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January/February 2006

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AMERICAN WHITewater

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

January / February 2006

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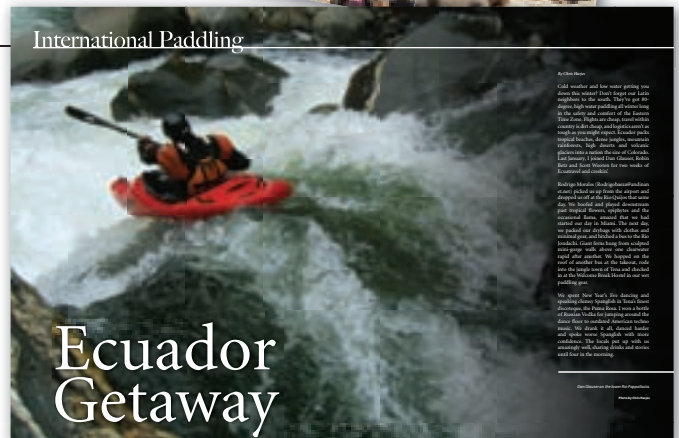
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Anna Levesque and Tiffany Manchester enjoy the lush scenery and crystal blue water of the Actopan River in Mexico.

Photo by Jenning Steger



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Purpose American Whitewater

River Stewardship, an Integrated Approach

Our mission: "To conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely," is actively pursued through our conservation, access, safety and education efforts under the umbrella of River Stewardship. The only national organization representing the interest of all whitewater paddlers, American Whitewater is the national voice for thousands of individual whitewater enthusiasts, as well as over 100 local paddling club affiliates.

AW's River Stewardship program adheres to the four tenets of our mission statement:

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision making

processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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, encourages equitable and responsible management of whitewater rivers on public lands, and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

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 American Whitewater Safety Code.

EDUCATION: AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

Together, AW staff, members, volunteers, and affiliate clubs can achieve our goals of conserving, protecting and restoring America's whitewater resources and enhancing opportunities to safely enjoy these wonderful rivers.

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Executive Director The Journey Ahead

By Mark Singleton

Welcome to the New Year! 2005 was a blur of activity for us at American Whitewater. Here are a few highlights from American Whitewater's stewardship efforts around the country:

Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, Thomas O'Keefe, worked with local affiliate clubs to protect paddler interests as agencies initiate long-range planning efforts for the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River. Tom has secured a \$1.5 million budget request from King County to protect important lands along the river that provide public access and protect the future of the riverside forest. Volunteers have helped formalize access points and are contributing in the effort to control invasive weeds.

California Stewardship Director, David Steindorf, is expanding releases on the North Fork of the Feather to at least two weekends per month, including the Rock Creek, Cresta, Belden and Poe reaches. Dave is also working within the community of Oroville to build the world's longest Whitewater Park on the Feather River.


In other parts of the west, the National Park Service released the long awaited Colorado River Management Plan, which improves the permit system that controls boating use on the Colorado through Grand Canyon National Park. American Whitewater was one of many groups that advocated for an equitable permit system that would reduce the time private paddlers wait to run the river. And after more than a decade of effort, the 320 acres of former Montana Power Company lands adjacent to the Alberton Gorge on Montana's Clark Fork River were transferred into public ownership. Transfer of these lands to public ownership ensures public access to this reach of river in perpetuity as well as protecting the scenic backdrop of the Clark Fork River.

In the Northeast, Tom Christopher, longtime AW director and volunteer, led efforts to remove the dam on the Contoocook River. National Stewardship director, Kevin Colburn represented boater interests in flow studies on Ausable Chasm. These studies demonstrated to those involved that the Ausable is a beautiful and classic Class IV run.

In the mid Atlantic region, private boater access to mid-river take-outs on the Gauley River (WV) were threatened just before Gauley Season. AW was a key facilitator in keeping the Mason's Branch take-out open. Efforts are ongoing to create a public access area as part of the NPS management plan for the Gauley River.

In the South, the dewatered Cheoah River flowed again in a riverbed that has been dry for more than 70 years. With AW's leadership and partnerships with clubs and individuals, releases began in the fall of 2005 and will continue for the next 40 years.

In this issue of the *Journal*, you'll have a chance to review projects that are in store for our stewardship team this year (page 60-63). The AW Stewardship Team is tackling another hefty set of work plans, which will ultimately benefit you, the boater, with careful stewardship of the places you love to play.

Usually, I'm not all that excited about New Year's Resolutions; they seem well intended but often end up being more talk than action. This year is different. With all these river stewardship success stories, my resolution is serious: get out and paddle more, spend more time with friends on the water, paddling where AW has a real tangible hand in making things happen. I hope to see you there! 



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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I think it is an honor that Whit Deschner deigned to enter American Whitewater's Humor Contest. Successful authors like Whit (not only has he published three books of boating humor, but his *Travels With Kayak* won the Ben Franklin Prize for humor in 1998) often have a reputation for arrogance. Yet he still remembers his roots and is not above jumping into the humble AW contest against amateurs and dilettantes. I have to say, had I known he was entering, I would have been too intimidated to do so. Yes, I earned runner-up, but my effort was canoe-zero compared to the flood of Whit Deschner's genius.

And what genius! He not only won the contest hands-down, but with an essay on paddling the Seine River in Paris. From a lesser quill, such a digression would likely never win the American Whitewater Humor Writing Contest. The Seine, celebrated for centuries by lovers and poets, is remarkable for being neither American nor Whitewater. We amateur scribblers are always tempted to retreat to the cliché of authentic whitewater experience, of which Whit Deschner has a cornucopia from the world over—New Zealand to Indonesia to Turkey and beyond. Instead, he rejects convention and sublimates his tour-de-France into a tour-de-force, exploding the paradigm of whitewater humor and forcing readers to confront their entrenched bias and prejudice as American Whitewater members. Look at his dilemma: the Seine demands that paddlers find an actual toilet in which to pee. We might never have the courage to imagine a world in which whitewater boaters pee in toilets, except that Whit Deschner dares us to see in the reflections of the still, glassy Seine our possible transcendent selves.

Whit Deschner richly deserves his choice of a Pyranha whitewater kayak, although surely such a brilliant light does not shine solely for so slight a material gain. After all, a man who published his first book of whitewater writing in 1981 should have acquired along the way a fleet to rival Lord Nelson's at Trafalgar. As he approaches

his golden years, one hopes that Whit Deschner can find in Pyranha's catalog a boat suitable to fraying rotator cuffs and replacement hips in which to continue his adventures, because god-forbid he should retire. Like literate boaters everywhere, I anxiously await his next discourse from the avant-garde of whitewater humor. Will it be hijinks in a Venetian gondola? Outrigger racing in Tuvalu? A pool float debacle from the Ft. Lauderdale Holiday Inn? Regardless, I know I cannot be the only one whose gratitude borders on reverence, that our humble *Journal* has been graced again by Whit Deschner's deathless prose. Indeed, we would be no more blessed had William Nealy disinterred himself to compose an entry for the contest. Maybe next year!

Humbly yours,
Miles D. Townes

Mr. Townes,

Thank you for your considerate comments. Given the circumstances, I had feared that your letter would have made you out to be, what they call in La Belle France, a sore loser. Due to the timing of our publication cycle, it was too late to contact Mr. Deschner's Press Secretary for a reply. However, you may be pleased to know that as of the time of this writing, he is reported to be paddling his wood strip canoe across the English Channel in order to hand-select his prize at Pyranha's factory. I am told Mr. Deschner has a host of criteria for choosing his new kayak, including, no doubt, some of the concerns your letter thoughtfully raised. In addition, I hear that he requires a boat with sufficient volume to store his many writing trophies and oversized prize checks—it's not easy being the best (or so I'm told—I wouldn't really know).

Tongue firmly in cheek,

Ambrose Tuscano

Dear Editor,

Perer Stekel's article "The River Rules" has many points I agree with. Tamarisk is a large problem in the arid west, and our water use has destroyed many invaluable stretches of river. Unfortunately, Mr. Stekel only superficially lays out the water issues of the west without treating their causes or possible solutions.

We cannot simply claim to be a wiser, elitist group above the ignorance of "Mostpeople." We are Mostpeople. Boaters are the inhabitants of desert cities like Phoenix and Albuquerque, Grand Junction and Mexican Hat. Our own livelihoods depend on the San Juan and Colorado flowing through pipes at least as much as our happiness depends on floating atop those rivers. We may not like to admit it, but the truth remains.

Despite how much we enjoy it, running rivers is no more noble a pursuit than the many competing uses of desert water. If we are to be honest and effective conservationists, we must not place ourselves above Mostpeople. We must respect the livelihoods of farmers, ranchers, and urban dwellers. Until then we will only bicker bitterly while our reservoirs silt up and tamarisk continues to spread.

Thank you for your consideration,
Keith Stagg
Conservation Biologist,
New Mexico State Land Office

Mr. Stagg,

Thank you for your letter. You raise an important point. The boating community is not exempt from responsibility for the state of water use in the American west. However, paddlers are among the most aware of the problems facing rivers and their ecosystems. Seeing the state of a river like the San Juan in person, as Mr. Stekel has, makes one more likely to ask important questions about water use and to advocate for healthy rivers. While we are not blameless, we are also not ignorant, like "Mostpeople." If more people could experience a human-impacted desert river for themselves, we might begin to see the support necessary for sustainable, ecologically friendly water use.

Sincerely,
Ambrose Tuscano

AW News & Notes

Joe Monahan Passes

By Charlie Walbridge

I recently learned that Joe Monahan, a well-known C-1 paddler in the 60s and 70s, passed away this past summer. Joe was a stocky, barrel chested guy known for his friendliness and his sense of adventure. He lived in Short Gap, Pennsylvania and worked in Cumberland, Maryland as an office equipment salesman, but he had another life on the river. Along with Phil Allender and Todd Martin he explored many of the region's rivers and creeks. Joe started out in a decked Grumman Canoe with a homemade deck, but in the summer of 1966 he salvaged John Berry's C-1 from the Upper Yough. Berry didn't want the boat back, so Joe patched it up and got it back on the water.

After polishing their skills on nearby Wills Creek the crew moved up the Potomac to the Savage River in 1967. There they became friendly with Harry Bittinger, the damkeeper, and Joe bragged that in those days he could get an hour's worth of water for a case of beer. Although the Savage is considered a straightforward Class III+ run today, few people ran anything as fast and relentless back then. "It comes right after you," Joe once told me, "and you better be ready!" Swims, busted boats, and lost equipment were the order of the day, especially at the Dam and Memorial Rock.

Later, the group got interested in the North Branch of the Potomac and its steeper tributary, Stony Creek. Both had been run earlier by paddlers from Penn State. After running the Lower Stony on a cold December day in 1971, Joe tried to interest his group in the previously unrun upper section from VEPCO dam to Route 50. He got no takers, so he went by himself, finishing in the dark. His buddies ran shuttle and sat by the Route 50 bridge, leaving their headlights on to show him where the takeout was. Joe ran all the


classic runs in Northern West Virginia including the Upper Yough. He never had a reliable roll, but his survival instincts were legendary. "My fingernail marks are still in those rocks above the falls," he told me when I asked him about the Lower Big Sandy. "I thought I was a goner!"

In spring of 1972, Joe's crew made the first run of West Virginia's Blackwater River. After being turned away by rangers at Blackwater Falls they bushwhacked down Pendleton Run, which flows below a small lake in the park. After an hour of walking and "only" two rope-assisted boat lowers, they arrived at a point halfway down what is now considered the Upper Blackwater. "I never saw so much hairy unexplored whitewater in my life," Joe told a rapt group of slalom boaters at the Petersburg Races a few weeks later. "One of us would get out front and paddle until we just got too scared to go on, then he'd eddy out and let another guy lead." They made a number of portages, especially in the upper part, but got through without mishap. Word of the run spread, and others followed. The Lower Blackwater became a classic 70s and 80s run. The steeper, more technical Upper Blackwater wasn't done in its entirety until a group of Cheat River guides made the trip in April of 1983.

Joe, like most good paddlers of his era, was an active racer. After getting a taste of the action at the Petersburg Races in the 60s, he became a regular at the Esopus, Loyalsock, and Bellefonte Slaloms. The first informal Savage River Slalom was held in 1968; there were 26 entries and only 5 successful finishers. Since courses this long and difficult had not been set in the US before, the Savage Races exposed serious racers to difficulties that they would encounter in European races. The river taught racers (including me!) a lot

about making quick moves in fast water and became a proving ground for aspiring racers from all over the country.

In addition to mentoring a local explorer post and building fiberglass whitewater boats in a rented garage, Joe, Todd, and Phil later formed the Appalachian River Runners Federation (The ARRF) to organize races on the Savage. Not to be outdone by the Dartmouth College paddlers in their snappy green warmup outfits, they had green jackets made with ARRF emblazoned in 6" yellow letters on the back. Those jackets were seen at races throughout the country, and the guys would often jog along the racecourse barking "arf, arf" at their buddies for encouragement. During the many race events held at the Savage in the 70s, Joe was known for driving his loudspeaker-equipped sedan up through the camping area in at first light. "Har, Har, Har!" he screamed into the mic, "Water's up in fifteen minutes! The course is open! The race starts at 9:00! Har, Har, Har!" We'd all roll out of bed, wolf down some breakfast, and head down to the river for our practice runs.

During the 1980s, Savage Race leadership passed to CCA, then to PCC, and finally the key people got tired and race died out. Except for the World Championships in 1989 (which included Pre-Worlds events in 1987 and '88), there has been little activity on this sporty little creek in a long while. Joe lost his job in Cumberland and we lost track of him, but we never could forget his happy, fun loving spirit. I saw him last at the C-boat Concordia a few years ago. He looked great, and told a good story just like always. Thanks, Joe! We'll miss you! 

AW News & Notes

Rob Lesser Honored as Whitewater Explorer

By Greg Moore

Idaho kayaker Rob Lesser, a pioneer of big-water expedition paddling, has been named to a newly created Whitewater Hall of Fame.



The new institution is part of a complex under construction in western Maryland called Adventure Sports Center International. It is being built adjacent to the Wisp Ski Area, and will include whitewater slalom and freestyle venues, mountain biking trails and an adventure sports museum.

“I thought my storage garage with its sixty-plus boats was going to become the museum for whitewater, but I didn’t act quickly enough, I guess,” Lesser, 60, said jokingly during a phone interview from his Boise home.

Collected over his 36 years of kayaking, those boats cover the changes in design and technology the sport has undergone since its infancy.

When Lesser learned to kayak in 1969 on the Blackfoot River in Montana, he and a friend had to teach themselves—there was no one else around who knew how. But before long, he, more than any other American paddler, was pushing the sport’s boundaries, with first descents on rivers in Idaho, Canada, Alaska and elsewhere.

The inaugural inductions into the hall

of fame were made in four categories—Pioneer, Explorer, Champion and Advocate. Though Lesser was indeed a pioneer of the sport, his forte has been as an explorer, and the sports center’s 40 judges recognized him as such. To most Idaho paddlers, the selection should have been an easy one—indeed, the choice of anyone else for that category would have been deemed a travesty.

Lesser is perhaps best known for his participation in 1981 in the first descent of the Grand Canyon of the Stikine River in British Columbia. A big-volume river flowing through a narrow, vertical-walled gash in the earth, it is widely considered the most demanding big-water run in North America.

Spending most of the 1970s working as a park ranger in Denali National Park, Lesser pioneered descents on many of the state’s wilderness rivers, usually flying in by float plane.

