



Wooden Canoe Heritage Association

NORTHWEST CHAPTER

WCHA Northwest Chapter

Fall Newsletter

October 2021



Annual WCHA Meeting is Virtual Again in 2021

President Michael Grace, Executive Director Annie Burke and Benson Gray led the 2021 virtual annual meeting for the WCHA on September 9, 2021, reporting on the state of the organization.

Happily, the 5 year strategic plan (2019--2024) initiated by our Board of Directors, designed to address specific issues for the WCHA, has already paid dividends. Michael detailed how the plan, aimed at financial stability, membership growth and sustainability, is helping.

WCHA membership, which was declining, has stabilized at around 1300 people. Retention/membership renewal is an ongoing issue, and our group is also an older demographic. Multiple new life memberships are encouraging. Ideas to broaden our base include potentially reaching out to the guideboat groups, more effort to include stripper canoes, and engaging the broader woodworking/boating community.

Financially, thanks to dynamic Board initiatives, the WCHA is in a much stronger position. While the organization was in the red several years ago, cost-cutting measures, re-formatting the journal and a dues increase have stabilized the business model, and we now have strong reserves. (Note that a large amount of volunteer effort by board members, including technical expertise -thank you, Benson Gray-, and website design -thank you, Colleen Hovey!, contribute to the organizations financial health!)

The 2021 virtual Assembly was produced at no cost the WCHA! (Again, thank you, volunteer producers and organizers!) **The Assembly features may be viewed at Wooden Canoe Heritage Association You Tube.** The Assembly quilt auction was a financial bonus, with 486 tickets sold, earning a record \$2430. The lucky winner, Macky Mongold, is from St Petersburg, Florida.

Paul Smiths College kindly transferred our reservations deposit to 2022, and the Assembly will likely be both virtual and live. **The theme will be Solo Canoes, and Remembering Tom McKinley, on July 12–17, 2022.**

The journal, currently on #223, has received many favorable comments on its new format, and the new size is more cost effective to publish. A new ad rate structure is designed to attract new advertisers, and submissions from the membership—trips, boats, techniques, stories—are encouraged.

The 2021 Calendar has sold out, and the 2022 Calendar is 60% sold, so get yours while you still can!

Chapters report a general decrease in activities due to Covid, but those are hopefully increasing.

In summary, Michael reported, the WCHA is vibrant and healthy, with the membership and finances stabilized and new initiatives, the website and journal, well-received. Annie reported that members seem pleased with the organization, based on correspondence with members, and an increase in donations. The efforts made to accomplish this need to continue, and again, are due to volunteer work by many people. Thank you to Michael, Annie, Benson, Board members and volunteers!

A Very Special Cedar and Canvas Canoe Restoration by Bob Podesta

Desi Winterbottom, a long-time canoe builder /restorer lives around the corner from me. Along the way, while he and I were discussing repair work, I mused several times that I'd really like to see one of the boats that he had built from his custom mould (still in his shop.) Well, presto! The owner of his #11 canoe needed some work done, and heard Desi was living in the valley, and still doing repair work. Next thing I know, I'm looking at a boat built in 1974, with the original builder right beside me.

The project was handed over to me, as he is winding down this work and I'll say there was no small amount of pressure in my mind thinking about doing the restoration under Desi's watchful eye! Actually, Desi is very relaxed and easy to work with; most of the time he discusses technical problems with me until I come up with the solution.



Desi Winterbottom Canoe #11, before restoration. Podesta photo



Restoration begins.

Podesta photo

The orange ribbon seats and bamboo seat spacers reminded me of the early 70's when that color and Hawaiian tiki torches were popular themes. As far as repairs, it was a typical job with the usual repairs at the stem and stern tips along with some planking and broken ribs. The work went well and the owners were very happy when they picked it up though I sensed a bit of surprise at how different it looked from what they were used to seeing (it was green before.)

You may have noticed that this canoe is the same color as my previous canoe restoration; well, it's not because I only have one can of paint. When this canoe was being dropped off for the work to be done, the other one was finished and sitting in the shop waiting to be picked up. They really liked the color and later decided to use it as well, and again it turned out beautifully (full bias acknowledged). This canoe has darker colored outwales which gives it beautiful features and contrasts.



