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Rushton races highlight Canton Canoe Weekend

CANTON – Dozens of professional and recreational paddlers turned out this weekend for the 60th John Henry Rushton Canoe Races on the Grasse River.

Competitors came from Canada and throughout the northeast, as well as from the North Country, for the three-day event that started Friday.

A dedication ceremony Saturday morning recognized the new adaptive kayak/canoe launch in Taylor Park that is compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

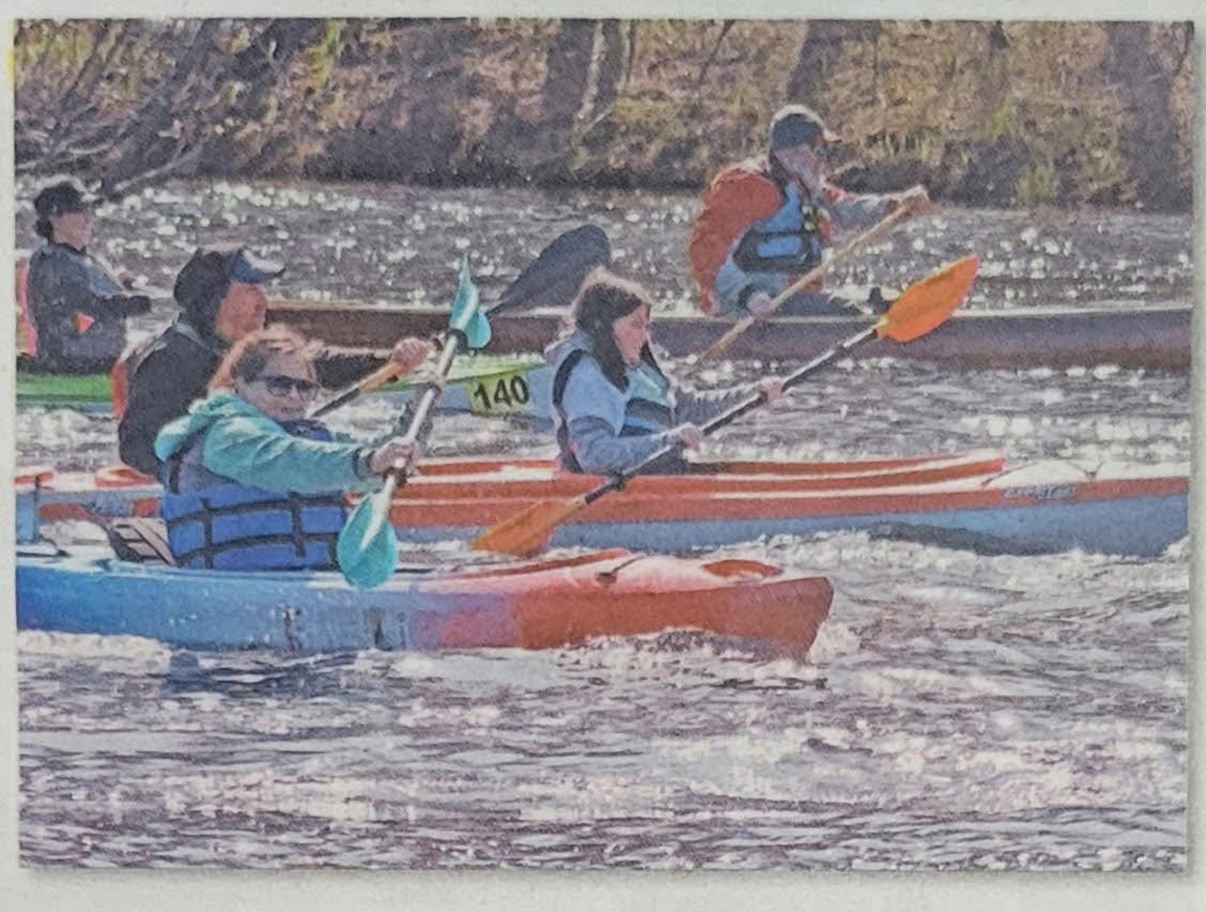
Canton resident Mark McKenna was the driving force and fundraiser for the handicap-accessible boat launch.

"It is thanks to the Canton community, friends and family that made this possible. There are about 80 businesses and foundations that helped," said McKenna, founder of the Wounded Warriors Sled Hockey team. They include local contractors Wilcox Crane Co., Watertown, Michaels Power Co., Canton, and Fiacco & Riley Construction, Norwood.

Descendents of J. Henry Rushton traveled from California, Oklahoma, and New Mexico to attend.

They joined a number of local officials at the ribbon-cutting for the ADA-compliant boat launch.

The event, started in 1962, honors Rushton and his famous boatworks, a business he founded in Canton in 1875.



Cheryl Shumway | NCTW

Starting the morning Rushton Recreational Races were dozens of kayaks and canoes participating in the 1, 3, 5, or 8-mile races on the Grasse River.

NCTW photo

Traveling from Williamstown, MA, to participate in the Rushton races for the first time are, from left, Nancy Roseman and Lori Vanhandel.

