

Central Iowa Paddlers

Volume 8 Issue 1

March 2004

This newsletter is a publication of the Central Iowa Paddlers, an informal group of paddlesport enthusiasts. The mission of the club is to share information, promote recreation opportunities and paddlesport safety, and encourage care of our aquatic resources. The group includes new and experienced paddlers with canoes and kayaks of all kinds. Visit us on www.paddleiowa.org and pass the word!

MEANDERINGS

This is a new chapter in our club's history! Robin Fortney, Founder, Chairwoman, and Publisher of CIP retired as our overall leader. But she is still very active in the growth of our club and our sport. We'll never be able to repay her for her tireless efforts and outstanding leadership. I know that I would not be nearly as involved in local paddling activities but for Robin's encouragement and example. Thanks Robin!

A steering board, including Robin, has been formed to make sure we keep the CIP running and growing. I've agreed to publish this Newsletter. You'll be hearing more about the Club, its activities and successes in this Newsletter, emails and our website.

But, enough about gratitude and governance. Let's think paddling! The year started right with a bunch of us trekking out on New Years Day to paddle a section of the Des Moines River near the Saylorville Dam. Mother Nature has thrown up some roadblocks this year, but we remain undeterred. Even when we couldn't always put paddle to water, we stayed busy publishing books about paddling in Iowa, advocating for clean rivers, holding Expos, and having Armchair meetings on paddling topics. Now that the ice has melted, we can put this practice to use. Be safe out there and have some fun!

- Steve Parrish, Editor

If the life of a river depended only on the rainfall within the confines of its own banks, it would soon be dry. If the life of an individual depended solely on his resources, he would soon fall. Be grateful for your tributaries.

- Dr. William Arthur

TRIP and NEWS REPORTS

New Year's Day, 2004 Sycamore to Saylorville by Gerry Rowland

We had an excellent day on the river. There were 9 Central Iowa Paddlers with boats, and 2 who stopped by to wish us well. The day was overcast, with occasional sun spottings. There were 2 eagles at the boat ramp as we pulled up, more as we paddled upstream.

The current was moderate, air temperature was in the upper 30's (as was the water temp), we had enough water the whole 1.5 miles up to the dam. We were 1 canoe, 2 whitewater boats, and 6 kayaks. All guys this year. We missed some who have been on this trip in years past, John P, Dave H, and Leonard T. We missed Rick D also.

All paddlers made it through the riffle at Cottonwood fishing pier. There were scuba divers by the spillway this year. We left Sycamore at 10 AM, we lingered at Saylorville, two paddlers left early. We were back at Sycamore by 12:30, one paddler took a spill while disembarking, but there was warm car right there. We had some bread and cookies and marveled at the joy of living and paddling in Iowa.

Thanks to the paddlers for joining me. Thanks to Central Iowa Paddlers for promoting the event.



January 1, 2004 paddle on the Des Moines River

Picture by Gerry Rowland

News from Ames (from Carolyn Comar regarding the February film fest held at ISU)

1. The February National Paddling Film Festival Road Show was a success again this year. The attendance was down from last year, but we raised funds that will be contributing to development of a white water park/river trail system in Des Moines. The videos covered all aspects of paddling and everyone enjoyed the diverse selection. Talk is already underway regarding having another film fest next year - so stay tuned!

2. 2004 PaddleIowa Calendars are still available. Contact Carolyn if interested:
ckomar@iastate.edu

Winter Water Fun by Nate Hoogeveen

Paddling on New Year's Day has its rewards, but mixing cold weather and icy water warrant caution. There's a Dilbert proverb repeated often in my home: "Everybody is somebody else's weirdo."

On New Year's Day, eight of us from the Central Iowa Paddlers club slipped our kayaks and canoes into the Des Moines River and paddled 1.5 miles upstream to Saylorville Dam. We were weirdoes that day for at least one walker on the Neal Smith Trail, who informed me we were crazy. Surely, myriad couch jockeys nested in front of televisions for the Outback Bowl would have thought the same of her and the cyclists sharing her trail.

The first day of a new year is a great time to follow your passion, even when complicated by cold weather. Balmy conditions in the 40s rendered this year's annual New Year's Day Paddle exceptional. The trip always begins at the Sycamore Access at NW 66th Avenue because the dam's tailrace is slightly warmer than elsewhere, and thereby more often ice-free. Iowa's rivers this time of year run remarkably clear. Beneath us, carp up to three feet long could be seen thumping against neighboring boats. Dozens of bald eagles alighted from limb to limb or soared high above the river.

Before turning back, we watched scuba divers from Iowa State Skin Diving Schools as they explored the river's depths below the dam, surfacing occasionally, and kicking of their New Year much as we were. If we were crazy, they must have been criminally ill.

Winter paddling has great rewards, but caution – and the right gear – is absolutely necessary. A new friend (who shall remain nameless here) flipped his boat while trying to exit his craft at the end of the trip.

