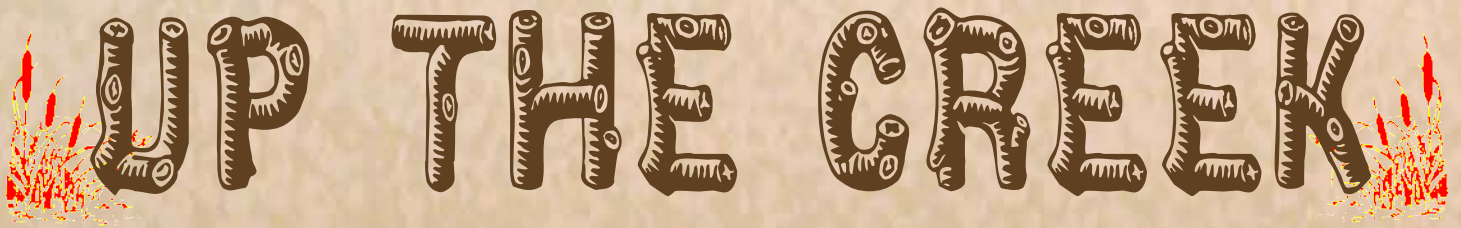


UP THE CREEK

The title 'UP THE CREEK' is written in a large, black, hand-drawn font. Each letter is filled with a white, repeating pattern of small, stylized figures or shapes. The letters are flanked by decorative elements: on the left, a cluster of red and orange autumn leaves; on the right, a cluster of red and orange autumn leaves.

Autumn 2007

The Hackensack River Canoe & Kayak Club Newsletter

A photograph of two people in a canoe on a river. The person in the front is wearing a white shirt and a tan hat. The person in the back is wearing a white shirt and dark pants. The canoe is on a calm river with a forested bank in the background. The water is still, reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees.

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- ◆ And All Sorts Of Other Stuff...



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Captain's Log

DIFFERENT STROKES

By Jeff Bowen



For me, paddling is a gratifying and delightful pastime that allows me to get outside and enjoy the company of my fellow paddlers. I'm enthusiastic about paddling. Too enthusiastic, sometimes, for some of the people at work that I talk to about it. My wife has warned me on several occasions not to assume that everyone shares the degree of enthusiasm that I enjoy.

When I'm out on a trip with fellow club members, I feel a constant urge to give advice that I think will enhance their paddling experience. This advice is probably poorly presented, and doubtless frequently found to be merely annoying.

I often see puzzled expressions on the face of newer paddlers as they try to discern the "secret" that enables the more experienced paddlers to negotiate some obstacle or execute a difficult maneuver. It seems to them that the boat of the more experienced paddler "knows" how to align itself. It moves and turns with the grace and ease of Ginger Rogers on the dance floor. The newbie's puzzled expressions sometimes turn to scowls of frustration as the he attempts to follow the same line as the preceding paddler but is unable to.

Why? What's wrong? Do I need a different boat? A different paddle? What?

The answer is in at least two parts. First, the ability to "read the water" or understand the current and its effects on the boat is something that comes with experience. Second...Ya Gotta Know the Strokes.

A lot of new kayakers know just two strokes: 1) Forward 2) Backward

They use these two strokes in combination and are able to move their kayaks more or less to a given point if there is not too much interference from wind and current. They might also know "Rudder", something that canoe paddlers seem to become familiar with very quickly.

Knowing more strokes and how to use them will enable you to control your boat better. When you can control your boat better, it will behave as if it "knows" where it should go, and how it should turn. I learned this at Boy Scout Camp in the summer of 1962.

Summer Camp was like heaven. I enjoyed the ceremony of raising the flag every morning, and having a hearty breakfast with the rest of the guys in my troop. There was ample supervision to insure we performed our various chores, and a variety of activities to keep us all busy throughout the day. We all had lunch just when we began to feel hungry again, and then there were more fun activities and classes. We had time to visit the Nature Lodge, where several turtles, including a "small" snapping turtle the size of a dinner plate, were kept in the pen in front. The snapper usually just skulked at the bottom of the sunken bathtub that was in the pen. Inside the Nature Lodge we would

always stop by the terrariums which housed the snakes which were captured right in the camp. We stared at them, not daring to tap on the glass and arouse the ire of the Nature Lodge Director. The Garter snakes were somewhat lively, trying to reach up and find a way out of the screened top. The Milk snake and the Water snakes seemed content to lie loosely coiled under their incandescent lamps, soaking up the heat. The key attraction, however, was the large terrarium that held the Rattlesnakes and Copperheads. They lay there exuding malice and danger, stock still, only once in a great while did they lazily wave their forked tongue to sample the air for evidence, we were sure, of prey. Sometimes they wouldn't move for days at a time.

Dinnertime! Once again assembled in the open air dining hall, more food and then the perfunctory singing of camp songs, and then.....

