

THREE RIVERS CHAPTER

Issue 133

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

A Note from WCHA Three Rivers Chapter Head

by Millie Sass, Chapter Head

As 2018 draws to a close, it is time to think about the new year and our upcoming chapter activities. As most of you know, Craig Johnson has handed the chapter head gavel on to me. I'm not entirely sure what that means at this point, but you can be sure that I will do my best to push things along and will be calling on all of you to help.

We had our new season planning meeting November 19. With 12 members in attendance, there were lots of ideas flying around the room. We settled on some familiar spots for paddling and some new winter activities. The details as we currently know them appear at the end of this newsletter. Now is a good time for you to get ready for a couple of the planned sessions.

In January, we will be going to Cadiz, Ohio for some sharing

of canoe tales. So think about some great trip or experience you've had with your canoe. The thought is to limit each presenter to 8 minutes so that we can hear from as many people as possible. Visual aids will not be required, but a couple pictures never hurt if it's simple to do. Not everyone needs to share an adventure, but we know that some of you have had some very interesting and creative trips; we need to hear of those joys and challenges.

Think about some great trip or experience you have had with your canoe activities. The thought is to limit each presenter to 8 or 10 minutes so that we can hear from as many people as possible. Audiovisual aids will not be required, but a couple pictures never hurt.

Then by popular demand, we will be doing some more silk screening of our chapter logo in February. Remember that great design created by Martha Ball,

and remember the silk-screening tutorial that Tony Stanton gave? A number of folks have been hoping for another session, and now there will be one. Details will be forthcoming, but in the meantime, think about some *cotton* items that you would like to silkscreen. Last year we did t-shirts and some small carry bags. This year think about branching out to whatever makes you happy—jeans, sweatshirts, the dog (oops, that wouldn't be cotton, would it!). The image sizes are 5 ½ x 5 ½ in. or 8 ½ x 8 ½ in.

March will bring another inside winter meeting, this time something entirely new: a tour of the David Warther Museum in Sugar Creek, Ohio.
<https://warther.org/information.php?Tour-the-Museum-20>)

We have some great wood workers in our chapter, and this is a good place for them to get inspiration and for all of us to show appreciation for expert carving. The drive might be a bit long for some of us, but it will be well worth your while.

So January, February, and

Chapter head: Millie Sass
Treasurer: Fred Capenos

Librarian: Mark Zalonis
Newsletter: Andy Hutyera and Ann Mertz

At large: Bob Ball
Craig Johnson

March bring some fun inside activities. The first water event will be at Moraine State Park on Lake Arthur; April 27 is the main paddling day. I'm sure it will be sunny and lovely as we head out on the water.

Don't forget to think about spreading the word about WCHA in general and our chapter more specifically. The pictures on our chapter website (<http://threerivers.wcha.org/index.html>) have recently been updated. The Events page on that site is due to be updated when our meeting plans firm up. Dan Miller is a great help in getting pages updated for us.

You can tell people about the chapter information found at <http://www.wcha.org/local-area-chapters>. There is a listing of all WCHA chapters and links to current newsletters. It's a great site to promote to friends and family.

If you know of other internet spaces that would help us to



A snowshoe trek on a Boundary Waters lake.

spread the word about our chapter, let me know. Does anybody have thoughts about Instagram or other popular social media? We need to push ourselves out there a bit and stay current online.

So get ready for a fun-filled 2019, and bring friends along. ☸

A Word About Canoe Country

by Andy Hutyera

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of northern Minnesota and the adjoining Quetico Provincial Park of Ontario comprise a vast protected wilderness area that is a paradise for those of us who want to take in the wonders of the natural world from the seat of a canoe. The Boundary Waters alone contains more than two thousand lakes and streams, with more than 1500 miles of canoe routes. It offers the opportunity to see moose, wolves, beaver, otter, loons, whiskey jacks, and countless other inhabitants of this vast wilderness, as well as the flora unique to this boreal environment.

