

# american whitewater

January  
February  
1997

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# American Whitewater

Journal of the American Whitewater Affiliation

Volume XXXVII, No.1

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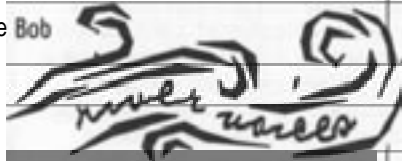
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# Introducing the AWA/WKF Partnership

As paddlers of America's rivers and guardians its whitewater resources we have much to be psyched about as we launch into a new year. AWA continues to grow in 1997 as the only national organization working full time for whitewater conservation, access, and safety. We won some significant battles last year, undertook some new ones, and held fast on some old conflicts. With each new year, our membership grows, and the population of whitewater paddlers, who become vested in the protection of our whitewater rivers, rises to what now quite clearly amounts to a boom. New equipment, new techniques, advances in safety procedures, broader popularity, and growing threats to whitewater resources mean changes in our sport and changes in how we at AWA approach our mission.

This issue of the Journal introduces

one such change and provides evidence of the continued vitality of AWA. In November 1996, the AWA Board approved a cooperative agreement with the World Kayak Federation (WKF) under which the AWA will help advertise and promote professional events sponsored by the WKF, and the WKF will share revenues from those events with the AWA to help fund our growing whitewater conservation and access programs. WKF athletic events will complement the National Organization for Whitewater Rodeos, AWA's established circuit of whitewater athletic events.

In this issue WKF President Eric Jackson introduces the Federation and describes its instructional programs and race events. Under the cooperative agreement WKF will provide frequent articles and may even have a regular column in

## EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in the features and editorials of **American Whitewater** are those of the individual authors. They do not necessarily represent those of the Directors of the American Whitewater Affiliation or the editors of this publication.

On occasion American Whitewater publishes official organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

## STAFF

Editor: Bob Gedekoh, Box 228, R.D.#4, Elizabeth, Pa. 15037

Emeritus Editor: Chris Koll

Contributing Editors: John Weld, Pope Barrow

**Art direction/Graphic design/Production:** John K. Victor, 370 Belleview Ave., Chillicothe, OH 45601

Contributing writers: Carla Garrison, Jonathan Katz, Ed Ditto, Lee Belknap, Joe Greiner, Mark White, Bruce Farrenkopf, Nathan Lewis, Brik Miller, John Foss, Paul Tefft, Howard Davidson

Production Assistant: Richard and Teresa **Augustin**

Advertising Director: Phyllis Horowitz, Box 636, Margaretville, New York 12455 (914) 586-2355

Safety Editor: Charlie Walbridge, 230 Penllyn Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422; Phone 215-646-0157; fax 215-643-0668; email 73514.1714@compuserve.com.

Conservation and Access Editors: Rich Bowers, Rich Hoffman, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD, 20910 Phone (301) 589-9453 Fax (301) 589-6121, email: 72732.401@compuserve.com, 76435.731@compuserve.com

Missing Copies and Address Changes: Contact Phyllis Horowitz

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American Whitewater. Benefits of this new partnership can be seen already in articles launched in this issue by WKF Pro Team Members and world class competitors Dan Gavere and Corran Addison.

All AWA members may join the WKF at half-price (\$25), and AWA membership will remain at the bargain price of \$25. AWA members will be able to sign up for both groups or maintain only one membership. Together, the AWA and the WKF have much to offer.

1997 promises even greater popularity for whitewater boating and greater challenges for those defending access to our rivers and conservation of our whitewater resources. For existing AWA members, I hope you will take an increasingly active role in our efforts this year. For nonmembers, I encourage you to join the AWA and the WKF, two organizations that are working together to ensure you the ride of your life'

Ric Alesch  
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# LETTERS

## RODEO PICTURE CONFUSION

Dear Bob:

I enjoyed Kelly Mull's article "At the Bigfork Festival, The Mother Ship" (*American Whitewater*, September/October 1996). Sounds like everyone has a great time and I applaud the organizers' efforts. Just one question: why were all the article pictures from the Payette Whitewater Roundup?

Ted Ryan

Committee Chair

of the Payette Whitewater Roundup  
Idaho Whitewater Association

**EDITORS REPLY:** Montana... Wyoming... Idaho... Aren't they all the same place? Tenderfoots like myself (from East of the Mississippi) get so easily confused! Actually, the photos in question were intended to go with Kelly Mull's other article, which was about the rodeo scene in general. Sorry, about that. I'm even sorer that we neglected to credit the photographer for those fine pictures... for the record they were taken by Jack Popowich. Thanks, Jack.



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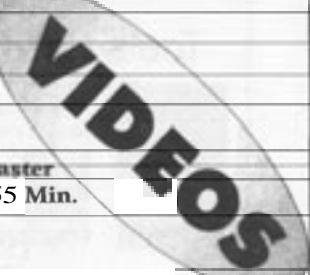
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# Guidelines for Contributors

Please read this carefully before sending us your articles and photos! This is a volunteer publication, please cooperate and help us out. Do not send us your material without a release - signed by all authors and photographers [attached]!!

The editorial staff of American Whitewater carefully reviews all material submitted for publication. We are particularly interested in receiving full length feature articles, conservation and club news, special event announcements, articles pertaining to whitewater safety and short, humorous pieces.

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

If possible articles should be submitted on a 3" computer disk "cassette", after wordprocessing. (Wordperfect preferred - others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. 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 personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

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.

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not our intent to intentionally offend our more sensitive members and readers.

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. If you don't want us to edit your article, don't send it to us! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes we make prior to publication.

The American Whitewater Affiliation is non-profit; the editors and contributors to American Whitewater are not reimbursed. On rare occasions, by prearrangement, professional writers receive a small honorarium when they submit stories at our request. Generally, our contributors do not expect payment, since most are members of the AWA, which is a volunteer conservation and safety organization.

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# DIRECTORS

Anita Adams  
Star Route 1, Box 46  
Edmond, WV 25837

Ric Alesch  
14262 West Warren Place  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
73624.2333@compusewe.com

Landis Arnold  
P.O. Box 4617  
Boulder, CO 80306  
landis@wildnet.com

Pope Barrow  
136 13th Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
72702.1552@compusewe.com

Lee Belknap  
1308 Maryland Avenue  
Glen Ellen, VA 23060  
76513.2466@compuserve.com

Risa Shimoda Callaway  
216 Inverness Way  
Easley, SC 29642  
risa@kayaker.com

Tom Christopher  
931 Union Street Rear  
Leominster, MA 01453

Brooke Drury  
8224 14th Avenue NE  
Seattle, WA 98115  
brooked@mountaineers.org

Chuck Estes  
114 Bay Path Drive  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830-7801

David Fallside  
1700 49th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819  
fallside@rahul.net

Bob Gedekoh  
Box 228, RD 4  
Elizabeth, PA 15037

Bob Glanville  
66 Deer Run  
Glenwood, NY 14069  
104121567@compuserve.com

Joe Greiner  
7316 Chicora Court  
Raleigh, NC 27615

Barry Grimes  
124 Hilltop Drive  
Richmond, KY 40475  
bagrim1@pop.uky.edu

Chris Koll  
352 Cameco Circle  
Liverpool, NY 13090-2732  
cko111234@aol.com

Kevin Mendik  
135 Nathan Lane  
Carlisle, MA 01741

Joe Pulliam  
P.O. Box 1500  
Harriman, TN 37748  
72002.305@compusewe.com

Susan Scheufele  
2121 Ocean Street Ext.  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
susans@eng.sun.com

Jim Scott  
3715 Jocelyn Street NW  
Washington, DC 20015  
jscott@amfor.org

Pete Skinner  
2 Snyder Road  
West Sand Lake, NY 12196  
skinnp@rpi.edu

Ron Stewart  
P.O. Box 1337  
Chattanooga, TN 37401  
ron\_stewart@baylor.chattanooga.net

Mac Thornton  
6467 Wishbone Terrace  
Cabin John, MD 20818  
72634.316@compusewe.com

Barry Tuscano  
RD 1, Box 32  
Bolivar, PA 15923  
tmr@westol.com

Charlie Walbridge  
230 Penlyn Pike

Penlyn, PA 19422  
73514.1714@compusewe.com

Susan Wilson  
52 Albemarle Place #T6  
Asheville, NC 28801  
76017.3534@compusewe.com

## AWA STAFF

Rich Bowers, Conesation  
Program Director  
1430 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 589-9453  
72732.401@compusewe.com

Rich Hoffman, Access Program  
Director  
1430 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 589-9453  
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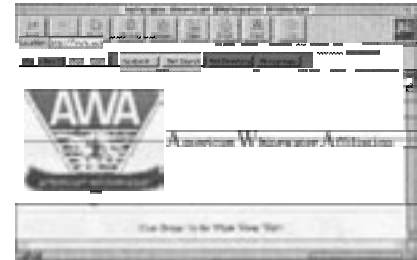
Phyllis B. Horowitz,  
Administrative Director  
P.O. Box 636  
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Kelly Mull, Events Manager  
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## AWA OFFICERS

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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 636, Margaretville, NY 12455, (914) 586-2355. AWA is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



# Take the Plunge.....

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# The Buck Starts Here!

by Rich Bowers, AWA Conservation Director

**I**n case you haven't noticed, outdoor recreation has become BIG business. I think we here at AWA have realized this for awhile, but it hit kind of hard at the end of 1996 with all the new management plans, regulations and rules which are being discussed for whitewater rivers.

For instance, the Forest Service has estimated that by the year 2000, this agency will contribute \$98 million to the Gross Domestic Product from recreation and tourism, and this will effect 2.5 million jobs. Perhaps more importantly, outdoor recreation and tourism are forecast to increase 60% by the middle of the next century.

And the Forest Service isn't alone. All of our federal and state agencies (and even local government) are recognizing the trend. However, the Forest Service is a great example because it is in charge of some of our most highly used whitewater rivers like the Ocoee, Kern, Chattooga, Nantahala, Feather, and others.

Now the above figures are for all outdoor recreation, not just whitewater. But our sport is no slouch in the economics department either. The Ocoee brought in some \$40 million last year, the South Fork American generates over \$30 million, the Penobscot, \$20 million, and even the Upper Yough brings in \$4 million a year. And let's not forget the big daddy of them all – the Gauley makes a tidy \$30 million primarily over the fall season. Add to this the fact that many whitewater rivers are in rural areas, and you have an outdoor recreation bonanza. And it's just beginning.

It seems that often the last group to realize this are boaters themselves. "Boaters are cheap" is something we often hear. But we don't hear it from agencies, landowners or developers, we hear it from other boaters. Now I'll allow that some boaters support this statement. We still have the Bob Gedekohs who talk to their trucks in the driveway, trying to coax a few more miles – the Pope Barrows who wish they had a truck (or a driveway) or the Ed Gertlers who paddle boats left over from before I was born – but the problem isn't that they are cheap ... It's... well... perhaps something best left for another article.

Let's get back on track – how many boats do you own? You

can blame the dollars on them yuppie commercial rafters, but the economics argue that you're a part of this also. Most, but not all boaters today have good jobs, we drive good cars, we consider drysuits, air-bags and break-downs, once luxury items, to be basic pieces of equipment. We even drink home-brew and buy \$10 nose plugs! By researching various economic studies, AWA found out that private boaters are tied with mountain bikers; each spends about \$80 a day in gas, food and camping fees.

Well, while some boaters are still crashed at the rest-stop, agency staff, developers and others were driving through popular river towns and counting the number of paddling vehicles parked at restaurants and hotels.

They figured out that there is money in this sport. For some, it's a legitimate discovery. They want boaters to pay for resource protection, recreation improvements and the like. And AWA supports this, just so long as it's justifiable, that it is discussed with boaters first, that the money goes into the resource, and that someone has thought this through.

The problem is, that for every legitimate expense, there seems to be two or three harebrained schemes or, worse yet, outright plans to fleece boaters. Regardless, the number of ideas floating around to

make boaters and other outdoor users pay is incredible. It threatens to change the very nature of recreation. No longer will these activities be dependent on skill, experience and independence, but on who can afford it!

It would be easy if boaters, and AWA, could "just say no" to fees. But it's not that simple. First, most boaters really want to do what's right, especially if it will help protect the rivers they paddle. Second, boaters often seem less than confident about their conservation ethic. This allows some people, including resource abusers, to turn the tables on boaters and convince them that "recreationists" should pay for the damage that abusers inflict on rivers.

Well, if we really want to improve and restore rivers, we need to make sure that our money is well spent. And the idea that boaters don't pay their way is pure **crap** (Sorry, but this is something which really sets the AWA board and staff into orbit).

**The problem is, that for every legitimate expense, there seems to be two or three harebrained schemes or, worse yet, outright plans to fleece boaters.**

And, just to stroke that conservation ethic a bit, boaters already pay for rivers - they pay **ALOT!** They pay through volunteer efforts, through letter writing and meeting attendance (often while playing hooky from work), through memberships and donations to groups like the AWA, River Network, American Rivers and others, and through their lifestyles which revolve around the outdoors.

Sure, all of us could probably do more. And we will doubtless pay more in the future. But let's not forget who's messing up the rivers. Taxing recreationists is the wrong move, lets tax resource abusers not resource users!

Some of the fee systems being proposed are good ideas, and some are not. AWA supports the good ones, but we are reluctant to endorse any system until the bogus and worthless schemes are out of the running. The following is a quick run-down of some of the ideas, and schemes, currently making the rounds and which may affect you or your local rivers in the near future:

### Demonstration Fees (National)

In April of 1996, the Clinton Administration signed a new federal appropriations law which authorizes federal land management agencies (USFS, NPS, BLM and BuRec) to implement up to 50 fee demonstration areas each. 80% of the fees raised by these "service" or "user" fees would go directly to support the cost of administering and maintaining the resource, the remaining 20% would go to the regional office. Most fees will begin after January, 1997 and remain in effect until September 30, 1998.

As we went to press, only the USFS had published a listing of their demonstration fee areas, and only two directly affected whitewater rivers:

the Nantahala (NC) will begin to charge a parking fee for all river users, and

fees or additional fees will be charged for Rogue River (OR) Wild & Scenic River Permits

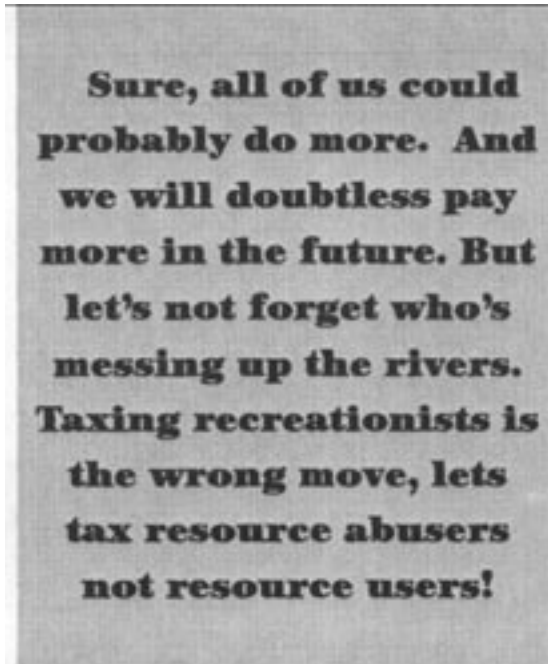
In general, AWA supports raising additional revenue if it remains within the resource. Our preliminary concerns are that demonstration fees will be set at areas where public access can be controlled (like put-ins and take-outs) and that this will become discriminatory with only those users at these sites paying fees.

### Teaming with Wildlife Tax (National)

This tax has been one of the AWA's favorite examples of a bad plan for the last year. Now it seems that others are beginning to agree with us. Proponents of this bill, which would tax outdoor gear to pay for State Fish and Wildlife Agency programs, claim that this tax is now being shopped around Congress. To be accurate, it has been rejected by every Congressional representative it has been presented to. Bill proponents cannot even finding a sponsor.

This tax remains unsupported because this tax will not secure lands, provide greater public access, and restore riverways, as it's supporters claim. Nothing in the language of the bill guar-

antees this, or lays out how much it would cost. Even groups that supported this bill in the past are having second thoughts. Just recently, one of the founding sponsors for this bill, and a member of the steering committee to push this through Congress, withdrew its support claiming that the money would never find its way out of limited Fish and Wildlife programs.



### TVA Wants Reimbursement (TN)

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) claims that returning water to the upper Ocoee River Channel would cost them between \$600,000 and \$800,000 in lost power revenues. On the other hand, better flows would increase recreation and benefit the state and local economy to the tune of nearly \$25 million annually.

Unfortunately, TVA isn't interested in the greater good. They have stated that they will need to be reimbursed before they allow more water than the 40 cfs they have released since the 1930's. One scheme is to charge boaters, both commercial and private, to pay for this water.

### Great Northern Paper's Access Plans for the Penobscot (ME)

Just recently, FERC issued a final license for Great Northern's

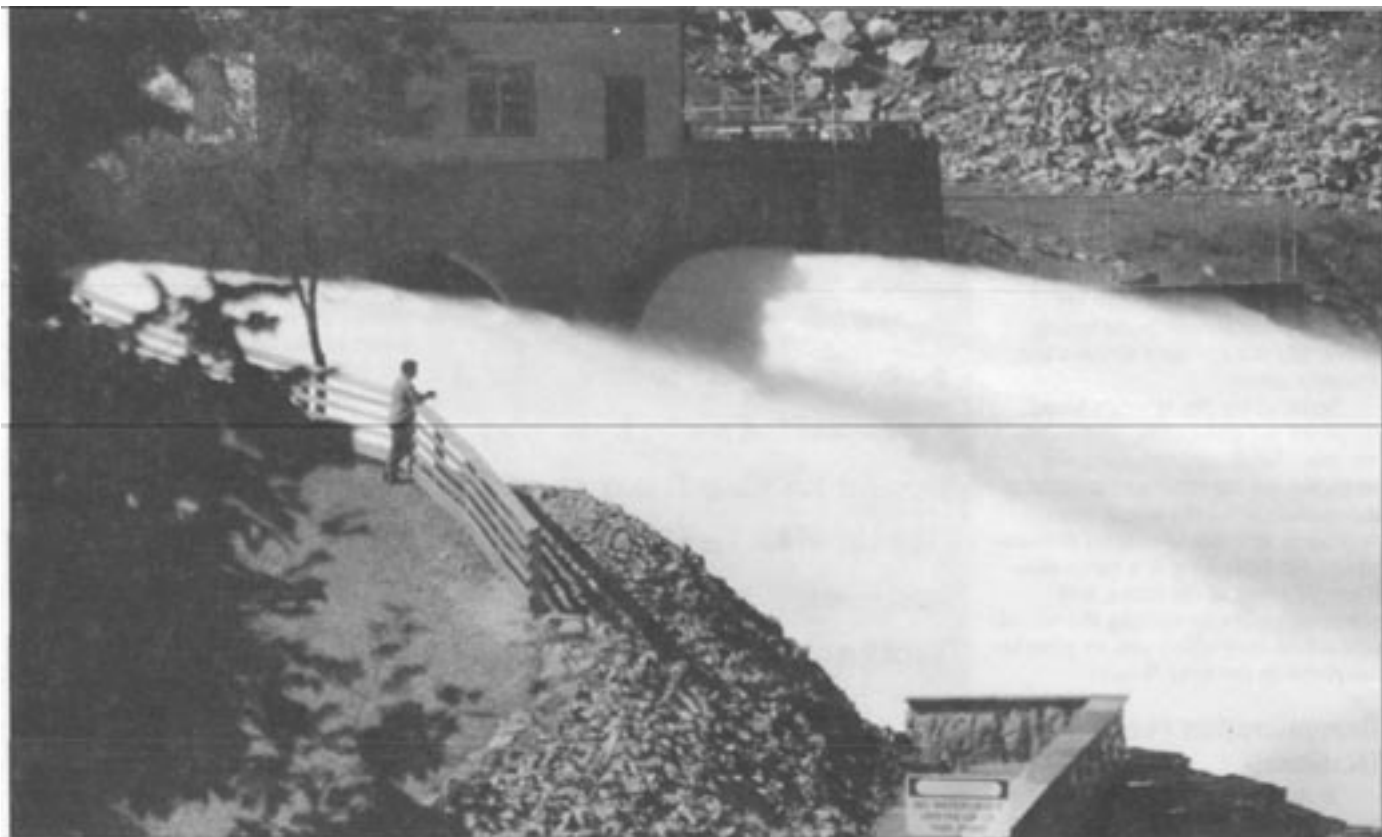
Penobscot Mills and Ripogenus projects on the upper Penobscot. In this license, the dam owner proposes to do away with its access fees for Maine residents. At first glance, this seems a worthwhile plan, and we appreciate the company's move to improve public access (pushed for years by the local Fin and Feather Club - a really cool group of retired anglers). However, on closer inspection, you may realize that if you live in Massachusetts, or Vermont, or anywhere else, you may wind up paying huge fees to offset Maine residents use of the river.

AWA, AMC, New England FLOW, American Rivers, Maine Audubon and the conservation Law Foundation have appealed this license decision. One reason is that we believe that access to the river should be free for all users. And that a navigable waterway such as the Penobscot is a public resource which belongs to more than just one state.

### Boater Fees on the South Fork American (CA) and Upper Yough (PA)

Still listed by AWA in the "hare-brained" scheme division, the local administrators of El Dorado County are seeking to manage the nationally recognized South Fork of the American for their own benefit. Fueled by local landowner misconceptions, the County is proposing boater fees to offset, among other issues, noise pollution and vandalism along the river.

Landowners along the Upper Yough were not so subtle. Early last year, these landowners requested that the state institute private boaters fees to offset a perceived "takings" of private property when boaters are on the river. Included in this was a "taking" when emergency vehicles need to cross private property to handle a rare river rescue.



# AWA Sets the Stage for Future Appeal of Gauley Hydro License

In October, AWA met with Catamount Energy and Noah Corporation – two companies helping the City of Summersville, WV to build the Gauley Hydro Project – to discuss modifications to their plans to add hydroelectric generation to the Army Corps Summersville Dam. Among these modifications was a rerouting of the transmission line across the middle section of the Meadow River and along Glade Creek. The Meadow is an outstanding whitewater tributary to the Gauley that enters just above Lost Paddle rapid, and Glade Creek is a Class III-IV stream which is now being run by more and more boaters.

After this meeting, and after a site inspection by AWA members, it was concluded that the transmission line would have a major visual impact on this watershed which could be eliminated by routing the line across the Highway 19 Bridge. As a result, AWA petitioned the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for a rehearing of its order to approve the project modifications (which included the new route of the transmission line) and to halt construction of the transmission line and the clearcutting which would accompany this. Only by stopping construction could AWA be sure to prevent irretrievable damage to the natural resources of these rivers.

AWA argued that the Environmental Assessment did not adequately address the outstanding recreational qualities of the

Meadow River or adequately examine the damage to the aesthetic values of the river corridor. The Commission's EA erroneously concluded that the rerouting of the transmission line across the Meadow River "...would have minor adverse impacts on soils, vegetation, wildlife, land use, and aesthetics, (and) would not significantly affect the environment." Contrary to the Commission's finding, locating the transmission line at the site specified in the amendment would have a major adverse impact on the aesthetic quality of the Meadow River Gorge and totally damage the value of Glade Creek as a recreational attraction. The intrusion of a structure of this kind into this area constitutes a permanent disfigurement of an otherwise beautiful natural area.

In this petition, AWA implored FERC to only approve a transmission line site that would not unduly and unnecessarily impact significant aesthetic and recreational resources of the Meadow River or Glade Creek. We suggested that the Commission provide another opportunity for public comment, revise the EA to reflect the **additional information** submitted, and, based on the public comment received and the revised EA, make a determination regarding the appropriate location for the powerline.

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

# AWA Comments on Future Management for the Upper Ocoee



In early December, AWA submitted formal comments regarding the Draft EIS for the Upper Ocoee River Corridor. AWA believes that the decisions made by the USFS regarding the Upper Ocoee will set the stage for many outdoor recreation and river restoration efforts in the future.

One of the prime issues is the restoration of 72 days of whitewater releases to this section of the river (52 recreational releases and 20 special event releases). In addition, the alternative supported by AWA would create: 44 miles of trails for hikers, bikers and horseback riding; 50 new campsites; expanded river access; and day use facilities.

In support of releases, AWA presented a strong economic argument. Last year, the middle Ocoee was "worth" \$40 million in recreation dollars and attracted nearly 300,000 people to the area. Releases on the upper river are expected to bring in an additional \$24.8 million annually in new direct spending, and create 487 new jobs (\$10.6 million in payroll).

Besides dollar benefits, releases on the upper would help alleviate the growing problem of crowding on the middle Ocoee. Use on the middle was up over 30% in 1995 as compared to 1994 and over 52% since 1988. Some 278,363 recreationists used the river last year (75% of these were commercial raft customers).

AWA also argued that whitewater cannot afford to waste another river. In a similar situation, Maryland's Savage River, site of the 1989 World Whitewater Championships has been virtually abandoned. Until this year, when AWA and others convinced the Army Corps to provide one weekend of releases, the Savage has not been available to boaters except for rare and exceptionally high flow situations. This is also true on the upper Ocoee, where the USFS has already spent \$25 million on the race course.

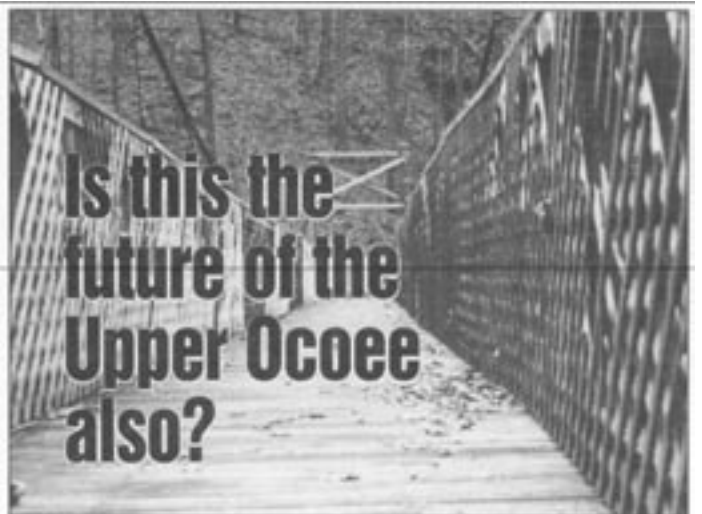
The second issue is whether or not the Tennessee Valley Authority will release the water, and if boaters will be forced to reimburse them for lost power generation.

According to the DEIS, "A supplemental agreement would be made among TVA and interested parties for reimbursement

of costs associated with water releases directly related to commercial, recreational and/or special event related to use of the upper Ocoee River."

AWA has objected to this statement. We believe that the water is a public resource and belongs in the river (the average flow for the upper is approximately 1,100 cfs, but TVA has released only 40 cfs for years). The economic payoff of whitewater releases will benefit boaters, local businesses and others who depend on the river for enjoyment or livelihood. These benefits (\$24.8 million) far surpass the marginal loss in power generation, which TVA estimates to be \$660,000 to \$830,000 per year.

In addition to releases and who will pay for them, here are a few of the other issues being decided on in this EIS: whether or not commercial use will be allowed, and what split would be used between private and commercial boaters; use of the upper for free-style (Ocoee Rodeo) competition; private boater participation in future decisions; allowing boating during high flow conditions; and overall recreation fees.



## AWA Seeks to Restore New Whitewater Sections on California's Feather

Since 1979, FERC and Pacific Gas & Electric have been working on new license terms for both the Rock Creek and Cresta dams on this river (there are many dams on the Feather, including, Hamilton Branch, Butt Valley, Caribou #1 and #2, Belden, Bucks Creek, Poe and Almanor reservoir). However, in a November 1996 draft EIS, nothing was discussed about how putting water back into the river would restore over 15 miles of whitewater. This is after the AWA, Chico Paddleheads, Shasta Paddlers and California Outdoors intervened in June of last year, and told them they had not adequately addressed the potential of whitewater on this river.

Both the 8 mile Rock Creek Run and the upper 6.5 Cresta Run have similar difficulty levels (Class III-IV with one Class V+ on Rock Creek), similar ranges for boating flows (800 to 4000 cfs), and similar optimum levels, listed at 1,500 cfs in "A Guide to the Best Whitewater in the State of California" by Stanley and Holbeck.

Just before the first of the year, AWA requested boaters to write even more letters to FERC, and submitted comments which requested FERC to:

Complete a full analysis of impacts on whitewater and provide adequate scheduled, optimal, and dependable flows on weekends and holidays in the summer and early fall.

Establish a set schedule for whitewater releases which will benefit commercial outfitters, private boaters, anglers and other river users. Install a flow phone which provides updates on this

schedule, and gives one week flow projections during naturally high flows.

Examine how supplemental flows to reduce water temperatures (requested by California Dept. of Fish and Game (CDFG) between July 15<sup>th</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>) could be used to benefit whitewater recreation.

Increase minimum flows in both sections of the river. Base these flows on scientific studies or the record, not on estimates and guesses.

Do a better job of analyzing how the Rock Creek and Cresta dams affect the overall North Fork Feather. All dams except Hamilton Branch and Caribou #1 are part of an integrated system and controlled by PG&E's office in San Francisco.

Redo the sediment pass through system, proposed in 1993. This is a major amendment to the license, and should have provided an opportunity for public comment.

Request that the 1991 Fishery Agreement be amended to include other river users (signed only by PG&E and CDFG), and increase the funding for the \$1.5 million enhancement plan to do more than just protect fishery resources.

For more information, or to get a copy of the AWA's comments on the Feather, call Rich Bowers at (301) 589-9453.

**Check out AWA's new "Hot-News" links on our HomePage for up-to-the-minute river conservation and access news - <http://www.awa.org/>**

## Restoration of California's Kern River Continues

### Upper Kern

American Whitewater, Friends of the River, the Kernville Chamber of Commerce, and the Kern River Valley Community Consensus Council have been working together to restore flows and improve recreation along the Upper Kern, designated by Congress in 1987 as a National Wild and Scenic River. However, the Kern #3 dam (Fairview), owned by Southern California Edison (Edison), removes up to 90% of the water, year round, from over 16 miles of the Kern.

So far, our combined efforts have succeeded in: increasing daily flows for whitewater between May 15<sup>th</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup>; providing a portage around the existing Fairview Dam; and improving camping facilities along the river.

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a Final Environmental Assessment for the Kern River #3 dam on the Upper Kern River. Unfortunately, boaters and local residents of the Kern Valley felt that the recommendations of the USFS

To restore more of this river, the above groups together appealed the USFS conditions on the grounds that it did not do enough to include the public (including boaters) in its decision. This appeal, which was upheld by the Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas, allowed river interests to stall the FERC relicensing process, and required the USFS to take a closer look at their decisions. In late November, over 60 boaters sent letters to Sequoia National Forest requesting that it:

Increase maximum flows for whitewater recreation to 1,400 cfs from April 1<sup>st</sup> through August 15<sup>th</sup>.

Retain at least 50% of the river's natural flow at all times to

support fisheries and other aquatic resources.

Besides improving whitewater, increased flow would boost the local tourism-based economy by \$6 million to \$8 million per year by providing 176 more days of optimum fishing, 46 more days of optimum rafting, 85 more days of optimum flows for canoes/kayaks, and 220 additional optimum days for tourism and recreation.

Now, river groups are waiting to see just what kind of rewritten conditions the USFS will present. Hopefully, they will take our appeal seriously, and make substantive decisions which will improve the Kern.

### Lower Kern

Meanwhile, the same groups working to restore the Upper Kern (as well as the local Kern River Alliance) are seeking to improve another 10+ miles of river below Lake Isabella. This includes the Class V+ Cataracts of the Kern, and the upstream Class III-IV Cadillacs of the Kern (named for the cars that wind up in the river from Highway 178).

Based on last year's whitewater study on the lower Kern, and on the legal challenge river interests have brought on the upper, Edison and the USFS have decided to seek negotiation rather than confrontation. The first set of meetings were started last October, and set an agenda which includes: scheduled whitewater releases, access improvements, establishing a Kern River supervisory board (which will include boaters and local businesses), and a Kern River trust fund. This looks to be a long process, but perhaps not long or as heated as the Upper.



