

# PADDLE SPLASHES

Mar  
2024

Appalachian Mountain Club  
New York-North Jersey Chapter  
Canoe & Kayak Committee

Middle  
Fork of the  
Salmon

LEGENDS

The  
Grand  
Canyon



20

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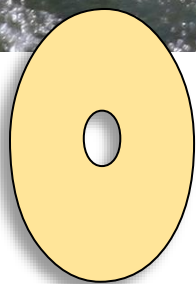


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Cover: Curt Gellerman on Minerva Stream in the Adirondacks. Photo by Marty Plante.

# THE MIDDLE FORK OF THE SALMON



One of the most repeated trips among Curt Gellerman's extensive repertoire is the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho.

When asked why it holds such a lure, Curt doesn't know where to begin.

"You've got beautiful clear water, Sawmill Mountains, and great rapids," he said, "It's got everything you'd ever want.

"There's nothing quite like Idaho," adds Sozanne. "I wish it were closer. It's the ideal river," she added.



Rich Dabal, who joined Curt this year, agreed. Even if on their June trip bizarrely witnessed snow and sleet, it was still a stunning trip.

"The water was cold only on the days it snowed," he explained. And certainly it's not the 40°F of the Grand Canyon.

"Kramer, the last big wave before take-out, was a perfect ride." Rich recalled.

Even Owen, the yellow lab, enjoyed himself.

**Above: Curt, the human, on a rapid.  
Left: Owen, the dog, between rapids.**

A medical emergency hastened the trip's itinerary a bit.

"It's great to have EMTs on board among your paddlers," Curt remarked.

With so many talented paddlers in the crew, no wonder he repeats this trip sans guide, self-supported.

"You kayak back east and row out west," Curt noted.

Regardless of oar, canoe paddle, or double blade, this experienced team crushed it.

"Once a boatman, always a boatman," Rich surmised.



**Above: The put-in.**

**Below: Richard cruising the Salmon.**





# READY, SET, SNOW!

STORY BY LORETTA BRADY  
PHOTOS BY MARY ANN HOAG

**P**ercentage-wise, a record number of paddlers toasted the year at January's annual holiday party and awards at J.P. Doyle's in Tarrytown.

How many? Well, some calculate about 40% of our paddlers RSVP'd, and nearly 30 actually made it there during the killer arctic vortex snowstorm to January 2024.

“One thing to remember—when we had 80-100 attendees at the Paddlers Party, we had about 400 paddlers paddling one or more times in a year, giving an attendance of 20%-25%,” noted Henry Schreiber.

In the past we hired DJs, carved homemade turkeys, and spread a grand potluck along the tables of VFW halls.

There was even a special stage show.



“When I was leaving as CKC chair and the new chair, Herb Stermer, was starting,” Lenny Grefig recalled, “I had the DJ play the theme song from Rocky so while I was introducing him, Herb bounced in as if he were entering a boxing ring.”

After the traditional pre-happy hour hike—this time along the scenic Hudson River a few blocks away—folks enjoyed free pub food and good cheer.

The awards this year were many.

Golden Award winners honored lifetime leaders whose trips are creative, consistent and always good fun. Often, as in the case with Russ’s bushwhack paddle & backpack trips, you find it hard to leave the trip—sometimes because you can’t find the take-out right away.

Golden Awards went to the superlative leaders:

Neil Grossman, Marty Plante, Tim Watters, Russ Faller, Butch Futrell, Don Getzin with extra special applause to instructors from our KCCNY partners, Jordan Yaruss, Zack Hvizdak, and Tom Hart.

**A**dditionally, we honored the system-wide golden leaders Eileen Yin, Regional Director, Lenny Grefig and Henry Schreiber, advisors emeritus and Trainers of the Leaders-in-Training, Jim Om, head of Harriman Programming, Rose Suarez, leader of Fire Island Trips, and of course our Chair, Brian Horowitz.



The Platinum Awards went to all our cherished trip and river leaders who bring so much life to our season. These included Mary Ann Hoag, Jennifer Koermer, Mark Tiernan, Chris Viani, Loretta Brady, Charles Michener, Susan Allan, David Rosenberg, Julie McCoy, Sozanne Solmaz, Paul Edwards, Stephen Ferder, Zana Adis and many others who assisted coaching and programming at Fire Island and in the several Whitewater Instructional follow-up trips.

