## Stay close to the water

# Sharing lessons works both ways, by Louis Dzierzak

FATHERHOOD begins with the soul-soaring joy of cradling a newborn child in your arms. Before long that giddiness turns to serious pondering about the responsibilities of raising them. What will I teach them? What will be my legacy when I'm gone? Most parents top 10 lists include: Be kind. Embrace learning and curiosity. Read books. Have fun. Those are noble aspirations for all parents to teach their children.

For me, staying close to water is high on my list of life lessons. Paddling a canoe nurtures the soul, invigorates the spirit, and calms an overworked mind. If that sense of peace and serenity has made my life better, why not the same for my kids?

As toddlers, first trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area planted seeds in my children that continue to prosper years later. At first, portages were short or even non-existent. A campsite on an island a mile past put-in can deliver a magical sunset. Campfires and morning mists burning off the water are memories hard to duplicate in city life. Can we come here again?

Kids quickly get bored leaning against the gunwales and dragging their hands through cool lake waters. They get antsy sitting in the bottom of the canoe and soon begin pleading for a chance to take the bow seat and steer the boat. Awkwardly using kid-sized paddles, they survive bruised knuckles banged on the gunwales and wail about how slow we're moving. Faster, Dad. Faster. More practice, bigger paddles, longer trips. Can we come here again next year?

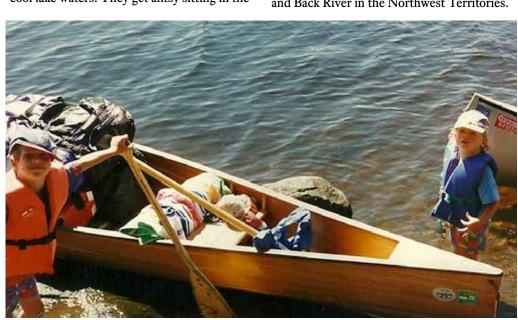
My personal paddling technology expertise is admittedly limited. As they've grown older, I've used our annual trips to Canoecopia to gently guide them in front of experts to learn the finer points of tumblehome, initial stability, bent shaft paddles and the pros and cons of fiberglass and Kevlar hulls. Storytellers like Kevin Callan and Cliff Jacobson have inspired them. Those slideshows, video clips, and tall tales sink those roots a little deeper each year.

Our battered but beloved cedar strip canoe has endured paddling experiences from elementary school to teenager to young adult. Cartoon-festooned PFD's have been replaced with professional models. Dad's aged collection of paddles no longer fit as well as their own carefully vetted selections. Adults now, my two oldest children have explored the waters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Quetico, and as far north as the Thelon and Back River in the Northwest Territories.

Today, their paddling adventures, skills and expertise far exceed mine. When we paddle together now, my daughter subtly but firmly lets me know she's got the stern.

I'm not sure how many of the life lessons I pledged to teach when my children when they were infants have taken hold. But the "stay close to the water" seeds planted so long ago worked their magic. Can we go again? Yes, yes we can.

Lou is a Minnesota-based freelance writer who's well respected in the outdoor industry. He's also a cyclist, triathlete, and the kind of guy you want with you when it rains for three days straight on a river trip. He loves wearing plaid shirts and cargo shorts.





# FEATURES

# **Making and Sharing Memories**

Find time to share your love of paddling, by Jim Pippitt

WHEN I'm stressed, I find that I can gain peace and comfort by remembering the time I spent out on the water.

Some of my favorite memories as a kid involved canoeing. Dad got a used Royalex boat and we paddled around local ponds in Idaho. I vividly remember the play of light against the basalt formations. Then as the family grew, we got a larger canoe which we took to the lakes. We paddled around in clear waters surrounded by majestic mountains scented by pine and sagebrush. It continued into adulthood. One of the first things my wife and I did on our honeymoon was a paddle around a glassy lake. I remember the glint of sunlight against her hair and

reflecting off my wet Mitchell paddle. She remembers the warmth of the sun. The shared experience makes us happy, and closer together.

I try to share experiences like those, hoping that the magic of being on a human-powered watercraft will make a memory that resists fading with time. I hope that the "be here, be now" moments that come with paddling will move those who come along with me. I hope that the kids I take along will see that the electronics they love are awesome, but that the natural world is no slouch either. Offer up those experiences to those around you. You never know where they'll end up.

### AFTER THE SHOW:

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# "Because you didn't set it up"

Kids will often surprise us with how capable they can be, by Maura & Bobby Marko

BRINGING children along on a canoe expedition is one of the best things we have done as adults. We made a conscious effort to bring our children into many wilderness settings no matter their age. Jack (3) and Rowan (1) are grizzled, experienced explorers who are daring, strong, confident, risk-takers. They work hard to terrify us with their seemingly death-defying leaps from tall rocks or desires to climb and do things themselves. It can be hard to step back, ignore our protective instincts, and see what they are trying to accomplish. Yet, when we do, we see that our own preconceived notions are limiting our children from taking positive risks that can have an enormous reward.

We had the privilege this summer of bringing our 10-year-old nephew, Ryan, out on a BWCA trip, his first wilderness and paddling





experience. The changes we saw in him after only 4 days in the BWCA were truly astonishing.

Shortly after making camp we took a tiny hike up a spur trail that led to the Border Route Trail. He complained as we made our way along the overgrown, rocky, and damp trail. He wanted to turn around and go back to camp after a mere 1/4 mile. Meanwhile, our three-year-old sobbed and begged to walk further.

As we entered the tent the first night he wondered aloud why his sleeping bag wasn't set up. I told him, "Because you didn't set it up." He explained that his mother usually did that for him.

