

Letter from Ed Walter

..... Long time USCA member

I read with great interest [the *Canoe News*] article on reasons to attend the *USACK* team trials.

I'm really happy and excited to see someone in the *USCA* promote crossover into *ICF* competition. *ICF* competition was always one of my primary interests as a newcomer *USCA* member but during the mid 1980s-mid 1990s, when I was chair of the *USCA International Competition Committee*, I could never gather much support within the ranks of *USCA* to really accomplish and sustain the crossover.

At that time *Chuck Weis* and I joined forces and worked hard to promote *ICF* competition but, despite *Chuck's* long history with the *USCA*, we could never seem to establish enough of a political base within the *USCA* to make it happen.

At that time *ICF* marathon racing in the US was still being sanctioned by the *ACA* and there seemed to be a lot of bad blood and mistrust between the *USCA* and the *ACA*...mostly on the part of the *USCA*.

Even though *Chuck* and I were able to organize a few joint *USCA/ACA* marathon national championship events, the *USCA*, with a few exceptions here in the East, never fully welcomed the idea of a joint venture with the *ACA*.

We even had *John Edwards* competing in several of the *ICF Marathon World Cup* events as a high kneeler and *Peter Heed* in a sit down *ICF C2*.

But times have changed, the *ACA* is no longer the sanctioning body for *ICF* racing (or any type of marathon competition for that matter) and the *USCA* seems to have a more open mind toward the *USACK*.

I took note of the financial support from the *USCA* to its members who made the *USACK* marathon team and see that as a tremendous step forward on the part of the *USCA*!

So perhaps the time really has come for the *USCA* to step up and join the rest of the world. God knows we, the *USCA*, have some top notch paddlers who are certainly worthy of the honor of representing the *US* and *USCA* in *ICF* *Marathon*

World Cup competition. Having done so myself I can say that it's quite a rush.

So, knowing that the *USCA* President supports the idea of international competition in *ICF* boats motivates me to contact my PA *USCA* Delegates and urge them to support her in that endeavor. Good luck and go forward!

Ed Walter (Pennsylvania)

New Book Mentions *USCA*, Reveals that "Marathon canoe and kayak racing involves getting from point A to point B as fast as possible." . . . Gareth Stevens

Sports Competitions For Adults Over 40 is a new book from McFarland & Company in North Carolina. The author, Thomas A Jones, is a retired English teacher who has, the book cover tells us "won national and international competitions in kayak racing."

The book covers 27 sports from alpine skiing through table tennis to powerlifting and multi-sport events, and describes US

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Short Strokes – News in Brief: Cruises – Paddle Florida and the Great River Rumble

national and regional organizations, the sport itself, and the major competitions. This, in fact, is a great tour of the opportunities for different types of competitive sports for older competitors – many that even those under 40 could manage.

Naturally, I turned to the section on canoeing, where a big focus is on, gratifyingly, marathon paddling and the *USCA*, and to a lesser extent, “*USCKT*” (Jones uses the outdated name – the organization became *USACK* in 1998).

There are myriad small errors. As examples, Peter Heed’s coauthor Dick Mansfield’s name is mis-spelled, the name of their current publisher is wrong (it is Vitesse Press), and our membership chair’s address is outdated. While the publisher in me shudders at such typos and errors, and such trite insights as “Marathon canoe and kayak racing involves getting from point A to point B as fast as possible,” I also have to say that Mr Jones did quite a good job of giving an overview of the sport (and covering a wide range of paddling disciplines in the process). It

was fun to see the table showing 2007 *Nationals* competitors by age group an event; I don’t think the numbers are quite accurate, but the big picture is.

I have to be a little careful about a too holier-than-thou attitude, as I know how easy it is for typos to creep into *Canoe News*. I hate it when the print run becomes the final proofing stage. However, the errors of factual detail in the canoeing section do make me wonder about the other sections, the ones I don’t know about. Also, having so much hard, recent(ish) information, the book will unfortunately date very fast.

That said, dipping into the book was an interesting way to spend 20 minutes. Worth checking out at the library.

Paddle Florida - A New Multi-Day Cruise

A new, 8-day paddle down the *Suwannee River* in Florida will debut October 15-22, 2009. Up to 200 paddlers will make the 123-mile trip from the *Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park* in Live Oak, FL

to beautiful *Manatee Springs State Park*. Paddle Florida is held in cooperation with the *Florida Park Service* and the *Suwannee River Water Management District* down the 171-mile *Suwannee River Wilderness Trail*. The *Trail* is a series of cabins, river camps and private “hubs” that, taken together, make the *Suwannee River* accessible to paddlers, hikers, bikers, equestrian enthusiasts and other user groups. Paddle Florida will be using some of the facilities that have been recently completed. More info: www.paddleflorida.org.

The Great River Rumble - A Midwest Favorite

Now in its fifteenth year, the annual midwestern week-long paddling adventure is back on the Mississippi River with a trip from LaCrosse, WI to Dubuque, IA, from July 25 to August 1. Run by Rex Klein, *USCA*’s Cruising and Camping Chair, the cruise attracts a group of regulars and first timers across a range of ages. for more information: www.riverrumble.org.

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