

CCA DOWNRIVER RACE 2009

By

V. Star Mitchell, Race Chair

The 54th running of the CCA Downriver Race occurred May 23, 2009. Fifty-three racers ran the race in 45 boats with a water level of 4 feet. A total of approximately 98 people were involved with the race in some capacity. This does not count spectators who wandered over to the Island. All racers and volunteers received the neatest T-shirt that Adam VanGrack (BCE Vice-Chair) had designed by an artist in California.

After the race, racers and volunteers devoured 30 buckets of chicken, 5 lbs. of Greek Salad, 6 lbs. of potato salad, 10 half gallons of ice cream, gallons of soda, and homemade cookies made by Sycamore Island member Jane Winer and delivered by husband David Winer. After the feeding frenzy, awards were made.

The race results can be seen on the chart. The beautiful cups donated by the Bethesda Center of Excellence went to: Fastest Overall, Peter Lutter (age 16) paddling a wildwater boat (0:53:51); Fastest Kayak, Adam VanGrack (0:57:50); Fastest Solo Canoe, Tom Brubach (1:15:36); Fastest Female (K1), Sandrine Deglin (1:08:59); Fastest Tandem, Bob Davis and Larry Lubbers (1:01:52).

A bit of history rolled down the river as Bill Marmon and Wade Wallace paid a tribute to one of the beloved "Father's of the CCA" and paddled John S. Thomson's old faithful Grumman that they carried the Level IV carry out of Sycamore Island. I would surmise that 54 years ago that was the boat of choice in which to run the race (only without any floatation).

I hope John S. Thomson was watching from above as his faithful old boat relived history and ran the race with a respectful time for a Grumman of 1:38:02. Most of you do not know, but John's ashes in a solemn ceremony were quietly sprinkled down the Potomac so when we paddle, he is always with us.

No race could happen without the dedicated volunteers who are the backbone of the race. Without skilled timers, we couldn't function. Our head timers, Kathy and Frank Collins gave up Bloomington to appear with their laptop to acquire fast and accurate times. Michael Baummer (and his

canopy), Ben Collins, Alf Cooley, and Peter Mueller gave skillful timing assistance.

Susan Sherrod was our official photographer. Our land workers who arrived at Great Falls at **8:00 a.m.** for set-up, check-in, directions, shuttling racers, carrying heavy loads, and toting and fetching at Sycamore Island were: Steve Delanoy, Jim Finucane, Joan Goodbody, Mitchell Helbrecht, Mike Marstaller (our Parking Lot Marshall), Dan Moorad, Dave Newson, Tim Tilson, and Jan Wolf. Lee Prouty came over to my house prior to the race and spent two hours with me folding T-shirts. Don Besom (former Co-Race Chair) came by my house, picked up the Sign-In forms and Liability Wavers and ran them off on colored paper.

Without Safety Boats on the river there could be no race. Mike Blackburn headed up the Safety Crew that consisted of: Laura Breeden, Kevin Campbell, Jane Collins, Jeff Fox, Ed Grove, Pat Kinney, Miki Komlosh, Jim Long, Jim Mallard, Hector Picart, Jen Sass, Helene Scalliet, and Kathleen Sengstock.

To aid racers in the flat, heavily-vegetated, and confusing end of the race, Sycamore Island Safety Boats were strategically stationed by Jim Drew and his crew of: Cindy Bertaut, Richard Burns, Vicky Judson, Lucky Marmon, and Jeff and Sondra Komarow.

Sycamore Island's George Malusky greeted the racers at the take-out with cookies and water. Jerry Barton, Carl Linden, and John Stapko arrived at the Island to give needed assistance. Island Caretaker and CCA Social Chair, Joe Hage re-painted and put up directional arrows, hung the finish line banner, and many other tasks. Saturday Caretakers Renee and Stephen Marcus took racers bibs and gave out T-shirts.

This race is such a wonderful 54-year-old tradition and people seem to enjoy volunteering and making it all happen. My thanks goes out to these dedicated volunteers. I particularly want to thank Adam VanGrack for taking the position of BCE Vice-Chair and giving me so much valuable assistance. Many thanks to the 53 racers who turned out and ran the race. If I have forgotten the name of anyone who came and helped, I am so sorry.

If you missed CCA's annual race and big social event, I hope you will join us next year.