIATION



*Photo from the 1968-1993 25th Anniversary Yearbook of the USCA*

Did you know that the USCA held a listing in the *Guinness Book of Records*? On August 17, 1996 on the Rock River in the Byron Forest Preserve, Byron, IL, the USCA brought together 649 canoes & kayakers in a single free-floating raft! The record was beaten, however, in May of 2001 with 776 boats in Hinkley, Ohio. The current record consists of 3,150 boats and was achieved by One Square Mile of Hope in Inlet, New York on September 2014.

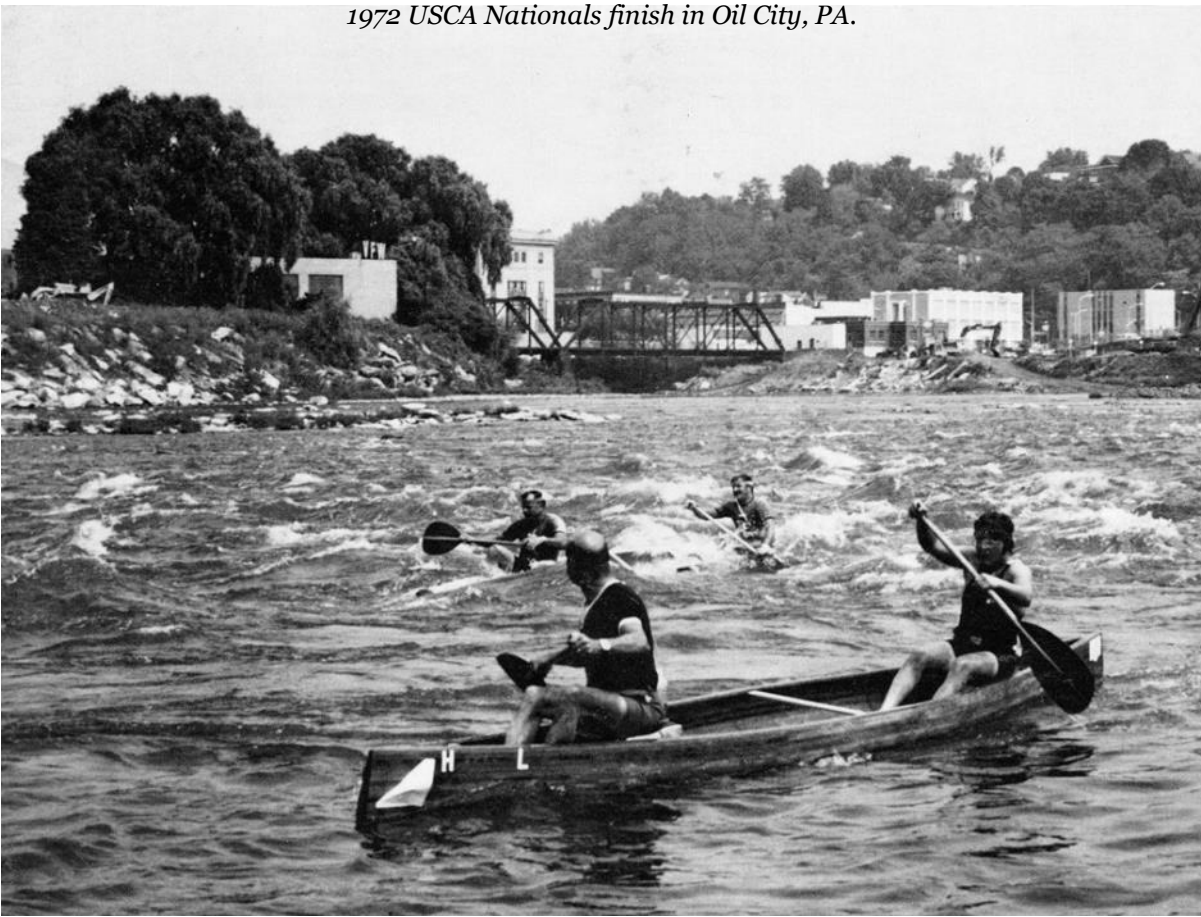
*Shawinigan 1989: photo from Calvin Hassel (in all-white cap)*



