

Paddling challenges at Gunflint Trail Canoe Races

Staff reports

Want to try your canoe paddling skills in competition? The Gunflint Trail Canoe Races offer you the chance to enter some classic and other unique races.

Ever tried to paddle backwards, facing your partner or gunnel pumping? All of these are races offered at the July 15 event to be held at the Gunflint Lodge waterfront from 4 p.m. to dusk.

The races are divided into age and gender categories with adult and child races drawing the most entrants, Race Director Ronee Smith reports. Competition is lively but friendly with teams representing resorts, outfitters, lakes or just enthusiastic paddlers. Smith says that Voyageur Outfitters has taken the all-around team totals for at least the past four years. A list of race rules has been circulated along the Trail and includes aluminum or Royalex canoes, life jackets mandatory, no intentional contact with competitors and other warnings when competition gets serious in the heat of a race. Registration is at the waterfront and there is no registration fee.

The races are a tradition that began in the 1970s, when they were held every Wednesday evening during the summer and rotated from lake to lake. For several years the only race has been at the Gunflint site and has been the big summer Trail bash held to support the Gunflint Trail Volunteer Fire Department with proceeds from the gathering.

Family paddling is a part of the competition. Four generations of Kerfoots have raced: Justine, Bruce, his sons Robert and Lee and last year Robert and Miranda's son Zack paddling with Uncle Lee. From Heston's Resort Sharlene Heston LeTourneau paddled, then her sons Greg

and Jeff Gecas paddled, with Greg adding color to the event with his zany costumes. Currently Greg and Barbara's children Addie and Paul plan to paddle.

Word is out that 2008 long distance winners Dave Seaton and Andrew Wood of Hungry Jack Outfitters will not defend their title. But the Seaton family (Dave, Nancy and their sons Ben and Will) will be paddling in a variety of races.

What is the most difficult race? Nancy Seaton answers, "Backwards paddling because it is just the opposite of what a canoeist usually does." LeTourneau and Seaton agree that gunnel pumping is the most dangerous. Competitors carefully balancing on the canoe gunnels and pumping can be caught in the waves or wakes of the many canoes and tossed off their precarious perches — hopefully not slammed into the metal canoes. Swamping is the fate of many paddlers who go down laughing.

At the race is an award display featuring handmade token awards presented to first-, second- and third-place winners. One award dates back to 1979 and is a miniature wooden paddle. Others are small canoes, paddles of various materials, wooden disks with race information and date, wildflower photos in red, white and blue, and numerous ribbons and other small treasures.

The races begin at 6 p.m. and other events start at 4 p.m.: five kids' events, an eating contest, a silent auction, two raffles (donated items and canoe raffle), food service and the chance to meet and greet some new friends and old neighbors.

Proceeds go to the Gunflint Trail Volunteer Fire Department, which has three stations along the Trail and offers fire, emergency and rescue services. The



Paddlers dig in during the 2008 Gunflint Trail Canoe Races. Canoeists are invited to compete in the 2009 races on July 15 at the Gunflint Lodge waterfront.

Photo by Melissa Anderson

fire department's needs are great and include three ambitious projects that depend on grants and local donations.

The department has been working on financing of a new fire truck for three years and hopes to complete funding. It plans to put up two communications towers for use in emergencies like evacuations. The third project focuses on fire hall needs: bathrooms for all three halls and a meeting room at the Poplar Lake station.

At 4 p.m. the silent auction begins. There is also a 200 item raffle (\$2 a ticket) and another raffle for the grand prize, a Wenonah Spirit II Royalex canoe donated by Wenonah Canoes of Winona, Minnesota (\$5 a ticket).

There area also ctivities for the kids (minnow racing, kayak races, bean bag toss, putting green and casting contest) also start at 4 p.m.

Call Bob or Sharon Baker at (218) 388-0544 for information.

ATHLETIC PHYSICALS



Physicals for 2009-2010 School Year
Tuesday, July 7 and Wednesday August 5

Physicals are required every three years (6th & 9th grade, 7th & 10th grade, 8th & 11 grade, etc.)

Please call Sawtooth Mountain Clinic to schedule appointment. 387-2330



Photos by Sue Nelson
Sue Nelson's Cook County Middle School eighth-graders had a creative writing adventure before the end of the school year. They had an assignment to create 3-D poems.

Above: More of the 3D poetry. Justin Goldstein models the t-shirt on which he wrote his poem.

Left: Deedra Mongan and Ben Seaton decided to write their poems on cakes. The rest of the class was delighted they chose that medium!

GUNFLINT TRAIL CANOE RACES

at Gunflint Lodge

JULY 15

Activities
4:00 PM

Food service
4:30 PM

Long Distance Race
6 PM

Regular races
to follow



FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GUNFLINT TRAIL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT!

Silent Auction

Raffles!

\$2 donation for each regular chance any prizes!
\$5 donation for a chance to win a Wenonah Canoe

Wolf Ridge Day Camp

2 sessions to choose from!

3-day: June 29 - July 1
5-day: July 6 - 10

To register call 353-7414 or 1-800-523-2733



Entering grades 1-7

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Youth soccer begins Aug. 23

Staff reports

Plan now to participate in youth soccer!

The youth soccer program for ages 5-18 will begin games on Sunday, Aug. 23. Practice for ages 5-10 will be Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. at the multipurpose field and practice for ages 11-18 will be Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. at the multipurpose field.

Registration forms can be picked up outside the Community Education office at the school Monday through Thursday.

or download a registration form off the website at www.cookcountyschools.org (click on Community Groups). The fee is \$45.

For more information, contact coordinators Scott Puch and Julie Pederson at (218) 387-1923.

