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United States Canoe Association

CANOE NEWS

Eating Crow—Early Racing Experiences

Lurking in the Tall Grass

Paddler Profile: Priscilla Reinertsen

Builder Profile: Van Dusen Racing Boats

Spring 2016 VOL. 49 NO. 1

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From the Editor:

Welcome to the Spring Edition of Canoe News! Now that the air and water are beginning to warm up many of us are hitting the water again, trying to rebuild those "winterized" muscles. To help encourage you in your paddling endeavors we have an issue packed with humor, warnings, tips, and interviews with some of the fascinating people that make up this sport. I hope you'll enjoy the reading. Please send in your stories, photos, etc. for publication; we need your materials to really make this your magazine!

Keep paddling strong!

Steve

Cover Photo: Jimmy Roberts in the midst of a canoe race (race and date unknown).

Canoe News is the official publication of the United States Canoe Association

Supporting a Five Star Program:
Camping, Camaraderie, Cruising, Conservation, and Competition

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www.uscanoe.com

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WINTER 2015

Inside this issue:

VIEW FROM THE BOW

USCA PRESIDENT PETER HEED

Paddlers Partnering For Clean Water

One of the most appealing aspects of marathon paddling is the natural beauty of our training and racing environments. Unlike many sports, we are not stuck in a gym, or a stadium, or a track or on some artificial course. We do not pound or spin along busy roads and highways. Instead, our world is a world of water - usually rivers and lakes. Our world is a world of nature, a world of liquid surrounded by an ever-changing natural (or man made!) environment.

This helps to make the training/racing experience so darn pleasant. There is simply no better way to relax and to get alone with your thoughts than to be out in your canoe or kayak on some peaceful river or lake. We all notice how different and lovely the world can look from river level. Even when rivers or streams flow through residential and urban areas, the perspective from your paddler's seat is so unique that you get a sense of protected isolation from the troubles of the hectic modern urban world. Paddling is not only good for the body; it is good for the soul. No matter how rigorous the workout, we all feel refreshed and vitalized when we step out of our kayak or canoe.

The most significant part of this special paddling experience is the water, for it is this liquid medium that provides our unique racing/training environment. Most areas of our country are now blessed with relatively clean rivers and lakes in which to paddle, but it was not always the case. We all have benefitted from the dramatic improvements in water quality which have taken place over the past 50 years, but the battle goes on, and there are many ways in which USCA members and local canoe/kayak race organizations can help in this on-going effort.

One of the best ways for paddlers to contribute and support these clean water programs is to partner with active organizations which usually exist in most watershed areas. In New England, we have a couple of prime examples of how competitive paddlers work hand-in-hand with local conservation organizations to help keep our rivers and lakes clean. The Charles River Watershed Association and the Mystic River Watershed Association were formed in the 1960's in Boston to respond to increasing public concern about the environment and the declining conditions of both rivers. Since their earliest days of advocacy, these watershed organizations have figured prominently in major cleanup and watershed protection efforts, working particularly with rowing and paddling organizations to help protect wetlands, close landfills, stop pollutants, and restore shorelines.

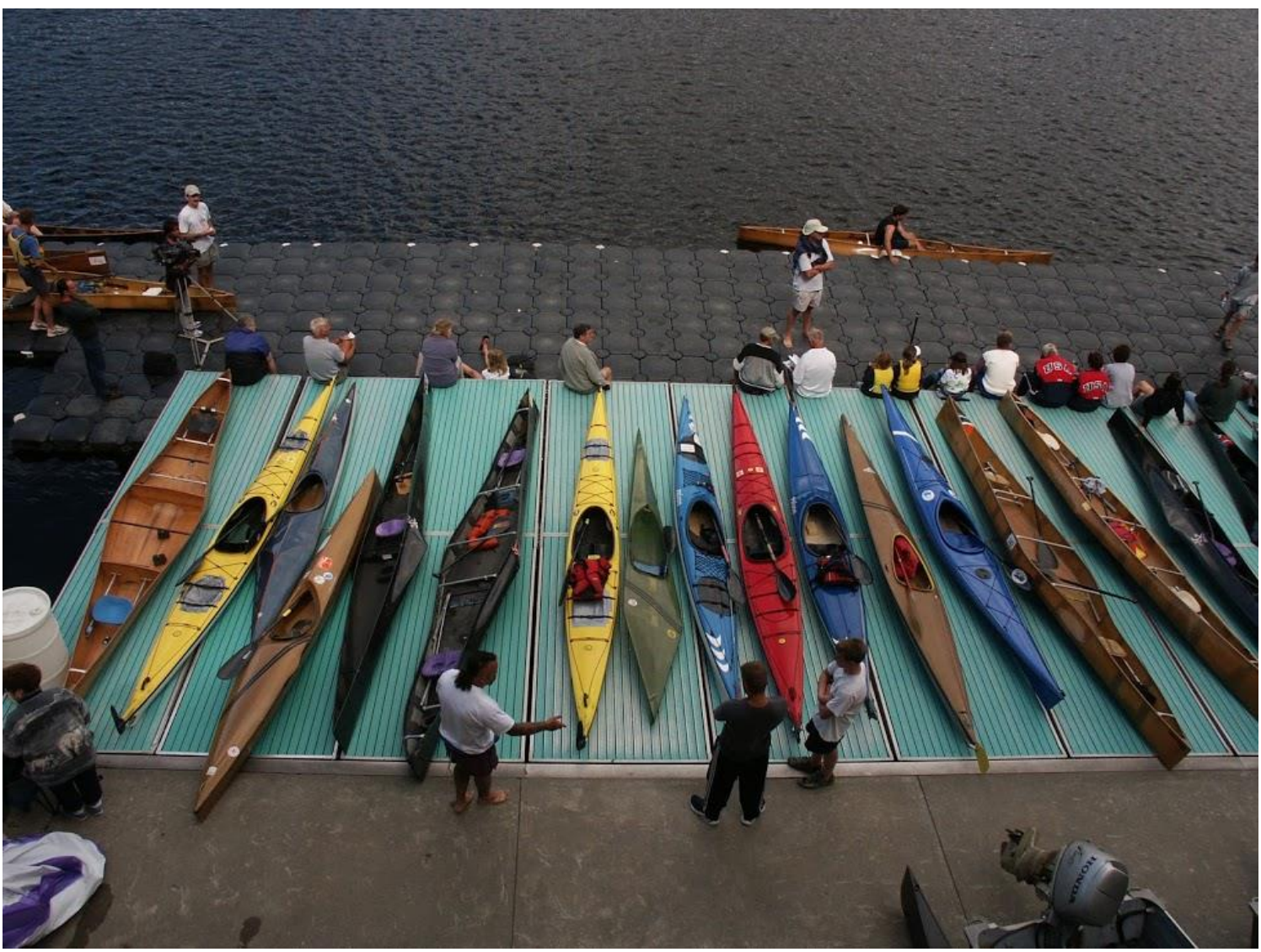
Both the CRWA and the MRWA started hosting competitive rowing and paddling events to raise funds for clean-up efforts and also to bring awareness of their good programs to the public.

Two particular events have been spectacularly successful in both raising funds for river conservation and clean up, as well as raising public awareness of the positive impact that a clean waterway can have on a community. The longest running event is the Run of The Charles, now in its 34th year. As the CRWA's signature event, the Run of The Charles has become the

largest canoe/kayak race in New England, where it draws an average 1,500 racers and thousands of spectators each year. Some of the many portages run down the streets of Boston, including one portage which follows on a section of the famous Boston Marathon! The big event for the MRWA is the "Herring Run", held each May on a beautiful and historic section of The Mystic River. In conjunction with a canoe/kayak race on the Mystic, the MRWA also hosts a 5K running race which follows walking and biking trails on each side of the river. Both events raise substantial sums to help support waterway clean up, while at the same time drawing the public's attention to the value of a clean and beautiful river.

These are just two great examples of how canoe and kayak paddlers and racers can team up with local conservation groups for the benefit of our waterways. There are many, many similar collaborations taking place each racing season all across our country. I encourage all USCA members - and all paddlers - to get involved in one or more of these important initiatives. If you do not currently have such an event or partnership which supports water quality in a river or lake in your area, give some thought to starting one. The true winners will not just be the canoe/kayak racers participating in the event, but everyone in your community who understand and appreciate the countless public benefits of clean and beautiful waterways.

Peter Heed



TRICIA'S TRAVELS

TRICIA HEED

You may not have noticed, but people who live in Connecticut realized that their state was left out of Tricia's Travel Tips Part 2: *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* Here is a taste of interesting places you may wish to include in your New England vacation.

CONNECTICUT

1. HARTFORD: 70 miles, 1:14

The Mark Twain House & Museum offers visitors an opportunity to learn more about Mark Twain, his family, the historic house, and the author's legacy.

2. MYSTIC SEAPORT: 128 miles, 2:13

Mystic Seaport is known as one of Connecticut's most popular tourist destinations, full of

one-of-a-kind sights, activities, and attractions. The Museum of America and the Sea is the largest maritime museum in the world.

3.FEELING LUCKY?
Home to some of the first and largest casinos in America, Connecticut is no stranger to gambling. With Foxwoods Resort and Casino, MGM Grand at Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun, there's plenty of options for casino excitement and entertainment.

Mohegan Sun, Uncasville Connecticut: 113 miles, 1:57

Foxwoods Resort and Casino, Mashantucket: 116 miles, 2:07

4. NEW LONDON ferry to Block Island, RI: 126 miles, 2:26

Visit this jewel of an island which lies 13 miles out to sea. The Island's 17 miles of beaches offer many choices. Within walking distance of the ferry landing you will find three-mile Crescent Beach, restaurants, shops, and bicycle rentals.

