

# PADDLE SPLASHES

AMC NY-NoJ Chapter, Canoe and Kayak Committee

May/June 2005

## Southern River Trip

May 14-21, 2005

By Chuck Wilkinson

I had been looking forward to this southern rivers trip since the mid 1990's, but work or injuries had prevented me from participating. One of the Class 3/3+ week of Southern Rivers trips this year was lead by Don Getzin of the NY/NJ Chapter of AMC. Horst deLorenzi and I left on Thursday, May 12 with my pop-up camper and arrived at the Nantahala Outdoor Center on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> around 2 pm, a 1,000-mile trip from my home in Lake George.

We were scheduled to paddle the Nantahala on Saturday, so the first thing we did was to scout the famous Nantahala Falls. We had been lead to believe that it was an easy class 3. When we looked at the last falls below the bridge we thought it was a hard class 4 or 5 and figured we were in trouble if everyone else thought it was a 3. We soon learned that what we were looking at was Wesser Falls and it is not normally run by anyone because of very sharp rocks. When we did find the Nantahala Falls we agreed with the assessment that it was an easy class 3. We spent the next two nights at Lost Mine Campground, which was about a mile from the center on a back road

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On Saturday, our plan was to paddle the Nantahala, but after we got all the boats off and paid for parking at the put in, we discovered there was a problem at the dam and they were probably not going to be able to turn the water on that day.

After consulting with some local paddlers, we decided to paddle the "Tuckasegee" which was about a one hour drive away. This was a class 2 natural flowing river with one good play spot where Chuck had a good long ride before going over on his off side and a short swim. The weather for this trip was warm 70's but filled with some big down pours of rain.

On Sunday we drove to the Ocoee leaving our campground at 6:45 AM to get there by the 9AM meeting time. Don Getzin's preference was to do this more difficult river later in the week, but it only releases water on Saturday and Sunday during this time of the year. The river is twice as long as the Monroe Bridge section of the Deerfield with about the same difficulty with the exception of "Dragon's Tooth" being more difficult.



Horst deLorenzi at 2nd Ledge

The run starts out with a **must make** scary ferry to river left which, if you do not make, will deliver you to some very big holes. The rapids were very continuous with so many more significant ones than the Dryway. Don told Horst and I privately that he predicted there would be at least 10 swims. There turned out to be over 20 in three groups of 8 paddlers. The group consisted mainly of open boaters with 3 kayakers. Horst and I were not among the swimmers, which to a great significance was due to our wonderful river trip leader Dorothy Vezzetti. She was amazing, and really knew the river. She was able to shepherd us down very safe routes of the river. Our group had only three swims. *(Continued on next page)*

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## Southern Rivers Trip *(continued from p. 1)*

Our paddle on Monday was the "Chattooga 3" which is a 12-mile very scenic paddle with significant drops or rapids called Dick's ledge, 2nd ledge, the Narrows and finally Bulls Sluice. In-between these were numerous class 2's and fast moving water. Highlights of the day were successful runs of all of these rapids by Horst and only a short swim by Chuck at the bottom of Bulls Sluice, which was an optional class 4 drop. During the day Horst did have a swim out of a hole, which fed into an undercut rock. There were no injuries to either of us. The temperatures today were in the 80's with sunny skies. The paddle on Tuesday started above Bulls Sluice and continued into the Chattooga 4 section but ended at Woodall Shoals above the seven- falls part. It was approximately 5 miles of paddling that ended with a tough quarter mile uphill carry of the boats to our cars. I was determined to get revenge at Bull's Sluice, but it did not work out that way. I got too far right on the approach, missed the eddy on river left and went over the double drop forward, but out of control. I low braced in the foam when I should have been doing a powerful forward stroke and it was now Bulls Sluice 2 and Chuck 0.

