

PADDLE SPLASHES



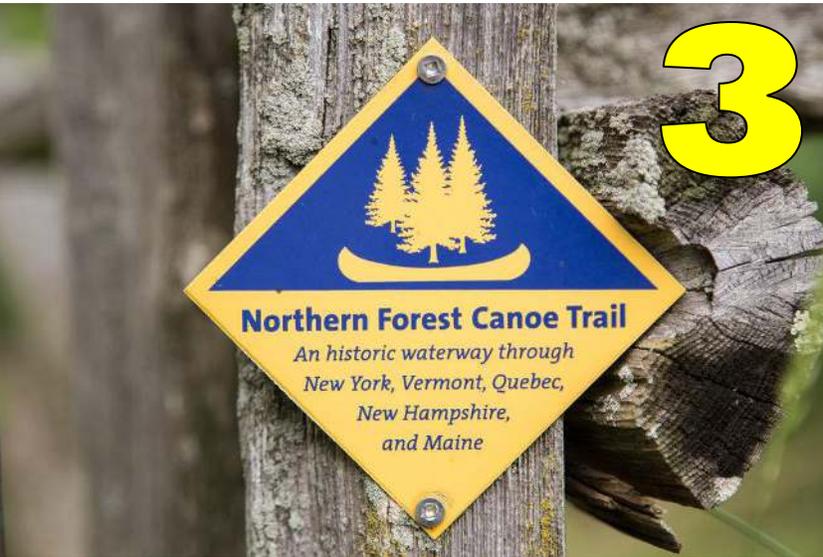
Canoe & Kayak Committee
Appalachian Mountain Club
NY-NoJ Chapter

MAY 2019

MEET
our
LEADERS



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PADDLESPLASHES

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On the Cover:
New leader Naz Ghanbani
and husband Sean exploring
the Adirondacks.

BY LORETTA BRADY

Airbnb AMC Style

Fresh air, boats 'n paddle. It's Airbnb.

Quiet or moving, watery vacations rock your world, if not the boat, as well. Why not join CKC for an off-the-grid holiday? There's plenty to choose from.

As clubs go, AMC has a disproportionate share of amateur explorers who paddle all over the hemispheres, then return to share their gifts. Recently, folks tagged the rivers and seas of:

- *Central America* (Jake, Butch, Monica, Eileen, Kerri, Cameron, Loretta)
- *South America* (Donna & Paul)
- *Canada* (Julie, Ollie, Jake, plus Curt and his many merry bands)
- *Nepal* (Jennifer & Andrew)
- *Europe* (Marty & Elisa)

You'll lose track of who's out West, floating on everything from the placid Green or San Juan (Chris, Marty, Elisa, Curt), to the livelier Yampa (Clare, Radu & Violet) or Salt (David B., Curt, Sozanne).



It's not just the NY-NoJ's chapter. Gwen Hunter of AMC NH applies her wisdom wandering with campy Canadians to host her regular treks along sections of the North Forest Canoe Trail.

Below we describe this year's holiday high points—the long-running hits, and new best sellers. You'll see why this chapter is variously known as “Appalachian Mountain Caterers,” and “Always More [*insert desire here*] Coming.”

Click here for info about Gwen's next trip on the **Northern Forest Canoe Trail**

4th of July: SMOKY MOUNTAIN HIGH Jun 29-Jul 7, 2019

Friends around the campfire, everybody high. Carolina high. The buzz about **Carolina Canoe Club's (CCC) Week of Rivers (WOR)** kept building.

Could there really be a boating festival where paddlers of every level mix and bond?

Asking around, answers typically prefaced with, “Damn, wish I could go this year,” followed by lists of great expectations.

“WOR is the annual gathering of members from around the country,” notes President Rick Higgins. Their 4th of July fest spans June 29 to July 7 this year, and specially celebrates a 50th anniversary.

“Paddling options run from Class 1 all the way to Class 5, plus education

clinics, workshops, and lots of entertainment,” Rick adds.

CCC clearly welcomes AMC, as we found out last year when a boat load of us dropped in. And it wasn't just special treatment 'cause Liz's dad, Lee Belnkap, is among their VIP leaders.

“I spent 25 years playing lifeguard, and I can't tell you how many people I've saved,” Lee says.

Having served as AWA Safety Chairman for 12 years and paddled the country for three decades, he has seen it all.

No, they welcome you as if you're a member, which, indeed, you are, since a stipulation to join the fun requires signing on.

In fact, that \$20 membership fee is the *only* charger the entire week, apart from our own tent, grub and fuel.

Unlike our club's usual specialized Southern Week of Rivers vacay, this festival truly embraces paddlers and boats of all experiences, shapes, and sizes. And we do mean *all*.

"I practiced beforehand," noted last year's winner at Bad Idea Theater, a race for the falls in pool toys. "If you swing in a circle like this," she mimed, arching and twisting in hula-hoop fashion, "the thing is almost controllable!"

Last year, folks from Texas to Louisiana, Wisconsin to Ontario were surprised and delighted to select from a wide range of options: the Ocoee, the Pigeon, or the further flung Chattooga or Hiwassee.

One surprised and delighted paddler had just driven all night to arrive, so he jumped at the chance for a carpool to the Nolichucky.

Surprised as we drove past Davy Crocket's birthplace, our weary new friend slapped his forehead. "Doh, we're at the *lower* Nolichucky." Yet was he delighted, nonetheless, by river's end.

"Just what I needed: a really cool Class 2/3." he agreed.

But it's weird.

Though irruptions of river people swarm to Bryson City's big WOR event, it never feels crowded.

Not in the eddies. Not at Carnage Film night. Not at night in the woods, when fireflies and fireworks worked their magic.

You pitch a tent among a field of strangers and leave knowing a dozen new friends.

Plenty more information is available so register and plan to join us, too.

