

River



Rat

EXTRA!

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(6/85)

"WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...?"

An Exclusive Interview With Lowell Tyde

(In a River Rat exclusive, Muskrat Lowell Tyde, whose portrait graces our letterhead, reveals the untold secrets of the Hackensack River Canoe Club. As is well known, Tyde is extremely press-shy (just ask the editors of Time, Life, Playboy, Popular Mechanics, Boy's Life, Etc.). So it was with great pleasure that we recently met with him at his modest burrow just north of Route 4 to seek insight into this dynamic HRCC founder...)

Q: What's going on here?

A: We're forming a canoe club.

Q: Who's "we"?

A: Anyone who joins. Part of the idea is that this is a club which transcends all societal designations. All ages, sexes, colors, shapes & sizes, income brackish, etcetera, are welcome. The common bond is canoes & water, and a spirit of fun. Care for a cattail?

Q: No, thanks. You mean anyone can join?

A: Anyone with twelve dollars.

Q: What do you get for twelve dollars?

A: A receipt.

Q: I mean, why would someone want to join the HRCC.

A: Becos we need their twelve dollars. That way we can send them a River Rat after every regular meeting, which is on the last Sunday of the month at 7:30 at the Flat Rock Brook Nature Center in Englewood. In your River Rat is a schedule of trips and events, and a registration form so you can sign up for them all. Members must sign up.

Q: What kind of trips do you go on?

A: Canoe trips. All over.

Q: Not just on the Hackensack River, then?

A: Nuh-uh. The Hacky is our home port and we love her. But we're not restrictive in that way. We want to canoe on every river we can find. Long trips, short trips, you name it.

Q: Do you need to be an experienced canoeist to join in?

A: Hell, no. We all learn together, and there are trips of varying difficulty. As I said, this is Everyone's canoe club - including the total novice. We would like to see people find out - if they don't know already - that canoeing is a great time, and a great way to get in touch with yourself.

Q: How so?

A: Cos canoeing gets you out on the water, and you are, afterall, over 80% water. And it's good exercise. Sure you don't want a cattail?

Q: Positive. How are trips organized?

A: We decide where we want to go at meetings. Then if someone volunteers to be the trip's Skipper, we go. The Skipper handles the organization of the trip.

Q: Do you need a canoe to be in the Club?

A: It's great if you got one, but, no, you don't. People without them double-up with those who do, or they rent one. What you DO need is a Coast Gaurd-approved life vest.

Q: Can non-members come on trips?

A: Yeh, but in that case they're on their own as far as arrangements etcetera go. Only members can register for a trip.

Q: I see. Anything else we should know?

A: I dunno. You should know that you'll have some good times, make some new friends, and discover some beautiful places. And soon we'll have t-shirts. You should know to make your checks payable to Hackensack River Canoe Club. And you should know we're serious about all of this.

Q: This is no joke, huh?

A: You're sitting here interviewing a muskrat who looks like a gremlin and you're asking if it's a joke? And they wonder why I'm so press-shy...



"I dunno."

"over 80% water..." "And it's good exercise."

Dear Lowell:

YES! I want to get my River Rat and get canoeing! Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for one year's worth of exciting HRCC membership!

NAME: _____ I got my own canoe.
STREET: _____ I ain't got a canoe.
TOWN: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
PHONE: _____ WHEN TO CALL: _____

THE FLAT ROCK BROOK NATURE CENTER in Englewood is where we meet on the last Sunday of every month at 7:30 PM unless otherwise indicated in the River Rat schedule. It can best be reached from Route 4 by taking the JONES ROAD exit, turning right off the ramp (from either direction), and right again at the 4-way stop, which is VAN NOSTRAND AVE. It is at the top of Van Nostrand, through the gates.

"IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SLUDGE"

- The Philosophical Origins of the Hackensack River Canoe Club -

"There are no problems; only solutions."

-J. Lennon

"You show me a dirty river, and I'll show you
a canoe club!"

-E. Sternthwart III

RIVERS FLOW THROUGH TIME as well as place, and in their course they say much about us. Today's Hackensack speaks of neglect and years of human disrespect. Gone are the white sand beaches, and in their stead is at least a foot of oozing sludge in many places. Gone is the abundance of wildlife which inhabited her and her banks. Gone too is the countless-century-old tradition of canoes on the Hackensack. Almost gone. There is a lesson being told to us, if we stop to listen. The lesson is that when we forget a river - or, worse yet, treat it as a drainage ditch for our refuse - that river in turn will abandon us. Slowly at first, the river and all the life it nurtures will begin to leave our careless culture behind. It flows around a mysterious and uncharted bend, and suddenly it is no longer the source of beauty and bounty which once it was. For those among us who would love the river and all it could mean to us, there is the constant fear that we may lose her forever.

But...Good news! The river grows cleaner, thanks to new interest in our "environment." By the Steuben House, a friend who lives nearby points to a spot midstream at low tide. For years that spot has shown only blackest sludge, a legacy of pre-Clean Water Act sewage "disposal." Amazingly, we see a glimmer of white sand... The canoe is entwined in this river's history. Long before the European colonization brought an end to their culture, the hand-tooled dugouts of the Lenape graced these waters. And it is only in my own lifetime that canoeing on the Hackensack lost its popularity as a local recreation. So let's bring the canoe back to this peaceful stream! Let's shock our friends and neighbors when we say "I'm a Hackensack River Rat!" Let's wave to the cars on the turnpike as they race blindly by the abounding wildlife returning to the meadows. Let's place our faith in the river's recovery, and let us bring the canoe back to her as a sign of our good will.

-Eric Nelsen

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"All the canoes fit to print!"

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