

american whitewater

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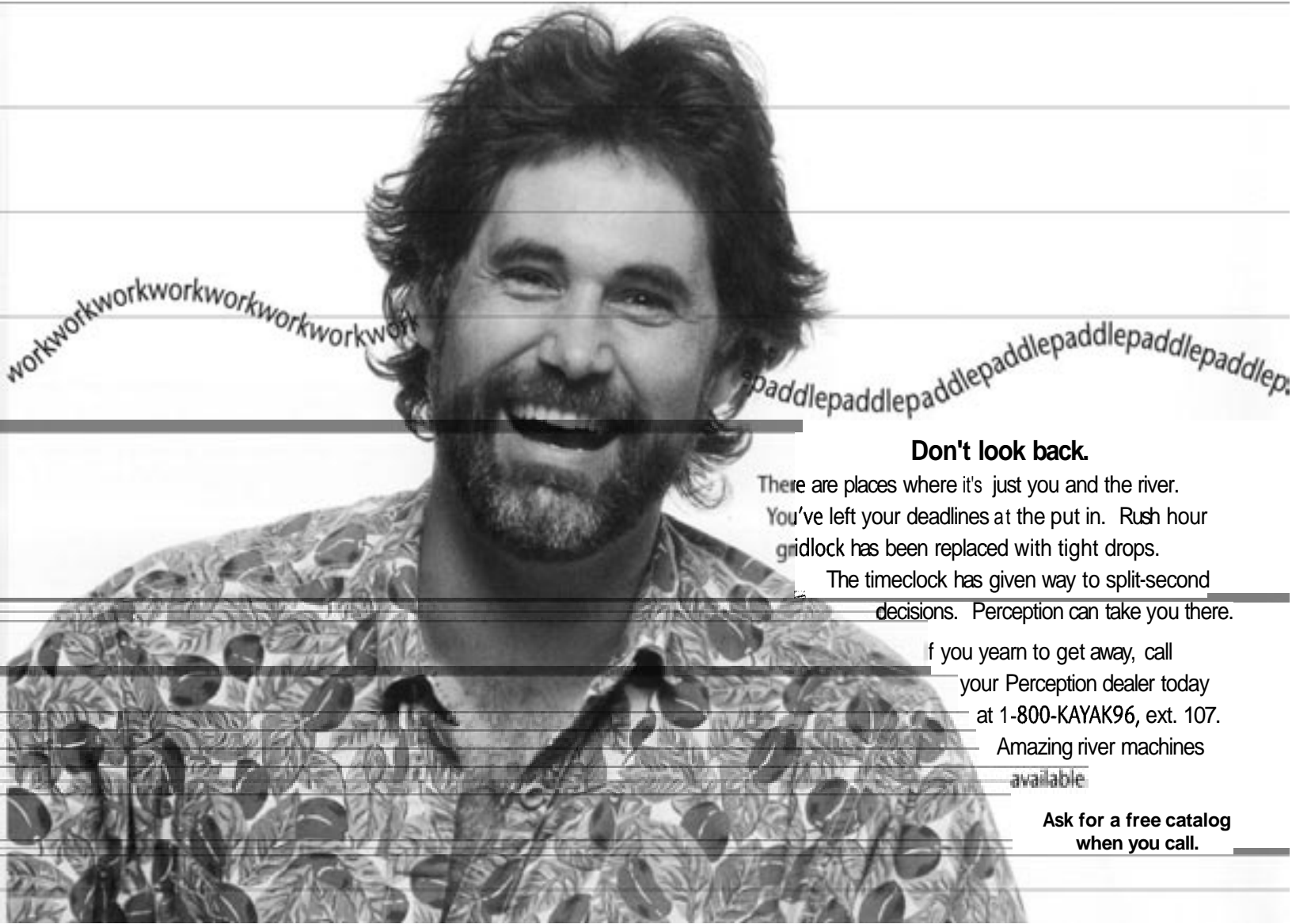
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Journal of the American Whitewater Affiliation

Volume XXXVI, No. 1

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Friends Remember Jim Sheppard

by Harrison Metzger

It was a cold day last winter, temperatures well below freezing, when the telephone rang and I heard that familiar, upbeat voice. It was Jim Sheppard, calling to see if I wanted to go boating on the Nolichucky, French Broad or Watauga—some icy wild river. I can't remember which.

I told him it was a little too cold for me. After many trips paddling in near freezing conditions, I had decided to limit my boating to days when the mercury at least reached the 50s. Undaunted, Jim called others from his long list of paddling friends to find someone brave and hardy enough to accompany him on his ice-breaking excursion.

Last Sunday night I came home to six flashes on my answering machine - all friends calling to tell me Jim had died in a kayaking accident on the French Broad's West Fork near Lake Towaway.

As the bad news registered I thought back to that cold day last winter and remembered something about Jim - whitewater paddling was his life.

"He was as enthusiastic about paddling as anyone I've ever met," said 28 year old Charles "Heath" Cowart, who was with Jim and tried to save his life on Saturday morning. "If you sat down with

Jim, he would talk about nothing but kayaking for a half hour."

As word of the accident spread through western North Carolina's paddling community Sunday and Monday, friends were remembering Jim, a 53-year-old father of three grown children.

"Jim was probably the most active person for his age I've ever known," said 45 year-old Ned Steadman, Transylvania County's 1995 Teacher of the Year and an expert kayaker who paddled often with Jim.

At Brevard's DuPont plant, where Jim worked as senior research engineer, friends were mourning his death. He had worked there 27 years.

"I think pretty much everyone was in shock over it..." said Joe Roark of Horse Shoe, an electrical engineer at the plant and kayaking companion.

"It's close to home. You always hear about someone drowning on a river somewhere, but most of the time these people aren't kayakers - and very rarely kayakers of Jim's experience."

Jim ran whitewater for the same reasons I and countless other paddlers do: the thrill and challenge of taking on a power bigger than yourself, in the context of the intimate beauty and mystery of mountain rivers.

EDITORIAL

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in the features and editorials of **American Whitewater** are those of the individual authors.

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But Jim took the sport to another level, pushing the limits on the south's most difficult rivers - rivers that challenged paddlers half his age.

Just the day before his death Jim and Cowart had kayaked the Green River Narrows, considered one of the most difficult and dangerous whitewater runs in the east. After dozens of runs, Jim had worked up to tackling Gorilla, a 20 plus foot complex waterfall considered the worst on the river, one that deserves its class V+ rating.

On Saturday morning, Cowart and Jim decided to kayak the West Branch, a short steep creek with a series of three waterfalls rated class V, followed by several rapids rated IV. The water level was high but not flooding.

The pair paddled the three waterfalls successfully and were entering a long rapid named "Pinball" when the accident occurred.

Jim, who was paddling a new boat and had never run the West Branch before, rolled -just before washing into a hydraulic which trapped, surfed and, eventually, recirculated him.

By the time Cowart reached Jim downstream, after he had flushed out of the reversal, Jim was floating face down. He did not respond to 45 minutes of CPR.

(For a more detailed account of this accident, see the Safety section of this issue of American Whitewater.)

Friends remember Jim as someone eager to share his gifts with those less experienced.

Roark was among a group of a dozen or so paddlers from the DuPont plant who learned to roll and paddle kayaks at the Henderson County YMCA under the tutelage of Jim and fellow plant worker John Bayless. Jim organized the roll sessions in 1983.

"I'd get out and paddle with those folks. They were all experts compared to myself," Roark said. "They led us down a lot of rivers, told us where to go and where not to go. They were always there watching out for us."

I also met Jim at the YMCA, where he taught me how to roll a kayak about eight years ago. He was there when I first paddled my open canoe down Wilson Greek Gorge, a stunning stream near Lenoir.

I often would see Jim at Asheville's Be Here Now music hall, where he like to socialize and join the Contra dances.

The last time our paths crossed was on the Chatooga. Jim, who had finally given up on trying to get me to switch from canoe to kayak, yelled out a quick

"How are you?" and flashed a smile as he passed me in a rapid.

Jim was a founding member of the Western Carolina Paddlers and an active member of the AWA, who volunteered at the Ocoee Rodeo and Gauley Festival.

The death of a paddler as prominent and talented as Jim will leave many of his boating acquaintances thinking about their own mortality. Some may take extra safety precautions: paddle in larger groups or avoid runs at high water. Still boaters will argue - probably correctly - that they encounter more dangers driving to and from the river than on it.

For myself, the experience of confronting the clash of raging whitewater and immovable rock will remain as powerful as the gravity that creates the rapids and the falls. For there are few times I feel as alive as when I look back up at some monstrous rapid after running it, pulse racing and drenched with the river's water and power.

Jim Sheppard knew that feeling often. And knowing him as I did, I doubt he would trade his considerable hours running whitewater for anything.

Excerpted from an article first published November 14 in the Hendersonville, North Carolina Times-News, with the author's permission.

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Dear Editor,

I just want to say how much I appreciate all of the incredible things that the AWA accomplishes on our behalf, including the publication of American Whitewater. Bob Gedekoh and the entire staff do a great job. Furthermore, Jonathan Katz is a freakin' genius. Just make damn sure that you don't lose him to Hollywood.

Sincerely,
Bob Cipoletti
Albuquerque, NM

CLASS VI KIDS???

Dear Perception/AWA Editor:

Today I read the Fall 1995 issue of Kavakina Kids, a newsletter sponsored by Perception. The article featuring Jack Ruch amazed me.

Only a few days ago I read the AWA article about kayaking kids and was blown away by the article with Woody and the kids he took on the Upper Green. I thought, this is both scary and awesome! I felt jealous that I hadn't started kayaking at an early age...I thought about the lack of good judgment that finds its way into every kayaker's life at some time or the other...Sometimes it's because we really want something bad enough that we ignore the little things, like fear and the facts. Sometimes it's just that we don't know enough to know better.

So, like I said, I was amazed. Here's an eleven year old kid, who, in practically the same breath, states that his favorite river is the Upper Yough, but that he needs to improve his roll because he's not very good at kayaking yet, so he'll have to practice so he can get out in BIG water. Excuse me. The Upper Yough isn't big water?

In my own career I have unfortunately found that experience is often what you get when you didn't get what you wanted. Judgment calls can be right or wrong and hopefully, the price paid is affordable. Some paddlers claim they won't paddle anything that they wouldn't swim. I'd rather not paddle anything that I might swim! Good judgment, like anything else, needs practice.

So I am wondering...what will a kid do when he or she comes to the place where (perhaps) the price is inconceivable? You and I both know that few, if any, of the paddlers who die every year

while out kayaking (in everything from class 1-6) had in mind that a particular lay was a good day to die. Where's an eleven year old kid going to get the judgment skills to decide that maybe, just maybe, the Upper Yough requires class 5 skills and that having a bombproof roll and being good at kayaking are probably good things to have BEFORE going out in class 5?

So, yeah, maybe someone has taken responsibility for this kid. Hey, that's great. But what about the kid who reads your article and thinks "Cool, me, too!???"

I applaud kids kayaking: I've even taught a few. But this is more about judgment than anything else. Yes, it is about Jack's judgment and maybe the judgment of his parents...but most of all, it's about the good judgment of a company who simultaneously publishes an article that could encourage emulation of questionable judgment, while labeling its boats with a very emphatic disclaimer regarding the dangerous nature of the sport and the need for good judgment.

A concerned paddler.
Oakland, CA

PERCEPTION REPLIES

Dear Concerned Paddler,

I read your letter expressing concerns about the article on Jack Ruch which appeared in "Kayaking Kids." I would like to respond.

The article states that Jack's father is a river guide. Jack has, therefore, rafted the Upper Yough, the Tygart at ten feet, etc. These, we know, are formidable runs. When he states that he "shredded the Big Sandy" it refers to a trip that he and his father made in a two person inflatable. He was under the guidance and direction of his father, an experienced, professional river guide. After the mention of Jack recently getting a kayak, you may have interpreted his love of these runs as having run them in a kayak, still not confident about his ability to roll reliably. Perhaps this differentiation should have been more clear in the article.

Jack sets a positive example as a kayaking kid who honestly assesses his skills, identifies opportunities to improve, and has identified a particular rapid as beyond his skill level. This is the kind of judgment we want to encourage.

Please keep in mind that kids are starting to kayak at younger ages these

days. There are expert paddlers who are even experienced, trained instructors as young as 13. The new products designed for kids help make this possible. Perception is committed to the highest standards of quality and safety. Nonetheless, kayaking can be a high-risk sport. It is important to get training and instruction, regardless of one's age.

Your letter serves as a reminder to be especially vigilant in communicating the importance of instruction to kayaking kids. Jack Ruch is fortunate enough to have a father who can instruct him. I will be glad to include a notice about the importance of instruction in our next issue of "Kayaking Kids." Thanks for the reminder.

Sincerely,
Judie McCaslin
Public Relations Coordinator
Perception, Inc.
Easley, South Carolina

JACK RUCH RESPONDS

Dear Bob,

The offending paragraph in Perception's Kayaking Kids Newsletter reads:..."I'm not very good at kayaking yet, I need to practice my roll some more before I get out in big water. This spring I *shredded* the Big Sandy...Middle Fork of the Tygart. My favorite river is the Upper Yough." (Italics added). To avoid confusion, I should have tabbed in a new paragraph and written; "This spring I *Shredded* the Big Sandy..."

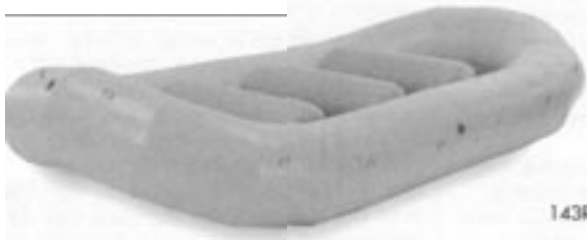
I am eleven years old. I go to public school. Whatdoya want, Shakespeare?

The Shredder is, of course, a two man inflatable, manufactured by our good friends at Airtight Inflatables and prominently advertised in this magazine. Although I recently received a Pirouette Super Sport from the wonderful folks at Perception Kayaks, the biggest water I've done in it is the pond down the street. I'm no idiot, I know my limitations. When I go on the river I make sure I am surrounded by professional river guides and expert kayakers, friends who take my safety personally, folks who have decades of whitewater experience and would be insulted by the idea that they are somehow endangering me. In fact, I'm insulted too.

Safety is important, so is minding yer own business.

Sincerely,
Jack Ruch

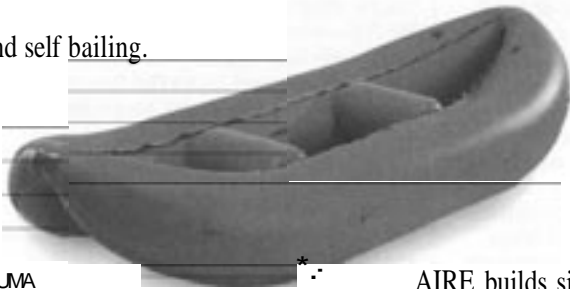
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FLOOD FIASCOES DECRIED

We have had a pretty dry summer, with many natural flowing rivers only barely runnable. So it must appear a bit odd to be writing about problems associated with flooding. However, on the weekend of August 26 and 27, we had a great deal of rain. I missed out on the flush because I was out of the country on business.

After I returned I found that there had been problems on the Haw and the Rocky, both necessitating helicopter rescues. Both cases hit the local newspapers. The *Charlotte Observer* reported that a tandem pair in an open canoe put on the river at 4:00 p.m., intending to paddle until 7:30 p.m., lost control, and spent the night on an island. Rescue workers looked for them that evening and a helicopter search was initiated the following morning. They were spotted at noon and a rescue attempt using a raft was attempted at 1:00 p.m. The newspaper report does not mention the type of raft used, other than describing it as "rubber", but this flipped. Two of the rescuers swam to shore and the other ended up on the same island as the canoeists. At 4:00 p.m. the three people were lifted off by a helicopter.

The problem on the Haw involved a group of kayakers and the people who had to be rescued were in trees rather than on an island.

The one positive thing about both incidents is that nobody died. But I think that is the only good thing that can be said.

The first question that arises is why were these people on a river above flood stage. One of the two people on the Rocky described himself as an "experienced" paddler. He did have the grace to admit afterwards that "we were kind of stupid". One of the people involved in the Haw incident claimed to be an "advanced" paddler, but no one admitted that they made a mistake being there. It is quite possible that the people involved were experienced to some degree.

Paddling rivers in flood, particularly by yourself, is another situation entirely. I have paddled rivers several times that have been much higher than normal in one case the river was in flood. I was with other paddlers each time. A river which you know well at normal levels is entirely different at very high level-holes get bigger, many appear where there were none before, the eddies disappear and the river runs through the trees at the banks.

Another issue is the cost of rescue. Local tax payers are usually not too enthusiastic about paying for rescue per-

sonnel, and certainly not helicopters. We face the possibility of local law enforcement agencies closing down rivers when the level rises. We know for sure if this happens that they are going to make very conservative decisions and close down rivers at levels which, though higher than normal, are no where near flood stage.

Other communities have faced this same problem. To paddle the James at Richmond, a permit, based on skill, is required above a certain level. At the Rappahannock near Fredericksburg, the river gauge is color coded. If it is at red and you need rescuing, you pay for it. This approach has its merits, but presents a problem when a river rises faster than those responsible for posting levels can react.

Perhaps this should be the bottom line: if you need rescuing, you have to pay for it. What about people who need rescuing from other recreational activities. Maybe the same principle should apply, but I'm not hung up on this point. Let's look after our own area of interest. People who put themselves at risk in this questionable way have a major effect on the general public's impression of paddlers as a whole. It's up to us, whenever we learn of any action related to paddling which is considered to be irresponsible, to do our best to try to prevent it from happening in the first place, to help sort out the problem if it occurs, and to try to counter any adverse publicity which might be generated.

We should also do our utmost to encourage local rescue organizations to take advantage of the Swift River Rescue courses which are available.

What do you think that we, as a Club, or as individuals should do?

See you on the river - at least if its not in flood!

Maurice Blackburn

Editors Note: Maurice Blackburn is the president of the Carolina Canoe Club. This open letter is reprinted from their newsletter, The Paddler, with permission.

OCOEE RIVER BLUES

Dear Editor:

Keith Judson's letter (Aug/Sept 1995) defending The Ocoee made me curious; did *The Weeping Wall* (May/June 1995) really insult Ocoee locals, calling us thieves and prostitutes? As a Tennessee native, I must defend my redneck brethren.

After digging out *The Weeping Wall*, I discover that Mr. Judson is a bit defensive. Mr. Hay's piece was primarily descriptive of the sordid history of the Ocoee, on which he seems to have a solid grasp. The references to stealing and prostitution serve to illustrate the desperation of a time when people were driven from their ancestral lands by a filling lake. The current behavior of boaters, rafters, and tourists in the Ocoee area is not excused by any such dire circumstances. Rather, Ocoee etiquette can best be compared to a street in a Chinese city; logical behavior given high population density.

The Ocoee is a sacrificial river. She has been sacrificed to "progress" and the "whitewater industry". There are 24 rafting companies that run the Ocoee. According to Mr. Judson, the Ocoee hosted 20,000 rafting guests in 1994. Anyone who has waited her turn to surf at Hell Hole on Saturday knows that the private boater traffic is anything but trifling. Mr. Hay would agree with me; we'd rather see hoards descend on a river already defiled, and leave the few remaining pristine rivers secret and untrammeled.

Mr. Judson must spend little time on the river, and much in the office, or he'd know the outright falseness of his blanket statement that raft trips on the Ocoee are "extremely well run". Not all raft trips are created equal, and not all guides are rigorously trained. But Sunburst has a good reputation and good guides, so why worry?

The Ocoee is sacrificed to the sounds and smells of Tennessee Highway 64, which is practically on the bank of the river. Occasionally an 18-wheeler careens into the river bed, attempting to dodge gawking tourists. A wooden flume decorates the other side, diverting water for the generation of electricity to run your TV. Upstream and downstream are more dams and reservoirs quickly filling with sediment.

The Ocoee has residual water quality problems from copper mining and smelting in the basin, not to mention intermittent questionable emissions from the Tennessee Chemical Corporation plant. There are no fish in the Ocoee. The rocks are stained an iron color reminiscent of acid mine drainage on the Cheat. As Mr. Hay says, "It's already ruined for real river running. Convert it to a slalom course. Have a nice day."

Of course, if this kind of information was in rafting brochures, no one would make a profit rafting the Ocoee. But few rafting customers read this magazine, and the ones that do probably already know. To the TV-watching city dweller it's just like wilderness.

Guides and boaters have pet names

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for the Ocoee: "the Ocoee MacRiver, over 2 million sold!" With the advent of the Olympics it has become known as "The Southeast's Premier Whitewater Gymnasium." and people go boating after work "for a workout."

Mr. Hay's bitterness about the rape of the Ocoee reveals that he cares about the Ocoee as a river, not just as a money train. If you lift your eyes from the boat strewn waters, above the road and flume to the still wild (but threatened) ridges, you will see some of the beauty the Ocoee still holds. There is a wilderness area above the Ocoee, and a thriving black back population. There is an endangered species (Ruth's Golden Aster) still clinging to its shores. Some of the side streams are still drinkable.

The resilience of nature is amazing, but not without bound. It would be a fitting memorial, to etch the names of every river we have compromised in the face of that dam; let's start today.

Teresa Gryder
Boater and Guide
Knoxville, Tennessee



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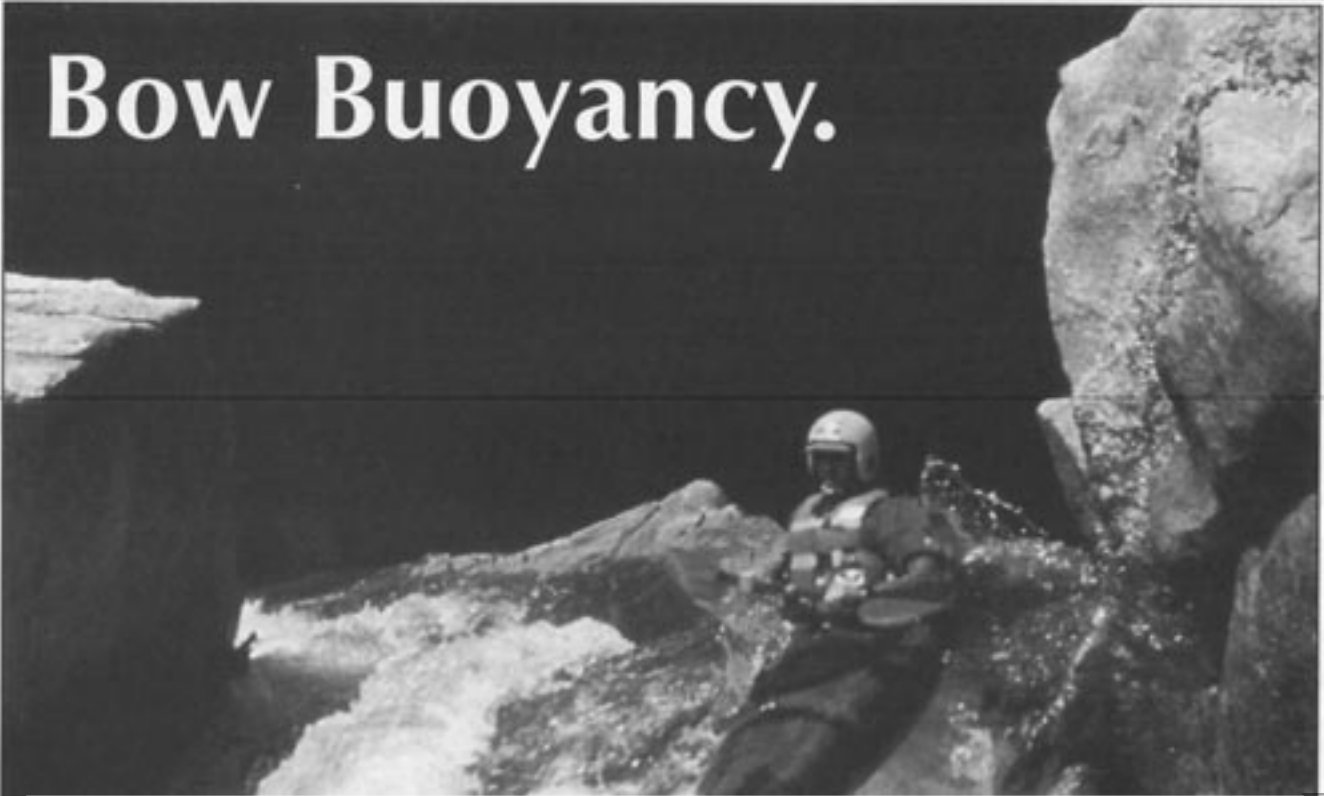


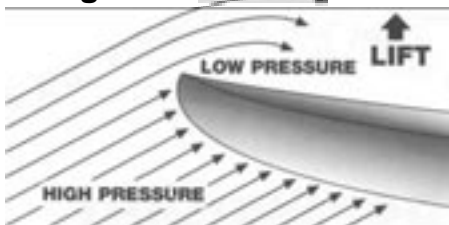
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PURPOSE

The American Whitewater Affiliation

Our mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership consisting of thousands of individual whitewater boating enthusiasts, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates.

CONSERVATION: AWA maintains a complete national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors threats to those rivers, publishes information on river conservation, provides technical advice to local groups, works with government agencies and other river users, and-- when necessary-- takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

RIVER ACCESS: To assure public access to whitewater rivers pursuant to the guidelines published in its official Access Policy, AWA arranges for river access through private lands by negotiation or purchase, seeks to protect the right of public passage on all rivers and streams navigable by kayak or canoe, resists unjustified restrictions on government managed whitewater rivers and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

EDUCATION: Through publication of the bi-monthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater, (AWA) provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

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

EVENTS: AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation, including the Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo in Tennessee, the Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), the Arkansas River Festival in Colorado, the Kennebec Festival in Maine and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at P.O. Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464, (914) 688-5569. AWA is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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Hydropower Update

by Rich Bowers, AWA Conservation Director

1995 was a wild year for anything even remotely associated with hydropower dams. This included rivers, whitewater boating and even the hydro industry itself. There were changes in how energy was sold and how much it was worth. There were changes in how power companies, agencies and the public gauged the value of individual dams, and (the AWA played a part here) changes in how power economics was weighed against other values of rivers.

Throughout this turbulent uproar, the AWA (and its associates in dam reformation) were able to forge ahead on a strategy defined some five years ago to improve rivers and whitewater recreation. In 1995 this strategy resulted in a number of landmark decisions which restored rivers, improved flows, increased access, and brought whitewater boaters into the front line of river conservation. For boaters, it resulted in direct improvements on a number of popular whitewater rivers, and moved us closer to opening up runs never before available.

It also created a number of unknowns: How will industry changes affect future dam operations? Will this result in more or less dams? Who will wind up owning both private and federal dams? And will this be good or bad for rivers and river recreation?

No one knows the answer. What we are sure of, undeniably, is that future dam operations, management, regulations and perceptions will change, causing new opportunities and prob-

lems to develop. While the AWA mandate to improve whitewater and open wild river segments will not change, our strategy will. AWA needs to remain flexible and adapt with the times. We're not alone; Industry, state and Federal agencies, and even Congress are in the same spot.

Here's what has been going on:

"Water Sovereignty" Bill before Congress

Representative Mike Crapo (R-ID) and six co-sponsors introduced H.R. 2555 "The State Water Sovereignty Protection Act" in November. If passed, this bill would make Federal government subject to state's control over water rights.

H.R. 2555 would let the federal government exercise control or management of water only in compliance with state law. If the government wanted to appropriate water

(dams are one example), or acquire a water right, it would be subject to state law.

In large part, this bill has been introduced because FERC has ignored Idaho's comprehensive water management plans in the past. This bill would reverse earlier Federal court rulings that hold that, under the Federal Power Act, FERC's hydro licensing authority pre-empts most state water rights laws.

AWA has worked before to improve state involvement in dam licensing. Earlier in the year, the Hydropower Reform Coalition (of which AWA is a founding member) pushed hard to allow states to determine minimum flows and what issues define water quality. The resulting Supreme Court decision allowed

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the State of Washington (with help from local boaters, AWA and other local groups) to eliminate a proposed dam on the Cispus River.

But not all states are this progressive, nor are many of them pro-river. Many have a track record of backing industry and eliminating environmental considerations for dams. A bill such as this can be a killer for boaters, or it could be a means to stop new dams.

Unfortunately, this could be bad news in Idaho. The Gem Irrigation District is looking to build a diversion dam on Idaho's North Fork Payette which will divert 100cfs of water out of the river. The proposed diversion will lie between Cabarton Bridge and Banks, a state designated Recreational River and right in the middle of one of this country's finest whitewater runs. To accomplish this, they need to change the state water management plans and create a loophole to build just one more dam. This bill could provide them a means to this end.

Who Wants This Dam?

For years, the AWA has been asking this question on new and existing dams around the country. Our reasons were obvious - if we don't want it, or it messes up the river and the surrounding riverine environment - then don't build it, or take it down, quit generating, and let's boat this drop!

Now however, power companies are asking the same question. Their reasons are obvious also. In many cases, they have operated these dams at enormous profit and little cost. But increased competition is reducing the profits at the same time that costs are going up dramatically (due in part to environ-

mental and recreation interventions).

This competition comes from advances in wind and co-generation technology and also from changes in power monopolies. In the past, hydro was profitable because it was cheap to produce (hey, they got free "fuel") and provided immediate generation for peak periods (like those mid-summer 90 degree work days here in DC). Hydro is still quick, peak power, but in some areas of the country wind and co-generation energy is now less expensive than hydro. And it's a lot less expensive to stick up a wind turbine than build a dam.

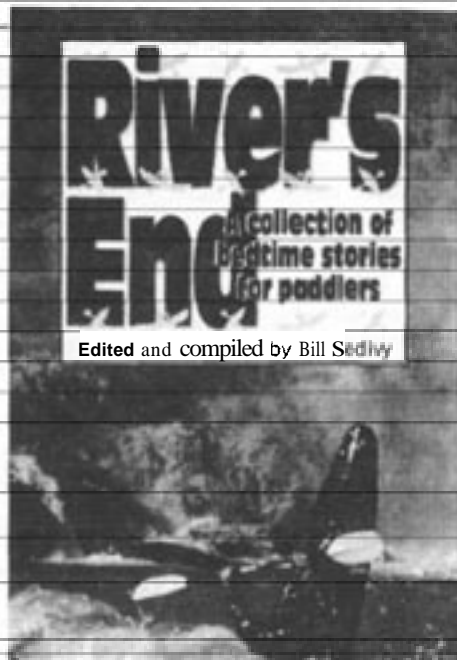
Competition is also coming from changes within the industry. When you pay your electric bill, you have one provider, right? But in the future, you will be able call up another provider, even in another state and region, if you're not happy with what you pay. This will take awhile, but big businesses may start doing this as early as next year. Power experts say that you and I may be able to pick our power before the year 2000. There goes the power monopoly! And there goes industry's ability to subsidize uneconomic projects.

So in the face of an unsure market, potential lower profits and, if the current process continues, increased environmental responsibility, power companies are looking to dump their turkeys:

— New York's Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. (NiMo) filed a restructuring plan in October which calls for its power plants, including 75 hydro dams, to be spun off into a separate company. The purpose? To create an open, competitive electricity market and to deregulate generation. The rest of NiMo would also be restructured into separate holding companies for marketing, brokering and services. This plan would allow large in-

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dustrial customers to choose alternative power suppliers by early 1997. If the plan is not approved, NiMo said it "cannot rule out the possibility" of restructuring under Chapter 11 Bankruptcy.

— Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PGE) is looking to dump two small uneconomical projects in California (including three reservoirs), the Murphy's Project (FERC No. 2019) on the North Fork Stanislaus and the Angels Project (No. 2699) on Angels Creek just downstream of Murphy's. Who wants them? The Calaveras Water District is interested in both projects, both for the power generation and the overall value of the water. PGE has already sold its Potter Valley Project on the Russian River to Calaveras.

— Duke Power Co. is looking to sell between six and eleven small uneconomical dams in the Piedmont region of North and South Carolina; all of these dams have a capacity of 5.5 megawatts or less (really small). Duke is interested in purchasing the power from these new owners, and has requested proposals from qualified companies.

— In September, FERC changed the way that it calculates project economics. In the past, FERC compared hydro costs to alternative power, and factored in estimated escalation over the 30+ life of a license. Now FERC only uses current costs, which reduces (on paper) profits from individual dams. So far this change has forced Tacoma Public Utilities (WA) to surrender its one month old license for the Barrier Island Project on the Cispus.

So what does this mean for boaters? Just like the industry, and even FERC, we really can't tell yet. In many ways, it should spell the end of new small and uneconomical projects, and the eventual demise of other existing borderline cases. But even though this has started on the above examples, we still have numerous new requests for preliminary permits on streams and creeks, and some companies seem determined to hold out until the very end.

Agreement on New York's Black River

On November 6, 1995, members of the Hydropower Reform Coalition (HRC) including AWA, American Rivers, Trout Unlimited and New York Rivers United, along with the New York Dept. of Conservation and other river conservation organizations, signed a comprehensive settlement with Niagara Mohawk Power Company and BeeBee Island Corp. for new licenses at six hydroelectric projects on New York's Black River.

This settlement is the third agreement signed in 1995 regarding hydropower on the Black. The City of Watertown agreement, an earlier agreement regarding eight dams on the Beaver River (a major tributary of the Black), and this agreement link together improvements on a total of 15 dams.



Bulls Bridge Dam on the Housatonic. Photo by Rich Bower

"For wildlife, for fish, for outdoor recreation and other values, we need to stop looking only at individual dams in the watershed," said AWA Conservation Director Rich Bowers. "This settlement, along with other recent agreements helps accomplish this goal for New York's river systems."

During the settlement announcement for the Black, the City of Watertown deposited a \$30,000 check in the Black River Enhancement Fund. This check was the first installment of more than \$1 Million that will result from the Black, Watertown, and Beaver River settlements.

This fund will be used for river restoration projects throughout the Black River Watershed.

This agreement is especially important to recreational users in New York as it provides for a 20 to 25 mile canoe route from Carthage to Watertown; new base flows of 1,000cfs; access for boating and fishing on all impoundments, rivers and shorelines owned by Niagara Mohawk; and future land acquisitions or easements for public access. It expands and improves on earlier AWA/HRC hydropower agreements which provide for scheduled whitewater releases on the Moshier and Taylorville sections of the Beaver, and on the nearby Salmon river. The Black agreement also continues previous AWA settlements in the mid-eighties on both the Moose and Lower Black rivers, and sets the stage for future improvements on other outstanding rivers including the Hudson and Racquette.

The Black River Settlement comes as part of AWA and HRC efforts to relicense some 40 dams in New York State. This settlement has been submitted to FERC for final approval. For more information, contact AWA's Conservation and Access Office or New York Rivers United at (315) 339-2097.

In 1985, AWA helped formulate an agreement, along with Adirondack River Outfitters, Glen Park Associates and Niagara Mohawk, which began what is today a multi-million dollar whitewater industry on the Lower Black.

In 1985, AWA also won recreational whitewater releases from Long Lake Energy on the nearby Moose River. In October, AWA hosted the first annual Moose River Festival, which attracted over 1000 boaters to Old Forge, NY from as far away as Maine, Maryland and South Carolina.

Whitewater Releases Locked In on New Hampshire's Pemigewasset River

In late October, FERC released its Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Ayers Island Project on the Pemigewasset river near Bristol, New Hampshire.

The "Pemi" has been the scene of a long (and sometimes contentious) fight to improve whitewater recreation by the AWA, Appalachian Mountain Club, the Merrimack Valley Paddlers, and others. The FEIS locks in many of the whitewater recreation improvements sought by these organizations for the next 30 years.

The 1.5 mile section of the Pemi immediately below the Ayers Island dam provides Class II-III releases throughout the spring, summer and fall months. In addition to some outstanding play areas for boaters, it offers easy routes around most of the more difficult rapids. For these reasons, the Pemi is an excellent training river for all levels.

Here is the FERC staff recommendations:

Whitewater flows of 840cfs. for a minimum of six hours (10am to 4pm) on weekends and holidays from May to August and September through October (releases are guaranteed unless lake levels cannot be replenished within 48 hours).

A special whitewater release of 1000 cfs in July, and another at 1,500 cfs in August. (release dates will be announced prior to

May 1 of each year)

Improved flow phone information, including a monitoring log, contact person, and a schedule of when information will be available. Improved and widened put in area including toilets, and snow plowed access road when necessary after March 1.

A one time contribution by Public Service of New Hampshire to improve the boater's take out area (amount to be determined).

For more information contact AWA or George May with the Merrimack Valley Paddlers at (603) 883-3409.

Federal Agency Recommends Whitewater Releases in Tallulah Gorge

On October 27, 1995 the FERC announced a critical first-step victory for AWA, river conservationists and recreationists on Georgia's outstanding Tallulah River.

The long-awaited-raft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) recommends specific improvements for the environmental, aesthetic, and recreational resources available on what was once described as the "Niagara of the South." (see October 1993 Journal) A total of six hydroelectric dams currently regulate flows and access to this river, including the outstanding Class IV-V whitewater of the Tallulah Gorge.

In this DEIS, FERC recommends that the applicant, Georgia



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Five weekends of whitewater boating flows (the first two weekends in April and the first three weekends in November), with flows of 500 cfs on Saturdays and 700 cfs on Sundays

Additional weekend aesthetic flow releases in the spring, late summer, and fall of 200 cfs during daylight hours.

Improved year round minimum flows of 35 cfs into the gorge (it is currently 12 cfs or less)

Each of these issues has been an AWA agenda item throughout this relicensing. However, AWA continues to call for higher minimum flows (75 cfs or more) to help restore the natural river habitat in Tallulah Gorge. Appropriate and acceptable whitewater and aesthetic flows were determined during the AWA requested 1993 whitewater study, conducted as a joint study between AWA and Georgia Power.

Also included in this decision were issues hammered out over the last two years between federal and state agencies, AWA and local boating clubs, non-profits and Georgia Power. These include:

A prohibition on logging and development in Tallulah Gorge to maintain the biological diversity of the gorge.

Improved public access to the river, including access through the newly developed 3,000 acre Tallulah Gorge State Park and Lake Tugaloo (take out for both Tallulah and Section Four of the Chattooga).

Safety and liability issues in the gorge.

FERC also carefully addresses the concerns of homeowners on upstream reservoirs over the restoration of Tallulah Gorge. According to the DEIS — "As proposed, the whitewater boating releases would not have a substantial effect on upstream lake levels. Georgia Power would operate one or two generating units at the (upstream) Terrora powerhouse during the proposed whitewater releases to maintain Tallulah Lake at normal pool level and provide a stable flow into the gorge."

This DEIS fully tested FERC staff's ability to address its Congressional mandate to balance the many existing and potential uses of this river. Besides power production, whitewater boating and property owners, other uses within the Tallulah watershed include: reservoir recreation, fishing, hiking, swimming, climbing and sightseeing. This decision is a real victory for conservationists, whitewater boaters, and for the Tallulah River!

However, this is only a partial victory — the next step to permanent improvements for the Tallulah rests with the Final EIS, which should be available by early summer, 1996.

For more information, contact AWA Conservation Director Rich Bowers at (301) 589-9453.

Decision on Washington's White Salmon River

As we went to press, FERC had just released its DEIS regarding the Condit Dam on Washington's White Salmon River. In this DEIS they reject removal of the dam. AWA and environmental groups had requested removal because this is the only dam on an outstanding Wild & Scenic River, and a block to both upstream and downstream fish migration. This is a serious blow to whitewater boaters because, without dam removal, there will be little potential for whitewater improvements through this relicensing. AWA seeks to restore the whitewater now impounded by the dam, and connect this with the area from the dam downstream to the Columbia River.

FERC does recommend installing upstream and downstream fish passage. Look for future updates on this project, or call the AWA office at (301) 589-9453.

Summersville Hydro Dam Moves Ahead on the Gauley

The city of Summersville, WV is moving ahead with plans to build a \$35 million hydropower project on the existing Summersville dam on the Upper Gauley. The dam is currently operated by the Army Corps for flood control, downstream flow augmentation and whitewater recreation. Construction could begin as early as next summer.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the National Park Service (and included in its permit), the project must avoid interference with the 1996 fall drawdown season. Current put in locations for commercial outfitters will be moved downstream, but private boater put ins will not be affected. Under its permit, the project can use only existing flows for generation, and will not affect whitewater boating on the river. However, tube releases from the dam will be gone as future flow will be released underwater.

The city of Summersville is looking to generate \$90 to \$100 Million from power generation over the next 50 years. The Summersville city budget is now about \$1.5 Million. Part of this money could go towards a new water plant for the city. Call the AWA office for updates on this project.



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Coal Company Abandons Cheat River Cleanup

In late October, 1995, T&T Fuels of Kingwood, West Virginia (the coal company responsible for two large and recent acid mine drainage (AMD) "blow-outs" into the Cheat Canyon), filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

On October 27th, they walked away from AMD treatment facilities at their deep mines along Muddy Creek, a tributary of the Cheat. Blow-outs in the past 18 months from T&T mines dumped millions of gallons of toxic water into Muddy Creek, adding tons of iron to the Cheat and Cheat Lake.

T&T's decision to file bankruptcy and abandon the site follows months of legal battles and investigations. In September, a former T&T superintendent, Clyde Bishoff, pleaded guilty to violating the Clean Water Act by discharging excessive amounts of AMD into Muddy Creek over the last ten years. In information filed with his plea agreement, federal officials charged that Bishoff conspired with other persons as early as 1982 to violate the Clean Water Act by diverting untreated water from two T&T mines to an abandoned mine, enabling T&T Fuels to avoid paying for treatment.

Through bankruptcy, T&T now joins a long list of other industries which have found a way to dump their clean-up costs onto the public. By leaving the site in October, T&T forfeited the \$10,000 bond required prior to issuance of a permit. T&T also owes fines of \$249,114 resulting from violations during and after the blowouts which have not been paid.

"This is a nightmare," stated Roger Harrison with the West Virginia Rivers Coalition. Harrison described these fees and fines as "a drop in the bucket compared to the actual long-term cost of cleanup to the state." In November, the State Division of Environmental Protection took responsibility for the site and is dealing with immediate problems regarding inadequate water treatment and sludge disposal. The state estimates cleanup of this site in the millions of dollars.

According to Friends of the Cheat Director, Dave Bassage, "this situation is a dark cloud on the efforts to restore the Cheat watershed. People are starting to believe that the Cheat can be brought back to life."

For more information, contact the AWA Conservation Office, or West Virginia Rivers Coalition at (304) 472-0025.

12th Annual Tuskasegee River Clean Up

This April 20th will represent the 12th annual cleanup of more than 22 miles of the Tuskasegee river corridor in North Carolina. Participating in last year's cleanup were over 475 students from Western Carolina University, local community members and other groups.

If you would like to participate in this year's event, or can donate prizes or food, please contact Lynn Brandon, Outdoor Program Coordinator with Last Minute Productions Program Council, Western Carolina University, at (704) 227-7206.

A T-shirt, door prizes and a cookout are provided for volunteers.



AWA Access Coordinator Rich Hoffman and Mad River Canoe President Kay Hemey at the "Taste of the Outdoors" Exhibit. Photo by Rich Bower

AWA and the Outdoors Industry Lobby for Recreation

On October 25, the Outdoor Products Council for the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA) hosted a Congressional Reception and Exhibition on outdoor recreation. This first ever "Taste of the Outdoors" highlighted and showcased outdoor recreation to those who make decisions on public land (and water) policies, including land purchase and protection decisions. The event was held in the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC, and attracted over 60 Congressmen and Senators and numerous congressional staff members.

Participants and exhibitors in this event represented a wide cross section of human-powered outdoor recreation interests, and included over 30 industry and manufacturer representatives such as Reebok, American Recreation Coalition, Pearl Izumi and others. Several members of the Conservation Alliance (a major funder of the AWA River Access Program) were also on hand, including Backpacker's Pantry, Thor-Lo Socks, and Grabber International. Non-profit conservation and recreation organizations included AWA and the American Hiking Society.

For AWA, this event provided a great opportunity to work with the Paddlesports Industry and to lobby for rivers. River sports were especially well represented by Perception, Inc., Dagger Canoe Company, and Mad River Canoes. Before the exhibition, the outdoor industry and AWA staff visited elected representatives and Federal land managers in a series of one-on-one meetings. First on the list of topics was the dependency of the outdoor industry on our country's natural resources — and the need for Congress to protect these resources.

The "Taste of the Outdoors" was timed perfectly for a lobbying effort. The vote to hold the Animas-LaPlata project (H.R. 1905) accountable for environmental provisions took place just

hours after industry and non-profit groups met with Congressman Skaggs (CO), Chairman of the Conference Committee which voted on this Energy and Water Appropriations Bill.

The Paddlesports Industry explained to Congress why industry and AWA are against projects which destroy recreational rivers — the proposed Auburn Dam on California's American river was a major issue in these visits.

Cool your Jets! Technology v. Paddles on America's Rivers

by Rich Bowers, Conservation Director

Every time I run a river, it seems I am faced with paddling miles of excruciating flatwater to get to the takeout. I try to console my aching muscles by repeating to myself, stroke by stroke, that this is good for me, that it will make me a man.

I'm sure that I am not alone in these situations — when I find myself fantasizing that my boat has suddenly sprouted wings and I am just blasting across the water. On some rivers (the Black in New York and the Chattooga in Georgia come to mind), I've actually lusted after the tow boats that haul commercial customers across this flatwater. "Geezer" paddling — a reality and a curse!

But there is a difference between fantasy and reality. If I wanted a motor, I'd stop paddling and hang out on lakes. I'd trade in the whitewater rush and all that communing with nature stuff for a six-pack of beer and the adrenaline of pure speed (not that I've never stuck a can or two in my boat). Maybe this is cool also, but it's not me and I never wanted it.

Unfortunately, it's here anyway. Welcome to jet boats, jet skis and other personal watercraft (PWC's) on wild and wilderness rivers. I ran into this for the first time on West Virginia's New River. Paddling into the eddy above "Surprise," I was strafed repeatedly, and intentionally by a PWC which blew out of nowhere. I was pretty ticked off, but clueless. Later I found out that I had stumbled across, and screwed up, at least one take of a commercial photo shoot for a PWC manufacturer.

This year some friends of mine were stunned to find PWCs attaining "Heaven's Gate" on the lower Gauley. This is a long way upstream from the closest river access, and above some pretty booming whitewater.

Last fall, a U.S. Court of Appeals decision overturned the City of Redding, California's ban on PWC use on the Sacramento River within City limits. Whitewater boaters are about to find out what sailors and other motor boaters already know — PWC's are coming on strong, regardless of rocks, rapids and gradient.

Besides the obvious danger to operators of wrapping a rock at 40mph (some models can get over 60mph), PWCs offer a potentially serious hurt to whitewater boaters. We don't expect to see them as we negotiate whitewater drops and waves, and, while many opponents object to the noise created by these craft, they are hard to hear over the roar of whitewater. In honesty, the safety record of PWC's is pretty atrocious (2,500 collisions in 1994, almost half of all reported water crashes); adding whitewater will only increase these statistics. Between 1986 and 1989, nearly 65 to 75% of all accidents on Idaho's Snake River involved jet boats.

For the rivers themselves, PWCs will dump even more people onto our dwindling river resources, and insert them into

areas which have been unreachable before (in 1995, PWC use reached almost 700,000 nationally). While this is a problem with human powered boats also, there is a significant difference — unlike kayaking, PWCs introduce documented noise, fumes, oil spills and safety problems for wildlife, wilderness solitude, and other users. Both the San Juan Islands in Puget Sound and the Chesapeake Bay are seeking PWC restrictions.

The problem goes beyond PWCs however. It even goes beyond the compatibility of motors (inboard or outboard) with whitewater rivers and with existing use. As usual, it has to do with politics.

Jet boats of all kinds mean commercial operations — big bucks — especially on our Western Rivers. Motorized travel means large outfitter operations and corporations including Kawasaki and Yamaha, and, as boaters well know, these groups have enormous political clout.

In November, this political power was dramatically demonstrated when US Senator Larry Craig (ID) and Congressman Wes Cooley (OR) introduced legislation which would severely limit the Forest Service's ability to regulate jet boating on the Wild & Scenic Snake River near and within Hells Canyon. Senate Bill 1374 and its companion bill, HR. 2586 would cut the Forest Service's ability to control the highest impact recreational use on the Snake — jetboating. If successful, then other legislation could be introduced to allow jetboats on other rivers also (just recently, a permit application was filed with the Forest Service to run (3) 50-person jet boat trips per day, every day from May to September on Washington's Wild & Scenic Skagit).

The Forest Service spent 8 years and \$1 million to come up with a plan for managing the Snake river. The outcome was a limited number of non-motorized use days (Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays in July and August). Jet boaters and non-motorized boaters were intimately involved in the process. Craig and his cronies want to bypass this system entirely and make their own rules — ones which would keep the river open all year for all jetboaters.

The Forest Service has limited non-motorized paddler access by enforcing a permit system on the Snake since 1976. The Forest Service was supposed to enforce the same sort of rule for jetboaters but hasn't. Craig's bill would make this "illegal use" legal by locking in no less than the highest established number of jetboat launches.

This legislation also states that "concurrent use of the river...by motorized and non-motorized" are not in conflict. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Craig's bill makes it impossible for the Forest Service to dedicate any stretch of the river or time period for non-motorized boating on the Snake. The Wild & Scenic River Act mandates, in part, that rivers designated as "wild" be maintained as "vestiges of primitive America." Congress designated the stretch on the Snake from Hells Canyon dam to Fishtrap Bar as "wild." If Craig's bill passes, "vestiges of primitive America" will, for the purposes of the Act, be defined to include jetboats, jetboat noise, wakes, etc.

Those working to stop this bill believe that the key lies in Oregon's Senator Mark Hatfield. Hatfield is a republican and senior to Craig on the Natural Resource Committee. He is also head of the Appropriations Committee that would have to approve of the legislation being "sneaked in" via budget bills. Perhaps more importantly, Senator Hatfield played a key role in the creation of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, the area now targeted for unlimited jetboat use in S.1374.

If you would like to help comment on motorized use of rivers, you can write to the following addresses:

The Honorable Mark Hatfield
US Senator
711 Hart S.O.B.

Washington, DC 20510
 attn: Doug Paul
 ph: (202) 224-3753

Laurie Sprague
 New River Gorge National River
 Gauley River National Recreation Area
 Bluestone National Scenic River
 P.O. Box 246, Glen Jean, WV 25846
 ph: (304)465-0508

For more information, contact the AWA Conservation Office or Ric Bailey at the Hell's Canyon Preservation Council at (503) 432-8100.

Animas-La Plata Update

In early November, AWA helped to defeat an effort to exempt the Animas-La Plata (A-LP) water project from economic and environmental review.

Senator Ben "Nighthorse" Campbell (R-CO) attempted to excuse the A-LP from

federal law by introducing language which would have ordered the project to be built "notwithstanding any other provision of law." This language would have allowed the project to ignore the mandates of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act.

This language was tacked on to the mammoth Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, thwarting the public scrutiny of the authorizing process and neglecting the standard rules of order for a bill. Campbell's effort to approve this project through the appropriations process was made in part because the project would not stand on its own merits.

This controversial and expensive project would divert a substantial portion of the Animas River into the La Plata River basin just upstream from the world class Santa Rita play hole, affecting the lower reaches of the Animas (Class II-III) and the downstream San Juan, both outstanding recreational rivers. The A-LP has received widespread criticism from both the environmental and economic experts — a recent estimate by the Bureau of

Reclamation calculated that the project would only return 36 cents for every dollar invested.

Unfortunately, \$10 million was appropriated for the project for Fiscal Year '96, guaranteeing that the fight to prevent this project will continue.

For more information, contact AWA, the Colorado Rivers Alliance at (970) 259-3209, or the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund at (303) 623-9466.

Westwater Canyon

In November, a bill sponsored by Representative Hansen (R-UT) was floating through the halls of Congress to designate

public lands in Utah as "wilderness." Unfortunately, major problems exist with these bills: of the abundance of eligible public land, this bill only recommended 1.8 million acres; the designation allows development and motorized use; and the bill omits 1800 acres from wilderness designation from the mouth of Westwater Canyon because of controversial mining claims. Skip Edwards, a former BLM ranger in Westwater and rafter, is working hard to keep Westwater intact.

For more information, contact the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance at (202) 546-2215.

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Navigability: It's not just for breakfast anymore!

by Rich Hoffman

On July 3, 1976, the fate of Colorado boating was forever altered.

On this day, David B. Emmert, accompanied by three others, put on the Colorado River in Grand County for a day on the river. The sun was shining and the river was still high from runoff. A perfect day for a leisurely float trip on the Fourth of July weekend.

Near the small town of Parshall, the Colorado flows through the ranch of the Ritschard Cattle Company and ranch owner Con Ritschard was not a happy man on this sunny July day. Ritschard had been trying to keep floaters off this stretch of the river for years. After hearing of the approaching rafters, Ritschard and his foreman loped down to the bank and strung a length of barbed wire across the river. When David Emmert and his party reached the fence, they were placed under arrest and charged with 3rd Degree Criminal Trespass.

Sound familiar? I would venture that every boater has either had a similar experience or knows of a buddy that has.

Emmert and his party were pissed. What they hoped to be a relaxing float turned into a stand off with a hostile landowner and a deputy sheriff.

And here is the crux of the matter: instead of paying the \$50 fine and leaving, Emmert decided to press the issue in court.

The end result? The Colorado Supreme Court case of *People v. Emmert*, a complete trainwreck for recreational boaters in Colorado. The legal equivalent of a swim through Pine Creek on the Arkansas.

The Basic Problem

The basic problem is that most boaters, landowners and sheriffs are confused about whether it is legal or not to boat down certain rivers.

In Emmert's trial, he argued that recreational boating was guaranteed by the state constitution. Unfortunately for him and all boaters in Colorado, the Supreme Court disagreed. For an excellent examination of the Colorado situation, see separate article in this issue by John Marshall, a boater and AWA volunteer in Colorado.

One of the sources of confusion stems from the concept of navigability. Navigability is a term that is thrown around a lot and widely misunderstood—similar to the debate about the Class V rating system.

So what does navigability mean?

In general, if a stream is considered "navigable", the public has the right to boat down it. Here's why.

There are two levels for tests of navigability: federal and state. The federal test most relevant to boaters is the test for

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stream bed title which determines who owns the bed and banks of the river. If the river was "susceptible" to being used for commerce at the time the state entered the union, the river is navigable by federal definition. As such, the bed and the bank (up to the mean high water mark) is owned by the state and held in trust for the public. We have the right to boat these streams. (One exception to this general rule is when the king of England granted the beds and banks of navigable rivers to private owners.)

Unfortunately, this determination of stream navigability can only be decided on a case by case basis (often on a segment by segment basis) and only after conflict occurs. Furthermore, the federal definition relies on historical evidence which can be hard to come by. Fortunately, there is some movement by the courts to recognize recreational use as a test of navigability.

If a river fails to meet the federal title test, the bed and the banks are privately owned and we must turn to state law to discover our rights to boat. And state law varies wildly on this right.

Some states are enlightened about the validity of recreational rights. In the California court case of *People v. Mack*, the ruling stated that "The public has the right to navigate below the high water mark on rivers which are capable of being navigated by small recreational craft." In other words, the definition of navigability in California rests on whether the river is capable of floating a canoe or kayak. AWA strongly advocates this test of navigability.

Other states choose to be regressive and exist in the past. In Georgia, the courts have relied on an 1863 statute to conclude that "a navigable stream must be capable of transporting boats loaded with freight. The mere rafting of timber or transportation of wood in small boats shall not make a stream navigable."

What this means is that if you live in a state that has recognized the right for recreational use of streams, consider yourself lucky. And if you don't, be careful. While we state in our access policy that every stream reasonably susceptible of being navigated by kayaks and canoes should be open to the public, this is not a reality unfortunately. As illustrated above, some states like Georgia still rely on anachronistic definitions of navigability.

Judicial Approach

Which brings us back to July 3, 1976 and *People v. Emmert*. As stated above, Emmert contested his trespass charge. Thanks to a hostile judicial environment, Emmert lost and this flawed decision has cast a long shadow over Colorado boating since 1979.

Like Emmert, we need to push for stronger rights for downstream recreation, but we need to choose our battles very wisely. One lost trespass case like *People v. Emmert* can have ripple effects that harm boater's rights for decades. In Georgia, a similarly hostile judicial environment has resulted in a losing effort on Armuchee Creek.

Boaters should only go to court if they are well-funded and very well-researched about both the law and the procedure. And to be successful, you must have a strategy. Getting arrested and backed into a legal corner is not an advisable way to start your effort. It puts you on the defensive from the beginning.

In contrast to the Colorado effort, New York boaters successfully litigated a trespass case last year on the South Branch of the Moose River in the Adirondacks. One of the keys to their success was that the boaters were supported by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and chose to get arrested as a

"test case." The result: a progressive ruling that New York's navigability standard (that a stream had to show evidence of log drives) was an anachronism and that recreational use was a sufficient test for navigability. An identical approach was successful in Montana.

Legislative Approach

Of course, if a judicial approach is not feasible or wise, there is always the legislature. As detailed in John Marshall's article on the Colorado situation (see accompanying article in this issue), Colorado is a state where legislation could be most effective and direct solution to counter the flawed and anachronistic string of judicial decisions that discourage boating. New legislation is the best solution to what otherwise would be haphazard litigation.

The AWA is considering a legislative approach in Colorado right now. (See John Marshall's accompanying article for more detail.) Our effort would need to strike an acceptable balance between landowners and boaters and to provide benefits to each group. By clarifying the existing confusion, legislation would provide a fair and consistent alternative to continued litigation by recognizing the right of boaters to make incidental contact with privately owned streambeds and banks. In addition, legislation could

strengthen liability concerns of landowners. We have started our effort by approaching the two largest private property groups in the state and listening to their suggestions.

Diplomacy

When you're face to face with an irate landowner or sheriff, diplomacy is the best strategy. Especially if they're armed. Avoiding conflict is always better than inciting it. As illustrated by the losing efforts above, it's better to pay the trespass fee and be on your way than to be backed into fighting a losing battle.

And maybe the time isn't right for either a judicial challenge or a legislative effort. Time then to tend to your grassroots. With help from the AWA, Georgia has turned towards building a statewide river group that both highlights the incredible river resources of the state and builds a larger constituency for future efforts. In September, Georgia hosted a very successful statewide rivers conference.

Conclusion

As we state in our access policy, we believe that boaters should have the right to float through rivers that flow through private land. The AWA is pushing to make this policy a reality. Most importantly, we are propelling states to recognize recreational use as a form of commerce and navigation.

We would also like to advocate for a stronger recognition of the public trust doctrine in the law. In the landmark case of *National Audubon Society v. Superior Court of Alpine County*, the courts stated "The very purposes of the Public Trust Doctrine have evolved in tandem with the changing public perception of the values and uses of waterways." If this doctrine were incorporated more fully into modern law, we wouldn't face the current risk of being excluded from public resources.

In the future, look for AWA literature to guide boaters about navigability law in every state. If you would like copies of any of the above case law, please contact AWA at 76435.731@compuserve.com or call Rich Hoffman at (301)589-9453.

AWA Comments on Future use of the Upper Ocoee

In November, AWA submitted comments to the Forest Service about the future

use of the upper Ocoee River. Foremost among our recommendations was that the upper Ocoee should continue to be used for whitewater recreation after the Olympics. The Forest Service has invested a significant amount of time and money in the site, and this infrastructure should be used to benefit all boaters. (The Savage River in western Maryland hosted the 1989 World Whitewater Championships but the site has been virtually abandoned since then and there have been no scheduled whitewater releases from the Army Corps of Engineer's dam since 1991.)

Additional recommendations include: hosting a world class freestyle (rodeo) site on the upper Ocoee; restoring minimum instream flows to this stretch; and issues of cost, management, and liability.

For copies of AWA's comments, contact AWA's Conservation and Access Office.

AWA Attends ACA Conference

In November, AWA attended the annual meeting of the American Canoe Association (ACA) in Austin, Texas. AWA's Rich Hoffman participated in a panel on navigability and an open session on conservation and access issues with Tom Goynes of the Texas River Protection Association and ACA's Dave Jenkins. The most dynamic session was an explosive forum on effective lobbying hosted by Texas Representative Edmund Kuempel (R 45th) and former Missouri legislator (and boater) Chris Kelly. Legendary paddler and president of the Nantahala Outdoor Center Bunny Johns and Olympic Gold Medalist Greg Barton were inducted into the Paddling Hall of Fame.

Access to West Virginia's Gauley River

At the end of November, AWA, West Virginia Wildwater Association and other private boaters had an opportunity to meet with Peter Hart, the new National Park Service (NPS) Superintendent for the New, Gauley and Bluestone rivers.

The meeting was originally to discuss the issue of private boater access within the Gauley River National Recreation Area (NRA), the proposed hydropower project on Summersville Dam (see Hydro section), and to review comments on the NPS management plan for this area.

While access was discussed, the conversation quickly turned to what is becoming an even more important issue for private boaters — commercial development within the NRA boundaries. Over the last several years, several new roads have been bulldozed into the middle and lower Gauley area, buildings have appeared on the canyon rim, and the Sweets Falls area has more bar-b-ques than downtown Summersville. In addition, the WV Dept. of Natural Resources continues to push for a new road from the existing campground to stock the river.

Several boaters mentioned that while private boater and public access is critical, a few interests seem bent on destroying the very resources which attract boaters to the river. Access needs are quickly being replaced by the more pressing need to protect the river.

Superintendent Hart explained that, while public access and development within the NRA is an NPS priority also, that they are "a paper tiger" with no recourse to purchasing additional land, and no current way to manage lands unless they own them.

Access to West Virginia's Meadow River

Route 19 in the Summersville area has been under construction for the past several seasons. One benefit of the road and bridge construction was to be a parking lot and improvements on an existing (primitive) road at the junction of Route 19 and the Meadow River. This road was to provide public access to the Meadow for boaters and fishermen (take out for the Middle and put in for the Lower), and an administrative access point for emergencies. Due to the steepness of the road, it was considered to offer walking access. Both the NPS and the WV Division of Natural Resources supported this construction.

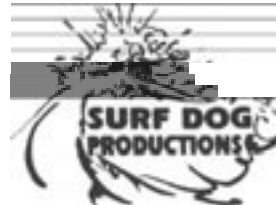
However, it never happened. Construction is now complete in this area, and the guardrail has been replaced. No parking area was built, and there is no way to pull off to access the existing trail.

