

I've Seen Fire and I've Seen Rain

By Jeff Gregg, Mike Dalton and Loretta Brady

e had made a dream

come true. My friend, John, and I finally realized our dreams of a real Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness trip in July of 2010! The BWCA is a million acre wilderness area within the Superior National Forest in

northeastern Minnesota. It straddles the borders of Canada near Ontario's infamous Quetico Provincial Park.

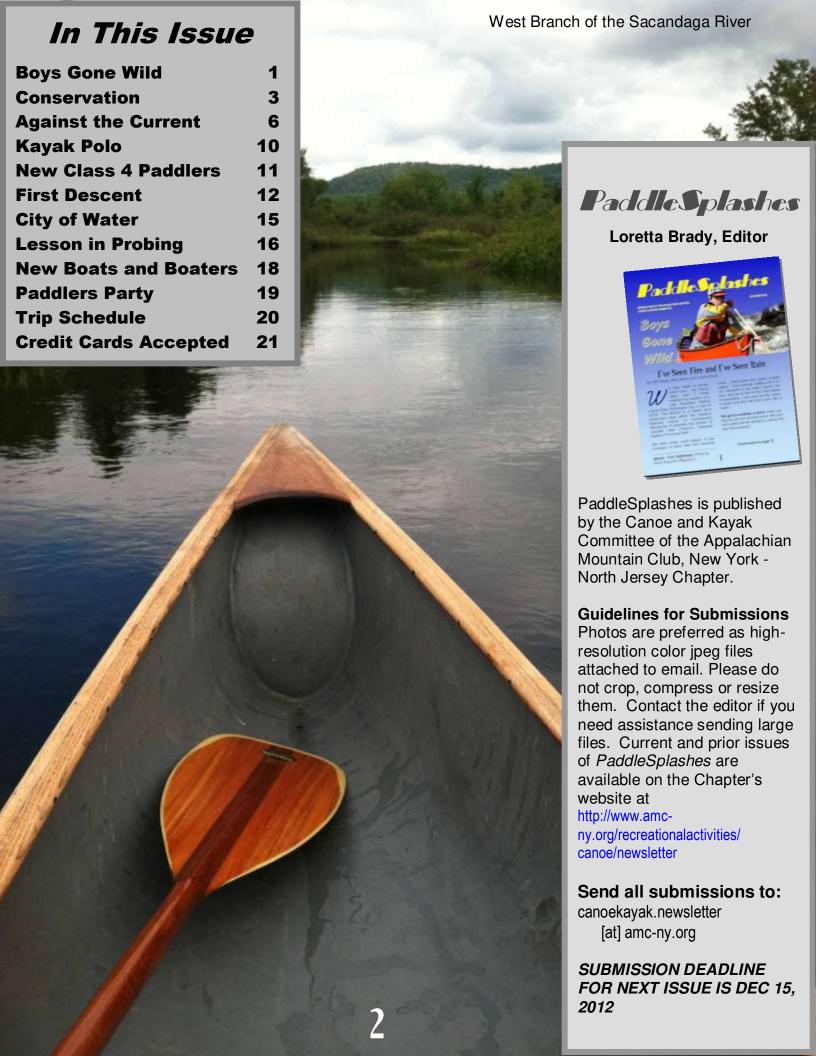
We were pretty much always in the company of loons, with their haunting

tones. There were also plenty of bald eagles. One evening, looking out from our campsite to an island across the way, we saw a total of five bald eagles congregating. I also saw my first raven, a large crow-like bird that soars like a hawk.

We got to weather a storm under our tarp on our own private island. We sure were glad that we decided to set-up the tarp that evening!

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above: Curt Gellerman (Photo by Road Dog [Jim Pflaumer])



Have You Hugged Your Local Conservationist Lately?

By Loretta Brady and Tanya McCabe

ou never step into the same river twice. Or bay. Mother nature makes sure of it. Those natural fluctuations of current, tide and head winds keep the challenge fresh. But what about the ways we, as individuals, impact the waters. AMC's big-city lawyers watch over the wilderness, but there's a lot that happens locally, too.

