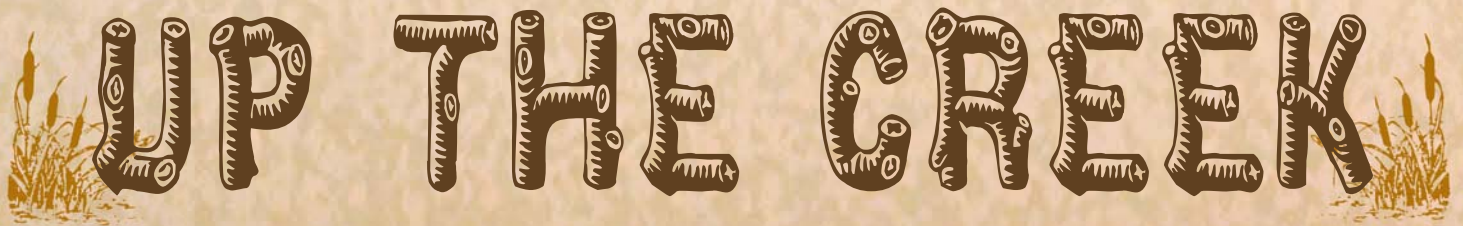


# UP THE CREEK

The title 'UP THE CREEK' is written in a large, stylized, hand-drawn font. Each letter is filled with a pattern of small, repeating shapes, possibly representing water ripples or a similar texture. The letters are black with white outlines. On either side of the title, there are small, golden-brown illustrations of reeds or grasses growing from the water's edge. The background of the entire page is a painting of a river scene. In the foreground, a man and a woman are sitting in a canoe, viewed from behind. The man is wearing a white shirt and a tan hat, and the woman is wearing a white shirt and dark pants. They are on a calm river with a forested bank in the background. The water is dark and reflects the scene above.

*Autumn 2005*

## The Hackensack River Canoe & Kayak Club Newsletter

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- ◆ And All Sorts Of Other Stuff...

Membership  
Directory  
Enclosed



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# Fro' De Eddyter

Translated into English from Fat Elmo's Old Bogotian lingo  
by Martin Wellhoefer



Now that we are in our twentieth year since the founding of the Hackensack River Canoe and Kayak Club, I have to say.... Wow. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that the Club would still be around let alone thrive the way it has. We had about 30 people the first year and that started to dwindle down to less than 20 after a couple of years. I personally was afraid we wouldn't survive much longer as a club for awhile there. But with much work and dedication from some of our membership who volunteer their time and effort to make this organization work, we are now indeed the largest paddle club in these parts. The HRCKC now has about 400 members and growing.

Still, looking back to those early days with just a couple dozen members, we were an active club, paddling almost every weekend and hiking and skiing in the frozen season. We were like a little family (no, not the Manson family). Originally starting out as the Hackensack River Canoe Club - we later added "and Kayak" to the Club name in the mid 90's since more and more kayakers joined. As the membership grew, it got a little harder to keep track of names and faces, but the Club still has that laided-back, informal attitude.

Now with 400 members the administrative part is a bit more complicated than it used to be. I remember hand writing the mailing labels on the newsletter - now we have to rely on sophisticated computer databases to keep track of membership information and print out mailing labels. The Club web site, which was introduced a few years ago, is probably the most effective way of getting Club information and schedules to our membership. Almost everyone has access to the Internet these days, so now members can check on the Club trip schedule and any last minute changes or additions. In response to more and more people switching to high speed broadband Internet access, the staff at LitterBox Publications is working on a web-based edition of the Club newsletter in addition to the printed one - there is a lot less production work involved with electronic newsletters and should be able to get "Up The Creek" out more often.

In February of this year, the Club had it's 20th anniversary meeting. In attendance were some of the original members - Peggy Valvano, Adele Breikietz, Phil and Geraldine Renner, Eric Nelsen and Martin Wellhoefer. Those along with original members - Lisa Tracy-Savioe, Karen Siletti, Steve Barnes, Gail and Mike Musante who couldn't make the meeting, were given Lifetime Membership Awards.

