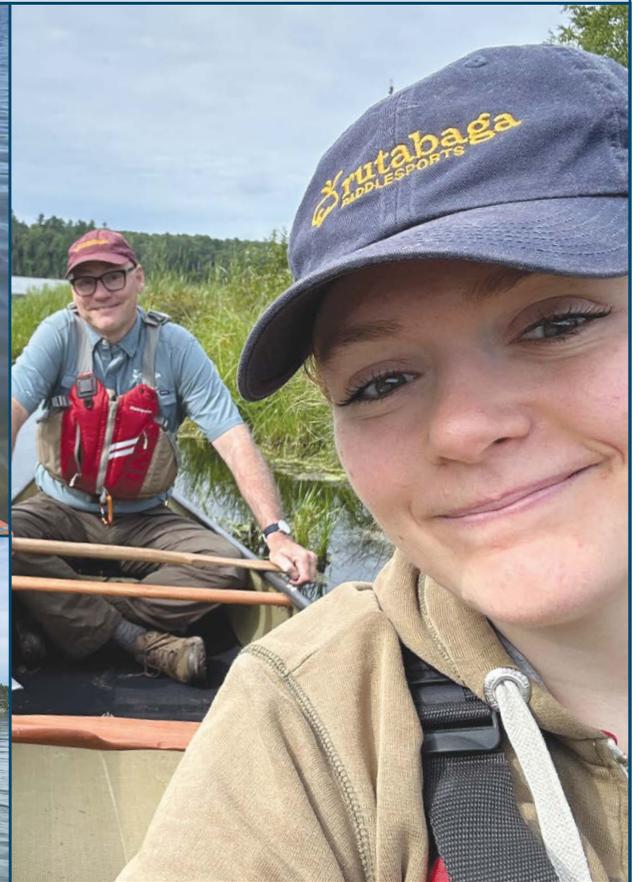


# CANOECOPIA 2024

WORLD'S LARGEST PADDLESPORT EXPO

BEST PRICES, BEST SELECTION



presented by:



A Celebration of All Things Paddlesports  
ALLIANT ENERGY CENTER, MADISON, WI  
MARCH 8-10, 2024

# Welcome to Canoecopia

The premier kick-off to the paddling season, by Darren Bush

Well, it's been a wild ride. I'm only going to mention COVID once, and how it put the world in a giant food processor and pushed the pulse button over and over again. It put Rutabaga and Canoecopia in the same slicey-dicey position as all of us.

The publication you are holding in your hands took a hiatus too, but after three years, we decided it was time to bring it back. Sure, paper, printing and postage costs all shot up double digits, but the best thing about being family owned and operated is that I can do things because I want to. We have no board of directors to consult, no CFO to tell me the numbers don't work. I wanted to bring it back because I love having something tangible, and from the response to the resurrected show guide, so do you.

If you've read the Canoecopia Gazette 30 times, great: here's 31. If this is your first time, welcome. In these pages you'll find a wealth of knowledge about all things paddle. You'll find stories about the joy that comes from paddling, learning to

paddle, and getting others on the water. You'll find stories about people who went from rank beginners to accomplished wilderness explorers.

Our new store (just down the road from the Alliant Energy Center) is a huge blessing. The solar array and green construction means low energy costs, and it was the right thing to do anyway. We're closed during Canoecopia, but we hope you come back and see what we built.

Welcome, again, to Canoecopia 2024. We hope to see you in March.



Gratefully,

Darren Bush

Owner and Chief Paddling Evangelist

Rutabaga Paddlesports



## Thank you

I believe in the power of gratitude. Indeed, I consider ingratitude to be one of the worst character flaws.

I am incredibly blessed to have such a great team at Rutabaga. Thank you to my staff: Manager Ethan, Buyers Dan and Ann, Sales Staff Brandon, Steve, Connie, Shannon, Jon, and Brooke. Thank you to Warehouse Manager Drew, Shipping Guru Brendan, and Chief Receiving Officer Tori. We have an amazing IT and website team: thanks to Kris, Joel,

and Jim. Lastly, thank you, Chloe, Director of Outdoor Adventures (and Canoecopia Speaker Wrangler). I can't name the dozens of other people who help out with load-in, running the ticket booths, cashiering, tear-down, and all the stuff I'm forgetting. Thank you to them.

Thank you, dear customer and supporter of Rutabaga Paddlesports and Canoecopia. Without you, on March 8th we'd be awfully lonely. None of this would be possible without your patronage. My gratitude for you is immense.

I'm thankful for all the other people in my circle. Most manufacturers and sales reps are lifelong friends, and my banker Ted from Lake Ridge is an integral part of my business and a good friend for 25 years.

I could write a novel about my beloved wife, Stephanie. Without her, there would be no Canoecopia. No Rutabaga Paddlesports. And most likely, no me.

# 2024 SHOW GUIDE CONTENTS

**CANOECOPIA**  
**MARCH 8-10, 2024**  
**ALLIANT ENERGY CENTER**



## **An Immigrant Takes His Son to the BWCA**

Miguel Garcia-Gosalvez has an interesting look at what it is like to be an outsider who loves being outside.



## **From Pure Ballast to Pure Motor**

Darren Bush considers how different and yet how similar his paddling experiences are with his maturing son.



## **Novice to Instructor**

Lenore Sobota decided that one of the things she had to do in life was “Learn Kayaking” and enjoyed that so much that she became an instructor. She remembers the people that helped her along the way.

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Jim and Darren

Canoecopia has always been presented by



## Getting the Most Out of Canoecopia

Our tips and tricks for maximizing your time at the show.