To my great relief, Desi is very happy with the end product, as am I. We are both members of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association (WCHA). I joined in 2017 but he has been there from its beginning, and is well known in the association. Because this is a restoration of one of his boats it is expected to be featured in an upcoming WCHA NW Chapter newsletter, which I feel is a very fitting gesture of recognition. I'm proud to be part of it.

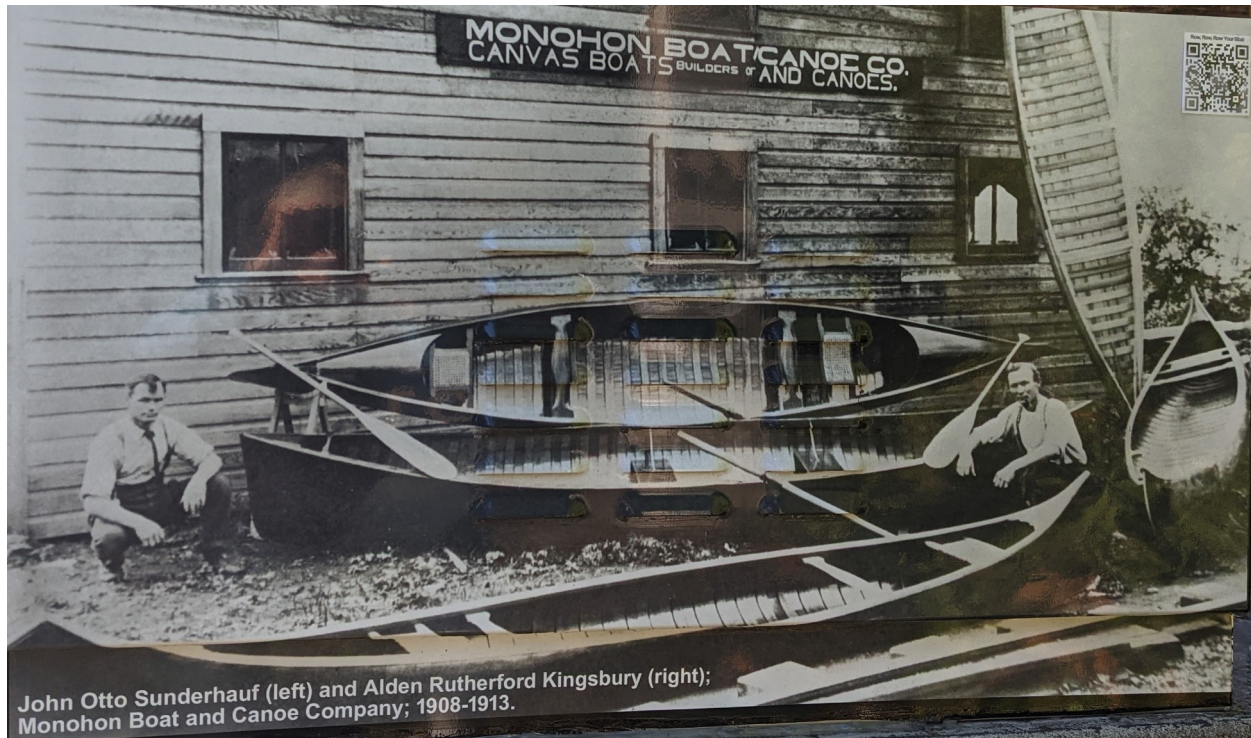
For my part, I'm going to continue learning and doing more of this work, connecting with others who share the same interest, and promoting the nostalgic aspects of our canoeing world. I love it!



*Finished canoe, ready for new adventures! Sleek lines and lovely restoration.
Podesta photo*

Monohon Boat & Canoe Company, Lake Sammamish, WA

information from Phil Dougherty, HistoryLink.org, and Pat Chapman, *The Willits Brothers and Their Canoes*



John Otto Sunderhauf (left) and Alden Rutherford Kingsbury (right);
Monohon Boat and Canoe Company; 1908-1913.

Monohon was a small mill town located on the southeastern shore of Lake Sammamish in western Washington, and named after an early homesteader. When the railroad along the lake shore was completed in 1889, a lumber mill became the town's main industry, supplying lumber to Seattle and north to Alaska. By 1911, the "model mill town" had a population of 300, with a school, hotel, church services, meeting hall and many businesses, including the two story Monohon Boat and Canoe Company.