Register Now



August Break: DAK ATTACK

Aug 4-9, 2019

By August, city humidity takes your breath away. New York City is a ghost town. Everyone's left on holidays.

That's why Don Getzin invites you to something even more breath-taking. Escape to NY's own mountain haven: the Northern Adirondacks, August 4-9.

Though not part of the Appalachians *per se* (which are more sedimentary, rounded ranges), these jagged metamorphic uplifts dress their crags in stately pine, spruce and fir. With a treeline at about 4,000 feet, alpine shrubs and lichen-coated

outcrops take over. Sunsets reflect off the cliff's rocks, glowing gold in the reflecting sunlight.

Heart stopping, breathtakingly beautiful.

Don knows this area like the back of his paddle. A pivotal guide for the Paul Smith's College-ADK annual Paddle Outing for over a decade, Don knows nearly every nook of the

St. Regis Canoe Area—that means 18,400 acres and over 50 ponds.

Chilling out with plans to base camp at Meacham Lake, he still warns that there'll be challenges.

"We'll paddle slow current and take some sharp turns, some duck-unders, lift-overs, and beaver dam carries," Don advises.

The group might take advantage of meals prepared by top notch culinary staff nearby at Paul Smith's College.

If that disappoints some purists, rest assured the option to brew your own cowboy coffee and ramen remain.

Just watch out for the bears. In the DAKS these predators now unscrew certain models of bullet-proof barrels and climb trees to destroy roped-up food bags.

Guess those knots weren't tied by Don.

Register soon while limited spots remain.

Register Now



Labor Day: CATSKILL CAPERS

Aug 31-Sep 2, 2019

Many of you already know about our tradition for serious whitewater trips on Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day at the Yough or Esopus Creek with Butch, Jake, Chris and Charles.

But don't forget these trips have increasingly involved multi-sport hijinks.

Ohiopyle, PA boasts gorgeous hiking and biking trails, along with nearby tours of Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Waters or Kentucky Nob. And many of us have even—ahem—rafted the Upper or Lower Yough.

The same variety of fun goes for the Esopus in Phoenicia on Labor Day.

The weekend barbecues don't exclude camp-followers—especially when a season's injuries sidelined you. Go biking, hiking, or even antiquing one town over in Woodstock. Dave and Jill found a great route up Mount Templar with panoramic vistas of the river valley.

We've even had duckies. But NO tubers!



Columbus Day: FRIENDS & FOLIAGE

Oct 12-14, 2019

Our club has a rep for its hearty, macho swagger.

Male or female, we “embrace the suck.” Charles seeks out trips that promise Type 2 fun, the kind that burns while you slog through it, but feels good when you stop.

But there's much to be said for the zen vibe of glamping. You are braver facing the forces of nature after dining well.

Hey, it *is* the holidays, after all.

The Fall Foliage Columbus Day weekend appeals to both types, which is probably why it's been a club favorite for nearly a quarter century of our 100-year history.

Rich Breton uses his extensive experience of the Adirondack Park to pick inventive new routes every year.

Some years the expedition racks up dozens of carries, as you make our way along the evergreen forests of Floodwood ponds and beyond. Or other years it is natural springs and historic homesteads, or the hand cranked locks between the Lower Saranac and Lake Flower.

This year we sat calmly in our boats, mesmerized by the music of loons and the fiery glory of autumn colors mirrored on the lakes. The challenge came from the elements. We hearty souls launched each morning in cold, pelting rain.

Yet rewarded we were when the fog parted to reveal brilliant yellow tamaracks, copper beeches, and groves of aspen bliss.

Then there were predators, too. An adult eagle stooped and parried in the skies overhead as he chased to a slick juvenile who'd neatly snatched a fish right in front of our boats.

“We sat calmly in our boats, mesmerized by the music of loons.”

A great-horned owl woke us at dawn, his great wing span whooshing, seriously ticked we hadn't invited him for bacon and eggs.

Yes, the gourmet menu is the centerpiece.

Hard to say what pleases the crowd most, the Oktoberfest fare or the Friday night bouillabaisse. Then, night caps and other sweet provisions warm us by the fire for storytelling hours. It's some of the best boat folklore from the legends, themselves.

There are the planners, and there are the anti-planners. For years, Rich's advanced planning removes the road blocks to road trips and lightens our pre-trip prep load. You still pull your weight as the group tasks unfold, and wind up learning more than you'd guess about how to cater to 30 without microwave or refrigeration.

The Columbus Day Fall Foliage trip wait lists early every year, so register early. Even better, sign up for the [AMC web Daily Digest](#) to get pinged when the link goes live.

AMC Trip to CCC's WEEK OF RIVERS



Q: *Are there rivers I can handle?*

Rick Higgins: There are rivers of every type and level. Some are flow dependent, others dam release. Could be a WOR Week of Rain! Check out [our descriptive list](#) with Beginner to Advanced groupings. It's an awesome chance to step up to new rivers.

Q: *Will I get tired paddling so many days?*

Sozanne: I think it's good to paddle tired. You really focus on using the current and your strokes fully. But anyway, just take a rest when you need to or have some other fun.

2nd Opinion: There's clinics, sure, but more fun are the many boating Brahmins who attend. They love to coach and offer advice.

DEMO DAY

APR
27,
2019

The Sebago Canoe Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club combined teaching talents and boats to introduce paddling to interested SCC & AMC members. Loretta Brady, Charles Michener & Dan Olson discussed boat nomenclature and demonstrated paddle strokes and boat handling techniques for getting around in canoes and kayaks. Chris Bickford provided canoe handling commentary.

PHOTOS BY CHRIS BICKFORD AND MILANA BUSLOVSKY





Lessons From

Whitewater Paddling

I was paddling “Numbers,” a Class IV rapid on the Arkansas River near Buena Vista, Colorado. I had strong doubts about one rapid, Number V, and decided not to paddle it. The water bounced all around and roared ferociously. It seemed as if the river flowed into routes that would surely bash you on to rocks, chewing up the unsuspecting paddler and boat into tiny bits.

