

# PADDLE SPLASHES

AMC NY-NoJ Chapter, Canoe and Kayak Committee

November/December 2006

## ANOTHER GOOD FLATWATER SPOT

By: Jim Rubins

It started with a *New York Times* article on June 30, "Just Beyond New York's Suburbs: a Genuine Swamp," describing a reporter's venture into the East Branch of the Croton River, in Putnam County near the Connecticut border. The reporter had paddled upstream for two miles or so, then turned back. But the article promised more river than that short stretch, so I followed up a lead to the "FROGS" (Friends of the Great Swamp) to ask about possible put-ins further upriver. Then I called Lenny Grefig: "Hey, let's scout this some day!" She recalled paddling it several times, years ago, and agreed enthusiastically that we should scout it.

Next, a call from Henry Schreiber. Lenny had told him about my call, and he too remembered paddling this swamp in the past. Then, in a recent Conservation presentation about the Highlands by Club staff to all the committee chairs of the Chapter, the Great Swamp was listed as a Critical Treasure within the Highlands region -- a developer's proposed plans may threaten the integrity of the swamp. Henry realized that this was the same Great Swamp that he, Lenny and others had paddled several years ago.

It seemed right to scout this river sooner rather than later. So on Sunday, October 30, the three of us - Lenny, Henry and I - set off with two canoes for Patterson NY. Lenny had talked to the Braleys about water levels (this river is practically in their backyard). Henry had printed out a topo map and checked the gauge. When we arrived on site, Lenny and Henry remembered exactly where the best put-in is, and the best place to spot a car for early out. Pretty good recall - it had been more than ten years since they'd been there.



Photo by Henry Schreiber

The put-in is near the Patterson train station, where there is a "great divide" of sorts: water flows south from there into the Croton Reservoir and eventually into the Hudson. Just a short distance above the put-in, water flows north into the Ten Mile River, then into the Housatonic, and down into Long Island Sound.

It had rained hard the week before so we had plenty of water, maybe even a little too much. Sometimes it was hard to find the channel because

the water was well above its banks, and we could paddle shortcuts right through the tall grass. There are certainly beaver dams there but we floated right over them; we did see beaver lodges and plenty of chewed-on trees. It's a very twisty river in a beautiful wet woodland, more open than the Pine Barrens, and contained in a fairly narrow, flat valley, running parallel to Route 22. Very quiet, good birds, and only minimal intrusions from civilization. We had a fine half-day paddle down to the spotted car, where we pulled the boats out to be sure we weren't still paddling after dark. In springtime daylight, there will be plenty of time for a grand full-day paddle from there down to a takeout near Green Chimneys School on Doansburg Road. So, a Club Critical Treasures trip will be re-born in 2007. Next May 12. Maybe we'll see you on that river.

For more information about the Highlands Region and Critical Treasures, see: [www.highlandscoalition.org](http://www.highlandscoalition.org). The AMC is a member of the Highlands Coalition.

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## STILL THINKING ABOUT IT?

Have you joined the growing list of paddlers who have decided to give up their paper copy of PaddleSplashes and read the on-line version? If not, what are you waiting for?

The Canoe/Kayak Committee mails over 400 copies of PaddleSplashes to our members five times per year, at an annual printing and mailing cost of \$2,750. That's more than 8,000 sheets of paper each year. In addition to the environmental benefits, eliminating this cost would provide enough savings for us to buy a new sea kayak *and* whitewater kayak *and* canoe every year!

See how easy it is to access the online version by going to <http://www.amc-ny.org/recreational-activities/canoe/newsletter> then send an e-mail to [PSonline@amc-ny.org](mailto:PSonline@amc-ny.org), telling us that you want to start reading the on-line version. We'll send you an e-mail reminder each time a new issue is ready - just click on the link and start reading.

Help us save some trees and buy some new boats.



**Cath Kraft and Victoria Butler pick the winner of the PaddleSplashes On-Line Drawing. Tom Trevor was the winner of a \$50 American Express gift card.**



Thanks to all who have elected to receive PaddleSplashes on-line. If you change your e-mail address, don't forget to let us know at [PSonline@amc-ny.org](mailto:PSonline@amc-ny.org) so that we can continue to notify you when each issue is posted.

## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue will complete my sixth year of editing PaddleSplashes, and I have decided to step down. I have asked Connie Farley to continue as the Editor. She graciously accepted. Connie has been editor of the KCCNY newsletter for the passed two plus years. She has been an outstanding Trip Leader for AMC and leads many trips during the year.

I wish to thank you all for providing articles, information and responses to my many requests over the years. You have made the job of Editor very worthwhile for me.

PaddleSplashes is your source of information about the sport that you enjoy, and it helps to keep us all in touch with pertinent information, about each others travels, river information, trip reports, equipment and much more.

Please send your articles and information to Connie at [paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org](mailto:paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org). The next issue will be published in January 2007.

Thanks again, and see you on the river!

# THE TRIP THAT ALMOST NEVER WAS

Minnisceongo and Cedar Pond Creeks, October 21, 2006

By: Tom Trevor

I started paddling these relatively benign tidal streams more than a decade ago. After a while, I started leading trips there geared for beginners. We got a lot of bang for our buck: 15 minutes from The Barn, put-in and take out at the same spot. Song birds and wading birds abound, if the season and tides are right. I have never seen a power boat in the water there and rarely spotted other paddlers.

So, why was Saturday, October 21, 2006 different?



Photos by Angelica Padro

On Friday, October 20, 2006 we had high winds gusting to 40 miles per hour. Numerous trees were blown down and blocked the roads in Rockland County. The winds were forecast to calm to 10 mph from the northwest with gusts to 25 mph. However, even these conditions made me uncomfortable paddling with beginner recreation kayakers into the Cedar Pond Creek portion of the trip with its northern exposure.

So, I called all the participants and explained the conditions. The forecast seemed benign enough from a cozy living room. But I explained what can happen to small boats paddling against both current and gusty winds, a condition we were likely to face. Most were interested in paddling on what was to be a warm fall day with partly cloudy skies and temperatures in the low 60s. The water temperature was about 60° F.

Rather than cancel the trip, I offered to meet at the barn, go to the put-in, and make the decision about continuing the trip when we saw first hand what the conditions were. Two paddlers decided to accept my offer and met me at the barn. There, we could see intermittent gusts buffeting the leafy trees and bending branches, and one paddler opted out.

The trip was down to two paddlers, Angelica Padro and me. We set off to the put-in in a parade of two cars, each with our own boat.

From the put-in at the Haverstraw Canoe and Kayak launch site we observed high winds and some wind driven waves beyond the old railroad bridge north of the put-in. So we restricted our paddling to the sheltered portion of the river. Since this was about  $\frac{1}{3}$  the original trip, we paddled leisurely up Minnisceongo Creek toward Haverstraw Bay County Park.

We began our excursion at slack high tide which enabled us to browse wetlands not normally navigable at lower water. In one open space we saw a great blue heron take flight across our line of sight. In another area we watched two belted kingfishers dance across the sky at tree level. I'm not quite sure what the significance was, territorial dispute or some other issue? The four turkey vultures riding the thermals looking for lunch seemed too high to spot anything but they did not appear to be malnourished either. As we paddled up Minnisceongo Creek we were occasionally ushered by two mallards ahead of us.

The leisurely trip also allowed us to observe some of the changes wrought on the land by our predecessors. A sunken barge reminiscent of the abandoned brick industry mournfully waits for its cargo of bricks strewn along the shore. The green cap of the Haverstraw landfill sports prickly pipes to relieve methane gas. The causeway by Haverstraw Bay County Park, with its pipes carrying brackish creek water to and fro with tidal regularity; supports an abandoned rail line used in this once highly industrialized riverfront.



We were off the water by 2 PM as the tide was falling rapidly. We had a great time, in part, because we were able to adjust our float plan and expectations to meet the conditions on the water. As often as I've paddled here, no two trips are alike.



