

# Paddler keeps tackling Missouri — and 340-mile river race

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA  
mhayakawa@yrmg.com

Bill Lanning ventured to the waters of the Missouri River for a paddling expedition last month.

But for the 67-year-old Ballantrae resident, it wasn't to take in the sights of what this mighty river in the United States had to offer.

The former Sun-Tribune photographer's objective was to paddle a 340-mile course from Kansas City to St. Charles, Mo., in the Missouri River 340 Race.

With competitors hailing from the United States, Great Britain and Canada in what's known as the world's longest non-stop river race, Lanning entered the men's solo event and completed the gruelling course in 79 hours and 36 minutes.

That clocking enabled Lanning to finish 67th out of 92 paddlers in his competitive division.

Out of 194 entrants overall in the event, he was 142nd.

The oldest paddler in his division, Lanning was proud of the fact he met his objective in completing the race in under a targeted time of 80 hours.

"For the most serious participants, the objective is to finish

the race and a lot of people don't finish it.

"Being the old man of the group I was in, I was pleased with how I did. I really wanted to finish the race and to do it in under 80 hours. That's the fun part of it," he said.

Making his debut in this event four years ago after finding it on the Internet, Lanning's best finish was that year where he was 21st out of 75 entrants.

## DIABETIC

Since that time, though, Lanning was quick to note the event, which began five years ago and is run under licensing of the U.S. Coast Guard and conducted under a full moon and under flood level conditions, continues to flourish.

It's gone from 17 boats the first year to the well over 100.

At the same time, he noted it's now to the point where there's more younger competitors and even some entrants who are semi-professionals with sponsorship.

To keep up, Lanning takes a serious approach.

Having paddled since he was five years old is definitely an asset for Lanning.

At the same time, he undergoes a fairly rigorous training

schedule that includes riding stationary and mountain bikes.

When Lanning can utilize his vessel, a handcrafted 18-foot Kruger DreamCatcher made of composite Fibreglas and valued at between \$5,000 and \$6,000, he will paddle from eight to 10 hours a week.

He trains at Canal Lake, Frenchman's Bay or the Toronto harbour.

Being a Type 2 diabetic, Lanning also credits the support he's received from his daughter Carrie and wife, Carol. The pair serve as his ground crew and meet him at the race's eight mandatory checkpoints to resupply him with water, food, protein whey drinks and have a tent ready for him to sleep in between stops.

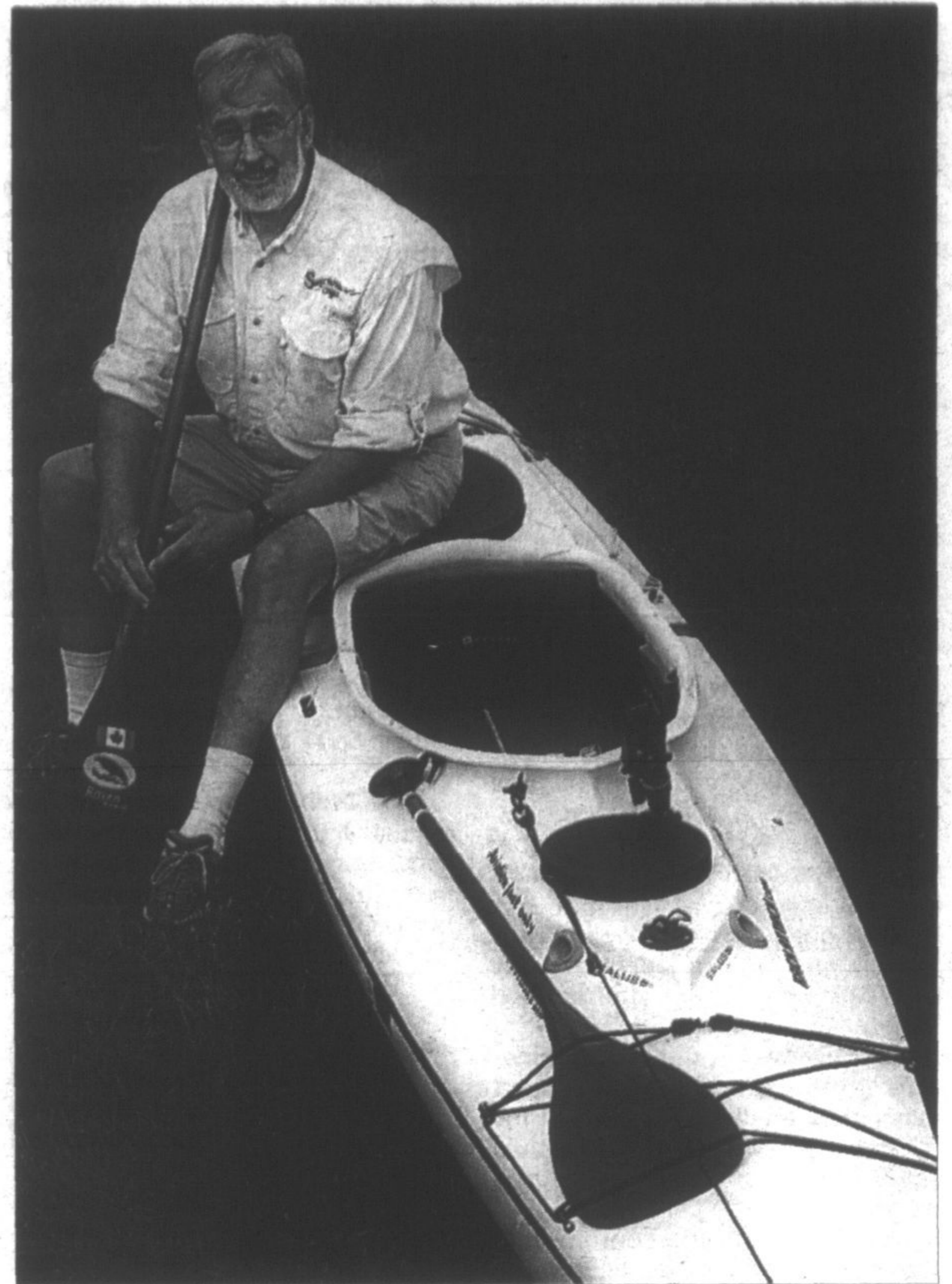
"My job is just to paddle," he said.