Check out their website: http://www.blockislandchamber.com

TRICIA'S TRAVEL TIPS FOR NATIONALS 2016

Part 3: Keeping it Local

There is so much to see and do in the New England area within a three hour driving radius. My last article highlighted only a small sampling of places to go to transform your trip to Nationals 2016 into a memorable vacation. The good news is that you don't have to travel more than a few miles to fill your vacation time with adventures!

Here is a sampling of how to keep it local and keep the planning low key. Many of these adventures can be last minute decisions.

No driving necessary! Park your car at the Northfield Mountain Recreational and Environ-

mental Center (race headquarters) and spend the day. You can hike, run, or mountain bike up the numerous trails at the mountain. You may want to paddle downriver under the French King Bridge to explore a different part of the river. Hop on the Riverboat for a guided cruise. There are tours morning and afternoon every day with the exception of race days, when tours will run after racers are off the river. We are hoping that a morning tour will be offered on the race course for spectators to have a great on water view of the racing action! Right inside the headquarters building is a very interesting museum interpreting the hydroelectric facility.

Bring your road bike. The Franklin county roads offer rides from short to long distance loops that are some of the most enjoyable rides in the state weaving between the river, hills, and small towns. You can start right from race headquarters.

(Maps will be available at our hospitality booth.)

Something for everyone area attractions! Within a short drive in any direction you can find great places to explore.

Sugarloaf Mountain provides one of the most dramatic views of the Connecticut River Valley. It is surely a must see place. You can drive to the top or hike one of the trails. It is a perfect spot to bring a picnic lunch!

Not to be missed is **Historic Deerfield**. It is a fascinating museum complex of 14 preserved 18th and 19th century houses. **The Great Falls Discovery Center and**

Canal-side Bike Path is an interpretive museum of the natural, cultural, and industrial history of the Connecticut River. **The Magic Wings Butterfly Conservatory and Gardens** offers indoor and outdoor gardens with over 4,000 butterflies from around the world. In Greenfield, you will find the **Museum of Industrial Heritage** to learn about the area's industrial history.

Golfers, bring your clubs! You can choose from the **Crumpin-Fox Club** which is rated the #1 Public Access Course in Massachusetts and the **Northfield Golf Club** which is a 9 hole "link style" golf course.

Antiques, galleries, and gift shops are in all of the surrounding towns. You check out some of them in the websites listed below. The area is famous for **Kringle Candle** and **Yankee Candle Village** shops.

Many of the places highlighted above, as well as numerous other places of local interest, can be found at these websites:

EXPLORE! visitnorthfieldarea.com

FRANKLIN COUNTY - A Breath of Fresh Air! franklincc.org

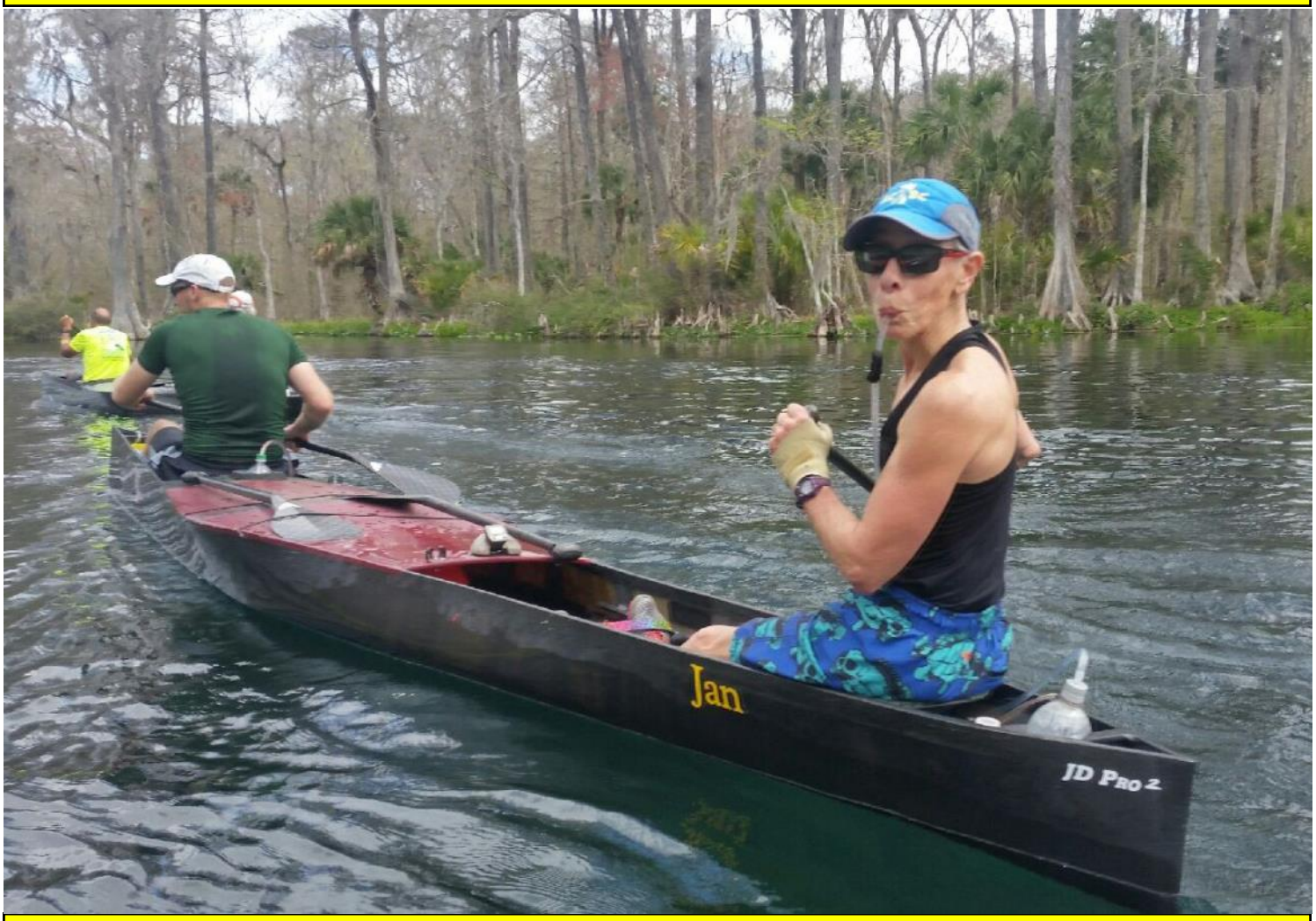
Be sure to visit our **hospitality booth at race headquarters** for help in planning your area explorations. There will be local people available to answers all of your questions. You will also find maps and brochures to guide your planning.

2016 Nationals Race Headquarters!

NATIONALS ALERT!

Make your motel or campsite reservations asap! This is a very popular tourism area during summer months. Places will fill up quickly.

Go to newenglandnationals.org for lodging information.



NATIONALS ALERT!

Register early for your races! We are offering an early registration discount and you will be assured a t-shirt and goodie bag. (You can always make adjustments when you arrive.)

Forms will be available on newenglandnationals.org in the near future.

EATING CROW

TWO DINGBATS AND A CANOE—TOM THOMAS

After reading about the glorious canoe racing beginnings of Peter Heed and Bruce Barton in the 2015 winter issue of "Canoe News", I thought it might tickle the funny bones of a few canoeists to read about my inglorious beginning in the sport. I've told this story to several canoe racing friends and it always got a laugh.

Tom (in the stern) with a friend in 1977 paddling the Champ II Cruiser

Back in 1977 I bought a Kevlar 18' 6" Sawyer Champ II Cruiser from a guy who had won it in an outdoor writers' contest. The new boat had lain in his back yard for two years still in the crate. He didn't know what he had and neither did I. I bought it from him for $200.00. I had experience as a recreational paddler having canoed the length of the Mississippi River and I did my master's thesis on recreational canoeing, but I knew nothing about marathon canoe racing. The Sawyer canoe was not setup for racing. It had fixed large bucket seats, no foot braces, a sixteen-inch high bow and stern, and aluminum gunwales. It was a real nice boat though.

That spring of 1977, a friend and I entered a three mile long local canoe race on the Wabash River at Terre Haute, Indiana and paddled my new Sawyer canoe. As it turned out, we were the only ones with a racing canoe; the rest had old aluminum canoes and were just as inexperienced at canoe racing as we were. We won and thought we were really tough and could kick the butts of anyone in a canoe race. We heard about a USCA-sanctioned race that was to be held on Wildcat Creek near Lafayette, Indiana and thought "What the heck, let's go to that race and show them how to do it!"

We didn't know it, but in those days the Indiana race circuit was really big and many of the big name marathon canoe racers competed in all the Indiana USCA races. As you can guess, we were about to get an education. We launched our canoe and drifted into the starting lineup confident that we going to crush the competition. Here we were in a boat not setup for racing using aluminum shaft paddles with straight plastic blades and not the slightest idea of what marathon canoe racing was all about. On the line were many of the top marathon paddlers in the Midwest. I was kneeling in the stern as we had no foot braces and no idea we needed them. My bow partner was a large muscular former college football player by the name of Frank Miklozek, but for a big guy, he had a high squeaky voice.

The drama started when we all got lined up and were waiting for the starting gun to go off. Frank was sitting there in the front of the boat with his paddle resting across his legs. He looked up and down the line and loudly squeaked out "alright, you mother #$%@*s, ready to go!" All the other teams looked at him as if to say "Who in the heck are you?!?" I was thinking "You tell 'em Frank, we're going to kick their butts!"

Well, the starting gun went off and within five minutes we couldn't see the next to the last boat. They were ready to go and we were left like we were standing still. The water was shallow with many rocks and logs to dodge. We struggled along trying to figure out what the heck had just happened and why we were so slow. It had to be the boat! The paddles were not what we needed! The gods were against us! The bottom line was we didn't have the slightest idea of what we were doing. The rest of the boats were just gone and we were crushed.