The Monohon Boat and Canoe Company produced at least 5 models of canoes and double-ended rowboats from 1908–1913. Partners John Sunderhauf and Alden Kingsbury were both experienced canoe builders from the Charles River area of Massachusetts. After the death of his father, Kingsbury returned home to the Charles River area in 1913, where he built Kingsbury canoes for many years—at least until 1947--eventually partnering with his son David. Sunderhauf remained in Monohon, working additionally as an architect, builder and farmer.

In 1925, the town was destroyed by a fire that started in the sawmill, with only a few houses saved by a change in the wind. Although a new mill was built, the town never really recovered, and the new mill was destroyed by fire in 1944. Again rebuilt, the mill was closed for good after yet another fire in 1980.



Monohon Canoe (circa 1908--1913) restored by Dick Cross in 1914. Livdahl photo



Dick Cross's Monohon canoe at NW Chapter Spring Meet 2015. Livdahl photo

Remembering Jerry Newcomb

Long-time friend and founding NW Chapter member Jerry Newcomb passed away in Springfield, Oregon, in April, at age 86. Born to a farming family in Arkansas, Jerry moved to California at age 7, attending a one-room school for his early grades. Following harvests in the western states with relatives, he fell in love with Oregon.

After high school, Jerry served in the Naval Reserve, and worked as an apprentice electrician at a naval shipyard. At 19, he entered the computer field, becoming a customer engineer for IBM, and leveraged training opportunities to rise quickly to a senior position. He managed computers for the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, and installed the first computers in many Oregon businesses and at the University of Oregon. He began teaching computer science at the Oregon Institute of Technology in 1969, while working on his own degree at Southern Oregon College at the same time. He published work on pharmaceutical UPC codes, and algorithms for problem solving for geothermal wells.



An early environmentalist, Jerry was a state and national leader in his hobby sport of falconry, and enjoyed bow-hunting. He loved camping and canoeing Oregon's lakes and rivers, and taught himself to build wood and canvas canoes. Jerry attended the first, founding NW WCHA canoe event planned by Carl Hoth, and he and Becky frequently attended NW chapter Meets, usually accompanied by a Golden Retriever. He became a decathlon athlete, and participated in the 1989 World Championships at Eugene, Oregon.

Jerry's wide interests and life-long learning inspired many people. In his 70's, he taught himself Greek, and began studying Shakespeare. He wrote extensively, and loved the origins of words. He enjoyed studying science, Native American history, and philosophy, and closely followed U of O women's basketball (Go Ducks!)



Jerry Newcomb, Becky Sisley and Sochi

Jerry will be greatly missed by his many friends. Our sincere condolences to Becky and Jerry's family. We will continue to be inspired by Jerry.



Ivy and Des Winterbottom, Barb Dobree, and Jerry Newcomb at Manning

Camp Bishop Canoe House Update by Vern Heikkila

How long did it take to build the Great Wall of China? You may wonder, will the YMCA canoe house take longer? Maybe!

Due to the pandemic, distance to the site, and student isolation, very little was accomplished on the building itself. But there was light—the Grays Harbor carpentry class was able to build the crest that will top off the canoe house. It's a 47-foot long, two-sided structure consisting of old growth cedar. It forms a profile of a generic NW native canoe, based on a drawing by Tony Johnson, culture advisor of the Shoalwater Tribe. It's constructed as a stripper, except using tongue and groove rather than bead and cove to form straight sides.

The carpentry students did the milling and gluing for the majority of the project. Adam Pratt and Kelly Williams, carpentry instructors, and I did the planning and layout, working from the 2-dimensional drawing. It was a seat-of-the-pants experience.

The crest is now complete and awaiting installation. We are hoping to have the entire project completed and ready for a dedication at the next Camp Bishop meet.



Vern Heikkila shows the dramatic canoe sculpture to top the Camp Bishop Canoe House.
Heikkila photo



Detail of the cedar canoe's stern.

Heikkila photo



Canoe deck pattern library at Mike Elliott's Kettle River Canoe shop.