*Scott Gallagher of Cincinnati, OH and Trudy Gilbert of Lansing, MI racing on the Mad River in Ohio, in the Spring of 1970*



*1972 USCA Nationals finish in Oil City, PA.*

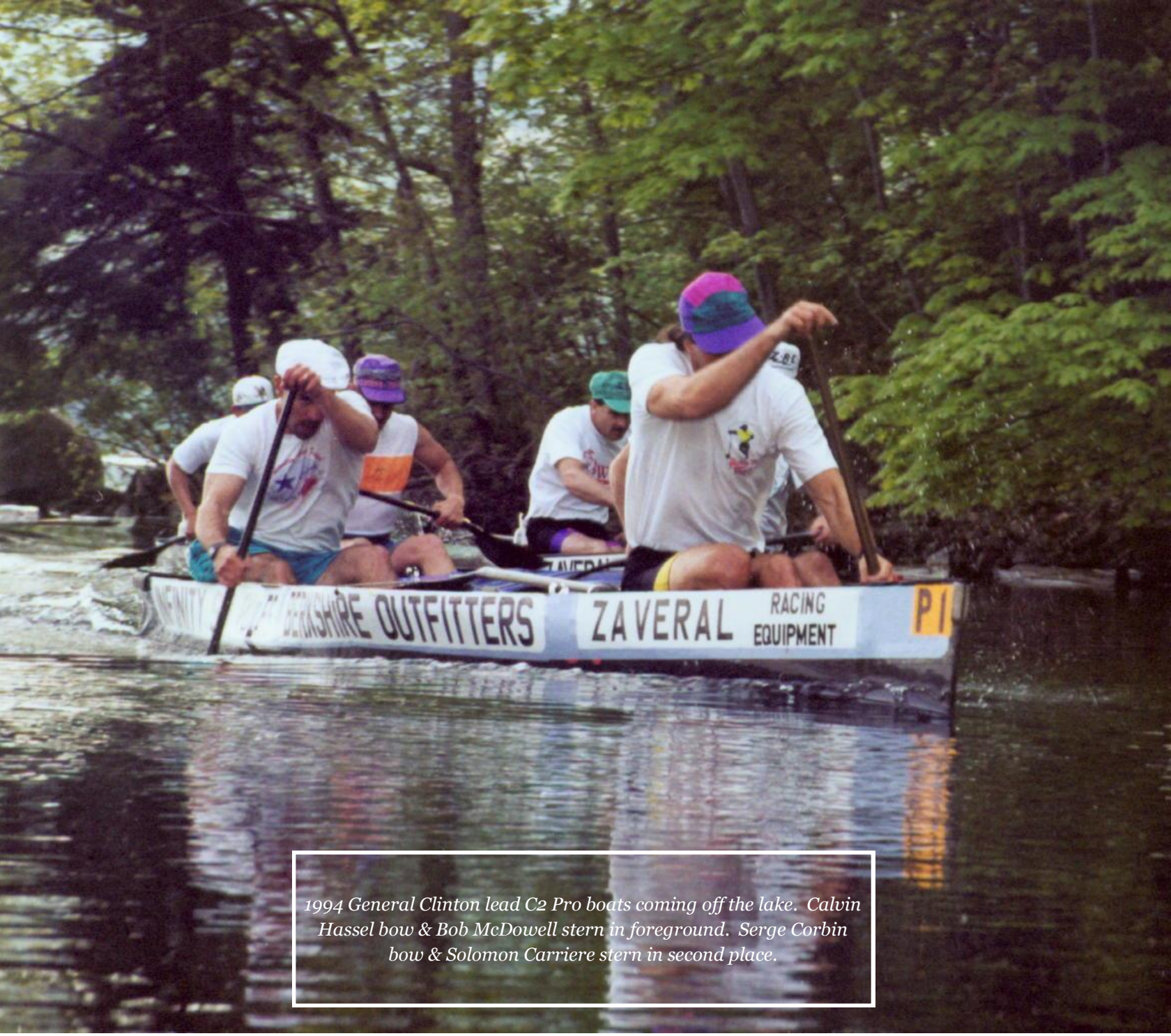


U.S.C.A. Canoe News  
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SUMMER  
1970

