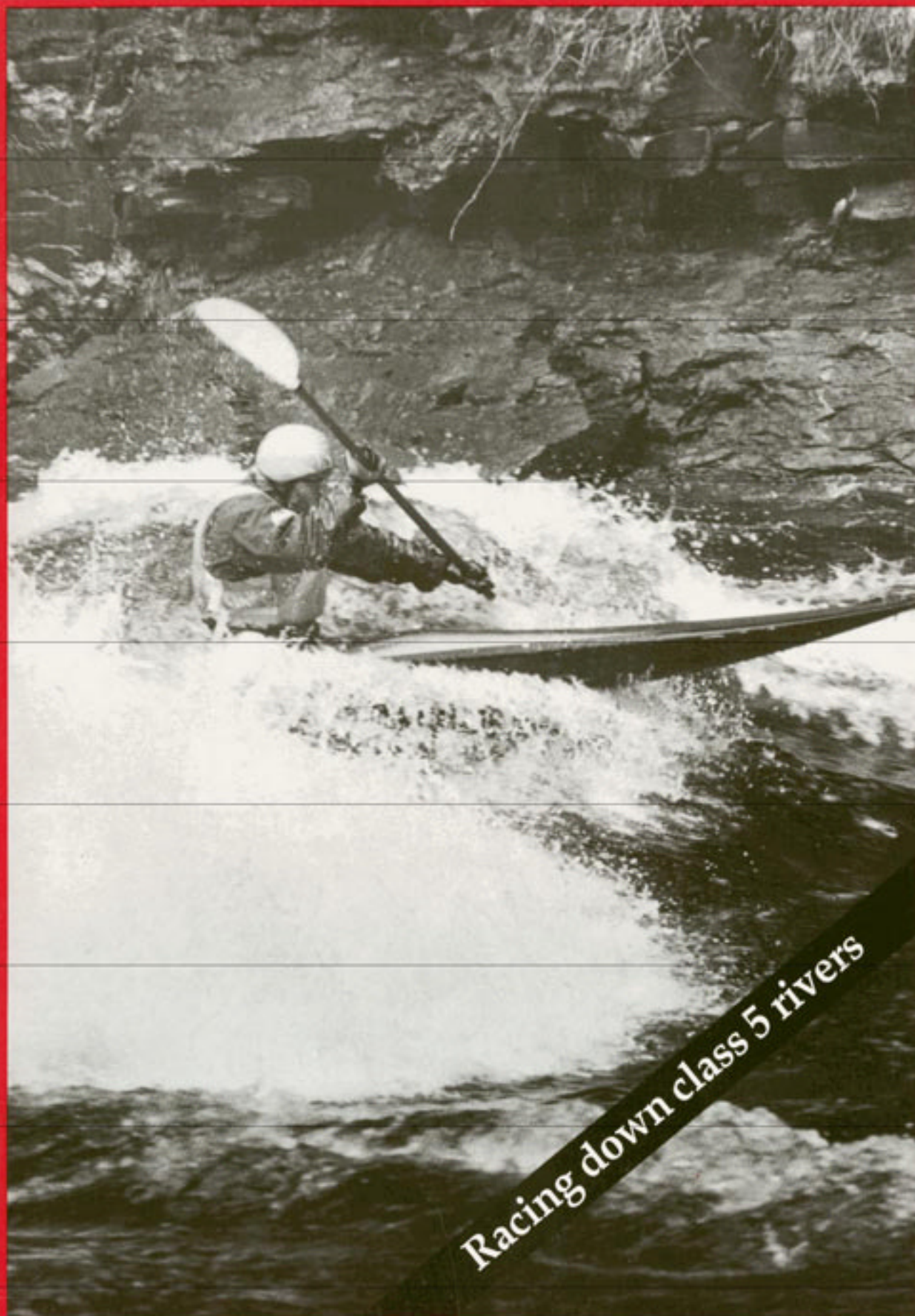


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# american whitewater

January/February 1993  
Volume XXXVIII, No. 1

JOURNAL OF THE  
AMERICAN WHITEWATER  
AFFILIATION

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### Hair-racing

For most paddlers, these rivers represent cutting-edge whitewater. But once a year expert boaters throw caution to the wind to sprint down their class V rapids.

\*Gore Canyon

•The Upper Yough

\*Great Falls of the Potomac

\*North Fork Payette

•Watauga Gorge

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*and ANDY BRIDGE, JOHN WELD, MARK WHITE*

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Front cover: Dave Ware surfs a wave on New York's Fish Creek. Photo by Jim Swedberg

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## FORUM

# Jerry Marquis and common language

The last time I saw Jerry Marquis was two months ago at my wedding.

I'd known Jerry for about 10 years--ever since he managed a rafting operation for Wilderness Tours on the Hudson. As manager, Jerry picked his duties--and he was usually on the river in a kayak. We'd boat together.

After Wilderness Tours dosed its Hudson outpost, I'd still bump into Jerry frequently. In the winter I'd see him skiing at Tupper Lake, where his family lived and he taught art at the local high school. During spring, I'd encounter him boating the Hudson or Moose. And in the summer, he'd be on the Ottawa working as a manager for W.T.--still from the seat of his kayak.

During the last few years, Jerry gravitated toward squirt boating. Now, I don't know about other kayakers, but I have a problem talking with squirt boaters. They have a different vision of whitewater...and a different language to describe it.

Consequently--many of my recent conversations with Jerry were reduced to a series of guttural "uh-huhs" and "yeahs" while he spoke with animation about the Ottawa's whirlpools, eddy lines and surfing waves.

It never seemed to matter that I failed to grasp the technical points Jerry attempted to make. I understood the excitement in his voice--the enthusiasm only days on a river can produce.

Nevertheless, I was relieved when Jerry didn't want to talk squirt boating at my wedding.

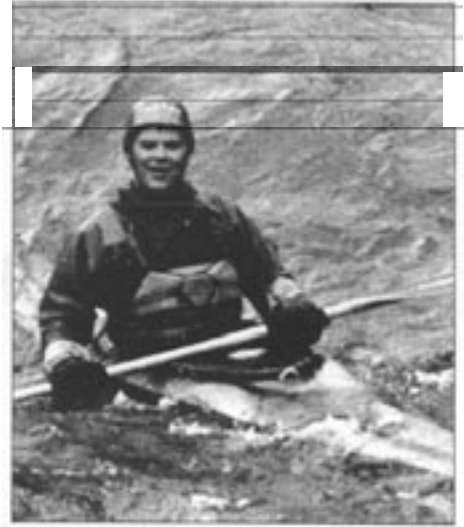
"Hey, General..." he called to me during a momentary lull in the festivities, "...I wanted to give you a little introduction to my gift.

"It's a drawing I did. There's an eagle and a snake in it but when you look at they form a wave. Some people don't see it right away so I thought I'd give an explanation..."

The next day I unwrapped the package. The drawing was done in pen on deer pine. I picked out the wave right away. It was a unique gift for a kayaking couple. But my wife Caron and I put it away for the time being--it would be perfect for display in the camp we're buying up by the Moose.

But when I heard of Jerry's death in a snowmobiling accident on Christmas night, I took the drawing out and studied it again for a long time.

Hell, I'm not going to pretend I actually comprehend what the picture really means, but it conveyed the spirit of moving water. So, in a way, it's just like old times. Jerry, I still don't know exactly what you're saying...but I feel your enthusiasm.



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# PURPOSE

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over 1300 whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 50 local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to **protect** and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

**EDUCATION:** Through publication of a bi-monthly journal, the AWA provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique, and equipment.

**CONSERVATION:** AWA maintains a national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through its "River Watch" system, publishes information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers, and provides technical advice to local groups regarding river management and river conservation. AWA also gives annual awards to individuals to recognize exceptional contributions to river conservation and an annual "hydromania" award to recognize the proposed hydroelectric power **project** which would be most destructive of whitewater.

**EVENTS:** AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation. Since 1986, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual Gauley River Festival in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation, other than at international racing events.

**SAFETY:** AWA promotes paddling safety, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, and maintains both a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the **International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty**) and the internationally recognized AWA Safety Code.

**ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES:** AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered **craft**; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness **cruising** and of white-water sports.

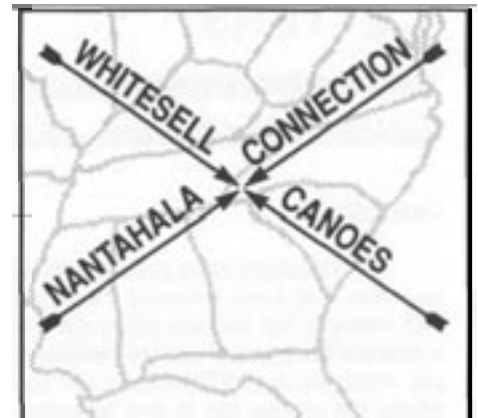
**PROFESSIONAL STAFF:** Except for membership services and the Executive and Conservation Directors position, all AWA operations, including publication of the bi-monthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.

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# LETTERS

## Pay for Yough

Dear Editor,

Although I don't get to the **Yough** too often, I've been following the boycott with interest. My first run down the river was in the Spring of '69, so I remember the pre-state park days. We parked by the road where the ranger hut is and followed a narrow path down to the river. No fees, no quotas, and very few paddlers. To give you an idea of how few, I was told after my run that you couldn't always find someone to paddle with, but that you could usually go down with one of the raft companies if you'd help their guides chase down paddles.

Now there are a lot more of us. And that, unfortunately, puts a costly burden on access areas. The wide shoulder at the put-in was outgrown decades ago. We need parking, sanitary facilities, changing areas, trails that won't erode, and (yuk) a reservation system to dole out the slots. Without it, conflict with the people who live in the area is inevitable. If we refuse to pay the costs we can hurt the sport in the long run.

Our numbers have created problems at many rivers. Some of us remember the situation at Swiss, the Lower Gauley takeout, a few years ago. Traffic jams, break-ins, and police harassment were the norm. I'm grateful that a few local people have begun renting their land to us for use as parking. After years of paddling some distance downriver to avoid trouble, three bucks to get out at Swiss seems like a good value. The AWA rented a field this year near Panther Creek to alleviate a parking problem that was becoming a source of friction with outfitters and locals. A great idea, but AWA doesn't have the resources to go everywhere there's a problem.

At the **Tohickon** Creek, locals seldom have parking problems during rain events. There just aren't very many of us. The Fall Release is another story, and here's been much complaining about a **hefty \$5** a head takeout fee. Using a choice piece of private land with lots of parking contributes to the landowner and a local fire company, prevents illegal parking and traffic jams, and keeps the townsfolk happy. It also saves us two miles of flat paddling on the Delaware to the next take-out and about twenty minutes of shuttling. This helps boaters make three runs of the river in a day. I didn't see anyone heading downstream to **Bull's Island**, but I ran into lots of

folks trying to evade the fee. I would not have wanted to be working the parking lot that day and taking the **abuse!**

Ohiopyle State Park provides worthwhile services to boaters: changing rooms, toilets, parking, and enforcement of the quotas. Without them I doubt if the town would permit our activities. Their charge is \$2.50; subtract the \$1.25 shuttle fee and you have the unreasonable cost that the protesters are complaining about: \$1.25. That's the kind of money you'd spend on a Coke and a candy bar. And there's no fee for putting in after **3:00PM**, something of real benefit to those who live close to the river. By contrast, most of us own around \$1500 in paddling gear, probably more. We drive for hours in our nice cars burning buck-a-gallon gasoline to get to the river. We own the latest camping equipment, eat out regularly, and talk about protecting river values. No one forces us to go to the **Yough**. And yet a run down the river isn't worth giving \$1.25 to the folks who manage it? C'mon!

There are some real issues here. Why aren't other users of the park, particularly bikers, also being charged? What special provisions can be made for local boaters who paddle the river frequently? These are matters worthy of political action; even a boycott if necessary. But the focus of the **Yough** boycott has been "the principle of the fee". I've always believed in paying my way, and compared to the other expenditures connected with our sport this cost seems trivial.

In writing this, I realize that I'm making myself a target for people who strongly disagree with me. The Journal is an excellent forum for controversy, and I'd encourage the membership to contribute their feelings and ideas. Access problems are becoming a fact of life; they shouldn't be ignored. But spare me the hate mail, and don't spoil my river trips by coming up and arguing with me. Let's maintain a civility and respect in this debate that reflects well on our sport.

Sincerely,  
Charlie Walbridge

Editor's **Note**--I know what you're saying **Charlie**--\$2.50 only lasts me for the first few minutes in a bar. But the principle of the issue still pisses me off. And the behavior of the park staff--in my opinion (and I personally witnessed some of it) has been reprehensible. The **Pennsylvania** DNR should be **ashamed**.--*chris koll*

## I like Idaho

Dear Bob,

I read your article on the Clearwater Basin in Idaho. My wife and I were vacationing in Montana and Idaho in August and September and we did get to see the Lochsa, Selway and Clearwater on U.S. 12; however, everything was low.

We did stay at the Lochsa Lodge at Powell and met the couple that owned the lodge. We spent the evening at the bar talking to the owners and the bartender, who is a boater and raft guide. What a neat place!

I was impressed with your article and interested in running the **Selway**. Could you send me the address for obtaining a permit for the Selway. Also, any other references or information would be appreciated.

Thanks,  
Dan Adamson  
Moscow, Ohio

Editors note:

To obtain an application for the **Selway/ Salmon/ Middle Fork Permit Lottery**, write to the **West Fork Ranger District**, Darby, Montana 59829 (406) 831-3269.

The lottery is held in mid-winter and only one application is accepted for individual. The odds of getting a permit during the peak season are not great and the individual who wins the permit must participate in the trip. (*If you get lucky, keep me in mind!*)

I highly recommend Grant **Amaral's Idaho: The Whitewater State** to boaters planning to visit this area. This authoritative reference is available through a number of mail order supply houses and at many whitewater stores. It is also available from Watershed Books, Box 271, Boise, Idaho 83701-0721.

## Idaho secrets

Dear Bob:

I thoroughly enjoyed your article on Idaho's Clearwater Basin. (**September/October 92**) It brought back many memories and I hope it will encourage more of our members to use some of those rivers.

Few of our present members

would be aware that it was AWA people who ran the first trips on rivers like the Selway and the North Fork of the Clearwater. It began in 1959 when Jack Reynolds and I led a rather large, week long, **AWA/Sierra** Club trip that included runs on the lower Selway, middle **Lochsa** and a four day wilderness run on the North Fork of the Clearwater. At that time there was still a 28 mile section of *de facto* wilderness on the North Fork between the Bungalow and Canyon ranger stations and it rivaled the Selway for natural beauty.

By today's standards, our equipment and river skills were primitive, but everyone had a great time. Rafts were

used to make it possible for non-boating family members to go along and also to lighten the load of gear in the small boats.