Lanning intends to continue the annual pilgrimage.

At some point, though, he hopes one of those appearances will be in the tandem event with daughter Carrie.

That is, providing he can remain physically able.

"In this event you're pushing yourself physically and at my age it takes a little while longer to recover," he said with a laugh.

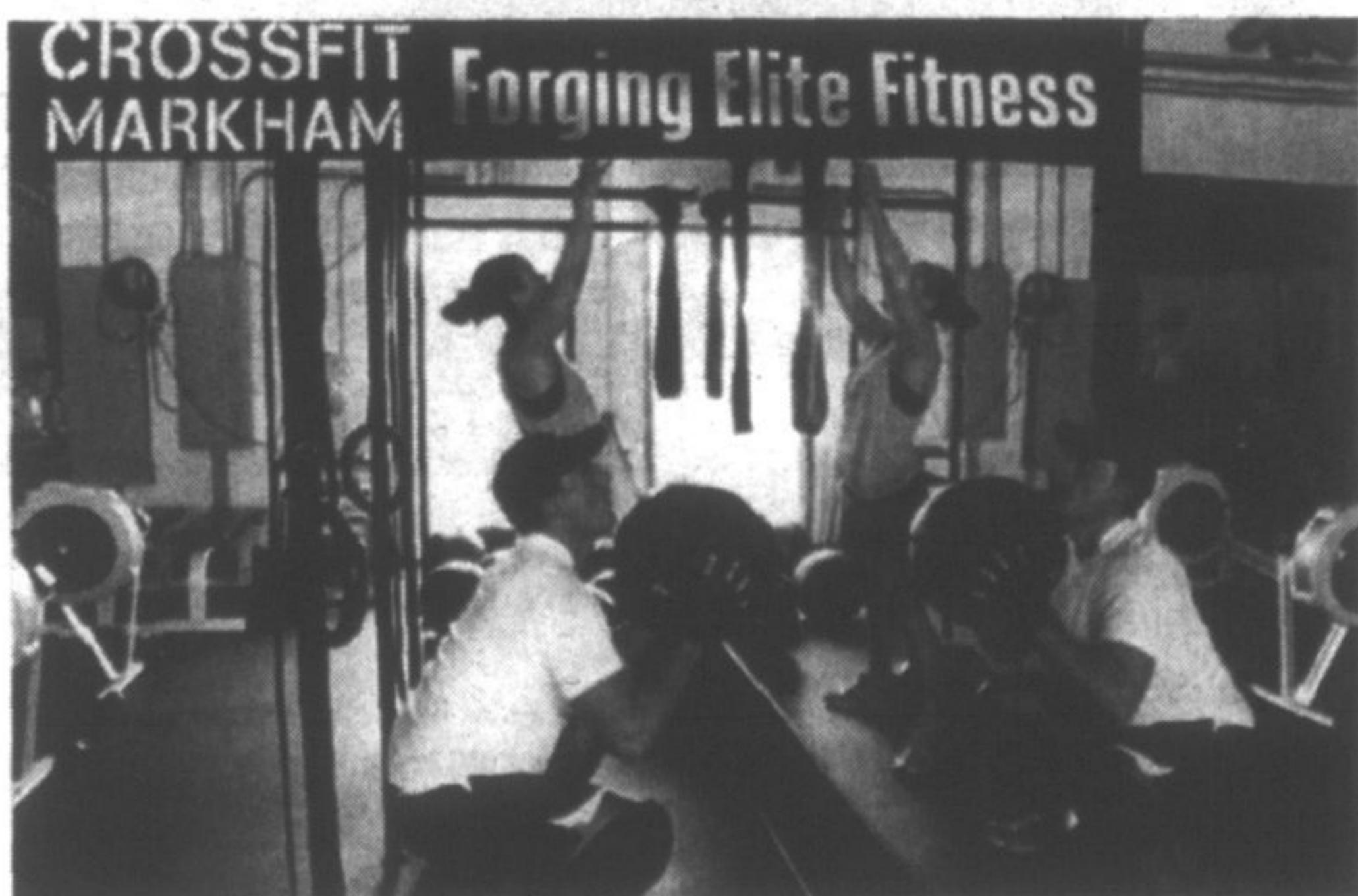


Ballantrae's Bill Lanning and his handcrafted 18-foot Kruger DreamCatcher completed a Missouri River race this year in just under 80 hours.

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