# ANTARCTICA

## Part 4

By: Anne Bailey

As we cruised through this ongoing spectacle of sea and landscape, our experience was enhanced even further by the wildlife that was spotted here and there, floating by us. The captain announced such sightings and maneuvered the ship to come as close as possible when there was an especially noteworthy viewing. The cluster of seals in the photos below was one of those. One of the seals seemed to be waving at us, as we came close by the iceberg that was his sundeck.



On several occasions, we saw a seal sharing an ice floe with penguins. In the water, a seal would view a penguin as a potential meal, but on the ice, a penguin can move too quickly to make the pursuit worthwhile, so they peacefully share the space. One time, I watched as a seal slid right by a solitary penguin, and watched it nonchalantly as it slid into water, the color of a swimming pool, and resurfaced around on the other side of the ice.

Our REALLY close-up encounters came when we landed at the rookeries in the Zodiacs. The Zodiacs held 12 passengers each and Antarctic law allows no more than 100 people on shore at a time, so this process covered a 6-hour time frame. We visited two of these rookeries, one of Chinstrap and the other of Gentoo penguins. The dirty tummies on some of the penguins indicate that they have been onshore for a while. When they have just returned from fishing, they are shining white.

The rookeries were very busy places. There were many young to feed, who by this time were almost as big as their parents (remember that February is like August for us). Most families had two chicks. The parents went to sea to fish and returned to the rookery, found their chicks among the throngs, and regurgitated

the fish into a chick's throat. The second chick waited, seemingly very patiently, for the next trip, as it seemed that only one chick was fed at a time.

Squealing, squabbling, squeaking, and the plaintive cheeps of chicks seeking missing parents were the sounds of the rookery. Intermittently, the air was pierced with long, very loud honks from an adult, its head thrown up toward the sky. All this was accompanied by the scurrying and hopping of birds everywhere. Yet the Gentoo young certainly knew how to take it easy - many were flopped out spread-wing on their stomachs, napping in the sun.

The sea lions (much larger than seals) were on the shore of the Chinstrap rookery and the Zodiac took us by to see them on our return to the ship. They looked very much in charge of the beach!

The second rookery, of Gentoo penguins (with the orange beaks and unusually long tails), was on a small island that was a Chilean research station, complete with a small post office and flag. Many of us mailed a few postcards from there, with no assurance as to how long it would take for delivery - the mail was picked up by ship. As it turned out, it arrived in a few weeks and not the several months we had been told it well might be.



When we walked among the penguins at the rookeries, we had to be very careful to stand still when they crossed our path. Some of the ship's staff members were posted around the rookery wearing bright yellow vests that said "Penguin Police" on the back. Their job was to watch us to see that we were being careful not to startle the penguins and that we were keeping out of their way as they hopped around us. The penguins weren't at all afraid of us and were on the move all the time.



## THE INQUIRING PADDLER

Questions and answers may be sent to [paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org](mailto:paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org) or by snail mail to the address on the last page of this newsletter. The deadline for the next issue is January 15, 2007. If you wish to be included on the e-mail inquiry response list, please send your e-mail address to [paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org](mailto:paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org).

### What is the Strangest Thing You Carry in your Boat?

#### Jim Rubins

The strangest thing I carry is me. "What a piece of work is man..."

#### Bill Hladky

My false pride, also the most dangerous. My joy comes when I am doing what I can truly do without pretend or vanity and the experience is clear and clean of mind pollution.

#### Henry Schreiber

A TV that we picked up on a Bronx River clean-up.

#### Tom Trevor

When I paddled the Rockland section of the Hackensack River, a few of my fellow paddlers were amazed to see me pull a saw and anvil clippers from my canoe when we encountered blow-down obstructions.

#### Cath Kraft

The worst equipment—when a nameless person outfitted my first boat (Impulse) backwards, that means that my seat was facing the wrong way, soon after it was outfitted, the saddle fell out of the boat and I glued it in backwards again! Duh!!! The error was pointed out eventually - getting the saddle off the boat sure was harder than the first time.