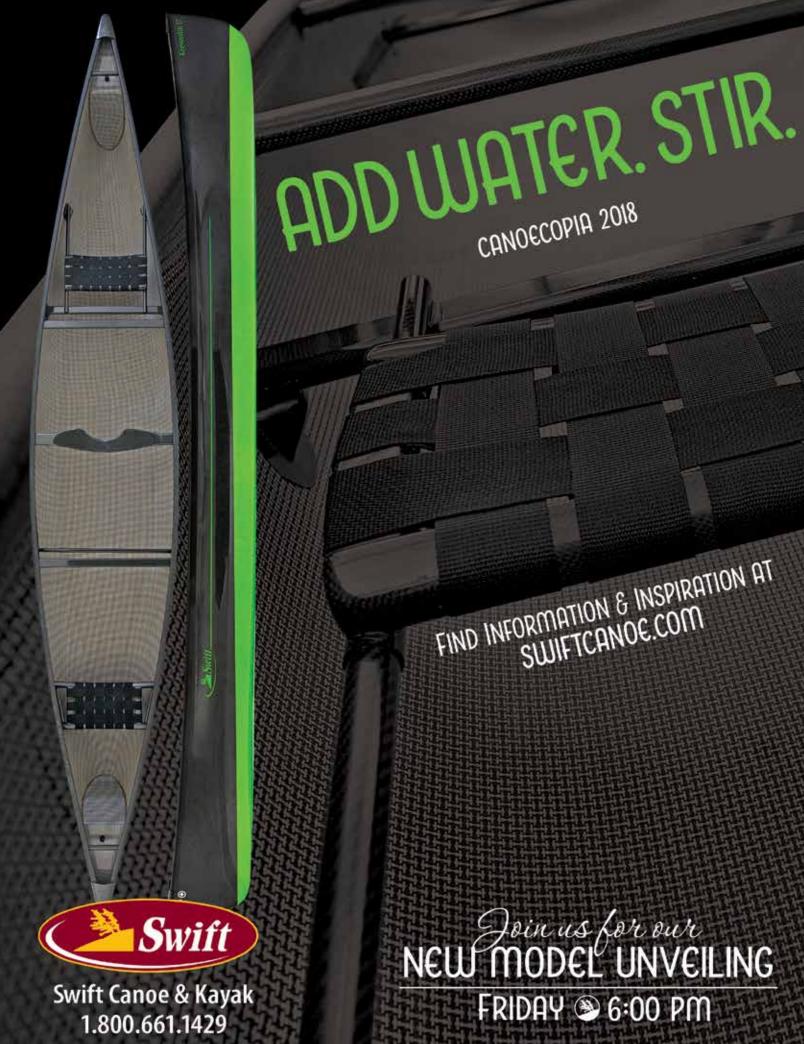
He was one of three children along on that trip and he was the oldest (our 3-year-old and 7-month-old were also along). I explained that, when in the wilderness with a group, each member has to pull their own weight. He learned that he would be helping with cooking, clean up, playing with his cousins, and rationing his snacks without being asked.

Two days later we paddled across the lake to a trail and summited a beautiful palisade on a stunningly sunny July day. Being a wizened wilderness adventurer at this point, we no longer heard complaints from Ryan. He walked faster, helped our toddler on the

trickier and steeper sections of the trail, and he didn't want the hike to end when we reached the summit. He learned to paddle and took time alone on the lake in the solo canoe we had along. He helped with dishes, filter water, paddle on day trips, collect firewood, ate heaps of food, pooped in the privy like a pro, and perfectly rationed his snacks. Once home, he raved about how much fun he had and how badly he wants to go back.

As parents, caregivers, or adults we often forget the resiliency and strength that children have. All too often we look at a situation and think, "they can't do that" without realizing that we should at least give them the opportunity to fail before making that decision for them. They will often surprise us with what they are capable of. Paddling into the quiet places of this world is something that all children should do to help them find their way, find their strengths, find their boundaries, and find their happy.

Maura and Bobby live in Excelsior, MN with their 3 year old son, Jack, 1 year old daughter, Rowan. They are extremely passionate about encouraging other parents to take the plunge and continue, or begin, an adventurous lifestyle with kids along for the fun. They will be speaking about canoe camping with babies and toddlers. See page 45.



# The next generation of paddlers

# Talking to city kids about the joys of growing up a paddler, by Whitney Bush

"AS most of you know, I grew up in Wisconsin," I greeted my entire school population early on December 22nd, "and I've been really excited to share this tradition of mine with you since I signed up to present this morning meeting."

350 preteens and a couple dozen staff members sit in crews of ten to fifteen students on our gymnatorium floor, and a couple dozen staff members dot the perimeter, just like we start every day at the middle school where I teach in the heart of Brooklyn. The first 15 minutes of every day we come

together as a whole school to hear different staff members talk about a current event, a favorite hobby, or book recommendations. We all share something that excites us to help expand the horizons of our students.

A grainy picture of four-year old Whitney by Lake Wingra is projected behind me. My red pigtails match my bright lifejacket, and the water lilies Dad had painted on my canoe paddle match the lilac-colored, nine-foot solo canoe resting next to me. Most of my vivid memories as a four year-old involve that canoe and the small lake a few miles from our house: practicing my J-stroke, visiting the

beaver lodge, correcting other paddlers' technique (I was four and fearless), and dumping it right by the dock and having to stand shivering on the shore in a troll sweatshirt where each troll had a bejeweled belly button, and wondering if there were any shrieking eels in our lake while Dad pulled my boat out.

Next are pictures of eight year-old Whitney watching a dragonfly hatch on a sandbar on the Wisconsin River for my eighth birthday trip. I tell my kids about how much I love



being on the water. How even though I tried soccer and basketball and other activities, nothing ever stuck the way that paddling did. I tell them I'm my favorite version of myself when I'm on the water.

Another picture flashes on the screen. It's an image of twelve-year-old Whitney, this time in a 22-foot voyageur canoe with the whole family, including Winnie the German Shorthair, who loved canoe trips. We're paddling the sloughs on the Mississippi River. I have braces, Ian is squinting in the sun, Dad's in the back ruddering while we do all the work. That was the day we saw a juvenile bald eagle fishing from the river. The day we tried

to write a second verse to "Great Green Gobs of Greasy Grimy Gopher Guts." It started with "Big Brown Blobs," and got worse from there, something about boogers. We were camping in Wyalusing state park. Mom would read to us from the *Dark is Rising* books by the fire at night, and the family would pile into the extra-large canoe during the day.