Anyway, if you're reading this you'll most likely have noticed that we have a new format for the newsletter with a color cover page (ya, we know - no pfd's on Steve and Karen in the photo. Old picture! I'm much too lousy an artist to draw them in.) Like it? Hate it? Don't give a hoot? Let us know (not that we'd pay any attention to you anyway).

Another new feature is Fat Elmo's Canoo Shack. This will feature articles of interest to the canoeists (and maybe even you kayakers) in the Club. Gad Zooks! Why just canoe related stuff? Well, because I am, foremost a die-hard canoeist and that's what I really know so that's what I write about. Now, if any of you kayakers out there would like to start a kayak feature, please let us know and we'll be most happy to put it into the newsletter. Please contribute any articles you can to this newsletter. We need stuff to print! You will also notice that the membership directory is also included in this issue.

So just to wrapping this up, I would like to thank all those members who have volunteered their time and effort in the last 20 years - be it as club officers, trip or event coordinators or doing demos at the meetings. Without these folk there would be no Club. Fat Elmo salutes you - Wha Ho!



### Fat Elmo

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

# Captain's Log

**By Robyn Lowenthal**



As fall paddling season gets into full swing, the a new academic school year begins. Students all over the country are worrying about testing they will face this year. I thought it might be fun to test our knowledge of all things related to paddling. So, here is a short, multiple choice exam. The correct answers will be found on the bottom of page.

1. The best kind of boat to paddle is:
  - a. Canoe
  - b. Kayak
  - c. Waterproof refrigerator box
  - d. Inflatable
2. The best type of canoe paddle is:
  - a. Square blade
  - b. 2 x 4
  - c. Otter tail
  - d. Beaver tail
3. The best place to paddle is:
  - a. Lake
  - b. River
  - c. Open water
  - d. Drainage ditch
4. The best time of day to paddle is:
  - a. 8 AM
  - b. 11 AM
  - c. 4 PM
  - d. 6 PM
5. The best month to paddle is:
  - a. March
  - b. May
  - c. July
  - d. September
6. The best weather for paddling is:
  - a. Sunny
  - b. Partly cloudy
  - c. Cloudy
  - d. Chance of rain
7. The best lunch for paddling is:
  - a. Peanut butter & jelly
  - b. Spam & Tang
  - c. Lobster
  - d. Ham & cheese
8. The best shuttle vehicle is:
  - a. Chevy Blazer
  - b. MG Midget
  - c. Honda Accord
  - d. Subaru Outback
9. The best tie downs are:
  - a. Straps
  - b. Rope
  - c. Your carpool buddy's hands
  - d. Chains
10. The best reason to join a paddling club is:
  - a. Safety
  - b. Companionship
  - c. Entenmann's donuts
  - d. Information

Answers: There are no wrong answers, except if you choose to use your carpool buddy's hands to hold your boat onto the roof of your car! What ever kind of boat you paddle, where ever you choose to paddle, the most important thing is to get out and paddle. See you on the water.

# A LESSON IN BOATING SAFETY

*By Betty Wiest*



Because I don't want this to happen to you, I'm relating an incident that happened to me recently. I told my story to the kayak club at the May meeting and several people have come to me saying how it made them think more about kayak safety.

It was Sunday, May 29 - Memorial Day weekend. After spending hours working in my garden, I felt the strong need to go paddling. So my daughter, Julie, and I got the kayaks out and began strapping them on my van. My yellow Shaman went on first and rested between the anchors on the Thule rack system on top. Rather than strap the little green Wilderness System "Rascal" on top where I did not have the proper anchors, I said to Julie, "Why don't we see if we can get it in the van?" I've done that before with great success, although the bow is like kissing a green frog as it sits nestled between the two front seats. In the end we just put the kayak on top and strapped it on in the traditional manner.

