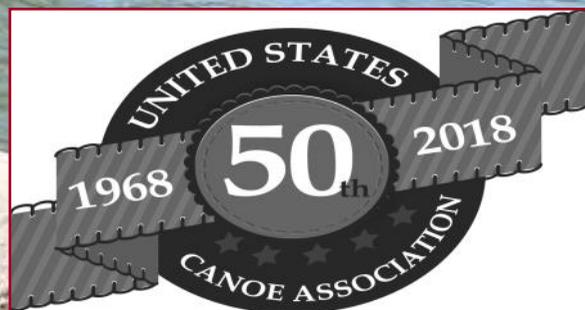


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Canoe News





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From the Editor:

You could call this our “Special Race Edition”, or maybe the “International Edition”, with reports on two special races in Australia, a Hawaiian race, and a couple of American classics. And speaking of classics, we have a fascinating interview with Roland Muhlen, a paddler who’s “done it all” and been part of the USCA from the founding. Hopefully you find some interesting reading to ward off the winter blues!

Keep paddling strong!

Steve

Front Cover: Tony Bond and Susan Williams (center C2 aka Toro) at the Goulburn Classic, Australia

Back Cover Photo Credit: Steve Dresselhaus, Reconciliamar, Baja California Sur, Mexico

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United States Canoe Association
Supporting a Five Star Program:
Camping, Camaraderie, Cruising, Conservation,
and Competition

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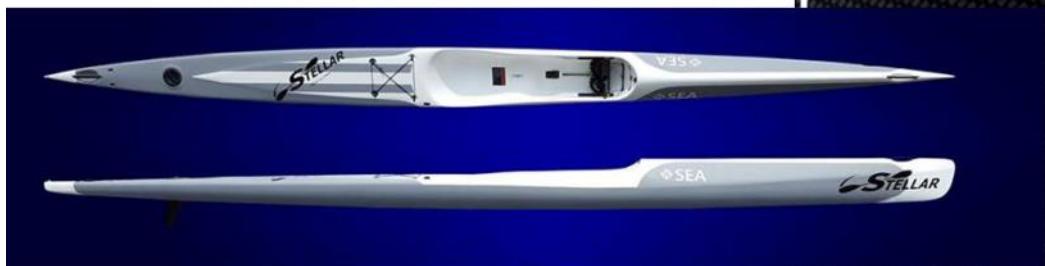
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VIEW FROM THE BOW

USCA PRESIDENT REBECCA DAVIS

Welcome to canoe/kayak season 2019! While most of us may have done some off season cross-training, many are itching to get back in their crafts even it requires a long drive south. (Those Florida paddlers are lucky in the winter!) Unfortunately, sometimes the slower paddling months require us to rest and recover. Injuries can be a big part of any sport, and managing our training load both physically and mentally can help us transition season-to-season, year after year, successfully.

This fall I had the opportunity to go out to Utah and run some trail half marathons. I was definitely untrained, but I thought with a combination of running and walking I could make it through unscathed. I overestimated my ability and talked myself out of the pain I was experiencing, so I came home with a nice stress fracture in my left foot.

Stress fractures are not nearly as serious as rotator cuffs or muscle, tendon, and ligament injuries, but the down time has further reinforced the need to listen to my body when it is telling me *no*. Paddlers tend to pride

themselves on pushing through the pain and finishing no matter what. Mental toughness is one of our biggest assets.... until it's not. Prior to causing my injury, I knew I was fatigued, and undertrained. I could feel my muscles being pushed to failure, yet I still continued on. I ignored the red flags that would've prevented me from weeks of recovery.

I have stressed this in a prior issue of Canoe News, but rest is never more important than when healing. Do I mean sitting on the couch and eating bon-bons? Probably not. However, going out for a run on the first day I start to feel better probably isn't the best idea. When we start up training again, we need to take it slowly. Grab the 2 pound weights instead of the 10 pound ones, take a 30 minute walk instead of a 30 minute run, or make your first paddle with a friend who enjoys chatting and sightseeing instead of an interval



workout. We all would like to get back to our pre-injury condition as quickly as possible, but testing the waters for a few days or weeks will save us months in setbacks.

Patience with ourselves can be hard to come by, especially when we cause our own problems in spite of our own better judgment. I am learning the art of giving myself grace and time to heal, while appreciating what I can do... and the fact that my sidelining is only temporary. The start of the 2019 season is going to be different for me than in years past, but I am allowing myself the time I need to get back on my feet, and who knows, this mandatory break may be just what I needed.

ROLAND MUHLEN: 50 YEARS OF RACING

STEVEN HORNEY



CN: *Roland, it seems that canoe racing has been a substantial part of your life for at least 50 years. How did you get started?*

Roland: I was a guy who always loved the outdoors and the solitude that came from being away from it all. In my earlier years I was really into horses (I even shod horses to earn some extra income) and I would take my horses to different places just to ride off and enjoy the peace of being alone in the woods. As a High school swimmer, I was quite comfortable around water so my initial thought in getting a canoe was having a way to enjoy the peace and solitude of the various rivers in the area. Racing wasn't in my mind at all. My first canoe was an Old Town Otca I bought for \$30. This was one of the early canvas-on-frame canoes and it needed help. My dad and I put new canvas and paint on it, creating a solid boat. Sort of my first foray into boat building. My parents were German immigrants who didn't have any interest in canoes (they were too busy trying to make a living in this country), so I developed it on my own. I lived close to the Ohio River, as well as near the Little Miami and Great Miami Rivers and the Whitewater River, so

As we close out the 50th year celebration of the USCA, it seemed appropriate to interview a man who's not only been with the USCA the full 50 years, but one who has also had a profound impact on canoe racing. A former

Olympic canoe racer and perhaps the fastest canoe racer in America in the early years of the USCA, Roland is still a powerful force to contend with in a canoe at over age 75!

Here's his story.

opportunities to paddle were abundant. I loved paddling and even took my \$30 canoe to the Boundary Waters for my first major canoe trip on my 22nd birthday (August 23rd).

CN: *How did you transition from seeking peace and solitude on the water to becoming a noted racer and boat builder?*

Roland: As mentioned earlier, I had no thought of racing canoes but in 1964 someone told me about a race on the Little Miami River in Cincinnati while I was canoeing with a local chapter of the Sierra club. We didn't have any idea how to canoe race, so a friend and I just showed up and gave it shot. We quickly figured out we had a lot to learn about canoe racing!

For the next three years I raced almost every weekend. The ICRC (Indiana Canoe Racing Council) had a lot of races with Ohio and Kentucky filling in the rest. I also met many interesting and supportive people who taught me to love the sport. Hank and Em Freeman (they had their own canoe club in Cincinnati – the Crazy Cat Canoe Club), Mike and Cathy Barton (parents of the Barton Clan), Bob & Bev Stwalley, and Charlie Moore (who became the first president of the USCA). Howie LaBrant was a true promoter of canoe racing back in the day and one of the first to try ICF canoe racing in our canoeing region. He kept talking about racing the “Peanut,” one of the early high-kneel C1 canoes (used in

some of the first Olympic Games canoe events back in the 30's and 40's), but I wasn't interested in Olympic paddling at that time. Howie was active in the ICRC and a big part of the start of the USCA, along with such notables as Lynn Tuttle and Bob Demoret. All of these people were at the first meeting of what became the USCA at Turkey Run State Park. As a side note, of all the people at the first USCA meeting, a lawyer by the name of Thor Ronemus was probably the most instrumental in getting the USCA off the ground (taking care of all the legal paperwork, etc.).

Back then (1964/1965) almost every race had its own set of rules. Aluminum canoes were fairly standardized and their class was by far the most popular, but almost every kind of canoe would show up to race in the other classes. Those classes might include anything from Pro-Boats to Old

Towns. Racers were divided between amateur (generally classified as someone who had never raced) and pro (or expert) classes (generally someone who had raced before!). Race directors made that decision on their own – there were no rules but lots of ideas. It was kind of a free-for-all! It was fun, but confusing. All kinds of ideas were tried including stretching a pro-boat out to 23 ft. long. Lynn Tuttle had already designed a canoe for Ralph Sawyer for the Sawyer Canoe Company – the Tuttle Cruiser (or Sawyer Cruiser). The Tuttle Cruiser was the most popular boat at the time and measured 17' 9". Ralph Fries also designed a boat called the Canadian, which was 18' 6", and also popular. Each boat excelled in different types of water and while they were the new “hot” models of the time, they were quite heavy, being constructed of solid fiberglass (no



*Roland Muhlen racing at the 2018 USCA Nationals
Photo courtesy of Bill Amos Photography*

core materials were used in the early fiberglass boats).

In 1966 I became friends with Dick Pratt, a GE aeronautical engineer who worked on the nose cones of reentry rockets and such. He also loved canoeing. With his aerospace experience he was really at the forefront of composites, and he designed and built his own fiberglass canoe called the Otter. It was similar to other fiberglass canoes in construction, except that Dick used end-grain balsa as a core to stiffen the floor of the canoe. The Otter wasn't a racing canoe, but it was 18 1/2 ft. long, very modernistic looking, and fairly fast. I used it to win several races in 1966. Dick was also a great teacher and he introduced me to many modern boat building techniques, using modern epoxy resins and core materials like end grain balsa, Nomex, and honeycomb. Honeycomb was a superb material for a core except that it didn't like to bend around curves. After some experimentation, we found Ox Core ended up working better as a core material because the rectangular cavities more easily bent into the shape of a canoe. I also learned to vacuum bag my composite boats, which yields a constant pressure on the composite layup, forming a better bond, squeezing out excess resin, and giving a better finish. As a do-it-yourself kind of guy, I created my first vacuum pump out of my mom's Electrolux vacuum cleaner! Although it probably only generated 1 psi, it worked surprisingly well. But about this time some-

thing else happened that was fortuitous for my boat building operation: the US government ruled that dairy farms could no longer use milk cans, but they had to use bulk coolers (claimed to be needed for safety reasons). That ruling put nearly all small dairy farms out of business. But it was a blessing for me, because I was given two milking machine vacuum pumps that I used for the rest of my boat building career.

By early 1967 it was very apparent to the ICRC and others that rules and specifications were becoming necessary. During discussions over how to spec canoes for competition, it was noted that the Tuttle Cruiser had a good width for stability (there was a desire to keep the canoes "family friendly"), while several popular models (like the Otter, the Canadian, and the Pro Boats) were more efficient with an 18.5 foot length. Combining these ideas (of width and length), I created a canoe to match these as yet unformed rules. It matched both the 3x27 and 4x32 rules (by being very V-bottomed). It was not the best at shallows or turning, but it was very directionally stable. It was instantly successful. I took it the very next day after I finished the canoe to a race (in Raccoon Lake State Park) where I raced against



Roland shaking hands with Bob Stwalley. These two founders of the USCA met up again 50 years later at the 2018 Wabash River Canoe Race in Indiana.

all the other boat designs at the time. My partner and I absolutely slaughtered all the other racers at the event! Then I took it up to the 1967 AuSable Race, and entered the amateur division – winning it. The success of this canoe made everyone realize that canoe designs could be greatly improved, and many of the later boat designers took note. I wasn't interested in becoming a boat builder for profit; I just built my own canoes to enhance my racing.

In the winter of 1967 the USCA was founded, and with it a clear set of specs for marathon canoe racing was generated.

At the time the ACA (American Canoe Association) was focused on Olympic canoe racing, and

ignored marathon racing. So the USCA was created to give control and direction to marathon racing. I was at the meeting at Turkey Run when they formulated the USCA, participating as a young racer. As soon as they came up with the formula for canoes, I made a canoe to meet their specs – and started dominating canoe racing. By designing my boat right to the specs I had a more efficient design than the other boats I was competing against.

I was a very successful canoe racer at the time the USCA was founded – I was 25 and strong; basically a “classic” version of Mike Davis. It was then that Lynn Tuttle changed my canoeing goals and my life.

In 1967 Lynn Tuttle suggested I should try out for the 1968 Olympic team. I thought of Olympic canoeing as an Ivy League collegiate sport; I hadn't been to college, and I figured I wasn't part of the right “society” to compete in the Olympics, but Lynn suggested I should give it a shot. Many Midwestern canoeists weren't familiar with Olympic canoeing; it was more popular on the East coast. But Marsha Smoke (who had her own kayak club in Niles, Michigan) had been (and still was) an Olympian; she encouraged many of us to try kayaking and to get into Olympic competition (in turn, I later encouraged and coached a number of kids to enter Olympic canoeing competition). We in the Cincinnati area called ourselves the



Roland Muhlen and Dave Landenwich high-kneeling a marathon cruising canoe.

Tanner Creek Canoe Club when we went to the competitions in NY and other places even though we were unattached. Eastern canoe clubs looked down on competitors who were “unattached” and who weren't part of an established canoe club – until we started beating them! Then they started giving us a little respect.

Lynn Tuttle gave me a lot of help in my early Olympic quest by creating a set of drawings for me to use in building my own Olympic C2 canoe. He took the measurements off a 21 foot Olympic C2 Canoe that the Ainsley twins owned. My partner Art Preising and I went to work making a strip wood canoe off the plans in the winter of 1967-1968. That got us into the Olympic training. We had no coach, but Art and I worked at it. Neither one of us really knew how to high-kneel (Olympic-style paddling) and it was very frustrating. We were crushed at a C2 sprint race in Canada. But at the same time Art and I build the Olympic C2,

we built a new USCA C2 cruiser to match the USCA specs that were now formulated. Our goal with that boat was to win the first USCA Nationals. We won the USCA Nationals in July by over 10 minutes. That was all Art needed to declare “I'm retiring as a National Champion!”