He was also among the group that first probed the difficult stretches of the now-famous North Fork of the Payette River in Idaho in 1977. With legendary rock climbers Yvon Chouinard and Doug Tompkins, he

did the first descent of the Clark’s Fork of the Yellowstone River in Wyoming in 1984.

Also that year, he participated in the first successful descent of the Braldu River in Pakistan. Flowing through the Karakorum Range, the river drains Mt. K2, the world’s second highest peak.

For someone whose life has been directed by whitewater boating, his introduction to the sport began almost by accident. One day in April of 1969, a friend of his, who was a climber and constantly in search of new adventures, got a hold of two fiberglass kayaks and talked Lesser into accompanying him on a trip down the Blackfoot River.

“I had no intention at all of learning to kayak,” he said. “But as soon as I got into the boat and felt the freedom of moving around on the river, it just went straight to my core. I was totally hooked by the time I got off.

“Immediately I saw that this was a tool for exploration. That’s what turns me on about kayaking to this day—being out there on your own. We have the ability and the knowledge to take ourselves to

For someone whose life has been directed by whitewater boating, his introduction to the sport began almost by accident.

Rob Lesser on the North Fork of the Payette.

Photo by Charlie Munsey

beautiful, natural places and to experience them in a way that no other people can.”

Lesser's immersion in what was then a new sport also brought him a livelihood. He became the foremost whitewater photographer in the United States, wrote articles for whitewater magazines and spent 16 years as a sales rep for Perception kayaks.

Looking back on all that, he acknowledges that such an unconventional lifestyle has demanded sacrifices. Though he said he never had a strong desire to have a family, he knows he's missed out by not having a solid romantic relationship while he was traipsing around the globe looking for the next great river.

“I do feed off having my freedom, though,” he said. “I think I've probably followed my inner soul in that regard. Being in the outdoors ranks very high.”

Lesser said he also cherishes the world-wide group of friends the sport has brought him—those who live in the remote corners he's visited, and those who show up on his doorstep when they come to paddle in Idaho.

Of all his whitewater accomplishments, he said, he has no doubt that his descents of the Stikine mark the high point.

“It's the most complex,” he said. “It was obviously a step above the other rivers that had been considered.”

His first view of the river was in 1977 when he chartered a plane to fly over it while on his way to Alaska to paddle the Susitna, another big-volume run.

“It looked absolutely outlandish,” he said. “I just pretty much wrote the Stikine off, but after I ran the Susitna and the Alsek, I started to think about it again.”

By 1981, he said, he had decided that at a lower flow than what he had seen it at, the river was doable.

The first descent was supported by a

helicopter hired by ABC television to help with a film of the run for its American Sportsman program. Ferrying stuff around and providing a fantastic way to scout rapids, the helicopter was a nice luxury for the boaters. The drawback became apparent when the TV crew suddenly proclaimed they had enough film and were leaving—before the kayakers had completed the river. At that point, Lesser said, their gear was spread all over and it was impractical for them to continue on their own. But he and others returned in 1985 to complete the first descent.

“We solved the problem there,” he said. “We solved the puzzle.”

That challenge, he said, has been the main motivation behind his first descents.

“I like a more and more complex puzzle. I'm not out there to scare myself.”

Yet, long after he solved the puzzle on it, he continues to run a river in his own backyard that ranks as one of his favorites anywhere—the North Fork of the Payette. That river, he said, has been a training ground that has helped him to run rivers all over the world. In September, he put in for a special run of the river to mark his 60th birthday.


His birthday was also marked by a phone call informing him of his selection to the new hall of fame. He attended an expense-paid ceremony in Maryland in October.

“I'm honored,” he said. “I haven't exactly settled myself into the pack of nine-to-

fivers, so I might as well be a big fish in a small pond.”

“And,” he said, laughing, “it's certainly a small pond.”

That pond, of course is growing all the time. New technology and new techniques have made kayaking even more exciting. Lesser said he's envious of the moves that the good, young paddlers are throwing now.

Still, he said, he's glad he started when he did--a time when seeing other boaters was a rarity and so much was new. 

Other boaters chosen for the hall of fame are:

Pioneer category: Bob McNair, who helped form the American Whitewater Affiliation and wrote the bible on canoeing technique.

Champions category: Davey Hearn and Jon Luginbill, both internationally renowned C-1 (decked canoe) slalom paddlers.

Advocate category: Payson Kennedy, who co-founded Nantahala Outdoor Center; and Charles Walbridge, known internationally for his promotion of whitewater safety techniques.

This article was originally published in the Idaho Mountain Express newspaper in Ketchum, Idaho.

AW News & Notes

Kayak Speedster Fletcher Anderson Dies in Plane Crash

By Chuck Hines

Fletcher Anderson was an expert at flying down rivers. He held the unofficial speed record for kayaking down the Grand Canyon: 49 hours. Over a 40-year paddling career that extended from the early 1950s to the early 1990s, he won numerous downriver and slalom races, mostly in his home state of Colorado.

Both of Fletcher's parents were paddlers, taking up the sport after visiting Europe and bringing back a foldboat in 1950. Fletcher once said, "At a very, very young age, I was being taken for rides in those early boats." He attended the Colorado Rocky Mountain School in Carbondale, where he was taught by world champion, Walter Kirschbaum. He was probably the first teenager to run the Class IV-V rapids on Colorado's most challenging rivers, and he was a nationally-ranked racer not only in kayaking but also alpine and nordic skiing.

After graduating from Colorado College in 1970, Fletcher became an extreme-sport filmmaker, and in the 1980s, he authored a best-selling book, *Rivers of the Southwest*, with his first wife, Ann Hopkinson. This text is still available from Amazon and other sources.

He served on the Board of Directors of the National Organization of River Sports and worked diligently to protect rivers and promote paddling throughout the western states.


In the early 1990s, he was injured in a paragliding accident, and the injury brought an end to his illustrious kayaking career. Ever the adventurer, Fletcher took up flying, and became a flight instructor in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. He wrote another book, *Flying the Mountains*, which is considered the definitive text for piloting single-engine aircraft in mountainous regions.

Thus it is ironic that Fletcher died this past November 18 in a plane crash while flying down the Snake River Canyon. He was 57. His single-engine plane apparently hit a wire just above the river near the Hoback junction.

Andy Corra, owner of 4 Corners Whitewater in Durango, Colorado, has these personal memories of Fletcher:

The first time I ever saw Fletcher was at Sunlight ski area during their spring festival. They had a galande jump competition and I was watching the jumpers near the in-run. Fletcher skied up to me and asked where everyone was starting. I pointed to the spot and he proceeded to hike up about 100 feet above it. He went into a full tuck, launched, and he sailed well beyond where anyone else landed, winning the competition. I was awed! A few months later I was on the river in my first season of paddling. I was working with Roger Paris when Fletcher came flying by in his downriver boat. I recognized the "crazy ski jump guy" and asked Roger about him. Roger told me that he was a great paddler and explained what a Wildwater boat was. I knew from that moment that I wanted to be a downriver paddler. In the following months and years I paddled and trained with Fletcher. I remember a lot of joking about my terrible technique those first few years, but Fletcher would drop, in his understated way, little gems of advice that I always remembered. In subsequent years, Fletcher and I would battle back and forth in races. The last time I raced with him was in the Goosenecks Classic on the San Juan River—a 90-plus mile marathon suited to his endurance. I was two weeks away from heading to Europe for Worlds and was not about to paddle 90 miles risking injury and fatigue. Instead I planned to paddle only the first 25 miles, taking out in Mexican Hat—but I didn't let Fletcher in on this. At the start I

took off at full speed and Fletcher spent the next 10 hours thinking he was chasing me. A dirty trick? Yes, but Fletcher was one to appreciate a good practical joke, as well as the practice—and besides, he won the race.

He was certainly one of the country's leading whitewater kayakers at one time. He is survived by his current wife, Shelby; his ex-wife; his mother; a son and a daughter; two brothers; and other relatives. In July, 2006, a gathering to remember Fletcher's life will be held on the banks of the Snake River. Further information is available from Wayne Turner at 307-733-3729. 



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History

Bob McNair: Whitewater Pioneer

By Sue Taft

The first class of inductees into the International Whitewater Hall of Fame was announced at Gauley Fest 2005. One of the four categories for induction is the Pioneer category which recognizes a (deceased) person who was the “first or among the earliest to significantly contribute to leading the way for any whitewater related activity.” Bob McNair was elected as the first inductee in this category. His election is most appropriate—his contributions were among the earliest and most significant that helped shape the course of whitewater sports.

McNair’s induction as the first Pioneer is a special honor for American Whitewater since he was one of the organization’s founders. He was one of the key people and driving forces for the establishment of a national organization that represented whitewater interests, an organization that became American Whitewater (see “AW - The Sport’s Cornerstone” *American Whitewater* May/June 2004).


McNair was also one of the founders of the Buck Ridge Ski Club in the New Jersey/Delaware area. The club was formed in 1945 to facilitate ski trips. Those winter ski trips morphed into whitewater trips—exploring rivers from New England through the mid-Atlantic using Grumman canoes. By 1958, club trips even included excursions to the Cheat in West Virginia and to Colorado for whitewater competition in Salida.

Under McNair’s leadership, Buck Ridge expanded its activities to include whitewater instruction. The American Red Cross (ARC) Basic Canoeing Manual was the basis for the club’s whitewater canoeing technique, which used side-slipping and back-paddling. Realizing there was much to learn beyond that, and being a mechanical engineer, McNair read what he could find about river hydraulics in an attempt to transfer it

into usable information for whitewater. In 1953, he circulated an article containing his observations of basic river hydrology and whitewater canoeing which became the basis for a new ARC River Canoeing Manual in 1957. Buck Ridge and ARC’s Southeastern Chapter also began conducting bi-annual basic canoeing courses, which became known as the “Red Ridge College of Canoeing Knowledge.” Over the years, the course’s popularity and success drew paddlers, novice to advanced, from up and down the East Coast and the Midwest. McNair later expanded upon the 1957 manual, writing *Basic River Canoeing* in 1968. By this time, he was an acknowledged leader in whitewater canoeing technique that used back paddling and back ferrying to slow descent and maneuver in whitewater. Although passive by today’s standards, these techniques greatly expanded the use of canoes for more advanced whitewater runs.

McNair’s contributions go much further than his associations with whitewater organizations. His involvement with AW’s founding was the result of his interest in slalom racing (see “AW and Slalom” *American Whitewater* March/April 2004). From the time he learned about slalom through the International Canoe Federation’s invitation to compete in the 1953 races in Italy, McNair was one of slalom racing’s first proponents. He pushed ACA, the governing body for flat water canoeing and kayaking competition, to recognize slalom racing and was named

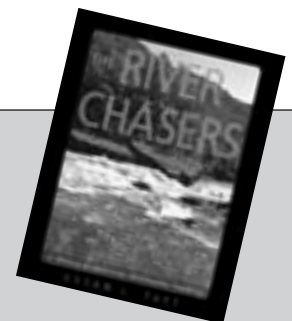
the first chairman of the National Slalom Committee in 1955. In the ensuing years, McNair continued to play an important part in supporting whitewater slalom competition within AW, ACA, and Buck Ridge, which sponsored the first inter-club slalom race in the United States in 1954. He viewed slalom competition and techniques as a means to improve whitewater river-running skills and corresponded with European racers to learn more about it.

Though McNair was noted for his whitewater canoeing skills, he also paddled a kayak. While demonstrating a one-paddle roll for his students, he frequently wore a top hat that he would place on the bottom of the kayak as he rolled over and retrieve as he rolled back up, never getting the hat wet. It was an apt representation of Bob McNair: he was a gentleman, a professional, and an accomplished paddler. He is a Pioneer by which future inductees will be measured. 

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Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers*, the history of American Whitewater Paddling. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, e-mail it to editor@amwhitewater.org and look for its answer in an upcoming issue.



Field Notes

Places To Paddle (Besides the US)

By Clay Wright

Kayaking in the US is just awesome. We have winter boating in the southeast and Oregon, spring rains and runoff everywhere, incredible snowmelt summer runoff in California, Colorado, New Mexico and Montana and, of course, all the dam releases that make fall in the Southeast such a joy.

But it does get cold in the winter (do you like boating in the snow?). As long as you've got a thirst for adventure, plane fare, and a passport then there's a warm water winter destination just awaiting your arrival.

Okay, so South America works a lot like North America upside down. The season starts in the north and water lasts longest in the south. We'll start close to home.

Mexico

Dropping down through Brownsville, Texas gives paddlers in the eastern US the easiest access to international whitewater, the Sierra Madre Oriental Region. Rainy season ends around October. From then until November is when many of the "East Side" runs go down. Long ropes, rappel devices, and reliable transportation a must. Inescapable canyons are plentiful

The author, Clay Wright soaking up a little warm weather boating himself.

Photo by Clay Wright



but so are post-card quality waterfalls with deep plunge pools. Highlights include El Salto and the Cascadas Micos sections of the Rio Valle, the big Twitch drops of the Tamata, and the travertine classic Rio Azul, near Guatamala, for the distance drivers.

Costa Rica

What a fine country! The fruit, "café con leche," tropical birds and flowers—it's really a paradise. The town of Turrialba is the hub of Costa Rican whitewater. It is where much of the country's rafting is based and home of the Renventazon and Paquare rivers. You can stay there and rent taxis for shuttles, or hook up with various tour groups. The Reventazon is a dam-release medium-high volume river with several different sections. The Pacuare has a lower section of scenic Class III-IV and an upper section that is one gem of a Class IV+ (V) run. On both you'll see toucans, red frogs, and possibly magic mushrooms.... Other great runs in this country include the big water General River, creekly Orosi, and mid-volume Sarapique (home of the Toro's 30-foot falls). September rains mean "creeking" but the typical season runs October through November. In December, prices rise and water drops.

Ecuador

Cheap prices on lodging and taxi shuttles from town make Ecuador paddling easy, while the huge variety of rivers, gradient and rain make it an adventure! Steep canyon walls and regular flash floods make every run exciting, and while there are waterfalls, the country is famous for its constant gradient and massive boulder fields. It's also got a super long season and several outfitters to choose from. While November may be high water, there is still paddling to be done all the way into March. Many paddlers base out of the town of Teña, where taxis and hotels are readily available. Independent outfitters like Small World Adventures offer permanent base-camps right on a river instead.

Chile

This long, coastal country has as much whitewater, gradient, and great weather as the state of California—and the wine is much cheaper! While the prices aren't Mexico, any kayaker can live on pan, queso, and vino tinto for a month and spend everything else on gas. It's a huge place, so you have the option to either rent a truck (a good one, as some roads are rough) and drive up every drainage south of Santiago, do short creekin' trips

While foreign travel is sure to broaden your horizons, traveling with your kayak will also arouse some curiosity in the places you visit.

Photo by Clay Wright



from Pucon (December), or just head to the Futa (February through March). Every single road off Route 5 eventually runs right along whitewater, so it's pretty easy exploring. Pucon is the hub for creeking. With the Palguin, Alto Trancura, Maichine, and Desague rivers accessible for day trips as well as several Class III-IV options, many paddlers never leave. The resort-town amenities, beaches, and hopping nightlife add spice to this already festive destination. Drive a bit further and you can hit the Fui (Class IV+ waterfalls) or Gol Gol (big waterfalls, Class V) and then add international insurance so you can hit the Manso (Class IV-V) on your way South to the Futa. The Futa is basically the Gauley—only three times bigger—in an Andean valley setting. While some rapids dwarf Pillow at 5000 cfs, playboats abound and there are easier (Class III-IV+) sections to play on. This pristine valley is home to numerous rafting and guiding operations, as well as the “Casa del Indio” campground. You're gonna love the hot water heater....

