

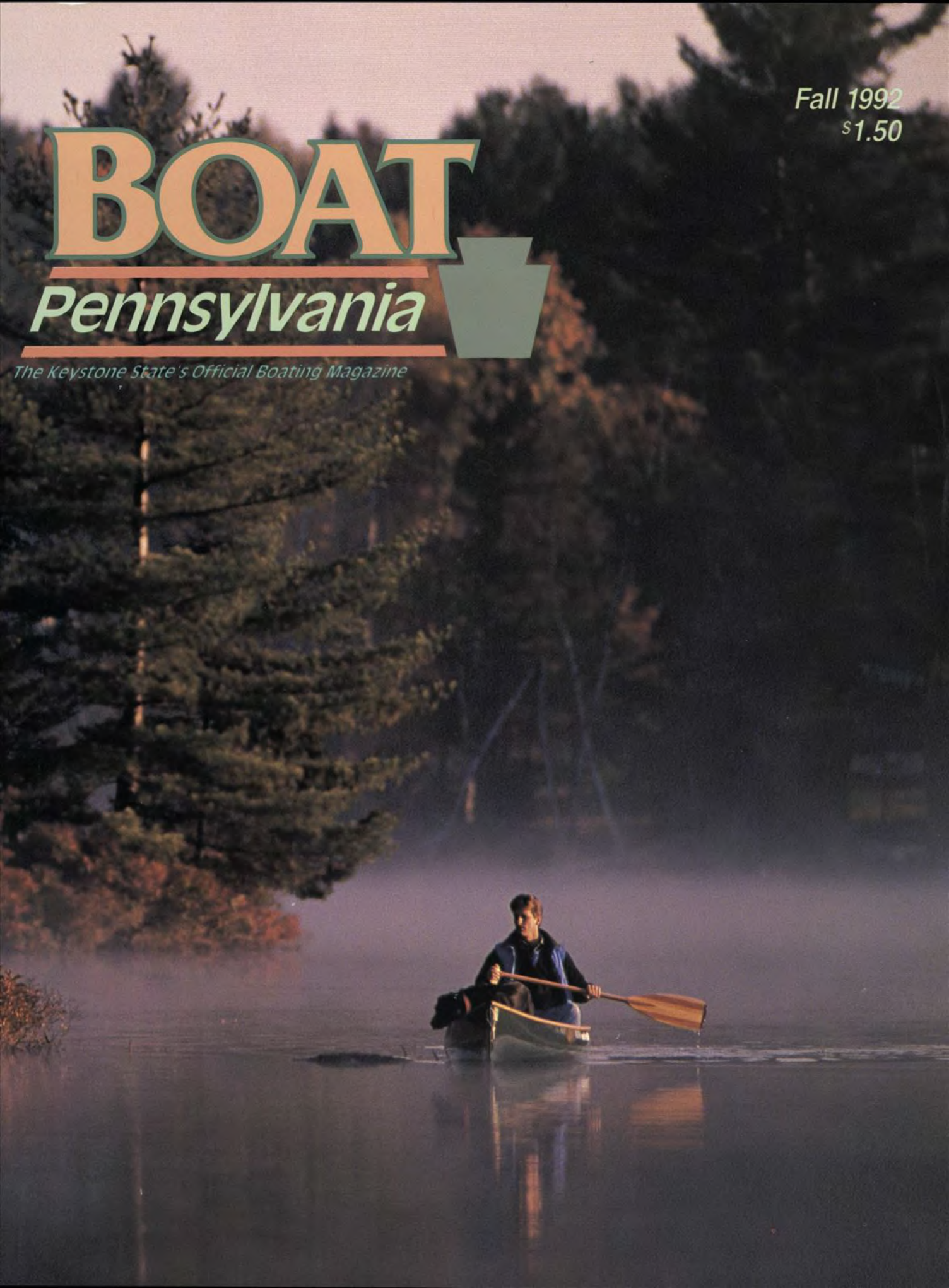
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Take Pride in Pennsylvania



John Simmons

Director

Bureau of Boating

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

On July 16, it was my pleasure to participate in the third annual Over and Under the Delaware River Cleanup sponsored by Kittatinny Canoes, the largest canoe livery on the Delaware River and the oldest continually operating livery in Pennsylvania.