I took a pass on these rapids several times, but observed others run them successfully. One day I decided to tackle the rapid. I found that the rocks, with the water flowing over

and around them, producing all the white foam and thunderous roar, also slowed the speed of the water. There was plenty of time to make the necessary maneuvers to master the rapid.

The lesson learned is that our expectations and anxieties may hold us back and create unnecessary blocks to our progress in life. Of course, this must be balanced with a realistic appraisal of situations, the dangers involved, and our abilities. If we are *too* cautious, we do not try new things and limit ourselves unnecessarily. If we are not *sufficiently* cautious, we may make reckless decisions.

I am fascinated by the topography of rivers, i.e., the three-dimensional aspect of the water's surface. It is like a ski slope, where the skier uses the hills and bumps to help execute turns and move from one part of the slope to another. Paddlers use the hills, bumps and valleys of the river to move around in the water. Maybe the most similar move to skiing is the paddler caving a turn around the side of a wave (hill). Waves in the river are made by water going over rocks, around rocks, and sometimes by the river narrowing. Water flowing over a ledge can form a hole or a pour-over (these are the valleys in our topographical model). A paddler can become stuck in a large hole or pour-over, so these have to be approached with caution.

Rivers also have dynamic features that paddlers can use to move in and around the rapid. The dynamics of the river are produced by the relative speed and direction of the water.

Yes, the water is not always moving downriver. The relative speed of the water changes as the river goes over and around rocks or the river bends. At some points the water may be moving upstream. It is helpful to understand the dynamics of the systems we are involved with and how to interact with them.

There are other lessons learned when paddling. Another river, the Mongaup, had a mile-long continuous rapid, with big waves that were difficult to paddle. While I could paddle this section of the river, I was intimidated by it and always took the easiest and safest route. Over a few summers paddling on the Fractions section of the Arkansas and the Taylor (Class III sections of Colorado rivers) my skills had improved so much where I learned more refined techniques. I was

able to paddle rapids with bigger waves, taking less water in my open canoe. (If too much water comes into the canoe it may sink or turn over, spilling the paddler into the river.) I could go over waves without them crashing into the canoe.

“
**Our bodies
should flow
and move
with the
waves.**
”

Part of the trick is to paddle almost sideways to the waves, helping the canoe to ride over

them. Another aspect had to do with balance – to stay balanced as the waves tossed the canoe around in the water. While remaining in balance, tilt (nudge) the canoe so the downstream side grows higher and blocks the approaching wave. Using these motions, the canoe rides safely over the waves.

Armed with these skills, I decided to approach the feared rapid differently. Instead of taking the easy and safe routes, I paddled into the heart of the rapid and bid the undulating water to take its best shot at me. The ride was fantastic. It was as if I could do no wrong. I weaved and bobbed through the waves and around the worst holes and pour-overs with ease. At one point, I was almost tripped-up going around a rock and landed in a small hole. Balance saved me and I paddled out of the hole.

Balance is a key element. For it to work well, balance needs to be effortless and reflexive. Tension or anxiety makes us stiff and we are less in balance as we maintain our balance in an effortless ballet.

Neil paddling Browns Canyon on the Arkansas River in Colorado.

Sometimes I realize the river has grabbed the canoe and, in a quick and unexpected move, is trying to turn it over. I instinctively respond and counter-act the intent of the river. In other instances, I am caught off guard. By the time I realize what is happening, I am swimming in the water.

I am becoming more aware of the significance of focus. (This is sometimes referred to as “flow” in the psychology literature.) When we have good focus, the “happenings” of the river slow down and more of the key elements are within the scope of our awareness. Here, the paddler seemingly has more time to react and can economically make the right moves, instead of frantically scratching at the water with the paddle. Focus is important in most activities.



More recently, I have been working the river as if I were a football broken-field-runner: constantly changing my flow, darting from one obstacle to another, going one way and then another. I'm almost daring the river to catch me. Occasionally, it does. But most of the time, I am too agile and I elude its grip.

Just as I change my flow, the river changes too. As the water level becomes higher or lower, or the rocks move during a flood, the rapid becomes different, and I have to learn new routes to escape from its grip.

It is a never-ending series of challenges and lessons.

WILDERNESS FIRST AID

Paddling plans don't always go as planned. If you go where ambulances don't, plan for the unexpected with Wilderness First Aid training.

Sat-Sun, May 4-5
Sterling Forest Park
Tuxedo Park, NY



Fri-Sun, May 17-19
AMC Mohican
Outdoor Center
Blairstown, NJ



May 31-Jun 2
AMC Corman
Harriman
Outdoor Center



Take Me to Your LEADER

Sometimes it happens when you're hardly trying.

Could you have asked for a more diverse, high caliber crew to attend the recent Trip Leader training workshop?

Diverse they are culturally: we have Latvians, Kurds, Irish, and Puerto Rican trainees.

Diverse they are in skills: they paddle SUPs, Hornbecks, and Jacksons; they scuba dive, back pack, and cross-country ski.

Geographically, many have already led, instructed or explored in sea or fresh waters of Maine, Florida, Fire Island or the Adirondacks.



Milana and Oleg Buslovsky on the Farmington River. Photos by Erik Eckilson.

Take Sarah Osborne and Milana and Oleg Buslovsky, for example, who could run a sub-chapter for us out on Long Island. Or meet Rico (Ricardo) Fritz-Caldero, who each spring semester crams 40 eager collegiates into 20 tandems to herd them through the Pine Barrens' twisty channels. And some years he rescues a swimmer or two.