The rest of the southern hemisphere offers some great whitewater destinations. You just need the time and cash to devote to a longer trip. Once you read about these whitewater Meccas, you'll think it's worth every penny....

New Zealand

This far-off, Big Ticket Land is actually the easiest for most Americans because they speak English there (sort of)! While you may feel right at home in town, the flora and fauna are spectacularly different,

as you'll see as soon as you leave the road. On the North Island, the Kaituna is the popular spot. Warm water Class III-IV (IV+) and dam release flows with a 20-foot waterfall AND one of the best play holes in the world? It's awesome! Camp nearby or stay in Rotorua, but make sure to buy a car (cheaper than renting) so you can head to the Wairoa release (IV+) on Sundays, catch the infamous Huka Falls (huge volume 20-footer) at a low enough flow, or head to the creek Rangatiki (IV+) down South. From there, you are just a ferry ride away from the world famous \$70 helicopter-accessed Class IV, V, and V+ of the South Island (the shuttles themselves are worth every penny). Oh, and there's water all “summer” on the North Island and after each rain down South.

Zambia

So if you're still reading, you've obviously got a taste for adventure, a necessity for this totally foreign destination. The big-water gorge of the infamous Zambezi is scary enough without the tales of hippos, crocks, and malaria. It's all there, but so is the safest, most impressive big water Class III, IV, and V on the planet. Add in the Victoria Falls put-in, monkeys stealing your breakfast, and porters who carry your boat for \$2 a day and you've got one incredibly memorable destination. The “low season” is your target, and it lasts mid July through the end of January. After that, you may catch the infamous “tubing wave” but you won't catch many other boaters on the water. Don't miss the nearby wildlife sanctuary—you'll forget you came just for the whitewater.

The Zambezi's own Victoria Falls is one of the natural wonders of the world.

Photo by Chris Emerick and Clay Wright



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Field Notes

Karen Mann and Anna Levesque walking back to camp from take-out to Pescados River, Jalcomulco, Mexico.

Photo by Jenning Steger






Uganda

The new gem of foreign whitewater travel destinations is the White Nile. This huge volume source of the Nile is released from a dam and runs at a fairly consistent flow all year long. The Nile is home to some of the best playboating waves in the world, as you've seen in the videos, but it's also an amazing river in and of itself. Huge warm water features, multiple channels, and large volume rapids make this "Ottawa South" experience suitable for a variety of skill levels, yet exciting for all. It's not quite as hot as the Zambezi, which is a real plus, and the rafting scene is growing rapidly to fill in the lack of amenities. Nights are spent at the bar and days are spent on the river. It's a simple existence, but this "one-stop shop" will keep your heart

racing for weeks on end. And no, gin and tonics won't ward off malaria—there are prescriptions for that.

So there you have it: a tiny piece of the whitewater world at your fingertips. These are the places you are most likely to find other kayakers and a guarantee of quality whitewater, but it certainly doesn't mean there aren't lifetimes more to discover. China and nations from the former Soviet Union are just being explored, and there are unknown rivers even in the most populated of areas in the Southern hemisphere just awaiting your arrival. Chase summer; warm water whitewater adventures await! 



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Locals' Favorite



Snake River Canyon, Wyoming: West Table Creek to Sheep Gulch

By Christie Glissmeyer

Shortly after the snowmelt makes its way down from the heights of Yellowstone National Park, it winds past the rugged Teton Mountain Range and into the spectacular Snake River Canyon. Large slabs of sandstone and limestone shelves create a natural hydraulic playground that is paddlers' paradise. Within this canyon is an eight-mile stretch of river that is action-packed with Class II-III rapids, epic play spots, big glassy wave trains and whirlpool eddy lines with names like, The Dream Seam. The river is deep, clean and free of debris, which makes it safe for paddlers of all skill levels. Situated only 25 miles southwest of Jackson, Wyoming, this section is a local favorite because of easy access and quality play at all water levels. The refreshing summer temperatures and friendly local paddlers help make it the most popular run in the area. To top it all off, you have the stunning beauty of the Snake River Canyon.

The easy river access on this section is one big bonus for whitewater enthusiasts. The entire float parallels the US 26/89 scenic highway which has recently been reconstructed to provide pullouts at key features to accommodate park and play. Trail access to the river is maintained by a non-profit organization called the Snake River Fund.

Snake River Canyon is within the boundaries of Bridger-Teton National Forest, so access rights are not a problem. There are several designated camping areas and free camping sites on the nearby Greys River. The shuttle is a simple drive from West Table Creek to Sheep Gulch and both access points have boat ramps and ample parking. The run only takes between two and three hours, which makes it convenient for local paddlers to enjoy a quick run before or after work.

The best asset of this run is its versatility: it is playboater heaven at nearly every water level. There is an entertaining variety of steep bouncy waves, fast green waves, and deep, retentive holes. Paddlers of all abilities can find plenty of play spots to occupy their time. Earlier in the season, when the flow is higher, paddlers surf the glassy green wave at Lunch Counter Rapid or throw ends in the hole at Taco Ledge. It is generally at one of these entertaining features where Rendezvous River Sports hosts their annual Wyoming Whitewater Freestyle Championships in early June. Medium flows offer great play on waves appropriately named The Big Kahuna and The California Curler. Even at lower flows, there is plenty of fun to be had at the wave-hole known as Burrito, or the Winter Wave. The three highlights of this canyon are Lunch Counter Rapid, Taco Ledge, and The Big Kahuna.

Visiting Lunch Counter Rapid in the summer is almost like a day at the beach. Surfers hang out on the banks drying their wet suits and waxing their boards; sunbathers sprawl out on the warm rock slabs by the river's edge; raft guides barrel through the rapid with boats full of screaming clients; families on shore observe the scene around picnic lunches; and children float through the wave train in life jackets. The first wave of Lunch Counter Rapid is so smooth and glassy it attracts not only kayakers, but surfers and boogie boarders as well. There is a perfectly flat ledge next to the water and you can launch off the rock and right onto the shoulder of the wave. The third wave is fast, furious and always surging; if it can be caught it is an outrageous ride. Although the micro-eddy service can be challenging at these two features, it is an easy hike back up to the top of the rapid. The line-up can get crowded on weekend afternoons and holidays but the rest of the time long waits are generally not an issue.

My all-time favorite experience at Lunch Counter was a midnight surf session under a full moon. My friends and I hiked

down to the river just as the moon was rising above the canyon wall, sending a bright stream of light beaming down on the water. The wave looked alive and silver in the moonlight. Surfing was a bit of a challenge because we were lacking depth perception in the flat light, but it was a rush carving to the top of the white, frothing pile and speeding down the face of the wave in the ghostly glow. We had the rapid all to ourselves and lost track of time. The moon eventually started to drop behind the mountains, casting a dark shadow across the bend in the canyon, but we were prepared. We got out our headlamps and continued our midnight surf through the small circular glow of the beams. From the banks of the Snake you could just see a small flicker of light carving back and forth across the wave, bouncing wildly through the wave train and then spinning into the eddy below.

Taco Ledge is another favorite play spot and was named for the phenomena that happens to any unlucky raft that finds its way into this hole. It is fun and forgiving for kayaks above 6,200 cfs but can get really sticky at lower levels. The left edge of the hole is especially nasty and has earned the nickname "The Dark Side" because of a large backwash that has been responsible for a number of swims. At optimal levels, Taco Ledge has a great shoulder for spinning and is the ideal hole for loops. I have seen people cartwheel here for days. Paddlers can also look forward to a great wave-hole called Burrito, which forms at the edge of Taco Ledge at low water. Both of these features also have a great big elevator eddy to whisk you back up to the hole.

The Big Kahuna is a super steep wave backed by an impressive hole. Just about any trick under the sun is possible in this double feature. The wave is great for big air and perfect for throwing down anything from spins to air screws. The hole is fast with a large foam pile for some serious freestyle frenzy. This rapid does not have complete eddy service so a short walk or



rope pull is required for subsequent rides. It is also fun to sit back and watch the carnage of rafts and duckies flipping in the hole. I would definitely recommend keeping a close eye out for rafts while surfing this rapid. It is easy to get carried away and forget about upstream traffic. The trough of the wave is so deep that it can be hard to see rafts coming until an 18-footer piled high with people comes barreling down on top of you—not a pretty sight!

It is possible to float this section year-round but is at its best April through October. June through September is the most popular season when the high temperature averages between 70 and 85 and the water temperature warms up to around 50 degrees. Even in July and August, the play spots on this stretch of river are relatively uncrowded and the vibe is great. The regulars are relaxed and friendly and there is never any conflict between the surfers and kayakers.


This is not your typical play run. The clear green water meanders through a genuinely dramatic section of pristine Wyoming country. There is a 360-degree view of snow-capped mountain ranges and pine forests. Crystal clear creeks tumble down steep side canyons and the upstream breeze blows the fragrance of evergreens. Paddlers are almost guaranteed to see a bald eagle or osprey gliding overhead. One of my favorite times to paddle this canyon is autumn evenings when the summer crowd is diminishing, the air is sharp and crisp, and the glow of maple and cottonwood leaves illuminate the water. Fortunately, with the support of American Whitewater, this stretch of river has recently been proposed for Wild and Scenic Designation to ensure that its brilliance is something that can be protected and enjoyed for countless future generations. 

Photo Captions

Top from Left to Right:

Christie Glissmeyer surfing her heart out on her favorite run.

Photo by Luke Walker

Jackson local, Luke Walker, warms up for a dawn patrol mission at Taco Ledge

Photo by Christie Glissmeyer

Cory Volt throwing down on the Big Kahuna.

Photo by Christie Glissmeyer

Rock ledges create a natural play park paradise for freestylers like Luke Walker.

Photo by Christie Glissmeyer

Christie Glissmeyer is right at home.

Photo by Luke Walker

A Watershed Approach to River Protection: Campaign for the Snake River Headwaters

By Tom O'Keefe and Aaron Pruzan

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was signed into law in 1968 in order to preserve forever the free-flowing condition and outstanding values of some of our country's most precious rivers. To qualify for Wild and Scenic designation, a river must be free-flowing and must be deemed to have one or more "outstandingly remarkable" scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values. Some of our nation's most outstanding whitewater runs are protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, legislation that paddlers had a hand in shaping.

Protecting these rivers prohibits actions that would impair their outstanding values, prevents construction of dams or other projects that would impact the free-flowing nature of the river, and limits activities that would degrade the river's water quality. In short, this protection keeps our most treasured rivers wild and free for recreational enjoyment, fish and other wildlife, and the overall health of the ecosystem.

American Whitewater plays a direct role in campaigns to protect rivers with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In 2005 we successfully worked to include additional miles of the White Salmon in Washington State, and work is now underway to protect the Snake River and its headwaters in Wyoming as part of the Campaign for the Snake River Headwaters. This campaign represents the first time that a watershed-based approach is being used for Wild and Scenic designation. The upper Snake is recognized as the "best of the best" in the lower 48 with respect to water quality, the health of the native fishery, and the quality of its riparian habitat. In all, 32 river segments in the upper Snake drainage qualify for Wild and Scenic designation, including Crystal and Granite Creeks, plus portions of the Snake, Greys, Little Greys, Salt, Buffalo Fork and Gros Ventre Rivers. These rivers include sections of great whitewater on the Gros Ventre, Hoback, Greys, Snake and others.

American Whitewater is a steering committee member for the Campaign for the Snake Headwaters which also includes American Rivers, American Wildlands, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the Jackson Hole Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, and the Snake River Fund.

Domestic Travel

For the Love of It: A Month of Driving, Gradient and Friendship

By Jeff West

In the spring of 2005, a new kayaking competition was born. The Total Vertical Feet (TVF) Creeking Contest (also known as “March Madness”) pitted 19 southeastern teams against one another. The goal was to see which team could hurl themselves down the most river gradient during the month of March. The rules

were simple: form teams of up to six paddlers (at least two had to complete each run together), and go creeking. A list was made of the total gradient of each creek in the southeast from put-in to take-out. To earn points teams simply paddled as much as possible and reported total earnings each day. As expected, a month of daily kayaking produced all the usual clichés: poorly tied kayaks were launched from moving cars, state troopers were busy

writing citations, broken boats and sore backs required duct tape and ibuprofen. But, most importantly, friendships were sealed and incredible paddling experiences were created. By the end of March we had great stories to remember and some of us had even made new best friends.

The TVF competition was created by one of Chattanooga’s most respected creek boaters, Ben Hayes. Ben dedicated



his time to create this contest while also managing Steepcreeks.com, a website providing southeastern creekers with a great resource for information on and history of our steep whitewater. Ben is one of those guys who is always a joy to see and his hard work to promote creek boating is derived purely from his love of it. He is not out for recognition, and mentioning his name in this article will surely make him mad. But, without his creativity and enthusiasm, many of us might have spent March on the couch instead. Thanks Ben.

The anticipation leading up to March was tremendous. Teams were formed. The rules were written, leading to much debate in the online forums. Everyone had a strategy. Best of all, the trash talking

began. A few teams guaranteed total gradient in excess of 60,000 feet. Yes, 2,000 backbreaking, butt-jarring feet per day. In late February, two competitors training for March Madness racked up six runs on Bear Creek in one day. Bear was worth 857 feet per run and fast runs can be made in 45 minutes. And yes, the rules allowed for paddling the same run as many times in a day as desired. These guys dropped nearly a vertical mile in one day on the same creek. If teams could drop a mile every two days, their gradient for the month would surpass 75,000 feet. With hopes of much rain in the Southeast, teams looked toward March with the same anticipation as children waiting for Christmas. Everyone was amped and we all stocked up on spare gear and painkillers.

March 1st began for me at 6:30 a.m. Chris and Stan, two of my teammates, pulled into my driveway and started loading boats in the snow-covered front yard. I was on the Internet checking gauges and soon we were on our way to Little River Canyon. The month started dry and we had to paddle whatever we could find water. LRC is not exactly a creek, but it was a great way to warm up. As we drove to Alabama we spoke of strategy and joked about past trips. Chris and I have been friends for many years. Stan, I barely knew. I had seen him during past summers leading raft trips on the Ocoee. In 1976, his family's rafting company was the first to offer trips down the Ocoee. Growing up, Stan spent his summers around the outpost and had guided since he was 18. His kayaking began many years before and had matured into his life's passion. A year earlier Stan had decided to switch from a traditional paddle to hand paddles. One day he arrived at Overflow Creek and discovered his paddle had not made the trip. He only had a pair of hand paddles with him, and so the legend began. Now, a year later, his hand paddling was smooth as butter and he could match any move a traditional paddler could make using only his hands. Stan stood out not only for his hand paddling, but because he

Stan on Suck Creek just outside of Chattanooga, TN

Photo by Jordan Jacobs



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Domestic Travel For the Love of It

was truly the nicest person I had ever met. On that first day we logged two trips on LRC and racked up 1,100 feet in freezing conditions. It was not extreme kayaking, but it was nonetheless an awesome trip. I had spent the day with an old friend and made a new one.