Free Period.

My neighborhood friend and fellow Raccoon Patrol member Rudy and I ran like deer to get down to the lake to go canoeing. We had found that the newly painted yellow canoe "12" was the lightest of the canoes on the rack. Every evening we raced down to get "#12". Rudy would take the stern, and I would take the bow. We would cruise around the lake in the evening, often heading into the lily pads at the end of the lake. We would attempt to sneak up on turtles and frogs, and we would race the other canoes. We were very fast in our light boat with Rudy adjusting our course carefully, and me in the bow supplying all the forward thrust that I could.

Near the end of our two weeks in camp it was announced that there would be an exciting competition among all the troops. There would be Pioneering contests, Bridge building contests, knot tying and fire making contests, and races of every kind, including **CANOE RACES**. Rudy and I were the obvious choice to represent our troop for a canoe race.

The day of the race arrived, Rudy and I were much concerned that we might not be able to select "Old number 12" and miss that little extra advantage. Our real disadvantage, as it turned out, was me, and my knowledge, or lack thereof, of basic canoe strokes.

Assembled at the starting line, the race director instructed us.

"WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL, YOU WILL PADDLE TOWARD THE CAMP COUNSELOR OUT THERE IN THE ROWBOAT."

We all looked at the counselor in the rowboat about halfway down the lake.

"YOU MUST GO AROUND HIS BOAT AND THEN RETURN TO THE FINISH LINE HERE."

"Ha! This'll be a snap! We'll be able to sprint the whole way! We got this sucka in the bag!"

"ON THE WAY OUT TO THE ROWBOAT WHEN YOU HEAR ME BLOW THE WHISTLE, YOU WILL CHANGE PLACES IN THE CANOE."

Gasps and murmurs rose from the crowd and I noticed some expressions of bewilderment from some of the other contestants. Rudy and I looked at each other and shrugged.

"ONCE YOU HAVE ROUNDED THE ROWBOAT AND ARE ON YOUR WAY BACK, WHEN YOU HEAR MY WHISTLE, BOTH PADDLERS WILL JUMP INTO THE WATER AND THEN REENTER THEIR CANOE."

Rudy and I exchanged another look, and another shrug. We had played this game before.

"READY....SET...GO!"

That end of the lake erupted as dozens of paddles flailed the water. There was momentary confusion as paddles whacked into neighboring paddles, hulls collided and racers shouted instructions to each other. Rudy and I sprung out to an early lead, easily outpacing most of the others. Rudy even had time to fling a paddle full of water backward at our closest competitor...accidentally of course. We had almost two boat lengths lead over our nearest competitor when the whistle blew the first time.

Rudy and I were typical kids of that era. Lean, lithe and wiry. We stowed the paddles, and as agile as a couple of ferrets, Rudy went on all fours along the gunwales while I ducked under him and took the stern. We had our paddles up and in the water

Captain's Log - continued...

before most of the others had exchanged positions. That is when disaster struck.

I did not know how to “J” stroke. I was clueless. Just like those people I see every spring in their new boats paddling in a circle. I was shocked, dumbfounded, and worst of all, causing our canoe to veer totally away from the line of the race. Rudy tried to give instructions, and I made all the typical newbie moves, switching sides...nothing seemed to work. The others were catching up! They were passing us! They were ahead of us!

“TWEET!” Rudy and I exchanged positions again, quicker this time, and took off trying to regain the lead. We had almost taken the lead again when... “TWEET!”

Once again we veered wildly off course, overcorrected, veered again, giving more and more advantage to the other paddlers. We were now in the middle of the pack, a crowded clutter of careening canoes.

“TWEET!” Rudy now in the stern, we threaded our way through the disorganized jumble. Our only hope was to round the rowboat before the next whistle and keep Rudy in the stern on the way back. We paddled hard to evade the turmoil and tumult that surrounded and tangled the turning point, taking a wide outside line that added distance and time to our route. The gamble paid off as we passed the rowboat and headed toward the finish line with about a third of the field ahead of us. I still had hope, but the realization burned in my mind that the only reason we were not leading the pack was that I could not control where our boat went when I was in the stern.

“TWEET!” Rudy and I stowed the paddles, gripped the gunwales and simultaneously, on opposite sides of the canoe, we jumped into the water. Our grip on the gunwales limited our de-

cent, and when our arms were fully extended, we kicked our feet, pulled ourselves up and rolled over into the canoe again, quicker than you can dunk a doughnut. We were paddling before some of the others had even gotten into the water. We still had a chance. The course ahead was littered with boats and swimmers. One poor kid probably has nightmares of this race to this day. I'll never forget the look of fear in his face. He had just come up from underwater, not having held on to his canoe when he jumped, and was wiping the water out of his eyes when he looked and saw our canoe bearing down on him, me in the bow, face filled with rage, paddling furiously and screaming “Ram him! Ram him!” Thankfully, Rudy steered us away. I resented the seconds we lost to that maneuver.