Fortunately, I was able to sell the Olympic C2, buy an Olympic C1, and then spent the rest of the summer training for the Long Beach, CA trials in October (the 1968 Olympics were held in Mexico City in November). At those trials I did well, but I couldn't quite overcome the Santa Ana winds. The course was south to north. With the winds blowing in off the ocean in the afternoon, it creates a strong left wind. The rowers at the time qualified in the morning, when it was calm. The canoeists qualified in the afternoon when the winds kicked up. I was a “righty,” paddling high kneel on the right side only. The winds were trying to blow me to the left (the front of the boat is in

stable water and “sticks,” but the back of the boat in unstable water and drifts with the wind, so the back of the boat was drifting right, pointing me left). It was tough to paddle hard and counter the winds. Lefty paddlers were able to use the wind to help steer; it was a big disadvantage to those of us who paddled on the right. I essentially had to J-stroke constantly to keep it going straight. The other challenge to making the team was a Canadian with a dual citizenship. He didn’t make the Canadian team, but he came down and as a lefty made the American team. He was third and I was fourth. But now I was firmly involved in two distinct paddling disciplines: USCA marathon and ACA sprints.

By 1972 Andy Weigand and I were the fastest C1 paddlers in the US (he was a “lefty” and I was a “righty”; which one of us was faster depended on which way the wind was blowing). We teamed up to race together to beat the Europeans. We were well matched and made the Olympic C2 teams in 1972, 1976, and 1980. I also became better friends with Marsha Smoke at the early trials. We were both pursuing sprint competition, so we started training together. We weren’t competitors because she was K1 and I was C1, but we made great training partners. The speed of a top woman K1 paddler roughly matches the speed of a top male C1 paddler. She was encouraging young paddlers in kayaking and I

was encouraging them in canoeing.

Without any real local coaching available, I set up a training center in my garage. I took movies of the better paddlers at the 1970 Worlds so I could try to emulate their technique. To get the best possible effect, I set up the movie projector in my garage in front of my paddling tank, plus mirrors so I could see myself. I would then try to imitate the good paddlers by watching the movies as I practiced. It worked and I was able to make the Olympic team in 1972.

Looking back, I now find it hard to imagine how I was able to juggle my life between 1968 and 1980. As a husband and father I was truly blessed to have my family’s support. As a Union Electrician, it was a real help having the

support of the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers). I was the only member of the IBEW at the time who was trying to make the Olympic team and they did a lot to help me, sending letters of support that allowed me to work in other locations when I needed to be in a different area for Olympic training. Their help enabled me to work in CA in 1972 when I was trying to make the Olympic team; I had a job waiting when I got there!

The same happened in Washington, DC when I was trying out for the Olympics in 1976. Fortunately I could work as an electrician, because I couldn’t use my boat designs or enter any “money” races for support. There were strict rules in maintaining your amateur status, so I couldn’t profit from anything I developed.



Roland and Dave Landenwich paddling C2 Sprint in an ICF C2 canoe at the North American Championships

The closest I could come was naming my boats “RPM’s” – my initials. But I could sell the boats I made for myself, giving me some “mad money.” After making the team in 1972, doors did open up. People recognized me as being a serious paddler. In 1973 at the annual winter meeting of the USCA, DuPont gave me 50 yards of Kevlar to see if it could be used to build a canoe (DuPont wanted to promote the use of Kevlar in canoes). I used it to build a marathon C2 canoe, which I raced in 1973, winning the USCA Nationals in C2 Mixed.

I made a lot of canoes at the time in my parent’s upholstery shop, trying to optimize canoes for different conditions. It was a lot of fun for me and some of the most enjoyable parts of my canoeing career. Some of my designs went into production with different companies. Sawyer Canoe Company used my 1971 Nationals-winning design which they marketed as their Champion 1 canoe and Doug Bushnell from West Side Boat Shop bought my molds for the RPM. One of my friends who had a fiberglass company got a kick out my stuff (he made dune buggy bodies) and would help me make molds. We could even make some molds in one day!

For me, high-kneel (or sprint) canoe racing provided me with many rewards but I never considered it that enjoyable. I quit high-kneeling almost 30 years ago. Sit-down



The start of the Spanish Sella Descent Race

(marathon) racing is a lifetime sport and that’s why I still enjoy it so much. **One of the neatest things about this sport is that you can stay involved in this sport and still stay competitive even 50 years later. Winning the Nationals 50 years apart (1968 and 2018) was an incredible experience for me. That clearly shows you can enjoy canoeing almost your entire life!**

When kayaks were first added to the USCA, we had a discussion over how long the kayaks should be; I wanted them to be at least 17 ft. long like the Olympic boats but others wanted to keep the boats shorter. Only a few paddlers could do well with the shorter kayaks; most needed the extra length for the size of the paddler. The short boat contingent won, which is how we ended

up with 14’9” downriver kayaks. I built the RPM to meet the specs, but eventually the class died as the longer kayaks and surf skis began to compete and become much more popular. I also wanted to put weight limits on canoes to keep prices down, but that didn’t go over either.

I based the RPM on my 17’ Olympic C1 canoe design that I shrank down to 14’9”. Some of the paddlers were too heavy for the RPM, but Greg Barton at age 16 was sized just right for the kayak and he just killed the other paddlers with it; that’s how the RPM kayak got its reputation and how Greg won his first major race at age 16 (the first kayak class in the 1976 Nationals). I loved being part of it all!

Just like the USCA’s only requirement to race in the Nationals is to be a member in good standing, the ACA only requires you to be a member and a US

citizen to race in the Olympic trials. By 1976 several top marathon teams, both amateur and pro, decided to try to make the Olympic team. They came to the Salt Fort State Park in Ohio, site of the 1976 Olympic trials, to make the Montreal Olympic team. They built special 21 foot ICF sit-down canoes to challenge the high-kneel teams. A real Olympic canoe has the waterline of a rowing shell. Their canoes were twice as wide to maintain their balance sitting down. Plus, you can't generate the power sitting down that you can high-kneeling. There was no way they could be fast enough to qualify. BUT—their canoes were really cool!

In 1980, after Russia invaded Afghanistan, the 1980 Olympic team was forced to boycott the Moscow Olympics. Our canoe and kayak team was fully funded by the USOC (US Olympic Committee) to go to Spain to race in several races, including the famous Sella Descent. That trip was given to the Olympic canoe & kayak teams to replace going to the Olympics as a sort of compensation for all our training. Other European teams that didn't go to Moscow also went to Spain. As a result, the Sella Descent—already one of the bigger races—had even more competition that year.

Before leaving for Spain, the Triebold family loaned me their 21 foot ICF marathon canoe from 1976 (one of the sit-down boats that was used to try to get

on the Olympic team). I made a slip copy of that canoe to take along to Spain. It flew with us to Madrid just fine as over-sized luggage in the cargo hold of a 747, only to be cut in half to fly in a smaller plane for the last leg of the journey to the Sella River! Two days later after seaming it back together, Matt Streib and I raced that canoe against over 900 other boats. Over 600 Olympic K2's and K1's lined up ahead of us (Google the Sella Descent videos to get a feel for this race, the biggest and most notorious downriver race in the world). Boats crash into each other all over the place in the Sella Descent, but sitting down gave us way better balance and our canoe was a tougher boat than most, enabling us to blast through the crowd of lightly built boats. We were the first canoe to finish, placing 129th overall. It was a blast!

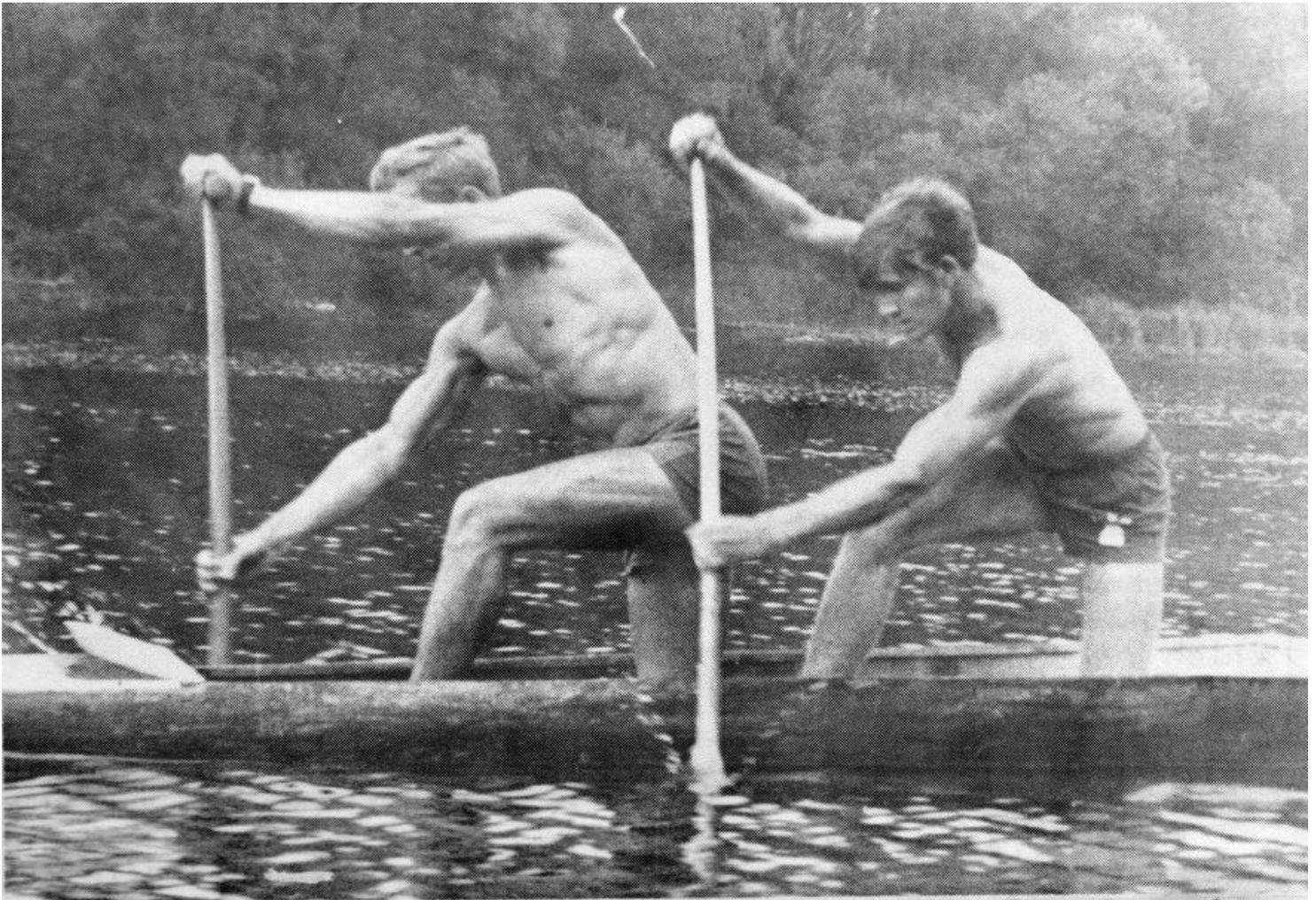
I love my canoeing life!
From 1980 (when my Olympic attempts ended), I continued to race in Master's sprint for another 10 years. After that I was mostly involved in family things as my

kids were involved in lots of sports. When I retired from work in 2004, I reconnected with the USCA and many of my old paddling friends like Dave Landenwich, Ray Bauer, and Tom Thomas; my wife Linda started paddling with me as well; and I started competing in the Nationals again.

I've raced a lot of major races throughout the years: multiple World Championships, North American Championships, Pan American Championships,



Roland still looking powerful and fit at 75!



Roland Muhlen left, of Cincinnati, Ohio and Mike Guenther of our club practiced on Center Island off of Toronto, Canada, after winning the U.S. Canadian four's and taking second in the doubles. The U.S. Canoe Team practiced here among thousands of Canadian geese while awaiting the North American Canoe Championships. Photo Al Beletz

USCA Nationals, and ACA White-water Nationals. In 1975 I won three major events in one year: the USCA Nationals (mixed with Carol Davis), the NPC (National Paddling Committee) Sprint National Championships, and the Whitewater Open Canoe National Championships. In 1980 I was co-captain of the 1980 Olympic team. With the boycott of the Olympics in 1980, OP (Ocean Pacific) offered to fully fund a team of Olympians to paddle the Hawaiian Molokai outrigger race. That how I got started in ocean

paddling. I've also paddled OC6 in Hawaii with the Illinois Brigade (name later changed to The Great Lakes Brigade) and with other teams. **But having the opportunity to mentor a number of paddlers along the way has probably been my greatest experience, leaving me with many wonderful memories.** Like Marsha Smoke, who encouraged Bruce and Greg Barton (as well as a great many others), I'm proud of encouraging the success of

Dave Landenwich (on the Olympic team in 1972, and who had never been in a canoe before I met him in 1969). Also Jim Terrell – a 4 time Olympian and US-CA National champion, Greg Stuart, Rob Plankenhorn, Jay Kerney, and others. These guys all made the Olympic team. I also helped my two sons Eric and Jamie become Junior Sprint Champions. In summary, these are just a few memories of my blessed canoeing history.



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RUN OF THE CHARLES RACE UPDATE

In an effort to produce a more sustainable event with a lower carbon footprint, we are making a few changes this year, including new race courses! There will be a 14-mile relay (with fewer portages) and 12-, 6- and 3-mile races. We have also developed a RiverFest at the finish line, which will include river games, live music, family canoe races and much more! Please visit the website below for more information.