Then there's Naz (Nazanin) Ghanbani, who already earned her stripes stomping through the wilds of the Whitney Loop, co-leading with her husband, Sean (See Sahand Anechi's bio as a newly promoted leader).

Lucky for all the LIT graduates, four seasoned leaders enveloped them that March day at AMC's charming 63rd Street office at the Y. There's Henry Schreiber's steady hand, carefully outlining the most dire "what-ifs" in a manner that calms us all.

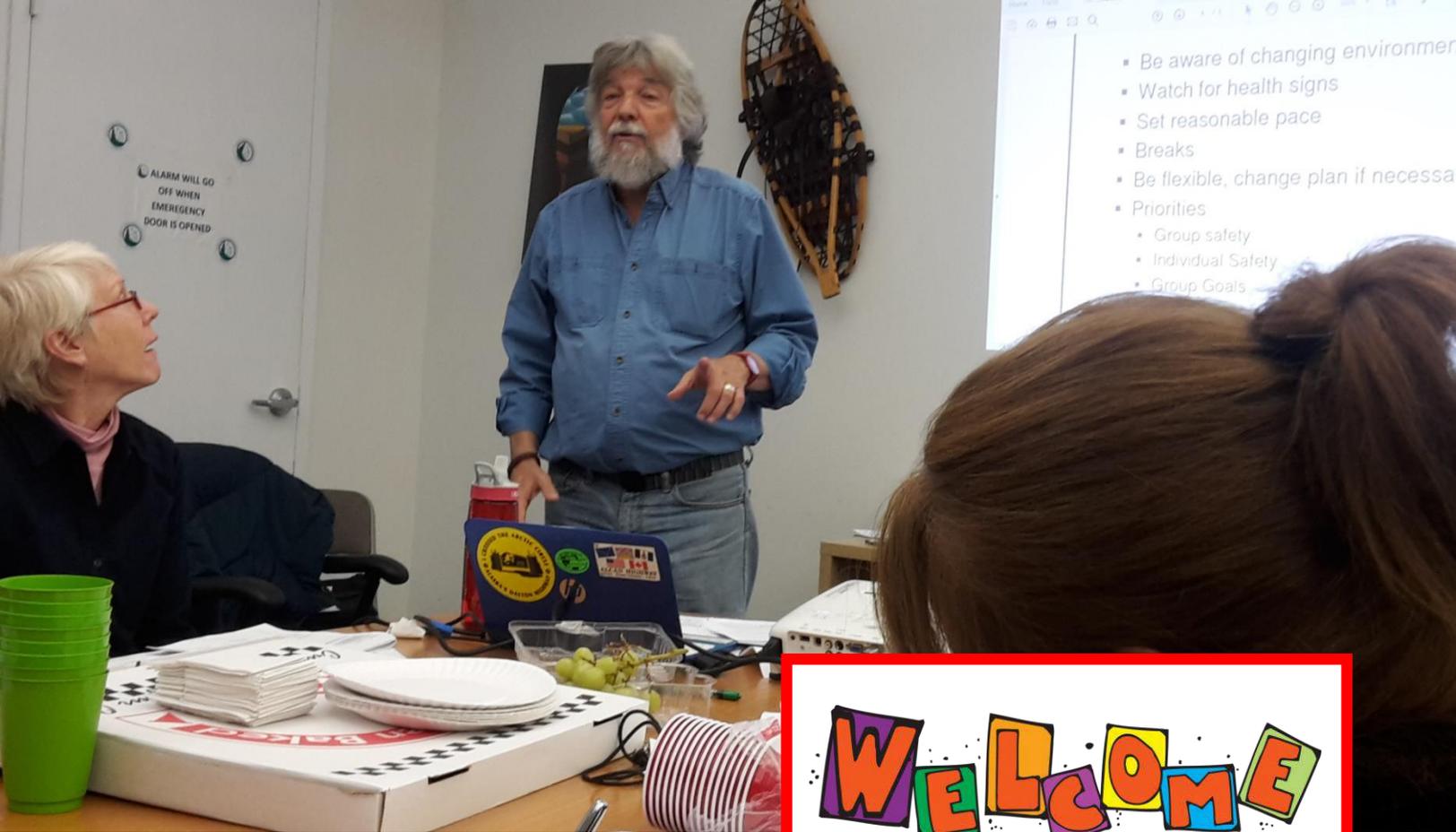


Plus, they met Lenny Grefig, and gleaned many lessons from her years of experience. Lenny's easy humor reminds us not only that nobody's perfect, but also—as Charles Michener says—“If stuff doesn't happen, there ain't no story!”

Naz Ghanbani, above.

Left, the new leaders-in-training at the 2019 leadership training workshop with instructors Henry and Lenny.





Henry conducting the 2019 leadership training workshop.

It's quite obvious Henry and Lenny enjoy what they do. Which is a good thing, since there are three more canoe leaders and three whitewater kayakers who couldn't make this recent session and are itching to get their skin in the game.

"If everyone just led one or two trips," Henry reminded, "think of the variety and increasing opportunities the club would have."

Charles posed an intriguing suggestion to the newbies. Anyone can get friends together and go paddling," he pointed out. "What you offer that's different as

WELCOME

The NY-NoJ Canoe/Kayak Committee is very pleased to welcome our newest Leaders-in-Training:

Oleg Buslovsky

Milana Buslovsky

Ricardo Fritz-Caldero

Nazanin Ghanbari

Mary Ann Hoag

Sarah Osborn

And a big **Thanks!** to our Leader Trainers,

Lenny Grefig

Henry Schreiber



Sarah Osborn

an AMC leader is to help people challenge themselves.” He was no doubt thinking of all the ways in recent seasons that NY-NoJ’s been growing our human capital—co-planning with chapters in new regions, scouting new rivers and routes, and plotting more adventures farther from the tri-state area.

“If each of you tried something that tests your own limits a bit, that pushes your skills just a little bit further,” Charles sagely advised. “Think of how that would help those you’ll lead.”