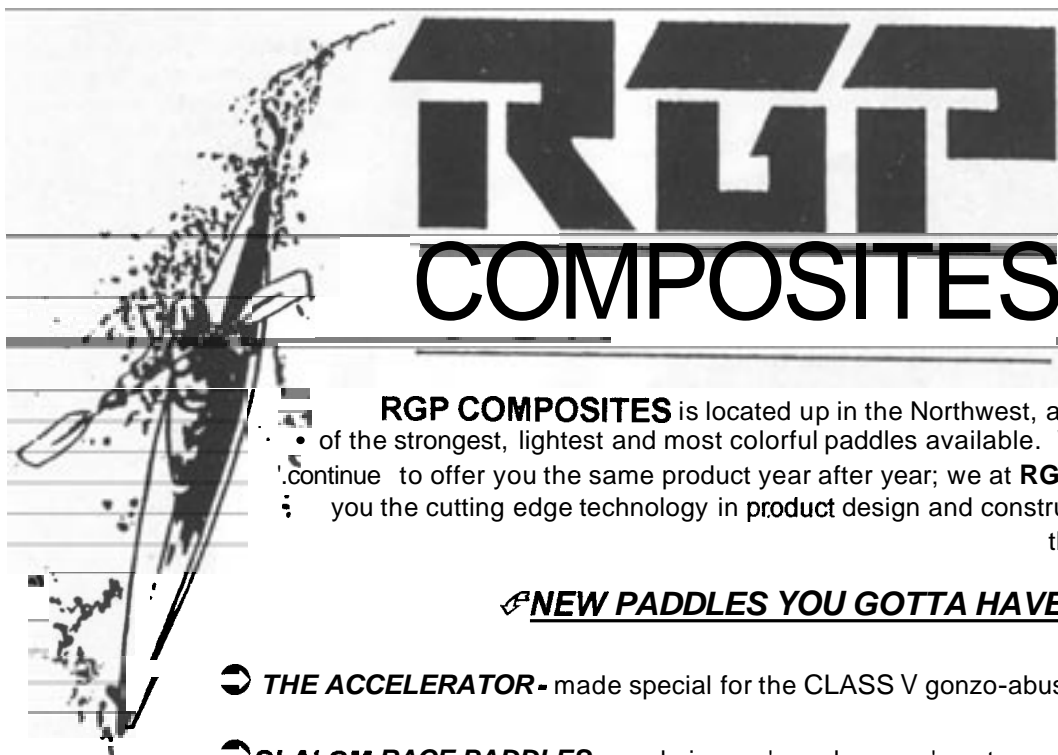
After that initial trip, a Trip Planning Committee was formed and it not only planned future AWA trips for several years, but provided the raft support, meals and shuttles. In 1960, Jack and I led a small scouting trip on the Selway with one raft and a decked 15 foot Grumman. As far as we could ascertain, local fisherman in little yellow raft were the only people who had run the Selway, and then, only **by flying** into Moose Creek.

We started at Whitecap Creek, the present put in, and, using the old Corp

of Engineers river maps and profiles, made notations on rapids and campsites and named the more interesting rapids.

Les Jones then converted these to **scroll** maps which he made available to boaters. Most of our names for the rapids have stuck. The National Forest Supervisor at the time the management plan was written for the Selway was Orville Daniels. As a boy, he learned his canoeing with me in the Ozarks, so he had some appreciation of rivers.

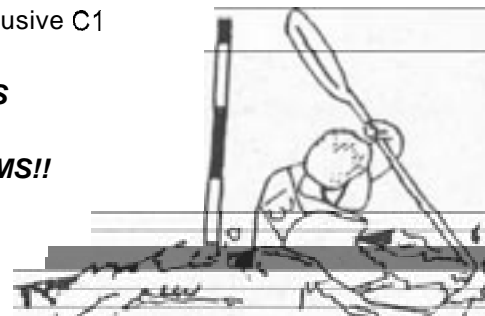
Shortsighted boaters, a few of our members among them I fear, have made attempts to weaken the management policy to allow more traffic on the Selway. How-



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ever, it is a fragile river and I feel strongly that boaters who care about real wilderness river experiences should accept and support the present management policy of one launch a day in the peak period.

As you ably point out, there are plenty of rivers to run in the general area which do not require permits. The North Fork, which you apparently did not have time to run, is very enjoyable. It used to be a very long haul over bad roads, but now the roads into it are improved, and some, including the one along the river, are paved. We ran some of the North Fork in 1990 and found it relatively unchanged, except for the addition of one fair sized campground and the roads. We saw only two other boaters during our stay.

Many of the boaters from the **midwest** seem to have the idea that if a river does not require a permit, it must not be worth running. I've often tried to convince them otherwise, without great success. Perhaps your **article** will help educate them and relieve the pressure on some of the overused rivers.

Sincerely,  
Oz Hawksley  
Warrensburg, MO.

## Gauley thanks

On behalf of the AWA, I want to thank all of the volunteers who helped make this year's Gauley Festival a tremendous success.

You helped prepare and wire the site. You placed promotional literature on every whitewater vehicle in two counties. You greeted our guests at the gate and collected their entrance fees. You helped with the camping arrangements. You handed out AWA Journals. You sold T-shirts and memberships. You hawked raffle tickets. You made order out of the chaos that is the silent auction. You cleaned up Sunday morning.

You made the '92 Festival the best ever.

Thank you....and....See you next year!

Joe Greiner  
Festival Volunteer Coordinator

## LETTERS

### A Carla fan

Dear Chris,

I have been reading the imaginative and zany reflections of Carla Garrison<sup>1</sup> Gary Carlson with considerable delight since they first appeared on the end pages of *American Whitewater*. With this historical perspective I was tipped upside down by **November/December's** "He kindly stopped for Carla".

Each year at Christmas time I drag out my duct-taped, moldy, scratched and battered copy of *The Greatest Christmas Pageant Ever* (by Robinson) and read it again. Precisely because the author is able to capture the zest and off-beat character of a band of hooligans' encounter with God, my Spirit is genuinely renewed by the story, and I am, momentarily set free from the cumbersome conventions and heavily mortgage vocabulary of traditional religious narrative.

Now I have another story to keep alongside Robinson's. I loved "He kindly stopped for Carla". The reason the story worked so well for me is exactly because I have relished Carla's ribald and off-color accounts of previous mis-adventures. Carla's gestalt brings her Divine Encounter literally down to earth - not the stuff dreams are made of, but the stuff of laughter, hope, life itself, and God's outrageous love.

Thanks for some real fine stuff over the years.

"The reality-hunter most like the artist is the man of religion - the man whose primary intuition is that the world is holy."

John Gardner, *On Moral Fiction* (Basic Books, NY: 1978), p.155.

22 December 1992  
Ave atque vale

Rev. John R. McClester, Jr.

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## AWA's conservation agenda for 1993

By **POPEBARROW**  
AWA Conservation Chairman

The philosopher, Edward **Bellamy**, once said "If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second."

Bellamy had his priorities all screwed up. This is not surprising since the rotund philosopher was a notorious couch potato, who only occasionally managed to rouse himself for a brief game of billiards.

Whitewater boaters know that recreation is ALWAYS the first necessity. You can catch a burger and beer AFTER you get off the river.

Recreation also comes first at the American Whitewater Affiliation. We put the protection and improvement of recreation opportunities at the top of our agenda.

In 1993 AWA will continue to focus its energies on the most vulnerable, rare, and threatened rivers now existing in the United States: the 2,200 recreational rivers listed in the AWA Nationwide Whitewater Inventory.

Whitewater river segments may not add up to much in overall river miles — the are only 1% of America's river miles (36,000 miles) — but they offer more and better recreational opportunities than the remaining 3,500,000 river miles put together. Whitewater rivers, in our view, are the crown jewels of rivers.

Unfortunately, the importance that boaters attach to recreation and to protecting and preserving whitewater rivers is not always shared by the general public - or by their elected representatives.

If the average person thinks about conserva-

tion at all, he generally worries about water quality, biodiversity, and endangered species, not outdoor recreation. Kayaking off waterfalls just in not the average Joe's cup of tea. Politicians and major foundations share this mind set.

Given these **public**-perceptions, AWA often tkes an indirect tack to achieving our goals. We have work in coalitions with other larger wide-sprectum groups (like American Rivers, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, and the National Wildlife Federation) to convince them to adopt our interests, at least in part. This sometimes works, and sometimes it does not.

One new strategy we are developing is to link whitewater preservation and protection with popular issues now dominating the American political agenda, such as jobs and biodiversity.

The jobs part of the agenda ties in with tourism, one of the most important and fast-growing industries in the world. Recreational **attrac**-tions like the BIO BIO, THE GAULEY, THE OCOEE and the whitewater runs in the Rockies are big money-making tourist attractions. They are critical elements of a healthy rural economy. To protect and preserve whitewater we have to do more work documenting and publicizing the economic importance of rivers in the tourism industry.

Equally as important, we need to document and publicize the link between whitewater rivers and the natural environment.

Whitewater rivers, especially waterfalls, are a unique and fast-disappearing kind of landscape. They provide scenic diversity.



Ed Kiesa (before he got married and stopped paddling) on the Gauley. The Gauley is one of the East's most popular whitewater rivers and is included in AWA conservation plans.

(Think how boring it would be if all waterfalls were used for power generation !).

Whitewater also provides a special kind of habitat for a unique variety of plants, animals, and microinvertebrates, many of which cannot live in other types of riverine environments.

Scientists know little about the plants, insects, and animals which can live in dose proximity to the cool mist of falling water, and data documenting the biological values of whitewater areas is hard to come by. The general public, our **conservation**-minded allies, and even some whitewater boaters, often do not realize that whitewater areas may be as important for biological diversity as for providing a diversity of scenic and recreational opportunities.

Bringing these issues to public consciousness, and pursing all our other river conservation work at the same time, is more than even the most hard-working all-volunteer organization could hope to do. In

1992 AWA's Board of Directors realized that we need a full time conservation staff. Conservation Program Director, Rich Bowers, was hired and, in September, his contract was extended indefinitely.

Hiring a paid conservation staff to help and lead our near-exhausted volunteers has been a gigantic, expensive, and wrenching leap forward. But this move is already paying big dividends. AWA is now playing a larger, and more independent, role in virtually all of the major river conservation issues in the United States.

### **THE THREE PART PROGRAM**

The AWA river conservation program has three elements: (1) River Defense Projects, (2) River Conservation Projects, and (3) River Access Projects.

River Defense Projects have dominated our agenda. there were always so many threats so few resources to throw at the problem. That situation is now changing.

On December 7 of last year, Energy Daily published an article entitled "Is the Green Promise of Hydropower Fading to Brown". The author noted that "a strange thing happened to hydropower on its way to the sustainable energy ball: the party's environmentalist hosts withdrew their invitation". They began to realize that "hydro has left fish high and dry, transformed once-mighty rivers into pathetic streams and destroyed fragile ecosystems".

Our message, it seems, is finally getting through.

Now that other environmental groups have recognized the problems that hydropower can cause, AWA can turn more of its energies to other parts of our agenda.

**RIVER ACCESS**

River access is right at the tippy top of **AWA's** agenda for 1993.

Access problems are nothing new. River access has been a controversial issue at least since Roman times, and ancient English common law still influences court decisions in the United States. The old river access disputes mostly concerned people's rights to fish, dig for dams in stream beds, and float logs downstream. Now the questions most likely to be debated are more like: Can whitewater boaters gain access to the **KENNEBEC RIVER** without paying a fee? What about the **LOWER YOUGHIOGHNEY**? Can non-commercial boaters get a reservation to run the **GRAND CANYON**? Can they find space to paddle between the commercial rafts on the **GAULEY**? Can they float through private property on **CHAUWAYNOCHAWAY**? Can they paddle the **NIAGARA GORGE** at all?

These questions have impacted almost every whitewater boater at one time



**Ed Kiesa** again—this time on the Grand Canyon. Access to the Grand and other permitted rivers is a key issue.

or another. Recently they have become even more troubling and so, at the 1992 Board of Directors meeting in Summersville, West Virginia, the AWA Board voted to ratchet **AWA's** river access work up to a much higher level.

An **Ad Hoc** River Access Committee was appointed to develop a policy and specific plan to improve access to whitewater rivers. The first step has been completed. Whitewater river access **policies** were reduced to writing in policy paper in December of last year. (Free copies are available from AWA, 136-13th St., SE, Wash, D.C. 20003)

The overall policy is "to assure rights of public access to rivers and streams for recreational use by human-powered water craft." The paper details policies for eight types of river access issues: (1) Fees for Access to Rivers. (2) Limits to Control Carrying Capacity and Allocate Use Among Different

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# CONSERVE

Groups (3) Limits on Access for Safety or to Avoid Liability (4) Access to Whitewater Affected by Water Projects. (5) Bans on River Access for Environmental Protection. (6) Overcrowding. (7) Access Points on Private Land. (8) The Right to Boat on Streams Through Private Lands.

The ideas in the 1992 Policy Paper will be actively pursued in 1993.

AWA Conservation Program Director, Rich Bowers, took the policies to the River Outfitters annual conference (Confluence '92) in Boise in December of last year and explained our views to commercial outfitters and Federal river managers.

In addition, AWA is insisting on changes in hydropower relicensing and in new FERC licenses, specifically the removal of all legal "hooks" in FERC licenses which block public access or rivers at dam sites or allow

power companies to impose access fees on recreational boaters. We have already made these demands in cases involving the ANDROSCOGGIN and DEERFIELD RIVERS, AND MOXIE STREAM. There will be more to come in 1993.

AWA will also continue the fight against the unfair fees imposed on boaters at the LOWER YOUGHIOGHENY as well as the fees on the KENNEBEC.

One of the most promising river access ideas for 1993 is our proposal to take on cooperative projects with lands trusts (like the Nature Conservancy) to buy or lease access rights and legal parking areas at whitewater rivers. AWA participated in a successful program of this kind at Sang Run on the YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER in Maryland in 1989. There are hundreds of similar land

acquisition opportunities. We will be surveying our members in 1993 to identify the most promising sites for this project.

## PROACTIVE RIVER CONSERVATION PROJECTS

There are a number of ways to protect rivers before the final crisis arrives. Wild and Scenic Rivers:

The classic proactive river protection measure is Federal wild and scenic designation. We still have a number of possible wild and scenic rivers on our agenda, the most important being our effort to get federal wild and scenic designation for 13 rivers in West Virginia.

We are also beginning to work towards other forms of river protection, both generically and in individual cases.

Last year we helped pass a bill to designate the Little River in Alabama as a National Preserve. This year

new individual whitewater river bills will surface in Congress. Congressman Larry LaRocco's bill to protect the NORTH FORK OF THE PAYETTE is at the top of the list.

Our best chance to get rivers safely stashed away is with Statewide grassroots political action. This is why we formed the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, still headed up by AWA Director Mac Thornton, but now an independent broad-spectrum river conservation group.

We are taking the same tack in New York by helping to start up New York Rivers United with Pete Skinner at the helm.

Supporting these organizations with funding and technical help is a key piece of our 1993 agenda.