The NPS needs help in getting this access back on track. Boaters can write to:

Mr. Rusty Hall
WV Division of Highways
Roadway Design Division
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Inside the Beltway

by Ed E. Lyne

An eight-lane interstate highway (known as the "beltway") encircles the nation's capital like a monstrous snake, separating the noxious inferno of politics from the rest of the nation. The populace peers in with an attitude of bewildered dismay. Meanwhile, politicians, bureaucrats, T.V. newscasters, lobbyists, lawyers, thieves, reporters, muggers, government contractors, drug addicts, and spies form a cacophonous Tower of Babel. At the center, gripping his new Contract with America like the Sword of Gheghis Khan, Newt Gingrich, newly enthroned Speaker of the House, announces a gradiose strategy to transform the planet. Undetred by this horrific scene, alert whitewater boaters, trapped deep inside the beltway, carefully filter the pandemonium to report on anything and everything affecting whitewater rivers.

Ever since Bill Clinton invited Newt Gingrich and a pack of other political types to fly over to Israel with him last November for the funeral of Prime Minister Rabin, events inside the beltway have been dominated by what happened on that flight. Bill acted like a Big Bully. He wouldn't play hearts with Newt and made him leave through the back door.

Newt got pretty steamed about this treatment. But if the truth be known, he was in a bad mood even before he got on the flight to Israel.

It all started in early November. Gingrich was fondling a baby cougar in the office of Ohio Congressman, John Kasich, when the little bugger took a bite out of Newt's chin. (The cougar was there with some monkeys from a zoo for a "photo op" event.)

Things went from bad to worse when Gingrich caught the flight to Israel with Clinton. Newt expected to jump start negotiations with Bill on the plane. To set the tone, he announced in a pre-flight press conference that Clinton was the kind of "flip-flopping, bed-wetting, back-stabbing, cynical, liberal, counter culture elitist" that he would love to negotiate with. Despite all the foreplay, for some reason, negotiations never took flight when the plane did.

First you get bit by a something from a zoo. Then the President won't play hearts or negotiate political deals with you on his big fancy airplane. Finally you have to ignominiously exit through the back of the plane with people who have never even been President of a country. This kind of treatment can make a man mad.

Newt got angry enough to make good on his pledge to shut down the Federal government. He did that within hours of his return. In private conversations with key lieutenants, he made it clear that there is more punishment to come. Much more.

In a nutshell, the Gingrich's basic political dynamic goes like this. If Bill Clinton supports X, Y and Z, Newt says "Those spineless, corrupt, spendthrift, taxaholic Democrats like X, Y, and Z. Ergo, X, Y, and Z are bad and our team should destroy them all."

Until he sensed that it would irritate Newt, Bill never made much fuss about the environment. He left that mostly to his sidekick, Al and to Bruce "Biological Diversity" Babbitt. Lately, however, Bill has been acting more friendly to forests, parks, endangered species, clean water and clean air.

According to the basic political dynamic, Newt needs to destroy all of the above to make Bill look bad.

But can Newt manage to trash the nation's environment all by his lonesome? After all, Bob Dole and a lot of other Big Dogs are also playing around in the same sandbox. And quite a few people on Newt's own team, like Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), John Chafee (R-RI), and Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), are green to the core. Don't they have any say?

The answer is "Yes. But". First of all, when Newt gets angry, he unleashes his pack of 78 mad dog freshman Republicans. They start barking at other people in Congress and running amok, scaring the bejeezus out of all the moderates. This ravenous pack of pit bulls salivates at the thought of tearing apart the nation's burdensome environmental laws and privatizing America's mismanaged natural resources. Those resources (parks, forests, rivers, etc.) are all being underutilized by Federal bureaucrats, they say. Forests, mountains, and rivers would be more profitably managed by Canadian mining companies and Japanese timber conglomerates who won't let them just go to weed and fill up with a bunch of worthless wild animals.

Fear and Loathing Inside the Beltway

Newt has also developed techniques to convince ordinary folks that the freshman class is not really the mob of rabid anti-environmentalist pit bulls they seem to be. That image is just a fiction perpetuated by the "liberal media", according to Newt.

How does this technique work? A Congressional leadership group recently explained how to pull it off. "Don't get all worried and obsessed with your anti-environmental votes", they told the new Congressmen. "Call a press conference. Have photo of yourself planting a tree. Put some smiling children and seniors in the picture. People will think you are a card carrying died-in-the-wool friend of the environment."

This way, according to the leadership group, a member of Congress can vote to hand over wilderness to oil companies, close national parks, pave over wetlands, pollute rivers and streams, and do most anything else he needs to do to get campaign contributions. And he can still get a big piece of the environmental vote.

In a recent article in the New Yorker, Newt revealed that he has also been teaching his followers to use carefully selected negative words to describe the opposition. The best words, according to Newt, are "sick", "corrupt", "bizarre", and "self-serving". If an opposition politician has any environmental credentials whatsoever, Newt advised his teammates to refer to poor devil as a member of the "ecoterrorist underworld". If he supports national forest wilderness, call him a "tree-spiking, knee-jerk, tax-and-spend liberal".

The most amazing thing about this bold strategy is that, according to the inside-the-beltway pollsters and spin doctors, it works! Another thing to remember is that Newt is not alone in his mission.

Who are the other Congressional Big Dogs pushing the trash-the-environment agenda? Their names are not exactly household words yet. (Probably because Newt and Sonny Bono have been hogging all the cameras.) But one day they will be famous for the big changes they are trying to bring about.

One Big Dog is John Doolittle from California, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Water and Power Resources in the House Resources Committee. John wants to build Auburn Dam, a 2.2 billion dollar boondoggle that is supposed to protect Sacramento from a 200-year flood, that is, unless it is demolished by an earthquake beforehand. This dam, bigger than either Grand Coulee or Hoover and more expensive than both, will ruin the American River, California's most popular whitewater area. Doolittle proposes to pay for the project by selling off the Redwood National Park.

Another Big Dog is Ken Calvert, also from California. Ken is Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. Ken got caught doing funny things with a prostitute on the Los Angeles freeway just before his election, but got elected anyway by his tolerant constituents. Ken wants to give away billions of dollars worth of valuable mining deposits on public lands to Canadian mining companies and let them walk away from the empty mines without cleaning up their mess.

Then there's James Hansen, from Utah, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands. He wants to close down a lot of national parks and up the entrance fees at all the rest.

Idaho Senator, Larry Craig, wants to allow more jet boats and other motorized rivercraft in wild and scenic rivers.

Montana's Senator Conrad Burns introduced a bill to give 270 million acres of Federal land over to the States.

Don't forget Don Young, from Alaska, Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee in the House of Representatives. Don wants to gut the Endangered Species Act, repeal wilderness protection laws, open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil companies, get rid of the Tongass National Forest, and tax outdoor equipment manufacturers to pay for nongame wildlife.

A really Big Dog is Tom DeLay, from Texas. Tom wants to repeal the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and just about ev-

ery other environmental law. He keeps a black book of the nation's biggest campaign contributors. If you are not in it, he is against whatever you are for.

One of the fiercest Big Dog of the new Congress is Billy Tauzin, from Louisiana. He calls himself a Blue Dog. Sometimes he is a Democrat. Sometimes a Republican. He is kind of a chameleon. He has vowed to wipe out endangered species and wetlands protection so that the oil and gas industry can make some real money. Keep an eye of these boys. They have plans for all of us.

The key issues for boaters are: * How much Federal land is going to be sold off or given away? * How many rivers are going to wind up with toxic pollution, dams, jet boats, or some other form of river abuse?

With Newt this pissed off at Bill, and Newt's pit bulls snarling ravenously, the toll could be high. Some lands will be sold to corporations and individuals (starting with forest service ski areas and valuable mining deposits) at far less than fair market value.

Some lands will be given to States to do with what they will. Wildlife Refuges and lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management will probably fall in this category. Legislation has already been floated to transfer the entire Tongass National Forest to the State of Alaska, for free, to be clear cut.

Some lands will remain in Federal ownership, at least for now, but under a lot less management. First of all no money will be provided to catch polluters and exploiters. Access fees for recreational users, however, will go sky high. Parks, like the Mojave National Preserve, will be transferred from Park Service management to less protective agencies.

In those parks that remain, concessionaires will become more entrenched and less competitive.

Millions of acres are involved. We (you and I and other Americans) still own one-fourth of the entire acreage of the nation. We own 268 million acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management in twelve western states. We own 191 million acres of national forest lands in 44 States which are supposed to be managed for recreation, wildlife, and long-term timber production. We own 87.4 million acres of lands managed for fish and wildlife. And we own 77 million acres of national parks in 49 States.

Big Dogs in the new Congress have made it clear that they plan to give away or sell off vast portions of these lands and manage the rest for private profit.

River recreation will be affected by the changes in land ownership and management. Rivers will also be subjected to more jet boats and other kinds of visual, chemical, and biological damage.

For example, the Clean Water Act is being radically altered and a bill is under consideration to eliminate regulation of jet boats on the wild and scenic portion of the Snake.

Adding insult to injury, both anti-environment and pro-environment Congressmen are ganging up against boaters and other recreational users of public lands and rivers.

They are signing on to legislation to levy fees of up to 5 percent on kayaks and kayak equipment. The proceeds will be turned over to the same State agencies that are attempting to cut back on whitewater boating on streams like the Upper Yough and the Savage. This is known as the "Teaming with Wildlife" tax.

AWA is working hard to stop this tax, but many environmental groups have been bamboozled into signing on.

The bottom line is: if you are following events inside the beltway, swallow hard and grit your teeth. The ride is going to be bumpy from now on.

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Left: T. McEwan on San Marcus

The better the Upper Amahac got, the worse I felt for Charlie. Six years ago I had talked him, and a couple of others, into exploring a 60 mile stretch of the Amahac with me. Even though the most it dropped was 45' per mile over 12 miles, I argued that it might hold some whitewater surprises, if the gradient were distributed unevenly. After all, the maps registered contours in increments of 100 meters elevation. Three hundred feet of drop can kick up quite some interesting whitewater if it is concentrated into a couple of miles.

We were certain the gorge had never been run; no person among the many we asked along the banks had ever seen kayaks. And it was enclosed in a 6000 ft deep canyon. We saw many spectacular and memorable sights: a cave of vampire bats, for instance, and several isolated towns along the river, with hundreds of people but no roads. But, unfortunately, we found no whitewater consequential to class IV-V boaters. The gradient was an even downhill slope and the canyon walls never constricted.

For 60 miles we scraped down gravel bars and rode each other's wakes across the flats, trying to stay out of the river wide crayfish traps. It was a class I-II-III river, beautiful for canoe-camping. Charlie was able to enjoy the trip despite its disappointing whitewater. In fact, he was the only one who didn't complain vociferously.

That was six years ago. This year, when it appeared that we could explore another section further up the Amahac, I was sorry Charlie couldn't be with us. While we decided to run 30 miles of the river, above our former put in, at La Palma, Charlie had to board a plane for home.

During the dry season, the true source of the Rio Amahac is the caves of Tolantongo. These are a fantastic cluster of cliff side caverns, out of which gushes 300 cfs of blue-green water. Out of one cave comes cold spring water, from another, hot water. Follow the flow of a hot spring 60' back into the cliff and it becomes a steam room like those in a health club. Except that it is pitch black, and couples "huddle" in the corners.

Climb into the back of another large cave and you can swim down a three foot rapid and be tumbled around in the swirls. A lifeguard will not allow you to swim into still another pool, further back in darkness. It has a whirlpool, he explains, and some of the water goes out the bottom.

"Has anyone ever been killed there?" I ask.

"Only a few", he says. But that is why he has been stationed there. The springs and caves are said by locals to have medicinal virtues.

The Rio Tolantongo tour falls 900' over two 60' water falls in 4 miles, before it empties into the larger Amahac river canyon. Not knowing whether the two 60' falls, deep in a crevice on the



SWEET AMAHAC:
A MEXICAN
FIRST DESCENT
by Tom McEwan



Tolantango, were portageable, we chose to drive around to the confluence with the Amahac at Chalmita. The Amahac added only 50 cfs. A few miles downstream another stream out of the reservoir Metztitlan, added 50-75 cfs. From these sources, we had a grand total of about 500 cfs of water; we saw no other significant tributaries for 30 miles.

We started down the pastoral river, ducking and dodging under log bridges, with barely enough water to float over the gravel bars. Suddenly a woman excitedly waved me over to the side of the river. With three little daughters at her side, all dressed up in pastel jumpers, she insistently warned me about the river downstream. She was really concerned. The river below was not at all like the river above. There were cascadas and "grandes piedras" in the rio! The three others she had seen ahead of me didn't know what was ahead!

I did my level best to contain my elation and receive her warnings seriously. It was clear that she feared the river below, and I was touched that she would be so concerned for total strangers. But the more excited she got, the better it sounded to me. After I assured her several times that we would exercise the utmost caution, I went on to catch up to the others with a light heart.

Not far downstream, we encountered a mile of very tight rapids. We had to scout most, and set safety at a couple of strainers. With a little care everything was runnable. Eric flipped and lost his paddle under an undercut. There were, one after another, narrow slots and boofs for about a mile. The best part was knowing that those sweet little drops were being run for the first time. By luck, a villager nearby watched us run the first few rapids. I felt that his report would make its way back to the concerned woman upstream, letting her know we would be okay.

San Andres Miraflores and La Palma are two very different little towns, deep in the bottom of the Amahac river gorge. Miraflores is a day's paddle (20 k.) below Chalmita. La Palma is another 20 k. down easy-going little rapids, and an extra 80 mi. around by car. It has a reputation for drugs and murders. Unfortunately, when we found out about the access by road to Miraflores we had already arranged for a driver to meet us at La Palma. We couldn't change plans.

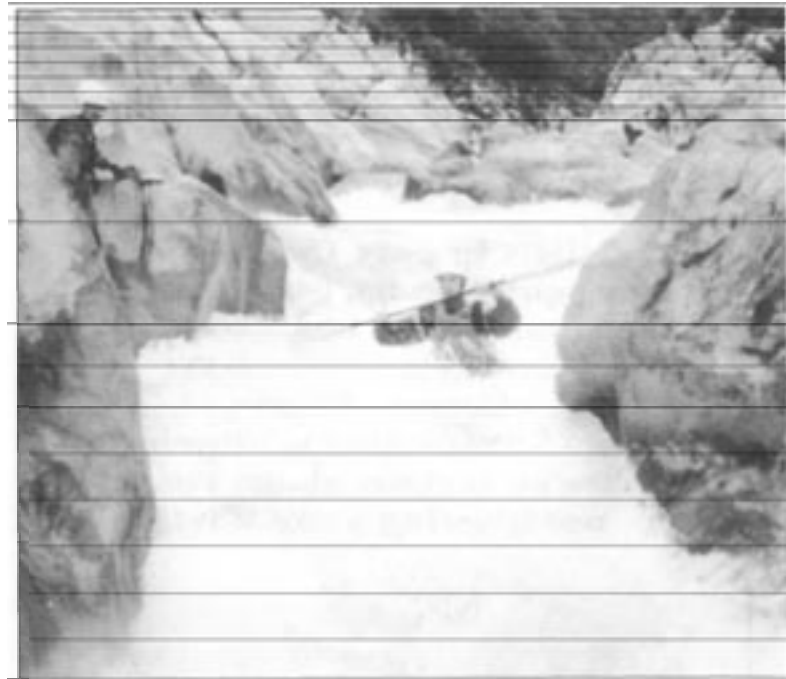
Padding into Miraflores, we met some young fellows speaking a little English, and driving a van with an expired Georgia plate on the front bumper and an expired Texas

plate on the rear. They run a taxi service to Ixmiquilpan with the van when they are not working for a landscaping company in Georgia.

Before dark, Ben and Jon coaxed some of the town kids into trying out the boats. Soon they were the center of attention of about 20 kids and another 20 adults. None of the girls would try it; I guess, because they didn't have swim suits. The boys were soon down to their underwear and piling onto the boats, tipping them over and having a great time. Later we were invited for dinner at a family's house in the town. Eric and Jon played basketball in the town plaza (Miraflores rules). Ben was the only one the whole trip that managed to make a date—with a pretty Mexican school teacher named Rosie. The next morning, after waking up to a breakfast of "cafe con leche and pan dulce", we paddled on to La Palma.

The first English words I heard from a crowd of about 30 school children gawking at us from out of a classroom window as I carried my boat into La Palma were "F...Y...!" Not wanting to encourage them, I was careful not to react. It was a town school with a big U.N. logo on the side. Whoever was there last speaking English left a legacy. The kids tried a few other coarse expressions in English before someone remembered the word, "HELLO!" That at least was worth acknowledging.

In La Palma we soon met the town locos. In the square three very drunk men invited us into their beer and soda stand. Since it was the only place in town we could find beverages, we reticently accepted. Their eyes were doing strange rotations in their heads and they staggered as if the pavement were gyrating underfoot. They weren't drinking



Top left: T. McEwan at Moctezuma
Above: Jon Brown on Santa Maria



Ben Jewit at Amahac

SWEET AMAHAC: A MEXICAN FIRST DESCENT

anything from the cooler; instead, a gallon plastic bucket in the corner filled with a foam covered, whitish liquid had their attention.

It was "pulque", a local liquor like Moonshine, made from the Agave plant. They offered us a foam topped glass, and I think each of us was tempted to take at least a small sip to see how it tasted. I was, however, determined not to drink anything that did not at least have a printed, company label. Later, when one of them confided to me that he had mysteriously gone blind in one eye, I was really glad that I had abstained.

How can you every claim to be the first to paddle a river? According to logic, it is impossible to prove a negative. Even if you have read all of the paddling magazines and newsletters, there can always be, without your knowing, a Mexican (or Polish) team that beat you to it. But in a small, isolated community the locals remember unusual people and events. When you show up in their back yard with hi-tech boats and gear, they stop what they are doing to watch you.

So I assume, pretty safely I think, that the locals on the Amahac would know if other paddlers had been there before. And I think that when we go back to the Amahac again, the locals are going to remember the group in '95 who lost a paddle in the "cascadas peligrasas" but were otherwise "muy bien".

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What's Bigger and Meaner than the Futaleufu?

THE BAD-ASS BAKER!!!!

by John Foss

Imagine a river that dwarfs the Rio Futaleufu, flowing through a beautiful and grandiose Patagonian landscape. This is the Rio Baker, the most voluminous river in the South Pacific. Scale is enormous in the Baker watershed: spectacular glacially-carved granite crags, star-studded skies, world-class trophy fish, and the biggest runnable whitewater in Chile.

Above: Clay Wright dropping into the bottom of E'Nef. Photo by John Foss.



The Baker drains Campo de Heilo Norte, a huge continental ice sheet that blocks the moisture-laden south Pacific storm track, and Lago General Carrera, the second largest freshwater lake in South America. The Baker watershed forms a botanical and climatic transition zone in central Patagonia. At 47 degrees S latitude, the austral temperate flora of northern Patagonia merges with the frigid, sub-antarctic flora of the south. Juxtaposed on the leeward side of the ice pack, the sheltered Baker valley boasts an arid, sunny climate, much in contrast to the verdant, saturated coastal archipelago and bleak, wind-swept pampa to the east.

The western horizon is dominated by a series of massive, serrated peaks, with Cerro Arenales (3365 m) the highest and most impressive. Out of sight to the west is Monte San Valentin (3910 m), the highest peak in the southern Andes.

The upper river has four distinct sections that run the spectrum from serene, swift-moving flatwater, to tumultuous, unrunnable class VI. Sobek attempted the first raft descent of the upper canyon in 1992. As guide Monte Becker succinctly stated, "...we came, we saw, we got pummeled, we hiked out!" The two safety kayakers on the trip, Rocket and Chuck Carpenter, persevered and completed the first descent by portaging the entire third canyon.

The uninitiated should realistically plan to spend one and a half days on the upper Baker. The time consuming scouts require traversing the dry Patagonian shrub steppe and battling vicious horseflies. And if you chose to begin your descent at the nacimiento on Lago Bertrand, 12 kms of swift, azure flatwater must be paddled before reaching the first big drop, E'Nef.

We named this impressive double falls after the cold, glacial Rio Nef, which empties into the Baker from the west

just below the rapid. The 3 meter and 4 meter falls are separated by a turbulent 50 meter pool. Depending on the flow, various routes can be found through both drops. A long pool below E'Nef marks the top of the first canyon.

Scout thoroughly from the bluffs above river left to continue downstream. When hoisting your boat on shore you will leave a lot of plastic on the sharp schist that forms E'Nef and the dark, foreboding canyon walls below. The first two big rapids come in quick succession. Current velocity is deceptive and requires a correct ferry angle upon entrance to the tongue. The rapids have obvious routes but tricky eddy lines and pulsating boils can throw you off course. Once in the juice, hold on! Huge crashing waves and extremely turbulent hydraulics can surf you into gigantic holes. At flows of 30,000 to 40,000 cfs all the holes seemed to be flushing, but if you were to unfortunately find yourself in the depths of a gran hoyo, it would not be fun trying to escape.

A long pool separates the first two rapids from the third drop, which we named Bill Wall Shot. This violent maelstrom is a quantum leap beyond the Wall Shot of Futalufu fame. By cutting hard right to left, you may be able to avoid both the bus-sized entry hole and a major pummeling in the huge reflex waves coming off the wall at the bottom. The alternative is down the center for the BIG ride. While cresting the set of explosive 6 meter high waves, it is quite possible to get surfed into the turbulent right eddy - even though most of the water is flushing to the left. Regardless of which route you choose, it's wild!

One more big rapid remains in the first canyon...Steep Sneakin'. We wimped out and boofed the far right side to avoid a horrendous hole on the left and another in the center...that fed back into the nightmare on the left!

Continuing downstream, a virtually flat, albeit turbu-

THE BAD-ASS BAKER

lent, narrow canyon follows. Clay Wright says that it is "scary fun" to surf the remolinos extremos that surface from the depths below. He field tested the Baker's swirling vortexes, compared them to those on the Rio General in Costa Rica, and concluded that the Baker's last longer and suck deeper!

Puente La Pasarela marks the end of the second canyon. One of the biggest and best surfing waves in Chile is located 500 meters below this bridge. It is an incredible reward for your efforts and comes complete with an auto-return eddy on the right. The wave's oceanic dimensions are sure to lure paddlers to the Baker for future Patagonian rodeo's.

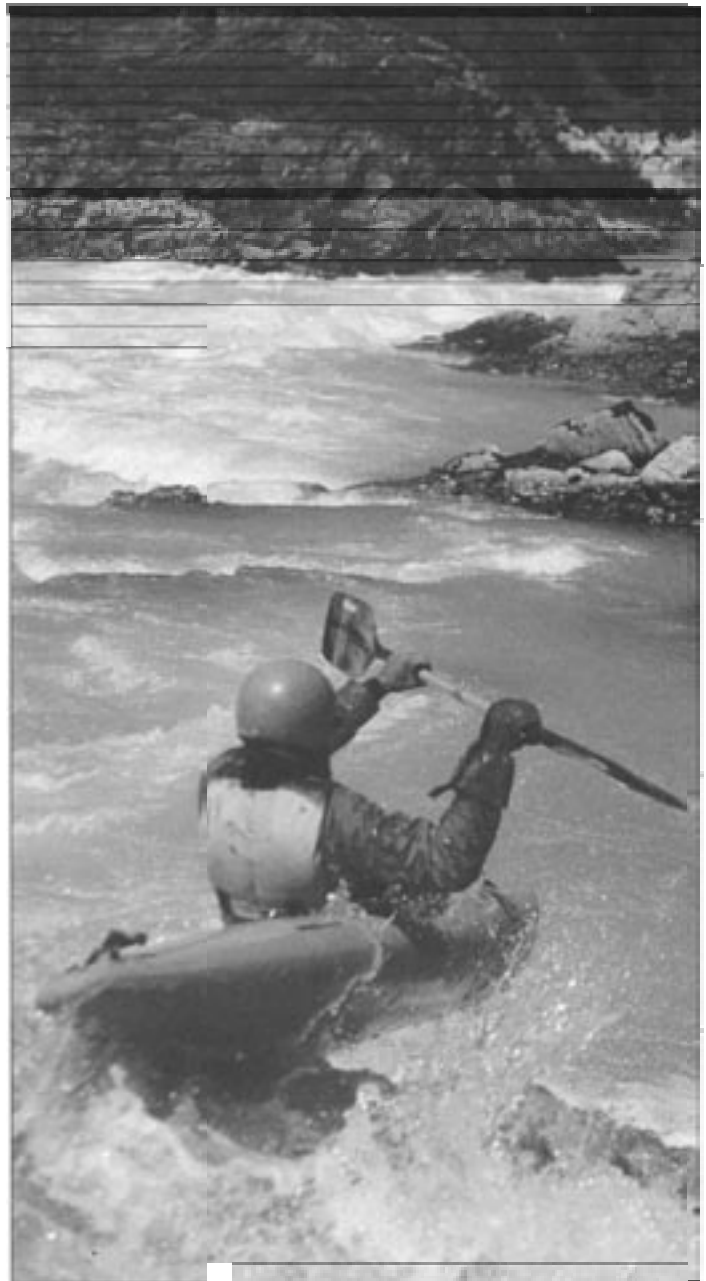
Continuing downstream, the third canyon is an unrunnable class VI portage fest. As noted earlier, Rocket and Chuck actually carried their boats around all of the heinous drops in this gorge. Go check them out on foot if you like, but for convenience, take your boat out of the river a kilometer below the play wave at an old cable crossing.

There are only six runnable rapids on the upper Baker. It is a helluva long way to drive for six rapids, but if you are cruising around central Patagonia and life is getting a little dull, the Baker is a fine place to scare yourself senseless. After a few runs, the intimidation factor may actually diminish to the point where you are actually having fun! If you feel comfortable in the Futaleufu's Throne Room, then you are ready for the Baker.

From Coihaique, drive south on the Carretera Austral 290 kms to Puerto Bertrand. For stunning views, put in on the lake. An alternative egress is 10 kms downstream at a fisherman's pullout along the road. Take out 22 kms downstream from the lake, turning south on an obscure road across from a wood frame house with a rusted brown metal roof. Continue another kilometer down to the river.

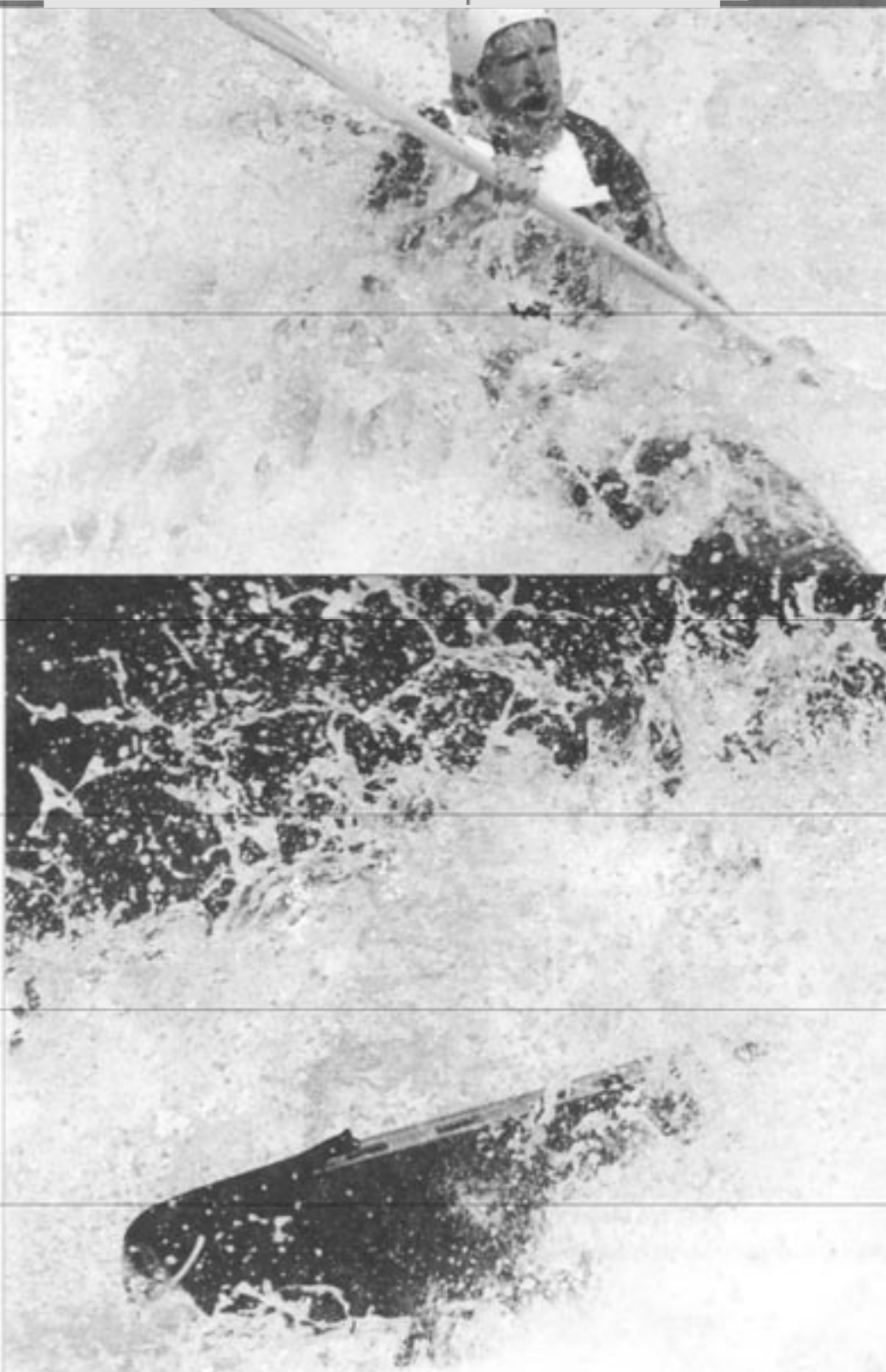
Editors Note: This description was excerpted from John Foss' upcoming book titled, "Chile Whitewater: A Rafting and Kayaking Guide," tentatively scheduled to be published Fall 1996, river gods permitting.

Left Page: Clay Wright entering the right side of E'Nef.
Right: Josh Lowry boofin' Steep Sneakin'.



ANOTHER TRIUMPH

Zbel Captures Gauley Race



Columbus Day Monday, October 9, 1995. A fall high pressure system was giving the Summerville, West Virginia area weather appropriate to the name of the town.

I had rafted the Upper Gauley the day before with some friends and has been overwhelmed by the experience. Even now, 24 hours later, I could still feel the water, powerful and unpredictable. At other times, it was gentle and I felt like I was floating on a cloud. I wanted to stand at the source of the river and feel and smell and taste the mist once more. And so, I drove to the base of the dam.

I noticed a crowd of kayakers gathering in the parking lot. I knew they were kayakers because Mongoose, our raft guide, had pointed them out. Mongoose didn't hold much with kayakers. I guess he felt they were like snakes and he was...well...he was the Mongoose.

I didn't much agree. They looked free to me. Able to go where they wanted without a loud voice in their ear yelling, "Right back", "All full ahead", or Mongoose's favorite, "Paddle, Dammit!". I had envied them their freedom from my seat in the raft.

But they looked different today. They were stretching into strange shapes. Occasionally, one would greet the other with a loud U.S. Marine-like grunt and they would high-five. Many had longer and older boats than I had seen the day before. They were not putting on, either. They just stood and talked and milled around, like they were waiting for something.

