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# Mainsheet

Newsletter of the Delaware River Chapter, TSCA

February 2008

Next Meeting: Tuesday  
February 5 at 7.30 pm,  
Independence Seaport  
Museum. *Enter through the main  
entrance.*

John Brady will talk about SILENT  
MAID, a new A-cat, and a 15'  
sneakbox.

## DUCK HUNTING

Ken Tweed, a builder of his own duckboat,  
spoke at January's meeting on duck hunting.  
Much of the talk focused on getting the  
modern hunter in line with state and federal  
regulations. The rules vary by hunting zone,  
and some are easily overlooked. Many of  
the violations concern hunting the wrong  
species of duck. Ken passed around guides  
that help the hunter identify the species in  
flight by wing pattern and by post-mortem  
identification of bill and feathers.

There are various methods for getting out to  
a hunting site. A common one is to be towed  
to a spot in a layout boat with a support boat  
close at hand. Sculling was discussed, but it  
is mostly a lost art nowadays.

Ken provided a few examples of decoys.  
Some are now motorized, but they are illegal  
in certain areas. Nontoxic shot is now  
common to prevent lead poisoning. And  
lastly, members will be glad to know that no  
live ducks were harmed during this  
demonstration!

-Tom Shephard

Also at the meeting, Chuck Sutherland  
introduced us to a new online Delaware  
River paddlers' guide. The site is called the  
Tidal Delaware River Water Trail and can be  
found at [www.tidaltrail.org](http://www.tidaltrail.org). According to the  
website: "The Tidal Delaware River Water  
Trail spans about 56 miles of the river from  
Morrisville to Marcus Hook. The Water Trail  
Maps include access points for all types of  
craft and contain information about river  
safety and points of interest." The maps are  
in draft form with links provided for  
suggestions and/or comments.

Chuck also discussed the success of his  
Cold Water Safety brochure. New York  
State has printed thousands to distribute. It  
is in the club's interest to continue their  
distribution, so if anyone knows of a new  
venue, please let Chuck know.

## TAKE TIME FROM THE WINTER DOLDRUMS TO DO SOMETHING BOAT- RELATED, AND GET A FREE LUNCH!

Greg DeCowsky is in charge of MASCF  
2008 and asks TSCA members to help out.  
A steering committee will gather on  
February 23 in the Van Lennep Auditorium  
at the CBMM to plan programs for the event.  
A free lunch is offered for attendees. RSVP  
to John Ford or Bryna Richter so they can  
get an accurate head count.

Workshops and activities, both nautical and  
otherwise, will be chosen for adults and kids.  
The most helpful thing a member can do is  
volunteer to lead a workshop (this includes  
the chantey sing). Volunteers are also  
needed for judging boats, serving on the  
race committee, and assisting with launches

and dock safety. The committee strives for variety and makes every effort to entertain the boatbuilder and spouse alike. Any suggestions for new activities, keynote speakers, etc. are greatly appreciated. Contact Greg at [schoonercashier@earthlink.net](mailto:schoonercashier@earthlink.net) with ideas.

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## CLUB NOTICES

### **2008 dues are due!**

It's still a bargain at \$20. Send your check made out to TSCA to:  
Ron Gibbs  
107 Orchard Rd  
Paoli, PA 19301

Tom Shephard is asking for help with the Tuckup. He would like to have 4 manila rope fenders made. Any takers for a nice Winter project?

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A few years ago Jenny and I were looking through brochures, trying to plan a camping trip. A three-word description of one of the campgrounds caught our attention: *boat access only*. Having recently built a MacGregor sailing canoe, I was interested in giving it a try, and Jenny was easily convinced. We booked site 49 on Lower

Saranac Lake in New York over the internet using ReserveAmerica.com and set out on Memorial Day weekend to try out canoe camping.

We arrived at the launch point at mid-afternoon, having driven eight hours from Philadelphia. After registering for our campsite, we received a map and basic directions for getting to the site, a two mile paddle from the launch site. Reality hit when we approached the task of getting ourselves and all the camping, sailing, and cooking gear into the 15'8" canoe. The canoe has low freeboard when empty, so it truly becomes a careful balancing act when filled to the gunwales with gear. On our first camping trip, it required more than one journey to get all our gear to the campsite, but we've learned a lot since then, perfected our packing techniques, and had some great camping trips in the canoe.