## More on Kraft v. Burr

*As discussed in the last issue, the Virginia Supreme Court decided the case of Kraft v. Burr earlier this fall, a trespass case brought by local landowners against a man who was fishing the Jackson River while floating downstream. David Bailey, an attorney in Beaverdam, VA. filed an amicus brief on behalf of the AWA, Friends of the Rivers of Virginia, and several fishing groups. Here are his thoughts on the legal implications of this case:*

"The simplest way to describe it is that the Virginia court ignored the arguments regarding stream uses, state laws, and navigability, and addressed only the question whether those landowners holding a traceable King Grant could bar others from fishing by boat in the river flowing over such grant lands. Presumably, the court ignored the other issues because if they concluded the grants were valid as to fishing, interpretation of any other law to permit fishing would have constituted a 'taking', and such laws would have to be ruled unconstitutional as to them.

"In holding that the landowners could bar fishing in the waters over their crown grant lands, the Court held that the land patent contained language which stated the landowners rights ere identified as a tract of land 'lying and being in the County of Augusta on Jackson's River....and bounded as followeth, to wit [metes and bounds description] with all etc. to have hold etc. to be held etc. yielding and paying etc. provided etc. [signatory language]'.

"In reviewing the history of other patents and conveyances over English and colonial times, the majority concluded that the word 'etc.'" had become a clerk's recording shorthand for describing basic rights conveyed in all patents. Reviewing these past patents which contained the entire language, the court found conveyances of fishing rights. Based on this history, and concluding that the Crown had the right to convey fishing rights, the majority felt obligated to honor the word 'etc.' in this grant as embracing all that was described in other Crown Grant conveyances. To this language, the court added 'exclusive'. Thus, the little word 'etc.' gave the landowner the exclusive rights to fish in the river. In fact, there is little the opinion doesn't give to the landowner. Navigability is preserved, but that is about it. The Court did not rule on whether recreational boats could float by, as that was not before them. Even that, however, is now in question as the historical grants conveyed the 'rivers, waters and water courses therein'. I would hope the court would not give them the water as well but who knows.

"As for precedence in other states, only time will tell. The opinion does analyze the historical context of Crown Grants in detail and will probably be cited for that. The Virginia Supreme Court was aided by certain legislative actions by the Virginia General Assembly, which supported the court's view by codifying language that excludes state ownership of beds conveyed by special grant. Thus, the precedence of this case may be of limited value where a state legislature has re-sewed unto itself stream beds without regard to special grants. However, as a constitutional taking question, such state legislation may not be good enough.

"This decision is certainly no help in the struggle to win freedom of passage and fishing on state waters. It appears at this time that if complete public access is desired for all waters, even to float or fish, the state will have to condemn and purchase the rights from owners who can show special grant rights."

The AWA would like to offer our thanks and gratitude to David Bailey for his excellent work on this important issue.

## Black River, NY

In October, AWA travelled to upstate New York to investigate access possibilities on the Black River, an outstanding 8 mile Class III-V run by the city of Watertown. Unfortunately, there is currently no public take-out for the run, which is located on the main street in the town of Brownville. Boaters currently have permission to take out in the backyard of a private residence, but there are no facilities for changing clothes and there is inadequate parking, problems that have been mentioned by local residents and churches.

AWA is hoping to get permission to take out across the

land of a local paper factory (Rexam DSI), located on river right just downstream of the bridge in Brownville. For more information, contact Rich Hoffman at (301) 589-9453.



Left: Current take out through residential neighborhood of Brownville, NY for Black River. Photo by Nancy Weal. Right: Potential future takeout for Black River (NY) on Rexam Paper Co. land. Photo by Nancy Weal.

# The Stoneycreek River

## Pennsylvania

**By: Barry Tuscano**

It was a warm, clear, October afternoon and my wife and I were getting ready to try out a new toy. We had bought a used K-2 at the Gauley Festival and intended to give it a try on the local class III Stoneycreek River. I looked at the bridge gauge with some doubt. At the minimum runable level showing on the gauge, the Stoneycreek had a reputation for being severely polluted by acid mine drainage. Usually I try to avoid it at such low levels, but today the water was surprisingly clean and clear. We joined a group of Johnstown boaters for this after-work run. Scott Cuppet, Mark Antonsik, and Craig Miller were chattering about river conditions as they unloaded boats. This was a regular ritual for these guys who live and work near the river.

Scott and I had been in contact recently concerning the ongoing effort to get whitewater releases from Quemehoning dam,

just upstream of the put-in. For at least ten years, various groups and individuals have made efforts to get some of the water impounded in the Quemehoning restored to the riverbed. An urgent phone call from Scott two days before had revealed a surprising fact: the Quemehoning reservoir was releasing water through a 36" valve at the base of the dam. The significance of this was obvious; in all the years of discussions on the subject, Manufacturers Water Company, the dam's owner, had insisted that it was impossible to release water from the dam.

With this new information, Scott began to investigate the possibilities. He met and befriended the dam-keeper and learned that the valve had been opened 10" (the most it could be opened without affecting water pressure to industrial customers downstream). By monitoring river levels before and after the release,

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we were able to extrapolate that the valve had a capacity of approximately 100 CFS. This seemed like a meager amount of water, but some rough, preliminary calculations show that a minimum **runable** level on Stoneycreek is about 300 CFS. After studying average monthly flows, it became obvious that the dam has the capacity to supplement the Stoney, making it a usable recreational resource through most of the year.

Quemehoning Dam creates a 900 acre lake just above the confluence of Quemehoning creek and the Stoney, controlling approximately 1/3 of the watershed. The water quality from this watershed is by far the cleanest portion. The dam was built over 100 years ago by Bethlehem Steel to supply its mills with a source of water. A 66" pipe carries the water from the dam to Johnstown. Today, Bethlehem no longer makes steel in Pennsylvania and other users are drawing approximately 50% of capacity. Bethlehem wants to sell the dam and has a potential buyer. The status of the deal is unclear, but the buyer would continue to operate the dam for a water supply. Local conservation groups are planning to ask the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to require a new permit for the buyers and to include conservation releases in the permit. AWA will join this effort and hopefully expand it to include occasional recreational releases. Rich Bowers, and I recently traveled to **Harrisburg** to meet officials from the state Dept. of Environmental Protection and to address our concerns. The result of that meeting was that the state has agreed to re-open the dam permit with the purpose of establishing a regulation to provide a **conservation** release from the dam. Flows would not be significant for recreational use, but might be a foot in the door, lending to discussions between AWA and the water company.

On November 28, I attended a meeting at the dam with interested parties trying to get the state to take over the dam and open the facility to the public. Many local and state agencies were represented along with the water company. Different scenarios were discussed that would lead to public ownership of the reservoir and the surrounding land. In the long run, public ownership would perhaps be the best chance to create recreational opportunities in the area. AWA will continue to monitor this effort and represent whitewater interests.

Ben's Creek Paddling Club is sponsoring the Stoneycreek Rendezvous again this April. This will include a weekend of paddling and partying, as well as a series of races. The focus of the weekend will be the efforts to obtain an agreement to restore some of the water to the Stoneycreek.

As our October trip proved, even low levels on the Stoney can be fun. With the dramatically improved water quality a dam release provides, this could become a regular destination for intermediate paddlers.

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# "CLOSE CALL ON THE 'THE HAG'"

## Saved from ENTRAPMENT

by Joan Hildreth

I decided to write about a close call which happened in the Spring of 1996 in the hope that others might learn something valuable by reading about it. Those of us present that day certainly gained new knowledge, and things we already knew were reinforced.

On Saturday, 5/25/96 five of us - all in kayaks - put in on the Gulf **Hagas** section of the W. Branch of the Pleasant River in Maine. The level was in the medium range - 1" below the bridge abutment platform at the put-in. It was a gorgeous May day, the black flies weren't even biting. We were psyched.

Gulf **Hagas** is an incredibly beautiful river which carves its way through a remote section of the Maine woods. The overall gradient is 95 ft. per mile, but the steepest three quarter mile section averages 255 ft. per mile, with one quarter mile of that dropping 100 ft. The river varies tremendously in character over the 5 and 1/2 mile section which is usually paddled. At the put-in "The Hag" might not look like much, but don't be fooled. It starts as a meandering quickwater stream, but after a mile or so it suddenly drops over a series of spectacular runnable ledges, including the multi-staged Stair Falls (total drop about 15 to 20 ft.) and Billings Falls (19ft.).

The river soon narrows and drops through a series of constricted, often overhanging gorges. The rapids in the gorges tend to be tight, technical, and steep. It later widens and becomes flatter, meandering through relatively easy boulder-strewn rapids to the take-out. I'm not great at rating rapids but would say that "The Hag" is generally a class III - V run with one drop (usually called Amok) bordering on, or at, Class VI, depending on the level. (I personally walk that one, but there are quite a few people who run it.)

It is a river which requires good boat control due to numerous pinning/broaching possibilities. Capsizing is certainly not recommended, but in the event of a flip, rolling quickly is important. Swimming is not a good idea because of undercuts and sieves. It is a river which deserves respect-and certainly has always had mine.

I should be clear about the skill levels of the members of the party paddling that day. We are all expert boaters and most of us are very familiar with Gulf **Hagas**.

# "CLOSE CALL ON THE 'THE HAG'" Saved from ENTRAPMENT

Two of us have run it at least twenty-five times. We've run it at many different levels, from a high of 8" above the platform (pretty beefy) to a low of 10" below (pretty boney). Two others had run it at least a couple of times before. It was the first time for the fifth member of the party, but he had run numerous other rivers of similar difficulty. In addition to being experienced, I would describe all of us as careful. We enjoy challenging whitewater, but we're not exactly full-blown adrenaline junkies.

Our trip down "The Hag" that day started off really well. We took our time, running some of the drops multiple times, taking photos-just enjoying being in such a beautiful place. We were having a ball. We had clean runs off the waterfalls. All had gone well at a potentially nasty place called Turnstile. There were lots of smiles on all of our faces.

When we got to the drop called Jaws, we all got out to scout. Jaws is a very serious multi-staged drop (class V) with numerous spots which are potentially problematic. The final chute of Jaws is a particularly tight place. It's an 8 or 9 ft. drop through a

narrow slot between a cliff on river left and a sieve rock to the right, and it's partially obstructed at the top left by another rock. A key place to set up safety in Jaws is on the sieve rock.

Bill and Glenn climbed down and set up at the "safety rock". Jack and I each proceeded through the rapid, one at a time, and had clean runs. Jack and I took over as safety people (and photographers). Glenn ran the drop next and also had a nice run. He remained in his boat in an eddy at the base of the drop and Jack and I stayed on the rock.

Bill was next. He, too, was having a really good run, right on line. I was taking pictures of him. He entered the final slot in the center after coming around the right side of the obstruction at the top - right where you want to be. And then - boom - he hit his bow and suddenly he totally disappeared from sight. Gone! No evidence of a person or a boat or a paddle. Nothing. The drop looked like it always did, but somewhere under this mass of water was Bill.

I had never seen a pin this serious, but I have been present during other pins/broaches/etc. and have been able to function and react. But it was a very different story when the person trapped was my husband. I lost my composure and started screaming. The good part of that was it alerted Rich (still upstream) that something was going on. He immediately started running down to where we were scrambling over all of the boulders and cliffs.

Meanwhile, just after the pin a muffled voice emerged from the chute calling for "Help" twice. It was heart

niques we learned and practiced was vertical pin extraction. As a result of having taken the course we all knew what to try to do to get Bill out of his horrendous predicament. We didn't even have to discuss it - we knew.

While Rich was running down from upstream and Jack was attempting to get to Bill by jumping into the chute, Glenn flew out his boat on river right, swam across to river left and somehow managed to climb up the slippery rock face onto the cliff above where Bill was pinned - directly across from where I stood. As soon as he got there I threw a rope to him so that we each had an end and the rope spanned the chute. We (mainly Glenn) scooped the rope down through the water to where we thought Bill was, sweeping it from downstream to upstream. Nothing caught on the first sweep.

Later, Bill said that he had seen a flash of yellow go by, knew what was going on, and prepared to grab the rope when it came by again. The line was passed through the water again, this time with Glenn forcing it even deeper, and Bill was able to grab it. He let go of the paddle so he could use both hands on the rope. By that time Rich had

arrived and had taken the end of the rope I'd been holding. Then Jack joined Rich in holding that end of the rope. Glenn, Rich and Jack were able to move upstream along the rock/cliff and get the rope taut.

Bill later said that he pulled the rope to his chest as soon as he grabbed it. As the line tightened he let it raise his arms over his head in order to get leverage for lifting out. The force of the water was such that he needed to let go of the rope with one hand, so that he could push off the boat. As he struggled into a sitting position the skirt popped and water filled the boat. He knew that was the time to move quickly, with purpose, before the boat could destabilize.

As Bill slid part way out of the boat he broke the air above the water with his head and was able to shout instructions, telling the other guys to step back more and pull tighter. The rope slipped a little bit and Bill went back down a couple of inches so that his head was back under water again with a small air pocket. Bill



Glenn Belongie warming up on the 1st drop of the "Hag".  
Photo by Bill Hildreth

wrenching not to be able to do something instantaneously, but it was also a relief to know that Bill had had an air pocket, and it gave us a better sense of his location. Then Bill briefly stuck his paddle up through the water. It let us know more specifically where he was and was also his way of letting us know that he was okay (relatively speaking).

Before long Jack jumped into the chute from the rock, hoping to grab hold of Bill or his boat and dislodge him. Unfortunately it didn't work. Jack washed through the chute and swam into the eddy just below the drop. He tried the same thing again, but still with no luck. Bill remained trapped and Jack swam back into the eddy once more.

Fortunately in the summer of 1995 Rich, Glenn, Bill, and I had all taken a river rescue course taught by Charlie Walbridge. One of the many rescue tech-

# "CLOSE CALL ON THE 'THE HAG'" Saved from ENTRAPMENT

worried that if the rope were to go slack he would be forced forward again. With his legs only partially out of the boat, his knees could have hyperextended or his legs could have broken. The force of the current and the amount of power needed by the guys holding the rope - and by Bill - were incredible. The three guys were pulling with all their might and Bill had to use all of his strength to move back and out of the boat. Glenn, by himself on river left, hardly had any room to move on the narrow, slippery surface, but somehow managed to hold on and keep pulling. All four of those guys were thinking clearly and seemed to know exactly what needed to be done. Glenn, Rick and Jack were able to maintain steady pressure on the rope so that Bill could completely free one leg and then the other.

As soon as he was fully out of the boat Bill flushed downstream and swam into the eddy on river right. His sprayskirt was gone and his pants were inside out and around his ankles, but he was okay, except for a sore ankle and thigh. Needless to say, we were all extremely relieved, grateful, and emotionally and physically drained. 7 to 10 minutes

had elapsed from the moment Bill first pinned to the moment he got out of the boat.

Bill later told us what transpired from the time he pinned until we got the rope to him. When he first hit and stopped he immediately tried to wiggle off, but there was no movement whatsoever. He tried to push off the left wall of the chute with his paddle (After finding that he couldn't reach it with his hand), without success. He attempted to pry with the paddle but, again, nothing happened. He was locked in. The water on his back was forcing him forward so that he couldn't sit up.

Bill felt that he had little chance of getting out by himself. He knew what we would be doing to try to extract him and felt that, because he was in a relatively stable position and had air, he should wait for us to initiate the rescue. If we hadn't done something within a couple of minutes, he would have tried to get out of the boat by himself.

After Bill was on shore we set out to free the boat. But that wasn't easy - it was solidly pinned. The bow was lodged to the left and the stem was wedged under the rock river right of the chute - the

one the "safety people" stand on. After considerable effort Bill, Glenn, Rich and Jack got it out.

I am writing about this incident because it highlights a number of important issues. It's not my intention to try to tell others what to do. The following is simply my perspective, what I learned as a result of witnessing this close call.

## 1. PADDLE WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR YOU AND BE THE RIGHT PERSON FOR OTHERS.

This one is key as far as I'm concerned. Although paddling is, to a large extent, an individual sport, there are many elements which require teamwork. I really value the friendships of my close paddling buddies. The events of May 25th reinforced to me the reasons I enjoy boating with the people I boat with. We have fun on rivers, but we are always looking out for one another. We aren't a bunch of strangers who just hook up to paddle together so that a shuttle can be set. We care about each other.

I know that Glenn, Rich and Jack would have done everything they could for a stranger, too. That's the way they are. However, some of the adrenaline which allowed them to mount their super-human efforts surely came from the fact that Bill is their buddy and they care about him. I will always be grateful to those guys for what they did. Words can't possibly describe my appreciation.

Jack hurt his knee on the river that day. He doesn't know exactly where or how, but it likely happened when he was trying to get to Bill. Someone else might have been angry at Bill, written him a letter chastising him for getting pinned or even sued him. But not Jack. He's a gracious guy, a true friend whose major concern was that his buddy was okay.

## 2. SIGNIFICANT OTHERS BOATING TOGETHER ADDS AN INTERESTING DYNAMIC TO A PADDLING SITUATION.

When a couple is paddling together and one of them has an accident, it's bound to have a greater emotional impact on the other member of the pair than the others present. In addition, it can make it that much harder on the other members of the party. I'm sure that my obvious emotional pain in this case made it harder for Glenn, Rich and Jack to deal with the already difficult situation.

People who paddle with couples, as well as the couples themselves, need to be aware of this. It adds a twist to the group dynamics.



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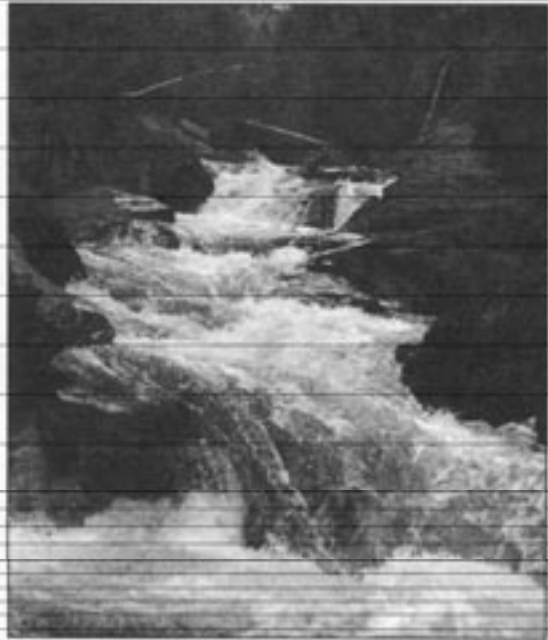
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# "CLOSE CALL ON THE 'THE HAG'" Saved from ENTRAPMENT



**Top Left: Bill's run thru Jaws the day he was pinned. At the entrance.**



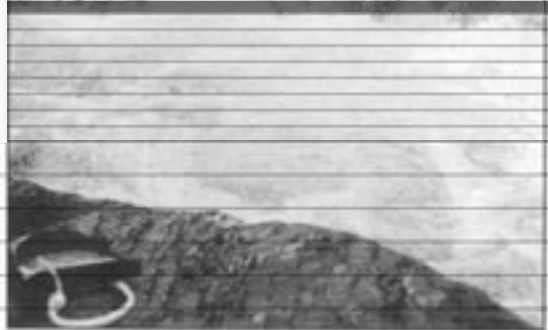
**Top Right: Bill's run thru Jaws.**



**Bottom Left: Bill moving thru Jaws (plus throw rope used!)**



**Bottom Right: Bill just before he went around the corner and pinned.**



**Photos by Joan Hildreth.**

### **3. KNOWLEDGE OF RIVER RESCUE TECHNIQUES (AND PRACTICING THEM) IS INVALUABLE.**

Some people are naturally mechanical and might be able to quickly improvise effective rescue techniques in emergency situations. I know that I'm not one of those people. I feel certain that I wouldn't have known what to do right away if I hadn't taken that river rescue course. I strongly encourage boaters to take a river rescue course, read a river rescue book, and/or study a river rescue video tape. Think about the way(s) that you learn

best. For me, hands on learning was important. Certainly, taking the course made a huge difference to all of us. There is a strong likelihood that it made the difference between life and death for Bill.

Some expert boaters might not think they need to learn rescue techniques because they're experts and they know what to do in whitewater. But being an expert boater doesn't necessarily make you a rescue expert. In emergency situations it's critical to know what's likely to work and it helps to have practiced various rescue techniques. I don't ever want to be in a situation where there is a bad outcome (i.e., serious injury, death) and know that I

might have saved the person, if only I had known what to do.

### **4. HAVE THE RIGHT RESCUE EQUIPMENT WHERE IT MIGHT BE NEEDED AND MAKE SURE THAT IT WORKS**

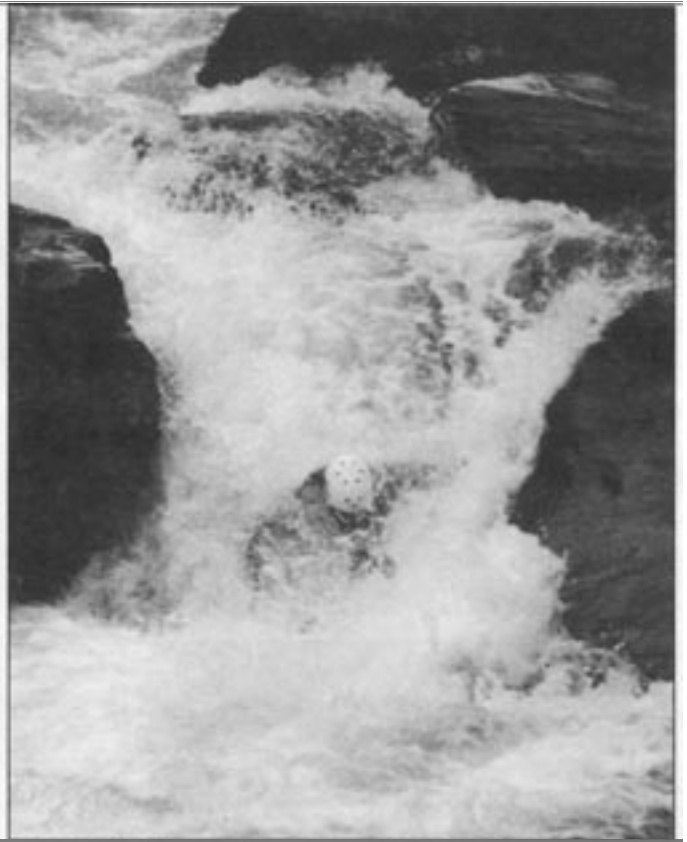
Fortunately, Bill's kayak was equipped with a bulkhead, so that his feet didn't slip off, causing him to go further into the boat. It also had strong walls to prevent collapse and a keyhole cockpit to allow easier exit.

There was a rope readily available. However, it was a new rope. Had I

# "CLOSE CALL ON THE 'THE HAG'" Saved from ENTRAPMENT



This shows the final chute where Bill was pinned. He was pinned against the river left wall. Totally under water. Photo by Bill Hildreth.



Jack Fuller in final chute of Jaws, briefly hitting ledge, then bouncing off. Last Year. Photo by Bill Hildreth.

checked it out and done a practice throw I would have found that it had been packed wrong, causing it to partially tangle. Fortunately we did not need the entire length of the rope, but a tangled rope could have created a major problem in another type of rescue.

Rope color might not be a factor in most rescues but, after this experience, given a choice of color, I'd pick the brightest. Bill was able to spot the bright yellow rope through the water.

We had a spare paddle (which was only needed for a brief time because Bill's paddle had conveniently eddied out on its own not far down stream).

We're now considering carrying a spare sprayskirt on certain rivers. It could come in handy if a skirt were badly tom. In this situation Bill's was ripped off by the water. I ended up paddling the rest of the river in a full-sized Free Fall without a skirt. Fortunately we were through the hardest drops, so that it wasn't a big deal. A spare skirt would have been handy, though.

## 5. RIVERS CONSTANTLY CHANGE.

It's possible that something changed recently in that last chute of Jaws, but we're not certain. Over the years many people have banged the left wall with

their bows and just kept going. We had never heard of pin in the chute until this year. Another person pinned there briefly a couple of weeks before Bill, but wiggled off fairly easily. We heard a rumor (still unsubstantiated at this point) that someone else also pinned there this year.

We returned to Gulf Hags a few weeks after the incident and did a low water (8" below the platform) run in Thrillseekers. With much less water we were able to get a closer look at the rocks/cliff walls in Jaws. The left side of the final chute is formed by a cliff. The bottom portion of it juts out into the slot about 8 to 10" and there are two distinct deep cracks at the top of the outcropping, either of which could fit the bow of a kayak all too well. Bill probably pinned in the upper one. Perhaps the cliff has changed recently, or perhaps it had been that way for years, and Bill just happened to be the first unlucky person to find one of the crevices.

## 6. EVERYONE'S EXPERIENCE ON A RIVER IS DIFFERENT

Even though Bill looked like he was taking the very same line as everyone else, he obviously wasn't. His ended in an obstruction. It's possible that because he weighs more than those who went be-

fore, he went deeper and "found" the obstruction.

In any event, it's dangerous to assume that a drop is clean just because others have made it through safely. As people run steeper, gnarlier rapids, the risks increase.

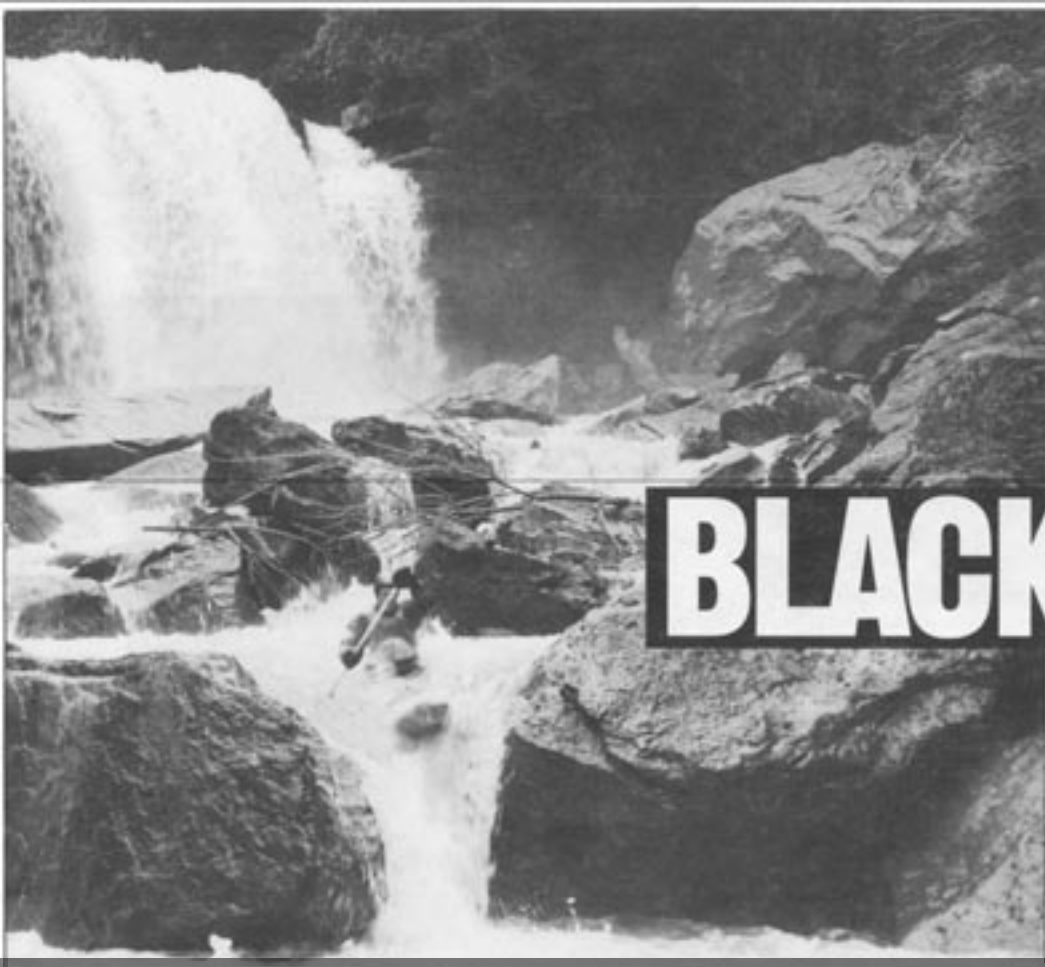
## 7. NO MATTER HOW CAREFUL YOU ARE, THINGS CAN STILL - AND DO - HAPPEN.

As I said earlier, we consider ourselves to be a fairly reasonable, cautious group of people. None of us ever expected a pin of any sort, let alone such a serious one, in a chute that has been successfully negotiated hundreds of times. Nobody ever thinks that something bad can happen to him/her, but there are no guarantees in life and there are certainly no guarantees in this sport.

Hopefully my account of this near miss and a review of the lessons learned by those of us involved will be of use to other boaters. We know that we are extremely fortunate that things turned out the way they did.

**EDITORS NOTE:** Joan and Bill Hildreth are widely known and highly respected class V boaters. Believe what they say...if it happened to them, it can happen to you!





# BLACK BEAR

WEEKEND AT THE

# BLACKWATER

TRAPPED IN A SIEVE!!!

by Boze Houck

Boze on the North Fork of the Blackwater one week before the Black Bear Weekend. Photo by Eric Link.

After six hours of late night driving from Northeast Ohio I have just a few more miles to go.

Wow! Look at that! A big black bear ambles across the road twenty feet in front of me. He has to be eight feet long. And right there is the dirt road that leads to our campsite rendezvous.

I don't believe it. We are going to camp in this bear's back yard. And it's time to sleep; locked in the van.

Tomorrow... my second trip down the Lower Blackwater.

My companions are hair boaters Eric, who hails from Michigan, and "Sasquatch", an accomplished open boater from Cincinnati. They will paddle the class V+ Upper Blackwater and meet me at the confluence, to paddle the rest of the river - the Class IV+ Lower Blackwater.

I talk with two other groups getting ready to repel to the water's edge at the Lower Blackwater put in. They know Sasquatch and ask if he will help them on the tough drops. Eric and I figure we can eddy hop and they will catch right up. We get out to scout the double drop called "Crack - a - Toa".

Eric runs it perfectly. I ace the first drop, but a swirling eddy sends me to the left of my intended boof and I slide over the next four foot ledge with little water to cushion my landing.

Oh, well! I do my best boof ever on the next drop, called "The Ledge". We scout... We drop... We boof... We smile!!!

Eric and I stay just ahead of the other boaters. Eddy, hop, boof, paddle, eddy hop. We smile! We arrive at the next major rapid, "Rock and Roll". Eric gets out to scout.

"Stay right; follow me." We drop! Wow! This is great, I'm thinking! We're already past "Rock and Roll".

The "Slides" are ahead. The rough stuff is over. We can start dancing now!

Eric goes left and boofs left. I follow. I execute a passable boof, but I get water in my face. No problem: it's a big eddy.

Oh no!!! I can't go left, I better turn right. Look out for that rock! No problem: I can ride the pillow. Just like Heinzerling on the Upper Yough, but to the right.

Oh shit! There is a rock on my right! Do a slot move! But

it's not a slot... I'm stuck!!! The back of my boat folds down behind me... creased under my seat. I'm pinned!

I can't stay here: I must get out. Get my left knee up first, grab the spray skirt, pull, try to stand up. But the force of 300 cfs is too much. It sucks me down.

I catch the side of my boat with my right hand. My left is reaching high up past my ear toward the down stream rock. Luckily I have one stiff arm (my right) going straight down to my kayak. But I am stuck in a sieve with only my head and left forearm out of the water!

I turn my head to look upstream and see Eric head to shore. Water runs into my mouth and I have to turn to my left to spit it out. I try to use my left leg for another prop, but can't. The river's too strong.

I turn and see Sasquatch make the boof and yell something to the group that is scouting. I turn back to my left and spit out more water. I better not look that way again. Stay still... They will get here...

Now I remember my friend Dave Mills, who died in a pin on the Gauley. Dave, is this how it is? Dave, what do I do? Dave, how long can I hold on? Dear God...!