"What's happening?" I asked.

"Today is the third Animal Gauley Race." A young man answered. He was tall, lean, and athletic. He had a strange accent. I moved on to another. He was much older. He had an open face, a warm smile, and he looked at my eyes. This one didn't look very athletic or lean, for that matter. That's when I scrutinized the rest of the group and I expected most to be male athletic, like

my tall and lean acquaintance. To my surprise there were women and children and old men in this race!!! Youngsters not old enough to shave were racing men old enough to be their grandfathers and women who could have been their mothers.

"Who are these people?" I asked.

"Some are students, some are raft guides, video boaters, doctors, lawyers, computer programmers, nurses."

"What is this race all about?"

"We put in just downstream and run all the way to just below Sweet's Falls. It's about 8 miles long and it takes about an hour. Then we have a party."

"What about you? Do you race, also?" I asked.

"Of course I do. I won't win. But the fun for me is the challenge of finishing the race."

I listened to the competitor's meeting and walked to the start line with some of the Park Rangers. They explained that the racers started one at a time because there was not enough room on the river for a mass start. I listened as the competitors cheered for each other as they started downriver, one-by-one. There were even canoes!!! Then they were gone and I hurried to get to Sweet's Falls Finish Line.

What a sight it was. The racers who finished were panting and clapping one another on the back. As each racer came into view, all eyes would be on the paddler as he or she ran Sweet's Falls. Several had the misfortune to flip in front of the assembled crowd. Two swam, but their "time" was recorded when their bodies passed the finish line.

There were walkie-talkies at the finish line and people stationed upstream at the major rapids. Word came that one of the racers had withdrawn after the start. He had taken a swim and was safe and unhurt, but he did not want to get a time.

It was quite a party. I overheard everybody talking about this line at Tumblehome or that line at Iron Ring and people were congratulating each other for just finishing. It looked like such fun to me. I would give anything to have the health, skill, and daring to do what those 46 people did.

Later, amid food, beverages, and music, the winners were announced.

All of the competitors applauded the fine work of Donnie Hudspeth, the race organizer, and North American River Runners (NARR), and all the volunteers



who helped at the start and finish, and party. The event, which raises money for the West Virginia River's Coalition, could not have happened without the generous donation of their time.

The event had several important sponsors who donated time, services, product, and/or money. This year's title sponsors were Wendy's of Summersville and Wendy's of Oak Hill. Additionally, the following provided support or major prizes; New Wave Kayaks, Perception Kayaks, Ridge Rider and Blue Ridge Outdoors in Fayetteville, S and R Boardroom, Sidwinder Paddles, Mountain Surf of Friendsville, Md., East-West T-shirt Printing, and, of course, the National Park Service. Whitewater Photography provided photos of all the racers at Pillow Rock.

Left top: Roger Zbel "the Champ", on his way to another 1st overall, Upper Gauley Race 1995. Photo courtesy of Whitewater Photography

Left bottom: John Deardorf on his way to a course record in open canoe, Upper Gauley Race 1995. Photo courtesy of Whitewater Photography


Above: Middy Tilghman, 15 years old, has a hardcore day. Pillow Rock, Upper Gauley Race 1995. Photo courtesy of Whitewater Photography

1995 UPPER GAULEY RACE RESULTS








Place Overall	Name	Time	Class	Place Overall	Name	Time	Class
1	Roger Zbel	45:27	WW	24	Jocelyn Hernreid	55:54	SL
2	Mike Hipsher	46:24	WW	25	Deb Rhule	56:13	SL
3	Steve Kauffman	48:52	WW	26/27	Wayne Amsburg	56:55	SL
4	Clay Wright	50:01	WW	26/27	Jon Nelson	56:55	SL
5	Howard Tidwell	50:26	SL	28	Patrick Henchley	56:56	SL
6	Tracy Clapp	51:25	WW	29	Joe Greiner	56:57	SL
7	Rick Gusic	51:28	SL	30	Shannon Carroll	57:11	SL
8	Dan Brabee	51:44	SL	31	Ryan Bahn	57:21	SL,C1
9	Sherwood Horine	52:21	SL	32	Jeff Knechtel	57:22	SL
10	Middy Tilghman	52:22	WW	33	Brant McLaughlin	57:22	SL
11	Scott Hasson	52:33	WW	34	Katie Neidert	57:29	SL
12	Billy Zolars	52:36	SL	35	Jason Allen	57:37	SL
13	Erie Lindberg	53:11	SL	36	Mary Bethune	57:53	SL
14	Travis Palmer	53:15	SL	37	Trey Marley	57:55	SL
15	Chris Hipgrave	53:42	SL	38	Beau Bethel	58:15	SL
16	Colleen Laffey	54:05	WW	39	Heidi Domeison	60:02	SL,C1,W
17	Chris Emerick	54:16	SL	40	Heather Snow	60:03	SL
18	Donnie Hudspeth	54:25	SL	41	Buffy Bailey	62:05	SL
19	Ken Kruger	54:39	SL	42	Becky Blevins	64:15	SL
20	Tim Kennedy	54:43	SL	43	John Deardorf	66:09	OC-1
21	Carolyn Porter	54:56	WW	44	Larry Napier	66:55	SL
22	Kurt Braunlich	55:27	SL	45	Steve Frazier	68:56	OC-1
23	Kathy Howerton	55:33	WW				

UPPER GAULEY RACE COURSE RECORDS

Wildwater Men's - Fastest Overall
 Roger Zbel, 45:10, 1994
 Wildwater Woman's -
 Colleen Laffey, 54:05, 1995
 Slalom Men's -
 Howard Tidwell, 50:26, 1995
 Slalom Woman's -
 Saskia Johnson, 55:00, 1994
 C-1 Men's -
 Ryan Bahn, 57:21, 1995
 C-1 Woman's -
 Heidi Domeison, 60:02, 1995
 OC-1's Men's -
 John Deardorff, 66:09, 1995

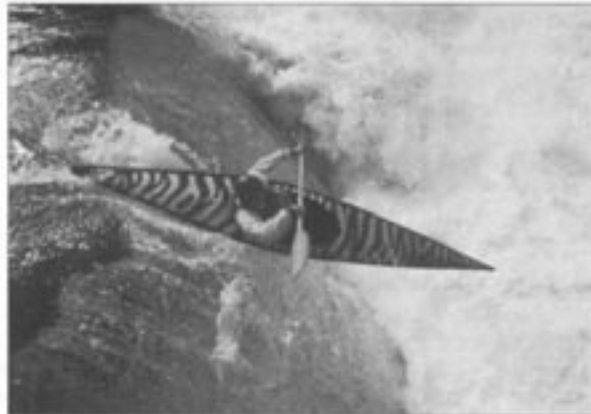
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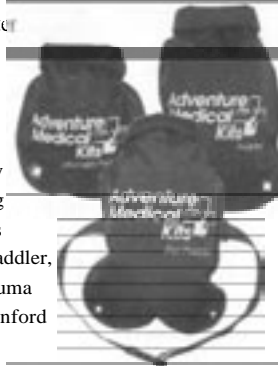
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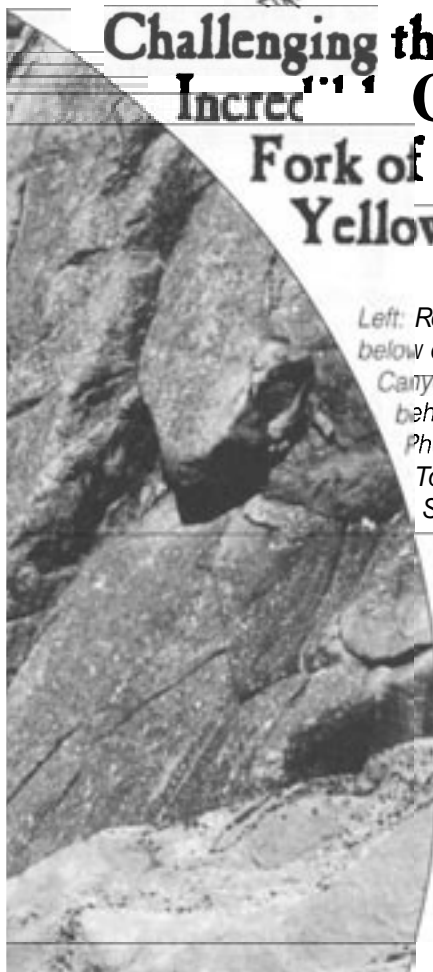
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Challenging the Incredible Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

*Left: Rob Lesser
below drop,
Canyon
behind.
Photo by
Tom
Schibig.*



*Story by
Bob Gedekoh and
Mark White
Photos by Tom Schibig
and Gary Ward*



Challenging the Incredible Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone



AWA Regional Coordinator **Mark White** paddled the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone in 1990. American Whitewater editor **Bob Gedekoh** made the run in 1995. In this story the two combine forces to reveal what it is like to challenge one of the most spectacular, difficult and endangered wilderness rivers in the western United States.

■ *Editor's note: Mark White's account is reproduced in italics. Bob Gedekoh's is in our standard print.*

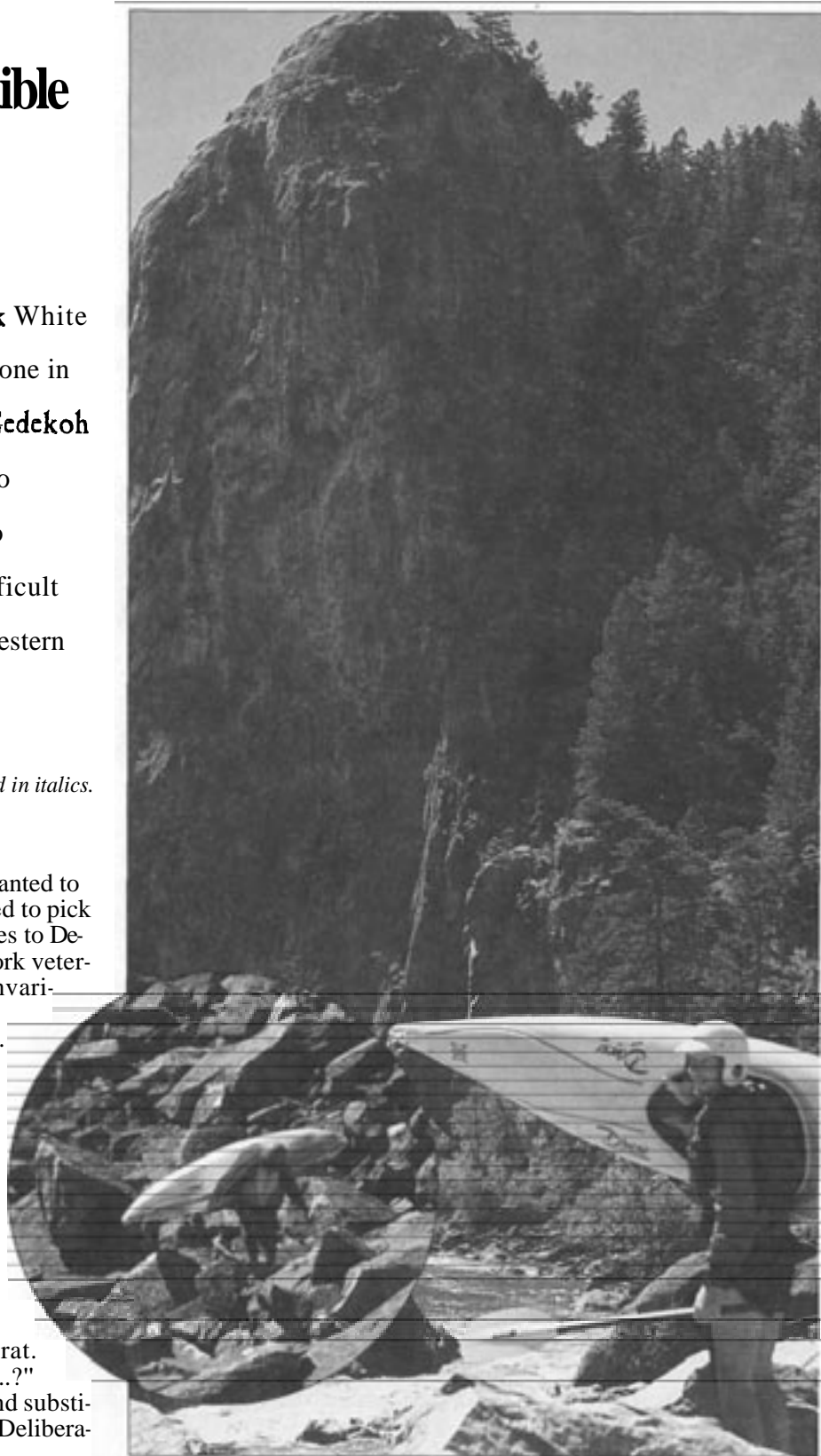
🐾 About the time I decided that I **really** wanted to run the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone, I started to pick up on the subtle... almost subliminal... references to Deliberation Corner and Leap of Faith. Clark's Fork veterans would whisper the names of these rapids, invariably rolling their eyes to the heavens, while exchanging sly, May the Saints Preserve Us looks.

But no one seemed eager to volunteer any hard, cold facts. "You'll see when you get there," one Montana boater told me tersely, as if there were some taboo against discussing Desperation and Leap outside of the sacred Clark's Fork canyon.

"If you can paddle the rest of the river, you can handle them," a kayaker from Wyoming observed solemnly. "In most respects they are easier than a lot of the other rapids on the river," he continued, as if to reassure me.

But I was not reassured. In fact, I smelled a rat. What exactly did he mean by "In most respects...?" And why did my sources occasionally slip up and substitute the words Desperation and Demolition for Deliberation?

It was not until my buddy from Virginia, Gary Ward, and I flew into Boise en route to the Clark's Fork, that I managed, with considerable arm twisting, to unravel the mystery surrounding Deliberation and Leap. I subjected my friend Tim Shanahan, a displaced easterner who had written a brief account of a Clark's Fork expedition for this magazine several years ago, and whitewater legend



Above: Paul Zerkelbach, Clark Fork Carry. Photo by Tom Schibig.
Inset: Paul Kopcynski, Day 2. Photo by Tom Schibig.

Challenging the Incredible Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

Rob Lesser to a cross examination that would have made F. Lee Bailey proud.

This is what I learned. The mandatory moves at Deliberation Corner and Leap of Faith were simple. Each was said to feature a straightforward approach to a ledge that was vaguely described as more than ten but less than twenty feet. The outflow of each was said to be long, but manageable, class IV+. Both rapids could be recognized from above. So what was the big deal?

The big deal was that both Deliberation and Leap were surrounded by shear canyon walls, towering thousands of feet above the river. And each was positioned smack in the middle of sequences of serious class V and, some would say, Class VI whitewater.

The torturous course of the Clark's Fork was defined by these cliffs and, even at low water, my sources told me there wasn't much room for anything but the river at the base of the canyon. Fortunately it was at least theoretically possible to scout, and/or portage, most of the "significant" whitewater.

But not at Deliberation Corner and Leap of Faith. Here the canyon walls reportedly plummeted directly into the water, leaving no reasonable way to portage, or even scout. Boaters who had used ropes and climbing gear to haul their boats part way up the canyon walls, then traversed narrow ledges on the faces of the cliffs, described the experience as "scary... brutal... impractical ... and worse than running the river."

The bottom line was that, for all practical purposes, both Deliberation and Leap had to be run, and they had to be run blind!

Rapids that fall into the Do or Die category have never been my favorites. The more I "need to" do something, the less I "want to." Especially when I can't even see what it is I "need to" do.

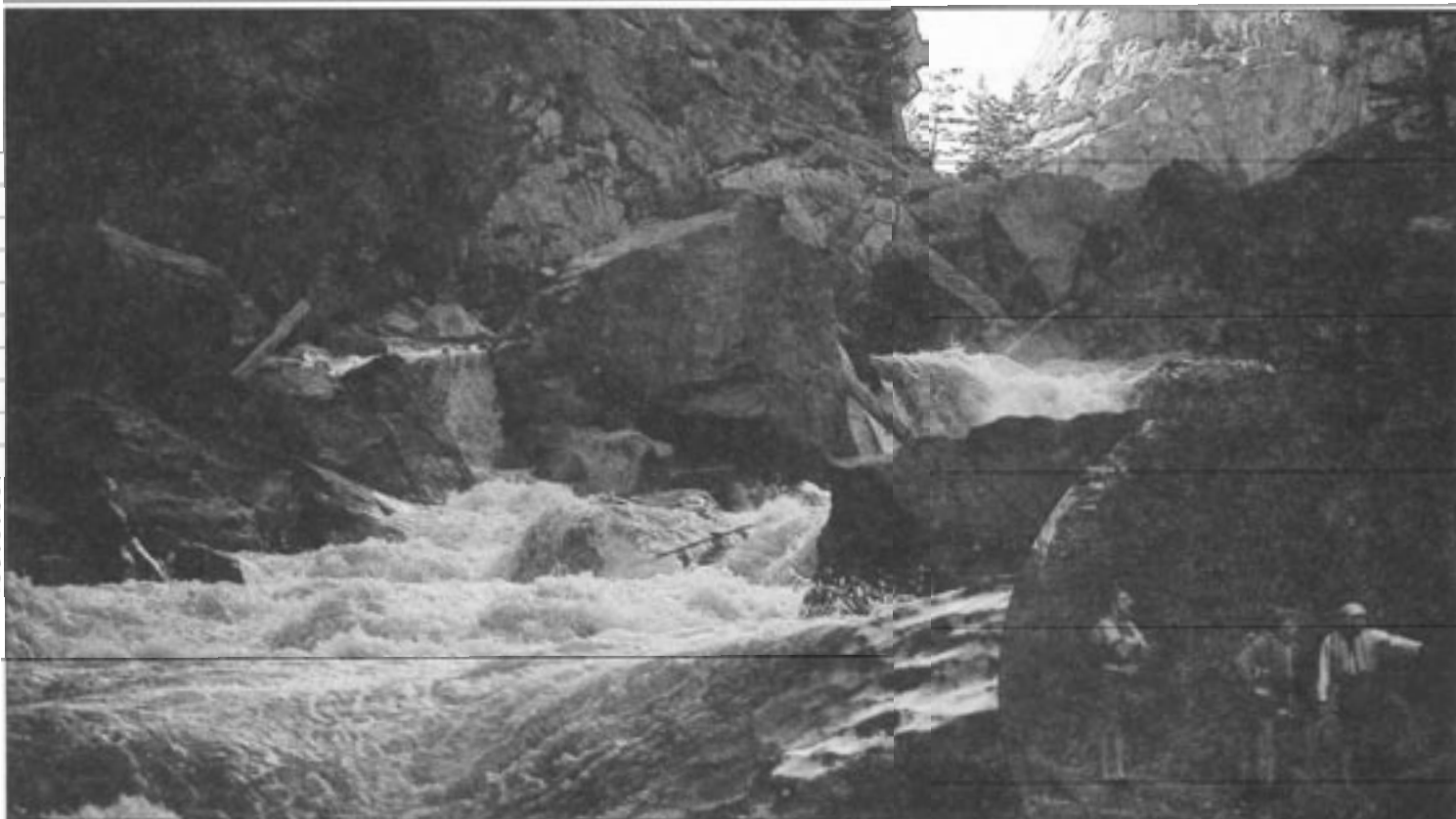
Do or Die Rapids freak me out. And, like a lot of other boaters, when I freak, I'm prone to screw up. That's why Gedekoh's Canon of Whitewater Kayaking is to avoid Do or Die situations.

But there I was, nervously driving through Yellowstone Park from west to east, headed toward the Clark's Fork. About to violate my sacred principle. What brought me to this?

I had been seduced by the mystique of the river. Every Clark's Fork veteran I had ever met had said the same thing. The odyssey through the canyon was one of the most difficult, intense and strenuous things they had ever done. It was also said to be one of the most spectacular and rewarding whitewater wilderness adventures in the United States. Everyone who had paddled the Clark's Fork spoke of the experience with reverence. And they all said, without hesitation, that they would love to do it again.


The more I heard about the Clark's Fork, the more I wanted to do it.

*Below: Paul Zerkelbach, Day 2. Photo by Tom Schibig.
Inset: Rob Lesser holding class. Photo by Tom Schibig*





I knew from experience that every wilderness whitewater river of epic proportion has a steep price of admission. On the Clark's Fork I figured our tickets to ride would most likely be punched at Deliberation Corner and Leap of Faith.

 The Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone originates on the Wyoming/ Montana border just east of Yellowstone National Park. The headwaters are surrounded by such towering peaks as the Thunderer, Windy Mountain, Bear Tooth and Montana's tallest mountain; 12,799 foot Granite Peak. It subsequently flows through a chasm more than 4000 feet deep in the heart of the Beartooth Mountains. The river initially heads southeast, then turns northward to meet the Yellowstone River, which eventually flows into the Missouri

The river was named after Captain William Clark of Lewis and Clark fame. In 1805 they were the first white men to see the river. (The Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone should not be confused with the Clark's Fork River... Alderton Gorge, Class III-IV... located west of Missoula.)

Until the mid 1980's the 21 mile long wilderness class V-VI section of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

Top: Day 1. Rob and Paul. Photo by Tom Schibig.

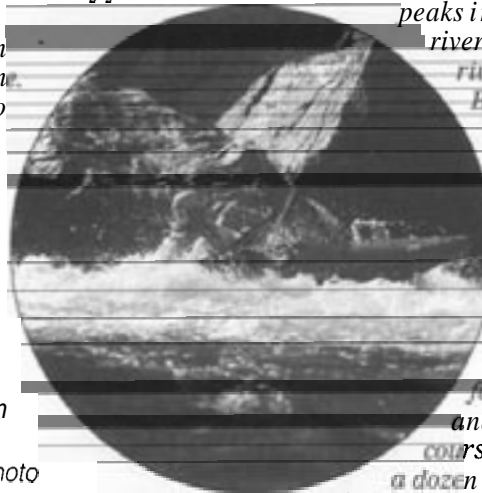
Inset: Rob Lesser on the Clark's Fork. Photo by Tom Schibig.

had never been kayaked. Due to its remote location, inaccessibility, incredible gradient and short season, it remained unchallenged. Then, after scouting the river by air, a party including Kay Swanson, Ron Frye and Roger Hazelwood managed to paddle and portage about two thirds of the canyon- before being forced to abort their expedition.

The first successful top to bottom descent of the Clark's Fork was accomplished in 1984 by the talented and daring team of Rob Lesser, John Wasson, Doug Tompkins, Reg Lake and Yvon Chouinard. Chouinard subsequently described their epic adventure in *First Descents: In Search of Wild Rivers*. Prior to our trip in 1990 the Clark's Fork had only been run by a handful of parties, in varying degrees of desperation.

The Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone typically peaks in June near 8,000 cfs. To attempt the river at these levels would be insane. The river dries to a trickle by mid-autumn. Because the flow is so unpredictable on this undammed, high altitude river, catching the 'window' for ideal kayaking (1,000- 1,200 cfs) is a game of chance. In the late summer of 1990 Roy Piskadlo, Larry Dunn and I placed our bets and made the drive from Salt Lake City.

At the put-in, some twenty miles southeast of Cooke City, Montana, we found a clear, shallow river. Roy, Larry and I planned to meet a few cohorts. Of course, friends had invited friends and soon a dozen kayakers were sharing coffee, stories and anticipation.



Challenging the Incredible Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

"This is excellent," I thought. "The beauty, the crystalline water and the rapids downstream." These would not be easy class III rapids with names like Satan's Steamcleaner. This would be no leisurely float trip. The Clark's Fork would demand decisive and clear-headed scouting and river running. It would be a high stakes game of skill and nerve. Class V+, indeed. I hoped we were up to the challenge. We would soon find out.

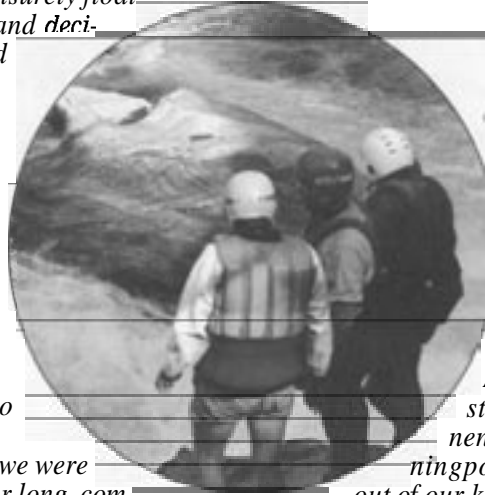
The first cascade of significance was a boulder-choked class V with only one tenuous route. A couple of us took the challenge and narrowly avoided vertical pins. The remainder of the party took note of this and wisely chose to portage.

A hundred yards downstream we were back on the bank, scouting another long, complex drop. My friend Paul Zirkelbach, running probe, did fine until he was nearly at the bottom. Then the deceptively powerful current flipped and pinned him against some partially submerged boulders and the overhanging right wall. There was no way we could get to him; we could only offer our best wishes. After a few tense moments Paul wiggled free. We breathed a collective sigh of relief, the first of many.

With considerable trepidation the rest of us paddled the rapid, with variable success. At this point one paddler decided that he had seen enough, shouldered his boat and headed up the steep incline back to his car. Had he continued much further, his retreat would not have been easy one.

Inset: Rob, Doug, and Paul scouting, Day 1. Photo by Tom Schibig.

Bottom: Rob Lesser. Photo by Tom Schibig.



The canyon began to close in around us. The imposing granite walls grew higher and higher and the beauty of the place was strangely intimidating. Monstrous slabs of water-polished granite constricted the river. Lush shrouds of moss clung to the canyon walls, casting emerald reflections in the pools below.

Midway through the first afternoon we approached a thunderous rapid. A dense mist hung in the air from the maelstrom downstream. John Jaycox, a prominent Colorado kayak builder, and I were running point. We pulled into a micro eddy, climbed out of our kayaks and took a peek. What we saw commanded respect. The river squeezed into a steep tongue replete with huge, exploding waves, then spilled into a gigantic wall to wall hole created by a garage-sized rock.

Below the hole the river twisted out of view, but it was apparent that it continued to plunge precipitously. And there were no portage routes at river level; the river was bounded by sheer cliffs.

We tentatively climbed back into our boats.

"You should go first, John, since you have the biggest boat," I suggested.

"No way," he replied. "You go first and I'll follow."

We continued bobbing around in the eddy until Paul arrived. Paul had paddled the Clark's Fork the year before. He climbed out of his boat, surveyed the situation and





Frowned.

"Don't do it!" he yelled from the shore. "Get out of your boats!"

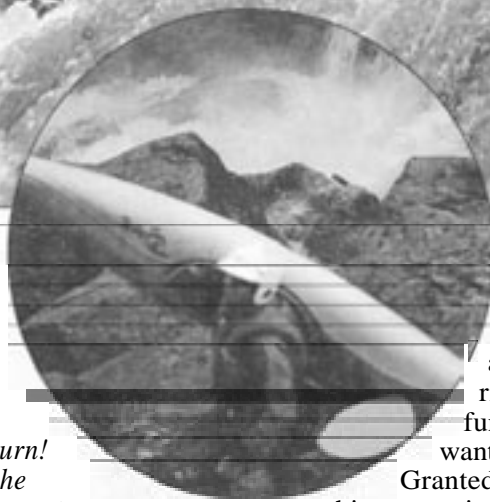
We had inadvertently paddled beyond the best spot to start what has come to be appropriately known as the Green Monster Portage. In fact, we had nearly paddled past the Point of No Return! We worked our way back upstream on the banks, ditched our boats and scouted the portage.

The best route necessitated a tough quarter mile scramble up a steep, mossy incline, a one mile traverse through a dense pine forest above the cliffs, followed by a precipitous descent back to the river.

Heading back to get our kayaks, we paused to peer over the edge. Four hundred feet below the Clark's Fork was a whitewater hell, the three-quarter mile-long Corral Creek Strainer. Water seethed and plunged through a series of rock and log jams, sometimes disappearing completely beneath the rubble. There were no banks, no eddies and no still water. It was a sobering sight. To run it would have been certain death.

"I still think you should have gone first," I said to John with a deadpan grin.

During the past five years the Clark's Fork has become increasingly popular with the cadre of experts



who live in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho. Accomplished boaters including Aurele LaMontagne, Greg Goodyear, Paul Kopczynski and Tom Schibig have explored the river. As a consequence a sizeable fund of knowledge has accumulated. I wanted to tap into that information.

Granted, pioneering a tough new whitewater river can be exciting and rewarding, but there is something to be said for waiting a few years, so that others can work out the gruesome details.

Like how to identify the class V and VI rapids before you paddle into them. And how to portage them most easily.

Probably no one has done more to simplify running the Clark's Fork than Guy Erb, who has tackled it a number of times. When I started to make telephone inquiries about the Clark's Fork several months before we headed west, every one of my contacts pointed me in Guy's direction.

When I called him in Bozeman, he seemed likeable

Top: Doug - day 2 rapid. Photo by Tom Schibig.

Inset: Paul Zerkelbach. Photo by Tom Schibig.

and level headed. He cheerfully mailed me a detailed five page outline he had prepared, which included the names and descriptions of the major rapids and the location of the mandatory portages and promising campsites. Guy had even discovered a couple of precipitous "trails" that led from the river to the rim of the canyon.

I scrutinized Guy's outline carefully. It contained a wealth of information, but it also made it clear that paddling the Clark's Fork would be no Sunday School picnic. I realized that Gary and I would be more likely to have a good time and, more importantly, survive the run, if we could talk Guy into going with us.

After several phone calls I managed to get adopted. The dates were set, in early August we were to rendezvous with Mr. Erb and his paddling buddies at the put-in.

Gary and I were the first to arrive at the bridge. I told Gary I hoped there would be at least one or two shaky looking out of shape individuals in our party; I had no desire to be the weak link. Soon we were joined by nearly a dozen other boaters, including Guy. I scrutinized the crowd and shook my head in dismay. It looked like a casting call for a Solarflex commercial!

"Oh, well," I whispered to Gary. "So much the better to pry us off the rocks."

There were a couple of familiar faces in the crowd. Mouse Prentiss, who used to live and paddle back east. And Bozo Cardozo, who paddles out of Ketchum, Idaho.