The first week of March Madness produced controversy. The rules for the contest were under debate. Should a team's run be counted if the water level was below what most considered minimal? Should a team be allowed to paddle easily-accessible short runs 10-20 times per day and rack up huge numbers? Our team took heat for paddling the Ocoee. Yes, I know, the Ocoee is lame for a creeking contest, but there was nothing else to paddle. The Narrows of the Green, which ran almost every day during the month, was limited to being counted four times per team during the entire month. As you can imagine, limiting the allowed number of Green runs upset the teams based near Asheville. This contest was new and the rules reflected the best guess as to how this style of competition should be managed. This was the first TVF March Madness and it was more or less made up as it went along. Of course, all of the debate would have ended if the rainfall had increased. The month started dry, but many teams made the most of it and logged double-digit runs on Class III-IV. Personally, I did not mind doing laps on the Tellico. In fact, the marathon nature of the first part of the month was great training and resulted in everyone being in solid shape when the rains finally fell.

At the end of the first week, our team traveled to the Green for our four runs. We spent two days in paradise paddling the Narrows. Two runs per day was the goal. On the second day we arrived at the takeout finishing run number three with only 30 minutes to shuttle back to the top and put on for our last run before they shut off the water. The Green is dam controlled and we had 30 minutes to be in our boats paddling with a 25-minute drive ahead of us. As we frantically loaded gear, Johnnie Kern approached and asked if he could join us. I couldn't believe a legend like Johnnie Kern wanted to paddle with us. "Hell yea," I said. I grabbed his boat

and loaded it onto Brad's brand new Subaru. Everyone piled in and off we went. What we did not have time to tell Johnnie in the parking lot was that we were starting our Narrows trip an extra three miles upstream. We were putting in at the powerhouse in order to maximize our day's TVF score. Johnnie was a little surprised when he realized he now had to paddle an extra three miles of slow moving Class III whitewater. He was a good sport about it and assured us he needed the workout too. Ten minutes prior to dam shutoff, we found ourselves nearing the put-in. Brad was pushing his brand new Suby to the limit and everything looked great. A second later, however, kayaks were launching at 60 miles per hour from Brad's car. One boofed the hood, the other ripped the rack system off the roof. Our great day was spiraling. Johnnie's brand new prototype creek boat skipped across the oncoming lane and lodged itself in the far ditch. Brad was starting to cry. Honestly, I really just wanted to paddle with Johnnie Kern and I refused to let Brad's car being partly destroyed prevent it from happening. I loaded the boats again as Brad stared in disbelief at the dents and scratches on his brand new car. I assured him it would be best to still paddle. With one minute to spare, we slid into the river. It was great being rushed and I swear it helped Brad forget about his car for a while. The Green usually cures all woes of daily life. Not even a brand new car being destroyed could detract from this amazing river. On the drive home, Brad agreed: getting to paddle with Johnnie Kern was definitely worth a few scratches.

Finally, it rained. On the eighth, ninth, and tenth, Stan and I were able to log quality runs on natural-flowing creeks. Stan showed me down Citico and Double Camp at high water. Chris joined us on the Lower Cullasaja for two runs. At this point Stan and I had spent most days in March together. We had paid our dues on lesser-gradient rivers and creeks logging countless runs on Class III-IV. We were not only boating well together, but becoming great friends. Every day consisted of hours of driving in my old Volkswagen Fox combined with great paddling. My car had become our team's official shuttle

vehicle. A good friend had given this car to me a few months earlier. Actually, he abandoned it in my driveway and refused to remove it. It sat there for a month and one day I finally drove it to the store. It runs great and gets 32 mpg. I have driven it every day since. Why do the kayaks never fly off of the old, piece-of-crap cars, while the new cars get trashed?

The middle of March turned dry again. The Tellico and the Little were the only options. On the thirteenth we did perhaps the silliest thing in kayaking history. Stan, Tiya, and I arrived at the Tellico at 5:45 a.m. By 6:00 a.m. the first light of day caught us as we were boofing Baby Falls. We paddled the two-mile laps in 25 minutes. Only two of us paddled per run allowing the third to drive shuttle. Loading, shuttling, and unloading took five minutes. During each shuttle, the driver prepared peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the group. We had cases of Red Bull and allowed ourselves one per person for every three laps. We continued that way the entire day. Somewhere around run 15 I looked back to see Stan sinking. He had split his Response from bow to stern. Actually, the boat was not his, it was his father's. I knew Stan's father loved that kayak and I knew how much trouble he was going to be in. "The old man doesn't paddle anymore; Dad will never know," Stan assured me (Of course a few weeks later Stan's dad decided to go kayaking for the first time in years and discovered his kayak looked like a clam shell). On that Tellico day we had no time to think about it. We kept a backup kayak with us on the car and Stan was back in business a few minutes later. By 7:30 p.m. we had finished 22 Tellico laps and dropped more than a vertical mile. One lap was disqualified because I finished it on my own while Stan hiked back to the car. The sun went down during the last trip and we dragged ourselves to the car in the dark. It was exhausting, and some would argue just plain silly, but I would not have traded it for the world. It is not often you watch the sun rise while creeking and paddle until it sets. We took the next two days off.

With only a week left in March, we found ourselves in second place. A few teams had

quit. They cited unfair rules and stated they were too good to paddle laps on the Tellico. Oh well, perhaps they missed the point. Our team not only wanted to paddle as much as possible, but we were also using the competition to raise awareness of and donations for our local Boys and Girls Club. We had sponsors donating money to the Boys and Girls Club based on how many feet we dropped. Our sponsors paid a penny per foot to the charity. Knowing our laps meant more than just a win helped keep the strokes going.

After three weeks of wishful thinking, the rains came back to the Southeast. Brad, Stan, and I drove straight for the West Prong. Located in Smoky Mountain National Park, the West Prong drops 1,360 feet. We completed two runs during the day and scored some much needed Class V gradient. It was a great day of creeking. The following day was perhaps my favorite. Stan and I traveled to the Raven's Fork. The level was perfect and no other groups were there. For this run you park at the takeout and hike your boat two miles to the put-in. The hike begins by climbing straight up a mountain for 700 feet. The laps earlier in the month had prepared us well. At the top of the ascent you follow an old trail upstream a few miles until the river joins in. I had only paddled this once before and Stan had never. We scouted everything and took turns leading. It was simply a perfect day. While scouting one of the huge slides, Stan asked where I planned to drop the last horizon line. Looking down, the last horizon line was probably 50 feet below me and I truly thought the last ledge was only five feet tall. He laughed and told me not to be surprised at what I might find after careening the first 50 feet. I definitely need my vision checked because after bouncing at 40 miles per hour I approached my five-foot ledge. I could almost hear him laughing as I flew off a 20-footer. From the bottom, I looked upstream. Stan appeared tiny as he entered the drop. The size of these drops is amazing. The creek consists of difficult 20- to 50-footers the entire stretch. As I watched Stan hand paddle I knew I was fortunate to watch a rising star of kayaking. Stan was perfect with every line. There are only a few hand paddlers who kayak this style of whitewater and

Stan did it better than any traditional paddling legend could hope to.

One of the last rapids on the Raven's Fork is a 10-foot river-left boof called Cave Man. A tree blocked the entrance, but we managed to squeeze under it. When I paddled here before the water was much higher and the undercut on the bottom right was not in play. Today it was. Stan went first and styled the rapid. I committed a few minutes later. The tree was not an issue. A quick duck and I lined up for the boof. At the ledge I got pushed right and landed pointing straight into the undercut. I gave the rock a good head butt and pushed myself back thinking I was fine. Suddenly my edge caught and I was going back under the rock with no balance. I flipped and immediately went under. I was battling, trying to push myself out when a pair of hand paddles wrapped around my torso. Stan tackled me from behind. His bear hug pulled me straight out and up righted me. Seeing his hand paddles wrapped around my chest while I was stuck under the rock was about as cool as anything gets. He pushed me downstream and smiled. We finished with only three portages for the day. Pretty good for the Raven's Fork.

On March 28th we were still in second place. The team in first was racking up laps on the Little while we stuck to steeper runs. We wanted to win, but could not pass up the steeps. Stan and I went back to the West Prong and paddled the Upper Upper, Trailhead, and Picnic sections twice. We scored 3,000 feet for the day and finished with our ritual drive home in the VW Fox. At this point we were both financially broke and our respective girlfriends had long since dumped us. We were, however, paddling extremely well and living life to the fullest. We had paddled for nearly a month straight and had more great memories of our month than most acquire in years.

On the 29th Stan and I headed to the Toxaway. The Toxaway is a brutally unkind river. It is full of both wonders and misery. The slides are huge, hundreds of feet long, and they drop at a terrifying gradient. The speeds reached while sliding down

these monsters are faster than my beater car's top highway speed. The run requires three of the worst portages known in the Southeast. As usual, Stan was flawless. His hand paddling allowed him precise control. One portage ends at the top of a several hundred foot long narrow slide called Land Bridge. You actually walk out on a huge slab of rock that acts as a bridge over the river. To enter the drop, you seal launch off the downstream side of the bridge and land in the falling waterfall. This is only the start of the rapid. It continues to drop approximately another hundred feet before crashing into the pool at the bottom. I went first and from the bottom looked up to see Stan launch. He was already perched on the rock bridge facing downstream. From this distance he appeared to be tiny. I could see him tapping his hand paddles on. He then reached forward and with both hands gripping the lip of the ledge he flung himself perfectly into the waterfall. I have seen video of the world's best paddlers dropping these falls and have been fortunate to watch a few of them in person, but Stan's line was absolute perfection. He glided to the bottom.

If you are new to the Toxaway, Land Bridge is usually the biggest rapid you have ever paddled. Then you paddle the 30 feet of flatwater below and eddy out above Wintergreen Falls. While scouting Wintergreen you realize that it will be the biggest rapid you have ever paddled. Wintergreen is absolutely amazing. I have no idea how big it is. It is so much taller than other rapids there is nothing to compare it to. It makes Stairway to Heaven on Bear Creek look child-sized; Gorilla on the Green looks like an amusement park compared to this one. Plus, there is no portage. You have to run it. The drop consists of three giant slides. The first and last are almost vertical. Wipeouts on Wintergreen often include spinning around backwards after the first slide and stern pitoning into a ledge at forty miles per hour. This results in being ejected out of the back of your kayak and dropping the last huge slide on your butt, backwards! Before running Wintergreen I usually feel as sick as kayaking ever makes me. Afterwards, I feel as great as kayaking ever

Domestic Travel For the Love of It

makes me. Once again, Stan was on the money. We paddled the last section talking about our adventures. With the Toxaway, the fun is not over when you get off the water. The take-out is actually an old road that is gated and you must carry your gear four miles straight up the mountain to the car. Two hours with sixty pounds of stuff on your shoulder going uphill gives you time to reflect.


The following day we hit the Tellico for 12 quick runs. I know it sounds ridiculous to call 12 runs quick, but after our month it was. On March thirty-first Tiya, Stan, and I spent our last day logging seven laps on Johnnies Creek. Johnnies flows into Little River Canyon. The level was pumping and to be honest much scarier than I had anticipated. Tiya knew the run and took turns leading us down. On the first run my creek boat split apart. The boat had been brand new on March first and had kept me very safe for the month. It somehow seemed appropriate for it to give out on the last day. Thankfully, we had a spare and later in the day Stan and I paddled for the last time that month. We raced the entire run and although I was in solid paddling shape I could barely keep up—remember, I had the paddle. Following my new friend was awesome. There is certainly no one else I would have ever wanted to follow. We finished our last run of the month at sunset. Later that evening, we learned that we had won the first TVF March Madness.

During our month of paddling we racked up four runs on the Green, four on the West Prong, two on the Lower Cullasaja,

one Raven's Fork trip, one Toxaway trip, seven laps on Johnnies, two on Little River Canyon, 17 Ocoee laps, one Double Camp, three Citico, and 43 Tellico laps. We logged 254 miles of kayaking, 4,128 miles on the VW Fox, watched nine sunrises, broke four kayaks, lost two girlfriends, destroyed a brand new Subaru, raised money for the Boys and Girls club, ate hundreds of PB & J's, and dropped over 30,000 vertical feet of gradient. Most importantly, I made a great new friend.

In the months following March Madness, life returned to normal. I stayed busy with my business. Stan made plans to finish college and returned as the head guide and trip leader for his family's rafting company. Stan and I saw each other every few days on the river. Nothing needed to be said, but the great bond of friendship from our month-long adventure had forever tied us to one another. We both knew we had discovered a great kayaking partner and looked forward to years of paddling together.

One day in July, I learned about a terrible accident involving a raft guide on the Upper Ocoee. The guide had swum toward a pinned raft in order to help out. While swimming through a relatively calm section of water upstream of the pinned raft, the guide was pulled under into an unknown sieve. The guide who lost his life was Stan.

Stan was much more than an amazing kayaker. He was, without a doubt, the most amazing person I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. He treated everyone as if they were his best friend. He was only 23, but knew everything about life. He knew that relationships with family and friends are miles more important than any other goals in life and he inspired everyone who knew him. 



Tiya McNabb speeding down the Tellico.

Photo by Jeff West

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International Paddling

Earthquake on the Colca

By John D. Mattson

I awoke at dawn and my senses were instantly overwhelmed by the colors and the stark-emptiness of the huge canyon where we had spent the night. It felt like a dream, but as I came to, I realized where we were, and recalled the events of the last few days. It was the third day of our expedition, but we had only traveled about 10 kilometers and we had already lost two of the original six members of our group.

Peru's infamous Colca Canyon is a steep and narrow gorge with lots of loose rock; escape routes are few and exceedingly difficult. "It's a real scary canyon," my friend Dave Black told me. "The rapids are always changing, and there is one Class V rapid that is very hard to scout and cannot be portaged."

Dave had lived in Peru for a couple of years, and had run many difficult rivers, so I respected his opinion, but I still wanted to experience the Colca. The stories of huge Condors and incredible vistas lured me onward, and besides, a Polish team had done it with non-self-bailing rafts in the early 1980s.

Our expedition had started in

Huambo, a quaint little adobe village that sits on the rim of the great canyon. Our taxi dropped us off at the local restaurant where we stored our kayaks, and had a quick lunch, before wandering off to explore the narrow streets.

Most villages in South America have a main square, a Catholic Church, and a soccer field—in fact, I have never seen one that doesn't. Huambo has a huge old

adobe church with two very large bells. The legends say that when Europeans conquered the Incas, they melted down some of their artifacts to make bells for the new churches.

The days are short on the equator, and the nights are cold in the high desert, so as soon as the sun hit the horizon we scurried back to a big dinner at Sue's Place, and quickly retired to our dirt hostel floor. We were back to Sue's Place again for breakfast, and the burro drivers showed up just as we finished.

A local family had arranged for the Arriero (burro driver) to show up at the restaurant, and had coached us on the proper rate, but the rest was up to us. It was time for some serious Spanglish, but we managed to get the right number of burros and, in less than an hour, they were loaded and headed into the canyon.

I think that carrying a kayak is probably the equivalent of burro hell, and one of our troops was definitely showing his

hostility. As soon as the boat was loaded, he started running and bucking through the main square.

"Hey! That's my boat," yelled Randy, as the Arriero rushed off to catch him.

