

american whitewater

January / February 2001

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BANKSIDE IN A TENT. STAKING YOUR TURF IN A CROWDED RV. THE BACK BED OF A LUXURIOUSLY DECKED-OUT PICK-UP. NO MATTER WHERE YOU KNOW THAT YOUR SOUL SLEEPS MORE PEACEFULLY ALONGSIDE THE RIVER THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE. WE KNOW OURSELVES TO IT. AND YOU CAN SEE IT IN OUR WHITEWATER BOAT DESIGNS. BOATS LIKE THE NEW AMP— A REVOLUTIONARY NEW DESIGN. THE CURRENT OF THE RIVER THIS SERIOUSLY ADVANCED WHITEWATER SCENARIO WILL PUSH KAYAKING TO A NEW EXTREME. SO IT GETS A GOOD NIGHT'S REST. BECAUSE, THANKS TO NEW BOATS LIKE THE AMP, ITS GONNA NEED IT. **FOR A FREE CATALOG**

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Whitewater Love Trouble 68

Cover: Kevin Barchers tacles Boof Boof Slide on California's South Fork of Silver Creek. Copyright© 1999, Barcher's Photography©, kbarcher@jps.net



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By the time we plummeted down the narrow road to the campground at the Russell Fork take-out it was 2 AM. We had been driving for seven hours and it had been twenty hours since I slept. It was dark, cold and I felt like someone had bashed me in the head with a tomahawk.

It had not been a very good week. My cherished pickup, Dakota Green, was behaving like a spoiled child. I wanted to throttle her. For seven days she had languished in a garage. Her transmission was elsewhere, being rebuilt. To make matters worse, Dakota Green was demanding a new muffler, catalytic converter and radiator. With only my bike for transportation, I had been unable to kayak.

I was a desperate man. So desperate, in fact, that when my friend Chuckie offered a ride to the Russell Fork, I jumped at the chance. Even though I had long argued that the Russell Fork is the most overrated river north of the Ocoee and south of the Cranberry. But I was hardly in a position to be picky. It was the Russell Fork... or my neighbor's pond.

The campground was jammed. After two passes around the loop, Chuckie reluctantly conceded that the only parking spot left was next to an RV with a raging bonfire and a boom box going full tilt boogie. The base was turned up so high that it was difficult to ascertain what Party Central was blasting; but it sounded like the Sex Pistols' Greatest Hits.

As my buddy Joe and I fumbled around trying to erect my tent, the batteries in my headlamp died a slow death. The architect Buckminster Fuller may have popularized the geodesic dome, but I know for a fact that Satan invented it. I swear, the next time I pitch that sucker it is going to be into a landfill. It was nearly 3 AM when I swallowed four aspirin and crawled into my sleeping bag. Just then our neighbors threw a new CD in their merrymaker... one of those Yoko Ono Lennon recordings where she screams like a pig being roasted alive on a spit.

After a half-hour I could stand no more. I rolled out of the tent, which we had erected on a 45 degree slope, snatched my sleeping

The View from the Weenie Pit

bag, and crashed off into the woods. I stumbled into a vacant rock pile about a quarter mile away, out where the boogie ends and the woogie begins. I tossed my bag on the ground and fell asleep.

The drizzle started fifteen minutes later. For a while I pretended it was just my imagination, then I pretended that it was going to stop. At 4 AM I faced the cold hard facts and decided to seek shelter. That potty-mouthed rap singer... the one who calls himself Enema... was waiting in the distance. After I tripped over a stump and bounced down an embankment, I was about ready to start waiting, too. I landed in a bed of gravel. But after I finished swearing, I noticed that it was a bed of dry gravel. My first pleasant surprise of

Soon something big and nasty was snuffling around over my head. Even before I opened my eyes I came to the logical conclusion that I was about to be eaten by a bear.

the night... I had come to rest under some kind of tarp. A minute or two later I was asleep again.

My respite did not last long. Soon something big and nasty was snuffling around over my head. Even before I opened my eyes I came to the logical conclusion that I was about to be eaten by a bear. Considering the way the night was going, it seemed inevi-

table. But when I worked up the courage to look, I discovered that the hairy critter hovering above me was not a bear. It was the biggest, butt-ugliest coon dog I had ever seen. As he lifted his leg, I realized that eating me wasn't exactly what he had in mind.

No way was I going to tolerate this indignity. I let out a fearsome growl that sent that startled fleabag flying. Then back to sleep I went.

An hour later I was roused by the sound of slamming doors. A few cheerless steel-gray rays of light had penetrated the thick river mist... dawn. Some kayakers... no doubt from Ohio... were scurrying about, noisily loading boats. Who could blame them? After all, the release would get to the put-in in just six hours, and the Russell Fork is at least four miles long!

I noticed an odd smell... was someone burning bacon? Already? No... it seemed to be coming from the ground all around me. As my eyes accommodated to the dim light, I made the connection... the tarp I was sleeping under had a purpose. It housed the campground barbecue and I was sprawled in the weenie pit. Sleeping, in fact, in the weenie drippings. Well, that explained the nocturnal visit from the hound from hell.

I crawled to my feet, brushed off the weenie crumbs, and hobbled back to our campsite. Chuckie and Joe were already up, ready to head into Elkhorn City for breakfast. They looked real perky.

"Pretty schweet campground, huh?" Chuckie observed. He had spent the night sleeping in the back of his comfy, sound-proof hatchback.

"Yeah, it's a great spot," replied Joe, who sleeps so soundly he could have dozed through the fire bombing of Dresden. "It was really cool sleeping right by the river. I'm sure glad we didn't waste money on a motel room."

"Me, too," I nodded, as I wiped the weenie grease off my face with my sleeve.

"Me, too." I said again, as I rubbed my aching back.

The embarrassing and scary thing is... I think I really meant it!

Bob Gedekoh

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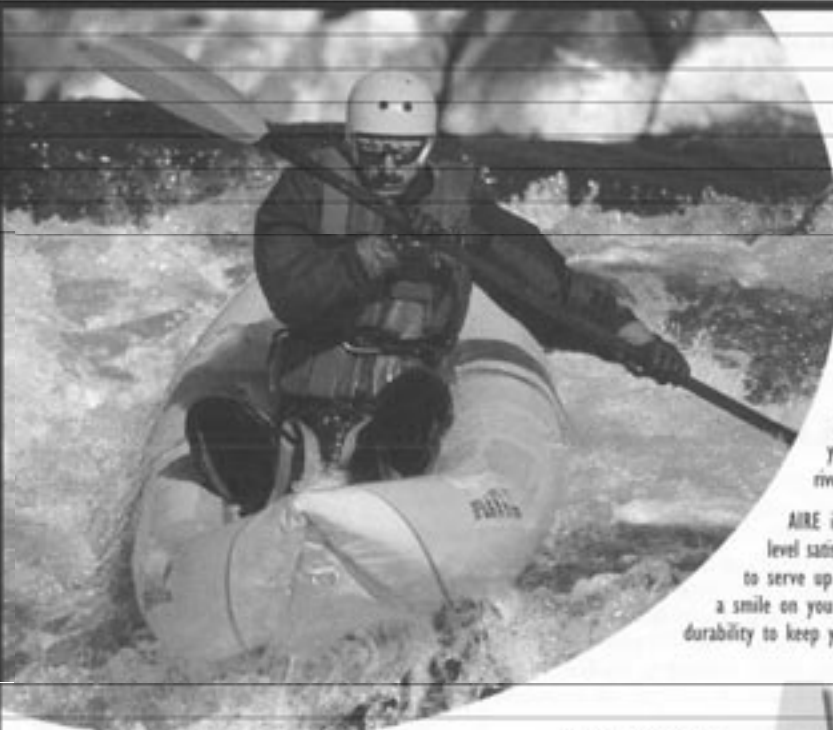
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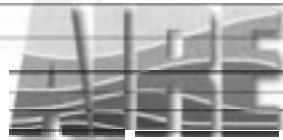


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Smoking and Boating Don't Mix!

I'm writing the AWA -cause I'm concerned that the tobacco industry has found a friend in the white water community. In July I sent a letter to the editor of Paddler magazine addressing their flamboyant coverage of the so-called international rafting championships on the Futaleufu River in southern Chile (see enclosed copy). Not only did they not print my letter, but when I e-mailed the editor and asked why my letter wasn't printed and asked if it be printed in the next issue, I got no reply. It appears to me that Paddler magazine might be a bit embarrassed by their coverage of a tobacco-sponsored event. If not, they should be.

I seriously doubt that Marion Jones or Maurice Greene would even consider taking sponsorship from a tobacco company. Nor Lance Armstrong after fighting cancer back to winning the Tour de France not once but twice. Why? Because they are true athletes who take pride in themselves and their sport. These people are heroes to our children at a time when our children lack heroes. The people who participated in the camel race are not heroes.

As a father of a thirteen year old who has recently begun to kayak, I want my daughter to enjoy the sport for what it is: free rivers; the outdoors; good friends; healthy living. I'm embarrassed when my daughter asks me why a group of healthy, athletic women would not only participate in a raft race sponsored by Camel cigarettes, but then also hang an American flag next to the Camel slogan on their raft? All I can answer is that they are not true athletes. They have little self-respect and no social conscience and are an embarrassment to the white water community.

If the people who participated in the Camel raft race were parents, they would know that the tobacco industry has in the past intentionally targeted children to get them to start smoking to ensure profits. Do they know how much time our schools devote to prevent children from starting to smoke? Time and money that could be better spent on more positive educational matters. Obviously not. They're too self-absorbed in promoting themselves.

My hope is that the white water community will be socially responsible enough to reject the tobacco industry. Besides, how can we and the AWA be taken seriously in its conservation efforts to protect our rivers? Why? So a bunch of rafters can have a race sponsored by a tobacco company and hang an

American flag next to the camel cigarette slogan. "Hey! Puff a butt save a river!" That will get a lot of respect.

Yours truly
Dieter King
Nevada City, CA

Editor's note: In fairness to Paddler I must point out that your letter was included in their November issue. But I think you raise a valid point. I don't see professional baseball, football or basketball players or their clubs promoting smoking. Nor do champion skiers, gymnasts or ice skaters. With that in mind, I think that competitive whitewater enthusiasts should show some "class."

Admittedly, being a physician, I may be biased. When I was a third year medical student working in an ER I first saw someone die of lung cancer. The tumor had eroded into a major artery and the poor guy literally hemorrhaged to death in front of me. The stream of blood coming from his mouth had so much force that it hit the ceiling. This went on for at least five minutes, and he was wide-awake for most of that time. It remains one of the worst deaths I have ever seen. Believe me, it's not just smoking and boating that don't mix...smoking and LIVING don't mix!

Zone Dogg Fan

Dear Editor,

I wanted to give you some feedback on the Sept/Oct issue of AW...I really liked the article by Bobby "Zone Dogg" Miller, "Smackdown on Laurel Creek." The article was descriptive, humorous, and very entertaining. I think this genre of article is what American Whitewater desperately needs more of, in every issue.

Greg Chairalaison
Lehigh, PA

"ZONE DORK"

Dear Editor,

To set the record straight, "Zone Dog" is really "Zone Dork." With his tall lanky undeveloped body it's hard to imagine hot chicks watching him. "Zone Dork" is a good boater, don't get me wrong. But his stories of how he is the great one get real old real fast. Hey, Bobby, how about writing a modest story instead of one were your head has as much volume as your creek boat!!!

Until his next tale see y'all later.

Simon "I don't need a stupid nickname to be cool" Robinson
Shepardstown, WV

Editor's note: Goodness, lighten up! We think "Zone Dogg" Miller is the working man's answer to Tao Berman.

Too Much Hair

Dear Editor:

We feel A.W.A. does a "great" job for the boating community. However the A.W.A. magazine has become BORING! There is more to whitewater than hair boating and rodeos.

My wife and I are OC1, OC2 boaters who enjoy everything from creeks to big rivers. There is a lot of fun water Class III more suitable and safe for open boaters, so give constant Class V a break.

Besides, whatever happened to Omaha and McBride, those politically incorrect boaters? Their antics were some of the funniest and best stories in the mag.

Dean Geis
New Windsor, MD

Editor's reply: Thanks for the input. Check out Dale-Marie Herring's article about Cataract Canyon or Don Getzin's article on front surfing in this issue. As for Omaha and McBride, Doctor Kantgettenuff is the heir apparent.

New School Indeed!

Some of us were paddling Class V water before most of you were born. Why disparage the Old School? If not for us you would still be paddling 4 meter boats and half of you wouldn't make the grade due to the time and effort required to paddle a 4 meter boat in Class V water. If you don't believe this, get a 4 meter boat and come down to the Gauley and we'll all watch you get trashed big time due to your inability to readwater, back ferry, or Dufek yourself out of danger.

In the seventies, it took a gifted paddler 2 years to learn enough to tackle Class V water and master what you didn't have to learn due to your forgiving new boat design. It's the Old School, those of us who built and modified our boats, which led to the "easy to paddle" boats you now have.

It was men like the Shreiners, the Snyders, the Sanders and many, many others who did this development work. These were the fathers of playboats, squirtboats and surf shoes — forerunners of the present boats.

The learning curve on new boats is short enough that beginners can and do paddle the Gauley in only one season.

It is the BOATS that have made you decent paddlers — not necessarily some special skill. There are indeed some exceptions.

So before you criticize, have some appreciation of the hard work of many Old Schoolers who gave you your sport.

Griff (Bob Griffith)
Mountville, PA

Misleading Safety Statistics!

Dear American Whitewater,

My housemate and I have been arguing about the relative safety of whitewater kayaking compared to riding in an automobile. Much to my delight, your article, "Kayaking is safer than you might think (really!)" came out in the September/October 2000 issue just in time to resolve this issue. At first glance, it appeared that I, the kayaker, had won the argument, as it indicated that driving was about 5 times more deadly than kayaking in 1998 (15.2 people per 100,000 population died in passenger automobiles, while only 2.9 people per 100,000 participants died K1 whitewater kayaking.) On further examination, I realized that this statistic is grossly misleading! If you consider that an average kayaker may paddle only 15 days per year, and an average person may ride in a car 300 times per year (these guesses have no basis), it turns out that there are 0.2 kayaking fatalities per 100,000 kayaker-days but only 0.05 passenger automobile fatalities per 100,000 automobile user-days. By this statistic, every day that you get in a kayak, you are 4 times more likely to die than every day that you get in a car! Statistics are powerful numbers that must be interpreted correctly. I think kayaking is a very safe sport, but I hope that you did not give anybody a false sense of security about its dangers. Paddle safely!

Sincerely,
Bill MacFarlane
Fort Collins, CO

No More Bimbos!

I will no longer subscribe to American Whitewater because I find the derogatory ads of women in your publication very distasteful and inappropriate. I am offended that AW views women as sex objects, and I'm concerned about the message you send to young people.

As the father of a young daughter, I truly hope that my child will grow up with a decent amount of self-esteem, but this trash stands in the way. My daughter enjoys looking at my kayak magazines, and I want her to be able to see women as athletes, not bimbos. By portraying women in such a manner, you are weakening the (already low) confidence in young girls, and you're sending a dangerous message to young boys (and to many men) as well.

As much as I want to support your causes, I will have to find another way to help save America's rivers.

Sincerely,
Gedas Zilinskas
Louisville, KY

Editor's reply: Funny, when I look at those ads I see attractive, athletic women who aren't ashamed of their bodies. You, on the other hand, see "Bimbos." I guess it's just a matter of perspective. But I have a question for you. How about the shirtless guy in the full page Harmony ad? Is he a Bimbo, too?

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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, AW 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 3-1/2-inch computer disk. (Microsoft Word if possible - 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 whiteprints, or colorprints. Keep your originals and

send us **duplicates** if possible; we cannot **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 flat water. 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 personali-

ties 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 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.

American Whitewater is nonprofit: 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 AW, which is a *volunteer* conservation and safety organization.

Release For Publication

I hereby release my work (literary, graphic or photographic) for publication in *American Whitewater* magazine.

I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.

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I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation or agency in this work.

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I understand that the contents of *American Whitewater* Magazine, including my contribution, will be archived on the *American Whitewater* web site.

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Purpose

American Whitewater

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

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

CONSERVATION: AW 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, AW 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, (AW) provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

SAFETY: AW 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 AW Whitewater Safety Code.

EVENTS: AW 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.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Directors

Jay P K Kenney, President
1675 Larimer Suite 735
Denver CO 80202
jaypk@aol.com

Lynn Aycock
2884 Murray Hollow
Thaxton, VA 24174
lunnayacock@rutherfordord.com

Landis Arnold
3170 Eastwood Court
Boulder, CO 80304
landisa@attglobal.net

Lee Belknap
1308 Maryland Ave
Glen Allen, VA 23060
rivergypsy@sprintmail.com

Risa Shimoda Callaway
316 Inverness Way
Easley, SC 29642
risashi@mindspring.com

Tom Christopher
931 Union Street, Rear
Leominster, MA 01453
tchris@t1ac.net

Brooke Drury
8224 - 14th Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115
lm4rivers@aol.com

Chuck Estes
114 Bay Path Drive
Oak Ridge, TN 37830
estesoak@worldnet.att.net

Sue Langfitt Fuller
5 Martin Road
Rye, NY 10580
Stuller@gwrr.com

Bob Gedekoh
8245 Mentor Road
Elizabeth, PA 15037
bobgedekoh@icubed.com

Bob Glanville
9385 South Hill Road
Boston, NY 14025
rglanville@icubed.com

Jennie Goldberg
3048 62nd Avenue SW
Seattle, WA 98116
thelleague@home.com

Joe Greiner
7316 Chicora Court
Raleigh, NC 27615
ioekayak@worldnet.att.net

Barry Grimes
124 Hilltop Drive
Richmond, KY 40475
bagrim@pop.uky.edu
Chris Kelly
3201 Rodeo Drive
Columbia, MO 65203
ckelly1022@aol.com

Chris Koll
352 Cameco Circle
Liverpool, NY 13090
ckoll1234@aol.com

Jeff Leighton
2079 Reliez Valley Road
Lafayette, CA 94549
jeffleighton@prodigy.net

Kevin Lewis
6069 Hornbeck Lane
Anderson, CA 96007
klewis@snowcrest.net

Sherry Olson
2515 Kings Way
Cummings, VA 30130
sdopc@mindspring.com

Richard Penny
5050 Glide Drive, #B
Davis, CA 95616-4419
rpenny@amrivers.org

Ken Ransford
475 Sierra Vista
Carbondale, CO 81623
ransford@csn.net

Bill Sedivy
Idaho Rivers United
PO Box 633
Botse, ID 83701
work: 208-343-7481
e-mail: sedivy@earthlink.net
fax: 208-343-9376

Ron Stewart
P.O. Box 1337
Chattanooga, TN 37401
ron_stewart@baylor.chattanooga.net

Paul Tefft
P.O. Box 4784
Aspen, CO 81611
enviro@rof.net

Barry Tuscano
Bolivar, PA 15923
Tmr@kiski.net

Charlie Walbridge
Route 1, Box 329F
Bruceton Mills, WV 26525
ccwalbridge@cs.com

Kara Weld
Immersion Research
426 River Road
Confluence, PA 15424
Kara@immersionresearch.com

Mark White
2034 E. Hubbard Ave
Salt Lake City, UT 84108
mark@saltlake.org

AW STAFF
Rich Bowers
Executive Director
1430 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
RichB@amwhitewater.org

Jayne Abbot
Events Manager
P.O. Box 842
Weaverville, NC 28787
Jhabbot@aol.com

John Gangemi
Conservation Director
482 Electric Avenue
Bigfork, MT 59911
jgangemi@digisys.net

Jason Robertson
Access Director
1430 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Jason@amwhitewater.org

Phyllis Horowitz
Administrative Director
P.O. Box 636
Margaretville, NY 12455
whitew@compuserve.net

AW OFFICERS
President: Ric Alesch
Vice President: Brooke Drury
Secretary: Barry Tuscano
Treasurer: Jeff Leighton

AWA Home Page-
<http://www.awa.org/>

Staff

Editor: Bob Gedekoh, 8245 Mentor Road, Elizabeth, PA. 15037

Chairman of the Publications Committee: Chris Koll

Associate Editor: Ambrose Tuscano

Contributing Editors: John Weld, Bill Sedivy

Art direction/Graphic design/Production: John K. Victor, David Scardena

Contributing writers: Lee Belknap, Mark White, Paul Tefft, Marion Boyer, April Holladay, W. Scott Morris, Scott Stough, Bill Hay, Donnie Hudspeth, Whit Deschner, Joe Greiner, Teresa Gryder, Barry Grimes, Charlie Walbridge, Bob Woodward, Bobby Miller, Matt Terry

Production Assistant: Teresa Austin

Advertising Director: Phyllis Horowitz, Box 636, Margaretville, New York 12455 (914) 586-2355, e-mail: whiteh2o@catskill.net

Safety Editor: Charlie Walbridge, Route 1, Box 329F, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525. e-mail: CWAL@compuserve.com

Conservation and Access Editors: Rich Bowers, Jason Robertson, John Gangemi, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD, 20910 Phone (301) 589-9453 Fax (301) 589-6121, e-mail: richb@amwhitewater.org; jason@amwhitewater.org; jgangemi@digisys.net

Missing Copies and Address Changes: Contact Phyllis Horowitz

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

"American Whitewater remains a group of dedicated river conservationists who believe in the need to protect America's whitewater rivers from destruction and degradation, and to restore those already impacted. We are dedicated to expanding a constituency that cares and is committed to protecting the rivers we enjoy so much. Our mission statement—to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely—serves this vision." 1999 Annual Report

It's always good to know where you're going, and how you intend to get there! American Whitewater is fortunate in this respect, having drafted a three-year strategic planning process that outlines, step-by-step, what we want to accomplish in the next few years.

Our focus is to ensure that the organization and all volunteer efforts target our primary goals of improving whitewater rivers and river access. To accomplish this, we set four objectives:

- *Remove obstacles and increase opportunities for private boater access by 1) identifying 40 obstacles to access on a nationwide basis and 2) removing 40% of those barriers in each year.

- *Conserve and restore whitewater quality/quantity on 40 paddling reaches each year.

- *Increase membership from 8,000 to 15,000 to better represent whitewater paddlers and increase volunteer activism on rivers.

- *Raise the funding necessary to support our mission and complete our goals.

It's an aggressive schedule, but necessary to build a legacy of river improvements undertaken and completed by whitewater paddlers. And not all issues are as time intensive as a lawsuit on the Grand Canyon or the 30-year relicensing of California's Mokelumne River. Some issues can be completed with a phone call or two, or improved just by getting the right tools out to local volunteers. But whatever it takes, we are counting on 40 improved access issues and 40 improved whitewater river efforts each year.



To get a quick start, we are looking to hire an east coast River Associate early in 2001 (see the job description listed in this Journal). This Associate will work with both John Gangemi and Jason Robertson to enhance our responsiveness to local river issues. A top priority will be to strengthen the effectiveness of American Whitewater's local volunteers including more than 50 Regional Coordinators and more than 80 Streamkeepers (volunteers monitoring whitewater streams for our Website).

A second, equally important task for this position will be to link our volunteers with other users and groups, and to create strong coalitions that can improve rivers.

Over the next three years, we will look to hire a total of six River Associates to address issues in the Northeast, Midwest, Northwest, Rocky Mountain area, and Southwest. While the first position will target issues from Maine to Georgia, we expect the primary workload in 2001 to target river issues in the Southeast, including: relicensing of the Cheoah, Upper Nantahala, Tuckasegee, and Coosa; restoration of the Upper Ocoee; the effects of Chip Mills on whitewater; and access issues from the Upper Chattooga to Maryland's Upper Yough.

Paddlers can also expect to see a real push to increase our membership in 2001. If we really want to represent paddlers, then we need the numbers to back us up. As American Whitewater's President Jay Kenney said last March, "the size of our membership directly affects our ability to protect rivers across the country."

But membership means more than just numbers, it means more bodies to get involved, people passionate and knowledgeable about the rivers they paddle, and it means that more work gets done. Whether we have two, three, or six Associates, it's not enough to address all of the problems and threats facing rivers. American Whitewater's success has always and will continue to come from our member's volunteer efforts.

Our fourth goal, raising the funds needed to complete our mission, is a necessary and critical part of our effort—and

like all of our efforts, most of our funding (more than 65%) comes from boaters.

We don't ask our members for money because boaters are the most affluent group around. We ask because our issues are your issues—and because you care so much. Member donations guarantee that American Whitewater is locked into the issues that affect rivers, and that we can quickly tackle those issues important to all boaters. You don't need to give every time we ask. Give what you can, give when an issue hits home, and then boost it a little because you want us to work even harder for you!

We have a new plan, but the same mission and same set of goals that have stood us well for over 40 years will continue. We look forward to staying the course over the next three years, and we invite all paddlers to help us and come along for the ride—we promise to keep it fun, interactive, and productive.



Late Breaking News...

Executive Director Rich Bowers Announces Resignation

After many years of dedicated and valued service, Rich Bowers has announced that he is resigning as the Executive Director of American Whitewater. Rich plans to pursue new opportunities in the Pacific Northwest, but has agreed to continue to serve as Executive Director while the organization seeks a replacement.

Rich's contributions to the American Whitewater Affiliation have been immeasurable and he will be sorely missed. The next issue of American Whitewater will include a detailed profile of Rich and his many accomplishments.



AMERICAN WHITewater SEEKING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Applications are currently being accepted for the position of Executive Director of the American Whitewater Affiliation. Information regarding the qualifications, responsibilities, benefits and the application process are currently posted on the American Whitewater Web Site. American Whitewater plans to complete the selection process by March 1, 2001.



Old School meets New School on Upper North Fork Feather Flow Study

By Annie Chamberlain

Scott, Jenny, and I pull up to the PG&E house around midnight, dead tired from a weekend of kayak instruction and road-weary from the five-hour drive getting here. It's cold out. I wander among the motley assortment of trucks, vans, trailers, and disheveled kayaking paraphernalia until I find Trevor and Robbie, hoping to scrounge sleeping pad space or at least some body heat. Trevor is cocooned in the back of his truck by piles of gear, so I lie down in the dirt next to Robbie, cursing myself for the thousandth time for leaving my sleeping pad in the Perception RV last time I was on rodeo tour. The stars are incredible, and I fall asleep hypnotized by the pulse of the Pleadies.

We wake up early, the extra incentive of PG&E buying breakfast motivating everyone to get out of bed, or for Robbie and I, off the dirt. We're told that our pavement camping scared the PG&E employees arriving in the dark to start the upramp for today's whitewater release. They didn't anticipate the obstacle course of boats and people sleeping in the road as they drove to work. The ensuing teasing and jokes by the PG&E employees about sleeping in the road breaks the ice between the paddlers and the PG&E employees. Satisfied I'm doing my part to represent the dirtbag faction of the paddling life-style, I move my stuff upstairs to one of the extra beds.

After breakfast we gather on the porch at the PG&E bunkhouse for introductions. There are nine paddlers. As each of us describes ourselves to the group, a dichotomy soon becomes clear: those of us who paddle 200 plus days a year, and those of us who, well, do not. Marital status, parental status, and hairline status or lack thereof seem to have something to do with the paddle-starved condition of the latter, while stickers, sunglasses, tans, and a natural proclivity for sleeping in the dirt characterize the paddle-saturated condition of the former. John Gangemi, Bo Shelby, Dave Steindorf, and Ron Rogers have "real jobs" and together comprise what came to be known as the "Old School" faction of the group. The "New Schoolers"—Jared Noceti, Scott Blakenfield,

Trevor Hudson, Robbie Hogg and myself — have "virtual jobs," with Scott, California Canoe and Kayak's whitewater program director and Jared, a Perception tech rep tying for first, while Trevor, Robbie and I fall in a distant second as kayak instructors, river guides, and whatever else that makes good tip money. John Gangemi, Conservation Director for American Whitewater, reminds us of the importance of today's flow study, stressing that our work will affect the next thirty years of water released on the North Fork of the Feather. "This will affect what your kids are able to oaddle thirty years from now," he says. The New Schoolers look at each other wondering whom he's talking to. "Our kids?" we say, startled by the thought, much less the spoken affirmation that any of us will be parents someday. "Believe it or not it really does happen but we'll save the discussion about the birds and bees for another day," I wink at Scott and Jenny, who are four months into expecting their first.

At the put-in, Larry, the PG&E operations manager, hands out gilded coins. On the front it reads "Pacific Gas and Electric — We Generate Safely," and on the back, a picture of a mill wheel surrounded by the words "Safety Doesn't Cost—It Pays." "This is the safety token we give to all our workers reminding them to be safe," Larry tells me, "You guys have a safe trip down the river today." I put the token in my lifejacket pocket, appreciating the gesture, and wondering if his concern isn't in some way augmented by his early morning drive through the obstacle course of dirtbag paddlers crashed in the road. For PG&E, our descent down this rarely boated reach is death defying. For this crew of paddlers, it's just another day of adventure with the added excitement of collecting data on whitewater flows. PG&E is truly concerned for our safety, handing John and Bo radios to report our progress down the river.

The Seneca stretch of the North Feather has been on an anorexic diet of 35 cfs for the last 80 years: our trip marks one of the few releases greater than 35 cfs since the 1920s. The creek's subsequent malnourishment is obvious everywhere, from the piles of brush and logs, to the gritty rock and the smell of stirred-up organics that permeates the air for the first mile of the trip. Our conservative 250 cfs allotment for day one makes the river come alive again; we have a fun, if bumpy (and initially, smelly) trip down the river, looking forward to paddling the run again the next day with more water. Few folks have



Left to right: Looking upstream at "Tight" a typical drop on the Upper North Fork Feather. Annie Chamberlain launching off "Killer Pillar". Above: Robbie Hogg getting the nose up on "Solid Gold". Photos by Scott Blankenfeld.

boated this run and no one has named, let alone described, the rapids. We get the distinct privilege of naming rapids. The gradient in this section is 400 feet per mile making for a creek feel. There are lots of rapids to name, which I offer up verbally and physically with examples like "Oh My Log." The old school faction of the trip teases us about our sticker-clad gear and cool sunglasses, but is impressed by the cartwheels we can still throw in creek boats, even after Jared bridges himself doing a rock 360.