As a result of early cooperation between the U.S. and Canadian governments, the adjoining Quetico Provincial Park was



Sunset on a Boundary Waters Wilderness campsite.

established in Ontario early in the 20th century. It includes more than 1.2 million acres of wilderness. The two areas encompass the historic fur trade canoe route along the U.S.-Canada border. Canada has other great protected wilderness areas for the canoeist, but on this side of the border we have nothing to equal the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Other than on a few holdover lakes in the Boundary Waters, no motorized travel of any kind is allowed. Because of its remoteness there is little light pollution, and nighttime skies are truly spectacular, especially on cold, crisp, clear winter nights.

A winter visit to this area is a great adventure. Travel can be on foot by cross-country skis or snowshoes. Best of all, one can enjoy the supreme quiet of winter from the back of a sled pulled by energetic Alaskan huskies.

The Battle to Protect the BWCAW

The U.S. side of this wilderness has a long history of attack from commercial, lumber, and mining interests that continues to this day. We owe a great debt of gratitude to those who had the foresight and stamina to take on those interests. The BWCAW that we now enjoy is the result of many hard-fought legislative victories over the years. Sigurd Olson, Ernest Oberholtzer, and Paul Wellstone are among the wilderness



Hieroglyph in the Boundary Waters

visionaries who have continued the never-ending efforts to protect this vast wild treasure. You can view a time line of the many battles along the way that shaped what we have today at: <https://www.brainerddispatch.com/sports/outdoors/4513475-timeline-bwcaw-history>.

One of the most valuable resources of this area is the enormous quantity of clean water it contains. Many of us drink from these lakes without treating the water at all. The lakes and streams team with all manner of aquatic life and game fish.

Experts tell us that the tailings from copper mining remain sources of substantial acid runoff for more than 500 years.

The likelihood of contamination of waters within the BWCAW appears to be uncomfortably close to 100 percent.

Unfortunately the efforts to exploit the other assets of this wilderness never cease. As

Sigurd Olson pointed out, the preservation of this natural environment requires eternal watchfulness. For the past several years, international mining interests have been pushing to develop mines within the watershed of this area to exploit the scant reserves of copper and nickel.

The method used is termed sulfide mining and involves removing rock

and extracting the copper and nickel leaving approximately 90 to 98% of the material removed as tailings. When exposed to air and water, these tailings produce sulfuric acid. Those of us who live in mining country are familiar with the orange goo that runs out of old mines and gob piles. Experts tell us that the tailings from copper mining remain sources of substantial acid runoff for more than 500 years. The likelihood of contamination of waters within the BWCAW appears to be uncomfortably close to 100 percent.

What You Can Do

Several groups including major conservation organizations are working hard to prevent mining anywhere within the watershed of the BWCAW. There is already such mining occurring on the other side of the height of land that drains away from the BWCAW.

They were almost successful under the previous federal administration and had

The new federal administration promptly reversed this course and that issue is presently being litigated in federal court.

succeeded in persuading the federal government to decline to renew the mining leases that had already expired. This action was supported by the governor of Minnesota. The new federal administration promptly reversed that course, and the issue is presently being litigated in federal court.

I recently spoke to some of my friends in Ely and asked which organization seemed best suited to carry on the efforts to protect the BWCAW from the threat of harm from sulfide mining. Their recommendation was to support the group known

as Save the Boundary Waters.
<https://www.savetheboundarywaters.org/> ☎

A Word from Our Parting Chapter Head

by Craig Johnson

I wanted to take this moment to thank Millie Sass for stepping up to take over the position of chapter head for the upcoming year. Millie has been very active since she joined us about five years ago. She brought her father's 604 Peterborough to our winter meeting at Max Peterson's woodworking shop, and we removed the fiberglass as a group project. From there Fred Capenos took on the restoration, and Millie was so happy with her

beautiful canoe that she wrote an article about the canoe's journey for *Wooden Canoe*.

Millie also participates regularly on the WCHA website forum and has worked with the editor to publicize our activities. She set up a website for our Three Rivers Chapter and also set up and administrates a closed Facebook page so that chapter members can easily share photos of our events.

Millie has also hosted an on-the-water event at her cabin on the Allegheny River for each of the last few years and has brought in new members. Her sister, daughter, and grandchildren have joined us on some outings.