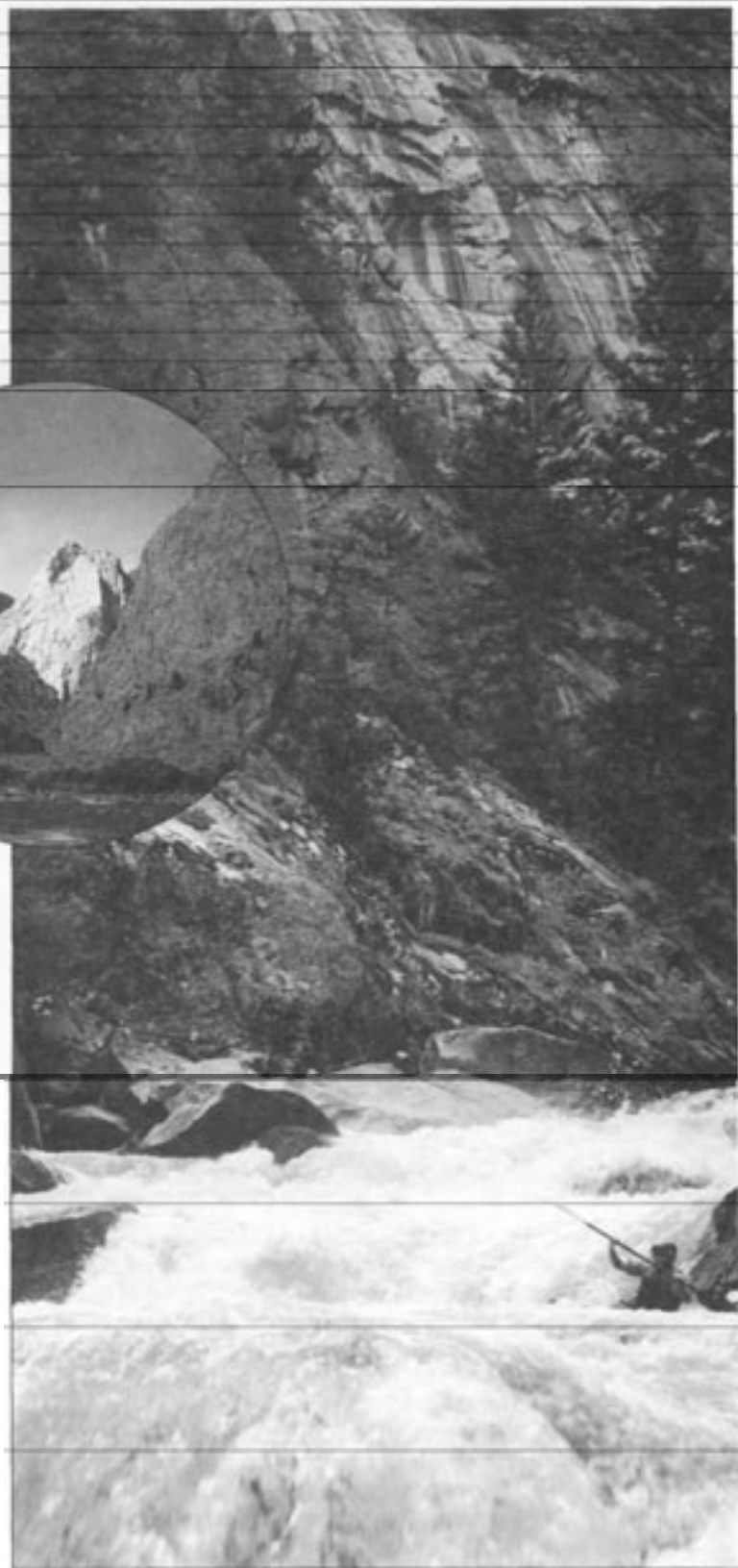
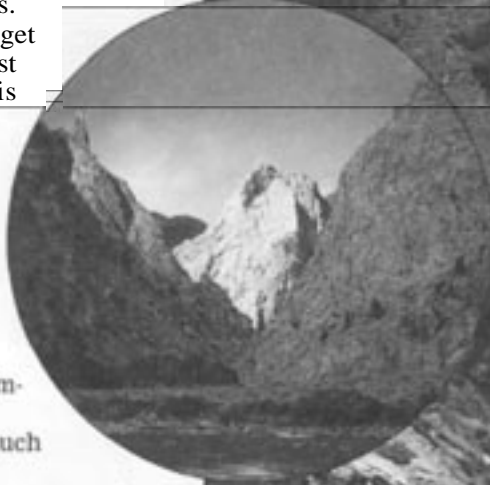
I was really glad that Bozo was coming along. In 1994 I followed him down the North Fork of the Payette. A highly respected hair boater with great safety and river sense, Bozo doesn't just focus on the river, he pays attention to his companions. Working as a guide for a helicopter skiing operation has apparently given him a sixth sense about people. He seems to know when one of his companions is starting to freak, and then he is there, offering a few calming words of quiet encouragement. Bozo is just plain good karma.

The first difficult section of the Clark's Fork, which ends with the Green Monster Portage, has been named the Honeymoon Canyon. Perhaps this is because this mini canyon offers a tantalizing taste of the whitewater delights to come. Another view is that the canyon is so named because it terminates with the Green Monster. Once you embark upon this demanding and frustrating portage, the honeymoon is certainly over.

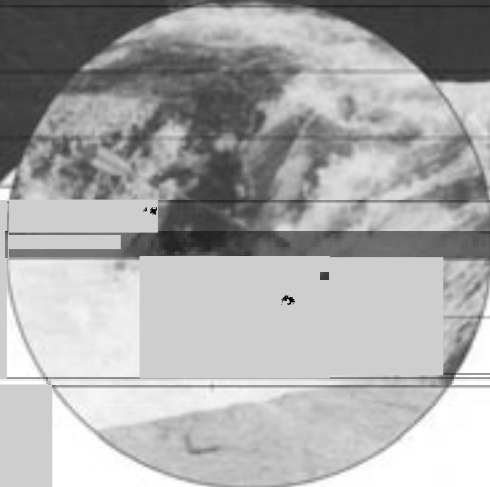
The rapids in the Honeymoon Canyon bear the monikers of characters in the old Jackie Gleason Honeymooner's show. Class IV Alice featured a vicious siphon on river right, which Guy's outline referred to as "the toilet bowl." At "class IV+" Ralph we punched a ominous hole and rode the boil from left to right. Gary and I agreed that Ralph felt like a class V.

I did a tail stand and Gary smashed into the right hand wall at Ed Norton, a rapid that would have been difficult to portage.

Not far below Ed, Beartooth Creek tumbled down a thirty plus foot slide into the Clark's Fork. I was content



*Inset: Float Out- Clark's Fork. Photo by Tom Schibig.
Above: Doug Ammons, Day 2. Photo by Tom Schibig.*



to admire this stunning falls from below, but Hairy Gary, as he is known in Virginia, hauled his boat up the steep embankment and took the plunge. He landed at the bottom, unscathed and non-plussed, in spite of the fact that, for reasons that were clear to neither of us, his boat did a swift 360 degree spin two thirds of the way down the slide.

After several class III drops and Honeymoon Falls, we paddled up to class V Big Nasty. Guy Erb's outline suggested that this rapid could be a measuring stick for what was to come. "If you carry this one you will probably be carrying most of the class V drops below." Grumbling about the tendency of some hair boaters to under-rate rapids, I portaged.

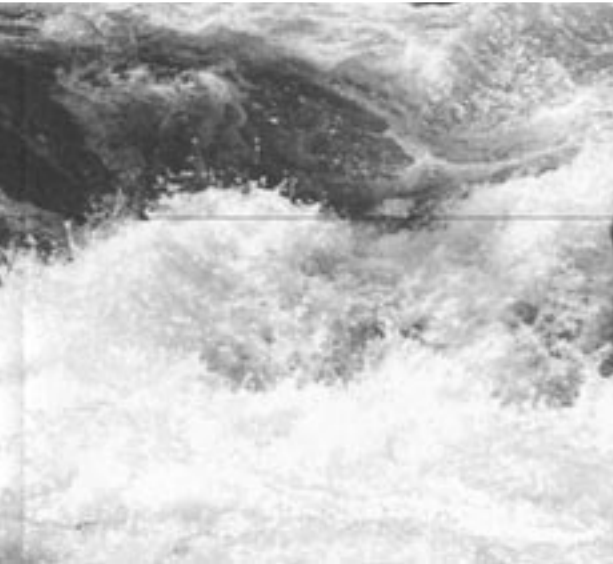
After portaging Trixie, a severely undercut class V, we tackled Crandall Creek Rapid and Zoom Boom to the Moon. The whitewater raged on downstream, but Guy emphatically waved us into an eddy at the base of a gully on river right. It was time to face the Green Monster.

Someone jokingly suggested that we continue down-

Above: Rob in one on Hymal. Photo by Tom Schibig.

Above inset: Punch that sucker! Photo by Gary Ward.

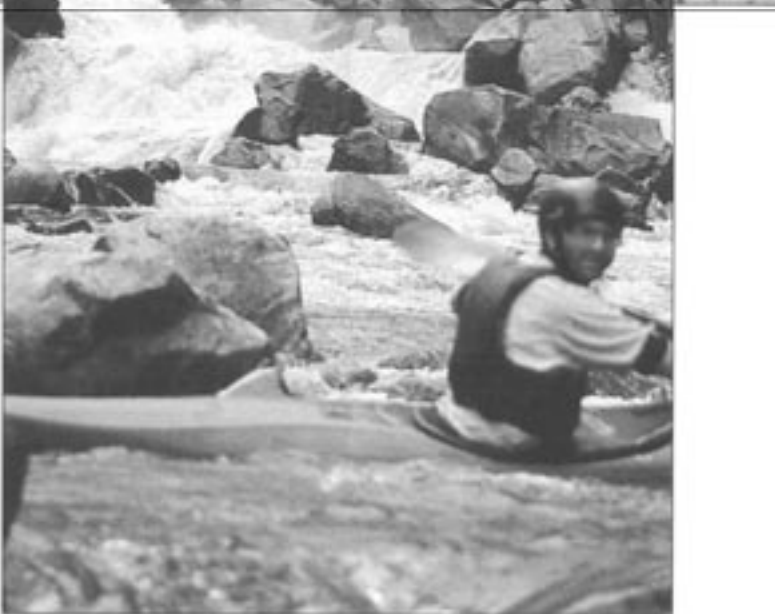
Right inset: Doug Ammons between portages near Sunlight Falls. Photo by Tom Schibig.



stream a bit further, but when I saw Bozo shoulder his boat and start up the ravine, it was enough for me. I grabbed my boat and followed in dogged pursuit, determined to defend the honor of eastern boaters, at least on the portage trail, if not on the water.

Judicious portaging must be a fact of life on tough inaccessible rivers like the Clark's Fork, where a serious injury or loss of equipment would be catastrophic. Although many of the class V+ drops on the river have reportedly been run by different individuals at different times at different levels, most parties average fifteen to twenty carries. Many of these portages are short and easy and can be accomplished at river level. But several, like the Green Monster, require circumventing long unrunnable cataracts high on the canyon walls.

These portages are grueling and time consuming. It took more than an hour and a half to whip the Green Monster. But they are rewarding as well, offering awesome views of canyon and river, raging far below.



We made camp just below the Green Monster Portage, having covered only five miles since our noon put-in. As Larry Dunn, a National Weather Service employee, predicted, we were treated to evening showers. Sitting there in my pathetically wet paddling gear, I asked myself why I hadn't brought a tent, bivy sac or even a ground cloth. Maybe I craved an epic, or was so tough that a few cold, wet nights would be a cinch. Perhaps I was just foolish.

When the clouds finally wrung themselves out, we started a stubborn, smoldering fire. I had long since devoured my day's allotment of fig newtons, so I sat forlornly, watching the Coloradans dining on pork chops, hot soup and chocolate bars.

The next morning dawned cold and grey. I curled up in my damp bag, trying to ignore the biting chill outside my cocoon and wondering, once again, why I had left my perfectly good tent at home.

When I finally emerged I found the Coloradans enjoying hot coffee and Danish rolls by a roaring fire. I nudged my way into the circle, kneeling as close to the blaze as I dared, while wolfing down a few more soggy fig newtons.

During the night the river had swollen and now it was running a muddy brown. It seemed out of place amidst the verdant pines and moss. A southern Utah backdrop of pale red sandstone would have been more appropriate.

The first four miles out of camp featured flat water (20 feet/mile) flowing through magnificent surroundings. This portion of the canyon looked like Yosemite, with enormous granite domes rising up from the valley floor. When we stopped at a small side stream for water I spotted a set of bear prints the size of pie tins. The bear, possibly even a grizzly, might have been there two minutes or two days before our arrival. At any rate, I was gone in ten seconds.

The afternoon was packed with an overwhelming parade of fantastic scenery, portages, class V and class VI rapids. Remembering our close call above the Green Monster, we approached the blind drops with considerable apprehension. Halfway through one long, complex rapid, the river twisted completely out of sight. Scouting verified what we suspected... a potential deathtrap downstream. And so we embarked on another quarter mile carry.

In our determination to travel fast and light, my buddy Roy and I had foolishly decided to run the Clark's Fork in wimpy nylon mesh shoes which offered no ankle support. The soles were paper thin and virtually without traction. Our toes had torn through during the first portage. As a consequence we were as awkward as seals on land. And so, like seals, we tried to stick to the water, avoiding portages by staying in our boats as much as possible.

That night we competitively compared the damage done to our feet. I suspect it was self-inflicted, by Roy won by virtue of a missing toenail.

That day we covered an additional eight miles, bringing our total to thirteen. Paul predicted, mistakenly, that the next day would be our easiest. With the promise of "only a few easy portages tomorrow" the Coloradans lightened their loads by giving away their extra food. Good Samaritans to the end, Roy and I obliged them by shamelessly gorging on the handouts.



Above inset: A vertical stern pin on the Clark's Fork...one of two close calls. Photo by Gary Ward.

Above: Day 2 Paul Kopcynski. Photo by Tom Schibig.

Challenging the Incredible Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

Anyone who tells you that running the Clark's Fork is no big deal is telling you a whopper. In the most intense six mile long section of the canyon, known as The Box, the river drops at an average gradient of 200 feet/ mile. In the course of one very extreme mile it drops more than 300 feet. When one considers the isolation and volume of the river, these gradients are nothing to scoff at.

Small wonder that Cassady, Cross and Calhoun state unequivocally in their 600 page guide that the Clark's Fork contains "the most difficult whitewater in this book." (Western Whitewater: From the Rockies to the Pacific, North Fork Press.)

During the next two days we negotiated an endless parade of class IV, V and VI rapids in a setting that defies description. Everything about the Clark's Fork experience is so intense and extreme that sensory overload is inevitable. So is exhaustion, both physical and mental.

I have no idea how many rapids I portaged, much less how many I scouted. I have no idea how many rapids I ran. I know I portaged some rapids that I probably could have paddled. And I know I paddled some rapids that I probably should have portaged. Some of the other kayakers in our group, including Bozo, his paddling partner, Irv Byers, and my friend, Gary Ward, tackled several class V+ rapids that I would never have attempted. But, to be honest, they are far better boaters than I will ever be.

The Clark's Fork demands daring, caution, nerve, patience, strength, bravado, hubris, decisiveness and humility. Most of all it demands, and deserves, respect.

Our expedition through the Clark's Fork canyon was a roller coaster ride of exhilaration, fear, doubt, confidence, pride, embarrassment and amazement. Through all this everyone remained remarkably good humored.

There is a whole lot more difficult whitewater on the Clark's Fork than I expected after our first day on the river. The rapids in the Honeymoon Canyon are short and discrete, but those further downstream in the meat of the Box are long, continuous and complex.

This point was driven home at the Upper and Lower Snowshoe Rapids, class IV+ sequences that go on forever. Sometimes we played follow the leader; sometimes we were able to scout from eddies. But lots of times we had to scout from shore.

The structure of the river bed is jagged and there are plenty of nasty undercuts.

There are also a lot of ledges and pourovers that generate mean holes. So discovered Patrick, a ballsy, hot paddler from Montana, at a rapid named the Snolieguster. Drawn back into the recycle at the base of a constricted twelve foot ledge, midway through this complex class V+, he doggedly side surfed for several minutes while those on shore tried to toss him a rope.

Long after it became apparent that he would never escape the maw in his boat, he accepted the inevitable and abandoned ship. Then he was drawn back under the ledge several times and I began to fear that the Saga of Patrick in the Snolieguster was not going to have a happy ending. Finally he surfaced near the edge of the tenacious backwash and managed to snatch a rope.

By the time he was towed to the rocky bank he was one whipped pup. But Patrick still had a game face and a

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few minutes later he was back in his kayak, confidently and cheerfully paddling more class V.

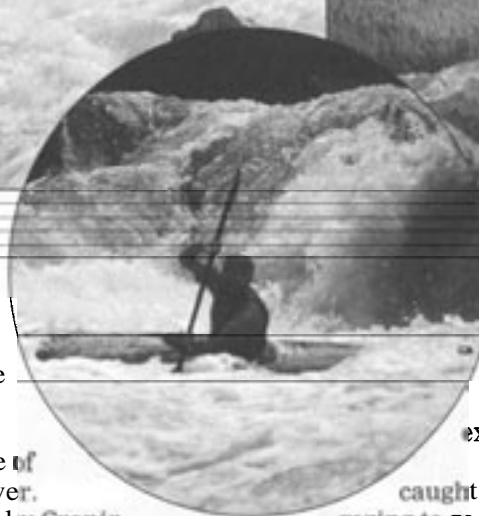
If I had taken the beating he endured I would have wrapped myself around the trunk of the nearest pine and it would have taken five guys with pry bars to pull me loose!

Patrick's scary hole ride was one of two close calls I witnessed on the river.

On our final day on the river Packy Cronin, who, incidentally, designed the graphic for the Clark's Fork Tee shirt currently being sold to raise funds to protect the watershed, nearly fell victim to a treacherous pin. You would think that the Clark's Fork would be more appreciative!

This near disaster occurred at a non-descript, but nonetheless, tumultuous slide. Several of us decided to scout this drop from river right, even though, from above, it looked harmless. From shore we could see that the rapid was a lot more hazardous than it looked. "Boy, if you fall into that slot in the middle, you'll get pinned for sure," Gary observed.

The words were no sooner out of his mouth that Packy rocketed over the lip, oblivious to the peril. His subsequent stern pin lasted for several minutes. Fortunately the water billowing over his back formed an air



pocket in front of his face. Although he was only about ten feet off shore, the current was extremely swift and our efforts to reach him were futile. Packy maintained his cool in the face of what must have been a terrifying situation, and he finally managed to extract himself from the entrapment.

And, like Patrick, as soon as he caught his breath he was back in his boat and ready to go. Take note, Pardner. These western whitewater cowboys have a lot of guts!

Well, I have guts too. But mine were getting pretty twisted up by all the excitement. By this it was apparent that the Clark's Fork was a river of considerable consequence. Every time we stopped to scout I nervously pulled Guy Erb's outline from my drybag to monitor our progress. Specifically, I wanted to know just how far it was to Deliberation Corner and Leap of Faith.

Bozo thought this was very amusing. He claimed he never relies on written guides to rivers, that he finds it more relaxing to just take the rapids as they come. He never seemed to be the least bit nervous. I guess this is Zen boating.

I, on the other hand, was apparently looking a trifle stone faced.

"Come on, Bob. Smile a little!" Bozo demanded on several occasions.

I replied that I'd be grinning from ear to ear once we got past Deliberation and Leap.

I sure wasn't grinning much above the crux move at Deliberation. This blind plunge down a slot and over a fifteen foot falls lies near the bottom of a long class V++ train of powerful ledge holes. While most of us portaged

Above: Day 2. Photo by Tom Schibig.

Inset: Doug in Day 2 Rapid. Photo by Tom Schibig.

Challenging the Incredible Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

as far as we could on river right, a few of the real daredevils tackled a couple of the ledges before shouldering their kayaks. Unfortunately, as I had previously ascertained, the crux move could not be carried at river level. And the dangerous portage up and around the cliffs would clearly have taken two or three hours.

It was not possible to see the small "pool" at the bottom of the crux from our vantage point, but those who had survived Deliberation before warned that it was turbulent and that the current tended to draw unwary boaters back under the ledge. They also added that there was a bony class IV rapid just downstream. As if that were not enough, they announced that if you boofed too far right you might piton, whereas if you drifted too far left, you might fall victim to a sticky oblique hydraulic.

We soon had reason to take these warnings seriously; we heard a loud "thunk" when one boater disappeared over the edge, and we glimpsed the bow of another's boat backending through the air seconds after he took the plunge.

I looked at Gary and he looked at me.

"What do you think?" he asked with a grimace.

I arched my neck and scanned the granite cliff, towering over us like the wall of an impregnable fortress. Then I watched two more westerners gamely disappear over the edge.

"I think we're going to have to do it. When you run with the big dogs, you can't pee like a puppy," I finally replied. "But I think you should go first," I added cagily. "You have the bigger boat."

"We're both paddling Corsica Matrices," Gary observed dryly.

"Yeah... But your's looks bigger," I winked.

And so noble Gary climbed into his kayak and vanished. Once again age and treachery had triumphed over youth and courage.

But I wasn't far behind.

Really. I wasn't.

As luck would have it, we both had picture perfect landings.

On the third day we hit the river not long after daybreak. We wanted to make sure we would be off by day's end. It was still cold and the river had risen again overnight. We estimated the flow to be 2000 cfs, far more than any previous group had experienced.

Well into the afternoon we encountered a house-sized rock that had toppled into the river bed. It spanned the entire river channel, but on river left there was a three inch air space between the surface and the rock. We toyed with the idea offloating under the rock upside down, then thought better of it and portaged. Later I learned that at lower flows it is possible to paddle through this tunnel and

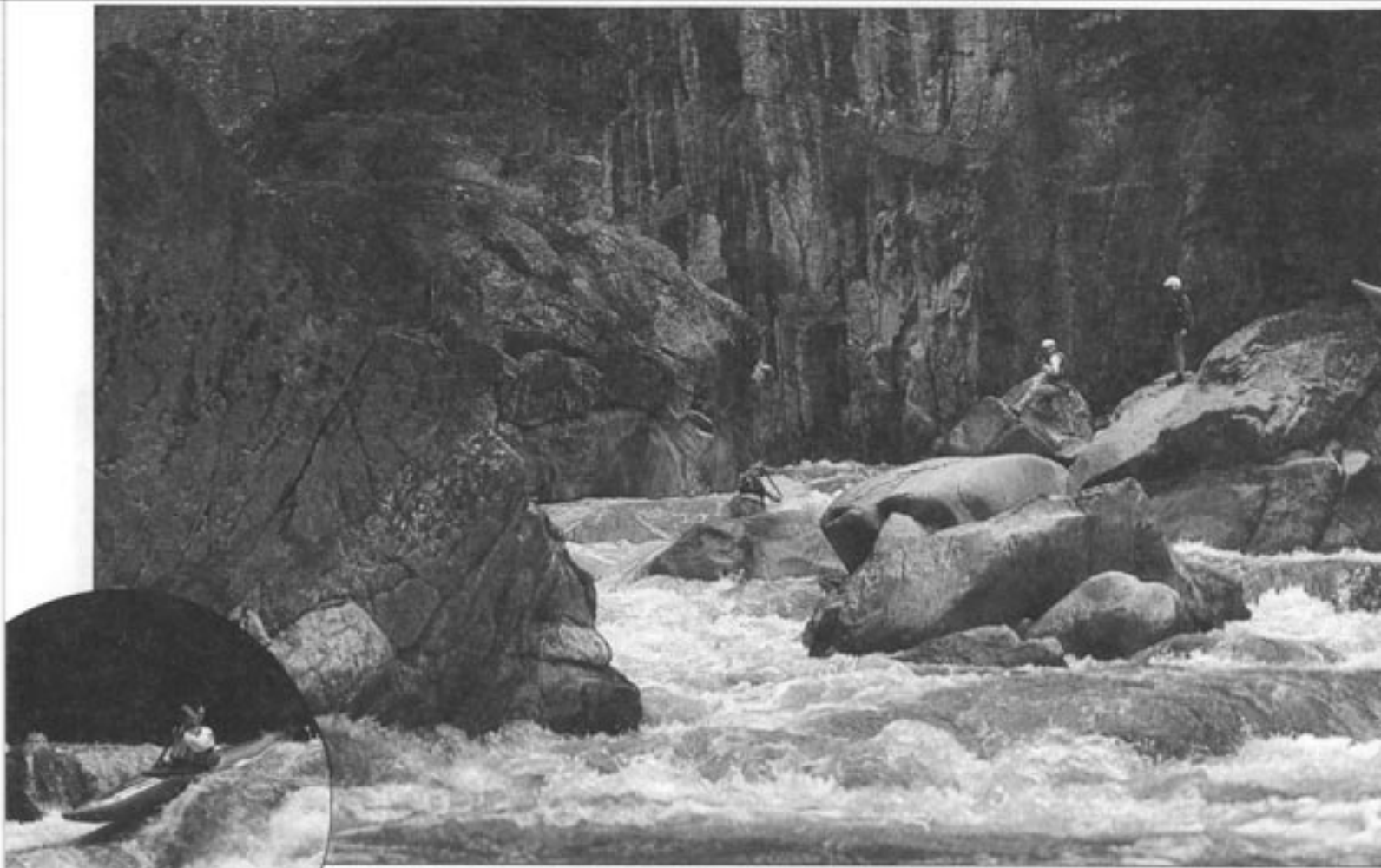


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that it is the approach to what is now called Leap of Faith.

We got back in the water but fifty yards downstream we were portaging again... around a blind drop followed by an acute bend in the river. To circumnavigate this mess (The Leap) we were forced to climb high. Very high. Eventually we had to use our throw ropes to haul our kayaks up the cliff: It got worse.

To continue the portage we had to traverse a long narrow ledge on a vertical face. A heavy boat and four hundred feet of nothing but air between me and the river gave me an uneasy feeling that I will never outlive. I even considered climbing back down to the water; surely it would be better to drown than to be turned into a pancake by a screaming fall.

But we finished the traverse without mishap and started to descend to the river. We found a narrow gully and we lowered our boats, one by one. It took three full rope lengths to span the distance. Those on the receiving end at the bottom of the gully repeatedly had to dive for cover as they were bombarded by dislodged boulders cascading down the pipeline.

The Leap of Faith seemed a lot less intimidating to me than Deliberation Corner. The crux move was just as blind, but far less water was cascading through the slot of choice. Besides, I was getting too tired to worry. I

told Gary, "What the hell. We survived one. Most likely we'll survive the other."

As I dropped over the lip I boofed to the left, exactly as I had been instructed. My landing was amazingly soft. Someone strategically positioned in small pool directed me to river left. I circumvented a gigantic slab of rock, then turned downstream into a long, friendly class IV flush. By the time I reached the bottom I had a big smile on my face. Now I was having fun.

Having conquered Deliberation and Leap, I figured I had the Clark's Fork whipped. True, there were a number of difficult rapids ahead, but at least they could all be portaged. I started to get a little cocky. To push my limits a little. I was cruising for a bruising.

My comeuppance came just beyond the last big portage, an exhausting scramble around a cataract named the Second Sunlight Strainer. After climbing back into our boats we paddled a short distance and came up on what appeared, from above, to be a sizeable but straight-forward slide. Gary and several of the others climbed onto the rocks on river right to scout, but two other kayakers, who had run the Clark's Fork before, charged

Top: Rob on drop in Corsica #2. Photo by Tom Schibig.
Inset: Day 2 Doug Ammons paddling. Photo by Tom Schibig.



Challenging the Incredible Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

right into it. Once they dropped over the horizon I could not see their lines.

Sure, the prudent thing would have been to scout. But I was tired and hot and stupid and from where I was sitting the rapid looked just like the Particle Accelerator on the Cheat. To hell with scouting, I said to myself. You know how to do this... just take it from left to right.

Even now I don't know exactly what I did wrong. I damned sure didn't do anything right. Midway down the sluice my boat dove like a torpedo, drawn down by the fierce current into some deep, horrible cauldron. I was not far behind. I managed what should have been impossible- a full blown mystery move in a Corsica Matrix!

The water was incredibly-violent and... yes... you've all heard this before... it sucked me right out of the boat!


Really! It did!

At any rate the flush at the bottom was a lovely place for a Sunday afternoon swim. In fact, it was probably the most spectacular swimmin' hole on the entire river! On river right Sunlight and Dead Indian Creeks cascaded hundreds of feet, side by side, into the Clark's Fork. Brilliant rainbows arched across the face of these magnificent falls, framed with a backdrop of shining granite, deep green pines and a crystalline blue sky.

A fellow couldn't ask for a nicer place than the Clark's Fork to dine on crow and humble pie. Believe me, there is plenty to go around. I certainly got my fill.

But would I go back for a second helping?

Damned right, I would!

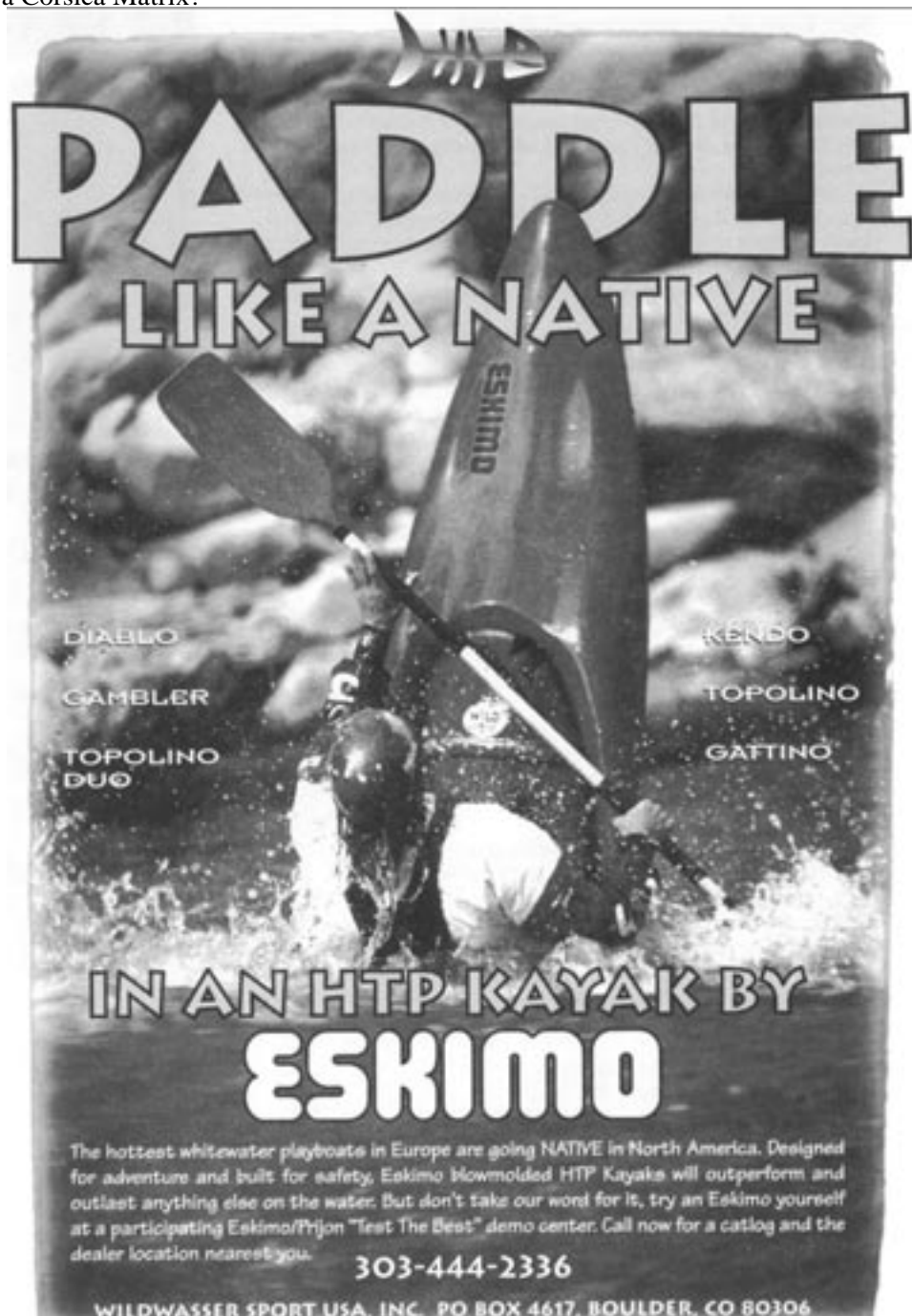
 The sheer walls of the canyon begrudgingly gave way to pine covered mountains. Soon gentle hillsides and prairie bluffs, covered with blond grasses and cacti, took their place. A powerful wind was blowing up the river. Over the years it had turned the riverside trees into grotesque living sculptures.