I remember the story of another paddler broached in a folded boat below Big Splat on the Big Sandy River. How long did he hold on? What went through his mind before he got free?

Dave, is this how it is? Dave, what went through your mind? How long?

My legs are dangling straight down, my feet flapping like the flag. My booties are sucked off. Then my socks. There is a lot of water going down there. Is the sieve open? Is there a tree in it? Rocks?

Dave, what do I do? I can't hold on! A final thought, "I love life", as I flush into the sieve.

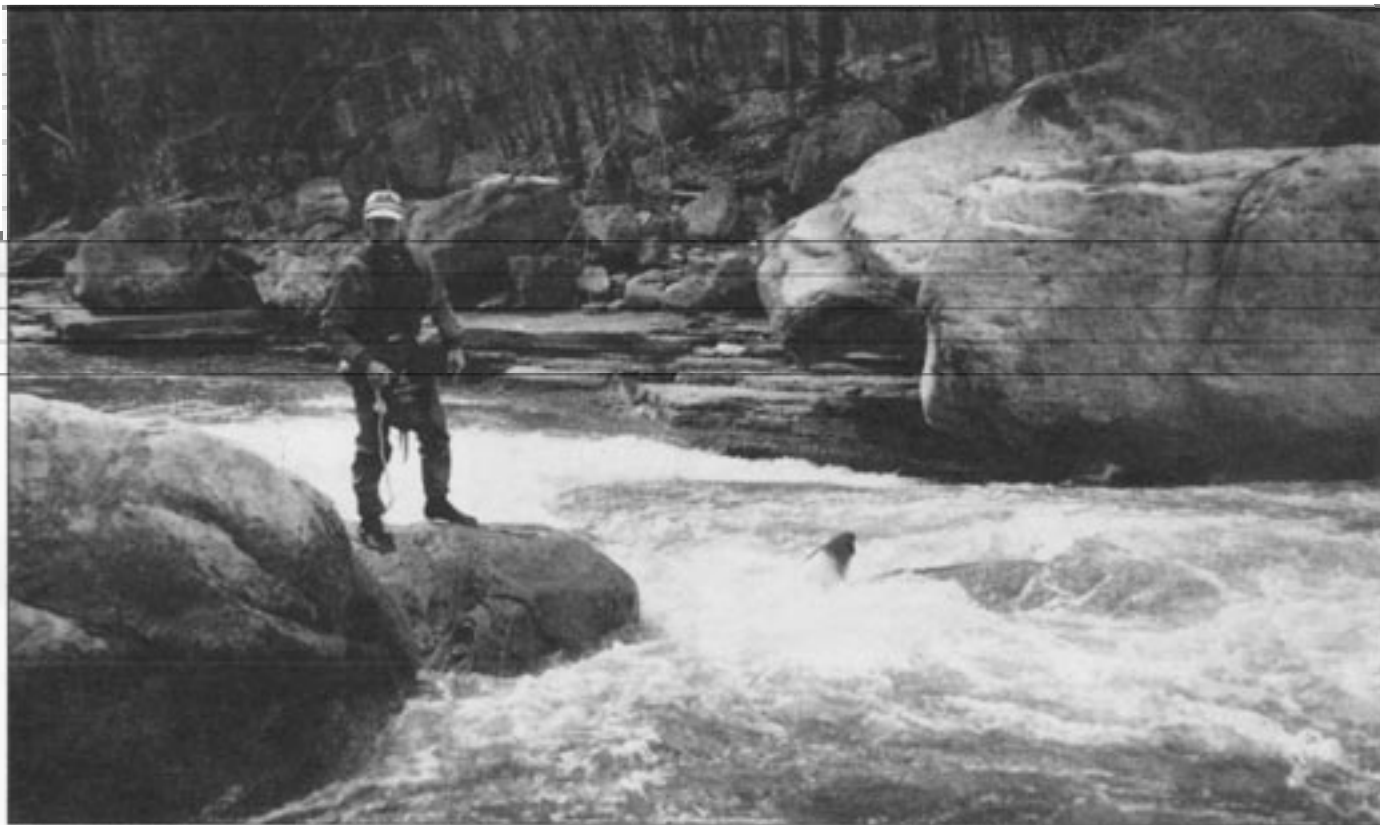
Down... Around... Swim... Pop up... Breath... React.

I hear, "Boze get your booties." I react... Swim... Self rescue... Get to shore...

Wow..! I'm alive!

# BLACK BEAR WEEKEND AT THE BLACKWATER

Below: The author's boat jammed into the sieve. Eric on the rock. Photo by Boze.



Eric yells, "Do you have a beener?"

"I need it to get your boat." Eric has a plan. "If you went through the sieve, so can your boat."

"I could give a shit about the boat!" I reply hoarsely.

He hooks on to the bow with a throw rope, then with a little tug, the boat plummets down through the sieve and out the other side.

But the boat is bent. Sasquatch looks for my paddle down stream.

"Anybody got a break down?" No answer from the group on the rock.

"Do you know how to use a canoe paddle?"

"Yea, better than hand paddles!" I empty my boat and jump up and down on the seat. It's good enough for the paddle out.

But Eric hands me his kayak paddle and says, "I'll use the canoe paddle"

Thank God!

"How you doing?" Eric asks.

"O.K., I guess!", but I'm not sure.

"The Slides," my favorite rapid of the river, is just below. React, paddle, brace left, paddle, brace right, paddle hard. I know there is a hole at the end.

After the "Slides" I am still shaky, but things go well. Every time I hit a rock I think the boat might bend again. It seems like a long paddle out. At first I hate it, I am scared shitless. But it gives me time to think.

After two portages around trees, countless eddies, drops big and small, I remember what it is about rivers I like.

Look in the woods, see those caves. Bears can live in there. See the cliffs through the leafless trees. I love this time of year.

Paddle! React! Catch that eddy!

Good thing we have a long way to go. My first thoughts af-

ter the pin are to quit paddling forever. But when I finally get off the river I say, "I have to paddle tomorrow".

At the take-out the group that observed my ordeal reports that one of their party pinned in the sieve too. He crawled up on the rocks on his own. Another flipped in the main drop and swam right into the sieve. Fortunately there were two paddlers on the broach rock to pull him out.

Later, I learned that rapid had changed during a January flood. First lesson to be learned... before you do a run, ask if anybody has heard of any changes on the river. The second lesson was from Eric... be sure you catch important eddies!

Eric's line to remember. "Do the drop, get in the eddy! Good Doggy." Just like training a puppy dog.

We hoped we could do the Upper Yough the next day, but found it a bit too low. Sasquatch and Eric decided to drive home early.

I was alone, but I had to paddle; so I went to Ohiopyle.

I'll do the Loop; there is always somebody to paddle with there. But no one was ready to put on when I got there, 1:00 on a Sunday in mid-April. "I can't believe it! What should I do?"

I had to do it! Had to! The Loop at 2.4 ft. I did not see a boat from Entrance rapid to Railroad.

What was I thinking?

Paddle, eddy hop, look, react.

A quick trip, but I had to do it.

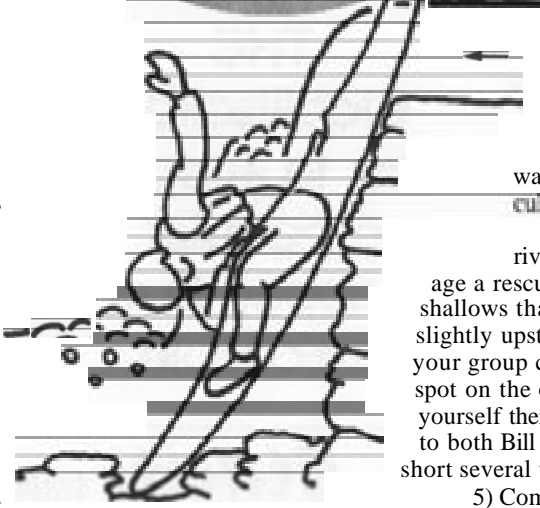
"I love life!"

Addenda: My friend Dave Mills, died in a sieve at Insignificant on the Upper Gauley in 1994. My thoughts run to him during good trips and bad. He remains an inspiration to me and all those who knew him.

S A F E T Y

# THE SNAG LINE MAKING IT WORK

by  
Charlie  
Walbridge



Vertical pins are not uncommon and they've lead to several fatalities and many near-misses during the last few years. Bill Hildreth's experience, described in this issue of the Journal, had much in common with my own predicament this past spring. We were both rescued by a Snag Line, which has been used successfully many times in the past.

The Snag Line was developed at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in the late 70's as a quick response to foot entrapments, but it works even better with vertical pins. First, a tag line is stretched across the river. When it's positioned to support a trapped paddler, it is called a stabilization line. When used to actually pull a person free, it becomes a snag line. This technique is taught by Rescue III, the ACA, NOC and Glen Carlson. Training classes usually include several dry runs, which help you understand how it works.

Vertical pins occur in steep drops with rocks alongside. First, the bow dives into the base and becomes lodged against or under a hidden obstruction. Next, the stem is pushed to one side against the rocks at the top or side of the chute. Lastly, water starts coming over the rear deck, pushing against the paddler's back. Longer (race legal) boats and those with low-volume bows dive deeper and are more likely to hit obstructions. Boats with low-volume stems are likely to be pushed deeper than more conventional designs during the second phase of the pin, making escape more difficult.

Once lodged in the drop, the boat rests at a 35° to 70° angle. Paddlers must pull back out of their outfitting to get free, but gravity and the force of the water are both working against them. In addition, a vertical pin may be unstable. The boat could flip or plunge deeper into the river without much warning. Although bouncing or wiggling may work a canoe or kayak free if slightly stuck, if the water is at all powerful vertical pins will require outside help. Here are some tricks to make sure the rescue runs smoothly.

- 1) Keep the rescue simple. The less that can go wrong, the better the chance of success. The best way to deal with entrapment is by paddling, swimming, or wading to the accident site and making physical contact with the victim. Direct muscle power can then be used to help them work free. Snag lines should be considered only if this cannot be done safely.
- 2) The skills needed to throw and belay a line are not difficult to learn and will increase your confidence on the river. Take a river rescue class, then practice occasionally to keep sharp.
- 3) In order to climb out of a vertically pinned boat, paddlers must push back and lift up. In a kayak with a keyhole cockpit, you can bring one foot off the footbraces and onto the front

edge of your cockpit. The second foot is then lifted into this position, at which point you can jump free. If the cockpit is too small to allow this, you must first push your rear end back, onto the cockpit rim, before quickly moving your legs. C-1 paddlers must back out of their thigh braces, push their legs back, and somersault forward. I found getting the initial backward shove in my C-1 surprisingly difficult!

4) The longer the distance across a river, the harder it is to throw and manage a rescue line. Look for mid-stream boulders or shallows that will shorten the span. Look for a spot slightly upstream of the accident site. If you see your group congregating on one shore, look for a spot on the opposite side of the river and position yourself there. One person doing this was the key to both Bill and my rescues. If your rope is too short several throw bags can be carabinered together.

5) Communicate with a trapped paddler as soon as you can. They may know precisely what kind of help they need to work free. In a very intense situation your encouragement is vital and may make the difference between success and failure. Make eye contact. Call out their name. Let them know that help is on the way.

6) Many descriptions of snag lines involve filling an empty throw bag with rocks at the center of the line to sink it under water. This doesn't work as well as you might think! For one thing, finding rocks of the proper size to fit in a throw bag is surprisingly time consuming. Second, even a weighted bag may not sink in fast current. I've found it more effective to simply stretch the line tightly across the water, controlling its height with my hands. If your hands are lowered below the water, the rope will cut beneath the surface and can slide under a foot entrapment victim.

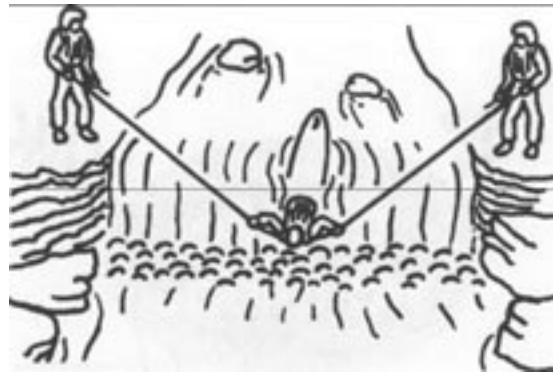
7) Once the line is pulled tight across the river, guide it so that it crosses the trapped paddler at mid-chest. They can grab it with their hands, or place their arms over it so that it snags them under the armpits. This allows for rest, and provides good traction for a snag line. Most paddlers, unless unconscious, will have enough presence of mind to help guide the rope into position.

8) Although it seems like a good idea, supporting someone on a line stretched across the river is almost impossible. When someone grabs hold at the center of a tight line, they are actually initiating a vector pull. This increases the pressure on the rope enormously, making it difficult for rescuers to hold on. The belayers should move upstream, allowing the rope to bend around the victim while keeping it snug against his or her body. A 90° angle between the two ends of the rope is optimal, but any significant bend greatly increases the rescuer's pulling power. Both Bill and I asked our rescuers to move upstream and felt the support increase immediately.

9) With any entrapment the best strategy is to first stabilize, then extricate. Once the line is in position, it may give the victim the added balance and strength needed to work free. This is safer because it allows the trapped paddler to control the speed and timing of the exit. If he is pulled out while one leg is still caught inside the kayak, for example, the situation will deteriorate instantly.

10) If the trapped paddler cannot work free, a snag line should be used. A line placed under the victim's armpits can literally lift him out of the boat. The only time this won't work is if the boat has collapsed and is holding the person inside. Good communication can avoid this. In a situation when you can't talk with or even see the person you're trying to help, going directly to a snag line makes good sense. After all, to do nothing is to insure a catastrophe. Bill Hildreth was completely under water, so his decision to raise his paddle to mark his position was extremely smart.

11) As the rescuers pull, one side is invariably weaker than the other. One "team"



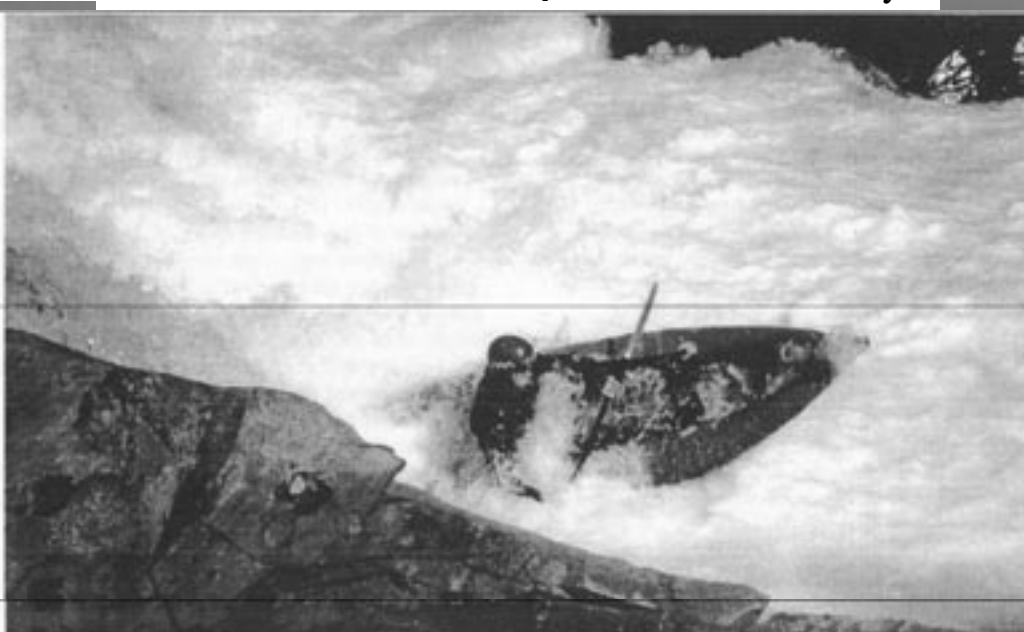
## THE Stabilization line to support a paddler trapped in a vertical pin.

may consist of a single person set up on a small rock or slippery ledge. Watch the opposing side; if they appear to be losing control of the rope, ease off a bit. If the rope is too short to get a good grip, clip a second rope onto it. One side may also have very limited mobility. When putting a bend in the rope only one side may be able to move upstream. This is fine so long as both are above the pinned boat.

12) Once the paddler comes free, he or she may somersault over or duck under the line. Be alert to the possibility of entanglement, and let go of one end if needed. If manpower permits, station someone downstream to help them ashore.

This and other techniques are covered in Swiftwater Rescue by Walbridge and Sundmacher. If you can't find it at bookstore or outfitter, send \$20 to Charlie Walbridge, 230 Penllyn Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422. You can also buy it from NOC or Northwest River Supplies. Write me and let me know about any success or problems you have with this technique.

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# Paddling



The National Paddling Film Festival is a competition of film, video and ~~computer~~ images highlighting human powered watercraft sport co-sponsored by the American Whitwater Affiliation and the American Canoe Association. In 1997 the NPFF will be celebrating it's 14th year of ~~outstanding~~ paddling ~~image/media~~ competition. Deadline for entries is January 24,1996.

# Film Festival



For more information please contact:

## National Paddling Film Festival East:

Barry Grimes  
P.O.Box 4231  
Lexington,KY 40544

**February 21,  
22, 1997**

e-mail) bagriml @pop.uky.edu

## National Paddling Film Festival West:

Todd Stands  
1139 Pepper Dr.  
El Cajon, CA 92021

**March 1,  
1997**

e-mail) kernflow@aol.com

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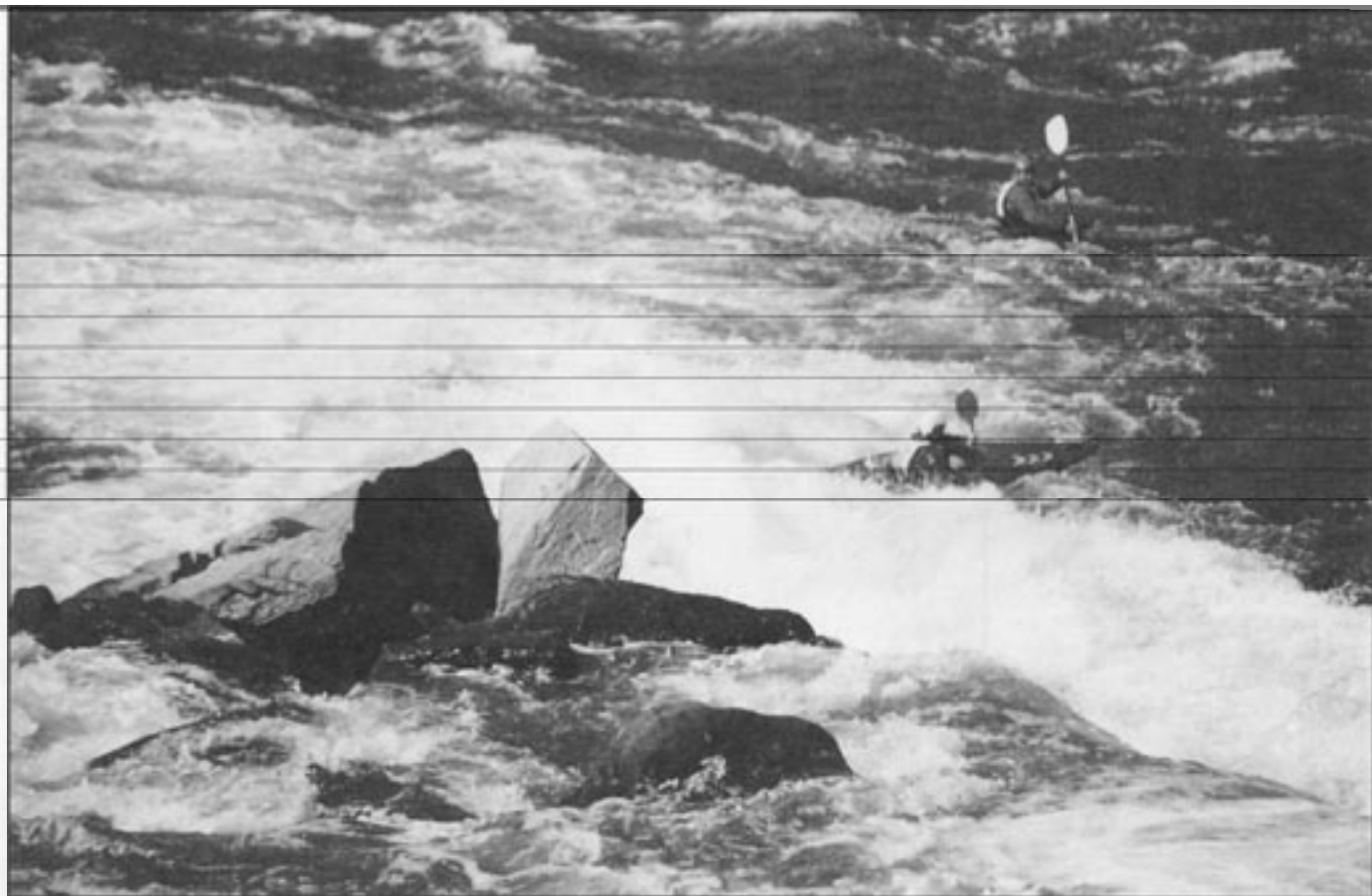
Check us out at <http://www.worldkayak.com>

# LIMOUSINES AND LOOT

*In Pope Barron*

## E.J.'s Extremes

Jason Beakes was out in front as he slammed hard into the fourth of five big drops. Beakes had bolted away from Dan Gavere at the starting line. His powerful acceleration, the product of hard slalom training, assured Beakes a solid early lead. After three big drops he was well out in front.



*Busting through the hole at the bottom of the last slide to finish on the right.*



*M.E. Truckenmiller*

**"Anyone could make a mistake in this race."**  
*Extreme Racer, Jason Beakes*

Beakes plunged hard into a hairpin right turn behind a treacherous boulder pile. That turn had bedeviled more than a few racers in earlier heats of the WKF Extreme Races Pre-Worlds, but not Beakes or Gavere. Both had made this turn smoothly in three previous runs during the October 5 and 6 elimination heats. Both

had beaten 16 other expert kayakers from around the country and one from Europe (Arndt Schaeftlein of Germany) in earlier heats. Now they were dueling it out at Great Falls on the Potomac River for \$2,000 in first place prize money in a head-to-head battle through class V whitewater.



Beakes knew the lines of the Fish Ladder run on the Maryland side of Great Falls well. It was his home turf. His speed and acceleration were clearly superior to Gavere's, who is primarily a freestyle rodeo superstar. Beakes' slalom training was proving to be a huge advantage.

In a head-to-head race on a tight, hard course it is not easy to pass the lead boater.

Unless something unexpected happens.

Beakes carved sharply into the hairpin turn. Suddenly his boat jammed momentarily on a small rock. He flipped.

Unbelievable!

Gavere cut the turn slightly wider and slower, but with Beakes' boat still upside down, Gavere shot past and over Beake's boat as Beakes rolled up.

Beakes reloaded and fired off as if shot out of a cannon, but Gavere now had momentum and a critical edge. Beakes struggled to catch up with only 30 feet of flat water and one big drop to go.

Both boaters charged down the final drop, a steep slide into a nasty hole that earlier in the weekend had claimed the boats and paddles of several top boaters.

This hole had been "pretty eventful" in earlier heats according to Dan Gavere. Gavere noted, "Kyle Marinello was in the lead when he went in there. Then someone else went in with him, and the third guy finished first." [Editors note: Actually, Eric Jackson was in first place and Paul Schelp in second when Kyle got stuck in the hole. Kyle, by the way, is the kayaker on the Frosted Flakes commercial. No doubt Frosted Flakes will be anxious to get the footage of the pounding Kyle received in this hole.]

Clearly anything could happen in the bottom hole. Eric Jackson (a.k.a. EJ), the pre-race favorite, had proved this point earlier in the day. EJ made a slight miscalculation on his elimination run as he entered the hole and missed the final sharp right turn through the finish line.

But Gavere did not make the same mistake. With Beakes breathing down his neck, and \$1,000 riding on the move, Gavere slammed in the hole, hammered the turn and won by a hair.

The finish of this event may have been a metaphor for whitewater racing in 1996. Whitewater competition is struggling to make a sharp turn and become as respected and high-

profile as beach volley ball or ocean surfing. But the slalom end of the sport seems to be hitting a few rocks.

At the same time rodeo boaters and extreme racers, the bad boys of the sport, may be surging ahead in visibility and capturing the public imagination.

Local politics in Australia may take whitewater slalom out of the next Olympics. Slalom boaters are discouraged by this possibility, and some complain about politics in the sport and the lack of funding for younger athletes. Meanwhile, whitewater rodeo boaters and extreme racers are making waves in terms of publicity, sponsorship, promotion, and fame.

Some ex-slalom racers like Eric Jackson are turning to ex-



M.E. Truckenmiller

Jason Beaks out if front followed by Arnd Schaeftlein and Chuvk Kern at the second slide.





"The race is not being determined at the start. It will be decided in the drops... I paddle alot harder when someone is trying to pass me."

*Extreme racer, Dan Gavere*

treme racing and rodeo to enhance or extend their whitewater competition careers. Others are avoiding the rodeo scene completely. A few, like Jason Beakes, are still training hard for slalom, but performing well in the rodeo and extreme events as well.

Organizers billed the WKF Great Falls event as one of a series of "Extreme" Races. The course was hard, but not the ultimate in whitewater difficulty. An annual race is run every year on one section or another of Great Falls. And AWA, as well as others, have been running low profile, small prize,

races on difficult whitewater rivers like the Moose, the North Fork of the Payette, Gore Canyon, the Russell Fork and the Upper Yough for several years.

But this race offered something new. No one had ever run this course in a head-to-head competition with three eager beaver racers trying to get past each other at critical moments. Silas Treadway, an experienced young racer from Team Adventure, saw it this way: "I have never been in a race like this before. You really need to avoid being pushed off line by other racers."

The head-to-head racing concept on class V whitewater had some racers off balance. In an interview before the race, extreme racer Chuck Kern said, "It will be wild. There are no rules. I never did a head to head downriver race before. The start strategy will be fun. If someone sets a precedent at the beginning with dirty stuff, it could deteriorate. But if not, it will be pretty clean."

Some racers were even more dubious. Jason Beakes said, "I am terrified of the mass start." Beakes added, however, "Of course, I kind of like the idea of being terrified at the start of a race."

Before the race, competitors were all over the map, trying to think up a winning strategy. Fred Coriell said "Its going to be really hard to pass people. You gotta get ahead in the first hundred yards."

Clay Wright, a rodeo expert and extreme racer from North Carolina, had another idea: "My strategy is to hit all the other competitors with my



*Action at the second slide.*

*M.E. Truckenmiller*



paddle and disable them. I have been practicing on rocks. Rocks don't sue or hit back."

At least one racer, Dan Gavere, was really enthusiastic about the head-to-head concept. Dan said, "We have Le Mans starts in some of the races on the Lochsa. It's fun for the racers and a much better way to watch the sport than having to do stop watch splits. It gets the spectators more involved. I love it."

But it was not just the head-to-head element that was extreme at the WKF Race Pre-Worlds Race. The race was also EXTREMELY lucrative for the winner. No one has ever put on a class V race (or any other whitewater race for that matter) with such big cash prizes. This event boasted more than \$5,000 in purses for the top 15 finishers.

The high profile approach to the media was also taken to the extreme. No one has ever delivered whitewater racers to the starting line in sleek black limousines with so much hoopla and so many cameras rolling.

According to race spectator, Sarah Anderson, "The limousines reeked of testosterone."

The competitors, however, loved the extreme Hollywood show biz angle. Fred Coriell, one of the young racers from Vermont, reported that "The limo ride was excellent, Dude; it was my first ride ever in a limo."

Peter Kennedy of Vermont's Adventure Quest School in Vermont declared that "The limos are absolute class. Its unique. You don't usually see this element of class in our sport; it's hard to have class when you're dealing with smelly polypro."

The awards ceremony in a Georgetown bar was also a unique spectacle. EJ proudly handed out \$5,200 in single dollar bills to 15 contestants.

Always thinking like a promoter, EJ took the financial spectacle to the limits even before the awards ceremony. As the finalists raced under a bridge, EJ was spotted hanging a gigantic, 4 foot by 3 foot replica of a \$2,000 check, down towards the racers urging them on: "Go

fast! It's real money!!!!"

Bringing real money into the sport is a key part of EJ's vision for the WKF. It is all about making it possible for

whitewater athletes who make their living in the sport to survive, and maybe even prosper, on their whitewater skills.

Peter Kennedy, for one, is not offended by the WKF effort to bring money into whitewater racing. Kennedy said: "Money prizes are great. Some people may take a purist attitude, but being able to get a little financial reward is not necessarily so bad."

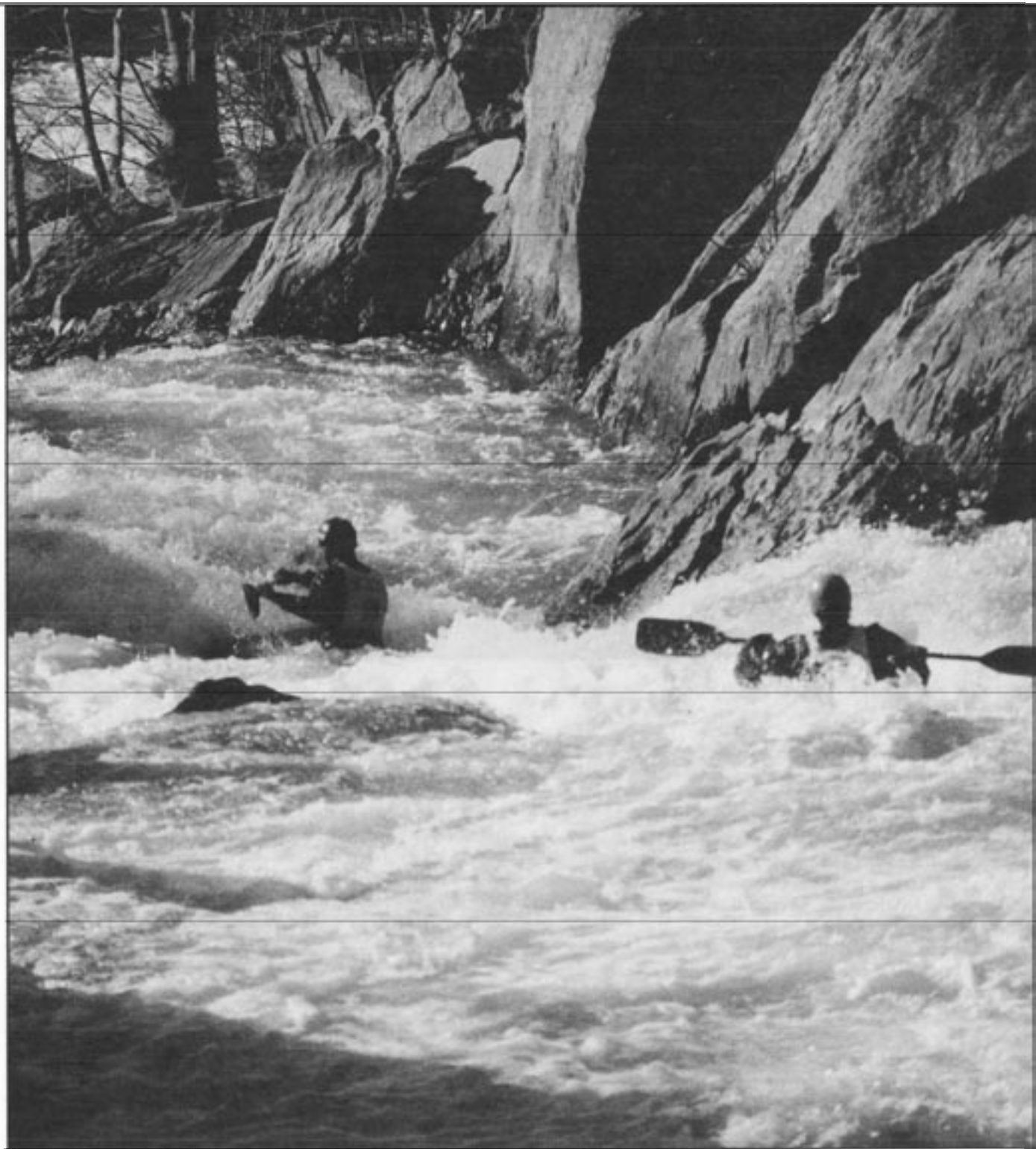
The letters "WKF" stand for the World Kayak Federation, a new organization, founded by Eric Jackson. The WKF is comprised of, and devoted primarily to, the pro-athletes, those people who are making, or who are trying to make, a living with their whitewater boating expertise.