We take-out at the PG&E powerhouse, literally walking through the power plant. The big blue turbines dwarf us. Gangemi, whose every day is spent working to restore rivers degraded by hydropower operations is thrilled with the take-out walking by the huge blue turbines with a sense of accomplishment for the day. Just outside the powerhouse, we load boats onto the Perception van. As each of us pass our boat to Jared on top of the van our bodies act as conductors to the metal roof rack reminding us that electric power generation dominates this landscape most days of the year. John, prostrate on the pavement, can't overlook the photo opportunity for a picture of the Perception van loaded with boats and a backdrop of electricity transformers and huge penstocks spilling 500 feet from the ridge top to the powerhouse. During the drive to dinner, Scott offers up some beta on how the penstocks work, which is all news to me, a child of the Potato State. We eat a huge dinner and go to bed early, and I make sure to take advantage of the shower, the space heater, and the bed, which turns out to be a huge improvement over dirt, pavement, and utility trucks.

We start day two with wide smiles anticipating the bump up to 400 cfs, which proves to be safer and much more fun than the 250 cfs on day one. Jared probes the right side of the 25 foot waterfall, and calls it "Going for

the Gold," to compliment the left line, which we dubbed "Solid Gold" on day one. We focus on capturing more video footage and taking more pictures. John needs to document the rapids for the FERC relicense proceeding. The New School and Old School factions of the trip begin to develop a more even river-running cadence. We arrive at the take-out elated with the days paddling. Reality strikes at the days debrief. Many of us were already looking forward to bumping the flow up to 500 cfs on day three. Bo and John present a

rational argument for paddling 325 cfs rather than 500. They explain that it's more valuable in this relicensing proceeding to identify the minimum acceptable flow for development of an annual flow schedule. Knowing this minimum helps John negotiate a flow schedule that doesn't drop below the minimum. It's much more difficult for him to negotiate flows above the optimum due to limited water availability. Though we all had visions of punching chunkier holes and launching big boof moves, we remind ourselves that our job is to evaluate the river for a 'minimum acceptable' and 'optimum' flow for recreation.

I ride the shuttle back to the house with David, our videographer and environmental consultant, and we see a large black bobcat sprint across the road in front of us, a vision that keeps us smiling for the rest of the day. I head up a group dinner effort and we start cooking a ton of food, dance in the kitchen, and tease PG&E that we invited all our friends up from Coloma to have a PG&E house party. We call Dave Steindorf and tease him about taking "The Waambulance" back to Chico the night before, telling him he's missing the party and better paddle with us tomorrow, as the Old School is feeling outnumbered. John G. and Bo come back from the grocery store with more food and beer, surprised to find the kitchen transformed into a dance club and bar serving Ron's special gin and tonics. "What's the music?" Bo asks me.

"Techno," I say.

"I've never heard of them," he says. "I can't help but laugh. "Techno is a genre, not a band." I laughed again, thinking of Bo's kids popping in a techno tape on the way to the river. "It's like jazz, you know. There's elevator jazz, acid jazz, etc. Same with techno — there's house music, tribal music, all that. What we're listening to is house music."

"Oh," Bo said, looking slightly bewildered.

"Anyway," I said, smiling as I thought of



The New School Style by Scott Blankenfels

their entire lives. It occurred to me that the locals hadn't "forgotten" what the river looked like with water since there was no image to remember. The skinny stream was all they knew—the dam dissolved the memory of the river from their entire lives. Their entire lives. Imagine a lifetime passing without water in a river. A lifetime passing without life.

We spend lots of time at the waterfall on day three exploring new angles for photos and lines. Robby hikes his boat half a dozen times probing almost every possible angle on both sides of the drop. I taunt the old schoolers at the top of the waterfall. They've portaged the rapid on days one and two. "Hey old school, show us your stuff." Bo and John rise to the occasion running clean lines. In the pool below the waterfall they tease back, "Old School rules, New School drools!"

We play at the ender spot directly below the falls, perfecting our pirouettes and big boat cartwheels. Our playboating jonse satiated, we paddle down to one of the last rapids on the trip, which starts with a straightforward 3 foot boof. Everyone is doing silly tricks off the drop and I turn to Dave and say, "Watch this one, it's the glam girl move." I launch the boof and do my patented pose. As I land, I find myself moving towards a huge log (20 feet long, 30 inches in diameter) that I have the good fortune of body slamming, instantly flipping me upside down. Now, I know people always say they "just fell out of their boat," and I've sneered at such excuses myself, but I really did just fall out of my boat. I believe it happened promptly after I body-checked the log, now floating down the river with me and my gear. Clearly this was not my trip with regards to logs. Trevor and Robbie, Team Vitamin B bros that they are, quickly rescued my boat and paddle, while John motions me to an eddy to avoid being decapitated by the log as it tumbled down the river. All summer as a kayak instructor for

California Canoe and Kayak, I teased my students that the penalty for swimming is drinking a beer out of their river booties hoping this would be incentive for them to stay in their boats. This gut-turning consequence is a long-standing tradition from my first boatin' buddies posse, the New Riders of the Perfect Wave (check out their new video with Teton Gravity Research). Much to my chagrin my swim set me up to practice what I'd preached. At the take-out, with horrified PG&E and Forest Service employees watching, I enthusiastically guzzled a Sam Adams from my Five-Tennies. Luckily I hadn't been wearing them much lately (author's personal opinion).

We finish up the day-three surveys deciding that 325 cfs is indeed the lowest we can recommend from a safety and enjoyment standpoint. Bo and John are thrilled that the study design has lead to a definitive result. We drive back to the PG&E house to pack up, exchanging e-mail addresses and future trip ideas. I am sad to leave my comfy PG&E bed, as it has been a nice reprieve from random couches, tents, and my trusty hammock. We wave goodbye to our new "old school" boating buddies and the PG&E employees heading down the North Fork of the Feather, back to our jobs or virtual jobs depending on your generation affiliation.

As we come to the most spectacular part of the drive, Scott and Jenny show me the put-ins and take-outs for the popular stretches of the river. We're almost back in cell service, so Scott and I fiddle with our cell phones, mildly annoyed when the service sucks and we can't get our voice mail.

"Annie, I want you to imagine this," Scott says, "Imagine this place before the dams, and the road and the railroad. You'd start way up there where we were doing the flow study, spend a few days paddling down to here, every day the canyon getting more and more beautiful and the river increasing in volume. See these granite domes? They

Bo asking his kids if they were listening to house or tribal music, "It's all techno."

During dinner we watch a video of the July 2000 Chelan Gorge Controlled Flow Study in Chelan, WA. Everyone is in awe of the beautiful run. The New School recognizes Tracy Clapp and Britt Gentry among the paddlers on the trip. "Hey John," I say, "There was a New School versus Old School on that flow study, too."

John laughs and agrees. Clearly a pattern was forming: younger paddlers, however stereotyped for their lack of responsibility or commitment, realize the need to take an active role in ensuring the future of the rivers. American Whitewater is hoping to inspire more younger paddlers to get involved. Check out the new "Rodeo Tips" section in the American Whitewater journal then, take a minute to flip through the rest of the magazine and get hip with American Whitewater's conservation and access projects.

A bright autumn sun greets us on day three of the flow study, and we look forward to another descent of the Seneca section at 325 cfs. Having only seen the run with water, it is hard for me to imagine the creek with its usual emaciated level of 35 cfs. Locals we met at the take-out were shocked, saying they had never seen this stretch of river with water in

The paddling Crew ready to do some channel restoration on the Upper North Fork Feather. Photo by Scott Blankenfels.



would come all the way down to the river. Look up there—" Scott points up a side canyon. I can see silver granite shoulders sloping down to where they touch a blue vein of water. "That's what this place would look like. You would be rock spinning and cartwheeling on smooth granite with your eyes on complete sensory overload. This place would be so spectacular. Now, look to the left," he says, as we pass a steep penstock running down a small drainage, "You'll have to use your imagination because the river is in those tubes."

We come back into cell service and Scott and I check our voice mail. "I'm going to play devil's advocate here," Jenny says, "Just for the fun of it. PG&E provides a lot of power to a lot of people—us included. Now would you be willing to give that up—all the luxuries, the life-style you enjoy?" We turn off our phones and grow quiet, our imaginations still too transfixed on the idea of silver granite domes that come all the way to the river, clean 360 rock spins on smooth sierra granite, pristine water in hearty amounts of cfs, and granite domes scattered with pines. We make jokes about solar-paneled kayaks, none of us really wanting to engage in the complicated triage of technology and the environment, of wilderness and civilization. It occurs to me that perhaps what I love most about water is it's ability to restore wildness,

to make a river spontaneous and powerful and alive again, even as giant penstocks loom in the background and you shock yourself loading boats. Unfortunately the power of a river translates too easily into gigawatts and less clearly into aesthetics. My hairdryer or the flick of a light switch has never made me laugh with pure pleasure, never made me feel weightless, never made me feel scared or confident or peaceful or in love. Gigawatts might make me feel warm but they don't inspire challenge or humble me. I guess I could forsake my pleasures of the modern world for soulfulness, but then my truck could never get to the put-in, much less the take-out, and my hair would always be wet. Besides, my parents are so happy to finally have a number where they can reach me—at least some of the time. Somewhere there must be a compromise. Somewhere between the penstocks and paddling, the transformers and the exhilaration of boofing the lip of a drop, a starving river and my voice mail, somewhere there exists the ability to have both gigawatts and a river with life. I think of the baby growing inside Jenny and wonder what the child will know more intimately: a stoplight or a surf wave, a cell phone or the mysteries of currents. Will it possess the memory of the way a river looks with water in it? Will you?

American Whitewater Conservation Program footnote: American Whitewater focuses on finding a balance between societies thirst for power and opportunities to immerse oneself in flowing water. In hydropower relicensing proceedings, American Whitewater works with the utility to strike a balance between continued power generation and river restoration including recreation. Often times this is simply a matter of more efficient hydro operations. In some cases river restoration requires reallocation of some water back to the river channel. This redistribution of water for non-power purposes does not reduce the projects power generation capacity but may reduce total energy output annually by about ten percent maximum. This reduction will not cause local or regional blackouts. In fact, hydropower only contributes about ten percent to the overall electric energy market nationwide. Small reductions in annual hydropower output could easily be overcome with simple conservation practices. For example, on the Rock Creek-Cresta hydro project on the North Fork Feather, annual whitewater flows recently proposed account for only 1/2 of one percent of the hydropower currently generated at these powerhouses.

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Run Description, Seneca Stretch of the Upper North Fork Feather

By Annie Chamberlain

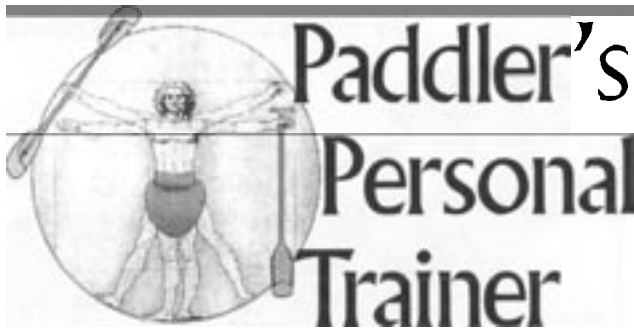
The Seneca stretch of the North Fork Feather is a challenging and unique lava rock run in the middle of a Sierra granite wonderland. The chunky rapids and comparatively small volume make this run more reminiscent of eastern-style creek boating, which could provide a nostalgic reprieve for visiting easterners or a stylistic challenge for local paddlers anxious to try something different. Be advised that the run demands expert boat control, as you will be avoiding undercuts, logs, and sieves, sometimes all at once. The ten-mile Seneca section run can be divided into two distinct sections each five miles in length. The upper five miles drops 400 feet per mile providing plenty of technical rapids and a satisfyingly high ratio of 'bang-for-your-buck'. The lower five miles is lower gradient and has been channelized by mining equipment. The best rapids on the lower occur in the last 3/4 of a mile above the powerhouse take-out.

The upper run begins with a 3/4 mile Class II section, followed by a few good Class III warm up rapids named, "Giggles" and "Zig Zag." During the Controlled Flow Study, the rancid odor we paddled through in the first mile inspired jokes like "Boof—arted?". The smell apparently comes from decaying material in the bottom of the lake stirred up by the low level releases from the dam. We all agreed that nature's peculiar aromas drastically decreased after the next rapid, "The Barrel," named for a rusty barrel you may encounter when eddy-hopping down this Class III drop. (For those of you with a sensitive olfactory, don't fret—regular releases of this run should wash away the boof—arted effect.) From here the run picks up showing it's technical side, with "Wrecking Yard," a Class IV boulder mess that ends with a lovely pile of miscellaneous auto parts on river left, and a 2 foot pool-drop we couldn't help but name "The Dump." As you paddle deeper into Action Canyon the rapids become more

challenging, starting with a slot-move drop called "Tight," followed by "The Flume," a sweet 20 foot lava ramp.

A Class III boulder jumble takes you to the next rapid, "Killer Pillar," a fun double drop with a large rock pillar in the middle of the river after the second drop. After "Bit's Find" and "Oh My Log," the gradient increases as you approach "Snooze You Loose," a long jamming stretch of waves, holes and horizon lines that leads to a small eddy above a spectacular two-pronged 25 foot waterfall, easily the Kodak spot of the run. We named the falls "Solid Gold" (the left line) and "Going for the Gold" (the right line—best @ ≥ 400 cfs) in honor of our PG&E safety coins. Local nomenclature (however trite) refers to it as "Salmon Falls." Though perhaps initially daunting, both sides of the falls have been run multiple times without incident, even by the Old School faction of the trip, who stepped up on the last day of our study and probed the Solid Gold Master's Class. A great ender spot follows immediately below the drop (also a great place for pictures). The next two rapids round out the end of the challenging part of the run, with "Tight and Right" (a slot far right of a log—be careful) and "C-7," a set of slot moves named for the spot on your neck that scrapes along the lava shelf if you have the misfortune of running it upside down (names omitted to avoid character degradation). The run ends with "Jungle Ride," a theme-park cruise through rolling waves, channelized mine tailings and dense blackberry brambles. The bridge serves as a take-out or a midway break if you are continuing down the lower five miles. This lower section has less gradient. The first four miles are characterized with intermittent channelized reaches, more mining waste and lots of dense vegetation. In the last mile, the gradient picks up again for some long Class IV drops right to the powerhouse.

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The Fate of California Rivers in a Deregulated Energy Market

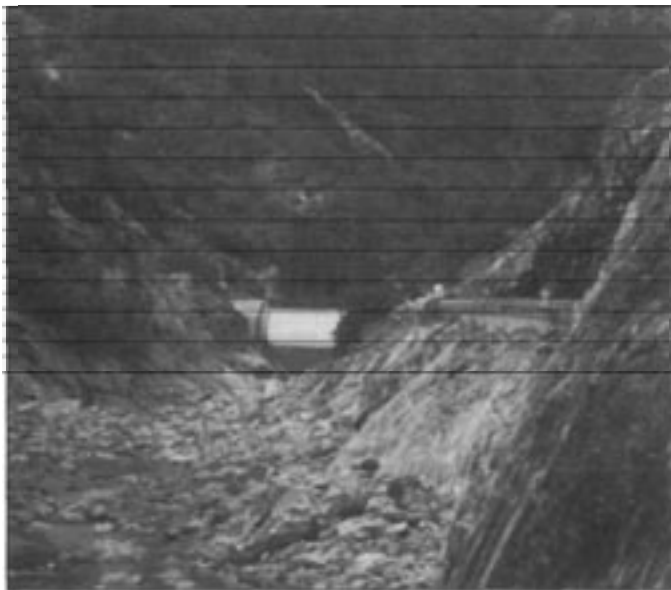
By Steve Wald, California Hydropower Reform Coalition

California's experiment with restructuring its electrical energy industry hit rough waters this summer, and the fate of dozens of the state's most important rivers and watersheds hangs in the balance. A combination of hot weather, transmission constraints, and soaring regional demand sent wholesale power prices through the roof and threatened blackouts across the state. Utility bills tripled in San Diego, the first city to experience the new market-based rates planned for the rest of the state over the next two years. The series of events left many questioning whether the newly created market could deliver on its promise of cheap and reliable power. The crisis has also eclipsed, for the time being, PG&E's pending application to auction off its hydropower assets and a subsequent proposal to instead hand off the system to a PG&E affiliate. The lands and waters comprising PG&E's hydropower system are at risk of getting lost in the frenzy over rates and supply. Next to CalFed, it's the most important natural resource decision the state has faced in years. State regulators and lawmakers need to hear from river recreationists, loud and clear, so they take the long view and do right by the rivers instead of squandering the opportunity of a lifetime.

But first, some background. What could energy deregulation possibly have to do with rivers? When California restructuring legislation passed in 1996, the big utilities were encouraged to sell off their generation assets, and it was intended that markets, rather than regulators, would determine which new power plants were built and when existing plants would run. The trouble is, lawmakers didn't have hydro in mind when they wrote the bill. Hydro plants do more than just generate power, of course—they control stream flow, and by doing so, they have the potential to affect nearly every other use of the river, including its ability to support fish, wildlife, and recreation. And we're not talking about just a few rivers. PG&E's hydropower system controls flows in 16 major watersheds on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada and the southern Cascades, all documented whitewater runs. Comprised of 174 dams, 68 powerhouses, and 140,000 acres of watershed land, it's the largest hydro system under single, private ownership anywhere in the world.

Under deregulation, decreased state oversight and new profit incentives combine to pose a serious new threat to the utility-controlled rivers and land. For example, PG&E's vast acreage has always been open to the public and provides access to some of the state's classic whitewater. Once it leaves state jurisdiction, nothing stands between the owner selling out to a timber company, a developer, or both—in fact, there will be every incentive to do so. Similarly, as the hydro system is manipulated to maximize profits in the new energy market, rivers that have already been plumbed into submission will only get worse. The new market richly rewards generators operating during the hours of peak demand, when power can sell for 100 times or more than the normal price. Because hydro plants can switch on and off at the turn of a valve, they can jump in and out of the market at a moment's notice. The result is unnatural and often dramatic fluctuations in streamflow that erodes streambanks, strands fish, disrupts aquatic insects and amphibians, degrades water quality and alters or eliminates recreational opportunities.

While the hydro industry likes to call it "clean power," hydropower can drain the life from a river. Anyone who's contrasted PG&E's 20 foot diameter diversion pipes with the paltry trickle left in parts of the North Fork of the Feather River in the summer can see



Dewatered North Fork Feather River below Cresta Dam. Photo John Gangemi

how. But when it's operated with reasonable control measures, hydro can actually be compatible with whitewater boating. So how do we ensure that compatibility? Unfortunately, the federal regulatory process for hydro is complex and contentious, and progress comes in bits and pieces (see sidebar). We can't count on it to offset the immediate risks posed by deregulation.

Despite its threat, electricity restructuring could also create an opportunity for some relief for the beleaguered rivers and permanent protection for PG&E's watershed lands. Recall that the restructuring legislation back in 1996 encouraged utilities to sell off their generating assets. Last fall, PG&E asked the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for permission to auction off its hydro system to the highest bidder. This set in motion a formal inquiry at the CPUC regarding which of several possible outcomes is in the public interest. The CPUC is preparing a massive environmental impact report (EIR) examining the current effects of PG&E's hydro system and the pros and cons of various scenarios—including retention in the regulated utility, transfer to an unregulated PG&E affiliate (now PG&E's preferred option), state ownership, and others.

At the conclusion of the process, the CPUC will be in a position to specify terms and conditions to protect the public interest. Therein lies the opportunity. The CPUC can require that the owner(s) make progress toward compliance with state water quality standards and other laws now, in advance of the federal relicensing timetable. It can also ensure permanent protection and public access for the 140,000 acres of watershed lands that could otherwise be sold off. These simple steps achieve two critical objectives: they avoid or offset the potential for adverse impacts under deregulation, and they help reverse the continuing damage this system has caused to California's rivers for decades.

But as the saying goes, with every silver lining there's a cloud. This summer's price spikes (and the accompanying ratepayer revolt in San Diego) will no doubt leave Sacramento policymakers very dubious about reining in hydro operations. But establishing reasonable performance standards for hydro makes a lot of sense, even in

the midst of this "power crisis." That's because, according to the California Energy Commission, the energy shortfalls are only expected for the next two years — after which clean gas-fired plants in the planning and permitting pipeline, totaling 14,000 megawatts, are expected to begin coming on line. New flows to protect fish habitat and lower water temperatures first require a couple years of monitoring and studies, leaving time for the new capacity to more than offset any losses. In fact, the new capacity dwarfs any conceivable loss—PG&E's entire system totals about 3,800 megawatts, and impressive river improvements have been achieved with just a 5-10 percent reduction in annual generation.

Performance standards that accelerate compliance with existing state laws are also sound public policy. We put scrubbers on smokestacks, treat discharge, and regulate every other generation source. It only makes sense that hydropower operators should also take responsible steps to minimize their adverse effects on the environment and river users. Protecting the public interest in this restructured energy market means maintaining accountability for the use of public trust resources—a point we can't afford to let lawmakers and state regulators forget.

Interested in learning more or lending a hand? Here are four suggestions.

1. Request a copy of *Power Play: The Sale of PG&E's Hydro-Dower System and the Future of California's Rivers*. It's a report prepared by CHRC and Environmental Defense, available online at <http://www.environmentaldefense.org/pubs/Reports/CAHydropower/> or by calling Steve Wald at 510-644-2900 x105.
2. Support the conservation work of your American Whitewater and your local paddling club.
3. Comment on the CPUC's draft EIR released November 20,

2000. To access the various documents and for information on how to comment, check this website: <http://cpuc-pgehydro.support.net/>.

4. Let Governor Gray Davis know about your concerns. A personal letter goes a long way in Sacramento. His address is Gov. Gray Davis, State Capitol Building, Sacramento, CA 95814. 916-445-2841, fax 916-445-4633, gravidavis@governor.ca.gov.

Steve Wald is the coordinator of the California Hydropower Reform Coalition, which consists of conservation, sportfishing, and river recreation organizations working to restore and enhance California rivers damaged by hydropower. The CHRC Steering Committee includes American Whitewater, California Outdoors, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, California Trout, Foothill Conservancy, Friends of the River, Natural Heritage Institute, and Trout Unlimited. You can reach Steve at 510-644-2900 x105 or swald@calhrc.org.

Note: An earlier version of this article appeared in *California Fly Fisher*.

The Hydro Relicensing Process Helps Restore the Balance

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issues 50-year operating licenses for all non-federal hydro plants. During that license term, the owner is essentially "grandfathered" from complying with all other environmental laws and standards. When a license does expire, FERC works with the owner, resource agencies, and the public to develop new license conditions that comply with modern laws and strike a fair balance among the multiple demands on the river, including fish and recreation. It's an important restoration opportunity. Boaters and anglers are working together in California to make sure rivers get their fair shake in the process. But of PG&E's 28 FERC licenses, only a small fraction have been issued recently, meaning most of PG&E's hydro system is operated according to decades-old science and social values, and almost none of it complies with the Clean Water Act. It will be decades before the entire system makes it through the relicensing process.

That said, about a dozen licenses (not just PG&E projects) do expire in the next few years, including projects on the Klamath, Pit, McCloud, Feather, American, Stanislaus, and upper San Joaquin. There are incredible restoration opportunities, but it takes a lot of work. Conservation groups could use your help. To find out more, check with John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director 406-837-3155 jgangemi@digisvs.net or contact the author.

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Who would of thought..

John Jerger



Participants on the Upper North Fork Flow Study on the Belden Reach.
Photo John Gangemi

As a long time member and supporter of American Whitewater, I have frequently read about the various flow studies that have been and are being performed as part of the hydropower relicensing process across the country. In fact, in the September/October, 2000 issue of American Whitewater, there is an article, "Top 40 River Issues of 2000." Six of the top 40 issues have to do with hydropower relicensing. The number two issue on the list deals with hydropower relicensing on the North Fork of the Feather River. As I read these articles, I always wonder who are these paddlers and how do they get invited to participate on these studies. Well, I found out!

This summer I had the chance to meet and have dinner with Rich Bowers, American Whitewater's Executive Director. We discussed many issues, including American Whitewater plans and directions for the future. He was looking to me for feedback on how American Whitewater could better serve and be part of the local paddling communities. During dinner, I dropped a comment that I thought it would be cool to participate in a flow study.

Who would of thought...

In September, I received an e-mail on behalf of John Gangemi, American Whitewater's Conservation Director, asking me to participate in Upper NF Feather flow study. Lets just say I was thrilled!!

The flow study was conducted on the first weekend in October, 2000. We could not have asked for a nicer fall weekend. Michele and I camped on a pretty little creek the night before we were to meet with the American Whitewater crew. That night as I listened to the sounds of the creek, I wondered if it ever had enough water to run. To my surprise, this creek was actually the dewatered North Fork of the Feather. I (and it turns out many people do) mistook the East Branch of the North Fork for the actual North Fork. The East Branch runs along the main highway to Quincy, while the main North Fork confluence is about a mile or two above Belden Town.

The flow study was conducted over five days, the first two were concentrated on the Belden Reach, a six mile Class III/IV section that ends about a half mile above the confluence (there is a low head dam that keeps you from paddling all the way to the confluence). The last three days were spent studying the Seneca Reach, a Class IV-V section flowing out of Lake Almador. Michele and I were part of the Belden reach study. Due to Michele's earlier meet with a large rock on the T, Michele was unable to paddle. Being the conscientious participant,

she decided to conduct her own study, analyzing the flows of Merlot and Cabernet, along the bank of the river.

The plan was to run the river three times at varying flows, once on Saturday at 350 (testing the low end), and twice on Sunday with flows of 650 and 850 (testing for optimal and high end). After the usual logistics and a few pre-study questionnaires, we headed for the put-in. We had a good number of paddlers and split into several groups. I was in the lead group. As we ran the river, we were to count the number of hits, stops, and carries. A hit was when you hit a rock, a stop was when you hit a rock that actually stopped your forward progress, and a carry was when you had to get out of your boat and drag it across some obstacle. In addition we were to keep track of the number of breaks, scouts, and/or portages and overall quality of the river.

This reach of river is not your typical Sierra pool drop, rather a very continuous, fast moving six mile long boulder garden. There are not a lot of large eddies, and as the flow increases, the number of eddies decrease. The stretch of river has been dewatered for many years, and as a result has become very overgrown with trees, brush and berry brambles. In fact, we all named one of the drops Brambles (read on for more about carnage in Brambles). There are several places in the run where the river becomes braided and it is hard to pick the correct channel. For the most part, all of the channels go, some a little dicier than others. One of the paddlers in our group had run this section last winter and basically knew the run. This saved us from several berry bramble bush whacking scouts. While there are a few calm sections, you definitely do not want to swim this section. Swims could be long and painful, with the rocks in the channel and the berry vines on the banks.

The first run at low water (350 cfs) was bony, but nonetheless navigable yet uneventful. The hit count was huge, the stop count was high but we never had to carry, scout (I would have scouted had it not been for Dave who knew the run), or portage. It took about 4 hours, with about a 40 minute lunch stop.

The second run (650 cfs) was considerably better. The first half mile was a blast, no warm up, just strap in and go. This run is unique. As the flows get higher you get a big water feel in a creek setting. There are no really steep boulder choked drops—the river just goes and



Catboater passing under the penstocks used to deliver water to the Belden Powerhouse on the North Fork Feather River. Photo John Gangemi.

doesn't stop, with lots of waves and lurking holes to keep you on your toes. There are a couple short stretches where the tree canopy has grown completely over the river and its like shooting down a tunnel. Its pretty wild. There were far fewer hits, no stops, and it took us a little over two hours to complete the run, with no stops for lunch.

Ok, carnage time. I heard there was a least one swim, but since it was not in my group, I don't have the details, but I do have a story of my own. Brambles has a long boulder garden entry, with two tree/bramble braided exit chutes, one far river left, the other far river right.

You want to stay out of the middle—it's a messy, strainer-blocked island.

After the first low water run, it was decided that the far right exit was the cleanest—you just had to line up correctly and not let all of the flow pushing you into the overhanging bushes bother you. As I peeled out of the eddy, I realized the guy behind me missed the eddy and was right on my tail, I put in a couple of quick strokes to get out front, and did not see a rock that spun me around just above the entrance to the Bramble chute. As I was working to straighten myself, I forgot to pay attention to "all of the flow pushing into the overhanging bushes." As I got straight, I ducked and leaned to miss the bushes, and this was enough to flip me. As I set up to roll, my paddle sharply struck a rock and broke in half. Sh*t, I did not want to swim, I tucked up tight and rode out the chute upside down. Warning! There are many large mean boulders lurking just beneath the water surface in the Bramble chute — my right shoulder can attest to at least three. In the small pool at the end of the chute, I was able to roll up with one of the half paddle pieces, but was not able to attain the eddy. As I C-l'ed by everybody in the eddy, I shouted "I need a little help here." It turns out, nobody knew I broke my paddle—they just saw me roll, and turned back to watch the next guy through the chute. I was able to paddle to an eddy a couple hundred yards downstream and was given a breakdown paddle. Life is funny. I have paddled for years with a breakdown in the back of my boat, and the day I lend it to one of the other groups is the day I break my own. Thanks Murphy...

The third run (850 cfs), I personally liked the best, maybe it was because I had a perfect line through Brambles, but I think it had to do more with the run itself. There were big waves and lots of action.

The veggie chutes through the tree canopies were great and I found a couple of big fast surf waves. The run on the whole is not really playful, due in most to the lack of good eddies near playable features. Although, I guess I should speak, my Godzilla is not the hottest play boat in town, and those that did paddle playboats seemed to be having fun on the eddy lines and in the waves. This run took a little under two hours, with just a few hits.

The stretch of the North Fork Feather has a lot of potential as a fun Class III/IV run, if it had water on a regular schedule in the late summer/fall. One really gets a different paddling experience from the typical Class III-IV runs we are all too familiar with paddling. The fast continuous nature, along with a few eddies, gives you that "creekin" feel, without the serious steep creek consequences. The drive was an easy three and half hours from home (Oakland, CA). In addition, there are several great riverside campgrounds along the run, and we had the bonus of real fall colors.

Michele's study continues and she has asked me to participate, man I love these flow studies...

In all seriousness, I want to thank John Gangemi, American Whitewater, Chico Paddleheads, PG&E and all of the others for their time and hard work towards restoring water to the North Fork of the Feather and many of the other great rivers around the country. I strongly urge you all to donate your time and/or money to American Whitewater and/or your other favorite whitewater organizations to help restore more whitewater for the generations ahead.