Rudy and I didn't win the race that year.

The next summer on our evening paddles I made sure that I got a chance to practice in the stern. I got my Canoeing Merit Badge. I not only learned the J stroke, the pry, the draw and the rudder, but the bow rudder, cross-bow rudder and sculling, as well as the various sweeps. I understand how each of these strokes affects the movement of my boat.

In that summer's race, Rudy and I were so far ahead that we glided across the finish line standing on the gunwales. Then we swamped our boat for the fun of it.

Learning a variety of strokes has made paddling more fun for me. It has increased my ability and my confidence. I understand how each of these strokes affects the movement of my boat. It enables me to make my boat go where I want it to. I can make my boat “dance”. Granted, it is not the subtle and elegant choreography of some of the more skilled paddlers in our club, but my boats can dance better than I could on the floor of any disco.

Captain Jeff Bowen

Top 5 Ways to Know You are a Paddler

By Nancy Passow

1. Upon seeing a new body of water, you wonder:
 - a.) it is deep enough to paddle on
 - b.) where's the put in.
2. You plan your vacations around paddling locations.
3. You dress for the water (and weather), rather than for looks.
4. You choose your new car based on how many boats can fit on the roof.
5. Your car stays in the driveway, while your boats stay in the garage.

Gearing Up To Paddle

By Scott Hagaman



One of the charms of HRCKC is that we tend not to be an elitist group (although this is not to say the canoeing contingent feels certain they are held in a higher light by the great spirits than those choosing to travel in a lower stance along the water's surface.) In our laid-back way, we happily strive to draw and nurture countless of our overstressed fellow tri-state neighbors to those places that allow their tensions to dissipate on a regular basis; be that floating on a wilderness pond as the sun burns off the morning mist or perhaps charging through Class II+ rapids and playing the eddies with a combination of terror and thrill. The charge of being a paddling mentor becomes an understood role to many of us.

I was prodding a new member recently about when he was going to jump in and get that first club paddle adventure under his belt. I already knew this person well and was familiar with his circumstance – one shared by many new to the club – he had little or no equipment and experience yet. He just looked at me and confessed that he had no idea on what he needed to show up prepared. I knew he had not yet decided on what boat to buy and I readily offered one of mine to try. However, he knew there was more to it than a boat and I realized I had become desensitized to the predicament of those who have not had the pleasure of spending infinite hours perusing paddling gear catalogs and relaying their credit card information often enough to do it without even looking at the card anymore.

It is not uncommon to meet new faces at club gatherings and learn they have been members for years. They then confide to have just never mustered the courage to take the leap from paddling visions to actually getting on the water. For some it may be a fear of appearing unworthy, unprepared in equipment or skill, to join in and for others it may be that the momentum towards realizing their dreams is stalled by the learning curve to figure out which boat and what gear is needed to paddle happy and safe.

Accordingly, in the spirit of helping new club members start 'just doing it,' I will share the collection of paddling gear I have accumulated over four years as well as what I still hope to acquire (in place of a retirement fund.) Some fellow members have been seen to nod approvingly at my selection of boat and gear. They generally are holding canoe paddles at the time. Those who choose to end their days with soggy bottoms will, however, find much of the listed equipment is equally useful if they can find it floating in the dark corners of their kayak's bilges.

Gear I Have and Always Bring:

1. *Canoe (duh)* – read about the features of various designs. Personal advice is both plentiful and cheap. Don't rush into a purchase before you shop around and demo as many models as you can spare the time to do. If you are stubborn about getting a kayak, bless your poor soul and, yes, some canoers will carry your cooler on those overnight campouts if you have extra beer.
2. *Two paddles* – one in your hands and a spare in case your favorite slips away downstream. Some kayakers use a small canoe paddle tucked away as a spare. There is hope they will be fully converted one day.
3. *Life vest (PFD)* – always worn on the water!
4. *Foam kneeling pad* – kneeling on a hard surface gets old real fast.
5. *Paddling gloves* – especially if you have hands that blister easily like mine.
6. *Foam seat pad held onto web canoe seat with stretch cord* – stays put if I swim. I could live without this but it doesn't hurt and it was an inexpensive toy to buy when I just had to spend on something at PaddleSport.
7. *Sponge* – soaks up that occasional "moisture" on the bottom of the boat. I hold it between a stretch cord tied around my seat frame for handy access.
8. *Bailer* – made from a plastic container of your choice for when more than a little moisture finds

Gear...

its way into your boat. Attach to your boat with some cord or keep in a tethered mesh bag so it stays put if you capsize.

