

Debra West

## Boatcraft Tried and True

**A** GROUP of "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" episodes this summer focused on a man who created a boatbuilding and maritime skills program for Bronx teenagers.

The man, Adam Green, is executive director of Rock the Boat, an after-school and summer program based on 174th Street near the Cross-Bronx Expressway. But Mr. Green has spread his good works to Westchester, too.

A year ago, he took his Rock the Boat students to Philipsburg Manor, a living-history museum in Sleepy Hollow, where they spent six weeks learning to build boats 18th-century style. As if boatbuilding weren't hard enough with electric saws and laser levels, they worked on a 21-foot flat-bottom boat using handmade wooden tools and a lot of sweat.

"The kids learned about Colonial history and its connections to the waterways," said Mr. Green, who founded Rock the Boat in 1996 and has built 14 other boats with more modern methods. The boat made last summer is now moored on the Pocantico River, as it would have been in 1750 when merchant-owners, tenant farmers and slaves worked the property.

### Make Your Own Kayak

For those who would like to learn more contemporary boatbuilding methods, and who don't mind being farther from actual water, there is Fox Lane Boatworks, a wooden-boatbuilding school set to open in Brewster this summer.

On the walls of the school, in an elegantly converted barn just off I-684, hang several sleek kayaks that the owners, Paul Pasquantonio and Kerry Critzer, have built for themselves and friends. The shop was completed two years ago, but the partners are still waiting for town permits to be granted (within a few weeks, they hope) so they can open for business.

"This is an art with me," said Mr. Pasquantonio, 54. "I'm just beginning to understand the economic swap I've made to be able to do something I love and eke out a living."

They build with traditional design and modern composite construction. Using a technique called stitch and glue, they start with plywood planks stitched together with copper wire, glued together with epoxy and then encapsulated in Fiberglas. The results are a stylish and lightweight boat.

The ocean-going kayaks they create are 17 feet long and weigh 45 pounds.

It will take about 60 hours and cost about \$1,750 to build your own kayak; for \$2,500, Fox Lane Boatworks will build it for you.

Scott Valentine, 14, of West Harrison, is a kind of pilot-student. He is building his own boat from a ready-made set of plans for a kayak called the Chesapeake Light. He used pre-cut planks, but more experienced carpenters can cut their own.

"There really is no hard part," Scott said. "It's all small simple steps put together."

### The Learning Curve

Follow the simple steps. That's what the students competing in the 18th International Young Physicists Tournament say, too. Only their simple steps are likely to include long mathematical equations on tricky subjects like fluid mechanics, air flow and gravitational pull.

Three students from Rye Country Day School are on the five-member Team U.S.A. who went to Winterthur in Switzerland

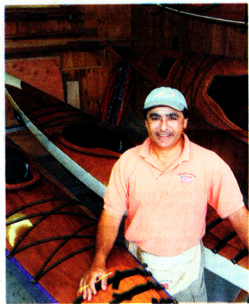
this week to compete in the Physics World Cup. (The other two came from California and Florida.)

The Rye students, Jonathan Bohren, Robert Kirkham and Divya Krishnan, have been working on solutions to 14 deceptively simple physics problems since September. Guided by their teacher, Bruce Oldaker, they have tackled questions like the following: How does a dragonfly fly? How does spin affect the trajectory of a tennis ball? What exactly creates a mirage on a hot roadway?

At the tournament, the team must investigate each problem, pose mathematical theorems to explain the behavior in question, and then defend their ideas against those of opposing teams.

The contest started Thursday and lasts seven days. Last year Team U.S.A., which also had students from Rye Country Day, came in 16th out of the more than 20 teams.

"We're hoping we improve a little over that; we've learned some strategies this time," said Mr. Kirkham, 18, who graduated in June and plans to attend Harvard University in the fall of 2006. "Everyone says the team to beat this year is the Germans."



Alan Zale for the New York Times

Paul Pasquantonio of Fox Lane Boatworks, who says of boatbuilding, "This is an art with me."

And Rock the Boat is back at Philipsburg Manor this summer, with 16 students working on an 18-foot cargo scow, a boat that hauls supplies from one side of a river to another. The students dress in Colonial costume, because part of their job is to show and tell visitors to Philipsburg Manor what it was like to live in 18th-century America.

When the scow is complete, it will be moored at another Historic Hudson Valley property, Van Cortlandt Manor, in Croton-on-Hudson.

Of course, for the students whom Mr. Green works with, a trip to Westchester is sometimes a bit like time travel.

"We bring them up in a van," Mr. Green said, "and it is 30 minutes door to door. In 30 minutes they go from the Bronx to a place where sheep are roaming around. We're not just teaching boatbuilding, we're teaching the possibilities of life — something that's hard to learn if you never get off the block."

For a new spin on reality television, the producers of "Queer Eye" might consider hiring Mr. Green to encourage their contestants into being more socially conscious. Now that would be must-see programming.