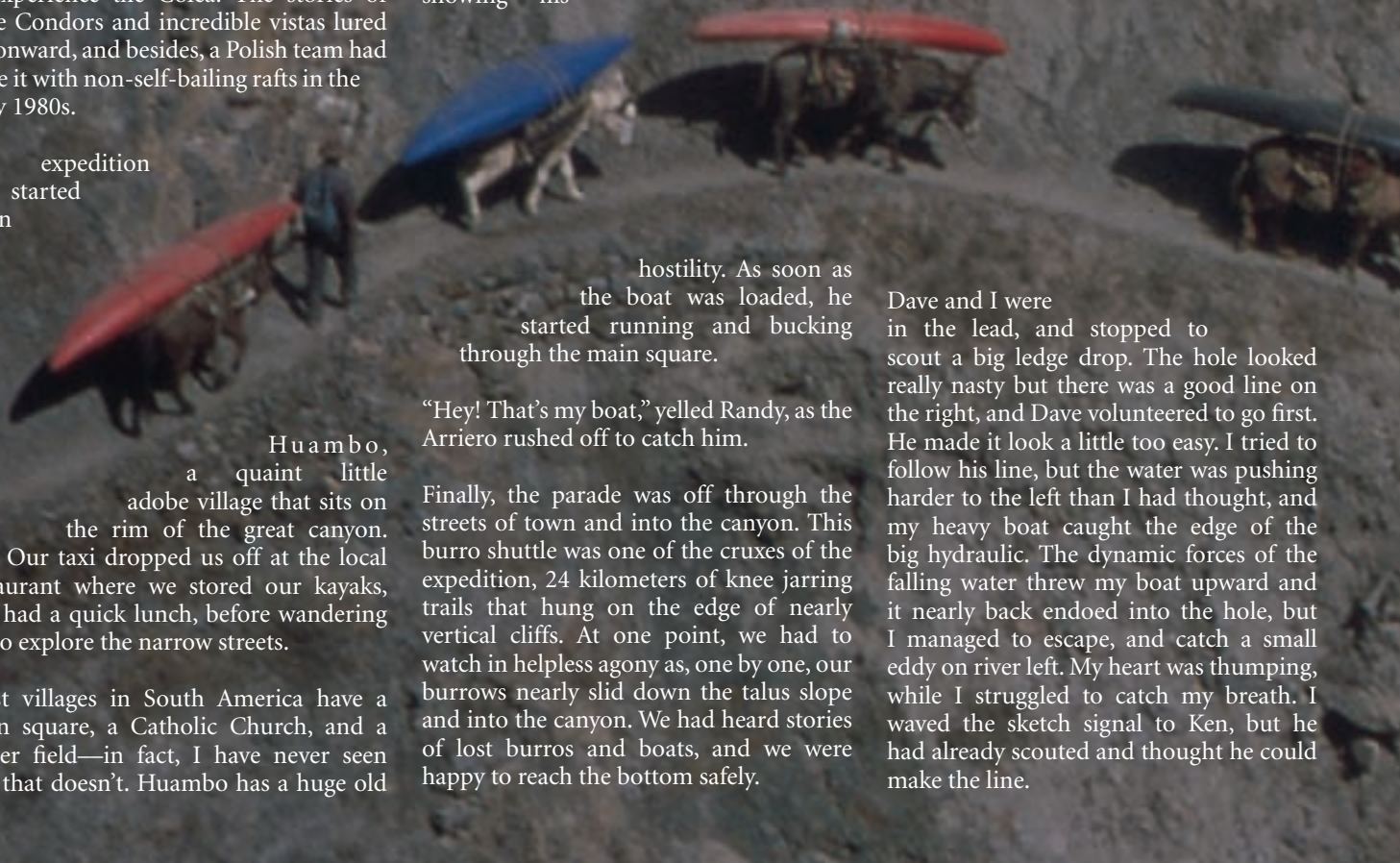
Finally, the parade was off through the streets of town and into the canyon. This burro shuttle was one of the cruxes of the expedition, 24 kilometers of knee jarring trails that hung on the edge of nearly vertical cliffs. At one point, we had to watch in helpless agony as, one by one, our burrows nearly slid down the talus slope and into the canyon. We had heard stories of lost burros and boats, and we were happy to reach the bottom safely.

The first day was mellow, with only four kilometers of easy water to a beautiful side canyon with an emerald clear stream and a great hike. We found some large pottery along the way, and the trail felt like it hadn't been used for a long time. The water was warm and deep, and we enjoyed a relaxed day in an empty paradise.

It felt great to get some rest, because the next day would begin with an arduous portage that covered one kilometer of steep, loose rocks. The portage had been created by a huge landslide two years earlier, which dammed the river for two months; it had probably occurred during one of Peru's many earthquakes.

When we reached the portage the next morning, things looked different than we expected. In only two years, high water from monsoons had washed most of the debris out of the main river bed. It was now possible to run everything, but a few of the drops were a bit harder than we wished to try in this remote canyon with loaded boats.

Dave and I were in the lead, and stopped to scout a big ledge drop. The hole looked really nasty but there was a good line on the right, and Dave volunteered to go first. He made it look a little too easy. I tried to follow his line, but the water was pushing harder to the left than I had thought, and my heavy boat caught the edge of the big hydraulic. The dynamic forces of the falling water threw my boat upward and it nearly back ended into the hole, but I managed to escape, and catch a small eddy on river left. My heart was thumping, while I struggled to catch my breath. I waved the sketch signal to Ken, but he had already scouted and thought he could make the line.



Ken had about the same line as me but the strong current grabbed him and back-ended his boat right into the big hole, which was every bit as bad as we had thought. He put up a gallant effort, but the hydraulic would not release him.

"He's swimming," I yelled to Dave. We rushed into the current and managed to push him into an eddy on river right.

"Thanks! I'm fine," Ken said. "Where is my boat?" We searched diligently, but the boat had disappeared, and the sheer canyon walls made it impossible to return upstream if we went chasing it.

"I don't see any other choice except hiking out," someone in our group declared. "At least we aren't too far from the put-in trail."

"I'll go along," volunteered Dr. Bill. "I came for an adventure, and I think that hiking out will definitely be one."

We all agreed that it would be best to have two people hiking out together. If they could get out, then someone could also hike in, so Bill left his boat in the

hopes of retrieving it later. Their first task was swimming across a small channel, so we set up safety ropes, and then helped them haul their gear up a loose rock face.

"If I went alone, I wouldn't have any stuff to carry," joked Ken, as he helped Bill with the gear he was salvaging. He was trying to stay in good spirits, but it was obvious that he was disappointed about having to abandon the trip. From there, we could only watch helplessly as they disappeared up the slope.

Our plan was to wait until 11:00 the next morning, just in case they were trapped by the formidable canyon, in which case we would rush downstream and try to organize a rescue.

Despite the events of the previous day, when I awoke the next morning, I was so struck by the beauty of my surroundings that I temporarily forgot about poor Ken and Bill, hiking through the Colca's unforgiving canyon. The remaining group was up early after a restless night, but we could only wait, and search the canyon above for any sign of movement. At 10:30 we started packing our boats.

"It's eleven o'clock, they must have made it," Tom yelled as he headed for his boat. "Let's go find out what is waiting for us."

Within a kilometer we had found Ken's boat. We quickly salvaged the most valuable items and left everything else on the rocks to dry.

The day was waning, and anxiety was pushing us onward.

The canyon became more and more spectacular with ominous sheer walls and some very narrow passages, but the rapids were mostly Class III, and we moved onward with ease.

Some very large Condors were circling and their presence helped to create an eerie, somewhat prehistoric mood. It was almost as if we had passed through time and entered an ancient world in the very bowels of the earth. There were no roads, no people, and not even an airplane to distract us from the serenity of this

remarkable place.

"I think that's Jasmine," Randy said, as we approached a side canyon on river left where a small clear stream joined the Colca.

We stopped to hike up a sensational gorge, with bright red, brown, and gray walls enhanced by the tilts and swirls of the constantly changing geology. A short time later, we were sent rushing back to our boats, as rocks falling from the walls overhead nearly landed on us.

This had been recommended as a camp, but there was too much exposure to the loose rock above, so we found a sheltered spot for lunch, and headed downstream to the Douche de Condores, a 1,000 meter waterfall in one of the most remarkable parts of the gorge. It looked like a pretty safe camp, and the entertainment was fabulous, so we found a comfortable rock and settled back to watch the Condors.

These mysterious birds with wingspans of three meters or more live in

the Colca, but travel about 80 kilometers to the Pacific Ocean, where they feed on the bounty of the sea. When they return in the evening, they fly through the mist of the falls, before returning to their nests. We saw at least half a dozen of these great birds fly through the falls and one of them circled close and landed right across the river from us.

"Crash! Bang! Bang! Boom! Splash!" A large rock landed in the river about 10 meters away.

"I'm moving my tent," Dave said somewhat nervously. I decided to join him while Randy and Tom were reluctant to move, feeling that the whole canyon was

Domestic Travel

3 Rivers in 1 Day

By Robyn Battaile

It was really happening. New York and Vermont had gotten a week's worth of warm drizzle and downright downpour, and here it was, Father's Day weekend! I hadn't even noticed that it was Father's Day until my buddy, Ed Clark, mentioned that forgotten key for us kayaking dads to get out paddling. Unfortunately for him, he was on call for the weekend and was unable to join us for our creeking trifecta.

Jon Adler, Simon Wiles, Chris Skalka and myself left Burlington on Saturday morning with two rivers in mind: the Big Branch and a seldom run creek called Pike Brook in the Lake George region of New York. There was so much water that creeking parties were scattered, with many headed north to run the North Branch Winooski, North Branch Lamoille, Gihon etc. But we had our sights on what is in my opinion the BEST run in Vermont, the "Big and Classic Branch." The Big Branch is short—about a mile and a half—but it flows away from the road for the entire time. The water is crystal clear and the rocks are smooth boulders creating deep chutes. The rock is a marble conglomerate that creates the smoothest mix of rounded boulders and slabs I've found anywhere. Since I have two kids and a full time job (in addition to being Dad), I hadn't gotten on the Big Branch all year and neither had Simon, so this is what we wanted to hit first. However, since there was so much water, we would also have to look at Furnace Brook, a small watershed halfway to the Big Branch.

The water level at Furnace was perfect: clear water covering the grassy banks of the creek. Usually I have a higher than average tolerance for running the bone, but I had been warned of hitting Furnace too low. This was an ideal level and no one in our group of four had ever run it!

The gradient on Furnace felt like roughly 200 feet per mile—not insane, but we certainly knew we were creeking! The steady rapids required a fantastic combination of read-and-running and

easy river level scouting by whoever was in front. There were a few large drops ending in pools that punctuated the consistent whitewater action.

Towards the top there is a photogenic four-tiered slide that drops a total of 30 feet in about 50 horizontal feet. The first part is a straightforward 25-footer right down the middle where you want to aim for a gorgeous boof flake six feet from the bottom. Nothing was hard (as long as you were upright). The creek bed was a mix of rounded large boulders and big boulder flakes that had peeled away from the riverbanks and slid into the water. Around every bend was another small horizon line, which required a quick look. We continued scouting and eddy hopping until the landscape eased back from its steep banks. We could see a good-sized horizon line with a lot of mist coming up from below.

This was the second largest falls on the river: a respectable Class V entrance leading to a significant hole at the bottom with a slightly undercut wall on the river left side. The river had three channels that all dropped about eight feet with varying degrees of steepness. The channels converged in a pot hole/cauldron that then pumped through a narrow spout about four feet wide over another six-footer and into a frothy mess. Simon ran first, making it look smooth, then set up a camera and throw rope on the river right bank. As he was getting set, a burly guy came down and began to harangue him about the dangers of the falls, telling him that someone had died there in the last year. He was pretty loud and upset at first, but Simon calmed him down by saying that we were professionals and had safety set up; it was no problem. Just then, Jonny came bouncing down the first drop a little too far left, and caught his left rail on the incoming jet of water entering from the left channel. In the blink of an eye, he nearly freewheeled the bottom falls, launching into the rock wall on the left. Keeping his paddle in front to protect his body, Jonny had his paddle ripped from his hands and he ended up washing through the bottom hole. Everything was retrieved in short order, but so much for

making it look professional! Fortunately, the water was warm, the day was warm and we had lots of time to scout and slide our way to the take-out.

After running Furnace we drove south for another 40 minutes trying to gauge the flow on Big Branch. Indicators of water levels were scattered; the online gauges said it was going to be low but our observations from the road indicated we could be in for some excitement.

The Big Branch is loaded with hundreds of small drops. There are only two waterfalls, Cave Drop and B.L.T. (Boof Left twice), but what the river lacks in large drops it more than makes up for in continuous whitewater. Jamie McEwan and Bruce Lessels, in Bruce's guidebook to the northeast whitewater, described it as not so much as a river but more of a cascading flow of white down a mile and a half of boulder fields. And the best thing? It all goes! Every single drop is clean and boofable with deep landings—again and again and again.... In my opinion, the Big Branch is the best Class V creek in Vermont.

Since we had all done the Big Branch many times we buzzed down it, enjoying the day, the good flow and the company. About halfway through the run we got out to look at the hardest, most technical rapid, Mushroom. There, the river drops steeply through a narrow, jumbled channel, opens slightly with convergent currents exiting and entering the main flow, then bottlenecks between two giant boulders, letting the water pile up and then gush down to slam into a golf cart sized rounded boulder, creating a mushroom effect. Mushroom is even harder to paddle than it is to explain, but the goal is to stay upright through the boulder goal posts and try to skirt the mushroom on the right. Many boats, paddles and paddlers have been broken here, especially in the early days of exploration of the river in the mid 1990s.

Another drop we scouted was Boof Left Twice, a beautiful 10-footer into a deep pool, but with a slightly complicated entry. The river ramps up, onto and over some

Simon Wiles nearing impact with the pillow on Pike's Z-Drop.

Photo by Jonny Adler



Domestic Travel **3 Rivers in 1 Day**

entry rocks maybe three feet high. The landing off these rocks is a smooth sloping rock shelf that angles not only down river but also towards river right where the majority of flow disappears into a three-foot wide crack. If you blow the first boof left, your boat will stall and then drift into the crack, and it isn't pretty! But the line is to stick the boof, paddle a hard two strokes off the next lip over a clean 10-footer into the deep pool below.

We got to the bottom of the Big Branch and decided we had time for another 45 minute drive to New York, where Simon and Jonny had made the first decent of Pike Brook last year. They had raved about the smooth, steep, clean falls and slides. And they had mentioned that the slides were big—really big. How big could they be? There was only one way to find out, so off we went, at 5 in the afternoon to check it out.

As we passed over the takeout bridge, Simon craned his neck upstream and howled "Oh baby, it's ON," while the car began to veer dangerously off the road. Upstream, as far as the eye could see, was a seemingly endless slide. The slide varied in pitch from low angle to somewhere between waterfall and crazy-steep water slide. Jonny knows the landowner and after a quick hello we walked upstream to see exactly where the slide began. Hundreds of feet above there was a small pool with a good eddy on river right which was the landing to another slide, again stretching out of sight. "How many more of these are there?" I asked. Jonny and Simon both began laughing in a way that, I have to admit, didn't make me feel too good. "Lots, lots more—these are just the small ones!"

We put on about a mile and half upriver into a small gorge. Most of the wood and strainers had blown out in the previous

springs floods. Still, I was glad two people in the group had been there before, as we faced many tight, technical drops. Luckily everything except for one falls went smoothly. That one is an extremely complicated, narrow, pushy, undercut falls that certainly has a line, but on that day no one elected to try it.

The gorge began to ease back a bit with one final gorge-like feature. This was a straightforward but intimidating 25 foot slide/falls with an overhanging rock shelf on river left about chest high $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down. The river, only about four feet wide, pumped directly into the undercut rock wall on river right. As long as you were upright and in the middle it wasn't a problem.