We were on our way to Split Rock Reservoir near Green Pond on Route 287 South traveling in the slow lane when I heard an odd sound. Ignoring it, I traveled further down the interstate about half a mile. I hear another sound—I could not ignore this one—it was such a loud boom! Looking at the rear view mirror I saw both kayaks had come off the roof and were now sitting on the side of the road. It was a shock. We got out of the van and walked to where the kayaks were. Now I began to assess the situation...not only were the kayaks displaced but also the rack loading bars and some other pieces of the system. No one stopped to help so Julie and I wound up hauling the kayaks to the van. Because the van has a manufacturer's rack on top we were able to strap on my yellow kayak. This time the green one went inside the van as we were able to remove both headrests and the kayak fit just right.

Julie and I still decided to do some paddling and we continued on our way to Split Rock. It was still a beautiful day when we launched our boats. Before not too long I surmised that my kayak just "didn't feel quite right". Sometimes it felt like I was being pulled forward and sometimes it felt like I was being pulled backward. It's hard to describe. After paddling awhile, Julie commented, "Mom, why is the bow out of the water and the stern, well, kind of sinking!" Oh, my! (I had immediate thoughts of an earlier experience some years ago on the Delaware River when a boater went through some rapids, took on a lot of water and by the time he had paddled to shore for a scheduled rest stop, his boat was really sinking.) She unlatched the hatch cover. It was full of water. It was too much to pump out so we paddled to a clearing in the shoreline and turned the boat over. Have you ever paddled with

an extra hundred pounds or more? We finished paddling but not before the hatch was full again and had to fight a headwind back to the launch site. This routine of getting water out was getting old. So what went wrong? Perhaps a few things. I think the wind might have had an effect on the physics and dynamics of traveling at a high speed (65 mph) combined with the fact that the other kayak did not have the proper anchors on top (although I had done this several times before). But I also think that perhaps the wings of the

Thule racks system might have come loose after the years of being installed. In any case I was just very glad that no other car was involved. The fact that I was traveling in the slow lane was clearly remarkable and that the kayaks slid to the shoulder of the highway.

My boat? Well, we discovered two small holes and that was the reason the boat slowly filled with water. Waterproof silicone doesn't do the job as I was told, but some other trademark solution does. I am truly grateful to Martin Wellhoefer for repairing my boat. I've been out five times since the accident and it's very seaworthy.

Here's another reminder. Make sure that you run straps from the bow of the boat to the front end of your vehicle and the same for the stern. Perhaps this lesson can be learned by many of you... you just don't need to actually experience it.



# Fat Elmo's Canoo Shack



This new addition to our newsletter deals strictly with canoes. Sure, you kayakers can also read it, maybe you'll even start paddling open boats one day. Since I'm primarily a canoeist that's what I know the best so that's what I write about. In this and future articles I'll attempt to explain the history of the canoe, types of canoes, material used in their construction, paddling techniques, accessories, equipment sources, etc., etc. Wish me luck. Any literary contributions are welcome. Now for you kayakers who say "Hey what about us?" Well, sit down and write something about kayaking and we'll start a kayak section too. Ain't gonna happen if no one writes. Hint! Hint!

What a wonderful craft the canoe is. A most versatile vessel, designed to carry people and cargo into places very few other watercraft can navigate. The canoe has a certain grace in it's lines and in the hands of an experienced freestyle canoeist will dance on water...

A canoe, especially a solo canoe, takes a bit more skill to paddle correctly than a kayak. You have only one blade on that canoe paddle compared to a double bladed kayak paddle (you can also use a kayak paddle in a canoe, but that's cheating in the purist's eyes. I occasionally use one on those long stretches of water with a headwind). There are many paddle strokes that you can use to propel your craft - that's what makes canoeing so enjoyable to me. It's a lifetime learning experience. If you get a chance watch a freestyle canoeist do a routine. Total boat control - it's ballet on water.