### What Type of Safety Equipment Do You Carry in Your Boat?

#### Charles Michener

I carry a throw bag, webbing loop with locking carabineer and a spare biner; also a pair of prusik loops. The throw bag and biners have both been used in the last month to retrieve pinned equipment or stranded paddlers.

#### Theresa (Tee) Zazzera

MMMMM! Safety equipment?? When Jay and I first started paddling eons ago, we participated in Charlie Walbridge's first safety clinic and several more in the subsequent years. The information disseminated in these types of clinics has proven invaluable. It has little to do with equipment, but more to do with training the brain to respond to an emergency situation and learning the importance of when to say no to paddling. You can carry pulleys, knives, throw bags, prusiks, etc., but if you are not trained to stay calm, and think and act fast, it is all for naught. So the best type of safety equipment I carry in my boat is the knowledge gained from swift water rescue.

#### Don Getzin

I wear a high-float Type V rescue PFD fitted with a cowtail holding a large gate carabineer. Attached to my PFD pocket are two pre-tied prusik slings. Around my waist I wear a pre-tied 8' tubular nylon webbing sling held in place by a locking HMS carabineer. Under my rear airbag, there is a throw bag containing over 70' of 3/8" NRS Spectra line. Also inside the throw bag, attached by a locking carabineer to the end of the Spectra line, is a gear

bag containing three 2" pulleys and 20' of 1" tubular nylon webbing. In my saddle, in a yellow NRS Sea Stow XS dry bag are a rigging plate, a 2" prusik-minding pulley, a Kevlar cordelette, another two 20' lengths of 1" tubular nylon webbing, and 6 chocks/hexcentrics for constructing anchors. In my saddle I also carry a complete first aid kit in two red NRS Sea Stow XS dry bags. But the most important safety equipment in my boat is me, my judgment acquired from years of paddling and my knowledge from taking first aid and Safety & Rescue courses and from teaching S&R courses for our chapter.

#### Martin Plante

I usually carry a small waterproof box with some first aid supplies, including a CPR mask. In an emergency, I wouldn't need to waste valuable time finding whichever paddler had the Club's first aid kit. I also carry the other essential: a can of Coke to ward off hypothermia and dehydration.





**Bill Canfield**

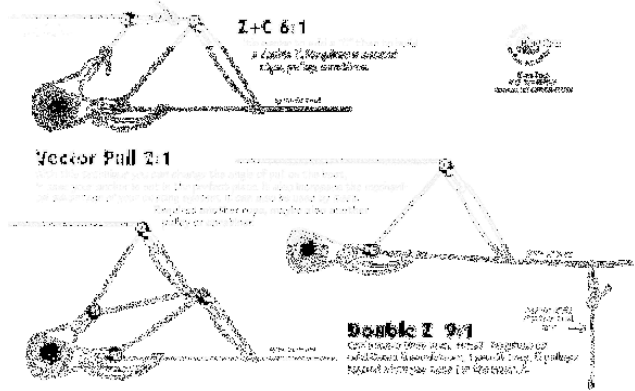
On most whitewater runs I carry a 60' throw rope (I personally prefer Spectra), two carabiners, and a small first aid kit. In my dry bag. My first aid kit contains a selection of Band-Aids, bandages, tape, moleskin, antibiotic ointment, scissors, waterproof matches, rescue blanket (also referred to as a space blanket), aspirin, Motrin, antihistamine, and latex gloves. I also wear a rescue vest PFD. Rescue equipment could/should be augmented with other safety items depending on the river and the group. When I paddle South America, I add a suture kit, antibiotics and topical steroidal cream to my first aid supplies and when I paddle rivers (vs. creeks) I wear a cowtail on my PFD.

**Jeffrey DePue**

Full first aid kit with Sam splint, anti-inflammatory, band-aids, gauze pads, epi-pen, flashlight with spare batteries, small hand rescue saw, compass, flare (250 ft high), magnesium fire starter, matches that burn underwater, space blanket, duct tape, leatherman knife. Full rescue kit for Z drag, small amount of food and water for emergency purposes, besides my lunch. Total weight 10-12 lbs, I do this for others. I also wear and know how to use a safety rescue harness vest and I carry a throw bag.