AMC NY-NoJ Chapter **ANNUAL PICNIC & PIG ROAST**

Sat, Jun 8, 2019

AMC Corman Harriman Outdoor Center



The Adirondacks

The Original PlayStation

ACA'S ADIRONDACK CANOE SYMPOSIUM

**Paul Smith's College
Thu-Sun, Jul 18-21, 2019**

Excellent instruction for those wishing to improve their quietwater paddling and boat control skills, from beginners to experienced paddlers, in both solo and tandem canoe.

[Click Here to Register](#)

A WEEK IN THE ADIRONDACKS

**Meacham Lake Campground
Sun-Fri, Aug 4-9, 2019**

Canoe and kayak the quietwater North Country rivers of the Adirondacks. Slow currents, lift-overs, duck-unders, beaver dams and awesome scenery.

[Click Here to Register](#)

**Traditional Canoeing
in Traditional Canoe Country**

meet our LEADERS

Sean Ainechi

My name is Sean Ainechi, and I'm glad to be one of your newest trip leaders.

In my view, paddling is the least commercialized outdoor activity. It's possible to go places without seeing any other human beings for days and just connect with nature. Paddling on quiet crystal-clear waters gives you the feeling of flying, seeing beavers and beaver dams and hearing them at night chewing on tree branches or watching geese flying close to water surface while slapping their wings on water and screaming are experiences that no five-star resort or a paid vacation gives you. Paddling makes National Geographic's mesmerizing shiny pictures a reality and in reach.

I grew up in the Iranian city of Tehran, with a snowy 13,000-foot summit next to our city. I started hiking as early as 10 years old and ever since been climbing mountains as high as 18,000 feet and walking deserts for days. Coming to live in the US in 2007 was a big change for me. I immediately started biking with 5 Boroughs Bicycle Club and hiking with AMC. In 2016, after a two-day beginner course with our NY-NoJ Canoe/Kayak Committee, I discovered paddling, which opened a whole new chapter in my outdoor activities.

Paddling is one of the most fun outdoor sports because it challenges

constantly. You must be aware of your surroundings, anticipate the next move, hope for the best, and plan for the worst. Sometimes, being wet and cold all day long while paddling will make you feel miserable, but the unique rich experiences that you will have along the way will make you start planning your next adventure as soon as you hit home.

By no means do I call myself an experienced paddler or hiker, but I know that by being a trip leader I can pay forward my experience and introduce paddling to new generations of people.



David Schwide

I first tried my hand at kayaking here on Long Island and enjoyed it very much. From sitting in quiet bays bird watching, to observing seals by Jones Beach. Then before I knew it, I owned over half a dozen boats.

Now here I am, David Shwide, introducing myself as one of the AMC trip leaders for the NY-NoJ chapter. After hiking for many years in New York and the northeast areas (which I still enjoy, but at a slower pace), I began to grow interested in recreational kayaking. After paddling about on Long Island and on the Hudson River by Bannerman's Castle, I decided to join others on a four day, 50-mile trip along the [Northern Forest Canoe Trail](#) in the Adirondacks.

I hadn't really understood the difficulty of carrying gear *en route* between the put-in and take-out (portaging or "carries"). Oh, boy, did I learn how tough that can be. That was a game changer for me. It was time for a lightweight open pack boat!

When I came home with a solo open boat the next year, my wife asked why there weren't two seats. Where was she going to sit?

Hmmm.

"I'll be right back," I told her, then went searching on Craigslist. The next day I had a tandem in the yard. "Here you go!"



Around that time, I realized how different boats and water conditions can be. Not too sure what happened, but just like that movie *Gremlins*, my boats started to reproduce. At one time I think I had 11 or 12 boats!

Now I'm down to half that amount, but recently had a wood-canvas Canadian Chestnut restored and added to the list, which I brought to the [Wooden Canoe Heritage Association](#) (WCHA) gathering in Canada last year.

Most of my trips involve camping, as you would guess, considering the driving distance. From the Pine Barrens of New Jersey's Mullica River (wilderness camping) up to the Basha Kill (car camping), I've even paddled Brooklyn's Jamaica Bay and camped out on Floyd Bennett Field!