**T**his year we bestowed Silver Awards to the most promising students among a *very* high caliber class. These were folks who never had to be “voluntold,” and whose athleticism, skills, and warm personality are admired by all.

These winners were canoeist Ingo Weiss, and kayakers Elisia Langdon and Erik Werner.

Some asked why the party was on a Sunday, but the answer is obvious when we realized the Saturday pool sessions run jointly with KCCNY are popular.

Most rewarding was the “buzz” among the crowd over anticipated trips for the season.

When asked if we could do more flat water rivers, we jumped on the idea, and of course took the opportunity to recruit new leaders and co-leaders.

It was also a chance to pitch the June 21-23 moving water instructional weekend at the Lehigh this year. Many showed an interest. Friends welcome!

Apparently these parties make a great accelerant for recruitment. Fun sells.



A group of hikers is seen from behind, walking along a narrow, rocky trail that runs along the edge of a massive, layered rock formation. The trail is dusty and appears to be a well-used path. In the background, the vast, rugged landscape of the Grand Canyon unfolds, with a winding river visible in the distance under a clear blue sky. The overall scene conveys a sense of adventure and the scale of the natural environment.

# 10 Reasons Not to Skimp on a Guide

## 16 Days in the Grand Canyon – With a Little Help.

**“H**ow the heck does anyone survive this trip unsupported?!” I kept asking myself.

Yet so many AMC NY-NJ paddlers did and do run the Grand Canyon.

Alone.

For it's an incredible fact that several intrepid NY-NoJ AMC groups have launched rafts, hard boats, and piles of provisions in several different missions through the tumultuous Colorado River and its various, mysterious slot canyons.

STORY BY LORETTA BRADY  
PHOTOS BY GWEN HUNTER

Sozanne Solmaz even famously joined one trip midway, trekking down the rigorous trail at Angel's Falls to join the supremely brave band of paddlers, David Brucas, an anchor leader among them.

Or there were Don Getzin's canoe trips, semi-supported with expert Bob Foote and one lone expert kayaker as safety escort.



On those trips, without guide support, they saw canoe after canoe pop over a wave's roiling crest, then barrel roll as the crashing monster swells swat them about.

That's why I opted for what I imagined would be a cushy 16-day Hiker's Special with **Canyon Expeditions**.

Viani calls this the "Disneyfication" of outdoor adventure, so my expectations were set for a mostly relaxing cruise by raft, paddle, and ducky then hiking among iconic, sinuous cliffs, grooving to a leisurely vacay vibe.

That's not quite how it turned out.

1

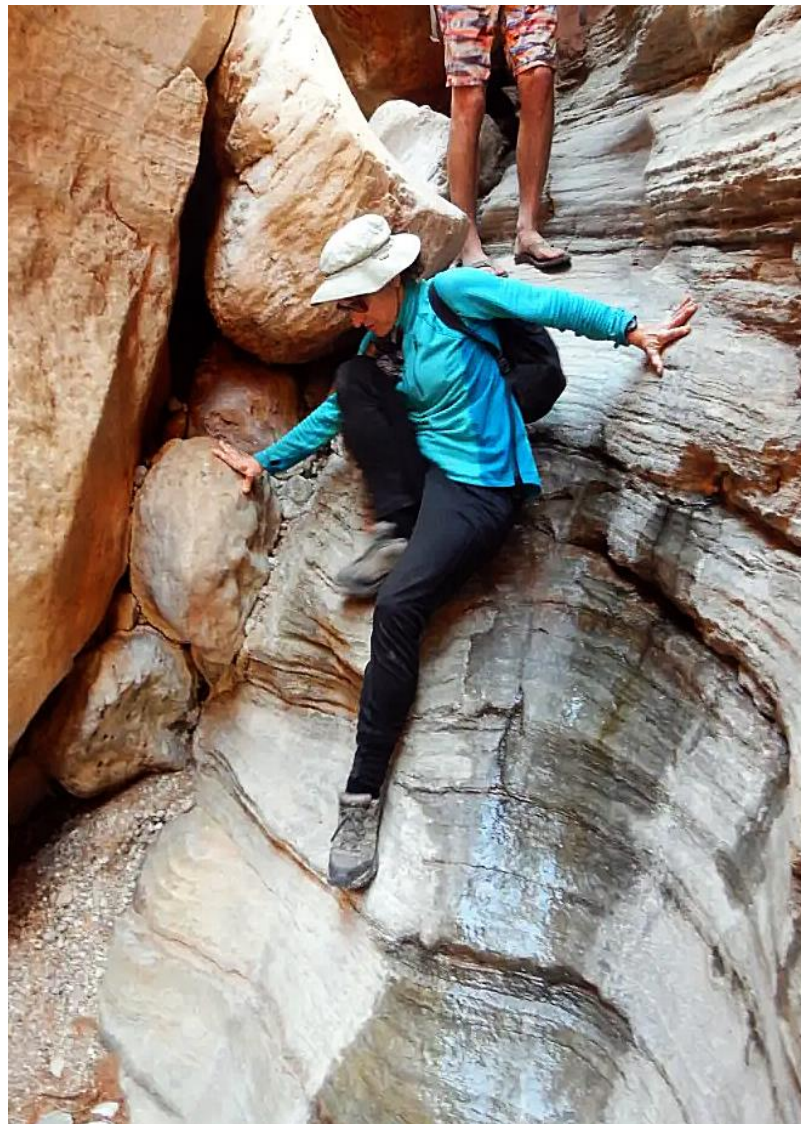
### **You Don't Miss the Scheduled Eclipse -**