Then a picture of me in old running shorts and Chacos standing next to a Forest Service sign that says Hilda Creek. Another picture of me as a college student, lugging a Nova Craft Prospector 15 over a beaver dam. I teach my students

about Hilda, the creek near Superior National Forest where, for half a dozen summers in high school and college, my dad and I would set out early in the morning to make our way down a waterway that probably saw no other humans throughout the year because it involved navigating more than twenty downed trees, beaver dams, and rock gardens, and usually lead to disturbing several surprised deer and, I'm convinced, the same great blue heron who never flew more than fifty feet downstream at a time. Herons are not smart.

Picture by picture, I saw that I wasn't just showing my students memories, but also the

thing about my life that has taught me to live deliberately.

"But now I live in Brooklyn," I speed up to present day. "I see pictures of my parents paddling in Northern Wisconsin in the fall as I scroll through Instagram and I get so jealous. I love it here but that doesn't mean I miss it there. So a few years ago I started a new tradition. In the past few weeks we've shared a lot of different traditions that people have this time of year. Often we think that a tradition has to be old, has to be something our grandparents have passed down and



#### **FEATURES**

our family has always done. But I've realized, and love, that we can always start our own traditions as our lives change."

The slide changes and the screen shows the average high and low temperatures for Belleville, Wisconsin on December 31st. "Wisconsin gets really cold. When I go home for the holidays, I spend a lot of time curled up on the couch with my dog. Here are some stats about a town just southwest of where I grew up in Madison: on New Year's Eve, the average temperature last year was 28 degrees, but the average low is -17 and the average high is -4."

Again I change the slide and they see me and my dad, bundled and beaming in that same Prospector,

navigating a curve of the Sugar River on New Year's Eve 2016. I tell them how we chose the Sugar River when we started our new tradition a few years ago, because most of the river is protected so the wind doesn't feel as biting. I tell them that Dad is the best because he always ties the boat back on by himself while I defrost my hands in the truck. I tell them that my dad has struggled with depression since he was a boy, and just like for a lot of people, it feels worse in the winter when it's dark and cold, and sometimes it's hard to do the things that we know make us happy. I tell them that I know everyone has a different family, but I count myself lucky that I grew up in a family where my dad has always been my best friend, so just as much as I look forward to spending Christmas Eve sharing gifts in front of the fire with my parents, my brother and sister-in-law, and this year my grandma, I look forward to the chilly hours I spend with my dad doing something that makes us both so happy.

Now that I'm almost thirty, I realize more and more the ways that my childhood was unique, and it gets harder and harder to tell what about my past has made me who I am today. The extraordinary concoction of time and place, people and belief has plopped me down right where I am now. I consider myself fortunate that so much of that time and so many of those places were on the water, and

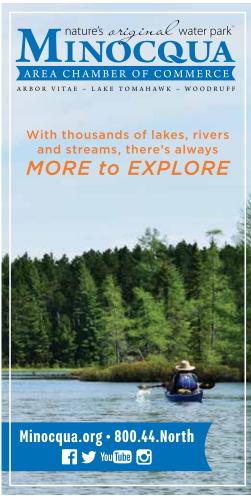


it's my belief that the people you find on the water are some of the best you can find.

Paddling taught me to notice. To be aware of my own movements and see the details in the ecosystems I visit. To crave connection to the land and understand its history. To empathize with the other living things that crossed my path. To feel small in a big world but also huge in moments that belonged just to me.

"It's a little harder to get outside in New York City, but we're lucky. We live or go to school by Prospect Park and the Parade Grounds. If you get up early enough on a Saturday, the Brooklyn Botanical Garden is free. And in a world that literally buzzes with technology, studies show just how good it is for our minds and bodies and relationships to spend time outside, even if it's not in the most conventional time or place. So as we begin our moment of solitude and reflections, I ask you to think about how can you find ways to spend time outside with the people that matter most to you?"

Whitney's first exposure to paddling was sleeping in her father's whitewater kayak with her blankie and a stack of Little Golden Books. She has a BS in Wildlife and Wildlands Conservation from BYU and a MA in Special Education from Brooklyn College. She loves City Bakery hot chocolate and run-on sentences.





## Canoecopia through the years

Amazing to think we've been doing this (with your help) for 42 years!

WHEN a business is 42 years old and matures over the years, you don't notice gradual changes. We recently (re-)found a box of old catalogs, pictures, and logos that took me back in time, when layout meant just that—taping photos to paper and taking

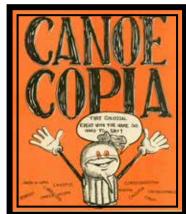
pictures of it. Finding the original logo shows how far we've come. We love the funky hand-drawn art, and look for some of it returning in the near future.

Original logo, 1976

There's a lot of history in these boxes, and it's a fun rabbit hole to climb down. Pictures of younger and hairier staff, and old faded newsprint gives way to glossy, beautiful magazines.

We're going to put a lot of these images on social media

in the next few months. While we're a different business than we were four decades ago, we're still paddlers, and we still love being part of a big, paddling family. -DB



Show guide cover, 1993



### Surviving the attack of the two-headed turtle

My first trips down the Brule, by Sarah Schnell (age 13)

I feel pretty lucky to have a family that has given me a love of watersports from an early age. It isn't surprising. My mom's family has enjoyed recreational canoeing with friends and family, and naturally carried on the tradition.

One of my first clear memories of being in the water is when I was around eight, and I was paddling from the front of a canoe on the Brule river. My Uncle Jim, who was in the stern, called whatever stroke I was to use—I found it fun to try and keep up. We encountered only the occasional mild rapids and wore safety

gear, but the slight element of danger was exhilarating to me. The water-sprayed adrenaline rush was well worth getting the bottoms of my shorts soaked.