We did not run Woodall Shoals' initial drop, which doesn't look, that tough, but the hole leads back under the falls and there have been several deaths here. Dorothy offered two options which included a very bumpy sneak route on river right into an eddy or to carry over the falls and do another scary ferry below the hole and above several other holes below it in order to run the rest of the rapid on river right. Horst did the river right route while I followed Dorothy on the scary ferry.

We had a more relaxed start to the day on Wednesday as we were paddling the Big Pigeon Gorge and the water was not going to be turned on until 2PM. After a hearty breakfast of pancakes and sausage we packed up and drove about 2 hours to the meeting spot. The river section we paddled was about 5 miles long with some very big class 3+ water. There were some play spots, but we were usually passed them before they were spotted. We were off the river by 4:30. Horst and I paddled in different groups today and neither of us had to practice our swimming skills. The weather was 80+ degrees and very sunny. After the paddle we drove to Hot Springs, NC where we camped on the French Broad.

Thursday's paddle on the French Broad was another long paddle of 13 miles. A two-mile flat section divided the river. The part above this was scattered with very technical, complex rapids that were not too difficult. We did not have a trip leader who really knew this section of the river and we did boat scouting. This did lead to a problem for Chuck when he decided he wanted to get a river left eddy when most everyone else went to the river right eddy further down. The water coming down the middle was pushing up onto "pillow rock" and was powerful enough that I did not make the ferry above it to river right and ending up going through a narrow slot to the left of "pillow rock". Pulling in behind it I found myself in a hole with water coming over the rock filling up my boat. I didn't last long before I went for my fourth swim of the

week. The section below the flat part had two rapids of note, which were Kayaker's ledge and Frank Bells. Horst and I ran the first successfully. The second was avoided by taking a class 3 sneak route to the left around an island.

It started raining about 1 AM on Friday and we awoke to flood warnings and thunderstorm warnings. Dorothy thought the present river level would allow for quite an increase before the level would be a problem. Most people were tired and were ready for week to be over. Horst wanted to paddle the Nolichucky, of course, and we almost had a small group going but it did not happen. We all packed up and headed for home.

As Horst and I were driving through Virginia, we wondered if there was anything we could paddle on Saturday. After checking with the American Whitewater Website, and asking for information from locals, we discovered the North Branch of the Potomac.

We stopped at a bait shop and fortunately found they would shuttle us for a small fee. During the shuttle two kayakers showed up and we were paddling with them by 10:30 AM. The normal release for the section we paddled is 1000 cfs. Because of the heavy rain they were releasing 1200 cfs as indicated by visual gauge at the put in. It made for a fun run. The two guys we met up with said the play spots were a little better at the normal release level. It was fun for us to get in one more river. We were on our way home by 1:15 PM and I was in my drive way by 10:35 PM. We had driven approximately 2600 miles and spent less than \$400 apiece for the entire trip. It was a great week of paddling and I look forward to doing it again.

## Pool Sessions Make the Local Paper

By Ara Jingirian

On May 13, 2005, the Sunday edition of "The Star Ledger." (a NJ daily), a reporter Claudia Perry covered and reported on the AMC NY-NoJ chapter pool sessions held at Fleisher Athletic Center at NJIT in Newark during the months of February and March.

She interviewed Ara Jingirian, the program coordinator, and Jonathan Duckett, Dave Brucas, Chris Viani, Eileen Yin and Jennifer Koermer. A photograph of Michael Duffy and Hanno Schop accompanied the article.

Her article contained a great deal of information about paddling and our club including:

- Type of equipment required for paddling
- Training required and offered
- Equipment AMC offers at the barn
- Winter pool sessions
- AMC membership fee
- Boat Demo Day
- The benefits of pool sessions
- Some of the scheduled trips AMC offers

# Just for the Fun of It!!

By Tanya McCabe

Just for the Fun of It!!

Well, some of you joined in for the fun of it!! But many more missed out on it. Yes it was our annual river cleanup, held May 7<sup>th</sup> of this year.