I arrived at Dingmans Ferry about 9 a.m. Other volunteers were already beginning to arrive. The weather was threatening, but by 10 o'clock more than 250 people from Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey were on site and ready to go. After a coordination and safety briefing, we were assigned to various sections of the river. My group of about 40 was assigned to a nine-mile stretch from Bushkill to Smithfield Beach.

A 20-minute bus ride took us to our put-in where our canoes were waiting. Our guide and leader was Ruth Jones, president of Kittatinny Canoes. During the day we were to find that no one knew more about the river nor cared for its future preservation than she. Her life has been the river and her affection for it was evident to all that day.

Our collection of trash began almost immediately. Soda bottles, beer cans, plastics, milk jugs, chairs, styrofoam bait containers and coffee cups, shopping carts and assorted other items of household trash began to fill our canoes. An aluminum ladder was found a mile from our launch site as was a kitchen sink. It wasn't long before we retrieved our first of many automobile tires.

The upper Delaware River is a National Scenic River managed by the National Park Service. It is one of the wonders of Pennsylvania. Little evidence of the intrusion of man (except for the trash we found along the banks) was present during the entire trip. Ospreys flew overhead. An eagle had been reported the day before. We observed a family of red-headed mergansers. Fish were jumping and the water was so clear in some spots that shad and carp could easily be seen at the bottom of deep pools.

The amount of trash gathered that day was disturbing. After years of neglect, a large amount of debris and societal effluent could be expected. This was the third year of clean-up, however, and I had anticipated that most of the trash would have already been collected. During the first two years of the project, over three tons of trash has been collected and removed. Our job on that day should have been easy. It wasn't because trash is still being discarded by uncaring individuals who see our waterways as a simple method of disposal.

At the end of the day, everyone gathered at Dingmans Ferry to exchange anecdotes and experiences, while enjoying a barbecue prepared by the dedicated staff of Kittatinny Canoes. We heard that one group had discovered 270 tires on one island. Another had found a tire from a construction vehicle that required a dump truck to haul away.

It was a great day for participants and the river. The group collected 19.86 tons of garbage, including 617 tires, 908 pounds of aluminum and 5.5 tons of scrap metal.

Keeping our rivers and streams clean is everyone's responsibility. We can start by ensuring that nothing we carry onto the rivers is left there. We can also take an active approach and pick up not only our own refuse but that left by other less thoughtful individuals.

Participate in organized events. Or better yet, start one on your favorite stream or boating water. There is no better way to combine boating, enjoyment of the outdoors and a commitment to improve, not just use, the water resources of the Commonwealth.

For its efforts, Kittatinny Canoes has been recognized with numerous awards, including Take Pride in Pennsylvania and its second Take Pride in America Award received at a recent ceremony in the White House. Ruth and David Jones, the staff of Kittatinny Canoes and their many fine volunteers are to be congratulated for a job well done. They truly do "Take Pride in Pennsylvania."



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This issue's front and back wraparound cover, photographed by Dave Brownell, suggests the kind of paddling fun you can get in on as fall progresses and winter approaches. Two Pennsylvania places you might want to try are the West Branch Susquehanna River and French Creek. Paddling these waterways is covered in articles on pages 4 and 28. Have you ever competed as a paddler? Two Pennsylvanians successfully tried out for and made the U.S. Olympic Canoe and Kayak Team, and their stories appear in the article on page 8. When you've had your fill of fall paddling and you decide to put away the gear for the winter, please turn to page 24 for practical information on storing your whitewater stuff. Similarly, powerboaters will want to check out the article on page 14 for a description of practical preventive maintenance. If you frequent a marine supply store or boat dealership this winter, you will probably talk to a member of a Pennsylvania marine trades association. But for an inside look at what Pennsylvania marine trades associations do, see page 18. Lastly, most of us will suffer sooner or later from seasickness. However, recent research into this malady offers more hope than ever. See page 11.

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