

REPORT OF ATTENDANCE AT AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION MEETING

LOUISVILLE, KY

SEPT. 30 – OCT. 2, 2011

The ACA held an active conference, while the Board Meetings were on the 1st and 2nd of Oct. on Friday there were paddling competitions held along the Ohio River and on Saturday there was a Mayor's Cup Race for paddlers and standup boards also on the Ohio waterfront. There was good participation in those events.

ACA represents paddlers in 21 countries around the world. This was the first time there had been a Stand-up Paddler Conference held in conjunction with the ACA meeting.

I was invited to sit in on the Board Meeting on Saturday at which Virgil Chambers reported on NSBC activities and upcoming events, the Wrap It Program; and other offers.

It was noted that ACA has partnered with the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Sea Scouts for their 100th Anniversary celebration in Baltimore and the BSA Explorer Program.

The keynote speaker was Ms Torrey McClure, a very active paddler who actually rowed across the Atlantic Ocean. She is a dynamic speaker and has written a book about her epic journey. Basically she feels that anyone can accomplish their goals with support and courage.

I was invited to make a brief presentation on NBF to the Board, where I spoke about the purpose of NBF, the current legislative issues and how NBF can benefit all boating interests. There was quite a bit of interest from Board members and I answered their questions; however, I did not feel that the President was online with even having us represented. Chris Stec was most welcoming and supportive, but he was not running the meetings. They were particularly interested in the EPA issue with gray water and runoff permitting and happy to hear that had been put off.

One member of the Board Doug Davis was also very welcoming and made sure that I was able to attend the on-water events.

It was evident during the meeting that ACA has some serious internal issues particularly with finance that they are working on.

They are looking to have more events/competitions; more instruction, more kids involved, bring in paddlers of all abilities; more stewardship activities; encourage more members and more funding. They currently have 21,422 paid memberships, 2,867 qualified instructors.

They are starting an outreach with a volunteer page, member recognition in their magazine RAPID, an Instructor of the Month sponsored by Kokatat who donated 10 branded PFD's for the project. They are looking forward to getting involved with paddler-fishermen, excursions all over the world with discount rates through ACA. They have developed a "boat card" which will be inserted in all new paddleboats being sold to advertise their programs and for retailer contact.

Efforts at this time are on re-engaging grassroots members, clubs, states and divisions. They currently have 2 camps for paddlers, one in NY Sebago, and the other in Canada which they are looking to better utilize for events, training, etc.

At the Annual Meeting on Sunday some of their issues became evident as they spent almost 1 hour simply nominating and electing a slate of new Board members, although they only had 1 slate and no competition, the process is obviously not clear in their business model.

They have a previous publication which is now no longer functional; however, they have some financial issues with closing that out.

There was a lengthy discussion about compliance with New York State Laws relevant to their bylaws. There was also a great deal of discussion on teleconference meetings vs. face-to-face meetings and the costs and other implications of both. A monthly teleconference will be held with the Executive Committee.

In all it was an interesting conference to attend, I met several people from other organizations with whom I will follow up on possible NBF memberships.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Belmore, Director

National Boating Federation