The canoe as we know it today was first built by the American Indian centuries ago. Some tribes such as our own Lenapes used dugout canoes made from solid logs which were hollowed out by stone tools and fire while some other tribes built the more efficient and lighter birch bark canoe. These bark canoes were relatively fragile boats usually lasting only a season or two. When the white eyes first came to North America they almost immediately began to use the "Indian" canoe in their travels into the continent's interior. Throughout the 1600's and 1700's French-Canadian Voyageurs paddled 30 - 40 foot canoes loaded with pelts and other cargo in their journeys throughout North America. By the mid 1800's birch bark canoes were starting to be replaced by wood/canvas canoes. A much more robust method of construction, the wood/canvas canoe consists of steam bent ribs - usually northern white cedar, covered by red cedar planking. This in turn is covered with filled canvas and painted with a waterproof paint. This method of canoe construction was basically unchanged until the late 1940's when Grumman Aircraft first produced the venerable

aluminum canoe. Since then various other material were used in canoe construction. At the high end, composites such as fiberglass, Kevlar and carbon fiber are being used nowadays to produce strong, light and stiff canoes while plastic laminates such as the almost indestructible Royalex and the cheaper but heavier polyethylene is being used to make the low to mid-range priced boats. Many people build their own canoes using wood strip construction creating some exquisite works of art.

But guess what? The good old wood/canvas canoe is still being built by Maine's Old Town Canoe Company (a half year wait and \$4000.00) and various small canoe builders, mostly in Canada. Many old w/c canoes, some 100 years old, are still on the water today. My Old Town OTCA is a youngster - it's only 70 years old. Ask anyone who has ever paddled a wooden canoe and they will tell you the same thing - there is nothing like the feel of paddling a wood canoe. It has that certain feel that can't be duplicated by any man made material - something that was a living tree but now continues to live another life as a canoe.

Now onto which material is the best. There is no best. What's good for lake and flat water travel may not be as good for rocky, whitewater rivers and streams. Composites such as fiberglass, Kevlar or carbon fiber are great for paddling on water where the chances of rock impacts can be kept to a minimum. They are very stiff, are usually much lighter than plastic canoes and can be molded into much finer lines for increased performance. Granted, composites can be quite rugged and usually relatively easily to fix, they are not as impact resistant as Royalex and polyethylene. These canoes are usually quite expensive due to the fact that they are hand built - from \$1500 on up, so when you hit a rock and you hear that high pitched squeal there is most likely result in that cringe that occurs on one's face... For a river running canoe that will be subjected to much abuse from

rocks and dragging over sand bars, Royalex is probably the way to go. This plastic laminate consists of an inner core of foamed ABS (big long chemical name) surrounded by various layers of non-foamed ABS, and then all this is covered by a layer of vinyl. Royalex is a bit heavier than composites but is very impact resistant and actually has a memory to it. A canoe that has been dented or pinned against a rock, bent in half usually can be left out in the sun to warm and it'll sort of go back to it's original shape - more or less. This material is somewhat easy to fix if you actually manage to put a hole in one. Royalex canoes are in the middle price range. A good 16' - 17' boat will run around \$1000 - \$1200.

For rivers and for those that don't want to spend this kind of money, there is polyethylene. Canoes made from this material are quite durable, cheaper than Royalex but substantially heavier. If you'll never need to carry one (portage) very far this material may be for you. Prices run around \$500 - \$800.

There is no perfect canoe. Some are designed for long distant touring, some for flatwater racing, general recreational paddling, whitewater, river tripping, fishing, etc., etc. That's why most serious canoe drivers own more than one canoe. (Some of us sickos with way more than one canoe).

There are tandem (two or more persons) and solo canoes each requiring a different paddling technique. Generally lake, racing, touring and flatwater canoes usually are long and narrow with little or no rocker making for good tracking ability. Whitewater canoes are usually short (some as short as 8') and highly rockered for maneuverability, while tripping or river expedition boats are usually long (16' and longer), high volume moderate rockered workhorses. General recreational canoes are midsized 15' - 17' stable hulls with 34" - 38" wide. Fishing or sport canoes normally are very wide 38" - 40" inches wide and relatively short for great initial stability,

# Transporting Your Boat

*By Martin Wellhoefer*

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So, how do you get your boat to the water? Hummm. Never gave it a thought when you bought the boat, huh!

