

UP THE CREEK

With A Paddle

A person in a red canoe is positioned on the right side of the image, paddling down a river. The river is surrounded by dense, colorful foliage in shades of green, yellow, and brown, suggesting an autumn or early spring setting. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding trees. The overall scene is a serene outdoor setting.

EARLY SPRING 2013

The Hackensack River Canoe & Kayak Club Newsletter

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- ◆ And All Sorts Of Other Stuff...



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FROM THE BILGE CAPTAIN'S LOG



Well, I just had to ask, didn't I?

At this past February monthly HRCKC meeting after the usual business portion, I asked the membership present for their suggestions, comments and wishes on what they would like the Club to offer for the coming year. After the barrage of rotten tomatoes, putrid cabbage and all sorts of rubbish that was tossed at the officers by the general membership (particularly at the Captain who by then - "considering he "IS" the Captain and must know something" - resorted to wearing a dust bin on his head for the rest of the meeting)... things started to settle down a bit after the masses were placated with heavy doses of facsimile donuts.

Since there were about 30 people in attendance, we did have some very good suggestions come forth. Several members suggested they would like to see more social events, others commented that there is a definite movement to the right of the "Age" bell curve and we should work on ways of attracting younger folks to our club by possibly having some family oriented events.

There seemed to be a considerable amount of interest on the subject of enhancing member's paddling skills by offering more INFORMAL (and I stress "INFORMAL") skills workshops, either as a scheduled event and/or on the club trips themselves in addition to the usual annual Swim-With-Your-Boat-Days, Paddling Strokes For New Folks, New Members Orientation Day, the Moving Water Seminar, the Cold Water Workshop and the TRT 101 (Throw Rope Tossin') Workshops. Additionally there was some discussion about the Club's trip policy which hopefully is mostly resolved now.

Captain's Log - continued...

All these proposals and suggestions were very welcome indeed... and most can be easily put into place... IF there are members who are willing to step up and volunteer to bring these ideas to fruition! Dare I say more?

We are now approaching the "put-in" of the new paddling season for most of us. ("What the bloody hell are you talking about! It's still February!"). Time to have thoughts of paddling gear dancing around in our heads. Time to gather all that paddling paraphernalia out from under the snow shovels and finding that the mice have built a little nest in your favorite water shoes. Time to try on that paddling attire and finding that nothing fits due to the accumulation of winter blubber. And, time to wonder what you'll still need to get for your equipment collection. Luckily, we will again have our annual Gear Day presentation at the March meeting. We like to do this event right before the annual PaddleSport show so as to allow our new-to-paddling members to learn about what paddling equipment is available and used by some of our membership and then in turn having a basic idea on what to look for when setting out to acquire such.

The advantage of attending the PaddleSport show is that there will be representatives of the various paddling gear manufacturers in attendance providing you with their product information even if you don't buy at the show. What we ask is that anyone who would be interested in sharing their knowledge and experiences about some of their equipment to please bring it along to the March "Gear Day" meeting. Now, a word of warning! If we don't get anyone besides myself to bring in samples of paddling gear... well, you know what will happen, don't you? Yup! You'll see nothing but canoe stuff...

Another idea which has been discussed in the past by the Club officers would be to hold Trip Coordinator's Workshops in the near future for those who may be interested but, a bit apprehensive about coordinating a Club trip or event. Some of the experienced trip coordinators would give advice about the procedures and pitfalls that go along with coordinating a trip such as:

- **Picking out a place you want to paddle.**
- **Determining the put-ins and takeouts and the difficulty, length and time factors of the trip.**
- **Coming up with a trip description, posting of the trip to the membership.**
- **Determining if certain participants are suitably skilled for that particular trip and how to tactfully tell them they are not.**
- **Of course the fine and sometimes mystical art of "The Car Shuttle".**
- **The all important "Signing Of Trip Liability Waivers".**
- **Safety procedures, etc.**

Captain's Log - continued...

Anyway, as I write up this newsletter, there are some trips and events in the process of being compiled and put on the Activities Schedule of the website. We need more! We need your involvement and ideas to make the HRCKC thrive! Well, that's it for this early spring edition of "UP THE CREEK". I want to thank Rico Pagliei and Jeff Bowen for their contributions to this issue of the newsletter. Hope we see some of your literary contributions in the next issue.

Until next time...

Fare Thee Well, Pilgrims
May De Winds Blow Ye Good Tidings
De Rivers Lead Yer Way
An' May Ye Keep Yer Scalp Another Day

Martin W. - Captain

Please wear your life jacket



Paddle Ying vs. Paddle Yang

By Jeff Bowen

WINTERTIME

The water is too stiff to paddle, and we spend more time indoors attempting to stave off boredom and madness as we anxiously await the new paddling season. Catalogs of paddling gear arrive in the mail, and cookies from the websites we visit surreptitiously feed our internet interests to vendors who bombard us with marketing ploys. Few of us are immune to the lure of some new piece of equipment or gadget that we can use on our next paddling trip.

Some of us are upgrading to a new, lighter paddle or a more comfortable PFD. A few of us are upgrading to a new boat better suited to our improving paddling skills or new types of paddling we want to pursue.

