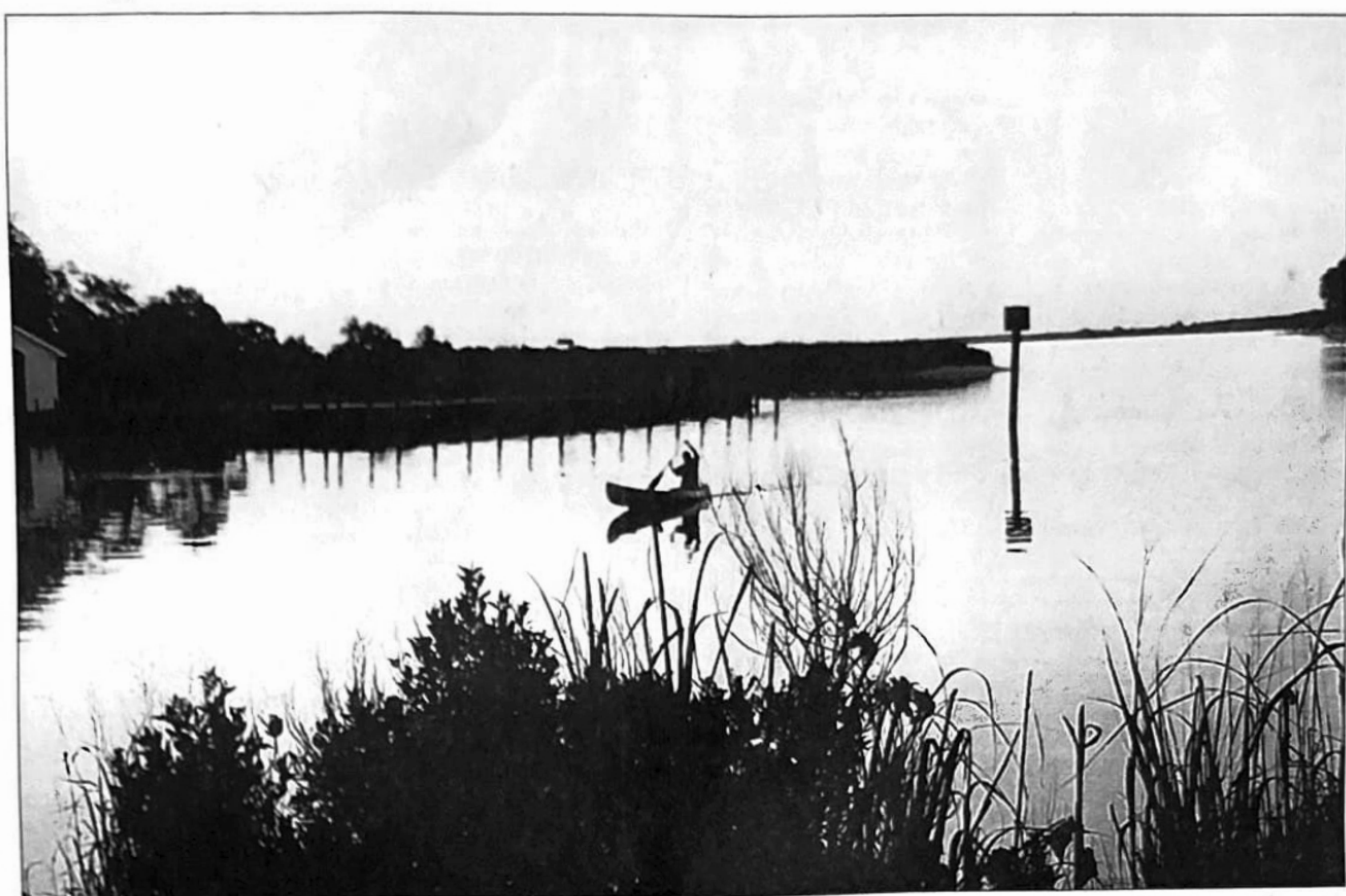


ADVENTURE MONDAY B

DAILY LOCAL NEWS

Monday, November 28, 2005

A passion for the outdoors



Adventure Crafters, a business started by three brothers, organizes trips for people to enjoy outdoor activities such as sailing, rafting, surfing and — as shown above — kayaking.

Chester County family starts Adventure Crafters, organizes group trips along East Coast

By BRIAN McCULLOUGH
Staff Writer

WEST CHESTER — A family of nature enthusiasts believes Chester County residents are missing out on something they could easily be taking advantage of: the great outdoors.

That's why brothers Robert Schrack, Richard Schrack and Shane Gore have started Adventure Crafters, a business that organizes group trips along the East Coast.

"We started putting it together when we realized how close Chester County was to outdoor opportunities but that people weren't taking advantage of it," said Robert Schrack, president and trip coordinator of Adventure Crafters.