Cheoah. Woodlands had nearly choked off the river till it resembled more dirt road than waterway. "It was a dry bed with trees growing out of it," noted Rich Dabal. "There were so many trees a channel had to be clear cut," he said. Local activists initiated feasibility studies to reinstate expired release permits. Thanks to the locals' push, AMC enjoyed what Carin calls one of her "all time favorite rivers."

Boating clubs are



recreational, but that doesn't mean they don't see themselves as stewards of the wetlands. We've been the grateful beneficiaries of club activism, perhaps without even realizing it. Kayak and Canoe Club of New York's Lauren Cook back in 2005 learned that the Esopus Creek releases were threatened. His hours of testimony at important hearings and his rallying for letter-writing campaigns won important victories for water quality and access on this and other local rivers.

Thanks to the advocacy of other boat clubs, AMC members recently enjoyed the ride of a lifetime on the crazy

Our club can claim quite a few green victories of its own. Few may know that one of our very own canoeists has had her hands in a highly beneficial dam project of her own. A skilled environmental engineer, Fran Schultz worked on the team that dammed the Merrill Creek Reservoir. "Its purpose is to provide make up water to the Delaware River at times of low flow so there'll be enough water in the river for the PSE&G power plant." That reservoir is a favorite quiet water destination on our trip schedule partly because of the many birds who also gained from the project.

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Conservation

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"The project was cool, but ran into so many more issues that challenged us than we could ever have expected," Fran said. While building the 300 foot high half mile long main dam, and three side dams (dikes), they found naturally occurring asbestos, and a fault line. "It was like a one year prison sentence as far as the work schedule: lots of time outdoors, but really stressful." Still, the bonus pay off endures in a popular site for touring kayakers and canoeists who name it as one of their favorite paddling spots.

Rivers age. Like us, they get wider and tend to flatten out. Storms pummel their banks and blow down trees loosened by flooding. Our AMC chapter pushed to support storm clean-up on favorite club destinations ravaged by

Hurricane Irene, especially on the mangled Shohola in eastern Pennsylvania. The storm caused a temporary construction bridge to collapse, sending very large, dangerous sections of wood downstream, clogging this pristine, popular waterway. In addition to advocacy efforts by many local clubs, AMC NY-NoJ sent letters to the gas company responsible for the bridge, urging them to clean the debris and free our waterway from these manmade hazards. Sections of the bridge were removed six months ago, making the Shohola navigable in time for the season.

Then there's the continuous

conservation efforts of AMC leader Brant Collins, who has made Barnegat Bay our chapter's "sister-city" project. Just a short way down the road from

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Many consider the Esopus Creek, under the care of NYS's Department of Environmental Conservation, a kind of endangered species. It has a long history of erosion risk, storm damage and water quality threats.

Photo by Rob Holbrook



Here, Meredith Fabian conquers the rapids on the Esopus during AMC's Basic Safety and Water Rescue course in August. The 10 participants learned how to walk steadily through strong current, how to swim to self-rescue with paddle in hand, and how to prevent then surmount drowning hazard obstacles called strainers. Inadvertently, they even swept out a bit of trash when Matt scooped up a mangled steel picnic table frame submerged directly in the path of the rapid-swimming drills. The course was led by Instruction Chair Butch Futrell, assisted by Carin Tinney and Matt Schafer.

Conservation

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the Jersey Shore scene is this soothing sanctuary for myriad forms of shore life and sea kayakers—including one powerhouse AMC member who island-hopped by solo canoe. Even National Geographic visits regularly to document at-risk species like the oystercatcher. The Sedge Island educational center guards the surrounding ocean waters to preserve endangered species of birds, turtles, clams and more. Brant's passion has led a steady stream of AMC boaters to add their support.

But perhaps no conservation effort is more loving than the club members who trawl local waters for "river treasure." Regularly, AMC members minimize the impact of urban sprawl by cleaning the bays and rivers that border our cities in sites like the New Jersey Meadowlands or the Bronx Pelham Bay.

