Namekagon River Display Popular

The new WCHM display celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act has turned out to be quite popular with museum visitors. Entitled “Wisconsin’s Moving National Park,” the display focuses on the Namekagon River in Wisconsin, which together with the St. Croix River forms the St Croix National Scenic Riverway. “Everybody that visits the museum loves the new display, especially the wall size map of the Riverway,” claims WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke, “They all want to look up where they have been on the river, or where they are planning to go.”

Archeological items in the display illustrate the history of the riverway, first as an ancient travel route for Native Americans, then as an avenue of exploration and trade for the Voyageurs, later as the major mode of transportation for the timber industry, and most recently as a recreational opportunity. “It is surprising to learn that so many people, even those familiar with the St Croix and the Namekagon, don’t realize the riverway is part of the National Park Service and essentially a National Park,” explains Malischke. “We are happy to educate them to that fact, and also about the historic significance of the riverway as a canoe route. And we have the National Park Service and Fort Folle Avoine to thank for the loan of items in the display.”

Robert Morris Presents Caribou Kayak: Building Boats to Survive

Robert Morris from the Brewery Creek Small Boat Shop in Vancouver, British Columbia, and author of the illustrated instructional book “Building Skin-on-Frame Boats”, will present “Caribou Kayak: Building Boats to Survive” at the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum on Wednesday August 1st. It will be an evening of high arctic video, photographs, and storytelling. The presentation begins at 7:30 pm and is free and open to the public.

The Netsilingmeot kayak is primarily a caribou hunting boat. Survival in the high arctic was measured not just with food, but in the number of caribou hides a man could supply his family for clothing. Hip-wide and nearly twenty feet long, every aspect of the Netsilingmeot kayak’s design was optimized for lancing and killing caribou as they crossed rivers. In the age of aircraft, skidoos and ATVs, caribou no longer need to be chased down and lanced from a kayak. Why then were Morris and shop mate Mark Reuten invited to work with elders in the community of Kugaaruk to reestablish local kayak building traditions?

Join Robert Morris as he explores what went right, what went wrong, and how his experience in the Kugaaruk community informed his understanding of boat building, teaching, and his place in the world. The presentation begins at 7:30 pm at the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum in Spooner (312 N Front St) and is free and open to the public.
2018 Opening Day A Heated Success

With temperatures and the heat index well into the 90s and nearing 100 on the afternoon of May 26th, the annual WCHM Canoe & Wooden Boat Show continued under sunny skies for Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Day.

A record thirty-five exhibitors braved the heat and brought their items for show. The music went on throughout the day with Brave Cowboy, Four Mile Portage, and Tom & Jed.(pictured). The food booth ran out of food and served up plenty of beer. The canoe shop buzzed with activity and the exhibit hall was crowded.

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News Briefs & Upcoming Events

Northwest Wisconsin Suffers June Flooding

Heavy rains caused flooding and flash floods in northwestern Wisconsin in early June. The National Weather Service says the area received seven to twelve inches of rain. The counties with the most damage included Douglas, Ashland, Bayfield, Price, Iron and Sawyer Counties. Many area roads were closed due to washouts, with some cities and towns being unreachable for periods of time. The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum in Spooner was unaffected, as was the city of Spooner itself, which is in Washburn County.

WCHM Finds New Deal For Canoe Storage

The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum has arranged a cost free deal with a local business to store some of its canoe collections. Crystal Creek is a family owned livestock nutrition and animal health company that has been serving the farming community since 1997. They provide a line of high quality nutritional supplements and animal health aids along with consulting services. The company recently constructed a new, large warehouse to meet their recent growth, and offered a small portion of extra space to WCHM. The museum currently has eight canoes stored there, leaving much needed space in its own storage shed for new acquisitions. You can find out more about Crystal Creek at https://crystalcreeknatural.com.

Canoe Shop Demos Popular on Opening Day

Volunteers provided a number of interesting and educational demonstrations in the museum canoe shop during Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Day. Jamie Dunn of Spooner and Barry Christenson of Fort Ripley (MN) recanvassed a canoe. Norb Pintens of Rice Lake and Mike Johnson of Spooner demonstrated a couple different ways to bend stems, including a steamed version and a laminating method. And Ron Carlson of Spooner continued work on his restoration of a 1951 Chestnut 18’ Guides Special, replacing a few worn ribs.

Volunteers Needed

WCHM is looking for new volunteers to join the ranks of the “Keymasters,” the folks that dedicate three or four hours every couple of weeks during the summer to open the museum exhibit hall to visitors. WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke says “No special knowledge or skills are required, just a friendly attitude and a willingness to be prompt and responsible.” Inquiries for more information can be made to Jed Malischke at 715-635-2479 or by writing to jed@wisconsincanoeheritagemuseum.org.

WCHM Board Developing New Strategic Plan

The WCHM Board of Directors held a planning retreat this past winter at the Heartwood Conference Center in Northwest Wisconsin. The purpose of the retreat was to begin development of a new strategic plan for the museum. Since then the board has been working in various committee groups on such hot topics as finance and fundraising, building and facilities, marketing and visibility, collections and exhibits, and programming and education. They are currently in the process of providing finishing touches on a plan intended to extend for the next five to ten years starting in 2019.
Videographer Jim Erikson To Visit WCHM This Summer

Jim Erikson is one of the nation's preeminent commercial photographers. For over 30 years Jim has created timeless imagery for hundreds of blue chip clients, including AT&T, American Express, Wells Fargo, Cisco, General Motors, HBO, Home Depot, and many others. He is known for his ability to capture spontaneous and unexpectedly telling moments that connect with the viewer in a way that just makes you want to be there. You can see some of his work on his website for Erickson Stock at jimerickson.com.

Jim is planning a visit to the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum in July and August 2018. He has visited in the past, says he loves the museum, and has offered to create a video for the museum to use commercially. Together with the WCHM, Jim is searching for a couple of people, preferably seniors, that are devoted to canoeing and would like to participate in the making of this video. If you are interested, or know someone who would be a good candidate, contact WCHM Executive Director at jed@wisconsincanoeheritagemuseum.org.

Upper Great Lakes Regional Canoe Assembly 2018
Celebrating Canoes Past & Present In Ely August 24-26

The Upper Great Lakes Regional Assembly (UGLRCA) of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association (WCHA) will be held in Ely, Minnesota, in 2018 at YMCA Camp Widjiwagan on Burntside Lake on August 24-26.

Dubbed a “Celebration of Canoes: Past & Present,” this year’s event will be in special honor of canoes built by and the legacy of Joe Seliga. Join like-minded canoe enthusiasts from around the region for this unique canoe focused event. Widji will provide food and lodging, while partners from the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association, Minnesota Canoe Museum, and Ely Folk School will collectively provide canoe related activities and presentations from regional experts.

Further information on the event can be found at on a special Facebook site setup specifically for this event at https://www.facebook.com/celebratingcanoes/. It includes a recent tentative schedule of events for the three day event. Friday activities will be based out of Semer’s Beach in Ely and Friday evening the event will move to YMCA Camp Widjiwagan for the remainder of the weekend.

Lodging and reservations information is available at https://www.ymcamn.org/camp_widjiwagan_news__events/2018/04/04/10156/celebration_of_canoes_past_and_present. For vendor space or questions call Alex Comb at Stewart River Boatworks, www.stewartriver.com or 218-834-2506.

Thank You to These Supporting Members
Jim Hart
Jill Weber Dean & Jeffrey Dean
Kurt & Susan Sroka

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