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EFFORT TO RESTORE RAPIDS AT LOWER ST. ANTHONY FALLS IN MINNEAPOLIS

By Bill Tilton

In the heart of Minneapolis, the Mississippi River takes a 75 foot plunge at St. Anthony Falls, the only geological feature of any importance on the entire length of the Mississippi. This magnificent waterfall and rapids was buried under two hydro dams 100 and 150 years ago respectively. Now an effort is afoot to build a whitewater channel at Lower St. Anthony Falls, where the Northern States Power plant fell into the river in 1987 (we think of it as the river taking back its own). Northern States Power has no plans to rebuild the plant. Resolutions in support of the whitewater channel have come from the city council, mayor, county board, state legislature, parks board, neighborhood groups, big & little city newspapers, and more. A legislative Feasibility Study estimated conservatively that restored rapids here would put 50,000 or more people into the river annually, mostly in rafts, pumping millions into the local economy and creating tens of thousands of more constituents for further river restoration. The major roadblock is Northern States Power company, which owns part of the land and wants to leave it pretty much a wasteland after generating hydro power there for nearly a century. Northern States Power has yet to acknowledge its obligation to the community and the river to restore some of those rapids which it took away in the 1890s. But, fortuitously, Northern States Power is in the midst of relicensing their hydro project at St. Anthony Falls. The Mississippi Whitewater Park Development Corporation (which has been working on this for 5 years) is teaming with several local and national kindred groups (including American Whitewater) to formally INTERVENE in the FERC relicensing process for Northern State Power's hydro facility for the Upper St. Anthony Falls.

Learn more about the effort at <http://www.whitewaterpark.canoe-kavak.org/>.

Successful Whitewater Flow Studies in 2000

In this issue of the American Whitewater Journal, boaters report on their experiences participating in Controlled Flow Studies on the Belden and Seneca Reaches of the Upper North Fork Feather in California as well as the Little River in Vermont. These October studies wrap up a successful year of whitewater flow studies on rivers across the country including the Pit River (CA), Poe, Belden and Seneca sections of the North Fork Feather (CA), Cheoah (NC) Chelan (WA) and the Little River (VT) all told covering a total of 58 miles of whitewater.

Hydropower operations at each of these river reaches alters the timing, frequency, and volume of river flows, impede river access and limit public access to flow information.

Whitewater flow studies are a critical part of the data gathering phase in a hydropower relicense proceeding. Whitewater flow studies are designed to identify a range of boatable flows for a variety of watercraft. The ideal flow study releases a range of flows over a period of several days. This is referred to as a controlled flow study since the release of flows is controlled by the dam operator. A team of boaters in a variety of watercraft paddle each flow. After each release participants complete a single flow evaluation form rating the quality of the whitewater resource at that flow volume. At the conclusion of all the releases the boaters complete a comparative evaluation form to identify the optimum flow and the minimum acceptable flow. The minimum acceptable flow is the lowest flow in which at least 50% of the participants indicate they will return to paddle. Flows less than this volume are considered unacceptable for whitewater recreation. The results of the study are used in part to mitigate lost whitewater opportunities through implementation of an annual whitewater release schedule.

Flow studies are only as successful as the boaters that choose to participate. In 2000 a stellar cast of boaters stepped forward to help restore their whitewater opportunities in their area. On behalf of the entire paddling community we thank each and every participant for their devotion to the cause. We could not have achieved this success in 2000 without you.

Flow studies are a study component of the larger relicense proceeding. Relicensing is a 5-112 year process. American Whitewater is engaged in this process from start to finish. The ideal model is to have local boaters working in concert with American Whitewater's Conservation Office. Local boaters provide knowledge of the whitewater resource and use patterns. American Whitewater brings knowledge of the relicense process. Together this team develops a mitigation package to restore whitewater opportunities impacted by hydropower project operations. Scheduled flows for the river reaches listed above are still several years out. American Whitewater will inform the paddling community when releases are scheduled to occur. Contact American Whitewater if you would like to volunteer in a hydropower relicense proceedings.

C O N S C R V C

EPA stepping in to protect West Virginia's clean water

Folks at West Virginia Rivers Coalition (WVRC) were excited to learn that the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be stepping in to make sure that West Virginia implements the anti-degradation provision of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA)—a policy that WVRC has been fighting for years to put on the books!

This "anti-degradation" portion of the Act protects clean water, and keeps dirty water from being polluted further. After state regulators failed—year after year—to implement this important protection, WVRC threatened to sue EPA, which has federal oversight of the implementation procedure. Although the West Virginia Environmental Quality Board (EQB) completed a draft plan in August for the state legislature's approval, it is so weak that federal regulators are now stepping in to bring it up to CWA standards. EPA has little faith that the West Virginia legislature or the EQB will rectify the language to comply with federal standards.

While the real celebration won't happen until EPA actually follows through with anti-degradation language, this is a great step toward protecting West Virginia's rivers and streams. Thanks to all of you who called for a strong policy during the public comment period and took the time to voice your concerns, and who continue to support our work on this issue! Visit West Virginia Rivers Coalition on the Web at www.wvrivers.org

American Whitewater Conservation Director note: WVRC provides a boat shuttle up from Mason's Branch, a.k.a. Panther Creek, during Gauley season charging a modest \$5 fee. Funds collected from this shuttle are used, in part, by WVRC to fight for better water quality standards in WV. For the boating public, that means clean water to paddle. Thanks WVRC.

Whitewater Flow Study in Vermont

On October 20, 2000, nine local paddlers participated in a whitewater flow study on the Little River in Waterbury, Vermont. The flow study was part of the hydropower relicensing for the Waterbury Hydropower Project operated by Green Mountain Power Company. GMP's hydropower operations affect flow levels and hence boating opportunities in the Little River downstream. This section of the Little River below Waterbury reservoir is approximately 2 miles long and consists of Class I and II whitewater. The upper Class I section is separated from the lower Class II gorge by an unrunnable low head dam.

The flow study was conducted by E-Pro Engineering with careful review by American Whitewater. E-Pro has participated in several flow studies throughout New England, in cooperation with American Whitewater, including the Magalloway and Rapid Rivers in western Maine. The study was designed to identify minimum acceptable and optimum flows for whitewater paddlers. Three flows were boated, 366 cfs, 454 cfs and 538 cfs. The study was an all day event. Many arms were weak at 5:00 p.m. A final flow of 65 cfs, the proposed minimum flow, was observed but determined to be unboatable. There were two open canoes, one C1, and seven kayaks on the water.

All of the flows produced interesting features. Most of the participants identified 450 cfs as the optimum flow because it provided a good balance for the entire river. It produced good water for nontechnical Class I runs above and below the gorge and produced adequate play waves and eddy lines in the Class II gorge section downstream. All of the participants agreed this was a great resource for the local paddling community. This is one of the only reliable flows in Central Vermont. Predictable releases would make this an excellent river for instruction, slalom training or just a day of paddling with friends.

Access to the river is an issue. The put-in is behind a locked gate. The midpoint take-out at the low head dam is considered hazardous because of the proximity to the dam and the thick undergrowth upstream. The put-in for the gorge requires a steep climb down a leaf-covered bank to a cut in the gorge wall. Clearly, access improvements will be necessary in this relicensing proceeding.

American Whitewater and local paddlers will be working closely with Green Mountain Power to develop a predictable whitewater flow schedule and improve access points. For more information contact Bob Marshall e-mail: rmarsh@accessvt.com.

JOB DESCRIPTION RIVER CONSERVATION & ACCESS EASTERN ASSOCIATE

Job Classification: Regular Full-Time, Salaried

American Whitewater's Conservation & Access Associate will assist the organization's Conservation and Access Directors with on-the-ground river work from Maine to Georgia with a primary emphasis on the Southeast. The Associate works with and reports to the Program Directors and is responsible for assisting with river issues within their territory. Of primary importance is the direct growth, coordination and strengthening of grassroots efforts by American Whitewater volunteers, including our nationwide system of regional coordinators. The Conservation & Access Associate provides coordination, technical expertise, and assistance in promoting American Whitewater's mission. The Conservation & Access Associate is also responsible for working with other conservation and recreation organizations, as well as local, state and federal river agencies.

Responsibilities:

Conservation and Access Working with the Conservation and Access Directors, serves as American Whitewater regional representative on conservation and access issues. As part of the organization's Programs Team, works with the other staff and the Executive Director to articulate American Whitewater's policies, goals, and objectives in individual river issues. Coordinates the efforts of local and regional American Whitewater volunteers. Assists with fund-raising efforts.

Communications With other staff members, helps present and develop a strong, efficient, and cohesive organization message. Should have experience drafting press releases, speaking publicly, writing, and good telephone and Internet skills.

Journal & Website Responsible for writing and soliciting local and regional articles for the bimonthly magazine *American Whitewater* and for the organization's website.

Events Responsible for promoting American Whitewater's Conservation and Access mission at events. With other staff and volunteers, assists with local and regional events as needed.

General Participates in general staff responsibilities, including meetings, record keeping, administration, and so forth. Salary is commensurate with experience. Travel and availability on evenings and weekends are required. Ability to work in Silver Spring, MD for the first two months and an additional week every six months is required.



Essential Qualifications:

*Proven background with local, and regional river conservation and access work. Special consideration given for expertise in hydropower relicensing, accesslaw, river protection regulations, fisheries, river ecology, hydrology, and similar fields.

*Experience working with nonprofit river groups, agencies, local landowners, and recreational groups. Knowledge of local rivers, issues, and key constituencies including paddlers and paddling clubs.

*Self-starter, eventually able to establish a regional field office and work independently on regional issues.

*Excellent organizational and management skills including communications, teamwork and small office management and support.

*Proven ability to interact successfully with a broad range of people.

*Excellent written and oral communications skills.

*Strong Computer and Internet Skills.

*Knowledge of regional watersheds and familiarity with whitewater recreation opportunities on the East Coast.

Send cover letter, resume and references to American Whitewater, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or fax (301) 589-6121.

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

PERMIT FREE ACCESS! Tallulah River Gorge, GA!

By Sherry Olson

No Permits.

No Pre-Registration.

Open Walk-On from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM

For the first two weekends in April, 2001 (April 7 and 8; April 14 and 15), boaters will be allowed to run the Tallulah River Gorge in Georgia without a permit or lottery slot as required in the past. The number of Boaters will NOT be limited to 120 per day, but all boaters must start down the stairs by 4:00 PM to beat the flow cutoff down to the lake. You only need to sign a Waiver at the top of the stairs to the put-in to be permitted to paddle the river. The non-permit weekends are **only a test**. Future non-permit weekends will be based on this trial run.

You can continue to park across the road from the put-in for a \$2.00 fee per vehicle. But remember, you must go under the Bridge to cross the road.

This is an exciting opportunity, but we need **your** help to make this process successful. Numbers may limit access again should this new procedure result in environmental damage to the sensitive plant life within the Gorge. The outcome of the April Releases will determine if the November 2001 releases will require restrictions on the number of boaters again.

To help us keep "**Permit Free Access**," we need every Boater, including **you**, to:

1) **ONLY** access the Gorge to the put-in at the Stairs and **ONLY** leave the Gorge at the take-out at Tugaloo Lake. The stairs were constructed to eliminate impacts to endangered plants while allowing access for recreation. Please respect this. (Remember, Hikers and Climbers are still limited to 120 visitors per day in the Gorge.)

2) **KEEP** your impact on the riverbank to a minimum in connection with scouting rapids. Avoid all unnecessary contact with plant life. Tallulah River Gorge has several federally endangered species, including "Persistent Trillium" which are legally protected.

3) **PARK** only in the designated areas. Obey all parking and road crossing signs.

If you have any questions, you can reach American Whitewater at 1-866-BOAT4AW or 1-866-262-8429 (this is a free call) and additional information regarding the Tallulah River Releases can be obtained on www.americanwhitewater.org.

The future of permit free access to Tallulah Gorge lies in the hands of the boating community. Let's rise to the occasion and demonstrate our superb stewardship of this natural resource!

American Whitewater would like to thank Georgia Power Company and Tallulah Gorge State Park for its efforts in this new process.

RISK MANAGEMENT SIMPLIFIED IN SIX EASY STEPS

By Will Leverette

A large part of the success of any risk management plan is the understanding, simplification, and implementation of a program that actually gets used by everyone in the organization.

Editor's Note: Will Leverette is the Risk Management Department Director for the Worldwide Outfitter and Guide Association, International Special Event and Recreation Association, and Prime Insurance Syndicate. Will also does risk management consulting through his company, ARMOR, the Affiliation of Risk Managers for Outdoor Recreation. More importantly from our perspective, Will is the Whitewater Paddling Coach for Warren Wilson College. Will can be contacted at 353 Buckeye Cove Road, Swannanoa, NC 28778, Phone: 828-298-6920 Fax: 828-298-7492.

Many of American Whitewater's members are also river guides or instructors and several own companies. This article is primarily directed towards protecting the outfitters from liability litigation. However, we think this information will be of general interest to our members and volunteers who help with events, races, and other activities. Liability and litigation are ever-increasing facets of river management and use and its good to be aware of trends in risk mitigation.

Introduction

A large part of the success of any risk management plan is the understanding, simplification, and implementation of a program that actually gets used by everyone in the organization.

Many levels of complexity and detail can be utilized, but the essential basics are fairly simple. Based on my examination of dozens of lawsuits against outfitters and the results of conducting hundreds of risk management consultations, a few instructive lessons are apparent. This process has given me the opportunity to identify the most critical factors that could hurt or help in the event an outfitter is faced with frivolous litigation.

The following comprises a list of these important risk management tools that most outfitters would benefit from using:



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distribute gear that allows you to
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without hesitation."

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on line: www.nrsweb.com
on earth: 2009 S. Main ST
Moscow, ID 83843


Northwest River Supplies, Inc.

I. Develop Redundant System to Share Warnings and Other Information

Develop a means to prove that guests were adequately warned and informed. This avoids claims that, "My client was not adequately warned and informed, and therefore did not know what s(he) was getting into." This is the single most common allegation against outfitters and the most difficult one to disprove without some kind of documentation. There are many ways to go about it.

You can design a basic safety talk or outline and laminate it on a small card that your guides can use to make sure they do not forget important points. You can give out handouts to participants with pertinent safety information prior to the trip. You can post signs, do a safety video, or any number of other creative solutions. Redundancy is always a good idea and reduces the possibility of ambiguity.

II. Make No Outright Guarantees of Safety

Safety guarantees, which are made in your literature or marketing materials, are an open invitation for a lawsuit. Instead, you can talk about things like your excellent safety record, extensive staff training and/or experience, and membership in professional trade organizations without actually guaranteeing safety. Everything you can do to make sure your guests know what they are getting into and what is required of them is in your favor. This includes sharing information in all printed materials, advertising, and even scripts for your guides to answer frequently asked questions.

III. At a Minimum Maintain Basic First Aid Training and Certification

All field staff must have current basic first aid training. It's the industry standard. All the government's permitting agencies require it. You have to do it. In fact, in today's world, with numerous recreation industry specific first aid courses now widely available, it could be argued that basic first aid training may not meet the prevailing industry standard. Think of it this way: would you want one of your own family members to be attended to by someone with basic first aid, or would you want them to be helped by someone with a higher level of training?

IV. Develop a Written Emergency & Evacuation Plan

You should develop a written emergency/evacuation plan for all areas and activities that you'll be using. The plan does not have to be rigid or precisely adhered to in all situations as that would be unrealistic and impossible. However, it does need to contain general guidelines and information that the field staff will find useful in an emergency situation.

V. Obtain Witness Statements at Accident Sites

One good witness statement will shut down a frivolous lawsuit faster, cheaper, and less painfully than anything else will. You must have some means of tracking the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all participants in your activities. Staff should also be alerted to the critical importance of witnesses and be trained to look for opportunities to obtain names and phone numbers of independent persons such as private boaters who might have seen the accident.

VI. Use a Properly Drafted Liability Release Form

You must use a properly drafted liability release form. The old adage that "they aren't worth the paper they are printed on" may have been true in the eighties, but it is no longer the case. The courts are increasingly supportive of the doctrine of the Express (written) Assumption of Risk. Part of the value of release forms lies in the fact that they may or may not be enforceable. The mere threat that a given release may work in a given situation is sometimes enough to encourage the litigation attorney in a frivolous cause of action (personal injury lawsuit), to advise his/her client to take the excess medical benefit offered by your liability insurance policy and be happy. Do they really want to spend the time and the money to find out if the release will or will not be upheld? Often times the answer is no.

Insurance?

It seems that obtaining general liability insurance should be a cornerstone of any risk management strategy. However, contrary to what most attorneys and all insurance agents will tell you, buying a huge liability insurance policy does not necessarily provide you with more protection. This is a case where less is truly more. The more money you put out there at the end of the rainbow, the more goofballs you're going to have looking for it. Huge liability limits, and I'm talking about a million dollars or more, encourage litigation. The rub comes when you are required to have liability insurance in order to get a government agency permit from the Forest Service or the Park Service and they require huge limits. Purchase the minimum required, do good risk management, be a pro, and you should be ok. The courts look at the facts of any suit and determine if the outfitter met the standard of care and determine if the accident was due to inherent risks.

The judicial system got terribly bogged down in the eighties with frivolous litigation and they started telling the ambulance chasers to take a hike in the nineties. Today, if you adhere to the prevailing professional practices of the river industry and somebody gets hurt due to inherent risks, you are defendable, and should insist on an aggressive defense from your liability insurance provider.

Summary

These risk management tools and strategies are easy to develop and easy to implement. Utilizing them is important for many reasons. The fear of litigation alone is not a good enough reason to do anything.

If a tool does not serve the larger purpose of providing safer, better organized, less problematic programming then it's is not worth doing.

The bottom line must always be to do everything possible to reduce the likelihood of human pain and suffering. Having better warned and informed participants should be a goal of all outfitters.

Safety talks, activity orientations, carefully drafted literature, and liability release forms all speak to this goal. Staff trained in first aid and emergency planning helps the outfitter take care of people when the unfortunate does occur. The secondary benefit of strengthening the outfitter's position when faced with a frivolous lawsuit is just a welcome bonus for doing the right thing!

AMERICAN WHITEWATER COLLECTS LIABILITY LAWS AND RECREATIONAL USE STATUTES ON NEW WEBSITE

By Jason Robertson

Ever run into a landowner that wouldn't let you cross their property because they were afraid of getting sued? Well, every state provides some degree of liability protection for landowners through their recreational use statutes. Now, American Whitewater has compiled all of these laws on our website at www.AmericanWhitewater.org/access/.

We have developed an easy to read table that shares the most important elements of the recreational use statutes at a glance. We have also included links to the state statutes themselves, and even prepared a report describing what recreational use statutes are designed to accomplish, how they work, and what their limits are.

Now, the next time someone says they're thinking about blocking access because they're afraid of getting sued, you can direct them to our website and give them the facts!

PIRU CREEK, CA

By Jason Robertson

Piru Creek (pronounced "pie-roo") has been circling our radar screens this winter. This creek is an increasingly popular run about an hour from Los Angeles. In October, American Whitewater learned that boaters have been harassed by local landowners for boating on the creek and parking on the public right-of-way. We spoke with county officials and expressed our concern that the actions of the landowner on Piru Creek negatively affected the boating community. We indicated that we wanted to ensure these difficulties are avoided in the future and prepared a summary of California State law on navigability and public rights of access as they relate to Piru Creek for the Sheriff's office. Now, it appears that things have settled down and both the landowner and county deputies are aware of the public's right to access and float Piru Creek. We're keeping our fingers crossed that this issue will not come back to haunt us. If you encounter or hear about any difficulties on Piru Creek in the future, please contact American Whitewater.

CRABAPPLE CREEK, TX

By Jason Robertson

Crabapple Creek is one of a handful of great whitewater runs in Texas. During the wet season and after thunderstorms the creek is about 90 feet wide, at other times it is little more than a trickle. As evidenced in the recent presidential elections, Texas has long been a proponent of strong state's rights and landowner rights. In late October, boaters had an encounter with a landowner on the creek when they literally paddled through a barbed wire fence across the river. The Sheriff was called, and though no charges were pressed, the boaters were threatened with trespass violations.

Texas law is interesting because it states that rivers with an average width greater than 30-feet shall be treated as being legally navigable regardless of historic use. Though the width is defined statutorily, the law does not clarify how to measure the width. The common school of thought is that the width is determined by the normal high water mark at the apex of the scour line; this is the national standard for gauging width. However, in Texas another conservative school of thought argues that the width is determined by the low water mark. In a river that's as temperamental and temporal as Crabapple Creek,

the measuring definition becomes very important.

American Whitewater is seeking legal and possibly surveying assistance in the area, if you are aware of an attorney or surveyor that might be interested in volunteering to help us with our research please ask them to call American Whitewater at 866-262-8429.

AMERICAN WHITEWATER SEEKS 48-HOUR ADVANCE NOTICE ON RELEASES ON THE UPPER YOUGH, MD

By Mac Thornton and Jason Robertson

On November 14th, American Whitewater, Canoe Cruisers Association, Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Monocacy Canoe Club, and nine commercial rafting companies, submitted an application for the enforcement of notice provisions of water releases for Deep Creek Station on the Upper Yough.

At issue is whether the dam operators are required by permit to provide "48 hours advance notice of normal releases" as stated under permit. American Whitewater believes that this is one of the most valuable provisions in the permit for the whitewater community, as it makes normal (but unscheduled) releases usable for a broad range of paddlers like those in the Washington-Baltimore area, and results in more tourism in Western Maryland.

Nevertheless, the current owner (and the third in three years), Sithe Maryland Holding, LLC, owned by Reliant Energy, has consistently violated this provision and failed to provide any notice at all for many releases from the facility. Reliant is not entitled to ignore provisions in the permit it simply finds undesirable.

There are three basic reasons why compliance with the notice provision is important at this time.

First, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has concurred with our position regarding the meaning of the 48-hour advance notice provision. Reliant is in error in asserting that the current permit does not require notice of releases for just power generation ("run-for-cost").

Second, it is obvious that unannounced releases are of no recreational use to whitewater boaters, and cannot contribute to the economic prosperity of Western Maryland. The many members of our organizations who would like to boat the Upper Yough (even in the late fall, winter and early spring) have become very frustrated at the lack of communication of release information.

Third, there are several situations when the lack of notice could needlessly expose river users (fishermen and boaters) to danger when a release arrives unexpectedly. In fact, Friendsville's Mayor has recently written a letter to the power company informing them that the unannounced releases are a hazard to the community and that the town insists on announcements of releases (on a recording) when they occur. The concern is that both young and elderly fishermen wading in the river are at risk if the water rises quickly and unexpectedly.

Seeking announced releases may seem like a small issue, but as the dam has passed through three different owners in the past 6 years the operators have steadily reduced their compliance with this provision of their permit. In 1994, then owner Pennelec, provided advance notification for all except emergency releases on a telephone taping system. The fact that a release would occur on a particular weekday was announced one week in advance, and the exact times of these releases were given by 8:00 AM on the day of the release.

Between 1994 and 1997, American Whitewater and Pennelec reached informal accommodations regarding notice of releases and additional Saturday releases. Each summer, Pennelec would schedule some releases on Saturdays in addition to the permit requirements. In exchange, we acquiesced in not requiring Pennelec to give 48-hour advance notice for "run-for-cost" releases when it would be inconvenient to the company. This informal understanding worked well for three years, although we remained concerned that this understanding was not reflected in the actual language of the permit.

Our concerns proved well founded when in 1998, Pennelec became interested in selling the project and halted the extra Saturday releases, yet expected us to acquiesce in their failure to abide by the 48-hour advance notice provision.

Over the last two years, there have been several weeks when an announcement would be posted on the telephone tape early each day stating there were "no scheduled releases but releases are possible depending on system conditions," only to have a release arrive in Friendsville later in the afternoon. The frequent daily updating of the tape with this meaningless message, yet not updating the tape when a release actually occurs, is simply unreasonable.

The conclusion is that Reliant cannot pick and choose which permit conditions it will honor and which conditions it will not honor. The permit needs to be enforced and complied with as written, or it needs to be changed. Therefore American Whitewater has asked for an immediate improvement in Reliant's near-total noncompliance with this provision. At the very least, the company should announce all releases as soon as it is determined they will occur.

A C C C S S

PLANNING RESUMES ON CHATTOOGA, SC/GA

By Jason Robertson

River management planning on the Chattooga River was temporarily delayed in 2000 when Forest Service resources were shifted to fight the forest fires in the west. Under the revised schedule, planners began scoping and seeking public comments in December 2000 and expect to complete the process by May 2001 for implementation in June.

As described in the Nov/Dec 1999 issue of *American Whitewater*, we have identified four priority areas that should be addressed in the plan:

First, access should remain flexible and the Forest Service should manage use without implementing restrictive permit systems.

Second, the Forest Service should allow limited access to the classic whitewater in the headwaters of the Chattooga on Sections 00, 0, and 1 during periods of high water, as well as between December 1st and May 15th.

Third, the Forest Service should work with neighboring counties to improve water quality on the tributaries of this Wild and Scenic River; particular emphasis should be placed on cleaning Stekoa Creek and controlling streamside development on the West Branch.

Fourth, the agency should develop clear swiftwater rescue and recovery protocols for emergency workers and visitors.

SETTLEMENT FLOATED IN GRAND CANYON LAWSUIT, AZ

By Jason Robertson

On July 6th, American Whitewater joined with the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association (GCPBA) and other parties to sue the National Park Service in the Grand Canyon for their failure to: manage the river corridor for wilderness, complete a river management plan, equitably manage allocation, and reduce the private boater waiting list (now a quarter century long!). Earlier in the year, attorney John Wells filed another suit in federal court, which only addressed the issue of the waiting list. The judge in the earlier case has encouraged the parties of both suits to attend settlement hearings, which are scheduled for early 2001. More information is available on our website at www.AmericanWhitewater.org/access1 and through the GCPBA at www.slcvba.org.

RECREATION GROUPS DISCUSS FUTURE RECREATION FEES

By Jason Robertson

On December 12th, American Whitewater helped arrange a special summit in Washington, DC to discuss the future of the Congressional Recreation Fee Demonstration program (commonly known as Fee Demo). Representatives from nearly a dozen national conservation-oriented recreation groups including the Access Fund, American Hiking Society, American Canoe Association, and Outdoor Retailer Coalition of America participated in the one-day session. The Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Congressman Ralph Regula (R-OH) also sent representatives to discuss the issues. The objective of the meeting was to develop a consensus position among the human-powered recreation community regarding positions on the controversial Fee Demo program. Complete details of the summit are available on our website at www.AmericanWhitewater.org/access/.

AMERICAN WHITEWATER HELPS USGS RECEIVE \$9.9 MILLION INCREASE FOR STREAMGAGING!

By Jason Robertson

On November 8, the Director of the USGS, Charles Groat, announced a \$9.9 million increase for their streamgaging operations in FY 2001. Director Groat sent a letter to American Whitewater saying, "**The increase in the USGS budget comes as a result of hard work by many players including key constituents like you.**"

American Whitewater and several other conservation-oriented recreation groups including the American Canoe Association, American Hiking Society, ORCA, and Access Fund strove to increase the USGS

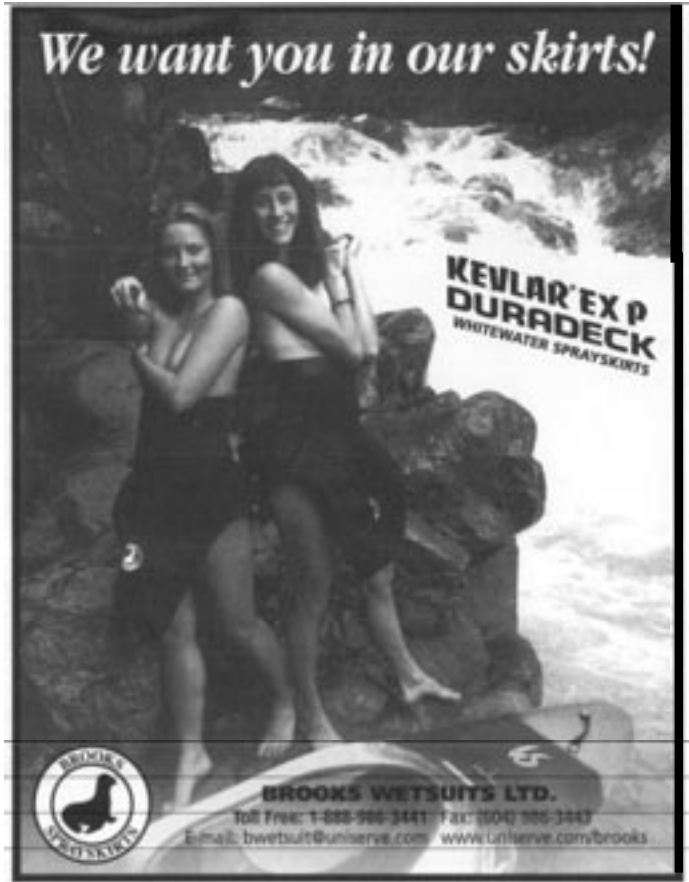
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AMERICAN WHITEWATER HELPS USGS RECEIVE \$9.9 MILLION INCREASE FOR STREAMGAGING!

streamgaging budget by at least \$5 million in FY 2001. Our Streamkeepers have also helped by targeting priority gauges for recreation while raising awareness of the funding shortfalls for the USGS. Imagine our excitement when we discovered that Congress awarded an additional \$4.9 million for streamgaging above our request!

Increases include \$3.1 million for reporting real-time data, \$5 million for Title VII streamgaging activities, and \$1.8 million for repairing or replacing stream monitoring equipment damaged by natural disasters! Priority spending areas in 2001 are expected to include Oklahoma, Texas, Southeast, and Pacific Northwest where dozens of gauges have been shut down over the last 10 years due to lack of funding.

This \$9.9 Million increase puts American Whitewater on track to increase funding for the USGS Streamgaging Network in FY 2002 by an additional \$40 Million beyond FY 1999 levels.



Trouble on the Waters

If you had trouble getting to the river, let us know. Use this form to report access problems so that AW can convince legislators and government authorities where and when river access is a problem. If you have met an irate landowner, noticed signs forbidding access, or were stopped by a landowner, barbed wire fence or a locked gate, tell us about it on this form. If several boaters are arrested or involved, only 1 form should be filled out per incident naming a boater available for future contact.

River: _____ State: _____

Date of incident: _____

Access code categories: List below or circle the categories, multiple categories are ok.