I was discussing this the other day with a couple of old friends, Rusty Reese Sykeller and Will Spendmoore when the subject of Paddlesport came up. I was fascinated by the remarks of my two friends who have differing yet complimentary views on the matter. I thought that I'd pass along some of their viewpoints for you to consider.

JEFF: Paddlesport is coming up the end of March. You guys going?

WILL: Yup. I'm looking to buy a whitewater kayak and try to do some whitewater stuff this year. There will be a big selection of WW boats and I can sit in all of them to see which one I like.

RUSTY: I am. My old PFD is about worn out and I'd like to get a new one. Plenty of choices to try on to see what size fits properly and is comfortable.

J: Nice! That will be fun, shopping for a couple of major purchases like that.

W: I'm also going to get a high-tech super bombproof ultra-neo sprayskirt with handwarmer pockets, waterproof map holder and Super-Stick velcro pads to attach some of their accesories like a water bottle holder and navigation lights. It really looks cool!



J: Wow! You're really going whole hog. Those things are top-of-the-line. How about you, Rusty?

R: Well, I'm looking at upgrading my paddle eventually to a lighter model, so I want to see what's on the market and ask the manufacturer's reps some questions before I make up my mind. Aside from that, I want to check to see what new gear is on the market.

W: Me too. I want one of those bailing sponges that has the super soft covering and attached lanyard. I should be able to get it for \$14.00

R: Fourteen bucks? Mega-mart has them for fourteen cents!

W: But without the lanyard and super soft covering.

J: So guys, what would your advice be to the folks in my club about going to Paddlesport?

R: Tell them it's a great place to look at equipment and gear, and at prices that are pretty good. But tell them to go with a sensible friend. Make a pact with your friend that you and your friend will be the "voice of reason" and try, in a good natured way, to talk each other out of making any purchases that might be a bit rash. It is easy to get caught up in the

excitement and anticipation of another paddling season.

W: I don't agree with Rusty at all. I say that they should just buy what they want. It will force them to achieve what they might not have wanted to do if they had not spent all that money. Guilt and remorse will force them to paddle more. That's what I'm counting on to make me learn how to roll this year and get into that whitewater stuff. But what about you, Jeff, what are you going to buy?

J: Well, I'm looking for a small waterproof box or something that I can put a small first-aid kit in.

R: I'll be your "voice of reason" friend.

W: Is that all? Why don't you buy a white water boat?

Jeff

"I hear banjos!

Paddle like hell, chubby boy..."



A Few Words On Stitch-and-Glue Kayaks

By Rico Pagliei

Kayaks were developed thousands of years ago by the indigenous people of the Aortic known as the Inuit, who as legend has it may have been among the earliest members of what later became The Hackensack River Canoe and Kayak Club.

The first kayaks were constructed from frames made of wood or whale bone and covered in seal or animal skin. Fast and seaworthy, kayaks were the original “personal water craft” as each vessel was hand built by the person who used it based on the dimensions of his own body.

Modern kayaks, while retaining the basic shape of the early boats, are now constructed utilizing a wide variety of materials, all of which offer advantages and trade-offs to the end user.

- Rotomolded polyethylene kayaks are durable, can easily survive a rocky beach landing, but tend to be heavy.
- Thermoformed plastics kayaks are comprised of several layers of hybrid plastics that create a kayak that is stiffer than rotomolded boats, are lighter in weight and can survive a rocky beach landing with minimal damage.
- Fiberglass boats are stiff, relatively light and can be repaired if



damaged as a result of making a rocky beach landing.

- Kevlar and carbon fiber kayaks are light in weight but heavy on the wallet. Both can be repaired if damaged but due to their high costs one would be well advised to keep them off the rocky beaches!

Finally, there is an option that utilizes a material that is stronger than steel (when comparing strength vs. weight), is stiffer than fiberglass or Kevlar (when comparing stiffness vs. weight), is relatively light in weight, is durable, and was a material favored by the Inuit when constructing their kayaks.



The answer of course is wood - specifically, marine plywood sheathed in fiberglass and epoxy.

Utilizing a process called “stitch-and-glue” construction; pre-cut plywood panels are stitched together using copper wire and then held together permanently with epoxy. No forms, molds or internal frames are necessary as the panels, once stitched together form the shape of the boat.

Plywood seams are then reinforced with thickened epoxy and fiberglass tape. Both sides of the hull and deck are then “glassed in” utilizing fiberglass cloth and epoxy. The end result is a kayak that is every bit as capable as one constructed of plastic, fiberglass or Kevlar – often at a lower overall cost.

Using a few hand-tools, and some sweat equity, a stitch-and-glue kayak may be assembled from plans by a

person who is looking for something a little bit more unique to paddle around the local lake or bay. Another great option is to purchase a kit that features everything a builder needs to get on the water including precision pre-cut plywood panels, epoxy, fiberglass, deck rigging, and even the seat!

Two of the premier companies offering both plans and kits for multiple styles of boats are Chesapeake Light Craft of Annapolis, MD (www.clcboats.com), and Pygmy Boats located in Port Townsend, WA (www.pygmyboats.com).

Both websites offer a wealth of information on the stitch-and-glue process and should be the first stop for any would-be-builders.

