

AO Newsletter – Volume 18 Number 1 – Autumn/Winter 2008-2009

Due to the lack people submitting write ups; the AO Newsletter will no longer be Quarterly. Starting with this issue it will once every six months. Besides the write up below here we have at the bottom a write-up by Roger Chu of the Adirondack Wilderness Trip in August.

Autumn 2008 Round-Up

Autumn began without our annual Lobster Cook-Out/Beach Party at Jones Beach. Because Cincip was held in the middle of the Summer we opted not to do it in 2008. If you were looking forward to it and was disappointed you need to speak up by shooting an e-mail to any outings leader of other events and this information will forwarded to the planners.

The first Autumn outdoor event was a hike along the top of the Palisades in NJ which began in upper Manhattan with a walk across the George Washington Bridge. About a dozen people attended this hike. Actually preceding this by a week was a semi-outdoor event; a Moon Festival Cruise on a party boat out from the South Street Seaport. That event was attended to by a dozen people.

Next on the was the usual popular Biking event along the Delaware River but for some reason whether timing or price of gas there wasn't any takers. This was followed in the very same area by a Weekend Camping Trip attended by a dozen people. Our base camp was at Bulls Island State Park and had a side trip down to visit the twin quaint villages of Lambertville NJ and New Hope PA.

The following weekend was a decent turnout of about twenty people to our Annual Autumn Foliage event at Minnewaska. The next Saturday event was a Day at Malibu Ranch for Horseback Riding but we had to cancel due to rainy forecast. One Saturday later was Orienteering at James Baird State Park in upstate NY. Despite the low turnout this was held.

Next on the schedule was a visit to Storm King Art Center; a outdoor sculpture park but once again some reason whether timing or price of gas there was few of any takers. Two weeks later was a hike in Popolopen Gorge attended by a half dozen or so hikers. After Thanksgiving there was another Orienteering event scheduled for Eagle Rock Park in Orange NJ but that too had no takers.

For December we had on Sunday December 14th a Bowling Event attended by a handful of people which preceded the Christmas Luncheon at Ah Rhee Soo Korean Restaurant in downtown Flushing. The Luncheon was attended by two dozen people. This was a departure from our Xmas banquet style dinner which would have quite expensive for these dire economic times. Even so due to a misunderstanding between our organizer and the restaurant manager; some of those who opted for the Korean platter were not happy with what they were served with. What was served was not Korean BBQ and these people were expecting BBQ. To resolve the dispute – at added cost to AO we made good on the meals served. Gong forward with Xmas 2009 should we go back to Ah Rhee Soo – we will have four options; Japanese style, Korean style, Fusion style and actual Korean BBQ.

Now in January we had scheduled Winter Trails Day for the 10th and we had four respondents but lack of snow on Saturday so it was switched to Sunday and half

dropped out. Thus far coming up we have eight people RSVPed for Lapland Lake mini-weekend trip and seven for the Vermont extended weekend trip.

Looking ahead on the Calendar we are planning a Ice Skating event at Wollman Rink for March 7th. So mark your calendars. Going forward because of the lack of prompt [not last minute] RSVPs we are considering cutting back on the number of events organized. Is this what you want? Please advise us by shooting a e-mail to ao_info@yahoo.com

WILDERNESS CANOE CAMPING

St Regis Wilderness/Adirondack Park

This was an adventure that Don Chen and Bell Yee have been discussing for the last 30 years. At first, I didn't consider going. I heard from others that Don and Bell were crazy to attempt it. After all, no bathrooms (not even an outhouse), no showers (could we sleep sweaty with suntan lotion and bug spray on for days), no reserved campsite (what happens if we can't find one – do we sleep on the canoe?), no running water (a water purifier, using the lake water, would have to be used), no guide (what happens if we get lost?), one black bear every mile (a bear can outrun a deer), no medical facilities available (what happens if one of us gets seriously hurt), etc.

Bell and Don took turns in spoiling me. Bell picked me up and drove most of the seven hours going and returning. He alternated with Don while I rested/slept in the back seat. They reserved a hotel room in advance which they let me use (I slept on a cot). Using Don's GPS, they found locations of good eating places and various destination points. During the entire trip, Don prepared almost every meal. They permitted me to swim (I had to wash myself somehow – the suntan lotion, bug spray, and sweat were getting to me) one time while they setup the tent. Don did solo in one canoe while Bell and I used the other canoe. He would have continued solo but his shoulder started to ache. I took over since I am a little stronger than Bell. Boy, did it get lonely canoeing by one's self. For a chatterbox, like me, it was very lonely. Also, since I was an inexperienced canoeist, could I handle the different situations that come up?

Don and Bell are real outdoor men. They surprise me how well prepare they were. For portages (crossing over land between two bodies of water), an investment was made for a canoe carrier. The portages ranged from 450 feet to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. The carrier is a cart with two wheels that the 69-pound canoe is tied to. Instead of carrying the canoe over each portage, the canoe can be wheeled except over narrow or rocky trails. The \$200 water purifier was slow in purifying the water but it worked. The water had no odor or taste. The camping toilet set was a blessing in disguise (enough said). A bear repellent was brought (thank God we never had to use it).

The hardest part of the trip was transporting the canoes over land. We had to constantly lift the canoe to go over branches, rocks, etc. Also, we had to move the canoe side to side to fit through narrow, winding paths. Don, who is much stronger than I am, took the back of the canoe (thank God) to do these intrinsic maneuvers. After a few minutes, I had to switch hands carrying the canoe. Don, a lot of times, continued to use the same hand. Bell, who knows how strong Don is, gave Don a back pack, besides the canoe, to carry.

The easiest part of the trip was eating the food whether we like it or not. We had prepared meals (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks) by the Canoe Outfitters. Since I am a big eater, almost all meals were too small. I carried and ate a lot of snack bars which was recommended by Don.

Don and Bell gave me direction and guidance in paddling my canoe under various conditions. The lessons couldn't have come sooner. One time when I was the solo canoeist, I was caught in current that pulled me a way off course (I almost lost sight of Don and Bell – I didn't have a map nor did I know the names of the ponds we were going to). Several times I benefited from their infinite wisdom when motor boats passed by that created waves (I thought the canoe was going to tip over and we would lose everything).

Don was my outdoor teacher. He explained different things about nature. For instance, I never noticed the small trees (one to two inches tall) by the large trees. Then he progressed to giving me pointers in tying a string around a rock (I never could do it correctly). We used the tied rock to throw a rope over a tree branch. Then we hung the food at least 15 feet up and 10 feet away from the tree trunk if possible. One time we couldn't retrieve the hung food. Don made me a lasso and let me have the glory of using it.

All in all, the trip was what I needed to take a break in life. The scenery was breathtaking. We overcame any obstacle that arose. There were small mishaps; we got lost every now and then. Have you ever try to read one of these forest maps? This was a nice adventure and I wouldn't want to have missed it for anything. For better or worse, we got to know each other better.

Roger Chu