This year we moved out west, not that the Rockaway was pristine clean, there had to be at least 100 more tires embedded in the river bottom, but we needed a change. Not only did we need a change, but we must admit after having moved to Blairstown a few years ago, we felt the need to be civic minded and do something for the community. After considering our talents, we realized that we were good at river cleaning and fortunately Blairstown had one. Not only do they have a river, the Paulins Kill, but AMC also paddles it, quite a bit. So it was the right thing to do. As they say there is no such thing as altruism. Our river cleaning crew gets such a kick out of it, who is to say who benefited more, the town or the crew!!

I must admit the river really was very clean, we picked up stuff that you would probably find anywhere when water is flowing. Our big claim to fame was clearing debris blocking canoe passage. Yes, a class III might have made it through, but since it's a class I we needed to make it passable for beginners. You should have seen all of us poised behind a tree about 24" in diameter, giving the old heave ho, to

a count of *one, two and three!!* to get it over to the shore line. Well, we cleaned out one portal of the Rte. 94 Bridge. Further down stream the river was fully blocked by tree trunks, branches and debris. I never saw so many saws (no pun intended) going to work!! And so, we cleared a channel one half the river wide, making it 'smooth sailing' for anyone in a boat. That took most of the day and then the whole group came back to our house and had a full-fledged BBQ. Not only do we love to clean rivers but we love to talk about it too!! Same old war stories guys, just a slightly different flavor!!

The tremendous flooding we've had here back in September (Hurricane Ivan) and this past April wreaked havoc with all kinds of debris in the river, mostly trees, limbs and branches. This in turn caused 'log' jams and so next year we'll continue down the river to make sure canoe passage is assured.

More and more we come to realize that we can't wait for our government to improve the world, we can't expect religion to do it all. What we can expect is that each of us try's to make a better place. Peace and a better place begin with the individual, peace and a better place begin with me and it begins with you.

A river is cleaned; it's a better place.

# Look Out!!!!

By: Connie Farley



Marty Plante and Rob Robertson introduce the class to Basic Safety and Rescue under the AMC tarp.

The lessons began before we even glimpsed the water as standard boating safety equipment was demonstrated. The two essentials are your Personal Flotation Device (PFD), and helmet; both must be properly fitted, secured and worn while on the river. From flat-water to whitewater - all rivers, lakes and coastal waterways have inherent dangers that we must learn to understand. One of the best methods of preparation is to sign-up for the AMC's Safety and Rescue Workshops. The NY-NoJ Chapter of AMC conducts a Basic Safety and Rescue Workshop twice a year, as well as an Advanced Safety and Rescue Workshop in the Fall (September 17-18<sup>th</sup>), (consult the Chapter's Schedule or website [http://www.amc-ny.org/rec\\_actv/canoe/schedule/](http://www.amc-ny.org/rec_actv/canoe/schedule/)). Taught by experienced whitewater paddlers, the course instructors - Lenny Grefig, Kurt Navratil, Marty Plante and Henry Schreiber - seamlessly entwine their paddling knowledge into practical descriptions on how to recognize and deal with river hazards. On our recent workshop in June we were joined by guest instructor Rob Robertson from the Berkshire Chapter. River subjects include: low-head dams, strainers, foot entrapments, undercut rocks and hypothermia. The workshop was held in Phoenicia, NY on the Esopus Creek, with group camping amid the scenic Catskill Mountains - truly no finer way to spend your weekend and learn life-saving skills.

Emphasis of these safety workshops is on self-rescue: to take responsibility for your actions whenever you are on or near the water and to learn new skills to assist other paddlers so we can all benefit and enjoy this wonderful resource, in a safe, fun manner.

Our class consisted of eight enthusiastic students who readily committed their all to the rigorous lessons. Even the inclement tropical



Kurt Navratil discusses the dangers of a kayak pinned by underwater rocks. Simulating a pinned paddler Marty Plante leans forward as the powerful rushing water pushes his body towards the bow. Lenny Grefig, stabilizes boat while Henry Schreiber monitors the demonstration.

weather of thunderstorms and voracious bugs didn't discourage our group from cheerfully signing-up for camp tasks, including the food preparation and clean-up assignments. We dined buffet-style on Happy Hour appetizers, charcoal roasted potatoes, BBQ teriyaki chicken, fresh corn on the cob and garden salad, all under the shelter of our Winnebago sized tarp. The most rewardingly pleasant aspect of our trip was sharing experiences in the company of new found friends.