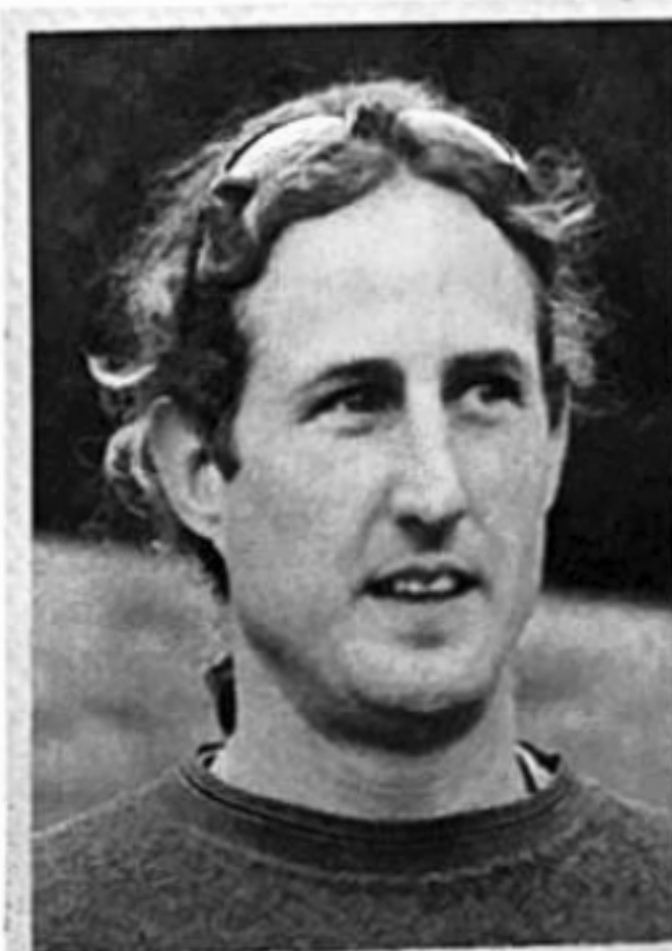
Robert Schrack is most involved with the company's water trips — sailing, whitewa-

ter rafting, surfing and kayaking — while Richard specializes in ski trips and food preparation, and Gore is an adventure guide.

But the family involvement goes further: Robert Schrack's wife, Kerrie, is the general manager, and her father, William Booker, is the captain of the company's 37-foot Alberg Syrinx sailboat.

"Our idea is to show you something different every weekend," Robert Schrack said. "There's still fun in the road trip. Our research showed that people have less and less time to do things, such as make arrangements for hotels and transportation. That's where we come in."

Robert Schrack, 38, owns Decker Out Exterior Designs, a West Chester landscaping company. He said he began conceiving Adventure Crafters



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— ROBERT SCHRACK,
president,
Adventure Crafters

three years ago and officially started the company last December.

"I've always been an outdoors person," said Schrack, whose father owned a backpacking and climbing shop in West Chester in the 1970s. "My job in the last year and a half has been great."

"I was always the one organizing trips anyway," Schrack said. "All the research I did said people were looking for something a little more adventure-related."

Schrack picked a good year to start his venture. According to the Travel Industry Association

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tion of America's annual travel forecast, 2005 will turn out to be a good year for the U.S. travel industry, with leisure travel by U.S. residents rising 4 percent this year and international travel to the U.S. jumping 7 percent.

Spending by domestic and international travelers will increase 7.8 percent for full-year 2005 to nearly \$646 billion.

However, slow growth in fourth-quarter 2005 — a trend that is expected to continue through the first quarter of 2006 — is expected to contribute to a modest growth forecast for full-year 2006, the organization recently reported.

David Brown, executive director of America Outdoors, a trade association of active travel companies, said the

business began to recover in 2004, after a big falloff following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"There's been a rebound in leisure travel and in active travel," Brown said. "The Northeast started off slow this year because of the cool, wet spring but made up for it with a great fall."

Most of Adventure Crafters' trips are a two-hour drive from West Chester, such as the sailing trips on the Chesapeake Bay that leave from Queenstown, Md., and the ski trips to Pocono resorts.

Others are farther away, such as the whitewater rafting trips on the Lower New River in West Virginia and ski trips to Vermont.

The average trip now is two days, although many are still done in a single day; in the future Schrack hopes to offer trips up to two weeks long, some in the wilderness areas of the West.

The trips include group transportation, food prepared by Richard Schrack, owner of Moonlight Catering in East Fallowfield, and equipment for the activity. The company also conducts trips for corporate team-building.

Costs start at \$150 a day per person and escalate to \$275 a day per person as they become more involved.

The company's five-year business plan calls for revenues of \$250,000 a year and starting a retail outlet for trip booking.

Robert Schrack said he hopes to contribute to getting people out of their easy chairs and out into nature.

"Safety overrules everything," he said. "That said, we want to challenge people to go a little bit further than they would on their own."

To contact business editor Brian McCullough, send an e-mail to bmccullough@dailylocal.com