See you on the water.

Rico

The Elegant Dining Review

By Anne JoVee and Phil A. Mignon

Tail O' The Pup

Driving up and back from the annual Saranac Lake trip, it is a automatic stop at this rustic BBQ joint in the heart of the Adirondacks. Long tables with lots of napkins is the venue here - you are expected to dribble BBQ sauce over yourself. The ribs are tangy but yet not overwhelmed with sauce, the chicken tender and moist but yet not underdone, the fries are crispy yet not hard as a rock. Is it on par with a fancy 5-star restaurant - hell no.... It's better. A must stop on the way to Saranac Lake. **HRCKC Rating - 6 ½ Stars**



TOO COLD TO PADDLE? HELL, NO!

CONFESSIONS OF AN HRCKC PADDLIN' POPSICLE

By Martin Wellhoefer



So yer say, "Yeah right! There ain't no way that am I going to paddle in anything except the summer, in anything under 70 and in warm water, so why bother learning anything about cold water paddling"! Okay, then go read the comic section or something instead!

Or... "Hey, I might like to paddle in the spring or autumn when the air is still warm, but the water may be a bit chilly!"

Or.... "Yes, I want to try paddling in cooler (or cold) temperatures and cold water!"

Well then read on, Pilgrim!

There are some facts that I would like to pass on to you before I start my discussion on cold water paddling. Many studies by many agencies, doctors and scientists have been done over the years to research the effects of cold water immersion on the human body, all of which you can look up on the Internet for the in-depth facts and figures. I'm just

going to list a few of the basic known facts from these studies.

1. Water conducts heat away 25 - 30 times more than air.
2. One can die from cold water exposure through various causes... i.e. cardiac arrest, "the gasping reflex", drowning and hypothermia.
3. Proper knowledge, a life vest, proper immersion gear and of course... common sense can minimize #2.

**To quote some guy named
Mario Vittone:**

"It is impossible to get hypothermic in cold water unless you are wearing flotation, because without flotation - you won't live long enough to become hypothermic."

The 1-10-1 Rule... (Stolen excerpt from The US Coast Guard Auxiliary website - hey, I'm a taxpayer)

1 - The first phase of cold water immersion is called the cold water shock. Data shows that roughly 20

percent die in the first minute. They breath in ice cold water in that first uncontrolled gasp, panic and drown, plain and simple. In some, the cold shock triggers a heart attack. Surviving this stage requires you to stay calm and get your breathing under control.

10 - The second phase is cold water incapacitation. Over approximately the next 10 minutes you will lose the effective use of your fingers, arms and legs for any meaningful movement. Concentrate on self-rescue initially. Swim failure will occur within these critical minutes and if you are in the water without a life jacket, drowning will likely occur.

1 - Even in ice water it could take approximately 1 hour before becoming unconscious due to hypothermia. The result can vary with time, water temperature and physical condition. The symptoms can include confusion, poor judgement and unconsciousness leading to death.

So... before I start, what I am NOT going to do here is to claim that the contents of my diatribe in this article is the ultimate in cold water knowledge, I am NOT going to claim that I am an expert on this stuff and what is appropriate for me may not be appropriate for everyone else. I will just parlay my experiences and

my personal research to the readers and if you agree - well that's Ok. If you disagree, that's Ok too.

As some of you folks know, I am an absolute wimp in the summer heat. Whinin' and grippin' ta no end about the heat - rarely venturing out paddling in weather above 75 degrees. Kind'a opposite of most paddlers I guess. Now stick me in cool and/or cold

temperatures

and you'll see a big smile on my mug. That said, and even though I might be able to tolerate cold better than most, I ain't that much of a

block head (there may be some disagreement amongst many folks about that) that I don't think I might have problems with cold water immersion too.



Let me tell you a little tale... about an incident on a river trip about 20 years ago which turned out to be a real wake-up call for yours truly about the first hand effects of cold water immersion. One relatively cool but quite windy February day (maybe 40 degrees or so) on the Wallkill River in Sussex County, myself and two other HRCKC members were playing around in the "rapid" just north of Bassett's Bridge when I, driving in a newly acquired

"squirrely" white water solo canoe and not quite having gotten used to it's handling yet, managed to get dumped into the upper 30 degree water in the pool just below the rapid.

Having had on a 2 mm neoprene pull-over vest, a pair of wet shoes and of course my trusty lifejacket I was somewhat better off than just having "street" clothes on. Actually hitting the water was so unexpected and yeah, I did notice the water was cold, that it took a few seconds to get my wits (or as some may say... half-wits) about me. Ok, thanks to my lifevest I ain't dead, I didn't drown and the water isn't all that bad yet. With the help of my paddling companions we managed to get the boat and me to shore in a few minutes.

In the water I was a little cool but still functional, but as soon as I exited the water that wind hit me and "damned it was cold". Of course I had a complete change of clothes in a dry bag with me so I started to get out of

my wet attire and attempted to get into my dry stuff and well, here is where the difficulties began. First the shakes started, then the fingers started to hurt, then they went numb, then the feet went numb (hey, feet yer still down there?) various other parts of my

anatomy, which at the time I wasn't using and which probably won't have worked anyway - ;>{) went numb.