The next year we were on the Brule once again. This time, wearing all the appropriate rapids gear and a little extra. Extras? A GoPro camera mounted to the front of my kayak, my lucky watch that I never took off, and a younger brother who was a little too fond of making trouble.

I found myself going through a once-over at the launch site. Uncle Jim once again coached me about what stroke to use when I was stuck on a rock, snuck up on by an unexpected sandbar, hit by a falling tree felled by homicidal beavers, attacked by a carnivorous two-headed water turtle... the list goes on. For the first time I was going solo. On my own. Just me. Alone.

There was a little risk, sure. A stray trout could leap into my boat, or a vicious six-foot branch could yank away my paddle, but those were unlikely and I had years of experience behind me. I knew I could handle it. Or I thought I could... Most likely.



I got on the river with an interesting start. Right off the bat Uncle Jim had a nylon rope tied to the ring at the bow of my craft and was dragging me into the water, complaining loudly (and with surprisingly colorful language) about how cold the water was. He

"After some more curses of, "Oh, golly gee," and, "Son of a biscuit!" we were off, zooming down the frothy river towards excitement"

then, with little to no warning, let me go and marched over to his own canoe. Paddling against the tides was difficult, but interesting, and after some more curses of, "Oh, golly gee," and, "Son of a biscuit!" we were off, zooming down the frothy river towards excitement.

My brother, younger by two and a half years (and full of mischief), gleefully used his solo craft to repeatedly bump my boat, sending me skidding into the bank. To my great embarrassment I continued this pattern of meeting the bank's trees very closely and personally

even after he found other things to divert him.

When my meet-and-greet with the trees finally ended, I found myself repeating under my breath, "Tree, tree, tree..." Almost as though I was alerting myself to every trunked piece of vegetation within twenty feet of my little craft. The embarrassing episode was caught on camera (if you recall, a GoPro was strapped firmly to the bow of my kayak), and it has haunted me in the family lore to this day. If anyone wants to see me blush, they simply say 'tree-tree', or 'DIE-DIE' (that

one refers to when I tried to battle a massive spider with my paddle... while in a canoe, but that's a story for another day).

Another time I found myself afloat on the river was only a few months ago, during the summer months when school was out and adventure was in the air. I was again solo, but that time in a sea kayak that required a bit of core work to keep upright. My uncle (yes, the exact same one), my mom, my brother, and the family dog paddled down the Wisconsin river. We stopped on our whims to snack on pre packed sandwiches, and run the dog across sandbars. It wasn't as action-packed as two years prior, but it was a charming experience that I recall with a smile on my face.

When she's not rolling her eyes at another of her uncle's 'shaggy dog stories,' Sarah Schnell can be found trolling the kitchen for small bits of bacon or pepperoni to silently nibble on. She loves math, science, and singing along with the Ella Fitzgerald Songbook albums.



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# Forty Years and Counting-the BWCAW Act

Preserving a place of water, rock and forest

THIS year marks the 40th year of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act. Like any other anniversary, it is an occasion for reflection on the past, present, and future.

A place of water, rock, and forest: The BWCAW, part of the Superior National Forest in northeast Minnesota, encompasses approximately one million acres and stretches nearly 150 miles along the Canadian border. Eons ago, great glaciers carved the physical features of the region. Scraping and gouging bedrock, glaciers left behind rugged cliffs and canyons, gentle hills, towering rock formations, rocky shores, sandy beaches, and thousands of lakes and streams interspersed with islands and surrounded by boreal forest.

This thing we call "Wilderness": The BWCAW is one of 765 federally-designated areas created by the 1964 Wilderness Act. According to the Act, Wilderness is "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The intent of the Act was to establish wilderness areas that would remain undeveloped "for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."

A varied past: Over time, people have been drawn to the BWCAW for reasons reflecting changing social values. Native Americans have hunted, fished, and gathered in the area for thousands of years. In the late 1600's, Europeans discovered a bounty of fur-



bearing animals and other natural resources, and a place to settle reminiscent of northern homelands. Rumors of gold brought mineral exploration that shifted focus by the 1880's to the "Iron Range" where rich iron ore deposits were developed with the help of migrants from many countries. Logging first occurred around 1895. A series of hydro-dams along the Canadian border was proposed and deterred in the early 1920's. Over the decades, there was a growing advocacy to protect the natural character of the area.

Wilderness in the making: Prior to the 1964 Wilderness Act a long series of actions were taken to protect the natural character of the area. In 1909, President Roosevelt included much of the current BWCAW in his establishment of the Superior National Forest. More than half of the current area was set aside as a roadless area in 1926. In the 1930's dams and logging were prohibited and the Superior Roadless Primitive Area

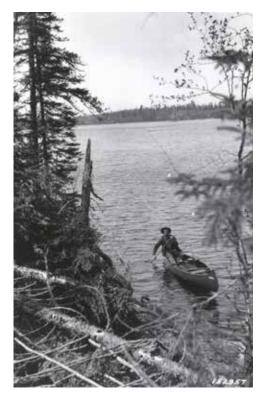




## **FEATURES**

boundaries were expanded. In the 40's no-cut zones were established along the international boundary and a presidential order established an air reserve over the roadless area.

While Wilderness designation lent federal protection, intense, sometimes violent, conflict continued; most regarding pre-existing uses. Following years of debate and compromise, President Carter signed the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness



Act (PL 95-495) on October 21, 1978, adding acreage and amending the national Wilderness Act of 1964, with the purpose to:

- 1. protect and manage fish and wildlife "to enhance public enjoyment and appreciation of the unique biotic resources,"
- 2. protect and enhance the natural values and environmental quality of the lakes, streams, shorelines and associated forest areas,
- 3. maintain high water quality,
- 4. minimize, "to the maximum extent possible," the environmental impacts associated with mineral development,
- 5. restore natural conditions to existing temporary roads and prevent further road and commercial development,
- 6. provide "orderly and equitable transition from motorized recreational uses to non-motorized recreational use..."

The Act specifically prohibits logging and provides direction to the Forest Service regarding: level of motorized watercraft use, size of motors, quotas for use, motorized/mechanized portages, snowmobile use, location of resorts, and maintenance of dams.