Livdahl photo

Sauve Canoe Restoration by Dick Cross



Little remained to show what the decks were like. RC Cross photo



Cedar planking, with steel boat nails. RC Cross photo



New decks featured book-matched mahogany. RC Cross photo

Moses Sauve was a Canadian boat builder who moved to Coeur D'Alene around the turn of the century. He continued to build rowing skiffs and advertised "Peterborough Model Canoes". The canoes were built out of local timber, cedar planking, decks, seats, and trim of Douglas Fir. The canoe is heavy, 1/4" instead of 1/8" th planking and a heavy keelson of oak, full length, Rather than copper or brass canoe tacks steel boat nails were used for planking. The planking is beautifully matched and lapped. Luckily there was no broken planking. It would have been impossible to pull the steel nails without doing a great deal of damage to the narrow Canadian style ribs. In this rebuilding the decks were upgraded to book matched mahogany. Critters had spent many winters chomping on the deck .



Caned seats replaced the woven steel strapping seats, which might not have been original. RC Cross photo

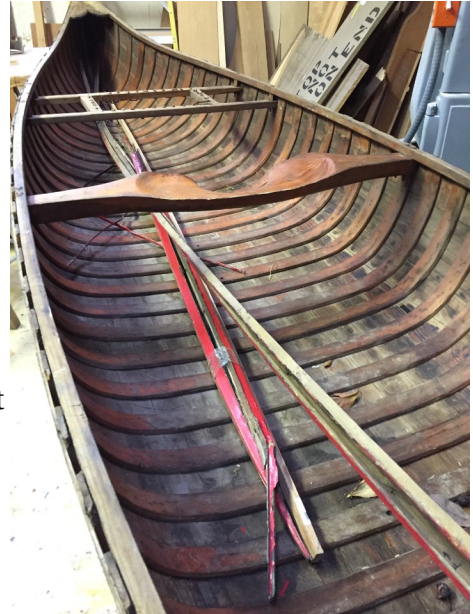


The finished Sauve canoe was part of the 2021 WCHA Assembly virtual Paddle-by. RC Cross photo

A First Nations Canoe Restoration by Dick Cross

I have no background on this little canoe. The First Nation tribes began to build wood/canvas canoes after the Europeans stole their designs and added the improvement of canvas over birchbark. The canoes were sold to the Canadian market as well as in the U. S.

This 13' 8" canoe has a nice shape and when it gets to the water should be fun to paddle. The keel has been left off so it should turn easily. It is a light canoe and not too much care was put into the selection of materials such as planking. The outwales are quite thin and the decks are very small. Uncomfortable thong seats have been replaced with more standard woven cane. It came with an out of scale carrying yolk which has been left off. By weight and size it should be a good solo canoe.



*The canoe's past history will remain a mystery.
RC Cross photo*



*The finished canoe has the same paint and pinstriping as the recently finished
Sauve canoe.
RC Cross photo*



*Caned seats replace laced thongs, and no heavy
carry yoke.
RC Cross photo*



*The finished canoe is small and light and should be a
good solo canoe.
RC Cross photo*

Trip report: Lake Ozette September 11-13, 2021

Paddlers: Scott Christianson and Chip Asbury

Photos by Scott, text by Chip

The seed idea for our trip to Ozette was planted by Scott, pretty soon after my son, Matt and I finished building our Cheemaun canoe, “Bean”, in 2020. Scott mentioned a trip that the club had taken years ago. He said there was a boat-in-only campsite on the lake, at Erickson's Bay, and a two-mile trail that led to a relatively remote stretch of Pacific Ocean beach. I'd been looking for an excuse to visit the NW part of the Olympic Peninsula, and especially to see the Olympic beaches. What a great way to do so. The seed idea germinated, and started to grow.

Later, we learned a little more about that prior club trip. Scott hadn't joined on that occasion, but Bill Paine, who did go on that trip, explained it was led by Bill Biddle. It must've been a big crew, because apparently Bill B divided the crew into three eating groups. And on the drive to Ozette, they stopped at a Safeway in Port Angeles, where each group stocked up on their chosen foods. We also learned from Bill Paine that after

they'd paddled to the campground, set up camp, cooked and finished dinner, Bill B revealed a selection of whiskeys he'd brought along, and shared them around while he read passages from the Iliad. I never had the pleasure of meeting Bill Biddle, but I wish I had. I understand that in addition to being an outdoorsman, he was also a scholar of English literature. Clearly, the trip he led to Ozette set a very high bar. Scott and I decided we better bring some whiskey and some highbrow reading too.