—because the guides know exactly where the sun will be visible among the often sunless, shaded red rock walls.

### **Swimming is fun, not stressful**

—not just the voluntary ones: in the crystal blue rapids of the Little Colorado, or in a 500-yard rapid into which we leapt after hiking up 12 feet. Safety was everywhere, our anxieties at bay. Feeling so guarded, even the duckies dared turbulent waves. With mixed results.

2





3

**If the guide's hands are trembling, you know it was an IFR.**

—it takes no skill to land a raft in a hole at Hoar Rapid, but it's rare if it lands inside one hungry hole on its side, then bounces through the next and pivots off the wall. *And* guide and passengers are tossed like popcorn. In guides' parlance, these are special IFR moments (Involuntary Fecal Responses). You may be the headline that day, but from stories that night around the campfire (yes, *campfire*, see #4), you learn of many *worse*, fascinating near misses that guides have endured.

5

**Steaks. Chops. Salmon. Vegan Ambrosia Casseroles.**

—yep, you eat good. Side-stepping food prep nightly means more hiking around the camp (usually at a slot canyon), or lengthening the Happy Hour.

4

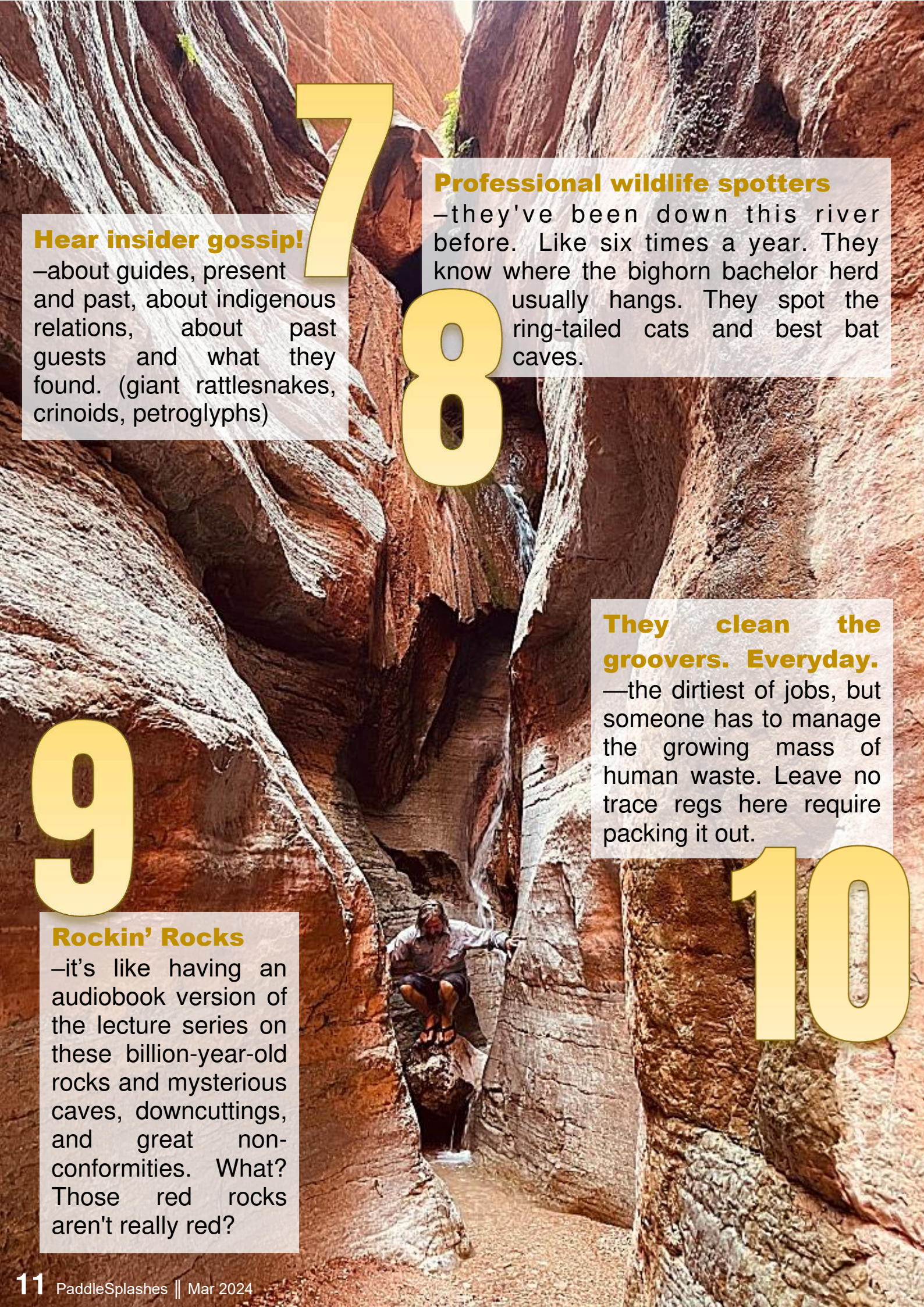
**Campfires!**

—because guides haul the bulk of gear, they easily packed juniper logs (what an aroma), and pack out the dirty ashes with no fuss for you. It's also a great time to hear guides spew fun geological and historical facts, or pitch their favorite books for the library of books (yes, library, an ammo can full of cool titles) they lug along for your enjoyment.

6