*Ethel Thomas, Miss Citrus City, makes the cover of Canoe News!*



*1994 General Clinton lead C2 Pro boats coming off the lake. Calvin Hassel bow & Bob McDowell stern in foreground. Serge Corbin bow & Solomon Carriere stern in second place.*



*Left and Above: Photos from Indiana paddler Roger Crisp*



2017 USCA  
Nationals  
Medal



Paddling photos and patches on page 38 are courtesy of Roger Crisp





1981  
USCA  
Nationals



*Roland Muhlen and sons in 1975.*





Photo from Wally Werderich  
August 5, 2013



Left: Larry Latta explains Facebook to Jerry Patton at the 2015 USCA National Meeting



Right: For many years there were patches for Nationals participation. How many have you collected over the years?





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##### Derek Diget

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##### Karl Teske

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#### (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY)

##### Lynn Capen

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#### New England Division

#### (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)

##### Robert Allen

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#### Pacific Division (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

##### Morgan Brunstrom

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360-756-1312

#### South Atlantic Division

#### (DC, DE, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV)

##### Lynne McDuffie

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#### William McDuffie

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#### West North Central Division (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)

##### Earl Brimeyer

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#### West South Central Division (AR, LA, OK, TX)

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##### Don Walls

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#### Non-US Regional Division

#### Affiliated Club Delegates for 2018

##### Florida Competition Paddlers Association

Kathy Edwards; St. Petersburg, FL  
727-522-3348; ktiae17@aol.com

##### Michigan Canoe Racing Association

Chris Hewitt; Lansing, MI  
989-751-4324; hewittc@gmail.com

##### New England Canoe & Kayak Racing Assn

Priscilla Reinertsen; Contoocook, NH  
603-746-6491; prtisen1@comcast.net

##### New York Marathon Canoe Racing Assn

Scott Stenberg, Moravia, NY  
315-406-4692; owascalake@gmail.com

##### North Carolina Canoe Racing Association

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704-483-4130; sar4130@gmail.com

##### Pennsylvania Assn of Canoeing and

Kayaking Dale Glover; Montgomery, PA  
570-547-2635; glover1093@msn.com

##### St Charles Canoe Club

Ben Josefik; Dwight, IL  
815-674-7472; bjosefik@yahoo.com

##### Texas Canoe & Kayak Racing Association

Chris Stevenson; Houston, TX  
713-320-2408; castevenson@gmail.com



## **Standing Committees for 2018**

*Adaptive Paddling* – Jan Whitaker  
*Auditing* – Steve Rosenau  
*Barton Award (Sub-ctee, Youth Activities)* - Phoebe Reese & Teresa Stout  
*Bylaws Review* - Lynne McDuffie  
*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* – Open  
*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* – Lynne McDuffie  
*Merchandise Sales* – Open  
*Nationals Coordinator* - Don Walls  
*Nominating* – John Edwards  
*Publications* – Steven Horney  
*Publicity & PR* – Open  
*Safety* – Glen Green  
*Technical Inspection* – Bill Corrigan  
*USCA Bylaws/Rules/Regulations Review & Oversight* – Joan Theiss  
*USCA/ICF Grants* – Priscilla Reinertsen  
*Youth Activities* – Phoebe Reese & Teresa Stout  
*Webmaster*- Larry Latta  
*Women's Interest* – Open

## **Special Appointments**

*USCA Marathon Coordinator to USACK Marathon Committee* -Kaitlyn McElroy

## **Business Affiliates**

### **American Dragon Boat Association**

John Miller; Dubuque, IA  
dboatmny@aol.com

### **Bike Bug LLC**

Mike Schneider; Houston, TX  
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### **Global Paddlesports**