As we began thinking about dates, and learning about the necessary permits, we were also getting ready to attend the 2021 Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival. The Boat Fest this year was supposed to be held in-person. I was excited for the opportunity to participate in the NW WCHA booth, to reconnect with club friends, and to experience all that I love about the Boat Fest, but missed last year when it was an on-line only event. So when it was canceled again, and only one week beforehand, it was a bit frustrating. However, on the bright side, this meant the time I'd budgeted for the Boat Fest was now free. And the weather forecast for the Olympic peninsula looked okay. So Scott and I decided to go to Ozette during the same weekend when the Boat Fest had been scheduled. What better way to celebrate wooden boats than to paddle one on the largest natural lake in Washington state?



With our itinerary solidified, we circulated it to the club email list, with hopes of recruiting some more club members to join, even though it was on short notice. As enticement, we mentioned our plan to bring whiskey and try to recreate the vibe of Bill Biddle's earlier trip. Although no one else was able to join us, we got some very nice replies with encouragement, and with additional fun anecdotes about the past trip. Sandy Dengler sent a brief note, blessing our trip and relaying how Bill B would've loved to have joined. Mike Monks told us that Jerry Stelmok himself had joined the prior trip, and was Bill B's paddling partner. He also mentioned that there had been ten additional people. So it was a big crew indeed, and included someone who is like wooden canoe *royalty* to me. (I relied very heavily on Jerry's two books to figure out how to build my own canoe.) Mike also mentioned that there was a minor mishap when Bill B, who had insisted he would bring all the necessary cooking equipment, opened his box of gear after reaching the campsite to find all his cast iron pans, dutch oven, and griddle very badly rusted. "Each was a lovely shade of orange." Apparently Mike knew a remedy involving sand, elbow grease, seasoning the pans in hot coals, and "Chore Girls", which I believe are a type of coarse copper scrubber. This must've saved the day, because Bill B then was able to cook Cornish game hens in the dutch oven, which Mike reported were delicious. We learned from Mike and also from Bill Paine that the weather on that past trip had included some gorgeous sunshine and, on the last day, some rain and a strong north wind that made the return paddle back to the cars challenging.



I am happy to report that our 2021 "reenactment" was a total success.

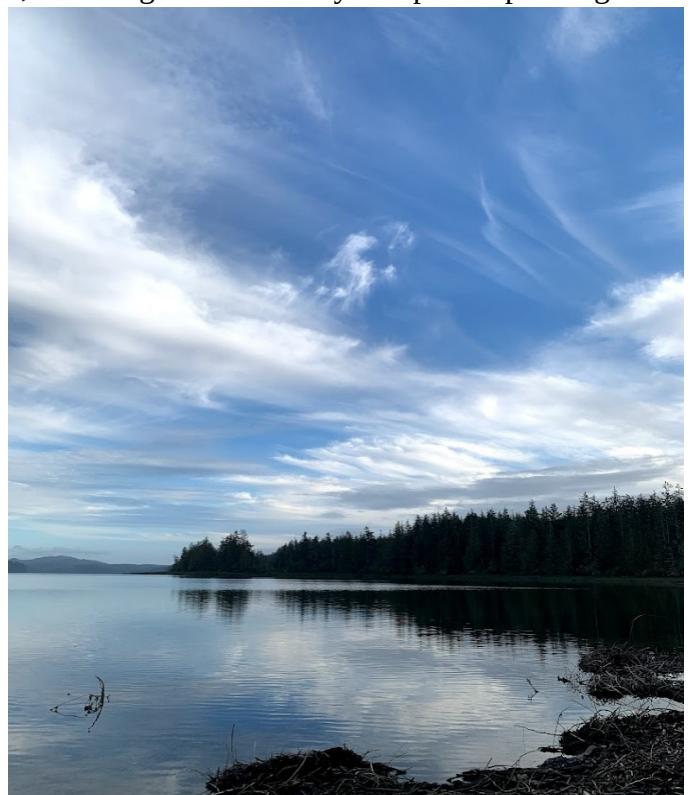
We made the drive early on Saturday, reaching the Lake Ozette ranger station and parking area by midday. There were lots of people milling around there, but very few with boats. Most were hikers or car campers. Once we packed our canoe and got underway, things started to feel a bit more like the remote experience we'd been expecting. Scott's canoe, a sixteen-foot Guide model, is bigger than mine, and looking at all our gear I was glad we'd chosen it. I'm sure we wouldn't have fit in the fifteen-foot Cheemaun. And as we packed up the boat and parked the car, a south wind began to pick up – a little bit of drizzle too. The forecast had called for a chance of rain through late in the night, then improving with partial sun predicted for Sunday and Monday. But it began to look like our paddle to the camp, our setting up camp, and our dinner preparations might be wet.

