



# The Paddle

*Winter 2012*

<http://www.masondixoncanoecub.com/>

## *Presidents Message*

### **Why We Paddle**

By John Enagonio

What are the things that get you charged up when paddling season comes around?

Maybe you paddle for the companionship. Maybe for the relaxation. Maybe for the wilderness experience, and for the challenge of doing harder runs each year. Maybe you paddle for the fitness. Maybe the focus required to paddle well helps you get a better sense of balance back at home and work.

People paddle for many different reasons. As your new MDCC president, I hope our club can be a place where many different paddling styles are welcome, and where we listen and embrace each other's motivations for paddling.

I personally get a thrill when I have a chance to paddle with one of our club's several competitive paddlers or a well-known trip leader who has the skills to run Class IV or harder. I might just pick up one or two new things but that's enough to carry with me. I also enjoy when I'm in the trip leader role, taking someone on a run they've never done, especially if it's something that is personally a challenge for them. While I generally stick with things no harder than Class III, I really love the unpredictability of catching a free-running creek after a spring rain.

If there is a thread here I guess it's that everyone is an individual, and that as a club we should offer opportunities for people to seek whatever it is that gives them that "top of the world" experience. Even if you've been paddling for years, I bet you still remember those people that were able to relate to you as a beginner or an intermediate, and just help make the experience fun for you. Maybe you can be that kind of mentor for someone else.

Are there specific activities you want to see out of the club this year, or specific things you can help bring to the club? Can you help organize or teach a beginner class? An intermediate class? Would you attend a swiftwater rescue class or a safety workshop? Would you be interested in a trip leaders seminar? Is there a specific river you'd like to see us run and can help lead it or organize the trip?

I look forward to hearing your feedback, at [enagonio@yahoo.com](mailto:enagonio@yahoo.com), and email addresses for our other officers and board members are on the MDCC web site. Let us know what you see on the horizon line.

## **2012 MDCC BOD and Officers**

### **Your 2012 Officers:**

**President:** John Enagonio

**Secretary:** Sheila Chapelle

**Vice President:** Ericka Hoffmann

**Treasurer/Membership:** Fred Dalauro

### **Your 2012 Volunteers** (excluding trip coordinators, instructors, etc):

Newsletter Editor and Membership chair: Dan Eigenbrode

Conservation Chair: Chuck Davis

Safety Chair: Jim Norton

Pool Session Coordinator: Dave Russo

Web Master: Vitas Eidukevicius and Chuck Davis

### **Your 2012 Board of Directors:**

Merrill Pearson

Bobby Miller

Jim Norton

Jamie Geraghty

Vitas Eidukevicius

Dave Russo

Ron Shanholz

John Navarro

### **MDCC new Prez !**



**John Enagonio (aka John E)**

**Name that Rapid !**



First to post the correct answers on the designated thread for this (thread titled "Name that rapid" started by DanE) wins something at the banquet. You can play if you won the prize before, but you may not get another prize, just the recognition you have computer time no one else does. Hint: not a local run or dam release, photo taken from a scouting rock on river left. The usual line for this is far right or for the timid, a short carry and paddle a ledge river left (not shown).

**Mark your Calendar !**

## 2012 MDCC Banquet

\*\*\*Note new location\*\*\*

Saturday, **March 3rd**, 2012

**6:00 pm** (5:30 for setup)

**Bolivar Community Center**

60 Panama Street **Harpers Ferry, WV 25425**

All members and guest welcome. Center has a strict "no alcohol" rule.

Pot Luck. Please bring an ample dish to share. Paper/plasticware, soda, ice and door prizes provided.

Contact: John Enagonio [enagonio@yahoo.com](mailto:enagonio@yahoo.com)

## Roll Sessions 2012

Sunday mornings **March 4, 11, 18, & 25**

**9:00 am** till 11:00 am is pool time. OK to arrive as early as 8:30.

**Hagerstown YMCA** 1100 Eastern Blvd N

Must be paid MDCC member (\$10 annual household fee). Cost per session per person \$15.00.