AMC CKC Trip Leader Tim Watters helped his son, Patrick, organize a Ramapo River clean up this past June. Patrick took the initiative to reach out to his Eagle Scout troop and expand the project. Thanks to Patrick, Tim, and all the scouts, the river is a much healthier place to recreate and paddle because of their effort.

Jill Arbuckle and Tanya McCabe

hosted a spring clean up of the Pelham Bay area that transformed the waters overnight—or over the course of the day. In four hours that May day, they worked using canoes supplied by the New York City park service. Some shore cleanup was also done by another group of volunteers that day. In the end there were 3 boatloads full of obstructions removed from the waters.

It was a stewardship passed on through generations. Tanya McCabe and grandchildren, Alex and Trevor Bradley and Erin McCabe shared in the task. Billie Whitney-Bukofzer had her mother, Katie's, "can do" and "let's move it" attitude.

All went well until they found out that the tide--that should have been coming in--went out, leaving some workers stranded on the opposite shore from the put-in. Tanya and Erin spent 45 minutes pushing through 40 feet of mud to get to water. Alex and Trevor had it a bit easier, only slogging through 20 feet of mud. But all was not lost as Don Getzin found a place to get to shore. The rest joined him and succeeded in cleaning up even through dense poison ivy. Much of what they found was harmful rusted metal. Urban legend has it that past trips snagged unbelievable finds like picnic tables and car tires.

Perhaps the key to sustaining volunteers is the infamous AMC postactivity Happy Hour. After cleanup, Tanya and grandchildren ate lunch looking out to Long Island Sound. The volunteering grandchildren were promised a dinner at nearby Arthur Avenue if they agreed to re-enlist for next year's clean up.

Promises were made and kept.

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Conservation

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What about the rest of us? Perhaps we grow complacent about a greener NY-NoJ when we know our Conservation Chair is the highly capable Sara Hart. Alongside her other goals to strengthen the chapter's naturalist commitment. Sara's vigilance over water quality issues has led to a club-wide campaign to raise awareness on the hydrofracking controversy. Check out her Winter 2011 article in Trails and Waves, or the many postings under the Conservation tab on our club website. She reminds us that AMC can only take a stand that aligns with its energy policy statement, but there's nothing to stop individuals from turning up the heat on politicians.

Paddler Henry Schreiber agrees. Don't just rely on the club's environ-

mentalist research. As one of our Conservation Committee members, he keeps his ear to other chapters' activities and scopes out sites like the Delaware River Keeper. He then shares these online at http://www.amcny.org/Conservation. "We really encourage any boater to let us know of an issue you'd like us to follow," Henry said. "We could get that information out to everyone." A big development he is monitoring is the proposed expansion of power lines in the Delaware Water Gap region. Anyone, not just CKC leaders, can receive e-blasts, timely updates that include alerts for environmental action. "You know," Henry observes as a long-standing loyal club boater, "A lot of people start off in AMC for the recreational activities, only to find out later how much conservation is needed."

Hear that? Conservation needs you.



Against the Current

Are we doing enough for our waterways? Should we be more proactive in sharing information updates and opportunities for action? Or would this lead to polarizing politics and anti-energy ranting?

Share your stories of past environmental triumphs by NY-NoJ boaters. Tell us the issues you wish to learn about, or wished we took action on. Send your favorite conservation links and blogs to paddlesplashes@amc-ny.org.

BOYS GONE WILDContinued from first page



The wonderful people at Piragis Northwoods Company, in Ely, Minnesota, helped us plan and outfit our three-day loop. Never having portaged before, we figured three days would be a good start. We prepared ourselves by reading Cliff Jacobson's Boundary Water Canoe Camping. We learned the basics. Pack all of your gear into three packs, so that the gear and the boat can all be carried to the next put-in over no more than three crossings. On the first crossing, both paddlers carry one of the packs from the take-out to the next put-in. Then they hike back to the old take-out, pick-up the remaining pack and the boat, and head on back to the new put-in - a total of three crossings. So, a half mile portage is really a mile and a half.

Was it worth it? You bet it was, even if one of the portage routes, the last one in our loop, has the local nickname of "the ankle buster." The sense of serenity was palpable, the scenery beautiful, and the wildlife fascinating! Can't wait to do it again!