And wet it was. The wind got pretty strong and although the rain was not terribly heavy, it was right in our faces as we headed south, toward the point on the western shore that marks the head of Erickson's bay. Scott in the stern seat steered us close along the shore, to stay out of the waves and avoid the strongest wind, which worked fabulously – until we rounded the point. South of the point, all we could do was keep paddling and be thankful that the Guide has high freeboard. In the bow, I timed my strokes to coincide with wave crests. We made steady progress and, although a couple of the biggest waves reached up close to the gunwales, we took on very little water. It was also a blessing that the water in Lake Ozette is *warm*. My Gore-tex was soaked completely through, but between the exertion and the warm Ozette water, I was not cold. Staying well off the lee shore, it seemed to take quite a while to ferry around the point, which is wide. But once we had a clear view downwind into the bay, Scott turned us smartly toward the head, with only the briefest moment with our beam directly toward the waves. Then, just as when a sailboat turns downwind, the entire character of the weather seemed to relax immediately. The rain and wind seemed to ease, and we had a leisurely paddle to the gravel and sand beach that marks the campground.



We set up our camp in the woods behind the beach, made a nice dinner of freeze-dried lasagna, bread, chop salad, and wine. Even though it rained off and on, we lounged comfortably in a pair of pack-light chairs under a tarp, listening to the pitter patter and chatting. A burn ban remained in effect, despite the rain, so instead of a campfire we had a nice oil lamp making a cozy light. There were two other campers nearby, but lots of empty space and quiet.

Sunday was our big full day. The rain had stopped overnight. We made a killer breakfast, with espresso (via Aero Press), pepper bacon, pan-fried biscuits, homemade jam, eggs over-easy, and more espresso. Few meals have ever tasted better in my lifetime. Then we packed a day pack, paddled a half mile to the trailhead, and began the short hike over to the Pacific. The trail has long stretches of wooden boardwalk, which is slippery and rotted in many places, but not difficult. As we picked our way through it, the forest felt old and wise, like in Tolkien's books, with enormous old cedars towering above, soft needles and leaves underfoot, ferns and fungus. There is nothing quite like the feeling of approaching the mighty Pacific in this manner.



Even from the campground we could faintly hear the low rumble of the surf, a couple of miles away. As we hiked closer, we began to smell the salty air and hear the pounding surf more clearly, but still could not see any of it. When we finally burst out of the forest, the bright sun and sand, the loud surf, the strong ocean smells, the large offshore sea stacks were all such a contrast from the more subdued quiet of the forest. There was a feeling of wildness that I have not experienced at the beach before. No other human beings were immediately visible. To me it felt a little like we had arrived on another planet. To add to the feeling of wildness, Scott found some large, very clear, probably very recent animal tracks in the sand. At the time, we speculated they might be cougar tracks. Reexamining the photo now, I think they were probably bear tracks. Whatever they were, they gave me a feeling that I was being watched.

We hiked northward on the beach in a leisurely way, looking in tide pools, checking out driftwood forts, and eventually up to Sandy Point, where a small promontory creates a little semi-protected area north of the point. A trail from the ranger station leads to this point, so we found a handful of hikers and overnight campers there. The views of the sea stacks were beautiful. We stopped to eat lunch, and watched a sea otter fishing and eating in the ocean nearby. A couple of deer climbed up onto the highest part of the point. Slowly, we hiked back to the trail, and back through the forest to our canoe. A short, relaxing paddle brought us back to camp, where we enjoyed a cold beer on the beach, and then cooked another nice dinner, with salad. Afterward, we enjoyed two different whiskeys. One called “John Jacob Rye”, made at the Fremont distillery in Seattle, was a favorite. In honor of Bill B, we also read, by the light of the oil lamp, an essay by Wendell Berry entitled, “Why I am not going to buy a computer”.