After this the river passed under a New England dry-stone arch bridge that is a marvel of engineering. At its height, the arch is about 20 feet over the water. There

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At the top of the next drop, a 25-foot vertical falls onto rock with a bouncy sneak on far left, a woman came out of a house nearby. “Hey, HEY! You know there are waterfalls down there?” Simon and I just looked at each other. It was the second time that day that someone assumed we were loco, playing around in water falling off cliffs. Simon said that, yes, we did know there were waterfalls down there—and big ones at that. She looked at us as though she suspected we were not from around there—not New York, the planet! We continued on laughing, not at her, but at normal people thinking of Class V kayakers as not quite right.

From here the river widened and the sun filtered into the small gorge. Simon and Jonny led through a small 20-foot slide. At the bottom I noticed that they were both wearing HUGE evil smiles. “After this,” Jonny said, “is the biggest slide of the day.” And there, in front of me, the earth fell away in a dizzying absence of anything to hold on to. The base of the slide was so far away the mist didn’t even reach up to us at the top. I felt like I was on the sharp end of the rope, with several pitches behind me but looking up into a great expanse of nothingness. I couldn’t believe it was going to be runnable. But here is the thing: not only is it runnable, it’s also FUN! This thing is several hundred feet long, dropping some 50+ vertical feet. It starts off with an interesting left to right entrance move around a final boulder at the lip before take off. It falls at a 45 degree angle for 50 feet before leveling off to a 20 degree slope that continues for a 150 feet. Jonny and Simon said that on the first descent in November, without so many leaves on the trees, they could see Lake George, hundreds of vertical feet below them.

Although the longest and steepest, this first huge slide is not the most difficult. Z Drop, named because of the obvious zigging and zagging required to run it, deserves that distinction. An entrance slide of about 15

feet ends in a small hole backed up by a nice pool. A hard four strokes off the lip of this pool send you screaming down 75 feet into a huge pillow smashing off the river left wall. If you brace into the pillow you can ride it out into a large hole towards river right. Crash through the hole, and you must scramble back left to hit the next small hole, which has a tree hanging a foot above the water. One final hole just downstream from this puts you at the end of the rapid. It is one of several slides on this run where, from the bottom of it, you just can’t believe how far away the top is.

After a walk around a gorgeous, long, low angle slide, which ends up sailing off a 10 footer onto rock, we put in just above another very long slide. Named Powder Day, this is the slide that we had hiked in to from the bottom of the run. It flows for hundreds of feet down a uniform, smooth, low angle slide—the stuff of dreams—before sailing off about a six-foot clean boof at the end. The only problem is the large boulder right in the middle of the final boof stroke, but there is lots of space to sail into the river right eddy. From the bottom eddy, we peeled out into the very next slide, another hundreds of feet long affair that is not as “powdery” as the slide before it. This low angle affair went 60 feet or so before breaking up into a vertical falls onto a shallow landing. The more left we were, the more broken up the fall got, whereas the far right was a uniform 12-foot vertical drop onto a shallow shelf. Our boats and our spines took hard hits as we all went as far left as possible. After the vertical break up you have to maintain your composure as the slide steepens to about 20 degrees and goes for another 80 to 100 feet. The right wall sends out rock shelves to be avoided, and the whole river funnels into a large finale hole. At the bottom of this slide, the homeowner and several other people were gathered on both sides of the river taking pictures and shaking their heads.

“Should we look at the last one?” I asked Simon.

“Ah no. You’ve made down this far, the last is more of the same. Just hold on and go right down the middle.”

Chris and I had been given sage advice so far; so a few seconds after Simon disappeared over the horizon, I followed. And this is where things got a bit interesting. This last slide is NOT like the other slides. After going for quite a ways on a river-wide, low angle slide, the take out bridge flashed by. And then, somewhere under the bridge, the earth dropped away. My hoots of joy quickly became howls of panic and I saw Simon, way, way down below me as I sailed off into space (in the middle, like I was suppose to be). The water morphed into a vertical falls for 10 to 12 feet before rejoining the earth as a now very steep slide. Upon impact my boat bounced, and all was whiteout. Time slowed and I realized I was angled scarily toward river left. There was still a lot of slide to go, and now not only was my boat river left, but my body was leaned frighteningly over the left side of my boat! I almost flipped over, but fortunately a bounce or two and a hard push with my paddle got my boat underneath me again and I finished the last 30 feet upright, thankful to be done.

We could see the lake through the trees; it was only a football field away. It was amazing that only 30 minutes before we had been hundreds of feet above lake level.

On the way home we recounted our stories from the day, but had a hard time remembering which rapid went with which river! Furnace had been a new river for all of us, and was awesome. The Big Branch had been as lovely a stretch of gorgeous, mellow Class V as it gets. And Pike had proved to be an eyeball stretching hair run. On the ride home, using the topo map, we estimated that we had descended around 1,500 vertical feet that day. Thankfully for me, one of the year’s best water weekends happened to fall on Fathers Day. Thanks Hallmark! And a special thanks to Kir for being so awesome and watching the kids! 

*The author, Robyn Battaile, nails the crucial boof
at Boof Left Twice, on the Big Branch.*

Photo by Jonny Adler



Domestic Travel

Middle Fork Fiasco

Classic Middle Fork Scenery



Getting There and Back is Half the Fun

By Rich Smith

Few expeditions exceed the pure exhilaration and scenic wonder of a white water rafting trip. But sometimes getting there and back is more of an adventure than running the river....

While I was living in California, I had been invited on several such rafting trips on different rivers like the Rogue in Oregon, and the Kern, Stanislaus and American rivers in California. My friend Brian and his wife Jan were dedicated whitewater enthusiasts. They owned three 10-man WWII rubber rafts, and with homemade rowing frames plied various rivers throughout California and Oregon each summer. Occasionally they invited me to join them on these expeditions. Whenever they did, I eagerly

accepted. One spring I was invited to run the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in central Idaho with them. Several of Brian's kayaking friends intended to join us along with their spouses and, in some cases, children as well. Fourteen folks in all, and I felt privileged to be one of them.

A junket like this requires extensive planning and logistics including equipment, provisions, transportation and shuttle. Brian and Jan were very experienced and capable when it came to organizing and executing complex trips. The US Forest Service controls the Middle Fork River and issues limited permits to private groups as determined by lottery. Brian had won a mid-August permit for a group of fourteen, and was required to assure the Forest Service that he was an experienced rafter, sufficiently equipped to lead the hazardous five-day float trip downriver. While making these declarations, Brian

was advised that the upper portion of the river had unusually low flows and the resulting shallow water would severely restrict maximum raft capacity. Food and equipment sufficient to sustain fourteen people for five days would entirely fill each of the three rafts. This presented Brian with his first major logistics challenge.

The voyage was scheduled to start from Dagger Falls and proceed downriver for five days to the confluence of the Middle Fork and the Main Salmon River, also known as the River of No Return, then down the main Salmon to Corn Creek—a journey of just over 100 river miles. Corn Creek, about 40 miles downriver from North Fork, Idaho, was the only takeout along the entire route with road access. The Middle Fork of the Salmon River cuts a canyon thousands of feet deep into the Idaho batholiths. It is designated as a roadless wilderness area and, as such, is

one of the most primitive and inaccessible places in the lower 48 states. The only access to various river campgrounds and lodges is by the river itself or by three primitive airfields along the river. One of the rafters invited along was a doctor who intended to fly his airplane to Idaho. Brian devised a plan to solve the low water problem whereby the doctor would fly his airplane into the Stanley, Idaho airport, load the aircraft with one half of the group's provisions, and then fly those supplies into the Indian Creek airstrip about 25 miles down-river from Dagger Falls. The river downstream from the Indian Creek airstrip was reported to have sufficient flow to accommodate our heavily loaded rafts. The Stanley Airport was designated as the rendezvous for the start of our adventure. At the airport, equipment would be sorted, packed, and loaded on the airplane. The remaining supplies and passengers were to be transported to Dagger Falls via five automobiles.

The second logistics problem was how to shuttle 14 people and all their equipment from the takeout at Corn Creek on the main Salmon River back to the Stanley Airport for the return trip to California. Brian contracted locals to drive five cars from Dagger Falls and park them at Corn Creek for the 175-mile shuttle back to Stanley. Several of the group's other cars would remain at the Stanley Airport.

Brian, Jan and I had been friends for many years. Brian was a generous and outgoing

individual who would give you the shirt off his back if you asked. He also was a very experienced and capable outdoorsman who felt very strongly that things were best done his way. Consequently, he took control of most situations, especially when it came to the details of a river trip. Jan was a very compliant, understanding and patient individual who enjoyed outdoor activities, especially river running, but left most trip details to Brian.

We planned to leave from Brian's house after work on a Friday afternoon for the 15-hour drive to Idaho. At 5 p.m. when Brian had not yet showed up, Jan and I decided to load Brian's station wagon to save time. We carefully packed our personal gear, food, camping and rafting equipment into waterproof bags and crammed them into the wagon. Then we tied the rafts, rowing frames, and oars to the luggage rack. I was pleased that we actually found room for everything, and still had space for a driver and two passengers. At 7 p.m. Brian finally showed up, took one look at the station wagon, and without a word to either of us proceeded to untie and remove all the equipment from the luggage rack, unload the bags from the station wagon and place everything on the front lawn. He then took the next hour to repack everything and tie the rafting equipment back onto the roof of the car. Jan and I sat there and enjoyed a beer as Brian worked to pack everything in much the same manner we had. We had no clue as to what was wrong with our packing job but, when he was finished, Brian seemed satisfied.

We left Redwood City at 9 p.m., and by 3 a.m. we were somewhere in the Nevada desert outside of Reno. Although Brian was very tired, he refused my offers to drive. Concerned that Brian might fall asleep at the wheel, Jan wisely suggested we stop for a few hours and catch some shut-eye. Brian saw a rotating beacon some distance from the freeway and decided that an airport would be a safe place to camp for a few hours. Distances can be very deceptive in the desert, and what initially looked to be only a few miles off the freeway turned out to be a half-hour drive on a dusty dirt road. Jan and I begged Brian to simply pull off the deserted road and make camp in a turnout. However, Brian continued to search for the elusive airport, which despite our bone-jarring drive into the depths of the wasteland, never seemed to get any closer. Finally, he succumbed to our pleading and we made camp beside the road. When dawn broke, we packed up and drove 30 miles back to the freeway.

It was already very hot at the Stanley Airport when we arrived just before noon. We were the last ones to pull in, and the airplane had already left for Indian Creek to take advantage of the cool, stable early morning air. We spent the next hour sorting, packing and loading the remaining camping gear, food, and our personal belongings into waterproof rubber bags for the shuttle to Dagger Falls. After the airplane returned, we loaded the cars and drove the 30 miles of bumpy dirt roads to our designated put-in.

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Polly on the Kaitiva River in New Zealand ©Valerie Kreger



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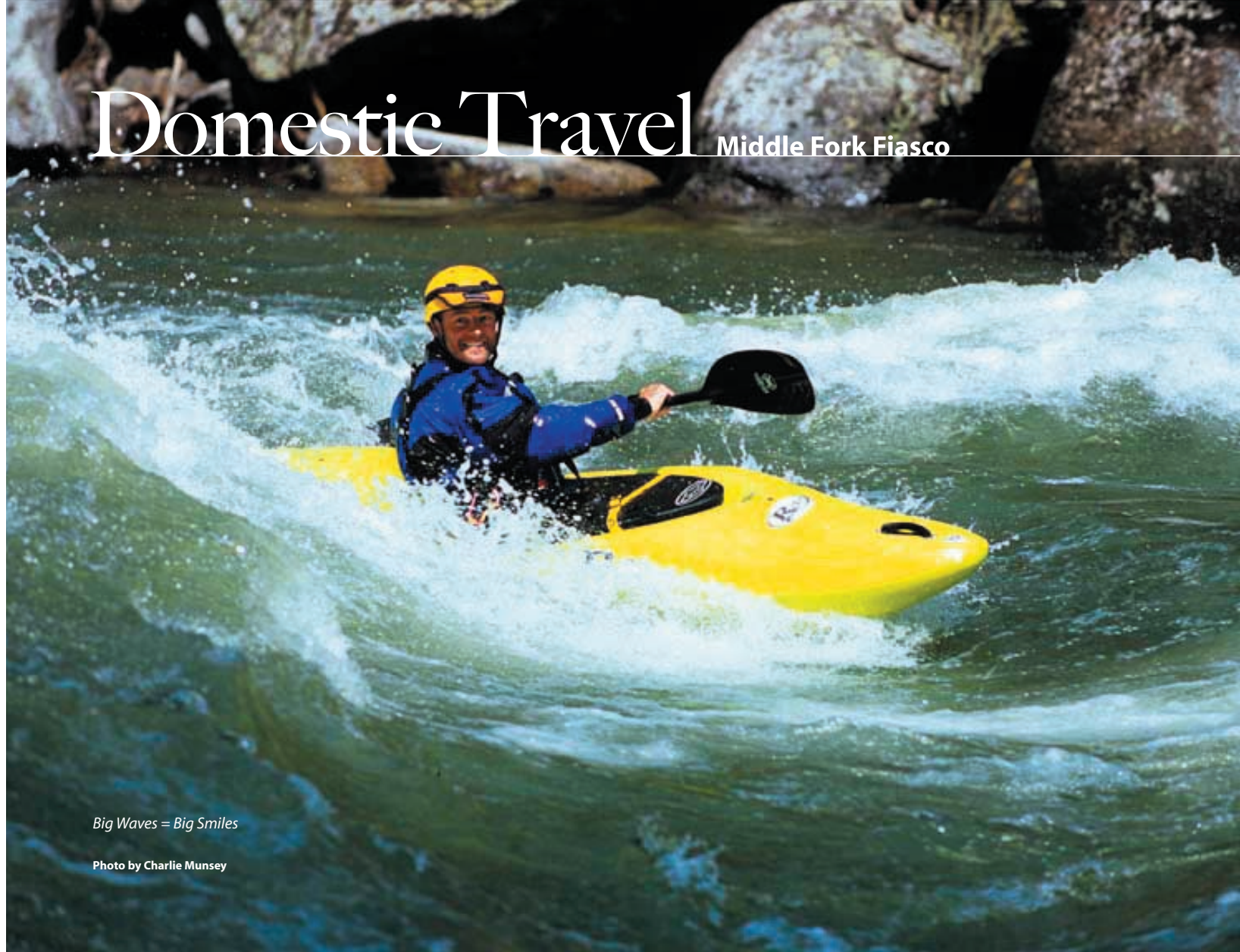
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Domestic Travel

Middle Fork Fiasco



Big Waves = Big Smiles

Photo by Charlie Munsey

Brian checked in with the Forest Service folks at Dagger Falls, and they assigned campsites for the entire trip. The Middle Fork River is designated as one of the few pristine primitive rivers in the contiguous United States. The entire Salmon River system is unpolluted and unconfined. There are no dams to interrupt its flow from its headwaters in the Sawtooth Mountains to the confluence with the Snake River in Riggins, Idaho.