As we kept splashing away and got about an hour or so into the race, we realized that this racing stuff really makes you thirsty. We had taken nothing to drink and were starting to feel real dry. As it happened, we came upon several guys floating along on inner tubes and had large coolers with them. They yelled out "hey, you guys want a beer"? That was all the invitation we needed. We stopped and sat on a sandbar with them and drank three beers apiece. We finally got back in the canoe after a relaxing respite and headed downstream, each of us with an additional three beers apiece to drink along the way.

We finally made it to the finish line with twelve empty beer cans rolling around in the bottom of the canoe. My mother and sister had come to the race and were standing on the bank near the finish line. They had come to watch us kick butt! As we staggered out of the water carrying the canoe, my sister yelled at us "You dingbats!" She was really proud of us. On top of it, the race officials had been holding up the awards presentation until the last canoe made it in. Needless to say we didn't make any friends that day!

We had a very rude awakening that marathon canoe racing is much more technical that either of us realized. We had been totally humiliated. This ended Frank's short racing career. I kept it up though and I am now in my 39th year of racing. And any beer drinking now is left until after the race!

The epilog to this story is that after I became established as a marathon canoe racer and told this story to several of my canoe racing friends, whenever we got on the starting line at the Nationals, we would squeakily yell back and forth at each other "alright, you mother &#%$s, ready to go"! It kinda' became a battle cry. Even though racing is serious and intense and everyone in the race is your mortal enemy until the race is over, you gotta' have fun at it too!

1978 race with (left to right) Bruce Barton and Rick Diebold, Tom and Terry Strieb, Duane Swisher and John Diebold, and Greg Barton and Steve Yuel.

Have a great story for the *Eating Crow* column? Send it to the Editor for consideration!

LURKING IN THE TALL GRASS

JULIE HORNEY

Somewhere out there by the side of the river, next to your boat-mobile or behind the garden shed may be a menace that could change your life forever. You may see it before it gets to you and you may not. It may be no bigger than the period at the end of this sentence! Perhaps you have been bitten many times before and think you are immune to its wrath. Maybe. Maybe not. One day that could all change so take heed: this message applies to EVERYONE!

Lyme disease is the fastest growing infectious disease in the U.S. Lyme has been reported in all 50 states although it is most prevalent in the Northeast, Northwest, and Great Lakes areas. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that there were 300,000 new cases in 2012 and estimates based on clinical diagnosis suggest there are over 1 million new cases yearly.*

Lyme disease (LD) is called a "vector-borne" disease transmitted by the bite of a black-legged deer tick imbedded with the Borrelia burgdorferi (Bb) spirochete. LD is often complicated by Co-infections: other bacteria, protozoa, and viruses carried by the same ticks. Lyme is difficult to diagnose because fewer than half of all patients recall a tick bite or develop the signature erythema migrans (bull's-eye) rash; the routine Lyme ELISA screening test has up to 60% false negativity. Similarly, testing for co-infections is also plagued by a high rate of false negativity.

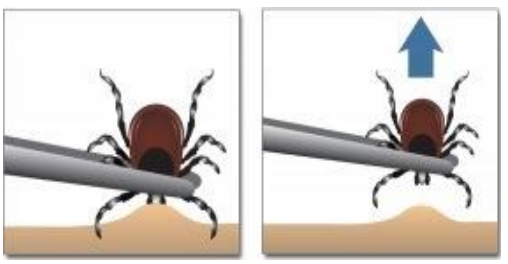
For example, research by the International Lyme and Associated Disease Society (ILADS) finds that joint swelling typically occurs in only 20% to 30% of patients. Given the prevalent use of over the counter anti-inflammatory medications such as Ibuprofen, joint inflammation is often masked. Based on these statistics, a significant number people who contract Lyme disease are misdiagnosed during the early stages leading to a chronic form of the disease which can prove even more difficult to diagnose and treat. Lyme disease is often referred to as the "great imitator" because it mimics other conditions, often causing patients to suffer a complicated maze of doctors in search of appropriate treatment. While it may not be fatal, the consequences of Lyme and Co-infections can profoundly affect the quality of your life. In the words of my own Lyme Literate Medical Doctor (LLMD):

If you don't treat it then your life will be hell.

Alright, so now that I have your attention, let's dig into the details. Isn't there a difference between an acute infection and a chronic infection? The answer is yes. And since only an estimated 50% of ticks carry infection, how do I know that I have been affected if I do not have any symptoms?

Lyme disease is difficult to diagnose without a rash, Bell's palsy, arthritis, or meningitis but you can still have Lyme and not have any of those signs or symptoms! Many people react differently to the infection and experience fatigue, headaches, irritability, anxiety, crying, sleep disturbance, poor memory and concentration, chest pain, palpitations, lightheadedness, joint pain, numbness and tingling. The key is in the careful medical evaluation of ANY suspicious insect bite since they are all capable of spreading disease. (The CDC has stated that mosquitos can carry Lyme disease.)

The diagram below shows the proper procedure for removal of an



Proper tick removal using tweezers****

attached tick. Using fine pointed tweezers, grasp it from the side where it meets the skin, and gently pull it out in the opposite direction from which it embedded. My husband, Steve, and I each carry a pair of tweezers in our vehicles in addition to a First Aid kit for this purpose.

While the longer the tick is attached, the higher the risk of transmission, it is possible to get Lyme disease even if the tick is attached for less than 24 hours. The salivary juices of the tick, which contain anticoagulants, anesthetics, and immune suppressors, also contain microbes that can be injected at the time of attachment. (The anesthetic is why you don't usually feel it biting you!) Transmission of bacteria by ticks attached less than 24 hours has been well documented in animals, and a recent paper last year documented that this can occur in humans as well.*

You may have the tick tested nationwide for free at: http://www.bayarealyme.org/lyme-disease-prevention/tick-testing/ Taking a "wait and see" approach to deciding whether to treat the disease has risks. If you do experience symptoms, you may even need to have more than one doctor evaluate them. *Onset of Lyme disease symptoms can be easily overlooked or mistaken for other illnesses.* Once symptoms are more evident the disease may have already entered the central nervous system and could be hard to cure. This is one case in which an ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure. Work with a Lyme-literate medical doctor to identify the appropriate treatment option if you have symptoms and if those symptoms persist. There is more than one type of antibiotic available, often beginning with 20 days of Doxycycline. Longer treatment is also an option per guidelines at www.ILADS.org

Prevention

Strategies for the prevention of tick bites are do-able even for the avid paddler who finds himself standing in endemic areas on a regular basis! First and foremost avoid known infested areas and keep to trails, boat launches, and areas cleared of brush/grass/bushes. Next, invest in clothing treated with permethrin or treat clothing 24 to 48 hours ahead of time with permethrin (which is waterproof through several washings) including paddling shoes. Tucking light-colored leggings or pants inside socks or fitted ankle-high water shoes can be helpful; tucking shirts inside pants is also recommended. There should be no gaps in clothing such that skin is exposed.

An insecticide containing DEET is the standard repellent to use. The Centers for Disease Control maintains that repellents with the active ingredient of picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus are as effective as DEET for mosquitos but make NO CLAIMS for their effectiveness against ticks. Similarly, the EPA registers several essential oils and other natural remedies for safety but not effectiveness! Limited alternatives are available by searching their site.** Assist children in the safe application of all insect repellents and skin checks too. And do remember to protect your pets: dog and cat fur can act like a "tick magnet" carrying ticks inside your home. Consult with your veterinarian about tick-protection for your pets throughout the year.

When outdoors, periodically inspect your clothing and skin for ticks. Wearing light-colored clothing will make tick identification easier. Brush off those that aren't attached and remove any that are with the method noted earlier. Some keep an adhesive-style lint roller handy to pick up loose ticks on clothing or pets.

Once you are home, take a shower right away. This will wash away unattached ticks and offer a good chance to thoroughly inspect your skin. Feel for bumps that might be embedded ticks. Pay careful attention to hidden places, including groin, armpits, back of knees, belly button and scalp. This may seem strange but a quick skin check when sitting on the potty can be done anywhere, right?

Why bother? A Quick Story

Perhaps it was the tick Steve removed about 6 years ago or maybe it was the zillion mosquito bites I've had over the years that caused my four years of hell with Chronic Lyme Disease? We are not sure. At first we thought that when I got really sick it was the consequence of a biotoxin illness (exposures to blue green algae-infested water when kayaking then mold at home). For four years I sought medical advice from traditional, functional medicine, and al-

ternative health practitioners; we spent tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket to no avail. We found secondary issues to resolve that often go along with what becomes a "chronic illness" such as mercury toxicity, Candida, parasites, dental issues, food sensitivities, hormonal issues, and more. Several doctors gave me a psychiatric diagnosis; others attributed it to "fibromyalgia." Oy vey!

Convulsive episodes every day for 2 to 5 hours has created a living hell for both of us. Sometimes the seizure attacks are triggered by environmental toxins or fragrances and other times it's the simple act of going to bed or waking up in the morning. The thrashing has created secondary orthopedic injuries that require their own treatment. Relief is generally temporary until the next round of torture coming within hours.

I had become largely homebound with a litany of noxious symptoms and until recently, bedbound for most of the day, a minimum of four days per week. Extreme dietary measures including a ketogenic diet did nothing. Family visits still require extreme avoidance procedures.