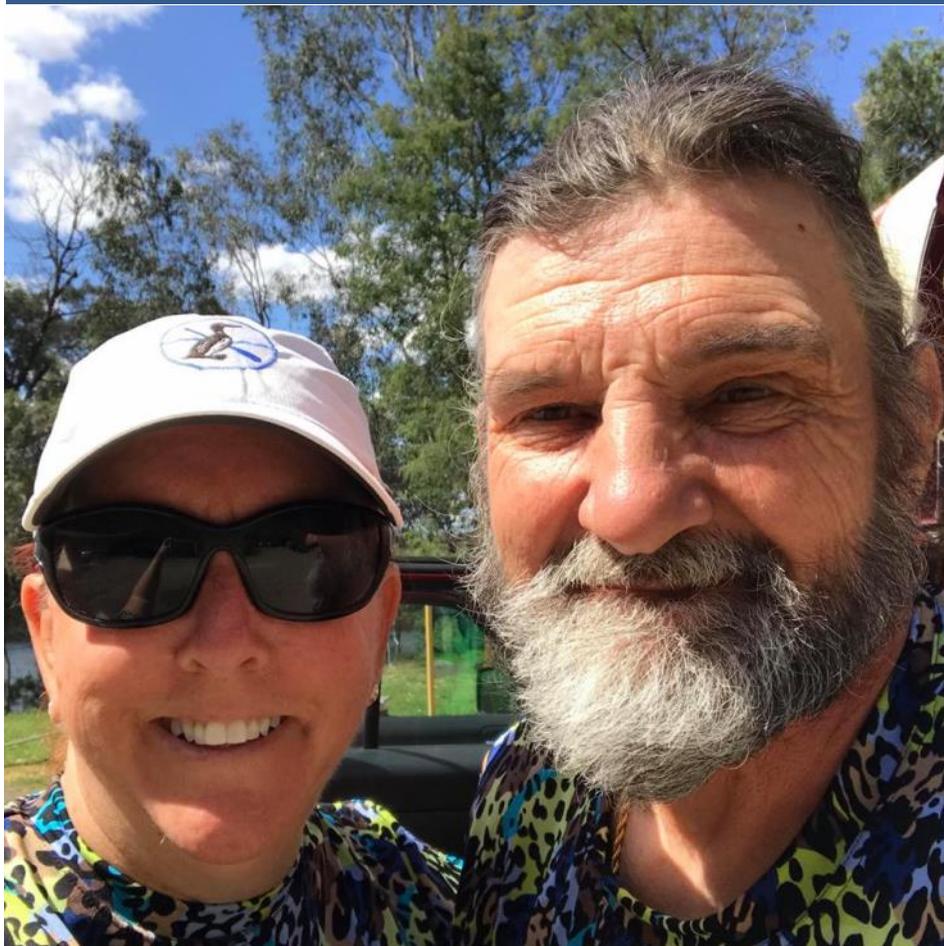
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THE GOULBURN CLASSIC

SUSAN WILLIAMS



The Goulburn Classic, or The Tour de Bloody Goulburn, is Australia's oldest race. It was originally 100 miles non-stop but in the 90s it changed to a stage race so that the beauty of the Goulburn River could be seen in the daytime. It has had lots of changes but is now 3 stages in one day, for a total of about 34 kilometers. The winner of each stage gets to wear a yellow jersey for the next stage.

Tony kept telling me it's a nice race, we do Stage One, 10 kilometers, and then everyone stops for morning tea. At first, prior to the Hawkesbury, I

thought, how very civilized, a race that stops for everyone to have morning tea. However, after the Hawkesbury with its massage therapy before the race, I'm highly suspicious of any Australian race that does something civilized right smack in the middle of it. Investigating further, I saw the race description included "The river has a powerful and deceptive current, the water is cold, therefore PFDs, and footwear, must be worn. Paddlers need to be self-reliant and competent in paddling fast flowing water." Uh-huh, I knew there was a catch! Then Tony said he was wearing a full wetsuit and I

should wear his extra one. Yep, when judging Australian canoe races, always go with the rule that the more civilized it sounds, the more it's just ... not.

Tony doesn't know how many Goulburn's he's done. He doesn't know when he started, he thinks around 1978, and the race wasn't run for a few years so he lost count somewhere along the way, but it's a lot.

So we get to the start area and I think, only Australians would look at a bunch of blackberry thorn bushes full of spiders growing on a steep embankment over a bunch of huge snake-hiding boulders that you'd train army men to repel on over a freezing cold swift water river and say, hey, this looks like an excellent place to take a bunch of canoes down to the water and start a race.

We picked up the 500 pound Toro (only a slight exaggeration, I swear), and headed down the beginning of the steep, hardened mud, rutted, dusty, slippery, briar bush covered slope. Soon enough it became clear there was no way I was going to be able to carry the Toro and myself down and over the boulders. I suggested a seal launch from the top but fortunately Mad Mick Dinkgreve was standing nearby and Tony volunteered him to take the stern of the boat for me. Thankfully Mad Mick stepped up and did it because I had to slide down the boulders on my butt; I have no idea how I would



have done it holding a heavy boat. Or a light boat. Or a piece of paper if the truth be told.

Of course the biggest crisis was that I broke a nail in the process. This was not my finest moment in representing the United States, sliding on my rear down boulders while whining that I broke a nail. Did I mention that no one else seemed to have a problem with the rock climbing exercise? Australians are a wee bit crazy and very tough.

Everyone kept saying the Goulburn is not really a white water race, it's just a fast water race. This is why we were racing the Toro canoe and not the V1-Pro. Now I have to say that the Toro boats are cool. The story behind them, how Andy Toro brought one from the U.S. to race, in pieces on a plane, and kicked everyone's rear, and their popularity even after all these years, is awesome. But, they're an entirely different animal than a North American pro racing canoe.

It's like this: the Toro likes to rock from side to side. It's actually an incredibly stable boat. But it rocks. A

lot. Like a Weeble. And it rocks to the extent that, if a pro canoe went on its side that far, it's a 100% guarantee you would be swimming. Every time you move, the Toro rocks. I swear the movement of my corneas made the Toro rock. And every time the Toro rocked, I braced. Because I thought I was going for a swim. But I didn't swim because I was in a Toro. But I braced anyway. Every. Single. Time. Because 1 hour of practice in a Toro is nowhere near the time needed to break the 8 year habit of bracing in a pro boat when you're tilted on your side.

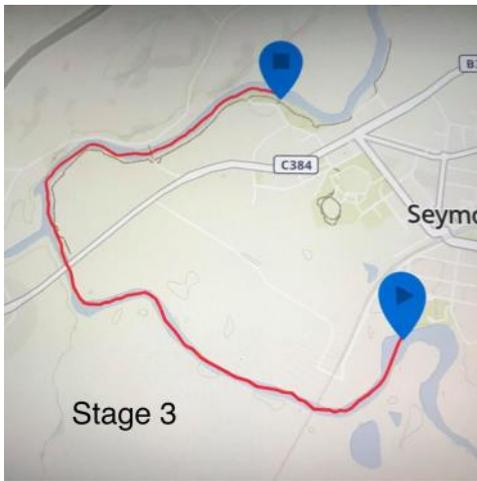
I weebled my way to the start line with Mr. Bond in the bow telling me several times, "You're going to have to relax back there," and me replying, "I'm trying!" But I was not succeeding. Part of the problem was that he and Raaahd Clark told me the waves at the start can be 3 feet high from all the boats in a narrow section of water going over shallows. 3 foot waves in a Toro that I felt was going to fall over on its side at any moment means Note to self: You do not need caffeine before a race start,

what you need is Ativan, perhaps a crate of it!

Had I seen any shallows I would have been better. I get much braver in shallow water. But the Goulburn was up and I couldn't see the bottom under me. I also get braver in warm water and when I'm close to shore. But hey, this is Australia so why should we have a warm water, shallow, close to shore start on a swift-water race in a Toro? Mr. Bond's exact comment, in that lovely Australian accent, was, "That wouldn't be any fun at all now would it?" Yes, yes it would.

The starter counted us down to go and Stage One began with me wobbling and Mad Mick bashing paddles into me while yelling "Let's crash into the American!" We stayed upright but we were headed toward the embankment. The waves probably weren't 3 feet, but they were definitely big enough for me to not like them at all. Poor Tony was steering from the bow as hard as he could to keep us from smashing into the banks while I was in the back wondering why I thought racing a Toro was a good idea. A few minutes later





the water flattened out as the field got ahead of us and I began to wonder if, at the end of 34 kilometers, I would be any less wobbly in the boat. The answer is no, in case you too were wondering.

I kept telling myself, there are only 10 kilometers in this stage, maybe I can do this. Nope. Every whirlpool, every boil, every turn, every tree and boulder in the place had me wobbling and bracing in the stern. God bless Mr. Bond. Once again he never changed pace while keeping us out of all sorts of trouble.

Tony told me that last year he and Barry Bell went backwards down a 4 foot drop, and the rescue crew applauded them. Ok, so there are a lot of problems with that sentence. 4 foot drop. Backwards. Rescue crew. They don't station rescue crews in areas with 4 foot drops for no good reason. And backwards? I don't even know where to start with what's wrong with that one.

So for several kilometers all I could think about was, where is this 4 foot drop? Maybe I will be able to relax once we pass it? And, there it was. A technical aspect of the fast moving water that doesn't give you much time to think. So Tony called the huts and we nearly crashed into a

big boulder in the middle but missed it by a hair. But ... there was no drop. The water being up made the drop disappear. "Bummer," I said to myself, followed by, "Are you insane? You do not want to go over a 4 foot drop in a Toro, you just dodged a bullet here you moron!"

We came to some less swift water, with less boils and whirlpools, and I remembered to look at the scenery. Everyone told me the Goulburn is beautiful and they sure were right.

Australia, or at least Echuca, is flat. You can see forever. It's so flat that I swear if it weren't for the trees you'd see the curvature of the earth. Then you drive south toward Melbourne and suddenly there are mountains. No foothills. Just flat, then mountains. The Goulburn is in the mountains, hence the fast flowing water, and it is thrilling to see the mountains come up around you from the river. Absolutely gorgeous. And there isn't much civilization on the river either so you can really get a view of nature with the Australian mountains and forest. Being on the river, things are green too. Australia is a bit brown, or at least Echuca is, because it doesn't rain much there. But on the Goulburn everything is green. Despite the Toro feeling like I was going to flip over at any second, I did manage to take in a good deal of stunning scenery during the race. The constant wobbling was totally worth it to see this.

Raaahd and Jude, when I crewed for them for the AuSable River Marathon, said they never noticed the whirlpools on the AuSable. Now that I was 5 kilometers into the Goulburn I could see why. The AuSable on it's worst day doesn't even have a whirlpool that could compare to what the

Goulburn throws at you on every turn. And every straightaway. And ... just everywhere.

Raaaahd and Tony told me that they and others used to paddle the Toros with the seats up on the gunnels. Every time we hit a whirlpool or slid across a boil I thought, who in their right mind could paddle a Toro with the seats up on the gunnels? Well the answer is pretty simple, anyone who actually spends more than 1 hour practicing in a Toro before they are genius enough to race it. It's not the boat's fault that I didn't practice enough in it to be comfortable.

Soon enough our 10 kilometers were done and it was time for morning tea. I was not one iota more comfortable with the Toro rocking side to side than I was when I started. I felt really sorry for Tony having to deal with me in the stern and I apologized about 9 times for how wobbly I was. His answer to everything is, "You'll be alright." Maybe. I still couldn't figure out how to steer the Toro, I couldn't go on sides because it felt super unstable if I did, and I wasn't going to risk not having a paddle on either side of the boat in the event we hit any particularly violent whirlpools. Maybe some morning tea would help.

It wasn't going to help Raaahd, who was sitting on the bank looking half dead and regretting his Maccas breakfast choice that morning. I hoped he had finished first or close to it. If you're going to throw up your breakfast the effort had better be worth it. And indeed he did get to wear the yellow jersey for Stage 2 because of his Stage 1 finish.

I almost had morning tea, because it's so darned civilized, but I did not.



I decided I didn't need any caffeine to make me any more jittery than I already was in the Toro. The brownies looked so awesome though. Seriously, hosting morning tea in the middle of a canoe race in the middle of nowhere on the banks of a scenic river, now that's an amazing race organizer.

Ashley asked me how I enjoyed the first stage. I said I didn't. He said the second stage is worse. Several people said he was lying, it was no worse than the first, so I gave him the good old American one finger salute. The Goulburn was not my best day to leave the Australians with a good impression of Americans.

The second stage is 18 kilometers. About 11 miles of swirls, boils, whirlpools, and oddly fast currents. The start goes under a big bridge right away and we stayed to the side which meant the waves were smaller than the Stage 1 start waves. I was glad for that. I felt slightly better in the boat. But that was likely because it was flat for the first few kilometers. There was some wind pushing me to the side but I'll take that over

the squirrely water in a Toro any time.

Then we got to the longest right turn ever. I began to think we were just going to go in a big circle and come right back to where we started. Between the wind and the right turn, I felt like I was never going to stop drawing on the left. I decided drawing on the left for what felt like forever was better than being a Weeble, so I looked at scenery while drawing. I almost felt comfortable in the boat.

And then we rounded a corner into some whitewater. You know, in the race where they told me there was no white water only fast water. Ok, so it was like 20 yards of Class I rapids but still, they said no whitewater. Surprisingly the Toro didn't seem to mind going through the waves. But then we were back to boils and whirlpools and me having an anxiety attack every time the boat tilted again.

Right in the middle of some whirlpools Tony said, "I'm going to take a photo here," and out came his camera. It really was photo worthy scenery: a big mountain ahead of us with

bright green trees on either side of us and blue skies with white clouds above. That's the gorgeous Goulburn.

I began to worry a bit when both rescue boats pulled up to us, one on either side. Tony said, "How do you feel now with 2 rescue boats escorting us?" "Oddly reassured," I replied. And we had a lovely conversation with the two paddlers for about a kilometer or so before they suddenly dropped back. Reassurance gone. Rescue boats don't start following you unless there is a good reason.