The first rapid, Gardell's Hole, was designated as Class IV. We had just left Dagger Falls, and I was still busy stowing my gear and adjusting my PFD. I was sitting on the back tube of the raft with my PFD in my lap, buttoning up my Hawaiian shirt when we rounded a bend and unexpectedly plunged into Gardell's Hole. The raft folded in half and unceremoniously launched me into the

swirling river. As I plunged headfirst into the ice-cold water, all I could see was green water and bubbles ... lots of bubbles. At first I was totally disoriented, not knowing up from down. It was as though I had been thrown inside of a washing machine and was being tossed around like a dirty shirt. The hole finally tired of playing with me and on the third rotation spit me out. In the meantime the raft, also caught by the undercurrent, made two or three rotations in the hole and finally floated down-river. After what seemed like minutes but was probably only seconds, I saw light overhead and swam toward it. When I finally surfaced, the raft was gone! I looked behind me and saw it charging toward me like an uncontrolled scow; somehow I had been swept under and surfaced in front of it. Jan, surprised to see me dog paddling ahead of the raft, hauled me in. Brian yelled something about his rule

that one should never sit on the raft tubes and should always wear a PFD. It was a good rule, but the admonition was unnecessary, as the experience had already driven the point home. Jan looked at me and asked, "Where are your glasses?" I reached up to where my glasses, held in place with black rubber tubing, once rested on my nose. They were gone. Then she asked, "Where is your hat?" The water gods had also snatched my hat. Then, finally, "Where is your shirt?" Now, the missing shirt was a complete mystery, since I was wearing it when I was unceremoniously dumped into the river. There was not a shred of the shirt remaining. I had several minor scratches and abrasions on my chest, arms, and legs, but except for my pride, I was unhurt. I felt fortunate to be still wearing my bathing suit.

On the second day, we ran Pistol Creek Rapid, another Class IV. Brian wouldn't

let Jan or I row the raft, yet seemed more focused on guiding the other rafts and kayaks safely through the rapids than watching where he was going. He rowed our raft with one hand as he waved instructions to the other rafts and kayakers. "Go right, go left; look out for the rock; the river bends to the left, etc." The other rafters and kayakers, all experienced river runners, seemed to scorn Brian's directions as we scraped over every rock and bumped into every obstruction the river had to offer. Eventually his neglect resulted in disaster. The raft wrapped itself around a large boulder that occupied a prominent position in the middle of the river. The force of onrushing water pushed the raft hard against the rock such that no amount of straining at the oars would break us free. I jumped into the raging but shallow water and nudged the raft around the rock. As I climbed back in, I heard a hissing sound and watched a trail of bubbles escape from one of the tubes. Fortunately, the raft consisted of several independently air compartments; nevertheless, the damaged compartment soon went flat. Brian beached the raft and spent the next two hours patching a two-inch gash. We caught up with the rest

of the group as they were eating lunch at Indian Creek, where the rest of our gear had been cached.

That evening we were relaxing around the campfire enjoying stories of past river trips and enjoying some homemade ice-cream when the young girlfriend of one of Brian's friends came into camp grasping a three-foot snake, possibly with the intent to show us how unafraid she was of the local wildlife. She should have been afraid of this particular snake. It was a visibly upset Western Diamondback rattlesnake. She held the snake's head in her right hand and the buzzing tail in her left hand. "Look what I found!" she bravely proclaimed as she thrust the snake toward the group. It was an unnecessary boast; everyone in camp knew exactly what she had. "Get rid of that thing you dingbat!" her boyfriend yelled. As she tried to release the snake, it managed to wiggle its head out from between her fingers and bury its fangs into her exposed right thumb. She screamed, and with the snake still clamped onto her thumb, began to flail her arm up and down whipping the poor creature about like a limp rope. The snake eventually released her thumb and flew into the air,

and hit the ground, where one of the men crushed it with a shovel.

The injured woman sat down on a log and began to cry. The doctor looked at her wound and shook his head. "We have to get her back to the nearest lodge immediately for treatment. I don't have anti-venom with me." The doctor thrust her rapidly-swelling thumb into some leftover ice cream and gave her a few anti-histamine tablets. Guided by a flashlight, the doctor and the woman's boyfriend assisted her down the two-mile long trail to the Middlefork Lodge, where they treated her with anti-venom. The following morning they radioed for a medi-vac helicopter. She and her boyfriend were subsequently flown to Boise, where she was hospitalized for three additional days before flying back to California for further treatment. Later, I heard that she was hospitalized for three weeks and almost lost her entire hand.

Several miles past Loon Creek was Big Creek. About a quarter mile up the Big Creek trail, a historic copper plaque marked the spot where the Sheepeater Indian Wars took place. The Nez Perce Indians had camped here in 1877. After



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Domestic Travel **Middle Fork Fiasco**

escaping from a reservation in eastern Washington, the Nez Perce were chased down Big Creek by the US Army as they were making their way into Montana, and eventually Canada. This was the place where Chief Joseph vowed, "I will fight no more, forever." It was a sad story of man's cruelty marked simply by a copper plaque. While hiking the path back to the rafts, Brian brushed aside an overhanging branch and a swarm of angry wasps attacked him. When we got back to the beach the doctor gave Brian some of his anti-histamine tablets and rubbed smoothing mud on his dozen welts. Brian was not a happy camper, but he still would not let me row the raft.

Brian's map showed that our last day's float would be an uninterrupted series of Class III and IV rapids in a narrow high-walled canyon. It was some of the most technically challenging whitewater

we would encounter on the trip. It wasn't so much the savageness of the individual rapids that troubled us, but the fact that there was one rapid closely followed by another with few places to beach the raft throughout. As we entered the canyon the river narrowed to less than fifty feet from cliff to opposite cliff. At Cliffside Rapids, the river made a sharp 45-degree turn to the left, followed by an even sharper horseshoe bend to the right. The river thrust itself against the sheer bulwark of the canyon wall, creating huge waves and spray as it struggled to make the turn and escape the restrictive gorge. Brian knew that we had to remain clear of the canyon wall or risk being smashed against it. Try as he might to keep clear of the cliff, the river had its own ideas of where we were going. We crashed hard against the wall and the rubber raft began to bounce along the cliff. The force of the raging water lifted the river side of the raft two feet

into the air as we slid along the cliff and snapped one of Brian's wooden oars like a toothpick. A raft caught in such a rapid with only one oar is totally helpless. The force of the turbulent river held us against the cliff and water poured into the raft, filling it knee-high. Brian continued to attempt to pry the raft away from the wall with his remaining oar as I unlashed the spare oar from the rowing frame. With both of us pushing the raft away with the oars, we finally broke loose of the wall and were flushed downriver. Brian struggled to affix the spare oar to the empty oarlock and regain control of the raft. Fortunately the raft was self-bailing, and the hundreds of gallons of water we had shipped soon flowed back into the river. We landed at the first rocky beach downstream from the gorge to gather our wits and repair the five-inch rip in the raft caused by the encounter with the canyon wall. Fortunately, no one in our party had



capsized, although like us some folks had come very close to just such a calamity.

We counted a dozen more Class III and IV rapids in the remaining run to the confluence with the main Salmon River. None of these rapids gave us the fright that Cliffside Rapids had. The main Salmon River was twice as wide as the Middle Fork River, and muddy brown rather than the clear blue of the Middle Fork. Haystacks dotted the river all the way from the confluence to our destination, Corn Creek, about six miles further downriver.

Corn Creek appeared around a bend early in the afternoon of the fifth day. We landed and began to unload and deflate the rafts for the five-hour drive back to Stanley. However, there was a major hang-up with our transportation. Only three of the five cars Brian had arranged to be shuttled to Corn Creek were in the parking lot: one truck, Brian's station wagon, and the van. Brian was livid, and kept mumbling about how everything had gone wrong on this trip: the late start from California, the low river, the torn raft, the snakebite, the hornets and now only three shuttle cars for twelve passengers and all their gear. It did seem like a long list of adversities.

We spent the next three hours packing, unpacking and re-packing, trying to fit all the equipment and as many folks as possible into the available transportation. We tied the rafts and frames to the roofs of cars, and filled every available cubic inch of space with our gear. Nevertheless, no matter how we arranged and rearranged equipment, adults, and children, and despite who sat on who's lap, there was room for only ten people and their gear. Two adults would have to take their gear and hitchhike back to the Stanley airport. Brian decided that John Samuelson and I could find our own way back to Stanley. The plan was that three cars would drive back to the Stanley Airport, redistribute the equipment among the various cars and airplane before returning to California. Brian and Jan would wait for John and me at the airport.

I was anxious as Brian and Jan drove off. This was my first trip to Idaho, and I had no idea how long it might take us to walk to the little town of Shoup and hitchhike to Stanley. It was at least a five-hour shuttle by car, so it was impractical for Brian to unload and return for us. John and I began walking along the deserted

road that led toward Shoup, about 25 miles east of Corn Creek. The city of North Fork was another fifteen miles east of Shoup. U.S. highway 93 led south from North Fork through the towns of Salmon and Challis and then on Highway 75 to Stanley—a total distance of about 175 miles.

Corn Creek was at the end of a 40-mile long dirt road. Beyond Corn Creek were a few private cabins, a Boy Scout camp, and the River of No Return Wilderness.

Our chances of hitching a ride from such a remote place were little and none. I wondered how Brian expected us to hike with our gear all the way to Shoup and then hitchhike to Stanley. The afternoon was hot and we were soon stopping every few hundred yards to rest. After less than six miles we came to a deserted campground. The heat and our heavy packs had exhausted us. Shoup might as well have been another 100 miles away as 19. We decided to abandon the walk to Shoup and trust that someone would

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pro-ject (pr-ject) v. To thrust upward and outward
proj-ect (pro-ject) n. An undertaking requiring concentrated effort

Domestic Travel **Middle Fork Fiasco**

come along and give us a ride before nightfall. Plan "B" was to make camp right there and hope for a ride in the morning. We had been sitting beside the road for about an hour when a yellow school bus came bouncing down the road. We flagged the bus down, the door opened and the driver asked where we were going. We told him Stanley but we would be happy with North Fork. He laughed and said that they were going to Twin Falls and Stanley was along the way. For five dollars each, he would be happy to give us a lift there, but he added that if we were broke he would take us anyway. The bus was loaded with a group of Boy Scouts returning home after a weekend campout. We couldn't believe our good luck. We stashed our bags on the roof rack, climbed aboard, and gladly paid the ten dollars.

The Boy Scouts stopped in Challis for dinner, and the driver even offered to buy us a meal. We thanked him but said we had money for dinner. We arrived at Stanley at dusk, said goodbye to the Boy Scouts, and hiked up the road to the airport situated on a mesa above town. We expected to find Brian and Jan patiently waiting for us, but as we trudged up the access road, it was apparent that the airport was deserted. The doctor's airplane and all our friends' cars were gone. We figured that the others would have headed for California some time ago, yet we expected to find Brian and Jan still there. They had left Corn Creek for Stanley almost two hours before the bus picked us up, so they should have arrived long before we did. Where were they? Perhaps they stopped for a long dinner. All we could do was sit down and wait. By now it was completely dark, and the airport was only dimly lit by a few blue landing lights, a rotating beacon at the top of a tower, and a lone light over the shack at the end of the runway. I searched the shack for a note from Brian, but all I found was a weatherworn note pasted to the door with instructions on how to turn on the landing lights for an approaching airplane. There was no telephone booth at the airport; besides, who could we call? After another hour waiting for Brian & Jan, John suggested we leave a note and hike back down the road into town and stay at the town's only motel. At the time,

Stanley had a population of only 150, but it had four bars, two restaurants, and a small motel. The promise of a cold beer at one of the bars was sufficient enticement for me to agree.

We were just about to hike into town when

I saw a pair of headlights coming up the dusty road. "Well, it's about time!" I said, much relieved. Nevertheless, as the vehicle came closer it was obvious that this was not Brian's station wagon. In fact, it was the county Sheriff. He pulled up beside us, rolled down his window and asked,

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"Are you Rich Smith?" I said I was, and he told me that my friends were in Ketchum waiting for us.

"Ketchum?" I asked, "Where the hell is Ketchum?"

"Oh, about 60 miles up highway 75—over Galena Summit," he said pointing east toward the mountains gleaming in the moonlight.

"Why are they in Ketchum? They were supposed to meet us here," I grumbled.

"Didn't say," he shrugged.

John and I were not at all that thrilled with the idea of hitchhiking at night to Ketchum, but we had no other choice. The Sheriff gave us a lift down to highway 75 that led toward Ketchum.

"Exactly where in Ketchum are our friends?" I asked.

"Don't know, didn't say," he responded.

"Oh great, somewhere in a town I have never been to before."

The sheriff smiled as he let us out.

"It's a small town. Look in the bars, it sounded like they were calling from one. Good luck," he said as he drove off.

We stood on the highway for twenty minutes before the first car came along. It was an old '56 Chevy short-bed pickup truck driven by an old man in a cowboy hat with an ugly yellow dog in the seat beside him. I stuck out my thumb and John waved. The truck pulled over.

"Where ya headin'?" the driver drawled.

"Ketchum" John said.

"Hop in back." He pointed to the truck bed partially filled with bales of hay.

Galena Summit is over 8,700 feet high. One has to experience a ride in the back of a pickup traveling 60 mph over a snow-covered mountain to know what cold

really is. We soon dug into our river bags to retrieve warmer clothing, hunkered down between bales of hay and sat on our hands to avoid frostbite.

The main street of Ketchum was only two blocks long, seemingly limited to a series of restaurants, ski shops, and bars ... lots of bars. The driver let us out at one end of town and we began roaming the main street looking for Brian's station wagon. I figured with all those rafts and kayaks tied to the roof it would be easy to spot and Jan and Brian would be in a nearby bar or restaurant. Nevertheless, when a search of both sides of the street was unproductive we resorted to walking into and out of each bar. There were a lot of bars, and the interiors were dimly lit. I could barely see a thing as John and I walked from one end of the bar to the other gathering curious looks from the patrons as we went. I almost resorted to sticking my head in the front door of each establishment and yelling out "Brian!" but I wasn't quite that desperate yet.

As we entered the fourth gloomy bar, I spotted Brian seated alone on a barstool nursing a drink. Jan was not with him. I walked up to Brian and asked where Jan was. He pointed to the opposite end of the bar where Jan was sitting by herself. I then asked where the car was, and Brian grunted something about the back parking lot.

"Oh, that made it real easy for us to find you! You never told the sheriff where you were." Another unintelligible grunt followed.

"Why didn't you pick us up in Stanley—why are you in Ketchum for God's sake?"

Brian took another sip of his drink and muttered, "I should have driven." I was beginning to get real irritated with his attitude, so I went over to Jan.

"What in the world is going on?" I demanded.