**Paradise Slot Hike Destinations Daily.**

—unrushed. Guitar and banjo playing echoes in the chambers as the guides serenade you. You're led safely along super-exposed ledges like Elves Chasm and Havasupai Falls, scrambling to view stunning vistas or soaring condors.



7

**Hear insider gossip!**

—about guides, present and past, about indigenous relations, about past guests and what they found. (giant rattlesnakes, crinoids, petroglyphs)

**Professional wildlife spotters**

—they've been down this river before. Like six times a year. They know where the bighorn bachelor herd usually hangs. They spot the ring-tailed cats and best bat caves.

8

**They clean the groovers. Everyday.**

—the dirtiest of jobs, but someone has to manage the growing mass of human waste. Leave no trace regs here require packing it out.

9

**Rockin' Rocks**

—it's like having an audiobook version of the lecture series on these billion-year-old rocks and mysterious caves, downcuttings, and great non-conformities. What? Those red rocks aren't really red?

10

# LEGENDS



**Three pioneers of the AMC have left us. Mike Dalton, Fran Braley and Dottie Peters were all longtime trip leaders and instructors. They were instrumental in shaping our club's history and fostering a love of paddling for countless members. The indelible mark they made on our paddling program has benefited all of us that came after them.**



# Dottie Peters

Could she join the new AMC advanced canoe clinic, Dottie Peters wondered.

Carving turns was the focus, an essential skill for speed and control in Class 3 rapids.

She was 80 years old.

“She knocked it out of the park,” Instructor Don Getzin recalled. “That was the kind of spirit she had. It seemed she could do anything she put her mind to,” he added.