There was a tree down across the river. It's been there for several years, Tony said, and there is only a small space to get through on the left. The water is swift and there is another downed tree beyond it to navigate around. Tony called huts and made it seem easy from the bow.

The boils and whirlpools never ended, but at least I was doing slightly better at controlling the boat. I still wasn't feeling good about being in such a rolly boat, but at least I could see that the end of the race was near. Being done with Stage 2 was a relief.

The 3rd Stage was a time trialed 6 kilometers. The last ones in were the first ones set off and everyone else followed in reverse order of finish at 30 second intervals. Since we were last in, we were first out. I thought it would be cool to see everyone come by us.

At one point we heard Mad Mick coming, you can always hear him coming down the river, but then we didn't hear him. He took a little swim along the way and, as I understand it, it wasn't on purpose.

Tony said the only thing on Stage 3 to worry about was the bridges. They create weird currents, swirls and boils. We went through the first bridge without incident. Brett Sutton passed us asking if there was anything unusual ahead, and Tony told him to watch out for the old bridge and stay far right leading into it.

The old bridge was something. The lead in was definitely a far right path with a gravel bar to the left. But there were downed trees on the right and pushy current. Tony called the huts to guide us through. I reminded him that if he killed me he would have to answer to my mother. He replied, "You'll be alright."

Once through the right, we had to swing to the center where there were big navigational channel markers in the river and a line of construction or safety buoys on either side. The bridge was a bigger space to get

through than it originally looked like and the swirls afterward were no worse than the ones before. No better. But at least not worse.

Stephen Routley came by us in his carbon C-1. Just as he got in front of us, the entire river heard the sound of carbon hitting rock. It echoed down the valley and up into the mountains. Steven suddenly went sideways in front of us but stayed upright. We thought for sure he put a hole in his boat, but he did not. And he stayed upright, which is an especially good thing when you're within visual distance of the finish line.

At the very last minute Raaahd came by us like a freight train. A man on a mission having kept the yellow jersey at the end of Stage 2. And just like that it was the end of Stage 3 and the end of the day.

The bad news is that due to my inability to properly steer the boat and my anxiety in general about the boat rolling, despite Tony's best efforts, we finished last in the race even though not everyone passed us on Stage 3. The good news is we finished, kept the round side down, Tony got to finish one more run of Australia's oldest race, I got to race a Toro and, most importantly, I never have to get into one of them again.

The race organizer gave me a bottle of Australian wine because I traveled the farthest to get to the race. According to google maps, the Goulburn is 10,251 miles or 16,497 kilometers from my house. Despite my dislike of the Toro's rocking, it was well worth every mile.



MY RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

REBECCA DAVIS



Rebecca and Edith coming into Cooke Dam in 2018. Photo by Carol Bennet.

It is weird to look at my paddling career and realize with exact certainty that my best race is behind me. I realize that as I get older this will be something I have to get used to, but at twenty-eight years old I am sure I have some fight left in me. However, even if I physically can put together a better performance, my 2017 AuSable River Canoe Marathon was the perfect combination of training, synergy, and water levels to create my record breaking race.

I am sure most have heard of the AuSable River Canoe Marathon and most Michigan paddlers see it as the crown jewel of their season. It has a feverish following and the countdown has already

started for the 2019 season. It never felt that way to me; probably due to the nature of my parents' racing career, other races were a bigger focus for them. Even within the Triple Crown of Canoe Racing the AuSable takes the least amount of skill to have a good finish— river reading is basically non-existent for most of the race and pack tactics are also not that important— it is just a long grind to Oscoda where the fittest get to the finish line first. For these reasons, the race never held that much appeal to me even though I have done it each year since my first in 2010.

That all changed in September of 2016. I had just fin-

ished a great season and had started to formulate my goals for 2017, when Edith MacHattie contacted me about racing the AuSable together the following summer. For those who don't know Edith, she is from Saskatchewan and relatively new to the marathon scene. She quickly established herself as one of the best women- she had beaten Sarah Lessard, Mary Schlimmer, and myself with apparent ease. On top of that, she has a soothing energy and an easy laugh- something that can't be overrated in a partner for such a long race.

I had raced the AuSable in women's before and had very successful races, and I immediately said yes. I didn't have too many expectations; since we would only be able to paddle a few times prior to the race— if we didn't match right away we wouldn't have time to make many changes. On top of this, both of us are exclusively stern paddlers. After much deliberation, we decided to meet up in Florida in March and try each other out to determine who would paddle bow. I practiced a few times in the fall and winter prepping for a potential position change; this didn't help my nerves when paddling the first time with Edith! After paddling a couple of times it was determined I would

be our bow. For the next four months, I paddled bow at least once a week in preparation. Edith showed up the day before our sprint and we hopped in for our only training paddle of the week.

We felt pretty good every time we had paddled and the official sprint confirmed that we were moving well. We held on for 25th starting position and that allowed us to hope for an outside chance at a top 20 finish: women's teams usually gain at least 3 positions over their sprint, although five felt like a big margin. We didn't have our sights on the women's course record as it just seemed unattainably fast. The next best team was 15 minutes off the record, and that was the legendary team of Holly Reynolds and Gloria Wesley. Of course, the team holding the record was legendary in their own right—Connie Cannon and Carrie Montgomery—and they chose to race together in what ended up being the record high year of 1994.

I was so nervous the whole afternoon of the race that I couldn't nap, read, or really even eat. Time felt like it was racing and moving at a glacial pace simultaneously. Edith didn't seem much better but we tried to keep each other's spirits up and laugh off our jitters.

Waiting on the starting line of the AuSable is one of the most exhilarating and excruciating experiences of the canoe season. The sheer danger of a misstep keeps the heart pounding. Once

the gun goes off and everyone is charging to the river I felt oddly weightless and calm. We made it to the water cleanly and put in a smooth 26th after the run. Now I feel confident that the worst is behind us and the real race has begun as we pick our way through the field. I must've relaxed too soon and on the first left turn we tipped! Both Edith and I were soaked but we righted the boat as quickly as we could, only to tip over again as soon as we got in. This time we took our time to dump the water as teams raced by us. By my best estimation, we were 55th place. I tried not to think about the lost chance at a top 20, and focus on passing one team at a time without wasting too much energy.

The first twenty teams were easy to pass as we had more speed and skill, so within 10 minutes we were up to 40th place. We continued to pick our way through the field as darkness fell, taking more aggressive lines than I had ever taken in the dark before, but amazingly we slipped into the top 20 only 1 ½ hours into the race. We gained another spot 3 hours in, quietly passing a team as the river widened out. It was a huge relief to make up that much time, although we were both concerned we had pushed too hard to get there (although neither of us felt that way because the boat was gliding so well). We paddled the next four hours all alone with a dim light of another team far in the distance ahead. We had been so good at riding in our training

that it was an integral part of our race plan to work with other teams, *yet there we were going all alone.*

After the first portage at Mio, we immediately caught the mysterious light by cutting a couple of corners. It was a Texas/Belize team that was less than thrilled to be caught by a women's team. They rode us for a few minutes and then made an aggressive push to drop us, but we managed- barely- to hang on. As the sun began to come up and we entered Alcona pond, I knew we were on pace for about a 15 hour and 45 minute race (my best women's time, but nearly 20 minutes behind the record). I started to feel a little bit of a lull and even got a bit sleepy. I apologized to Edith as the men's team finally broke away after the Alcona portage, but she wouldn't even take it: our race has been so strong and she is sure we can hold our top 20 now.

I didn't share Edith's confidence. As a women's team, the ponds in the later portions of the race are a huge disadvantage. Any wind will mess with us and the lack of strength in the boat compared to a men's team even on calm waters makes us a sitting duck. I was worried that we would slowly slip out of our top 20. As we paddled alone I started to feel better. We discussed how to handle being caught by teams from behind and what our strategy should be to preserve our race. As we entered the next pond, Loud, we started to see a pack that had

formed in front of us. Interestingly, it seemed as if we were catching them, although the water slows so much on the shallow and mucky pond that I wasn't sure if it was just an illusion of losing the current.

After portaging Loud dam, it was evident that we were, in fact, catching the pack. We made a big push across the short Five Channels pond and closed the gap significantly, even as the teams started to work together to keep us back. After the Five Channels portage we knew it was only a matter of time until we caught the pack.

Cooke Pond is usually my worst stretch of the race but on this day it felt like I had wings. We worked hard for the next hour, gaining glide and speed with each stroke. We were able to portage Cooke first in the pack, and it was obvious that we would soon be alone again. As we crossed Foote our gap grew and the teams ahead of us started to come into view. Again this drove us forward—even though the gap appeared to be too much, we felt motivated to try.

As we approached the final portage I vividly remember seeing my Dad standing at the top, looking at his watch. The record, which we hadn't spoke about since the race started, came back into view. I told Edith that we must be close and she couldn't believe it- we definitely had been off pace earlier in the race. As we got to the wall, both of my parents

told us that we were on record pace; we crossed the time check point 2 minutes ahead of the old time. All we had to do was finish the last stretch in less than 1 ½ hours and the record would be ours. I didn't know if we could do it. I really hadn't paid attention to how long that stretch took down to the minute but our team told us to aggressively cut the corners, keep up the pace and we would make it.

The last section of the race is known by locals as “the gauntlet” because of the seemingly endless shallow corners. Staying out can make for an easier trip but you can give up minutes and positions. Some teams further back in the field have gained six positions in this stretch alone. Riding the high of the last four hours, we attacked each corner urging each other on to keep the boat planed. Each corner brought us closer to the finish and we continued to inch closer to the team ahead. As

we rounded the final corner, we couldn't manage to close the gap, but it didn't matter anymore. We heard the familiar sound of the William Tell Overture being played and our names were announced as the new women's record holders, breaking the old record my almost nine minutes. We had gained another seven minutes on in the final stretch!

Finishing that race, I felt like we could have kept going forever. I didn't feel fatigue and I have never experienced that precise feeling of glide we had mastered over the 15 hours and 17 minutes of paddling before or since. I won't ever win one of the Triple Crown races outright but I can now imagine how that would feel. Out of the whole experience, I managed to gain one of my best friends and we share a connection now that will be lifelong. If this is in fact the best race I ever have, I managed to make it a truly great one.

Rebecca and Edith at the Alcona Portage in 2017. Photo by Carol Bennet.



MOLOKAI HOE RACE

PETER HEED



The early morning Hawaiian sun is beginning to beat down on our 6 man crew. It has been nearly an hour since we went off the starting line with 98 other teams, paddling hard along the south coast of Molokai Island. We have cleared Laau Point, heading out into the open ocean as we start across the treacherous Kaiwi Channel - known for its intimidating waves,

winds, and currents. The goal is the finish line at Waikiki Beach on Oahu Island, approximately 40 miles in the distance. Each paddler is focused, putting all the force they can muster into each stroke. But it is time for a fresh crew.

Right on time, our escort support motorboat has found us. Our six other teammates

cheer some encouragement from the support boat, which then roars ahead. They all jump out into the turmoil of the ocean and line up with hands in the air so our steersman can locate them in the swells. We paddle alongside our fresh teammates, jumping out on the right side as they duck under the outrigger and pull themselves up into the canoe on the left side. Seat # 3 bails while



everyone else zips up their covers and start paddling. We tread water and cheer. Then it is time to swim to the support boat, climb in, drink, and eat. We have to be ready for our next paddling shift.

Once all six of us are able to climb up into the support boat, it is time for hydration and some gels. The support boat is rolling heavily in the ocean swells. The wave sets get increasingly large as our team works deeper into the channel, often causing us momentarily to lose sight of the canoe behind the huge walls of water. None of us are yet able to see the Island of Oahu, still hidden in the thick clouds off to the northwest. The reality of being out in the open ocean begins to sink in. So does the sense of overwhelming beauty. All ocean and sky painted in brilliant shades of deep blues and soft greens.

A gorgeous rainbow hangs over Molokai, now falling away off our stern. More eating and drinking and discussion among teammates follows on stroke rate, course options and how we are feeling. Now we can just begin to make out the tip of Diamond Head on Oahu ahead in the distance as it gradually emerges from the mist and clouds. No more time to sightsee! Our shift change is approaching and our next paddle rotation.

The captain guns the engines and we move out in front of the canoe, leaping off the back of the support boat into the churning ocean. Hands in the air, so our tired teammates in the canoe can locate us. Time to get back in the boat and hammer! And so it goes at The Molokai Hoe, considered to be the world's pre-eminent open ocean outrigger canoe race.

The Pacific is turbulent and wild and literally filled with crews and support boats from all over the world including Hawaii, Tahiti, Australia, Bora Bora, France, Singapore, French Polynesia, Canada, Washington, California, and Connecticut! Connecticut? Yes, that's us - Manu'iwa Canoe Club, based out of Milford, Connecticut. What we really are is a bunch of paddling friends, all over age 60. We are mostly marathon paddlers from all over the US and Canada. We normally paddle against each other in C-1s or C-2s but we all share the same love for paddling sport. We have joined together as a team to take on the unique challenges of outrigger canoe paddling in the open ocean.

Our core is a good group of veteran marathon paddlers from New England and New York: Paul Dyka, Del Cummings, Marc Lessard, Michael Fairchild, Bob Silvernail, and me. We used to paddle regularly with Blake Conant and the Manu'iwa Club until Blake moved back to Kauai some years ago. But thanks to the inspiration and leadership of Marc Lessard, we have come back together and our friend Blake has joined us, as have other talented Hawaiian paddlers Rodney Bayne and Sueo Higa. We are also fortunate to have with us Al Limburg from Wisconsin, Yves Cartier from Florida (formerly Quebec), and Pat McLellan from Calgary, Alberta!



er and left nothing in the tank. We crossed the finish line at Waikiki with a well earned second place in our age division (60+), with a time of 6:17:29. First place in the 60+ division went to the

prise that outrigger paddling is the national sport of Tahiti!