Because a silly mistake can quickly turn into a deadly case of hypothermia with water temperatures below 40 degrees, it's important to wear either a neoprene wetsuit or a waterproof dry suit when paddling this time of year. Sometimes risk taking is a calculated affair. Other times, it's because we drove a long way, or because we're anxious to get out. Those times – when our minds are clouded – are when supreme peril lurks.

Gerry Rowland, now a seasoned winter paddler and father of what's becoming the Des Moines River Water Trail and instigator of the New Year's Day Paddle, knows the risks firsthand. He has a story about 2001 December cold snap when he traveled near Keokuk in the nublet of Iowa that extends south beyond Iowa's mostly straight east-west border with Missouri. The channel was partially iced up even there.

Those who know Gerry well realize that while his exterior displays his mild-mannered library-consultant face, beneath that friendly exterior boils an obsessive paddler who is not easily daunted. That inner Gerry was the man who launched his kayak despite the ice, an invincible Titanic cruising frigid waters. Thin ice crinkled as his boat cut through, a surreal experience indeed. But later in the day, the ice grew thicker, and the channel began rapidly freezing around him. At one point, he became stuck against ice several inches thick. Unable to paddle, he jumped into chest-deep water. Had he no wetsuit to keep him dry, he'd likely have succumbed to hypothermia as he broke a path to the riverbank. Even if he'd made it to shore intact, he still needed to hike more than a mile in nasty weather to the nearest road before he could wave down a passerby and get a ride back to his vehicle.

Gerry's realizes that even with the gear, he was lucky, and that his story could have ended sadly. As it is now, the story just ends with a moral: "Be your own weirdo, but not a Popsicle."



Picture by John Terry

PS: Only one brave soul had the moxie to make the the trip from Sycamore to Prospect park on Saturday March 13. Our own Gerry Rowland answered the call. Winds 25 to 35 mph and gusts to 40 mph.

HERE'S YOUR MEMBERSHIP LIST !!

If you are receiving this first-of-the-year edition of the newsletter, you are also receiving the current membership list. This is a great source of information on people who share your interest in water sports. If you're not a member and would like to be one, see information in this newsletter for details on how to join!

Winter Meeting by Steve Parrish

We had a great winter meeting of the Central Iowa Paddlers on January 18. It was held in downtown Des Moines, with 30+ people showing up with food and good ideas. Lots of fun, stories, and plans for the future! We even had a guest appearance of Greg Vitale's visage all the way from Thailand!



The crowd meets, greets and eats

Greg's face magically appears!

Paddle Where You Can, When You Can! by Steve Parrish

Now that we are finally into the Iowa paddling season, do you feel like you're rusty? Perhaps a way to avoid this feeling for the future is to commit to doing some paddling even when your non-paddling friends tell you it's too cold, too icy, too whatever. I decided that this winter I'd be sure to get several paddles in, no matter what. It took some focus, but I'm coming into this paddling season perhaps feeling crusty, but at least not rusty!



In my case, I used holidays as a focus for my paddling goal. Thanksgiving was cold and ugly this year. But, before our weekend feast, I put my boat in at Saylorville Lake with the intent of paddling the entire length. Towards the Mile Long Bridge, I was repeatedly stymied by ice and finally had to turn back. But, it was still a good two hour workout. By Christmas, the lake was a big ice cube. So, I went to the small patch of open water below the Saylorville dam to get my strokes in. The next week I repeated the experience by being one of the crazies Nate Hoogeveen refers to in his article about our New Years Day paddle. To reward myself

for my cold water efforts, when in St. Lucia for vacation this February I took time to track down an old sit-on-top kayak with a short double blade that weighed a half ton. My short trip in the Caribbean won't be memorialized in film, but it still counts as a paddle. And finally, last week while attending a wedding in Florida, I used my Uncle's kayak to get my strokes in (see the attached picture). I had to catch a plane two hours later, but I can now say I've "paddled Florida."

CENTRAL IOWA PADDLERS

Our mission is to share paddle sport information, promote recreational opportunities and boating safety, and encourage care of our aquatic resources.



DUES: \$10 per year
Includes emails, Newsletters ...
And Fellowship!

Membership, Dues, Emails for CIP list

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Send: Articles, pictures .

For more information, visit our website at:

www.paddleiowa.org

COMING NEXT NEWSLETTER

You can look forward to an article by Karl DeLong on SAFTEY AND RESCUE. Also, Greg Vitale regales us with stories of paddling in Thailand! We want to read YOUR stories as well. Please attend some of the events listed below, write up an article, and send it in!