Clean gear and kayaks are required. Free volunteer instruction. Equipment not provided by MDCC, but members can provide extra gear with prior notification. No need to register beforehand and exact change or check appreciated. If you require gear and/or instructor, or have any questions about the pool sessions, contact Dave Russo. [drusso48@aol.com](mailto:drusso48@aol.com)

## Trips 2012

Need trip coordinators for the 2012 schedule. Contact Ericka Hoffmann to schedule your trip! She will be on hand at the banquet asking nicely if not twisting arms for volunteers to organize trips. You don't necessarily have to be the leader, just wanting to paddle. Pick your day, your river, and the rest will come together. You can also just pick a date and make the trip a Dealers Choice based on what is running closer to the time.

Ericka Hoffmann: [ehkayak@gmail.com](mailto:ehkayak@gmail.com)

Check the message board and schedule for updates on all MDCC events and trips.

[MDCC Message Board](#)

[MDCC Schedule](#)

## Trip Reports (2 !!)

### Tohickan Trip Report - November 5, 2011

By *Diesel Dave*

A trip report? Does anyone write these things anymore? I always thought it was mandatory after personal 1st descents or stepping up a level. This season I found myself sticking pretty much close to home, with the occasional North Branch or Little Falls excursion. But after paddling the Lehigh for the 1st time on an excellent trip led by Ron Shanholtz in September, I decided to join the MDCC group, led by Sean Caron, to the Tohickan release in early November.

Since I thought the Lehigh was over rated, I wasn't too fearful of the Tohickan, and watched as much video footage as I could find, and interviewed several paddlers who had already run it. Everyone thought it was fairly straight forward, if you followed the lines, and we knew Sean had run it many, many times. We even invited newbies Bonnie & Earl.

Several of us drove up the night before having reserved rooms at the Wedgewood Inn Bed & Breakfast (which we all highly recommend) in New Hope, PA. We enjoyed a leisurely nice gourmet breakfast, including fruit and quiche, before heading out to meet Sean, Earl, and John Roche at the put-in to set up shuttle. By now I was a little nervous, having read a review from a PA club that suggested that if you could run the Lower Yough, then you could do the Tohickan. I still think that's a little exaggerated...maybe on a par with the Casselman?

Since the run is barely three miles, the original plan was to run it several times. But finding the put-in proved to be more difficult than anticipated. (Note to self: be sure to always take good directions). We thought we could just follow all the other boats, but there were none to be seen, and the GPS just took us around in circles. We finally found some other boaters and got directions, and finally met up with Sean and Earl, who had already set shuttle and were thankfully still waiting for us, but we decided we needed more vehicles at the bottom so we set shuttle again. John R. found Lisa's group and decided to paddle with them instead.

Finally (to Sean's relief) our small band started out...Sean in the lead, followed closely by Susan, Constance, myself, Bonnie, Earl, and Keith, we kept the same order fairly consistently. Susan and Constance both had solid runs. Diesel Keith was the 1st to flip in a particularly knarly drop early on, (the Chute?) and had a successful combat roll. Since one of the benefits (and potential liability) of being last is that not too many people witness you, most of us missed it.

Then it was my turn. Probably somewhere near the "Second Ledge" (?), I was sitting in an eddy (on the opposite side for the creek from everyone else which was not infrequently the case) and everyone started to peel out for the next section. I found myself sitting behind a canoeist who was apparently stuck on a rock, trying to bounce off, and effectively blocking my exit. After what seemed like many minutes, and my group proceeding without me, impatience got the better of me, and I thought I could quickly pass the canoe before she came unstuck from her perch. I'm sure there must be some applicable Murphy's law relating to timing and the dislocation of formerly stationary objects, but it was that Newtonian law that stipulates that no two objects can occupy the same space at the same time which quickly became the imminent concern .... Simply put: "the bigger boat always wins". My mental (Note to self: "NEVER try to pass a stuck canoe") had to be quick because I even more quickly careened sideways into a hole and instantaneously found myself upside down. I had no perception of the coldness of the water, but automatically set up and began my sweep, and with my brain screaming "head down!" "head down!" I quickly found myself right side up and pleased with a successful

combat roll. Diesel's Rule! The confidence from that roll stayed with me the rest of the trip, and I was able to "stay loose", even in some tough spots.