For the three years that I served as chapter head, Millie has been a big help to me, and I am sure you will see some improvements now that she has taken over. If you have not served as a board member please consider doing so in the future. The demands are light but the rewards of connecting more closely with the other members are very satisfying. Thanks, Millie, and also board members Andy Hutjera, Fred Capenos, and Bob Ball.

Now for some personal news. Diane and I have a new grandson born in October to our daughter Miki and husband Jackson who live in San Francisco. We were lucky to arrive there on the day he was born and stay for 3 weeks. When we returned Diane decided we needed a roof over our new Airstream camper so I spent a week building this structure.



New home for the Airstream.



Canoes in progress at Craig's shop.

That out of the way, it is time to get back to work on canoes. When we left off, Scott and I had just canvased and filled his 14-ft. Chestnut Pal. Before I left I got three coats of paint on it, and today I trimmed the canvas and prepared it to steam bend new outwales. Scott will come

down this week to help with the bending.

The grey canoe behind his was filled and has dried for more than six weeks, so I will start painting it also. It is a 1930 17-ft. OTCA trimmed in mahogany. I hope to have it ready for spring.

To while away those dark

winter evenings, I have been making some little canoes inspired by one I picked up in an antique shop several years ago. I carved them out of red cedar and love the way the grain pattern looks like reflected water. The one in the first photo at left is done and is for my new grandson. In the bottom photo, I wrapped one in a piece of birch bark brought back from our trip to Andy and Jackie's cabin on the French River in September. I even sealed the seams with a mixture of pine resin and Crisco (I didn't have any bear fat.)

About now you might be thinking that this guy has too much time on his hands, but rest assured that many more important things are being ignored. I just want to get some shop time in before we head back out to SF again in January. This FaceTime just doesn't cut it for me when it comes to babies.

I hope you are all having a lovely winter and that you can make it to our next meeting. ☕



Craig's mini cedar canoes.

Schedule of Events

The newly elected board and some members gathered at the home of Fred Capenos and Lee Grubish before Thanksgiving last month. The main purpose of the meeting was to gather ideas for and to schedule next year's events. What follows is what the group has come up with so far.

✦ **January 26 at 10 a.m.** **Presbyterian Church** **154 West Market Street** **Cadiz, Ohio**

Bob Ball will be heading up this meeting, and the topic for the day will be Canoe Tales. Please come prepared to talk about your favorite or most memorable canoe adventures. We will have a digital projector set up so you can accompany your presentation with photos or video. The best way to bring photos or video would be on a memory stick. Show and tell will also be most welcome, so feel free to bring along any favorite camping or cooking gear. Nearly all of us have taken canoe trips that have provided both delights and travails, hopefully in at least equal measure. Those memories provide each of us with the material for a little storytelling. We will have a maximum of 8 minutes each to relate canoeing adventures from our heroic past. When I mentioned this plan to Tony Stanton, after only a moment he observed that he would need much more time. Take some time to reflect on and condense all those memories, keeping in mind that the hook will appear after 8 minutes. Plan

to attend this historic event. After the meeting we will visit a nearby restaurant for a late lunch.

✦ **February 16 at 10 a.m.** **183 Berryhill Rd.** **Glenshaw Pa.**

Silk screening time again at Tony Stanton and Ann Mertz's home. We will not be ordering shirts but ask that you bring your own high quality **cotton** shirts or other items such as cloth bags that you wish to have screened. You may bring long- or short-sleeve shirts or even sweatshirts so long as they are good quality cotton. Tony is quite expert at this process and will be in charge of the actual screening process.

✦ **March 16 at 11 a.m.** **David Warther Museum** **1775 State Route 39,** **Sugarcreek, Ohio**

David is the grandson of master carver Mooney Warther, who taught David how to carve. Grandfather Warther has a museum in Dover Ohio showcasing his carvings that follow the history of the steam engine. David has taken a similar approach to nautical transportation. The carvings represent Dave's life's work starting with Pharaoh's barges and warships and progressing to Viking ships, ships of Columbus's era, and a modern-era Coast Guard sailing ship. Every model is meticulously constructed to scale and is made from solid legal ivory including all the rope rigging. Included in the collection are well over 80 scale models. We will have a chance to visit with David, who

will answer questions and demonstrate some of his unique carving methods. There will be an admission charge of nine dollars per person. If we have more than fifteen members attending the charge will be reduced to eight dollars per person. Afterward we will meet at one of the local eateries before heading home. Note the 11 a.m. meeting time to allow extra time for travel. You can preview some of David's amazing work at: <https://warther.org/Carvings.php>

✦ **April 26–27 at 10 a.m.** **Moraine State Park** **Portersville, Pa.**

Fred Capenos and Lee Grubish have reserved a cabin near the water. We will go for a spring paddle and have a picnic lunch afterward.