According to EJ, the WKF plans to sponsor a series of



Action in a tight heat at the second slide.

M.E.



*Dropping down the course between slides three and four.*



*M.E. Truckenmiller*



**"This looks a lot like playing with rattlesnakes."**  
*Davy Hearn, C-1 Slalom Olympian*



View of the *middle* section of course at slidefour.



*M.E. Truckenmiller*

extreme races around the country with big cash prizes. First, however, the sponsors must found. If this can be worked out, it will be an exciting new departure for whitewater sports.

Many of the pros in the sport are really stoked about the WKF idea. Dan Gavere said, "This is a ground breaking event. EJ and the WKF have done a lot for the sport. WKF is built by paddlers for paddlers who paddle every day and who don't do anything else but paddle. The WKF will be a great resource for those kind of paddlers."

In order to help get things rolling, AWA has agreed to help publicize WKF events and grow the WKF membership. In return several WKF athletes will be writing articles for the Journal. EJ also hopes to generate some revenue and publicity for AWA's river conservation and whitewater river access work. If it works, the alliance will be a win-win proposition.

**SIDEBARS [COMMENTS ON THE RACE AND WKF BY PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS]**

"One strategy, if you think you might be slower and someone else might make a mistake, is to hang on his ass and then blast by him when he screws up. On the other hand, it could be chaos back there. My plan is to get out front and stay there. Of course, anyone could get stuck in the bottom hole with other racers coming down on them at about 30 miles

an hour." Jason Beakes, second place finisher, discussing strategy before the race.

Jason, on the Extreme Race concept: "I am real excited by

this kind of race. The public can understand it. It's a simple very basic event. It will be good for the sport."

"The head to head will be OK so long as people don't get in the bottom hole at the same time. If they do, its gonna be ugly. There is an undercut rock in there. Someone could get pinned on it. If that happens and someone is coming behind you.....well....." Gil Rocha, local expert, before the race.

Gil, again, after getting pitoned and blowing his heat in the bottom drop: "I was leading and I hit the wall on the bottom and blew out. It was tragic."

Gil described the bottom hole as "the gift that keeps on giving" after being munched again there the day after the race.

"I am just here to supply boats to these hot dogs." John Regan, Prijon Rep (Editors note: Both Gavere and Beakes paddled Prijon boats in the final heat).

"I just want to break even and get my \$50 WKF membership fee back. Any race where I can break even is basically fine with me." Paul Schelp, DC ~~representational~~ational boater.

"I don't even WANT to make the finals. Why? This mass start could suck. It would harsh my mellow to be stuck in the bottom hole with people coming down behind me." Skip Brown, local DC flood boater and photographer.



## 1996 WKF Pre-World Extreme Championships Race Results for Prelims

Jason Beakes	1:38	
Eric Jackson	1:39	
Clay Wright	1:42	
Sam Drevo	1:43	
Gil Rocha	1:47	
Paul Schelp	1:47	
Tracy Clapp	1:48	
Danny Inman	1:48	
Arnd Schaefflein	1:48	
Dan Gavere	1:49	
Kyle Marinello	1:50	
Silas Treadway	1:50	
Kurt Braunlich	1:50	
Chuck Kern	1:51	
Fred Coriell	1:52	
Brent Wiesel	1:52	
Luke Hopkins	1:54	
Eric Brookes	1:54	Above racers are in finals
Ted Keys	1:59	
Skip Brown	2:00	
Nate LaBrecque	2:01	
Jason Hale	2:02	
Martin Lackovic	2:05	
Chris Emery	2:07	
Bryan Christy	2:24	
Eric Southwick	2:38	

### Finals RACE RESULTS

- 1 Dan Gavere (MT)
- 2 Jason Beaks (MD)

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# FROM THE DESK OF THE WKF

by Erik Jackson

# PRESIDENT

Welcome to 1997—a new year with much in store for whitewater paddlers. I am president of the World Kayak Federation, a new international whitewater organization run BY paddlers FOR paddlers. If you're saying to yourself, "What the @\$\* do we need another paddling organization for?", then you've ended a sentence with a preposition. Grammar aside, I would like to introduce to you the WKF—where it is and where it plans to go.



## WKF Extreme Race on the Potomac

We are your organization and devoted full-time to improving our sport. Through a cooperative arrangement with the AWA, the WKF and the AWA will work together in 1997 to improve our rivers and the paddling we do on them. If you feel as I do that the time is right for modern instruction, for thrilling whitewater events, and for greater protection of our whitewater resources, then I hope you will join us. And remember, as an AWA member, WKF membership is half price.

### WHO IS THE WKF?

The WKF was created to improve and standardize the quality of whitewater kayak instruction, to create competitive opportunities for the professional paddler, and to support the conservation of whitewater resources around the world. In this way, the WKF complements the conservation, access, and whitewater festival and competition activities of the AWA.

### WHY SHOULD I JOIN?

As paddlers, we have tried to come up with a list of ben-



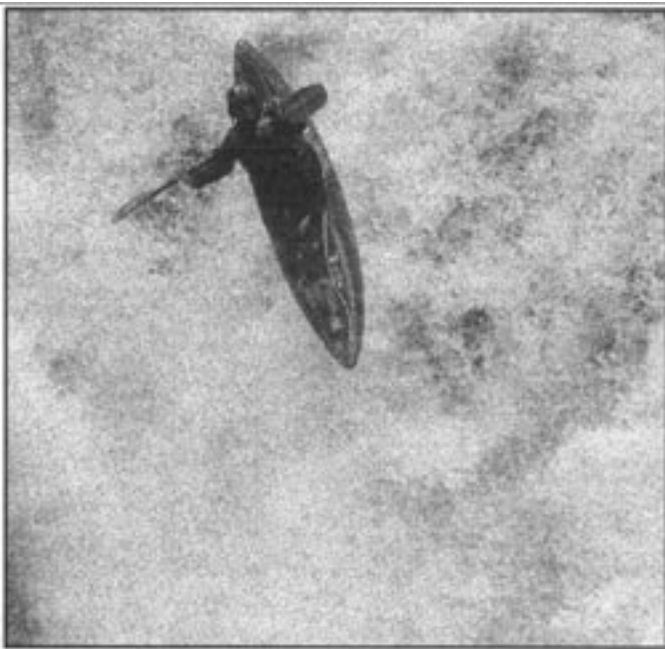
efits that have meaning for those on the river. Here's what we've got so far. If you've got a good idea on what else we might do, let us know.

**Get Your Money Back.** WKF members receive rebates directly from selected manufacturers of some of the best kayaking equipment in the business. Companies like Wavesport, AT Paddles, Savage, and Shaman, Inc. offer you money back for your support of the AWA and the WKF. In fact, if you're crafty, you can actually MAKE money by joining the WKF.

### Learn From The Best.

For the first time, paddlers at all levels can find modern, standardized instruction that reflects the latest developments in technique and equipment. Our instructional program is designed to enhance your existing skills and was developed by instructors in the field, Olympic athletes, and world class rodeo and extreme paddlers. Peter Kennedy, Executive Director of Adventure Quest, among the world's leading whitewater and adventure programs, oversees the WKF Instructional Program. Like the belt system in karate, the

M.E. Truckenmiller



Mike Olsen coming in last place.

Eric Evans Photography

WKF Class I to V Program ensures that, no matter what your level, you'll always have an opportunity to learn.

**Be The Best.** Our Elite Instructor Certification Program represents the highest standard for kayaking instruction in the sport. Enhance your teaching skills with WKF training.

**Compete In WKF Events.** Only WKF members may compete in WKF-sponsored events, the hottest in the sport and no entry fees!

**Protect Our Rivers.** The WKF and the AWA share in the revenues of all WKF events. Half of your membership fee is forwarded to the AWA giving you 2 for 1; existing AWA members join for half price.

**Sell Your Boat. Buy A T-shirt.** WKF members may post their want ads for free on the WKF Web Page, soon to become a central clearing house for buying or selling used gear. Get a WKF T-shirt or Extreme Video at WKF member rates.

**Paddle Around The World.** We've boated the galaxy and selected a handful of unbelievable adventures to offer to our members. Kayak Costa Rica, Kodiak Island, Ottawa, or Chile at WKF member rates. (Other kayak adventures on the way!)

#### WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE WKF IN 1997?

1997 will be a big year for the WKF.

First, the events: We will bring you the first-ever full scale World Cup and World Championships for Extreme Racing. The World Cup is a four race series beginning at the Cataracts of the Kem River in California. The second race is part of the Gorge Games in Hood River, Oregon, a 15 minute stretch of class V that will blow your doors off. The third race takes place on the infamous Green Narrows in North Carolina. And the World Cup Finals, featuring our trademark head-to-head action, will run over Great Falls of the Potomac. These events all happen in July and early August.

This summer promises a lot of action. Many athletes will come from a pro-rodeo in Switzerland straight to the WKF World Cup events in July. In August, several NOWR events will take place with many of the top paddlers participating. September will draw all of the rodeo team athletes to the Ottawa River to compete in the 1997 World Rodeo Championships. Just two weeks later, the WKF 1997 Extreme World Championships take place in Washington, DC at Great Falls.

Dan Gavere will defend his Pre-World Champion title at that event. And, of course, all WKF events promise significant prize money for first through fifteenth place.

Next, we will introduce a new standard for kayak instruction. In 1997, the WKF will commence certifying kayak instructors under new, more stringent, and modern guidelines. Only the best instructors will pass the WKF Elite Instructor Certification Course. By passing this course an instructor will be made a part of an elite corps of instructors with the highest credentials in the sport. The motto of the WKF Instructional Program is "Safety through Skill and Knowledge." Potential instructors will be taught by some of the world's best kayakers who will cover strokes, concepts, advanced teaching methods, safety, and rescue. The latest techniques will be taught and the curriculum will be updated as techniques evolve and change for the better.

Third, the WKF Pro Team will stand ready to answer those questions you always wanted to ask top boaters like Dan Gavere, Corran Addison, Clay Wright, Amd Schaeftlein (Germany), Tracy Clapp, Jamie Simon, and others. Dan will have his own "Ask Dan The Man," column. Those of us who play well with others will share an "Ask the WKF Experts," column. For your instructional questions ask experts like Peter Kennedy, Chris Spelius, myself, and others. Your questions can be technical, philosophical, or about anything you are interested in (remember, however, that you are asking kayakers, not brain surgeons, so make your questions difficult). Just go to the WKF web site and e-mail your questions to the athlete of your choice. In each issue of *American Whitewater* the "WKF Experts" will respond to your questions.

Remember: The WKF is here to make the life of all boaters more enjoyable. There is nothing to fear, no hidden agenda, no surprises. We have simple goals: We want to assist the AWA in river conservation, and on access issues. We want all paddlers to reach their maximum skill potential. We want to provide top kayakers with an outlet to demonstrate their abilities and want to make their lives easier by having money for them to take home if they do well. And, we want to give our paddling community the most awesome kayaking events ever staged—on video and in person. (Check out the 1996 WKF Pre-World Extreme Championships on video—only \$13).

E.J.

Eric Jackson

WKF President, Olympian, World Rodeo Champion

[www.worldkayak.com](http://www.worldkayak.com); [ej8worldkayak.com](mailto:ej8worldkayak.com)

The following email addresses are ready for your question:

Dan Gavere: [gavere8worldkayak.com](mailto:gavere8worldkayak.com)

Chris Spelius: [spee@worldkayak.com](mailto:spee@worldkayak.com)

Corran Addison: [corran8worldkayak.com](mailto:corran8worldkayak.com)

Tracy Clapp: [tracey8worldkayak.com](mailto:tracey8worldkayak.com)

Clay Wright: [clay8worldkayak.com](mailto:clay8worldkayak.com)

Eric Jackson: [ejQworldkayak.com](mailto:ejQworldkayak.com)

Peter Kennedy: [kennedy8worldkayak.com](mailto:kennedy8worldkayak.com)

Bryan Toole: [toole8worldkayak.com](mailto:toole8worldkayak.com)

If you want to ask a blanket question and let us give it to a couple of different experts just send it to [wkf8worldkayak.com](mailto:wkf8worldkayak.com) and we will pass the question around. If you are not on the Internet or otherwise fear the twenty-first century, mail your questions to the WKF at PO Box 15430 Washington, DC 20003.

# ASK DAN

by Dan Gavere

## THE MAN\*



Dan Gavere chasing Jason Beakes.

Skip Brown

### 1. Dan, what's your take on the WKF?

My first impression of the World Kayak Federation was that it must be a bunch of pissed-off, oversized paddling thugs in big capes parading around riverbanks with huge biceps, long hair, and gold chains—followed by busty women and fat managers—like the WWF (World Wrestling Federation). And I thought, "Ha, there's no way!" Obviously, I wasn't aware of anything the organization did. Now that I have been to a WKF event and have spent some time with organizers, Bryan Christy and Eric Jackson, I feel that the WKF has an incredible mission—a mission that I have always dreamed of.

Professional Kayaking! Finally an organization that is doing something for the athletes in the disciplines of freestyle/rodeo and extreme paddling—the two areas of the sport that are the most fun and exciting to watch and participate in. Initially, I thought that maybe EJ had formed the WKF as some sort of self-beneficial organization to take over the sport of rodeo and extreme racing, and I think that a lot of other people had the same skepticism. However, I now feel that what EJ and

\*A regular column by WKF Pro Team Member and 1996 WKF Pre-World Extreme Champion Dan Gavere. Questions on technique, trends, equipment, an event, how to wear your hair? Email Dan Gavere at [gavere@worldkayak.com](mailto:gavere@worldkayak.com) or write to Dan in care of the World Kayak Federation at PO 15430, Washington, DC 20003



the WKF can do for the sport of kayaking as a whole is awesome. The WKF will become more and more popular as more people start coming to events and realize how professional and fun they are. I am **totally stoked** that the World Kayak Federation has formed an organization that will be working for the betterment of whitewater kayaking. I'm also stoked that the WKF will be working with the AWA because this means that more money will go to the savior of our free flowing rivers and creeks. Overall, the WKF is a dream come true for me. I had always wanted to compete in an event where cash was awarded for the winners.

**2. You make doing a cartwheel look so easy. What's your secret? I am just starting out and can often get one point going but am not consistent and can't always get it around.**

Well, if I told you my secret it wouldn't be a secret anymore now would it. However, there are a few tips that will help you start throwing ends like a champ:

I always keep my eyes focused on the sweet spot (most powerful part of a hydraulic where maneuvers can be performed with the least amount of effort). While focusing on the hole, I usually try to surf at the very top of the foam, balanced just on the top of the foam pile. This positioning is critical because when I initiate a cartwheel it's imperative that I don't have a lot of **speed/momentum** going down into the trough of the hole. When I initiate my bow—let say I'm going left (counterclockwise)—I will be surfing on the very top of the hole and instead of just lining up, leaning forward, and ending out, I use braking strokes (either back-strokes or deep back pry's) to slow myself down as I'm falling off the top into the sweet spot.

As I'm coming close to the sweet spot I use another back sweep (with the back of the paddle moving from just behind the plane of the waist toward the bow grab loop), lean forward, and place my boat on its left edge. Edging varies in direct proportion to how vertical I want to go i.e., flatter is good for low angle "whip-its" or "McTwists" and fully on edge means nice vertical or



just past vertical moves. As my bow goes into the water I try to place all of my body weight onto my left blade so that I don't go too deep into the sweet spot. This enables the boat simply to pass through the water with very little resistance or bobbing action. When my boat gets to the vertical position (actually, just before) and I know that I'm not leaving the hole, I pull my left blade out of the water—it should be close to the bow grab loop—and I reach across my body with my right blade, being careful to keep my eyes on the hole and not to spin too much (like a pirouette). As my weight starts coming down, I look over my left shoulder and have my right blade planted right in the sweet spot of the hole like I'm going to do a big sweep. Before my body hits the water I start my stroke while I'm concentrating on keeping my boat on edge which allows the edge to cut right through the water with the least amount of resistance. Following through the stroke is critical. Once I have started my forward sweep on the stern move, I'm sure to continue the stroke all the way through the move because this same stroke will be pushing me forward to set me up for the next bow move. If all goes as planned, my bow will come right back down into the sweet spot and I will be looking right into the hole again. As the bow comes back around, the key is to get my weight forward and onto the backside of the left blade again. I know it sounds complicated, but if you find the right spot in the hole, making cartwheels can be almost effortless—which is my ultimate goal.

**3. You live a rather nomadic life as a kayaker traveling all over the world. What's your favorite adventure story?**

My favorite adventure story has got to be my 3rd trip down the Grand Canyon with my own permit (I had been on the waiting list for 8 years). I was 18 years old and had just graduated from high school. I invited all of my best friends from school and rafting companies that I had worked for. We had 15 people (average age was 20), 8 rafts, 5 kayaks, 1 squirt boat, 100 cases of beer, and 24 days to go 280 miles down the Colorado River. That was a trip I'll never forget because I worked, played, and relaxed harder than I ever thought possible.

The first night was a disaster. I cooked dinner and, after serving myself last, went to find

a seat in the fading light. I didn't notice a bucket of mashed potatoes and stepped right into the pot! Everyone was right there and I became the laughing stock of the evening. As I pulled the mashed potatoes from my toes, I took a seat on the only styrofoam cooler we had brought (for fruit). It wasn't until the sensation of cold fruit juice trickling down my privates that I realized what I had done. Instead of reacting suddenly, though, I simply leaned back to finish my dinner. Now everyone was in stitches laughing as I stayed seated on the cooler of crushed fruit. When I leaned back, I accidentally knocked out the center post for the huge tarp we had set up (it also had the lantern hanging from it) and rolled over backwards, spilling my whole dinner onto my chest and bringing down the whole kitchen tarp on top of me. All I could hear from inside the fallen tarp was more jeers and laughter. Finally, I crawled out, covered with food, and laughed hysterically with all of my friends. Needless to say we laughed and smiled a lot on that trip. I haven't experienced a situation or place that has brought me together with my pals like that since...truly a lifelong memory.

PS—You can jump right in the writing game by helping me to come up with a cooler name for this column. I will select the best name in the next edition of *American Whitewater*.



# CORRAN'S COLUMN\*

by Corran Addison

## Paddle for Miles!

When I was asked by Kristine Jackson (the real person behind the World Kayak Federation) to write an article for *American Whitewater*, I was excited by the prospect. Finally a medium to present ideas and pass new developments within our sport to the public, as well as a vein to convey my twisted sense of humor.

I have many articles in mind, ranging from coverage of technical advancements in equipment and paddling techniques, to little predictions of the future, to a few comments on current issues. Some run of the mill, others a little strange (you were expecting something else?). So here I thought that I would set the flavour. Hold on chaps: what a long strange trip it's going to be!

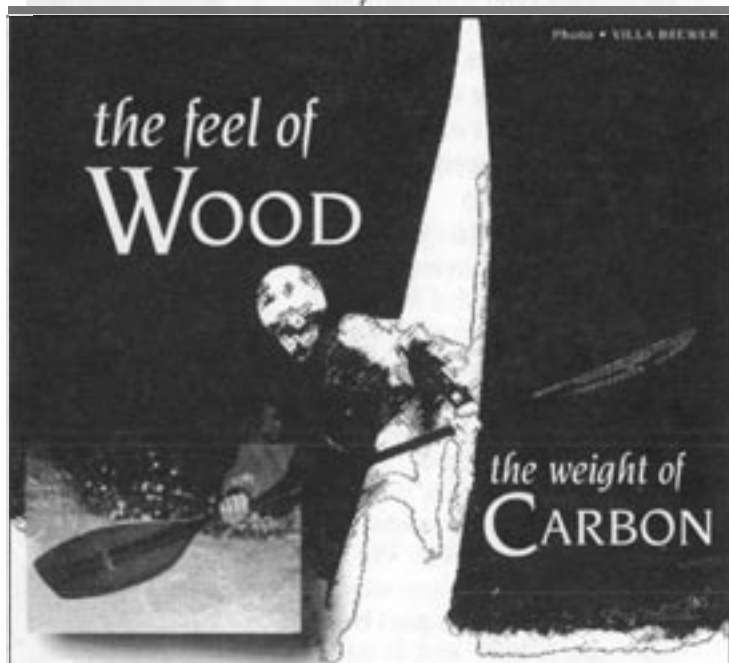
Now just about every kayaker I know has at some point or another complained about their respective intimate partner's obsession with limiting the amount of time that can be spent on a river. It seems that the two are mutually exclusive: kayaking and dating simply don't mix.

But none has summed it up quite as eloquently as NOWR organizer Kelly Mull, who in a moment of despair exclaimed: "Why is it that guys think just because you want to go out with them that you're going to take away all their fun tickets?"

An unfortunate reality, for our instinctual need to propagate the species is matched only by our need to establish ourselves through kayaking as the Alpha male (or in the case of those beautiful women out there reading this, the Queen Bee?). And it was during one of these conversations with Jeff Rivest (the owner of Rip International), that the topic of 'kayak miles' came up.

Kayak Miles? Ok, it goes something like this. Much like frequent flyer miles, which, once accumulated, entitle you to a free air ticket. Kayak miles eventually add up to a Fun Ticket. This in turn allows you to take off and go paddling with your buds.

Kayak Miles are acquired by completing various insurmountable tasks like doing the dishes, making dinner, taking out the garbage, bringing home flowers (upgrade to first class with that one), spending a day together doing something they like (instant acquisition of a Fun Ticket), and so on. Special needs require special planning, so if you want a new kayak for example, something like inviting your mother-in-law over for dinner (and then abstaining from killing her) would be appropriate. A trip to Chile might take a number of these unfortunate evenings, plus some clever little tricks like candlelight dinners, a picnic on the beach (never underestimate the effects of being blatantly romantic) and perhaps buying her a new pair of shoes (women loooove shoes - just go look in her closet). Lacy underwear doesn't count, because ultimately that's for you anyway, and she knows it. Unfortunately, soul mates vary as much from one to the next as do airlines, and



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thus does the exact number of Kayak Miles required to get a Fun Ticket. Whether this little system is something which is open between you and your mate is irrelevant, as it applies nonetheless.

An interesting twist to this, however, was practiced by another friend of mine, **Claude Page** (Canadian Freestyle team member), who had his girlfriend on a frequent flyer program (by his way of thinking, every time she saw him it was just like she was flying, but that's another story). In order for her to acquire sufficient miles to spend time with him, he had to go paddling. Every time he went boating, SHE acquired the miles, and thus it was in her interest for him to go. This little system only works however, if the other person is head over heels in love with you (which while we might all think this is the case, I suggest a little reality check here folks).

And that sums up the lesson for today. But don't let your guard down. I'll be back....

(The names and places of people mentioned here have not



been changed. We accept no responsibility for the offense taken by those reading this article, though our intent was defamation of character wherever possible. All complaints should be directed towards somebody other than the WKF, the AWA, sponsors, financial backers, the local diner that delivers free pizza, or the author of this article).

■ A not-so-regular column by WKF Pro Team Member, extreme racer, rodeo boater, and boat designer Corran Addison.

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# Turn, Turn Turn... Techniques for eddy catching.

By John Weld

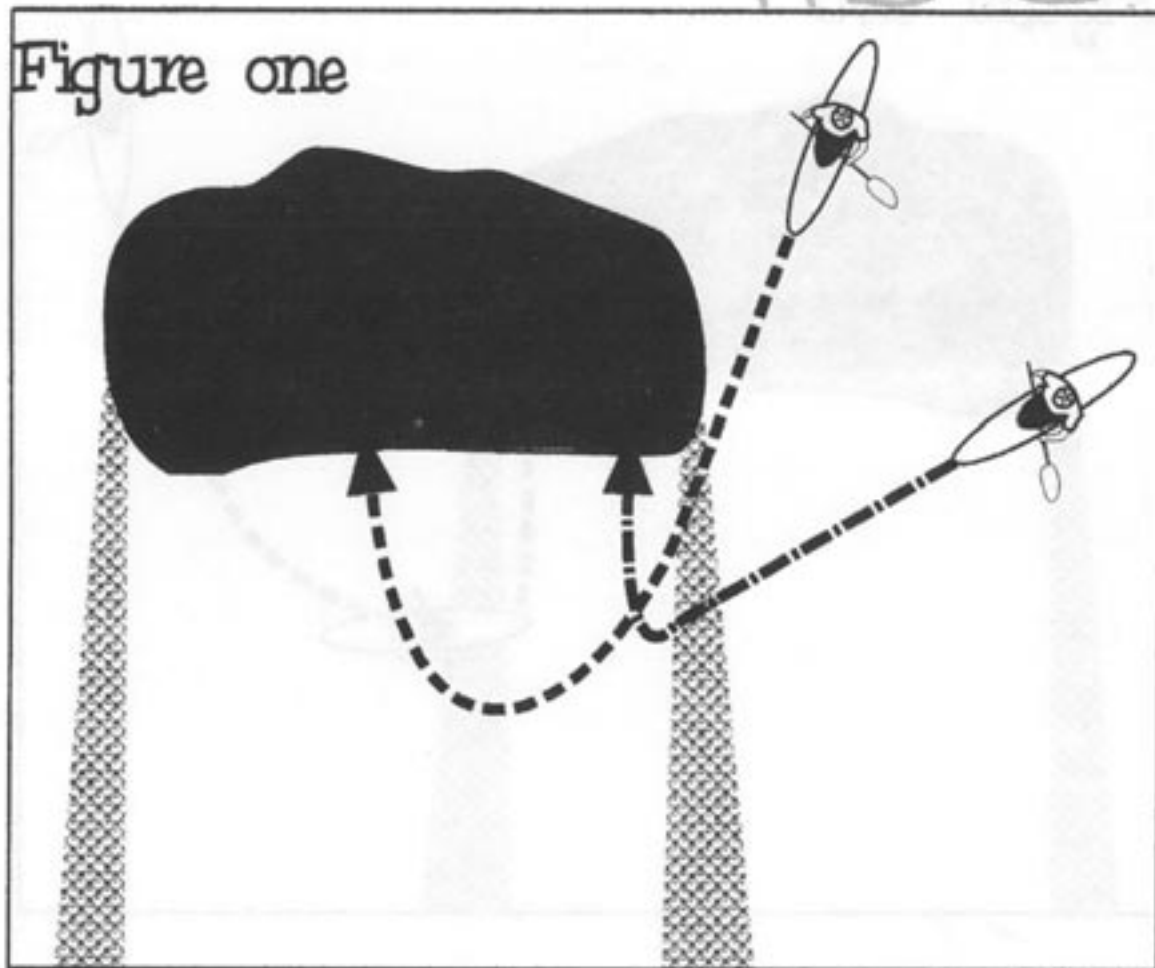
Now that I am entering my tenth year as a whitewater kayak instructor, I have resolved myself to that fact that correcting bad paddling technique has become my obscure lot in life. Every day I face new students ready to make technique errors with such zeal that I can only believe that they were taught that way. The total number of bad sweeps that I have seen ranges in the millions. Although at times the job is repetitive, I feel somehow obligated to attack this task with missionary-like stubbornness, and for this reason, I have decided to write a technique article geared towards the bulk of my students: class III and easy class IV boaters. Maybe by doing this I can, as General Westmoreland said concerning Vietnam, "Nip this problem in the bud." Your task as a student is to approach this (as any technique advice) with a critical mind, and be prepared to experiment and challenge what I suggest.

Here's the good news: 1) What I am going to point out to you is resoundingly easy to identify and fix. Often these problems have been a source of frustration for so long that many of my students who have made these mistakes for years often respond to this advice as if they had been hit in the forehead with a bat. 2) My students pay \$100 a day for this information; you are getting it for free, albeit only on paper. This is stuff that the really good boaters already do, but have never had the inclination or the patience to think about it and pass it on to the rest of you.

I'm going to keep this as simple as possible. There are two ways where my students waste most of their energy: bad turning strokes and poor eddy turns.

Let's begin our discussion with eddy turns. In its simplest form, you're coming downstream at a good clip, and you stick the nose of your boat in the still water behind a rock, and your nose stops (or slows down). The back end of your boat is out in the current and continues to move downstream. Your boat spins. Now, here's the difference between an expert and a novice. An expert has full con-

# Turn, Turn Turn...Techniques for eddy catching.



trol of this spin, and can use an eddy as a tool to do a variety of maneuvers, the most important of which is the ability to catch this eddy *effortlessly*. A novice boater usually can only spin out on the eddy line.

The key to understanding how to get the most out of an eddy is to realize that the angle at which you cross the eddy line into the still water has a direct effect on the trajectory of your boat into the eddy<sup>1</sup>. The more downstream angle that you have coming across the eddy line, the wider the turn your boat describes into the eddy, and the more perpendicular your boat is to the eddy line as you cross into the still water, the tighter the turn (see figure 1).

Here's one way to look at this phenomena. A good boater can paddle across an eddy line, take their paddle out of the water entirely, and based on the angle at which he or she crossed the eddy line, can end up anywhere they want in the eddy: close to the eddy line, dead in the center, or saddled up against the far eddy line, ready to peel out. This idea has two very important implications: 1) Good boaters don't do much with their paddles while catching eddies. They let the eddy catch them as opposed to "catching" the eddy, and their paddle plants are often very relaxed. 2) If they want, good boaters can zoom in one side of

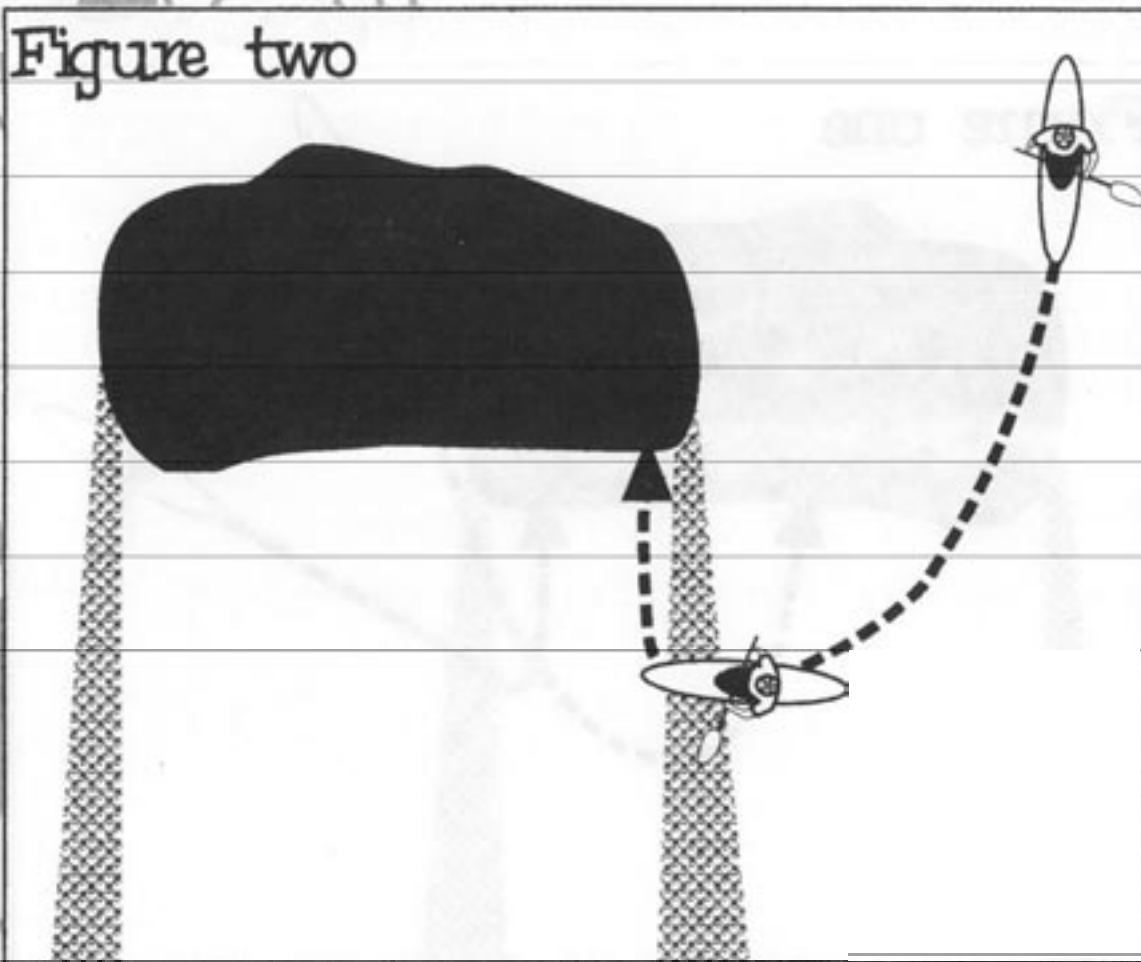
the eddy and with very little effort, zoom to the other side of the eddy and peel-out, thereby going from one side of the river to the other effortlessly. Slalom boaters call this move an "S-turn".