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Photo by Jeff Gregg

Boys Gone WILD

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Expect the unexpected. That's life in the wild. One of the most important traits of a canoe adventurer may actually be patience. You can prepare for all nature has to throw at you, but in the end you can never control her.

Who would expect that fire would be one of the greatest hazards for expedition paddlers? When you're Curt Geller, frequent traveler to waterways near the Arctic Circle, you know what to do. Curt obsessively maps out his self-guided routes and stashes a rifle for the polar bears. He's tough enough to take all the kidding about his extreme journeys, "What are you doing bringing guns to polar bears, aren't they dangerous enough?"

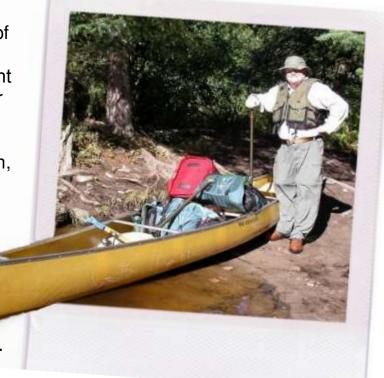
But there was a time when even he was shaken. Caught out in the wilds of Manitoba, a seething forest fire was headed their way. "We pitched our tent out on a peninsula of the Berens River and kept a vigil, ready to swim if the flames kept heading our way." After a tense evening game of wait-and-watch, they were able to move on safely the next day.

Mike Dalton wasn't as lucky. It's better to hear him tell this AMC legend:

"It was to be a three-week long trip on the Nahanni River in the Northwest Territories. After flying into Yellowknife, we had to load up a floatplane to be taken on the river. Our canoe was tied onto the float on one side of the plane as we flew over Virginia Falls.

"The whole trip we were concerned about dumping because the water temperature was 50° F, and also the speed of the river can carry you quite a distance before getting out. But the paddling proved easier than we'd thought, with just a few rapids in spots that caused apprehension. Our real concern turned out to be the fires.

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John gets ready for the next portage.

Boys Gone WILD

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"One night a ranger came in by

concern about getting back to Fort

Seven days later, the fires were still

gummed our situation to death. The

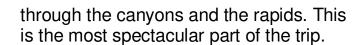
strong, covering an area of about

150 sq miles. We sat around and

helicopter and told us there were large

Simpson in time to get our flight home.

fires downriver, and we were to stay put for a couple of days. This has caused



"As expected, the next day the chief warden told us we would not be allowed to proceed downriver. Even that day's hike wouldn't come off because smoke from the fires had come upriver, destroying visibility.

"After finally getting home, I had a constant desire to return to the Nahanni. As time went on, I kept hoping someone would organize another trip I could join. By 1984, I decided that if I were to get there, it would have to be me that

organized it. This I did, and did again in 1986, 1988, and 1994.

The 1988 trip was by far

the best. Tanya (McCabe) and I were getting a bit discouraged when different participants kept dropping, so we decided we would do the trip alone. We recognized this violates many of canoeing's safety rules, but we accepted the additional risks and took extra precautions.

Jeff and John break camp in the Boundary Waters.



KAYAK WATER POLO

By Hanno Schop

t's hard to believe that so few people know about such a great sport. Several AMC kayakers are finding it's a great way to gain better boat control while just having a great time. Part of the problem is that if you even try to find it on YouTube, you have to type in "Canoe Polo," because to most of the world, that's how it's known. "It's rumored that there are more kayak polo players in small towns in New Zealand than there are in all of North America," says avid polo player Lyn Goldsmith.

Most of us are kayak polo "wannabees," parasites who play when we can with the regular, dedicated team members. Most of us enjoy the social Saturdays play times. What's good is that in a

competitive game they'd reshuffle the players so there are never too many newbies on any one team. Nevertheless, even our gang of mediocre temps wound up going all the way to the finals, thanks largely to star player Adelene Tan's expert coaching. She has been tapped to play for Canada's national team at the kayak polo world championships. She will tell us about her experiences when she returns from Poland, triumphantly, we hope!