We have taken a similar approach with international river conservation by participating in the formation



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## CONSERVE

friendly agency, at a total cost of over \$200 million. Meanwhile the old guard in this agency have still managed to find time to make life miserable for whitewater boaters.

After producing a woefully deficient Environmental Assessment of recreational flows on the Russell Fork River in southwestern Virginia and Kentucky, the Corps announced last fall that the days of 1200 ds flows on the Russell Fork were over. Flow are now cut back to to 800 ds. This decision was based on erroneous data, some of

which is still unavailable to the public in written form.

In 1993 AWA will continue working to turn this decision around and regain the higher flows we once enjoyed on this exciting river. Projects Abroad

Our major river defense project abroad, the fight to save Chile's Bio Bio River, suffered a severe body blow. In December of 1992, the International Finance Corporation (an affiliate of the World Bank) approved the making of an international loan to the Endesa Power Company.

In 1968, when the Bureau of Redamation was desperately trying to build more dams than the Army Corp of Engineers, and the Colorado Squawfish was being poisoned to create trout habitat, President Lyndon Johnson authorized construction of the project. Then came the rise of Richard Nixon, budgetary concerns, environmentalism, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Also at this time came the downfall of Floyd Dominy as head of the Bureau of Redamation, arguably the most powerful man in the United States. He was fired by Nixon for sexual improprieties on a legendary scale. (Ironically, he was notified of his dismissal by James Watt, who would later become infamous in his own right.) The Animas - La Plata project went on the back burner.

The project regained

momentum in the mid-80's with the recognition of Indian water rights. The proponents dusted off the 1980 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and Congress reauthorized the project in 1988.

On May 8, 1989, one day before construction was to begin, the Endangered Species Act was invoked to protect the Colorado Squawfish. Water development in the San Juan basin was frozen. A wave of lawsuits followed, and is still ongoing.

The project would have devastating environmental and recreational impacts. As proposed, it would divert water from the La Plata River, creating the Southern Ute Reservoir. It would also pump water uphill 500 feet from the Animas River at Durango, creating Ridges Basin Reservoir. Pumping will consume 165

## Animas project continues

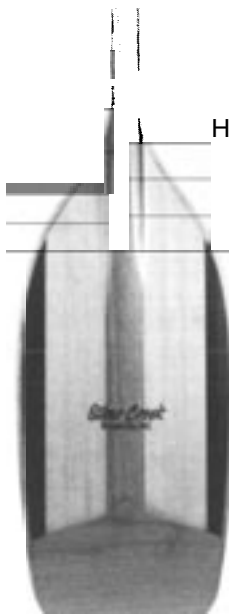
By **BILL BAKER**

Like the villain in a cheap horror flick, the last major dam in the West refuses to die. Ignorant of

over-allocation, salinity, and selenium, and wounded by lawsuits, endangered species, economics, and energy requirements, the Animas - La Plata project stumbles on.

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million kilowatts of **electricity** per year, roughly equivalent to that of a town of 26,000 people. Cost estimates from 1990 were \$600 million; the Bureau of Redamation is not releasing current figures.

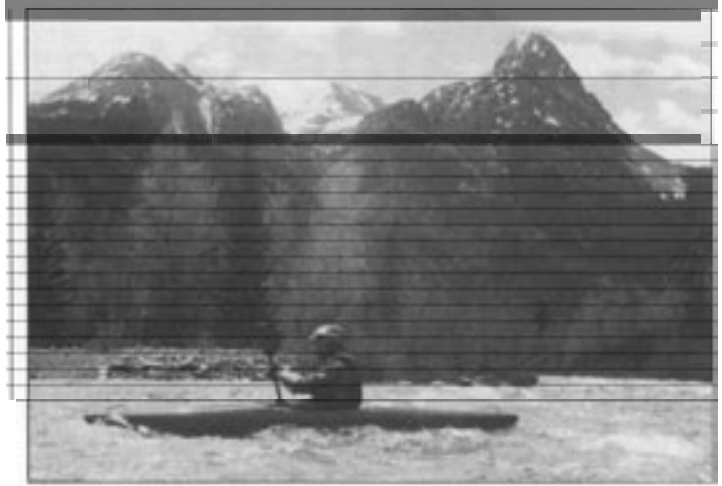
The project would be built in two phases. Phase I would be funded largely by taxpayer dollars, and 96% of the water would be used for Durango and anglo farmers. Phase II would be funded by water users, with water allocated to the Southern Utes and the Ute Mountain Utes.

Therein lies the rub. "What we have is a \$15 million problem of Indian water rights with a \$600 million solution," argues Jeanne **Englert** of Taxpayers for the Animas River. Indeed, if the project were actually designated to provide water for the Indians, why is there a rider

attached to grant over \$60 million to the tribes for 'development funds?' Explains Scott **McElroy**, water counsel to the Southern Utes, "I don't think the project would have succeeded for a minute if it wasn't the vehicle for an Indian water right settlement." In fact, some members of the southern Utes were so incensed at the proposal (which carries a cost of \$5,000 per year, per Indian), that they organized the first tribal council recall election in the history of the tribe.

Meanwhile, the developers refuse to give up. They propose to mitigate damage to the Colorado Squawfish by raking 50,000 **acre/ft** per year from the Navajos at Navajo Dam. The Fish & Wildlife Service is required to issue a draft study of critical habitat for the Razorback Sucker in January 1993.

A suit filed by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in October is pending; it would



Boating on the Silverton section of the Animas River. A **proposed** downstream diversion would negatively effect a popular recreational reach of the river near Durango.

require the Bureau of Reclamation to release financial data for the project.

A suit won by the Legal Defense Fund in April forced the Bureau to issue a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. That document was released on

October 13, and the comment period runs to December 15. For more information, contact the Bureau of Reclamation, Durango Projects Office (303) 385-6567.

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# AWA aids national River Cleanup

Last May, the first National River Cleanup week launched by America Outdoors and sponsored nationally by a number of organizations, including the American Whitewater Affiliation, scored a tremendous success for river conservation. In the course of 280 river cleanups, 22,000 volunteers cleared 6,000 miles of waterways to net an estimated 1,000,000 pounds of debris. To broaden the scope of this event in 1993, trails will provide an additional focus.

Many AWA Affiliate Clubs got into the act and helped boost the statistics. The Birmingham Canoe Club, historically responsible for annual river cleanups in their area, report having removed 40 bags of trash from a stretch of the Locust Fork of the Warrior River. Hauling the debris downstream was made easier by "Clean Livin", the Club's new raft/garbage scow purchased with the proceeds of a 1991 AWA Conservation Grant. BCC also removed trash from the Mulberry Fork and Ocoee to its 1993 agenda.

During the week of May 1 to 8, 1993 volunteers across the nation will be conducting cleanups along their chosen trails and waterways. These efforts will be organized on the local level by individuals, clubs, outfitters, outdoors shops and other groups. By focusing attention on the collec-



The Birmingham Canoe Club participated in the 1992 River Cleanup week by removing 40 bags of trash from the Locust Fork of the Warrior River. AWA provided funds for purchase of a raft that was used during the project.

tion of trash and debris, National River and Trail Cleanup Week will help foster a popular stewardship of our rivers and public resources. It's an excellent opportunity for every paddler to make a contribution.

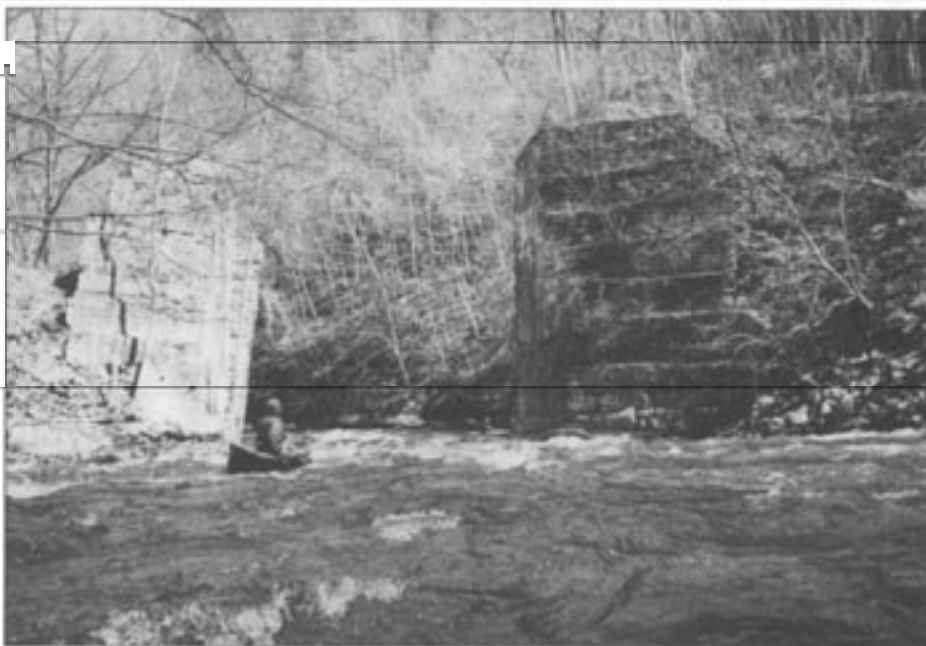
For further information on how to

participate in National River and Trail Cleanup Week, contact AWA, P.O. Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464. Heavy duty trash bags will be provided to registered groups on a first come, first served basis.

## *AWA donates funds toward conservation organizations*

AWA's Whitewater Defense Project (WDP) continued to thrive during 1992, enabling us to support its ever-expanding agenda of river conservation and access programs. Hiring Rich Bowers for the newly-developed post of Conservation Program Director got the year off to an energetic start, and money received from AWA's members, Affiliate Clubs, events and other organizations kept up the momentum.

So, how has AWA been spending your donations? A large portion of



AWA funding helps the WVRP protect streams like the Laurel Fork of the Cheat.



## BRIEFS

WDP proceeds went to support the day-to-day expenses of AWA Staff, Directors and Regional Coordinators in their work on various grass roots whitewater issues. Then, at year end, the Conservation Committee met to award substantial grants to several whitewater groups applying for financial support.

In December of 1992, AWA funded the following projects:

### NEW ENGLAND FLOW

AWA Project Sponsor: Tom Christopher  
AWA Contribution: \$2,000

Project Description: Continued attempt to obtain a regular, frequent recreational release schedule on all boatable sections of the Deerfield River (MA) through intervention in the FERC relicensing process and negotiations with New England Power Co. During the summer of 1992 FLOW also actively contested access fees on Maine's Kennebec River.

### NEW YORK RIVERS UNITED

AWA Project Sponsor: Pete Skinner  
AWA Contribution: \$5,000

Project Description: Formation of a coalition of New York river interest groups to pursue critical river corridor land conservancy opportunities, immediate hydro relicensing demands and the creation of a state-governed rivers program. Launched in July 1992, NYRU is currently conducting a statewide outreach program to introduce itself to river activists and governmental officials and become better acquainted with the issues at hand.

### WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS COALITION

AWA Project Sponsor: Mac Thornton  
AWA Contribution: \$5,000

Project Description: Further support of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition's efforts to gain Federal protection for 13 whitewater segments located within the Monongahela National Forest. Since WVRC's inception in 1990, AWA has contributed an additional \$15,900, largely made possible by membership donations and Gauley River Festival proceeds.

Although not an applicant for a formal AWA grant, Grupo de Accion por el Biobio and other Chilean activists received WDP proceeds in excess of \$3,000 during 1992. This money was used primarily to facilitate communications between the group and potential international supporters in its battle to stop the proposed Pangué Dam project on the Bio Bio.



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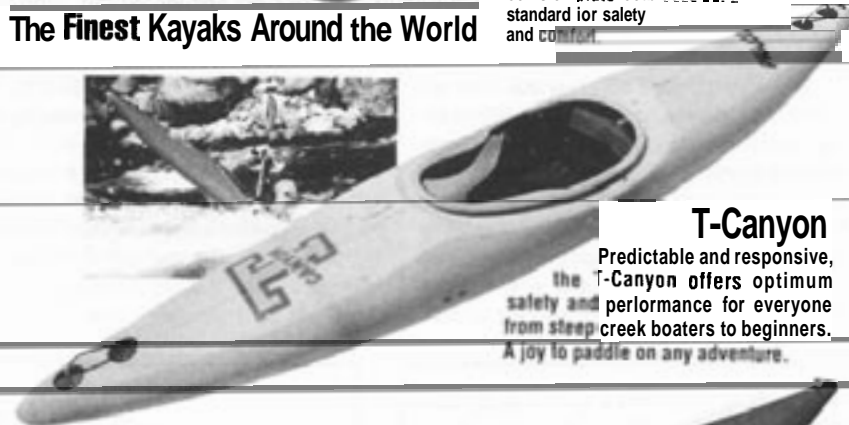
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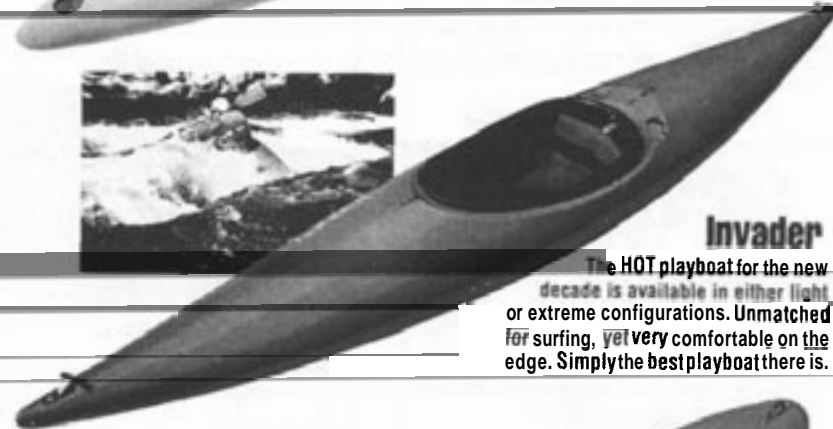
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## BRIEFS

# AWA represents private boaters at gathering of commercial outfitters

This year's "Confluence" was held in Boise, ID, and ran from December 5 to 11. Rich Bowers, AWA's Conservation Program Director, attended this meeting in order to help represent private boating interests (America Outdoors waived the registration fee for AWA participation).

This year's meeting was sponsored by the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, North American Outfitters, most of the Federal agencies involved in river management (NPS, BLM, FS, BuRec), as well as America Outdoors.

While this gathering was targeted towards agency and commercial river interests, the absence of private interests was obvious. To be effective, private boaters need to become involved early on when management plans are being developed. Only one private boater representative (Amy Haak, ID Whitewater Assoc.) was involved in any of the seminars, the one for the American River Management Association's

discussion on 'Evaluation of River Management as seen by Clients'.

To address this private boater absence, Rich Bowers began to set up partnerships with the various agency representatives, and established the fact that there are organizations which represent the private sector nationally.

Concerns over river access, hydro relicensing, management plans, and environmental concerns were but a few of the topics discussed at this convention, and which will affect both the private and commercial boater in the future.