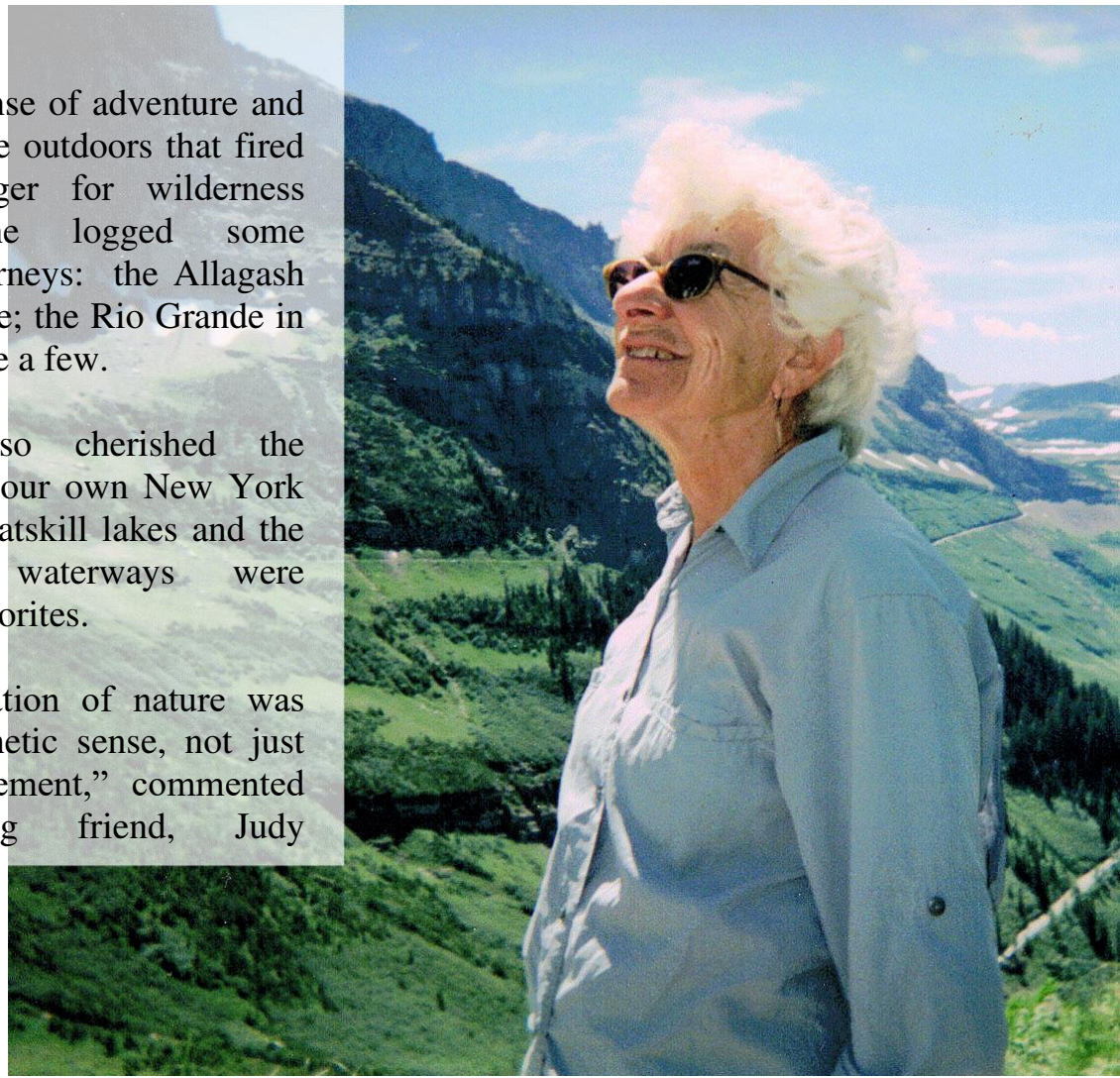
It was this sense of adventure and her love of the outdoors that fired Dottie’s hunger for wilderness tripping. She logged some incredible journeys: the Allagash River in Maine; the Rio Grande in Texas, to name a few.

But she also cherished the waterways in our own New York region. The Catskill lakes and the Adirondack waterways were among her favorites.

“Her appreciation of nature was from an aesthetic sense, not just for the excitement,” commented her life-long friend, Judy

Mage. That may explain how her daughter, Chela Zabin, became an estuary and ocean scientist specializing in marine invasions at SERC (Smithsonian Environmental Research Center), as well as a published poet.

And Dottie always graciously included friends on her trips, whatever their skill levels. We all know, as she did, the exquisite intimacy such group wilderness experiences nurture. She relished



these deep relationships that shared, as she often said, “a long shoreline together.”

She always looks so happy when I see her in all my pictures,” commented hiking partner and paddling companion, Jane Bottner. “She was a member of the club for years, for as long as I’d ever known her,” she added.