Less and less was I able to cheer my beloved River Bear by the shores of the waterways here in Indiana . . . "gooooo Steeeeve." I thought that my paddling days, ability to work, and ability to function normally at all were largely over. *Welcome to late stage, neuro Lyme . . .*

Tis funny how nothing is wasted for those who believe in the Lord's sovereignty over one's life. Initially I did have 5 weeks of antibiotics for a "clinical diagnosis" of LD even though virtually all of the fancy lab tests were negative. That first round of treatment in 2012 nearly killed me. I decided it wasn't for me. But after treating all of those other conditions over the subsequent 5 years I would eventually become ready for intensive treatment of chronic Lyme disease with high doses of IV antibiotics. At the time of this writing I am about 3 months into treatment. Placement of a power port by cutting into my chest wall was needed when the treatments got complicated. Neat huh? And at last there's good news: the big turn-around has begun! Praise the Lord I am getting well!

Fellow paddlers, *please take the prevention and treatment of Lyme disease seriously!* Chances are good that someday this will touch the life of someone you know. Let not my experience be wasted! Share this information with your friends and family. Take precautions then let's get on down the river, the beach, the intercostal waterway to enjoy the sport we love.

Perhaps soon you'll see me as the one in a Stellar SR Multisport. :J

*Source: International Lyme and Associated Disease Society at www.ILADS.org

** www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you

*** Video for removal of a black-legged deer tick: youtu.be/0wotB38WrRY

****www.cdc.gov/lyme/removal

USCA BOAT SPECS—HOW TO JIG

STEVE ROSENAU

The United States Canoe Association (USCA) created canoe and kayak specifications to keep racing fair. The boats in a given class will meet the same length, width, and other requirements. Boats that are longer, more narrow, or are otherwise different may create a significant advantage over the boats that conform to the specification. Wider and shorter boats are generally accepted into a class because it would be a disadvantage.

At the USCA National Championship races boats are precision measured (jigged) to ensure they meet their specification. If they do not meet the specification, they are disqualified. The specifications provide maximums in length, and minimums in width (beam) when such dimensions impact speed. The specifications don't have tolerances - if it states 18 feet maximum, then 18 feet and 1/64 inch is out of specification and would be disqualified. A 17 foot 11.5 inch boat length would be acceptable.

In local races, it is up to the race officials to make the determinations. Generally, no measurements are performed or a simple length check is performed to keep the race relatively fair for all.

If you want to ensure your boat meets USCA specifications for your class, here is a Simplified Jigging Method (for use at home or when purchasing a boat). Let's use a sea kayak as an example:

Length: Sounds easy, just use 25 foot tape measure and pull it tight. However, both the top and bottom of the boat are curved and the error could be up to 2" off. Place boat level on a good flat surface and make it level and upright. Use a framing square or tri-square to mark the floor straight down from the longest part of the bow. Do likewise for the stern without including the rudder. Move boat away and carefully use a tape rule stretched tight across the floor for the boat maximum length. The USCA Sea Kayak specification uses maximum boat length, not waterline length.

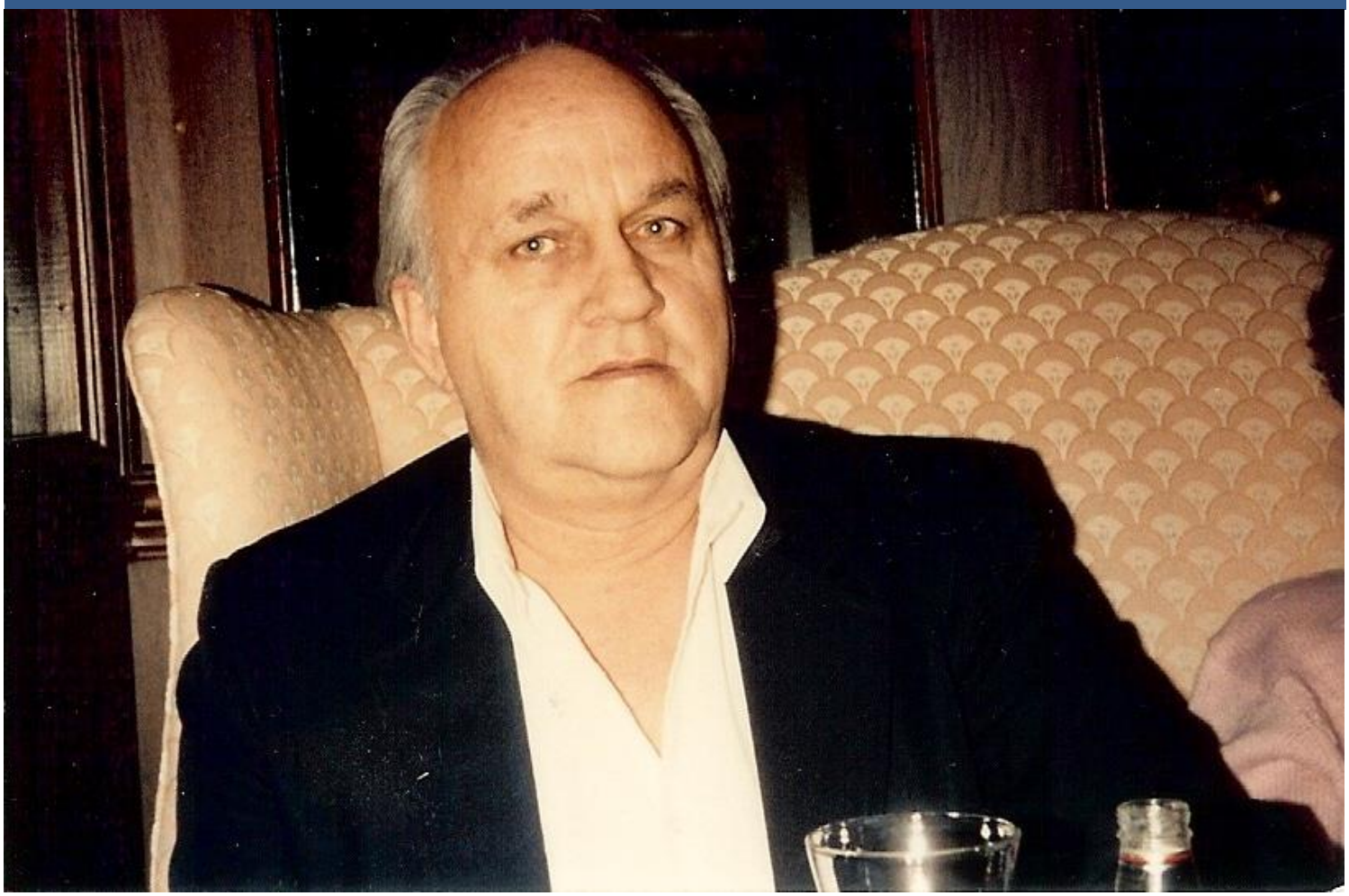
Width: The USCA Sea Kayak width is 8.5% of the overall length measured at the 4" waterline. First, get an accurate boat length as noted above. For an exact 18 foot boat the 4" water line beam would be: 18 feet x 12 feet/inch x 0.085 = 18.36" (just under 18.375" or 18-3/8"). Make the simple jig: cut a 4" deep and 18-3/8" long rectangular piece out of paper covered foam board or similar. Make all edges square and as accurate as possible. See the photo below.

How to use the simple jig: First turn boat upside down. Find the widest part of the boat. Second, place the jig gently over the boat (without damaging the jig corners) and move forward and backward to find the largest beam. If only the outer edges of the jig touch, the boat is wider than it needs to be. If the edges and the center touch, the boat meets the beam specification. If the jig touches the center and only one edge of the two edges, the boat beam does not meet USCA Sea Kayak specification.

USCA National Championship boat specification can be found at www.uscacanoe.org Click on "Nationals" and select the boat type of interest.

IN MEMORANDUM—MIKE REYNOLDS

LARRY LATTA



USCA Past President, Mike Reynolds, 1941-2015

Michael J. Reynolds passed into Eternal Life Friday, December 18, 2015. Beloved husband of Jane Resch (nee Kodell). Dear father of Cynthia, Catherine, the late Robby, Scott, Cindy, Wendy, and Lori. Loving step-father of Pamela and Daniel. Also survived by grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other relatives and many friends. A Celebration of Life will be held in the summer of 2016. Longtime member of Vagabond Ski Club and the Milwaukee County Memories Group.

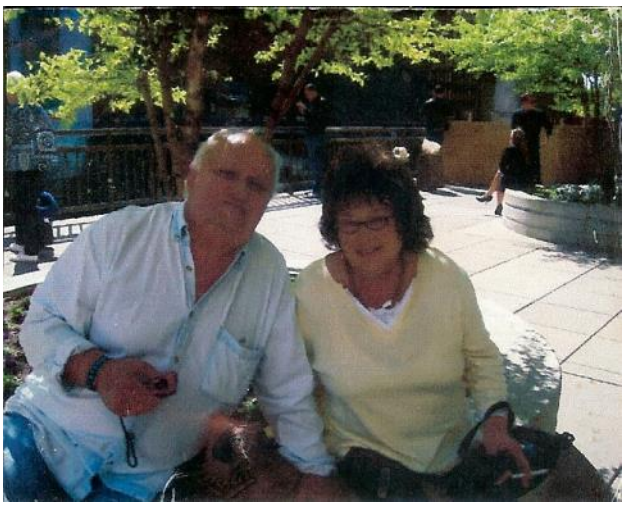
Mike, a Wisconsin native, earned his Life Membership to the USCA in 1980 and served the USCA in many capacities including President (1981-82), Canoe News Editor and Publications Chair (1977-1981, 1985-1987), Camaraderie Chair (1978-1980), and host to the 1987 Annual Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