The kayak polo players are a nice and welcoming crowd to players of all levels. It's fun and everyone should give them a try or two, either at their summer Hudson or winter NJ location.

To learn more, visit http://nykayakpolo.org/.

Lynn Goldsmith passes the ball while Hanno Schop looks on.

Photo by Bill Schoolcraft



The Class 4 paddlers have awarded new whitewater ratings to five of our kayakers.

Congratulations to all!

Class 4

Hanno Schop

Jordan Yaruss

Class 4R (Dryway)

Olly Gotel
Bill Handworth
Carin Tinney

First Descent

Crash Course on the Cheoah

By popular demand, members have asked for more stories of first descents, when paddlers cross a threshold and "step up" their game. Send us your growth experiences about that first wilderness canoe expedition with its marathon carries, or the sea kayak voyage that debuted your skills at storm-surf landings. Here, AMC whitewater paddlers, with the support of expert members like Rich Dabal and David Brucas, show how to muster your zen to take it up a notch.

henever I see paddlers lose their nerve, I tell them they just have to channel that emotional energy into their paddling. Focus on your strokes. Focus on your line. You have to envision yourself making the moves. The Cheoah River was a great place to test that out.

Carin's description of

North Carolina's class IV/V river is "the Savage on crack." Very true assessment. Others call sections of it "the Little Gauley" for its fast current, crashing waves,

giant holes, blind entrances, and big eddy lines to cross. Then there's its nick-name, "the Tree-oah." Trees grow right there in the middle of the river, remnants of the days before dam releases revived its life as a top-notch attraction. Running this 9.5 mile course means you read and run as you drop into it.
Rolling is mandatory. Any swims will be long and brutal. The run has a 12 foot water fall, tons of holes, powerful cross-currents and a lot of boof moves. The release was 800 cubic feet per second on top of natural flow. Total flow was about 1100 cfs.

Right away we got a taste of what would happen several times this day. It looked like river-left side was more open. Wrong. The channel choked off. We found a route through the trees and got back on line.

Back in the main flow, we went through big crashing waves, holes, and short ledges. Because of the heavily treed banks, shore scouting wouldn't be happening today. I relied on the

Photo of Rich Dabal by Jason Gould

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Crash Course on the Cheoah

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research done earlier—reading up on the rapids and memorizing the land marks that should appear. This helped especially for God's Dam, a river wide, six foot ledge with minimal time to see it. I saw the horizon line and ran for the river-left side. Not the best spot; sticky in there, but runnable. Did I say there were no eddies in this section?

After several miles of holes, big waves and cross currents. Bear Creek Rapid and Falls were in front of us. We got to the top of the Bear Creek Rapid and eddied out river-right. Climbing up the embankment to the road was a scramble. Once on the road you had good views of the drops. Bear Creek Rapid was a short, wide open rush of flow going over small ledges and stranded boulders. The move was start middle, head left of center for the square boulder and do an "S" turn around its upstream corner. That sets you up for getting the last chance eddy above the falls. David Brucas and I were running this. The rest walked. David went first and made the move around the boulder. I went next. Peeling out, I was in the ugly part of the rapid before I knew it. I scrambled around the boulders and got to the last chance eddy. So much for planning the run.

Bear Creek Falls. You have a choice of where to go; river-left over the highest part of the falls, or river-right

and boof over a boulder into a pool as long as my boat (eight feet), then finally drop into a strong right-to-left flow past the pile of rocks on the right. David went first. I watched him disappear. Carin gave me a thumbs up. I headed out. Lining up, boat angled right with a few correction strokes. I hit the boof move dead on. I slid off the boulder right into the first pool. Getting a facefull, I had the boat heading straight. I made it over the second drop where I had planned/ hoped. The views alternated between blue sky, white foam, some green, then more foam. Heading for the eddy, I was screaming - screaming my head off. I had waited three years for this moment. Still screaming in the eddy, I greeted another paddler who nodded, "First time?" A great day.

