

PADDLER

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Newsletter of the Rhode Island Canoe & Kayak Association

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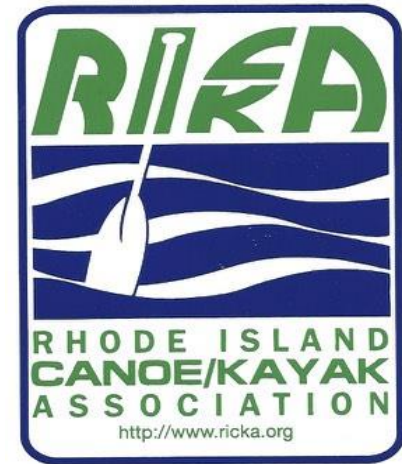
March Club Meeting Spring Soiree at Chelo's Warwick

Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

We will start off RICKA's 47th year with our annual [Spring Soiree](#) at [Chelo's](#) in Warwick.

For many years, the Spring Soiree was RICKA's annual banquet held at the Quonset Club. This year we will be returning to Chelo's on Post Road in Warwick. Known for its great food, we have reserved the upstairs area of the restaurant for the evening. Everyone will be responsible for their own food and drinks, and Chelo's will add a 20% gratuity.

Chelo's is located at 2225 Post Road, Warwick. Please RSVP to Sharon Dragon at shdrag1@gmail.com by Monday, March 18th if you plan to attend. We look forward to seeing you at this fun event.



Final Pool Practice Session March 10, 2024 from 12:15 to 2:15 p.m.

The final pool practice session will be on March 10th from 12:15 to 2:15 at the [South County YMCA](#). Contact Rich Coupland at rlcoupland@msn.com to be put on the sign-up email list.

Nominations Open for the RICKA Executive Board

Nominations are now open for club officers and Members-at-Large to the RICKA Executive Board. The Executive Board is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the club and the future directions the club will take. If you are interested in any of these positions, or would like to nominate someone else, please contact Cheryl Thompson at stonefoxfarm@juno.com.

Flatwater Planning Meeting April 6, 2024 from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Join us at [Visitor Center at River Bend Farm](#) for our annual [Flatwater](#) Planning Meeting. At this meeting, we will set up our calendar for the 2024 year, so please bring ideas for trips. Contact Cheryl Thompson at stonefoxfarm@juno.com for additional information.

Sea Kayak Paddle, Planning Meeting, and Potluck May 4, 2024 – save the date!

The annual [Sea Kayak](#) spring planning meeting and potluck will be held on May 4th at Jon Sharlin's house in Westport, MA following a morning paddle in the area. Details are TBD, and will be posted in the April/May Paddlers, and on the [website](#).

From the RICKA Library...

Whitewater Paddling and Rescue

Whitewater Handbook

By Bruce Lessels

Whitewater kayaking and canoeing have come a long way in the last few years with new gear, new techniques, and new ways to run the river. To start the novice right off, or to polish whitewater skills already acquired, renowned whitewater paddler and instructor Bruce Lessels has created step-by-step lessons for all essential techniques. He surveys safety issues such as managing risk, dealing with hazards, and rescue tools. Equipment choices are also surveyed. An introduction to racing is provided along with advanced techniques of playboating, squirt boating.

Whitewater Rescue Manual

By Charles Walbridge & Wayne Sundmacher Sr.

Regardless of skill, running rivers presents an element of danger. *Whitewater Rescue Manual* presents a tightly focused look at the best, most current techniques for both self-rescue and rescue of others on the river. The authors provide well-reasoned guidance that will teach you when to stay with the boat and when not to; how to retrieve a lost boat; how to swim out of trouble and when not to swim; how to reach a victim by wading, swimming, or using ropes; how to coordinate a rescue effort how to make sure that would-be rescuers don't become victims.

These are just two of the great books and videos covering the range of paddling topics that are available in our [collection](#). If you would like to check out these or any other selections, contact Bill Hahn at librarian@ricka.org. Library selections can be mailed to you with a postage paid return mailer provided at no cost to the borrower.