Brief description of incident:

Boater contact

Address: _____
City etc.: _____
Phone: _____
e-mail: _____

Landowner/Agency/Sheriff contact (if known)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City etc.: _____
Phone: _____
e-mail: _____

1. Trespass. Ticket, warning or arrest for:
 - 1.1.0 Trespass on private property
 - 1.2.0 Trespass on public property
 - 1.3.0 Criminal trespass arrest
 - 1.4.0 Civil trespass lawsuit

2. Public Access Closure
 - 2.1.0 Denied by federal law
 - 2.1.1 Denied by BLM
 - 2.1.2 Denied by Forest Service
 - 2.1.3 Denied by Nat'l Park Service
 - 2.2.0 Denied by state
 - 2.3.0 Denied by local authority

3. Injury from man-made obstacles
 - 3.1.0 Barbed wire or fence
 - 3.2.0 Low head dam

4. Obstacles running river, scouting or portaging
 - 4.1.0 Fence or chain on land blocking access
 - 4.2.0 Fence, wire, or tree on river blocking access
 - 4.3.0 Warning of no trespassing or posted sign
 - 4.4.0 Vehicle towed, ticketed, or vandalized
 - 4.5.0 Threats or acts of violence

5. Closures: Rivers closed that were once open
 - 5.1.0 Closed by private landowner
 - 5.2.0 Closed by government agency
 - 5.2.1 Federal
 - 5.2.2 State
 - 5.2.3 Local
 - 5.3.0 High water closure

6. New access fees
 - 6.1.0 Charged by private landowner
 - 6.2.0 Charged by government agency
 - 6.2.1 Federal
 - 6.2.2 State
 - 6.2.3 Local

7. Dam controlled rivers
 - 7.1.0 Water turned off
 - 7.2.0 Inconsistent flow: too much or too little
 - 7.3.0 No notice of releases

8. Lawsuits and legislation
 - 8.1.1 New legislation to block river access.
 - 8.1.2 Lawsuits to block access.
 - 8.2.1 New legislation to enable river access.
 - 8.2.2 Lawsuits to enable access.

Send to Ken Ransford, 475 Sierra Vista, Carbondale, CO 81623, 970-963-6800, FAX 970-963-6700.

ransford@csn.net

Access is a constant struggle. The AW Access Committee needs your help.

2001 Stoney Creek Rendevous

April 21-22, 2000
Hollsopple, PA

**AMERICAN
WHITewater**

Up to date info at:
www.benscreekcanoeclub.com

We need your participation and support to demonstrate the importance of recreational conservation dam releases into the Stoney Creek River. The Quakertown Reservoir is now under public ownership. It is crucial that our voices be heard. **BE THERE**

Rain, snow or sleet there will be attending for everyone. Stoney Creek and its tributaries have a variety of challenges from the Regions to the Expert. Water conditions, the following rivers can be your playground: Stoney Creek Canyon III-IV, Stoney Creek Gorge III, Pauls Creek V, Maple Creek III, Dark Shade Creek IV, Clear Shade Creek III, Rowing Fork Creek IV-V, Quakertown Creek II-III, Trout Run IV, Bearcreek II.

For more information:
Benevise Canoe & Kayak Club at 610-266-9595 Email: spc2001@comcast.net
American Whitewater Events 828-645-5744 email: info@aww.org

- | | |
|--|--|
| Thanks to everyone who participated last year to make the 2000 Stoney Creek Rendevous a key event in celebrating the experience of recreational/conservation dam releases into the Stoney Creek River. Due mainly to public support, the Stoney Creek River Watershed is included in the PA Department of Conservation and natural Resources "River of the Year 2000". This special celebration will have another big next year. Let's make a bigger splash this year! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live Entertainment • Dinner • Party • Silent Auction • Green Vendor • Demos • Environmental Exhibits • Slit Water Canoe Race • Class I-V Slides • Limited Ball Trip |
|--|--|



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NEW - www.nowr.org

The NOWR website has undergone a face lift. Many thanks to Keith "Zog" Aitken, who undertook this project as part of his duties as the Events Coordinator in the American Whitewater Events Office. The new site contains the 2001 calendar with links to information on each event in addition to important information for competitors and event organizers. New for 2001 is the NOWR Competition Guide, a complete guide to the rules and regulations for the sport including changes to the judging and scoring for 2001. You can check out the guide on the new website.

PRO COMPETITORS

Take note that Pro competitors must renew their pro status with NOWR on an annual basis. You will need to renew for the year 2001 prior to entry into 2001 team trials. Renewal forms can be found at www.nowr.org or contact the American Whitewater Events Office at amwwevents@aol.com 1 828-645-5299.

Also note that in 2001, pros must meet the following qualification to maintain NOWR Pro status into 2002: a paddler must have a minimum of one (1) top 1/3 (33% - rounded up) finish at an NOWR event during the past season. This process begins in the 2001 competition season, i.e., during 2001, NOWR registered Pro's must have one (1) top 1/3 (33% - rounded up) finish to maintain NOWR pro status into the 2002 season.

NOWR Judge Certification Program

At the NPFF in February, NOWR will run its first ever training program to certify NOWR judges. To find out more, go to www.nowr.org or call 828-645-5299.

SURFIN'

The NOWR season concluded in the California surf at the Get Yer Boat Salty Surf Contest. The rivers may have been low but the surf was still up at the beach!

Men's Expert

1. Rusty Sage
2. John Grossman
3. Jake Spies

Women's Expert

1. Jamie Cooper
2. Juliet Wiscombe
3. Gina Troiani

Men's Intermediate

1. Ben Wartburg
2. Brian Allen
3. Jason Drevenak

Women's Novice1 Intermediate

1. Suzanne Berg
2. Alison Smith
3. Emily Coven

Men's Masters/Seniors

1. Kim Sprague
2. Jim Crenshaw
3. Monk Kareken

Men's Novice

1. Van James
2. Wayne Waddington
3. Garrett Smith

Juniors

1. Will Underwood
2. Justin Pressfield



Brian Homberg charging downstream in the 2000 Upper Yough Race.



Jesse Whitternore at Triple drop on the Upper Yough 2000.



Friendsville native Scott Stough in his Upper Yough Race Secret Weapon.



Upper Yough Racer. All of the above photos taken by Bill Young.

Who Wants To Be A StreamKeeper?

By Matt Muir

Have you had a chance to check out the new American Whitewater site yet?

It's at www.americanwhitewater.org. Thanks to the great efforts of volunteer AW Board Member Barry Grimes, programmer Scott Collins, and a host of volunteers, your new home on the WhiteWater Web is better than ever!

Take a moment, if you will, and check out the River Database. Click on "Rivers," and on "Washington." You'll see a list of over a hundred great ww runs in WA; scroll through the list, and you'll see the latest gage reading for many of the rivers. Click on the Elwha (<http://rapids.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2112/>), and, courtesy of Washington SK Tom O'Keefe, you'll see lots of information on one of the country's premier rivers! This includes descriptions of the river's normal runnable periods, shuttle directions, and links. Lots of links. Links to up-to-date USGS gage readings. Links to TopoZone topographic maps. Links to Tiger Mapsurfer maps. Links to local weather and forecasts. Links to the latest info re. the proposed destruction of the Elwha Dam. Links links links!

That's just one example. Thanks to the efforts of over a hundred dedicated "StreamKeeper" volunteers, there are river sites all over the country where AW members and the general public can find out the "beta" on runs that they're considering. But we need more help. With a database of over 3,000 rivers (and the list is growing!), we need many more volunteers who have local knowledge.

Do you have a local stream that you'd like everyone in the country to know about? Do you run a bunch of rivers, and would you be willing to spend a little time sharing your knowledge? Then please volunteer to be a StreamKeeper! It's easy: just register with the AW site (it's free, of course, and your personal info won't be "shared" without your consent) and e-mail me at RivieraRatt@aol.com. Let me know your AW Username and the states that you'd like to work with...and you're all set to play the game!

What are the qualifications to be a StreamKeeper?

Well, they're similar to the qualifications that many clubs ask of trip organizers. You don't need to be the best/baddest paddler or the river. To be of value to the program, one must: I have some firsthand famil-

arity with the river section that s/he chooses, 2) have some understanding of computers and the Internet, and 3) be an American Whitewater member (of course). That's about it!

How much time does it take?

As much time as you want to devote. After a short learning curve, it only takes half an hour to enter a lot of data on one or two streams. After loading the initial data into the system, you might want to go back occasionally to add pictures, links to new or newly found websites, warnings about changes in rapids or shuttle, more detailed descriptions of rapids, etc. You can go wild, or not—it's your choice!

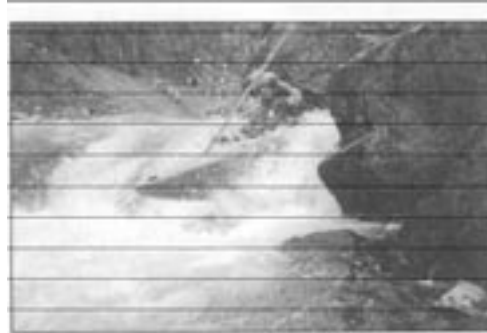
The StreamKeeper Project is not simply a database of rivers for you and your paddling buds to determine where you're heading for the weekend. The less obvious benefits of the StreamKeeper Project include:

▼ **Staking a Claim.** The identification and "information maintenance" of whitewater reaches by the volunteers of the StreamKeeper Project will allow boaters to help whitewater sport "stake a claim" on any streams that may become endangered in the future. A developer who wants to dam a remote stream may change his mind after visiting an SK river page showing active, up-to-date use by wwboaters. In the coming years, as pressures increase to develop more remote areas of the country, the SK Project could help offer a strong deterrent when dam builders and lake-side resort developers research "existing use." The recent dam and development threat on the tributary of Daddy's Creek, TN is one example.

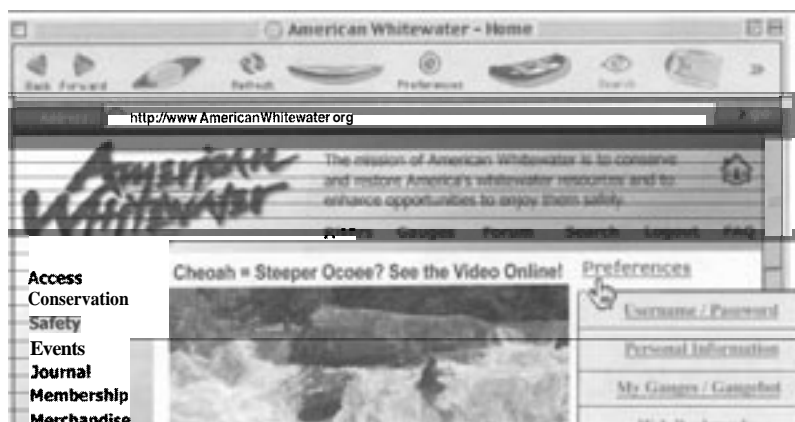
▼ **Demonstrated Use.** The SK river web pages can become a focal point to show active and current use of isolated whitewater streams. Wwboaters will become stronger and more able to leverage governmental agencies to take into consideration ww recreation interests on policies and issues affecting rivers.

▼ **Public Relations.** The SK Project river pages can create an online "point of contact" for the non-paddling public who might be concerned about particular streams or who may have information on developments that will affect those reaches.

▼ **Concrete Results.** The SK Project has already yielded direct benefits for wwpaddlers: the recent increased funding for the USGS. Because of the valiant SK input and identification of over 3,000 rivers in the spring of 2000, we helped the USGS increase its constituency and scope to better convince Con-



"Riviera Ratt" Matt Muir



gress of its need. Wwboaters, and the rivers they paddle, will now certainly be included in the USGS equation that determines which streams get new or upgraded gauges. In addition, through the identification of ww reaches employing EPA "RF-1" ID numbers, we have essentially imbedded and tagged within the massive government dataset a specific use for rivers which had been completely unknown to the bureaucracy of the U.S. government—and therefore invisible.

What is left to do?

Lots. While we're off to a great start, this project is really in its infancy. Literally hundreds of streams, from obscure, rarely paddled reaches to nationally prominent rivers like the Ocoee (TN), the Kennebec and the West Branch Penobscot (ME), the Tuolumne and Yuba (CA), the Gunnison and Animas (CO), and the North Fork Payette (ID), are currently (at this writing) without a StreamKeeper. *Now is the time for all good paddlers to come to the aid of their sport!* If a stream is already "spoken for" by a SK, but you wish to add your two cents' worth, that's easy: click on "add a comment," and share what you know.

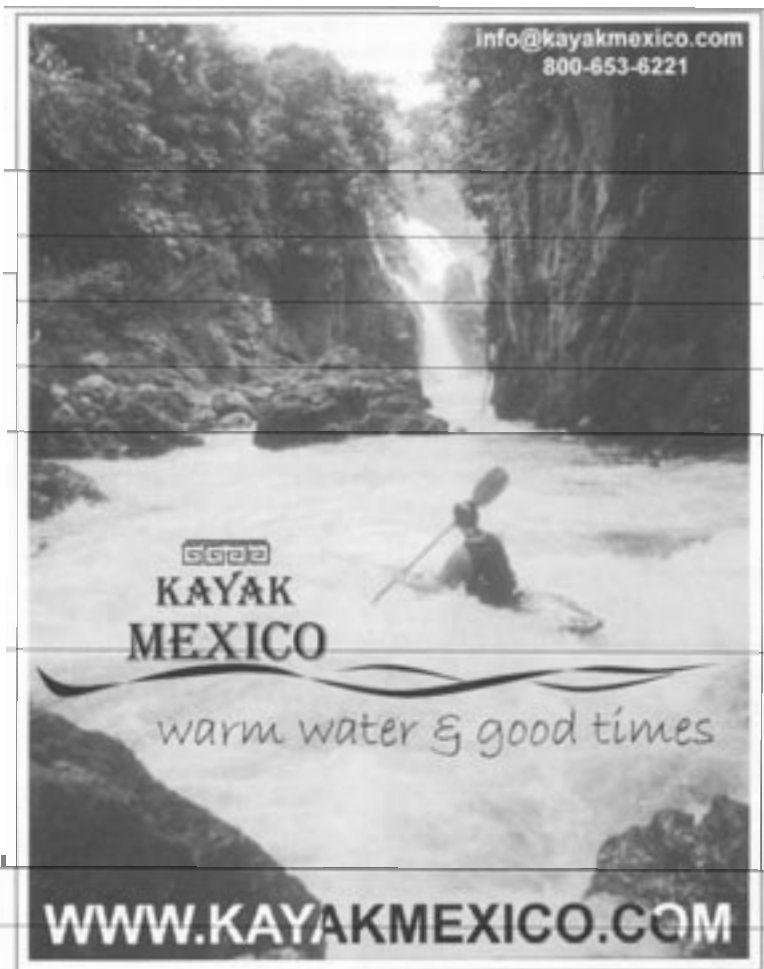
So, this is a call to arms to paddlers everywhere to share what they know. Remember: more information = more flow. If you can't paddle a river due to low flow, season, or being stuck in a cubicle all day, at least you can help protect it by becoming an SK and spending a few minutes online for your favorite stream. In these politically divided times, the SK Project can be an easy, fun and excellent way to help boaters instantly connect to the streams they paddle. The simple process of sharing river information can simultaneously create a powerful national network to keep and increase whitewater availability for us all. With your help, the best river database on the web will become more comprehensive, more useful, more fun...for all paddlers!

My reason for becoming a StreamKeeper is simple—I enjoy sharing information about the rivers that I paddle. I follow several newsgroups and fora (forums?) and I try to answer other boaters questions about any rivers that I have paddled.

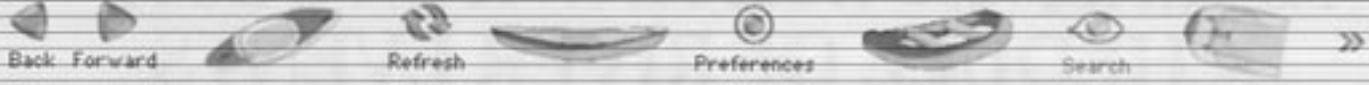
I volunteered early on to become a StreamKeeper even though I wasn't sure at the time what was going to happen to the data that I was busy gathering and entering. Then I saw the new American Whitewater web site at Gauley Fest and it all became clear. Here is one source for almost everything that you want to know about a river. It even has the current level, the local weather, and links to topo maps of the area. The amount of data available is only limited by the efforts of the StreamKeepers.

As a StreamKeeper, I decide which rivers I want to "adopt." Then I gather, enter and verify the data for each of these rivers. It took me about an hour to do the first river. Since then there have been several improvements to the process and tools. It now takes about 1/2 hour per river/section to input the data. Of course, that depends on how much detail you want to provide.

The only problem is that there still are many rivers for which there is little or no data. It's not a lot of work but it sure would help if each paddler became a StreamKeeper and "adopted" just a handful of their favorite rivers.



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Rivers in WV

Level Legend: Below Minimum Recommended Flow Above Maximum Recommended Flow

State	River Name	Section	Class	Level	Units	Updated
WV	Cheat	<u>Abright to Jenkinsburg Bridge</u>	III-IV			05/31 8:00am
WV	Gauley River	<u>Summersville Dam to Mason Branch</u>	IV-V	2500	cfs	05/31 5:00am
WV	Gauley River	<u>Bucklick Branch to Swiss</u>	III-IV(V)	4890	cfs	05/31 5:00am
WV	Gauley River	<u>Mason Branch to Bucklick Branch</u>	III+(IV)	4721	cfs	05/31 5:00am
WV	New	<u>Thurmond to Fayette Station</u>	III-V	5.72	ft	05/31 7:00am



StreamKeeper 3000 river database



Report on Dimple Rock Rapid, Lower Yough, PA
 American Whitewater board member and safety expert Charlie Walbridge reports on safety meetings with park officials at Ohiopyle Falls State Park to address safety issues at Dimple Rock Rapid on the Lower Yough.

[Read More](#)

Posted: May 29, 2001

Weather For Summersville
 Partly Cloudy
 Time: 10:00
 Temp: 84
 RealFeel Temp: 87 F
 Humidity: 70%
 Winds: Calm

[Click for 5-day forecast!](#)

AMERICAN WHITEWATER'S 2001 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS

Celebrating whitewater rivers across the country

AMERICAN WHITEWATER FESTIVALS

National Paddling Film Festival	February 23-24	Lexington, KY	Zina Merkin	806-258-2508	zmerkin@ky.com
Tallulah Festival	April 7	Tallulah, GA	Mary Beth Bundrick	706-754-4318	info@tallulahfallsgeorgia.com
Tennessee Paddle 2K	April 6-8	Wartburg, TN	Dale Robinson	865-909-2622	dalerQtennesseoaddle.com
Stoney Creek Rendezvous	April 21-22	Johnstown, PA	Steve Podratsky	814-266-9595	spodratsky@aol.com
French Broad River Festival	May 11-13	Asheville, NC	Chris Donochod	828-236-1209	www.frenchbroadriverfest.com
Salmon River Whitewater Festival	July 7-8	Pulaski, NY	Dan Murn	315-298-6475	dmurnQoacs.cnyric.org
Black River Festival	July ?	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll11234@aol.com
Deerfield Festival	August 4	Charlemont, MA	Mike Coleman		colemanm@beaconarch.com
"Don't Call This a Festival River Rendezvous"	September 1-2	Belfort, NY/Beaver River	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Gauley Festival	September 22	Summersville, WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355	whiteh2o@catskill.net
Russell Fork Rendezvous	October 1-8	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011	surfinQkvmtnnet.org
Moose River Festival	October 13 ?	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com

American Whitewater Cascade Series

A series of premier level races from mild(er) to wilder held across the country.

Tennessee Paddle -Race for the Obed	April 7	wartburg TN	David Benton	865-220-0956	dbenton@icx.net
Canyon Creek Extreme Race	May 9	Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	acks@tefeport.com
French Broad River Race	May 12	Asheville, NC	Chris Donochod	828-236-1209	
Great Falls Race	June 2	Great Falls, VA			www.potomacfest.com
Colorado Creekin' Festival	June 23-24	Durango, CO	Dunbar Hardy	970-385-2647	dunbarhardyQhotmail.com
Black River Race	July ?	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Gore Canyon Race	August 10-12	Kremmling, CO	Paul Tefft	970-923-3955	paultefft@enviro-actionsports.com
Animal Upper Gauley Race	September 24	Summersville, WV	Donnie Hudspeth	304-658-5016	dhudQgeoweb.net
Ohiopyle Falls Race	Sept/Oct ?	Ohiopyle, PA	American Whitewater	301-589-9453	www.americanwhitewater.org
Russell Fork Race	October 6	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011	surfinQkvmtnnet.org
Moose River Race	October 13 ?	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com

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GORGE GAMES

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(Ocoee Whitewater Games (\$5,000))	May 18-20	Ducktown, TN	American Whitewater Events	828-645-5299	amwweventsQaol.com
(Potomac Whitewater Festival (\$5,000))	June 1-3	Great Falls, VA	Greg Morrison	301-263-9572	www.potomacfest.com
(Animas River Days (\$5,000))	June 8-10	Durango, CO	Four Corners Riversports	970-259-3893	infoQriversports.com
(Subaru Gorge Games (\$10,000))	July 14-22	Hood River, OR	Subaru Gorge Games	541-386-7774	www.gorgegames.com

RiversLiv 2001 NOWR Series- Presented by American Whitewater

Gilman Falls Rodeo	April 14	Old Town, ME	Peter Lataille	207-862-2922	creekpete@aol.com
(Styrofoam Cup Intercollegiate Reg. Champ)	April 14-15	Bryson City, NC	Will Leverette	828-771-3770	stvrofoamcuQhotmail.com
Kern River Festival/Teva Cup	April 20-22	Kernville, CA	Terry Valle	818-340-3083	tvalleQix.netcom.com
Trinity River Freestyle Rodeo	April 28-29	Big Flat, CA	David Steinhauser	530-623-6293	splash@trinityriverrafting.com
New River Rodeo	April 28-29	McCoy, VA			

Teva Oreaon Cup / May 5-12

Maupin Daze	May 5-6	Maupin, CR	Dave Slover	541-395-2207	allstar@telesport.com
Boater and Rafter Xcross	May 7-8	Band, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201	allstar@telesport.com
Canyon Creek Kayak & Raft Extreme Race	May 9	Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	acks@teleport.com
Bob's Hole Rodeo & Raft Slalom	May 11-12	Estacada, CR	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	knewton@bellsouth.net
Coosa River Whitewater Festival	May 11-13	Wetumpka, AL	Lonnie Garden	334-272-0952	jacksonholekayak@wyoming.com
Wyoming Whitewater Championship	May 26-27	Jackson Hole, WY	Aaron Pruzan	307-733-2471	bigforkwhitewater@hotmail.com
Bigfork Whitewater Festival	June 1-3	Bigfork, MT	Mike Dezanni	406-892-2674	www.boisecountythrowdown.org
Boise County Throwdown	June 8-10	Boise, ID	Sam Goff	208-368-9837	zusanQamigo.net
Headwaters Championship / RBARK	June 14-17	Salida, CO	Susan Dempsey	719-539-4686	taylorbeavers@hotmail.com
Colorado Creekkin' Festival (waterfall rodeo)	June 23-24	Durango, CO	Taylor Beavers	970-385-5750	julesQu.washington.edu
Skyfest	July 7-8	Index, WA	Julie Albright	206-362-3246	fishinsp@hotmail.com
Black River Rodeo	July 7	Watertown, NY	Nancy Weal	315-788-2538	designQdwave.net
Wausau Freestyle Kayak Championship	August 25-26	Wausau, WI	Julie Walraven	715-845-5664	paul@equinoxadventures.com
Ottawa River Rodeo	September 1-2	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223	www.bcski.com
Canyon Doors Rodeo	September 25-26	Fayetteville, WV	Backcountry Ski & Sports	304-574-4005	ggharmon@bcgas.com
Kootenay Rodeo	?	Castlegar, BC	Gerry Harmon	250-359-6998	CalKayak@aol.com
Get Yer Boat Salty Surf Contest	October 20-21	Oakland, CA	Elaine Baden	510-893-7833	

(open fo college students and juniors only

OTHER EVENTS

Futaleufu River Appreciation Festival	March 2-3	Futaleufu, Chile	Jodie Deignan		infoOfutafriends.org
US Freestyle Team Trials/IR Triple Crown	March 31-April 7	NC and TN	Penstock Productions LLC	828-268-0676	www.penstockproductions.com
Cheat River Festival and Race	May 4-6	Albright, WV	Kerry Manier	304-329-3621	foc@cheat.org
World Freestyle Championships	June 25 - July 1	Sorte, Spain	Lluis Rabaneda		www.rocrol.com/wvcfreestyle



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"Don't let a paddlesnake get you."
 How many times have I heard this warning just before setting out into a vicious rapid? It is a common admonition among paddlers in the Southeast. For the uninitiated, a few words of explanation are in order.

Those days are behind me now. I not only am a believer of the paddlesnake theory: I hereby submit a further theory based on my own personal experience. To this point, most people consider the paddlesnake to be an elusive reptile, about 3 to 6 feet long; basically a big snake with a bad attitude. I submit to you that paddlesnakes are not snakes at all, but rather the immature larvae of a much larger beast. Something along the lines of a walrus or a manatee; a lost branch of the evolutionary tree.

drop I made certain that my eyes were open and my mouth was closed in case there was someone with a camera around. Trying to look as nonchalant as possible, I took that last stroke and became airborne. When I hit the water, I dug in with a powerful and skillful stroke that would pull me through the backwash, thinking that as soon as I could beach my boat I would consider helping Ed out of that awful hole.

Well things didn't go quite as planned. My skillfully placed powerful stroke was just starting to unwind when a huge tentacle or arm or some beastly appendage reached up from the depths and grabbed

Beyond the Paddlesnake

(a tale of terror on the river) by John Schroader



According to legend, the paddlesnake is a beast that lurks at the bottom of the river and grabs the paddles of unwary boaters, subsequently capsizing them. Many boaters in the south blame their swims on paddlesnakes. Personally I have been somewhat of a paddlesnake agnostic; I neither believed in them or rebuked those who did. I just didn't know. While several of my paddling friends have gone on record as being firm believers in paddlesnakes (see 'Deliverance From the Paddlesnake'), I have maintained my skepticism.

Here's how I came to realize this: Recently some buddies and I were paddling a beautiful West Virginia river, a pristine stream that starts high in the Monongahela National Forest. It was the sort of place that one would expect to encounter wood nymphs or leprechauns, certainly not beasts from the deep. As I watched my buddy Ed prepare to run a pour-over ledge, I could not help but note his inexplicable line. It was a typical Ed line. Anyone else would have taken a severe thrashing from such a bad run but, knowing the basic laws of physics, I could predict that sheer inertia would carry industrial-size Ed through the churning hydraulic. So I paddled up behind him and picked my line. Just as I reached the point of no return, I was startled to discover Ed in the hole doing rodeo moves that could only be purely accidental. And it looked like he was in for a long hard fall. I could not help but wonder why Ed had not blown through the hole like he always did, but at the moment I had more pressing matters to consider. As I launched over the edge of the

my paddle shaft and pulled me over into the froth. You can scarcely imagine my terror as I realized that what must have gotten Ed and now had hold of me was some huge beast from the depths of this hydraulic: the mother of all paddlesnakes. As I recirculated in this hole and tried to set up for a roll, this monster kept grabbing at me until I was forced to abandon my boat. It was huge and seemed to have many arms that kept grabbing at my arms, paddle, and helmet. I didn't know what it had done to Ed but I feared he was in big trouble too. And then a strange sense of peace and understanding came over me. My sixth sense—the river smarts for which I am so well known and respected—were at work. I came to realize that this huge beast was not really trying to harm me, but rather was interested in learning more about these





strange creatures who float down the river in little boats. It wanted to understand. It wanted to touch a real kayaker.

I realized then that Ed was *safe*—he would be untouched. Feeling the need for air, I swam to the bottom of the hydraulic and broke the recirculation (a move that I have been practicing quite a bit lately). Upon reaching the bank, I crawled up onto a rock to catch my breath. I had lost my contact lenses in this melee, so I couldn't see very well. I did however see this primitive beast — it must have weighed 350 pounds—lumber up into the shallow water and grab Ed's boat, *It wanted to try paddling a kayak!* Although I couldn't see very well, I could tell by the motion that it was an extremely clumsy creature and would never master the sport of kayaking. But off it went, blundering down the river. As soon as possible I got my spare contacts in and found my boat and paddle and dashed off to tell the rest of the guys what had happened. When I reached the crew, Ed was back in his boat (I guess the beast must have abandoned it) and was muttering under his breath. The guys just didn't seem to comprehend what had happened. We had *seen* a evolutionary legend—we had seen a mature paddlesnake.

I never would have witnessed such an incredible sight had it not been for my buddy Ed. I want you to know, Ed, that I will never forget this milestone day and will somehow find a way to reward you for allowing this to happen.



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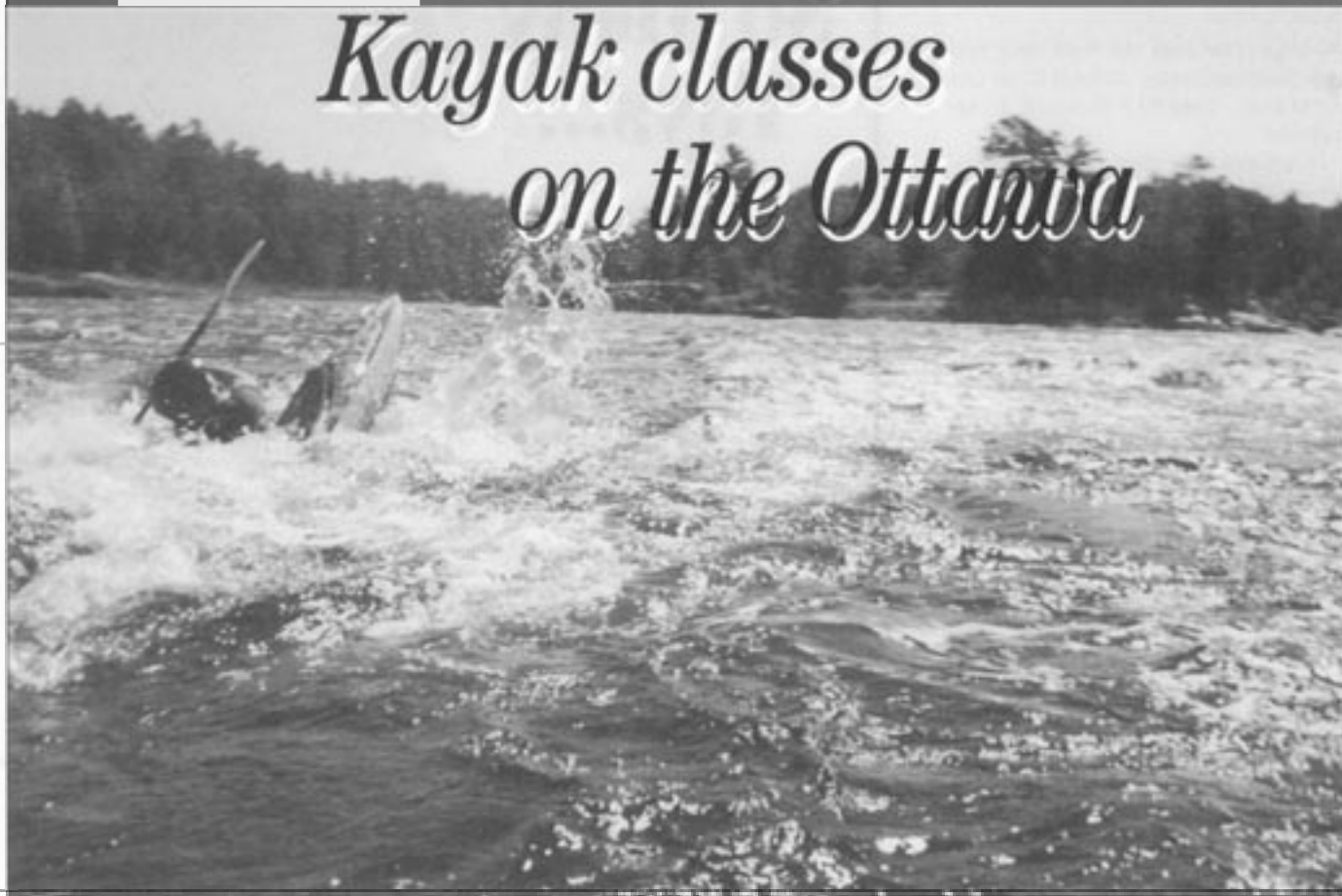
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Rapid Learning: *Kayak classes* *on the Ottawa*



By Joe Napora



Sitting in the eddy above Coliseum, I'm not thinking about water. Instead, I picture the 60-foot dead ash tree that I must cut this summer to keep it from falling on my garage. I hear a piercing cracking sound and look up to see the tree begin its slow descent. My 1984 Olds, its trailer loaded with 3 kayaks, lies directly in the path of its fall.