For someone less skilled in reading water, catching eddies is more of a task. Typically, novice paddlers begin turning their boats way too soon as they approach eddies. As a result, by the time they cross the eddy line, they have an approach angle suitable for an 2 inch wide eddy, no matter how large and luxurious the eddy really is (see figure 2). As a result, their eddy turn consistently takes place right on the eddy line. The problem with this is that eddy lines do not stop boats. The novice boater then may find him or herself turned upstream, but still moving downstream (and backwards) at a good clip. The paddle plant in this case is not an effortless high brace in the pocket of still water behind the rock, but a labored forward stroke right on the eddy line as the paddler tried to pull him or herself up into the eddy. In steep water, the paddler usually ends up drifting into the rapid backwards.

Unfortunately, I have heard of many students who have been taught that you should ALWAYS sweep on the outside of your turn just as you approach an eddy. Often this is done at the cost

## Turn, Turn Turn... Techniques for eddy catching.

Figure two



of an otherwise good eddy approach angle. I shouldn't even justify this nonsense with a comment, but I will say that the eddy could care less whether you sweep or not as you enter. What is paramount is the angle of your boat as you cross into the still water behind the rock. Sometimes you sweep on one side of the boat as you cross into an eddy, sometimes you sweep on the other, and sometimes you don't even need to sweep at all. If you approach the eddy correctly, the current will spin you exactly the way you want, and do so with more effectiveness and authority than you could ever do on your own.

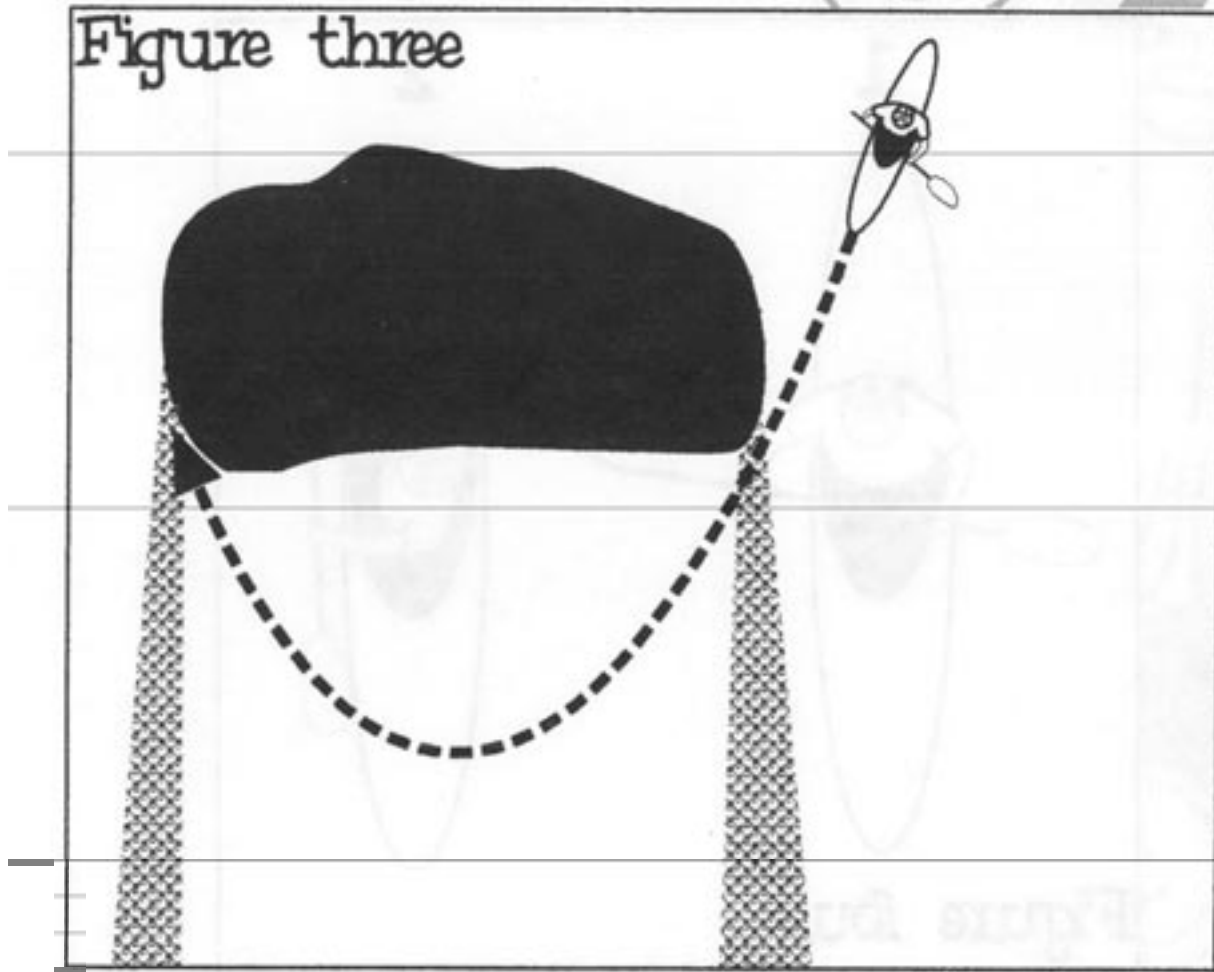
O.K., now it's test time. Go out to your nearest eddy, paddle up to and across the eddy line, and take your paddle out of the water completely. No cheating. If you did it right, you should have read the speed of the current and the width of the eddy then adjusted your approach angle so that your boat arced upstream in such a way that at the completion of the turn, the nose of your boat should have gently tapped the middle of the rock. You should be completely stopped. Remember, the smaller the eddy, the more you should "open up" your approach angle (refer to figure 1) to get exactly the right turn. If you are pointed too much downstream, you will either miss the eddy entirely, or your turn will be so wide that you will "S-turn" the eddy whether you want to or not. If you are too perpendicular to the eddy line as you cross it, you will turn way too soon, and you will find yourself sheepishly paddling up on the eddy line, nowhere close to the eddy itself.

Here's test number two, after you get a good feel for regular eddy turns. The goal here is to "S-turn" the eddy with no assistance from your paddle. Pick a reasonably sized eddy to start out with (less than 15 feet wide). Paddle up to and across the eddy line and take your paddle out of the water. Your approach angle should be such that your boat arcs all the way across the eddy to the far eddy line, and at the completion of the turn you can peel out of the eddy in one stroke (see figure 3). If you turn too soon and hit the rock, or even worse if you spin out on the eddy line and begin to drift backwards you need more downstream angle as you cross the eddy line. If your boat skids down along the eddy line and never turns upstream, you had too much downstream angle.

Under ideal conditions, your boat angle as you cross the eddy line should be your primary tool to determine your trajectory into an eddy. The result is that your paddle plant should be very, very relaxed: the eddy should be doing the work of pulling you to a stop. However, no one can get this right every time, and there are two "dynamic" paddle plants that you can use after you catch the eddy to correct your trajectory. A stem draw (see below for a full description) placed on the inside of the turn will widen your arc if you start to turn too quickly, and a Duffek placed on the inside of the turn will tighten the arc if you are turning too wide.

# Turn, Turn Turn...Techniques for eddy catching.

Figure three



Here is a checklist of very common problems that my students have with eddy turns:

Not maintaining a proper angle all the way across an eddy; turning too soon.

Having a good angle approaching the eddy, but no speed. Remember that catching eddies is a vector proposition. You must be moving your body weight out of the current and in to the eddy.

Failure to paddle all the way across the eddy. Often students will drift the last few feet up to an eddy, and as a result lose momentum and proper angle at the crucial point.

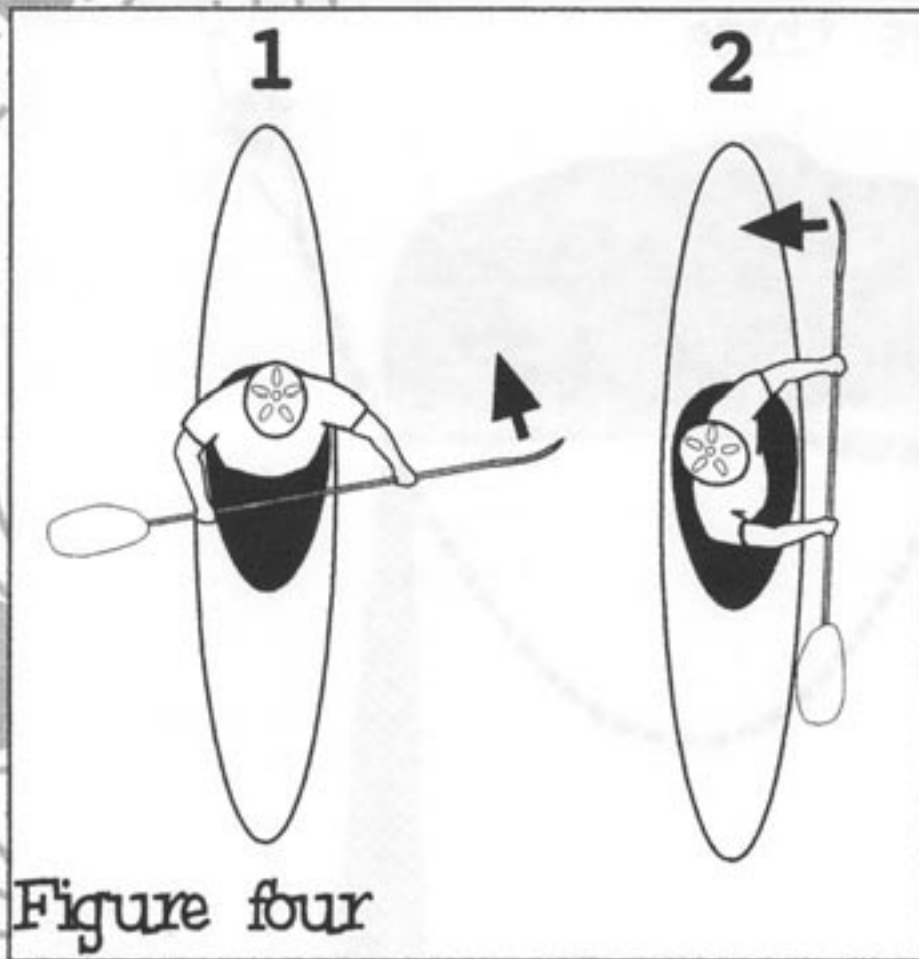
The next technique problem that I want to address is turning strokes, and here is where I am going to say something that may take some of you by surprise. Traditionally, the primary turning stroke in a kayak is a full sweep. This stroke starts at the front of the boat, sweeps wide from the boat and ends at the back of the boat. I'm here to tell you that 99.999% of the time, this full sweep is not necessary. All that you have to do is the second half of this sweep—from the mid-point to the back of the boat—to get the boat to turn. This stroke is called a stem draw.

This stroke will turn the boat effortlessly under most conditions, provided that you use exacting technique. Start the move

by reaching out at a right angle away from the boat with your paddle. Submerge your blade. Pull towards the back of your boat, finishing off by pulling water under the bottom of the boat. Rotate your entire body while you sweep back. Some instructors will encourage keeping your leading arm straight while you sweep back, but I don't think this is so important. What I see as the crucial aspect of this stem draw is that at the end of the stroke, your body is rotated enough that your paddle **shaft** is parallel to the side of your boat (see figure 4). If you are working hard to turn your boat, or if you are using more than two stem draws to turn, you are doing this stroke incorrectly.

There are two problems with the front half of the sweep 1) **mechanically**, the front part of the sweep is very similar to a forward stroke; note the position of your paddle shaft at the start of the full sweep. The stem draw, however, is radically different than a forward stroke. The shaft is parallel to the side of the boat and you are pushing water directly under the boat. 2) More often than not, you need to apply pressure to the back end of the boat to turn. The few times I need to apply pressure to the front end of the boat to turn, I find that a Duffek is far more effective than the front part of a sweep. With the Duffek, the paddle shaft is once again parallel to the side of the boat, in an excellent position to apply pressure right under the boat.

## Turn, Turn Turn... Techniques for eddy catching.



Here is a checklist of problems that my students often have with the stem draw:

- You must rotate your body with your paddle for this to work. If you are not flexible enough to do this, fix it. Stretch, lose weight, do squat thrusts, whatever.
- If you do not rotate your body, most likely your blade will not stay perpendicular in the water (like it should), but rather spoon water up at the end of the stroke. This will not turn your boat.
- Forward strokes just make your boat go even faster in the wrong direction. If you need to turn, do waste your energy doing 60 forward strokes when one stem draw will work.

Here's how perfecting these two items will save you energy on the water. If every time you catching an eddy, you spin out on the eddy line and do a labored forward stroke right on the eddy line to pull yourself up into the eddy, you are wasting energy. Good boaters not only catch eddies effortlessly, but can use eddies to zoom from one side of the river to the other by doing "s-turns". And I don't know how many times I've seen boaters who should know better fruitlessly hammering the water with

poorly formed turning strokes. It's very frustrating to watch. Some instructors **will** emphasize that a good forward stroke will save you lots of energy, but I feel that perfecting the forward stroke can be a bottomless pit of work. Instead, fix these two items, and you will see results immediately.

Specifically, it's the length of time that the boat spends straddling the eddy line that determines the amount spin put on the boat. Typically, if you are aimed more downstream as you cross the eddy line, you cross very quickly, and describe wide arc into the eddy. If you are perpendicular to the eddy line as you cross, you typically spend more time on the eddy line, and you make a very tight turn. The same effect can be achieved with varying angles if you are paddling faster or slower.



# CANYON OF THE DAMMED

## Paddling the Uinta

By Mark H. White  
AWA Regional Coordinator

We had rappelled our kayaks down a cliff, hauled them through a hellish river bed and were preparing to rappel again. Jeff and I were commiserating our way through Shale Creek's Gorge of Eternal Peril toward the upper Uinta River.

"This is probably the most stupid idea you've ever had," Jeff observed. Although I have proudly fathered a handsome number of absurd aqua-epics, his statement was fairly accurate. "Boating" the Gorge of Eternal Peril was akin to rocketing through a lubricated bobsled run of bedrock. A few fallen trees and channel-chocking boulders were thrown in to enhance Slate Creek's precipitous character and our frustration.

Until now, no one had ever attempted to run these creeks which drain melted snow from Utah's highest peaks. My enthusiasm to explore these new rivers had infected Jeff without even seeing the canyon. It appeared he was now cursing me under his breath, but the air was too thick to understand his exact words.



Unita River  
Photo by Mark White

# CANYON OF THE UAMMEU



The Uinta Mountains are the only major North American range which runs on an east-west axis. The southern flank spills water into the Green River drainage, which eventually enters the Colorado River. This natural flow of life-giving water has the special attention of the Bureau of Reclamation.

In 1956 Congress authorized the Central Utah Project (CUP)- which was to construct 18 major dams and reservoirs, leviathan pumping stations and hundreds of miles of tunnels, aqueducts and canals. The project was to supply the Salt Lake City metro area with abundant water for dozens, possibly hundreds of years. Congress naively set the original cost at a paltry \$330 million. To date, over \$3 billion has been spent, yet very little water has been delivered to the intended recipients—who incidentally consume nearly twice the amount of water on a per capita basis as the national average. The partially completed CUP is now recognized as one of history's largest pork barrel schemes. And the pristine Uinta River remains a target of the Central Utah Project.

Our trip required logistical ingenuity because access to Slate Creek and the upper Uinta is about fifteen miles from the nearest dirt road. Initially, Jeff and I planned to tether our gear filled boats and drag them up the rocky trail behind us. But by the time we reached the water, our kayaks would surely be worn to the grab loops and blue plastic shavings would litter the trail. After two years of research, we chanced upon Gordon and Bill, who proved to be our transportation saviors. These guys were hat-wearing, droopy mustachioed cowboys (muleboys?) equipped with animals, saddles, ropes, bridles, pistols and turn of the century attire.

Culture shock ensued as Jeff and I—new age kayakers—interacted with Gordon and Bill—traditional 'don't tell me what to do' westerners. "Gawdamned environmentalists," bellowed Gordon, "they want to change everything so we can't even use it." Being the consummate good-natured diplomat, Jeff explained we were in fact enviro-dudes and that dramatic change is inevitable.

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Jeff Macfarlane on Slate Creek, above confluence with Uinta River.  
Phot by Mark White

Inset: Mark, Jeff, Horse

# CANYON OF THE DAMMED

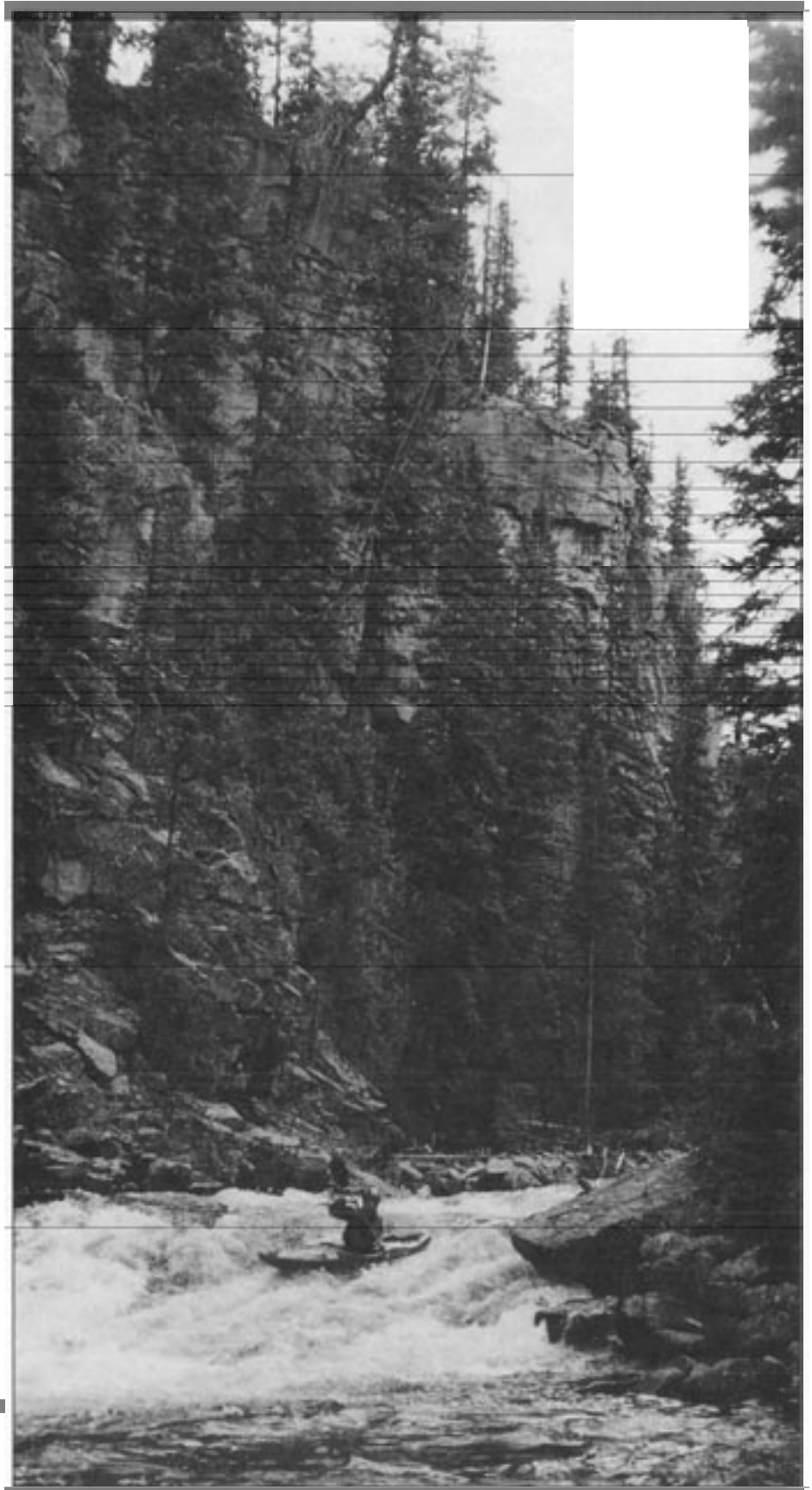
"We hope to conserve something so everyone; wildlife, kayakers and mule aficionados alike can enjoy it," explained Jeff. Our conversation seemed to be a microcosm of the evolving west—differing sides trying to understand one another; hopefully to combat the real enemy, rampant growth and over consumption.

On our approach to Slate Creek, Jeff and I were immersed in the finer points of mules and all that concerns them. We learned a mule is definitely not a horse, nor is it a donkey, hinney or an ass. Mules are the Willy's Jeep of the bio world, having provided dependable transportation since Adam and Eve hailed the first taxi. Our star animal, Elizabeth, easily **carried** both kayaks, paddles, boating gear and 50 pounds of additional paraphernalia.

While the horses stumbled and balked, our sure footed mules marched up the trail like boot camp marines—seemingly annoyed by their cousins shenanigans. Once at camp we discovered that mules, or at least Elizabeth, enjoy human attention, tortellini and apple-cinnamon **PowerBars**.

"I hope this gets better," Jeff said candidly as we lowered his boat over the cliff's edge—this time near the Slate **Creek/** Uinta River confluence. "It's awesome just downstream," I lied. Around the next bend we were forced to portage across a sheer rock wall to avoid pinning against an ancient log which blocked the entire river.

"I really hope this gets better," Jeff said again. From that point to the U-Bar Ranch, some 13 miles downstream, things did get a lot better. The Uinta River fell at a steady 211 feet per mile, creating a continuous class III rapid, punctuated by several short class IV+ drops, blind corners and fallen pines. We made the run in mid July which was past prime for an ideal flow. Because the only gauge on this river is far downstream, we had to guesstimate the peak run off and plan accordingly. I had scouted the run eight years before and had only vague memories of technical remoteness, so we opted to err on the low flow side. Jeff and I had about 300 cfs, but would have been happy to double that.



Mark White on the Uinta River.  
Photo by Jeff Macfarlane

# CANYON OF THE DAMMED



The glarier carved valley through which the Uinta flows offers some of Utah's most incredible alpine scenery. The steep slopes are thick with lodgepole pine and rocky moraines left by a glacier which, during the Great Ice Age, stretched nearly 27 miles. Within this wide valley the Uinta River continued to erode a narrow, walled gorge which ranges from 50 to 200 feet deep.

Once it reaches the arid Uinta Basin the river is diverted into unlined, uncovered irrigation canals which often run parallel to one another for miles, all losing precious water through seepage and evaporation. Extremely inefficient irrigation practices further waste water at the alfalfa fields. Amazingly, there is no cost-sharing for this valuable resource. In other words, those who receive abundant free water have no incentive to conserve it.

The Feds have spent billions of tax dollars to finance the proposed Uinta dam and dozens of others which compromise the CUP. The dam slated for the Uinta will stand 300 feet high and impound a 30,000 acre-foot reservoir. Simple conservation measures, such as lining and covering existing canals, merging parallel canals and instituting less wasteful irrigation practices would save water, tax dollars and wild areas from further degradation.

The sheer red walls eventually diminished in stature and yielded to gentle pine and willow-lined banks. Eased gradient slowed the river and we began to encounter log jams. Massive log jams. It appeared every tree which had fallen into the Uinta River over the past thousand years ended up in this relatively flat area. Several miles of tangled logs, pools, marshes and braided river made for productive wildlife habitat, but awful boating.

We were in and out of our boats constantly—pulling them over and around logs for hours. Our painfully slow progress was anesthetized by a glowing sunset and countless animal sightings. The Uinta drainage hosts a high diversity of wildlife; bighorn sheep, black bear, moose, mule deer, river otter, mink, pine martin, beaver

Mark White running portion of 'Gorge of Eternal Peril', above confluence with Uinta River.  
Photo by Jeff Macfarlane

# CANYON OF THE UAMMEU

and eagles all depend upon the riparian area. Speckled and **longnose** dace, mountain sucker, brook, rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout thrive in the Uinta and its tributaries. Many anglers suggest the healthy self-sustaining nature of the natural fishery may in itself warrant protection of the Uinta River.

It is in this area that dam construction will destroy critical habitat, stop sediment flow, displace and kill wildlife and fish. It will invite paved roads, increased commercial activity and motorized recreation. Millions more of your tax dollars will be spent where simple conservation measures would suffice. Utah is a state delirious with the concept of development.

'Taming and turning the desert green' was a mantra chanted by early pioneers and echoed by today's policy makers. While the tourism and outdoor recreation industries continue to dwarf the state's tiny agribusiness, the governor and key political figures openly and actively oppose any 'Wild & Scenic' designations.

As the long shadows surrendered to dusk, we dragged our boats and exhausted bodies from the water. The setting sun offered a perfect closing to our memorable adventure, but a prophetic warning about the future of this perfect river.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Author Mark H. White is AWA's Regional Coordinator and President of the Utah Rivers Council. The URC is a non profit organization which aims to keep Utah's rivers healthy and free flowing. For information regarding the Uinta River and Central Utah Project call (801) 486-4776.



Unita River near the headwaters 600feet above Big Daddy rapid.

Inset: Jeff Macfarlane in Big Daddy Rapid.  
Photo by Mark White

# It's time to vote

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO AWA CONSTITUTION

The AWA Board of Directors proposes to the membership the following amendments to the AWA Constitution.

1). In item 5, relating to the Board of Directors, amend the second sentence to read as follows (existing language shown in brackets; proposed new language shown underlined): "The Board of Directors shall consist of not less than 9 nor more than [25] 30 individuals who are each members in good standing of the organization.

Purpose: The purpose of the amendment is to enlarge the maximum size of the AWA Board of Directors from 25 to 30 so that we can take advantage of the talents and experience of other people who have agreed to serve on the Board. There are now 25 board members. Only one existing member who is up for reelection is not running. Several additional people are running for election for the first time. However, if the Board is not expanded and all existing members running for reelection are elected, there will be only one vacant position on the Board. The Board would like to make room for all of the new people who have been nominated.

2). To designate the Treasurer of the AWA a member of the Executive Committee.

Purpose: To increase the representation on this important, decision making body.

## Paul Tefft

### Snowmass, Colorado

As a longtime nature and paddlesport enthusiast, becoming one of the American Whitewater Affiliation Directors seems as



natural as a free flowing river. My first experience with environmental activism came at the tender age of 10. Appalled with the yearly clubbing deaths of seal pups, my sister and I created a fund-raising fair for the Fund For Animals in our suburban Alexandria, Virginia neighborhood. Holin Hills (HH) was a liberal, tight-knit community back in the 1960's. The HH residents banded together to support our seal saving effort. We turned our yard into an amateur yet gala event consisting of games, food and literature booths, music and balloons.

Through my young eyes the event seemed a huge success. We raised a little money, the President of the Fund For Animals wrote us a personal thank you note and we even received some minor, local media attention. It was a great feeling which probably influenced the direction of my life. We had decided to stand up against something we believed was wrong. In today's world filled with environmental and social problems, you have to at least try and make a difference. However small and insignificant, we had succeeded in doing our tiny part for a cause which we were passionate about. The Canadians kept brutally pummeling seal pups, but at least we tried.

If elected to the AWA Board of Directors, I plan to help conceptualize and participate in a variety of fund-raising endeavors. I feel that I can be an asset in a number of capacities including a fresh, multi-media approach to creating awareness about this excellent organization. Some of my environment-oriented company's (Enviro-Action Sports) upcoming projects will be designed as fund-raisers for the AWA. Previous Enviro-Action Sports activities have raised over two thousand dollars for the AWA! I look forward to the possibility of joining AWA's Board of Directors.



## Ken Ransford

### Denver, Colorado

I am running for the AWA Board of Directors because I believe we need to preserve access to rivers. River access benefits not only us, but all future generations. If we do not approach this subject head on, we will find access barred in the face of better financed and organized wise users. When I worked on the Colorado Stream Safety Act in 1996, I learned that many legislators do not understand or believe there is an access problem. We need to publicize our access problems and build a coalition with other sympathetic parties. The fight will go on permanently.

As a tax attorney I specialize in fundraising for nonprofits. I am the President of the Colorado Chapter of the National Society for Fund Raising Executives, an organization of executive directors and development officers who raise money for nonprofits. I can bring a fund raising perspective to the Board. I have kayaked for thirteen years in a dozen states, British Columbia, Nepal, Pakistan, New Zealand, Tasmania and India. If we ever get to the point where we believe access is assured in the U.S., there's a whole wide world out there that could use our help.

# AWA Board



## Mac Thornton

### Cabin John, Maryland

When I joined the AWA Board back in '89, we had a total membership of about 900 and a budget of about \$40,000. We had all the organizational savvy of a typical local paddling club. We had no staff and most AWA conservation work was done in the evenings by people like Pope Barrow and Pete Skinner (who did a grand job, by the way).

Today, AWA has over 5000 members, a budget of \$400,000 and four paid staff who get up every morning and go to work protecting and enhancing whitewater rivers. We have a Regional Coordinator system, linking key volunteers all over the country to AWA's support services. The AWA played a key role in spawning new river protection groups, like two I am intimately familiar with, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition and The Potomac Conservancy.

But the ride has just begun! The AWA Board has a strategic plan to take us to 10,000 members by the year 2000, and plans to hire an Executive Director and more conservation staff in the next year. I would like to remain a part of AWA – not like the President's "building a bridge" – but running a river to the 21st century.

## Richard Penny

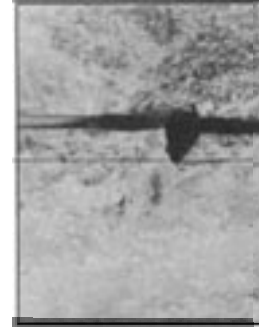
### Sacramento, California

Like many other Southeastern boaters of my generation, I got my start in paddling at summer camp, destroying aluminum Grumman canoes on the rivers of North Carolina. By 1975 I had my first decked fiberglass boat, and I've been paddling C-1 and kayak on the creeks and rivers of the South and West ever since.

My involvement with riven goes beyond paddling. In 1986 I wrote *The Whitewater Sourcebook* for Menasha Ridge Press, and it remains in print today. I am trained as a biologist (Ph.D., Duke, 1983) and it was a predictable evolution that I would become increasingly involved in river protection and restoration: first as an executive committee member for the Volunteer Group of the Sierra Club and then as a regional coordinator for AWA.

This past year, I made river conservation my livelihood, when I became campaign coordinator for the American River Coalition and directed the successful fight in Congress to stop construction of Auburn dam on the American River in California. I'm now the development director for Friends of the River, California's statewide river conservation group.

I am looking forward to an opportunity to serve on AWA's board. Nationwide our favorite paddling rivers are faced with a multitude of threats. To meet that challenge, river recreationists have to be organized, committed, and engaged. Through the American Whitewater Affiliation, we can be!