Along with Rich's efforts, there was a strong movement promoted by members of America Outdoors to also address the private boater deficiency. It was established that next year's theme should be partnerships between the private and commercial boaters, a positive and pro-active attempt to work towards healing this sometimes rift in river use. The AWA would

encourage all voices for boaters to contact America Outdoors and help them pull this off for '93.

Everyone who is anyone in river recreation and/or management was there! Seminars on endangered species, trends in recreation, development of grassroots programs, and various planning practices were presented by recognized experts in river issues.

Highlights were numerous (including a key-note presentation by ID Governor Cecil Andrus), but a few outstanding quotes were not to be forgotten, and had direct impacts on boater concerns:

Judy Harrison, CANOE Magazine, spoke about the growth of paddlesports and really set the stage for explaining the numerous and growing problems associated with river recreation. She stated that "all Americans are born with this inherent belief that they are guaranteed free access to their rivers".



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Outfitter Doug Tims, Maravia Corp., followed this theme in a later discussion when he talked about the "Attitude of Ownership" which pervades the use of our rivers. Boaters think they own exclusive rights to runnable streams; fishing interests, if possible, are even more unreasonable when it comes to river use. And worse yet, river managers, directed to balance this competing use, are prone to the same thinking which can (and does in many cases) result in closure of these river resources rather than proper management.

While no one offered that **all-inclusive/good** for everyone solution, it was heartening to see that others are aware of the basic problems hitting all river users today. Bill Spitzer, Chief of the NPS Division of Recreation Resources Assistance, recognized that recreation is too small and un-influential to be effective on its own, and needs to seek strong 'partnerships for the future'. Perhaps next year, with a more balanced partnership approach, and representation for private recreation, a solution may be found!

### Video review

## Kent Ford sets standards for instructional videos

Every paddler enjoys exciting river running videos. While most of these productions entertain, a few go beyond that to help improve your paddling skills. Noted racer and instructor Kent Ford has been working hard these past few years to do just that. His two recent productions, **Solo Playboating** and **The Kavaker's Edge**, have a lot of tips and secrets to share with viewers. Whether you're a beginner just starting to get wet, an intermediate looking for ways to refine your paddling, or an expert in search of a few ideas to get even better, you won't be disappointed.

**Solo Playboating** is a fast-paced 45 minutes of skills that open boaters need to play the river with agility and finesse. Aimed at the intermediate boater who wants to do more than just float the rapids, this video shows them what they need to know. From outfitting correctly to improving stroke efficiency; from surfing and eddy turn skills to bracing and rolling: each is explained

and demonstrated in a way that is easy to understand. And, working with top experts on some of the country's most challenging rivers, you'll go from watching the skills demonstrated to seeing them in action. It's fast paced, informative, and entertaining. As a canoeist of twenty years experience, I learned a few things!\*\*\*\*

**The Kavaker's Edge** is a worthy successor to Solo playboating. If anything, it sets a new and higher standard. Kent Ford teams up with some of the nation's top instructors to produce a kayaking instructional video that boaters of all skill levels can appreciate. It starts at a much lower level with a much softer tone, talking to the beginner about how kayaking feels and emphasizing the fun and the excitement, rather than the danger. But because it's 55 minutes long, this gentle pace doesn't sacrifice presenting higher level skills. Later in the video advanced stroke techniques and river playing skills are demonstrated.

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## BRIEFS

Enders, side-surfing, and other hot-dog moves are made understandable. As a C-boater just starting to fool around with a kayak, the video gave me lots to think about. The roll presentation is the best I've seen, with slow motion and underwater shots of different kayakers in action. For the first time I actually understand the difference between a "Screw Roll" and a "C to C Roll". Both are demonstrated so that the aspiring boater can learn both and use either one. Filmed on a variety of beautiful and exciting rivers, it's aesthetically pleasing and highly entertaining. \*\*\*\*\*

Solo Playboating and The Kayaker's Edge  
Directed by Kent Ford; Produced by John Davis  
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Available through Whitewater Instruction Videos, 160 Hideaway Road, Durango, CO 81301--and through whitewater stores and catalogs nationwide.

# Help needed to preserve Gore Canyon access

By RIC ALESCH

Access to Gore Canyon on the Colorado River has been a problem for several years and action is needed from paddlers to assure a permanent solution. Gore Canyon is a class 5 run about 2.5 hours northwest of Denver. It is especially valuable because it is generally run late in the summer after other rivers have dried up. It is also the site of the annual Gore Canyon race, which together with the Great Falls of the Potomac race and the Upper Youghiogheny race define the edge of whitewater racing difficulty.

Traditionally boaters have traversed a dirt road and crossed a railroad track on the north side of the river to put in for the run. A couple years ago a landowner gated the road and blocked access to paddlers. Although boaters recently got the

county attorney to direct the sheriff to keep the road open, it is still illegal to cross the tracks, and the railroad has asked that violators be prosecuted.

Local boaters are seeking a permanent solution and they could use your help. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the federal agency that manages public lands in the area, is considering developing an access site on the south side of the river. Because it would require the construction of a road and parking area, funding is needed for the project. As you can imagine there are many competing demands for BLM recreation development funds and letters of support, especially from around the country, would help convince BLM how important this project is. Please write to:

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# The dynamics of pinning

**Water flows around rocks, not through them. Beginners learn to avoid them even when a collision seems imminent.**

By CHARLIE WALBRIDGE  
AWA Safety Chairman

Hitting rocks and boulders of all sizes and shapes is a part of river running. Modern boats can take the punishment, but how should the boater deal with the real risks of pinning and entrapment?

Water flows around rocks, not through them. Beginners learn quickly to continue trying to avoid them even when a collision seems imminent. The current almost always pushes them around the rock at the last minute. This river feature doing the pushing is called a pillow, a mass of water which is formed when the current piles up on the upstream face of an obstruction. This makes hitting many boulders harder than it might seem.

Some pillows are so powerful that you can't paddle through them even if you try. At Pillow Rock rapid you can watch squirt boaters head directly for the left wall. They back-ender in the huge pillow, and wash around the rock. But on smaller rocks, a broached boat goes right through. As it impacts with the rock, it takes a few seconds for the pillow to transfer from the upstream side of the rock to the upstream side of the boat. When this happens, the full force of the river takes hold. If the force is balanced end-to-end, you're pinned.

When broached, beginners are taught to lean immediately into a rock. This lets the current pass under the boat, keeping the water from grabbing hold. This position is surprisingly stable, but remember: it's most important to lean the boat, rather than just your body. If the river washes over a kayak deck or canoe gunwale all the downstream body English in the world won't prevent a pinning. Once this lean is established, you're in essence riding on top of the pillow. This pile of water gives you time to work, and helps minimize friction as you work the boat off to one side or the other with your hands.

Slightly undercut rocks are dangerous because no pillow forms. When a paddler broaches on one they're almost sure to be caught. This is a much more frequent danger than huge undercuts, which are well-known and relatively rare. If a pillow is not forming on a rock, treat it with extra respect. It may well be undercut.

Being able to get out of your boat quickly can be important. As a C-1 paddler, I can stand up in my boat and jump

out in a flash. In 1972 I did just that after picking the wrong route on the Upper Yough's notorious "Lost and Found" rapid and broaching onto an undercut. In a millisecond I was on top of an undercut rock as my C-1 sank beneath it. Getting out fast is much harder in a kayak, and virtually impossible with smaller, old-style cockpits. Anyone who chooses a kayak without a big "keyhole" cockpit these days is asking for trouble in the event of a pin. If pinned upside down, eject. You can't roll about when it's stuck, so get out while you can.

Practice getting in and out of your canoe or kayak quickly. Note any outfitting problems, then modify your boat accordingly. Each boat and body combination is different, and presents unique outfitting problems. The extra margin that this fine-tuning provides can make a difference in a tight spot, and will contribute to your overall confidence as a boater.

**When broached, beginners are taught to lean immediately into a rock. This lets the current pass under the boat, keeping the water from grabbing hold.**

Crashing, bashing, and scraping rocks is not the same as being pinned. While frightening to experience when upside down, as long as your boat is moving you aren't pinned yet. The same thing is true when "surfing" a pillow. But once a boat sticks to the rock firmly, you only have only a few seconds to escape before the river takes hold. If you're right-side-up, watch the scenario unfold, and be ready to bail out. Upside down, you'll have to rely on how it feels. Wait for the hard impact that stops your movement; then eject. You'll never roll under these conditions. Don't wait too long to exit your craft.

Pinned boats get caught because the river's force is balanced at both ends. The way to work them loose is to look carefully at the pin, then decide how to reduce the force on one end or the other. Often just raising one side a bit is enough to unbalance the pin, allowing the force of

# SAFETY

the water at the opposite end of the boat to pivot your craft **free**. Mechanical systems and attempts to unpin boats by pulling one end back upstream are very time consuming, and should only be used as a last resort.

*Mechanical systems and attempts to unpin boats by pulling one end back upstream are very time consuming, and should only be used as a last resort.*

End to end pins can be particularly frustrating. Here both ends of the boat have snagged on closely-placed obstructions. In mild current you may be able to bounce your boat and wiggle **free**. Certainly you'll be able to hop out easily. If the water is powerful, get out at once, before the current grabs hold. There's simply no easy way to work free except lifting one end or the other up over one of the obstructions, or pulling or pushing the boat until it slides forward or backwards enough to swing past one of the rocks that snagged it.

When a decked boat pins bow-first, the paddler is stopped right in the middle of the current. The pillow builds up on the paddler almost instantly, putting pressure on the boater and shortening escape time. The pillow also forms the air pocket which may help people breathe in some of the more extreme examples. Rescue is a pretty grueling affair, and I recommend the use of high-volume boats and good judgement to avoid trouble.

All of these things take experience to **recognise**. Using these ideas, be alert to your own observations as you paddle. Never stop thinking. Remember: you can either have five years experience or one year's experience repeated five times.

A Video by Lars Holbek & Eric Magnuson

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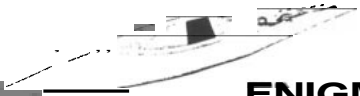
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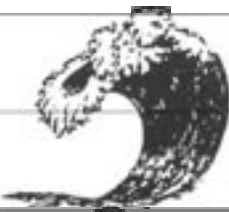


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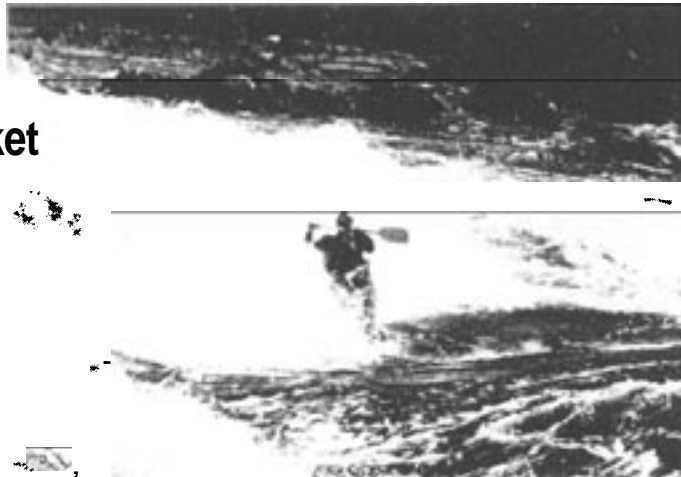
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*Sprinting down class V water isn't scary, it's...*

# HAIR RACING



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By BOB GEDEKOH  
and MARK WHITE, JOHN WELD, ANDY BRIDGE

Before you read another word, check your pulse.

Okay, got it? Go ahead then, read on.

The Great Falls of the Potomac.  
The Gore Canvon of the Colorado.  
The Watauga.  
The Upper Youghiogheny.  
The North Fork of the Payette.

Now, check your pulse again.

Picked up a few beats, didn't it?

No matter who you are, no matter what your skill level; if you know anything at all about whitewater, odds are reading that list curled your toes just a bit and sent a tingle up your spine.

What whitewater boater hasn't heard of these runs?

Scattered geographically across the nation, considered together, they constitute a virtual definition of class V whitewater. **These** are runs that almost every novice boater dreams of tackling someday. But for 95% of the boating population, that someday never comes.

Considering the difficulties and the dangers inherent in paddling this class of whitewater, it is probably just as well that these challenging rivers never become more than pipedreams to most whitewater buffs.

They are steep, they are technical and they are pushy. They are hard and they are intimidating. These are the rivers that separate the Big Dogs from the Pups.

Even experts approach these rivers with trepidation.

Most try to find a knowledgeable veteran to follow on their maiden voyage. These are not rivers that are easy to master; it takes a while to learn the best routes. Many boaters choose to portage some of the rapids. Others scout extensively, either from eddies or from the shore.

A good rule to honor on these rivers is to take your time... don't get in a hurry. Not if you want to reach the take-out with your body and your boat intact.

Please! No crash and burning here!

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Except...

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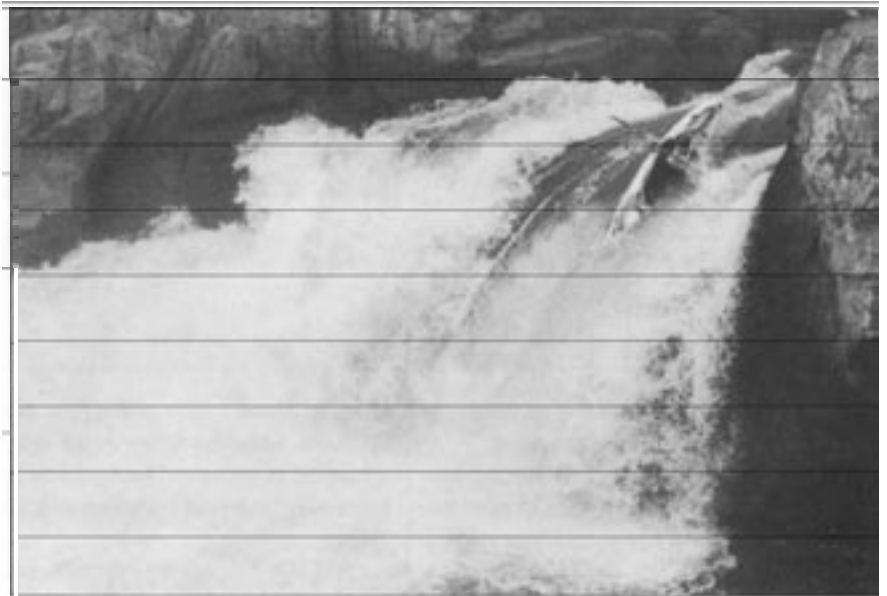
That's right... RACE DAY!

That one day of the year when experts throw caution to the wind and go for the glory. Call it courageous, call it foolhardy, call it loony... call it HAIR RACING.

Downriver racing on class V water.

For better or for worse, it's catching on.

During the past several summers downriver races have



*Billy Bob Taylor off his line in Great Falls Race*

been held on each of the infamous whitewater runs listed above. Not fancy sanctioned events, mind you, replete with elaborate finishlines, computerized timers, mobs of curious spectators and safety boats in every eddy.