In this era of *#metoo* triumphs and gender fluidity, it's interesting to note the heritage of women leaders, like Dottie, who so impressively have enriched our club.



Historically, strong, inspiring women like Dottie headed Southern Rivers trips, longer expeditions, and the club’s chairpersonships. Even during the oppressive 1950s and ‘60s, Helen Fair, Louise Davis and Ruth Walker steered the paddling committee’s ship of state with true Girl Power charm.

Continuing today, stalwart female influencers such as Regional Director Eileen Yin, Leader-Trainer Lennie Grefig, and super paddlers Linda Polstein and Jill Arbuckle continue to contribute their welcoming, networking, and planning superpowers to profoundly shape the NY-North Jersey chapter both in front of and behind the scenes, just like Dottie had for so many years.

Okay, perhaps it does take a bit of the “girl boss” energy sometimes.

“As cook and camp kitchen manager,” Judy remembered, “we teasingly called Dottie the ‘Dishwashing Tyrant.’”

Hey, look, in a world reeling from the lingering effects of centuries-old empire building and colonialist exploitation, (largely, but not exclusively, the byproduct of masculine social constructs), we could do worse than follow leaders who nudge us to work smarter, not harder; more united, less divided.

# Mike Dalton

## A Life Well Lived

**Mike Dalton (along with his partner Tanya McCabe) was a long time AMC trip leader and paddler.**

On April 27, 2024, we will celebrate the life of Michael Dalton. Mike was a hiker, paddler, woodworker, father, partner, friend, grandfather and great-grandfather. In accordance with Mike's wishes there are two parts to the celebration. Beginning at Mohican Outdoor Center in Blairstown, NJ, the first part is a 3-mile hike with an elevation gain of 800 feet, during which Mike's ashes will be spread on the Appalachian Trail at its intersection with Rattlesnake Swamp Trail.

The second part will be a celebration-of-life and luncheon at 1:30pm at the Irish American Association of Northwest New Jersey (352 Richard Mine Rd., Rockaway, NJ.)

If you would like to join the memorial, please RSVP to Shawn McCabe (Tanya's daughter) at [mccabesm@yahoo.com](mailto:mccabesm@yahoo.com) by April 20, 2024. Please specify whether you will join the hike only or both the hike and luncheon, and the number of attendees you're making the reservation for.



BY RANDY BRALEY

# Fran Braley



**F**ran Braley, a longtime trip leader and canoe instructor for the Appalachian Mountain Club, passed away in January at Putnam Hospital.

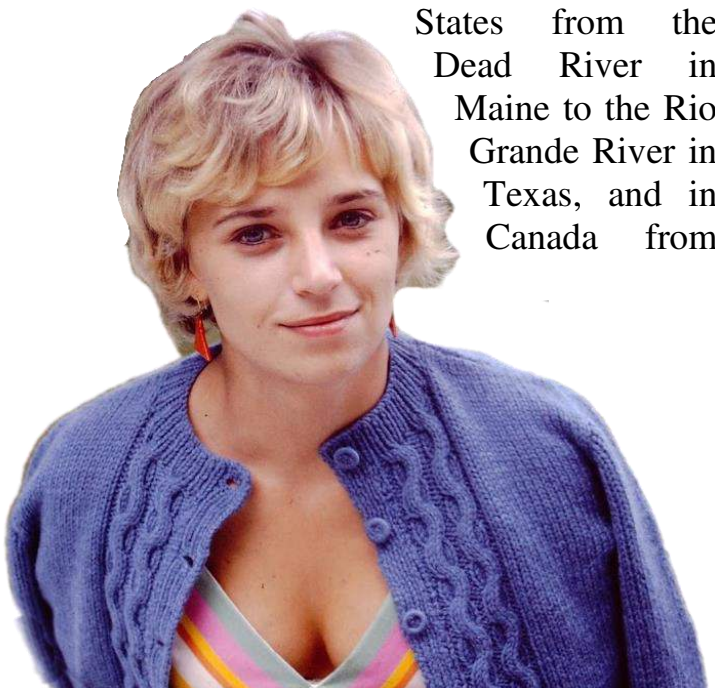
She and her husband Al Braley led numerous weekend trips and several expedition trips. They were chairs of the Canoe Committee and for many years Fran was editor of the bi-monthly newsletter, *Paddle Splashes*. In 1998 the chapter recognized her accomplishments and awarded her the 'Appie of the Year.' They paddled rivers all over the United States from the Dead River in Maine to the Rio Grande River in Texas, and in Canada from

the Bonaventure River in the Gaspé Peninsula to the Nahanni River in Northwest Territories.