The Tohickan is a somewhat unique Class III trip. Rather than a mixed variety of rapids, it starts off with a fairly easy succession of wave trains and ledges, which crescendo in difficulty with each rapid until Hat's Rock at the end. Many of the ledges are almost blind drops, until you get right up on them, so it's best to follow someone familiar with the best lines. A progression of smaller ledges builds to "No Name" ledge, so it was next to impossible to know which ledge was which, or "the Chute", "Race course", etc, which would have served as better points of reference in a trip report.

Earl was the next, but again, being toward the end of our group, most of us missed it. We all felt bad that he swam because absolutely no one had practiced rolling more this year than Earl did. Still, after your head bounces off a few rocks, it's probably not safe to stay under for very long. We were all glad to hear that Earl was able to redeem himself on a perfect subsequent run.

At one point we eddied out and Sean announced a feature he called "Baby's first Boof", a maybe 3 foot blind drop, and encouraged all of us to try it. I think Keith was the only one of us to actually hit it correctly. Susan said he was ecstatic which she could tell from the grin on his face. I know I went over sideways, and was relieved to stay upright. We all tried it without mishap. I'm anxious to see how the video turned out on that one. Sean??

I kept trying to figure out the names of the rapids, but no one seemed to know. I missed the proscribed line too many times, and frequently found myself in places I wasn't supposed to be, remembering too late Sean's admonition to "miss the big holes". Fortunately Bonnie didn't follow me too closely and was able to find her own line most of the way down. For a newbie without a roll whose prior experience included only the Staircase and the North Branch, she was having a fantastic run, that is, of course, until I sadly and unfortunately tried to congratulate her just before Hat's Rock... jinx! I felt so bad (Another note to self... "always wait until the very end to compliment another paddler")

We eddied out river *left* above Hat's Rock, which is a fairly blind drop run (of course) towards river *right*. The ferry proved to be difficult, and few of us made the best line. I found myself in some really nasty stuff, dropping from one hole into the next, but miraculously stayed upright. Bonnie wasn't so lucky, and took the swim, in what otherwise would have been a flawless run....(Sorry Bonnie!)

The few remaining rapids were anti-climatic, and we finally found ourselves at the end at what seemed to me to be one of the longest 3 miles I have run. After shuttling Sean and Earl back to the top for a second run, the rest of us headed back to New Hope, satisfied with our single run, and looking forward to a hot shower and a good dinner at a local restaurant.

I can't believe it's taken me so long to get there, but Tohickan Creek is definitely a run worth the time and distance. The Spring 2012 release is set for March 24-25....who's in?

## **Sahalie Falls!**

By Bobby Miller

**The water rushed toward the lip of the falls, freefalling 80 feet into a short cove surrounded by rocks. Fear had overcome my body and yet there I was in the eddy above, about to paddle over the scariest drop of my life....**



Typically, I like to write in a distinct style, an overtly egotistical and humorous character named the Dogg whose accomplishments fuel his descent over the craziest drops. However, I have decided to break character and give you a complete and honest account of one of the greatest accomplishments of my paddling career, running Sahalie Falls.

The word Sahalie comes from the Chinook Indians and means heaven or a high place. Sahalie Falls is an 80 foot waterfall on the McKenzie River in Oregon and certainly is a magical spot. The falls first gained fame near the turn of the century when Shannon Carroll took a successful plunge over the falls in what was, at that time, one of the highest waterfalls ever run in a kayak. Since that day, the height of the waterfalls being run has climbed but few have traveled to Sahalie to give this waterfall a try, and with good reason. Sahalie, aside from being tall, has a narrow lip that has serious potential for going off at the wrong point. In the center of the flow is a narrow blue highway of water that carries you cleanly off the falls. However, on the left and right are seams that threaten to alter your well laid plans and send you toward the rocks that lay on the side of the pool. On top of this, there is a twisty Class 4 approach with a series of ledges and holes and a major Class 5+ rapid immediately below. All of this creates one frightening sequence that is not to be taken lightly.

