

May 2010

# Waterlines

*Building Youth...One Boat at a Time*



## From the Director's desk...

Dear Friends,

Over the past year Urban Boatbuilders' youth, volunteers and staff have had many firsts. We finished our first Norwegian Prams, two of them in fact, a 10' and 12' model. Moving around the Scandinavian boating scene we also completed our first 8' Swedish pram. We began work with 5 different St. Paul middle schools and high schools through the 21st Century Learning Centers program for after school programs. We have expanded our work with Ramsey County's juvenile corrections programs, including the Enhanced Probation Program and the Juvenile Substance Abuse Court. Our longest running Boatbuilding Partner, Boys Totem Town, worked with Phil Winger, our Program Director, to develop a work experience program for teens in Boys Totem Town learning woodworking and boat building skills. A variety of our youth apprentices completed their year-long apprenticeship by completing a 4-day Mississippi River passage from St. Cloud to Coon Rapids.

But I want to leave you with a picture of these teens at work in our boat shop. One of our apprentices is planing and finishing off his personal project, a tool box. Several other apprentices work with each other to measure and place new planks on a 13' Wee Lassie solo canoe we are building for a buyer. At another work station teens are planing and sanding their canoe paddles. Our staff, Phil Winger and Brian Thorkildson, move around the shop giving a piece of advice here, demonstrating a woodworking technique or simply working beside the teens as they complete a project. On most days as I look out over the boatshop all I see is opportunity, new skills being learned, changed behaviors, focused activity and teens who are "building their lives, one boat at a time".

Thanks for your support of our work and our teen participants!

Dave

## Out and About

### Quick Links

[River's Edge Academy and UBB in the News](#)

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### Spy Photo



Guess who our spy camera caught out rowing on a sunny day in April? Our new Board member, Fred Zonino, rowing his new Norwegian Pram built by the teens at Boys Totem



Lake Home and Cabin Show

Sometimes its necessary to leave St Paul's Midway to drum up support for Urban Boatbuilders. Two events drew us across the river to Minneapolis and one event all the way out east.

Volunteers staffed our booth at the Minneapolis Boat Show at the Convention Center in late January. We showed the 10 foot Norwegian Pram and had one of the interns who helped build the boat on hand on Saturday to tell visitors about it. He was outgoing and did a good job explaining the program and project.

At the Lake Home and Cabin show in April we had the rebuilt 16 foot 1915 Old Town canoe and the pram on display. Cabin owners are usually multiple small boat owners, a great potential audience to purchase one of our partner's or our small craft. We had a lot of interest both in the boats and in the program. While it remains to be seen what will come from this show, the exposure was certainly worthwhile.

Board member, Bob Anderson and both Brian and Phil, our boat builders attended Teaching with Wooden Boats in Alexandria, VA in March. This conference was composed of organizations similar to ours from around the nation. Workshops included Measurement and Development of Effective Practices, Relationship Mapping, Fund Raising Techniques and other topics of interest.

Town.

## Save the Dates

May 13 -- Great River Gathering; St. Paul

June 4-6 -- Lake Pepin Messabout; Lake City

June 18-20 -- North House Wooden Boat Show; Grand Marais

June 21-25, June 28-July 1 -- Canoe Building; Como Lake Pavilion

August 4-8 -- Apprentice Wilderness Passage; BWCAW

November 5 -- Urban Boatbuilders 15th Anniversary Celebration; Travelers, St. Paul

Reality Test

Talk about accountability and reality testing! How many people can put their boat building craftsmanship - if they can even claim to have it- to the test on a four-day wilderness trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area? UBB apprentices, staff, and friends of UBB will do just that this August. To meet the challenge, UBB will hire the apprentices full time for two weeks in June to build two 16-foot skin-on-frame canoes at the Como Park pavilion in St. Paul, showing to the community the positive skills that young people develop at UBB. These canoes, a wood and canvas canoe being built in the shop, and a canoe built last year, will be transportation in the wilderness in August. Apprentices also make their own paddles. Can you imagine the thrill of putting your own muscle behind paddles and canoes you made with your own hands?



UBB Instructor Brian Thorkildson

With the August wilderness trip, the values that UBB strives for will become as plain as day. Perseverance, craftsmanship, teamwork, and responsibility will all be required by the wilderness herself, and our boat building apprentices will experience peace, beauty, and their own strengths in a brand new way.

You will soon receive a letter requesting your financial gift to support UBB's apprenticeship program, including the reality test in the BWCA. Thank you in advance for this investment, which makes UBB's important work possible. Who knows where the ripples will end?

**Boat Building In the Schools**

Urban Boatbuilding has been working with school partners almost since inception. The partnership with Boy's Totem Town goes back to 1998 and is a model of a successful program. Over the years the boys have built a wide variety of small craft, from a cedar strip canoe, to a Scandinavian skerry and a Norwegian pram. The boys are currently at work on a classic Adirondack guide canoe, which UBB program manager Phil Winger calls, "one of the most complex boats I've built".



Monroe Middle School

The school programs are about more than producing boats. From basic measuring, marking and wood cutting the youth move through measurement tools, fractions and angles. They learn about wood and tree anatomy as well as the differences between species. They touch on chemistry when learning about oxidation of ferrous metals. Then its on to pattern-making and construction. Project completion and boat use finalize the process and lend a high degree of relevance to the whole experience.

At the Battle Creek Middle School two groups of eight students each are fitting out the interior of an eight foot Swedish pram. Middle school programs are relatively new for Urban Boatbuilders as historically their work has been with high school age youth. This effort is intended to catch the kids earlier, before they get in trouble. Hazel Park Middle School is also at work on a Swedish pram and at Humbolt High School, a sixteen foot Skin on Frame canoe and a skiff were built in record time.

Funding for these programs is obtained by the school through various foundation and grant applications. The instructors are funded by UBB. Twelve years of programs at Boy's Totem attest to the success of boat building as a youth development activit

This was our first on-line version of Waterlines. I hope you enjoyed it.

**Sincerely,**

Bob Anderson  
President, UBB Board  
Urban Boatbuilders