No, most Hair Races are not like that at all.

They tend to be informal affairs, loosely organized, officially sanctioned by no one... Who would accept the liability?

And yet, in many respects, the intensity of the competition is just as great as that one might find at the team trials.

**You see**, these races **have been** dominated by some of the best known hair boaters in the country. Individuals known for paddling on the frontier of the sport, gutsy souls who continue to defy danger, as they redefine the limits of whitewater navigability.

Legendary paddlers with names like Snyder, Lesser, Ammons, Jaycox and Zbel.

Most of these individuals are not competitive in the conventional sense of the word. They certainly aren't your **typical Racerheads**. You won't find most of them practicing gates on class three waters or sprinting across flatwater, one eye on the water and the other on a stopwatch.

And, if you ask a lot of these guys about their participation in the Hair Races, they will laugh and say it is no big deal... that they just do it for the hell of it.

But don't swallow that hook, line and sinker.

Most Hair Racers are on the prowl for ways to distinguish themselves from the rest of the pack. Traditionally, their reputations have been established by virtue of perilous first descents and high water exploits; by running whitewater re-

**Mark White running Tunnel Falls in the 1991 Gore Race**



garded by most as either prohibitively difficult or inordinately dangerous.

The advent of Hair Racing has just given them another means to position themselves among the elite of the sport.

And though most Hair Racers will deny that they do anything special to get ready for the races, in truth, there is a often flurry of rather intense, albeit low key, preparation during the weeks leading up to the events. (*Dare we call it training?*)

By necessity, most of the competitors in the Hair Races reside in the vicinity of the rivers. Being an excellent whitewater technician is not enough to do well. You have to know the river, be familiar with the most expeditious routes and the trouble spots. A Hair Race tests one's knowledge of the river as much as one's ability.

Which is not to say that members of the conventional racing community have not participated in some of the events. Over the past few years nationally known and ranked racers including Jon Lugbill, Davey Hearn, Marty McCormack, Cara Ruppel and Brian Homberg have competed in the Upper Yough Race, the oldest and most "established" of the Hair Races. And the date of the Great Falls Race is chosen so as not to coincide with the traditional slalom and wildwater circuit races, allowing the more daring members of D.C.'s sizable racing community to participate.

K-1 Wildwater team member Steve Holmes paddled in last year's Gore

Canyon Race. His colleague, Neilson Oldham, won the Gore event this year, while C-1 Wildwater Champ Andy Bridge, triumphed this year at the Potomac's Great Falls.

Of course, not everyone who has participated in the Hair Races has a Big Dog or a Racerhead reputation. These races attract plenty of competent Wannabees.

After all, each competitor sets his or her own goals. Not necessarily to come in first... but to cut a few seconds off last year's time, or to finish just a few seconds ahead of his or her cronies, or just to cross the finish line in one piece.

In truth, most of the excitement at the post race parties (an important, and universal part of any Hair Race) centers around the Wannabees recounting close calls, near misses and out and out disasters. At the Upper Yough Race one of the most treasured prizes is a battered steering wheel, salvaged from an old van that has been lying in the river bed since time began. This dubious award goes to the competitor lucky enough to survive the worst crash!

For when it comes to Hair Racing, especially for the Wannabees, luck may be as important as stamina, skill and familiarity with the river. Luck... and the choice of a boat.

A lot depends on how much a racer plans to crash and burn. How much damage one will accept in the pursuit of speed. Ultralight, thin skinned glass race

boats don't fare well on these rivers. Mastic boats can take the beating, but they are heavy and slow.

And boat design is an important consideration too. Low volume slalom boats designed for running gates don't always hold their lines well in big water. And, they tend to be slow on the straight-aways. Short, high volume boats are less likely to pin or broach, but they don't track well.

During the past several years the top competitors in the Upper Yough Race have actually paddled wildwater boats... a ballsy move indeed, but one that has paid off in the winner's circle.

Recent events have seen competitors in rafts, duckies, open boats, K-2s and C-2s. Hair Racers agree on one thing. It's nice to have a craft that doesn't leak.

Unless, of course, you are wild man Jeff Snyder, who actually swam the four mile Upper Yough course last year in just a little more than an hour!

Which leads us to the obvious question. Where does it all end?

The Lower Meadow? The Bottom Moose? The Narrows of the Green? The Upper Box of the Rio Grande? Cherry Creek?

No doubt Hair Racing like Squirt Boating before it, is destined to be carried to extremes, before appropriate limits are delineated.

In the mean time, most boaters should be content to find a secure eddy, sit back and enjoy the show.

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# The Gore Corps

By SPARKY LeCOMPTE

One local boater compares it to Mordor, the nightmare fantasy land.

Another remarks on the fear in people's eyes as they head over the big drops.

Even **hairball** racers — nerveless uber-boaters who figure Class VI is just another step on the way to Class X — call Gore Canyon unpredictable, exciting, not to be underestimated.

The stretch of the Colorado River just west of Kremmling in the north central section of Colorado is all of those things. It's also one hell of a site for a wildwater race.

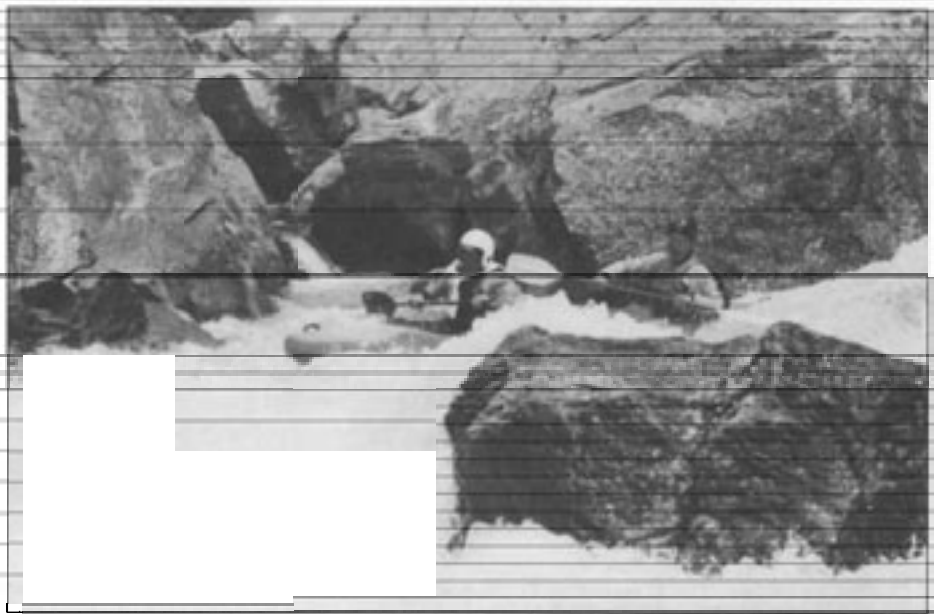
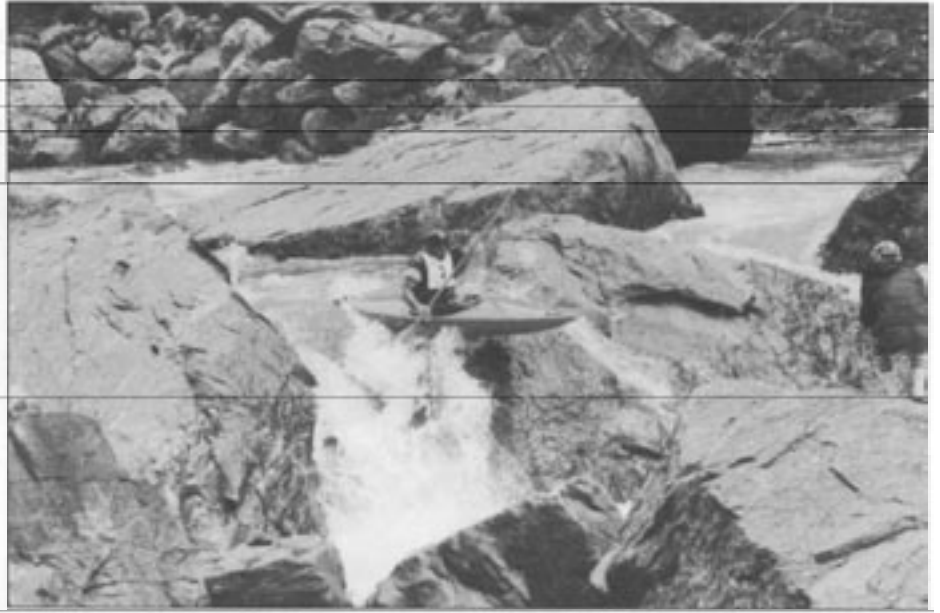
*Start line: the gauging station roughly two miles downriver from Kremmling. Kayaks and rafts group in a quiet pool, the last still water for the 20-plus minutes of the 3-mile race. Almost immediately there's a class 3 rapid with a good-sized hole at the bottom. Stay right of the hole and the pull of the hydraulic that wants to suck you back. After that, stay on the seam between flow and eddy all the way down to Applesauce.*

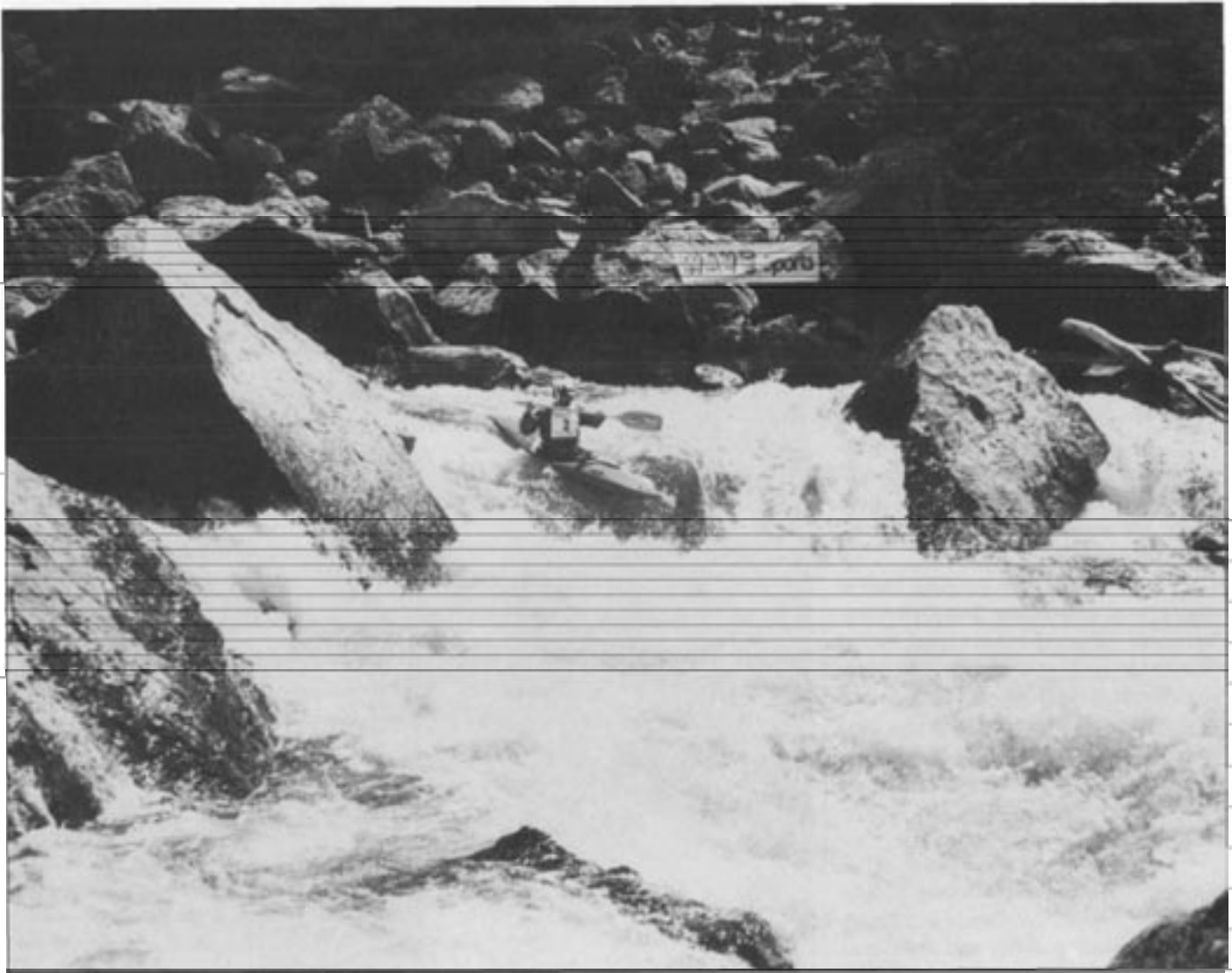
Gore attracts aficionados of extreme raceboating, national names: Nelson Oldharn of Aspen, U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team wildwater paddler and winner of the 1992 Gore Race; Steve Holmes, USCKT slalom team member, former C-1 national champion, 2nd place the '92 Gore race; in past years, USCKT member Brian Brown and Jeff Parker.

And it draws a prominent local contingent: Boulder boat builder and wildwater connoisseur John Jaycox; Charlie Ebel and Bob Blount, both of Vail Vertical Kayak School, the first ever K-2 team to run the race; former Atlantan George Long shore who moved to Colorado for the whitewater.

A berth on the USCKT is no guarantee of a fast track to the winner's circle, though those guys typically compose the top tanks. It's Jaycox, maybe as well known for his boats as his boating, who virtually owns the race, winning three out of the five since the series began in 1988.

*Rapid No. 2: Applesauce. The river cinches up tight, funneling the flow. The trick*





is to run all the way river right, counter to the current. Miss the **line** and there's a good chance you'll ride the drop upside **down** or tangle head-on with a major rock in river center. Conventional wisdom holds **that how you do in Applesauce sets the tone for the rest of the run.**

The canyon run conjures up images of a pair of hairboating legend, the two Walters — Blackadar and Kirschbaum. Blackadar, so the story goes, was the first to run Gore without a portage, beating himself up pretty badly in the process. But Kirschbaum, a pioneer of western whitewater, gets credit for first navigating the canyon, with portages, in the '50s. More remarkable, he did it in a canvas kayak.

But if those guys rank a spot in the history books as **the Lewis and Clark of Gore**, then **Chan Zwanzig**, founder of Wave

Sports, deserves a later chapter for his role in bringing a wildwater race to the canyon.

Gore had served as a sort of personal playground for Zwanzig, 43, before he grabbed hold of the idea of staging a race on it.

"The idea came about because 3-4 years prior to the first race, Kirk Baker of the Aspen Kayak School mentioned that it would be a neat idea to have a race in Gore," recalls Zwanzig.

Once an idea germinates in **Zwanzig's** mind, the safest course is to hide and watch. In this case, he kept talking the concept until he finally decided to do it himself and the first Gore race was born in 1988. Wave Sport is no longer an official sponsor, but Zwanzig still does much of the organizational leg work and donates a Wave Sports kayak for a draw-

ing.