Fran was also very active in the Morris County, New Jersey 4-H program. She was the leader of the Pins and Pans 4-H Club and with her husband leader of the Voyagers 4-H Club. In 1994 Morris County 4-H program honored her participation and presented her with *The Lifetime Volunteer Award*.

**A**fter moving to Wingdale, NY in 1997, physical problems kept her from paddling, so she turned to researching her family history. Fran discovered that she had several ancestors who fought in the Revolutionary War. She joined the Daughters of the American Revolution and chaired several of its committees.

Her body has been donated to science. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.





# Canoe/Kayak Committee 2024 Season Kick-Off Meeting

**Tue,  
Mar 19, 2023  
7:30pm  
via Zoom**

**You're Invited  
Click Here**

## **Fear Management for Whitewater Kayakers**

Designed to help kayakers identify and develop tools to understand and manage natural feelings of river-related anxiety and fear when paddling. We'll explore techniques for getting centered and building confidence while paddling on Class II-III (in some cases I-II) water. Learn how to align your paddling choices with your risk tolerance and skill level through effective risk management and objective self-evaluation.

**Sat, Mar 30, 2024  
New Hampshire**

**CLICK  
HERE**



# Western Pennsylvania Solo Canoe Rendezvous

May 31-Jun 2, 2024



## PADDLE SPLASHES

Loretta Brady, Editor  
Marty Plante, Printer's Devil

PaddleSplashes is published by the Canoe and Kayak Committee of the Appalachian Mountain Club, New York-North Jersey Chapter.



### Guidelines for Submissions

Photos are preferred as high-resolution color jpeg files attached to email. Please do not crop, compress, resize or otherwise interfere with them. Contact the editor if you need assistance sending large files. Current and prior issues of PaddleSplashes are available on the Chapter's website at <https://www.amc-ny.org/canoe-kayak/paddle-splashes>

### Send all submissions to:

canoekayak.newsletter <at> amc-ny.org

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## Keep in Touch!





**Adirondack Paddling Symposium**  
 Saranac Lake, NY  
 June 14-17, 2024

**CLICK HERE**



**2024 Activity Schedule**

Date	Quiet Water	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
<b>March</b>	16-17	Canoe/Kayak Trip Leader Workshop (Sun, 3/17) CKC 2024 Season Kick-Off Meeting (Tue, 3/19)		
	23-24	Canoe/Kayak Trip Leader Workshop (Sun, 3/24)	Shepaug AMC-CT (Sat, 3/23)	
	30-31 (Easter)		Riverton Grossman	
<b>April</b>	6-7	Shepaug AMC-CT (Sat, 4/6)	Collinsville Grossman	
		Pool Session (Sat, 4/3)		
	13-14	Ramapo Plante (Sun, 4/14)	Mongaup Grossman (Sat, 4/13)	
	20-21	Great Swamp Schreiber/Grefig (Sat, 4/20)		Westfield AMC-CT (Sat, 4/20)
	27-28	Pine Barrens Watters/Hladky (Sat, 4/27)		Ten Mile River Grossman (Sat, 4/27)
<b>May</b>	4-5	Oswego Watters/Hladky (Sat, 5/4)	West River AMC-CT (Sat, 5/4) Otter Brook AMC-CT (Sun, 5/5)	
	11-12 (Mothers Day)			River Rescue AMC Boston Held at Charlemont, MA (Sat, 5/11)
	18/19	Walkill Horowitz/Allen (Sun, 5/19)	Housatonic AMC-CT (Sun, 5/19)	
	25-26 (Memorial Day)			
<b>Jun</b> 1-2	Mullica Family Trip Watters	AMC NY-NoJ Chapter Picnic Mohican Outdoor Center		



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the quiet majesty of  
**South Florida**  
 Wed-Wed,  
 Jan 15-22, 2025

sea kayaking,  
 walking tours,  
 and more



**CLICK HERE**



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[www.getyourguide.com](http://www.getyourguide.com)



Jodi Frediani / Men's Journal



Aardvark's Florida Kayak Company



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