There were still a number of rapids, but they were long, playful class III-IV, unlike the horrendous cascades above.

The shadows were long by the time we reached the take-out and millions of voracious mosquitoes seemed to have anticipated our arrival. We celebrated with a warm beer from Tim Shanahan's van and passed around a tube of gardenia scented bug lotion.

After a midnight feast at a Cody, Wyoming truck stop, we aimed our car toward Salt Lake City. Roy was particularly relieved to escape the stares and glares of the redneck truckers and cowboys, who were quite intrigued by his hot pink jogging suit, sandals and floral fragrance.

Ten hours later we rolled into Salt Lake like Zombies, just in time for work. Before I knew it I was back at the office in a suit and a tie, and the Clark's Fork was just an intense, but happy, memory.



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The Future of the Clarks Fork

Canadian-based company Noranda has found mega gold deposits in the Fisher Creek drainage, near the headwaters of the Clarks Fork. This sensitive area lies in mountainous terrain two miles from Yellowstone National Park and borders on the Absarokee-Beartooth Wilderness. It sits at the headwaters of three drainages: Montana's Stillwater, the Clarks Fork, and Soda Butte Creek which flows through the Park.

This is one of the biggest river issues of the day. Besides making the #1 spot on American River's "Most Endangered," and AWA's "Top 40" rivers lists for 1995, the Clarks Fork has also attracted attention and personal visits from President Clinton, the World Heritage Association, and the governors of Montana and Wyoming.

Noranda plans to process 1,200-1,500 tons of rock per day for 10 to 15 years. The rock is high in acid forming sulfides which, when exposed to air and water, produce sulfuric acid. Both the Cheat Canyon today, and the upper Ocoee in years past, have been colored and sterilized by similiar acid mine drainage. (see Cheat River article).

The plan is to put a tailings pond impoundment in the Fisher Creek drainage. This is intended to secure the potentially devastating rock in perpetuity. Opponents claim the chances of eventual failure are very high. The design is untested in high alpine regions. The site is in a geological fault zone and is subject to frequent avalanches. Certainly nothing can be expected to last forever. If and when the tailings impoundment fails, the Clarks Fork will suffer irreparable damage.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is currently being written as the regulating agencies are preparing to permit this mine. The DEIS is now due out Jan 15, 1996 and there will be a 90 day comment period. Copies may be obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality: 406-444-2074. Unfortunately, the terribly outdated 1872 Mining Law is very much in favor of mining companies.

Besides commenting on the DEIS, boaters should also write to their elected representatives about the Clarks Fork. You can also contact the AWA or any of the following groups:

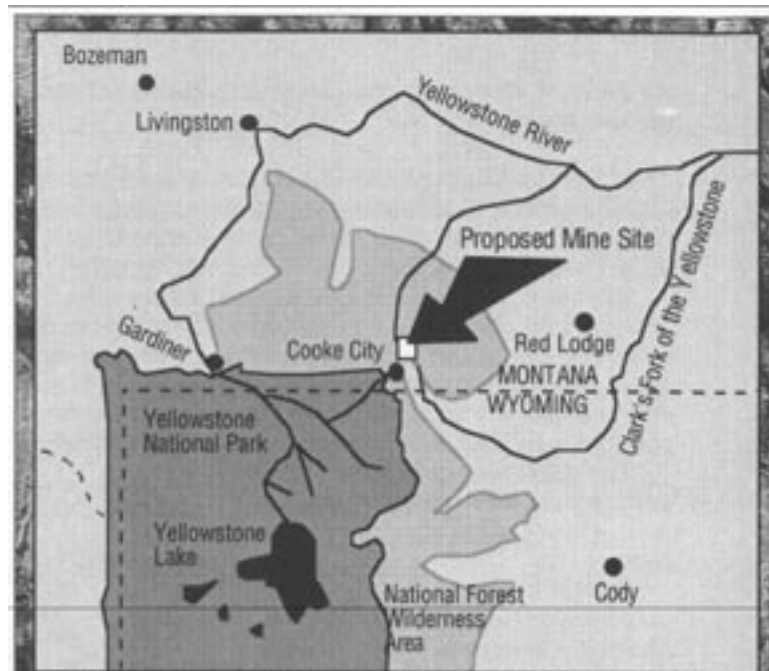
Headwaters Paddling Association (HPA)
Judy Theodorsen & Guy Erbe (503)242-9498

A loose group of paddlers in Bozeman Montana which is committed to the education and mobilization of the local and national paddling community. The HPA is providing funding for groups involved in lobbying and research efforts. Help them by wearing a T-shirt, writing letters, and telling others. Fight for sacred waters.

Greater Yellowstone Coalition
13 S. Wilson Bozeman, MT 59715
Contact: Brian Kuehl 406-586-1593

This group is very well funded and has an excellent staff of researchers, lobbyists, etc. They have done a phenomenal job of getting the facts out and challenging everything the mine proposes.

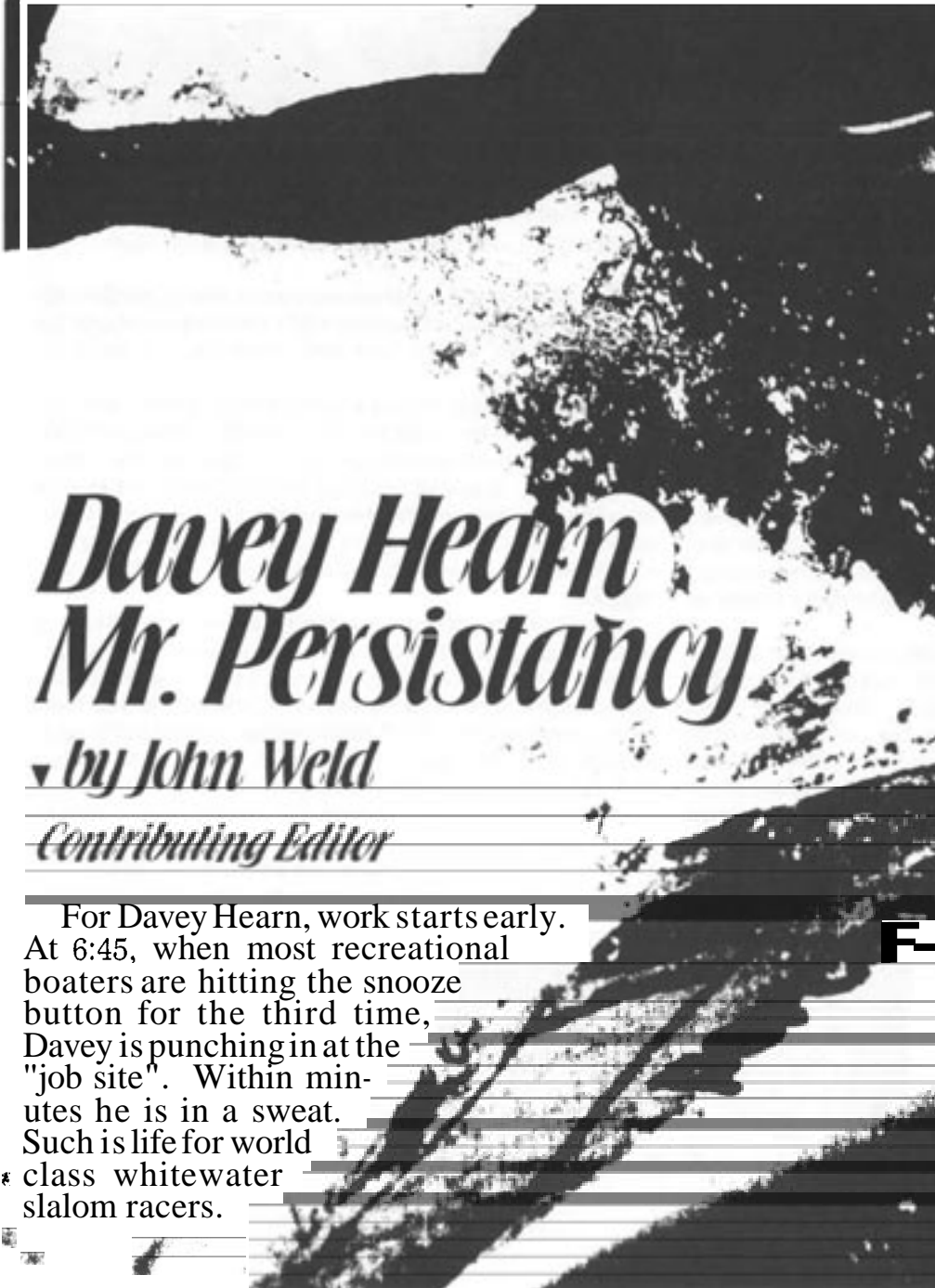
Beartooth Alliance
PO Box 1141 Cooke City, MT 59020
406-838-2402



This is a local grassroots group that started out to be a watchdog group for the mine — to be sure the mine behaved. Upon finding out all the facts, the group took a very strong stance against permitting the mine. They are under-funded and overworked and doing a fantastic job. HPA has been giving this group the money they earn from their T-shirt sales.

Inset: Doug Ammons in Day 2 Rapid. Photo by Tom Schibig.

Background: Doug Ammons and the Clark Fork scenery. Photo by Tom Schibig.



Davey Hearn Mr. Persistancy

▼ *by John Weld*

Contributing Editor

For Davey Hearn, work starts early. At 6:45, when most recreational boaters are hitting the snooze button for the third time, Davey is punching in at the "job site". Within minutes he is in a sweat. Such is life for world class whitewater slalom racers.

Top to Bottom: Ottawa River Surfing 1988; Japan 1992; Rocky Island 1987



USA Wildwater team, 3rd Place, World Championships 1977, Lieser River Austria; Left to right: Ron Lugbill, Jon Lugbill, Gordon grant, John Burton, Bob Robison, David Hearn

On this particular fall morning at a popular D.C. based training site, Davey's task is simple, at least in theory. He needs to be faster than the other top-notch slalom C-1s at the workout.

This is so that when he goes to the U.S. team trials this spring, he will earn a spot on the 1996 Olympic Team. And so that when he goes to the International races and the Olympics this summer, he will edge out the competition, perhaps only by fractions of a second.

Then he will simply be regarded as the best whitewater C-1 slalom racer in the Universe. Again.

Hearn starts early so that he can finish early, go home, eat and prepare to go out again in the afternoon. He needs to go to bed early so he can get up and do it all again the next day. It's a training procedure that is shared by the country's top racers—a ritual that is being whipped into a frenzy as the Atlanta Olympics approach.

But no one knows the racing life better than Hearn, whose uniquely long racing career extends back to the Nixon administration. Former U.S. Whitewater Team coach Bill Endicott explains, "Davey has one of the greatest racing records of all times". He has won five silver and two gold medals in World Championships and is also one of the sport's oldest athletes. This is a point that may frustrate his competition.

Like this fall, when Hearn won the World Championships in Nottingham, England. Just when the competition starts to think that Davey might be over the hill, he kicks major ass.

Who knows why Davey is so good? Maybe his propensity for super-organization and a structured life has made him the perfect training machine. When I came to visit him for this interview his house and his business, Maximum Whitewater Performance, a small store that caters to the gear needs of slalom racers,

were in perfect order. His appearance is always perfect; his shirt is always tucked in, even while he lounges around the house, and his brown hair and mustache are perfectly trimmed.

His memory for details is astounding. In the course of our discussion he could recollect results, times, courses, competitors, even individual moves through gates, from decades ago. The end result of this physical and mental organization is his ability to consistently race well. While some athletes trade off spectacular victories with miserable blow-outs, Davey almost always puts a good race run together.

Another consideration is Hearn's breeding. Davey is part of a family dynasty in whitewater slalom. His younger brother, Billy, was a member of the C-2 team. And his older sister Cathy, who in 18 years on the women's kayak team won 11 medals in world championships, as well as two gold medals in the outrigger canoe worlds, has a list of credentials every bit as impressive as Davey's.

Davey proves that whitewater racing favors experienced paddlers. "This sport is not gymnastics, we don't peak out at 13," Hearn said at one point in our discussion, and he's right. It's not overwhelming strength or bravado

that's the common denominator of world class paddlers, but rather the ability to correlate new, difficult moves with old familiar ones. Perhaps some can do this as well as Davey, but no one can do it better.

I talked with Davey at the Bethesda, Maryland house that he shares with his wife Jennifer (who is 6th boat on the Women's Team). Our conversation focused on his racing career, his influence on the sport and his plans for the future.



▼ *Lets get the vital statistics. How old are you and when did you start racing?*

I'm 36, and I started racing seriously and training in 1975.

How did you get involved with the sport?

I started with my family taking canoe trips down the Missouri River in Montana when I was four and five years old. I can remember me and my sister Cathy sitting in the middle of the boat. Mom was in the front and Dad was in the back. Those were just weekend trips, three or four days at the most.

▼ *Did you grow up here in D.C.?*

Yeah, I grew up in Garrett Park...and then I lived here again after I graduated from college in 1982.

▼ *Where did you go to school?*

I went to Carnegie Mellon for three semesters and then finished at U Mass. I was on the 5 year plan. I would go to school for three semesters and then take the spring semester off before the World Championships. I was studying Geology.

▼ *Lets back up a second. You started racing in '75..*

Well, I got a junior sized boat in '68 or '69. I was born in '59 so I was about 9 or 10 - and my Dad got his first decked

canoe. His was a decked canoe called a Yugo. It was 80 cm wide and it had a canvas seat stretched across the cockpit. We started going to the Petersburg Whitewater Weekend (an extinct river festival that was held on the Potomac) almost every year in the early 70's. My Dad would race in the downriver race. They had a cruiser race and the Canyon race, and I think that I raced in the cruiser race one year with my Dad and I think one year I raced a kayak...

▼ *The Petersburg Whitewater Weekend was a pretty big deal for many years, and it kind of, well, petered out.*

It was a big deal. Everyone who paddled was there. It's interesting, I was just talking to Kathy Weil (a local Perception rep) about this in comparison to the Gauley Race and all the other extreme races around the country. In a sense the general paddling population is getting drawn back into racing the way that they used to be involved back in the late 60's and early 70's. You didn't have to be a racer to race in Petersburg.

Left bottom: David Hearn - 1st Place — Pre-World Championships, Jonquire, Quebec, Aug. 1978

Below: Jonquire Quebec World Championships July 1979





Ron Lugbill and Davey Hearn, Great Falls Invitational Slalom, April 1979

▼ *So how did you make the transition into competition?*

Well, I kind of grew into it. I made a '71 Lettmann C-1 with my Dad and I used that boat in the Canyon race in '73. And I raced there in '74 with Kent Ford in C-2 slalom, and I remember swimming there. The race was held at the end of March so it was a cold swim, even with our home-made wetsuits.

▼ *When was your first team trials?*

The first Team Trials I went to was in '77. I could have raced in '75 if I had petitioned my way in - they had qualifier races that led up to the Trials. In the spring races you had to place first, second or third - that qualified you to race in the trials. But you could petition your way in, especially if you were a junior, if you didn't make any of those three spots. I could have done that, but I didn't want to feel like I came in the back door.

Cathy had worked at Valley Mill East that summer (a summer camp in D.C. that would over the years turn out dozens of world-class paddlers) and spent a lot of time paddling with Jamie McEwan (who won a silver medal in C-1 slalom in the 1972 Olympics) and Angus Morrison. She had gotten really psyched to train and race from being around them that summer. Then in the fall of '74 Cathy got her driver's license. We could paddle everyday after school and not need a ride from our parents. Right about that same time Cathy and I both were able to get gym credit for paddling. That got us pretty serious about training and got me keeping a training log. To this day I have all my training logs, dating from '74 to the present.

▼ *Who was in your peer group here in D.C. at the time?*

We were meeting after school with guys like Mike and Steve Garvis, a C-2 team, Kent Ford, and the Lugbills (Jon and his brother, Ron).

▼ *At that time if you made the National Team, would you get funding to race in Europe?*

No. Nothing like that.

Davey Hearn/Mr. Persistancy

▼ *Nowadays the Team members get money from the USCKT (United States Canoe Kayak Team, the sport's governing body). Was there even a USCKT then?*

There was no USCKT. Actually, until relatively recently, you had to pay your own way for everything. Sometimes clubs like the Philadelphia Canoe Club would sponsor one of their members with a couple hundred bucks, but it was very much personally financed.

In 1975 Jon and Ron Lugbill were 13 and 14 and had just made the Team. Actually Jon might have been 12 at the Trials, but he was 13 when he went to the 75 World Championships in Skopje, Yugoslavia. Cathy raced at that Trials as well.

▼ *So Lugbill was 12 when he made the Team in '75*

I think the Trials were in mid-May, and his birthday is in late May.

I guess that was more of a testament to how young the sport was than Lugbill's paddling ability.

Yeah, and remember it was in C-2 with his brother Ron. They were very young. But Jon had a beard when he was 12. He was the kind of guy who had whiskers when he was 12.

▼ *So you first made the Team in '77.*

Wales/ Bala 1980



Davey Hearn/Mr. Persistancy



1980 Europa Cup, Spain

In '76 there was no Team Trials because there was no World Championship. I guess we could have gone to the Europa Cup - pretty much anybody could race at that - but it was prohibitively expensive. In 1975 the Trials were held on Dartmouth Rapid on the Lower Yough and in '76, the Olympics were held in Montreal, but there was no Whitewater event. As a result, many of the whitewater top racers like Jamie McEwan and Angus Morrison moved over to flatwater to try and go to the Olympics. So we had this year where there was a little bit of a vacuum in the whitewater competition, especially in C-1. I won the Nationals that year...I was 17, and all of a sudden I was National Champion.

In 1977 I made the team in wildwater C-2, and I was 5th in C-1 slalom. The C-1 team that year was Kent Ford, Ron Lugbill, Bob Robison and Jamie McEwan. Jon missed a gate on the first day and ended up 8th. In those days, your two race days were added together, so that if you screwed up bad on any of your runs, you didn't have much of a chance. At any rate, it wasn't until 1979 that I made a World Championship Team in slalom.

▼ *You graduated from University of Massachusetts in 1982, and then you came back down to D.C. to train.*

Yeah, by then I was building and designing boats to make a living. I had been pretty much doing that since 1976.

▼ *O.K. so you made the slalom team in '79, and you have been on the team ever since?*

Yeah. 17 years.

Over the years the sport has gotten much bigger. I know now a handful of our top paddlers more or less make a living off the money they earn racing.

Well, back then you had to have a way of making a living, and you trained also. We get a lot of support now, but it's difficult to live off of funding alone.

▼ *Is that unique to the U.S. or do other countries' athletes have to work as well?*

Depends on the country. Some European Countries have good support for their athletes...the French, the Germans, the Brits...it varies. I think we do pretty well against the Europeans now, but in '89, before we knew that we were an Olympic Sport again, we were definitely the underdogs in terms of funding. We always prided ourselves on being lean and mean and hungry and not doing it for the money. The USCKT was in existence before whitewater became an Olympic event, but they represented flatwater alone (which has been an Olympic event since 1936). We were grafted on when we became an Olympic Sport.

One of the things that we ought to do here is explain the format of the yearly racing schedule.

There is a World Championship every odd year, and every single May we have to make the Team. There are no pre-selections. Some of the European countries have pre-selected paddlers...if you win the World Championships you are pre-selected for the next year's team. We have never done that. We believe that having to prove yourself every year makes a better team. Making the Team allows you to race in the international races. For many years it was just the World Championships every other year, but now there is also a World Cup race that is held every year. The World Cup is a five race series held anywhere from

Europe to Australia to America to Asia. This year I didn't do all that well in the World Cup; I think I finished 14th, because I really focus on the World Championships.

Before we get to this year, lets take a step back. You won the World Championships in 1985 in C-1 slalom in Augsburg, Germany. But in talking about this race, we have to talk about Jon Lugbill. Jon by then had been winning every World Championship in C-1 slalom for awhile, and was well on his way to becoming a legend.



Awards 1984

Davey Hearn/Mr. Persistancy

Jon had been first in '79, '81, and '83, and I had been second to him all of those years.

▼ *New anybody who knows anything about slalom racing knows about you and Lugbill...*

Yeah, Lugbill and Hearn.

▼ *And at the same time people see you as rivals, they see you as training partners. Do you think that this is true?*

Absolutely. We paddled together on a daily basis, twice a day, for years. Actually, in 1979 there were five of us in D.C. gunning for a spot: Kent Ford, Bob Robison, Ron and Jon Lugbill and myself. We paddled a lot together. Bill Endicott was on the scene by then (Bill Endicott was a U.S. Team Coach for almost 20 years - mostly on a volunteer basis) and he got us paddling on a more regular basis. Some of us made it and some of us didn't. Kent Ford didn't make it, he was just off. It's all in the movie "Fast and Clean".

▼ *But you and Jon elevated the C-1 team considerably.*

We became motivated after not making the team in 1977 to train faster and smarter. It wasn't any kind of spoken thing, but we went on to win gold and silver medals in the Jonquiere Worlds in '79, and Bob Robison was third. In '79,



I think Jon beat me by 4 seconds. In '81, Jon beat me by 3/10ths of a second.

▼ *New you and Jon trained together for many years in D.C., and you fell into a training pattern that has lasted well over a decade. What's a typical training day?*

Well, ideally, you want to train twice a day, once in the morning, once in the afternoon. Usually the workouts last an hour, or a little more. Often in the fall we only paddle once a day and lift some weights. Around the first of the year we start doing two-a-days.

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▼ *So in '85 you won the Worlds, but then Jon went on to win for the following two Worlds.*

Yeah. Jon won in '87 in France and on the Savage in '89. He won the World Cup in '88 and '89.

▼ *And you were always right behind him.*

That's right. Every time he won the World's, I was second.

▼ *So then what happened in '91?*

In '91 we went over to the World's in Tacen, Yugoslavia to this really wacky course. This was just prior to the revolution. The war started two days after the race was over and we got out just in time. They bombed the airport, which was right near the course. Anyway, that course was really crazy, really unpredictable. It was an artificial course that was extremely variable. There were places on the course where there would be fast current moving downstream through an eddy for five seconds, and then for the next five seconds the eddy would be really strong. It was very unfair.

Davey Hearn/Mr. Persistancy

▼ *What was significant about that race?*

Well, Jon came in 4th, and I came in 17th. I didn't get to race team because I was the worst boat. It was very frustrating, especially because it was the year before the Olympics. But I guess sports aren't always fair. It was a big learning experience for me because it was the first World class event that I had been to where I really bombed. I had always come to the World Championships under pressure and had come through. I won medals and won the race sometimes.

▼ *O.R. So the next year was the Olympics in Seu d'Urgell in Spain. Let's talk about what happened there.*

Well, Jon was fourth - he had a touch. I had two clean runs and I finished 11th. I was about three seconds out of the medals. That was the first year that...well actually, going back to 91 things were starting to get competitive. Some new young guys were coming along. We didn't trust the results from 91 because we thought a lot of it was just the randomness of the course. But in reality what was happening was that the sport was just getting more competitive.

▼ *There were a number of years where the U.S. C-1 Team was by far the best in the world.*


We were pretty well ahead on a good day.

▼ *Do you think that you got pretty comfortable with that idea?*

Well, I mean we got spoiled by it. We got spoiled by our success. The guys on our kayak team were familiar with winning or losing by a second, that was the kind of thing that we had to get used to. It's taken me awhile to get used to the idea that things are going to be tight. You might do really, really well and you could medal, or you could be 8th, and either one of those finishes would be excellent. So it's kind of measuring success a little differently.

▼ *This sport has gotten a lot bigger in the past few years.*

The sport is a lot bigger, a lot more competitive, has a lot more people doing it full-time and a lot more resources involved. It has a lot to do with the Olympics. It's no coincidence that '91 was the year where things started to get really competitive. The other thing that happened was that courses got shorter. The Olympic course was only 110 seconds long for the fastest C-1.



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Davey Hearn/Mr. Persistancy

Prior to that every World Championship had been over 200 seconds. The result is there is less course for the athletes to test themselves against and the margins for victory are very small. And I think there is more chance injected into the equation. In a lot of ways it would be like if mile runners were told that in two years their event would be cut in half. We're not going to have the mile anymore, just the 800 meters, get used to it. Now, three years later, we're used to shorter courses.

▼ *So Lugbill, who was really expected to do very well at the '92 Olympics, placed fourth, and then retired the following year.*

He had some shoulder problems in '92 that he never really talked about. He was training in the fall of '92 but then got a job offer in the spring of '93 to go work as the Executive Director of Richmond Sports Backers. So he decided to take them up on that offer. I never heard him say that he was going to retire. There were news reports that he retired but the "R" word never came out of his mouth. He was definitely paddling down in Richmond, and he told me that he started training again Christmas or New Years of this year. He said that it took him three months or so to get back to where he could train again. Well, when Jon Lugbill says that he can really train again,



Above: 1987 World Championships, France

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he is in phenomenal shape. Because when he trains he trains very hard, very intensely. You know, he trains like an animal, he's always going full out.

▼ *Did the thought cross your mind to quit after '93? I know that sometimes racers retire after the Olympics.*

That wasn't really my plan. I decided that I wanted to keep going. I decided that in the Olympic Village in Barcelona. During the closing ceremonies we had things in our hats during the closing ceremonies that said, "See you in Atlanta". I decided at that point that I wanted to keep going.

▼ *Was that out of habit or did you feel that you were still getting better?*

No, it was a conscious decision. I felt that I was getting better and still could do things that I had not done before on a slalom course.

▼ *Despite the fact that there are many, many younger people coming into the sport...*

Davey Hearn/Mr. Persistancy

Yeah, I think the age thing is a state of mind. You know that right now there are three or four generations of paddlers younger than me. There is the late 20's generation, there is the early 20's generation, and now there are guys like Michael Martikan from the Slovak Republic, who is 16 years old and won a Bronze medal in the World Championship this year in C-1. He's 20 years, one month and one day younger than me.

▼ *In '95 Lugbill came back and won the Team Trials, even though he had not been training like you for the past two years. How did that go over for you? You must have been a little frustrated.*

I think that motivated me. Basically, at that point in time nobody knew how much training Jon had been doing. In hindsight we know that he had been doing quite a bit. But at that point it was a surprise to have him beat me at the Trials. I could have had a better race...but for me making the Team was the goal.

▼ *So he won the Team Trials, but then you won the World's in Nottingham England, your second World's victory, ten years after your first. I imagine that on race day people were running down the bank during Lugbill's run, expecting him to win. There must have been some satisfaction when you won.*

I don't think that anyone expected Jon to win or me to win. I think people thought that Jon had more of an outside chance than me. My point is that now there are at least 10 C-1s who have a chance of winning the World's. I got the feeling that Jon wasn't completely aware of that or didn't want to accept that. It's very competitive, and to understand that you kind of have to be there. He didn't go to Europe; he didn't race in most of the World Cup races. It's extremely competitive now.

▼ *And with the current state of competition, with one touch on a race course you go from first place to...*

Well, in 1981 I went from first place to second place with one touch in the World's. In 1995 Jon went from (potentially) first place to tenth place with one touch.

▼ *Are you anxious about having to compete against Lugbill again? Did you ever have the feeling that "He's finally out of my way, and now I can dominate?"*

Actually, when he retired, I thought "Well, I'm not going to have another crack at him." I looked forward to competing against him, and I think we will both be made better by each other's competition. I also think it adds a lot of excitement to the race when we are both in it.

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Davey Hearn/Mr. Persistancy

▼ Let me ask you a question about a different subject. Jesse Whittemore, who is often cited as the inventor of squirt-ing, has referred back to you and Jon as the actual originators of the "squirt". Where and when did the whole thing start?

Well, Jesse designed the Falcon in '81, so it was somewhere in there. I know that we were pivoting the Max II (a C-1 slalom design that Jon, Davey and Bob Robison created in 1979) and that was definitely the beginning. The Max II was where we made a complete jump from one track to another in terms of boat design.

▼ Let's talk about the age thing a little bit. Every single one of our top boats on the team is over thirty. Is this usual compared to other countries?

It's not totally out in left field for this sport. This isn't gymnastics; this isn't swimming. Just the fact that I could go and win the World Championships at age 36 shows that there is a lot more to this than how old you are. Experience helps.

On the other hand it does help to be young and be able to paddle really hard and then bounce back the next day and feel really good. It is more of a challenge physically when you get older, but other things are easier. It's a confidence thing. You have to have faith that the work you're doing and the experience you have is enough. Maybe at some point it will be so competitive it won't be possible to be on a team if you're over 35. But how old you are isn't taken into account at the starting line at the World or the Trials.

▼ How long do you see yourself racing?

I'm going to find out. I don't know if anyone has won the Worlds in an individual class at age 36, but no recent World Champions have been near that age.

▼ Are you scared of the time when your ability starts declining?

No. I've accomplished plenty.

▼ What are you going to do afterwards?

I don't know. I've done some coaching and I've enjoyed that...

But coaching isn't necessarily going to pay the bills.

Well, I'm a big believer in finding

something that you like to do and then getting paid for it. I'm not a big believer in finding something you can get paid for and figuring out how to enjoy it.

▼ What would prompt you to quit? Let's say that you went to the Olympics this year and got absolutely hammered. Would you make that your last race?

I'm doing everything in my power to have a much different result than that at the Olympics! That's one of the challenges. You can't think negatively. You have to be positive and have faith. Lots of times that's what separates the higher places from the lower places.

The advertisement features a background map of Yellowstone National Park with various peaks and trails labeled. Overlaid on the map is a large, stylized logo for "SplashGear" with a silhouette of a person in a wetsuit. Below the logo is a photograph of a person standing in a river, wearing a dark wetsuit. A text box on the map reads: "From Wyoming Woolens and the rivers around Jackson Hole, comes the first full production line of Polartec Fleece-lined Thermal Stretch® paddling gear. We call it SplashGear..". At the bottom of the advertisement is a black box with white text: "THERMAL STRETCH SPLASHGEAR CONFLUENCE BOOTH L23 • O.R. BOOTH 1041 Wyoming Wear • Jackson Hole, WY Dealer Inquiries: 800-WYO-WEAR or 307-733-2889".

The AWA Safety Committee NEEDS YOUR HELP!!

You've read about it. Now we're asking for your help. We are trying to "benchmark" a representative sample of popular rapids from around the country as the first step in the project to update the American Scale of River Difficulty. We are interested in creating a consensus about all classes of rapids up to and including low class V. Once a general consensus is reached, the resulting list of rated rapids will be incorporated into the rating scale and promoted across the country and, hopefully, around the world. The main beneficiary of this project is the boating community at large and especially the paddler who is "climbing the ladder" and stretching him/herself and especially the paddler who is traveling around the country and wishes to stay within her/his skill level.

The plan is to maintain the current classification definitions, add a plus and a minus to classes 2 through 4, and expand the class 5 range to an open ended decimal (class 5.0, 5.1, ...) system similar to climbing. Some paddlers are already doing this. Along with this we need to stabilize the system by setting up bench marks, standard rapids if you will, that define the essence of each grade level.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!! Consensus building requires that as many people as possible participate!! The Classification Definitions are attached. **PLEASE READ THESE DEFINITIONS.**

We would like you to take the attached sheet and fill in the names and difficulty of popular rapids on rivers that you have run at flows that are commonly encountered. Please Place them in the category that seems appropriate to a typical paddler who is following somebody through the rapids for the first time. We ask you to use only the following ratings:

Class I	Class III-	Class IV-	Class 5.0
Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class 5.1
Class II+	Class III+	Class IV+	Class 5.2...