**Come all three days.** If we had one recommendation, that's it. There is so much to see, so a weekend pass is a good investment,

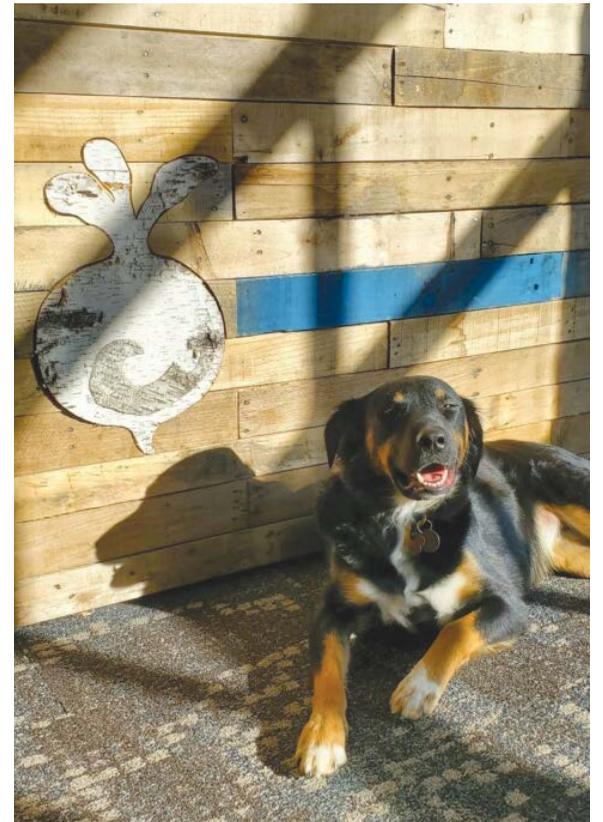
**Go to Presentations!** Our speakers are world-class. Our speaker schedule starts on page six. Sitting down can be educational and restorative.

**Talk to everyone.** The manufacturers, speakers, 'Baga staff, and exhibitors are here to answer any questions you have. We're all paddlers, and we love sharing experiences. Take advantage!

**Sit in a lot of boats.** Canoecopia offers an opportunity to sit in hundreds of models under one roof. Ask for help adjusting the seats if necessary. You hope to spend a lot of time in that seat, yes? Make sure it fits perfectly.

**Special order your dream gear.** If we don't have it on the floor and you can wait 6-8 weeks, you can order it and pick it up at the shop.

**Confused? Have questions? Lost something?** Come to the Customer Service booth. We take the Service part *seriously*.



Shop dog Blueberry

**SYLVANSPORT.**

### Booth #154

Lightweight, boat hauling camper that's spacious enough for 4 adults.  
**Show Special \$1,500 off GO camper!**

Just need the world's best kayak trailer?

Show Special \$500 off GO EASY kayak trailer!

## How Does This Work In Practice?

Let's talk about policies and procedures, shall we?

### Purchasing Boats and Trailers

Go to the Boat Checkout area inside the main hall. If your boat is in stock, take it home that day if possible. Go to the Boat Pick-Up booth to arrange a pick-up time.

**Special ordering a boat?** Fill out a form with the manufacturer, and bring it to the Boat Checkout area. There, we will explain the timeline for your boat arriving at Rutabaga.

**Need a roof rack or trailer?** Racks are installed only if you are taking a boat home. Pay for trailers at Boat Checkout, roof racks at Accessory Registers. If you aren't taking a boat home, we'll install your rack free when you pick up your boat at the shop (a \$50 value).

If you're not taking your boat home, you can pick up your boat a week or more after Canoecopia with a 50%

deposit, fully refundable until June 15th.

We take trade-in boats. Go to Boat Pickup for an evaluation.

### Purchasing Accessories (everything else)

Purchase accessories at the Accessory Register. Those are located outside the main hall behind Customer Service.

We have shopping totes to carry your items. If you want to go see speakers, leave your totes at one of our Tote Checks. Shopping totes are emptied each night, so buy your stuff before you leave that day.

Staff in the manufacturers' booths will fill out a special order form. Make sure your contact information is complete. Bring the completed form with the rest of your accessory

### The Value of Good Gear

I grew up cycling in Southern California. I had a sweet bike (Schwinn Paramount) long before I had a car, and rode on the shoulders, a death-defying feat even at that time. In 1977, bike helmets were not a thing. Bell Helmet came up with a hard, lightweight, protective, decidedly non-stylish helmet.

Bell's ad campaign was beautiful. Just a picture of the rather homely helmet with the tagline: *If you've got a ten-dollar head, buy a ten-dollar helmet.*

I spent my hard-earned cash for that ugly brain bucket. If I hadn't, this page would be blank.

The same applies to personal floatation devices (PFDs, lifejackets, or whatever you prefer). If you have a ten-dollar life, get a ten-dollar boat cushion. If you have a ten-dollar child, get ten-dollar water wings from a bin of them at Walmart.

Look, we know life jackets are a significant investment. The good ones fit great, which means you'll wear it, and *that* means it can do its job. The PFD world has changed dramatically, with fit and comfort being a top priority. Put one on...yourself...your kids...your grandchildren...because you are all worth so much more than ten bucks.

-Darren Bush

purchases to the Accessory Registers.

Returns need to be in "like-new, sellable condition," with its tags, packaging, and receipt. All returns must be made within 30 days of delivery at Rutabaga.

**Questions?** Look for anyone wearing a staff shirt. They can give you an answer or direct you to the proper place to find it.