Well, I found out the hard way that one's extremities become quite useless very soon in cold water when I couldn't work a button or grab a zipper let alone pull on my socks. I finally managed to wrap myself up in unbuttoned/unzipped but dry clothes and continued the 45 minutes to the take-out. Lesson learned! Next day I went to Neil's and bought a wetsuit.

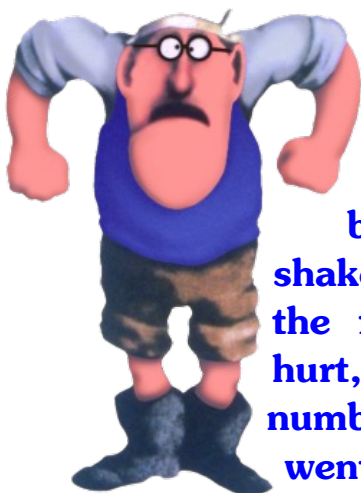
Now back to the discussion at "hand".

Gloves...

I like the neoprene Glacier Gloves. They are waterproof up to the wrists, but they are actually wet suits for the hands - once you get a thin layer of water you'll have wet but warm hands. A true dry glove which you can wear an insulating glove under can be obtained from a dive shop or online.

Footwear...

In very cold conditions I like to wear Chota Mukluks (NRS also makes a similar boot called the Boundary Boot) which are waterproof knee-high neoprene boots. In milder cold water conditions my preferred foot wear is a pair of over the ankle NRS Workboots.



Since I have built-in waterproof booties on my dry suit I like to wear either fleece or wool socks and a wicking liner sock under the dry suit booties.

Noggin'wear...

It's said something like 40% of your body heat escapes through your head - especially if one is follicularly challenged such as myself, so some warm noggin' insulation is wise. A wool or fleece hat, a neoprene cap or in very cold water a dive hood may be appropriate.

Dry Suits....

Since then I have tried, re-tried, experimented with (unintentionally in some cases) various cold water gear over the years, I finally ended up biting the \$\$ bullet and investing in a dry-suit. Once you go dry suit you'll never go back! So what's so special with those? First It keeps you dry from the outside. Secondly you can layer whatever insulation under it that you want. Thirdly... it's so much more comfortable than a wetsuit. Fourthly... it may save your hide in cold water. There are full dry suits and there are semi-dry suits.

The more costly full dry suits usually have latex neck, wrist and if you don't have built-in booties - ankle gaskets (which are a bit of a PITA to get on and off). Usually a more substantial waterproof metal dive zipper comes with the full dry suits too. The watertight latex neck gasket may need to be trimmed or stretched a bit



to make it fit your neckbone comfortably. The less expensive semi-dry suits usually have a neoprene neck gasket which in most cases is good enough but may or may not let in a small amount of water and usually has a less robust zipper.

There are a few options that you can get with dry suits... such as built-in booties, a relief zipper and pockets. The booties are a must in my opinion. They make getting the suit on and off much easier - no need to fight those ankle gaskets and you can wear as much or as little insulating socks as you require under them.

The "relief" zipper comes in quite handy when nature's #1 calls. The ladies version has a big semi-circular dropdown zipper in the back while the gentleman's version has a shorter zipper in the front. What I understand is that many women get the "Men's" version and use some sort of cleverly designed #1 drainage device" instead of contending with that huge drop seat zipper. One word of caution.... make

sure the zippers are zipped up before you go out. Many a paddler has been surprised when they forgot to zip up.

Also very important for us guys... make sure you've safely stowed away all your "Gentleman's Cargo" BEFORE you zip up. Doesn't feel very good when you catch something important in those heavy duty metal dive zippers!

A good top-of-the line Gore-Tex full dry suit will run around \$900 - \$1100 bucks while a semi-dry suit is around \$500 - \$700 smackers. Not cheap but they do last a long time if properly cared for - treat the gaskets with 303 (the gaskets are replaceable if you should rip one), lube the zippers and rinse the suit off every so often.

It's always a science - no, it's an art, to get into and out of a dry suit... but you'll develop your own technique in time. The way I see it, a dry suit will extend your paddling season tremendously and it's cheaper than a heart attack or a funeral. One can also get two piece dry-suits which some people prefer but they have a greater tendency to leak around the waist gaskets.

Now just to make it clear... the dry suit in itself will NOT provide much insulation from the cold water, it's

purpose is to keep the water out! It's what you wear underneath the suit that provides the insulation and you can wear whatever pleases you.

Dry suits are suitable for water temperatures down to "when the water turns solid" assuming you have sufficient insulation under it. For mildly cool water you can wear light stuff or in very cold water one may wear heavy fleece or wool. That's the nice thing about a dry suit - you can

adjust for water/air temperatures by adding or subtracting insulating layers under the suit.

In real cold water conditions I like to wear a "bunny" suit under my dry suit., you know kind of

along the lines of what Ralphie got from Aunt Clara in The Christmas Story, but without the ears, hood, feet and tail - and it ain't pink! The one piece "union suit" prevents that drafty feeling one can get on your lower back resulting from the gap usually formed when you use a separate top and bottom.

