

Beginners Workshop at Chatfield Reservoir

By Clare Donnelly

The workshop which was held on Sunday, the 8th of June was attended by 33 members, some seasoned and some green. Some gray and some not so gray, I'll be the first to admit that I belonged in the green gray group. The day couldn't have been more beautiful. I wondered what we did to deserve this, past experiences have often been with the weather being more dodgy than not. There was an exciting buzz in the air: A few folks were arriving and unloading kayaks and gear, walking the kayaks down to the water and lining them up. Some were busy setting up an area for food tables, coolers and barbees. And a few were busy setting up the registration table. It was clear that something was going to happen. People were gathering here and there, reacquainting themselves, chatting, laughing and sharing their latest tales. When it looked as if everyone had arrived, Gary called us all around and we pulled up our chairs, eager to learn and share.

Gary Greeno started the morning off with a Kayaking Safety Review, covering some of the basic issues we need to keep in mind while on the water. Among the other speakers were:

Larry Kline, encouraging one and all to consider being a group leader.

Jay Gingrich gave us a demo on rope throwing and how to pull a person in.

Cindy Miller presented a Food Packing Demo. She also included some of her favorite recipes in the handouts and a recommendation for a kayaking book.

Dan Bell gave the low down on packing gear as well as some very comprehensive packing lists. These are great; I'll be able to refer to them for future trips.

Mark Scott had a talk about low impact camping and the boom box. After a lot of teasing, he still ignored pleas



Lined up & Ready to Learn

(Photo by Bill Gordon)

for a demo. Maybe next time. Nonetheless, the discussion on leave no trace was helpful.

Gene had some help with the brats on the BBQ and soon we were all eating some very good food: brats, several different salads, chicken wings, dessert bars and watermelon. A BBQ isn't complete without a watermelon. We had a lovely lunch break.

After lunch, we were to split up into groups and set out on our missions. Gary was curious about the giggling in the tent and I will say the giggling was because certain members of the workshop, who will remain unnamed, were fighting with wet suits and the wet suits were winning! I was in the beginners beginning group. Larry showed us the basic strokes and set us off to try them out, helping us individually and as a group. It was interesting as I paddled around, practicing my basic strokes, watching the

groups that formed and the intentness of them. Each group was busy working on one proficiency, or another. Some groups were small and others consisted of a handful of crafts gathered around an instructor. But it was clear that their intention was to better a skill or to share a technique. Instruction was freely and patiently given. Learners were respectively absorbing and practicing.

The allegiance of this club was refreshing to see reflected in this day of giving, learning, sharing and being together. I was also most impressed with the many folks who actively support this club and its objective. RMSKC is a tight knit group who easily welcomes and inspires newcomers. This truly was time well spent. I look forward to meeting and seeing you fellow members again soon!

The photos come to us by way of the very talented and kind Bill Gordon. Hats off to Frank Lehto, "The Frito Lay Man" for bringing a boat load of cookies and chips! Special thanks to Cindy Miller for the kind use of her kayak, and to Larry Kline for his patience above and beyond the call of duty to those beginners of beginners. He could have let us all drown, but he didn't. He just kept on teaching. Last but not least, Gary Greeno deserves a gold star for organizing this event. It's not always easy being the organizer, but you do it so well, Gary.



Lunch Break (Photo by Bill Gordon)