Funny how many people go to the boat shop to buy a canoe or kayak and never even give consideration to how they will get it home. I've seen people come in with convertibles or little tiny sports cars expecting to carry a 17' canoe or kayak. I had one customer who bought a 14' kayak that was so stupid and too cheap to spend a few bucks for foam blocks thinking she could just attach her new boat onto her car by using masking tape. "But why not? Will duct tape work better? That was one for the books... This is a true story. I kid you not.

Anyway, the object is to transport your boat securely and safely. Various ways are available to accomplish this. First and foremost, use common sense. Do you really think 1/8" cotton clothesline will keep your canoe or kayak from departing company from your car? Probably not. Many people use bungee cords or rubber rope to tie boats on. Another bad idea. Bungies stretch when under an impact load and guess what can happen? The boat slides out from under and ends up in the windshield of the car behind you. Not good! A set of good straps and decent 3/8" or larger braided nylon rope is probably the best for tying on boats.

The boat may only weight 40 lbs. but when subjected to wind loads, braking and cornering forces that 40 lbs may

become 400 lbs or more of force acting on the attachment points to the car. Roof racks can and do fail. Ropes break. Straps come loose. One should always have a backup attachment in case of failure. In addition to belly bands (2 straps around the midsection of the boat) front and rear tie downs to a solid attachment point on your cars such as a bumper mount or tow hook are prudent. Not to make a prejudicial comment, but kayakers are notorious for not using bow and stern tie downs. My observations suggest that most canoeists do use them.

As I stated earlier, roof racks, even those expensive Thules and Yakima racks, can and do fail. I have seen it happen on more than one occasion. Those racks that come with the car from the factory are pretty much useless in my opinion. They don't have much of a load capacity (remember, real load forces) and their attachment points to the car have a lot to be desired. Unfortunately, for the owners of modern aerodynamic cars, is the demise of the once standard welded rain gutter. These gutters were great for clamping on roof racks - very strong and the racks were inexpensive. Alas, no more welded rain gutters so people are now forced to either use foam blocks (you can get a set for under \$50 or go for the full and expensive Thule, Yakima and various other commercial racks. These can cost upward of \$150 - \$200 for the basic rack and more for all the accesso-

ries that you can get for them. Foam blocks work ok for short trips, but if you carry your boat a lot proper racks are probably the best bet. Canoes are generally easier to load than kayaks. Just turn the canoe over hull side up, resting the gunnels on the rack's crossbars, strap it down with two belly straps in the center section and bow and stern tie downs. Kayaks need some more support if you don't want "rack rot" (those dents that occur from pressure from the rack and heat). Contoured foam blocks that cradle the hull can be used. Special saddles or stacker bars (for carrying kayaks on their sides, the best are made by Malone) that clamp onto the crossbars of these racks are also available as options. Straps are used to keep the kayak in the saddles or stackers. Just remember - front and rear tie downs are just as important on a kayak as on a canoe. It only takes a few more minutes to put them on. Another option is to use a trailer to transport your boat. They are available in capacities from one to ten boats, but are relatively expensive and you'll need a hitch installed on your car.

So that's a short diatribe on carrying your boat on your car. A word of warning! If you ever see someone driving down the road with a 14' kayak taped onto their car with masking tape, get away from them as fast as possible...

*The End*

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## **Fat Elmo's Canoo Shack - continued...**

but resulting in poor paddling performance.

Initial (primary) and secondary (final) stability... What the hell does that mean? Well, initial stability is basically - how stable does the canoe (or kayak) feel just sitting there in calm water. Secondary stability determines how far one can lean the boat over (or riding down the side of a wave) before it tips over. Generally flat

bottom, wide boats (there are exceptions) have great initial stability but poor secondary, while more rounded bottomed boats may have less initial (feels tippy at rest) but greater secondary allowing you to really lean the boat over for certain paddling techniques. Most higher performance boats have less initial but greater secondary. Rocker is the amount of rise (looking at the bottom

of the hull from the side) from the center to the ends along the keel line. The more rise, the more rocker resulting in more maneuverability, but less tracking (tendency to go straight). Again, there are design exceptions.