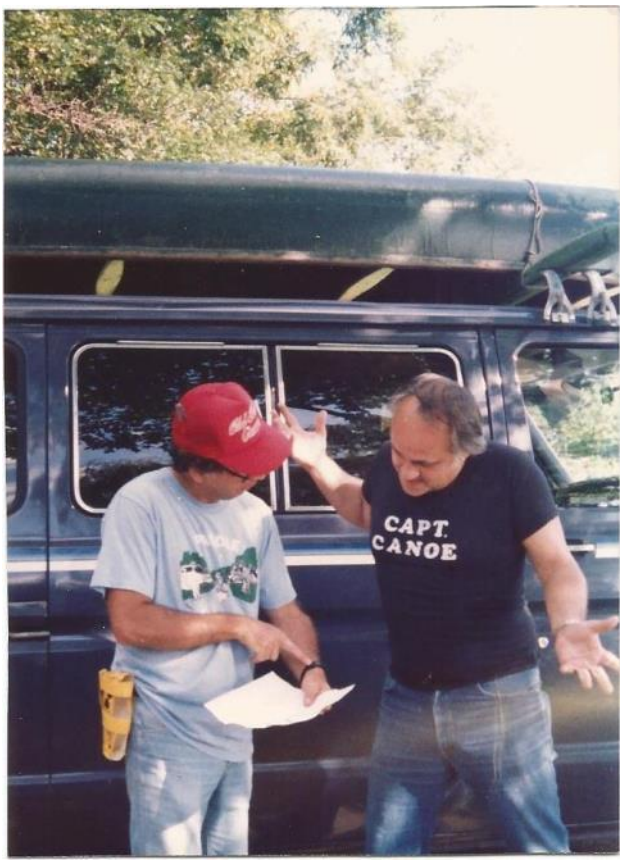
Ross Terrell, a USCA Life Member, noted "*We did in fact have some really good times working on USCA stuff. Several April fools editions of* ***Canoe News****, The "Coaches Corner" back in the 1970s, and especially a trip to Sky High Campground. Genie and I took 3 other couples up to WI with our big 25' Old Town war canoe. Mike & Sue hosted us for the weekend. Star gazing at night, camping at Sky High, a moonlight cruise on Mirror Lake with a great dinner at a beautiful restaurant, Ishnala, where we paddled in. Followed that with a paddle in pub crawl at several*

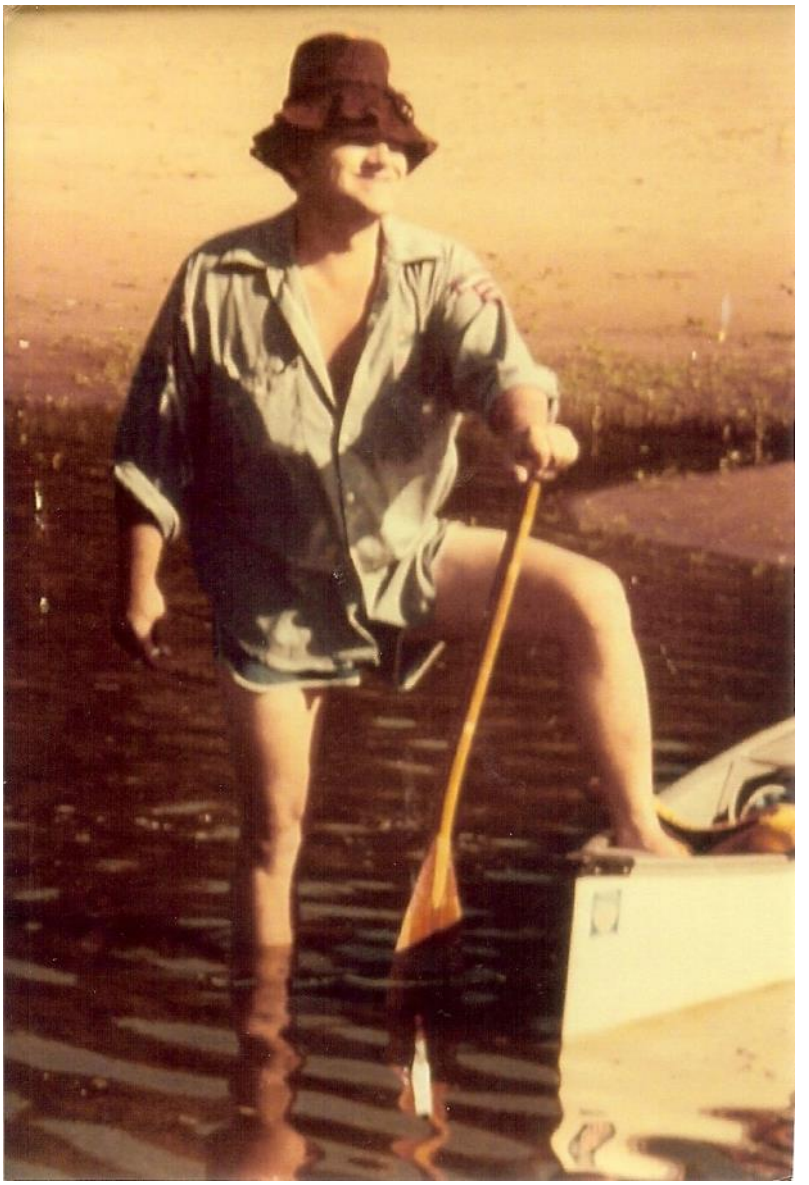
local pubs around the lake. On Sunday we were treated to a short cruise through the Wisconsin Dells. There we got to bounce off the waves from the tour boats in a beautiful scenic river setting. One special cove Mike shared with us he called Chicken Glen. Back at the campground

Mike ran a little bar named the Sandbar. There he had posted a welcome sign announcing "No shoes, no shirt, no problem!"

Jim Mack, a USCA Life Member and Past Executive Director, noted *"Mike's passions for canoeing, Wisconsin, and Milwaukee brew were only surpassed by the love he had for his family. Come to think of it Mike did have a passion for trains. Mike's Christmas card to Mack's each year had a train picture on the cover. Pat and I have great memories of the Reynolds and Mack families' camping and canoeing adventures - it was like a small village when we got together! Mike was also my kindred spirit when it came to photography and videography. We were often the unofficial photographers of USCA, capturing moments for* ***Canoe News*** *and annual meetings. We had a lot of fun together. Mike's kindness, generosity, and humor will always be remembered. God bless the Reynolds family. "*







Photos courtesy of Jane Reynolds, Jim Mack and Ross Terrell.

BUILDER PROFILE: VAN DUSEN RACING BOATS

BY STEVEN HORNEY

Dr. Ted Van Dusen is a quiet man, yet his impact has been felt throughout the USA and world paddling communities for decades, all the way up to Olympic and World championship levels. Not to mention even into the upper atmosphere. But we'll get to that.

A Naval Architect by training, Ted has the looks of an experienced sea captain combined with an agelessness that gives him the appearance – and paddling ability – of a man 15 years his junior (Working in carbon fiber must be good for the body.) Perhaps best known among canoe and kayak paddlers for the Mohican, a limited production K1 Open race boat, Dr. Van Dusen's resume extends far beyond that boat—and back to around age 11.

I caught up with Ted at his Composite Engineering / Van Dusen Racing Boats factory while on a recent business trip to northern MA. Trying to connect with Ted by phone or e-mail is sometimes a challenge; he's typically overwhelmed with work. But when I drop by he's always gracious to take time out to visit and this was no exception. In a rush to get an overseas order off the to the post office, Ted asked me to join him in the ride over so we could talk a bit on the way – an offer I gladly accepted. Ted happens to drive a Tesla – and likely the only Tesla in the country with boat racks on the roof! As an automotive enthusiast, a ride in a Tesla is a rare experience not to be turned down. And where better to start an interview than inside a quiet electric car...

The Composite Engineering facility has the look of a place that has seen better times, but which is still purposeful. There are older photos of Greg Barton paddling a Van Dusen ICF kayak and standing on the podium with gold medals from the 1988 Olympics, posters from an article on how boats are built at Composite Engineering, and various posters and photos of great events from the past. At the same time, futuristic composite parts can be found scattered about here and there. The offices and extra spaces which are generally unoccupied are in a bit of a disarray and perhaps in need of a good cleaning, but stepping out into the factory area reveals

Ted's original dory—built at age 11.

ICF Sailboat Race; Ted is racing USA 213.

an engineer's playground: rowing shells, kayaks, canoes, and sailboats are stored all around in various racks and shelves and even some in the ceiling structure. Some are historical, some are in for repairs, and some are new boats in various states of construction. There are cool things like the triaxial braiding machine for carbon fiber yarn and a 61 foot autoclave for curing components under heat and pressure. Sailboat masts, a NASA project, experimental construction test specimens, tools, and fixtures round out the rest. Leading edge engineering happens here!

And now for the rest of the story…

CN: Tell me about your background – how did you get involved in boat building and from whence did this love of the water come?

Ted: I always liked the water. My grandfather was a cabinet maker who sometimes dabbled in boat building. At age 11 I wanted a dory, so my grandfather showed me how to build one correctly, and I built my first boat – with a bit of help from my grandfather. I still have that boat [it's on the floor of the shop standing on the stern]. Around age 13 I picked up an Old Town canvas canoe and went to work refinishing the wooden structure and re-canvasing the skin. I learned that re-canvasing was quite a bit easier than repairing and refinishing the wood structure! But I finished the boat, set it up for sailing, and went off to explore rivers and various bodies of water. My canoeing experience expanded when I joined the Explorer Scouts and our troop leader, who was a Maine Guide, had us canoeing and climbing through Northern New England.

Along the way I really wanted to row, so when my best friend went off to a private school in 9th grade and started rowing I was jealous. But shortly thereafter, at the age of 14, I started racing Snipes (15.5 foot 2-person sailboats). They were the largest racing class in the world at that time. Initially I crewed for my friend, but then I built and raced my own boat at age 15.