I use some fleece or wool socks under the booties and a pair of neoprene Chota Mukluks



over them.

A major piece of safety advice.... dry suits should be "burped" before you head out onto the water. That means after zipping up, most of the air should be squeezed out of the suit either by squatting down and crunching yourself up or by actually getting into the water and letting the water pressure do the squeezing - all this while pulling the neck gasket a little bit away from your neck. If you don't do this and you end up in the water the air in the suit will make you look like Randy in his snow suit (in the Christmas story, again). This can be quite dangerous in certain circumstances due to the fact that not only will it restrict your movements, but may cause the dreaded "Bubble Butt" syndrome - when all the air moves to the derrière and leg sections thus actually forcing your head and upper torso under water. Not good! We demonstrated that hazard at the last Cold Water Workshop a couple months ago. To re-iterate, it's very important to "Burp" the suit.

Wet Suits...

If you go with the alternative - a neoprene wet suit - you'll find some major differences when comparing it to a dry suit. A wet suit works by trapping a thin layer of water between it and your skin creating a warm water layer, so it must fit snugly on your body to work effectively. What you don't want are big loose spaces that allow the cold water to slosh



around. There are 7 mm thick suits for cold water skin diving which are far too restrictive for paddling so most paddling wet suits are around 2-3 mm thick. Now, try to find wetsuits that fit real people - not just skinny young folks... Good luck! I don't know where they get the patterns to make the average wet suit but it ain't from your typical Joe or Joan Citizen let alone a typical Walmart shopper - I certainly wouldn't have a easy time wearing the average wet suit.

Granted one can get a "Fat Boy"(or "Fat Girl") suit such as NRS's Grizzly models that may or may not fit but other than having one custom made well... good luck! A plus for wet suits is that since they work by letting in a thin layer of water between the neoprene and your skin, if you happen to get a tear in the suit... Well, no big deal - in a dry suit, that's a very big deal!

Another aspect of a wet suit is that you will still feel that initial "cold shock" when you hit the water, it's only after you get that thin layer of

water in will it start to feel warmer. Wet suits are generally good down to about 55+ degrees water temperature.

Wetsuits are much cheaper than a dry suit - you can get a descent one for around \$125 - \$150. As I mentioned earlier I used to wear a wet suit for many years, but now the thought of stewing in my own sweat, the clammy and hard-to-fit discomfort and seeing myself looking like a prune at the end of the day - well, no more wetsuits for me.

The least desirable alternative for paddling cold water is probably NOT wearing immersion attire at all, just hoping not to take a dunking and bringing spare clothing in a waterproof container if you do. That is a real pain

since now you experience the negative effects and consequences of cold water immersion, the need to get changed in a hurry and holding up your trip companions while you do all this, but it is an option.



Watch what you eat before getting into a wetsuit!

**Well, that's quite enough about cold water paddling, don't you think?
Got'ta be bored by now! I am. See ya soon...**



Fro' De Eddyter

Translated into English from Fat Elmo's Old Bogotian Lingo

Wha Ho, Pilgrims;

Fat Elmo be here. Now let dis here varmint give ye all de straight scoop an' ah' ain't speakin' wit a forked tongue.... De only way we kin gits dis here newsletter out is iff in' all ye pilgrims write somethang fer it. Kin' be about purt near anythang... yer haar-raisin' adventures, yer tall tales, yer favorite gear, etc., Watever strikes yer fancy. Iffin' we don't git stuff ta put in it, we kin'na put one out. Simple as dat! Jus' send in yer writin's ta dis here polecat at: fatelmo@gmail.com ta git in on de newsletter.



Fat Elmo
Fare Thee Well, Pilgrims
May De Wind Bring Ye Good Tidings
De Rivers Lead Yer Way
An' May Ye Keep Yer Scalp Another Day

What Do I Carry...

By Martin Wellhoefer - A Canoeist, Dammit!



What kind of stuff do I carry in my canoe on a trip? That is is a question nobody really asks me, but I'll tell you anyway!

As we all know, canoeists have some distinct advantages over kayakers... not only are canoeists so much better looking (we don't need to hide our better looking knees under a deck either), have superior intelligence, vastly more culturally sophisticated ("Pardon me. Would you have any Grey Poupon?" And definitely not that French's yellow mustard type), have infinitely better paddling skills, are more fun at parties, make for a better date, wear better looking hats and of course, are much more humble... but the one other great attribute a canoeist has - we have much more room in our boats for stuff!

Even after acquiring (and rightfully consuming the contents) all the coolers that we canoeists are constantly asked to carry for the cargo constrained kayakers, there usually is plenty of space still available in our boats for some neces-

sary equipment and some luxury items.

Beside the usual life vest and paddle, I always carry a whistle and a knife attached to my life vest. The whistle works better than yelling and I always believe that if there is a rope in your boat, there may be a time when you may have to cut it - hence the knife. A spare paddle is something I always carry since I have busted more than a few over the years on trips and I don't really relish paddling the rest of the way with my hands.

Another thing I carry is some sort of bailing device. I like the old cut off bleach bottle scoop myself - free and can scoop out a lot of water at a time in the event of necessitating removal of some of the dampness from your cap-sized boat. A hand pump will also work well. A sponge gets the rest.