This feeling of inevitability, the impossibility of stopping that tree once the forces have been set into motion, must be why I think about the falling ash now. But instead of sitting in my house staring at a tree, I am in a kayak above Coliseum, the last big rapid on the Ottawa. And before I know it, I've taken those fateful strokes and left the eddy. It's too late to walk around, too late to paddle back into the eddy. These aren't real options anyhow; running these rapids is why I signed up for the class with my three sons.

Before this trip I had researched many kayaking schools. Most were a lot closer than the 15-hour drive from Kentucky. All were more expensive. A 5 day class for the four of us cost over \$2,400 Canadian, but with the favorable exchange rate and the family discount, it cost me about \$1200 US for instruction, camping, and meals.

The rapid again. Coliseum reminds me of Lower Keeney on the New River. It's long, hole filled, and to make a successful run through it you need to punch through a big reactionary wave at the top. Getting punched instead makes for a long, long swim.

We didn't start with Coliseum, though. Our first rapid, Black's, was actually the last one on the river. From the kayaking school it's an easy paddle upstream to this Class II-III rapid. With its glassy wave it was ideal for learning the basics of surfing and advanced play. That afternoon, and the next two days to follow we spent our time at various play spots. Finally, it was two days of running all of the rapids, all Class III and IV. The high points of the last two days included: crashing through Sattler's and avoiding Phil's hole at McCoy's, The Lorne, the crazy water below Butcher's Knife where we could watch each other sink out of sight in the whirlpools, the huge waves at Norman's, and, of course, Coliseum.

High points? Maybe points for getting high. The highest point of my week was getting airborne at Lorne, the second rapid a couple hundred yards or so from McCoy's. I hit the first wave dead on, and it lifted me completely out of the water. If I had a message painted on the bottom of my H2 Zone (and what would it be? help!?), it could have been easily read from shore. And the other high points: my oldest son, Jason (aged 31), hitting the same wave and almost getting airborne in his Overflow; my youngest, Yusef (17), squirting at Pushbutton, a celebrated ender spot at the end of The Lorne; Ere (19) surfing every wave and squirting every eddy line he could find and lining up at Baby Face and Blacks with the big dogs, not doing their tricks but trying them and always rolling up every time he flipped.

The kayaking school was phenomenal. The instructor showed us more than we could learn in one week, leaving us with a long list of techniques to work on, giving us all a new respect and understanding of waves, holes, and eddy lines. He was encouraging, complimentary, and competent. What I liked most about the instruction was that he didn't make it seem like school. There was no ratings, grading, no comparing, no rigid formula that we had to abide by. The facility was exceptional. The campground offered enough options to satisfy anyone: rowdy Canadian rafters, hardboaters or even non-



boaters. The food was good enough: plentiful and filling, just what was needed after being on the river from nine to five.

As I sit and write this account, I think of next year. We know that now we could run the river on our own, at least at the medium level that the river was running last year. But I think that I, at least, may go back for another five-day class. I have lots more to

learn. I can see myself making the ferry from the eddy below Sattler's to the eddy below Corner Wave, getting airborne again at The Lorne and back surfing at Pushbutton. And the next time I sit at the eddy above Coliseum, it won't be the inevitability of a falling tree that I think of; instead I'll be visualizing making the eddy on river right and, inevitably, catching the tongue through the bottom of the rapid.

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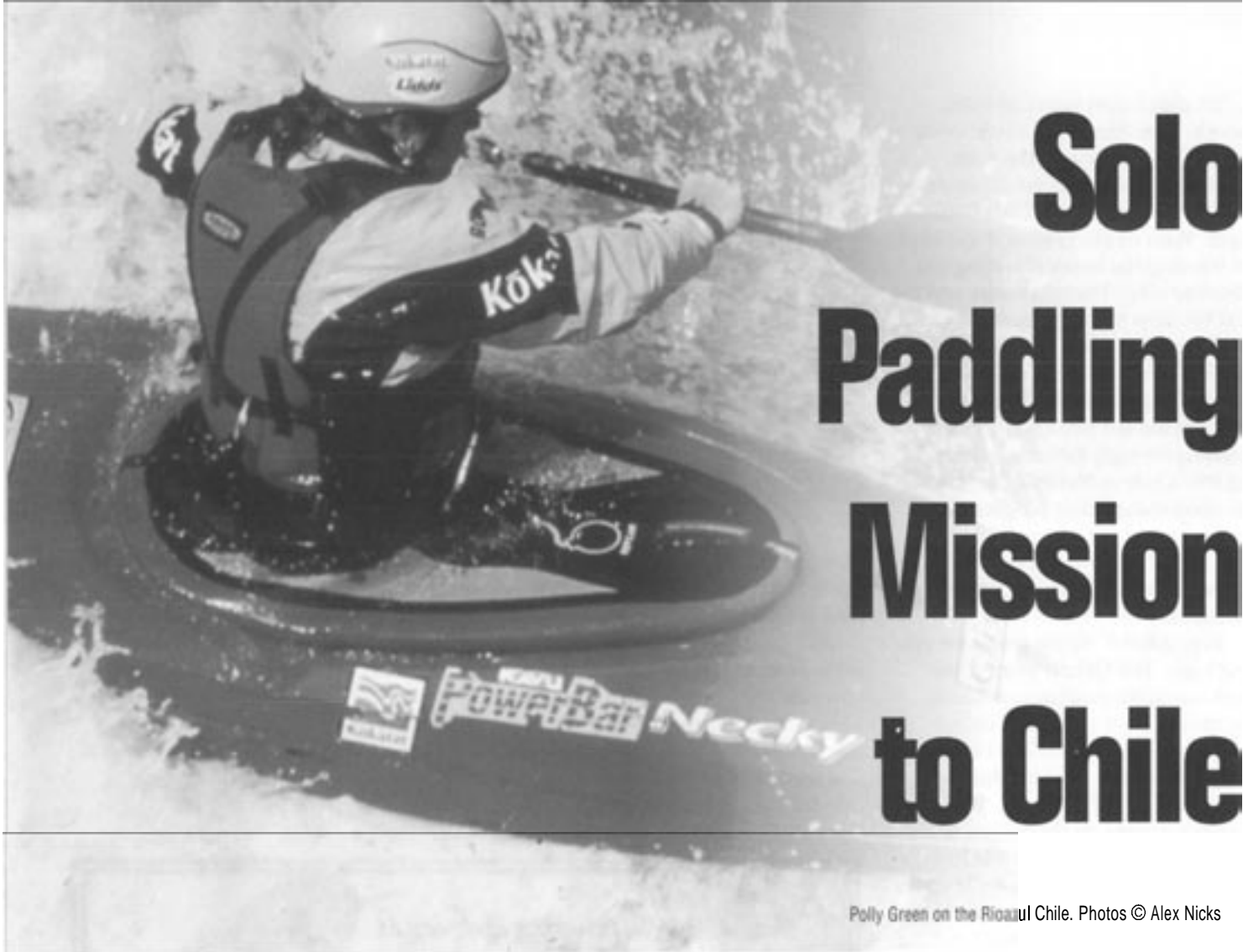
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Solo Paddling Mission to Chile

Polly Green on the Riozauil Chile. Photos © Alex Nicks

► By Polly Green

Things workout. This is my conclusion after returning home from a two-month solo-paddling mission to Chile.

I have paddled in several different countries, but this time I went by myself. I had always wanted to paddle in Chile and needed to train for the upcoming rodeo season. I packed light knowing that I would have to schlep all of my gear by myself. One change of clothes, paddling gear, camping gear, and a Werner take apart paddle all, more or less fit into my boat of choice, a Necky Gliss.

Checking in at the airport is always the first hurdle. I flew with American Airlines. In prior trips they assumed my kayak, which was packed in a Salamander Yak Wrap, was a surfboard. This time I was not so lucky. The woman behind the counter exclaimed, "That's a kayak." Kayaks are not in their computer, so we duked it out. She tossed around the dreaded words "air cargo." I countered with, "How about wind surfer?" She finally checked it through as a wind surfer, which cost twice the price of a surfboard. At least it was on. Now I could relax.

Towards the end of the nine-hour overnight flight to Santiago, I spotted the amazing Andes below. Arriving at the airport and getting to where you want to go always seems the hardest part of international travel with a kayak. My game plan was to take a transfer minibus to the

train station, an overnight train to Temuco, and then a bus to Pucon.

I bought my Transferbus ticket inside the airport, expecting to be accosted by taxi drivers once I stepped foot outside. Much to my surprise, that didn't happen. The minibus was waiting right out front, and it had roof racks. My Spanish was rusty, but I got the point across that I needed to go to the train station. I helped them tie down my boat with the cam straps I brought and we were on our way. That was easy. I liked this country already.

At the train station I hauled my boat to the ticket counter. I bought my ticket, and left my stuff with the bag watcher for the day. I was free to roam the city without boat for six hours. I was glad not to be spending the night in Santiago. I was looking forward to paddling ASAP.

Later I boarded the sleeping car of the train, kayak in tow. The train conductor was not happy with my kayak. The two of us wrestled it into the narrow hallway and seesawed it in into the small baggage room. With some creativity, it fit. I found my seat, put on my walkman and enjoyed the California-like scenery rolling by. Traveling alone made me feel so alive. I wondered what adventures lie ahead. At about ten o'clock the train attendant made up the fold away beds. I was psyched for a night of horizontal sleeping. I



Photos © Astrid Ensign

awoke just as the train pulled into Temuco. From the bus station I hopped a two-hour bus to Pucon.

In Pucon, I got my bearings and dragged my boat to Hotel Ecole. I knew I was in the right place. Other kayaks were in the backyard, where I stored mine. I was happy to finally be at my destination after two solid days and nights of travel. Now all I needed to do was find people to paddle with. A truck full of kayakers returned from paddling the Palguin. I introduced myself and asked if I could paddle with them. The next day I was on my way to the Fuy with three guys, also from Colorado. Things work out!

During my stay in Pucon I paddled most of the popular runs several times. This small resort town offers First World luxuries; good coffee, drinking water from the tap, cleanliness, beautiful scenery, and great nightlife. Hooking up with people to paddle with was never a problem. After two weeks the water was getting low, and I was ready to move on. I jumped in with a few guys from California who were heading south, toward the Futaleufu.

The twelve-hour drive through Argentina took two days and was spectacular. I was grateful to have gotten a ride, and to be on my way to one of the most amazing rivers in the world.

Once I got to the Futa I didn't want to leave. I decided that I would spend the rest of my time there. I staked out a camp spot at Cara Del Indio, a campground owned by the family of Luis Toro. The campground, right on the river, provides easy living. The usual pattern was to wake up late, have a leisurely breakfast, and decide what section of the river to paddle. Usually a group of three or four would come to the Futa and stay for a week. They would have a car and I would jump in with them. It is a very international scene, attracting paddlers from the U.K., Germany, France, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Canada and the U.S. I only paddled alone twice in five weeks on the Futa.

The Futaleufu is a magical river and valley. I felt a great connection with the people and place. I had so many good days it was hard to leave. Evenings were spent working on my Spanish, talking with the Toro family, or helping them pick vegetables from their garden. They are some of the most hospitable people I have ever met. We drank mate, a traditional southern Chilean/Argentinian tea served in a gourd

or cup with a metal straw. The cup is passed from person to person. One person is the designated water pourer. After you drink your cup it is returned to the person pouring, refilled, and passed on to the next person.

They were super patient with my brutalization of the Spanish language. I always felt honored to be invited for mate. By the end of my stay the Toros were asking me to help translate for English speaking campers that didn't speak Spanish. I felt this was a major accomplishment.

Paddling on the Futa was great training. The blue blue river is big volume with lots of amazing play spots. It rained for two solid weeks, which was great for the water levels. I never got bored paddling the same river and would have stayed longer, but **my elbows** told me it was time for a break.

My express journey home began with a two-hour bus to Chaiten, a small plane from Chaiten to Peurtomont, another plane to Santiago, and then my international flight. It was a solid two days before stepping foot back in the USA. I made all of my connections. Having sold my boat to a Chilean, travel was a snap.

A part of me is still at the Futaleufu. My memories of that place will always make me smile. Such experiences are what life is about. There is no question in my mind that I will return to Chile again next winter!

(Several sponsors made my Chilean experience possible; Necky Kayaks, Kokatat Water Sportswear, Kavu, Powerbar, Salamander, 5.10, Chaco, Werner Paddles, Bomber gear, Smith Sport Optics, and Watershed Dry Bags.)

Author Bio-Polly Green began paddling ten years ago. She didn't know then that kayaking would be more than just another sport, but an entire life-style. She competes on the freestyle kayaking circuit, instructs for Tarkio Kayak Adventures, and travels extensively around the world.

Photos © Astrid Ensign



The Allure: C

By Dale-Marie Herring

AW Associate Editor

My sister, Joan, said the four-letter word to me over the phone. "FLAT," she warned me. We were going on a five-day private river trip, through the Canyonlands, down the Cataract section of the Colorado River. The trip was 96 miles, with only 12 miles of rapids sandwiched between the FLATwater. When I tried to cancel the vacation, the airlines said, "nonrefundable." I tried to complain to a friend, but he shook his head unsympathetically and said, "Consider the flatwater the price of admission for an amazing adventure in a beautiful land."

When Joan and I arrived at Potash, Utah, where we'd begin our kayaking odyssey, we were missing two people. Our friend Steve assured us, "They are either drunk and asleep or drunk and in jail." So we packed the rafts, the kayakers geared-up, and we ran shuttle. Finally Johnny and Martin showed up.

"Hey, Babe," Johnny said in Johnny style, "Do you know why six is afraid?" We shook our heads. "Cause seven ate nine." I looked squarely at Steve who cued the trip leader, Dave. "Let's go boating!"

Our group of 16 slipped into the silky chocolate water of the Colorado. As I paddled, the canyon walls closed in. The current crawled so slowly that the whirligigs moved faster than my kayak.

In Spring there would have been wildflowers—pale primrose, globemallow, and the fatal locoweed, which is so addictive that livestock dying from its poison still seek it in their last moments of life. But this was summer; the land was raw: The jagged tips of rusty-colored buttes and spires jutted into the open, blue sky.

By mile ten, a 1,700-foot sheer-walled narrow mesa cast a shadow on my boat—Dead Horse Point. Legend had it that a group of wild horses died of thirst there after being corralled, gated, and forgotten in the 1800s. I imagined the beasts pawing the ground and longing to jump in the river far below.

By lunch, my abhorrence of flatwater was replaced by the deep sense that nature coursed through this desert like a deep, wild force. The beach where we ate was carpeted with white, warm sand. Joan and I followed some animal tracks. One set of tracks told the story of a deer mouse's demise. Sometime during the night an owl, soaring with wings stretched two feet wide, stalked its prey. I wonder if the deer mouse had time to glimpse the owl's yellow eyes before the talons seized hold. The owl dined on the rocks, just as we had. We found the re-



Can

tiny mouse teeth into my life jacket pocket before getting back on the river.

After 20 miles our crew camped for the night on a sandbar by a gooseneck bend. The gooseneck was 4 miles long, traversing less than a mile as the crow flies. Night settled before we could set up gas stoves and prepare dinner. Martin broke out some ice from the coolers and opened bar while Steve started a fire. We laughed easily under the summer sky, even when Johnny told us about the horse that walked into a bar and asked for a drink. The bartender said, "Sure, but why the long face?"

That night I dreamed that I was a peasant who snuck into a royal court where a mighty ruler loomed. When I awoke the next morning and saw the sun warming an alcove across the river, the sense of intimidation fostered but my dream lingered. I was in the royal court of nature.

We packed the rafts, cleaned the dishes, smashed the beer cans, and stowed the drybags packed with sleeping bags and personal gear. The groover, our travel toilet, got a capful of bleach and a very tight lid. Everyone helped until we pushed off together into the flat meandering river. The wind kicked up, pushing my kayak upstream.

"Do not enter," I imagined a gust whispering as I passed monolithic spires that looked like totems guarding the entrance to a land of ancient peoples. The first humans to visit the area, more than 10,000 years ago, were hunter-gathers. Piñon nuts, cactus fruit, and berries filled their baskets. Flint bladed spears and darts brought down big horn sheep and deer. It seemed that their rituals and oral traditions were imprinted in an ancient language within the rocks around me.

I continued to paddle with the ominous wind breathing in my face. Don paddled with me. We watched the landscape change from spires to mesas and buttes. The rocks' uncanny likeness to lavish temples seemed too perfect to be random acts of nature. Don told me more about the Old Ones, who were called Anasazi, or ancient enemies, by the Navajo. He told me how the Anasazi became farmers, then moved into cliff dwellings to protect themselves from raids. Some archeologists maintain that finds of smashed, cut, and burned bones point to cannibalism, or ritual execution.



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The wind kicked up again. We paddled harder as I scanned the cliffs for dwellings. So many images seemed etched in its ridges and shades. I saw a mesa shaped like an Anasazi ruler on a throne. Perhaps he commanded his people to build it, so he could sit closer to the gods. With each year the king sat higher until, too far from the river's wisdom, the King's mind dried up and he withered, just as the horses had at Dead Horse Point. Then his people left the haunted area.

I told Don this. He thought the Anasazi drifted away because of drought and war, or, maybe a new religion pulled them towards the southeast. I contemplated Don's theory and finally, grew tired of fighting the wind. If a new religion could pull people southeast, then maybe there was one that could pull me down river.

I headed towards Dave and Austin's raft for a ride. RAFT. Another four letter word. On crowded rivers in the east, I had been run-down in my kayak by commercial rafts. But here rowed Dave with a long blonde braid so unruly it could have sunk the vessel. He recited Monty Python saying, "Blessed are the Cheesemakers." His friend Austin solemnly asked, "What's so special about the cheesemakers?" Maybe this wouldn't be so bad.

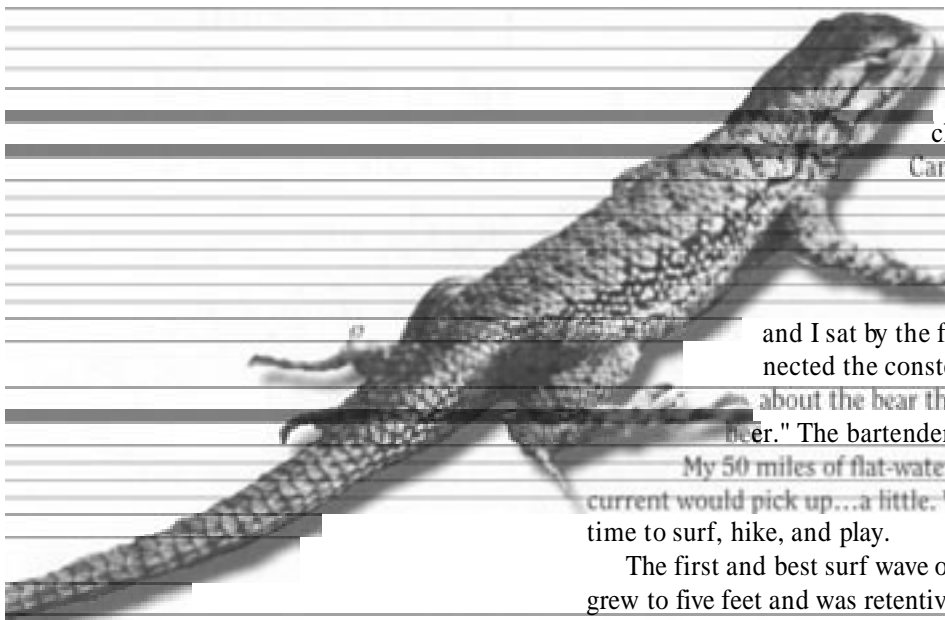
I took a turn rowing as bighorn sheep eyed us from the bank. A great blue heron poised like a five-foot buoy as we passed. When its dagger-like beak speared the water and came up empty of fish, its six-foot wings unfurled slowly as they contemplated flight. Choking and sputtering, the wings worked laboriously as they cut through the air. Then in an act of faith, the prehistoric looking bird retracted its legs and let the wind take it aloft, a blue parasail filling with air as the sunset.

That evening, the same wind that carried the great blue heron tossed sand into plates of food, sleeping bags, and crevasses of skin. My skin felt hot from the sun and breezes, which changed my color to the rusty glow of the Canyonlands. I could still feel water from the river

in my ears and clogging my nose. The landscape was claiming me as its own. No longer small and uninvited, I was becoming a part of something larger. My friends and I sat by the fire after dinner and listened to Martin as he connected the constellations into x-rated mythology. Johnny told us about the bear that walked into a bar and said "I'll have {pause} a beer." The bartender replied, "Sure, but why the big paws?"

My 50 miles of flat-water penance was almost over. On this third day the current would pick up...a little. We had only 12 miles to cover, so there would be time to surf, hike, and play.

The first and best surf wave of the river appeared after an hour of paddling. It grew to five feet and was retentive enough to spin and throw blunts and ends. It



was a giggle machine with eddy service. Peter and I were the last to leave the play spot.

The river flattened again for a spell and I thought of John Wesley Powell, a one-armed Civil War veteran who left on a riveting 99-day mapping journey of the Colorado in 1869. He would have regarded our surfing wave as a danger. He wrote, "The water of the river passes on while the wave form remains," It, "sometimes gathers for a moment, heaps up higher and higher, and then breaks back. If the boat strikes it in the instant after it breaks, she cuts through and the mad breaker dashes its spray over the boat and washes overboard all that do not cling tightly."

Peter and I caught up to our friends who were waiting at a shallow beach with gray rock undercut walls. Maureen, a salmon boat captain from Alaska and Peter's wife, had discovered fossils: crinoids and brachiopods, inlaid in the limestone shelves. She pulled out long fragile tubes from the bank and answered my questions about the crinoids that first appeared more than 500 million years ago. She also told me about the brachiopods, also called lampshells, because they look like early Roman oil lamps.

The tamarisk grew more aggressively along the banks as we pushed on. At what is mapped as mile 10 we saw a park sign, "WARNING—Dangerous rapids 4 miles downriver! Travel permit required by law."

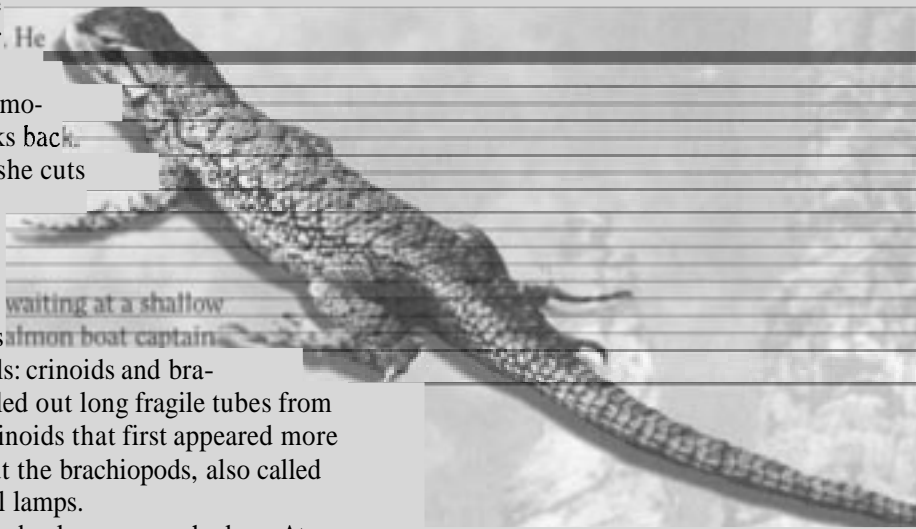
We heard the whitewater before seeing anything. Sure enough, four miles downstream of the confluence of the Green and the Colorado, we had rapids. When Powell came upon this confluence in 1869 he said, "On starting, we come at once to difficult rapids and falls, that in many places are more abrupt than in any of the canyons through which we have passed. We decide to name this Cataract Canyon." This is what I had been waiting for.

After surfing a glassy wave we set up camp right below the flat 120-acre floor called Spanish Bottom—its name recalling the Spanish explorers that penetrated the desert wilderness in the late 1700s. Our hike options included a river-right trek to a deeply fissured mesa, known as the DollHouse, or a four-mile climb from the left that went into the Needles.

We crossed the river and took the old path into the DollHouse. We climbed clay banks, zigzagging 1,000 feet up the face of the canyon wall. Dave and Steve leapt ahead like billy goats while Peter and Maureen searched for hidden secrets in the nooks and crannies of eroded rock. Iron oxide inked the walkway red while iron and manganese oxides and clay minerals intermittently created a lustrous varnish on rock surfaces. Butch Cassidy and his crew were said to have roamed these parts, escaping the law by hiding where few dared follow. We, too, disappeared, just as they may have, over the top of the rim down into a domed shaped amphitheater—the DollHouse. A rabbit bounded through desert scrub and cactus. I felt like Alice in Wonderland. Monolithic-sized rocks, shaped like dolls, circled the desert floor standing erect, clad in garments sculpted by the wind. They seemed to gather in the Juniper garden for tea.

That night we ate lamb roast and potatoes under a large sky full of shooting stars. Martin, who took a swim from his ducky earlier in the day, was forced to drink cheap beer from a neoprene river booty. Tomorrow we would take on the biggest drops of the Cataract Canyon. But, for now, the air was still dry, and the desert sand still warm.

"Last call for groover!" Dave shouted in the morning. I had overslept and now the toilet was being packed away. I dashed about, slopping on sunscreen and helping with dishes, finally sliding my boat in the water. The river took on a new temperament. The first rapid, just a couple miles below Spanish Bottom



The first and best surf wave of the river appeared after an hour of paddling. It grew to five feet and was retentive enough to spin and throw blunts and ends. It was a giggle machine with eddy service.



was called Brown Betty. It marked the beginning of four miles of light whitewater. Most guidebooks suggested scouting the 4th rapid at low water and the 7th rapid at high water. Scouting was always easy along rock jetties that replaced the sandy banks. The excitable river mellowed in a flatwater pool for two miles before sharply leaping left. "Watch up ahead," yelled someone from a raft, "there should be some good whitewater."

The Colorado took off again, toppling over canyon debris with its whitecapped garment fluttering chaotically. For over a mile we caught a whirlwind of energy. Dave had heard that the 14th rapid, Capsize, could present danger. At 7,000 cfs it was full of splashes and fun. The river saved its menace for just below.

The Big Drops is a three-part rapid broken into Upper Big Drop, Satan's Seat, and Satan's Gut. Here the Colorado slipped and fell down the canyon now constricted and littered with bus-sized rocks. We took turns running it—first the kayaks. After scouting the first two horizon lines on river left, Joan commented, "Making up your mind to run the rapid is harder than actually paddling it." While its crashing turbulence could be intimidating, the lines were straightforward. The kayaks made it through fine. We watched from downstream as the rafts came through. Since they are not as maneuverable as kayaks, they could be drawn off course into a trashing in a pour over called Little Niagara, or a spanking in Frogg Hole on the right of Satan's Gut.

Dave and Austin led in the little red raft, or the "ruby slipper" as they called it, planning in advance how to let 7,000 cfs and momentum take them where they needed to go. Dave lined up, casually throwing in a few adjustment strokes here and there. "Paddle!" I wanted to yell, but he knew the rubber would make it through. Following Dave came Jamie, who took a surf at the third drop in a nasty pour over. I couldn't imagine one of Powell's awkward vessels making it out of that in one piece.

In fact, the men of 1869 discussed the likelihood of getting out of Cataract alive. Powell worried over the very real possibility that "Maybe we shall come to a



fall in these canyons which we cannot pass, and where the water is so swift that we cannot return." At the Big Drop he wrote, "We are compelled to make three portages in succession, the distance being less than three fourths of a mile, with a fall of 75 feet."

Yet, even as Powell fretted, he was also awed by the river's majesty, "Wherever we look there is but a wilderness of rocks—deep gorges where the rivers are lost below cliffs and towers and pinnacles, and ten thousand strangely cawed formations in every direction, and beyond them mountains blending with the clouds."

After the Big Drops, our group called it a day. It would be our last night resting sleepy heads on the bosom of the wild desert. We sat together under the quilt of a starry sky. Next to me, someone whispered the origin myth of the Colorado River.

"A chief lost the woman who he loved most in life. He mourned bitterly and begged the gods to grant him a way to visit her. The god, Tah-vwoats, took pity on the crumpled man and created a passageway for him to follow. The path wove through magnificent splendors, otherworldly alcoves, and magical glens. It was so stunning that the gods feared other mortals would be drawn to follow it before it was their time to leave life. So they filled the golden road behind the mighty chief with water, and that river became the Colorado."

During our trip we had started down the path made for the chief, but we could never finish the journey—not because the gods had added water, but because man had flooded it with a nature-defying monstrosity called Glen Canyon Dam.