Race weekend qualifies as an informal whitewater fest, complete with a keg party the night before the race. But there's a serious backdrop and that's the hammer potential of the run itself.

*Rapid No. 3: Gore Rapid. It comes just when competitors are beginning to feel the first needles of anaerobic debt. First, there's a Class III-IV ledge on river right. Then follow the twisting route of the current as it winds around boulders scattered in the riverbed from when they blew up the mountainside to build the railroad. The main tongue heads river left and drops over a shelf 6 to 8 feet high, the standard raft route. Most kayakers opt for the river-right "sneak" — a narrow slot between two boulders leading to a 10- to 12-foot **waterfall** that drops into a **foaming**, aera fed pool. Hit it right and you shoot straight into the current,*



which pushes you back to river right. More Class IV rapids, then the river straightens and smashes against a mobile-home sized boulder in river center.

Gore ranks as one of the top three established hairball races in the nation along with the Upper Yough and Great Falls Invitational, or Spout, races.

A solid Class IV boater with Class V aspirations probably could run Gore successfully after careful scouting of the major drops. But when it comes to the race, scouting's not an option. You have to memorize all the lines, tuning out distractions and potential pitfalls, which are considerable.

"I didn't make any nonstop runs until I knew where my lines were going to be," Jaycox recalls. "All that comes at you much faster and packs into your head much quicker when you're paddling non-stop. It changes a few things in the way rapids feel. The line of approach may be different."

Or put another way: "All you see when you're racing is your line," says Steve Holmes, who once a year converts his standards slalom discipline to wildwater for the Gore Race. "And if you're on it, you're getting a really good view of it and if you're not, that's all the looking around you get to do, is trying to find it."

*Rapid No. 4: Pyrite falls. Pyrite arrives so quickly after Gore that it's easy to group the two. The preferred route on Pyrite is river left, but not too far left where a rock hides just under the water and offers the essence of pitoning for those who fail to avoid it.*

Jaycox reluctantly decided to forego the race this year, the first time that's happened since the race's inception. He'd even built a sleek new missile of a glass boat — the Gorepedo — for the race. But he'd injured ribs earlier in the week during training.

On another day, another course, maybe he would have given it the green flag.

"It definitely is challenging," Jaycox observes. "There are a lot of people who keep trying to downgrade Gore because they're used to it. I disagree with them."

*Rapid No. 5: Tunnel Falls. An unnamed stretch of solid Class III follows Pyrite and it's easy to let down a bit. The racers don't,*



*using this stretch to gain time, staying on line. Because Tunnel Falls — so named for the railroad tunnel maybe 100 feet above — is coming. Some bold souls run Tunnel Falls down the middle, going for the ski jump. The more common course is river left, hugging the bank and riding high on a boulder where the current forms a cushion then shoots you into a pool.*

The Gore Race hasn't produced any horror stories, Zwanzig says, although "What's happened is that every year there's been about one swim and DNF."

That's a tribute to the quality of boaters and the safety precautions in place for the race because the canyon definitely can take its toll. Hans Vlaar, four-time member of the New Zealand kayak team now living in Vail, Colorado, paddled to second place behind Jaycox one year. At the next outing, his spray deck popped in Gore Rapid and ended up taking "one of the most horrendous swims" of his life.

*Rapid No. 6: Toilet Bowl. After Tunnel the river mellows slightly to a Class III-IV stretch which flattens out even more right before Toilet Bowl, a 5- to 6-foot pourover stopper. The racers are really burning now, their ability to suck oxygen out of the thin mountain air nearly spent. You can run Toilet Bowl virtually anywhere but you'd better be damned strong to escape the pull of the hydraulic. Most boaters run it left, where the holes's grip is not so strong.*

Darryl Bangert, a 38-year-old Vail, Colo, raft guide and boater, envisions Gore becoming the most popular advanced

whitewater runs in Colorado. And being in his backyard, so to speak, it already is for him. But Gore still holds the promise of surprise.

"I've rafted for 16 years, only flipped once in my life and it was in Gore," says Bangert. "I ran it 15 times totally clean. Then three out of the next four times we had two wraps and a flip. It was pretty interesting. On the flip, three of us swam."

But the thing about Gore, the rapid and the race, is that it just doesn't seem to let up. Because just when you think you're done, there's....

*Kirschbaum, the final barrier between racers and the finish line. You enter Kirschbaum spent, physically and mentally, setting the stage for mistakes. It's a long Class IV and the river offers a variety of routes. The most common is sort of big S turn that goes from river right to river left and back. But it's not a cut-and-dried course and it's here where preparation shows because a mistake can mean the Big Surprise and a long, bad swim.*

In the end, there's a certain mystique to Gore that's accessible only by being there. It has nothing to do with competition and that's something even the races recognize.

"For all of us, paddling is still a really intense personal experience," says Bangert. "It's a reason to be alive. To go out and share a run with people like that, that's what makes it special."

# WHEN YOU RUN WITH THE BIG DOGS... YOU CAN'T PEE LIKE A PUPPY!!!

*What's it like to run one of the Hair Races? Here's our editor's blow by blow account of his astonishing performance (28th place!) in the 1992 Upper Yough Race.*

By BOB GEDEKO

Bobbing around in the eddy with the rest of the fools. Trying to act nonchalant. Two minutes to go and waiting my turn.

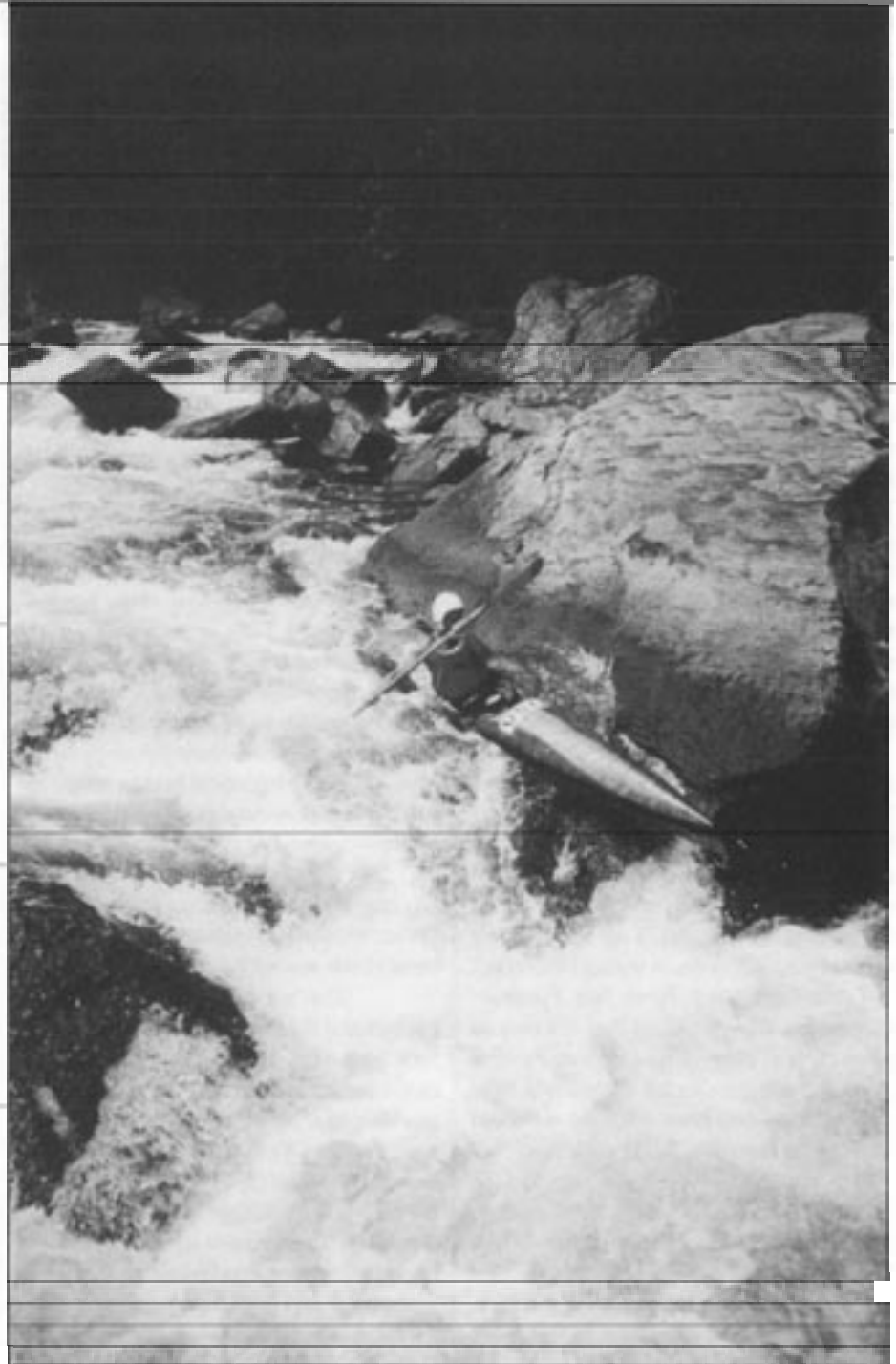
Just doing it for fun. For the t-shirt and the beer. Here for the party... certainly not to win.

All kinds of boats entered. Anything goes. Wildwater boats and slalom boats. Long, fast, sleek boats and short, fat, geek boats. **Wildman** Jeff Snyder is attempting the ultimate, going boatless altogether. Swimming the whole damned course!

Pick your poison. About half the competitors are in plastic, mostly starting near the end of the field in anticipation of relatively slower times. Plastic keeps turkeys fresh! I'm paddling glass this year, for the first time. A **stumpy**, big volume boat... but, nonetheless, glass. At least I won't look like a geek.

Someone asks, "Is that boat fast?" "Nope." I reply, "but then neither am I. We make a good pair, this boat and I. If we come in last I can blame it on the boat and the boat can blame it on me."

One minute to go. Alice Vernon is taking off. **Thank** God they started her ahead of me. She beats me every year. At least I'll be spared the humiliation of being



*Kris Wolpert photo*  
**Roger Zbell, perennial winner of the Upper Yough Race, negotiates the final drop of Heinzerling in his downriver kayak.**

passed by a woman with two babies, one less than a year old.

**Damn**, look at her go!

Thirty seconds. Just doing it for fun. Just to be sociable. Just want to get down the river in one piece without disgracing myself. Got to stay out of trouble.

Dear Lord, don't let me swim.

Not in front of this mob.

Ten seconds to go. Just for the fun...

Five seconds. Just for the t-shirt...

Four... **Three**... Just for...

why the hell am I doing this?

Two... One... Go!!!

Go!!!



Kris Wolpert photo

**Competing in a class of his own, Jeff Snyder approaches the pillow at Hinzerling during the 1992 Upper Yough Race.**

Paddle like hell!!! Paddle like hell!!!

**GAP FALLS.** Punch the hole...punch the hole... don't get caught...

**WHOOSH.** Keep moving... next mile is easy... class III. Make time here. Fast and clean... clean and fast. Pace yourself. Too fast? Too slow? Who knows?

**BASTARD FALLS.** The first **biggie.** Forget the aerial eddy. Skirt the hole and keep on moving. Down the center... then hard right.

No... NO.... Don't piton, fool! Now punch those waves... put your back into it!

**CHARLIE'S CHOICE.** Down the center from the top. Don't pin in the slot. Now, up and over the Rooster's Tail... **WHEE!!!**

Now down the middle. Stay off Martin's Rock. Stay off Widdemore Rock. No... NO... Don't fall into the damned Bird Bath!

Sloppy... But you made it! Keep moving... undercut on the right... keep

away from that! You know what happened to...

**TRIPLE DROP.** Hang right, but don't slam into the rocks. Skirt the hole at the bottom. Hit that tongue... **HIT** that tongue!

**THUNK!!!**  
Crap!!! Oh well... nobody in sight... no one saw. Get out the resin tonight.

**NATIONAL FALLS.** Heroes down the right. Big Dogs down the center. Wimps down the left.

Sometimes Heroes recirculate. Sometimes Big Dogs swim. Okay... okay... it will cost a few seconds, but sniveling down the left I go.

Cross the pool and **TOMMY'S HOLE.** Heroes down the left. Through the **rock box** and punch the hole. Bad place to break a boat. Bad place to broach. Worse place to swim. Nah!

Sissies down the right. Safe... but too damned slow! Nah!

So go for the center. Gnarly... but

manageable. Not the Big Dog Route, but not the Sissy Route, either. Now, over the ledge and don't get backended... now don't...

**CRUNCH..** Piton! Ouch! I can already smell that resin!

Arms aching... lungs burning. Some fun this is!

Why am I doing this?  
**ZINGER.** Brace to the right... brace to the left... brace to the right. And don't surf the hole.

Made it! Now stay off those rocks at the bottom.

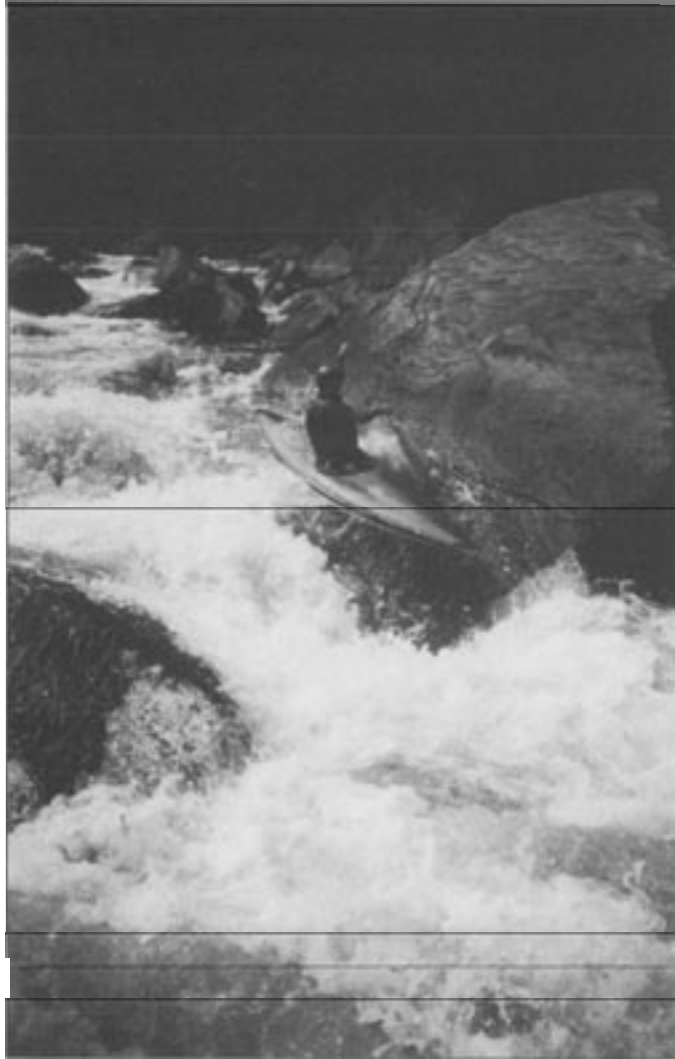
Easy for a while... but you know what is coming.