Monday breakfast was another unforgettably delicious meal. Blueberry pancakes and syrup, pepper bacon, espresso, eggs over-easy, toast, jam and more espresso. Somehow these breakfast foods taste five-fold more amazing when camping, I think. Then slowly,



and a bit reluctantly, we packed up our camp, loaded the boat, and began the paddle back toward the ranger station. The weather was gorgeous, with full sun, and very little wind. We took our time, stopping briefly for a little snack lunch on the way, and then again to ghost up near a pair of deer on shore. They looked at us but seemed completely unfazed. At one point, paddling along the shore, we heard a sharp crack, and then a loud crash, off in the woods. At first the crack sound made me think someone had shot a gun, but then the crashing sound made it clear that what we'd heard was a tree or a very large tree branch, suddenly breaking and then falling to the ground. So that settles it. When a tree falls in the woods, it *does* make a sound.

Overall this was a truly awesome trip and one that I hope to repeat again soon. Next time, I hope to spend more nights, maybe to camp on one of the small islands in Lake Ozette.



Author Chip Asbury



Photographer Scott Christianson

A One-Man NW Native Racing Canoe by Vern Heikkila

Two years ago, I was asked to help advise and construct a 6-man outrigger canoe. The Halalt Reserve in Duncan, B.C. wanted to build such a canoe. These NW tribes have built racing canoes for centuries. But it seems many of the young people have developed an interest in the Hawaiian canoe. I was contacted through my Hawaiian connection and decided to go to Duncan, B.C.

Upon arrival at their boat shop/canoe house I was impressed by the number of native racing canoes. They ranged from one-man 18-foot hulls to 11-man 51-foot hulls. I brought patterns and information with me and spent time helping their builders understand the process of building an outrigger canoe. Seeing that I was interested in their racing canoes, I was offered plans to build one. So building a one-man native canoe became my spring project.

My canoe is 20 feet long with an 18-inch beam, weighing about 30 pounds. I used 3/16" old growth red cedar, epoxy and fiberglass. It was given a native blessing last summer by our Quinault friend, Susan Oliver, and was soon launched on Lost Lake at Camp Bishop.

It was an interesting learning experience. I hope everyone gets a chance to try it at the next meet.



The canoe blessing ceremony included "smudging" and sweeping with cedar branches.
Heikkila photo



Janet makes paddling the 18" beam canoe look easy!
Heikkila photo

President's Letter

As the pandemic grinds on the NW Chapter of the WCHA continues, but without our traditional twice yearly meets. When will we meet again at one of our favorite rendezvous places? Only time will tell. But good things have been happening around the club, as our newsletter continues to report (thank you so much Mary!).

Sue and I have taken on a new project - small vacation home on Lopez Island that belonged to the family of my very first new friend after arriving in Seattle back in the Spring of 1978. Alas, that family is now on the East Coast and they tired of being rental landlords, so in an effort "to keep it in the family" it was offered to us in March. It's lovely, but it has a lot of deferred maintenance.

There is an interesting wooden canoe angle to it though. We were visiting the Lopez Museum a few weeks ago and noticed that they had a very old Native American long canoe that is in need of some serious restoration work outside their building and exposed to the elements. Also, there was at least one error in the signage. Inside, they had another even older small dugout that has not yet been dated (maybe early 19th century, but possibly older). So of course I struck up a conversation with the curator/director. I am not taking on the restoration of either of their canoes, but I did volunteer to consult with them when they get around to it.

Of course, the canoe the principle means of transportation over longer distances in this part of pre-Columbian North America. These artifacts remind us of how varied the form is. I'm slowly working on an article on this topic that I promised Michael Grace for our journal, Wooden Canoe. Trying to pin down the exact origins of a watercraft that is pinched at both ends, and has been shaped one way or another to be a container with an interior, and not merely a raft or bundle of reeds is hard. But, there is strong circumstantial evidence to suggest that it is truly ancient, as in several hundred thousand years at a minimum. The general form is globally universal, but the specifics of materials and construction techniques were always defined by locally available materials and what could be done with the current tool technology. The thing that is a constant marvel to me is how much can be done with very simple tools and materials given sufficient time and patience. Time and patience are one constant that binds all wooden canoe enthusiasts together, around the world and down through the ages.

Our attitudes about time and patience will carry us through this pandemic and reunite us once more at one of our favorite places - of that I have no doubt. In the meantime, stay safe and plug away on your projects, which I am eagerly looking forward to seeing and hearing about when we meet again. cd.



Sue Parker and Craig Dupler

Livdahl photo

northwest.wcha.org

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