## Tom Christopher

### Leominster, Massachusetts

During the past three years the American Whitewater Affiliation has undergone many changes that have helped to better promote conservation of whitewater resources throughout the United States. It had been an honor and a privilege to participate in this process. I have seen the steady growth of our membership each year and a greater awareness of boaters toward all conservation issues that are an integral part of the whitewater experience.

Education of our constituency on these issues is now an important component of the AWA mission. Both the directors and staff have done an outstanding job of representing boaters' interests in protecting our favorite rivers from the constant threat of dam construction, developments, and pollution. We have seen limitations to access to riven become a primary threat to whitewater boating and the AWA has taken steps to protect the public interest by developing a formal policy on access issues.

In spite of all the good work accomplished in recent years there is still much to be done as we bring the AWA into the next millennium. River protection for whitewater boating is a long, complicated process and it will be necessary to increase staff, generate additional revenue, and continue to keep the AWA agenda at the forefront of every proceeding. Once again I am willing to commit to this task. Only through hard work and dogged determination will the AWA continue to succeed and grow.

# See page 56 also...

# It' time to vote ... AWA Board

## SUE LANGFITT

Portland, OR

I began kayaking in 1984 and have been heavily immersed, (literally and figuratively), in the sport since then. I have taught at Sundance Kayak School on Oregon's Rogue and at Otter Bar Kayak School in Northern California. I now teach about two weeks per year at Otter Bar.

I have several friends who are Olympi-



ans, world champions, US National champions and are the finest elite level exploratory boaters. I am not that level a kayaker. I am a competent paddler but I won't paddle something where the chances are great that I will get seriously hurt if I make a mistake.

For the last two years I have been an AWA Regional Coordinator. I am a graduate of the University of Oregon with a major in Journalism, emphasis on film and video production. I am currently the owner of a small advertising agency in Portland and have a 14 year old daughter, Tracy, who is a competent paddler but who prefers the warmer waters of the east coast.

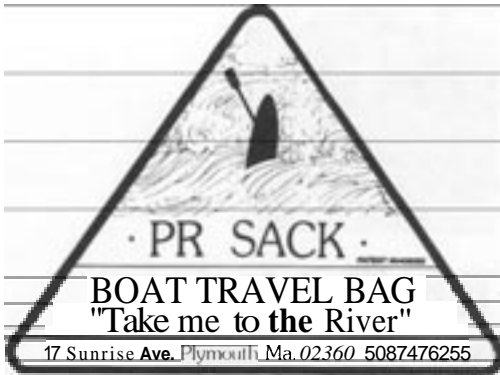
With your support, I will assist AWA in three areas: advertising, fundraising and promotion.

I love kayaking and the people involved with the sport. When we boat we become part of another world - a world that sometimes thunders, sometimes whispers, but always calls for attention.

## JAY KENNEY

Denver, CO

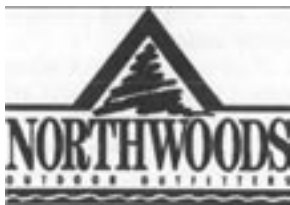
In the boating/enviro world, I have been boating for about seven years, and sit on the boards of the Colorado Environmental Coalition, the Colorado Whitewater Association, and the William C. Kenney Western Watershed Preservation Foundation. I have been active in the CWWA in the past two years, trying to get greater access for boaters without having to risk the threat of a trespassing charge. When that fails, I represent the CWWA member in the criminal case without charge, thereby making me the self-designated criminal defense sub-committee of the CWWA. The picture is from Ecuador, trying to figure out the indigenous roll.



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# THE **Grunge** POSER

by Doug Ammons

He walked up with a slight swagger, a young man in his early twenties, someone for whom the narrow confines of the real world were clearly too small. The studied care of his saunter mitigated the navigational hassle caused by his dreadlocks, which dangled into his eyes and obscured his vision. A sidekick shuffled along a half-step behind him with a surly face and a bandana tied tightly over his hair. I moved to the side. Donny Boy, the ring-leader, noticed me and spread an expansive smile.

"Duude! 'Been weeks! what's down?"

"Not much. Work, kids, the usual," I answered.

"Ha Ha! No man, I meant, done anything radical lately? Class Five? Ya gone *yakkin*?"

Without waiting for a reply, he exclaimed, "Hey! *Speakin*' of kayaking, I just got a new *Spitfire*. *Bitchin*! Rolls most excellently, like, bet I could do 100 handrolls without even outfittin' it. Spins, endos, rocket moves. Man, does it all!"

"So you've been out in it?"

"Well, Nah. Just got it from the store. Unwrapped it in the living room. But manic colors! Burnt chilli, neon lemon, and fuchsia. Makes your eyes water just to look at. No one'll miss it on the river!"

I asked a dumb question. "Weren't you paddling a Transform?"

He gagged. "Transform? That's last year's design, man! Banal! Sheezus, the thing had shit for graphics! Same old black and *floro* orange starburst. Nothing new! No stickers, no hot molded stuff. It's like, duuhh! They shoulda known nobody'd buy it after the first bunch went out. You just end up *lookin*' like everybody else...," he tailed off, shaking his head and looking into the distance.

"*Sorry*. I though you said you really liked it."

His mouth hung agape and he stared at me as though I had spoken and unfath-

omable idiocy. Collecting his patience he said, "Man, things change. The world changes." Picking up momentum he stated, "Its last year's boat! Case closed! Right, Jason?" He turned to his friend. Suddenly put in the spotlight, Jason looked shocked and not quite sure whether to agree or disagree, so he jerked his head around in a circle to cover the possibilities.

"That's right, Jase!" Donny Boy slapped him on the back and turned to me. "Can't stay with the same old gear, or what's the freaking point of being on the river?"

I said I didn't know. "So you aren't using it any more?"

"Nah, it's dead. A dog. A corpse! Stuck it in the garage with the rest. Got to get on with the times, dude! Everybody's that anybody is getting the *Spitfire* now."

His fickle mind jumped several cogs. "Hey, that new boat from Dimensional Warp, the *MegaThrasher*. When does it hit the scene?"

"I heard it will probably come out next month."

"Sheeet! I'm gonna get one of those! Heard the hull was the best ever." His eyes lit up and his hands started describing patterns in the air. "Something about the rocker, or maybe it was the chines. They did something to them, you know, changed them." His hands motioned vaguely. "They, uh,...," he frowned and his hands stopped in midair. He looked confused as complications from reality buzzed around like a cloud of annoying flies. Then, impatiently he brushed it all aside. "Well, shit, anyway, they made it a lot better. No comparison. Night and Day. Saw it in the ad in *HotDoggin*' magazine. Totally radical. Totally!"

"Yeah", said Jason, "Totally."

"Still, don't you think it's a decent design, depending on the kind of paddling you want to do?"

"Laame! Old designs, old colors, old graphics! They might as well torch their old shop!"

"Oooold", said Jason malignantly, "Torch it."

Donny Boy shook his head at the stupidity of it all.

"*Ahh*, well. They'll get with the program or go under. It's all in who's got the buying power, these days."

He thought for a moment. Or rather, his mind associated along a sequence of disconnected feelings. A big smile lit up. "Got a new climbing rope today. You know, you gotta have a rope when you lead... When you're on the sharp end. Yeah, it's the new Petzl waterproof coated shit that all the hot Euros use. Man, *Bogart* used it on *Everest* when he soloed the *Eastside* in a day. It's the best!"

"I thought it was Batard who did that. On the South Col route."

He waved me off. His vision couldn't be weighed down by trifling details.

"Whatever. I saw an article on him in *Outsider* magazine. Coolest thing, climbing. Leading, you know, bouldering and *stuff*."

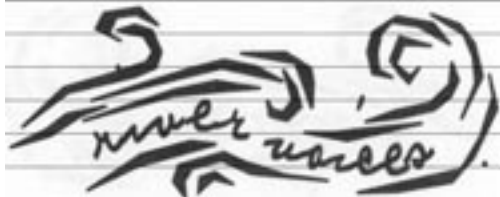
His eyes raised upward, surveying the overhanging cliff in his mind. The world's first 5.16! Heinously angled and just enough holds to allow him to reach the lip, then.... Yeah, and a photographer off to his left snapped photos that perfectly caught the drama and his buffed bod, and...

He snapped out of his reverie and blinked. "Uh, where was I?"

"You were talking about climbing, I think."

"Yeah, I, I..."

The vacant stare ebbed back as a sea of imaginings gathered within him. Brilliant images spun before his eyes. Biceps gleamed, sweat dripped, he could feel the rough granite on his fingertips, clamped like steel on quarter-inch holds...



With anxious look, his sidekick pulled at his sleeve - once, then again. Nudged by reality, the images faded.

"Oh, uh, like - right."

He was back.

Not missing a beat, he clicked again into his patter.

"Yeeahh! I got a buncha **whadda-ya-call-ems** - shortdraws, no, fastdraws, and slings too. **Gotta** have'em to sportclimb," he informed me. "And two setsa Camalots, lotsa 'biners, and Aliens." He laughed. "Man, aaaliens! That name is so fly! I love it! Then we put all the shit on a rack. Tried it on in the living room and Jason took some pics of me. We're **gettin'** them developed right now."

"Sounds good. I guess I didn't know you climbed."

My voice didn't register. His fantasy began to grow within him again. "**Yeaah**. Climbing. Rapboltin'! Saw all those great pics in a mag in the Snowboard shop.

**Extreme** stuff. Radical!"

"Raadical!" exclaimed Jason, scrunching his face for emphasis.

"Might even make a climbing wall.

Saw where you could buy these cool plastic handholds. Shaped like dinosaurs! Volcanic colors." He smiled to himself at a sight only he could see, then frowned. "**Ahh**, too much work. I'd have to get Jason to borrow a drill and shit. Maybe I'll just head out to Josh Tree next week.

Heard that was the place. And I'll be able to afford it then, after I visit my grandparents." He winked. "You know, time to stroke them some and get the cash.

They're good for a few hundred every week. They got dough comin' out the yin yang!" He sighed longingly.

"Anyway, hell, last time my grand-

mother bought me a new truck. Good thing too, the one dad gave me needed a new transmission, and new struts, you know, after the wreck. Least he paid the ticket off." Donny Boy laughed and slapped his thigh.

"Then I sold it for 3 grand to some loser!"

"Loooz-zer!" smirked Jason.

"Used the pesos to throw a party.

And got a new snowboard too, and some threads - pink Gore-tex jacket to match the 'board, and got my hair done. Looks cool, doesn't it?" He turned his head to the side so I could appreciate the way the tangled locks of hair hung into his face. "And don't have to wash it at all. Just put some mousse on it everyday with a q-tip and blow it with the hair drier. Only takes an hour-and-a-half or so. Keeps it dirty and cool."

Jason looked admiringly at him.

His girlfriend came up, knees tom out of her jeans, wearing a studded leather jacket with zippers and a permanent sneer. She looked upset.

"Dudette! **Lookin'** sweet, fox lady." They kissed.

She sighed long and deeply with the gentlest whisp of melancholy touching her lips. Then swore, "**My fuckin'** prof!" Brows hawked down, she bit her words out of the air.

"Like, he told everyone there was a test and I forgot about it, you know? I had to get up early to study for an hour! And like, then he stuck in a question from last week's test that no one could answer! Said, like, we shoulda had enough time to think about it." She spat. "Pisses me off so much. Didn't even tell us he was go-

ing to ask it again. It's so unfair!"

Donny boy commiserated. "Harsh. Maybe you should jack on your advisor about the jerk - you got traction with him. Sheet, what does he think you're supposed to do?" She started crying. "Babe, its ok. He's just a fossil. Ha, ha, just a fucking fossil!"

"Fosss-sil", hissed Jason.

"What does he know? What a jerk.

Probably thinks the Red Hot Chili Peppers are something you put on burritos." Her sneer softened and they laughed.

"**Ah**, I'm **blowin'** off the class anyway," she said, "but mom and dad, they're so uptight about my grades." The strain of life writhed on her face and she looked helplessly at Donny Boy. "It's such a pain. Life's a bitch. They don't understand. They think just because they pay my way I should spend all my time studying. Like, I got a life to live, too." She started pouting again.

"Forget it. Blow it off. It's a dope day, dudette. Let's toke a few and chill."

"Blow it **off**," said Jason sympathetically, patting her on the shoulder, "toke and chill." A look of confusion clouded his face for a second and he frowned as if trying to remember something important. Then his smile lit up and he nodded, "A dope day, dudette."

Donny Boy made a flicking motion toward me with his index finger. "Well, chao. **Been great rappin'**. You really got me stoked about paddlin'. But, time to chill out." He reached into his chest pocket and pulled out a pack of Camel cigarettes. "Here, have some uapors. Let's go out for pasta at that new vegetarian Italian place, **EcoRome**."

They lit up their cigarettes and walked off, talking together. I could just hear him say, "Man, that prof! Really makes you wonder about people."

He paused and waved as they got into his **FourRunner**. "Duude! Keep it up! You know, the future is ours! **Carpe Deem**. Grab while it's good," he shouted through the open window, "...cause nobody lives forever."

I waved.

As they drove off I heard him laugh, "Ha, and some people never live at all!"

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**EDITORS NOTE:** A selection from a soon to be published book, The Lauah of the Water Nymph, and Other River Stories.

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# GOOSING AROUND WITH TUOLOMNE BOB

by Tom Diegel

It was Memorial Day on the Tuolumne, normally a busy time. But the high flow (6500 cfs) kept the rafts away and the river was nearly empty. I had driven to the cafe above the put in, hoping to find some other kayakers. I had the good fortune to hook up with Jack, a Bay Area paddler who not only knew the river well, but was also willing to drive the hour and a half shuttle.

The river was big, pushy, and way fun. We literally had the whole

Tuolumne and the beautiful canyon to ourselves; every wave and hole was ours. After a few hours and a successful run of Clavey Falls, we found ourselves at the old power station. This is home to one of the all-time great play waves, and after an hour of high-speed surfing, we wearily dragged our boats onto the beach for lunch. Jack and I proceeded to scarf down bread and Powerbars while swapping stories as the big water rolled past.

Suddenly, Jack pointed towards the

wave and exclaimed "Check out that goose!" I followed his gaze to the river to see a huge, white and tan farm goose zipping across the wave and very determinedly swimming toward us. It caught the eddy, paddled to the beach, and, to our surprise, waddled right up to our feet and started honking loudly! Though laughing and a bit taken aback by his boldness, we realized that this goofy goose was as hungry as we were.

I flicked it a piece of bread, which it



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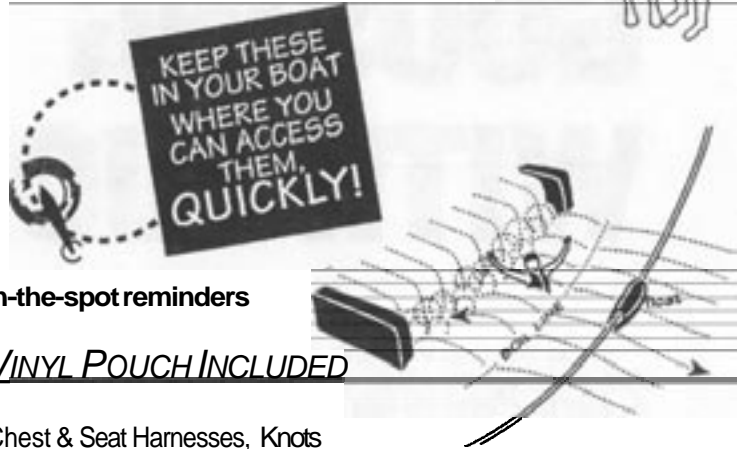
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Lee Boatiglio running Sheppard's Falls, Wind River, WA. Dave Slaver photo

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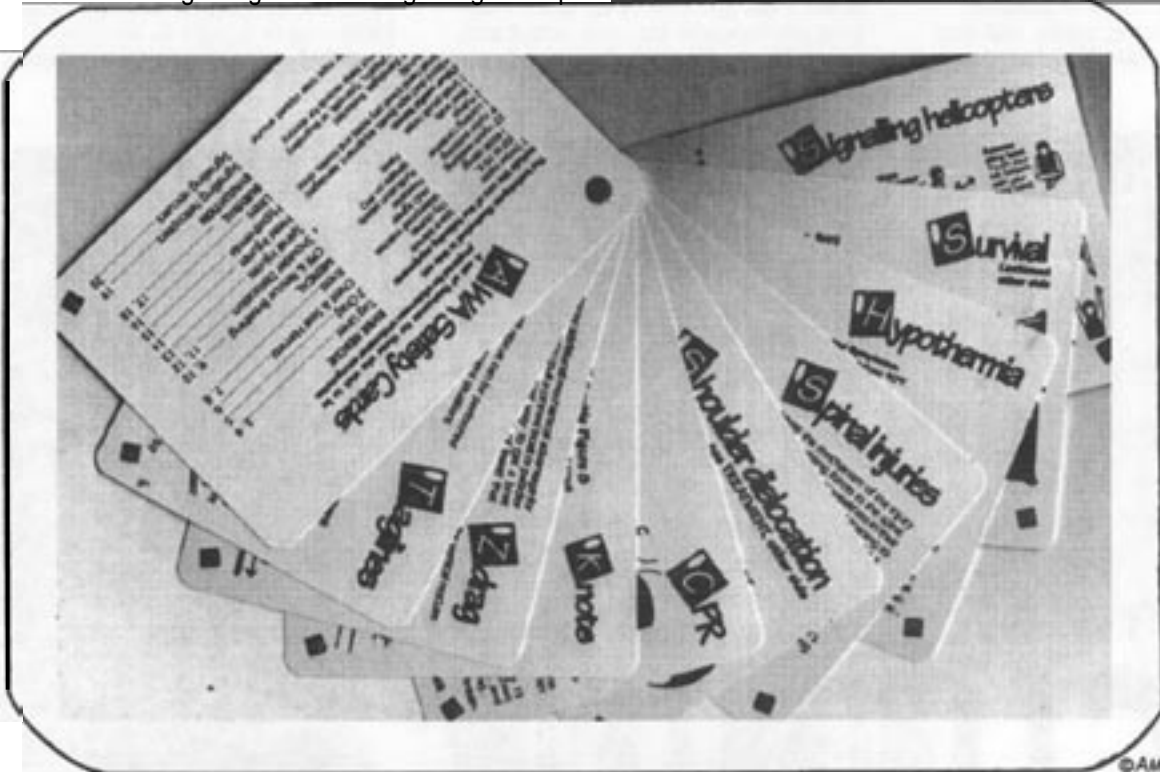
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gobbled up quickly. I gave him a few more and all was well until, suddenly, the goose stopped with his head poised high in mid-swallow, then suddenly spun and hurried down to shore. He stuck his bill into the water, sucked noisily to wash the dry bread down, then humedly waddled back up and started honking for more!

Soon I was out of bread, but Jack was still working on a malt Powerbar, so he

handed a piece of it to the goose. He made a concerted attempt to chew it, but (like many of his human peers) was apparently unable to do so, for he spit it out into the sand and promptly bit Jack in the leg! By this time the goose had me howling in laughter.

We were out of both people and goose food, but apparently our guest was at least partially satiated, because he was no

longer honking. However, he continued to hang out on the beach, lounging in the sun with Jack and I. We speculated how this obviously domesticated goose could have wound up ten miles down from the put in (which is at the bottom of the infamous Cherry Creek section), 3000 feet deep in a remote and rugged canyon.

After a bit we decided to head down the river. I wondered what the goose would do when we left. He watched curiously as we wiggled into our gear and our boats. As we paddled into the current, I yelled "Come on, Goose!", not really expecting him to follow. We floated out of sight and I thought that would be the last I'd see of him, but a minute later there he appeared flying about a foot off the water. He sailed past me, landed in between Jack and I, and started paddling downriver!

I watched as he deftly cruised through the rapids, bobbing over the small waves and "goose diving" through the bigger ones. After a bit I drifted past him and was staring back upriver at his antics. Suddenly I heard a shout from Jack. I looked over my shoulder to see that I was about to drop into a nasty pourover. I backpaddled furiously and barely missed it. Then, feeling a little foolish, I shouted a warning to our feathered friend.

I thought to myself "Are you going to be the only man alive to witness a goose getting Maytagged?" But to my surprise, he gave a couple of flaps of his big wings and flew right over the hole! A trick I'd like to be able to pull off at times, to be sure!

Our little threesome continued for another mile or so until the goose pulled into an eddy and decided to bid us adieu. We floated on, still laughing about our unusual new paddling partner, Tuolomne Bob.



**EDITORS NOTE:** When he isn't out playing with his feathered friend, Tom Diegel works for Patagonia, Inc.

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# MY FIRST SOLO RUN

by John Riles

I was a novice kayaker whose total white water experience consisted of a few runs on the cemetery section of the Kern River. This section runs two miles between the Kernville white water park and an old cemetery where the river empties into Lake Isabella. The run contains three rapids, only the third of which makes it to class II difficulty. I had swam one or more of these rapids on every occasion I had been on the river, necessitating a lot of rescue work by my friend, John, who introduced me to the sport. In spite of my ineptness, I had caught the kayaking bug and had bought two boats, both of which I had with me. I was now "ready" to do a solo run of the cemetery section.

My wife said, "Honey, Are you sure you want to do this by yourself? What if you get into trouble?" My wife had the impression, probably from listening to John, that I was in continual need of rescue on the river. I patiently explained to her that since the water flow was so low, about 300 CFS, there was not much that

could possibly go wrong. She was hard to convince. "Doesn't your kayaking book say never to run a river alone?" she asked.

"The author had to be very conservative," I explained. "One of his readers might be a blithering idiot who should never be allowed on a river alone." All she said to that was, "Hmm."

My run went smoothly to the top of the third rapid, where I leaned away from a boulder and flipped upstream. My back hit the bottom in the shallow water and the boat stopped. I popped the spray skirt and started scrambling around, trying to get out from under the heavy boat. My lessons on wet exits had not covered the case of knee-deep water. Eventually, I got my legs out without giving up my paddle, but the boat caught the current and went speeding on down the drop. I started to plunge after it, but slipped on a river rock and sat down with a splash. I sat there in the shallow river, pondering my options, as I watched the boat disappear around a bend.

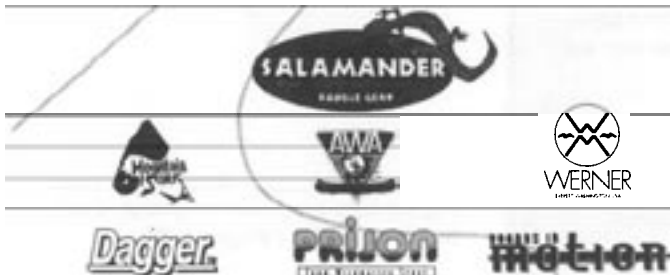


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First I tried to follow the boat from the river bank, but it was an impenetrable thicket. The only option was to go to the take out, retrieve my other boat, and paddle back up the river and retrieve my errant kayak. I fought my way through a hundred yards of marshy briar patch, across a golf course, and down a half mile of highway to the lake. I could see my wife pacing, she thought I was overdue and in trouble. I glanced at my watch, or rather at my wrist, where my watch should have been. The watch had been an expensive one, a gift from my wife, and now it was lost. I tugged the sleeve of my paddling jacket down as I walked up to her.

"What in the world happened to you?" she asked as she looked at my scratched and bleeding legs. "Oh, its nothing," I said, as I started to untie the other boat. "Just a minor mishap. The boat is probably up the river a ways in an eddy. I'll just paddle up there and tow it back."

"My Goodness!" she said. "I hope you

are not going to paddle out into the lake in this wind!" It was getting late in the day and an up-canyon wind had started to blow strong.

"This is normal for this time of day," I said.

"Well," she retorted. "I don't remember ever seeing such big whitecaps on the lake before."

I looked out across the lake and it did look pretty daunting. "Don't worry," I said. "I've paddled lakes before."

The spring run off had been heavy and the lake was very high, flooding the last quarter mile or so of the river. The river channel could be identified only by the gap in the trees and brush growing on its banks. After I had made my way out into the lake and turned up river the waves started to lift the rear of the boat. It was my first experience with big lake waves and I was surprised at how unstable the boat felt. My training had not yet covered bracing, and I felt in constant danger of going over. I glanced longingly

at the lake shore that I had left behind and wondered if I might be the first person ever to lose two boats on one run.

As I paddled into the mouth of the river the wind got stronger and the boat was being carried by the waves. Finally the waves diminished and I started to look for the other boat. Soon I saw two hippy types, one in a beard and the other with long dirty hair, coming down the river. The beard was towing my boat. I greeted them enthusiastically. "Hey; its great to see you guys!" I said, as I fell in beside them. "I thought I might never find that boat!"

Clearly they were less happy to see me. "How do we know this is your boat?" the beard asked, scowling. I was taken aback by his attitude. I had to think.

"Well," I said. "I assembled the boat myself. If you look inside, the front pillar is held in place with big gobs of hot glue. The knee braces are attached in the wrong place and there are extra holes where the seat has been moved around. In other words, the boat looks like it was put together by a total klutz."

Neither of them seemed to appreciate my humor, but the long-haired reached down and unclipped the carabiner from the grab loop and they paddled off without another word, leaving the boat drifting in the river.

It took me a while to push the drifting boat into an eddy and get it under tow. The wind was now blowing like a gale, and when I arrived back at the lake, exhausted, the waves were breaking and I couldn't make any progress. I started to get concerned.

That is when I saw the big ranger rescue boat coming. I was never so relieved. I began immediately to relax and think about the rescue procedure. I was concerned that the Ranger Headquarters were a long way from where my wife was waiting. But I wasn't too worried. After all, rescue was their job, and they probably had a standard procedure to cover every situation. So I was waiting for instructions when the ranger raised the megaphone to his mouth.

"This lake is closed," he bellowed. "The lake is closed." Why is he telling me, I wondered. Surely he doesn't think I intend to spurn their rescue and insist on paddling out on the lake. So I smiled and nodded my head vigorously at him to let him know I understood. "The lake is closed, the lake is closed," the ranger bellowed again as the boat did a U-turn in front of me.

It took me a little while to accept the

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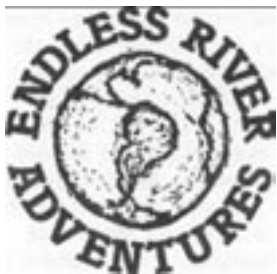
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fact that the rangers had no intention of rescuing me. Then I wondered what they expected me to do. I learned the answer to that quickly enough when the boat turned around **again and came bearing** back down on me.

"The lake is closed, the lake is closed," the ranger blared. "Go back up river." Then as the boat again made its U-turn, the ranger stuck his head out toward me and, carefully articulating his words, screamed into the megaphone, "YOU-MUST-GO-BACK-UP-RIVER."

So that was what they expected me to do. I wondered if they thought I had a water-jet engine hidden in the kayak that would take me upstream over the rapids. Well, I sure as hell was not going to try to

paddle back to **Kernville**. I started looking around to assess my options. Just as the boat turned as if it might make another pass, I spotted an opening in the brush that defined the river bank. I didn't know whether the rangers considered this area closed or not. But I figured they could never follow me through the trees and brush. I started to paddle toward the highway. In a few minutes I was completely out of the threatening waves and the ranger boat had disappeared.

When I paddled up to the cove where my wife was waiting, she said, "I don't know if you know it or not, but the lake is closed."

After I had loaded the boat, dressed and was pulling away from the lake, my

wife asked what time we would get home. Without thinking I raised my arm to check the time. My wife saw the bare wrist.

"Where is your watch?" she asked suspiciously.

"It's back there in the river somewhere," I answered. She didn't say anything for a ways. Then she said, "Well, I hope this will teach you a lesson. Maybe it will keep you from starting down another river alone."

I wanted to reassure her, but I had a premonition there might be even more terrible solo runs in my future.

All I said was, "Maybe."

# Freaking the Gim-Snake

by Ed Ditto

My paddling partner Andy is a herpetologist. Being a herpetologist means that he is fascinated with reptiles. Obsessed. He has a genuine fetish for all belly-crawling beasts possessed of cold blood and scales.

Andy still lives with his parents, and they occasionally complain about his hobbies. The time that the ten-pound monitor lizard and the twelve-foot Burmese python got loose and ran amok during the family reunion...well...what can I say about that that hasn't already been said by someone else? Ever seen a monitor lizard plow through a bowl of cherry Jell-O fruit salad?

As you may know, snakes are often spotted by paddlers. It's generally true that snakes like to rest on sunny rocks beside quiet rivers, where they nap and wait on chicken-flavored frogs to hop by. Snakes occasionally go in for a swim; I once saw a copperhead run through Three Chutes rapid on the **Hiwassee** river. That was one of the derndest things I've ever seen, because copperheads are, in theory, cold-blooded animals and the **Hiwassee** has colder blood than any snake. I guess that urge to commune with the river gods moves as strongly within the reptilia as within the mammalia.

But the river gods have the occasional red-headed stepchild. My other paddling partner, Skeeze, has a brother named Gim (pronounced "Jim"...you figure it out) who seems to be a constant first-time Ocoee paddler although he's been down the river a half dozen times. The old joke goes that at the Indianapolis 500 the most common words are "Andretti is slowing down", and at the Ocoee the most common words are "Gim is swimming".

**The boy can't run a line, he misses his rolls, and he gets munched in the holes like a bag of Cheetos.**

It's amazing...we keep him around as a lightning rod for bad karma. He's the designated swimmer. His problem is that he gets nervous right before a rapid, and he can't think clearly through his fear. He thinks, "I'm gonna drown...I'm gonna drown...I'm gonna drown", and he does.

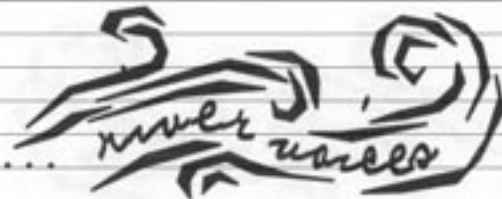
Last Friday night Andy, Skeeze, Gim, and I went camping in Turtletown (about ten minutes from the Ocoee Olympic Site) as a prelude to our Saturday morning run down the river. As we were setting up

camp Andy surprised a five-foot rat-swollen black snake behind a bush. Anyone else would have run like hell for the biggest, fattest, bluntest tire iron in four counties, but Andy (being a herpetologist) actually CAUGHT the damned thing WITH HIS BARE HANDS and locked it up in the back of his camper-topped pickup truck. I stutter just thinking about that...all of our gear, food and beer was in there...as well as power tools, a rifle, two handguns, a five-gallon can of gasoline, six road flares...and to lock up a snake in there was just plain WRONG! RUDE! EVIL! A sin against nature and definitely a sin against man.

Why, Lord (I prayed), oh why do so many of my paddling misadventures have to do with dangerous animals? From the berserk beer-swilling Swine King on the Chattooga to bat-fishing with the Mule Boy (of which I will NOT write), I have been abused by every phylum of the Animal Kingdom, save none. **Marlon Perkins** and his sidekick Jim should have my luck with wild animals...and I for damn sure need their life insurance. I can't believe it sometimes. And here one of my best friends was setting me up for another wild ride.

Anyway, I zipped up my tent very firmly that night and my dreams were restless. The night passed slowly, and in the morning, as I was stretching out my





kinked neck, I heard Andy cursing.

"That black snake escaped," he said bitterly. "Sumbitch was worth at least two-fifty." He shook his head. "Could'a traded him for five or six iguanas. Guess he squeezed out between the liftgate and the camper top."

"I know you hate that," I replied, "but I couldn't stand the thought of that snake being in there with all our stuff. Hell, I like snakes. But I like beer, too, and I couldn't get one out of there without worrying about getting hugged." He smiled.

That was all we said about the matter...we cooked breakfast, ate, packed, and drove west to the Ocoee. We had a great day, and for the first time Gim really seemed to have his act together. He seemed really intense...he was grim and silent, and occasionally his face would go pale, but he ran the river righteously and with great speed. At the end of the day he got so far ahead of us that we decided we'd just take our time and catch up to him.