A comprehensive implementation strategy authorized the Forest Service to purchase private lands inside the BWCAW and to compensate timber buyers. In addition, the Forest Service was to "expedite the intensification of resource management on the national forest" and "development of dispersed outdoor recreation" outside of the BWCAW. A key aspect of the implementation strategy was to provide transition assistance to displaced landowners, including technical and financial assistance to certain commercial resorts and outfitters "to improve economic opportunities for tourism and recreation-related businesses in a manner which is complementary to the management of the Wilderness."

Following implementation of the BWCAW Act and several years of litigation, the Forest Service established the first BWCAW Management Plan. Management direction for the Wilderness has been integrated into the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

Today and many tomorrows: Today, people still have strong and varied opinions about management of the BWCAW. Issues related to the Wilderness are frequently in the news, including legal challenges over motor use and lands transactions. Currently, an intense public/political divide has neighbors, interest groups, and politicians facing-off regarding the potential benefits and costs of mineral exploration and development in areas adjacent to the BWCAW. In 2017, at least three bills were introduced in Congress that would directly affect the BWCAW and more proposals are pending.

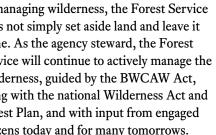


To retain its enduring value, various uses in wilderness must be balanced to be compatible with 'wilderness character' which is at the core of the wilderness concept. We know that, annually, more than 155,000 people follow ancient footsteps along approximately 1,200 miles of designated canoe routes and hiking trails and camp on the 2,000 designated sites. They come for many reasons, some for what they find and others for what they do not find; to take a step back and relax, unwind and escape the trappings and stresses of modern-day life. As Sigurd Olson put it: "Wilderness can be appreciated only by contrast and solitude understood only when we have been without it."

In managing wilderness, the Forest Service does not simply set aside land and leave it alone. As the agency steward, the Forest Service will continue to actively manage the Wilderness, guided by the BWCAW Act, along with the national Wilderness Act and Forest Plan, and with input from engaged citizens today and for many tomorrows.

Many thanks to the Superior National Forest for this article and the historical photos provided.

For information about how you can help preserve the BWCA Wilderness, visit the Northwoods Volunteer Connection in the Canoecopia Lobby, or learn more at http://www.mnnvc.org



**Drew Whitenack** Years at Rutabaga: This is my first full-time year, but I've worked for four summers

How did you get into paddling: My parents first got me into paddling by signing me up for the ROP summer camps and then it just kind of went from there.

What's the longest trip you've taken: 45 days through the inside passage of Alaska, around Ketchikan and then north to Juneau.

Favorite place to paddle?: Black Earth Creek since it's easy to bike shuttle.

Favorite part of Rutabaga?: The people we get to meet, either customers, reps, or the rest of this crazy staff.

Favorite boat & why?: Wenonah Argosy, I've thought about it and couldn't really say why. It just fits me well and handles great on the rivers I like to paddle.

Little known fact about you?: I am a huge fan of all kinds of animation.





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# Canoeing runs in this family

# Passing the passion down to the next generation, by **Doug Burns**

CANOEING! Once it is taken up as a passion it can run in family lines. My dad, Rev. Richard M. Burns, was introduced to it through Boy Scouting. His first experience was on the lake at a Boy Scout Camp in Pennsylvania. His skills improved, and in his twenties he was leading river trips.

By the time I was born in 1960, he was leading scouting and church camps to Canada. The loon and north country called to him often. A keepsake news

article we have pictured Dad standing by some canoe-laden cars heading again to Algonquin. The date caught my attention, July 11, 1960. Just 11 days after I was born, he was heading out for a Canoeing trip. God gave Mom patience with his adventurous spirt.

Soon enough, his passion became my passion. I remember marveling at how he could make the canoe go straight with that peculiar J-shaped stroke. His canoe seemed to dance across the whitewater;



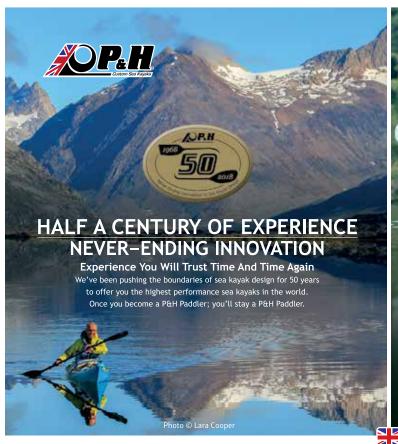
before long, mine could too.

The paddle and camp leadership has passed into my hands. I love how paddling affects my campers. I remember the look of accomplishment in the eyes of the campers when we put our shoulders to a log and levered up a water-filled canoe.

Canoeing is a constant for us. I got to take my daughter on a "Father & Daughter Trip" to Chiniguchi before her

wedding. Surprisingly, it helped me to let go of her and hold on to her at the same time. This year we loaded her son, my 1st grandson, into my Old Town Canoe for his inaugural ride. Yes, canoeing runs in this family.

Doug is a Methodist Pastor and paddler in Rockwood, PA. He believes we should all "enlarge the places of our tents, stretch our tent curtains wide... lengthen our cords, and strengthen our stakes."



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# Onni's amazing paddling journey

A young paddler loves whitewater competition, by Dan Bowers

ONE of the greatest joys in my paddlesports career has been assisting new paddlers to become experienced paddlers. Whether it is sitting them in the right boat on the shop floor, meeting them out on the water, teaching a new skill, or hearing stories of personal triumph and joyful leisure, it's truly rewarding. The paddlesports world is like that: one big happy family enjoying a similar passion, and this experience binds us. Helping families grow is at the heart of our work here at Rutabaga, especially the youth of our world.

Last spring we had a family from Finland stop into the shop. If that wasn't unique enough what they were after was a surprise. I approached the father and introduced myself. After the quick introductions, Ville got right to the point and mentioned an in-





terest in whitewater kayaks, more specifically a freestyle/play boat. Ville pointed towards his eleven year-old boy, Onni, who was busy taking in all the sights of the shop. After discussing different options and selecting the right boat, including the important decision of color, Ville pulled the trigger.