Whew, and you thought that a canoe is a canoe... Ha! Well, that's enough for now, more to come. Till next time. See ya.

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

# Spring Streams

By Bob Rancan

**Shepaug, North Branch Raritan, and Paulinskill**

Sometimes it is cold and the weather changes from good to bad to worse in what seems like an instant but April in NJ and Connecticut is the month to get out on the small streams. The water is cold but it is usually flowing in quantity sufficient to allow for navigation. Snow melt, thawing groundwater and April showers make trips possible that if tried in most Junes and Julys would result in some walking down the riverbed.

I was able to get out three weeks in a row on three favorite streams. Conditions varied: On April 9 our club trip to the Shepaug in Connecticut coincided with Opening Day of the trout season in NJ. It was a sunny but cool day and the river was carrying lots of runoff from the previous week's heavy rains. Fred Cohane, Jeff Hackett, Michele Paradiso, Denise Marcel and I swept down the usually shallow stream and left almost no plastic hull marks on the river's boulders.

A pair of sharp-shinned hawks spotted at the Roxbury take-out in the morning

were the highlight of the day as were the many pairs of common mergansers and phoebes. We checked the vernal ponds at our lunch stop and saw many spotted salamander egg cases. In the afternoon the call of spring peepers drowned out the sounds of the rushing water. Thanks to Michele for tending the fire at the take-out while we picked up cars and bought the marshmallows.

On April 16, Tom and Matt DeAngelis and I tried our luck on the North Branch of the Raritan (Bedminister to North Branch, NJ.) We were concerned that since the water had been so high and cold for Opening Day the place might be overrun with early season fishermen. This was not the case and with the flow still strong (3.23 at North Branch at Raritan gauge) our only problem was adjusting to a hot sun. On these spring trips the question is always "what do I wear?" The great blue heron rookery near the town of North Branch had expanded and I counted at least three dozen nests.

For the club trip on the Paulinskill April 23, 9 paddlers in 7 boats turned out despite the dire forecast. Warm temperatures made the threat of rain more bearable. Overnight the river rose (1.93 to 1.99 at Blairstown gauge) and the feeder streams were bringing down lots more water as we set out. Remarkably, it rained a bit as we readied the boats and a whole lot as we finished but the precipitation held off while we were on the river. There were many wood ducks and common mergansers and we had a good look at a green heron. Scott Hagaman and I saw a wood turtle on the bank and Matt Hagaman found a small snapping turtle no more than two inches in length at our lunch stop. Thanks to Scott and Matt, Alex Toia, Fred Cohane, Robyn Lowenthal, Carole Baligh, Phil Brown and Bob May for a great trip.

Hopefully, it will keep raining and the streams will run all summer!

## The Fine Dining Review

By Ann Jo Vee and Phil A. Mignon

*Ah yes! We now return to one of the most prized activities of the Hackensack River Canoe & Kayak Club... Eating! This feature provides an in depth review of various eating establishments, diners, dives and grease shacks which the Club has visited in it'd travels. These opinions are strictly those of the reviewers and are therefore rather biased. So, if you beg to differ, well, we don't care...*

**The Mason Jar - Mahwah, NJ**

Situated on Route 202 near the intersection with Rt. 17, the Mason Jar makes for a convenient stopping place for some good food and beverages after a trip on the Ramapo River. In addition to the usual restaurant fare, the Mason Jar also offers some decent "Southern" BBQ. Granted it's nowhere near as good as real southern BBQ, they make a tasty plate nonetheless. The combo platter contains various cuts of pork and beef showing real smoke rings in the meat with the sweet and mildly spicy sauce served on the side. You have a choice of a couple of side dishes, including slaw, tater salad, fries, baked beans, etc. The re skinned tater salad was very good, but stay away from the baked beans. They tasted like cheap canned beans and I had a stone (yes, a stone) in my serving. I could see if they were kidney beans (kidney stones... Get it, Haw! Haw!) but that could have broken a tooth. All in all, the food is very good and the Mason Jar is highly recommended.

**HRCKC Rating: 3 Paddles**