9. Whistle – lash to your PFD for ready use to signal for assistance.

10. Knives – preferably one dedicated rescue knife for cutting rope entanglements and another for all other uses. Many rescue knife sheaths attach to the outside of a PFD for ready access. I carry another general use knife and small multi-tool in my pants or PFD pocket.

11. Painters – these are lengths of rope tied securely to the bow and stern of your boat to help you pull your boat along shore (“lining”) or secure it to shore. I don’t know why they are called “painters.”

12. Suitable clothing and sun protection – this means that which protects you from both the likely range of atmospheric conditions during the trip as well as the possibility of immersion in cold water if present. Sun, wind and rain are easily dealt with in warm air and water conditions with a good hat, light cloths and rain gear plus sunscreen and sunglasses (a floating neck strap around expensive or prescription glasses is a smart move.) Cold water requires more elaborate choices and should not be attempted without consulting fellow experienced members or significant research and preparation on the subject. (See more about this below.)

13. Footwear – Mukluks, mukluks, mukluks. These are the best things to have in spring and fall cold-water conditions. They are waterproof neoprene boots that will keep your feet warm and dry as you get in and out of your boat. It is usually hard to enter and exit without getting into some water and wet, cold feet are no fun. Warm weather paddling can be done in old sneakers or the more expensive wet shoes (nylon sneakers.) I just bought LL Bean “summer sneakers” made of nylon and built for water use. They are super light, comfortable, fast drying and appear durable if you don’t need to

portage great distances. They are a relative bargain at about \$30. It is best to buy only boots or shoes with a slim and flexible build to fit easily under the canoe seat (if you are a kneeling paddler) or if your kayak has limited foot-room. I am not in favor of open toe water shoes/sandals as I have seen some pretty banged up toes and lost nails in the course of boating adventures.

14. Food and water – a well fed and watered paddler always seems to be happier. Taylor your culinary choices to meet hot or cold conditions and stay in synch with the group ie. most day trips

have quick lunch stops so don’t plan to grill burgers if everyone else is eating a WAWA sandwich. Don’t underestimate how much water you can go through while exerting yourself.

15. First Aid Kit – A variety of kits can be tailored to

expected circumstances. Large groups on extended trips might coordinate kits for packing efficiency.

16. Dry bags – a specialty gear bag which is waterproof when closed properly. This is invaluable for holding anything that shouldn’t get wet like car keys, cell phones, first aid kits, lunches and spare clothing. Even these are not infallible and I usually use a small nalgene bottle or other wide mouth screw top container to act a second line of defense for keys or the phone.

Things To Have For More Challenging Conditions

17. Spare clothing in a dry bag – not essential in warm conditions but always wise if wet clothing will present an uncomfortable or dangerous situation. Bring as much as you can reasonably fit in your dry bag to cover several changes for yourself or others.

18. Cold Water Protective Suits - I purchased a short sleeveless wetsuit known as a “Farmer John” for about \$60 to provide some level of core protection for late spring and late fall cool water



Gear...

paddling during my first year. It should be adequate for the inland waterways and group paddling circumstances I typically seek. It was never put to the test as I have been a relatively timid paddler and never swam in cold water with it. I normally wore it under nylon outdoor clothing and carried spare cloths also. A large selection of wet suit materials and coverage is easily found at local retailers and catalogs for paddlers. In my fourth year, I have just purchased a Kokatat semi-dry suit. This is the lesser cousin to the full dry suit with the difference being a more comfortable but less watertight neck gasket. Full and semi drysuits range from \$300 to over \$1,000 depending on quality and features. They are generally breathable waterproof nylon, covering neck to toe, with watertight gaskets and zippers to keep you completely dry when in the water. Kayakers should consider only full drysuits as they are exposed to more full immersion while rolling or wet exiting from their boats. Canoeers wearing PFD's are generally OK with a semi-drysuit as complete immersion is brief under most scenarios. I paid \$450 for a well made and comfortable suit which I feel is a good investment towards allowing a safer and longer paddling season. Some poly or wool long underwear and/or lightweight fleece worn inside is usually sufficient to stay warm in these suits for a while.

19. Rescue Throw Bag – this is a length of floating rope, usually 50 to 75 ft, which is stuffed into a throwable bag to be used to toss a line to somebody in need of assistance or being extracted from the water. In moving water situations, everyone should carry these for it will be your fellow paddler who will come to your rescue with one so please give them equal consideration by being prepared as well.

20. Specialty ropes and hardware – these are a necessity in moving water where boats and people may become pinned against obstructions by powerful fast water. Ropes and pulleys greatly aid rescue and recovery efforts. Responsible and experienced paddlers will take the time to learn the skills and gather the tools to bring higher rescue capabilities to the group. After four seasons, I find I am spending more time on challenging water and will focus on learning higher rescue skills.

21. Communication – cell phones are almost constant companions to us all anyway and would be invaluable in summoning aid quickly. They may not always have a signal connection in your paddling local and are not a substitute for knowing basic first aid skills.