Ville's job had moved the family to Beloit from Finland for the summer. In their home town of Jyväskylä, Ville joined a kayaking club, and progressed into a solid intermediate whitewater paddler.

In the late summer of 2015, Ville took Onni down his first class 2 river, the Kapeenkoski. Onni came off the river stoked! "He was really excited afterwards," said Ville. "I think it was clearly his sport from the first

Continued on pg. 77





**World's Largest Consumer Bicycle Show** 

in the New Holland building at Madison's Alliant Energy Center

Friday Noon - 9 Saturday 8 - 9 Sunday 10 - 6

#### **FEATURES**

Continued from pg. 75

try." I could see that excitement when the young lad's boat arrived. Onni was set for a summer of Wisconsin whitewater, sporting a new paddle, skirt, and kayak.

Heading up to Wausau Whitewater Park for a spring release, I wondered if I'd see Onni. Sure enough, Ville and Onni where already on the water practicing eddy peel outs at the bottom of the course. A friend, Chris Keller, who also has youngsters, had shown them down the course for their first time.



Onni was doing very well hitting his rolls, some on the first try, obviously having just as much fun upside down as upright. Having only surfed a wave a few times you could tell he wanted nothing more than to be in the features of the park doing tricks and scoring points, but wasn't there quite yet.

Throughout the summer I enjoyed seeing Onni and his family at the park, watching them enjoy the supportive community and seeing them both progressing fast. When asked, Ville mentioned that his favorite part about their summer in the States was "all

those Wausau weekends with great kayaking, great new friends, and camping with the family, getting them outside, and spending time together." It was now mid summer and Ville chuckled, "Onni is starting to pass me in skill." Sure enough, the youngster was in Hole 4 of the course nailing flat spins and carving around.

In August, Wausau Whitewater holds the Annual Midwest Freestyle Championships. It feels like a family reunion with fun competition. After the prelims of Beginner Freestyle, the scores were posted. I was surprised; Onni was only a few points behind me, and we qualified to compete the next day. Neither of us made it to the finals, but we had a blast engaging in playful banter beforehand.

On the second day another event held is Team Freestyle, where random folks are put together in teams of four. Each team has some new paddlers and some expert paddlers, so it really levels the field. Onni, right at the very end of his team's time in the feature, dropped the nose of his kayak into the pour over and popped straight up into the air, managed to swing the boat around and successfully pulled off a full loop. A loop is an out of water front flip, a highly sought after trick for play boaters. The crowd went wild! Onni drew by far the loudest cheers of the whole weekend. The smile on Onni's face was contagious and was the highlight of the summer. Keep your ears open for this youngster out of Finland!

I asked Ville what kayaking means to him as a father. He replied, "It means spending time with Onni and learning new things together. It is also a natural way for me to get my kids into the outdoor lifestyle and in touch with nature. Every time we go kayaking, it is something special."

A seasoned whitewater paddler, Dan just completed his first year as a 'Baga. He loves getting kids into paddling kayaks, and the next generation is fortunate to have him. In his spare time, he paddles. No, seriously. If he's not at work, he's in a kayak. Or sleeping in the back of his truck.





# VISIT THE MSR BOOTH

# Helping veterans heal

Heroes on the Water, by Jason Bartol

PADDLE. Fish. Heal. Words we live by every day as we focus on supporting our nation's heroes in living life to the fullest.

Founded in 2007, Heroes on the Water (HOW) helps our Nation's warriors and veterans from all branches of the United States military and first responders unwind using the therapeutic qualities of fishing from kayaks. What looks like a day trip of paddling and fishing is in fact something much deeper and longer-lasting.

HOW is a therapeutic kayak fishing rehabilitation and reintegration program dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of active duty personnel, veterans, first responders, and their families. Our unique kayak fishing program allows the participants a chance to decompress from the stresses associated with combat, the physical rigors of rehabilitation, and the stressors that warriors and first responders face on a daily basis.



HOW is unique in that it is a long-term activity, not a one-time event. We know that the effectiveness of the program is a direct result of engaging participants for the long-term, based on results as a participant in a Troy University Study.

HOW has over 87 chapters nationwide and in the past two years Wisconsin has seen the creation of four chapters: Southeastern WI (Milwaukee), Southcentral WI (Madison), Northeastern WI (Black Creek), and Northwestern WI (Spring Valley). The support from local companies like

Rutabaga Paddlesports has helped to ensure the Wisconsin chapters are successful and able to serve veterans and first responders in all areas of our great state.

Kick off 2018 at Canoecopia and come see us to get more information on our program and volunteer opportunities. You can get additional information at **HeroesontheWater.org** 



#### National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act turns 50!

A behind-the-scenes memory as told to Darren Bush

"An unspoiled river is a very rare thing in this Nation today. Their flow and vitality have been harnessed by dams and too often they have been turned into open sewers by communities and by industries. It makes us all very fearful that all rivers will go this way unless somebody acts now to try to balance our river development. So we are establishing a National Wild and Scenic Rivers System which will complement our river development with a policy to preserve sections of selected rivers in their free-flowing conditions and to protect their water quality and other vital conservation values." -Lyndon B. Johnson, October 2, 1968.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The story of how this law was made demonstrates the way things should work: dedication to a good cause, knowing how to engage stakeholders, and finding ways to work together so everyone wins.

The story starts with Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, Secretary of the Interior Stuart Udall, and a host of other highpowered political haymakers like Frank Church (of The Wilderness of No Return fame) and Wayne Aspinall, a Colorado Congressman who was an ardent protector of rivers and water. Gaylord Nelson sold the idea to President Johnson, who saw a need to protect rivers and keep them unspoiled for future generations. Thus the work began.