In 1963, the Department of Interior shut the gates to the 300-foot thick, 710-foot high dam—or the "cement plug," as Edward Abbey called it. A reservoir, Lake Powell, flooded Glen Canyon and its rapids, reaching as far back as only a few miles below Cataract Canyon. An entire eco system drowned in an unparalleled watery massacre.

As a sad beauty persisted on Lake Powell as we tied up our rafts and motored out through the reservoir the next day—a beauty marred by the twisted ingenuity of mankind. The tamarisk and tall freemont poplars that bordered the wild and free portion of the river up stream no longer softened the transition from water to rock on the banks. We drank from bags of wine saying goodbye to the Canyonlands and each other.

When our boats pulled ashore at Hite Marina, I still tasted whitewater, scratched sand from my scalp, and felt branded by the sun. The Colorado of the Canyonlands coursed with its concentrated beauty, but it was no longer other, or separate; it had claimed me.

Editor's note: AW Associate Editor Dale Herring works for National Geographic.



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Steep Creeking... California Style!

By Matthew Gontram



After living in Colorado for nine years; six of them in Crested Butte at 9,000 ft., I was getting tired of winter. I needed to find a place where I could spend more time paddling on rivers as opposed to skiing across them. Not to say that the boating in Colorado isn't spectacular...it is! The problem is that it never seems to last more than a couple of months. By the time the snow melted from the access roads, the creeks only ran for a couple of weeks. Having to get creative with shuttles was a prerequisite. But skis, snowmobiles, or good old post-holing only extended the season a week or two.

What's an obsessed paddler to do? There's plenty of places to "visit" to paddle during the winter. But I wanted a place to call "home." It was time to relocate. After narrowing my choices to two, the decision was very difficult. Would it be the southeast, for southern hospitality, sweet tea and a choice of fifty or so classic, steep runs almost any day of the winter? Or the Sierra foothills, for California girls, granola and beautifully sculpted granite canyons? I opted for the latter, and couldn't be happier!

After arriving the first of May, I decided to trade my



nail bags in for a job at the local paddling shop. Immediately my paddling time increased two hundred percent. Daily runs on the S. Fork of the American are tough to beat. If you have to squeeze a day of paddling into a two hour play session, the park n' play possibilities on this river are some of the best I've seen. Whether it's 3,500 cfs at Barking Dog or 1,700 cfs at Chili Bar, the spins and ends are automatic. But lets face it, as fun as play boating is, it doesn't completely fulfill the "need." You know the "need" don't you? Scratching your head while trying to decipher a line through a tightly constricted boulder garden. Or peeling out of a last-chance eddy with all of your energy harnessed and focused on the line, the only line. Perhaps my favorite, walking back to your boat after a complicated scout, visualizing each and every stroke that will carry you through to that big smile in the eddy at the bottom. Creeking Rules!!

Soon after I arrived in California, I started to get that down deep urge to lose elevation. My prayers were answered when my friend Andrew Boucher told me about a little gem in the Crystal Basin drainage: The



South Fork of Silver Creek, one of the upper tributaries of the South Fork of the American River. As part of the first descent party, he assured me that this was

But, it wasn't until I heard the terms "650' mile" and "good to go" in the same sentence that my eyes lit right up!

destined to be a future California creeking classic.

But, it wasn't until I heard the terms "650' mile" and "good to go" in the same sentence that my eyes lit right up! Could there be a mile as steep as that filled with clean drops? After wiping the drool from my chin, we made plans for a run the next day. I hurried straight home to chase the spiders and knock the cobwebs out of my creek boat.

Motivation was high the next morning. Gear and people loaded and we were on the road by 9 am...not bad! The shuttle drive, however, was not as encouraging. We couldn't find the put-in. After four tries and a long look at the trusty Forest Service campground map, we finally found our way to the river. Ah!! The water level looked reason-

able. Andrew and I proceeded to shoe-up and wait for our partners for the day, Jeff Trauba and John Rogers. After a few minutes, we could hear them hooting as they pulled in. The fun was about to begin.

The put-in is at 6,500 ft. With high Colorado altitude runs fresh in my memory, my expectations were for

frigid water. To my surprise, this creek was on the warm side. I estimated the flow to be 250 cfs.

We put-in and headed downstream. After a quarter mile of shallow, low angle "boogie water," the thrills began. In the next mile and a half we found the epitome of "guerrilla boating." Paddling downstream by any means necessary. Doing anything you can to avoid pinning, broaching, or flipping in blind slots that sneak up on you quicker than V.D. in a border town. Some steeper than others, but all requiring precise boat placement and flat landings...tons of fun.



One boulder garden did contain a nasty sieve with a large channel through it. Although we decided to portage, I have since seen successful runs at lower flows. At those levels a "catcher" directly above the sieve made it look a lot safer. After a few more puzzle-filled drops to solve, we reached our first named rapid.

Ever run a 350 ft. long slide? How about one that you can boat scout from the eddy above? That's when I first met "The Audubon." The entry to the rapid was a ten-foot boof onto a granite slide that was fun, fast and seemed to last forever. The last 50 ft. of the slide sent us hurtling down a considerably steeper slab of granite, 35 degrees or so, and skipping into the eddy below. It was so much fun that we all had to walk back up for a second helping.

Next, came the first of four or five blind slides that drop 10 to 30 feet at a time and are all "read and runnable." The smooth slabs of granite that create these rapids are magnificent. This series of slides is called "The Dislocator." (Named for my friend Landon, who was forced to take a three-month break from paddling due to an unfortunate line here.)

After a short pool below





the final slide, we found ourselves above one of the most difficult drops of the South Fork of Silver Creek. As we climbed out of our boats to scout, I could tell that this one might have a bit of a punch. The grins of anticipation on Jeff and Andrews' face gave it away. The drop was called "Boof, Boof, Slide." After one look it appeared to be the granddaddy of all elbow crushers; a 20 ft. drop that looked very tight and difficult. Beginning with a four-foot boof onto a platform so small it allowed no more than two strokes to boof again, this time as far right as possible. All the while hoping that you won't smack the wall at the bottom. Yahoo!

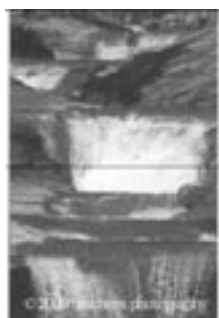
After a super fun 10 ft. boof into a constricted slot and a short boulder garden, we reached the crux of the creek. An awesome series of waterfalls in the middle of one hell of a cool mile of whitewater. As I looked downstream I saw four waterfalls, each no larger than 15 feet. The classic analogy of "teacups" came to mind. I imagined a huge ice cream scooper dipping into the smooth, steep granite riverbed, leaving behind these excellent waterfall-style drops. After the fourth drop I could see "one of those horizon lines." The kind that might

require you to pop your ears during the scout/portage. Jeff urged me not to check it out. "One thing at a time, Matt." We all charged the "Teacups" with ear-to-ear grins and eddied out river left to scout. This, I was told, was "Skyscraper."

Skyscraper was the only rapid that had been described to me prior to the run. Those descriptions did not do the rapid justice. I'll

This drop rocks! A mandatory flat landing into a corkscrew slot that turns you 90 degrees. Very cool!!

leave my description (as the others should have been) vague. This is one you just have to check out for yourself. Skyscraper is separated into two sections with an eddy in between. The first half is a tight, steep mess of whitewater. The second half is known as "The Off-Ramp." Watch out for the overhang! I cave that the current wants to shoot you into at the bottom. Sick!! With razor sharp stares and complete focus on the line, two successful runs were posted. Immediately following Skyscraper is the only manda-



tory portage on the South Fork of Silver Creek. This twelve-foot drop was totally consumed by one large tree. We opted for the dry line on the left.

After the portage, we did a quick scout of the next

drop, "Nosejob." It was named for the piton rocks both right and left. This drop rocks! A mandatory flat landing into a corkscrew slot that turns you 90 degrees. Very cool!!

The next and last two major rapids were some of the best. Both presented series of drops with tight lines at the end. We took our time scouting each and ran one at a time. The first rapid started with two boulder-infested slides and ended with an s-turn slide taking us over a nasty pothole. A big "kicker" at the end sling-shot us into the eddy below.

The second and last major rapid ranked as possibly the best all day. Slides, slots, and punchy hydraulics all stood in the way of the awesome 25-foot drop at the

end. Luckily for us, the cushion on the landing was a whole lot softer than it appeared. With the exception of one paddler's line a little too far right in pothole land, we all nailed it and proceeded to "blue angel" the final few slides.

The last half a mile offered more "guerrilla boating." We were all feeling great and cleaning up every boof. Following Andrew and Jeff down tight, blind drops that had absolutely no sympathy for sore asses. We took out on river right just below this section.

A short hike up the hill brought us to our take-out vehicle. Yeehaw!! There were high fives all around for a truly spectacular day. As we shoed-down the stories started to fly. Take-out treats were shared by all as we celebrated our successful mission. An epic day with a great group of paddlers.

A short drive from the take-out was a small general store. Andrew and I, of course, felt compelled to stop for some Post Boating Refreshments (P.B.R.'s). Because of its remote location the store didn't have the most competitive prices, but that didn't matter much. We were feeling so good that the ten-dollar six-pack didn't seem like such a bad



deal. Now I'm starting to figure out why I'm broke all the time. That crazy drug adrenaline will make you do most anything.

After a cold beer and a beautiful sunset, the drive home was quite enjoyable. I drilled Andrew about other great, steep runs in the area while mentally putting together the "hit list" for my new home. What's next? When does it run? How long does it run for? Most important, when do we leave? Andrew looked at me and said, "Relax, there's tons of killer creeks to be had. Remember, you aren't in Colorado anymore, we've got water all year long."

Sweet California!

Editors note: I have never paddled with Matt Gontram or his friends, but I have a sneaking suspicion they are very good boaters!

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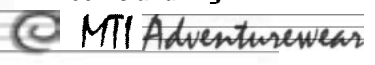
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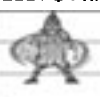
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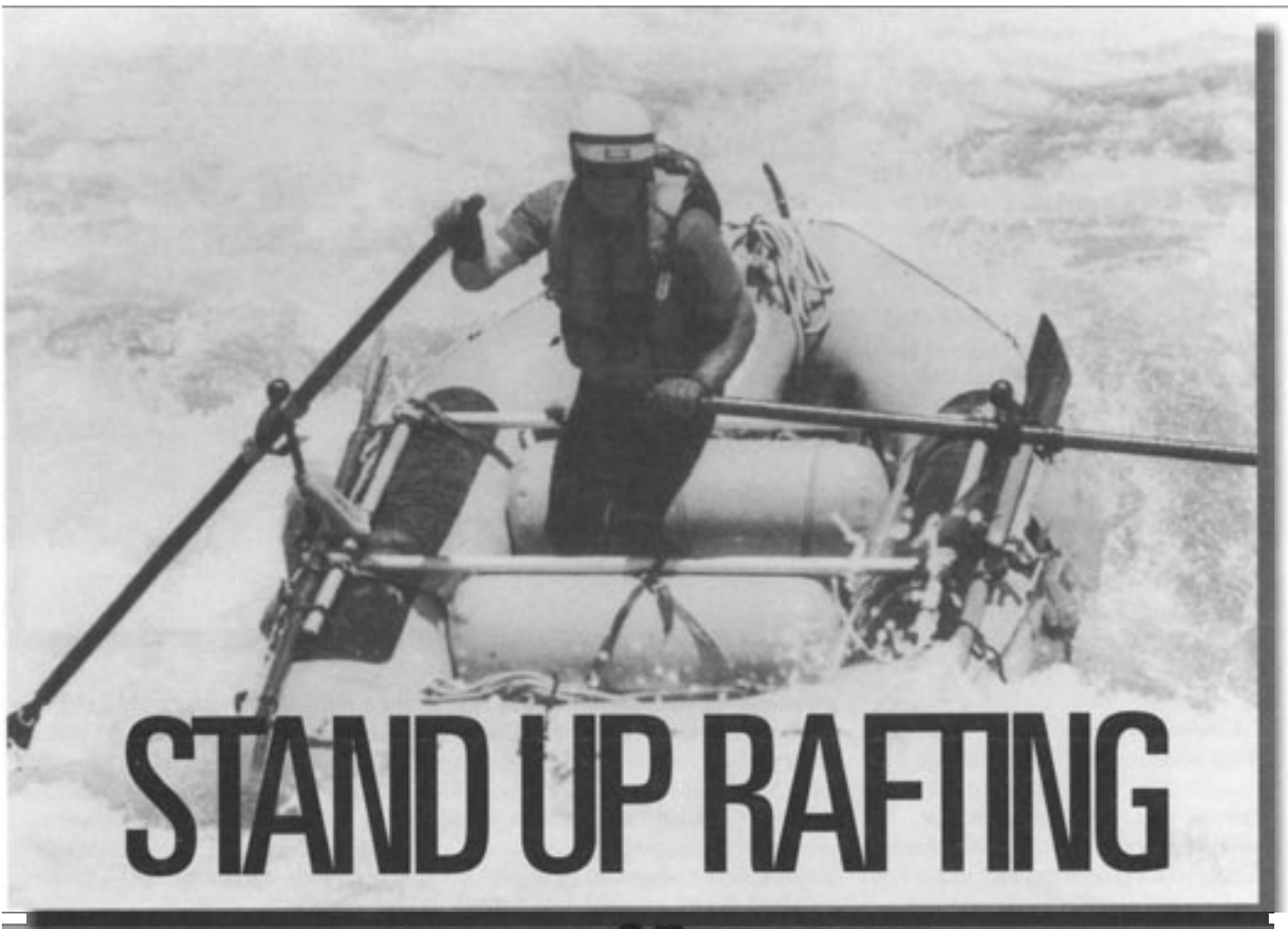
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STAND UP RAFTING

OR

***WHEN WALKING ON WATER
YOU MAY AS WELL DANCE***

OR

**SEATS ARE FOR
WIMPS**

STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. SCOTT MORRIS
PHOTOS BY COLORADO WHITEWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

In many parts of the country, rafting is almost synonymous with paddle rafting. But in the western United States most private boaters use oar rigs, rafts fitted with a rigid rowing frame equipped with oars, oarlocks, seat, etc. so that a single rower controls the boat. As a whitewater rower, I am interested in different rowing techniques and equipment, always looking for ways to improve my performance. One of the more unusual methods of

rowing, and perhaps the most promising for whitewater, is stand up rowing.

My first look at stand up rowing was a sweep oar boat on the Salmon River, a large decked pontoon cargo raft with huge funny looking oars projecting from the bow and stern. There were two oarsman, one for each oar, and they stood up and pushed and pulled with their whole body. Although I did not envy these rowers with their mountain of gear, I was impressed with

the power they got into each stroke by using their legs and body weight as well as their arms and back. (If you are curious about these large sweep oar rafts, check out *THE RIVER OF NO RETURN*, 1954, with Robert Mitchum and Marilyn Monroe at the oars.)

While I was impressed by these sweep boat oarsmen, I wasn't really inspired by the concept of stand up rowing until I meet Kenton Grua in the Grand Canyon in 1991. Kenton was

leading a trip for Grand Canyon Dories in a beautiful wooden dory he had built himself. It was a decked boat, but he had fashioned a deep cockpit in the center of the deck so that he could row standing up.

Kenton explained that he had a bad back and that he found it easier to row from a standing position. This interested me as I too have lower back problems; but what really struck me was the grace with which he rowed and the effectiveness of getting his entire body into each oar stroke. I immediately tried to imitate him (when he wasn't watching) but was disappointed. The standard tub floor of my little raft was way too floppy and the oarlocks were too low.

Of course I could stand up and row in flat water, particularly when approaching the lip of a rapid to get a better view. This is common behavior among rafters. But what I really wanted was Kenton's power and elegance while running big whitewater standing up, something I have never seen any rafter attempt. (I later learned that Kenton, along with Petschek & Reynolds, set the speed record for the Grand Canyon in 1983 at 70,000 cfs; all 277 miles in 36 hrs. 38 mins. in a 17 ft dory. In the late '80s Kenton was instrumental in organizing the Grand Canyon River Guides association).

In 1996 I upgraded to a 13 ft. self bailing raft and immediately started ex-

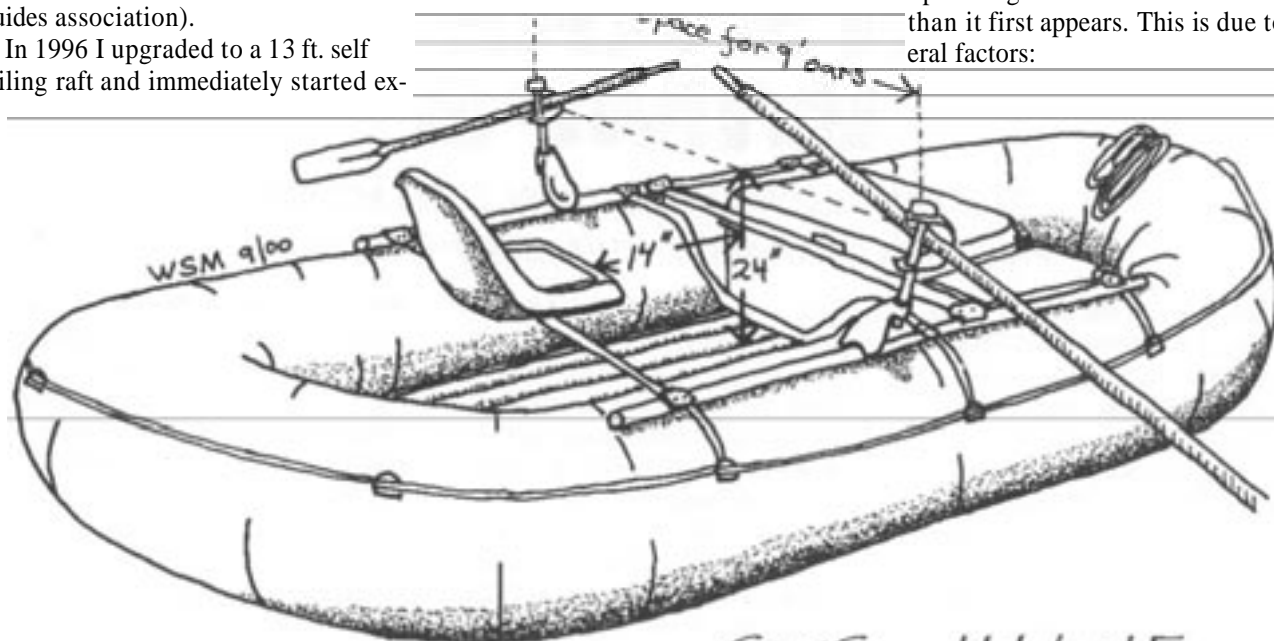


perimenting. The floor proved almost perfect for stand up rowing. Not only did it provide firm support, but it offered lots of cushion if I hit rocks. I still had a problem with the oarlocks, however, which appeared to be about 6 inches too low when I stood up. I switched to taller oarlock stands and longer bolts for my 'pins' so that the oars, when horizontal, are about 24 inches above the floor (with the raft sitting on flat ground).

The oarlocks also had to be moved forward enough so that my body didn't get in the way of the oar handles dur-

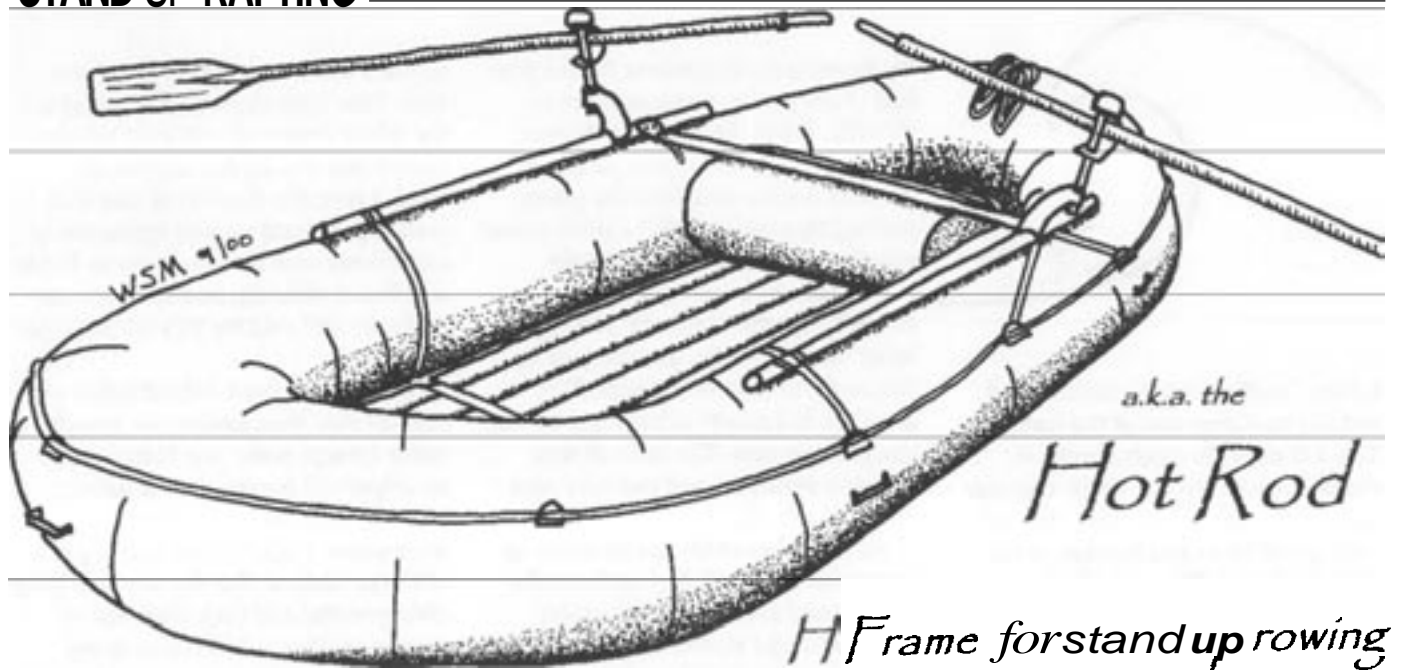
ing a full pull stroke (about 12 -14 inches between the front of the seat and a line between the oarlocks works well as a sit/stand hybrid rig). After fiddling to get these adjustments just right, it all came together. It felt totally natural to row standing up. I was off and running.

At first I tried standing up mostly in small rapids, as all my survival instincts screamed at me to sit down in the bigger stuff. It seemed like a good way to get my teeth knocked out. But time and experience proved that stand up rowing in whitewater is a lot safer than it first appears. This is due to several factors:



Sit/Stand Hybrid Frame

STAND UP RAFTING



1. Standing in the center of the raft is quite stable, even when the boat is tilting up and down in the waves. It is like standing on the center of a see saw, which is quite secure, versus standing on one end, where you will likely be tossed off.

2. Standing also allows you to move around, changing your stance, and moving your feet to maintain your balance. (make sure your footgear grips the floor material well, wet or dry).

3. You can brace your body from side-to-side by leaning against either oar. Because you are really bracing against the oarlock and frame, this works even when the oar blades are not in the water.

4. If the blades are in the water, you can also use the oars to brace your body in the forward or backward directions to provide very good overall stability. Beware, however, of popping your downstream oar in shallow waters.

5. Self bailing rafts act as huge shock absorbers so that you are largely protected from impacts.

Aside from being reasonably easy and safe, this type of rowing also has several clear advantages over sit down rowing:

1. It vastly improves your view of the river, and provides continuous high-quality boat scouting. Since suc-

cess in whitewater depends as much on your ability to read the river as on your boating skills, this benefit alone makes stand up rowing worthwhile.

2. Freedom of body movement allows for new and expansive oar strokes.

3. It allows you to use leg muscles and body weight in your oar strokes, substantially increasing power and effectiveness.

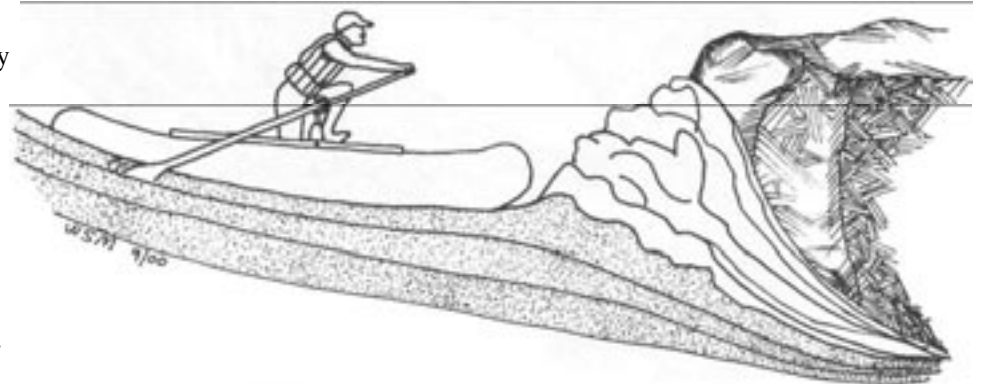
4. With experience, stand up rowing imparts a feeling of control and potential, as well as pure exhilaration. It is unmitigated fun. Like switching from sledding to skiing.

With experience I came to realize that stand up rowing is actually a superior way to run most rapids. By the end of my second season, I was consistently able to row the Numbers section of the Arkansas River (a classic Class IV run in Colorado) without touching the seat. After three seasons I preferred

standing to sitting even on my occasional Class V runs. Despite all my expectations, I have yet to be knocked out of my boat while stand up rowing. There are still times when my instincts tell me to sit down and hang on, but these are becoming fewer and fewer.

This past season I finally removed my raft seat entirely and restructured the frame to optimize the potential of this technique for whitewater day trips. I started by just removing the seat, but this proved to be a mistake. Whenever I needed to step backwards to keep my balance I tended to trip over the back thwart. With no seat to fall into, this was a problem. In one case I tripped backwards over the thwart, landing on my back with my legs in the air, much to the amusement of some boaters surfing the tail waves.

This made me realize that without the seat, I was better off with nothing behind me at all. So, with some uncer-



STAND UP RAFTING



tainty, I yanked out the back thwart and the back crossbar of the frame. This left me with a very simple H shaped frame with the single crossbar centered on top of the single thwart, both about 18 inches forward of the raft's midpoint. The oarlocks are pushed forward up against the crossbar, and the entire back of the boat is left open like a dance floor. This proved to be a great solution. Not only can you step backward to maintain balance, you can move back as needed to increase the 'throw' of both pull and push strokes. Or you can stay back for some interesting pry and draw strokes with the oar blades close to the boat.

Of all the stand up oar strokes I have experimented with, my all time favorite is the "Please Lord get me out of here right now" power pull. It is done like this; brace one foot against the crossbar and reach forward with your

arms and body so that your chest is on top of your bent knee. Drop the blades into the water and push against the crossbar with your foot so that your

leg muscles provide power for the first half of the stroke. Once your leg is straight, finish the stroke with your arms and back. Using your large leg muscles greatly increases the power, making this stroke 50% to 100% more effective than a seated pull stroke.

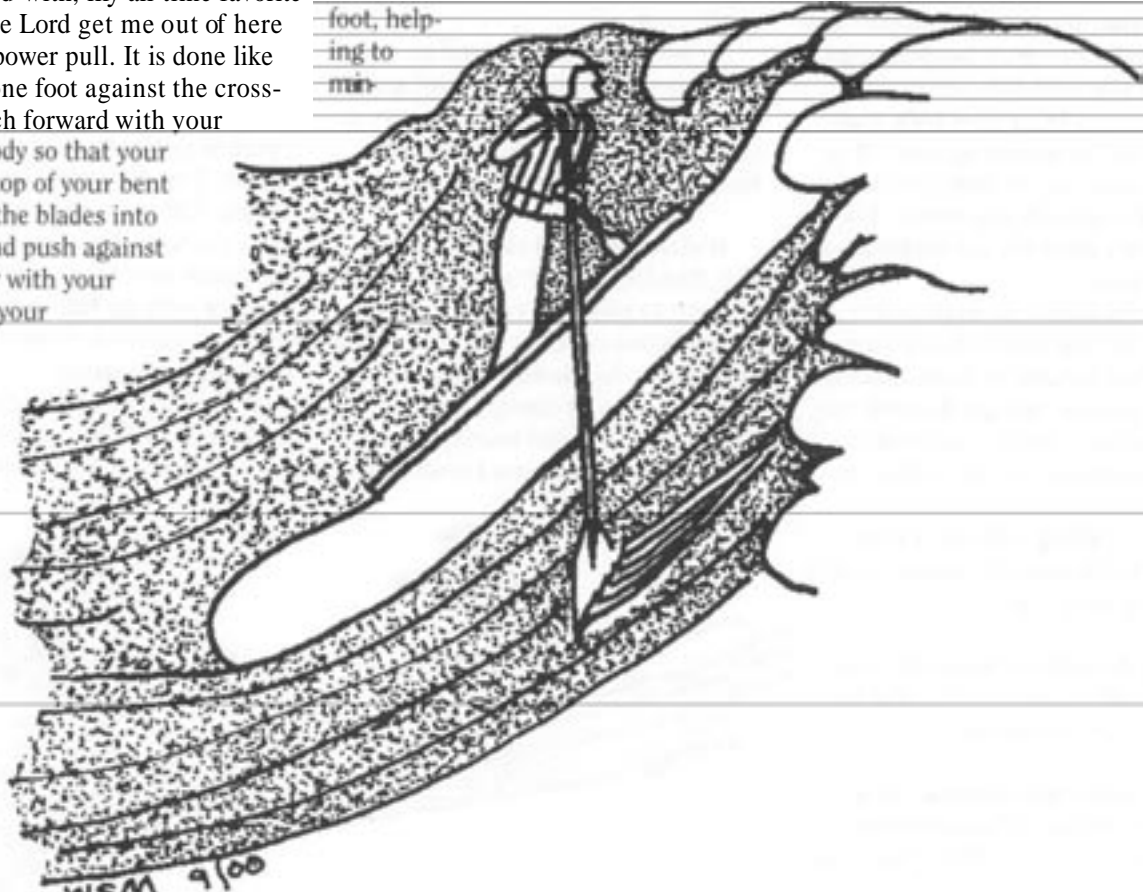
In a serious predicament you can supercharge this stroke by getting the other foot up on the crossbar just as you begin to pull on the oars. This gives the full power of both legs as you hang off the oars. The force of this stroke is awesome, and can save your butt in scary places.