I had camped with my family in upstate New York, spending time at campgrounds on the St Lawrence that provide you with an area for a vehicle and a soft spot for a tent. Determined to get the most from waterfront camping and inspired by the two most notable craft associated with the area: the Adirondack guideboat and the decked sailing canoe, I decided to build a small canoe of my own. I built my MacGregor undecked to combine the best of the Adirondack guideboat, which can carry ample supplies for extended forages, and the sailing canoe, which is pleasant when the wind breezes up.



Loading the canoe at the Lower Saranac Lake launch site.

During our first weekend at Saranac, we quickly discovered the pleasures of boat access only campsites. We had a multiple acre site entirely to ourselves; the nearest campsite was a half mile hike over rocky wooded terrain. The lake was quiet and almost empty of powerboats, being used primarily by canoeists and kayakers.



Our compact tent is easy to carry and has more than enough room for two.

The campsites are primitive; the sole amenities are a picnic table, fire pit, and a port-a-potty, but there were large rocks to sit on and watch the sunset, grassy knolls for the tent, and many small bays and coves to explore. That first weekend was stormy and cold, but we were able sail in Pope Bay next to our site and to venture further down the lake.



The view into Pope Bay with Ampersand Mountain in the background.

A thunderstorm provided us with a wild ride back to camp, testing the boat and our abilities to stay afloat. We discovered how effectively the mountains channel the wind and hide approaching storm clouds, giving us little warning of fast-moving squalls nearby.



Paddling through dense forest on our way to the Upper Locks.

On subsequent trips we have paddled through the Upper Locks to the breathtaking scenery of Middle Saranac Lake. It's a good day trip and a dramatic passage on the narrow winding river into water meadows filled with lilies. The journey through the locks itself is an adventure as the water rushes into the lock (operated by a Park ranger) while you cling to ropes hanging from the side.



Once through the locks, the scenery opens up to water lilies and grass.

The great advantage of the sailing canoe is that it gives you the option to sail when the wind picks up. When paddling, we set the mizzen and have the mainsail rolled up but ready to go at a moment's notice. We've also found that steering with the tiller helps direct our paddling when the wind and waves are contrary. The sailing rig weighs very little so it isn't a nuisance to keep it aboard. And when the breeze picks up, it's all worth it, especially when cruising by other canoes.

There are a few guidelines that we've developed for packing and paddling a canoe laden with gear: get a modest-sized tent, opt for self-inflating (thermarest-style) sleeping pads, and take only the most essential clothing and camping gear. We use dry sacks of different sizes and shapes for the gear since they can be squeezed to fit the hull of the canoe. We've stopped bringing strawberries and an extensive variety of fresh fruit and vegetables with us, instead opting for dried foods like fruit strips, macaroni and cheese, risotto packets, instant oatmeal, and soups that can be reconstituted with water and cooked in a single pot. This saves a lot of space in the canoe and enables us to fit all our food into a bear canister, which can be hung from the trees. The local critters (a raccoon, a deer, and possibly something bigger) visited us

on our first camping trip and since then we've found it easier to sleep if everything, toothpaste included, is up in the trees. With some advance planning and thought you can fit the necessary gear and two people into the canoe. Canoe camping on Saranac Lake has become an annual and much-anticipated event for us every summer.



The canoe is loaded and we say good-bye to the campsite after a gorgeous weekend.

Note: The State of New York has a vast system of parkland. Two of the larger offices for information on camping are the *New York State Office of Parks* and the *New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*. There are two museums in the area that are sure to provide inspiration for boat building and canoe camping: *The Antique Boat Museum* in Clayton, NY and the *Adirondack Museum* in Blue Mountain Lake, NY. *St Regis Canoe Outfitters* sells a wonderfully detailed topographic map called the *Adirondack Paddler's Map*, which shows up to date portages, trails, and numbered campsites.

-Andy Slavinkas

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Monthly Newsletter of the  
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