✦ **May 17–18 at 10 a.m.** **Big Run State Park** **10368 Savage River Rd.** **Swanton, Md.**

Mark and Ruth Zalonis have scoped out this gathering site. According to website information, Big Run has 29 primitive campsites available year-round. Sites 60–75 are wooded, with stone dust camping pads. Sites 78–90 are in an open grassy field. Each campsite has a picnic bench and fire ring. Campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. A self-registration station is located in the lower camping area, along Savage River Rd. Pets are permitted in any of the campsites, on a leash. More details will be provided as the time approaches.

⊕ **June 22 at 10 a.m.**
Salt Fork State Park
Cambridge, Ohio

Craig Johnson is making arrangements for this outing. He and Diane have rented cabin #21 at Salt Fork State Park for Friday and Saturday nights, June 21–22. The cabin is near the boat launch, where there is plenty of parking. We can put canoes in there, or at the docks or the cabin yard, which has easy water access. We will meet at the cabin/boat launch area and will try to be on the water at 10:00 a.m. We can explore the lake around the cabin, which is a no-wake zone. Individuals can canoe as much or as little as they like because no shuttle will be involved. After paddling, we will meet back at the cabin for a cookout. The chapter will provide burgers and dogs, so bring a side dish or dessert. This is a bit farther for some of you to travel, so if you would like come Friday evening or stay Saturday evening before heading home, Salt Fork has some beautiful accommodations. There are the cabins, there are campgrounds close by, and the lodge is a nice option. There are lots of things to do at Salt Fork, including a museum, hiking trails, horseback riding, or just hanging around the grand fireplaces in the beautiful stone and timber-framed lodge. All the accommodations have pet-friendly options. For more information about Salt Fork, see: <http://parks.ohiodnr.gov/saltfork> Please let Craig Johnson know if you are coming so we can get a head count on the food. If you have questions contact Craig at

740-696-1000, 740-591-2226, or noshojgiarc@gmail.com.

⊕ **July 16–21**
Annual Assembly
Paul Smiths College
Paul Smiths, N.Y.

This year the Assembly will feature 100+-year-old canoes.

⊕ **August 24 at 10 a.m.**
Millie Sass's cottage
Allegheny River

Assuming good water conditions, we will go for a paddle and return to Millie's for a picnic. Millie has room for a few tents, as well as some sleeping space in her relatively new outbuilding. Chapter folks are welcome to spend the weekend camping out. The picnic will be potluck, so bring a dish to share.

⊕ **September 28 at 10 a.m.**
Annual meeting
Sylvan Canoe Club
Verona Pa.

The meeting is being moved to September in hopes of having more favorable weather for a paddle. We will be meeting as guests of Sylvan. This will be a Saturday meeting, and we will plan a canoe outing on the river to precede a potluck dinner and business meeting.

⊕ **October 11–13**

Mini-Assembly
Gifford Pinchot State Park
Harrisville, Pa.

The mini-assembly has been moved back to the Columbus Day weekend this year. Campsites go quickly, so now is the time to reserve yours! ⊕

Classifieds

For Sale

- ⊕ **Mad River "Slipper" solo canoe.** Very maneuverable. 14' 8," 48 lbs. \$500 or best offer. If interested, call Fred Capenos at 724-438-1027 or Max Peterson at 412-443-5699.
- ⊕ **Complete Balogh BSD BATWING™ sailing rig,** excellent condition. Aluminum mast; original parts and bag. Best offer. While this particular model has not been made in several years, you can see descriptions and specifications for similar models here: <http://baloghsaildesigns.com/rigsCanoe.html>. If interested, call Max Peterson at 412-443-5699. He says that, while it will work for any canoe, he thinks it's better suited to larger ones.