**HINZERLING.** So get your act together. The sneak down the right takes way too long. No use even doing the race if you're gonna do that! Take the sneak and everyone will laugh.

Nope... going for the race line down the center... running with the Big Dogs.

Look at the crowd! Vultures on

**Pete Zurflieh competes in the C-1 class of the Upper Yough Race. Zurflieh is shown here at the last drop in Hinzerling. Photo by Kris Wolpert**



every rock! They want to see blood and guts! All yelling and cheering. For me... or the rapid???

Maybe I should sneak... yes...no...yes...

NO!!!

Over the ledge and past the point of rescue! Down the center it is. Just don't screw up. Ran it clean on Monday... ran it clean last week...

Pinned herein May... pinned and nearly swam.... Damn, I hate this route!

Don't even think about it!

Okay...okay....take your time. Boof to the left... keep your nose off the rock...

SCRUNCH.

Wow! That was close!!! But still moving...and moving fast... everything happens so quickly here. Cut back right and don't piton... now quick, Quick, QUICK, cut left and boof the edge of the

ledge... hard, Hard, HARD...

WHOOSH...It's grabbing my tail!

Dig in...dig in! And pull, man, pull!

Close one! But made it...listen to them cheer...

Don't get cocky. Cross the pool and punch the hole...

BOTTLER DANCER. Bony today.... cut right at the bottom...

MEAT CLEAVER Right to left... stay off the pillow. You know the line... between the Cleavers. Don't get sloppy.

Damn I'm tired. Why am I doing this?

Flip now and I doubt I'd have the strength to roll... No...don't think that.

Flip here and the cleavers will tear my head right off. When you run with the Big Dogs it's Roll or Die!

ROCKY I...II...III.... Easy fours... keep up the pace.... don't wuss out. Still no sign of Alice...no surprise there.

Wonder how far back the next guy is? No time to look.

Hope he's at least a mile behind.

POWERFUL POPPER. Stay in the middle and punch that sucker...

Don't get knocked into the Eddy of Woe.

LOST AND FOUND. F#\$% UP FALLS. Most dangerous spot on the river. Left to right... away from Tombstone Rock... a name well earned. Okay, back to the left and skirt that shoulder munching hole...

CHEESEBURGER FALLS. Forget the fancy eddy moves... straight down the middle...quick and dirty... dirty and quick....

SCRUNCH!!! Not that dirty! Oh well, that's why God made patch kits.

Now get your butt moving... the worst is behind you... pick up the pace...

Fast and clean... clean and fast...

WRIGHT'S HOLE. Skirt it to the left. Don't want to camp out in there today!!!

Now back to the right.... punch those ledges and...

PENCIL SHARPENER. Right... tight... and upright. Zipadeedoodah!!!

Home free!!! Safe at last!!! Less than a mile to go... all class II and III. Exhausted! Don't quit now... go for broke. Left... right...left... right...

Man! Feels like my stern is full of cement. Some fun this is!

Why the hell am I doing this???

Stroke.... stroke.... stroke....

KENDALL RAPID. End in sight.

Everyone cheering...beers in hand.... "Go... Go... GO... GO... GO..."

Across the finish line and into the pool. Arms aching. Lungs on fire. Heart pounding. Head spinning.

I made it!!! Without disgrace!

Over for another year! Thank

God!

Why do I do this? Why put myself through it?

For the beer and the t-shirt... of course.

Will I do it again? Next year?

Sure 'nuff! Wouldn't miss it.

Why?

Because it's a lot like torture.

It feels so damned good when it's over!

# Zbel rules Upper Yough race again

When it comes to Hair Racing one should expect the unexpected. The outcome and consequences of barreling down a class V river full tilt boogie ought to be decidedly unpredictable.

Still, no one was really surprised by the outcome of the 1992 Upper Yough Race, held this past August. Once again, as in ten of the previous eleven races, Roger Zbel captured first place, definitively trouncing the competition.

Zbel, one of the owners of Precision Rafting, is a former member of the U.S. Wildwater team and one of the east coast's most renowned steep creek specialists. No one knows the Upper Yough better than he, and no one can paddle it faster. In fact, the only time Zbel failed to capture first place was during a year when, seeded first, he actually outran the release of water from the hydroelectric dam upstream.

Zbel's victories are all the more impressive when one considers that during the past several years he has elected to paddle the four mile course, which contains more than twenty class 4 and 5 rapids, in a full-length wildwater boat. Dealing with the limited maneuverability of this craft would seem to be flirting with disaster, but it has allowed Zbel to trim several minutes off the times he previously posted in a slalom boat. This year he finished the race in 28 minutes and six seconds.

Second place finisher, Ted Newton, also paddled a wildwater kayak, finishing in 32 minutes and 26 seconds. The third fastest time was posted by wildwater champion Andy Bridge, who paddled a wildwater C-1 to a 32 minute and 39 second finish.

The remainder of the top ten competitors were John Weld, Phil Coleman, Jesse Widdemore, Scott Stough, Dave Bassage, Bob Vernon and Mark Gallagher. Alice Vernon posted the fastest time in the women's division, 36 minutes and 54 seconds, finishing 25th overall in a field of 52 contestants. Seven women competed in

the event this year.

The fastest time in a raft was posted by Jan and Mykl Messer at 47 minutes and 45 seconds. A second raft, manned by Carol and Crede Calhoun, finished just over two minutes later. Squirt boat ace Jeff Snyder continued to astonish by swimming the entire course in 109 minutes and 20 seconds.

The Upper Yough Race is the grand daddy of Hair Racing, and, with time, several traditions have evolved. Each year originally designed t-shirts are awarded to all competitors. The post race party, organized by boat designer Jesse Widdemore and held in Friendsville, has become a veritable whitewater institution.

An informal safety code of conduct has also evolved at the Upper Yough Race, one which hardly precludes the possibility of disaster, but which minimizes its likelihood. For instance, to reduce the likelihood of passing on the course, boaters are started at one minute intervals, their order determined by the results of the preceding year's event. And individuals who are not known to be familiar with the exquisitely technical river are discouraged from entering.

Although there are never enough safety boaters to cover the entire course, spectators, most of them boaters, generally congregate at the "trouble spots". Their

## Challenging Great Falls... a capitol idea

The course at Great Falls on the Potomac at Washington D.C. is by far the shortest of all the Hair Race tracks, only a few hundred yards, but it is arguably the most intense and spectacular. This year's fastest time, posted by Wildwater C-1 Champion Andy Bridge, was just 60.8 seconds. During that sixty seconds Bridge dropped nearly one foot per second.

The Great Falls Race includes but three rapids... but what rapids they are. The first two are class five, said to be more difficult than anything on the Upper Yough. Then third is the infamous Spout, a 20 foot falls with a potent recycle at the

intent may not be entirely noble... like Romans at the arena they want to be where the blood and guts are likely to fly... but they do stand ready to help in the event of an unexpected swim or entrapment.

Participants in the race also agree to stop racing and help if they encounter a fellow competitor in significant distress. It has been stated that anyone who fails to do so will be forbidden from participating in the race again, but there has never been a need to impose this sanction.

The competition at the Upper Yough Race has consistently been intense, but it is also friendly and good natured.

In this respect the Upper Yough Race has served as model for other Hair Races.

As one competitor put it, "The real challenge and spirit of the event is not to race one another, but rather to race the river. The important thing is to finish the race knowing that you did your best; if you do that you can walk away feeling real good about yourself."

"Any one who comes here expecting to beat Roger Zbel or Andy Bridge is in for a rude awakening. Besides, that's really not the point. The real point is to have cut loose and have a good time. To experience the whitewater racing fantasy... if only for one day of the year. For most of us, that is quite enough..."



Kris Wolpert photo

John Maxwell in the 1988 Great Falls race.

bottom. Between each of the rapids lies a small, fast moving pool, providing just enough time for competitors to recover from the preceding drop and set their lines for the next.

And setting the correct line for the Spout is what Great Falls is all about. In order to avoid the recycle at the base, boaters attempt to clip the edge of the falls, driving hard from right to left. Naturally, at that particular point in space and time, the river is screaming from left to right.

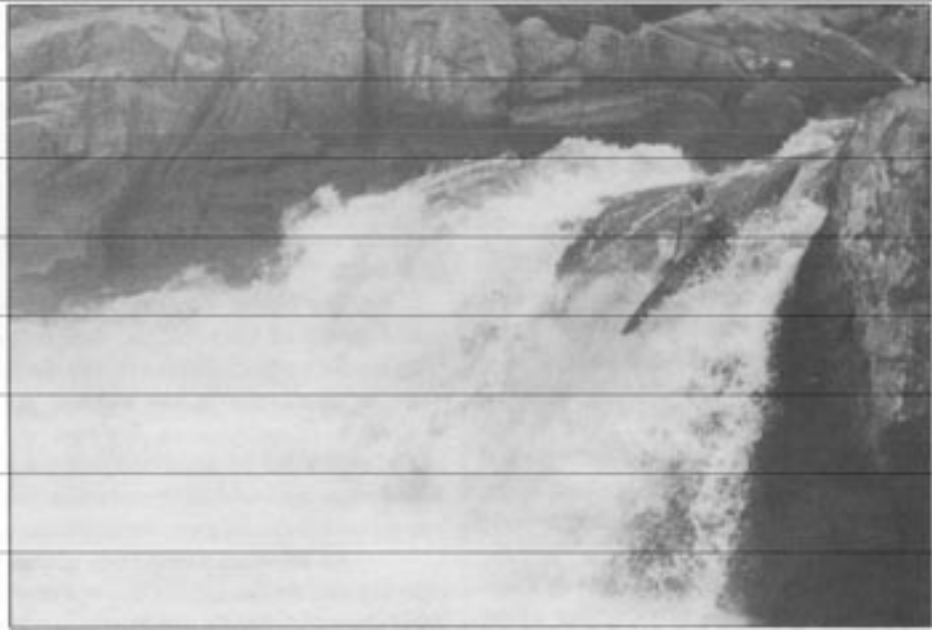
"At high water nine out of ten boaters who miss this line and get caught in the recycle go for a swim," according to one Great Falls regular. And swimming below the Spout is not pleasant, the pool at the base, a.k.a. the Kettle, lies in a rocky chasm with vertical walls, against which the swirling currents of the Potomac smear the unlucky.

Scheduling the race at Great Falls has proven difficult since the course is negotiable only at a narrow range of flows... ideally 2.7- 3.1 feet. This year's race was postponed one week due to unexpected August rains. Finally, it was held at a level of 3.12, a level so intimidating that a number of "regulars" chose not to compete. Nearly half of the eighteen competitors flipped on the course this year, and three swam in the Kettle.

This year second place was captured by Eric Schreiber, a K-1 paddler, who finished the course in 66.2 seconds. Veteran Hairmeister Tom McEwan, who operates the venerable Valley Mills summer camp, the spawning ground for a number of world class racers, placed third.

The winner of the preceding Great Falls Race, Neilson Oldham, a member of the U.S. Wildwater Team, did not compete this year on the Potomac, but he has not abandoned the Hair Racing scene. In fact, he has relocated to the west, where he captured first place in this year's event on Gore Canyon.

The event at Great Falls has been held three times in the past five years. One year it was cancelled because of high water and once it was cancelled because of "bad vibes" from the Park Service. Since that time boaters have reached an agreement with the park authorities which allows registered, qualified boaters to paddle the falls under specified circumstances.



*Andy Bridge, winner of the 1992 event, boofs over the right side of the spout.*

The first two events were relatively spontaneous, low-key events, but this year's race was more heavily promoted. In fact, this year's event may have been the first Hair Race to actually "go legitimate". Consent was obtained from the Park Service, safety was set at strategic locations, the competitors were insured, and the race was covered by at least one D.C. TV station.

Organizer Andy Bridge is helping to prepare a promotional video about

this year's event and hopes that next year's Great Falls Race will attract even more spectators and media coverage.

The development of the Great Falls Race has been a swift one. Bridge remembers the days when only a handful of "adrenalin junkies" challenged the sequence at Great Falls, always "catching the eddies between each drop."

"Then we started to run the rapids in succession; it was a bigger rush. The Race just sort of evolved from all that."

### North Fork Payette

## Just a low key affair on a high intensity river

After years of rumblings and rumors it finally came to pass. On August 23, 1992 the First Annual Downriver Hair Race was held on the big, tough class V whitewater of the North Fork of the Payette in Idaho.

Considering the notoriety of the North Fork, the race was a relatively quiet, low-key event; without sponsors, "official" officials or fanfare. Just a bunch of ballsy guys looking for aquatic trouble.

Without the guidance of an "offi-

cial" organizer, there was quite a bit of preliminary debate. Should the course include the entire river, or just the top, middle or bottom five miles? Should the course really include Jacob's Ladder and Golf Course, the most intimidating, demanding and dangerous section of the river?

Finally, the contestants reached a consensus, discretion ruling the day. The race would be limited to the middle five miles, ending above Jacob's Ladder.

Ideal conditions prevailed. The river was flowing at a comfortable 1,800 cfs, the skies were clear and the temperature was balmy. The contestants, all North Fork regulars, were pumped.

The race was to begin above Slide Rapid with a fifteen foot launch off a granite boulder. In spite of John Foss's preliminary depth check of the pool beneath the

boulder, the first contestant, Mark White, plummeted onto an undetected rock. An inauspicious way to start a tradition, but White managed to roll and recover quickly, resituating himself in his craft. As he streaked away from the small crowd at the starting point, the remainder of the contestants wisely decided to change the starting procedure.

Although there were a few breaks in the action, most of the five mile course consisted of big, booming whitewater... including Bad Jose, S Turn, Pectoralis Major and the notorious Bouncer Down the Middle. There were no safety boaters along the course, each of the twelve contestants assumed responsibility for his own safety.

Fortunately, there was no major unpleasantness, though almost every contestant lost some time struggling to maintain his line through the more turbulent sections of the run.

