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A Publication of the Prescott Paddle Club

There is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Mr. Rat in Grahame's Wind in the Willows

Find us on the World Wide Web at www.prescottpaddler.com



Warmest Wishes for the Holiday Season

This is especially inviting on a snowy day in Prescott!

Merry Christmas

Vrolijk Kerstfeest	(Dutch)	<i>and a</i>
Crismas-e-shoma Mubarak Basad	(Farsi)	
Frohliche Weihnachten	(German)	
Mele Kalikimaka	(Hawaiian)	
Khag Molad Sameakh	(Hebrew)	<i>HEALTHY NEW YEAR</i>
Nollaig Shona	(Irish)	
Merry Keshmish	(Navajo)	
God Jul	(Norwegian)	from the Prescott Paddler Newsletter
Feliz Navidad	(Spanish)	staff

This and That

Well, not much in the way of contributions for this newsletter, so I'm afraid it will be a short one. My thanks to Toni for a great picture of her and Tobi on Watson Lake. Good composition, and the photographer allowed for the shadowed face.

To fill up space, I included a story about a train trip on Amtrak across the northern tier of states from Seattle to New York. Great way to travel.

Kathryn McCormack, our former newsletter editor, sent me an email about her adventures in her new home state of Hawaii. See her on page six and really feel sorry for her missing the fun shown on page seven. Poor girl, moving away from such a bracing environment!

With your permission via a vote, the Paddler website has been renewed for another year. Thank you for your participation.

CONTACT THE PRESCOTT PADDLE CLUB

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

First Saturday of the month—	Goldwater L.
Second Saturday —	Lynx Lake
Third Saturday—	Watson Lake
Fourth Saturday—	Willow Lake
Fifth Saturday—	Granite Mt. L.

Note— paddle times are 8 a.m. from April thru August and 9 a.m. from September thru March.

Willow Lake is seasonally filled with algae, so we will decide on a substitute lake just before the fourth Saturday. This condition may improve after the winter of 2009, allowing Willow to re-join the regular paddle schedule.

SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFASTS

A great way to start the Saturday morning paddle is to meet fellow paddlers for breakfast at the Dinner Bell Café, 321 W. Gurley, Prescott at 8:00 a.m. Come join us for delicious eggs Benedict or a Belgian waffle. -ed.

A second fueling spot has been found before our Saturday cruise, and that is Waffles and More on Iron Springs Road. Very good special breakfasts that won't break the budget.

CLUB MEETINGS AND NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

Prescott Paddle Club meetings are held at random times while paddling on one of the five Prescott lakes.

Annual contributions for Prescott Paddle Club are \$10, and are requested each January. Please mail your contributions to the address posted at the left. These gifts finance our web site, PO box and refreshments at picnics and paddle events.

The Prescott Paddler newsletter is a publication of the Prescott Paddle Club, published whenever there's input from the club members, and when the editor gets to it. We can be found on the World Wide Web at:

www.prescottpaddler.com



Toni and Toby on Watson Lake

Toni Kaus, and her decked out dog Toby, enjoy a pleasant paddle on Watson Lake. Looks like Toby has his eye on something enticing. Hope he doesn't get the urge to check it out.

photo by Ski Cahill

Borrddd!
An Amtrak Trip

by Bob Kane
October, 2008
revised March 2009

Peggy Noonan, that eloquent wordsmith, recently wrote in the prologue of her book, *Patriotic Grace* an essay titled, "The View from Gate 14", a vivid description of the agonies America's air travelers suffer getting to any gate, in any airport.

She writes, "...America is on line at the airport. America has its shoes off, is carrying a rubberized bin, is going through a magnetometer. America is worried there is fungus on the floor after a million stockinged feet have walked on it. But America knows not to ask, America is guilty until proven innocent, and no wants to draw undue attention. ...America is irritated that the TSA agent removed mascara from a woman's see-through plastic bag, opened it, and smelled it. Why don't you put it up your nose and see if it explodes? America thinks, but does not say."

Those sentiments mirrored my wife's and my experiences as we mixed the airport and airplane chaos with a more relaxed train trip by traveling to the East Coast - and return on Amtrak, in a sleeper car. What a great experience.

We flew to Seattle on an early morning Alaska Airlines flight from Phoenix, missing much of the usual mid-morning and afternoon crush of people and bags to board Amtrak's eastbound "Empire Builder" at the Seattle King Street Amtrak Station.

The "Empire Builder" is a train name as old as the Cascades from the old Northern Pacific Railroad, and carried us on a ride over those beautiful mountains, waking up the next morning in the middle of Glacier National Park.

During the night, we made a service stop in Spokane for food, fuel and passengers, and we never heard one sound from outside penetrate our- cocoon like sleeping car.

In the morning, we dressed and walked to the dining car for breakfast, filling a table for four already occupied by a retired civil engineer and his niece, both from Nairobi. Very

British, they were, and thoroughly enjoying the American west. The magnificent plains of eastern Montana and North Dakota slid by our window at 80 miles per hour as we relaxed over a breakfast of bacon and eggs. Later in the day, we read, dined some more, talked to strangers and turned in about 9 p.m. for another smooth sleep, waking up the second morning in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Just a short stop in the twin cities, and we're off for the Mother River and Chicago. Later, we sat while crossing the wide Mississippi River wondering just how Tom Sawyer navigated this river with the current flowing so fiercely. It was busy with barges being pushed up and down- slowly upriver, and rapidly, as though they needed brakes, southbound. Eight hours later, we arrived in Chicago for a five hour layover before boarding our train, the Lake Shore Limited, for New York's Penn Station.