2004 Iowa Paddling Events

- Sunday, March 14th CIP Armchair Paddling, 2-4 pm at [CanoeSport Outfitters](#), Indianola
(Discussion of rescue techniques, first aid kits, and other safety considerations)
- Saturday March 20th Des Moines River, Sycamore to Birdland, (CIP) Contact Gerry (515-277-3092)
- Saturday, March 27th [4th Annual SRP Icebreaker Paddle](#), (SRP) Contact Greg (515-663-9251)
- Tuesdays at 6:30 pm** Paddle Grays Lake with [CanoeSport Outfitters](#) staff (begins April 6th)
- Saturday, April 10th Clean-up, Harriet Street Boat Ramp, (CIP) Contact Gerry (515-277-3092)
- April 16 - 18 [Wapsipinicon River](#) near Stone City, (CIP) Contact Lynn (641-363-4451) or Rick (515-232-1484)
- Saturday April 24th Earth Day Activities: (Clean-ups in [Ames](#) and [Des Moines](#))
ASCE Concrete Canoe Races, Ames
Cedar Creek, (CIP) Contact Nate (515-256-7026)
- Saturday May 1st Upper Iowa River, (CIP) Contact Bill (515-274-4319)
- May 1 -2 [Story County Conservation Partners Spring Festival](#), Call 515-232-2516
- Sunday May 2nd for information
- May 8 – 9 Little Sioux River, (CIP) Contact Robin (515-277-1763) or Hank (712-262-4166)
- Sunday May 9th [Prairie Rapids Paddlers PaddleFest](#), 10:00am, Clay Hole, Cedar Falls
- Saturday May 15 [Middle Raccoon, Polk County Conservation Board](#), Call 515-323-5300 for information
- Wednesdays at 7:00 pm** [SRP Paddlin' at the Pits](#), Ames (begins May 19th) Contact SRP
- Saturday May 22nd Paddle the [Skunk River Canoe Trail](#), (SRP) Contact Rick (515-232-1484) or Mark (515-221-2587)
- Saturday, May 22nd Canoe Introduction Workshop, Dallas County Conservation (Call 515 465-3577)
- Sunday, May 23rd [Canoe Clinic, Story County Conservation](#), 1-4pm, Call 515-232-2516 for information
- June 4 - 6 North Fork Maquoketa River, Dyersville to Ozark, Contact Nate (515-256-7026)
- Thursday June 10th Raccoon River, (CIP) Contact Bob (515-964-7671)
- Saturday, June 12th [Great Iowa River Canoe Challenge](#), Iowa Falls
(Contact the [Scenic City Empress Boat Club](#) 800-873-1936)
- Saturday June 12th [Canoe Basics, Polk County Conservation Board](#), Call 515-323-5300 for information
- Wednesday June 16th Des Moines River, (CIP) Contact Bob (515-964-7671)

Saturday June 19th [Boone River Canoe Float, Story County Conservation](#) Call 515-232-2516 for information

information)
June 19 – 26 [Project AWARE Des Moines River](#) Contact Brian Soenen (515-281-6640)

June 21 – 25 Pass the Paddle, Dallas County Conservation (Call 515 465-3577)
Saturday, June 26th [5th Annual Timber City Adventure Race, Maquoketa](#)
Contact the Maquoketa Area Chamber of Commerce (1-800-989-4602)
[World's Largest Canoe Float](#), held in conjunction with the [Grand](#)

Sunday, June 27th [Excursion Flotilla 2004](#)

Saturday, July 10th [Iowa River, Polk County Conservation Board](#), Call 515-323-5300 for information

July 10 – 11 [Canoe Van Buren, Des Moines River](#), Call 1-800-TOUR VBC (868-7822)

July 16-18 and 23-25 [Iowa Games](#)
July 23-25 [8th Annual Badger Lake Bash Dragon Boat Races, Ft Dodge](#)

Saturday July 31st Julia's Full Moon Float, Des Moines River, (CIP) Contact Julia (515-284-2408)

Saturday, August 7th [River Ripple](#), Des Moines River, Eddyville to Ottumwa, Contact Dave (515-292-5918)

August 11 – 15 Apostle Islands (CIP) Contact Bob (515-964-7671)

Saturday, August 14th [Boone River, Polk County Conservation Board](#), Call 515-323-5300 for information

Sunday, September 26th [Brushy Creek Lake Fall Color Cruise and Boat Show](#), (CIP) Contact Jim (515-332-2069)

Saturday, August 28 North Raccoon (CIP) Contact Lynn (641-363-4451)

October 1 - 3 Root River (CIP) Contact Bill (515-274-4319)

Saturday October 9th Robin's Birthday Float, (CIP) Contact Robin (515-277-1763)

For information about these and other events, go to www.paddleiowa.org

THE BOOK IS HERE!!

Our own Nate Hoogeveen has published his long awaited book, [Paddling Iowa](#). This "must have" book for Iowa paddlers provides great tips, maps, and general inspiration. It includes 96 great trips by canoe and kayak. First introduced at the [Canoe Sport Outfitters Expo](#) in February, sales of this 183 page book have been brisk. Nick Gaeta from Cedar Rapids tells us [Paddling Iowa](#) made it on the list with [Canoe Camping - USA](#). Look under "Books on Canoeing & rivers" or go directly to www.members.aol.com/mmcbs3/books.html to see the book listed under Iowa.