Our two-day class was spent with the mornings devoted to descriptions of what we would achieve that day, with constant emphasis on safety. After lunch we practiced what we learned, in the evening our learning was reinforced by more safety discussions and video presentations.



Lenny Grefig, Kurt Navratil and Henry Schreiber pause in an eddy after rescuing a boat in the muddy and cold Esopus Creek.

First lesson: fording a fast moving stream. The correct way to walk across a river is in a sidestep motion, facing upstream, moving across the current. Using our paddle as a brace and carefully raising it and then planting it firmly in the current, we were able to ford the stream. There is danger in walking in moving water; your foot may become entrapped. This is a feature of forceful currents, and occurs when trying to stand in water deeper than our knees. Your foot can become wedged under a rock and the force of the current can pin you in place, making your ability to move or free yourself impossible until you are rescued.

Second lesson: swimming through rapids, passive vs. defensive swimming positions. Passive is floating on your back - appropriate for going through a rapid. The swimmer floats feet-first down river, keeping her head raised and using her arms to stroke while angling her head in the direction she wants to go.

*(continued on page 5)*

## Look Out!!! (continued from page 4)

The feet first position allows us to use our river boots as 'bumpers' fending off rocks and other obstacles. The aggressive position is swimming on your belly, actively stroking towards the shore or wherever you are going (such as swimming for the strainer to get over it). Our goal is self-rescue and to do this we must use defensive swimming.

Third lesson: swimming aggressively through a strainer. The most common river hazard whitewater paddler's encounter is a strainer. A strainer can be anything that allows water to pass freely, but will impede a person or other objects from passing through. Strainers are the natural result of erosion along of riverbanks, as tree roots are exposed weakening the tree and causing it to fall across the river. Strainers are usually visible above the river surface, but like an iceberg there is more danger beneath the water. Strainers should always be avoided!

In our 'mock' strainer drill a padded bar on a line was secured to both riverbanks. We jumped into the stream, swam on our backs until close to the strainer, then flipped on to our stomachs and aggressively stroked into the strainer while using our arms as a springboard to leap over the object. In a real river situation – never go under a strainer, but try to climb on top of it.

Fourth lesson: Swimming with your boat. If you are out of your boat you can use it to your advantage – place it as a buffer between hazards and your body. Keep the boat ahead of you, hold on to the grab loop and paddle with one hand while using your upstream arm to control your direction. We can also be of assistance to a swimmer if we are in our boat. As the swimmer comes down stream the rescuer presents the stern of her boat for the swimmer to hang on. The rescuer then tells the swimmer to "Kick Hard!" and both paddle/stroke vigorously towards shore.

Writing and reminiscing of the drills covered in the Basic Safety and Rescue Workshop reinforces the knowledge we gained. The only way to feel the surge adrenaline that comes from whitewater splashing in your face, the exhaustion of fighting the currents and the satisfaction of succeeding in bringing a swimmer to shore, is to take the course yourself.

Don't forget to Look Out! on the river, now that you know what to do.

## Committee Corner

By Herb Stermer & Steve Ferder

### LEADERSHIP ROLES:

Recently some disagreement and confusion has arisen in regards to leadership roles and responsibilities on canoe/kayak trips. The Canoe and Kayak Committee has discussed this at a recent meeting, and decided to make some changes in regard to trip titles and their responsibility.

It is important to note that when it comes to decisions involving safety, it is important that one person ultimately is in charge. However, when there are multiple leaders, communication and the ability to work things out is also important.