In the overall, our Manu'iwa old boy crew placed 70th out of 98 teams, and proud of it, having bested many good open and masters teams from regular outrigger clubs. Ultimately, our most heartfelt sense of accomplishment came from working together as a team, trusting and relying on each other to meet the many challenges of Molokai Hoe. It was a most memorable and special experience for all. One for the Bucket List.

Nearly all of our competitors come from active outrigger canoe clubs. They normally train and race together. Not us. Some of our team members were not able to get to Hawaii until a day or two before the race, so the first time we would all be paddling together literally occurred on the starting line. This puts a premium on trust, mutual respect, and teamwork. These big 6 person Hawaiian outriggers weigh over 400 lbs. and they only move fast if everyone works together. We have to rely on each other to paddle as one unit, focusing all our effort on the task at hand. There is no room for egos in an outrigger - not if you want to survive in the Kaiwi Channel and not if you want to be competitive.

Hawaiian Canoe Club from Maui in a time of 5:52:30. Third place in the same division was taken by the New Hope Canoe Club from Oahu, with a finishing time of 6:59:00. The overall win in the Open Division, with an incredibly fast time, went to the powerful Shell Vaa Club from Tahiti, finishing in 4:35:16. The Tahitians have dominated the race recently, winning outrigger's "Super Bowl" an unprecedented 11 times over the last 13 years. It should come as no sur-

So if you are a paddler, and you ever get an opportunity to paddle Molokai Hoe (or the great women's counterpart, two weeks earlier), go for it! You will not be disappointed.

Aloha!

Peter

Working together as a team is vital and it is one of the reasons outrigger racing is so special. I am pleased to report that the "old guys" from Manu'iwa did indeed stick together and successfully met the challenges of Molokai Hoe. Every team member gave it their all. We trusted and helped each oth-



HAWKSURY CANOE RACE

SUSAN WILLIAMS



Susan Williams and Tony Bond form an international partnership to take on the Hawkesbury Canoe Race in Australia. Photos in this article by Ian Wrenford.

Hawkesbury Canoe Race, October 27-28, 2018, Windsor to Brooklyn (just north of Sydney), New South Wales, Australia. 111 Kilometers, non-stop, all night long.

The Hawkesbury is Australia's longest non-stop canoe race, raising money for the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation. Over the years they've

raised almost four million dollars for leukemia research.

When Tony Bond told me we'd be doing the Hawkesbury Classic less than a week after I landed in Australia, I quickly did the math and thought, no big deal, 111 kilometers is about 70 miles and I've done 70 miles a lot of times non-stop. Heck, I've done the 70-mile General Clinton 3 times solo and 5 times tandem.

I've done the 90-Miler 10 times including once solo. I've done the 90-mile Cannonball with 13.1 miles of portages in the dark, I've done 120 miles non-stop in the AuSable River Canoe Marathon at night, and I finished the 200 kilometer Muskoka River X in Ontario, Canada, at night, with 20 portages, after breaking my wrist at portage number 16. If I can do that, then surely 111



kilometers at night on the Hawkesbury would be no big deal, especially since jet lag would work in my favor and I'd be wide awake in the middle of the night. After all, 3 AM on the Hawkesbury is noon time to my body.

I should know by now to never say something is going to be "no big deal." Enter the high winds, rain, big waves, jellyfish, sharks, darkness, tide changes, and Australian biting spiders. But first, the beginning.

It's about 9 or 10 hours from Echuca to Sydney, and I was in Tony's Jeep with Raaahd Clark and Barry Bell, the 3 amigos who keep any trip entertaining with bawdy stories and stops at every Maccas (MacDonald's) that can be found along the way. We also stopped at the Dog on the Tucker Box, which is a whole story on its own (Google it). Raaahd even sang the song. A spirited discussion was also had about the mer-

its of saying al-you-min-ee-um versus ah-loom-inn-numb and Raaahd accused me of not knowing how to speak English.

The Blue Mountains are gorgeous, I know that from when Peggy and I toured them last year, but I slept through them this time, a consequence of jet lag and my opinion that, even though 111 kilometers at night was going to be "no big deal", a good dose of sleep the day before wouldn't hurt anyway.

We spent the night at a gorgeous B&B and had a generous hot breakfast before heading off to the Hawkesbury start line. It seemed to me that arriving at a start line at 9:00 AM for a race that started at 5 PM was a bit extreme, but hey, not my country and I'm just following directions here.

We parked under a big tree, unloaded boats, emptied Tony's teardrop trailer to be ready for our afternoon nap, finalized

our registration, had our boat inspected ("scrutineered" in Australia), had our PFDs scrutineered, socialized with everyone I hadn't seen since last year, met some new people I was looking forward to meeting, and just about then I began to see why it was so important to get to the race site at 9 AM.

Australian sun is hot. Really hot. So hot that it melted the duct tape that was holding my protein bar onto the boat gunnel a mere 15 minutes after I taped it there. I didn't even know duct tape could melt. I could feel through the package that my bar was now liquid. By 10:30 there were no shade trees left. We made sure the boats were in the shade, the Jeep and trailer were shaded, we were shaded, and it was quite pleasant under our tree with a nice breeze.

I slept on and off all morning and afternoon until Tony woke me up to go get something to eat and a massage. Massage therapy students were there as part of their class. This race was looking better all the time. A nice day outside in the shade, a grilled sausage ("snag" in Australia) sandwich, and a massage. Who wouldn't want to do the Hawkesbury?!

The mandatory pre-race meeting was at 3:00 and the announcer said several times that if you go under any bridges before the finish bridge then you have gone the wrong way. Everyone said it's super easy to get lost on the Hawkesbury.

Oh, did I forget to mention that, unlike the AuSable, the Cannonball, and the MRX, lights are strictly prohibited here?

Yes, you read that right, lights are not allowed. You are paddling at night, in the deep dark of the Australian bush, with nothing but your night vision to see with. You must have an emergency light in the boat, but you are not allowed to use it unless it's a real emergency. You will be disqualified if you turn on a light to see during the Hawkesbury.

Soon enough it was 4:30, time for us to marshal up for final inspection and get on the water for our 4:45 pm start. The scrutineers looked at the boat for our food, water, emergency light, and paddles, and inspected our PFDs for the mandatory emergency blanket, small waterproof flashlight ("torch" in Australia), and our whistles. They then allowed us to go directly to the water and get on the start line.

It's a very civilized start. You line up at the blue flag, and then a man on the bank walks the blue flag downstream and you follow him in an orderly line until you get to the red flag. It stops people from jumping the line. Here everyone holds the boats for a few seconds until the starter says "Go." Thus ends the civility and it's a free for all for about 500 meters until things sort themselves out and people settle down. Tony and I started far right, in clear water, and we started at our all-night race pace, not some silly sprint start that we wouldn't maintain for 111 kilometers. It wasn't but only 2 miles later when we passed lots of boats that went way too fast out of the start.

Early on we rounded a corner, I was admiring the scenery, and there was a photographer in the middle of the river, up to his chest, just smiling ear to ear, greeting everyone, and happily taking photo after photo. He might have been the most cheer-

ful photographer I've ever seen. I thought, this has got to be the nicest race ever. Snags, a massage, a nifty civilized start, a cool photographer, the Hawkesbury was turning out to be pretty awesome.

Aaaaaaand then it got dark. Did I mention lights were prohibited? Yea. And, for the record, the middle of the bush in Australia is frickin' dark. The race organizers tape glow sticks to the front and back of each boat. I'm not sure why they do this because you can't see the canoes ahead of you if they're more than 50 yards away. It must be that the checkpoint boats, which are fairly large power boats, can see them from their higher vantage point.

There are many checkpoints on the Hawkesbury, I think they go A through P. Some are on the water (where you paddle by a power boat and yell your boat number) and some are on land. You don't have to get out on land; you just have to get close enough that they can hear you shout your number. Two of the checkpoints have in and out routes, and you have to check in and also yell when you go out; failure to check in both places is a 15 minute penalty. To find a checkpoint, you look for yellow flashing lights and a slower and less frequently flashing white letter. They're not hard to spot, however several of them are on the opposite side of the river from where you want to be, particularly when low tide hits.



As dark of night fell, the drunks on shore were initially funny but they lack appreciation for night vision. Or maybe they do appreciate it, which is why they shine spotlights into your face. Either way, it's blinding and it seriously affects your sight. With no lights allowed on the boat to help you see, keeping your vision night worthy becomes extremely important. One drunk at a camp ground ("caravan park" in Australia), actually got in his car, drove down the side of the river, and held the spotlight directly on us for at least 2 kilometers. Our names are printed in big letters on the side of the boat and, because lights are prohibited, I wore a white shirt, thinking that if they needed to find the body at any point, I'd be easier to see. It would be considered a huge faux pas to wear white or anything reflective in the AuSable, but when you're not worried about reflecting off someone's light, white works just fine. Until a redneck ("bogan") decides to aim a spotlight at you for 2 kilometers while drunkenly screaming your name at midnight. Then every stroke is blinding as the light reflecting off the white shirt hurts your eyes. Tony said, "Don't say anything to them, if you do, they might throw rocks at you." Ok, paddle on then.

There are 3 tide changes during the race and our GPS speed monitor shows exactly when the tide was at its worst. We started on an outgoing tide and hit 10 km an hour fairly routinely.

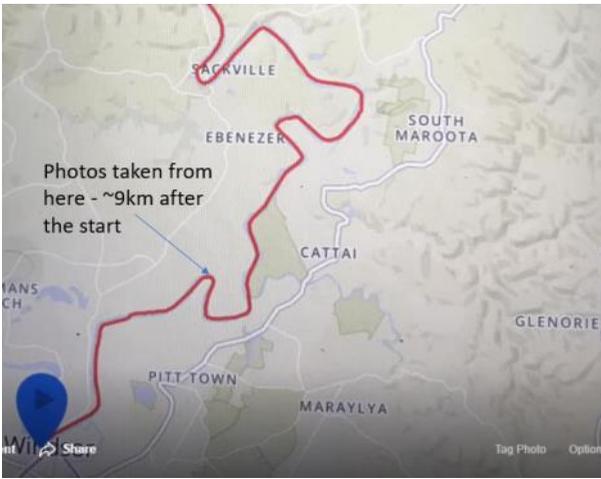


Then came the incoming tide and my morale went low knowing that we would have 6 hours of a slog. Even though we were going downstream with the current toward the ocean, in reality we were not. The incoming tide was so strong that we hugged the shores for 6 hours finding every eddy we could find so that we weren't paddling against the current. Our speed gradually slowed to 6.5 km an hour. You could see the incoming current ripping upstream in the center of the river.

The racing kayaks started 15 minutes behind us and it was a pretty sight every time a pack of them came by us. I started as a kayaker and I still love it the most. And when I see big packs of K1s and K2s drafting as they come by, I really miss it. Everyone is friendly in this race. I think some of the people just liked to hear my American accent. As soon as some of them saw "Susan" and the American flag on

the side of the boat, especially the younger people, they would always ask a few questions. It kept everyone busy and cut down on the monotony of knowing you had hours of going against a strong tide, and it was a little break from staring at the tree tops for an indication of which way the river was turning.

At one point there was a commotion ahead. A pack of kayaks was stopped in the middle of the river and we could hear that something not good was going on. Then a flash of light appeared and reflected back a huge dock that jutted out half way across the water, with the top of it right at face level. I believe that was definitely a proper use of the emergency lights we all had to carry. I think the lead kayak hit one of the many pylons holding up the dock, or nearly did, and we felt lucky the kayakers had gotten ahead of us because the dock was well and truly invisible against the black



water and the black background of the mountain ahead of us. We took a wide path around it as the kayaks came out and around too. It seemed they were all ok as they packed up again and carried on.

As we rounded a corner around a particularly tall and steep mountain, I saw one of the most striking sights I think I've ever seen in night racing. The full moon was big, bright, and glorious as it rose above the mountain. It was so big, so bright, and so beautiful that it seemed as if you could just reach up and touch it. The stars were amazing, and there were so many of them. The sky was lit up more beautifully than I've seen it in a very long time. Tony said that in the Australian bush there aren't any other lights to interfere, and that's why everything is so clear and bright in the sky. It looked like a million sparkling diamonds twinkling around a giant glowing pearl.

I wondered what time it was. I figured it was past midnight, given that the drunks seemed to be all asleep by now. There was no wind, no sound, no

ruffles on the water, just my voice Hut Hut Hut the call to switch sides in the darkness.

The sky was gradually clouding over. We knew it was going to rain at some point, and we were supposed to get some strong winds. But

not now. Now was just quiet, still, and glorious to see the cliffs, the mountains, and the trees among the stars and the full moon, the moon slowly being eclipsed by the wispy clouds coming in. I wondered what it would be like to try to see with no light when the clouds became solid.

Suddenly my head jarred awake. Had I fallen asleep just then? It was so quiet, so smooth, so incredibly surreal to be paddling where I was, in the black darkness of Australia, that I found myself now struggling to stay awake. I started calling huts on stroke 6 instead of 7, then in a few minutes it was 5 instead of 6. I hoped that changing sides more frequently would keep me awake. Was it really possible to fall asleep in the canoe? I didn't really want to find out but I was sure the answer was yes. I truly was nodding off.

Now what? Tony is not a talker in the boat, and I can't hear him well anyway. I focused on the tops of the trees to see which way the river would turn, I admired the cliffs and the stillness of the water, and I wished for some-

thing to wake me up. Then I took back that wish because I know I should be careful for what I wish for. I fought the urge to sleep while imagining how beautiful it must be to paddle in this valley during the day.