When it came time for college, I applied to and was accepted at both Webb Institute of Naval Architecture and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the Naval Architect programs. The choice was a tough one: Webb offered

ICF sailboat

Laying up a new rowing shell inside Van Dusen Racing Boats.

free board, room, books and tuition but MIT had a rowing program. The conundrum was solved when my father located a rowing club near Webb. While at Webb I was on their Intercollegiate Sailing Team and started racing ocean sailboats along with rowing. I later went to MIT for my Masters and Professional Engineering degrees. That was followed by my PhD in Ocean Engineering at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, where I actually focused on wind power. One of the professors wanted to demonstrate the feasibility of renewable energy, so Woody Stoddard, (a fellow aeronautical engineering student at MIT) and I joined professor Heronemus to create the first modern windmill designed for serious power production .(That wind turbine is now at the Smithsonian Museum). We extensively studied the aerodynamics, structural loading and dynamics on twisted fiberglass blades and worked out the electrical engineering and power control issues to create a robust and efficient wind turbine design.

During my academic years boats were still a central part of my life. While at Webb I had people tell me "you're im-

Ted ensuring the vacuum bag has a good seal.

Triaxial carbon fiber yarn braiding machine.

proving but you need a better boat; I'll lend you one if you fix it up". Unfortunately, these boats were always older and needed repair. Eventually I decided it would be better to build my own boat than to put in a similar amount of work only to end up with an old boat. That really started me down the path to professional boat building.

CN: So how did you end up building composite boats and forming a business?

Ted: In my quest to build lighter boats, I found I could only build a wooden boat to a certain weight; anything less would result in a flexible boat that was slower. In comparing material characteristics, I needed to use advanced composites to achieve the low weight and high stiffness I wanted. Initially I used Boron, which is about six times stiffer than aluminum for the same weight. When carbon fiber became more readily available around 1985, I switched to carbon. It has a slightly better strength to weight ratio, and it's easier to work with.

In 1968 when I began building composite rowing shells, the conventional wisdom at the time said that heavier boats penetrated into the wind better than lighter boats, but lighter boats were better downwind. In 1976 Joan Lind Van Blom won the Singles Trials and the right to represent the US in the Olympics—the first time women's rowing was included. She offered to try one of my boats along with a top European one during training and soon called to say that she had just set a new personal record downwind in my boat, but she still thought she might bring her heavier European boat to the Olympics. Then she set her flatwater PR with my boat. In the end she took my boat to the 1976 Olympics and won Silver – the first time an advanced composite shell won in the Olympics. I was building boats on the side at this time alongside wind turbine blades for the wind turbine we built in 1977 - all while earning my doctorate. I hadn't yet incorporated as a business; I decided to do so a month after the Olympics.

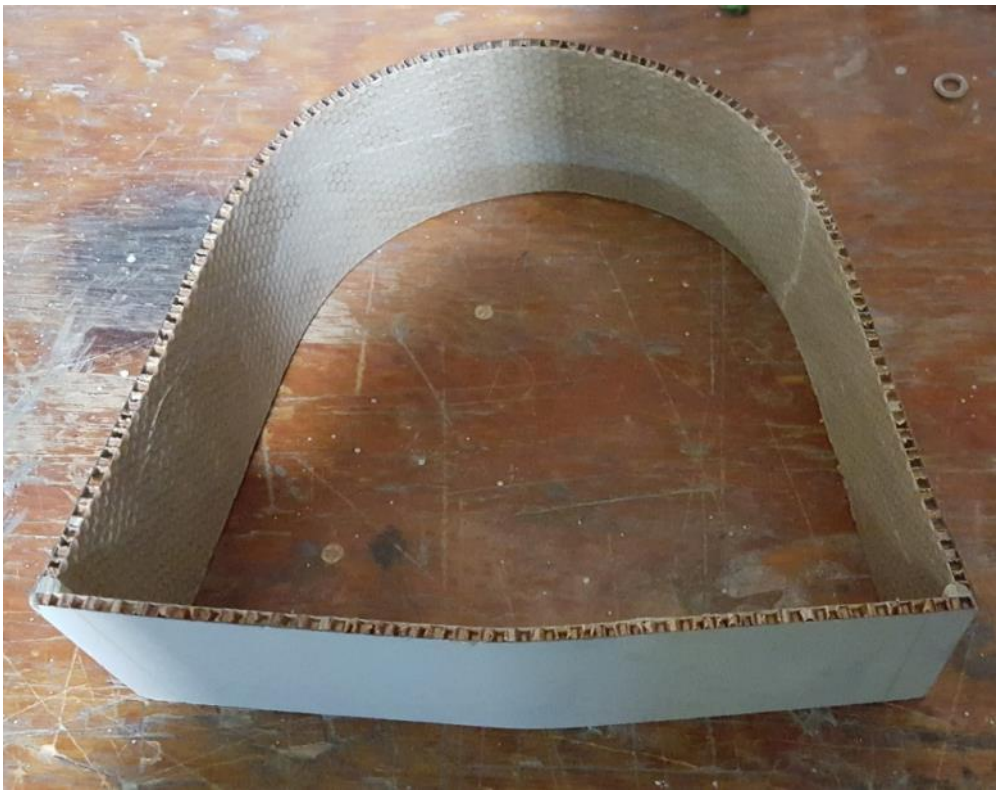
My next business venture began in 1978 when Woody Stoddard and I joined 2 businessmen to form US Windpower. The retired owner of Litton helped us raise $10 million to get the business off the ground, and US Windpower flourished. Soon the company moved to California where wind power had a lot of potential for growth and started installing wind farms at good wind sites along the coastal range. I continued fabricating the composite blades for the turbines until the other company felt I wouldn't be able to keep up with production and they formed their own subsidiary. Eventually Enron bought US Windpower; when they went under GE bought the company and it exists today as GE Windpower. In 1978 I was build-

ing wind turbine blades, sailboat masts, and rowing shells.

CN: It sounds like this was a very active period in your life. Were you still keeping active with water sports?

Ted: Yes. I made the US Rowing Team in 1977 and 1981 and raced in the World Championships in Amsterdam and Munich. In 1978 I built a wood strip competition cruiser canoe for racing around the New England area. Then in 1980 I bought a used International Sailing Canoe and raced in the ICF Sailing World Championships. (ICF sailboats are 5.2 meters long.)

CN: Tell us about the growth of Composite Engineering over the years and the unique opportunities and accomplishments you've had.



Rowing Shell cross-section (Nomex core/carbon skin).

Ted: In the 1984 Olympics the US Women's Rowing Single earned a silver and US Men's Rowing Double earned a gold with Van Dusen rowing shells. For a period of a dozen years from 1976 – 1988 no American single sculler made the US Rowing Team without a Van Dusen racing shell. In 1985 the US Olympic Committee (USOC) conducted some research and determined that Americans tended to do well in sports like running, swimming, and track and field, but in sports involving more technology like cycling and paddling our performances were less than optimum. So in 1985 the USOC asked for proposals to help our athletes improve their performances in the sports requiring sophisticated equipment. I submitted a proposal to use towing tanks to reduce the drag of ICF kayaks and rowing shells. The USOC was impressed enough with the concept to award me 1/3 of the available funds to pursue improvements in the designs. Thankfully some of the companies with big towing tanks volunteered their resources, as did two engineers, although I essentially worked for free as the bulk of the USOC grant went towards technicians and other expenses.

The results of our tests conducted in 1986 showed one of our K-1 designs had 1.5% less drag than the best boat at the time, so we quickly built a boat from the test model and delivered it in 1987. Greg Barton used the boat to win the K-1 1000 meter event in the 1987 Pan Am World Games, dominating the event by 20.3 seconds! The other boats were having problems burying their bows in the waves that developed in the strong tailwind, but the Van Dusen Eagle (the name of the boat) went right through. Greg Barton then used the boat to win gold in the 1987 Worlds and followed it up with double gold medals in the 1988 Olympics, winning both the 1000 m K-1 and the 1000m K-2 with Norm Bellingham an hour later– a feat no one else has ever done. For the 1988 Olympics I delivered a complete fleet of Van Dusen boats to the US Olympic Team, including K1 and K2 boats for both men's and women's events, and a K4. The women's K1 was called the Hawk, the K2 was the Osprey, and the K4 was the Condor; the men's K1 was the Eagle, and the K2 was the Falcon. At the 1996 Olympics 13 of 24 medals in ICF Sprint Kayak competition were won with Van Dusen kayaks.

Olympic rules were changed in 2000 to remove the minimum greatest beam rule. We had a new boat in development at the time (the Tiburon), which unfortunately was made obsolete almost overnight. Nevertheless our "out of date" boat won the Worlds in 2002. It revived a stern hung rudder in use since the 1936 Olympics which extended the waterline length 4 inches and included a spade rudder for better control, reducing the drag 0.5%. Over the stern rudders were then outlawed in 2004.

I also became involved in improving the performance of the wing paddle. The first wing paddles were designed by a Swedish fluid dynamics professor; initially the paddles had no twist but they added some twist in the second year. The paddles actually weren't too bad but

their quality was lacking; opposite blades on the same shaft were typically different lengths and twists. I instrumented Greg Barton and a paddle, taking measurements and underwater video as Greg paddled in a towing tank. The first paddles we created from our testing were actually pretty close to the Rasmussen design but with improved quality control to create precise, symmetrical blades. I went through 8 redesigns in search of improvements, increasing the twist and varying the shape. Lower twist is preferred in a short sprint for the standing start; higher twist for efficiency over longer distances. As a comparison, the Epic wing paddle is roughly a medium twist blade. Braca is currently making our 8th paddle iteration (the highest twist version).

CN: Tell me about the Mohican: how did it come about?