Russell Adams; Houston, TX  
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### **Great Hollow Nature Preserve**

John Foley; New Fairfield, CT  
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### **Housatonic Valley Association**

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### **Paddle Florida, Inc.**

Bill Richards; Gainesville, FL  
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### **The Paddle Attic**

Jeff Stephens; Winter Park, FL  
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### **Yadkin Riverkeeper, Inc.**

Terri Pratt; Winston-Salem, NC  
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## **Club Affiliates**

### **Birch Hill Canoe Club**

Charley Brackett; Fitzwilliam, NH  
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### **Dayton Canoe Club**

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### **Dubuque Dragon Boat Association**

Earl Brimeyer; Dubuque, IA  
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### **Dubuque Watersport Club**

Earl Brimeyer; Dubuque, IA  
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### **Explore Kentucky Initiative**

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### **Florida Paddling Trails Association**

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### **Freestyle Group**

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### **Friends of the Great Swamp**

Laurie Wallace; Pawling, NY  
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### **Friends of the Peconica River Foundation**

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### **Island Paddlers 777**

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### **Kent Center, Inc.**

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### **Middle Grand River Organization of Watersheds**

Loretta Crum; Lansing, MI  
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### **Minnesota Canoe Association**

Emily Johnson; Minneapolis, MN  
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### **Mosquito Lagoon Paddlers**

Thomas Perkins; Edgewater, FL  
doryman3@yahoo.com

### **New England Kayak Fishing;** Chris Howie

Rockland, MA  
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### **Outrigger Chicago**

Kristin Flentye; Lake Bluff, IL  
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### **River Advocates of South Central Connecticut**

Mary Mushinsky; Wallingford, CT  
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### **River City Paddlers**

Peter Rudnick; Folsom, CA  
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### **Symmes Creek Restoration Committee**

Harry Mayenchein; Chesapeake, OH  
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### **Texas Outrigger Canoe Club**

Kristen Wollard; Shoreacres, TX  
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### **Wanda Canoe Club**

Betsy Ray; New York, NY  
bray4526@gmail.com

### **Westfield River Watershed Association**

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Notice to all

## **2017 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS**

***Congratulations*** to all the 2017 National Champions who were awarded a Traveling trophy. As the winner of a traveling trophy last August, we hope that by now you have had your name and that of your partner, if applicable, engraved on the plate on the trophy. If not, please have this done before the trophy is returned to the 2018 Nationals in NY. Please take the trophy to a trophy shop and have your name(s) engraved on the trophy matching the size and style font and the method used for the previous winners.

Reasonable engraving fees will be reimbursed by sending a receipt to the USCA Treasurer, John Edwards. If you are not able or find anyone to engrave your name(s), please contact the USCA President, Rebecca Davis, for assistance.

We know you are already planning to attend the 2018 Nationals. See you there!



*Mr. Canoehead says "I'm on my way to the National Meeting. How 'bout you?"*

*By the time you read this issue, the delegates of 50th Anniversary Meeting of the USCA will have met where it all began at Turkey Run State Park in Marshall, IN on January 12-14th, 2018!*

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Canoe, Kayak and SUP races for youth and adults all over New England

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Lynne McDuffie, Membership Chair

410 Cockman Rd  
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Phone: 910-948-3238  
E-mail: [llmcduffie@gmail](mailto:llmcduffie@gmail.com)

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Keep Lynne busy & help grow the USCA!*

**Change of:** address, email, or phone number?

**Contact:** Lynne McDuffie

**United States Canoe Association, Inc.**

410 Cockman Rd,  
Robbins, NC 27325

*Mark Kopta (bow) and Jeff Rankinen (outer canoe) congratulating  
Dave Haas (bow) and Rich Rankinen following a hard fought Tiadaghton  
Elm Classic Race this summer on the Susquehanna River in McEl-  
hattan, PA. Photo by Susan Williams*