In the darkness I heard Tony's voice, "After the next checkpoint, the one after that will be the 66 kilometer mark." "66 kilometers next checkpoint" I echoed back, having learned early on that's what I needed to do to make sure of two things, first to let Tony know that I heard him, and second to make sure I heard him correctly. 66 kilometers, I thought, you've got to be kidding me. This was such a slog with hours of the incoming tide against us, and we've not yet gone 66 kilometers?! How much more of this have we got left?

My math skills have never been the sharpest pencil in the box, but on the Hawkesbury at that hour of the night, fighting sleep in the canoe, trying to focus on where I was going, where the next corner was in the dark, I was sorely struggling to subtract 66 from 111. This is what my mind was doing, "66, 76, 86, 96, 206, no that's not right. 66, 76, 86, 96, 106, that's it. Oh, I better call a hut. HUT. 66, 76, 86, 96, 106, 116, that's too much. HUT. 66, 76, 86, 96, 106. HUT. Ok, what's from 106 to 111? HUT. 66, 76, 10, 76, 86, 20, 86, 96, 30 HUT 96, 106, 40. Oh. My. God. There are 40 some kilometers left. HUT. 40 what? 45? Let's just call it 45.



Perhaps related to Tony Bond? Good to see that even famous spies attend this race. And as seen below, "Mr. Bond" apparently still prefers his drinks shaken rather than stirred...



HUT. What is 111 minus 106?
 HUT. There are 45 kilometers left.
 HUT. How many hours is that? 5?
 HUT. Five hours left." I had no idea what a toll it would take on mind and body to race without a light and five more hours seemed like forever.

Marker 66 was interesting. Lots of people were getting out there. There is a shorter race

within the Hawkesbury that ends there. Lots of activity to look at. I just yelled our number and we kept going. Tony had told me at the start that we were not stopping anywhere for any reason, and so we didn't. Barry, our intrepid pit crew, yelled loudly to us from shore, that the ferry ahead was stuck, the cable broke, so we had to go through the blue gate.

I had no idea what it all meant but I figured I would find out shortly. Sure enough, I saw two blue lights on the far side of the river. There was a police boat in the middle of the river and the policeman yelled that we had to go around the blue lights because they were trying to fix the cable on the disabled ferry. There are four ferries during the race and for each one we had to carefully obey the police officers. The ferries are pulled across the river on cables and you can't take a canoe over the cable or your boat could be overturned, cut in half, or worse, you could be decapitated. When the ferry is crossing, you must stop and wait for it. We were fortunate: we didn't have to stop at all for two of them and for the other two we had to stop for maybe 30 seconds each.

Once we crossed over the cable, Tony said we would be turning right. It sure didn't look like we had anywhere to turn right but this was Tony's 27th time on the Hawkesbury so I had no reason to doubt him. There were several boats going left. Tony said they were going to be lost and they would find a bridge eventually and that's how they would know they had to turn around. I sure could see why people would get lost here. It looked like two places to go left and no places to go right.

The right turn was virtually hidden and it was the first of many hidden spots where we had a group of people follow us



through. This time there were two kayakers who didn't know where they were going and followed us into the dark narrow opening in the river.

Here was the fourth and last ferry, the police told us to stop, and a group of maybe a dozen boats accumulated for the few seconds we had to wait. It was nice to see other paddlers around us again. Spirits were higher for everyone now that we had a small group together. Somehow it's easier to paddle in the dark when you know others are there, even if you can't see them very well. Everyone was so happy to greet another boat as they went by.

I think the most cheerful boat of all was the Rabaska. There were 10 paddlers in that boat. We could hear them coming for a long time. They cheered for everyone, occasionally they sang, and it seemed like they were all having a great time. When they came by I said "Hey Rabaska, I've paddled one of those before in

Canada." They thought that was pretty cool. It looked like all young people in the boat from what was possible to see in the dark. They were searching for a place to pull over. You have to be careful where you pull over on the Hawkesbury as Tony and several others warned me that you could very easily step out and sink into mud right up to your neck "and that would be the end of ya."

We rounded a few more corners and the wind hit. Strong

wind. This was not a good sign. The final 11 kilometers of the race is in open water, big open water, and a strong wind this far inland was not a good sign for the finish. It would mean big waves and I don't like big waves in a canoe.

It also got cold. I felt a little cold but not much, more like I noticed it had gotten cold but it wasn't bothering me. I felt just right with two shirts and the PFD on. PFDs are mandatory in Australia. I was glad to have one on even if just to keep warm.

We came through a few more spots where people were lost; each time we could see them sitting and waiting for someone to come along. We passed a checkpoint and saw a paddler way off to the right, clearly searching for the way. When he saw us, he picked up his pace and came straight to us, asking if we knew where to go. "This way," I said, as if I had any idea, but I knew the man in my bow certainly knew. Tony seemed to find the





openings in the trees so easily. Tony had a GPS, but he had it set to only show us if the upcoming turns were right or left, it was just a pink line on the screen. He doesn't use it for anything else.

The scenery on the Hawkesbury has to be gorgeous. I could see the outlines of sheer cliffs, lots of caves at the water line, and tall mountains. When we'd get close to the cliffs, it seemed that they were layered and striated, it would be so cool to see them during the day.

With several paddlers following us again because Tony knew the way, we made what I think was the longest left turn I've ever made. It never seemed

to end. It was so dark that I couldn't precisely tell, but it must have been a big sloping ox bow in the river. I could see the tree line but it was giving me an optical illusion. I kept thinking the trees were overhanging the water, but when I got to them, there was no overhang, the overhang had moved down the river. It did this 4 or 5 times, I kept seeing an imaginary tree over hanging the river, and the tree kept moving down the river. This is not the first time I experienced mind tricks or little hallucinations on a river during a long night. I once saw a gator on the northern Michigan AuSable (it was a log), and I saw big dinosaurs on Ontario's Muskoka River X (they

were trees). A few imaginary overhanging trees seemed merely amusing on the Hawkesbury.

I wasn't so amused however when we smacked right into some tall reeds growing in the river. I didn't see them and Tony didn't either. A couple of reeds smacked me in the face as I heard them scrape down the side of the boat. The initial sound just about had me jumping through my skin. While looking toward the left, to see how far out from shore the reeds went, out of the periphery of my right eye I saw something drop onto my right leg. It felt round and heavy and about as big as the palm of my hand. It also felt like it might have 8 legs.

Yes indeed it did have 8 legs and they were gripping with a bit of a pinch into my paddling pants.

Oh boy. Now what? I was afraid to take my hand and try to brush it off my thigh, for fear that I would agitate it and it would bite me in my hand or crawl up my arm toward my head and neck. What do I know about wild-life in the bush except that most things in Australia will kill you. I couldn't see what it was in the dark, not enough to identify it anyway. It seemed content to just sit on my leg. So it was going to sit there for as long as it wanted. I had no idea what I was going to do other than not touch it and hope to God it didn't move. I had a moment where I laughed thinking that if this was Peggy she would have run on top of the water and been in Sydney by now.

I briefly contemplated finding my emergency flashlight and taking a look at it. But to do that I was going to have to move around too much and probably

make it move too. The last thing I wanted was to have some unknown potentially deadly 8 legged thing become angry, move, and then be unable to see or find it in the boat under me. I thought I felt it move a bit. Yep, the pinching from those 8 legs had indeed moved. I briefly contemplated jumping out of the boat but then remembered the neck deep mud. It moved again. And then it bit me.

"OWWW," I yelled loudly, slightly alarmed, "Something is biting me!" "You'll be alright," was the calm Australian accented reply from the bow. I moved my leg and grabbed my pants and pulled them out and let them snap back, hoping that it would dislodge whatever was there. "OW! It's biting me again!" I yelled. "You'll be all right," came the calm voice from the bow again as I pressed my leg into the seat, hopefully squishing and killing whatever had bitten me. Given that there were no more bites,

I sincerely hoped I had killed it and not just knocked it into the bottom of the boat or under the seat where it was waiting to strike again.

Oh my God, I thought, what are the symptoms of a poisonous spider bite? How soon does venom take effect? Is my leg numb because I've been sitting in a canoe for 10 hours or because poison is pulsing through my body? Check your other leg Susan, oh good, it's numb too. Ok, I feel a little light headed. Is it because I'm sleep deprived, need some nutrition and hydration, and am mentally exhausted from trying to navigate down a foreign river with no light in the dark or because the venom is working? Take a drink, look up at the tree line, ok, I'm ok, adrenaline works against venom, right, or is that just what they give people with allergies? Breathe Susan breathe. Oh, maybe I was lightheaded because I was holding my breath.

I didn't have a whole lot of time to think about whether or not I was going to die from a spider bite, because we rounded a corner into a blasting headwind. In the moonlight I could see the whitecaps. We had reached the beginning of the open water. Tony yelled, "Do you see the checkpoint up there?" Checkpoint up there," I replied. "Head toward the checkpoint," he yelled. "Straight to the checkpoint," I yelled back.

The boat was crashing over whitecaps and water was flooding



into the boat. We had a bow deck cover on, knowing the possibility of rough water, but it wasn't sufficient to keep the waves from pouring in. Tony yelled something, but the howl of the wind and the crashing of the water made it impossible to hear what he said. "I can't hear you," I yelled.

Tony doesn't swear. He doesn't believe in swearing and doesn't like it. Tony said a swear word. Well, he yelled a swear word really loudly, and not only did I hear it but I think everyone on the river heard it. The non-swearing translation of what he said was essentially, "Go to the side of the river immediately and get out of these big waves!"

We couldn't keep going into the waves or we would fill the boat and sink, but now we had to take the waves on the beam to get out of there as quickly as possible. All I could think about was, just let me get to the side of the river. Kathy Kenley had, long ago when I was first learning to sea kayak, taught me the phrase "water goes up and down." Kim Greiner taught me to "lean forward and paddle low" when the waves get big in a canoe. And that's what I said to myself while paddling and bracing toward the shore, water goes up and down, lean forward and paddle low, water goes up and down, lean forward and paddle low.

We made it to the edge, Tony yelled, "Don't let it go back out there." I repeated, "Don't go back out there," but what I was thinking was, "Are you kidding me? There is no f'ing way in tar-nation that I am going to go back out there." Approaching the checkpoint, with the water rolling a bit too much for my comfort even close to shore, Tony yelled, "It gets worse when we get around this corner, make sure the bailer is open." "Bailer open" is all I could manage to reply while in my mind I was having a panic attack at the thought of it being even worse.

Around the corner we went, into a sea of more white-caps. Tony yelled, "Go straight





over to that mountain, we can stay in the shelter of the mountain when we get there.” “Straight to the mountain,” I replied, while thinking, how the heck am I going to do that?

Quartering waves from the front kept my mind occupied for the next half mile of open water to the mountain. There was no way we could paddle with both of us on one side to keep us straight. The wind was too strong for my draw strokes to work. I couldn’t call huts because I was sure we couldn’t take the risk of changing sides in the open water in waves of this size. So I had to rudder occasionally to keep us on course. My shoulders started to burn, but I hoped we were headed toward some relief.

Once in the shelter of the mountain, Tony said, “We’re going to cross back over up there and hug the left shore.” “Cross over and stay left,” I yelled all the while thinking how much more of this is there? Tony had said after

the last checkpoint that there were 11 kilometers left, a little less than 7 miles. There were probably 4 or 5 more miles left as we began to cross the open water again. Just lean forward and paddle low, water goes up and down. I was fairly terrified to swim in the dark open water.

Once across, we hugged the shore, having to come out a bit now and again to go around big boat docks and big boats moored off the docks. There was now a group of about 6 boats together as we passed another checkpoint. The wind and waves were so loud that the volunteer on the boat couldn’t hear me yelling our boat number. We had a little trouble at a few of the checkpoints with the volunteers understanding my American accent, and I think my accent combined with the howling wind meant that this volunteer just couldn’t figure out what I was saying. Tony yelled the boat number too and the man still couldn’t

get it. Finally another boat, one between us and the checkpoint powerboat, yelled our number for us. I don’t know who they were but I was thankful they did it. I wasn’t about to turn around in those conditions to try again.

“That was the easy part,” Tony yelled, “It gets worse from here.” I would have cried if I could have, but instead I just kept paddling, because there was zero other choice. And of course then the rains came.

I hit something squishy with my paddle. They told me if it squishes it’s a jellyfish, if it’s hard it’s a shark. So far they were all squishy. A lot of squishes. And then there was the hard one. Sharks and jellyfish. Yep, there they were.

The final checkpoint was way out in open water, I was hitting jellyfish right and left and at least one shark with my paddle, it was raining, it was howling wind, it was cold, we had 4 kilometers to go, and the waves were bigger than any racing canoe should have ever been out on. I was scared, exhausted, thirsty, and we’d been out long enough that the tide was changing again and the sky was starting to get light. And worst of all, I was robbed of the beautiful phosphorescence I was promised once we got to the open water. Maybe it was there and I never saw it, I wouldn’t know; I was trying not to have a full out panic attack seeing the finish bridge in the far distance and knowing we had to cross the

big white capped waves once again as one last final insult. Bam, my paddle hit something hard again.

I felt water on my ankles. I looked down and saw way too much water in the boat. There was nothing we could do. The bailer couldn't keep up with the waves pouring in. All it would take is one good slosh and we would be over. I thought, I am not swimming with the sharks. Lean forward and paddle low, water goes up and down. The bridge didn't seem to be getting any closer.

One of the best things about paddling with Tony is that he never changes pace. No matter what's happening, he is calm and steady. Wind, waves, jellyfish, sharks, spider bites, he never alters the stroke rate or the pace. Through it all, that never varying pace was thoroughly reassuring and it's what carried me along and kept me from screaming to quit. Coming across that last stretch of open water, it was particularly calming to watch my bowman never falter.