RICKA is an ACA



Paddle America Club

Executive Board:

The next Executive Board meeting will be held on March 6th at 7:00 p.m. online as a ZOOM videoconference. To participate contact Frank Cortesa at frankcortesa@charter.net and the Zoom link will be sent to you.

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<http://ricka.org/paddler/paddler/PaddlerList.HTML>

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Registration Form:

[Join the Fun!](#)

The **Paddler** is published monthly except December by the Rhode Island Canoe & Kayak Association, Inc.

Your RICKA membership expires on March 31, 2024...

Please renew your RICKA membership now!

Please visit the website at:

[Join the Fun!](#)

Rhode Island Canoe & Kayak Association

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Wilderness: Chuck Horbert401-418-2838..... chorbert13@gmail.com

Please Renew your Membership Now

It's Easy with Our On-line Registration Form!

You'll be supporting Rhode Island's oldest and largest paddle sports club

For 47 years, the Rhode Island Canoe & Kayak Association (RICKA) has been providing great paddling opportunities for its members. We are the oldest and largest paddle sport club in Rhode Island. A new membership year begins on April 1st, so please join or renew your membership today.

Why should you join RICKA? Let's start with the trips. Each year RICKA organizes hundreds of trips ranging from easy daytrips to weeklong excursions. Whether you enjoy [flatwater](#), [sea kayaking](#), [whitewater](#) or [wilderness tripping](#), there is trip for every interest and skill level at RICKA.

Are you looking to improve your paddling skills? Training is also an important part of the RICKA mission. Each year RICKA offers many fun and informative training sessions. Many of these sessions are offered free of charge, or at a significant discount to our members.

In addition to trips and training, we produce eleven monthly issues of our outstanding newsletter the [Paddler](#), hold [monthly meetings](#) with interesting and informative speakers, and maintain the [websites](#), [Facebook page](#), and message boards that keep you up-to-date on trips and activities. Our [library](#) also includes an extensive collection of paddling books and videos covering all aspects of paddling.

Do you need to buy or sell boat? You should check out the [RICKA Classified Ads](#) on our website and in the Paddler. If you can't find what you need there, RICKA members also get [special discounts](#) at several area retailers.

To register for this year's season we strongly recommend that you use our on-line registration form. RICKA is a web-based club, and the on-line form provides an efficient, secure, and flexible registration process. So, here's what to expect ...

With the online form, you will see that there isn't a lot of "required" information (name, email, type of membership), but we do have fields for optional information like being able to add a free household adult to your membership.

The type or membership remains the same with RICKA-only or the combined RICKA/BVPC options.

After entering your info, follow the flow of the form to enter your payment option. For those choosing the preferred no-hassle



Enjoy the many benefits of RICKA membership

online payment, you will be directed to a PayPal-branded online portal where you can choose to pay with credit or debit card. You do not need to have a PayPal account.

For those who prefer, check payment is available with the address provided when that option is chosen. Note also that because RICKA is run by member volunteers, it may be several weeks before checks are processed.

Upon registering you will be emailed a welcome message with important details related to our club. You will also receive an attachment that includes a pdf of your form, invoice, and membership card (valid upon payment). Utilize either the welcome message or your card for paddles and store discounts.

So please join or renew for the 2024 season here:
[Join the Fun](#)

Finally, if you have any issues or prefer not to utilize the new form, simply email membership at; rickamembership@gmail.com

Thank you for your support in the coming year, and we look forward to seeing you on the water.



Registration is easy with our on-line form

Practice Group Q&A

Paddling with RICKA Whitewater

What is the RICKA Whitewater group?

The [Whitewater](#) group is the smallest of RICKA's four interest groups. We paddle whitewater rivers and streams across New England.

What is a whitewater trip?