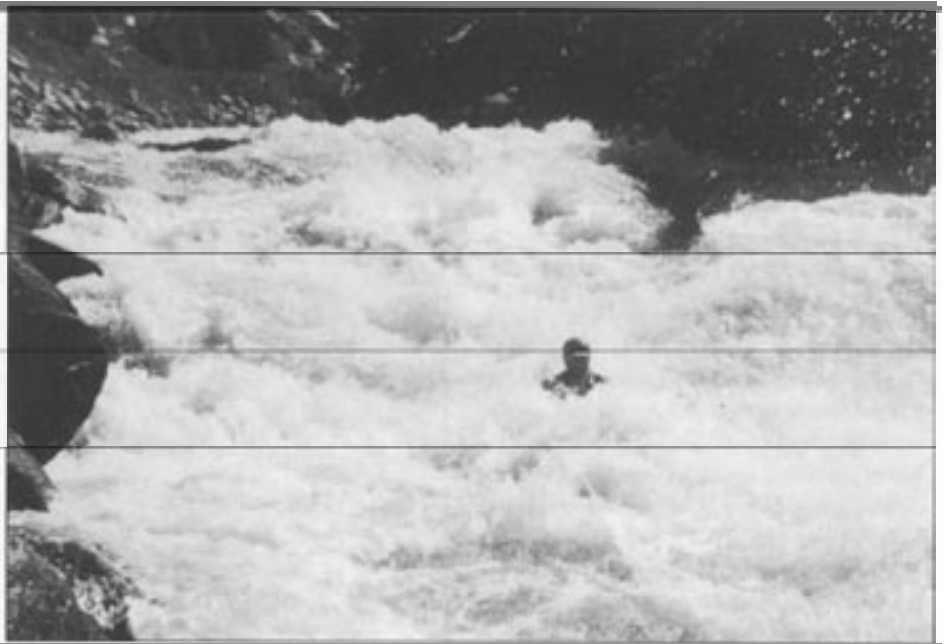
The final times of the participants were surprisingly tight, all approximating 14 minutes. Missoula Montana's Doug Ammons registered the fastest time, followed by Boise Idaho's Tony Brennon. Third place went to a star from the Payette Whitewater Roundup, Charlie Munse, of

nearby Garden Valley.

Veteran paddler and North Fork pioneer Rob Lesser placed fourth, topping the time of fifth place winner Mark White by only one-tenth of a second.

The contestants are already plan-

ning next year's event, which, once again, will likely be held in late August or early September. Already the length and placement of the course are being debated, final details should be decided at the Payette Whitewater Roundup, slated for next July.



Mark White racing through Bouncer Down the Middle during North Fork Payette race.

## Racing down the Watauga

Details surrounding the first (and only) Watauga Hair Race are a bit hard to come by. Considering the circumstances under which the race was held, that may not be all that surprising.

It fell on a cold, windy March 1988 day, with temperatures in the twenties. The steep Smokey Mountains that plummet into the river bed were snow covered. Small wonder that some of those who had announced their intentions to race backed out at the last minute. Could it be that those who participated weren't racing the stopwatch, but rather racing the elements, just to get off the river without frostbite?

No... it was a genuine event, and by all accounts, an interesting one. The river was running low, about 200 cfs. The course included the entire class IV-V stretch of the Watauga, from the low water bridge

to the take out at Stansbury.

Competitors careened down the exquisitely technical course through rapids with well earned monikers—like Bump and Grind, Asskicker, Hydro, Heavy Water, Boof Ledge and Last Hair. Most of the racers elected to portage Watauga Falls, but Risa Shimoda and Woody Callaway paddled over the 15+ foot class V+ (VI?) drop with their usual aplomb.

As is usually the case in any Hair Race, the top finishers were local "regulars". Bob Vernon, who attended college at Appalachian University in nearby Boone, North Carolina, finished first, in 47 minutes. Not far behind were Brian Wham, in second, and Andrew Carr, in third.

In spite of the harsh circumstances under which the race was held, the participants speak fondly of the event, and every year they vow to have another. But so far fate has thwarted their intentions.

Some have moved from the vicinity of the river... Bob Vernon is an



Tennessee the Hard Way--Watauga River

Upper Yough regular now. And, flows in the Watauga are quite unpredictable since it is not dam controlled, making it difficult to schedule a race in advance. Frequently the river is too low to navigate, while at other times it rages at levels that would intimidate even the most stalwart Hair Racer.

But the current crop of Watauga regulars adamantly maintain that there will be another race, hopefully in 1993. The cast of characters may be different, but given the intensity of the course, the level of excitement should be the same.

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Friendsville, MD

# Life in paddling paradises

*(Editor's note: Do you live in the perfect paddling location? Share your home with the readers of American Whitewater. Submit manuscripts and photos to Bob Gedekoh, editor.)*

By **SCOTT STOUGH**

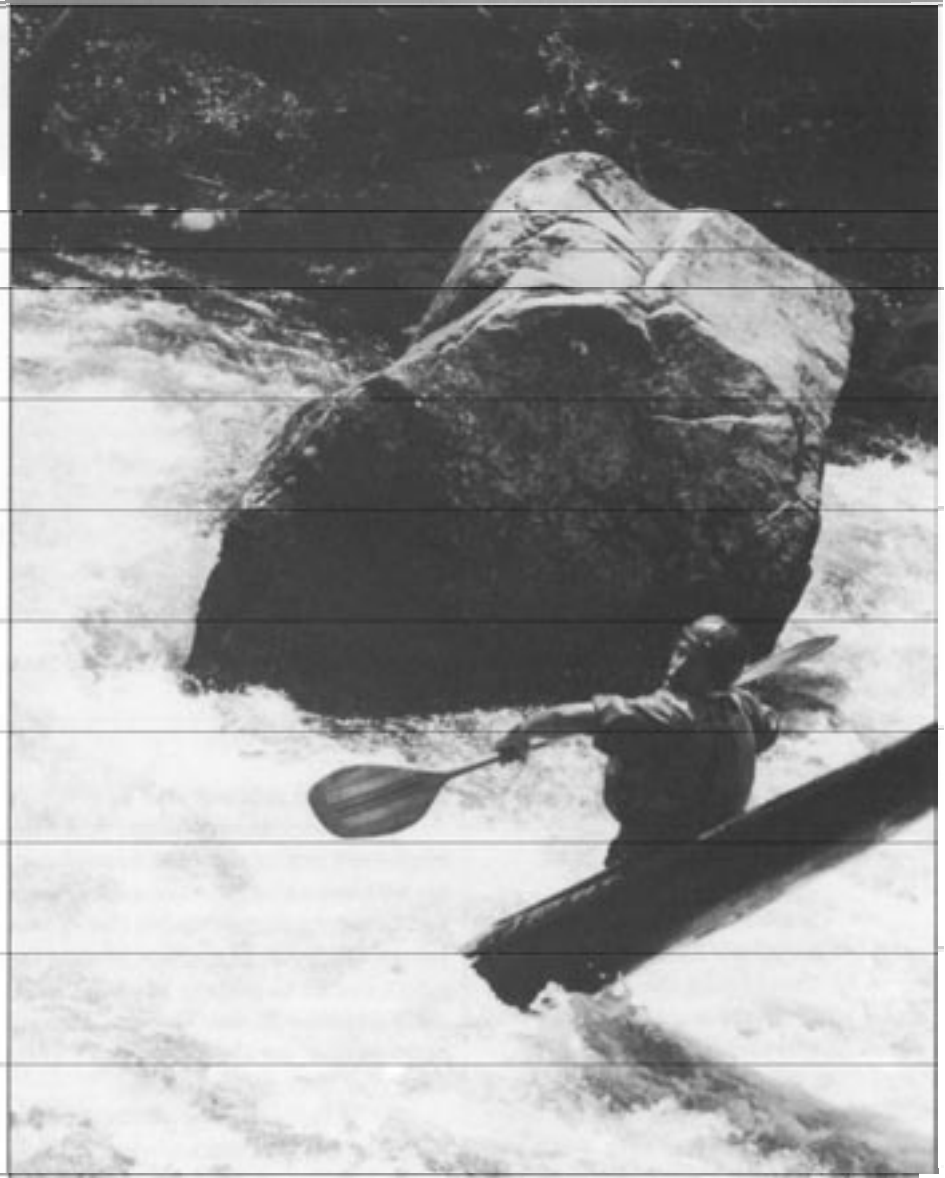
When I first met my wife, Terry, we were both employed as teachers in Reading, Pennsylvania. I asked where her hometown was and she answered, somewhat evasively, western Maryland. After a lot of coaxing she told me she lived in Friendsville. My immediate response was "The Upper Yough".

Like most whitewater boaters, I equated Friendsville with one of the best whitewater runs in the east. But like most boaters I had visited Friendsville only briefly, not spending enough time to really get to know the town and its people well.

When I arrived at Terry's apartment for our first date, I discovered a yellow Dancer and Backlund paddle in her dining room. This was encouraging. As far as she knew, Terry had been the first Friendsville native to try kayaking. Her first venture onto whitewater had occurred on a class three drop on Bear Creek, a trout stream, **runnable only** at high water, that flows into the **Yough** in town. It was a logical choice, since Bear Creek flows through her parents' backyard. Needless to say, Terry took her first whitewater swim that day.

A year and a half after we met, we were married in Friendsville in a church on the banks of the river. I was even permitted an Upper Yough run on the day before the wedding. Shortly thereafter, a position teaching drafting opened up at Northern Garrett High School, and I found myself in the midst of every paddler's dream... living at the takeout of a class 5 river with a real job. A job with the bonus of having summers off.

Terry found a job at the same



*Scott Stough catches air at Powerful Popper on his home river--the Upper Yough.*

school as a physical education teacher and certified athletic trainer. Nowadays we commute the eight miles to work together, a route that takes us along Bear Creek. Terry gets cross when I run off the road scouting the big drops at high water.

Over the years Terry's enthusiasm for kayaking has diminished. After surviving a few class 3 rivers, a roll clinic and several class 5 river disagreements,

she purchased a Demoree Inflatable ducky. These are built right in town and Terry claims it is like paddling her couch down the river.

But what is life in Friendsville like?

We seldom have traffic jams, since the nearest traffic light is twenty-five miles away. Skateboarding is a popular pastime for the young people in town...



but skateboarding on the sidewalk is now punishable by a \$50 fine. We wonder sometimes if the town council will pass a law outlawing the wearing of neoprene in public.

One of my wife's favorite Friendsville stories involves the arrival of the "Boat People". During the years when Terry had been away doing graduate work at Indiana State she had received a letter from her grandmother which stated that the "Boat People" had moved into town. This was the spring of 1982, the era of Castro's boat launch. Naturally, she assumed that a group of Cubans had settled in Friendmille.

Only later did she discover that the first two rafting companies had set up operations in town.

We now live about two blocks from the Upper Yough takeout, so a warm changing area and a cold Rolling Rock are never far away. We don't exactly have river front property, but we do save on flood insurance. There are always lots of

different people coming into town to paddle, so it's usually pretty easy to find a shuttle. I'm hoping that over the years I can play host to paddlers from all fifty states.

One disadvantage to living in Friendsville is that the nearest shopping mall is thirty miles away. Sometimes Terry suffers from mall withdrawal and the only cure is a safari to Cumberland, Morgantown or Pittsburgh. Our Izuzu Trooper does double duty, hauling serious shoppers and their bargains back to home base, then hauling kayaks to the put-in, all in the same day. Of course, any town with whitewater closer than a mall is alright by me.

My wife's parents don't always understand my boating. They stand on the banks of Bear Creek and wave as I bounce by. My neighbors are also puzzled. One always asks why I put my kayak on the roof of my car if I am going to paddle the Upper Yough. I guess he figures I'm good enough to paddle the class 5 run

upstream.

But I'm educating the community. My father-in-law now checks river gauges while driving fuel truck in the tri-state area, while our school's drivers ed instructor keeps an eye on the local creeks. My parents still have their doubts. Just before I married my mother told Terry that kayaking was just a phase that I would soon outgrow.

Fortunately, it hasn't happened yet.

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# Practicing the "Great Mooch"

By PROP WASH  
aka KEN KYLER

Most paddlers associate mooching with the frantic antics of fellow paddlers who left their lunch "in the car". You know the ones, the guys with what Carla Garrison calls the "Big Harpoon Syndrome", guys who were too busy trying to impress girls at the put-in to help unload the boats.

They sit beside you at the lunch break with stomachs growling loud enough to be heard over the roar of the rapids. Usually they make small talk about the scenery while surreptitiously eyeing your gorp and sandwich. However, this stereotype is a gross insult to those of us who are true River Mooch Practitioners! Mooching should not, by any means, be limited to lunch spots.

In fact, one can greatly improve one's results at river lunch spots by developing good mooching practices at home. Practice on your friends. As a long-time dedicated moocher, allow me to offer some finer points of mooching, on and off the river.

Mooching is an art, one developed to its highest form by bachelors. The first rule is to maintain the atmosphere of perpetual hunger. Stock your refrigerator with beer and nothing else. Stock your cupboards with macaroni and cheese dinners.

Sounds like normal behavior? Good. Next, spread the rumor that you subsist on beer and macaroni and cheese. In the case of those of us who practice mooching at the highest levels, this is not a rumor!

Now, start visiting your river buddies regularly until you can predict when dinner normally will be. This is the "window of optimal mooch". You also need to develop a "hungry but won't admit it" look. You know the look; you used it on Mom whenever you came home from

college. (Too bad the "broke but won't admit it look" never worked on Dad.)

To practice the "great mooch", start dropping in on the moochees during the mooch window. Sit in the corner discussing the next river trip while dinner is served. Periodically, stare at the food on the table using your best "hungry but won't admit it" look. If they are particularly hard cases, a little drool in the corner of the mouth and a slightly wild-eyed look will help.

When you are asked if you have eaten, say "yup, had some macaroni and cheese and a beer". This will almost always break down the spouse and result in an invitation for dinner. Be sure to make a few feeble attempts to decline, but be careful not to overdo it! You don't want to lose the opportunity.

Beware defensive tactics developed by some unscrupulous wives. In particular, watch out for the "liver and onions" ploy. This is a mildly disguised effort to discourage your timely visits. This usually does not start until you have started to wear them down. But, don't dismay!

Choked down the dinner and drop some thoughtful statement about how much better it tastes than macaroni and cheese. Eventually their consciences will get to them or your buddy will give up. My experiences have taught me that my buddies usually hate liver and onions worse than I do. In these cases practice patience, cause your buddies will get their dutiful spouses back on the right track soon.

Be sure that you don't mooch at the same table every meal. Moochees catch on pretty quick and start changing dinner times. Also, spread the wealth and only drop in... ohhhh... once a week or so, but never on the same day two weeks in a

row.

And it doesn't hurt to fib just a little now and then and say that you have just eaten at your Mom's. Of course they will know that Mom throws you out at dinner time; but it is a game that moochees like to play. When this happens, graciously decline dinner, unless it is a steak or something really great, and raid the 'fridge for a beer.

Which reminds me of an important point. Always take a few beers along with you. If your buddies are like mine, their wives will never let them keep enough on hand. Taking beer will keep you in his your buddy's best graces, even if the missus adds one more reason to her list of reasons why you are a "scum ball yakker".

If you have a friend who doesn't drink, buy some beer for him anyway, as a token of your appreciation for their graciousness. In order to be polite, they will thank you and stow the beer in their 'fridge. Presto! When you run out of beer, drop by his joint for a visit. Your stock-pile will be waiting, nice and chilled.

Well, that is Mooch 101 in a nutshell. Gotta run! If I hurry, I can catch my buddy Creek Freak and clan. I overheard Mrs. Freak mumbling to the kids that they were going to have ribs today.

*Editors' alert: Ken Kyler is a kayaker and personnel officer with the Air Force who used to boat with the Indianapolis Hoosiers but recently relocated to D.C. and joined the Canoe Cruisers. D.C. boaters beware ... watch your pantries!*

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