I always have a couple of “painters’ on my boat... and one of them only has one ear! No, not that kind of a painter, I’m talking about a boat painter. In other words a



length of 3/8's or so of floating rope about 2/3 to 1 boat length in size which is attached to the each end (stem) of your boat. Why do I need a painter, pray tell? Well, they do come in handy to tie your boat to that tree when you break for lunch, they do come in handy when you have to pull your boat unto shore and they really, really come in handy in emergencies when you flip the boat, you fall out and want to grab onto something or your companions have something to grab to retrieve and then tow your run-away boat. Picasso on one end and Rembrandt on the other!

If I'm paddling some whitewater I usually outfit some of my canoes with floatation bags to displace most of the water in the event of a capsize or just getting filled with water in big waves. You canoeists and 'yakers out there can see the importance of extra floatation at our annual Swim With Your Boat Days in July and August.

A small flashlight for those times when one misjudges a trip's length, a small "ditch kit" consisting of waterproof matches, a compass, water purify tablets, a small candle, some toilet paper in a watertight baggy, some rope, maybe a mylar "space blanket", a few energy bars, a signal mirror, a length of "Duck tape" (useful for patching a holed boat, fixing a busted paddle and muffling the screams of that person who came to me for first-aid.

Hey, the stump only hurts until the tar cools off).

In my small dry bag, I'll carry a spare set of clothes especially in colder conditions and always pack a couple of waterproof dryboxes for my cell phone, wallet, camera and car keys. These boxes are securely attached to the boat or if small enough I put one in my lifevest pocket - if it fits. A small folding saw comes in handy for those times when you got'ta cut away some of that shrubbery that has gotten a hold of your boat. Some basic rescue items such as a few locking carabiners and/or pulleys, a throw rope and a sling are also carried. For us kneeling paddlers - a knee pad is handy to have if you don't have them permanently attached already.

I usually carry a pretty comprehensive first aid kit (especially on a group trip) and since I majored in Civil War surgery in reform school, I include a bucket of tar, a bite stick and a pruning saw for when folks come to me to mend a boo boo - from a splinter or a small cut, but no matter what it is - the



leg has to come off. I even throw in a free wooden leg (pressure treated of course)... Just pay separate shipping and handling! Funny why I've never had a request for a band-aid in years! A bottle of BBQ sauce is also part of a trip coordinator's inventory (Why? Ask about the unofficial accident policy).

Some luxury items.... As I get older I do appreciate the camp chair more and more so unless I want to go ultra-light I'm carrying one of these light

pack chairs for the lunch stops. I can also fit a cooler or two or can use those now empty coolers belonging to those 'yakers for my vittles and water. A hefty bag for collecting stream flotsam and jetsam, a hat, sunglasses and maybe some sunscreen and bug dope are in a small thwart bag completes the cargo for a day trip. How's that?

You're turn to write a rebuttal!

Martin W.

YOU TOO CAN BE IN PICTURES!



Have you ever wondered what's it's like to work in a movie studio... work behind the camera shooting a "talkie"... direct a movin' picture... be a gaffer (whatever that is?) ... or maybe even be an actor!

Well, folks now you have your chance. Litterbox Movin' Pictures will once again ask folks to help out with making some HRCKC videos for the entertainment of the masses. No experience necessary!

Last year we started some video projects such as a demo pilot for the Fat Elmo Canoo Shack TV Show, but didn't get too far due to overwhelming lack of motivation... hopefully this season we can get some interest going on producing some informative and humorous short videos about paddling related subjects. If anyone wants to get in on the action, please e-mail me or see me at a meeting about the details. fatelmo@gmail.com

What Kind Of Canoe Should I Get?

By Martin W. - not a kayaker!

Yeah, I know this is about CANOES and most of the membership are 'yakers, but hey I'm a canoeist and I'm writing this so... I double-dog dare any of you kayakers to write up an article about kayaks for this newsletter! The following is an article about canoes: types, sizes, materials, etc. for those people new to the sport and are planning on buying a canoe..

The most important thing to remember is that all canoe (and kayak) designs are compromises. Eh???

There is no 'perfect' canoe (or kayak). You can have a fast, narrow, good tracking boat with a flat keel (explained later) and it's great for long straight-out paddling on relatively flat water. But put this same canoe on a narrow, twisty creek or in moderate to heavy whitewater and you have a real headache... it'll take forever to turn. Or inversely, take a highly rockered whitewater canoe that will turn on a dime, move sideways with ease but try paddling it on long, flat, windswept stretches and you have a dog. You have one of those big, heavy-duty Royalex boats that you can drop off the roof of a building (remember the 1970's Old Town ads for the Tripper), but try carrying this thing for any length of time on a portage (or a carry if you're in the Adirondacks) and you'll

wish you had one of those ultra-light but relatively fragile Kevlar or carbon fiber canoes.



See my point? If you're going to buy one canoe, first think about the type of canoeing you'll mostly do and then shop around and try them out. Warning! If you're serious about canoeing you'll most likely eventually end up with more than one canoe. The following biased observations are from my experiences canoeing for 50 years and what I have heard and read about from others, so take it for what it's worth. I can't get into too much detail due to space so I will generalize. There are plenty of books on the subject and plenty of experts, so you may want to consult with them. Lets get started.