Few people see what goes on behind the photo ops and speeches. Fred Madison was on the staff in Gaylord Nelson's office, and due to his background (Ph.D. in Soil Science), he was assigned to work on water



conservation, specifically the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Working for months, bouncing ideas off fellow aides, Fred labored tirelessly to make the glib words of a presidential speech into something that could be called a bill. It's all well and good to say a river is wild, or scenic, or recreational, but what defines each of these? Furthermore, how do you quantify all this, so that when the time comes to put up the sign on the St. Croix River, where does it go, and why?

Getting the law's language right was naturally tricky and required a lot of give and take. Even harder was convincing some legislators that there was a need. This is especially true when a congressman from Colorado said "There are no wild or scenic rivers east of the Mississippi." Hey, congressman, we here in Wisconsin would strongly beg to differ.

So while the guys in suits took credit, Fred Madison, of Sauk City, Wisconsin, made it happen.

Fred, now in his 80's, is a retired professor of Soil Science from the University of Wisconsin. He doesn't fit the academic profile of the tweed-jacketed guy with a pipe. Fred has a tremendous bushy mustache worthy of Hulk Hogan, a Packers cap, and orange suspenders, like he is coming right off his deer stand.

Fred is a brilliant man with a crystal memory of those days so long ago. He was a behind-the-scenes guy who had to work through a maze of obstacles, including one Congressman from Pennsylvania who was opposed to the Youghiogheny River even being considered for study,

and vowed to block it. (He later resigned in disgrace. Karma works.)

Once they worked around a few obstacles, the Act sailed through the proper channels, and eight Wild and Scenic Rivers were designated. As of 2014, over 12,000 miles of 208 rivers are protected under the act. It sounds impressive, but consider that's only

a bit more than a quarter of a percent of all rivers in the US.

We should be grateful to those who, through hard work and compromise, helped create this wonderful system to protect wild, scenic, and



recreational rivers. And we should thank Fred, the man behind the scenes.

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# DESIGN INNOVATION HAPPENS

# UPSTREAM

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#### **EXHIBITOR & VENDOR LISTING**

Northwest Indiana Paddling Assn. Stanley 350 Madison Frost River Stellar Kayaks USA ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP Gales Storm Gathering, The Northwinds Adventures Adriatic Kayak Tours Girl Scouts WI - Badgerland Council Stohlquist WaterWare Northwoods Volunteer Connection Sugar River Outfitters Adventure Technology Goal Zero Nova Craft Canoe Sunday Afternoons Agawa Canyon Good To-Go Food NPS St. Croix Nat'l Scenic Riverway Alabama Mtn Lakes Tourist Assn. Gränsfors Bruk Axes NRS Sunset Canoe Outfitting Aluu Paddles Great River Rumble! Ocean Kayak Superior National Forest Aqua-Bound Harmony Gear Old Scout Outdoor Products Superior Portage Pads Hayward Lakes Vis. & Conve Old Town Canoe Surf Wing Kayaks Astral Designs Heroes on Water, SE WI Chapter Swift Canoe & Kayak **B&E's Trees** Olive Lake Eco Lodge Badger Paddles Original Bug Shirt Company, The Sylvan Sport Hidden Valleys Badger Tenkara Hurricane Kayaks Outdoor Kind, The Tahe Kayaks **TCTeardrops** Ice Age Trail Alliance Outdoor Research Beaches Fort Myers & Sanibel Beaver Dam Lake Improvmt. Assn. Icebreaker TEAMSurvivor Madison P&H Sea Kayaks **Bending Branches** Illinois Paddling Council Packsack Canoe Trips & Log Cabins TemboTusk **Industrial Revolution** Packtowl Therm-a-Rest **BIC Sport North America** Paddle-Buddy Thule Big Agnes/Helinox Inland Sea Kayakers Paddle Oregon Boardworks Ironman WI Trailtopia Paddlesports North America ugo wear Bonafide Kayaks Isle Royale National Park **Boundary Waters Journal** Jackson Kayak paddling.com Uncharted Watercraft Jefferson County Parks Perception Kayaks C4 Waterman Uncommon Adventures Katadyn / Optimus Platypus Unexplored Florida Cache Lake Camping Foods Kayak Cart, The Prairie State Canoeists United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Callie Rohr Mem'l Race Upper Sugar River Watershed Assn. Camp Manito-wish YMCA Kayak Chicago Prosser RV Campaign to Save Boundary Waters Keen Footwear Pygmy Boats Utopia Gear Pyranha Kayaks Canoeing.com KIALOA Venture Kayaks Cascade Designs Kitigan Crossboats Qajaq USA Vepo Cataract Oars Klean Kanteen Red Lake Outfitters Vilas County Chamber Cedar Falls Tourism & Vis. Bur. **REDBUDSUDS** Visit Cook County Kokatat Remackel Trailers Voyageur North Outfitters Chequamegon-Nicolet Nat'l Forest Kokopelli Raft Chesapeake Light Craft Ladies Of The Lake Festival Richland County Tourism Voyageur Wilderness Outfitters Chicago Adventure Therapy Lake Effect Company Voyageurs Outdoor Gear River Action Chosen Valley Canoe Accessories Leave No Trace Center River Alliance of Wisconsin Wabakimi Fishing & Canoeing Chota Outdoor Gear Level Six RiverSport Adventures Watershed **Rock Art in Watercolors** Waupaca Area Conv. & Visitor Bur. CreekKooler Lightweights LiquidLogic Kayaks Rock River Trail Wausau Kayak/Canoe Corporation Current Designs Kayaks Wenonah Canoe Dagger Living Adventure ROW Sea Kayak Adventures Delta Kayaks Mad City Paddlers Rusk & Price Cty. Tourism Werner Paddles Discover Life Chiropractic Malone Auto Racks Rutabaga Outdoor Programs Whitecap Kayak WI Canoe Heritage Museum Don Miller Subaru Mercer Area Chamber Sanborn Canoe Door County Adventure Ctr Merrimack Canoe Savage River Works WI Dept Natural Resources Door County North Milwaukee Riverkeeper Sea to Summit WI DNR Nat. Heritage Consv. Door County Sea Kayak Symposium Minocqua Area Chamber Wild Rivers Interpretive Ctr. Sea-lect Designs Eagles Nest Outfitters (ENO) Missouri Nat'l Recreational River Wild Wales Tours & Walkabouts SealLine **Eco Migrations** MSR Seals Sprayskirts & Acc's Wilderness Ironworks MTI Life Jackets Seattle Sports Wilderness North **Esquif** Exped Mustang Survival Seven Treasures Wilderness Systems Sierra Club Explore La Crosse Naples Marco Island Everglades Willamette Riverkeeper/Water Trail Extreme Tears Native Watercraft Williams and Hall Outfitters Silent Sports Multi Media Channels EZ Dock of the Midwest **NOLS** Silverwaves Jewelry Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge

Snowtrekker Tents

Sol Paddle Boards

SPIbelt

Southern Utah Wldns. Alliance

Spinning Wheels Publishing

St. Croix River Association

Spirit of the Wilderness

Wisco Pop! Beverage

Woolpower Yakima

Zeko Shoes

Wisconsin Historical Society

Wisconsin State Park System Wooden Canoe Heritage Assn.

**82** | Canoecopia Show Guide 2018 – Presented by Rutabaga Paddlesports

North Country Trail Assn.

Northeast Iowa Whitewater

Northern Tier High Adventure

North Water

Northland College

NorthPoint Paddles

Northstar Canoes

**EZ-Recreational Racks** 

Friends of Wabakimi

Fritz Orr Canoe

Friends Apostle Isl. Nat'l LkShore

Friends Lower WI R-way (FLOW)

Feelfree Kavaks

**FITS** 

# PARTING WORDS

## Here's to our community

# Inspired by adventures in paddlesport, by Dana Griepentrop

STRANGELY enough, my first exposure to Rutabaga Paddlesports started with a Canoecopia show guide. In 2014, almost immediately after returning to Wisconsin from a semester abroad in Ireland, I received a show guide in the mail, on what I deemed a stroke of luck.

During my semester abroad, I began to paddle with the university's kayak club, admittedly more than I studied. I became hooked on the sport of whitewater kayaking and the inexplicable people I met. Running down rapids allowed me to experience nature like never before. My world more than doubled. My dreams grew more vivid. I was seeing the world through rose-colored glasses with people that I assumed only existed in movies. I met people who went out and explored the country.

However, after paddling more than I ever had in my life, my semester ended. I was on a plane flying away from a newfound community I actually trusted with my life. Was I leaving the sport, too? Prior to my paddling experience, I was a runner where the only things required were a pair of shoes and some clothes. My minimalist paddling gear was limited to a pair of old sandals I had gotten away with using as my water shoes in Ireland. I feared my gearless-self would never find a similar group that trusted me enough to lend me gear and foster my growth as a paddler. I did not want to take my rose glasses off.

A couple weeks after my return to Wisconsin, I received the 2014 Canoecopia Show Guide. I was absolutely elated to discover there was a store devoted to paddlesports in my home state. I deduced that where there was a store, there must also be a supporting community.

And there most definitely is! I mean, read through this Show Guide or look around you right now if you're at the show. There are a great number of us who can't

get enough of paddling and want to share that passion with others. It's inspiring that many of us are supremely affected by the innocence and curiosity that nature instills in us; enough to gather and talk about it together over three days! This is what I was looking for.

Whitewater kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddleboarding, fishing, photographing whatever your pleasure in this paddling world—we all have amazing, adventurous and genuine spirits that this world needs. This world is a playground that we intend to embrace.

So through another semester of college, a kayaking trip to the Alps, and another jaunt to Ireland for a year, I kept this promise of a caring community and Rutabaga on the forefront of my mind. Hoping to make Rutabaga my place of

"I was seeing the world through rosecolored glasses, with people who went out and explored the country,."

work, my hope came to fruition last April when I moved to Madison and started my position here. Now, I am surrounded every day by people who commit to strengthening this community through education.

My favorite part of the paddling world is that anywhere on the planet, whether you are an expert, a novice, a beginner, or aren't even a paddler and just play one on TV, we all have something to gain from listening to each other's experiences and

perspectives. Each and every one of us are simultaneously teachers and students. We all play an integral role.

Thanks for being a part of this wonderful community, and keep sharing your passion with others.



How did you get started paddling: I started paddling at a young age in an aluminum canoe while camping with my family. However, I really became hooked when I was studying abroad in Ireland and joined the University of Limerick Kayak Club. It was the time of my life!

What's the longest trip you've taken: The longest trip I have taken was a two-week white water kayak trip to the Slovenian and Italian Alps. If you ever get a chance—go!

Favorite part of Rutabaga: I am constantly learning new things from my coworkers. We have an encyclopedia of knowledge with the staff on board here!

Favorite boat & why: A Pyranha Burn. It fits me well and goes where I want it to go!

Sand strategies: I don't get what all the worry is about. It's

like glitter. One way or another you can always dump or wash it out.

Little known fact about you: I am a world champion Irish Dancer.



# baga staff

Rutabaga's 2018 Core Staff:

Back Row: Dan Bowers, Darren Bush, Amelia Musser, Joel O'Neill, Ethan Scheiwe. Middle Row: Drew Whitenack, Marit Haug, Jim Pippitt, Mary Constance, Bunny Kornfeld, Tadhg Barrett. Front Row: Kate Westphal, Nancy Saulsbury, Sasha Stone, Dana Griepentrog. Not pictured: Shannon Lehmann

# **CANOECOPIA**Information in Brief

What World's Largest Paddlesport Expo. Filled with canoes, kayaks, SUP, paddle gear, speakers, exhibitors, and the coolest visitors from all over the world.

When March 9: 4-9 pm

March 10: 9-6 pm March 11: 10-5 pm

Where Exhibition Hall at the Alliant

Energy Center. Map on pg. 6 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way,

Madison, WI 53713

**Pre-order** \$13/day, \$22/3-day pass admission *Pre-order at <u>rutabaga.com</u>* 

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