Starting with the January 2006 trip write ups, the term co-leader will no longer be used. In the past, this term has been used for both experienced leaders and new leaders. There will be four leadership designations:

Leader (L)	Assistant Leader (AL)
Leader in Training (LT)	Registrar (R)

Assistant leaders will be approved trip leaders who are helping another trip leader with their trip, but final say will rest with the leader. Leaders in training will be those who have completed the leadership training course, or an equivalent, and are now being paired with approved leaders who will mentor them on club trips so they can be placed on the approved trip leader list. If the trip leader is unable to run a trip, an assistant leader will be able to run the trip in his/her place. A leader in training will not be able to run the trip.

### EMERITUS PROGRAM

In the last issue of *Paddle Splashes*, there was a notice regarding paddlers/trip leaders age 70 and above. This is the Paddler Emeritus Program that was initiated at the May committee meeting. All paddlers 70 and above who have lead at least one trip in the previous year will be exempt from paddling and boat rental fees. This exemption is not automatic. Those paddlers wishing to take advantage of this program must submit a request to the Canoe/Kayak Chair. A list of eligible paddlers will be provided to trip leaders each year.

**Our apologies are extended to Soo Goy for the belated notification of his Class 3 OC1 rating from Class 2+ OC1, Congratulations, Soo!**

# Second Annual Boat Demo Day

June 25, 2005

By: Connie Farley

“How do I start?” is the eternal question beginners ask after deciding to try their hand at canoeing or kayaking. On Saturday June 25, 2005 the non-boating public was invited to Croton Point Park in Westchester County, New York, to experience paddling in a safe, secure environment. We welcomed over 219 beginners, some taking their first plunge in this healthful, relaxing, yet exciting paddle sport.

Members of the Canoe and Kayak Committee (CKC) worked overtime for months to plan and coordinate Boat Demo Day 2005. The first call for assistance was “**WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!**”, and in typical AMC fashion many of you said “Count on me!” No event just happens - especially one that requires emptying The Barn, the boat storage facility of the NY-NoJ AMC Chapter. Here members gathered to transport nearly 50 boats across the Hudson River – by land, not by sea.

The event would never have been so successful without volunteer willingness and commitment, plus their patience in answering the endlessly repeated questions of “why do I need to wear a life jacket?,” “how do I hold this oar?” and “will my cell phone get wet?”

Everyone’s help was essential, whether it was acquiring permission for the county park and logistics (Henry), or advertising in local media (Marty), or gathering and transporting the myriad of floating vehicles (Herb and anyone with a car!), or hauling the yellow trailer (thanks Don!), or setting up an orderly participant registration line (Jill and Betsy), or fitting our ‘customers’ with PFDs (Lenny, Mike, Eileen) and paddles (Ken and Gretchen), or patrolling the perimeter of the cove (Czar of the Water – Butch and all the Safety Boaters!)



Victoria Butler helps out a new kayaker at Boat Demo Day 2005

or steadying participants as they entered or exited the boats (Kurt, Rick, Fred) or coordinating the activities of the 40 volunteers (Victoria!).

The weatherman smiled upon us as air temperatures in the 90s made dipping in the salty Hudson refreshing. Our visitors eagerly lined up to ‘test drive’ the club’s collection of boats. Few opportunities are afforded to the visiting public that offer such an abundant choice of water-craft, all in one location, and for free! We had: flat-water and white-water solo and tandem canoes, whitewater and recreational kayaks, and several sea-kayaks thanks to Atlantic Kayak Tours and even a closed-decked tandem touring canoe.

When not paddling or waiting for a particular boat, guests relaxed at the river-side park in the shade of giant willow trees, chatting with AMC regulars or watching Rich Breton’s splendid video of past AMC river trips. Continued participation in all the diverse AMC activities was encouraged by our membership chair Si Pae, with special emphasis, of course, on canoeing and kayaking!