These lay-over hours in Chicago gave us time to go outside the Amtrak terminal, admire the Sears Tower and the Chicago River, and then return to the bowels of the huge terminal to window-shop all the boutiques and fancy stores below street level, finally boarding our next sleeper car for the overnight trip to the Big Apple. All in all, three days and nights from the west to the east shores of America.

An interesting fact about Amtrak's sleeper cars - they're two story cars on trains west of Chicago, but only one story high east of Chicago because that's the maximum height for cars to fit through New York's railroad tunnels.

The eastern cars have the same amenities as the two story beauties such as roomy bunks, showers and tea and coffee all day and night. One thing different about the one story cars is that they have a commode and sink built into the wall of your roomette.

The lid of the Eastern car commode is one of the steps to the top bunk - so be careful where you step at

night! (Gentlemen, be sure you put the lid DOWN)

Western (two story) cars have bathrooms at each end of the car, on both levels.

A sleeper ticket is considered first class, so we had use of the first class lounges in the Chicago and New York terminals as we waited to board our train. This class ticket also includes all meals in the dining car, turn-down service to convert your seats to beds, wine and cheese tasting in the afternoon, and hot coffee or tea any time. If we wanted, we could have had our meals served in our compartment, but the dining car is so much more fun, eating with different table mates each meal.

We even had free newspapers delivered on board when we stopped at some of the larger cities which was nice, because we soon lost track of the outside world for lack of TV.

Amtrak's food was really good, with at least three selections available for each meal, all served on china and real glass ware. So different from the usual airline experience.

We enjoyed our meals with the added attraction of actually watching the mountains and prairies and backyards slide by at ground level instead of from 35,000 feet. My old airline employer used the slogan, "The oooooonly way to fly!", but I can tell you, this beats flying!

Baggage fees? None – bring your checked bags to the baggage counter and they tag it for retrieval at your destination, even handling the change of trains in Chicago. Take on board a carry-on with your meds, the usual books and snacks, and a change of clothing after sprucing up from the shower on board (Amtrak supplies motel-like packaged soap and clean towels). There are regular electric outlets in the shower room for razors and hair dryers, as well as in your compartment. A little tricky balancing in the shower, but it's quickly learned. (ps- bring shower shoes)

We slept in two bunks, one above the other, and I had the top bunk which swings down from the wall, while Ann slept in the lower bunk which, during the daytime, splits and becomes two facing recliner seats. Amtrak provides pillows and ample blankets for the night's sleep. My top bunk had a "cargo net" strap affair stretched from the bottom of my bunk to the cabin ceiling to prevent me from rolling out at night. There were ample night and reading lights for the bunks at night.

TIPS - bring a blow up camp pillow for sleeping – Amtrak pillows are very thin,
bring an old pair of flip flops for the shower
bring a light sweater – the cars are kept cooler than I like
bring small bills for tips – meal cost (for coach passengers buying meals) is on the menu so it's easy to figure a tip for the waiter.
plan on \$5 per person per day for the car attendant for taking care of your bed
buy tickets via the internet – they're fully refundable up to the day of travel. Hard copy tickets are harder to refund according to Amtrak people.

COST? For both of us, from Seattle to New York and return to Flagstaff from New York was:

\$1695 with senior discount. Comparable to driving when fuel, motels and food are factored in. (September, 2008 prices)

Our country is huge – I never really appreciated its size while driving the interstates, but just sit in a lounge or observation railroad car and see – and see – and see the USA while being pulled along by the velvet-smooth Amtrak iron horse. This was our third transcontinental trip on Amtrak, and we've made the scenic Los Angeles to Portland, Oregon trip too. The Coast Starlight is a great ride, especially as you slide by the pounding surf north of Santa Barbara. Sit on the left side of the dining car for a lunch with a view.



Kathryn McCormack, our former newsletter editor, who moved to Hawaii last year, giving up all the great things of Arizona for some little spot in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, recently sent me these pictures of her new water sport called Stand Up Paddling! It's a different technique that takes some practice and a lot of concentration to erase your previous skills and substitute new ones.

See—she's even lost the kayaking skills she perfected on the treacherous Granite Mountain Lake, and had to start all over learning how to paddle. Notice the “learner paddle” she has - to maintain her balance, and I'll bet she has “training pontoons” on either side of her water board, just below the water line.

This Stand Up Paddling is quite popular in Hawaii. On a recent visit to the north shore of Oahu, I saw many people paddling, flotilla like, to their favorite dive spots. There, they would beach their boards and scuba dive for coral or just look at the colorful fish life. These boards cost anywhere from \$1300 to \$1700, and paddles start at \$200.

The next page shows some pictures of a Stand Up Paddler doing his thing. A great sport for warm water beaches, soft sand and tropical breezes!

