

Dec 30, 2009 US Canoe Kayak Update and call for input

Dear Whitewater Alumni and Friends:

The following is a letter and call for input from the USA Canoe Kayak Board of Directors. I appreciate their new energy and guidance for the sport. Happy New Year!

Kent Ford

With the permission of our friends at The Whitewater Slalom Foundation, I am sending you the year-end message that USA Canoe/Kayak recently sent to its members.

Your history and collective experience over a span of years with the sport, either as a competitive athlete or as a friend, is invaluable to us as we transform USA Canoe/Kayak. We would love to have you help us by providing us with the benefit of your insight. Many of you were directly responsible for the greatest successes in international competition that the U.S. has ever seen in paddling competition. You've experienced USA Canoe/Kayak in its glory days, and you've seen it in its not so glorious days.

We are in a re-building, transformative time. Our ears are open and we're inviting comments about the direction we should be heading to return the sport to brighter days.

I hope you'll take a minute to read my message below and then take a few more minutes and give us your feedback.

Best wishes,

David Backer, Chair USA Canoe/Kayak Board of Directors

"Nothing endures but change." - Heraclitus (540 BC - 480 BC) 2009 was a year of great transformation for USA Canoe/Kayak. Change is the one constant in life, but the transformations at USA Canoe/Kayak are by design. The year began with the adoption of a new set of Bylaws. By spring, a new Board of Directors was in place with four independent directors (David Backer, Marian Hanson, Jennifer Storms and Humpy Wheeler), two athlete directors (Joe Jacobi and Peter Newton), and three directors representing sprint (Fred Mechini), slalom (Richard Perlmutter) and world sport (Ross Flemer) disciplines. By the end of October, we had a new interim Chief Executive Officer - - two time Olympian (Barcelona and Athens) and Olympic gold medalist, Joe Jacobi. Joe brings a creative energy that is ideally suited to lead the metamorphosis that the Board envisions for USA Canoe/Kayak. "Be not afraid of growing slowly; be afraid only of standing still." - Chinese proverb The Board of Directors adopted a new mission statement: "To realize the dreams of competitive paddlers". The new mission statement embodies the essence of the goal of the "new" USA Canoe/Kayak. Recognizing that paddlers come from different disciplines and have a wide range of reasons for competing, the mission statement reflects our commitment to support our members in their quest to accomplish their competitive dreams, whatever they may be. To do that we can't stand still. We're moving forward but we're determined not to act impulsively. We're resolved to go slow with the expectation that our attention to detail now will enable us to go fast later. "Go slow to go fast" is our mantra. "If we don't change our direction we're likely to end up where we're headed." - Chinese proverb Members have shared with us their frustrations with the direction that USA Canoe/Kayak was headed. Our goal is to change the direction and be responsive to our members. To do that, we need to hear from you. Help us transform USA Canoe/Kayak into the organization that you envision it should be. What don't you like about USA Canoe/Kayak? What do you like about it? What would you like to see it do differently? Are you willing to

have us call on you to help? We invite you to be part of the transformational process and help us move forward in a positive and rewarding direction. There are two ways you can provide us with your input: 1. Call or e-mail the members of the Board. All Board members' telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are posted on the web site: <http://www.usack.org/pages/2700>;

or

2. If you prefer a less direct way of sharing your comments,

[Click here to take survey](#)

If you choose to respond via the on-line survey you can choose to provide your name and contact information if you want us to follow up with you, or you can choose not to leave that information. The process of transformation isn't always pretty, and we don't expect it to be easy but the outcome will be impressive and we're all committed to success. These are exciting times at USA Canoe/Kayak. In the words of Yogi Berra, "The future ain't what it used to be." I can't possibly say it all as well as Joe. See his great video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUWfc9nNoeE> On behalf of USA Canoe/Kayak, I wish you a healthy and happy holiday season and a year ahead filled with positive change, good health, and success in realizing your dreams, whatever they may be.

David Backer, Chair USA Canoe/Kayak Board of Directors