The river divided below the falls. The left channel, West Prong, was not visible. It has several "must make" boofs of several foot drops. The right channel was a swirling mass of white crashing over rocks and ledges. It looked really good. I did see the entrance to the first drop after the falls. It was a tight right-to-left diagonal that ended at the bottom of a very ugly sloping ledge. Before David and I ran the falls, I told him what was below. I took off down the right channel to catch the eddies above that diagonal chute

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Crash Course on the Cheoah

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mentioned earlier. I hit the chute, and at the bottom hit the flow off the ledge, which automatically turns you right, away from the ledge. Neat move.

After Tapoco Ledges—a train of more than 100 feet of off-set waves—we faced the last big drop of the day: Yard Sale. The name says it all. Carin went first over river left, the correct line. She flipped and rolled up. Dave Michael was next, over the center. Wrong spot to be in. Yard sale. By this time, Olly Gotel and I were in a very dynamic eddy on river right above the drop, a vertical six-foot ledge. Making the

the river-wide ferry to the left was not possible; center was not an option. Far right? Olly ran it and was flipped over before she was half way down the slot. Her boat banged hard on the rocks as she was getting flushed, but she finally rolled up. I got my boat and walked it 10 feet across the rock and seal launched into the water.

But there were no injuries. It was a great day for us all. Any boater running the Cheoah that day should be feeling pretty good: happy to tag a Southern classic, glad to be in one piece.



On July 14, the AMC participated in the City of Water Day, hosted by the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance to raise awareness of the waterways that surround us. Thanks to everyone who volunteered to staff the AMC booth: Jill Arbuckle, Carin Tinney, Rob Holbrook and Nathan Baker.

Photo by Carin Tinney



Descent and a Lesson in Probing: The Cheosh and Nolichucky's Jaws

hen the Cheoah was mentioned as a potential river for the Southern Rivers trip, I looked at the photos on American Whitewater, saw all the trees that littered the river, and I instantly said, "no way am I doing that!" But somehow, on day one of the Southern Rivers trip, Dave Michael and I ended up at the Cheoah put-in with Rich Dabal, David Brucas and Carin Tinney. Why not start the trip with a bang?

The only thing I had remembered about the Cheoah was that there was a class V somewhere on the river, and I was determined I would portage it. I assumed it was the scary-looking waterfall. So I got out above the waterfall and portaged. After all of Rich's screaming (fear or jubilation?), I honestly did not know whether that had been the right choice. Anyway, I put in right after the waterfall to continue to run the Bear Creek Rapid. I had figured out the line while listening to all the screaming; it was exciting and pretty challenging. When I got off the river, I went back to American Whitewater to read the description in more detail ... and, true to form, I had managed to put-in to run the

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Olly paddling a

southern river.

By Olly Gotel

Photo by Marty Plante

A Lesson in Probing

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hardest section. There is always this delicate balance between absorbing too much information about a new river (which means I would run nothing at all), or absorbing too little information (which means I'd inevitably end up doing what my mum would not be too chuffed to read about in an obit). Anyway, it led to me and Carin sharing a "high five!"

Perhaps the most interesting moment was running the rapid where I had just seen a chaotic yard sale unfold before my eyes. Rich was standing on a rock on river right pointing out where to run a blind drop into a crazy hole that had just snagged Dave B., while telling me that he was not actually able to exit the micro eddy himself to run the drop, and I could not come into that micro eddy. Do what? You just need to see Rich's hand gestures to know how seriously he takes his supportive role—I am not sure if I got his famous "get your head out of your butt" signal or not, but I just went for it. Err, a wonderful ledge crack, greeted me on the other side of the horizon line, but I escaped the real meat of the hole. Thanks Rich!

We had to scout most things from our boats on the Cheoah due to all the strainers. Only Dave B. and Rich did the completely blind probe stuff, and they gave the rest of us superb pointers. This set the stage for the first of many fabulous days of leadership and teamwork from the AMC crew.

Although a laughing point afterward, make sure that you know everyone's signals. I ran one rapid on the Cheoah with David B. sitting downstream in an eddy rubbing his head like crazy at me. I kept looking at him and giving him the "Yes, I'm completely OK" sign back, with my "What on earth's going on or coming up?" look. This went on and on as I weaved my way down through the rocks, now obviously getting concerned as to what I was misunderstanding, only to miss a perfect boof opportunity.