22. Emergency shelter - a space blanket, large plastic garbage bag and fire starting capability are invaluable in case you become chilled in cold conditions or just delayed and stranded overnight on longer trips. These items are so compact I usually include them on all trips in my gear bags automatically without thinking about whether they will likely be needed.

Paddle Camping Gear

My favorite paddling is usually combined with camping. When I joined HRCKC, I had not camped for decades. I felt completely lost over what to gather. A few hours reading camping periodicals and internet searching brought me up to speed and watching the old pros on our trips helps a lot too. I started out with the mantra that paddle camping meant I could pack a lot of luxuries and get by with some of the bulkier or heavier equipment because, hey, the canoe and water do the work, not my back! After several seasons, I find I have modified that frame of mind towards realizing that, at some point, gear still has to be carried and packed multiple times; gear from house to car, from car to boat, empty boat to portage (carry around obstructions or between bodies of water,) repack boat after portage, from boat to campsite...you get the picture. Therefore, the less I have to deal with, while still enjoying relative comfort, the better. I subscribe to "Backpacker" magazine and equally enjoy salivating over the latest of the smallest and lightest camping gear just as much as any of my paddling gear catalogs. It is not just about getting better stuff but also learning to do without a lot of unnecessary things. I guess my goal is to become a 'high tech minimalist' camper someday. By necessity, many kayaking paddle campers are way ahead of me when it comes to camping efficiently. Do not hesitate about the thought of camping as an option

Gear...

if you only have a kayak as many HRCKC yakers are doing it and don't appear wanting in luxuries except extra beer and pre-cut firewood.

There is a recognized expert in canoe camping named Cliff Jacobson. I enjoy his books and DVD's on the subject very much.

My current paddle camping gear consists of:

a) A Eureka "Back Country" four person tent. Wt. is about 6 lbs and packed size is about 7" x 18." I like this because it is plenty roomy for one and I get by fine with two if my son is along. Unless you are an avid backpacker who is used to cramped little one-man tents, I suggest a roomy tent be the one area you splurge on a few pounds and enjoy some space. Tent ratings for number of people they hold assume you keep all gear outside and stack yourselves like cordwood inside. I consider the high-walled, standup tents to be more weighty and bulky than I want to deal with.

b) A down sleeping bag and an inflatable 1" thick sleeping pad rolled inside a waterproof compression sack. The most important part of this sleeping setup is the waterproof sack. Mine is from Outdoor Research. A down bag and inflatable pad are lightweight and compress down to a small size but the bag is useless if wet. I have seen bags with waterproof shells or synthetic insulation that is supposed to provide warmth even when wet. I am sure they will be almost as much misery when wet so invest in a high quality waterproof sack to store this gear in. Instead of the bulk of a pillow, I wad up my fleece jacket or take a pillowcase to stuff with my spare clothing to serve as one.

c) Cook stove and mess kit – there are many choices and preferences for these items. Again, I wanted compactness as well as ease and reliability of use. We don't usually coordinate group meals so each of us comes self-sufficient with a small single burner backpacking type stove and small mess kit. The luxuries of canoe camping include a small folding or roll-up camp table to prepare and eat food on.

d) Camp chair – although bulky. A full size folding camp chair is nice to have when sitting around a campfire for hours while imbibing and telling juicy stories. Kayakers who have not arranged baggage

space in a friendly canoe can find a cut-down version of the camp chair or sit on a log.

e) Headlamp – this flashlight strapped to your head is invaluable for any after dark activity (well most of them) like eating, finding that marshmallow you dropped, getting another beer or letting the last one out etc. Do not worry about the fashion concerns of normal daily life. In the woods, this is a staple and a good lamp brings much envy.

f) Water – Depending on the length of trip or how gear crazy you want to get, water can be as simple as filling jugs from home with what you need or using one of the various forms of filtering and sterilizing treatments on the water around you. Jugs of water are heavy to carry but very convenient at camp. I have a high quality filter by the brand "First Need" and it works great but takes time and effort to pump. I will opt for water jugs if there is no significant portaging expected. If weight is a factor, the filter and/or chemical treatment is a good option.

g) Food & storage – This is where a canoe has a big advantage since a small cooler is an option if you really want perishable food on your menu. If you will be in bear country, a bear resistant barrel container is either required or just a good idea. Rope and a sturdy weatherproof bag are the classic alternative and usually work but I am told the bears are getting smarter.

h) Tarp – a tarp is another paddle camping luxury over backpacking. A good quality nylon tarp with adequate lines to hang and tie it with is great to have as a common gathering area out of the weather. A second one over and in front of your tent is real living!

i) Folding saw and hatchet (or a BIG Rambo knife) to cut and split fire wood if fires are allowed and wood is likely to be available.

j) Misc. – some toiletries and your ready to go!