Whitewater trips are designated according to difficulty of the rapids (see AMC River Ratings at right). Our trips range from easy class I trips which are open to any experienced RICKA paddler, to extremely difficult class IV trips which are open to experienced whitewater paddlers only. Most trips are rated class II/III.

An important difference between whitewater and flatwater trips is one of emphasis. A whitewater trip usually takes place on a single section of a river that happens to have the desired level of difficulty. We may spend an hour playing at a single rapid.

How do I find out about trips?

On occasion, RICKA Whitewater trips are posted on the trip calendar on our website. <https://www.ricka-flatwater.org/wwtrips.htm>

More often, they are posted as "bootleg" trips on the club's message board. http://members.boardhost.com/RI_Whitewater/

Please note that these bootleg trips are not official RICKA trips. They are posted for the convenience of our paddlers. As always, you are responsible for determining if the trip is suitable for your level of experience.



Paul Leclerc at the Gorge Drop on the Knightville section of the Westfield River

Most RICKA members also paddle with other whitewater groups such as the AMC, MVP, PPCS or other Facebook groups.

How do I join a trip?

Official RICKA Whitewater trips are always RSVP trips. Contact the leader via email or at the phone number listed. Most "bootleg" trips are "show and go" requiring no advanced notice other than confirmation on the message board.

What equipment do I need?

Every paddler will need a whitewater canoe or kayak with floatation, paddle, personal floatation device (PFD) and a properly fitted whitewater helmet. You can find a list of other equipment on our website.

What about clothing?

Whitewater paddling is definitely a water sport, and you should expect to get wet. Since the whitewater paddling season begins early in the spring, cold water paddling gear is required.

Do you offer training?

RICKA occasionally offers a Class II Kayak Whitewater School – details are posted on the website and in the Paddler.

For additional information on Whitewater paddling, please contact Whitewater Chair Paul Leclerc at paul_leclerc@hotmail.com.

2024 Dam Release Schedule

Dam releases are a guaranteed opportunities to paddle whitewater. Here are the 2024 dates for some of the dam releases that are frequently attended by RICKA whitewater paddlers:

[Lower Otter Brook](#) - Class II

April 14, 2024 - 9:00 AM to 3:30
May 4, 2024 - 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
May 5, 2024 - 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

[Upper Millers](#) - Class II/III

April 13 - 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
April 14 - 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

[Westfield – Knightville](#) - class II/III

April 22 2023 - 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
April 23, 2022 - 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

[Upper West River](#) - class II/III

Sept 21, 2024 - 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM
Sept 22, 2024 - 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM

There are also regular releases throughout the summer on the [Fife Brook](#) (class II/III) and [Dryway](#) (class III/IV) sections of the Deerfield River.

AMC River Ratings

Flatwater - There is little or no current - paddling upstream is easy.

Quickwater - The river moves fast, but is generally smooth.

Class I - Fast moving water with riffles and small waves, but few obstructions.

Class II - Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels that are evident without scouting.

Class III - Rapids with high, irregular waves and narrow passages requiring complex maneuvering in fast current.

Class IV - Large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages requiring fast and demanding maneuvers under pressure.

Big Water in the North Maine Woods

By Paul Leclerc

For those of you that don't know me – I'm the [Whitewater](#) Chair for RICKA. The RICKA whitewater group is small and for good reason - Rhode Island has no whitewater. So the adrenaline must be caught elsewhere. At one time RICKA had a large and active whitewater group, but most of those paddlers have either dropped out or moved away. These days we paddle mostly with other groups. For this trip, Pat and I were loading up for a weekend in the West Forks, Maine, home of the Dead and Kennebec Rivers for a trip with the [Penobscot Paddle and Chowder Society](#), or "Chowder Heads" for short.

The Dead arises at Flagstaff Lake and flows general south for 42-miles to its convergence with the Kennebec River at The Forks. The section from [Spencer Falls to West Forks](#) is New England's longest stretch of continuous whitewater at approximately 15-miles, with releases scheduled throughout the year ranging from a mellow 1,300 cfs (cubic feet per second) to a furious 6,000+.