Nearly 13 hours after we started, we

reached the finish line. My first, Tony's 27th. I was wobbly and light headed because we couldn't eat or drink for the last 11 kilometers, I stood in the parking lot and stripped buck naked and didn't care if anyone was looking, that's how bad I wanted dry and warm clothing, I had two big hot welts from whatever bit me on my leg, and it was hours before I stopped feeling like I was going up and down. *But I did it*, and I did it with a legend in the bow.

We learned a few minutes after we finished that, very shortly after we passed the last checkpoint before heading into the 11 kilometer open water section, that the race organizers shut down the race and stopped everyone behind us from continuing. Fully half the field was behind us and didn't get to finish the full distance due to the horrible con-

ditions we faced. Half of me thought, those lucky dogs, the other half of me thought, thank God I finished so I never have to do this again.

Nodding off in the car, holding the Hawkesbury finisher medal that a nice volunteer lady handed me on the boat ramp, looking at my bowman nodding off next to me, I realized that finishing the Hawkesbury Classic really is no big deal. What it is, actually, is a very big deal.

Toughest race I've ever done.

And I can't wait until next year.





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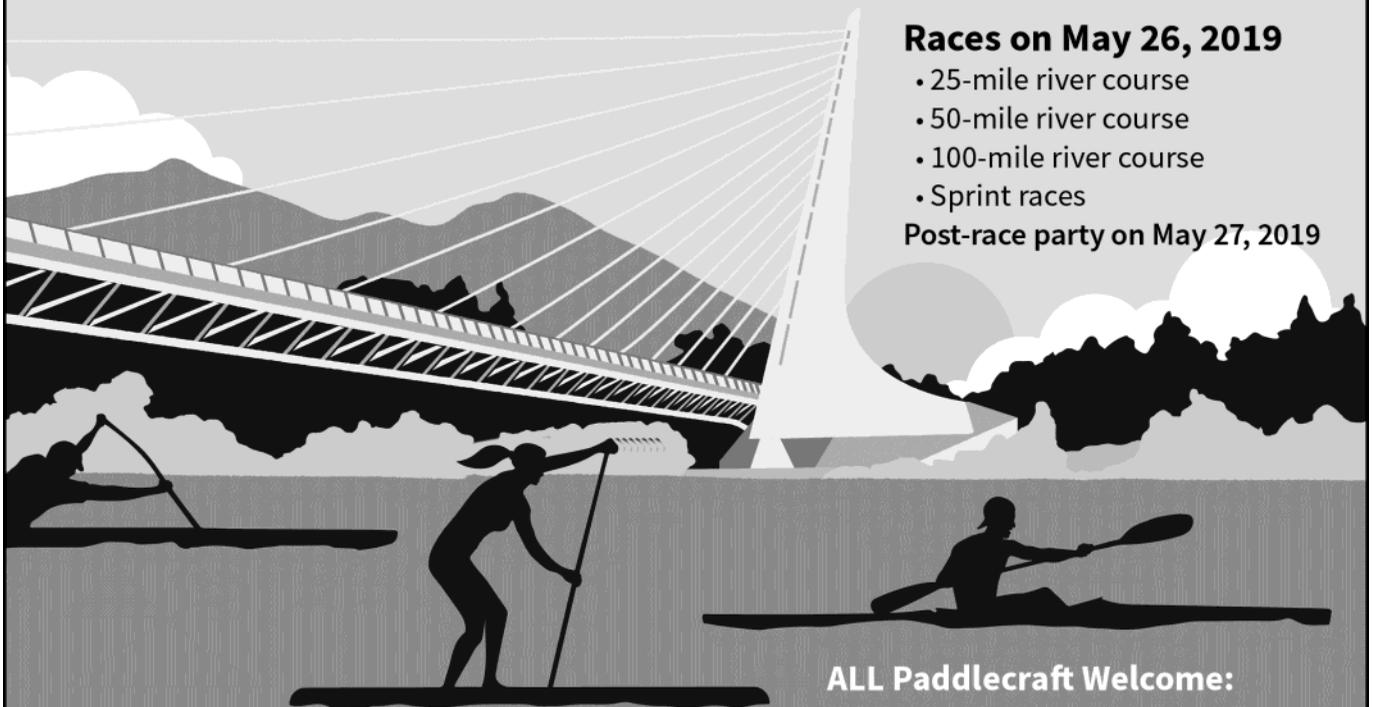
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THE GENERAL CLINTON—2018

PETER HEED



For many years the General Clinton 70 Miler, a race running from Cooperstown, NY to Bainbridge, NY, has not only served as the first leg of marathon canoe racing's Triple Crown (together with Michigan's AuSable Marathon and Quebec's *Classique Internationale de Canots*), but it has always started the Pro Division class separately - and last. The "Top Guns" in marathon canoe racing will usually be found in this class, and the competition is fierce. This exciting race is also a favorite with race fans.

This past Memorial Day the race organizers decided to try something new. The Amateur C-2 classes have traditionally started a full hour ahead of the Pro C-2s. This has been workable but it was also noted that spectators - and the many folks acting as feeder teams for the Amateur C-2s - often would not get to watch the

Pro teams battling it out until miles down the course when the fastest pros would finally catch up and flash by. There did not seem to be a good alternative given the limited nature of the traditional starting line by the Cooperstown docks and the necessary difficult 180 degree buoy turn around a pontoon boat.

All of this recently changed when the race committee secured a new starting line area nearly a mile farther up Lake Otsego. The starting line could now be made much wider and it permitted a longer straight-in run to the shallows at the mouth of the lake and the exciting portage around the outlet dam below the hospital in Cooperstown. Bingo! Why not start ALL the Amateur C-2s and the Pro C-2s together - since they are in the same type of canoes? In this way, it was thought by the race committee, that all these

teams could experience the thrill of starting together, and have the chance to wake ride with the best. Less experienced teams, not wanting to mix it up with the "fast and furious" elite racers, could always go way out to the safer sides of the wide starting line. And the committee realized that all of the feeder teams and other spectators would have more opportunity to be in the thick of things and get to watch the exciting competition unfold - both in the Pro classes and Amateur classes!

So that is exactly what happened this past May. Although some of the Pro teams originally were concerned about having amateur C-2s among them, it did not prove to be a significant problem. On the other hand, the feedback from most of the racers and spectators has been overwhelmingly positive. The Feeder Teams and

spectators at the hospital portage, Milford pit, Goodyear area, and the Oneonta portage got to watch the Pros and Amateurs battle it out.

And what a special treat it was this year with the return (out of “retirement”) of Serge Corbin. Serge made a “comeback” appearance, paddling with young and talented Guillaume Blais. The top Pro teams provided plenty of excitement for both the fans and the amateur paddlers - who got perhaps their last chance to go off the line head-to-head with Serge Corbin!!

The competition was very close in the early going, as Andy Triebold and Steve Lajoie took the lead, closely followed by Ben Schlimmer/Trevor Lefever, Chris Proulx/Samuel Frigon, and the ageless Serge Corbin with Guillaume Blais. Triebold and Lajoie opened a gap, but the battle for second place went back and forth coming right down to the wire. At the Bainbridge finish line, spectators and fans were treated to a dramatic close sprint with Serge and Guillaume taking 2nd place, just beating local favorites Ben and Trevor by 3 seconds! Andy and Steve continued

their dominance, by taking the overall victory in 7:30:11.

The real winners were the fans, the spectators, the feeder teams, and the other Amateur racers - anyone who loves marathon canoe racing at its best. The start procedure was a huge success, and the race committee has indicated that they will likely utilize this same format next year. Something to keep in mind for sure.

See you in Cooperstown!

Peter



2018 USCA Nationals Results Missing from the Fall 2018 Issue of Canoe News

SUNDAY C2 WOMEN/YOUTH (5-14 SHORT COURSE)

1	395	JESSICA ALICEA-SANTI, ME Javier Alicea-santia	1:10:01.6	0	: 0.0
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SUNDAY C2 MIXED OPEN

1	221	REBECCA DAVIS, Michael MI Davis	:54:36.3	1:45:57.4	0	: 0.0
2	223	EMMA ELLSWORTH, Trevor MA Lefever	:54:37.1	1:47:10.4	0	1:13.0
3	316	HOLLY REYNOLDS, Weston NY Willoughby	:55:20.6	1:48:36.9	0	2:39.5
4	228	BRIANA FITZGERALD, Adam NY Galinas	:55:28.4	1:48:39.5	0	2:42.1
5	257	PHOEBE REESE, Joe NY Schlimmer	:55:37.6	1:48:43.3	0	2:45.9
6	324	JOANN OLNEY, Dan Medina NY	:55:57.9	1:48:53.3	0	2:55.9
7	247	GREGORY LOWRY, Betsy Ray NJ	:58:23.2	1:53:16.0	0	7:18.6
8	224	TOM ELLSWORTH, Katie PeckMA	1:00:01.7	1:57:07.1	0	11:09.7
9	384	TIM ALLEN, Hannah Rubin MA	:59:59.5	1:57:45.7	0	11:48.3

SUNDAY C2 MIXED MASTER

1	229	PAM FITZGERALD, Steve NY Miller	:58:03.1	1:53:00.0	0	: 0.0
2	216	GREG BECHTEL, Susan OH Bechtal	1:11:48.6	2:20:21.6	0	27:21.6
3	217	TONY BOND, Susan WilliamsAUS	1:15:07.9	2:26:13.3	0	33:13.3

SUNDAY C2 MIXED SENOR

1	296	CALVIN HASSEL, Lynn CapenNE	:56:23.1	1:49:15.4	0	: 0.0
2	234	BOB WISSE, Cathy Grimes NY	:56:39.6	1:51:43.4	0	2:28.0
3	299	ELIZABETH SCHLUTER, Bill WI Torongo	:56:40.4	1:51:47.9	0	2:32.5
4	253	DAN MECKLENBURG, Debbie OH Brax	:58:04.5	1:53:08.8	0	3:53.4
5	284	SARAH WEBB, John Webb MI	:59:07.0	1:55:09.3	0	5:53.9
6	258	PETER ROSS, Priscilla NY Reinertsen	1:04:44.1	2:05:24.3	0	16:08.9
7	375	RICHARD NEUGEBAUER, NY Lorraine Turtorro	1:04:34.7	2:05:47.6	0	16:32.2
8	233	ED GREINER, Kim Greiner NY	1:06:36.4	2:10:19.7	0	21:04.3
9	400	PEGGY BRAMAN, Chuck NY Braman	1:09:14.8	2:14:58.4	0	25:43.0

SUNDAY C2 MIXED VETERAN

1	222	JOHN EDWARDS, Joanna FL Faloon	:58:21.7	1:53:46.7	0	: 0.0
2	262	KAREN SIMPSON, Gord Cole CAN	1:00:06.6	1:58:23.6	0	4:36.9
3	321	SANDRA SUPERCHI, Tom MA Payne	1:01:03.9	1:58:36.0	0	4:49.3
4	320	DAVE DORSEY, Kris Dorsey MA	1:01:07.7	1:58:36.9	0	4:50.2
5	250	STEVE MARTIN, Teresa PA Stout	1:01:09.6	2:01:24.2	0	7:37.5
6	310	MARK KOPTA, Laura Kopta NY	1:04:21.0	2:05:15.5	0	11:28.8
7	225	JOY EMSHOFF, Bob Spain TX	1:08:01.1	2:08:14.4	0	14:27.7

SUNDAY C2 STANDARD MIXED

1	226	JOHN FINNEN, Linda LenschPA	1:03:05.3	2:03:34.0	0	: 0.0
2	255	CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, NY Shauna Murphy	1:04:44.2	2:05:05.9	0	1:31.9
3	241	ALLEN KELLY, Blanche TownNY	1:03:39.7	2:05:14.9	0	1:40.9
4	220	COLLEEN CURRAN, Bernie OH Moller	1:05:18.5	2:08:16.5	0	4:42.5
5	254	GEOFF MOORE, Susan KnapikNY	1:06:42.8	2:11:10.5	0	7:36.5
6	244	BILL KOSTRA, Debbie PA Kostr	1:07:33.3	2:13:14.6	0	9:40.6
7	270	ED SHARP, Lynn Mcduffie VA	1:12:00.6	2:19:44.7	0	16:10.7

GO-GETTER – EARNED LIFE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM TO BE DISCONTINUED ON DECEMBER 31, 2019

There have always been three ways a USCA member could obtain a Life Membership. **Paid** (twenty times the dues amount for governing membership); **Earned or Go-Getter** by recruiting at least fifty governing or junior members with no time limit to accumulate this number of recruits and finally be nominated for **Honorary Life**. After December 31, 2019, there will only be two ways to become a Life Member, Paid and Honorary. Why is the Go-Getter program being discontinued?

At the 2018 USCA Annual Meeting, the Delegates approved to amend one of the duties of the Membership Chair in regard to the Go-Getters. The amendment changed the requirement from ‘maintain an accurate list’ of Go-Getters to only ‘maintain a list’ of Go-Getters to be published in the *Canoe News* annually. However this list will be in every issue until December 31, 2019. After December 31, 2019, the Go-Getter program will cease to exist. Members who have recruited fifty (50) or more new members by 12/31/2019 will be eligible to receive an Earned Life Membership. After that date, all recruit numbers will be deleted from the membership database and the Earned Life Membership will be deleted in the Rules and Regulations as a Membership Classification. The recruit record will be saved in the archives by the Historian.

When the USCA was first organized in 1969, recruitment to USCA was encouraged and rewarded with a ‘free’ Life Membership. Originally the Membership Chair’s duty was to keep a record of the number of members recruited by any member on a file card and include a running number with the name of the person recruited to prevent duplication. These file cards were maintained in a Rolodex file box until the early 1990’s. At that time, the hard copy data was transferred to a separate database. The number of recruits by each member was recorded, but not the names of those who had been recruited by each member. If a member didn’t renew for several years, they could be recruited again, even by the same person. Each Membership Chair has done their best to make sure accurate records were kept. But, it takes a lot of time to search through years and years of records to verify if the new member is truly ‘new’. If this search is not done, the recruit number is not accurate. Due to the time involved to verify whether the member being recruited was ‘new’ or not, it was determined to phase out the Go-Getter program.