We ran through the last series of rap-

ids and SkeeziX and I talked about Gim's run. "Gim hit Broken Nose like he was born there," I said. "At **Tablesaw** he never even had to lean or brace...it was like he was riding on pontoons or something. I've never seen anyone run the river that well."

"Yeah...he's been talking a lot about how he's frustrated, and I think he's taking this a lot more seriously than he used to," SkeeziX answered. "He's got the makings of a good paddler. I think he finally realizes that this river's not out to kill him and he's relaxing."

"He did seem calm today...none of the usual jabbering about how scared he is or any of the quick breathing," I said. "Remember when he hyperventilated at Double Suck? I thought he was going to faint on us. Something's gotten into him."

"Valium, most likely," said Andy. We kept paddling.

After discussing Gim's steady run that day imagine our surprise when we got to the takeout and we found Gim lying in a dead faint. We had just been talking

about that, for criminey's sake. He was stretched out across the parking lot beside his boat, and he was out colder than the Nantahala river.

We smacked his cheeks a bit and called his name a few times, and he came around slowly.

"Oh, thank God it's over..." he moaned. "Terrible, terrible! Never...oh, it was tight!" He slumped.

Eh? What was that? I cocked my head and looked quizzically at SkeeziX and Andy. SkeeziX seized his water bottle from his boat and emptied it across Gim's face. Gim coughed and spluttered, and his eyes cleared. He leapt to his feet and seized Andy by the collar of his wetsuit.

"You bastard!" he roared. "You and your reptiles! You nearly got me killed!"

SkeeziX and I grabbed him and hauled him off Andy, who had a look of disbelief on his face. "What the hell's the matter with you, boy?" Andy asked.

"That snake, that snake!" Gim shouted. "It didn't escape! It was in my boat the whole time!"

Well...we got Gim calmed down and he told us the story. Apparently the snake had gotten loose from the truck by squeezing between the tailgate and the camper top, and it had crawled up the truck to find a place to hide. It found a convenient hole, which happened to be a cockpit, and it slithered down into the stern of Gim's boat. Once there it squeezed past the airbags and went to sleep, because it was still full of undigested rat.

And that's the way things should have stayed, except that when Gim's boat hit the water the snake began to realize that something wasn't quite right, and it stirred out of its hidey-hole to see what was the matter. Gim's first realization that something was wrong came when the snake slid around his waist and poked its head up between his thighs. Gim couldn't see all of this going on because of his spray skirt, of course, but he could sure feel the snake as it slowly wrapped around his waist.

"I was so scared that I couldn't move for a while..." he said, and we all shook our heads. After he realized that he was sharing the boat with a guest and he regained his composure, he was right on top of the rapid called Broken Nose, which is about a mile into the six-mile run. Every time the boat got jostled the snake would tighten its grip around Gim's waist, and Gim eventually decided that the best course of action was to run the river as

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smoothly and quickly as possible, and then to bail out of the boat at the takeout, where he would have plenty of people around to help in case of trouble.

Well...that's how it went. Gim made it to the takeout, he leaped out of his boat and ran up the ramp, the snake took off for parts unknown, and Gim fainted in terror and relief.

And that should be the end of the story...except that...

About a half hour later, after all of the excitement had died down, it occurred to me to look around the parking lot. Lots of pickup trucks and camper tops at the takeout that day. Lots of cars.

Lots of boats.

So if you were at the Ocoee last Saturday, and you're thinking about your next week's run, you might just want to check your boat for stowaways first. Because I keep thinking about how I saw

that copperhead glide through Three Chutes on the Hiwassee, and how humans aren't the only animals with adrenal glands. And how maybe that black snake was squeezing Gim's waist in joy and excitement rather than in fear. Think he might want another ride?

Make sure you check behind your air bags. Apparently snakes can scrunch in there pretty easily.

# LAVA FALLS RAPID

for Rieko Nakanishi  
by  
Thomas Logue

Each second eighteen thousand cubic feet charges into the ledge hole - doesn't come out.

Water piles up and up blocking the sky like a anvil-shaped thunderhead.

Never fear-Rieko's here-She'll give us the weather report.

Her kayak rolls like clouds, shoots like lightning, in the rapids.

# STAGES OF KAYAKING

by Bob Shaw, MD

- Recently, while reviewing the latest New England Journal of Medicine, I was reminded that most addictions have several stages that a victim passes through on their road to complete dependency or eventual recovery. It is obvious that kayaking can be addicting and there are certain "stages" that one goes through as one becomes proficient (addicted) to kayaking.
- Obviously, only a few will reach the highest stage. Many boaters "burn out" at a lower stage or have a "religious experience" on the river and suddenly no longer feel the need for the adrenaline rush of pushing to new heights. With only a little training anyone can quickly categorize a paddler into one of the followings/ages.

- So now, with the time afforded by the long drive back from yet another adrenaline buzz of high water Idaho boating, the Musketeers offer our six stages of kayaking.

## STAGE I

- You've seen kayaking on television or while on a vacation or have a friend who kayaks. You go to a kayak club meeting, sit in a boat or paddle around a lake.
- You've never heard of the Gauley and you don't know what pile is. You see no relationship between sex and boating. You have no idea how to roll. You believe a hole is some thing in a donut end that Forrest Callaway is a football player. You think that Charlie Walbridge is a tuna.

## STAGE II

- You buy a boat and attend a whitewater clinic. You paddle local rivers and make your first long driving trip to kayak the Ocoee. You leave your kayak end racks on your car as a status symbol.
- You've heard of the Gauley and think that someday you might paddle it. The smell of wet pile still offends you. You talk to your sex partner about boating. You've learned to roll. You know what a hole is but want no part of it. You believe that Bob McDonough is a baseball player. You are aware that Charlie Walbridge has something to do with safety and boating.

## STAGE III

- Some of your friends have started to question the time you devote to kayaking.

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You're on your second boat end have mace et feast one week long trip out West. You've paddled the Gauley more than once and even know where some of the good play spots are located. You're beginning to like the smell of pile. You still prefer sex to boating. You roll with ease, even in big water. You play in some small holes. You've seen Nancy Wiley paddle and admire her style. You know that Charlie Walbridge is safety chairman of the American Whitewater Association.

### STAGE IV

Everyone who knows you is aware that you kayak. Your paddling trips consist of only Class N-V water. You own more than one boat.

You can tee ready for a week long trip in 30 minutes. You think that the Gauley is too crowded and has become boring. You wear pile even when not boating. You think sex and boating are equivalent. You can hand roll with ease. You play in large holes. You have paddled all the major rivers in both the Appalachians and the Rockies. You keep running into Jeff Synder on the rivers. You know that Charlie Walbridge publishes the Whitewater Safety Task Force newsletter.

### STAGE V

Your only close friends are hair boaters. You paddle only Class V-VI water. You've paddled rivers on at least two different continents. Your trips are planned around high water and remote access. You run the Gauley only because it finishes off the lower Meadow run. You are sexually stimulated by the smell of pile but enjoy boating more than sex. You hand paddle Class V water. Only river wide monster holes give you any concern. You're on a first name basis with Corrin Addison. You have met Charlie Walbridge on the river and think that he has something to do with safety and boating.

### STAGE VI

Over 50% of your time is spent on kayaking related activities and you have no regular Job. You are recruited for professional endorsements and have been featured on a television special or the cover of a whitewater magazine. You compete in over half of all the whitewater rodeos in the U.S. You don't need pile. You don't need sex. You don't need a paddle. River wide monster holes concern you only because you have to dodge the debris circulating in them. Every serious kayaker in the country knows your name. You think Charlie Walbridge is a tuna.

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## "CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR" BATTLED AUBURN DAM

Perception has awarded its 1996 River Conservationist of the Year Award to Ron Stork, Associate Conservation Director for Friends of the River, for his leadership in the effort to stop the Auburn dam project on the American River in California.

When the proposal to build the controversial Auburn dam was rekindled last year, Stork led the lobbying effort in Washington to fight it. His tireless work paid off when an amendment to include the dam in the Water Resources Development Act was defeated in a bipartisan vote this past June, led by Congressman Thomas Petri (R) of Wisconsin.

"There was one person whose contribution and whose sacrifice stood out beyond all others," says Richard Penny, American River Campaign Coordinator. "Ron Stork was in Washington for seven months, living out of a suitcase, eating in greasy spoon restaurants, sleeping in a house with no furniture, working fourteen hour days, and walking mile upon mile on

the hard marble floors of Congress."

Stork has a long list of accomplishments as a river-protector. A member of the Lower American River Task Force, the Water Committee for the Sierra Club in Northern California and Nevada, and, previously, the Merced River Canyon Committee, Ron now serves as a hydro-electric water resources specialist for Friends of the River, a California conservation group.

An expert botanist, avid hiker and paddler, Ron's avocation has helped to drive his analytical orientation. "He is a virtual encyclopedia of river, flood control, and hydro power lore," comments Jerry Meral, Executive Director of the Planning and Conservation League and Perception River Conservationist of the Year for 1984.

"Ron's work highlights the dedication of his peers and predecessors who fight, tirelessly, to protect our ability to recreate on our rivers," says Risa Shimoda



Richard Penny, left, of the American River Coalition hands Ron Stork (Friends of the River, right) Perception's "River Conservationist of the Year" award.

Callaway, Marketing Director for Perception. "We are thrilled about this hard-fought victory for river protection on the American, and we are proud to be able to acknowledge Ron's leadership in the defeat of the Auburn dam proposal."

Perception has been presenting the River Conservation of the Year Award to leaders in the river conservation community since 1981.

## GRAND CANYON OPPORTUNITIES

GRAND CANYON: I have a permit with a starting date of 8/3/97, and I would like to take 18 days on the river. The maximum number of participants is 16 for this is a non commercial trip. The group will be primarily made up of kayakers and canoers but we will also

need four rowers for 18 foot support rafts. If you would like to participate in this fabulous trip call me at 703-759-2584 or e-mail me at [cgilmore@seas.gwu.edu](mailto:cgilmore@seas.gwu.edu) Chuck Gilmore, Box 182, Great Falls, VA 22066.

## Grand Canyon News flash page 81

## F.O.R. ANNOUNCES FESTIVAL

The 17th Annual Rivers Festival is anticipated to draw over 2,000 people to Herbst Pavilion at Fort Mason Center in San Francisco on February 7-9, 1997. Sponsored by Friends of the River (F.O.R.), California's largest river conservation group, the event is open to the public. Admission costs vary, beginning at only \$5.

There is something for nearly every river enthusiast in the way of seminars, exhibits and presentations, including a series of conservation-oriented workshops supporting the festival's theme of "Saving California's Last Salmon." Another workshop series highlights exotic river journeys around the world, while a third track features F.O.R.'s conservation work

throughout the state.

In the exhibitor concourse, over 50 different retailers and manufacturers will be displaying the newest and the best of river running and outdoor gear. Many of those exhibitors donate gear toward live and silent auctions held Saturday evening.

In addition, the festival features a Sunday morning sea kayak race around Alcatraz Island, first aid, CPR and rescue classes, an used equipment swap meet, keynote speakers and representatives from about 50 non-profit, recreational and environmental organizations staffing informational tables.

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# WILDWATER RACING EXPLAINED

by *Kathy Howerton*

The general public knows little about **wildwater/downriver** racing. Surprisingly, the boating population isn't very knowledgeable about it either. This country has fielded a wildwater team every year since 1952, and even though it was not an Olympic event, wildwater racing is an international sport.

Wildwater boats look radically different from today's more popular play boats because they are built to go downstream fast. Long and narrow is the best combination for speed, but a price is paid in stability and maneuverability.

There is a length restriction. Wildwater may not be longer than **4.5m** (14.8') for kayaks, **4.3m** (14.1') for **C1**, and **5.0m** (16.4') for **C2**. The wings that protrude behind the cockpit are necessary to meet the width requirement and to add secondary stability. Placing them in the back above the water line helps to limit the negative effects of a wider boat. The width requirements are **60cm** (23.6") **K1**, **70cm** (27.6") **C1**, and **80cm** (31.5") **C2**. Paddling these boats is like paddling a telephone pole. They are about as easy to turn and only slightly more stable.

As **Mike Hipsher**, Coach Pain, stresses, "Forward speed is stability." Backstrokes and braces are prohibitive; aggressive forward strokes are a must. As simple as this concept seems, it can be difficult to practice. It is almost impossible to get the boat to turn on an impromptu decision. Since paddlers often must initiate a move before they can physically see it, it becomes imperative to know the river.

Kayaks are the most popular downriver boats and the men's **K1** is definitely the most competitive class. There were 16 **K1** men at the 1996 Wildwater Team Trials, as compared to 4 **K1** juniors and 7 **K1** women (out of a total of 37 competitors). There were 12 wildwater kayakers in the 1996 Upper **Yough** Race and only one was a woman. Four of the wildwater kayakers were traditional glass models while the remaining 8 were Wavehoppers. The Upper **Gauley** Race had 15 wildwater entrants: 6 glass and 9 Wavehoppers. Four women raced Wavehoppers this year on the **Gauley**.

This plastic wildwater boat built by Perception has opened up downriver opportunities for rockhoppers like myself. Glass boats cost \$1000-\$1600 and each scrape or impact quickly depreciates the boat's value. Perception has some 200 Wavehoppers in circulation; their popularity is growing.

The kayak is the only downriver boat women can compete in internationally, there are no **C1** or **C2** women's classes. At one time there was a mixed **C2** class, but that was discontinued after 1981, when **Bunny Johns** and **Mike Hipsher** won the World Championships. Even though the kayakers are more popular than **C1**, the USA did produce a 1992 World Cup Champion in **Andy Bridge**.

The U.S. didn't produce any world champions this year. The 1996 season ended with the Nationals October 12 and 13. The Atlanta Whitewater Club hosted some 70 competitors, with 40 people racing in the championship classes (wildwater boats). Saturday's race was the classic run on the lower **Ocoee**. The race ended just above **Hell Hole**, due to the concurrent **Rodeo** Competition. Sunday's race consisted of the combined times of two short runs on the Upper **Ocoee's** Olympic slalom course. The race was well organized thanks to the volunteers.

Why wildwater? I started because I was told it would improve my canoe stroke. Unfortunately, since there are no competitive **C1** classes for women, I had to make the move into a wildwater kayak. There have been plenty of sacrifices: no playing, I miss creeking...and rodeos. Some of my open boat friends feel betrayed. I've really struggled to learn the kayak roll and I find myself swimming all too frequently. But the rewards have been numerous.

For starters, wildwater is an **individual/team** sport. The camaraderie of the team is there, but each individual races alone. We typically start races at minute intervals. Unless you're involved in a passing situation, you may never see another paddler. You make your own goals, set your pace, choose your lines, and meet every obstacle as an individual. As a result, you can have an excellent race without winning. For me the real accomplishment is just getting downriver. This gives me an adrenaline rush every bit as high as creeking in a canoe. In all honesty, this feeling of accomplishment is probably what keeps me in the kayak at all. I like paddling alone and I like to go the distance.

The classic wildwater race is typically 3-5 miles long, lasting 20-30 minutes. Recently, sprints have been added to the second day's race events. Two runs are made on a 2-3 minute course; both run's times are added together for the second day's results. I prefer the classic run and do better in the longer races. Just push-

ing yourself to your limit reaps its own reward.

Wildwater has also improved my water reading ability. I hardly ever used to scout, and when I did, I rarely had a clear picture of what was really happening. Now I dissect everything and actually remember the details. Racers look for the cleanest, fastest route through a rapid and then connect all the dots for the best run. Landmarks may be obvious rocks and trees or obscure riffles and twigs. Which side of a wave train one runs can be critical.

We discuss every detail; naming rapids, describing strokes, and recording it on paper. In conjunction with the physical runs, we make mental runs. We visualize each anomaly of the river, while simultaneously picturing and feeling how the boat and body should respond. This positive mental imaging really works, but like everything else, it takes practice. It is difficult to picture perfect runs when your last effort was laced with out of control, crash and burn, swim for the eddy moments! Successful wildwater boating takes a certain degree of skill, but, at least for me, the head game plays a very important role. Wildwater has helped me gain emotional control.

The preparation and anticipation of the race is made bearable by the camaraderie with other participants. Wildwater racers are unique individuals looking to better themselves and improve the sport. Although competitive, racers are more than willing to discuss technique, lines and strategy with their counterparts.

So if you're getting bored with the same old rivers, or just looking to improve your skills, try a wildwater boat. There are people scattered all over this country willing to help you get started: **Chris Osment**, Chairman of ACA

Wildwater Committee  
Atlanta, GA

**Tom McEwan**

Germantown, Maryland

**Bob Powell**, Player Representative  
Bryson City, NC

**Mike Freeburn, Jr.** Coach

**Andy Corra**

Durango, CO

**Mike Hipsher**, Nantahala Racing Club  
Bryson City, NC

**Matt Lutz**

Seattle, Washington

**Brent Reitz**, Perception Wavehopper Rep  
Ashville, NC

**Peggy Mitchell**

Canaan, New Hampshire

B R I E F S

# GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES 29TH ANNUAL SOUTHEASTERN U.S. SLALOM AND WILDWATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

For the 29th straight year, the Georgia Canoeing Association (GCA) will sponsor one of the country's longest running annual whitewater races on the Nantahala River in North Carolina. Stewart Stokes, GCA President, announced that this annual event for both champion class and citizen racers will be held on May 3rd and 4th in the Nantahala National Forest.

Stewart says, "This race is for everyone, regardless of racing ability...it's about fun, friendship, and paddling." As in past years, the race will focus on both slalom and downriver racing on the Nantahala's class II/III rapids. Open boaters, as well as decked boaters, will have the opportunity to race against both world class paddlers and recreational paddlers to see who can negotiate the 25 slalom gates or wildwater/downriver course the fastest. The Nantahala Outdoor Center will again provide a backdrop for this exciting competition.

## RACE DATA

Race Name: 29th Annual Southeastern U.S. Slalom and Wildwater Championships and ACA Dixie Division Decked Boat Championships

Race Sponsor: Georgia Canoeing Association, American Canoe Association and the Nantahala Outdoor Center

Race Date: Saturday, May 3, 1997 -

Sunday, May 4, 1997

Race Location: Nantahala River at the Nantahala Outdoor Center, Wesser, NC

Race Classes: Open Boat Slalom, Wildwater and Downriver Fun Run For Solo and Tandem Decked Boat Slalom, Wildwater and Downriver Fun Run For Solo and Tandem

Boat Types: Championship Canoes and Kayaks (Boats Designed for Racing) Cruising Canoes and Kayaks (Boats Designed for Recreational Use)

Race Registrar: David S. Martin  
404.351.8208 for Questions and Registration Packets

Race Volunteer Info: Charles Clark  
770.920.3040 ext. 251 Day/770.998.9544 Evening

## CORPORATE SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

The overwhelming success of past Southeastern Championships can be credited to the enthusiastic crowds of volunteers and the generous contributions of many corporate sponsors. As we begin to plan this year's race, the GCA would like to encourage paddling enthusiast from all over the Southeast U.S. to spend a weekend in the mountains and participate in this great race. Volunteer information is available by calling Charles Clark at 770.920.3040 ext 251 day or 770.998.9544 in the evening.

Corporate Sponsorships are also available, and sincerely welcome. If you or your company would like to advertise and/or help the GCA with the race, please contact Brannon Proctor at 770.664.7384 for further information.

## RACE HISTORY

For 27 years, the Nantahala River has been the site for the Annual Nantahala Race as it was first called back in 1969. The first race, sponsored by the GCA, was on July 4 and 5, 1969, with help from

members of the Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington, DC, the Bryson City Jaycees and the owners of the Hemlock Inn. Horace Holden, Payson Kennedy, and Bill Crawford had visited CCA's Petersburg race on the South Branch of the Potomac the year earlier and met many experienced racers who expressed an interest in coming to the Nantahala the following 4th of July. The "First Annual Nantahala Race" was born to promote the sport in the Southeast, as well as advance the cause for wild rivers. The format of the races has changed a great deal in the past 26 years. The name "Southeasterns" was first used in 1972, after the American Canoe Association, the sanctioning body, designated the annual GCA Nantahala race as the "Southeastern United States Slalom and Wildwater Championships." For several years, the race has also included the ACA Dixie Division Decked Boat Championships. From 1984 to 1990, the Southeastern Cup was awarded to the Dixie Division paddling club whose members earned the most medals at the Southeasterns.

The following special awards are also presented during the Southeasterns:

■The Ramon Eaton Award is presented to the racers turning in the fastest OC-2 wildwater time.

■The Julie Wilson Award for many years was given to the K-1 wildwater champion. It is now presented to the fastest female wildwater competitor, usually in the K-1W class.

■Since 1972, the Charlie Patton trophy has been presented to the fastest solo canoe racer in the wildwater race.

## GEORGIA CANOEING ASSOCIATION

The Georgia Canoeing Association is active throughout the year with scheduled trips, instructional clinics, races, pool rolling practice, and family outings. Paddling trips vary from flatwater float trips with no rapids, to truly wildwater rivers guaranteed to challenge the most expert paddler. If your friends share our interest and concerns, invite them to join the Georgia Canoeing Association.

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Portage on Rio Santo Domingo, Chiapas, Mexico.  
Photo John Armstrong

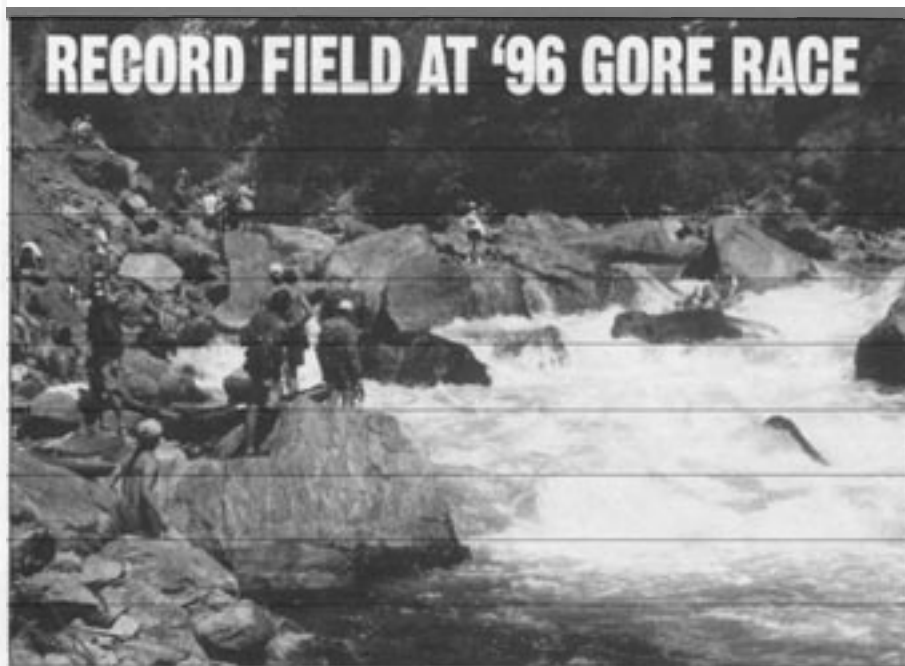
# TED NEWTON WINS BOTTOM MOOSE RACE

The Annual Moose Race was held on Oct 19 on the Bottom Moose River in New York. As always, it was an EXCITING event: Class V whitewater extreme racing matched up with an EXCELLENT party (in Old Forge New York on Oct 18). The Master of Ceremonies for both the race and party was the Moose Master himself, AWA Director, Chris (the "General") Koll.

There were 27 race entrants, including 2 women, and 4 juniors. People boated in wavehoppers (2) and slalom boats. Two wild men from New York City raced in a Topo Duo.

Place Name  
Time (in minutes and seconds)

1.	Ted Newton	31.07
2.	Jeff Snyder	31.27
3.	Chuck Kern	32.52
4.	Rok Sribar	33.15
5.	Willie Kern	33.54
6.	Paul Hoda	34.02
7.	Steve Heane	34.48
8.	John Kern	35.00
9.	Justin Beckwith (Jr)	35.08
10.	Chris Roberts	35.10
11.	Mike Burns	36.32
12.	Tom Vickery	36.37
13.	Silas Treadway (Jr)	36.57
14.	Kyle Marinello (Jr)	37.24
15.	(T)Alan Baker	37.33
15.(T)	Rich Hoffman	37.33
15.(T)	Ken Hill/Brian Totter	37.33
16.	Nate LaBreque (Jr)	38.12
17.	Chris Koll	39.55
18.	Marko Schmale	41.15
19.	John Wolfe	41.44
20.	Tim Budell	41.57
21.	Karen Mann (f)	42.13
22.	Gillian Wright	42.38
23.	Ed Kiesa	42.45
24.	John Gueve	42.46



by Paul Tefft

The top kayak racers were all pondering the same question prior to the start of the 1996 Gore Canyon Downriver Race. Where was John Jaycox? John is the perennial winner in the kayak division of this legendary, challenging class IV & V whitewater competition. In addition to being the undisputed king of Gore, John is a skilled boat builder. He holds the kayaking course record in his custom, self-made Gorepedo. The race was about to begin and John was nowhere to be seen.

However, plenty of other whitewater enthusiasts made an appearance. A record field of over 200 rafters, kayakers and shredders were on hand to challenge Gore's famous rapids. Gore Rapid, Pyrite, Tunnel Falls, Toilet Bowl and Kirshbaum's are some of the most difficult rapids on the entire length of the Colorado River. And the river

bared its fangs during the event. A number of kayakers and rafts were chewed up and spit out. The carnage kept the record crowd of spectators entertained and the safety crew busy. Fortunately, nobody was seriously injured and the event's newly required insurance policy wasn't utilized. For the first time in the Gore race's history, a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) permit was obtained. The race has grown so large the BLM will no longer turn a blind eye to this previously "unofficial" event. Popularity, progress and bureaucracy has a price, which was reflected in an increase

in the entry fee and expanded regulations. Benefits can accompany change. Recycling was offered, the complimentary Widmer beer was plentiful, cash prizes were awarded, and a portion of the proceeds were donated to the American Whitewater Affiliation.

Also in the giving spirit, a number of sponsors donated prizes. Enviro-Action Sports, Patagonia, Teva, Widmer Brewing Company, Henry Schien Inc., Boulder Outdoor Center, Backdoor Sports, Confluence Kayaks, Impex Piranha, and Wave Sport supported the race. Prizes and checks were dolled out at the award ceremony at the Pumphouse Campground. For the second straight year, the top raft team was Clear Creek Rafting (John Rice, Ryan Mcgrath, Jed Ward, Shane Sigle & Kelly Starrett). The numero uno shredder team was the Puckers (Steve Wheeler and Paul Muonio). The fastest female kayaker was Buffy Bailey. Her smoking time was the twelfth fastest of all the kayakers. The fastest craft of the day was the plastic downriver craft called the Wavehopper. Hank Bevington was happy to fill the void left by Mr. Jaycox as the race's fastest kayaker. At the award ceremony, John popped out of the crowd at the last minute to hand Hank the coveted Gore Canyon race trophy. Speculation is that Jaycox skipped the event because of lack of training time due to a busy work schedule.



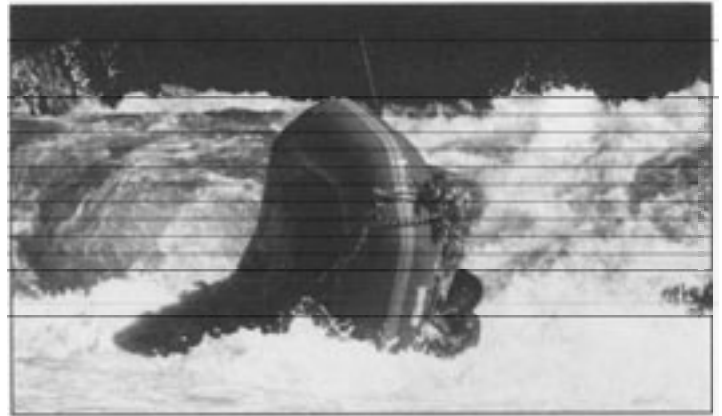
Will John return next year to attempt to recapture the crown? Only time will tell. He might need to scrap the Gorepedo and paddle a glass downriver boat if he wants to remain at the top of the pack. The top dogs are threatening to switch to wildwater boats. Jeff Parker, the third place finisher, actually paddled a wildwater boat on training day. A record time was in his sights until Tunnel Falls shattered his hopes, and his boat, into three pieces. And if some of the Appalachian speed demons migrate West late next August for the 1997 event, things will really get interesting.

**EDITORS NOTE:** Action packed Gore Race videos are available from Paul Kant or (305) 444.8414 . A portion of the proceeds will be donated to AWA.

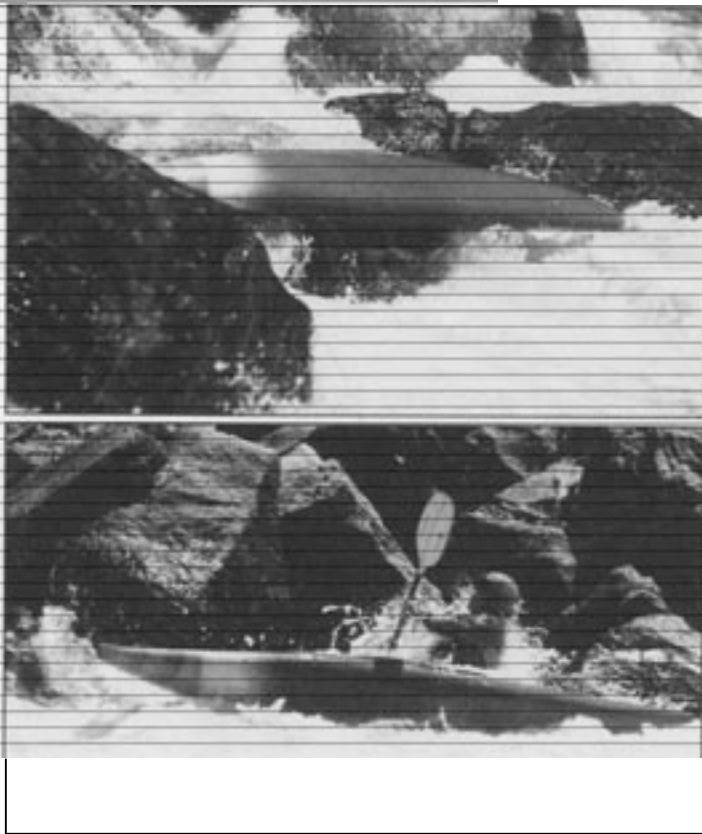
## 1996 CLASS V WHITEWATER CHAMPIONSHIPS

### FINAL RESULTS KAYAKERS

NAME	TIME	PLACE
HANK BEVINGTON.....	20.05 .....	1
STEVE HOLMES .....	20.10 .....	2
JEFF PARKER .....	20.13 .....	3
DAVE COLLINS.....	20.44 .....	4
SCOTT ROGER .....	20.46 .....	5
DAVE ECKARDT.....	20.47 .....	6
TIM KENNEDY .....	20.49 .....	7
TOR BOCHEN .....	20.58 .....	8
ALAN HADLEY.....	21.14 .....	9
TED KEYES .....	21.17 .....	10
PT WOOD .....	21.35 .....	11
TYSON LEIN .....	21.42 .....	12
JOSUHA ANTHONY .....	22.00 .....	13
CRAIG BISHOP .....	22.00 .....	13
JIM FARREL .....	22.04 .....	15
ANDY OREILLY .....	22.13 .....	16
SCOR FRAISER .....	22.23 .....	17
HENRY FILIP .....	22.25 .....	18
MATT DOPP .....	22.27 .....	19
BILL MCIARLAND.....	22.40 .....	20
MIKE WARTZ .....	22.46 .....	21
DEAN CUMMINGS .....	22.48 .....	22
SAM COX .....	22.51 .....	23
BOB PASTON .....	22.51 .....	23
JOHN GLOOR .....	22.51 .....	23
JOHN MATSON .....	22.54 .....	26
DAVE GLAZER .....	22.57 .....	27
DAN STURR .....	23.04 .....	28
KEN RANSFORD.....	23.11 .....	29
DAVE WOLF .....	23.12 .....	30
BILL JONES .....	23.15 .....	31
SAGE LOTH.....	23.15 .....	31
KARM TRIGG .....	23.47 .....	32
BARER LANGENDORPHAR .....	23.48 .....	33
FRANK PICKEL .....	23.52 .....	34
CHRIS ADDELMAN .....	24.03 .....	35
BRENT AUSTIN .....	24.22 .....	36
PHIL WALEZYNSKI .....	24.33 .....	37
ED LUCERO .....	24.36 .....	38
ANDREW GUY .....	24.37 .....	39



Top: Tunnel Falls gets another team. Middle top: Team Fiddlesticks in Gore Rapid racing for second place. Middle bottom: Michael Wertz in Gore Rapid. Bottom: Buffy Bailey on her way to a third, first place finish in Gore Rapid.