I probably forgot something but that is what is great about being a HRCKC member – you will be with a great group of people and sharing and mentoring is all part of the experience.



Packing It In

By Jeff Bowen

Once in a while I get the opportunity to paddle and camp. Usually it is somewhere that I do not visit often, too far away for a day trip. Less populated than my regular paddling haunts, it is wilder, more remote, more beautiful, enticing, and unpredictable. Paddling along in my boat with my camping gear I feel a sense of freedom and adventure. With self assured confidence I direct my boat where ever I wish. Cozily self-contained I glide along so silently, smoothly and gracefully that the four footed and winged denizens of this realm stop to watch me, yet do not flee. I think back to the days when trappers and Voyageurs traveled the waterways of this young country in birch bark canoes, wearing wool and buckskin. As I head toward my prospective camp, in the back of my mind I see a picture of myself sitting comfortably in a chair after a hearty meal sipping a cup of hot tea, watching the sun set over the water and distant shoreline, my sleeping bag fluffed and ready in my tent. I am one with Nature. Just like on TV and in those catalogs and on magazine covers.

Although still a far cry from “car camping” with a mega SUV mere steps away loaded with all of the conveniences, gadgets, gear and luxuries that one can imagine, paddle campers have a tremendous advantage over their other self-powered brethren, the backpackers. Water, not our backs, supports the load we carry to our destinations. We can carry more weight, and greater bulk besides. Our boats enable us to turn our wilderness campsite into a more inviting place, and still allow us to feel a certain sense of smug superiority when we paddle past a shoreline campsite with the hum of a generator and the soft glow of a TV set emanating from it. It’s harder to “get away from it all” when you bring it all with you.

Yet, this is not to say that paddle campers are relegated to a backpacker’s Spartan level of comfort. Nay! Our camps flaunt comforts and luxuries unheard of in a backpacker’s camp. Our pots, pans, dishes, utensils, stoves and grills can be larger and heavier. Tents, tarps, sleeping bags and pads can be more spacious and inviting. Our first aid kits

more complete and our selection of camp shovels, hatchets, knives, saws and lanterns more extensive.

Even though we carry extra gear dedicated to paddling, (PFD’s and such) our food is frequently fresh, more varied and elegant. We have COOLERS! Finally, regardless of the various denials and arguments from my backpacking friends, I think that we paddlers bring more clothes and can change our socks and underwear more frequently.

Still, things are not stress free even for paddlers. I have found that the highest level of anxiety during a paddle and camp is reached at the put in when the paddler looks at all of his gear arrayed on the shore in waterproof bags of many sizes and colors and then his boat alongside and says to himself “How will I ever fit all that in there?” To be sure, kayakers tend to feel this anxiety to a much greater degree than canoeists, and can experience an attitude change toward canoes during this time.

I’d like to pass along some ideas and thoughts that will help some of you who have little or no experience paddle camping. These ideas will be aimed mostly at kayakers who face greater restrictions of space and access. Anyone else might glean a few tips here and there, or recognize the tips and recommendations as ones they passed along to me. Some of the ideas will make sense to you, some probably will not. Hopefully they will generate some new ideas for you and encourage some experimentation and innovation.

THE TOP TEN

Imagine that you were beamed down from a spaceship to your campsite with nothing but the clothes you were wearing. Aside from food and water, what are the first ten things you would need to make yourself comfortable? This is one of the perspectives you should use when deciding what to take with you on a paddle and camp trip. It will help you determine how to limit what you bring to the most important and useful items. Of course,



you will doubtless be able to bring many more than ten items with you, but my guess is that the tiki torches and the gas-powered food processor will not even be on the second “top ten” list.

Try to eliminate duplication of function to minimize the number of items you intend to bring. A can opener might not be necessary if there is a can opener on the pocketknife you have already decided to bring. Also, look for items that can serve multiple purposes. A frying pan can be used instead of the cover for a pot, and of course, any old pot can boil water as easily as a coffee pot.

If you are clever, there are many other dual-purpose or dual-function items that you can bring that will help to reduce the number and sheer bulk of the things you need bring. It is important to have your priorities straight as you face the bigger problem of how to fit all your stuff in your boat.



Philosophy Class

One day my wise old philosophy professor entered the classroom carrying a large mayonnaise jar which he placed on a table next to the lectern. He then brought in a couple of boxes and placed them on the floor. We all wondered what he was up to.

“Good morning, class. I’d like you all to observe this, please.”