While I don't mind being a crash test dummy now and again, one of the many other lessons from the Southern Rivers trip for me was to always watch someone else go first into a feature with an ominous sounding name. With a little bit of coaxing from others in the eddyit doesn't seem to take much-I dove straight into the empty and very hungrylooking Jaws on the Nolichucky (a.k.a. "Beat Me Daddy!") After what felt like about 100 window shade moments later, (yes, those jaws are vicious, held me tight and gave me a thrashing surfing forwards, backwards, sideways, left, right, upside-down, all over...), the shark eventually let go of me-still in the boat and smiling/grimacing. Funny how everyone watching thinks you are having the most impressive ride of your life, while the reality is you are just trying to hang on for your life and get out. I'll take shark repellent with me the next time I head south!



Welcome to our New Canoeists! The Canoe & Kayak Committee offered two Basic Canoe Workshops again this year at Mohican Outdoor Center. New Canoeists! A warm welcome to our newest

contingent of open boaters and a big

thanks to instructors Henry

Schreiber, Lenny Drefig, Jeff

Dregg, Don Detzin, Fran Schultz,

Kurt Navratil and Rich Breton.

What a pair! Our Equipment Coordinator and purchasing

new kayaks!

agent, andy LoPinto, has found two gently used Dagger Mambas for our rental fleet. These are the perfect creek boat for experienced kayakers, but their crisp edging provides a solid platform for the novice. To reserve one for a trip, contact Andy at canoekayak.equipment @ amc-ny.org

Our boats have all been put away

Now it's time for fun and play

Outside may be a cold snow storm

at good food and friends will keep us warm

Please join us for the grand return of our

Holidays Paddlers Party!

Saturday, December 15, 2012 12:30 pm- 5:00 pm

> Hartley House 413 West 46th Street New York, NY 10036

http://www.hartleyhouse.org/theater/

In keeping with tradition, you will have the opportunity to flex your culinary muscles by providing your favorite dish or dessert.

Only sterno and electric heating options available.

Julia Childs (With a Dish) \$10

Mr. Bean (Without a Dish) \$20

Please RSVP with payment by November 3, 2012

Check your email for the official invitation, with up to the minute updates about all of the fun things we have planned to make this the best party EVER!!!!

To register, and to volunteer for the set-up or clean-up, contact Kafi at amc_ckc_membership411 <at> yahoo.com



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|---------------------------------|-------|--|---|---------|---|---------|---------------------------------|
| ACTIVITY SCHEDULE - 2012 | | | | | | | |
| Date | | Touring Water | Quiet Water | Class 1 | Class 2 | Class 3 | Class 4 |
| Sep. | 15-18 | | | | Deerfield Tinney/ Tiernan Esopus (Sun) Plante | | Deerfield Tinney/ Tiernan |
| | 22-23 | | Delaware & Raritan Canal <i>Gregg</i> | | | | |
| | 29-30 | | | | Mongaup (Sun) Jingirian/ Stepaniuk | | |
| October | 6-7 | Sedge Island <i>Collins</i> | Cedar Creek Gregg Adirondack Breton | | | | |
| | 13-14 | Hackensack (Sun) Fine | | | | | |
| | 20-21 | | Fall Gathering @ Delaware | | | | |
| | 27-28 | Round Valley TW1 <i>Gregg</i> | | | | | |
| Nov. | 3-4 | | Great Piece/Passaic (Sat) Baker | | | | |
| | 10-11 | | Rio Reservoir (Sat) Gregg/Barnes | | | | |

Your Credit Welcome Here









Trip leaders now have the option of submitting trip reports entirely on-line. No more frustrating searches for the check book! No more long schleps to the post office! And no more dangerous paper cuts!

Leaders can submit the trip reports and liability waivers by email, then send the payments by credit card or PayPal. Instructors may also allow their students to pay for workshops via credit card or PayPal. For details, see the description in the website.

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