**Jennifer Koermer**

I got rid of lunch to carry the following: first aid kit, pin kit (w/biners, prusiks, pulleys and webbing strap), flotation, throwrope, reuseable hand warmers, gloves and an extra neoprene beanie in the winter, spare contacts, water/Gatoraid. On my vest: rescue hook, quick release belt, boat towing tether, snacks.



**Curt Gellerman**

Besides the common safety gear (whistle, throwbag, knife, 1 or 2 carabiners that all paddlers should have on every paddling trip over Class 3, some additional items that often get left home during a crisis situation—brains/common sense and a quick reaction time. Quickly analyzing the situation and putting a safe plan in motion is worth more than most of the gear we carry.

**Dave Brucas**

I carry a first aid kit in a Lexan bottle, and a throw rope, sometimes a backup breakdown paddle. I also carry a “half” un-pin kit that weighs only 14 ounces, so in my opinion any kayaker can carry it! See photos above.

**Tom Trevor**

Throw bag, first aid kit, sun screen, extra clothing, bow saw and anvil clippers, depending on stream paddler; extra water, seasonally appropriate, extra energy food, extra paddle and for kayaking a paddle float.

**Linda Polstein**

The only item I carry that is different from the usual stuff boaters have is a 21' length of tubing (sometimes from a leaky airbag). If a person is trapped under water, or with the water rising, it can be used to breathe prior to rescue. It may be difficult to get to the victim, but it's better to try than to watch and hold your breath too.

**Joe Pylka**

Actually my response works for both questions: a bar of soap. If I'm in the water and all rescue efforts, throwbags, etc. fail, then I take it out and wash myself ashore...

**NOTICES**

**For Sale:** Rubber duckie, tandem, including paddles, pump, lifejackets \$500. Flotation bag, Mohawk, (brand new, never used) for open solo boat, yellow \$40. Call (908)626-1315

**For Sale:** Royalex Mad River ME canoe, set up for solo paddling, with air bags, thigh straps, knee pads. \$300. George Flinn, 852 Navesink River Rd., Locust, NJ 07760

**News Item**

ORC Industries Inc of Lacrosse, WI has signed a letter of intent to purchase Bell Canoe Works. The sale of Bell Canoe Works will pose some challenges in the interim, but promises to be a good thing for the future of the company. This transition means greater depth in financial stability. ORC will continue building high quality canoes.



# MY AMC PADDLING EXPERIENCE

By: Jim Dougherty

Since I lost my paddling partner, Betsy Goode, I have a different view of the paddling community. It's like an extended family. I received a great deal of support from paddlers, especially the AMC.

My paddling year started early, almost right through the Fall to February. I sharpened my skills in a local small section of a Class 2+/3 whitewater river about 45 miles from my house (when you live in Queens, NY, 45 miles is local).

Once March came, I ran my first CL 3, the Tohickon. I remember feeling butterflies in my stomach driving over the Triborough Bridge. I was told that a swim in Race Course is nasty and the cold water can cause real bad consequences. However, I felt that I practiced a great deal on my local river, often making tight and quick eddy-turns behind rocks the size of my boat in CL 2+ rapids. I also took some practice swims in cold water to see how I would feel, knowing the car is a few feet away. However, I knew that would not be the case on the Tohickon.

I had tried to sign up for the AMC trip but was turned down for lack of experience on Class 3 river, no history of having paddled with any leaders in AMC and because of the time of year. However, the trip leader referred me to Butch and his group who were running a bootleg trip on the Tohicken. After running the river, the AMC trip leader approached me at the take out to see how I fared on the river. Well, this

made the trip so much sweeter. She went on to tell me why she didn't accept me on the AMC trip, but I told her not to sweat it since if I was in her position, I would have done the same. After all, if a person cannot tell you a few rivers that they paddled at a comparable level and I didn't have anyone to vouch for my ability, a trip leader doesn't have a real way of judging whether or not it's safe to accept you on a trip.