He reached down into one of the boxes and brought up two handfuls of rounded river rocks which he placed into the mayonnaise jar. He continued placing rocks in the jar until the rocks reached the top of the jar. He asked the class if we thought the jar was full, and there was general agreement that the jar was indeed full. Then the professor reached down into the box and brought up a double handful of pebbles which he poured

into the “full” jar. The pebbles cascaded down in the voids between the river rocks, allowing the professor to place several handfuls of pebbles in the jar. Once again he asked us if the jar was full, and once again we agreed that yes, it was. The professor then bent down and brought forth from his boxes on the floor a bag of sand which he poured into the jar. The sand found its way down in the voids between the river rocks and the pebbles, and so the professor was able to add even more material to the “full” mayonnaise jar. The professor went on to explain to us the philosophical significance of this demonstration and how it was analogous to our lives, but I missed what he was saying because I was trying to get the phone number of the cute girl in the tight blue sweater who sat two seats behind me.

The class was not over, however. The professor took an identical mayonnaise jar and into it poured an amount of sand identical to the amount of sand in the first jar. Then he put in an amount of pebbles identical to the amount of pebbles he had fit in the first jar. Finally, he started to put river rocks into the second jar, but it was immediately clear that he would not be able to fit an amount equal to the amount he fit in the first jar.

Sweater Girl explained it to me later in the student center over a cup of coffee. “You see,” she said as I gazed across the table at her big blue...eyes, “Life is like a mayonnaise jar. The rocks are the big things in life like your family and friends, the pebbles are the less important things like your car or your job, and the sand is like the things that really don’t matter much, like TV shows or sneakers. If you concentrate on filling your life with the big things, there will always be room for the small stuff, but if you concentrate on the small stuff first, you won’t have room for all the big, important stuff.”

Keep this in mind when you are packing gear in your boat. If you think of your boat as a large mayonnaise jar, or more aptly a large Tupperware container, and your gear as various rocks, pebbles and sand, it will help you.

Despite the fact that I failed Philosophy due in large part to her ability to pull my eyes over the wool, I am grateful to Sweater Girl for explaining this to me, even though it became apparent that she considered me the sand in the mayonnaise jar of life.

Space, The Finite Frontier

Canoes enjoy a huge advantage compared to kayaks in their ability to carry large amounts of gear. With wide, tall hulls without decking, they offer easy access and more than ample space to pile high with gear and cargo. Canoeists, possibly daunted by the sheer numbers of kayaks and the ease with which even a neophyte paddler can get around, rarely miss an opportunity to trumpet this fact. A kayaker's lot is to endure this heckling in the hope that after a torrent of self-satisfying boasting and bragging the canoeist will relent and agree to carry a cooler or extra bit of luggage for him.

Most kayakers are uncomfortable with being dependent on canoes, and have evolved tricks and techniques to pack their kayaks to an extent that elicits consternation from condescending canoeists. This section is intended primarily for kayakers, although canoeists may find a few useful ideas as well.

A kayak's useful volume is limited by its usually shorter length, usually narrower beam, and lower hull which is decked. The space required by the paddler himself takes up a significant portion of the hull. To make matters worse, access to the existing volume can only be had through the cockpit and hatches, if any. Although some items can be affixed to the deck with bungees, much of this space is taken up with pumps, paddle floats, spare paddles and other such paddling related items. Heavy or bulky items on deck can affect stability by moving the center of gravity too high or presenting too much sail area to the wind. Overcoming the stowage problems inherent in kayak design requires a novel approach, an innovative way of thinking. The challenge is to efficiently use as much of the volume of the kayak as possible, and still leave room for you to get in and out safely.

Let's take a look at some of the things you'll want to bring on a paddle and camp trip and see if we can improve things a bit. We'll start with your kitchen. You probably have a backpacking stove and a cook-kit. The cook-kit has a couple of pots that nest one inside the other, and a lid/fry pan. Maybe the stove fits inside the closed cook-kit. Seems pretty good, right? It is hard to improve on the two pots and fry pan and stove, but think: what else is in there? Air? Why not use some of that space? Maybe you could put your toothpaste in there, or a small salt and pepper shaker, or a

zip-loc baggie with a scrub pad, or even some individual serving packets of hot chocolate. The possibilities are many. The more you are able to put in this unused space, the more space you will have elsewhere.

"Well, sure," you're thinking, "But that's just a drop in the bucket." True, this tactic has limits to what it can accomplish, but it is part of the strategy that a kayaker must use.

Let's look now at some of the bigger things you carry, like your tent. There it is, all neatly packed (quite compactly, too!) tent, fly, poles and stakes and lines in that fairly small bag. No way can I use any of that space more efficiently.

We need to think of something else. Where are we going to place the tent in the kayak? Our choices appear to be bow or stern. When we slide it up in the bow, it goes up pretty far, until the bow narrows down to a size smaller than the diameter of the tent bag. The stern is about the same. Either way our valuable storage space is filling up fast. Instead, let's try dividing the tent into separate components. The tent, released from the confines of its cylindrical stuff sack can be stuffed into either end of the hull and will assume the shape of the hull far past where the bagged tent would have stopped. That still leaves the fly, poles, stakes and lines. They are smaller and skinnier than the whole tent package, and can probably be placed over, under or between some other items. Possibly we can put them in the narrow space alongside the seat.

