

## Press Release 2009

### **Learn to take full advantage of our greatest resource – rivers!**

Sustainability and adventure combine for a first-class experience at Madawaska Kanu Centre in Barry's Bay, Ontario - a resort teaching whitewater kayaking and canoeing. MKC's unique personalized curriculum allows inexperienced and experienced paddlers to come together and learn according to their individual skill level during the five-day or weekend courses.

It has been an exciting road starting Canada's first whitewater paddling school in 1972. Carving out a unique program, that combines structured learning in a resort environment with a twist of European flare; entrepreneurs and national whitewater champions Hermann and Christa Kerckhoff learned that they were pioneers in their field. Years later they discovered they had started a phenomenon - the first whitewater school in the world; Madawaska Kanu Centre. OWL Rafting, started in 1981 became a natural progression for the Kerckhoff family – introducing non-experienced paddlers to the world of whitewater through rafting.

Both whitewater businesses remain in the family, having passed on to their daughter, Claudia and husband Dirk van Wijk, who embrace the same enthusiasm for the sport of whitewater. Today both MKC on the Madawaska River and OWL Rafting on the Ottawa River remain industry leaders and are renowned world-wide.

### **Through the years, a lot has changed – except their passion for the outdoors.**

Our society has become much more aware of the fragility of our natural environment, however, caring for the environment is about more than the three R's. According to Claudia, "Concern for the natural wonders that exist just outside the city is more than just recycling and speaking out in its defense – it is about getting out there and being a part of it. At MKC and OWL, we provide the knowledge and means to get out and enjoy wilderness rivers with friends and family"

Now, more than ever, people are realizing that these wilderness experiences exist just outside the urban environment. 2009 will be a magnificent year for paddling in Ontario with the abundance of natural snowfall that will fill our watersheds.

On the Ottawa River, OWL Rafting looks forward to welcoming whitewater enthusiasts for the 2009 season on the May Long Weekend High Water Special.

At Madawaska Kanu Centre, this season will be very exciting with the return of many of our specialty courses. The Family Programs are a great way for parents and kids to learn how to paddle at the same time as taking a family vacation – they even qualify for the Revenue Canada Education Tax Credit! Our Women's Retreats and Senior's paddling programs allow aspiring students to learn in an environment that is both skills based and social with like minded people. Combined with our Certification Courses and regular two and five day format courses, the line up this year has something for everyone and any skill level; you can catch the whitewater fever starting May 9th!



## Sidebar information for 2009:

**Madawaska Kanu Centre** can be reached at 888-652-KANU (5268) or by email at [paddle@owl-mkc.ca](mailto:paddle@owl-mkc.ca). For details on programs, please look at the website: [www.mkc.ca](http://www.mkc.ca).

**MKC** opens April 24th for instructor certification courses – Canoeing, then Wilderness First Aid and Swiftwater Rescue and finishing off with Whitewater Kayaking. Regular courses for whitewater canoeing and kayaking start mid-May. MKC offers weekend clinics every Saturday and Sunday of the summer starting May 9th and the more popular five-day Whitewater Vacations run every Monday to Friday starting on May 11th. Five straight days on the water allow a paddler to master the skills. Note: Our first five-day course is Wednesday-Sunday. From our second week on, the courses are Monday-Friday.

New at MKC is Sea Kayaking – a sea kayak instructional program based on the beautiful, pristine waters of Bark Lake. This program is perfect for the paddling enthusiast who would like to kayak but not venture into the whitewater world. The two-day clinics introduce the fundamentals of Sea Kayaking and lead up to Paddle Canada's Level I certification.



**OWL Rafting on the Ottawa River** opens its doors on the May Long Weekend with a Spring High Water Special. 1-Day and 2-Day Whitewater Rafting Trips, as well as Family Rafting trips run 7 days a week until mid-September.

To contact OWL Rafting please call 1 800 461-7238 [raft@owl-mkc.ca](mailto:raft@owl-mkc.ca) or have a look at the website for excursion details: [www.owlrafting.com](http://www.owlrafting.com)