Ted: I found myself taking a few too many swims in my ICF boats as I worked on developing my paddle technique, causing me to focus more on staying upright than on my paddle stroke. I decided that to improve I wanted to design a boat I could paddle comfortably but which would have the speed of an ICF boat. I intended to build a shorter boat initially, but as I worked thorough the various iterations I found I needed a 21 foot waterline to achieve good speed. I gave the boat an ICF – type cockpit because I liked the paddling position of the ICF boats. The prototype boat had an open hull like an ICF boat, but subsequent models had sealed hulls and an Andersen bailer like surf skis. Dumping the boat once in a race convinced me that emptying a 21 foot open boat was a greater challenge than I cared for. As for speed, the Mohican is as fast as an ICF boat up to 8 mph, but with greater stability. It was also carefully designed for minimum drag in shallow water, where wave drag can increase 4x – 6x what it would be in deeper water. This design characteristic has given the Mohican its reputation for being somewhat immune to the effects of "suck water."

CN: Why is the Mohican as fast as an ICF boat only up to 8 mph? I've heard that wetted area drag predominates until typically 4.5 mph or so, when shape drag predominates.

Ted: As a boat builds speed it creates a wave at the bow, followed by additional wave crests. When the boat is going fast enough so the second crest is at the stern it is said to be at "hull speed" because it takes a large increase in power to go faster as the stern drops and the boat climbs up on its bow wave. As the boat is pushed further above hull speed there is a point where the increase in wave drag becomes less severe and may actually increase less steeply than the viscous drag from the wetted surface area. With its hull shape and long waterline, the Mohican has less wave drag than an ICF kayak; however, above 8 mph its viscous drag is increasing more quickly than its wave drag and with its larger wetted surface it loses to the ICF kayak. Interestingly, a fuller bow and stern with a thinner midsection is also optimal at higher speed, rather than the sharper bow and stern that works effectively at slower speeds. It took quite a bit of analysis to find the minimum total drag at the power output of an athlete with the additional effect of varying water depth.

CN: You've obviously had some outstanding successes in the past; what lies ahead for Composite Engineering /Van Dusen Racing Boats?

Ted: I really like designing things, and I have a load of potential projects in the back of my mind I would like to pursue – although I try to avoid over-committing myself. It's a challenge to run a business while investing the time and effort into a new concept. But the business pays the bills! I anticipate continuing the fabrication of rowing shells, Mohicans, sailboat masts, and occasional development jobs such as the one we just completed for NASA (we modified a nose cone for a high-altitude plane to hold instrumentation). I am amazed at the skill people can achieve when they work at it, and I am fascinated at the relationship between a person and a piece of equipment that lets them accomplish amazing things, whether that accomplishment is in sports, music, or some other endeavor.

One area of ongoing development is the aerodynamic refinement of our rowing shells. In 1984 rowing shells were regulated to have a minimum weight with

Mohican owned by Brent Ernsberger.

Airfoiled rigger with articulated foot plate utilizing bicycle shoes/cleats.

the theory that it would keep rowing shell costs from skyrocketing with newer technologies and materials. At the time the rowing committee took the average weight of the boats and came out with a number 20% less as the minimum weight requirement. The problem was my boats were 40% lighter, so I had to figure out how to increase the weight of my boats without making them slower. With weight limits now in place, I have been working on reducing aerodynamic drag by such things as airfoil riggers and wind deflectors. Our airfoil riggers cut drag 0.9%, which is about 1 ½ boat lengths in a 2 km race. Optimizing the foot mount for maximum leg power has also been a focus.

CN: Thank you so much for your time. You have a fascinating history of success and innovation. I can't wait to see what the future holds!

Read more about

Van Dusen Racing Boats at:

http://www.composite-eng.com/home

Ted's Tesla with boat racks - and naturally, a Mohican in the racks!

NECKRA Announces that the USCA Marathon National Championship is coming back to New England!

USCA Nationals
FRENCH KING BRIDGE
NECKRA
2016 Northfield, Mass.

The New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association hosts the USCA National Marathon Championships

August 12th - 14th 2016

Northfield Mountain Recreational and Environmental Center, Northfield, MA

Championship competition for canoe, kayak, surfski, and SUP

·U·S·C·A·
UNITED STATES CANOE ASSOCIATION

NECKRA New England Canoe & Kayak Racing Association

For more information go to:
www.NewEnglandNationals.org

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PADDLER PROFILE: PRISCILLA REINERTSEN

BY STEVEN HORNEY

Priscilla with Bob Bradford (of Michigan) in the General Clinton 70 Miler.

This month's paddler profile is not a former Olympian or an overall Nationals Champion but she's a champion in her own right. An exceptionally gracious and kind lady, Priscilla Reinertsen is also a tough competitor. But more than that she's one who works to see others succeed. And that's the mark of a true champion. Priscilla, now 73, could be considered the "First Lady" of marathon canoe racing.

Priscilla's involvement in canoe paddling started in 1981 at the age of 39. Most of it was the fault of her neighbor: Peter Heed (our current USCA President). It seems that Peter lived only a few doors down from Priscilla, and she knew him from seeing him at the local YMCA. Priscilla was a long-distance runner at the time (and had run several marathons), and one day as she was out for a run and passed by Peter's house. Peter called to her "Hey – come look at these boats!" Priscilla didn't know a thing about boats and hadn't ever really thought about paddling, but Peter was nothing if not enthusiastic. Stopping to look, she found the boats to be extraordinarily sleek and beautiful but she continued her run without too much more thought about it.

Shortly after her first encounter with race boats, Bob - a friend - told her about a 10 mile canoe race coming up right before a running race.

Priscilla figured they could have some fun doing the canoe race then hit the running race thereafter. In preparation for the race, Bob arranged to borrow a less than hydrodynamically optimal short fishing canoe and some beat-up paddles. Starting out they figured they would at least hold their own, but they ended up running bank to bank in classic uncoordinated neophyte style – a humbling experience. But during that race they saw the experts in their sleek boats: well-coordinated, going hut-hut, and moving along rapidly. They were completely mesmerized by these pros. In spite of the humbling start, Bob and Priscilla decided they loved canoe racing and upon finding out a woman at the YMCA had an 18' Jensen for sale, they bought it and launched their racing career.

Priscilla with George Walsh racing the White Water Nationals in Maine

At that point very few women paddled ; it was pretty much a guy's sport. But Priscilla was fortunate to be in races where there were some incredible women paddlers. Those gals became role models for Priscilla and a great inspiration. They were also very helpful and the sport was so much fun that Priscilla added paddling to her already intense running and X-country ski racing regimen. Running became physically problematic shortly thereafter, so paddling come at an opportune time and became her dominant sport.

In 1982 (just a year after her initial race) and 1983 Priscilla teamed up with Nancy Cole to paddle the Clinton 70 miler. There were no women's classes at the time, so they entered the open amateur class. Another female team, Tanna Fries and Sherri Eaton from New York, raced in the General Clinton that same year and were 3rd overall. Nancy and Priscilla were well behind Fries and Eaton and ended up thoroughly worn out, but they pulled in with a 2nd place women's overall. Priscilla started lobbying for a women's class after that and it wasn't long before the race sponsors of the General Clinton added a women's class.

That first Clinton 70 mile race was painful but afterwards Priscilla had the mindset that she could be better so she began earnestly working on paddling smarter. Excelling in paddle racing requires learning a lot about technique, river reading, etc., which always gave Priscilla hope for improvement. Aside from the drive to improve, Priscilla came to really appreciate another great aspect of the sport: the camaraderie. She found that many paddlers would come up after a race and offer to help less experience paddlers – a character quality she didn't find in running races. Over time she came to realize that relationships are the best thing about paddle sports and Priscilla has developed many great relationships through paddling. Part of Priscilla's plan for continuous improvement comes from paddling with many different partners through the year, mentoring some along the way, and learning from others. She strongly feels older paddlers have a responsibility to "pass it on."

During her paddling career, Priscilla has often paddled with young girls, helping the girls to develop a love of athleticism in paddling. She works to help the girls feel good about themselves and to have a good time too. Priscilla has a passion to share the sport of paddling with other women, and particularly young girls, even though it's often a challenge to

Priscilla at Warren USCA Nationals. River McDuffie, age 13, is in the bow (not shown).

get young people involved. Working through the New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association (NECKRA), she and others are engaging with local communities to show kids that getting on the water is fun. Many of the kids introduced to paddling are children of existing paddlers, but sometimes she is able to work with kids with no paddling background, often brought her way by various community organizations.

This coming Memorial Day will be Priscilla's 34th General Clinton. She has also completed the Classique several times, numerous lesser races, and even paddled a kayak race in Norway (her husband is Norwegian, and she borrowed a kayak while vacationing in Norway). She has not missed a USCA Nationals since 1982! Priscilla says she always learns something from each Nationals and especially since her first Nationals in 1983. The 1983 USCA National races were on the Current River in Missouri, a roughly 21 mile twisty river course. Priscilla and her partner, Nancy Cole, still didn't know much about the sport but they wanted to paddle at the Nationals. Rather inexperienced, they were greatly outclassed at this race but in classic beginner style they spied one woman's team that was a generation older than they were (approximately 60 and more "sturdily built") and felt encouraged. They thought, "Thank God, there's at least one team we can beat!" It turns out that these ladies were June Triebold (mother of Roxanne Barton) and Alice Schmidt – a pair of very accomplished female racers. Shortly into the competition, working to stay in the current in the middle of the river, they looked over only to find these ladies were already ahead by 50 ft. before the end of the first turn! Priscilla and Nancy ended up thoroughly schooled by this "older generation."

Priscilla had all the long-distance runner's injuries. She now thinks she could have been better with certain strength and stretching exercises. Priscilla feels the same applies to her beloved water sport: paddling into old age requires faithful stretching and strength building. She highly recommends going to a good physical therapist right away if you have any sort of injury. Strength and mobility is important; be certain to build up balanced muscle groups to avoid imbalances that can lead to injury.