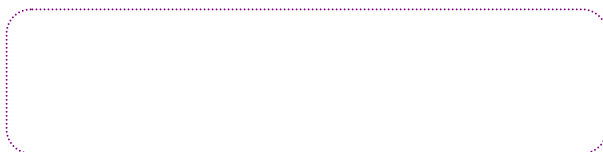
Boat Demo Day’s success is owed to the following AMC volunteers who donated their time and boating expertise. Thanks to all. See you at the Third Annual Boat Demo Day in 2006!

Jill Arbuckle	Michel Leroy
Rich Berg	Steve Magid
Carter & Robin Bland	Dick Muller
Rich Bryan	Kurt Navratil
Victoria Butler	Si Pae
Ellen Campuzano	Marty Plante
Betsy Collins	Linda Polstein
Andrew Douglas	Elizabeth Purcell
Connie Farley	David Rosenfeld
Fred Feingold	Jim Rubins
Steve Ferder	Michelle Sholtis
Mike Fitzpatrick	Hanno Schop
Butch Futrell	Henry Schreiber
Don Getzin	Gloria Silva
Lenny Grefig	Joe Sklar
Amy Hanson	Herb Stermer
Ara Jingirian	Ken&Gretchen Tardell
Jennifer Koermer	Mark Tiernan
Cath Kraft	Tom & Susan Trevor
	Chris Viani

# Activity Schedule

Date	BW	CL1	CL2	CL3	CL4	Sea Kayaking et al
Sept. 24-25	Eastern Adirondacks <i>Yin/Jingiriam</i>	Basic Kayak Inst. <i>McCaulley</i>		Sat: West River <i>Bailey/Ferder</i>		
Sept. 26– 30	Adirondack Exp. <i>Trevor/Arbuckle</i>					
Oct 1-2			Canoe Inst. <i>Yin</i>			
Sun. Oct. 2						Barn Workday <i>Douglas</i>
Oct. 7-10	Adirondack Expedition <i>Breton</i>					
Oct. 7-10	Maurice River <i>McCabe/Chasnow</i>					
Oct. 7-10						Sedge Island Level 1-2 <i>Collins</i>
Oct. 8-9					Canoe Clinic <i>Yin</i>	
Oct. 15-16			Farmington @ New Boston <i>Getzin</i>			
Sun. Oct. 16			Lehigh <i>Lindquists</i>			
Oct. 22-23			Farmington @ New Boston <i>Fitzpatrick</i>			
Nov. 5-6			Sun: Upper Tohickon <i>McHenry</i>	Tohickon <i>Robson</i>		
Nov. 12-13						Cape May <i>Raab</i>
Sat. Nov. 19						Leadership Workshop <i>Grefig, Navratil</i> L2: Hudson River <i>Bland</i>

Appalachian Mountain Club  
NY-NoJ Chapter Canoe & Kayak Committee  
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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 *Paddle Splashes* due on Nov 15, 2005. Please send as an e-mail message to: [phyllislindquist@worldlynx.net](mailto:phyllislindquist@worldlynx.net). My sincere thanks to everyone who has submitted articles and information.

## Notices

### Lost & Found

A set of keys was found in the pocket of a PFD, size small. Looks like a house key and a car key. Please contact Lenny Grefig at [Grefig@bestweb.net](mailto:Grefig@bestweb.net) or call (914)643-2527.

### For Sale

Rival Dagger solo canoe with Mikey outfitting. In good condition, one patch. \$500. Call (908) 626-1315.

## Video Library

Our video library is chock full of videos to help you learn how the experts do it. From kayaking, canoeing and rock climbing. You can watch the experts surf waves and negotiate drops.

A complete list and description of each video, as well as the instructions of how to go about renting a video, are located on our Chapter's web-site:

<http://www.amc-ny.org/rec-actv/canoe/videolib.html>

### Mark your Calendar

**Paddlers' Party**  
**Sat. December 10,**  
**2005**

**American Legion Hall**  
**Rochelle Park, NJ**  
**2 pm to 7 pm**  
**Fun, Food, Music,**  
**Dancing,**  
**Swapping Paddling**  
**Stories**  
**Slides, Videos.**