Tandem or solo. If you canoe with a partner you get a tandem boat. If you canoe alone you get a solo. Most of the time, that is. You can solo a tandem canoe, but it's a little more difficult due to the larger size. Try to fit two people in a solo boat and it's crowded to say the least. Size: Typical tandem canoes are usually 16 - 18 feet in length and about 34 -37 inches wide. Solo canoes range from 12 - 16 feet in length and 28 - 32 inches in width (there are exceptions to these

dimensions). In general for a given width a longer canoe is faster than a shorter one, plus you have more room for gear.

There are short, wide boats that have good initial stability but they are not very easy to paddle long distances. Narrow canoes are tippier (until you get used to them) but generally easier to paddle. Hull design: A canoe with a flat keel is easier to paddle in a straight line but harder to turn. This makes for good lake or open water boats. A slight rocker (an upward curve of the hull from amidships to the ends) helps the canoe turn better while retaining adequate tracking. Highly rockered canoes are designed for whitewater where turning ability is needed.

There are round bottom, shallow arch, flat bottom, shallow vees, deep vees, etc., etc. all with their own characteristics. There are boats with good initial stability and poor secondary stability. Likewise there are canoes with poor initial stability and excellent secondary stability. There's tumble home, flared sides, symmetrical and asymmetrical hulls, high stems, low stems, standard keels, and shoe keels. Heck,

isn't canoeing getting complicated?

Materials: There used to be only a few materials for building a canoe - birch bark, wood, or animal skins. Nowadays we have all kinds of plastics, aluminum, composites and wood to choose from. Each material has its own advantages and disadvantages as we'll see next.

First let's discuss wooden canoes. I hereby proclaim that there is nothing like a wooden canoe. It's something no one can explain, but there is a magic in wood. There is a very special feeling you get paddling something that's made from nature, the way it flexes ever so subtly to your every paddle stroke. It almost becomes a living extension of your being as you glide silently across the waters. Ah, yes, to paddle a wooden canoe! Harketh back to the days of the Voyageurs (or pre-1945).

Ok, getting back to earth. Wooden canoes (including wood-canvas and wood-strip canoes) are still produced today by a few companies and some individuals. If you have the time and ambition you can even build your own. These boats are all handmade and many are works of art. They are also



very expensive with prices from \$1500 to over \$10,000 dollars. Contrary to popular belief a wooden canoe is quite durable, with many 80-100 year old wood canoes still being used today. A little yearly maintenance and they'll last a long time.

My first canoe was a used (hey, I ain't that old yet) 1927 wood and canvas Old Town 16' Guide. And ***"To the no-good, low-down jackass who stole that canoe out of my backyard, I put this hex on you - "May the river gods disembowel you alive with a rusty Spam can and hang your worthless carcass by your colon out for the buzzards"***. Boy, still all that hostility after almost 40 years!

Next is aluminum. After the second World War, Grumman Aircraft started to build it's famous aluminum canoes. 'Tin Cans' as their owners affectionately call them, are relatively inexpensive (\$800+ or there about), very durable (you can leave them outside all year and drag them over all the gravel bars you want) and somewhat moderate in weight They're main dis-

advantages are that aluminum likes to stick to rocks - a real



bummer in rock-strewn rapids, they are noisy (if you bang a paddle against a gunnel, you can hear them a mile away), and the metal transmits the cold easily. One observation - aluminum canoes are becoming harder to find in canoe shops as plastic has now dominated the market.

On to plastics and composites: Plastic and composite canoes now dominate the industry. Be it fiberglass, Kevlar, polyethylene, Royalex and some other strange hydrocarbon mixtures - plastics are here to stay. Lets break them down into categories. We'll start with composites. One can buy some of the best designed canoes in 'glass and some of the worst. With fiberglass a canoe with very fine lines can be molded making for a fast, efficient and good looking boat. Hand lay-ups (where sheets of fiberglass are spread out in a mold and saturated with resin by hand or infusion are the mark of a quality boat while the 'chopper gun' method (spraying chopped up fiberglass on the mold) produces a generally inferior hull (the typical department store specials). Fiberglass is moder-





ately light in weight and prices can range from \$500 for a crappy boat to over \$2000 for a real nice boat.

Disadvantages include somewhat lower abrasion and puncture resistance. In other words you don't want to drop or drag a 'glass boat too much, but they can be easily repaired. Kevlar is somewhat similar to fiberglass but much stronger. It's similar to the stuff bullet proof vests are made from. Since it's stronger, hull thickness can be decreased thereby also making it lighter. A 17' tandem canoe weighs in around 50 -60 pounds, great on those portages. Solos can get down to 25 lbs. Disadvantages are somewhat low abrasion resistance and Kevlar can be punctured with a very sharp object. Very few boats are made up of pure Kevlar for technical reasons. Combination layered Kevlar and carbon fiber (and sometimes even with an added outer layer of "S-Glass" fiberglass) canoes are extremely expensive - starting at around \$2000 and up are but stiffer.