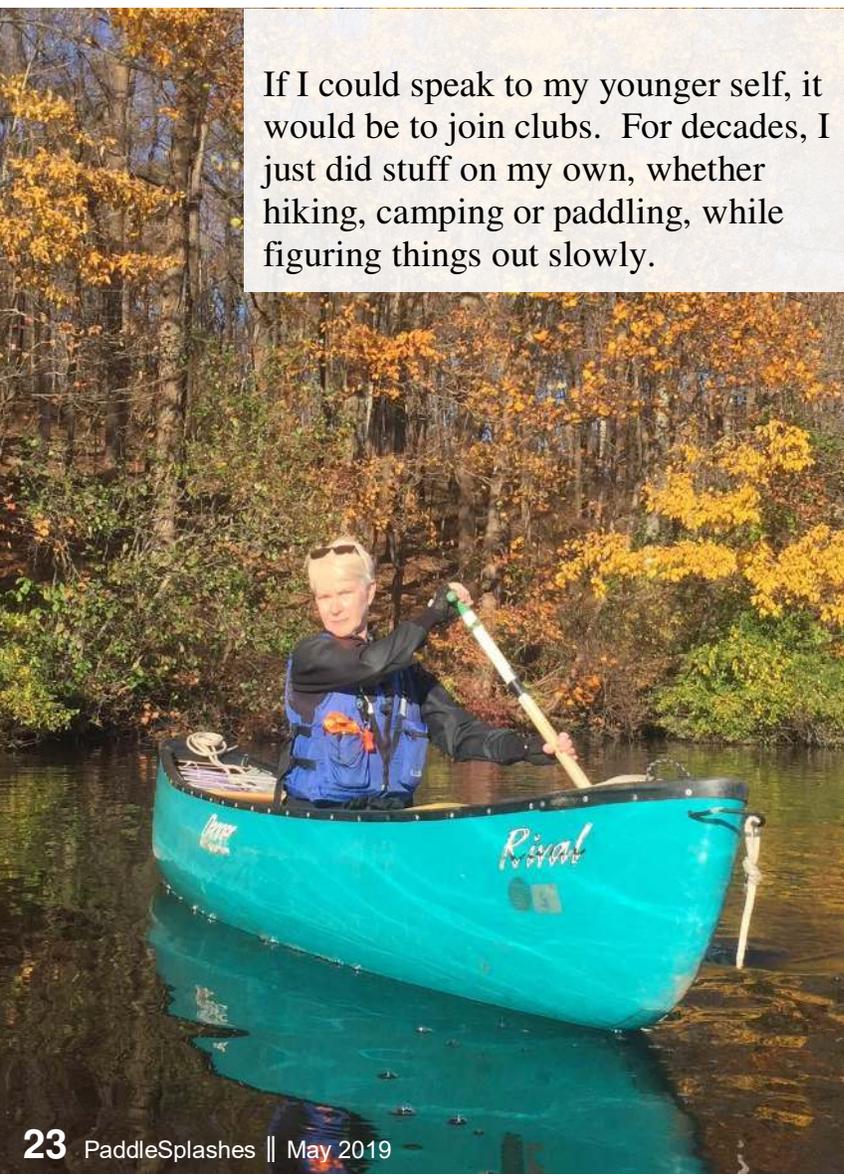
Over the last few summers, I have gone tripping in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Maine, Ontario's Algonquin Provincial Park, the Adirondacks, and this summer I'll visit Michigan's Upper Peninsula with a friend.

The only place you won't find me is on whitewater. I'm hoping soon to develop those skills to use on the flatwater trips that I'd like to take.

One of the day trips that would be interesting to have is the Bronx River of NYC! It's time for me to give back to the AMC community for all of their help. I hope to see you on the water and feel free to join me on some trips.

We usually have bagels or the famous matzo ball soup on those chilly days!

MaryAnn Hoag



If I could speak to my younger self, it would be to join clubs. For decades, I just did stuff on my own, whether hiking, camping or paddling, while figuring things out slowly.

My first real experience canoeing was a trip up and back on the twisting, beaver-dam packed Oswegatchie River in the Adirondacks in 2007. I rented a sweet, short 26 lb. Kevlar canoe called the Nessmuk and returned it to [St. Regis Canoe Outfitters](#) with hundreds of scratches from dragging over the beaver dams. The owner good-naturedly said, "Oh, you did the Oswegatchie" without chastising me at all.

After that trip, I started on a yearly section paddle of the NFCT, beginning in the Adirondacks. Now I've made it up to the Allagash Wilderness Waterway in Northern Maine. My canoe partner on these trips is one of the most experienced outdoors

**MaryAnn on Pennsylvania's
Lake Nockamixon**

women I know, and she once predicted we'd be 90 years old by the time we finish this trip.

I sort of don't want it to end.

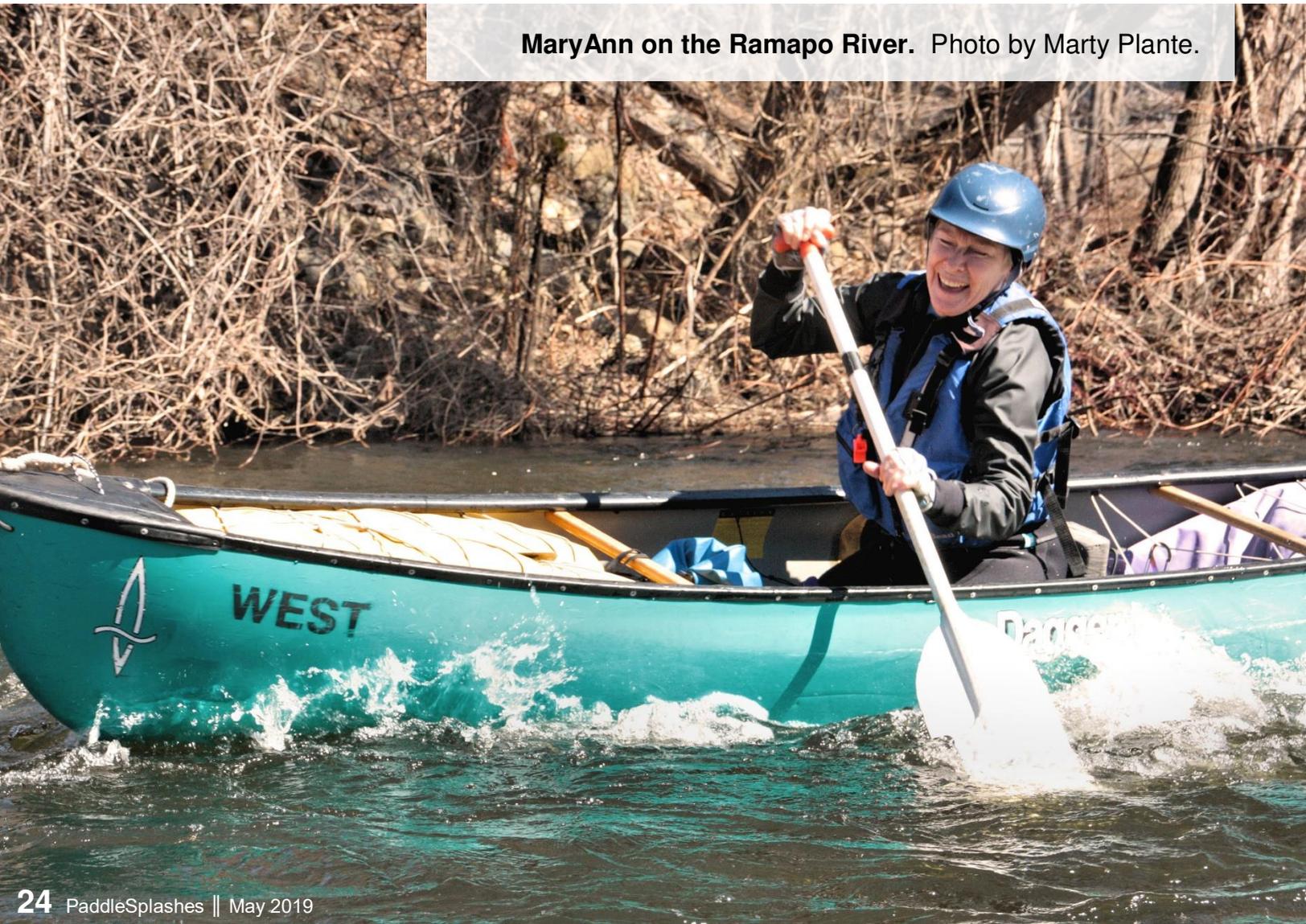
The variety of water on these yearly expeditions, from lakes to moving water, made me aware of my lack of skill on quick moving water. Through Loretta's encouragement, I found myself involved in the paddling group of the AMC NY-NoJ. Now, I spend some time canoe camping on short expeditions and try to learn the maneuvers of