Marcia Ready upside down over Decision Rock in Gore Rapid. not a good place to be but she rolls up at the bottom.

Photos made available by Adventure Sports Photography. All photos by Dale Nelson except photo on top of page 57. by Dan Erwin. Photos are available by calling 800-854-5744 or 970.926-2347 .

BRUCE HARBOUR .....	24.44 .....	40
BRETT HALE .....	24.46 .....	41
ARRON RANES .....	24.54 .....	42
PETE JENKINS .....	25.02 .....	43
JEFF CADWIG .....	25.08 .....	44
KURT KRIEG .....	25.43 .....	45
DON BROKNEYER .....	25.54 .....	46
MIKE NIGOLINI .....	25.58 .....	47
JONO STEPHENS .....	26.00 .....	48
DOUG MARBOURS .....	26.16 .....	49
FRED ALTO .....	26.31 .....	50
RICHARD SUNDERLAND .....	29.09 .....	51
BRIAN CARSON .....	31.52 .....	52
BRENDON KIELNAN .....	31.56 .....	53
RICK KARON .....	36.23 .....	54
JASON SNOWHANK .....	53.26 .....	55
CRAIG KISNER .....	55.49 .....	56
MARON FRAISER-SMITH .....	64.32 .....	57

**K-2 (TWO MAN KAYAK TEAM)**

CHARLIE EBEL Et BOB BLUNT	23.63.39 .....	1
---------------------------	----------------	---

**WOMEN**

BUFFY BAILEY .....	21.39 .....	1
LILIAN LAGER .....	24.42 .....	2
MARCIA READY .....	29.17 .....	3

**RAFTS/SHREDDERS**

CLEAR CREEK RAFTING .....	24.12 .....	1
FIDDLESTICKS .....	25.39 .....	2
TEAM BISEPS TIMBERLINE .....	26.50 .....	3
RIFF RAFT 2 .....	26.51 .....	4
FLASHBACK/TIMBERLINE .....	26.58 .....	5
RIFF RAFT 1 .....	26.59 .....	6
BWR 3 .....	27.04 .....	7
GTR .....	27.32 .....	8
LASERS .....	27.46 .....	9
BWR 1 .....	27.49 .....	10
FORESKINS .....	28.04 .....	11
KNOWN WORLD .....	28.16 .....	12
NO SUB FOR EXPERIENCE .....	28.19 .....	13
BWR 2 .....	28.41 .....	14
RIVER SMEGMA .....	29.27 .....	15
RIVER RAFT GORE-ILLAS .....	30.36 .....	16
SWOOPSTER .....	31.13 .....	17
NOVA 2 .....	32.17 .....	18
GIRLS DO GORE .....	33.03 .....	19
DUCT TAPE .....	36.49 .....	20
CELL BLOCK .....	37.26 .....	21
CARNAGE INC. ....	37.50 .....	22
PUFF TUFF .....	38.44 .....	23
BURNOUTS .....	43.56 .....	24
DE VIDAS .....	52.09 .....	25
DOG PADDLERS .....	59.33 .....	26

**SHREDDERS**

PUCKERS .....	24.43 .....	1
<b>MAD MAX AND BOOGEYMAN</b>	27.45 .....	2
CHA CHING .....	30.10 .....	3
RIGHTEOUS SNODGRASS .....	2.03.19 .....	4



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# THIS RIVER IS RATED M

by Jonathan Katz

As a dues paying member of AFSCME, Sal figured it was his right to complain, and he had been bitching for years about the unfairness of it all. For his pains he got what members of the rank and file usually get, which is to say, bupkus. But this year he vowed that things would be different, and with the International Convention just around the corner he found that he had a pretty good coalition going.

Sal's pet peeve was the lengths he had to go for sex.

"Dammit, year in and year out, why the hell am I the guy who gets stuck having to swim upriver to spawn?" he asked. And to his surprise the other members of AFSCME—the Atlantic Federation of Sea Creatures, Mostly Endangered—listened respectfully. For Sal was an Atlantic king

salmon, and he and his union brothers (and sisters) had in truth been forced to swim upstream to the headwaters of the great rivers of North America to lay and fertilize their eggs—Sal called it "getting laid"—for as long as anyone could remember, and at least twenty million years. Perhaps, the assembled brotherhood agreed, it was time for a change. But who, they asked, should go instead?

To this question Sal had an answer. "Why not send the rays? They got the wings for it."

And so, while Sal screwed around in the balmy waters of the Sargasso Sea, a large school of horny and thoroughly pissed off mantas swam past the Statue of Liberty, through the filthy water under the George Washington Bridge, along the Palisades and beside the military playgrounds at West Point and Bear Mountain. The mantas were great, primitive fish, closely akin to sharks. Underwater they looked like huge black rubber Stealth bombers with fifteen foot wingspans, weighing half a ton or more. They had gaping mouths, razor jaws. Their mission was to work their way up the Hudson as far as they could, to Lake Tear of the

Clouds if possible, and then and there, and only then and there, to get it on in a savage orgy of fish lust and beget as many little mantas as they could.

For salmon, the upstream journey was an old story. For mantas it was a colossal drag, entirely too much foreplay, and they weren't happy.

"Just swim up the river, then you can breed till you bleed," Captain Ray had promised. But they had to get there first, and it was one long and hungry

swim. By the time fought their way through the radioactive water in the Tappan Zee region and got to the heavy rapids in Hudson Gorge they were ready to eat anything that moved. And the blondes in the raft had looked like . . . popcorn.

In the leather-embossed and mahogany paneled party room at McBride-Omaha Chemical Company, Bam Bam was incredulous.

"Two decapitations? In the same raft?"

The man from EPA nodded. "Twin models from LA. Renal and Urethra Redfield. You've heard of them?"

Bam Bam shook his head. To Kenny Omaha, sitting across the table, the names stirred a few cells in the porn center of his brain. The EPA man handed over a well-thumbed copy of Glands Magazine. "That's them in the centerfold."

The men studied the photograph with interest. The Redfield Twins had hot lines indeed: soft chines, plenty of rocker and loads of bow buoyancy. They wore their trademark massively teased blonde hairdos and nothing else.

The EPA man said, "These are the 'after' pictures."

They were from the morgue. The bodies were identical. The heads were sheared clean off, as though they had been guillotined. McBride shuddered.

"This happened at Blue Ledge, in high

water. There were eight passengers and a guide in the raft. Everybody freaked. Nobody got a good look. One passenger said it was huge black birds skimming over the water. The guide pulled their bodies back into the raft, navigated the rest of the rapid and fainted. He can't or won't remember anything."

Omaha was leafing through the magazine, checking to see if the rest of the models had heads.

"There have been three other attacks. A raft guide, a lone canoeist, and the sweep kayak in a six boat party. All beheaded. No witnesses."

"So what do you want from us?" McBride asked.

"We think its an animal. Find it. Capture it. Alive if possible, dead if necessary. Then figure out how to save the rafting industry. If word gets out that you can lose your head in a raft on the Hudson, the customers will go back to bowling."

"And what's in it for me?"

"We have been sampling the discharge from your factory."

"I have a permit for that discharge."

"The permit does not give you the right to possess the chemicals you are discharging. DMT, MDA, MDMA, LSD. Alphabet soup, leftovers from the '60's. We think our own inspectors are stealing the samples so they can drink them after work. You find this thing, we'll keep the DEA from your door. Deal?"

"You can deliver?" Omaha asked.

"Hell yeah. Even narcs like clean air and water. And some of them raft."

"Too bad." Omaha said.

"We'll start in the morning," Bam Bam replied.

The Fed picked up his pictures and left.

McBride stayed out late that night.

When he got home he saw that his long-suffering wife had waited up for him. She was sitting in the big easy chair in front

# THIS RIVER IS RATED M

of the TV, mouth open, snoring softly. He went upstairs to bed without disturbing her.

McBride had a keen knowledge of human anatomy and a vivid imagination. He tossed and turned sleepless, thinking about how the blondes had died. Did their bodies sense pain after their heads were torn off? Did their heads feel the twitching spasms of the bodies they no longer had? Bam Bam mulled these questions over. Either way, he decided, death by decapitation was a pain in the neck.

An hour later he took five deep breaths to get the fear out of his voice, and dialed the unlisted, back-room number of a taekwon-do school in South Boston. It was three a.m. and he needed to speak to the woman who had saved his life once, long ago in a land far away. Someone picked up the phone.

"Rachel?" he bleated. He was still in awe of the tiny Korean safety kayaker with the fifty first descents. She was arguably the best whitewater boater in the world, though she wouldn't waste her time or her focus arguing about it. Rachel's calm voice soothed him, and when she promised to run the Hudson he smiled and fell sound asleep without hanging up the receiver, a mistake which

cost him \$247 in long distance charges.

Ignorant raft customers were lining up like lambs to the slaughter at the Indian River put-in when McBride's crew arrived in the morning. Most of the rafters were from New York, and used to guns. Even so, they found McBride's display of Rre-power unnerving. Omaha had abandoned his trademark 9mm Sig-Sauer automatic. Instead he carried a monstrous cannon, a Desert Eagle .50 caliber automatic in the shoulder holster on his life vest. Chopper had upgraded his kayak from a Dogger Misfire to a Kotex ("a more stable shooting platform for a man my size"). Bolted to the foredeck was an M-60 machine gun.

Bam Bam was carrying a pump shotgun. He had seen Antonio Banderas pump and fire the weapon one-handed in "Desperado" and he was so sure he could emulate the Spanish badman that he hadn't even practiced. Whatever was beheading gorgeous blondes in the whitewater below Blue Ledge, he knew he could take it on. No fear.

Under his sprayskirt McBride's 'nads shriveled with terror.

Only the beautiful and enigmatic Rachel Kim carried no firearm. Instead

she taped a long, slender speargun to her kayak paddle. Omaha tried to talk her into a pistol, but she gracefully declined. "One shot is plenty," she said.

She sat cross legged next to her black lacquered glass squirt boat inlaid with green dragon rampant, doing deep breathing exercises, ignoring the hubbub and babble of the raft customers all around her.

A raft guide asked McBride about her. "She's pretty intense, that Asian chick. Is she Chinese?"

"No, Korean," McBride replied, "But she has a Taipei personality."

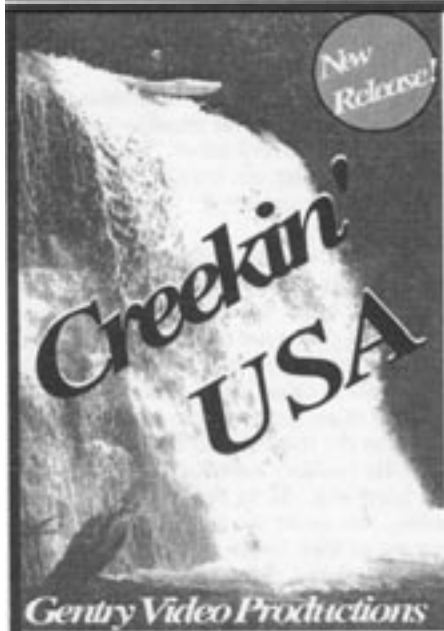
The guide nodded, went back to his air pump. He didn't care whether his customers lost their heads. His bowling average was 187.

By the time the rafts were loaded and they were ready to leave, Omaha was slumped senseless against a tree next to his open canoe. BamBam called to him but he did not respond. In his right hand was a small corncob pipe.

BamBam lifted Omaha's head. His eyes were half closed, his mouth half-open. His eyelids twitched. He was gone.

"Damn," McBride said to Chopper.

"He's been smoking Iraqi Wacky again." "Looks like he finally found a drug



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# THIS RIVER IS RATED M

that works. Can he paddle?"

McBride screamed into Omaha's face.

"CAN YOU PADDLE??"

"Guuuhhh."

"He can paddle. Throw him in his boat."

Chopper lifted Omaha into his arms like he was carrying his bride across the threshold. Omaha's head lolled. Chopper propped him in his saddle, pressed his fingers around his paddle, eased his canoe into the eddy. Omaha slumped sideways and fell overboard.

"Put him in a raft," McBride said.

"Even if he can't paddle, he can shoot."

Chopper stared at McBride, then looked at the sack of shit floating next to him. Shoot? Pistols, no way. So ask the man.

"CAN YOU SHOOT?" Chopper yelled.

"Guuuhhh."

"He can shoot," McBride said.

Shaking his head, Chopper propped Omaha into a semi-sitting position in the bow of a raft and pressed his fingers around the butt of his automatic. Chopper made sure the safety was on and noted with dismay the elephant gun he was carrying. Big gun for big game. Omaha's head slumped forward, on the nod.

While McBride's people escorted the rafts down the heavy duty rapids in the Indian, Ray Manta rallied his fish around him in the waters above Hams Rift. He hated carping on them about their diet, but they left him no choice: it was time for a manta-to-manta talk.

"I'm warning you," he told them.

"Don't eat the heads. They may look like junk food but the skulls will jam up your digestive tract. Give you hemorrhoids for sure."

His girlfriend Mantissa looked at him reproachfully, caressed him with her wingtips. An electric thrill shot through his body, through the empty knot where his stomach was. Just fifty more miles up this damn river, he thought, and then we can boogie.

The Hudson was running at nine feet, an April level, cold and explosive. The rafts rocketed in single line through the heavy water, up and down and up

and down the ten foot waves in Blue Ledge Narrows. McBride floated through in his kayak, tense and edgy. He remembered the headless torsos of the porn queens: the stars had been stumped in this very rapid.

As if on cue, the water burst open twenty yards in front of him, and a pair of mantas rose into the air, their huge diamond-black bodies skimming the waves, headed upstream. Behind him McBride heard a tremendous detonation, and a lesser pop from Omaha's monster hand-

gun. Both mantas crashed into the river, mortally wounded.

McBride whirled around, staring. Omaha had not raised his hand when he fired, and his first round had passed

through the fabric of the bow tube, deflating the raft with a deafening bang.

The river poured in through the ruined bow. Even then, Omaha hadn't noticed. He'd fired the second shot from underwater. Now he slumped forward, face first in the water, whacked on and oblivious to the screaming raft customers.

"Dead man shooting!" they howled, as the Hudson swamped their raft, washing Omaha's dope-addled body into the river.

As Omaha floated on his belly through the huge waves, the black squirt boat cut across McBride's line of vision. Rachel Kim, safety kayaker, to the rescue. As she rocketed by, McBride noticed with sick horror that she was wearing an enormous platinum blonde bouffant wig over her helmet. She had offered herself up as bait! Ravenous mantas would spot her a mile away.

"Rachel, no!" McBride screamed, and made to ferry over, somehow to get to her, to rip the silly hairpiece off her head. But twenty yards in front of him a dozen half-starved mantas exploded into the air, flying straight at him. Frantically he raised the shotgun, tried to line up the bead sight on the lead fish, pulled the trigger. BOOM! The kick rocked him. Had he missed? He grabbed the slide in his right hand and savagely pumped the gun, one handed, as he'd seen Banderas do on TV. But he short-shucked it, and the damn thing jammed. A shell was wedged into the breach at an angle. He fumbled to clear it, and glanced up just in time to see the manta's enormous flying mouth bearing straight down on him. Panicked, he tossed the gun away and capsized. As he slid into the water something slammed into his paddle with tremendous force.

Underwater, McBride set up to roll. But his paddle sliced uselessly through the water. Then he realized that the manta had bitten one blade off. Calm now (for he was safe underwater and had rolled thousands of times) he reversed the stub of paddle in his hands so that the one remaining blade was forward. He swept and started his hipsnap when the realization hit him: his head would come out of the water on the roll, and that THING would be waiting to bite it off.

McBride aborted the roll in mid-attempt. Instead he wet-exited. Still underwater, he shoved his head inside the overturned cockpit of his boat, and took a deep breath. Yes! There was air!! He

could hide under here!!!

Hanging onto the cockpit rim with both hands, McBride wedged his head against the seat of his boat, lifted his legs till his toes were out of the water, and allowed the river to wash him downstream, like a drowned chicken swept up in the flood.

Back on the surface nothing good was happening. The people in the rafts were screaming and ducking hysterically as the monster mantas made low passes over them, trying to get a head. The raft guide with the serious handicap was wrestling with his oars and ogling one of his passengers, a woman seated on the left tube of the raft. Her eyes were screwed shut with fright and she was screaming something over and over again. The guide noticed her carefully manicured blue and gold fingernails, her legs long and slender in the orange wetsuit. He realized that she was right up his alley. Try as he might, he could not keep his mind out of the gutter. He began to fantasize. He saw himself making his approach, laying it right in the groove, his ball picking up speed, hooking hard left at the last second and slamming into the pocket. Pins exploding. Strike. 300. Perfect game. Aaaaah, bowling!

He ducked his head to dodge a manta, and realized the woman was still screaming. "Bugs! Bugs!" she howled.

These customers were ridiculous. The guide gave her his best whadda-you-oua-your-mind stare and asked, "Bugs? Do you see any bugs out here?"

"Yes," she answered. "Preying mantas."

Chopper was firing short bursts of machine gun fire at the flying behemoths. They were huge, but offered crappy targets. The heads were buried in the bodies, between the wings; he couldn't go for a brain shot because the manta's brain was the size of an acorn and he had no idea where in the front end of the animal it was. He couldn't even figure out where the heart was. So he blazed away at their bellies. He could see gouts of meat coming out of their backs, indicating that the copper jacketed rounds were going right through the animals. The only problem was, shooting the things was a waste of time and ammo. The wounds didn't even slow them down.

Chopper zigzagged frantically, trying to keep the great flying fish from locking in on his helmet. Ahead she saw chaos: the raft Omaha had sunk with his pistol; Rachel towing Omaha's limp body to the side of another raft; McBride's kayak floating upside down between huge holes; mantas rising from the river, falling back with huge,



## THIS RIVER IS RATED M

earsplitting splashes. He saw Rachel break clear of the raft to chase down McBride's boat. Suddenly a manta was on her, a half-ton behemoth, jaws dripping hate.

Rachel raised her spear gun. She had one shot. Long ago she'd sat cross-legged and blindfolded in a small room, armed with a butterfly net the size of a dentist's mirror, listening to the buzzing of a fly she could not see, knowing that if she caught the fly in the net she would be given a bowl of rice that day, and if she didn't she wouldn't. She remembered the voice of her sensei—her instructor—on the third day of no flies, asking if she were hungry yet. "You have one shot at the fly," he had said. One shot was plenty.

Rachel lifted her paddle out of the water and at a range of six feet she fired the spear into the roof of the manta's gaping mouth. Her fishing line held, but the shock of spearing the thousand-pound fish tore her body out of the boat and dragged her head-first under water, but she did not let go of the paddle. The wounded and enraged ray dragged her deep to the river-bottom, and her body slammed into the rocks.

On the surface, the mantas were gone. Chopper and the raft customers feverishly backpaddled, trying to stay where they had seen Rachel go down, searching the surface of the river. But her body was gone, disappeared under the surface. Her boat floated in an eddy, the limp, empty spray skirt still attached to the cockpit. She had done a mole exit.

Underwater, Rachel fought for her life. She'd wedged herself into an underwater boulder sieve, the fishing line snarled around the rocks. She could feel the massive strength of the manta as it shuddered and jerked on the end of the line. She could feel herself weakening as she fought the wounded beast. Rachel had trained herself to hold her breath for over four minutes, but that was head-in-the-sink time, not mortal combat time, and the urge to let her paddle go, fight free of the boulders and drive for the surface air was becoming irresistible. She locked her throat, feeling the overwhelming pressure expand in her chest, hearing the roaring in her ears.

Through it all the voice of her sensei came to her again, from fifteen years ago and fifteen thousand miles away. "This is the last thing I can teach you," he had said to the young woman who was his greatest student. Then he had picked up her slender, teenage body, inverted it despite her struggles, and slammed her headfirst through the thin ice at the edge of the lake. He'd held her, head down in the freezing vise of the lake water, till she

knew she'd drown, and with that certainty came a warm fuzzy blackness that crept through her head, and she stopped struggling and passed out underwater. Half an hour later he'd removed her head from the lake and revived her with hot tea. Then, gently, he explained the miracle to the shattered Korean girl. It was the ancient Eastern mystery of how a man could drown in cold water and live, which Western scientists now call the "mammalian dive reflex."

Grimly, Rachel fought the manta underwater, in the freezing Hudson, and as the fish weakened she felt the black warmth spread through her brain and she slipped away. And when the last of her consciousness left her, her fingers loosened on the paddle and the lifejacket floated her body to the surface. She had been underwater nine minutes.

Chopper got to her first, and the cold clear Adirondack air revived her.

She led the big man and the thoroughly cowed McBride to the spot where her paddle was lodged in the rocks underwater. Chopper dove, and followed the line to the body of the dead manta, which they raised to the surface and tied to a raft, along with Omaha, who was still too wasted to talk.

They saw no more mantas on the trip out of the Hudson Gorge. At the takeout they turned the huge dead fish over to the man from EPA and laid Omaha's body out in the sun. The bright glare in his eyes roused him, and lazily he got to his feet. Shaking his head, he grinned lopsided at McBride and spoke.

"We're doing the Hudson today, right? I'm ready. When do we start?"

The American Whitewater Affiliation, together with Rafters Anonymous, announces the following official change in the river rating system. This change is necessitated by the arrival of manta rays in the rivers of the Atlantic Coast. For most paddlers, the new rating will do nothing more than provide additional material for bragging around the campfire. For a few, the change will have life-or-death consequences. Rivers with confirmed manta sightings—that is, where someone saw a manta and lost his head or lived to tell about it—will now be rated M. The following rivers are rated M:

Hudson  
Kennebec  
Penobscot  
Potomac  
Tohickon Creek  
Paddle carefully. And watch your head.

Jonathan Katz, October 27, 1996

# News Flash

## NPS

# Substantially Raises Fees for Private Boaters in the Grand Canyon

**Rich Bowers, AWA Conservation Director Rich Hoffman, AWA Access Director**

A new fee system has been announced by the National Park Service for private boaters and other users at Grand Canyon National Park. As stated in a letter by Chief Ranger Steven Bone to private boaters on the waiting list, "these new river fees reflect a significant rise in cost."

Specifically, the new system increases 3 existing fees and implements 2 new fees. Combined, these new fees increase the cost of a private trip by up to 15 to 20 times the current cost. The costs of an average trip (14 people on the river for 18 days who have spent 8 years on the waiting list) has jumped from \$131 to \$1648.

The National Park Service first announced this new fee system to the public in a press release dated January 9th. While the press release states that "public involvement and support are a very important part of this project," and that "the National Park Service encourages ideas,

# Grand Canyon Private User fees rising continued from page 81

suggestions, and feedback from the public regarding the program," the new fee system is scheduled to start on January 15. Six days is not an adequate period for public input on such a substantial change in policy and procedure.

The new fee program is actually two separate programs with different origins: the "fee demonstration" program and the "river cost recovery" program. For further information on the "fee demonstration" programs, see the Background section that follows.

The "fee demonstration" program is a component the 1996 Appropriations Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton which directs the federal land management agencies to "demonstrate the feasibility of user-generated cost recovery for the operation and maintenance of recreation areas..." The fees at Grand Canyon National Park that fall under this category are the increased entrance fees (up from \$4 to \$10 per person) and the new Backcountry permit (\$20) and the new User Impact fee (\$4/person/night).

AWA supports demonstration fees as a way to improve and maintain federal lands for the public, and the boaters who have contacted the AWA begin by saying "I want to pay my fair share." However, what exactly is our fair share? How was the current fee structure determined? How will the revenue be spent? These questions are not adequately addressed in the brief letter that outlines the new fee structure. Revenues from commercial use goes into a specialized fund called the Colorado River Fund (CRF) that is earmarked for special projects. Why isn't revenue from private boaters treated in such a manner?

AWA recognizes that federal agencies have a funding crises, and we have supported funding mechanisms which improve and maintain federal lands (not the national debt), which are fair, and which include recreational users in the planning. For instance, AWA is part of a coalition of other conservation and recreation organizations with a goal of reinvigorating funding for the greatly diminished Land and Water conservation Fund. AWA has supported other demonstration fees implemented by the USDA Forest Service on rivers such as the Nantahala (NC) and Rogue (OR). These fees were a reasonable amount, were applied to all users and provided necessary facilities for the public.

The "river cost recovery" program was started in 1989 with the goal of recovering 100% of the costs of "special uses." River running is considered to be a special use in GCNP, which begs the question: what is the criteria for determining a spe-

cial use? (For example, the infrastructure necessary to support a private automobile could be considered a special use, the costs of which should be recovered.) A 1995 audit from the Interior Inspector General concluded that the River Subdistrict of the Grand Canyon National Park needed to increase fees to accommodate increases in their costs. The result is the increased fee for adding your name to the waiting list (up from \$25 to \$100), receiving your permit (up from \$50 to \$200) and the new fee of maintaining your name on the waiting list (\$25/year). One obvious effect of these new fees is to discourage smaller trips that have less of an impact.

The existing split allocation system in the Grand Canyon (68% commercial v. 32% private) is the most unbalanced and inequitable river management system in the country. Under the existing system, private boaters must wait an average of 8-10 years to float the Canyon. The new \$25 yearly maintenance fee exacerbates this by making private boaters pay for their excessive wait. For a 10 year wait, a private boater must pay \$350 (\$100 to add your name to the list plus \$25/year to maintain your name on the list) before ever getting on the river. In addition, the Park Service now states that if you miss the window for renewing your permit, your name will be dropped from the list and your money forfeited, a change from the one year grace period that currently exists. No rationale was given for this change in policy.

In 1993, the AWA published its River Access Policy, which stated: "Fees imposed on boaters for the use of public lands and waters should be identical to the fees paid by all other users of the land and water unless these fees offset costs of special river access facilities and services needed by boaters to obtain safe access to the river. Any such special access fees should be adopted only after notice to, and input from, the boating public."

The new fees for Grand Canyon is not sound public policy because:

Σ There was no public notice for the dramatic increase in fees. Demonstration fees were not raised as an issue at this years Constituency Panel meetings and the Constituency Panel forum has been disbanded.

Σ There is no accounting of the actual costs or impacts of private boater use or commercial use. Likewise, there is no accounting of the way in which the money will be spent. The December 20 letter from Ranger Bone to the waiting list states that "the additional monies will be applied toward construction, and implementation of the General Management

Plan, including the South Rim transportation system and maintenance facilities, increased services in the Backcountry Reservations Office, and completion of the Arizona Trail." These projects do not serve as mitigation from the impacts of private boaters nor will they directly benefit private boaters. Again we want to pay our share, not pay for everything!

Σ Private boaters are being held to a higher standard of cost recovery than other users. Why should private river runners be the only segment of the public that is required to obtain 100% cost recovery. Private boaters do not need many facilities, in general only a put-in and take-out. We are certainly willing to pay for trail and beach maintenance, but these costs are not provided. While we agree with the concept of a carrying capacity, paying more money for an already inequitable permit system is not just.

Private boaters need to write letters now! We need to address the inequities in this new system before the start of the 1997 season, and there are only a few months for the Park Service to adjust its policies and fees, and to solicit public input. Letters should be sent to your Congressional Representatives, to the Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, and to the Fee Demonstration Coordinator for the Park Service.

Also, we encourage you to write to the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, on this issue. In November, when he introduced the fee demonstration system, Secretary Babbitt said "Our highest priority as we implement the test fee demonstration program is to articulate to the public the need for their participation and support.... Public input, suggestions, and feedback are crucial to the success of this... project."

The Honorable Bruce Babbitt, Secretary Department of the Interior 1849 C Street NW Washington, DC 20240

Rob Arnberger, Superintendent Grand Canyon National Park P.O. Box 129 Grand Canyon, AZ 86023 fax letters should be sent to the Superintendents office at (520) 638-7701 email: rob-arnberger@nps.gov.

Tim Stone National Fee Program Manager National Park Service 1849 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20240 fax (202) 208-6756

Finally, please fax a copy of your letter to AWA at (301) 589-6121 or email it to the AWA at awa@compuserve.com AWA will be working in DC. to discuss and amend this fee system. To be effective, we need to show our concern about this new fee system.

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**XL14**...For large paddlers or tandem paddling. It can be outfitted with two position outfitting for tandem paddling or three position for both tandem and solo paddling. rocker 3"

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## MOHAWK'S NEW SADDLE with THIGH RETAINERS

Mohawk has a new foam saddle with integrated quick release thigh retainer and knee wedges. It holds you comfortably and firmly in place and is adjustable so it will fit practically anyone. This innovative thigh retainer holds its shape so the paddler easily slips into "paddling position" without readjustment or having the hassle of getting into thigh straps.

By pulling on a single strap, located just forward of your lap, both legs are released at once for a quick exit. The four inch width of the unit and its thick micro cell foam give very comfortable and firm support to your thighs and hold you firmly in the boat with very little knee lift.

*"So quick and easy to get in and out of. No thigh straps to mess with and it holds me firmly in place, yet it is very comfortable." Jeff Richards - Steep creeker, winner 1992 Ocoee Rodeo & Winner 1994 short boat class Dixie Division (slalom races).*

*"I've used a Mohawk thigh retainer on big water in Costa Rica, the Upper Yough and Steep Creeks and it's just great. It is extremely comfortable and holds you tightly in the boat. It fits anyone, is easy in and out, and last but not least, pull on one strap that is practically in your lap and it releases both legs at once. The students in my canoe rolling classes just love it." (Mike Aronoff - ACA Instructor, Washington DC area.)*

**PROBE 12-11:** The narrower version of the Probe 12-11 is my first choice among the new 12 footers. I have tried the others but like the predictability of the symmetrical hull. The design makes the II quick and very responsive. Upstream attaining, ferrying, turning, and surfing maneuvers are very easy and effective. Crossing currents and peel outs feel solid and predictable; without surprises as with some asymmetrical hulls. The R-84 lay up makes the boat a pleasure to carry and after a year of hard use, is holding up fine. The boat does great on big rivers and creeks. My boating pals and students who have Probe II's are happy with them. If people don't try the II they may be literally missing the boat. *Mike Aronoff - ACA instructor, (Washington DC area)*



## MOHAWK'S NEW SADDLE WITH THIGH RETAINER

Includes saddle, thigh retainer, thigh wedges, knee pads, Yakima foot braces \$132.00

Specs	Length	Beam	Depth	Weight	Material	Suggested List+	Factory Direct
RODEO	10'6"	26.5"	16.5"	42 lbs.	R84	\$850	\$595.00
PROBE 11	11'8"	28"	15.5"	45 lbs.	Royalex	\$875	\$612.50
PROBE 12	12'8"	28.5"	15.5"	49 lbs.	Royalex	\$875	\$612.50
PROBE 12-II	12'2"	27"	15.5"	46 lbs.	R 84	\$875	\$612.50
PROBE 14*	14'	30.5"	15.5"	59 lbs.	Royalex	\$940	\$658.00
VIPER 11	11'6"	27"	15.5"	45 lbs.	Royalex	\$875	\$612.50
VIPER 12	12'6"	27.5"	15.5"	49 lbs.	Royalex	\$875	\$612.50
XL13	13'3"	30"	15.5"	56 lbs.	Royalex	\$920	\$644.00
XL14*	14'3"	32"	15.5"	60 lbs.	Royalex	\$940	\$658.00
XL15*	15'4"	35"	15.5"	65 lbs.	Royalex	\$970	\$679.00

\* Tandem or Solo + Prices do not include freight

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