The shuttle to the Dead was once an adventure in itself. Grinning paddlers sharing exaggerated stories packed on the back of an old flatbed truck or into a rickety old school bus endured a bumpy,



Old shuttle truck from Webbs



Lower Poplar on the Dead

dusty 45-minute ride to the put-in. The flatbed and bus are long since gone and replaced by pick-ups, but the stories are still good and the ride is still an adventure.

This weekend would be a robust 4,000 with plenty of class III and IV rapids. Along with the rafting companies, we joined a group of 25 paddlers from the region for the trip and it did not disappoint. At 4,000 many of the rapids require challenging hole-dodging maneuvers.

On the very last, most difficult rapid, I saw Pat ahead of me shouting, "Paddle right! Paddle right!" Seeing the fast approaching wall of water, I paddled hard and got turned 180 degrees in the crosscurrents. Without hesitation, and Pat now following behind, I looked over my shoulder and paddled backwards into the gaping hole. My plan, if I survived the crashing waters, was to spin around on top of the eight-foot crest. Success! Pat and I yelled a few choice expletives and continued down to the take-out at the riverside campground.

The following day we joined a crew of nine on the Kennebec - a step up from the Dead in terms of speed and amplitude. The section we would be running through the [Kennebec Gorge](#) is only 3½-miles, but two of those miles are confined to a canyon with three major rapids – Big Momma, Magic Falls and Maytag. Cross currents and big waves meet everywhere and eddying out is a challenge. Scouting is not possible, and once you are in the gorge you are committed to the run.

As it were, at the end of Big Momma, Pat and I both flipped. After what seemed an eternity in the water's grip, I was unable to roll up. I pulled the skirt and swam for the canyon walls - an exhausting undertaking. After climbing up the sharp, shale cliffs, I jumped onto a passing raft to be reunited with my kayak in an eddy below.

Next up was Magic and Maytag in succession, the most difficult thrashing turbulence of class IV water I've ever been in. Everyone came through clean, and we paddled the remaining class II/III out to the takeout.

Unfortunately, I paddled hard river right to get around a raft and before I could correct my mistake, I found myself going into a small pour over – water flowing over a large boulder with a recirculating hydraulic at the bottom. Pat and another kayaker ended up following me and all got sucked in. I got bumped out of my boat and Pat and the other fella got kicked out of the hole.



Magic Falls on the Kennebec

Two swims on the day. Not what I was looking for, but nevertheless another successful weekend in Maine. Big water can be tough to find in southern New England, but the [Dryway](#) section of the Deerfield River is another location for reliable whitewater releases. SYOTR.

Paul is the RICKA [Whitewater](#) Chair, a [Flatwater](#) leader and an active mountain biker with the [New England Mountain Bike Association](#).

Before you Paddle...

Educate yourself about the area in which you will be paddling, and carry appropriate gear, clothing, water, food, etc. Always check the weather forecast before launching. **YOU ALONE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE DECISION TO LAUNCH YOUR BOAT.**

Flatwater Trips

Check the [Flatwater Message Board](#) for ad-hoc trips and hikes. Appropriate skills and equipment are required.

Flatwater Planning Meeting April 6th from 12:00 to 2:00

Join us at [Visitor Center at River Bend Farm](#) for our annual [Flatwater](#) Planning Meeting.

At this meeting, we will set up our calendar for the 2024 year, so please bring ideas for trips. If you would like to lead a trip but do not have experience, we can partner you up with an experienced leader.

We will have party pizza and soda; you may bring a snack or dish to share, if you wish. The Visitor Center is located at 287 Oak Street, Uxbridge, MA.

Contact Cheryl Thompson at stonefoxfarm@juno.com for additional information.

RICKA Adirondacks Trip September 7-14, 2024

The [Flatwater](#) group will return to Lake Eaton Campground in Long Lake Village, NY for the 2024 Adirondacks camping and paddling trip.