solo paddling in a whitewater boat with the help of the AMC instructors and fellow paddlers. I even bought my own used whitewater boat last December.

Now that I belong to several canoe clubs, I've improved my paddling and safety skills exponentially, and I paddle much more frequently.

I am pursuing the leader-in-training more in hope that I can assist the current leaders and instructors, who have kindly guided me on instructional and recreational paddles.

MaryAnn on the Ramapo River. Photo by Marty Plante.





A WEEK OF SOUTHERN RIVERS

Sat, Jun 29 - Sun, Jul 7, 2019

Join our hosts, the Carolina Canoe Club, as they welcome the AMC and paddlers from around the country on their annual Week of Southern Rivers. Head-quartered at Smoky Mountain Meadows Campground near Bryson City, NC, we'll be within easy driving distance from some of the finest (and most reliable) whitewater in the Southeast. Education clinics, workshops, competition, fun, games and entertainment fill out a week of paddling activities. River availability is determined by release schedules (Nantahala, Pigeon, Tuckasegee, Ocoee, Green) and rain (Chattooga, French Broad, Tellico, Little, Nolichucky). This is just a short list of the rivers and creeks potentially available to us. The event is family friendly and the paddling options run from Class 1 all the way to Class 5.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Paddling with a Grain of Arizona Salt

BY CURT GELLERMAN, SOZANNE
SOLMAZ AND DAVID BRUCAS

Curt had been looking forward to a Salt River trip for about 10 years. A few years ago, he won a permit in the lottery, but was unable to use it due to a prolonged drought in the Southwest that lowered the river to unrunnable levels. This year's lottery provided the knock of opportunity that he had been waiting for when David Brucas scored a permit for an early season launch.





Sally (right) and David running Quartzite Falls

The US Forest Service didn't announce the winning permit holders until mid-February, so our group of six paddlers had less than three weeks to organize the trip and fly or drive to Arizona. We traveled from New York, New Jersey, Wyoming and Hawaii, meeting at our launch point in the heart of Arizona's magnificent Tonto National Forest and surrounded by spectacular mountain vistas.

Our flotilla consisted of two kayaks (David; Sozanne), one canoe (Curt), and two rafts (Tom & Jess; Sally). We launched on March 16, beginning on Apache lands, for a five-day trip down 52 miles of an intensely beautiful Sonoran Desert canyon.

The river is much more challenging than its Class 3-4 rating implies, requiring a strong power stroke throughout each rapid. On the third day, David

joined Sally on the larger raft, leaving Curt and Sozanne as the only hard boaters. At the end of one rapid, Devil's Pendejo, the raft went sideways into a large rock. The 16-foot raft with half a ton of gear flipped, sending Sally and David for a swim. It took hours to get the raft upright and clean up the yard sale. Three oars broke, but David was able to combine parts from them to fashion two working ones.

