

Steve Lapey Donates A Canoe to Pathfinder

August 2008

“The canoe that I left at Camp in August entered our life as a result of the 1988 reunion at Pathfinder.

“At that reunion Mac had one of Jim Spencer's new canoes on display in the dining hall, to be raffled off to support the rebuilding of the dining hall roof, which was way beyond needing replacement.

“The tickets were \$25 a pop and I figured that if I bought enough tickets I would be the winner and we would be taking the canoe home with us. Alas, it was not to be. Someone else was the lucky winner and I was miserable all the way home. Finally, Debbie said, "Why don't you contact the guy that made that canoe and see if he could make another one for you?" That was all I needed to hear, when we got home I made some calls and found Jim at his home in Smiths Falls. He agreed to build one and I insisted that it be painted Pathfinder Red. It was ready in November and I drove up to take delivery. It was the first red canoe that Jim ever made.

“We really enjoyed that red canoe, day trips and overnight adventures here in New England and several trips to Algonquin Park.

“I tried to take good care of it, keeping it under cover at all times and not abusing it, but one day a couple of years ago I was going over a ledge on the Millers River here in Massachusetts and I heard the unmistakable sound of cracking ribs. Three ribs broke that day and a couple of more went shortly after. It was apparent that major repairs were in order.

“The canoe was stripped down to the bare hull, everything broken was replaced, it was recanvassed and refinished and with new mahogany outwales returned to service, as good as new.

“The last trip I took with it was on the Ipswich River. Others on the river that day were paddling the usual Old Town barges, doing their best just to go in a straight line. I was ahead of the crowd, sort of "Omering", leaned over and spinning around in circles enjoying one of the most responsive canoes that I have ever paddled. It is a nice canoe.

“It is my wish that this canoe in its new life at Pathfinder will help teach some young men the magic of the wood and canvas canoe. It is so important to keep tradition alive and this is my way of helping.”

Steve