That is how the form is made up. There is space for comments at the end if you want to suggest something else. We are OPEN for suggestions and comment. **THIS IS A BEGINNING!!**

While we do feel there is a need for an open-ended class 5 system, we feel that 3 divisions of the class III and IV ratings will be enough.

We have filled in some rapids from the east and Colorado that we feel fit the definitions. These are meant to give you a benchmark to do your benchmarking from. If you disagree with the placement of our benchmarks... just cross them out and move them. Please help by returning the form today!!

We especially want to hear from the bicoastal or biregional boaters. **PLEASE** try to include rapids from as many regions of the country as you have paddled.

Thankyou so much for your help.

SYOTR,

Charlie Walbridge
Lee Belknap
Joe Greiner

If you want to give us more examples than we have left room for, please make copies of the attached sheet.

Please return to:
AWA Safety Committee
1308 Maryland Ave
Glen Allen, VA 23060

INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

This is the American version of a rating system used to compare river difficulty throughout the world. This system is not exact; rivers do not always fit easily into one category, and regional or individual interpretations may cause misunderstandings. It is no substitute for a guidebook or accurate first-hand descriptions of a run.

Paddlers attempting difficult runs in an unfamiliar area should act cautiously until they get a feel for the way the scale is interpreted locally. River difficulty may change each year due to fluctuations in water level, downed trees, geological disturbances, or bad weather.

Stay alert for unexpected problems!

As river difficulty increases, the danger to swimming paddlers becomes more severe. As rapids become longer and more continuous, the challenge increases. There is a difference between running an occasional Class IV rapid and dealing with an entire river of this category. Allow an extra margin of safety between skills and river ratings when the water is cold or if the river itself is remote and inaccessible.

THE SIX DIFFICULTY CLASSES:

Class I: Easy. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.

Class II: Novice. Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. Swimmers are seldom injured and group assistance, while helpful, is seldom needed.

Class III: Intermediate. Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required; large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large-volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare; self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims.

S a f e t y

Class IV: Advanced. Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Depending on the character of the river, it may feature large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast maneuvers under pressure. A fast, reliable eddy turn may be needed to initiate maneuvers, scout rapids, or rest. Rapids may require "must" moves above dangerous hazards. Scouting is necessary the first time down. Risk of injury to swimmers is moderate to high, and water conditions may make self-rescue difficult. Group assistance for rescue is often essential but requires practiced skills. A strong Eskimo roll is highly recommended.

Class V: Expert. Extremely long, obstructed, or very violent rapids which expose a paddler to above average endangerment. Drops may contain large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools, demanding a high level of fitness. What eddies exist may be small, turbulent, or difficult to reach. At the high end of the scale, several of these factors may be combined. Scouting is mandatory but often difficult. Swims are dangerous, and rescue is difficult even for experts. A very reliable Eskimo roll, proper equipment, extensive experience, and practiced rescue skills are essential for survival.

Class VI: Extreme. One grade more difficult than Class V. These runs often exemplify the extremes of difficulty, unpredictability and danger. The consequences of errors are very severe and rescue may be impossible. For teams of experts only, at favorable water levels, after close personal inspection and taking all precautions. This class does not represent drops thought to be unrunnable, but may include rapids which are only occasionally run.

Please add your own list to this example. This is why we have written to you!!!

Please include rapids from other parts of the country so we can tie it all together and feel free to change the list.

Rapid name (s)	River, section (s) & State	Level	Your Rating
Powhite Ledges	James, Richmond, VA	5'	1
Ramcat	Middle Yough	1.8	1
Pony pasture	James, Richmond, VA	5.0	2
Delabar's Rock	Nantahala, Gorge, NC	3.25	2
Needmore	Little Tennessee, NC	1000	2
Staircase	Shenandoah, WV	3.5'	2
Piddley	Lower Yough, PA	2'	2
Skinner's Falls	Delaware, PA/NY	2 t	
Bull Sluice	Shenandoa, VA	3.5'	2+
Lambertville Rapid	Delaware, PA/NY	2t	
Camel-Walrus	Lower Yough, PA	2'	3-
Patton's Run	Nantahala, NC	3.25	3-?,3?
Dartmouth Slolam / Eddy out	Lower Yough, PA	1.8	3
Powerline	James, Richmond, VA	5'	3
Roller Coaster	Nolichucky, Gorge, NC	2.2	3
Raft Ripper	Arkansas, Browns Canyon, CO	1000	3
Nantahala Falls	Nantahala, Gorge	3.25	3?,3+?
Dimple-Swimmers	Lower Yough, PA	1.6	3t
Slalom Rapids	Tohickon cr., PA	1.8	3t
Railroad	Esopus, NY	Summer	3t
Double Trouble	Ocoee, Middle, TN	1300	3t
Narrows	Chatooga, Sect. III, SC/GA	2.0	3 t
Zoom Flume	Arkansas, Browns Canyon, CO	1000	3t
Powerline Rapids	Rio Grande, Lowr Box Cyn., NM	1500	3t
Broken Nose	Ocoee, Middle, TN	1300	4-
Bastard	Upper Yough, MD	2'	4
Maze	Cheat, WV	3.0	4
Sweet's Falls	Gauley, Upper, WV	2800	4-?,4+?
Fayette Station	New river gorge, WV	0'	4
Gap Falls	Upper Yough R5ver	2.0'	4
Zoom flume	Arkansas, Browns Canyon, CO	3000	4
Pine View Falls	Cashe la Pudre	1500	4
Skull	Colorado R., Westwater Cyn, UT	5000	4
Entrance	Chatooga, Sect. IV, SC/GA	1.8	4
Vedge O'Matic	Ocoee, Middle, TN	1300	4
Middle Keaney	New River Gorge, WV	2.5'	4 t
Bull Sluice	Chatooga, Sect. III, SC/GA	2'	4?, 5?
Middle Keaney	New River Gorge, WV	2.5'	4 t
Pure Screaming Hell	Upper Gauley, WV	2800	4 t
Seven Foot Falls	Chatooga, Sect. IV, SC/GA	1.8	4 t
Sunshine	Arkansas, Royal Gorge, CO	2000	4+
Number 4	Arkansas, The Numbers, CO	1000	4+
Rock Garden	Rio Grand. Lower Taos Box, NM	2000	4+
Pillow Rock	Upper Gauley, WV	2800	4+?, 5?
Corkscrew	Chatooga, Sect IV, SC/GA	1.8'	4+?, 5?
S-Turn	Tygart Gorge, WV	4.5'	5
Insignificant	Upper Gauley, WV	2800	5
Big Splat	Lower Big Sandy cr., WV	6.2'	5
Pine Creek	Arkansas, Pine Creek, CO	700	5
Number 4	Arkansas, The Numbers, CO	2000	5
Charlies Choice thru National Falls	Upper Yough, MD	2'	5.1
Lost Paddle	Upper Gauley, WV	2800	5.1
Pine Creek	Arkansas, Pine Creek, CO	1500	5.3

13th Annual

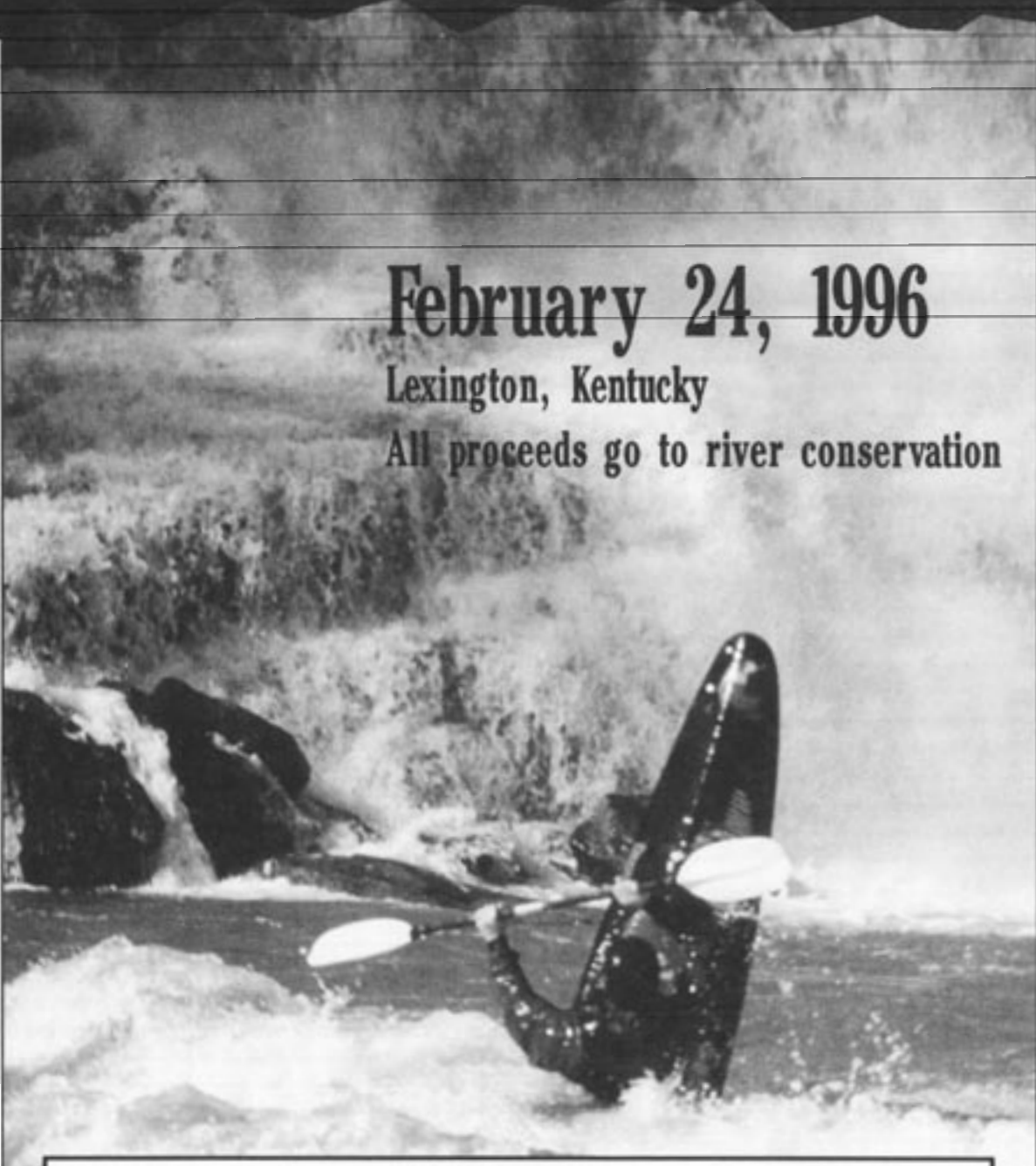
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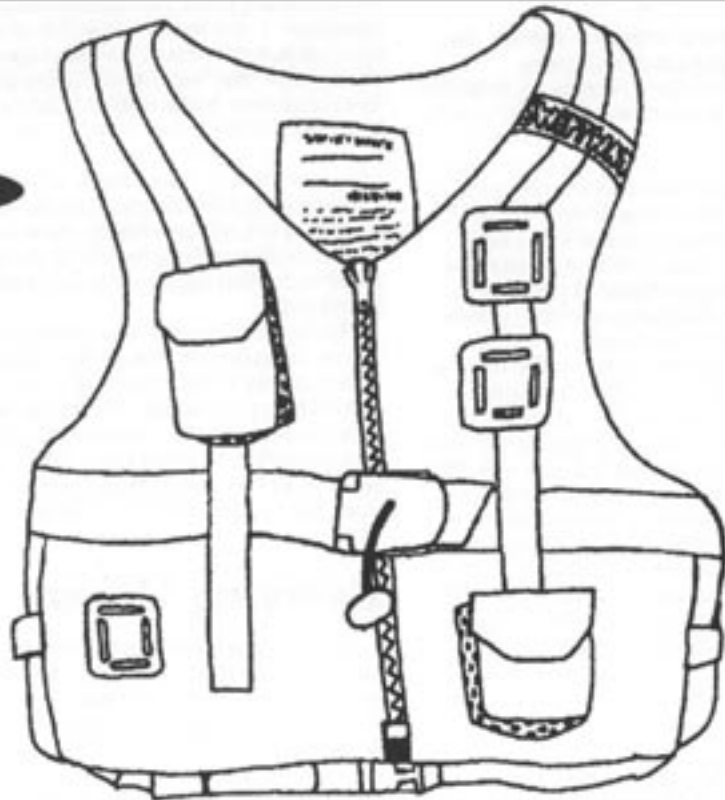


P.O. Box 4231
Lexington, Kentucky 40544

Tim Williams on the Caney Fork, by Scott Shoupe

DO YOU NEED A RESCUE LIFE VEST?

by Charlie Walbridge



If you're an active river runner you've probably seen a new style of life vest, featuring a wide belt fastened around the chest by a large buckle. These rescue life vests are equipped with a quick-release chest harness that makes it possible to attach a person to a safety line for backup during rescues. Although they cost over twice as much as a conventional PFD, they provide a number of new options for rescuing boats and people.

Although tying someone to a rope may be an accepted technique in other sports, it can be a fatal error when working around rapids. When a rescuer enters the current connected to a line, the rope tightens and the water pushes up against them. If the line "hangs up" on a mid-stream obstruction the person tied into it dangles in the middle of the river. If the current is fast enough it will wash over their head, pushing them underwater. Many untrained rescuers will drown each year by making this simple mistake.

A rescue PFD's built-in quick-release

chest harness allows you to clip into a safety line when working in and around whitewater. The rope is clipped into a D-ring on the back of the PFD, between the shoulder blades, using a carabiner. It floats you on your back in current, with your head up and feet in front. Most of the water passes easily underneath your body. If you are pushed underwater or the pressure from the harness becomes unbearable, a pull on the quick release buckle sets you free. You can swim to shore or get picked up by personnel stationed downstream.

Quick-release harnesses were originally developed in Europe. The first models were worn over a life jacket; later versions were built-in. Many of these imports are well-made, but none are Coast Guard approved and with a falling dollar they're becoming rather expensive. The Lotus PFD features a PFD with anchor loops; the harness is attached later. In Extrasport's Swiftwater Jackets both the PFD and harness are tested to U.S. and

international standards.

A quick-release harness is the foundation of a number of innovative techniques that can be taught to anyone who can swim, wade, belay a line, and use a throwline in fast-moving water. These skills include the following:

Self-Belays

Often a person must use a throw line or handle ropes along a slippery riverbank. The chest harness on a rescue life vest can be used as a self-belay device to keep you from falling or being dragged into the water. Simply run a tether line from the ring in back of the rescue PFD to a suitable anchor. Elasticized "self-tethers", worn on the jacket, are available. you can also improvise with a length of rope or tubular webbing. If you need to get beyond tether range quickly, release the harness and walk away.

It's important to note that the internationally-accepted standard breaking strength for a swiftwater harness is 1100 pounds. This is not sufficient for vertical rescue. A quick-release harness can offer safe backup when the bulk of a person's weight is supported by the ground or water. When a rescuer is actually dangling from a rope a separate climber's "sit" harness should also be used. These will not have a quick-release feature, so a person using one must not enter the water. Not all harness can pass this test, so read the manuals before you buy.

Boat Rescues

A quick-release harness can be combined with a long, collapsible tether to allow a paddler to clip into a runaway boat and pull it to shore. In skilled hands this is a very efficient technique. The tether should be long enough for the towed boat to clear the stern, allowing the rescuer to set a ferry angle and catch eddies without

interference. If you need to get free of the boat, the quick-release harness can be opened quickly.

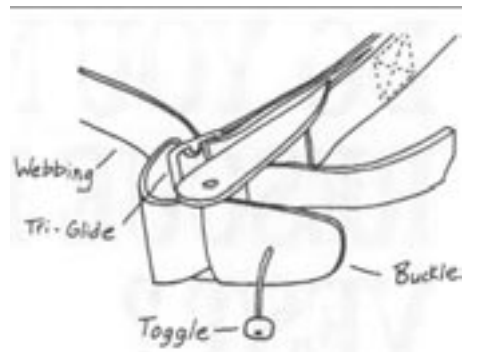
This procedure is not without risk, and controlled practice is needed to appreciate your personal limits. An attached boat, drifting behind you, can hang up on a rock or get surfed by a wave or hole. The sudden pull from behind can jerk you over, at which point the tether will certainly make rolling more of a challenge. If you and the towed boat are floating downstream at the same speed the harness may not release. A few guidelines may help. First, only clip into a loose boat in flat water or mild, unobstructed rapids. Even difficult rivers have stretches of easier water where such a rescue might be attempted. If the harness does not release cleanly, tuck your thumb underneath the webbing and pull it through, then paddle away from the towed boat.

The long tether can also be used to rescue an unconscious or helpless swimmer. If they are wearing a line vest, cinch the end of the tether around the PFD's shoulders, just behind the victim's head. If this is not possible, cinch to the victim's upper arm so that they face the rear of your boat. This will keep his head up as he is being towed.

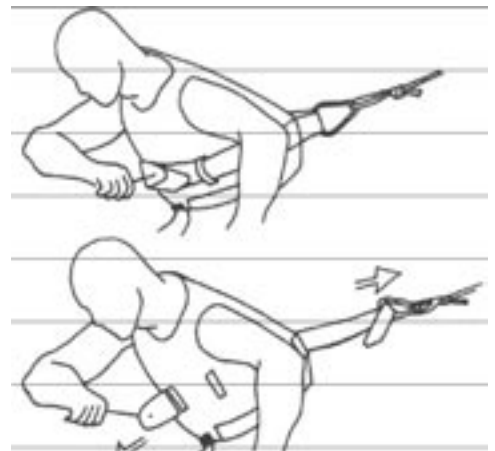
Belaying Others

A belayer working from a secure stance can tie into a second person who is wearing a rescue PFD for added security when crossing slippery shoreside rocks or wading in fast-moving current. When the harness user is floating downriver the rope behaves like perfectly-thrown heaving line. The belayer, using a hip belay, holds onto the line, allowing the current to swing the tethered swimmer to shore. If anything goes wrong the quick-release is activated.

Before belaying someone, think ahead to what will happen to them if they do need support. You must swing them into a safe eddy, not a sheer wall or strainer.



The Swiftwater Quick-Release Harness



(Jan Miles for Extrasport, Inc.)

Releasing the harness



(Jan Miles for Extrasport, Inc.)

Never tie yourself to a rope in moving water without using a quick release harness. A rope tied to your waist allows your body to be pushed and held

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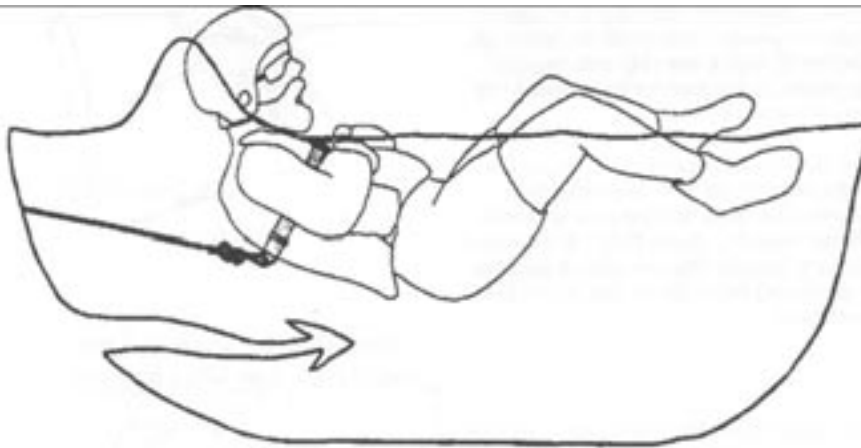
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underwater. (Jan Miles for Extrasport, Inc.)

The Swiftwater chest harness uses a rear attachment point designed



Move the your position if necessary to insure this. We must also think about what will happen if the tethered rescuer releases the harness and swims for safety. Be sure that the river below is safe for swimming, then station backup personnel with heaving lines or boats below. If the line to the tethered swimmer snags or hangs up on an eddyline, a third person should grab the rope in front of the belayer and work down its length, hand-over-hand. This is called "vectoring" the line. As angle of the rope to the current increases, the tethered swimmer is pulled towards shore.

Tethered Swimmer Rescues

Most of the time rescuers enter the water only by accident. But tethered swimmers get into the water deliberately to recover an unconscious swimmer or to approach a boat pinned on a mid-stream rock. This is considerably more dangerous than a shore-based rescue; success depends on good timing and teamwork between the swimmer and her belayer.

The tethered swimmer must enter the water cleanly and quickly. It may be possible to wade out to an eddyline and swim into the current, but if the water is too deep and fast a swiftwater entry is needed. This is a controlled belly-flop, not a dive. Enter the water with back arched, head pulled back, and hands in front of your face. Hit the water with your body angled upstream, into the current. This sets a ferry angle and makes crossing the current more efficient. To reach a stationary point, you'll have to aim upstream of your goal. But because both rescuer and victim are floating at the same speed in the water, "leading" a floating target won't work. Wait until the "floaters" is as close as possible, then go.

The belayer should find a secure stance and place four or five coils of rope in one hand. The line then runs behind his hip where it can be belayed. The idea is to let out enough rope to allow the swimmer free movement, but not so much that she becomes entangled. After the swimmer leaves, the belayer drops the coils in the water. Extra rope is let out as needed. When the swimmer makes contact with the victim, belay the rope as you would a throw line. The current will swing both swimmer and victim to shore. As always, backup should be stationed downstream in case the swimmer has to "punch out" of his harness.

Lowers

Swimmers wearing a rescue life vest can be lowered to points downstream. In



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a direct lower, a tethered swimmer enters the river from a point directly upstream. The belayer lets out line to allow the swimmer to be carried downstream. Since convenient launching spots for direct lowers are seldom available, the V-Lower is more useful. Tie the tethered swimmer into two lines, one going to each shore. The lines are belayed either directly or through a belay device like a Muentner Hitch. Signals for lowering, moving left and right, and help/emergency! must be agreed upon beforehand.

A word of warning: lowers should only be attempted in relatively mild current. Truly fast water will create enough pressure on the swimmer's chest harness to make breathing difficult and may push the tethered swimmer under. The limits of this technique are easily learned with regular practice. You'll find it's almost impossible to pull someone back upstream. To recover a rescuer stuck on a V-lower, let out rope on one side, and allow the current to swing him to shore on the second line.

Training

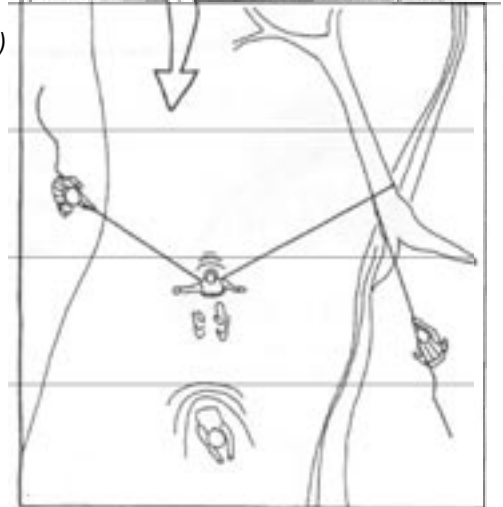
Rescue life vests, like any tool, require training to use effectively. Paddlers are first trained in swimming, wading, throw line use, and using belays in a swift water setting. Instruction covers how the harness works, followed by an opportunity to be lowered in current and work the release. An overview of belay techniques, followed by practicing a tethered swimmer rescue, completes the training. Effective in-water use requires regular opportunities for vest users to probe the limits of their skills.

Not all paddlers will want to make the commitment to training that rescue life jackets require. In fact, most paddlers who own one have no idea how to use it! Without training, these PFD's are a waste of money. But for the committed paddler, the increased capabilities are worth the investment.

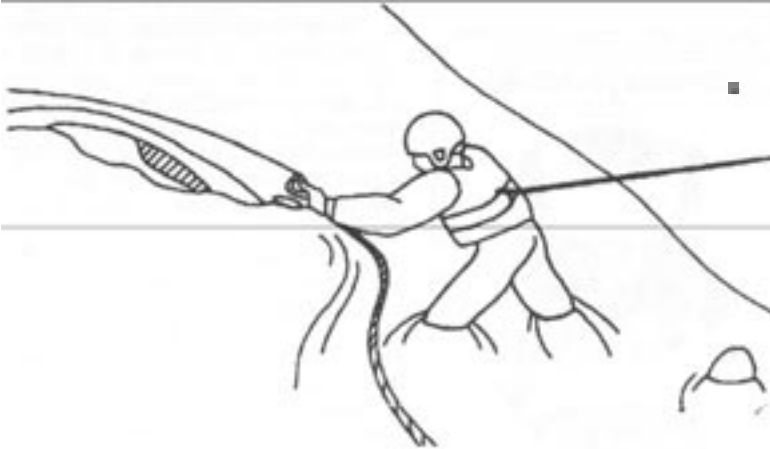
to float tethered swimmers on their back with their feet downstream and head up. (courtesy of Slim Ray)



A belayed wader attaches a line to a pinned boat. (Jan Miles for Extrasport, Inc.)



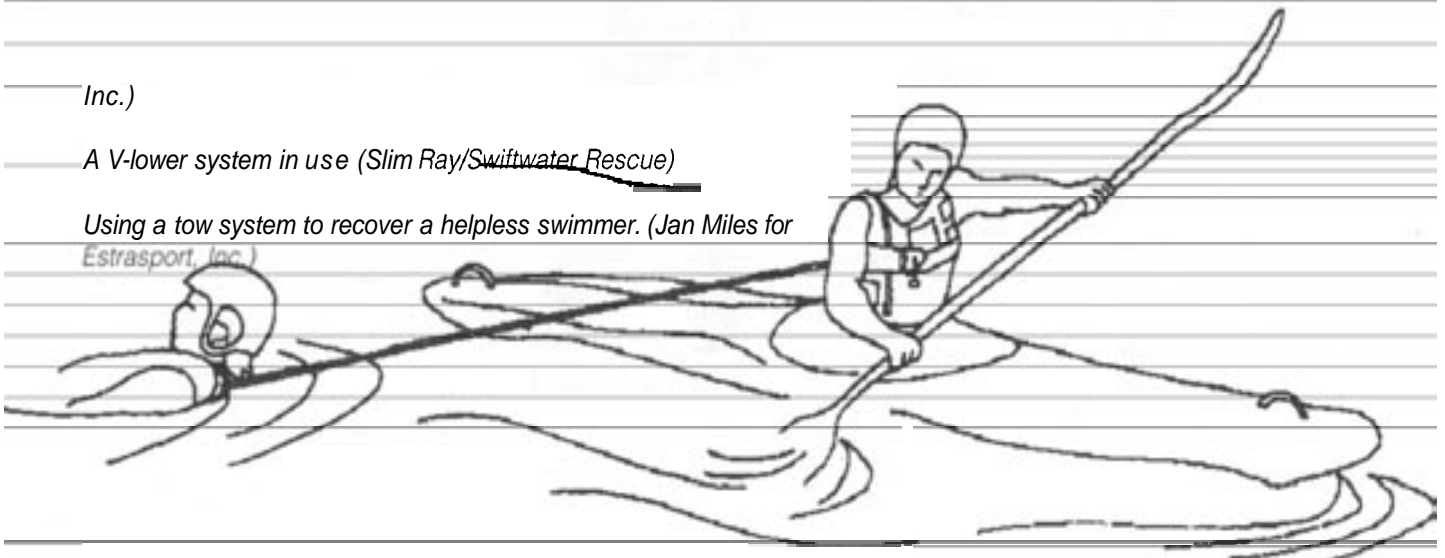
A belayer attached to an anchor with a short tether (Slim Ray/Swiftwater Rescue)



Inc.)

A V-lower system in use (Slim Ray/Swiftwater Rescue)

Using a tow system to recover a helpless swimmer. (Jan Miles for Extrasport, Inc.)



FIRST RUSSELL FORK RACE WON BY JEFF SNYDER

by Will I. Finish

The first race through the Russell Fork Gorge was won by Jeff Snyder in a Wavehopper in just under 11 minutes. Chris Hipgrave was about 20 seconds behind in a Response. Andy Bridge was the only C-boater to compete this year and finished fifth overall. The field of 15 boaters started about 4:00 PM just above Slot (a.k.a. Let's Make A Deal) and finished just below Climax. The time spread from first place in a wildwater boat to 14th place in a Freefall was only about three minutes.

Now that the race organizers know that the race can be open and safe, look for the second race next year to feature T-shirts and maybe prizes.

With this race, Chris Hipgrave becomes the first to complete all four of the southeastern "hair races", participating in the Great Falls Race, the Upper Yough Race, the Upper Gauley Race, and the Russell Fork event. Rick Gusic and Joe Greiner ran in three of the four, missing only Great Falls; and Clay Wright, Howard Tidwell, and Ryan Bahn ran in three of four, missing only the Russell Fork Race. Ryan Bahn was at the Russell Fork Race, but couldn't compete since he was not old enough.

No account of this race would be complete without the form that the organizers devised:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

I, _____, do hereby certify that I have paddled the Russell Fork Gorge on at least three occasions. _____ (initial here).

I understand that by running the river alone for time that I am exposing myself to risk of loss of life or permanent bodily injury and I wholeheartedly assume and accept that risk and release any party from responsibility for anything that may happen to me. _____ (no initial here).

I understand that two rafters have died in a rapid called Maze, one in 1993 and one in 1994. _____ (initial here).

I understand that an experienced kayaker who knew the river died in the spring of 1995 in a rapid called Fist. Further, I understand that there have been several close calls at the rapid called Fist when boaters have been pinned there or have swum under the undercut rock. _____ (initial here).

I UNDERSTAND THAT I WILL BE RUNNING THIS RIVER ON MY OWN AND THAT THERE WILL BE NO "SAFETY" SET AT ANY OF THE RAPIDS ON THIS RIVER. I WILL BE ALONE ON THIS RIVER AND HELP WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE. _____ (initial here).

I understand that this is not an organized event. It is for fun. There are no entry fees, no T-shirts, and no prizes. Any people involved in timing, running shuttles, "organizing, etc." are volunteers for my benefit and my fun. _____ (no initial here).

I understand that some people have called this the Russell Fork Race. Many people view this as foolhardy. Nonetheless, and regardless of how stupid I am for participating in this activity, I willingly accept all responsibility for what happens to me. _____ (initial here).

I willingly sign this document and relish the opportunity to participate in this show of self-glory at extremely high risk to myself. _____ (initial here).

If I die or suffer serious and/or permanent bodily injury, I understand that my loved ones will be angry with me. I understand and accept this. I ask them to direct their anger to me and not to the volunteers who gave me this chance. It is a risk. I accept it. Don't sue them. They warned me and I did it anyway. _____ (initial here).

Date: _____

signed participant (print name)

Witness: _____

RESULTS

All slalom K-1-M, unless noted.		8. Greg Hoskins	12:34.7
1. Jeff Snyder (wildwater)	10:51.8	9. Joe Greiner	12:47.6
2. Chris Hipgrave	11:10.8	10. Eric Stritmatter	12:48.9
3. Boone Brothers	11:29.7	11. Danny Inman	13:36.0
4. Rick Gusic	11:58.4	12. Chris Bell	13:43.4
5. Andy Bridge C-1	12:05.8	13. Mike Clark	13:53.8
6. John Horrell	12:25.8	14. Blake Brame	14:06.8
7. John Stockdill	12:32.9	15. Marc Harman	25:54.0

Who was that Masked Kayaker??