Another incredibly useful stand up oar stroke is the 'all day' push stroke, mostly used on flat water. It starts from a straight standing position, one foot a step ahead of the other, and blades in the water with the handles held near the chest. You simply lean into the oars allowing gravity to do the first part of the stroke. Then a forward push with the arms finishes the stroke and pushes your body back upright, ready for the next stroke. Your weight gets shifted back and forth between the front and back

tain a smooth seamless rocking motion. Your back stays totally straight the whole time and won't get tweaked even if you row all day against the wind. I recently discovered that this stand up forward rowing technique is sometimes used by fishermen in Maine and Baja California, and tall open oarlocks are still sold for this purpose (see Sidebar)

While I still use a hybrid frame with seat (as described earlier) for expeditions, I much prefer the H frame and an empty raft for real performance boating, especially in technical whitewater. Performance boating in a raft? Yes, indeed! But the key is to keep everyone else and their junk out of your boat. This is difficult as many rafters come from a commercial background, where an empty boat looks all too much like an empty cash drawer.

Most raft guides I know have never rowed an empty oar rig. But then, when they switch to kayaks or canoes, they look back on rafts as clumsy and awkward boats,



foot, helping to maintain

STAND UP RAFTING

not realizing it was mostly the load in these rafts, not the rafts themselves, that made them so unresponsive. If you ever have any doubts about this, try running whitewater with several people or several hundred pounds of gear in your kayak or canoe. When rowed empty, a small self bailer is pretty zippy.

Fortunately, the H frame discour-

ages passengers as there is no good place to sit. A small empty raft with the H frame is an incredibly responsive rig. Even kayakers are impressed. Last summer some Colorado boaters nicknamed my boat the Hot Rod.

Developing the techniques and equipment for stand up rafting has been a lot of fun. And although I have made some progress, the truth is that I

have just scratched the surface. Stand up rafting has enormous potential. As more boaters try it out and experiment, we could see both the skills and equipment evolve in some radical new ways. And why not? When walking on water, you may as well dance.

Editor's note: Scott Morris can be reached at wscottmorris@dellnet.com.

RAISING THE OARLOCKS

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To get high-quality bolts, you will probably need to order them from a specialty bolt supplier. For typical 6" tall stands, use 5/8"x16" hex bolts. Get grade 5 (3 radial marks on head), 5" of coarse thread, and zinc plated.

The standard method of attaching the bolt to the stand uses one lock nut under the receiver hole. If you tighten this nut to get rid of the wobble, the sleeve material starts to bind. With 5" of thread, you can use two nuts, one above and the other below the receiver hole, to secure very tightly. Leave the sleeves slightly loose for easy rowing.

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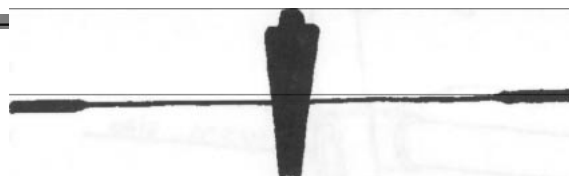
While working with this PVC, I discovered that the spacer sleeve can be slit lengthwise (17132") so that you can snap it on or off the bolt by hand. This means that you can switch the position of the oars from stand up rowing to sit down rowing in just a few seconds. Also, this slit spacer may be cross cut into smaller pieces and moved as needed for small height adjustments.

TALL OPEN OARLOCKS

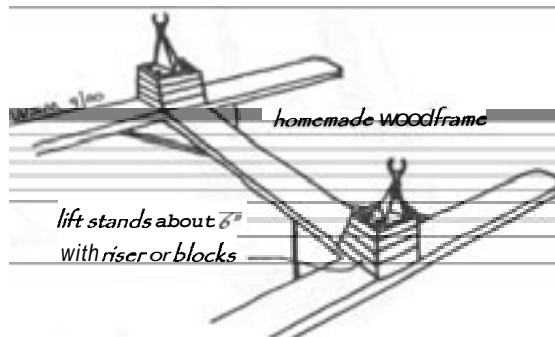
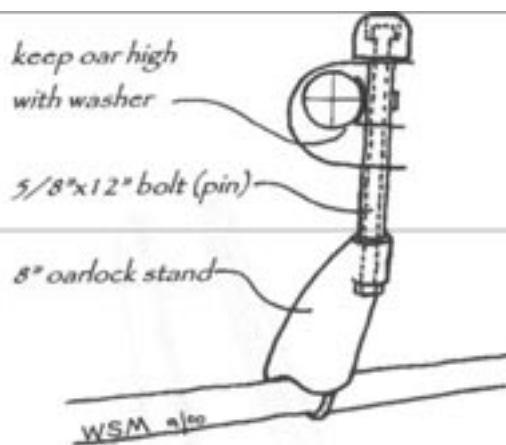
Tall open oarlocks, specifically designed for stand up rowing, are available. Check that all dimensions will work with your oars and stand (shanks are 314").

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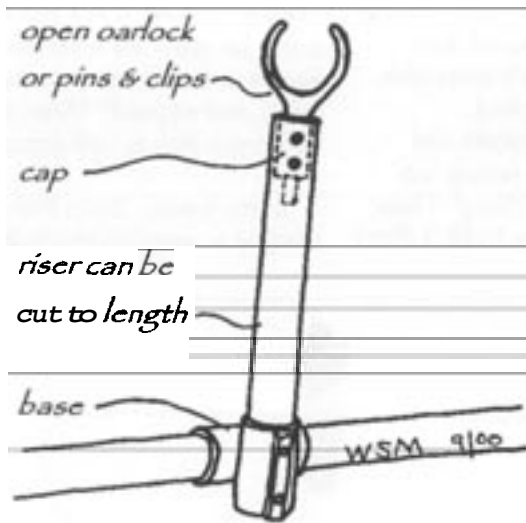
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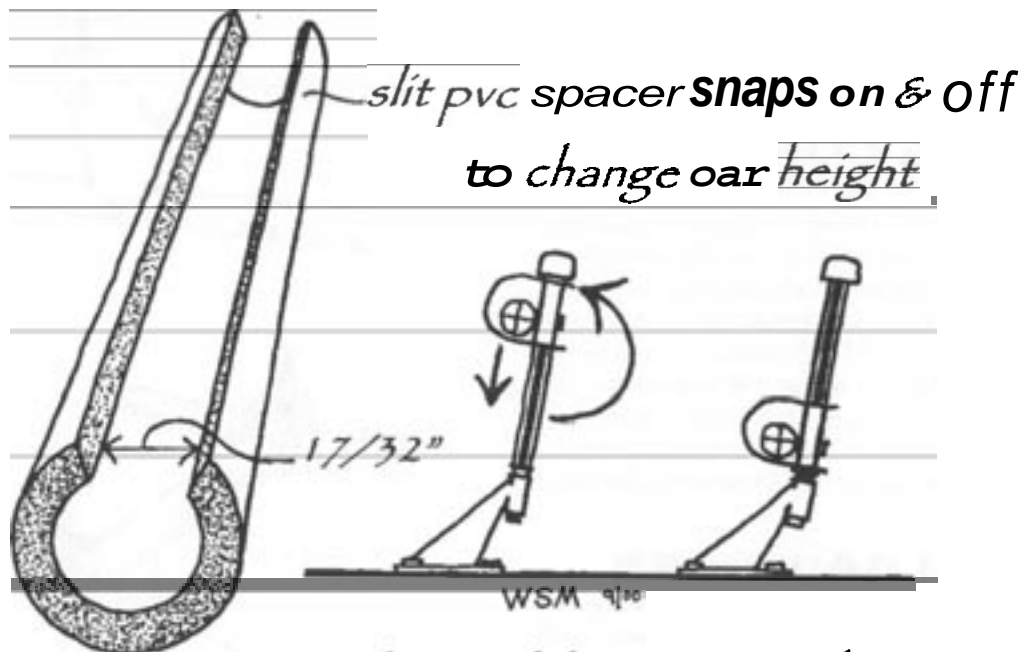
No matter what type of oarlock you use, always carry the tools needed to adjust or replace them, as well as spare parts. You may need to change your set up or, after a flip, replace parts that have been bent or ripped off by rocks.

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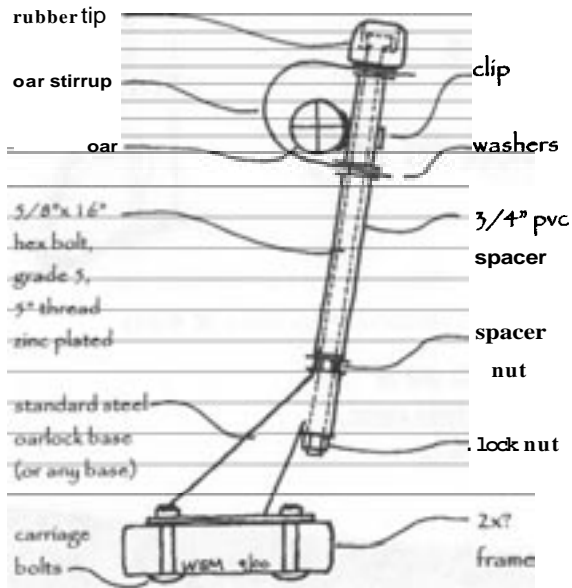
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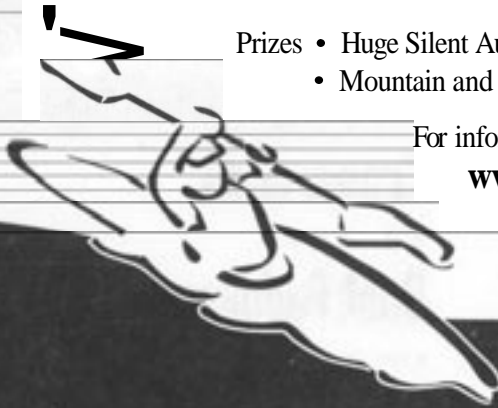
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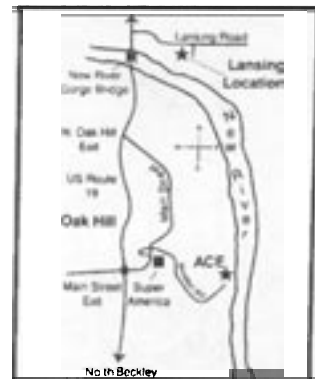
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The Ohiopyle Falls Race 2000

A View from the Edge

By Jan Steckel

The put-in for Pennsylvania's Lower Youghieny is just downstream of a dazzling 18-foot waterfall. Unfortunately, the falls are off limits according to Park regulations and kayakers are subject to a hefty fine if they make unsanctioned runs. In 1999 local outfitters and AWA representatives worked out a deal with the Park. The result was the 1999 Falls Race. Based on that event's success, park officials agreed to a repeat in 2000. The 2000 Falls Race lasted two days and was very successful. Many folks are hoping that this may pave the way for some sort of sanctioned falls running options. For my part, I think it's a great idea.

Ohiopyle was really jazzed up for this year's race. Perception, Prijon, and Thrillseeker reps had tents near the falls and all the outfitters were having sales. Wilderness Voyageurs Outfitters was dumping Perception kayaks at or below cost (they sold 17 kayaks on Saturday) and on Sunday there was a helicopter flying low over the falls with a camera on it.

The 18-foot vertical drop over the falls is the climax of the course, but a falls run involves running two rather difficult rapids upstream before one even gets to the eddy above the falls. I was pretty nervous before my first practice run on Saturday. I had to do a loop run first; I couldn't bring myself to go straight from the car and run two gnarly ledge drops followed by an 18-foot falls. However, after my warm-up and after hooking up with a suitable companion, Jake Nil, who kindly agreed to show me the good lines, I screwed up my courage and did fine. After the first two practice runs I felt better about those ledge drops and quit following Jake. My first few falls runs were deep, but I finally nailed a nice surface landing on the fifth practice run Saturday.

I got one more practice run on Sunday, also a decent landing on the main drop. My race run was my worst (of course). I flipped at the bottom of the falls. It is hard to roll there; the water is so aerated that it is too soft. I rolled up (finally) but my race time was pretty slow.

Many people swam in all sorts of places, but no one was hurt and everyone was (eventually) smiling. There were two tricky places beside the main falls. One was a horseshoe-shaped hydraulic that is in the first of the two upstream ledge drops. I happened to be next in line when some poor soul got trounced there. The view from upstream was not comforting, especially since I was not certain of the correct line. I saw paddle flails, huge geysers of water spraying up all over the place and occasionally a bow or a stern. The safety folks on the rock nearby eventually managed to pull in a very exhausted looking sufferer. Then, GEE, guess it's MY TURN. Waaaaaah!

The other place that was bad was the second ledge. There were 3 or 4 potential lines, but none of them seemed easy. The right and middle lines both had piton potential. A top duo got pinned on the right. Local paddling legend Chara O'Brien broke her Falcon running the middle. The far left line had a bad curler and was trashy — lots of swims there. I stuck with the middle line; I guess my guardian angel was in a good mood.

Pittsburgh native Mike Kinney went from glory to tragedy over the two days. Saturday was his glory day: 15 clean falls runs. He was getting beautiful air and nice high soaring launches. He was photographer Greg Green's poster boy; there were two large framed photographs of Mike at Greg's photo sale table. Mike was in a great frame of mind and happily doing more practice runs on Sunday morning when, around 11:00 AM, he got stuck in that horseshoe-shaped hydraulic in the first ledge. His glass boat ran the falls solo

Photos by Tom Uhlman



The 18-foot vertical drop over the falls is the climax of the course, but a falls run involves running two rather difficult rapids upstream before one even gets to the eddy above the falls.



and got beat up. I offered him my boat for the race, but he declined and did the best he could with duct tape. He had a nice race run in spite of the leaky boat and finished with a decent time. I have infinite respect for his nerve; I would never have had the guts to do the race run immediately after being trounced like that.

The women's winner was Erica Ruppel. Terry Peterson got second. In the men's class, Brian Homberg won for the second year in a row. Louis Geltman was second, Steve Kaufman was third, and Jesse Whittemore was fourth. Eric Martin was the fastest in a slalom boat. I was 58th overall (oh,well) but 4th in the women's class. (There are times when it's NICE being a minority.)

The freestyle event was stupendous. There were about a dozen entrants. Most pulled off some variant of a 180 going off the fall's lip. They also did other tricks like surfing the hole 4-feet upstream of the falls lip. Two or three did flat spins while surfing that hole. Some of them came out of their surfs and launched off the falls backwards,

with varying degrees of success. The overall winner was Clay Wright.

Jeff Snyder and Mark Gallegher both did a lot of "striding," (paddling with really long paddles while standing upright in a ducky). Jeff did practice runs on Saturday like he was running a marathon. He would execute a falls run; shoulder his big Aire ducky, and practically run back up to the put-in. I heard a rumor that he managed to do 40 runs that day.

Jeff nailed the landing most of the time, getting serious hang time with the ducky practically flat. His ducky has a lot of air resistance so it almost floats downward. It is amazing to see him land it. You would think he would squat low, but he remained standing, taking the force of the landing with just a small knee bend. During one run he raised his (wooden) helmet in a salute to the crowd while in the air. Another astonishing thing that Jeff does is roll his ducky "standing up." With his feet lodged in there tightly, he executes a nice kayak-style sweep roll and ends up standing upright.

The funniest thing I saw was at the end of the day on Saturday, just as the safety boaters were leaving. The last guy decided to do a paddle toss just before entering the approach plume to the main falls. Unfortunately, he missed catching his paddle by a few inches. At first he seemed calm; you could see him reaching for the paddle. He assumed the water would bring it to him. But a moment later he was picking up momentum. He started hand paddling backward and reached frantically for the paddle.

Finally, he had to give up and make the best of what most of us would consider a desperate situation. He squared his boat off for the plunge and had a great line. He did not even flip over at the bottom. His paddle caught up with him soon after.

But, I'll bet he will practice his paddle toss a lot more this winter!



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The following is a story of New York's Beaver River Rendezvous. (I don't call it a Festival or Chris Koll will kick my butt). The Rendezvous is a celebration of the work that Pete Skinner, Chris Koll and other dedicated AW volunteers did to make the Beaver releases happen. The first weekend consists of 5 releases on 3 different sections of the Beaver over 3 days. Taylorville, the easier Class IV section, releases Saturday & Monday morning. Moshier, a more difficult Class IV-V section, releases Sunday morning. And the gem of the Beaver, the Eagle section, a difficult Class V section, releases on Saturday & Sunday afternoons. Our story begins on the Eagle section...

Beaver Tales

By Karl Gesslein

◀ Bobby Miller opening a can of whoop ass on Slide #2 Eagle section of the Beaver River

So there I was on a beautiful Saturday afternoon, running one of the more difficult Class V runs in NY backwards on a \$50 bet. Thoughts of my sweet one-year-old son did NOT fill my mind. Survival was the focus here. How to pull off this stunt without getting flipped, swimming or worse. Marty probably didn't think anyone would really take him up on his \$50 dare to run it backwards. But I had decided to try it even before Marty voiced his challenge. Why was I doing it? Fame, fortune, glory?

No, I was doing it because I wanted to prove to myself that I had put off running the Eagle section of the Beaver so long that I could run it backwards. The Eagle section is considered to be the hardest of the three Beaver River sections. On the Eagle section over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile the river drops several hundred feet through a series of narrow slides and chutes, terminating in a small waterfall. The crowds of spectators on shore faded from my mind. All I could think about was, where is my boat, where am I pointed, and am I ready to brace? Complete focus.

My backwards run was not pretty, but

better than many other paddler's forward facing runs.

When everything was said and done I took the \$50 from Marty just to make him sweat it for a minute. Then I gave it back and told him to donate it to AW. My karma could not deal with taking another paddler's money on a bet to run something that I had NOT gotten hammered on. Other people swam on the Beaver that day; none of the swimmers escaped unscathed. Several sucked quite a bit of water, especially on the first big hole at Taylorville, the Class IV section that releases in the mornings.

That big hole sent me on a swim in 1999 when I dropped into it on purpose to play. After about 5 seconds I knew it was going to be really hard to get out of it. After almost a minute of mostly upright surfing I bailed out and started recirculating. After 15 seconds and about 4 recircs I swam out. This weekend others were not so lucky. One guy had 4 throw bags join him in the hole, to no avail. When he finally flushed out of the hole he was not a happy camper. It's pretty easy to forget that even really good boaters can and do drown.

But lets rewind to the beginning of the



weekend for the whole story. I arrived late Friday night at the Taylorville campground. Somehow I managed to talk Mike into sliding down Taylorville's 2nd big 30 foot slide on Themarest pads at minimum flow. The borrowed headlamp I was wearing bounced down onto my nose and made a couple of deep incisions as I careened down the bumpy 30 foot slide, laughing maniacally the whole way. It was pretty fun. We vowed to take the Themarest pads down during the full release the next day.

A bunch of little worms got all over us on our slide and we meticulously cleaned them all off. It must have looked pretty bizarre, two full grown men standing naked in a pool of water at night examining each other's bodies head to toe with headlamps. Remembering the movie Deliverance, I expected some toothless locals to come out of the woods with shotguns and fantasies of turning us into their little pigs.

Saturday morning the first release at Taylorville went without incident, except for the 2 guys that nearly drowned in the first bad hole. After almost 10 runs down the slide, including a Themarest run for good measure, we continued on to the rest of the river. We headed over to Eagle for the afternoon release. My first several runs of Eagle went surprisingly well. I ran it backwards once to fulfill Marty's bet, scared out of my wits. Then I ran it several more times facing forwards.

That evening we headed back to the Taylorville campsite for dinner. Over the past couple weeks I had been toying with the idea of buying a jetski. Surely an unlikely idea for an AW volunteer. I had no idea exactly how noisy and frightening jetskis really were. That evening after our full day of paddling I decided to try out a jetski on the Taylorville reservoir. Standing up on a jetski was difficult to say the least. People gathered around to watch me dragging around the lake behind the jetski like a wet sock. I flailed pitifully in repeated attempts to get up while the powerful streams of water pounded my private areas. After several attempts I pretty much decided that it wasn't my thing.

Later Saturday evening I was surprised to see the fragmentation of the paddling community. In the past all the paddlers had congregated around one big fire. This year there were many fires, representing groups from Canada, the Black River Boys, the NJ crew, Zoar Gap guys and the Plattsburg boaters. It was interesting moving from one fire to the next, watching the different group dynamics. Not the least interesting of which was the Black River Hudson rafting crew, who were partying completely naked and offering candy to people passing

by. Alas their attempts to attract Canadian women by partying naked failed. Better luck next year, I suppose.

That night lying under the stars I thought about paddling Class V stuff backwards. I thought about the anticipation and fear of not knowing what was going to happen. Crazy ideas of running other Class V stuff backwards filled my head. I fell asleep dreaming of running the Bottom Moose backwards from beginning to end. It was a great evening, until it started raining in the middle of the night. Running to the car in my underwear, I searched for the tent. After it was set up the sprinkling stopped, but I crawled in anyway to get away from the bugs.

The next morning after a couple runs down Moshier I headed over to Eagle. I kept saying, "Just one more run, or until the power guy comes and shuts off the water." The power guy was about 45 minutes late, so I made way more runs than I planned. That evening I rode around on my mountain bike begging food, visiting one site after another. After dark I continued my rounds, tearing through the woods with my super-fly headlight equipped bike.

The locals ride along the top of the 15 foot diameter water pipes in their dirt bikes for fun, but I didn't think I wanted to pit my sanity against that of the locals.

Eric tested the locals' sanity against his own when he decided to participate in their version of the X-games. The event required several traffic cones and a Quad-racer towing a trailer with an easy chair in it. Donning a helmet and other protective paddling gear as a precautionary measure, Eric was promptly dumped from the trailer, as the four-wheeler weaved in and out of the traffic cones. The locals swore up and down that the trailer had never flipped before, but then again, they had probably never given rides to non-locals before either.

The locals say they tube Taylorville and Eagle when they are running at flood, not just our "piddly" release levels. Come to think of it Eagle would be a pretty good run in an inner tube Nah!...



Zone Dogg Miller running the second drop of three on the Mosier Dam, Beaver River.

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Front Surfing



McQuade surfin' at The Shoots, Paint Creek, OH.

By Don Getzin

It is unfortunate that the term "ferrying" is used for that whitewater maneuver in which one paddles upstream, but angling toward the shore. This maneuver received its name because it was once thought to be similar to the movement of and forces on an old-time river ferryboat. That old ferryboat was a barge attached to a cable strung across the river. In whitewater ferrying, there are no unbalanced forces abeam (at right angles to our boat's imaginary keel), as there are at times on the barge-on-a-cable ferryboat. However, there is a whitewater maneuver which is analogous to the barge-on-a-cable ferryboat. That is front surfing!

For those new to boating, front surfing is a form of whitewater play in which we face upstream and ferry our boat onto the upstream face of a sufficiently large standing wave. We can surf back and forth across the upstream face of the wave, just as surfboarders do in the ocean. In the ocean, the water is stationary (it just moves up and down), while the waves roll toward the shore. In the river, however, the water actually moves downstream, but the waves are stationary. That means we potentially can have a very long ride!

Front surfing is possible because the component of gravity on our boat which is directed down the face of the wave opposes and offsets the drag on our boat created by the current, so that our boat remains more-

or-less stationary on the face of the wave. In the case of the old barge-on-a-cable ferryboat, it was the force on the barge exerted by the cable, which offset the drag force, held it stationary, and prevented it from Boating downstream.

If, while front surfing we angle our boat toward one shore or the other, an unopposed component of the drag force directed toward that shore arises. This causes our boat to surf along the face of the wave toward that shore.

Angling our boat toward the opposite shore then causes it to surf back along the face of the wave. Surfing back and forth along the face of a wave is called shredding.

Angling is exactly what the pilot of the barge-on-a-cable ferryboat did when he used his rudder to make his boat move back and forth across the river. He used the same unbalanced components of the drag force to make his ferryboat shred.

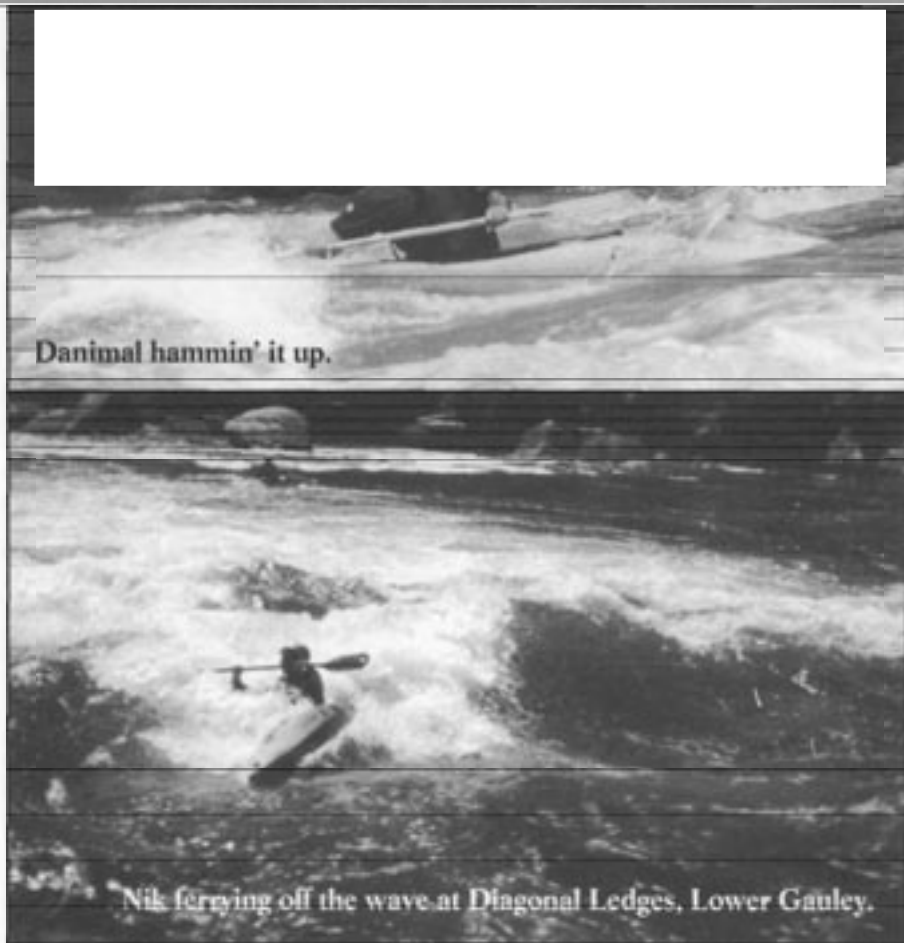
There are several ways to angle a canoe or kayak while front surfing. For both boats, only stern strokes are used, and they are best performed as far toward the stem as possible. This usually means the boater has to lean way back with his body rotated to the side and with both arms extended out over the water. If a boater tries to use bow strokes instead of stern strokes to change his angle, he usually is "blown" back off the wave.

A boater can use stern pries and stern draws, making his boat move, respectively, toward his paddling side or away from his paddling side. An OC-I boater must be very careful, however, when angling his boat toward his paddling side, because the stern draw is often not a powerful enough stroke to control the angle. If his angle becomes too large, he will be unable to recover and surf himself off the wave. A K1 boater can use stern pries on both sides, so this is less of a problem.

A better but more delicate way to angle your boat is to rudder. With your body rotated so that you are facing the side of your boat, and with both arms extended out over the water to the side, start with your shaft perfectly parallel to your imaginary keel and the blade perfectly vertical. An OC-I boater



Melissa watching the bow.



Danimal hammin' it up.

Nik ferrying off the wave at Diagonal Ledges, Lower Gauley.

will have the thumb on his grip hand pointing straight up. Rotating your paddle shaft toward you causes the top of your blade to

rotate toward your hull. If you simultaneously push out a little on your top hand, your boat will move to your "off-side." This is equiva-

lent to a stern draw. Rotating your shaft away causes the top of your blade to rotate away from your hull. If you simultaneously push out a little on your bottom hand, your boat will move to your "on-side." This is equivalent to a stern pry.

A K-1 boater can, of course, do this on both sides of his boat.

When your boat starts to surf across the face of the wave, you must tilt your hull slightly in the direction you are surfing. This is to counteract the unbalanced force which occurs on your hull below your center of gravity, and which tends to make you tip upstream. Tilting your hull also starts your hull cawing across the face of the wave. The amount of tilt or lean you use controls how tight a turn your hull begins to carve. To surf back in the other direction, you must stop your boat from carving by flattening the hull before using the proper sternstroke to change the angle.

Front surfing should not be thought of as a one-dimensional left-to-right shredding maneuver. Think in three dimensions. Your boat can also be moved forward or back on the wave, either by leaning your body forward or back or by throwing in a forward or a back stroke. If your bow is diving too deeply into the wave ahead of you, you can "clear your bow" and pull yourself back off away by using a far back stationary draw stroke or paddle plant. If you lean forward and drive your bow into the wave upstream of you, you might even get an "endo."

Look carefully at the current while you are surfing. It may not be parallel to the riverbanks, and it may not be uniform across the face of the wave. Feel what is happening to your boat with your knees. Sometimes defocusing your eyes enables you to concentrate on what you are feeling. Some paddlers get disoriented or even dizzy while front surfing as the water rushes by on both sides of the boat. If that happens to you, try focusing on a stationary object upstream such as a rock or a tree, instead of on the water.

Front surfing takes finesse, not power.

Editor's note: Originally published in Paddle Splashes, the Appalachian Mountain Club: NY No. J Canoe Chapter newsletter. Don Getzin is an ACA OC-1, 2 instructor.



Melissa and JKV shreddin the shredder.

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Plastic Welding: A Quick Fix

By Bill Hay

I recently had a little mishap while paddling in Idaho. Translate "little mishap" as "swim."

On this particular occasion, my boat got damaged leaving a tear in the cockpit rim just beside the pedestal.

By the way, I am a c-boater and paddle a plastic Dagger Cascade.

Although not large, this was a bothersome tear since this part of the boat flexes quite a bit. I was sure the tear would worsen over time, and that the leak would worsen.

Cascades are hard to come by and I am cheap, so I decided to effect a repair myself.

This turned out not to be easy. I first tried an epoxy repair using a lightcloth for reinforcement. This got me through the rest

of my trip to Idaho, but shortly thereafter the epoxy came off in one piece. I later found out that I had made a mistake in sanding the plastic. Apparently, this releases oils from the plastic that make it very difficult to get a good bond.

I was told that heating the sanded area until a glaze appears is the way to rid a plastic boat of these oils and secure a better bond.

But the guy who told me this, Jeff Scott of Cascade Plastics Repair in Puyallup, Washington, also showed me a better way to repair plastic boats — plastic welding.