You can make campground reservations now at Reserve America:

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

Please try to select a site in the 10-54 area (waterfront from 31-54).

If you are planning on joining the group, please contact Chuck Horbert at chorbert13@gmail.com to be added to the list for future organizational emails..

Sea Kayak Trips

Sea Kayak trips are now posted in the Show and Go Section of the [Sea Kayak Message Board](#). Appropriate skills and equipment are required.

Pool Practice Session March 10th from 12:15 to 2:15

The [Sea Kayak](#) group's last pool practice session for members will be March 10th at the [South County YMCA](#). There are 10 signup slots available, and we do our best to give everyone an opportunity to attend at least one session. All participants must sign an [ACA insurance/waiver form](#). Please bring your ACA member number if you have one. Contact Rich Coupland at rlcoupland@msn.com to be put on the sign-up email list.

Sea Kayak Paddle, Planning Meeting, and Potluck May 4th – save the date!

The annual [Sea Kayak](#) spring planning meeting and potluck will be held on May 4th at Jon Sharlin's house in Westport, MA following a morning paddle in the area. Details are TBD, and will be posted in the April/May Paddlers, and on the [website](#).

Whitewater Trips

Check the [Whitewater Message Board](#) for ad-hoc trips and hikes. Appropriate skills and equipment are required.

Branch River Icebreaker TBD

We will run the traditional race course route – not a beginner trip. Cold weather gear (wetsuit or drysuit) is required. You must have class II skills and be properly prepared for the conditions. Final details will be posted on the [Whitewater Message Board](#) when available.

A Cold Water Caution

As we approach the spring paddling season when the air is warm but the water is still cold, its time to think about cold water safety.

Exposure to the cold can drain your strength and rob you of the ability to make sound judgments regarding safety. Cold water immersion is especially dangerous due to the initial shock and rapid loss of heat. For cold water paddling, please remember:

- Never paddle alone - at least three boats are recommended, four boats are better.
- Keep the trip short, and well within the paddling ability of the group.
- Dress for immersion in a drysuit or wetsuit. Protect your extremities with a hat, neoprene gloves and warm footwear. Always carry a change of clothes in a waterproof bag.
- Know how to recognize and treat the symptoms of hypothermia.
- Always, always, always wear your PFD.

Paddle safe. Paddle smart!

RICKA Classifieds

Classified ads free for RICKA members and are printed here on space-available basis. Please see the [website](#) for the complete list.