Boaters continually gripe about regulations which restrict paddling; regulations which describe what rivers you can paddle — what rivers are off limits — which rivers are off limits at certain times and dates - what equipment is required (also often differing from river to river, state to state) — and what permits are needed.

Well, quit your crying. Maybe you don't have it so bad after all! The Washington Post reported in October that women athletes in Iran, besides any access or equipment restrictions, must wear chadors (hooded robes designed to hide the female form in keeping with Iran's strict Islamic dress code) during both workouts and official racing events.

According to the coach of the Iranian national flatwater kayaking team, this extra clothing adds 10 seconds to their time on the 500-meter course.

The women paddlers consider themselves lucky, since Iran has sent only men to the Olympics since 1979. They are one of the few women's teams from their country to have a shot at qualifying for next year's Summer Olympics in Atlanta. The Islamic dress code totally eliminates many events such as swimming, track and field, basketball and volleyball.

Hopefully the Olympics will introduce these women paddlers to a more tolerant society, at least towards women, if not paddlers in general. If they are real lucky, perhaps they can lock in a lucrative contract for a new line of outdoor sports apparel!



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No More Eastern Retrobooks

by Bob Cipoletti

This purpose of this writing is to offer my own perspective on some very important points which, to some extent, have been previously made, as part of American Whitewater's ongoing discussion of river classification. Unlike the majority of opinions which have been offered on this issue, mine is NOT expert. However, I have spent considerable time paddling a wide variety of rivers around the West, and most recently, a brief tour of the East. There are recent editions of comprehensive guidebooks available for every region, and there are three particular areas where I believe that the Eastern guidebooks differ from their counterparts in the West.

1. Recognizing the advantage of the conscientious use of +/- to further specify the relative difficulty of rapids.

2. The importance of correlating fluctuations in difficulty with fluctuations in flow.

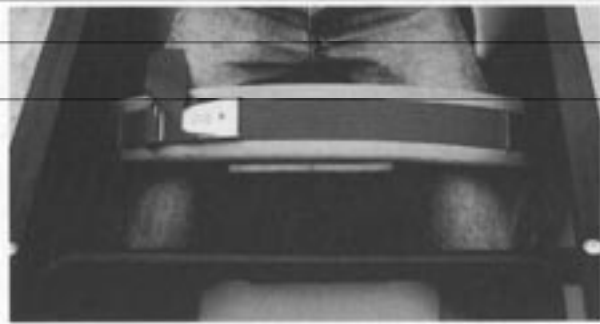
3. The role of the rating in describing potential hazards.

First of all, in the opinion of Western authors, Class V isn't just harder than IV. It's significantly harder than V-, which is significantly harder than IV+, etc.. Therefore, paddlers should expect BIG differences between rapids whose ratings differ by 1/2 class.

As an example, the Numbers on Colorado's Arkansas river is one of the most popular kayaking runs in the state. Below 2.5' (IV-), this run is teeming with boaters from all over the country. Over 3' (IV), the softies go elsewhere. At levels over 4' (IV+), this is a lonely place. Particularly in the range of 4'-5', this entire run is as big, as hard, and, because of the continuous nature and ever-present hydraulics, as dangerous as ANYTHING on the Upper Gauley at normal release levels. So, is this Class V? NO! Why? It's the same run and the same lines that the entire world thinks is Class IV at lower levels, except it's bigger and faster, and when you punch something, it punches you back.

The 'new testament' is not predisposed to 'downgrading' either. Consider the Rio Grande's Pilar Run, which is the neighborhood playground for every boater that hangs their hat in the state of New Mexico. For years it was considered plain old Class III. Although people would get really good boating there exclusively, and soft intermediates stayed away at high water, nobody was willing to go so far as to call it Class IV. The latest guidebook rates it III+, IV-, and IV at low, medium and high water, respectively. They're not exaggerating either. You couldn't even find Tablesaw in any one of those rapids at high water.

The point to all of this is that such a system, when used judiciously, is not only consistent with the definitions set forth by the Safety Code of the AWA, but is also much more accurate in describing the way that experienced boaters, who are truly familiar with the circumstances, perceive the relative difficulty. The same is true for experienced boaters at every level. This frame of reference is in stark contrast to the lack of structure found in the Eastern style of guidebook, which seems to tack on another level of



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difficulty for each time the paddler gets splashed. The latest Southeastern guidebook's description of the Upper Gauley reads like an ad for a commercial raft trip: "... five Class V ... a dozen Class IV+ and uncounted Class III+ rapids." That author clearly has a preference for the '+' system.

I'm no expert on the Gauley, having only run it once. But, as Joe Greiner has so effectively pointed out, Eastern guidebooks contain some peculiar notions concerning the relevance of hazards, and the length, continuity and difficulty of rapids on the Upper Gauley at standard release levels. However, another example of this type of confusion is evolving right before your eyes. I'm referring to the current publicity regarding Initiation. The Safety Bulletin is a great idea, but do some people really think that in the future, others will be more likely to avoid the river right bank, if a straightforward Class III rapid is rated Class IV? Could this be exactly what happened in the past with other Upper Gauley rapids?

I once asked my good paddling buddy and old-time guidebook author, Jim Stohlquist, who is a very knowledgeable and sensible boater, how he would rate Gore Canyon against the rest of Colorado rivers. He said, "It's one of the hardest in

the state." I said, "What do you mean? I do it." He replied, "Sure, at low water." The point is that if you're going to give a knowledgeable, sensible boater one crack at rating Gore Canyon, he ain't gonna to say V-. He'll probably say V+, or even VI, which it surely is at peak flows. Nevertheless, when dozens of solid boaters run it in the fall, they're going to think he's a quack. Describing a rapid in terms of a single flow is not fair to the reader, and it's not fair to the author. I wish I knew to what extent, knowledgeable Eastern authors are influenced by the sight of Iron Ring at 1200, or Lost Paddle at 8000.

Furthermore, the combination of information on flow variation and the associated levels of difficulty can provide valuable insight. For example, the three big rapids on the Upper Kern's Gold Ledge Run are rated V- at flows above 2500, while the Upper Taos Box is rated V- at flows below 800. While the ratings suggest that approximately the same level of skill is required for either run, there are obvious differences for the paddler to anticipate. At that level, the Kern's rapids are big and pushy, in addition to being steep and generously sprinkled with beefy hydraulics. Meanwhile, the pool and drop Upper Box is VERY steep, technical and dangerous, and

therefore garners the same rating at flows considered to be relatively slow and more manageable.

Charlie Walbridge is absolutely right about a new river feeling different the first time around. Isn't that one reason that we seek them out? Furthermore, that should be perfectly obvious to every paddler the very first time that they return to the site of their river clinic. They should be equally well aware that it's their perception that's changing, not the river.

William Finnoff, who is an awesome C1 paddler, accompanied me down the Taylor River Canyon for the first time at unusually high water due to this year's exceptional snow pack. We both casually agreed that it was a nifty Class IV run. After following my line through #4 on the Arkansas at 4.5' (rated Class IV+) the next day, William was pretty convinced



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that the rapid was Class Fiveish, especially if we were calling the previous day's run Class IV. Sound familiar? The next day William ran his own line through #4 and barely got his boat wet. After further consideration of the Taylor, it was not hard to imagine how the first time down a narrow river, lined with fallen trees, with a continuous gradient approaching 90 feet per mile, would seem to be Class IV. Although the river is easily navigated, we were eddy hopping like it was the first descent of Cherry Creek because it was quite steep as far as we could see, and we could never be sure of the actual placement of the trees from a distance. Guidebook rating: **HH+**. Right On.

The point is that no one has any business rating a river according to how THEY feel on any ONE day, whether it's the first day, or the tenth day. Ratings should be based solely upon the skill required to safely and reliably negotiate the rapid(s), with appropriate consideration given to the consequences of the failure to do so. Furthermore, this determination should be made over a period of time by as large a pool of knowledgeable, sensible opinions as possible. People who do otherwise are deliberately building ambiguity into the system.

When I started boating 5 years ago, most everything was Class 2, 3, 4 or 5. People were always bickering, upgrading, downgrading, condescending, you

name it! The more ambiguous classification system was serving the up-and-comers like a cotton sprayskirt. The only people whining now are those whose reputation was rooted in the ambiguity. Everyone else is too busy talking about how "right-on" the latest guidebook is. Now a couple of everyday boaters can travel throughout the Western states and know, more or less, what to expect. We knew from the description that a high water run of the Merced immediately below El Portal would be similar to the bulk of the Upper Animas. Contrast that to the very capable young woman from Wyoming, who told me that until she saw the Upper Gauley first hand, she was catatonic, because after reading a pile of eastern guidebooks, she expected to see something comparable to the last 5 miles of the N. Fork of the Payette! Unfortunately, I know exactly how she felt.

A lot of people are adamant about not reassessing the current ratings of eastern streams for fear of blowing smoke in the eyes of the little guys. But, while the experts are burning the midnight oil trying to decide how to pigeonhole the Class V+, VI-, and VI rapids, the rest of us are walking around in the dark! In the future, I'm going to rely upon familiar voices to give me first hand descriptions of Eastern rivers. That is, until Joe Greiner gets around to writing the definitive Eastern guidebook for the rest of us.

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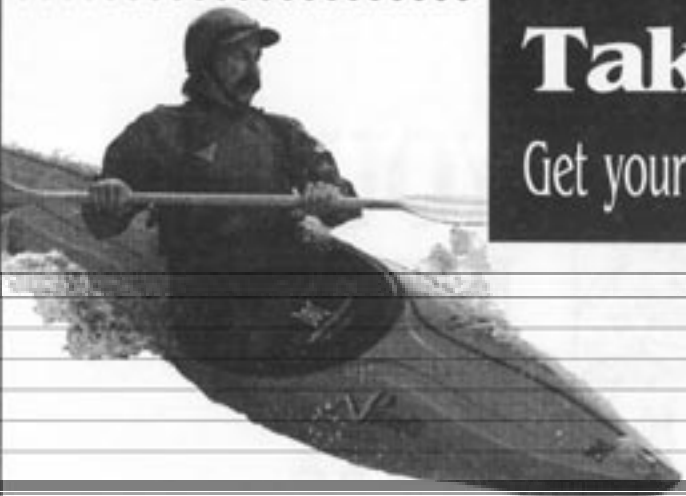
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YOU MIGHT BE A KAYAKER

by Tom Abraham

- 1 If you call your van or tent or the guide house home more than 100 days a year, you might be a kayaker.
- 2 If the smell of wet polypro no longer nauseates you, you might be a kayaker.
- 3 If your ideal woman is one that pulls out of an eddy and says "See if you can make this move, sissy!", you might be a kayaker.
- 4 If your boat, paddle and racks cost more than the vehicle they are on, you might be a kayaker.
- 5 If your Christmas list is the Mountain Surf Catalog, you might be a kayaker.
- 6 If your idea of breakfast is a Snickers bar, a Mountain Dew and a bong on the way to the put in, you might be a kayaker.
- 7 If you own more pairs of Tevas than you do shoes, you might be a kayaker.
- 8 If you call gauges more often than you call your significant other, you might be a kayaker.
- 9 If you believe ducttape can fix any thing, you might be a kayaker.
- 10 If your idea of a good time is running some sick drop, screwing it up, not getting hurt, and trying it again until you do get hurt, you might kayaker.



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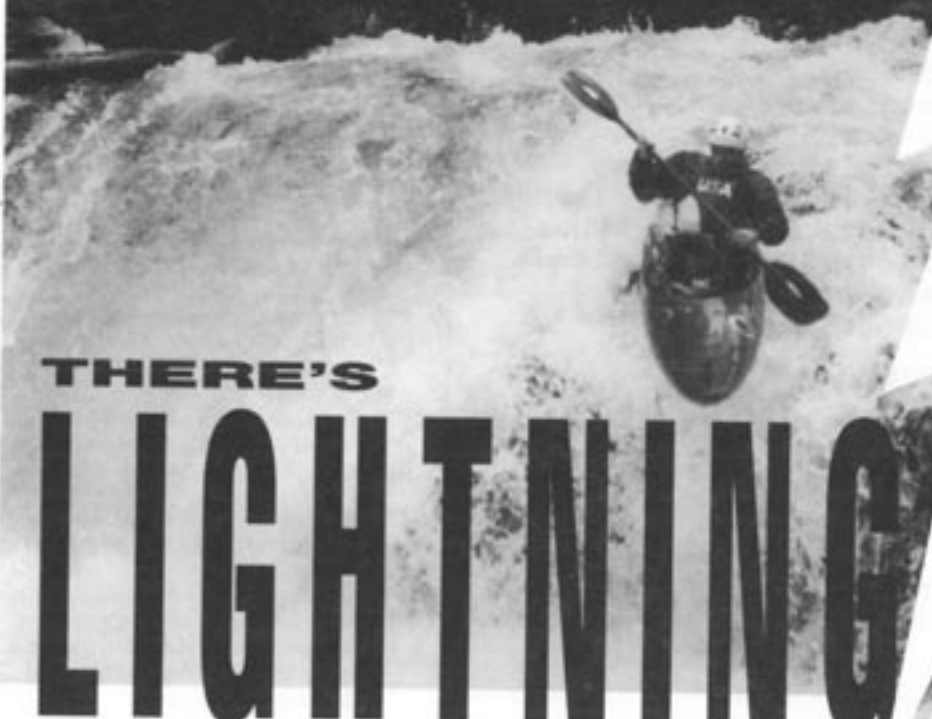
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Lee Buefigle running Sheppard's Falls, Wind River, WY. Dave Slover photo.

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THE FLYING PADDLE OF DEER CREEK

by H. Charles Foster

Spring, 1993, Deer Creek, Northern California. Bill Murphy had the lead as we floated lazily through miles of Class III wilderness, admiring the views of volcanic cliffs, oak groves, cool glades, and fern-covered grottoes. Minds and bodies were fully relaxed, until a particularly steep, basaltic cliff and pinnacle system downstream triggered a few faint warning bells.

As we drifted around a bend near the base of the cliff, we livened up at the sight of a maze of huge, chocolate-colored basalt boulders obstructing our progress. We eddied out because the narrow gaps between the first set of entrance boulders only gave us a view of more big boulders. As we eased out of our boats, Richard Penny, the third member of our group told us he was going to head on down and try to boat scout the rapid. Bill and I

took a little while to scramble up to the top of the nearest vantage point.

We ran into Richard at the top, looking a little less lackadaisical than he had moments before. And we saw why; this was definitely a difficult rapid. Twenty foot high boulders were scattered throughout the riverbed and against both vertical canyon walls for the next hundred yards. The obvious route, which Richard had started before quickly deciding to scout, was down the left side. It involved a quick turn or two, then a hard right turn to avoid a strainer tree. This sequence led to a five foot drop over a steep ledge, followed by a few more fast turns.

Richard volunteered to go first and his run was not inspiring. He started out fine, but as he entered the right turn, he had to paddle furiously to avoid the strainer. He had a good line for the ledge

drop, but got a huge backender that sent him screaming across the runout, bow up at a 45 degree angle, headed for a splat on one of the boulders. Just in time he managed to get his boat under control and avoid the boulder. As he pulled into an eddy at the bottom of the rapid, his recommendation was clear - portage.

Bill and I were all for that and started planning our portage route. There wasn't one. The same massive boulders that created up the rapid were also piled right up against the steep canyon walls. Any spaces between these rocks were choked with luxuriant, five foot high poison oak. Maybe the rapid wasn't as hard as Richard had made it look. Back to scouting...

We decided that by going through a kayak-wide slot, we could totally avoid the tree. That slot also lined up very well with the ledge drop, giving one a chance to build up more speed to ski jump the hole. And, it didn't involve intimate contact with poison oak. Confident that we had a winning plan, we piled into our boats. Bill peeled out, disappearing into the maze of boulders.

I waited about thirty seconds, and took my turn. The water was far pushier than it had looked. (Why does it work that way so often?) All too soon I was approaching the narrow slot, just in time to see Bill's kayak floating out, upside down. This distracted me so that as I dropped into the slot, I didn't quite get my paddle parallel to my boat. As I slid down the drop my paddle hung up on the rocks framing the slot. It flew out of my hands. Richard says it went thirty feet into the air, twisting and spinning, before clattering down atop a boulder, then bouncing into the river. I plopped into the slack water below the slot with plenty of speed and not ability to slow down.

As I hand-paddled desperately backward I caught a good look at Bill. He was within arm's reach of my bow, struggling to climb a steep, slick rock. In spite of all my backpaddling, I was slowly creeping toward the big ledge drop. There was no point asking Bill for help, so I shifted into forward gear. I actually managed to take a good line off the ledge, keeping my nose up and landing flat, but Deer Creek wasn't done with me yet. I had about a half second to congratulate myself for not pinning before I got a great view of the sky, then water. I'd done a classic backender, right back into the hole! The swim that ensued wasn't my worst, but it ranked right up there.

Epilogue: Bill made his way to shore, and hiked through the poison oak to the bottom of the rapid. We recovered both boats, and my flying paddle eventually completed its run of the rapid. Bill's paddle was never seen again.

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Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, AWA Briefs, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines, Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater cartoons are also welcomed.

If possible articles should be submitted using Wordperfect on a 5 1/4" single sided flexible disc. Please use the standard Wordperfect default settings; do not alter the margin or spacing parameters. If you use a different word processing program and/ or smaller disks, send us one anyway... we may be able to transfer it to our files. Send a printed copy of the article, as well.

Those without access to a word processor may submit their articles typed. Please double space.

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints or color prints. Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we can not guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you

want us to return your pictures, include a self addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Because we publish in black and white, photos with a lot of contrast work best.

American Whitewater Feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flatwater. The best features have a definite slant... or theme. They are not merely chronological recountings of river trips.

Open the story with an eye catching lead, perhaps by telling an interesting anecdote. Dialogue should be used to heighten the reader's interest. Don't just tell us about the river... tell us about the people on the river... develop them as characters. Feature articles should not be written in the style of a local club newsletter.

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to class III and IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river

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Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through and don't be afraid to poke a little fun at yourself...and your paddling partners.

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Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally responsible for the accuracy of such material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

Articles will be edited at the discretion of the editors to fit our format, length and style. Expect to see changes in your article.

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THE ALL-TIME ENDER

by Jonathan Katz

1. "Yee-Hah!!"

Chopper's rebel yell was so loud Omaha heard it underwater. He hung upside down in the pool at work, testing the outfitting in a prototype canoe. He rolled up, shook the water out of his ears and gaped at Chopper. "What's up?" he asked.

"Cheat's up, that's what. Four feet on the Albright gauge. McBride's closing the plant early. We're going to West Virginia. Right now."

"There is a River God," Omaha grinned. "Lemme grab some dope for the road and we're outa here."

So it was that at one o'clock on a bright summer Tuesday afternoon Bam-Bam McBride, Kenny Omaha and Mark Chopper decided to have a friendly little balls-to-the-wall surfing contest to see who was the baddest boater at Big Nasty. And thereby changed the entire course of human history. . . .

2. Lepticon, U.M.G., sat at the main battle station of his starship. He had planet Earth locked in his crosshairs. His finger twitched impatiently on the firing button while he waited for the last report from his scouting party. One push and this moldy, sodden blue world would disappear from his view-screen. U.M.G. stood for Undisputed Master of the Galaxy, and it was not an honorary degree. He'd kicked an awful lot of interstellar ass to earn the title, and he aimed to keep it. In space, there is no room for wimps.

Lepticon was positioned where he wanted to be, in a parallel universe about half a second behind Earth-time. He knew from long experience that most intelligent life forms spent their days in a futile effort to foretell the future. Only about two or three percent were smart enough to worry about trying to predict the past. Of those, virtually all looked deep into the dim recesses of time. They missed the threat that loomed right over their shoulder until it was too late. Lepticon would reveal himself for an instant, just long enough to show them the error of their ways, before he blasted them into oblivion.

He smiled. "As strategy goes it's not exactly rocket science, but it's always worked for me."

Lepticon acknowledged the presence of Baseg, his Science Officer.

"There's a thick layer of biological crud on that planet," Baseg said, gesturing toward Earth. "Flammable atmo-

sphere, a whole boatload of water, and a scum of primitive life forms, plants and animals mostly. Just different patterns of the same dull, boring DNA molecule. Garbage life, not even worth taking samples."

"Any sign of intelligence at all?" Lepticon asked.

"If you want to call it that," Baseg replied. "One dominant animal, usual architecture. Two legs, two arms, body, head. Brain about as powerful as the warning light on your toothbrush. Violent polluters, who spend all their time copulating and making war."

"Totally worthless, eh? Where did you get your data?"

"Zaxxor and Ariane are still on the surface. They did a random geographical survey, all places beginning with the Earth-letter B. They visited Bosnia, Belorussia, Bien Hoa, Belfast, Bombay, Biafra, Botswana, Bolivia, Beirut and Brooklyn. Found nothing but war and sex, sex and war, over and over and over again. Last stop is a place called Big Nasty. Sounds awful, but they wanted to go."

"So tell them to take a quick look, make a final report, and beam up. We'll leave our mark here and find a more promising star."

Baseg knew Lepticon's mark. The U.M.G. would tap the accelerator, just a little, and the exhaust from the stardrive would flash-burn the scum off the surface of the planet and leave it sterile, a smooth, unblemished sphere of polished iron, airless, waterless, lifeless, perfect. Then they'd set it spinning with a tractor beam, fast enough so that it pulsed a radio signal for a million light-years all around. A tell-tale warning to the rest of the universe: Lepticon was here.

3. On a Tuesday afternoon after heavy rain in high summer the Cheat was deserted. The raft companies couldn't scare up enough customers for midweek bootleg runs, and the few commercial trips that had managed to put on were far ahead of the McBride-Omaha boys. They had Big Nasty to themselves, and at four on the gauge the hole was a sticky, churning mass of froth and hydraulic variables, not your basic midsummer play spot. But the damage potential from the swim was minimal and they could carry their boats upstream on the beach and run it again and again. McBride eased his kayak into the hole on the way down, backpaddled to wedge himself in, and bounced and juddered around for a

while till he capsized and washed free.

Chopper and Omaha watched the Yobel laureate make a fool of himself. Neither saw Zaxxor and Ariane materialize on the beach. When they beamed down they looked like they'd been settled in for hours. After Chopper saw that McBride was clear of the hole he glanced up and saw the pair just sitting there—a trusted, filthy looking Caucasian wino and an absolutely riveting blonde.

Chopper nearly jumped out of his skirt in surprise as he surveyed the odd couple on the other side of the river. Where the hell had they come from? He saw no boats, and he knew the overland hike into the canyon was brutal. And were these two ever mismatched. The man looked horrible, red-eyed and scabrous, wearing ripped, grease stained khakis and matted hair. He was well over six feet tall, Chopper guessed, and well under 150 pounds. Literally skin and bones, an emaciated rail, probably dying of AIDS. And the woman?

Chopper and the voluptuous Arden Tygart had been sleeping tandem for some time, but that was an accidental relationship. Normally he was immune to feminine wiles. In fact, he'd rather play paintball than get laid. But the babe on the beach was stunning: big eyes, high cheekbones, an archly sensual mouth, surrounded by a bomb of blonde hair and perched on a mile of legs. And dressed to stop a truck. She belonged on a runway in Paris modelling ready-to-wear, not on some rock beach in the hills of West Virginia, next to one of the walking dead. Chopper caught Omaha's attention, pointed to the pair, and quickly ferried his kayak into the meat of the hole, where he settled in and began to surf his brains out.

Ariane watched Chopper ride the hole for a few seconds and transmitted the image to Lepticon and Baseg in the ship. "Look," she beamed, "This is different."

4. At his battle station Lepticon projected Ariane's vision onto his scanner. He watched Chopper bounce and flail in Big Nasty and turned to Baseg.

"What is this activity?" he asked. "Is it war?"

Zaxxor answered from the beach, where he, too, sat and watched. He observed that Omaha wore a hand-held projectile shooter in a sling on his lifejacket. Even by local standards it was not a powerful weapon, when compared to a primitive airfoil like a B-52.

"Their military technology is unbe-

THE ALL-TIME ENDER continued

lievably crude. They try to perforate each other's bodies with small cylinders of base metal, or turn solids into gases at close range in an effort to blow off chunks of flesh. They cannot even regenerate their own body parts, and when enough of them have sustained this type of physical damage one side declares that the other is the winner. Ridiculous;"

Lepticon made war by going back in time and vaporizing the earliest ancestor of his enemy, thereby destroying the bad guy before he was ever born and eradicating all trace that he had ever even existed. Lepticon agreed that setting off explosive bursts of gas near an enemy's body, or peppering him with small lead balls, was not worth the bother.

Ignoring Omaha's pistol, Zaxxor studied Chopper carefully, saw him flip his kayak and then right himself using only his paddle: no pistols, no plasma rayguns, no vaporizers, no weapons of any sort. Finally Zaxxor responded. "To answer your question, I don't believe the activity you are watching is war."

Lepticon agreed. Whatever Chopper was doing in the hole, it did not appear to have military significance. So, if not war, then perhaps the other?

"Is it sex?" Lepticon asked.

Ariane had studied the reproductive habits of the indiginous life form in thirty-seven places that begin with the letter B, including Buffalo, Bogota, Berlin and Binghamton. She knew that humans nearly always had sex by themselves or in groups of two. Invariably, alone or in pairs, they made physical contact with certain organs between their thighs.

Now she inspected Chopper closely. She was quite sure he was alone in the kayak. His sprayskirt fit tightly, blocking his lap, sealing him in the boat from the waist down. There was no way his hands could reach through the skirt to touch the organs between his legs.

"No," she replied. "Its not sex."

"What is it, then?" Lepticon asked, for he was truly not sure.

5. Back at Big Nasty it took Omaha less than three seconds to fall hopelessly in love. His mission in life was to save the gorgeous blonde from spending another moment with the dreadful wino she sat next to. He was certain he could impress her. Swiftly he paddled his open canoe into the maw of Big Nasty. With quick, powerful strokes he drove the bow of the boat deep into the bottom of the hole. The river bit. The stern rocked up behind him. Ender time!!

The bow of the canoe dug deep into the river, and the force of the rushing water popped the boat up into the air. Omaha leaned backward, struggling to stay verti-

cal, but he'd overbalanced and the boat fell forward on top of him, trapping his body upside down under water. For long seconds he struggled to set up his roll in the violent, aerated current. Finally he got his anchor points and slowly rolled the boat upright, gasping for breath as his head broke the water.

A wet and chastened Omaha drifted downstream in front of the flaxen-tressed honeydripper who was the object of his desire. He felt like a jerk for trying to show off. But she smiled at him, a radiant, glowing smile that filled him with a warmth sweeter than lust, and their eyes met. Omaha's body filled with contentment.

At that moment Ariane's telepathic powers flooded every cell and synapse in Omaha's drug-addled brain. She could have sucked his mind right then. She could have downloaded every conscious and unconscious thought he'd ever possessed so he'd forget he even knew how to breathe. She could have left him there to die in mute, suffocating agony as every nerve cell in his body discharged its full load of pain and rage and fear. But she didn't. She simply copied the two or three hundred gigabytes of data that made up Omaha's mind and soul and got out of his head. The process took less than a second.

Ariane's smile had overwhelmed Omaha. He had to do something to overcome his embarrassment, so he waved his paddle in the air and shouted, "Its FUN!!"

FUN. FUN. Ariane toyed with the word. It was new to her. In Bosnia, Belfast and Beirut it was not a term anyone used. So her translation index took over. She started with Chinese, the most-spoken language on earth. There were thirty-four characters pronounced "fun" but none of them appeared to mean anything somebody would scream after getting trashed in a big hole. Her mind drew similar blanks in Russian and Hindi before she started on English.

As she worked she picked through the gibberish she'd copied from Omaha's mind. She threw out the ninety-seven per cent of his conscience that was preoccupied with sex and drugs and war, and isolated one small kernel of pure joy: surfing an open boat in big water. At last she gained some inkling of what Omaha was yelling about.

"Its definitely not sex or war," she beamed to Lepticon. "Its 'fun', behavior done solely for the purpose of ~~pleasure~~, which is something valuable that we haven't seen before."

6. "So they are capable of recreation," Lepticon mused, watching Bam Bam McBride sidesurf the hole. "They like to have a good time."

"It doesn't look like anything I'd want

to try," Baseg responded.

"So, shall we cook them now or let them live?"

"Let them play with their boats a while longer. This planet poses no threat to us, and its doomed anyway. They are choking on their own feces."

"All right," Lepticon said. "Beam up Zaxxor and Ariane. We'll mark the ninth planet and warp out of here."

At Big Nasty Omaha caught an eddy in his swamped canoe and glanced back upstream toward his new-found love. But she and the derelict were gone. Anxiously Omaha scanned the beach, but it was as if she was never there.

They must have slipped behind the boulders for a quickie, he thought, and wondered with a pang of deep sadness just what the wino had that he, the legendary Kenneth Omaha, was missing.

Later that evening, deep in interplanetary space, Lepticon fired his stardrive and his warship knifed through the present, headed deep into the future. On the way he polished Pluto as smooth and round as a cue ball, a fact earthbound scientists would not discover for three hundred years.

7. McBride sprung for a hotel room that night and the three tired warriors sprawled on the double beds, watching the tube. McBride had drunk a sixpack and Omaha was deep into a fifth of Cuervo Gold. Nobody moved to change the channel, which was broadcasting a local access program called Midnight Hog Report. Suddenly the TV flickered once, hard, as the electromagnetic pulse from Lepticon's departure disrupted Earth's communications net. It did no lasting damage (except to certain nuclear weapons targeting computers in Washington and Moscow, which remained broken for months) but it annoyed Omaha, who cursed and grumbled that there was something wrong with the TV.

McBride rose suddenly. In a deep, robotic voice he intoned, "There is nothing wrong with your TV set. We control the horizontal. We control the vertical."

Chopper responded. "Beam me up, Scotty, There's no intelligent life down here."

7. Omaha lived long, and prospered. But he never learned that the ender he botched at Big Nasty saved Planet Earth from instant extermination. And he never forgot her smile.

© Jonathan Katz October 21, 1995

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(See chart at right for prices & specs)

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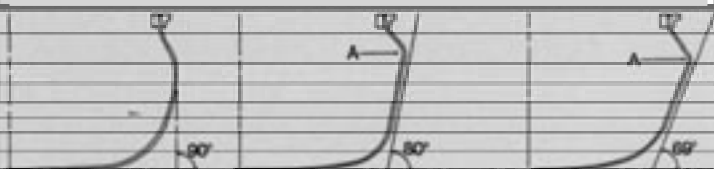
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As you can see from the center cross section, the Probe has more flare than the Viper. This is accomplished by lowering point A one inch and making the boat one inch wider at this point. The tuck-in above point A allows for a narrow gunwale width and a pocket for your hand. The extreme flare, (more than any other whitewater playboat) results in fantastic final or secondary stability, yet still maintains a sleek bottom that makes upstream moves, ferries and getting on surfing wave! surprisingly easy. In summary, the Probe is a performance boat that is user-friendly.

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VIPER 11	11'6"	27"	15.5"	45 LBS	ROYALEX	\$825	\$577.50
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