With some local water always open, you can find Priscilla on the water year-round in spite of living in New England. In addition to paddling, she rounds out her workouts with spinning classes and hikes. Priscilla was running until recently when some deterioration made that difficult, but she still skis when there's snow. For race season preparation, Priscilla has been going to Inverness, FL every March since the mid-80's to train at an informal camp originally started by Gene Jensen. Priscilla recalls Gene as being the most fantastic story teller ever: participants would gather around him in his kitchen to hear his stories! Priscilla also regards Gene Jensen as a very gifted boat designer and she still paddles a Jensen-designed Proboat built by Crozier. Interestingly, Priscilla isn't limited to flat water; she's also an avid whitewater paddler as you can see in her photos.

Always looking forward to the General Clinton, Priscilla will be racing with Lynn McDuffie this year. She's been racing with Lynn's daughter, River McDuffie, at many of the recent Nationals. (River will be racing with her father this year.) At 73, nothing seems to slow Priscilla – she still paddles about 35 races a year! No doubt the biggest news for Priscilla this year will be hosting the USCA Nationals in New England.

Priscilla with Cheyenne Voudron, age 12, winners of C-2 Womens Rec at the Rat Race in Orange, MA.

Her enthusiasm for the Nationals and the course this year is boundless! Priscilla wants us to know this will be a great course, very boat friendly, and with lots of shade.

Energetic, kind-hearted, gracious, and focused on helping others get a good start in recreational and competitive paddling, Priscilla Reinertsen definitely earns the title of First Lady of Marathon Paddle Racing!

Priscilla with George Walsh on the Youghiogheny River in Cucumber Rapids at the White Water Nationals.

Priscilla with several other women racing the Chris Schmidt's Memorial Round Robin in the buoy course section.

RACING TIPS—SHALLOW WATER

PETER HEED

When a canoe racing team enters a stretch of shallow water, things can go wrong fast. The stern of the canoe seems to sink, and you swear that you are paddling uphill. That is because you are! The canoe slows down, feels heavy and sluggish. You work hard, and yet it does not seem to matter. Each stroke becomes more exhausting, but the canoe just goes slower. So frustrating! Welcome to shallow water!

One of the first lessons any canoe or kayak racer learns is this: all water is NOT created equal. Just as running and bicycle racers have their hills and mountains - places where the strongest and fittest athletes leave the competition behind - so canoe and kayak racers have their shallow water. These "mountains," while not as visible as those encountered by runners and cyclists, can have the same dramatic impact on a canoe race. Yes, the "shallow water effect" gives canoe racing its mountains and provides canoe racers with the ultimate challenge to fitness and technique. Shallow water is where the "tough get going."

No single element in canoe racing makes a greater difference to the final outcome than substantial amounts of shallow water. The disparity between teams which are capable of handling shallow water and those which are not is dramatic. The team that can "pop" the boat in shallow water will quickly open up vast amounts of distance between themselves and any team that might be following and is unable to handle the shallows. Just as champion cyclists wait for the Alps or the Pyrenees Mountains to make their decisive move in the Tour De France and in so doing gain big chunks of time over less fit competitors, so can you look forward to opening up similar gaps on your competition during the shallow water sections of a canoe race.

Handling Shallow Water

The lessons of shallow water became very clear to me early in my racing experience when my partner and I travelled north to Quebec for a two day stage race at Mt. Laurier - home of a notoriously shallow race course. At that point I thought that the best way to combat shallow water was simply to move the bow paddler as far forward as possible and just keep paddling hard. I was wrong.

This happened to be a particularly low water year in Mt. Laurier. We are talking shallow - from about two inches to ten inches of depth! You could literally walk across the entire river and never get your knees wet! This was "take no prisoners" shallow water - four hours worth and much of it upstream.

Right at the start my partner and I were in trouble. The waves thrown off from our competition were gigantic. Our boat was kicked around left and right, and we continuously seemed to run into huge walls of water that we simply could not get over. My poor partner "ate his knees" as he slid his seat as far forward as possible, but it did not help. We were bow up and stern

down, going nowhere fast. Once we cleared the start, more and more canoes passed us. We finally turned a buoy and began paddling upstream. We just could not get the bow down, so we tried moving away from shore, hoping to find slightly deeper water. Again, canoe after canoe went by us on the INSIDE, paddling in just two to five inches of water! And they were flying! By the time we got to the finish line, we were just trying not to finish dead last. We finally figured out that we must be doing something wrong. Perceptive, huh? What we were doing wrong was just about everything.

So how should you handle shallow water? First, let's consider what is actually happening to your canoe. Essentially, as the water becomes shallow, and the bottom of the river or lake comes closer to the canoe, the interaction of hull and the water with the riverbed causes the waves created by the moving canoe to get shorter in wave length and higher. As the waves get shorter and higher, they "move forward" relative to the canoe hull. The end result is that the major wave upon which your canoe rides so nicely in deep water gets bigger and moves forward to a location under the front portion of your canoe. Consequently, your bow rides up on the wave and your stern drops. If you continue to paddle with the same pace and effort, your bow will ride up on the shallow water wave and the stern will sink down into the "wave valley," giving you the dreaded "uphill" feeling. You will work harder but will slow down. Oth-

er racers who know how to paddle shallow water will take off and leave you floundering in their wakes.

In order to go fast in shallows, you need to get in front and stay in front of the shallow water wave. This means a dramatic change in pace and technique. Just as a surfer accelerates onto a building wave, so must you increase speed significantly and get your canoe in front of the shallow water wave. To do this, to get and keep your canoe "surfing" downhill, you will need sharp acceleration and an all-out sprint as you enter shallow water. With a properly timed all-out effort, you will be able to keep your canoe on the "downside" (in front) of the shallow water wave. By achieving top hull speed, and positioning your canoe so that the wave stays underneath the mid or stern section of the boat, you will literally plane or surf forward at a speed which can exceed your speed in deep water. Your canoe will "pop up" and go. Once you get the hang of it, you will go back for more.

The shallow water acceleration requires both paddlers to pick up their efforts, both in terms of intensity being applied to each stroke and also in terms of stroke rate. You may only have a few inches of paddle blade in the water, so a distinct increase in stroke rate is essential. You must increase your intensity to maximum, as you will need the utmost hull speed to get ahead of the shallow water wave. As you enter shallows, your best approach will be explosive acceleration, also known as "jumping" the canoe. A burst of all-out effort combined with increased and shorter stroke rate will enable you to "pop" your canoe at the very beginning of shallow water stretches. It will also allow you to burst over a shallow water wave that is forming under the front section of the hull and let you then surf forward on that wave. These explosive sprints can require as little as 10 to 20 seconds of effort, but the dividends paid will be well worth the price.

Another key to shallow water is anticipation. It is by far and away better to anticipate shallow water by popping the canoe up to maximum hull speed BEFORE you enter the shallows. In this way, as the wave size increases and wave length shortens, you will be able to get your canoe ahead of and up on the shallow wave from the beginning. This is preferable to having to jump over a shallow water wave that has already built up in front of you. This is why it helps to know where the shallow water sections are located on any race course. If you are not able to pre-run the course, you often may "feel" the effects of oncoming shallow water before you actually see it. As soon as the canoe even hints at that "bow up, stern down" feeling, jump it up ahead of the shallow water wave before it is too late.

The best way to learn the acceleration technique of "jumping" or "popping" your canoe in shallow water is to find a very shallow section of your favorite lake or river and repeatedly practice. Remember to start off with short stretches of shallow water at first. Gradually increase the length of the shallow water sections as your proficiency increases. You will soon learn that once you get the hull in front of the wave, you can ease off on your stroke rate and intensity slightly, taking full advantage of the "surfing" aspect of the wave. You are now allowing the energy of the shallow water wave help propel you forward. Feel the force!

Once you experience the thrill of getting a canoe up and planing in shallow water, it will be a revelation. You will wonder why you disliked shallow water for so long. The exhilaration of the speed you obtain in a few inches of water will bring you back for more!

Long Stretches Of Shallow Water

Sprinting all out to get maximum benefit from shallow water waves is all well and good, but what happens when the shallow water goes on for miles? You can't sprint forever.

True enough. But you will be surprised how far you can go by getting the canoe surfing on the shallow water wave and utilizing the energy of that wave. Once the canoe is up and running fast, you will be able to back off on your intensity and stroke rate, while still keeping the canoe screaming forward.

A successful technique for many racers in shallow water is to drop the lower hand slightly closer to the paddle blade. This lowering of the hand, even an inch, will provide increased leverage and purchase in shallow water. This lower hand position also assists in increasing stroke rate and improving accuracy in the "catch" phase of the stroke. At the same time, emphasize the "drive down" with your upper hand. These technique adjustments will increase your acceleration during sprints.

Even after successfully getting up on the shallow water wave and backing off on your effort slightly, you will find that you cannot maintain this pace for more than a few minutes. The level of energy required is too great. Once you begin to fall back off the wave, your best alternative is to ease up on power while maintaining your higher stroke rate utilizing a shorter, crisper power phase. Continue to hammer forward as fast as your fitness level will allow. The higher the speed you are able to maintain, the more the shallow water effect will be minimized. Keep in mind that everything you do is relative to what other paddlers are doing. If you are having trouble with long stretches of shallow water, fear not, as others will as well. The teams that can go the hardest the longest will come out on top.

Many teams actually look forward to long shallow water races. In deep water courses, large packs form and it is difficult for the better paddlers to drop less fit racers. However, when shallow water sections are lengthy, packs will break up and the fittest, fastest paddlers will invariably be in the lead at the finish.

My next article will cover shallow water strategy as well as wake riding issues in shallows. We will also discuss the elephant in the room - that dreaded intermediate water (cement water). When all is said and done, you will find that shallow water can be both fun and fast.

Peter Heed

United States Canoe Association

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Follow Lori Blaylock to the 2016 USCA Nationals August 12-14th in Northfield, Massachusetts!