Anyway, if you plan on paddling a Class 3 for the first time, March might not be the best choice. Also, probably the most important thing to do is have someone guide you down. This was probably why it went so well for me..



Most of all, know when you are at the drop before Race Course. The left side has an easy way down, some of the other lines can be difficult and yeah, a swim at Race Course hurts.

In June, I paddled the Nescopeck with AMC and attended the barbecue afterwards at the Lindquist cabin in Pennsylvania. The party was one of the best I went to this year. I go to many rivers and parties, so when I say one of the best, I mean it. The Lindquists are fun people.

A few months later I found out what swim is like on the Tohican. I blew a boof and recirculated multiple times before wet exiting. It all went wrong when I was charging for the rock and at the last minute stopped to get a peek, MISTAKE. I should have charged full steam ahead. It resulted in a wet exit and watching my boat swim down stream. I had to swim Race Course.

This past summer I paddled the Ottawa. Although only CL3, it was huge. When I saw the first hole, I went through with fear and excitement. I tried to hit the hole where I was told, but was off and flipped. It was great, I rolled right up. I thought I had a bomb proof roll after four swims on Tuesday and two on Monday. On Thursday the instructor took us to a place that had a real swirly eddy line and whirlpools appeared and disappeared in different spots. You never knew when one of these whirlpools were going to appear and grab you. I finally learned to paddle in this cranky water.

Following Canada, I paddled my two favorite rivers, the Farmington in New Boston and Bulls Bridge. I really enjoyed the CL3+ section and was able to play in the holes. At Bulls Bridge there are three CL 4 drops in the mist of CL 2/3 rapids .

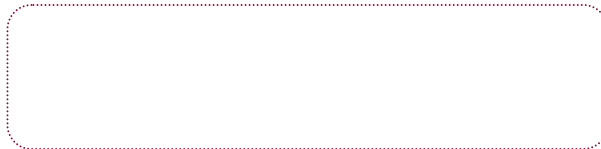
As you can tell, I really enjoy paddling and if it wasn't for AMC, I might still be whitewater rafting once or twice a year. Kayaking is so much more fun. From the beginner course given by Mac McCaulley to the present, this sport has changed my life. Hope to see you on the river, I don't want that new driesuit to go to waste.

## ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

website for schedule: [www.amc-ny.org/recreational-activities/canoe/schedule/](http://www.amc-ny.org/recreational-activities/canoe/schedule/)

Date	Sea Kayak	Flatwater/ Brownwater	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Instruction /Misc
2-3							
9-10				Sat: Paddlers Party			
16-17				Penguin Paddle Koerner			
23-24							
30-31					Sat.-Mon.: Winnepesaukee Ski & Paddle Koerner		

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**Submission for next issue:** Send in your articles, and share your canoeing/kayaking experiences and information in the next issue of *PaddleSplashes*, due on January 15, 2007. Please send as an e-mail message to: [paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org](mailto:paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org)

## DON'T FORGET THE PARTY!



**AMC PAD-  
DLERS'  
PARTY  
SAT., DEC 9  
AT 2:00 PM**

**AMERICAN  
LEGION  
HALL**

**From Garden State Parkway Northbound:**

Exit 160. At bottom of ramp turn right. Continue through 3 traffic lights. Post 170 will be on the right before the next light.

**From Garden State Parkway Southbound:**

Exit 163, Route 17 south. Follow directions for Rt 17 South.

**From Route 80 Eastbound:**

Exit at Garden State Parkway North. Follow directions for GSP North.

**From Route 80 Westbound:**

Exit at Route 17 North. Follow directions for Rt 17 North.

**From Route 17 Northbound:**

Exit at Maywood/Rochelle Park (E.Passaic St/W. Passaic St. just after Outback Steakhouse). Turn left at bottom of ramp. Post is on left side just after the first traffic light.

**From Route 17 Southbound:**

Immediately after the Garden State Plaza (shopping mall) take first exit for Farview Avenue. At second traffic light turn right onto W. Passaic St. Post 170 is on left.

**From Route 4/Route 208 Eastbound and Westbound:**

Exit onto Route 17 South. Follow directions for 17 south.