Jeff is a welder for a company that repairs automobile parts. Cascade Plastics Repair specializes in automobile bumpers, but Jeff was nice enough to fool with my boat for a half hour or so.

Plastic welding involves heat and welding rods, plastic rods that are designed to adhere to various kinds of plastics. And there are many kinds of plastics out there, people. This is the biggest challenge of boat repair (after the challenge of finding a body shop with a welder, or a specialty shop like Cascade Plastics Repair) — finding a rod that matches the plastic of your boat.

We used a general-purpose rod for my repair, but there are other choices. I would recommend consulting with your boat manufacturer and welder to make a match.

The way this repair was done is this: The tear was melted together. A wire mesh was melted into the repair side. The welding rod was then melted into the site to effect the final weld.

Jeff left me with a fairly smooth repair, one I was comfortable covering with, you guessed it, duct tape. He also warned me that sanding such a repair is chancy. You risk detaching the weld entirely. But it can be done if you have a really good weld.

Automobile bumpers are routinely sanded and painted after being welded, but they are made from a highly repairable plastic.

Will it hold? Well, I'll see, but it certainly is better than any glass repair I could have done.

Next time you rip a boat, try a weld. If it doesn't work, you can always re-weld the spot using a different rod, try a glass fix, or turn the boat back to the dealer for recycling.

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Two One Sik Boaters, Sik Creek

By Bobby Zonedogg Miller

At JD's Morgantown, West Virginia boater party on March 11 most people watched Twitch and recounted tales of past paddling experiences. I couldn't sit still through any of this. It was raining and raining hard and I knew it wasn't going to be long before this sikman got sik.

I even abstained from getting drunk to make sure that no hangover would bring down my creeking. Lord knows that this was difficult, because I have never met a cold beverage or a happy hour I didn't like. I had my sights set on a creek that I had scouted out a week before. It is about a mile long and it drops 500 feet.

It looked schweet and I couldn't wait to jump on it. "Why not tell me the real name of the creek?" you ask. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE CREEK'S NAME IS! All that matters is that the ZoneDogg was going out to layeth the smacketh down and there were only two things that that creek could do about it: nothing and like it! IF YOU SMELLLLLLLLLL WHAT THE DOGG IS COOKIN! (Editor's note: It was Bull Run, a Cheat tributary near Masontown, W.V.)

The next morning Joe Stumpf and I headed out to get sik. We drove to the "tunes" like "Guerilla Radio" and "Killing In The Name Of." On the way we passed many creeks with tons of water. However, each creek seemed to have less water than the one before, which started to worry me.

However, our target creek has a nice long watershed with several tribs, gutters and a few warranty concrete slides coming in. We reached the put-in and decided that, although it was low, it had enough water. We geared up in a blizzard of snow flurries.

Boaters drove past headed for less extreme runs like the Big Sandy Cheat Canyon. They stopped, gave us smirks, and said that they couldn't believe that we were going to attempt this creek at this level. I promptly explained that they nor anyone else could not deny this creek of its big chance to go ONE ON ONE WITH THE GREAT ONE! They obviously didn't know the tricks of the trade because we found plenty of water to tackle this run.

We put on right where the gradient begins. We were immediately confronted with



a slide that ended in a 4-foot drop onto an angled slab, which sent you close to an undercut on the left. After some easy rock gardens, we came to an 8-foot ledge. It had a schweeet clapper on the left. I pulled a double clap because I launched off a small rock at the top and clapped on the launcher slab; then off the 8-footer — clapping on the rock at the bottom. I clapped so hard that Joe could hear it from above. I clapped so hard that the next county over thought there was an earthquake (it was a 9.3 on the Clapter Scale). Joe went a little further to the right and landed smoothly on the foam pile next to the clapper.

Next, we were out scouting a 4-part drop that I named Brutus. It was steep and cool. It started with a sloping 5-foot drop through a slot into a small pool. Then it tumbled over a 7-foot ledge, followed by a slot with an overhanging undercut, followed immediately by a 5-foot drop. This drop led into a 12-foot cascade that banked into a rock wall halfway down.

Joe went first and ran off the 7-footer on the left to catch an eddy above the slot. I decided to run on the right, where there was a good launch rock. I launched a schweeet boof off this rock getting inajor air (Oh yesh, it was niche!). I headed for the slot, but was a little overzealous in punching the small hole and pitoned into a small rock on the left side of the slot. I bounced off, went over the 5-foot drop and caught the eddy above the cascade. After Joe joined me in the eddy, we both aced the schweeet cascade.

Soon we were scouting again, this time at a rapid called Matador. Matador is a long steep rapid that drops 60-70 feet in 100 yards. It starts with a 6-foot ledge from which I launched a niche boof. (Oh yesh, it was schweeet!). Then I parked my boat on the bank to scout the rest of the rapid. The water went off a 4-foot drop onto a slide that made a 90-degree turn to the right and cascaded 12-15 feet. Then it made a 90-degree turn to the left and cascaded another ten feet. This cascade ended in a 30-foot waterfall into a shallow pool. There was a niche boof ramp on the left, but it didn't have quite enough water going over it to get a confident launch.

There was also a slot on the far right that went off a 5-foot drop into a slide toward the middle of the falls, where you could launch. However, any mistake on this tightropewould result in falling 25 feet into a pile of jagged rocks (not real enticing).

I decided that Matador would have to wait for another day to tangowith this Brahma Bull and carried my boat. So Joe and I hacked our way through the congo. While portaging we ran into my buddy, Wally, who was hiking the creek with the intention of running it one day. He was surprised to see two sikmen out there. Joe and I slid down a long rock face into the creek and ran a tight slot with an F.U. rock at the bottom. We were confronted again with an ominous horizon line, so it was back into the congo for more scouting.

This rapid had a boulder drop that was clogged with trees at the top that had to be portaged. Then, it continued through a nar-



row slot and down a 12-foot cascade that bounced off a rock to the left. The rock looked like it could trap you, so I had Joe stand on it to assist if something went wrong. I came flying down the cascade at Mach 10, banked off the pillow and was immediately confronted by an overhang with a 5 foot flume pouring off it (coming from another channel). I shot underneath the overhang with the curtain of water pouring down on me and came out the other side. It was one of the coolest drops I have ever run! It was way sik! Joe walked around the cascade but put in right below it and paddled under the overhang as well.

We had to portage the next drop, a 4-foot ledge followed by a 6-foot ledge, because it had 4 trees pinned in it. We lowered our boats down next to a bear trap of branches that you could easily stumble through. It would have been a 10-foot fall onto rocks and we were glad we didn't step into it.

After a slide, the creek mellowed out some with many tight boulder drops. Although they weren't real steep, we still had to scout frequently to look for trees. In one drop, Joe tried to paddle toward a boof rock, but stalled on an underwater tree in front of the rock. He fell off the drop slowly, went deep, and got washed into a rock below the drop before rolling. I followed, stalled on the tree as well, and went deep. There were lots of tight slots and moves through these rapids. One drop plummeted into a niche launcher off a 4-foot drop. Another drop had a sweet looking boof into a slot on the right, but, unfortunately, it had trees in it. We ran off a 4-foot ledge on the left, grabbed a rock to stop the momentum, and ferried through a tight slot to finish the drop. The slot was so narrow that I had to tilt my boat on edge to fit.

Soon, the creek steepened again and we were scouting a 12-foot cascade through a narrow slot. It had a cool boof on the right and a crease on the left. I went deep in the approach and then, as I started down the slide, a rock pushed me to the left. I cascaded cleanly through the crease. It was schweeeet! Joe flipped in the entrance but came down the cascade in the center and launched a schweeeet boof (Oh yesh!).

Right below was a slide into a 20-25 foot falls that clapped about halfway down on a rock slab. A ramp on the left was dry, but would be a sik launcher with more water. We decided that the clapper looked more warranty voiding than fun, so we walked around. I probed the pool at the bottom with my paddle and found it to be about a foot deep. Oddly, the bottom was soft mud and not rock. (Things that make you go "hmmmm.")

At the end of the pool was a horizon line, so we got out to have a look. It was a drop onto a 10-foot slide that fed into a huge undercut rock. I was a little concerned about the undercut, so I had Joe stand near it while I ran the rapid. I boofed far left and rode high

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on the slide. I slid down smoothly past the undercut, but this was not a place for a mistake. From the eddy below, I could look way back into the dugout of this undercut. I saw a little daylight in there. Not pretty.

We continued to make our way down the creek boat scouting. One rapid fed right into an ugly sieve that reminded me of the Subway on the Potomac at Great Falls. We avoided this drop by running a slot on the right.

We soon came to a craggy horizon. I wanted to have a look for myself. The water went through a slot over a 4-foot drop. This was sure to send you deep. Then it made a 90-degree turn against a wall on the left and an overhanging undercut on the right. I was unsure how deep the water was in the slot, so

I decided to probe it with a log. I kept ramming it into the bottom of the drop and was making no contact with rock. I let go of the stick and it floated through the rest of the rapid, only to disappear underneath an undercut on the right at the bottom.

I decided to run this drop but I wanted Joe to stand close by for safety. I went deep, banked off the pillow, and down over the next drop smoothly (It was niche!). To give you an idea how narrow this slot was, Joe stepped across it to get to the other bank.

After some more boulder drops and tree portages, we reached the mighty Cheat. Where we took-out, there was a car smashed on the riverbank that had fallen from the road hundreds of feet above. I calculated that

that guy must have been going 532 miles per hour to bust through all of the trees and make it almost the whole way down to the river. He probably needed a running start on the straightaway to accomplish this feat.

We loaded everything up in snow flurries that had lasted the rest of the day. We tried to check out some other creeks in the area but were running out of daylight. But that was okay. I had gotten to tackle a new creek and explore an area I knew little about. It was a sick day, which prompted me to go to the topos looking for another new steep unknown creek to run. I found one, now I just need some rain!

Editors note: And so another guest checks in to the Great One's Smackdown Hotel!

On Drowning & The Perfect Storm

by Nick Lipkowski

While reading Sebastian Junger's *The Perfect Storm*, I was struck by some observations he makes on the subject of drowning. "The panic of a drowning person" he writes, "is mixed with an odd incredulity that this is actually happening. 'So this is drowning' a drowning person might think, 'So this is how my life ends.'" These thoughts sounded remarkably similar to my own when on the morning of July 4, 1998, I found myself looking up to the gray light filtering through the surface of the water below Big Splat on West Virginia's Big Sandy River and saying to myself "Well, you read about this all the time."

I associate panic with the ability, perhaps irrationally, to lash out physically. Whatever panic I experienced in this instance did not so much mix with, but rather gave way quickly to the reality that I was trapped; held bodily, seated downstream against an obstruction by an irresistible force of water. It rendered my arms useless. Soon I was resigned to the fact that I was beyond my own or anyone else's ability to help.

Junger continues, "No matter how desperate the drowning person is, he doesn't inhale until he's on the verge of losing consciousness. That is called the 'break point'; laboratory experiments have shown the break point to come after 87 seconds." My companions on shore concur that I was under between 60 and 90 seconds. It is unlikely that I reached the "break point" because I exhibited no signs of having inhaled water. But I must have been on the verge of losing consciousness, because I

cannot recall how it is that I was freed, nor do I recall my pfd or new river shoes being stripped from me.

Again from the book, "Lack of oxygen to the brain causes a sensation of darkness closing in from all sides, as in a camera aperture stopping down." My period of amnesia occurred between the dreamy sensation I felt as I searched for a peaceful ending and the rude awakening as the violent buffeting of rocks jolted me back to the reality that just wasn't my time to check out yet.

While my companions have offered their version of the events in various forums including *American Whitewater*, I have remained silent. There seemed no way to properly thank the small army of boaters who selflessly aborted or delayed their trips to aid in my rescue. In addition, I'm at a loss to respond to the inevitable comment "You must have been scared," because fear was not my primary emotion. For a few months following the event I suspected that I might be selectively blocking those semiconscious moments and that they might suddenly reveal themselves in a nightmare or as a flashback.

Two years have passed and I have given up that notion. I am back to paddling as aggressively as if it had never happened. Getting recirculated in holes is no more disturbing than it ever was, but I have a heightened interest in accounts of close calls. I recommend *The Perfect Storm* for as accurate and disturbing a description as I can imagine. As the author points out, it is from those who

have come back from such events that we learn, and while I have nothing new to offer (sorry, no blinding lights or beckoning voices) I am compelled to recount my experience as supportive evidence for what I consider an uncanny consensus.

How I was extricated from my entrapment is still a mystery. I recall the sensation of falling, followed by a sudden and violent stop, as if I had run into a brick wall. My primary injury, a torn ACL in my right knee, may have occurred on impact, but I believe, based on how I am told these injuries happen, that my ligament may have contributed to my entrapment. When the ligament eventually gave way, it may have allowed a change in position that led to my ejection from the trap. Perhaps muscle relaxation as I succumbed to subconsciousness was a factor.

In late August of 1998, following sufficient recuperation, I hiked in to Splat with a mask and snorkel when the Sandy was extremely low and found a pair of prescription sport goggles I'd lost that day.

Even with less than 30 cfs showing on the USGS internet site, the depth of the water at the base of Splat was at the very least twelve feet and probably greater.

As boaters we become accustomed to holding our breath under water and are less prone to panic under prolonged submersion, voluntary or otherwise than those who avoid water sports. Fear of drowning I speculate, is more accurately a phobia associated with the idea than with the event.

New School flips, tips, & tricks.

by Sam Drevo

How to "do" a Backstab

O.K., so you are a freestyle kayaking fanatic, and are trying to improve your repertoire by learning the Backstab. Well, my first question for you would be, "Do you know how to do a Blunt?" This is important because a Backstab is merely a Blunt in reverse.

I want to give you a little history in layman's terms so everyone can follow what I am saying. Back in the day when 360 moves were performed by elite kayakers only, they were done using the currents of the river in a hole to help swing the ends of the boat around laterally. Now, not only can intermediates learn these "flat spins" easily (in a large part due to the ubiquity of planing hulls), but the most challenging/dynamic moves are done against the flow of the river. By performing these moves "against the grain," paddlers can throw dynamic spins that are elevated and under the right circumstances create lift that pops boaters out of the water. The Blunt and Backstab epitomize these moves against the grain creating sensational elevated moves that are becoming standard freestyle fare.

Blunts are initiated from a front surf, while Backstabs are initiated from a back surf. In order to perform a Backstab, you must first be able to back surf as well as you can front surf. Prior to attempting a Backstab, get some mileage backsurfing lots of waves. Focus on proper posture, speed across the wave, balance/edge control, and awareness of your position on the wave. Once you feel confident with backsurfing, particularly your position on the wave, then you're ready to focus on the timing and explosiveness required in the Backstab.

Posture and Position: The proper posture for backsurfing is to make sure that you weight your bow by leaning forward, and placing your bow rudder at your toes. By having proper posture backsurfing, your stern will be free to guide your boat across the wave. Position yourself so that you are surfing back and forth on the crest/face of the wave. If you generate cross current momentum on the crest you will be controlling your boat, and keeping your stern from pearling



when your boat drops into the trough or hits surfs.

Balance and Timing: Now that you are backsurfing with proper posture and speed, you want to make sure your weight is over your boat. With the constant direction changes it is easy to lean on your paddle (for a brace) and lose your balance. Controlled backsurfing requires solid edge control actually tilting your boat away from your rudder. Awareness is key when you are back surfing and setting up for the Backstab because you can't see the trough of the wave, and therefore it is difficult to time your strokes and leans. Awareness and stroke timing only get better with practice.

Finally, explosive power is needed to whip your boat around your body and back to the front surf position. The quicker you can put together all these elements the more elevation you will achieve. Lets now use all these components to perform a perfectly visualized Backstab.

Putting it all together: Visualize your favorite wave and surf onto it (preferably with at least one steep shoulder). Establish your front surf, and execute a 180 degree spin so you are now back surfing. Assume your forward leaning posture. Control your boat with a bow rudder. Stay balanced and anticipate the moves of your boat as if it was an extension of your body. Briefly looking over your shoulder, identify the steepest part of the wave's shoulder. Backsurf away from the steepest part of the face to set up your

Backstab. Place a bow rudder on the side of the boat opposite the steep part of the wave, you edge your boat away from the rudder, and surf across the wave building some cross current momentum. Now your boat is carving across the wave towards the steep shoulder. Glance over at the face one last time to figure out your stroke timing. Sometimes you can drop your angle a bit (towards the trough) to increase your speed as you approach the steep shoulder. If you do this, make sure you redirect your boat towards the crest to prepare for the Backstab (it's critical to place your boat near the crest of the wave when you initiate a Backstab). Once your boat has the cross current speed and your bow rudder is directing your carve, you want to look in the direction you will be turning (to get ahead of the spin).

- 1 Flatten your boat to start your plane
- 2 Transfer your weight to the stern to initiate and loosen your bow
- 3 Simultaneously turn the bow rudder into an explosive and powerful stern draw that will thrust your bow over your head and back to the front surf position
- 4 Get your torso forward as soon as your boat comes off the elevated and accelerated spin to regain control of your boat as you reestablish your front surf.

Good job. You have now successfully visualized the Backstab. Now, dream about it tonight, do a karma dance for the rain gods, and drive carefully to your most favorite park and play wave. Visualize your Backstab as many times as needed until you feel confident that you can complete it. Then execute!



Photos by Jed Weingarten Photography3



The Ten Rules of Building Boat Stuff

By Dana Castro

To all those who ask about making things, I wish to offer a few thoughts, which I have condensed into the TEN RULES OF BUILDING BOAT STUFF. I first started annoying my family and neighbors with the smell of resins, the dust of woods, and the noise of tools in the late 1960s. I have continued on and off ever since, never being deterred by physical, financial, or emotional distress. I have learned these rules the hard way, which, by the way, is the only way anyone ever learns them...

Rule #1: If you get into "building stuff" you won't save money, in fact the cost of materials and tools will be FAR GREATER than even the up front price of the most exotic equipment available on the market.

Rule #2: The first several months (or even years in the case of big projects like boats) will produce NOTHING OF VALUE. An inevitable problem will be how to get the garbage man to take away all your failures without imposing special surcharges to your monthly bill.

Rule #3: If you're married or have neighbors within hailing distance and you get into "building stuff," you'd better hope they're VERY tolerant people or you'll end up paying lawyers more money than you'd ever have spent on boating gear.

Rule #4: Working with composites, foam, wood, and other boat or paddle building materials is the DIRTIEST, NOISIEST activity ever conceived of by man short of detonating a thermonuclear device in the several megaton range.

Rule #5: This dirt will slowly work its way into and onto everything in a large radius, so you'd better give up RIGHT AWAY the idea of every driving a clean car again or wearing any clothing that doesn't have a tiny telltale smear of cured resin, which ABSOLUTELY CANNOT BE REMOVED BY ANY KNOWN MEANS WITHOUT COMPLETE AND UTTER DESTRUCTION OF THE GARMET.

Rule #6: You CAN protect yourself from this dirt and noise with appropriate gear, but when so outfitted, you run the risk of being identified as an alien from Roswell, or hauled to the nut house by the police.

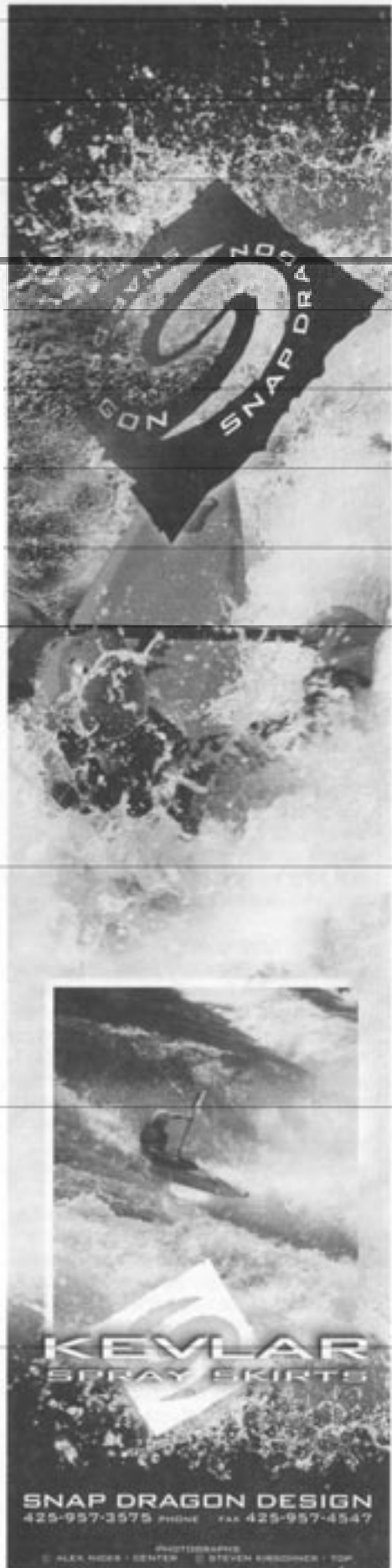
Rule #7: If you do get into building stuff sooner or later you will have to work indoors, such as in the basement. THIS MEANS YOU WILL NEED FORCED VENTILATION (such as an exhaust fan built into a door), in order to avoid asphyxiation, cancer, or divorce. Be prepared to add PLENTY to your heating bill.

Rule #8: Rule number 7 illustrates ONLY ONE OF MANY UNEXPECTED COSTS that you will INEVITABLY encounter, no matter how penurious and careful you may be. This also relates back to Rule #1.

Rule #9: Eventually, if you are REALLY thoughtful, skilled, and EXTREMELY AND PERVERSELY STUBBORN you MIGHT make a product that equals or even surpasses what is available on the market. IF this happens, which is BY NO MEANS ASSURED, people will begin to ask you to "make them one." This will then introduce you to an ENTIRE NEW RANGE of DIFFICULT, ANNOYING, AND UNEXPECTED EVENTS. Soon you will realize that you would often have been MUCH BETTER OFF WITHOUT HAVING GOTTEN INVOLVED WITH THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE, no matter how much they pay you.

Rule #10: Despite the immutable existence of the first Nine of the Ten Rules, IF you do get into "building things" to any serious degree it will be one of the most intense and creative experiences of your life. In fact, it may be one of those "life changing" things. Using something on the river that you have designed, developed, and created is an experience with few equals.

Thus Rule Ten becomes the Great Contradiction...On one hand I can say that the experience of "building stuff" is as infective as the Ebola virus and to be avoided like the plague; on the other hand, I can say that if you have the interest, you are missing one of the great experiences of life if you fail to try.





The Doctor is In?

Having a tough time reconciling your love of whitewater with your affairs of the heart? Share your misery with AW's own whitewater love expert, Dr. Juste Kantgettenuff. Dr. Kantgettenuff is currently the head of the Division of Motivational Podiatry within the Department of Proctology at the University of Katmandu School of Medicine. Even if he can't solve your problems, Dr. Kantgettenuff will do his best to exploit your misery for the amusement of the readers of this magazine. Send your letters to Dr. Kantgettenuff care of the editor. But if, perchance, your questions involve tiny insects that crawl about you know where, please DO NOT include samples in the envelope. (Message to Sam in Columbus: Yes... They ARE crabs!)

SHE WILL BE MINE!

Dear Dr. Kantgettenuff,

Ever since I first saw the photos of Schweet Isabelle in the Riot ads, I've had a hankerin' to lay the smackdown on her. How can I, a 51 year-old man, steal her away from Corran, at least long enough to check her into the Smackdown Hotel? I bought one of them rodeo boats, but can see that is not going to be my strong suit.

I've thought about challenging Corran to a rodeo duel in a terminal hole and letting him go first, but that dude is so SIK he would probably still come out alive... and there I'd be. Even if I got him to rochambeaux for her and I got to go first I'm a fearin' I'd just hurt my foot because that dude probably has some high tech chrome-moly cajones. And there I'd be again.

But I really want her! Please, Doctor help me!

She will be mine. Yes, SHE MUST BE MINE!

Thanks,
Attopofhill Notover
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dear Attopofhill,

The Good Doctor feels your pain. I too have gazed longingly at the Riot ads and I must admit that Isabelle would be quite a prize. But in good conscience I must advise you, Attopofhill, that your pursuit of Isabelle will surely be a dangerous undertaking. Admittedly, if you succeed, the reward will be indescribably sweet. But you will have to negotiate treacherous waters to achieve your purpose. And, at age 51 it is possible that reaching your goal might prove fatal, in and of itself.

That is why the first thing you should do is go to your doctor and get a cardiac stress test. You need to find out if your feeble old

heart will be able to take the strain. If you pass that test, this is what you must do.

You were on the right track with your first idea. You must challenge Corran to a rodeo duel in a hole, though not a terminal one as you suggested. Just a really mean one. Phil's Hole on the Ottawa should do nicely. Let Corran go first, no doubt he will put on quite a show. While Corran is battling the vicious monster, you must attract Isabelle's attention. Make no attempt to hide the overwhelming fear and dismay that you will no doubt be feeling. Let fair Isabelle appreciate just how terrified you are. And you will be terrified Attopofhill, because you will know that you are about to get the worst ass kicking of your life. Take it from one whom has been there, that maelstrom is going to beat the snot out of you. You should be afraid. Very afraid!

But in spite of your terror, in spite your sense of impending doom, you must struggle to put on a game face as you climb into your kayak. Remember what the great Bard said, "A coward dies a thousand deaths, the valiant die but once." As you drift down river toward the hole, gaze longingly at Isabelle and give her a brave little wave. Kind of like one Sean Penn gave Susan Sarandon before they killed his sorry ass in "Dead Man Walking."

Once you are in the hole, nature will run its course. You will take a god awful hammering and no doubt you will get badly hurt. If you want to get it over with quickly, throw a high brace... your shoulder will be instantly dislocated. One way or another you will inevitably swim. But resist the temptation to pop your skirt and abandon your kayak; let the hole rip you out of it. Next you will recycle, no doubt for quite some time. But make certain, Attopofhill, that you do not flush out of the hole until there is a lot of blood on the water.

This is where things get tricky. After they drag your sorry ass to shore, you must ignore the unimaginable pain and be brave. There must be no sniveling and no whimpering! Think about Chuck Norris, Texas Ranger! Or, better still, a REAL American hero, DUBYA BUSH! This is your moment to shine, to show sweet Isabelle what a man you are. When she realizes just how courageous and gallant you are, it will not matter to her that Corran's technical performance in the hole was superior. She will want you because you are her brave little soldier! And 'hen, Attopofhill, she will be yours! And if he isn't, don't blame the Good Doctor. SLAME CANADA!

One additional word of caution. You can try this with sweet Isabelle, but I wouldn't try it with Riot's new advertising icon, the Dominatrix. Don't even think about going after that one!

NO MORE MUTTAFRISEURS!

Dear Dr. Kantgettenuff,

You were right about that guy I told you about, the open boater who parted his hair down the middle. When you said he was a muttafriseur I didn't know what you meant, but I found out soon enough. What a pervert he turned out to be! That creep has some kind of weirdo whitewater fetish. The things he wanted me to do! Being from New York I consider myself to be a very open minded person, but I do have my limits.

The way I see it, carabiners, slings and throw ropes are for rescues, not for #@%\$\$ #\$\$\$ \$ # \$ \$ \$ # \$ % % % \$ # # @ # \$, and certainly not for \$ \$ \$ @ @ @ # \$ \$ \$ # # % ^ \$ \$ \$ \$ # @ * % # # \$!!!

No wonder that muttafriseur spent time in jail. Needless to say after I figured what he was up to, I dumped his sorry ass.

But that leaves me back at ground zero, still looking for a good whitewater man. I've been thinking a change in scenery might help. Maybe I should try my luck out west. What do you think?

Eternally grateful,
Goldie Digere
New York, New York

My Dearest Goldie,

Thank goodness you got away from that nasty muttafriseur before he had his way with you! You are well rid of him. My Grandmama Connie Kantgettenuff always used to say that getting involved with a man who parts his hair down the middle is almost as foolish as dating a trundahier with stupid blue eyes.

As for heading west in search of a whitewater companion, it might not be such a bad idea. The Good Doctor must advise you, however, that male boaters west of the Mississippi inevitably fall into one of two categories: those with lots of money who can't boat at all, and those with excellent boating skills who don't have a dime to their names.

So before you go, you need to decide what you are looking for in a mate. Hair boating skills or money? You can't have both.

If you choose the former, be prepared to sleep in the back of a rusty 84 Ford pickup and eat nothing but boiled potatoes. On the bright side, you might get to paddle the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone or even the South Fork of Silver Creek (see this issue).

If you choose the latter, be prepared to ride about in a brand new Lincoln Navigator and dine on truffles and caviar with Madonna in Aspen. Unfortunately you will be lucky if you get to paddle the Frog Rock section of the Arkansas.

The sad fact is that nothing is perfect in this world, dear Goldie.

Except, perhaps, me.

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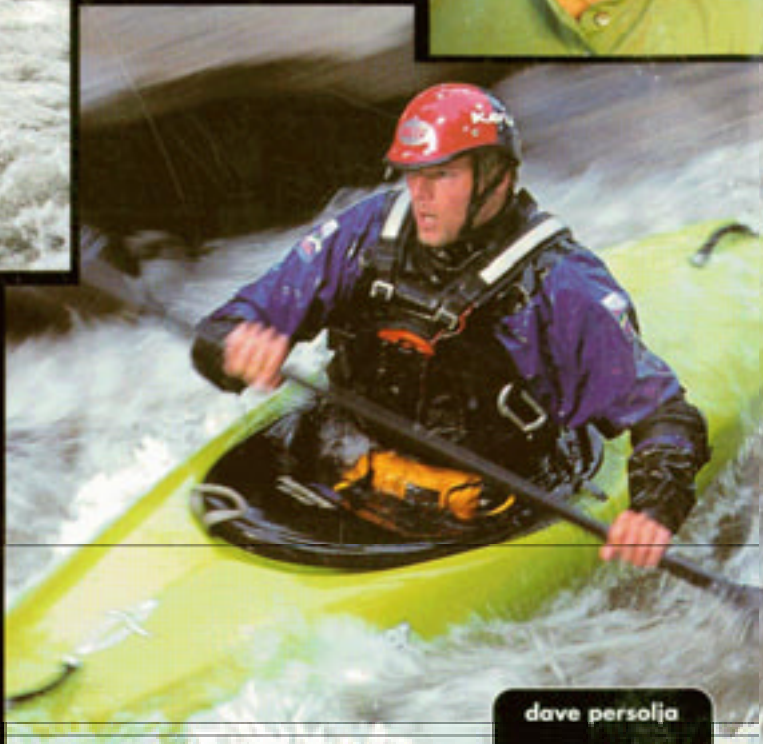
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