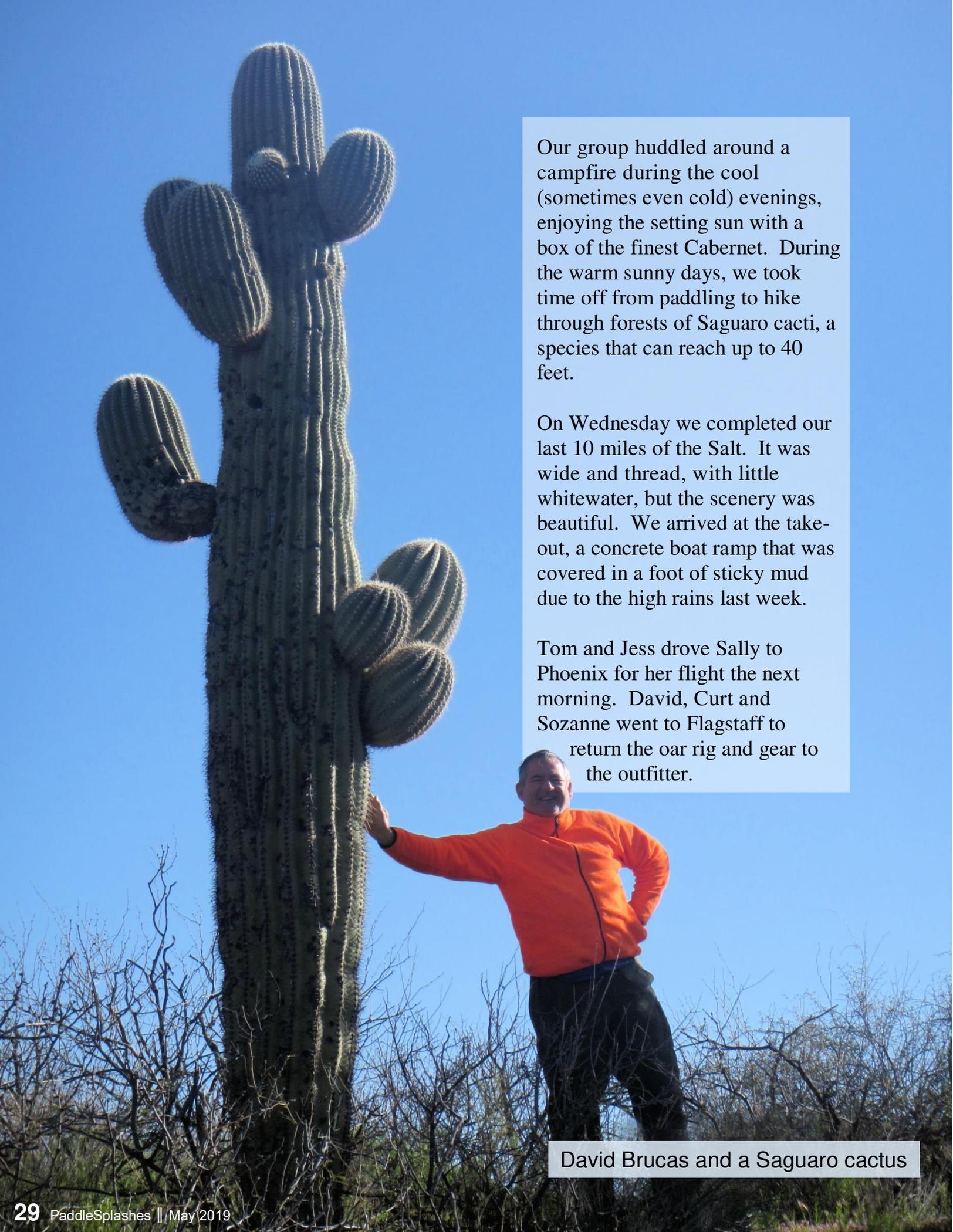
With names like Corkscrew, Maytag, and Pinball, each rapid was more exhilarating than the last. At mile 31 is the most famous rapid, Quartzite Falls, once

a narrow Class 5-6 sluice, that terminated in a deadly hole. A rafting guide illegally dynamited it in 1993, making it a tamer Class 4, but it's still a challenge.

Quartzite is a river-wide drop between two large cliff walls. The main channel is on the left, but the left eddy has a trap eddy wall. We let the two rafts go through first to set up safety. Curt came next, followed by Sozanne. She did the drop a little too far left and got caught in the eddy. She recirculated for five minutes, mostly out of her boat, before self-rescuing from the hydraulic with her kayak and paddle.

Sally Dewes on the oar rig.





Our group huddled around a campfire during the cool (sometimes even cold) evenings, enjoying the setting sun with a box of the finest Cabernet. During the warm sunny days, we took time off from paddling to hike through forests of Saguaro cacti, a species that can reach up to 40 feet.

On Wednesday we completed our last 10 miles of the Salt. It was wide and thread, with little whitewater, but the scenery was beautiful. We arrived at the take-out, a concrete boat ramp that was covered in a foot of sticky mud due to the high rains last week.

Tom and Jess drove Sally to Phoenix for her flight the next morning. David, Curt and Sozanne went to Flagstaff to return the oar rig and gear to the outfitter.

David Brucas and a Saguaro cactus

David (left) repairing the damaged oars while looks Curt on.



After completing the Salt River trip, David, Curt and Sozanne decided to explore some other Arizona rivers. We paddled Tonto Creek and two sections of the Verde River, all with gorgeous, mellow Class 3 rapids. Searching for the Tonto put-in was a trip in itself—we spent a lot of time driving around on desert roads trying to find the river.

What a marvelous adventure. And what a privilege to have been there!



Sozanne and the rest of the crowd having a St. Patrick's Day toast on the Salt River.

AMC Paddlers' Party

December 8, 2019



PHOTOS BY
MILANA
BUSLOVSKY

2019
Western Penna.
Solo Canoe
Rendezvous
May 31-Jun 2



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Leadership
Workshop
Fri-Sun, May 17-19
AMC Harriman
Outdoor Ctr

2019 Activity Schedule

Date	Touring Water	Quiet Water	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
May	4-5		Wappinger Cr. Clean-up (Sat, 5/4) <i>Faller</i>			
	11-12 Mothers Day		Pine Barrens (Sat, 5/11) <i>Watters</i>			
	18-19					
	25-26 Memorial Day				Yough (5/24-27) <i>Futrell</i>	
May 31- Jun 2		Mullica <i>Watters</i>		Esopus (Sat, 6/1) <i>Plante</i>		
June	8-9					
	15-16			Beginner Kayaking Instr. (Fri-Sun, 6/14-16) <i>Futrell</i>		
				Canoeing in Moving Water (Fri-Sun, 6/14-16) <i>Brady/Michener</i>		
	22-23					
29-30			Fifebrook (Thu-Sun, 6/27-30) <i>Solmaz</i>	Dryway (Thu-Sun, 6/27-30) <i>Solmaz</i>		
Jul 6-7			Week of Southern Rivers (Sat-Sun, 6/29-7/7) <i>Brady</i>			

Sea Kayaking on
Fire Island
Fri-Sun, Jul 12-14, 2019
AMC Fire Island Cabin



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LASTING IMAGE: Canoe and Kayak Waterskiing