Polyethylene has been around for many years most notably in Coleman (now Pelican) canoes. 'Tupperware' boats are tough, abrasion and puncture resistant They are also relatively dirt cheap. The Coleman (now Pelican) RAM-X canoes can be had for around \$500 (last time I saw one in a depart-

ment store). The bad thing is that these hulls are not self supporting, needing an interior aluminum skeleton just to keep it's shape. You can't get a good hull shape with this material.

A few years back a new mixture of polyethylene called cross-linked poly was introduced to the canoeing world. It was self supporting so no interior frame is needed. The stuff is very durable and puncture resistant, but heavy. A 17 footer can weight up to 80 - 90 pounds. Cross-linked poly boat prices range from \$700 to \$1000. The Old Town Discovery series are made from this stuff.

Now for the Arnold "I am not a girlie-mann" Schwarzenagger of canoe material - Royalex. This stuff is tough! Most whitewater and big water expedition canoes are made from Royalex. Its made up of a ABS foam core surrounded by solid ABS (initials for its chemical name, which is too long to fit in this newsletter), which in turn is covered with a vinyl skin. Supposedly one can completely wrap a Royalex canoe around a rock, bring it to shore, subject it to a little heat such as the sun or



a hair drier (if for some strange reason one happens to carry a hair drier on a canoe trip) and it'll pop back into reasonable shape. It'll slide over river bottom rocks with the greatest of ease, bend steel in it's bare hands, able to leap tall buildings..! It's also moderately heavy and can't be molded with the fine lines of a composite boat. But it's one tough hombre! Prices

for these canoes range from about \$800 to \$1500. Weight for a 17 footer hover around 75 - 90 pounds.

R-Light, a newer material out on the market, is basically the same stuff as Royalex but with a weather able coating (whatever that is) over the ABS instead of vinyl. It weighs a bit less and is a wee bit cheaper. Last but not least, I must mention an unusual material for a canoe - Hypalon. inflatable rafts are usually made from this material, but there are canoes on the mar-

ket from Pak Canoe and Ally that have hulls made from this fabric and a collapsible aluminum frame such as on folding kayak. You can take this full size canoe apart for storage and transport. Pretty cool, don't you think? There are some inflatable canoes out there too.



Well, that's all the writing I have any ambition for. But you still might ask "What canoe should I buy?" I'm

not going to recommend any specific make or model in this article. Everyone has their own tastes and preferences. You ask 100 paddlers what the best canoe is and you'll get 100 different answers. You just got'ta go out and try them and see what's right for you.

Besides, Muk Muk Wum - my 35 year old Old Town Tripper - is still the best canoe in the whole world... and I'm still not a kayaker! There, I just had to say that, of course...

Food Contributions To Animal Shelters

This has absolutely nothing to do with paddling, but... if anyone would like to contribute canned or sealed dry cat and dog food or kitty litter to a local no-kill animal shelter (both the Ramapo Bergen Animal Refuge and the Bloomingdale Animal Shelter) but don't have the time or means to get the supplies there, I will be collecting such items and will bring them to the shelters in bulk. If interested please see Martin W. at a meeting.

If you have any articles you would like to include in "Up The Creek" please send them to
Fat Elmo - Editor c/o Litterbox Publications
at fatelmo@gmail.com

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Just a refresher (or an introductory course for the new members) about how the HRCKC handles it's communications with the membership...

As you should all be aware of by now, the Club Website with it's Activities Section and the E-mail based YahooGroup features are the main means of getting Club's information out to the membership, be it HRCKC sanctioned trips, Club events and official Club business. Due to various reasons (i.e. liability issues, reduction of non-essential e-mails that may or may not be of interest to most of the membership and just annoys folks with too many e-mails) anything normally posted to these two features should only be Hackensack River Canoe and Kayak Club sponsored trips, Club events and Club business. If a member wants to coordinate and post a Club sponsored trip or event, they may do so by sending the details for inclusion in the Activities Schedule to our Webmeister at: **webmeister@hrckc.org**. To post the same to the Club-wide YahooGroup E-mail announcement feature which goes out to the entire membership you may also do that by sending the post to: **yahogroup@hrckc.org** using the E-mail address that ***you registered with the Club on your membership application*** as your sending E-mail address.

Please, be aware that the YahooGroup is moderated and anything deemed inappropriate (meaning not HRCKC sponsored) will not be posted.

Now you ask... what if you want to post something that is not HRCKC sponsored but something that you think may be of interest to the membership? Well, friends... every couple of weeks we will consolidate such submissions and send out a single YahooGroup E-mail "digest" containing these postings to cut down the amount of e-mails to the membership. You may submit such postings to the following address: **captainhrckc@gmail.com**

Another avenue is the Message Board. You may use this Message Board to post comments, ask questions, give some advice, get some advice, post how-to stuff, etc. You may register by going to: **<http://hrckc.freepowerboards.com>**

Official Disclaimer:

Again, submissions to this bi-weekly YahooGroup digest and the Message Board are not HRCKC sponsored or sanctioned and the Hackensack River Canoe And Kayak Club is not to be held responsible or liable for it's content. It is for the general membership's information only by the members themselves.