Packing this way has its own share of problems. Getting the tent fly out of the extreme portions of the bow might be a problem for someone whose reach is not great. Also, some of you may have thought about the poor tent and fly without their protective bag. Generally, modern nylon tents can get wet, they dry out fairly quickly, so keeping them dry is less important than protecting them from puncture and abrasion during transport. Cheap, roomy non-waterproof nylon stuff sacks may be the answer. With a short length of cord attached, they can more easily be retrieved from the distant recesses into which we stuff them.

We're feeling quite pleased with ourselves having efficiently used the normally unusable space in the conical tip of the bow and stern, but the idea isn't new. Waterproof stuff sacks



are available in tapered designs specifically tailored to meet the more space efficient needs of kayakers.

On the subject of waterproof bags, many times it is better to have two small bags than one big bag. Two small bags might fit in two different spots where one large bag would be unable to. Small bags may be able to be oriented perpendicular to the axis of the kayak where one large bag would have to be oriented lengthwise.

We're making progress, but we're not finished. We've got a ton of more of things we need to bring, like water and food, for instance. Where are we going to put that jug of water?

Trim and balance considerations frequently dictate that water, which is heavy, is located low and centrally. Leaving space for a big plastic jug really eats up storage capacity in a hurry. That is why I favor water bags. Water carrying bags are able to conform to different shapes, and collapse as they

are emptied to take up the same volume as the water they contain. These are two key and valuable attributes. If you are going to bring a can or jar of some product that can be transferred to a zip-lock bag, do so. You don't need to spoon your instant coffee from a jar, or munch your trail mix from a can.

At all times look for ways to fill voids in your boat. Keep an eye out for a plastic bin or container that will fit perfectly somewhere in your boat that you can use to stuff full of kitchen gear, personal items or other articles. Remember that separating components and repackaging will create some havoc in your usual organizational scheme.

By using these ideas it is possible to reduce the bulk and volume of your gear and equipment and pack it into your boat leaving more room for you and some of the items on your fourth or fifth "top ten" list.

Did yer know?

Fat Elmo be here.

All ye pilgrims might be interested in some o' de old laws about canooins' dat be funny. These aar not made up, but real laws still on de books around de country.

- In Brown's Mills, NJ, a law was issued that "Any person who shall wear, in a canoe, any device or thing attached to her head, hair, headgear or hat, which is capable of lacerating the flesh of any other person with whom it may come in contact and which is not sufficiently guarded against the possibility of doing so, shall be judged a disorderly person".
- In Rodgersville, Alabama, there is a law that states, "No female wearing a nightgown can be found riding in a canoe, and women must be fully dressed before they can be legally taken for a canoe ride".
- No one, male or female, in Needles, British Columbia is allowed to read the Sunday paper while sitting in a canoe while church services are in session. At the same time it is against the law to read comics in a canoe in Norwood, North Carolina.
- In Moran, Wyoming the law prevents a woman from chewing tobacco while canoeing without first having permission from her husband.
- In Ambridge, Pennsylvania, it's against the law to tickle a girl under the chin with a feather duster while she riding in your canoe. Dag-nabbit, every time ah's tried ta do dat, me always gets socked in de eye?
- In Crutwell, Saskatchewan, Canada, it's illegal for men with hair growing over their upper lip from canoeing with females. Gad Zooks, that's not fair! Ah' seen a few Mingo womens wit mustaches canooins' wit men in de Canada territories.
- Here be one fer all ye fashion conscious women paddlers. In Ballintine, South Carolina, "Every woman in a canoe must be found wearing a corset and in addition, a physician is required to inspect each female found in a canoe to make sure she is complying with the law". Kind'a makes dis boy want ta take up doctorin' right now!
- In Lisco, Nebraska, it's unlawful to canoe on the North Platte River with untied shoelaces. What, you gon'na trip over them and fall into 3 inches of water?
- In Bumsville, West Virginia, no married woman is allowed to go canoeing on the Sabbath unless she "is properly looked after" with her mate always close behind. Also required was that he carry a loaded gun over his left shoulder. Probably ta ward off de mother-in-law.
- Up north in Canada, in the town of Desbiens, Quebec, it is against the law for married men to canoe alone on Sundays. Me' reckons their sqaws dream'd up dat one.
- In Clinton, Montana, it's against the law to canoe while wearing a hat that "would scare a timid person". Oh lordy! Fearless Phil can't wear that red baret anymore.
- Last but certainly not least, a law in Albany, Georgia states that "it is unlawful for a woman that weighs over three hundred pounds and attired in shorts to ride in a canoe". Now dat one makes sense to me!