There have been a total of 26 members who obtained Earned Life Membership as Go-Getters since 1971. The last Earned Life Membership was awarded in 2014 to Gustave Lamperez who continues to recruit as a Trainer in the Instructor Certification program.

The list of Go-Getters is in the next column. The members who have recruited fifty (50) or more members have already been awarded Earned Life Membership. Those who have not reached the fifty member mark yet and would like to become a Go-Getter list and be awarded Earned Life Membership, you have a whole year to recruit the additional members. Make copies of the Membership form and hand them out at the races or cruises. Be sure to have your name as a recruiter on the form. **Help the USCA Grow!**

Go-Getter List as of 12/28/18

Last Name	First Name	State	Recn
Cichanowski	Mike	MN	422
Mack	Jim	OH	243
Terrell	Ross	OH	163
Stevens	Gareth	WI	113
Spain	Bob	TX	103
Cichanowski	Heather	MN	95
Cichanowski	Amy	MN	94
Theiss	Joan	FL	89
Theiss	Harold	FL	87
Zellers	John	IN	84
Lamperez	Gustave	LA	78
Whitaker	Jan	NY	78
Pontius	Mary Ann	IN	74
Narramore	Bob	TX	70
Ludwig	Norm	PA	68
Hampel	Larry	WI	64
Latta	Larry	OH	64
Kruger	Dave	WI	61
Foster	Richard	NY	59
Lake	Susan	NY	59
Pontius	Terry	IN	59
Reeves	Lloyd	FL	33
Stout	Teresa	PA	31
Brunstrom*	Morgan	WA	28
Brown*	Larry	NC	22
Liquori	Larry	NY	13
Gerg*	Ken	PA	9
Thiel	Paula	CT	8
Emshoff	Joy	TX	7
Heed	Peter	NH	7
Reinertsen	Priscilla	NH	7
Corrigan	Bill	OH	7
Kanost	Bill	IN	6

* Paid or Honorary Life Members

Note: Only current 2019 members may recruit new members. Membership applications must have the name of the recruiter on the form. A new member can only be recruited one time. The 2019 Membership year started on 10/1/2018 and new members may be recruited until 12/31/2019.



United States Canoe Association

Est 1968
 Competition ★ Cruising ★ Conservation ★ Camping ★ Camaraderie ★

Membership Application Form

Or Join on-line at www.uscanoe.com

Date _____

Name of Organization _____

Enter the name of organization only if you join as: (Race Sponsor, Club Affiliate, or Business Affiliate)

Last Name _____ First Name _____ M.I. _____

Address _____ Date of Birth _____ Gender M F

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Country (Non US) _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Membership: Renewal New If new, recruited by: _____

Member Type:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governing (18 & Over) \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Junior \$7.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club Affiliate * \$30.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Race Sponsor \$30.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Affiliate \$30.00 |

- Please attach your Club Membership roster with this application.

Foreign (US funds only) Canada/Mexico: Add \$5.00; All others add \$10.00

For family membership – other than above member, please complete the following:

(Family includes spouse and unmarried children under 19 years of age as of January 1, residing within the same household.)

Name:	Date of Birth:	Gender	
_____	_____	M <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	M <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	M <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	M <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	M <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Send payment and membership form to:

Make check payable to:
USCA

Lynne McDuffie, USCA Membership Chair
 410 Cockman Rd
 Robbins, NC 27325
 Phone: (910) 948-3238
 Email: llmcduffie@gmail.com

I prefer to have Canoe News delivered digitally _____ or as a printed copy _____

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USCA 2019 DELEGATES

OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, DELEGATES, & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

USCA Officers

Executive Committee

President & Chair:

Rebecca Davis

Vice President:

Phoebe Reese

Secretary:

Barbara Bradley

Treasurer:

John Edwards

Executive Director

Vacant

Delegates

NOTE: ALL DELEGATES MUST BE 2019 MEMBERS BEFORE THE NATIONAL MTG

Organized State & Regional Divisions

Florida Division/USCA

Tim Dodge

13859 Valleybrooke Ln, Orlando, FL 32826
352-318-5877; timmdodge60@gmail.com

Larry Frederick

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352-270-0289; LF6978@yahoo.com

Indiana Division/USCA

Steve Horney

15806 Timber Willow Dr, Hometown, IN 46748
260-452-6447; soarer_270@yahoo.com

New York Division/USCA

Dave Donner

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716-839-4307; revdonner@aol.com

Larry Liquori

79 Locust Drive, Kings Park, NY 11754
631-406-6918; lliquori@jacka-liquori.com

+4 Delegates to be named for 2019

Ohio Division/USCA

William (Bill) Corrigan

5888 E. Kemper Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45241
513-530-9249; wmcarrigan@fuse.net

Larry Latta

1188 Broken Bow Ct, Westerville, OH 43081
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Penn-Jersey Division/USCA

Charlie Bruno

2124 James Way, Saylorsburg, PA 18353
610-381-3780, Brunos@ptd.net

Glen Green

312 Duff Ave, Wenonah, NJ 08090
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Norm Ludwig

2006 West Side Road, Jersey Shore, PA 17740
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Teresa Stout

3563 Roller Coaster Rd, Corsica PA 15829
(814) 952-1444; teresastout3354@yahoo.com

Non-Organized Regional Divisions

East South Central Division (AL, KY, MS, TN)

Fred Tuttle

2093 Alexandria Dr, Lexington, KY 40504
270-993-3999; doctuttle@hotmail.com

East North Central Division (IL, MI, WI)

Roxanne Barton

6201 23 1/2 Mile Rd, Homer, MI 49245
517-568-3702; bartonpigfarm@dmcibb.net

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131 S Berkley St, Kalamazoo, MI 49006
269-343-5150; usca@comp-u-port.net

Lynne Witte

58 Union St, Mt Clemens, MI 48043
586-201-5695; dogpaddler54@gmail.com

Karl Teske

213 Jessica Ct, North Aurora, IL 60542
630-264-6575; kteske213@comcast.net

Mountain Division

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

Lynn Capen

685 Sugarloaf Mountain Rd, Boulder, CO 80302
303-444-0187; lynncapen@gmail.com

New England Division

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

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687 Montgomery Rd, Westfield, MA 01085
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Tricia Heed

581 West Street, Keene, NH 03431
603-209-2299; trilon777@gmail.com

Paula Thiel

487 Wylie School Road, Voluntown, CT 06384
860-564-2443; prmai@comcast.net

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

Morgan Brunstrom

3011 Bennett Dr, Bellingham WA 98225
360-756-1312

South Atlantic Division

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

Lynne McDuffie

410 Cockman Rd, Robbins, NC 27325
910-948-3238; llmcduffie@gmail.com

William McDuffie

410 Cockman Rd, Robbins, NC 27325
910-948-3238; wlrmcduffie@gmail.com

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

Earl Brimeyer

2595 Rhomberg Ave, Dubuque, IA 52001-1445
563-583-6345; ebrimeyer@aol.com

Doug Pennington

1735 County Rd 421, Poplar Bluff, MO 63901
573-785-0431; penncanoe@hotmail.com

Richard Hill

265 Ashford Place, Iowa City, IA 55545
319-354-1936; Richardlarae.hill@gmail.com

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

Bob Spain

803 Arroweye Tr, Austin, TX 78733
512-296-5544; rws0987@yahoo.com

Don Walls

9 Bunker Hill Ln, Russellville, AR 72802
479-280-1319; donwalls2@netzero.com

Non-US Regional Division

Vacant

Affiliated Club Delegates for 2018

Florida Competition Paddlers Association

Kathy Edwards; St. Petersburg, FL
727-522-3348; klpe86@outlook.com

Free Style Group

Paul Klonowski; Gurnee, IL
847-687-2477; pklonowski@comcast.net

Michigan Canoe Racing Association

Chris Hewitt; Lansing, MI
989-751-4324; hewittc08@gmail.com

New England Canoe & Kayak Racing Assn

Priscilla Reinertsen; Contoocook, NH
603-746-6491; prtsten1@comcast.net

New York Marathon Canoe Racing Assn

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

North Carolina Canoe Racing Association

Steve Rosenau; Mt. Holly, NC
704-483-4130; sar4130@gmail.com

Pennsylvania Assn of Canoeing and

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

St Charles Canoe Club

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

Texas Canoe & Kayak Racing Association

Joy Emshoff; Austin, TX
512-626-3741; jle4321@yahoo.com

Standing Committees for 2019

Adaptive Paddling – Jan Whitaker
Auditing – Steve Rosenau
Barton Award (Sub-ctee, Youth Activities) - Phoebe Reese & Teresa Stout
Bylaws Review - Lynne McDuffie
Camaraderie – Open
Camping/Cruising - Bob Allen
Competition – Norm Ludwig
Competition / Dragon Boat - Robert McNamara
Competition / Kayak – Ron Kaiser
Competition / Nationals Awards – Open
Competition / Orienteering – Stephen Miller
Competition / Outrigger Canoe – Open
Competition / Adult Sprints – John Edwards
Competition / Youth Sprints - Open
Competition / Standup Paddleboard - Lloyd Reeves
Competition / Swan Boat - Glen Green
Conservation - Chris Hewitt
Education - Lynne Witte
Historian - Joan Theiss
Instructor Certification – Bob Spain
Insurance Oversight- Joan Theiss & Scott Stenberg
International - John Edwards
Marketing – Gerry James
Membership – Lynne McDuffie
Merchandise Sales – Larry Latta
Nationals Coordinator - Open
Nominating – Peter Heed & Bob Spain
Publications – Steven Horney
Publicity & PR – Open
Safety – Glen Green
Technical Inspection – Bill Corrigan
USCA Bylaws/Rules/Regulations Review & Oversight – Joan Theiss
USCA/ IC F Grants – Priscilla Reinertsen
Youth Activities – Phoebe Reese & Teresa Stout
Webmaster- Larry Latta
Women's Interest – Teresa Stout

Special Appointments

USCA Marathon Coordinator to USACK Marathon Committee -Kaitlyn McElroy

Business Affiliates

American Dragon Boat Association

John Miller; Dubuque, IA
dboatmny@aol.com

Great Hollow Nature Preserve

John Foley, New Fairchild, CT
jfoley@greathollow.org

Housatonic Valley Association

Alison Dixon; Stockbridge, MA
adixon@hvatoda.org

Paddle Florida, Inc. (2019)

Bill Richards; Gainesville, FL
bill@paddleflorida.org

Islands Inspired Boards, LLC

Catherine Sutz, Conway, SC
catesutz@hotmail.com

Nigel Dennis Kayaks in Florida LLC

Janice Kriwanek; Gainesville, FL
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Paddle Florida, Inc. (2019)

Bill Richards; Gainesville, FL
bill@paddleflorida.org

Performance Kayak Inc.

Hansel Lucas; West Newton, PA
hansel@performance-kayak.com

The Paddle Attic

Jeff Stephens; Winter Park, FL
jeff@thepaddleattic.com

Western Penn Solo Canoe Rendezvous

Bruce Kemp, Fenelton, PA
bckjal@yahoo.com

Yadkin Riverkeeper, Inc.

Katie Wilder; Winston-Salem, NC
katiew@yadkinriverkeeper.org

Club Affiliates without a Delegate

Birch Hill Canoe Club

Charley Brackett; Fitzwilliam, NH
603-585-7167

BRD Fishing

William Eicher, New York, NY
info@brdfishing.org

Dayton Canoe Club

Thomas Tweed, Dayton, OH
thomasjtweed@yahoo.com

Elderly Paddlers Association

Michael Miller; Cincinnati, OH
mmmillermc@gmail.com

Explore Kentucky Initiative

Gerry James; Frankfort, KY
gerry@explorekentucky.us

Friends of the Great Swamp

Loretta Wallace; Brewster, NY
laurwally@aol.com

Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation

Lee Butler; Freeport, IL
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Island Paddlers

David Donner; Amherst, NY
revdonner@aol.com

Kent Center Athletic Club

Rebekah Hock; Chestertown, MD
rhock@kentcenter.org

Middle Grand River Organization of Watersheds

Loretta Crum, Lansing, MI
lcrum@mgrow.org

Minnesota Canoe Association

Emily Broderson, Maple Grove, MN
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New England Kayak Fishing

Chris Howie; Rockland, MA
seahorsech@comcast.net

Outrigger Chicago

Kristin Flentye, Lake Bluff, IL
kafentye@yahoo.com

River Advocates of South Central Connecticut

Mary Mushinsky, Wallingford, CT
marymushinsky@att.net

River City Paddlers

Peter Rudnick; Folsom, CA
rudnipe@live.com

Stone Bike and Boat

Lee Jones; Stoneville, NC
leesrockviewfarm@yahoo.com

Texas Outrigger Canoe Club

Kristen Wollard; Shoreacres, TX
kristenwollard@yahoo.com

Westfield River Watershed Association

Phillip Sousa; Westfield, MA
aboveandbelowh20@verizon.net

Symmes Creek Restoration Committee

Harry Mayenchein, Chesapeake, OH
hmanshine@zoominternet.net

Tour du Teche, Inc.

Trey Snyder, St Martinville, LA
treysnyder.cpa@gmail.com

2019 Nationals Info

2019 USCA National Stock Aluminum Marathon Championships: Sept 21-22 in Bastrop, TX. 14 mile downstream run on the Colorado River.

2019 USCA Marathon Nationals: August 6-11 in Warren, PA.

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410 Cockman Rd
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Phone: 910-948-3238
E-mail: llmcduffie@gmail.com

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Contact: *Lynne McDuffie*

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