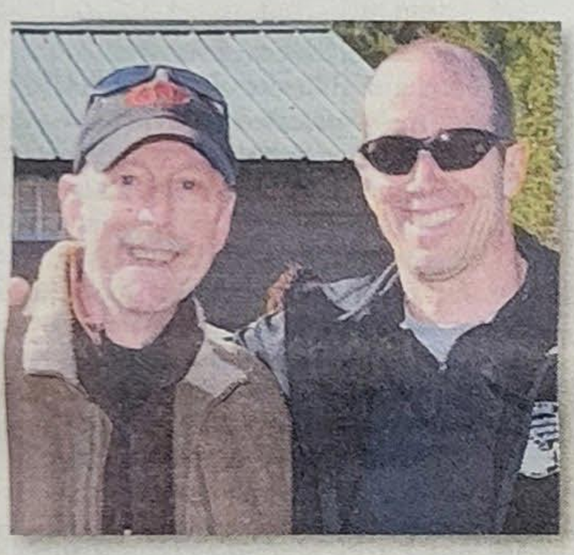


Photo by Two Guys and a Camera

Canton Canoe Weekend Race Director Gene Newman, on the left, is pictured with Steve Lajoie of Miracle, Quebec, the winner of the men's C-1 Pro International World Championship race held May 7.

Photo by Two Guys and a Camera

Rebecca Davis, Homer, Mich., the winner of the women's C-1 Pro International World Championship race held May 7.

Tom Lazore of Massena paddles the course.

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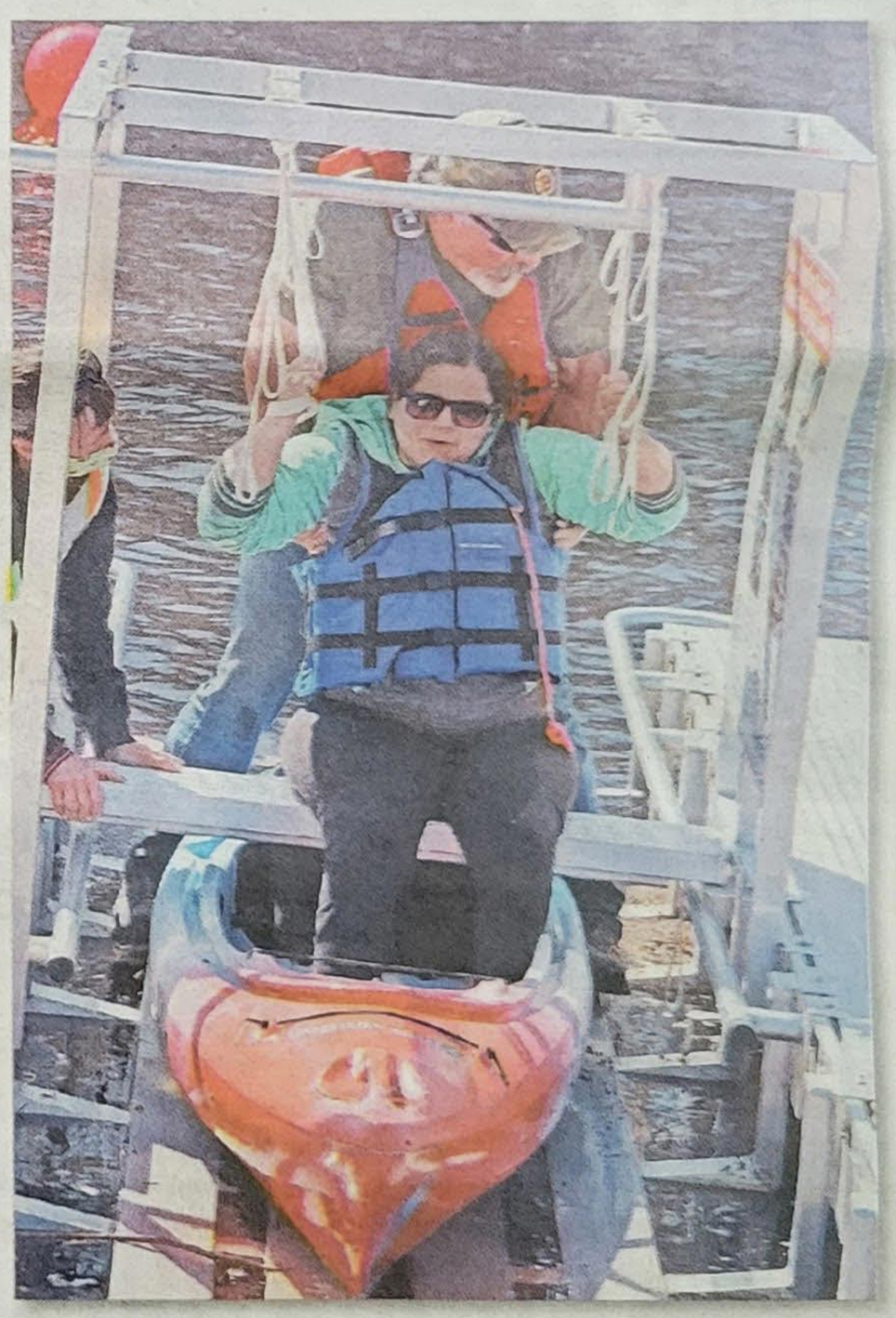
Several Canton officials and J. Henry Rushton descendents attended the ribbon cutting ceremony of the new ADA adaptive canoe/kayak launch. From left are Gene Newman, Linda Casserly, Mark McKenna, Bob Washo, Frank White, Meghan Richardson, Mary Ann Ashley, Beth Larrabee, Bob Santamoor, John Taillon, and Rushton descendents Janice Rushton French, Dick Rushton, David French, Donald Rushton, Donald French, and Susan Rushton.



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Sarahlee Holsen, Akwesasne, uses the new ADA adaptive canoe/kayak launch. Assisting her is Mark McKenna, Wounded Warrior founder.