- **Placid Boatworks Shadow** - Garnet color, 16 feet long and 25 inches wide, ultralight carbon and kevlar fusion with carbon and kevlar fusion gunwales and thwarts. Bow has a 3 inch rocker and stern has a 1.5 inch rocker and weights 23 lbs. A fun and fast tripper - \$2,700. Call Lee at 508-286-5999
- **Gear Lab 2-piece Aukaneck Paddle** - 210 cm, excellent condition with extra tips and canvas storage sleeve - \$250. **Kokatat semi-dry suit** - large, with XL fleece dry suit layer. Good condition, but needs wrist gasket replaced - \$100. **Kokatat Farmer John Wetsuit** - large - \$40. **Shorty Wetsuit** - large, \$15. **Pro Tec Helmet** - large yellow, like new. \$25.00. **NRS Booties** - size 11, **NRS Paddle Shoes** - size 10 - both for \$25. Contact Fred g33zr2@gmail.com or text 401-569-6038
- **Valley Gemini ST composite kayak** - 14' 10 and 45 pounds. Yellow deck with white hull and a keel strip. Kayak is in excellent condition as it has only been very lightly used and stored properly indoors. Asking \$1,750 including a Werner carbon fiber touring paddle and a Seals cockpit cover. Contact Bill Hahn: bhahn02835@yahoo.com or 401524-1612
- **P&H Aries 155** - 2016, Expedition Layup w/Keel Strip, 70P Compass, Paddle Britches. Pea Green Deck/ White Seam/White Hull/White Kevlar Keel Strip. Foam Block Footrest - \$2,200. **Betsy Bay Recluse Greenland Style Boat** - 19' long and 20 1/2" wide; Weight 30 to 34 lbs. Paddler Weight 175 lbs. & Up; Spray Skirt, laminated Greenland Paddle (Betsy Bay). Adjustable foot pegs. Epoxy protection on bow and stern. Maintained in Excellent Condition - \$1,800. **P&H Cetus MV** - Carbon/Kevlar w/Kevlar Keel Strip, 70P Compass, Paddle Scabbard. Sail mounting system in place. Yellow Deck/White Seam/White Hull/White Kevlar Keel Strip. Foot pegs. Maintained in Excellent Condition: Modest amount of hull gell coat scratches and normal spider cracking - \$2,200 firm. Seller lives in Providence - text 401-654-3168
- **Necky Looksha** - 17' sea kayak. Gray with rudder. Good condition, stored indoors - \$695. Contact Jay at josephlwade@yahoo.com
- **Boriel Saguana** - 18 feet fiberglass with rudder in red - \$800. **Borial Inukshuk** - 17 feet with rudder in yellow - \$500. **Futura Surf Ski** - 19 feet in blue fiberglass with a rudder - \$1,000. **Kayak Cart** - \$60. **Lendal Paddle** - \$200. **Borial Paddle** - \$100. **Roof Rack** - Hully rollers and saddles - \$400. Other items on website. Contact Julie at 401-688-7907 or jet14jem@cox.net
- **Carbon Werner Shuna paddle** - 205cm, used only a couple of times, as a spare paddle. in like new condition. 2 piece, straight shaft - asking \$225. Contact rcruelles@gmail.com
- **Skin on frame kayak made by Seawolf** - the model is the Kurki. 17 feet long, 29 lbs, rolls easily, I easily maintain 4-5 mph in the open ocean. Spray skirt and float bags included. Delivery within the RI-CT-MA area can be negotiated. Contact 443-974-0814
- **NDK Explorer HV** - touring, expeditioning and active water play boat. About 10 years, modest gel coat scratches and cracking, Yellow over white with black deck seam and cockpit coaming. Hatch covers are in good shape. Includes a deck mounted Bruton compass and recessed deck fittings - \$1,450. Contact Gerry@seasheerpakayak.com
- **Wilderness System Sealoution 16.6** and **Necky Manitou 14** - both plastic boats are in paddle ready condition, the Sealoution could use a little TLC - \$400 for either boat. Contact mbouley@gmail.com
- **P&H Code Zero Sail for Kayak** (with mast here is the link) - used only a few times - \$200. Contact jonathansharlin@gmail.com
- **Necky Kayook** - 15', two sealed compartments, foot-controlled rudder. Includes cockpit cover, spray skirt, some accessories - \$175. Contact Ed Poyer at edpoyer@gmail.com
- **Golden Kevlar Arluk 1.8** - excellent condition, 'Ocean Cockpit', skin coat top and bottom for weight savings (48 pounds / 18"x22"), Smart Trak rudder, up to date deck lines, bungees, rudder cables, rudder cord and inner hatch covers. New Brooks neoprene sprayskirt, Snap Dragon neoprene cockpit cover, plus two used repaired Wildwasser neoprene spray skirts with zippered pockets - \$1,250 cash. Russell Norton at lovepotent@hotmail.com
- **Eddyline Fathom Touring Kayak** - Sapphire Blue, nearly new pristine condition, Includes: Seals neoprene cockpit cover Kokatat basic Sea Skirt (XL) - \$2,100. Located in metro Boston. Contact Nicholas at 978-621-7935

Send your classified ads to RICKA Webmaster Cheryl Thompson, 53 Anan Wade Road, Glocester, RI 02857-2611 or webmaster@ricka.org. Include your name for membership verification. Please notify the Webmaster when your gear is sold so that the ad can be removed. Acceptance, duration and formatting of your ad are at the webmaster's and newsletter editor's discretion.