None of the Portland locals had off work or had any interest in Sahalie Falls but luckily, I caught up with the Bomb Flow boys: Evan Garcia, Fred Norquist, and Ryan Lucas. They were interested in some waterfall action so my wife, Melissa, and I headed over with a borrowed Volvo (thanks Bryon!) and met up with them. I was pleased to be at such a drop with such an experienced group of waterfall huckers, arguably some of the best in the business. We gave a long and detailed scout, talking about lines, looking at different angles, and debating the odds of a successful run. Evan had run the drop before and, after a long discussion, decided he was going for it. I hadn't slept hardly at all the night before due to nerves and was terrified now staring at the falls. Still, I found myself putting my paddling gear on to also make a descent.

Fred, Ryan, and Melissa got into position with safety and cameras. We took one last scout and ran the first approach drop. There was a tree blocking the second approach drop so we portaged and placed our boats at the eddy right above the lip. The falls looked 10 times more ferocious from the right bank due to the curler creating a deep depression that sent the water crashing down hard on the rocks below. One false move could be accompanied with dire consequences. Evan thankfully decided to go first with the confidence and purpose that I had expected from a paddler of his stature. He sailed over the falls and plunged cleanly into the pool below. At this point, standing all alone on the bank, it was me versus the falls. There was nothing left to do but to go out and execute the moves that I had performed millions of times throughout my long career of running Class 5. That certainty in my own abilities allowed me to overcome the intense sense of awe at the behemoth that lay before me.

I found myself climbing into my boat, a keen sense of determination in my heart and mind. I practiced my tuck one last time and began to peel out. As I was starting to exit the eddy, I didn't like my angle so I calmly backed myself into the eddy where I decided to restart. This time, I was right where I wanted to be. The approach was blind, not allowing the certitude of knowing that I was on line until I had begun to start over the slope toward the lip. I was pleased to see the blue highway right in front of me and I traveled down the slope and over the edge where an 80 foot freefall stood between me and the water below. I started into my tuck and fell for what seemed like forever before I felt my boat slice cleanly straight into the water below. After a quick roll, I was ecstatic to have overcome my fears and had a great run of the falls. I celebrated with my new friends and got into position for safety while Fred suited up and had his own successful run of the falls.

What an incredible day! Sahalie Falls is the greatest single waterfall that I have ever run and, with the finest of lines, is certainly one of the most dangerous drops I have run as well. I was fortunate to be surrounded that day with friends who took the time to properly scout and set up safety to add a degree of control to an unpredictable variable. Paddling in the Pacific Northwest has created tremendous adventures and memories and this day ranks up there near the top of it all. Melissa and I have a baby girl due in April and have decided to name her Sahalie, in honor of our adventures in the Pacific Northwest.

For a video and the article with more photos visit:

<http://www.fluid-junction.com/blog/index.php/post/2011/11/23/Sahalie-Falls>





**Bobby begins his descent of Sahalie Falls**

### **What Would You Like Out of your Club?**

Are there specific activities you want to see out of the club this year, or specific things you can help bring to the club? Can you help organize or teach a beginner class? An intermediate class? Would you attend a swiftwater rescue class or a safety workshop? Would you be interested in a trip leaders seminar? Is there a specific river you'd like to see us run, and can you help lead it or organize the trip?

Let us know what you would like to see out of your club. Even if you're new to the club your opinion counts. Email addresses for all of our officers and board members are on the MDCC web site and we look forward to hearing from you.

## Editor's Notes

### THANKS

To Dave Russo, Bobby Miller and President John Enagonio for their timely The Paddle submissions.

### River Access in the Harpers Ferry area !

River access in the Harpers Ferry area has become difficult at times especially during the summer season. John E has put the ball in motion on building a relationship with park leadership so that paddlers can have a voice when decisions are made. Read John's update on the website and feel free to jump in. We appreciate John's efforts and the park service for recognizing the issues at hand.

[Harpers Ferry Access Post](#)

### Welcome !

#### New members:

Joseph and Kimberly Melody, Patrick Krisak, Kim and Jen Buttleman, Ken and Kathy Conover.

### JOIN ! RENEW !

Send in your membership dues and forms soon! Banquet and pool sessions just around the corner! Go here for the info to do so:

<http://www.masondixoncanoecclub.com/MDCC/Join.html>

Happy New Year. See you on the river in 2012!

### Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers



Melius vivit qui remigat

*Who paddles lives better*