

ICE-BREAKING BY KAYAK

Joan Gorga

April 10 was a gorgeous sunny day with temperatures in the sixties. I spent several happy therapeutic hours cleaning up the yard, but slowly, inexplicably, I began to have the urge to go for a kayak ride. Perhaps it was all that sun on my head after a long winter, I don't know, but I even entertained thoughts of beating the loons out onto the lake this year. A quick stroll through the woods to the southern end of Gregg Lake down a trail that was alternately snowy, icy and slick with mud showed me open water as far as I could see, although I thought possibly I could detect a white glaze toward the northern end.

Since I had no desire to drag my kayak through all that ice and mud, I loaded it onto the car and drove down to launch at the beach. What a difference a mile makes! The whole north end of the lake was still covered with ice, and it wasn't just a glaze. But in places the ice looked thin, and I thought I might be able to work my way through it.

Normally I'm more concerned about soaking the gear I'm carrying with me than about actually getting wet myself, but stepping into the water with my bare feet convinced me that it would be better not to flip over that day. But the sun was warm and my feet dried quickly and I headed toward the icy layer determined to plow straight through to the open water beyond. The first patch of ice I hit was about two inches deep and crackled as it broke into small pieces. My paddles pushed right through, too, and worked pretty well to propel me forward. But the ice became thicker and thicker until I was no longer able to break it up, even by running the bow up onto the ice, and I decided to back out and head around the lake closer to the edge before really getting into trouble. Imagine trying to explain the need to be rescued from a kayak stuck in the ice...

I managed to plow through closer to shore by breaking through the ice with both my paddle and the bow until I finally emerged into a narrow gap of open water running along the road. There, the going was easier for the most part, although in several places I had to slide the kayak bow up onto the ice and bounce in my seat to break through. Creaks and groans emerging from the thicker ice sheets sounded like whales singing, and the sun glowed off the rocks I left anointed with little bits of green plastic from the bottom of my kayak. Finally I emerged into open water near the mouth of the channel and paddled easily across toward the western shore, where I was greeted by a pair of loons who were clearly flaunting the fact that once again, they were there first.

By that time, with the sun beginning to sink behind Willard Mountain and the temperature falling, I decided to see if I could continue to sneak around the edge of the ice along the camp shore to get back to the beach. I paddled through another patch of ice, three to four inches deep, which broke into sunset-reflecting crystals that looked like a chandelier

in the water and emitted a beautiful tinkling music as they bobbed up and down in the waves.

Near the rocks across from the point I came to a solid stretch of ice that was at least five inches thick. Clearly, I wasn't going to be able to go through it, and it was not a place where I could get out and pull the kayak. I looked back around at all the distance I'd come, analyzed the ice ahead some more and made my plan. Tying the paddle down carefully, I worked the kayak fully up onto the ice with my hands, slid smoothly across ten feet of ice, plopped back into the water on the other side, and was home free just as the sun disappeared.

The next day, all that ice was gone and I paddled easily the full length of the lake. ☐

ANTRIM BAPTIST CHURCH

Charlie Boucher, Pastor

In support of the Antrim 2020 initiative to help support community announcements, the Antrim Baptist Church has kindly asked the community to read its policy for signs they might desire to place on the Church's lawn prior to placement at www.antrimbaptist.org.

The Antrim Baptist Church and First Presbyterian Church will be offering Vacation Bible School for 3- to 99-year-olds at the Presbyterian Church on July 17-21 from 5 to 8 p.m. The theme this year is "Maker Fun Factory." The evenings will include dinner, singing, crafts, games, snacks, Bible adventures, and surprises. Sign up by calling 588-6614 and leaving your contact information.

The Antrim Baptist Church will be offering a free pancake breakfast to the community on the front lawn of the Church under the tent on Sunday, June 18, from 8:30 to 10 a.m. The menu includes plain and blueberry pancakes, sausage, fresh fruit, orange juice and coffee. In addition to its being Father's Day, recognition will be given to veterans that day. ☐

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