She looked up and said "Ask him!" giving a nod to Brian.

continued on page 65



Anna Levesque

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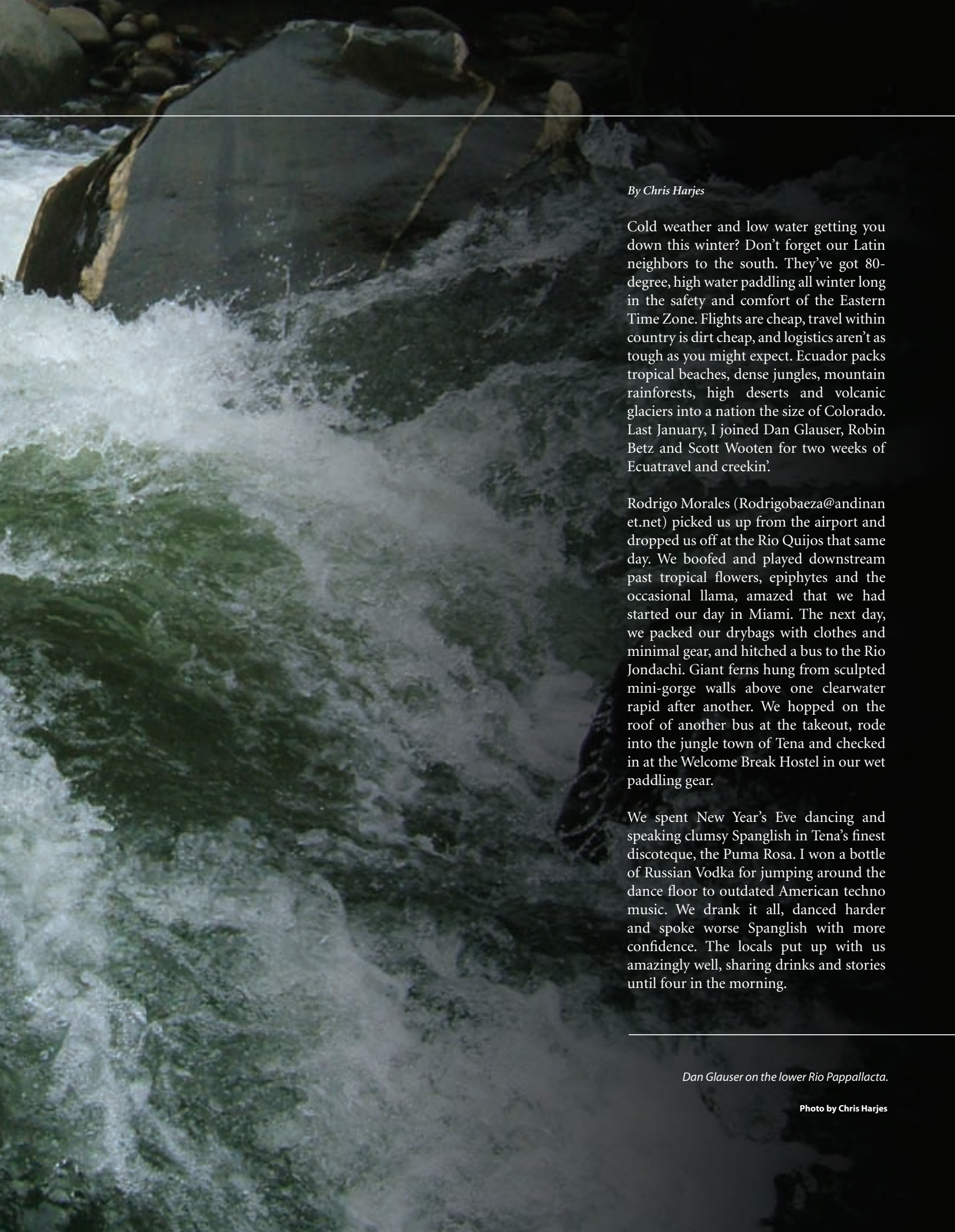
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A kayaker wearing a black helmet and an orange and black life jacket is navigating a red kayak through white-water rapids. The kayaker is holding a black paddle and is positioned in the center of the frame. The water is turbulent and white with foam, and there are large, dark rocks in the background. The overall scene is dynamic and adventurous.

International Paddling

Ecuador
Getaway



By Chris Harjes

Cold weather and low water getting you down this winter? Don't forget our Latin neighbors to the south. They've got 80-degree, high water paddling all winter long in the safety and comfort of the Eastern Time Zone. Flights are cheap, travel within country is dirt cheap, and logistics aren't as tough as you might expect. Ecuador packs tropical beaches, dense jungles, mountain rainforests, high deserts and volcanic glaciers into a nation the size of Colorado. Last January, I joined Dan Glauser, Robin Betz and Scott Wooten for two weeks of Ecuatravel and creekin'.

Rodrigo Morales (Rodrigobaeza@andinan.et.net) picked us up from the airport and dropped us off at the Rio Quijos that same day. We boofed and played downstream past tropical flowers, epiphytes and the occasional llama, amazed that we had started our day in Miami. The next day, we packed our drybags with clothes and minimal gear, and hitched a bus to the Rio Jondachi. Giant ferns hung from sculpted mini-gorge walls above one clearwater rapid after another. We hopped on the roof of another bus at the takeout, rode into the jungle town of Tena and checked in at the Welcome Break Hostel in our wet paddling gear.

We spent New Year's Eve dancing and speaking clumsy Spanglish in Tena's finest discoteque, the Puma Rosa. I won a bottle of Russian Vodka for jumping around the dance floor to outdated American techno music. We drank it all, danced harder and spoke worse Spanglish with more confidence. The locals put up with us amazingly well, sharing drinks and stories until four in the morning.

Dan Glauser on the lower Rio Pappallacta.

Photo by Chris Harjes

International Paddling **Ecuador Getaway**

Robin Betz on the Rio Chico Verde.


Photo by Scott Wooten



Chris Tulley joined us from there for a trek to Banos to run the Rio Topo and Chico Verde. Low water made the normally epic Topo amazingly manageable but still quite fun. Chico Verde turned out to be steep and hard, but horrifyingly manky due to recent landslides. We dubbed ourselves Team Hurl as Ecuador's lack of water and food hygiene tortured our Gringo stomachs. A day off sightseeing around the flanks of Volcan Arenal set us straight.

Traveling for nine days straight with small drybags as suitcases gave us an incredible sense of freedom—we could hop directly from bustop to boof, from riverside lunch to cocktails at the Tiki Bar. We still had more nice clothes and equipment than most of the country folk we shared roofrack space with.

The tropical rain machine started back up to finish our trip with stellar big-water repeat runs on the Jondachi and Quijos rivers. An entire troop of Ecuador's militiamen treated Robin to a nude standing ovation as she happened to enter the last big rapid at bath time. Keith (Beach) Huntsman and Melissa Picoli joined us for a last few runs and one last celebration at Pappallacta hot springs.

After two weeks of cold windy bustops, creaky beds and cheap food, Pappallacta welcomed us with our own private hotspring hot tub, world class dining and top shelf margaritas. We reveled in drunken decadence under crystal skies at 10,000 feet above the jungle floor—a perfect ending to an awesome trip. 



Robin Betz on the Rio Topo.

Photo by Chris Harjes

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Race

Seventy-five Racers showed up for the 10th Annual Green Race. Possibly 500 spectators hiked in to watch. This was the best showing ever. Thank you everybody, especially Al Gregory for getting us the water—it was a nice guarantee. I would also like to thank Liquidlogic and Astral Buoyancy for the awesome free food and party at Liquidlogic. Dixie Marree, Christie Dobson, Jessie Rice and Molly Malone, a huge thanks for the time keeping. Thanks again to Liquid Logic and Patagonia for shuttle service and thanks to Red Bull for the Wings. And let's not forget to thank the elusive Todd Grafe for the beautiful piece of glass that we all crave so much.

By Jason Hale

Looking upstream at the race course. Gorilla, into the ledges below.

Photo by Polly Kelly

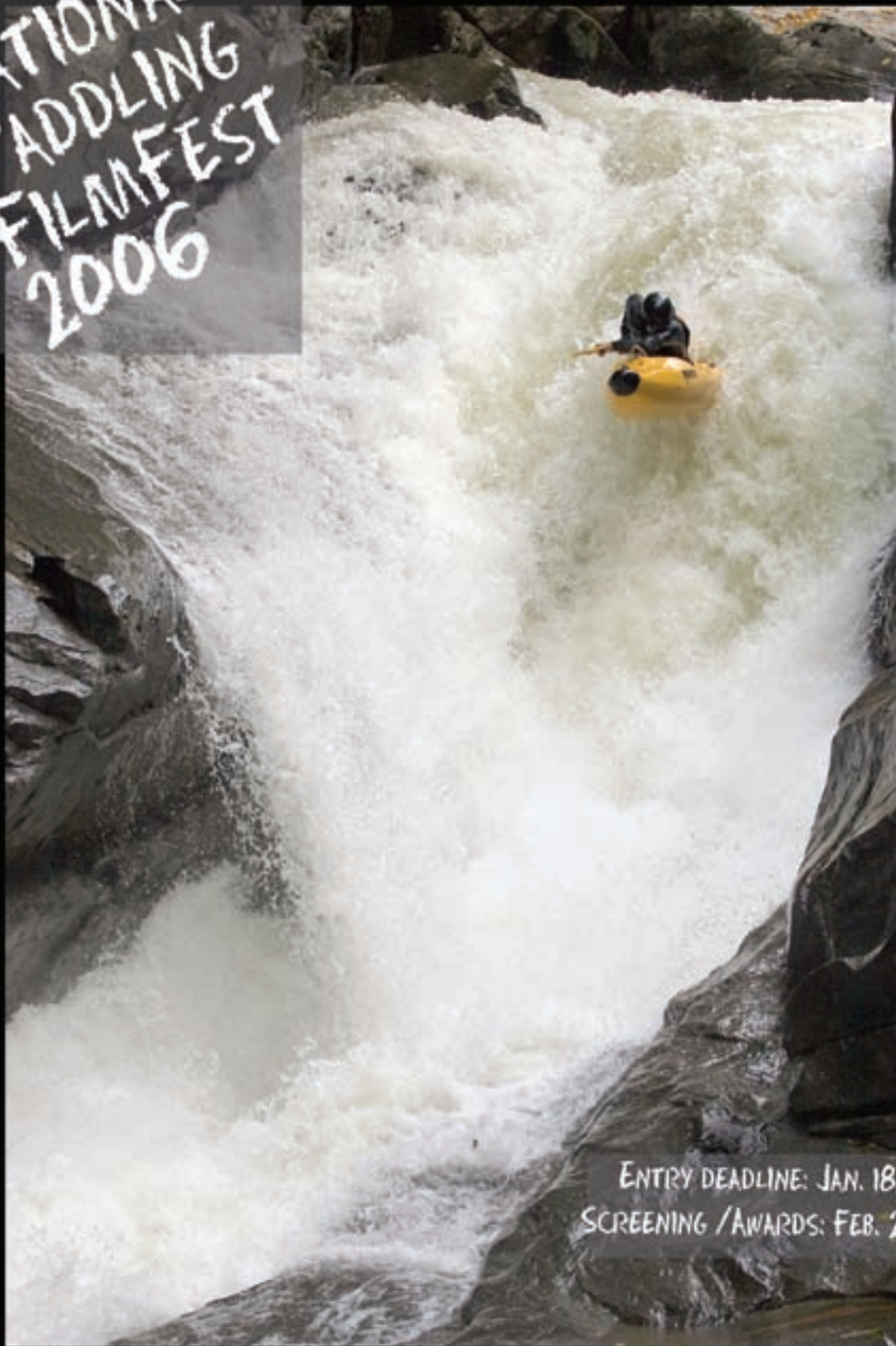


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Events

The Green Race



Here are some interesting facts about this year's race:

Tommy Hilleke won the 10th Annual Green River Narrows Race with a new record of 4 minutes and 34 seconds. Tommy has now won five of the 10 Green Races.

Eric Jackson won the 8'6" class with a 5:05, 11th place overall and only 31 seconds behind Tommy. Open Class next year?

Keith Sprinkle won the Hand Paddlers Division with a 5:43, 38th overall.

Robin Betz won the Ladies Division with a 5:52, 45th overall.

Jeb Hall won the Calcutta as the "Most improved."

Chris Grattmans won the "LePlant Ironman" which is open class and short boat class with a combined time of 9:57. This is 4:40 for open class, (2nd place overall) and 5:17 for short class (20th place).




*Inset Top Right: Jason Hale, race organizer
Top: Tommy Hilleke smoothing another line en route to another Green Race victory.
Above: The racers at the put-in.
Right: LVM podcasts from the river with Daniel DeLavernne and John Grace.*

Photos by Christie Dobson and Polly Kelly



Nine of the top 10 racers were paddling Prijon Tornados. The Tornado has won eight out of 10 Green races. The other winners were a Pyranha Master and Pyranha Mountain 300.

The 11th Annual 2006 Green River Narrows Race is scheduled for November 4, 2006. For more info on this event contact Jason Hale at h2obeatdown@hotmail.com or jason@spotyourlanding.com. 

Events **The Russell Fork Race**



John Grace racing the Russell Fork.


Photos by Eric Henrickson

Russel Fork Race Results

By Jay Ditty

Well, it was another great race this year, with a beautiful weekend, and a bunch of good friends hanging out at the Russel Fork Rendezvous (thanks Steve Ruth!). This year's race saw a tie for first place between David Jacobson and Toby MacDermott with a time of 10:51. Third place was John Grace (just one second behind the winners), then Bryan Kirk one second behind John. Robin Betz was the only female competitor this year, and she blitzed the course in 11:42, setting a new women's record. The previous women's record was 12:00 by Amy Brown in 1997. Since there was a tie for the overall race, we decided to give the Lord of the Fork trophy

(from Jeff Snyder) to Robin this year for her record-setting performance. As usual, there was a beautiful beat down right at the finish line, as one of the competitors crashed through Foreplay and swam over the box line at Climax.

Willy Witt once again did a great job as the starter, keeping everybody in line and on time. Thanks also to former race organizer, Greg Hoskins, for showing up and helping out. Immersion Research kindly provided the race bibs for us and Matt from Pyranha donated a nice prize for Robin. Thanks also to those who helped set safety. Hope to see everyone next year! 

Race Results

1 Toby MacDermott	Tornado	10:51 *tie
1 David Jacobson	Tornado	10:51 *tie
3 John Grace	Spirit	10:52
4 Bryan Kirk	Excel	10:53
5 Joe Barkley	Corsica	11:35
6 Caleb Paquette	Corsica	11:37
7 Robin Betz	Pirouette	11:42 K-1 W
8 Jay Ditty	Response	11:43 C-1
9 Matt Walker	Vortex	11:47
10 Nathan Helms	Tornado	11:49
11 Eric Henrickson	Tornado	11:56
11 Kyle Wingler	Vortex	11:56
13 Greg Hoskins	Crossfire	12:03
14 Nick Barron	PirouetteS	12:10
15 Ryan Bell	PirouetteS	12:12
16 Will Lyons	Response	12:14 C-1
17 David Herman	Pirouette	12:27
18 Nick Urquhart	Crossfire	12:29
19 Willy Witt	OverflowX	12:46
20 Eric Nies	Scream	12:52
21 Andy Dodson	TSlalom	12:53
22 Dalton Creech	TSlalom	26:30

(finish-line beat down!)

*course record

Events **Heff-Fest**



Announcing the 2nd Annual Heff-Fest on the Nolichucky River

Date: May 22, 2006

Location: Riverpark Campground
3937 Highway 81 South
Jonesborough, TN 37659


To Benefit: American Whitewater

Hosted By: Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APEs)

Heff-Fest 2005 – A Smashing Success!!

APEs would like to invite everyone to join us on the banks of the beautiful Nolichucky River for the 2nd annual “Heff-Fest on the Nolichucky River.” The event takes place Saturday May 22, 2006 at Riverpark Campground (aka Big Rocks) in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Heff-Fest is a river festival for paddlers and whitewater enthusiasts named in honor of the late kayaker, John Heffernan, who lost his life on the Russell Fork River in October 2004. All proceeds from the festival benefit American Whitewater. Heff-Fest activities will include:

- Onsite camping at Riverpark Campground
- Live music
- Vendor booths w/ boats, gear, jewelry, and crafts for sale
- Paddler’s flea market
- Paddling instruction by certified instructors
- Shuttle service to the Nolichucky gorge put-in at Poplar, NC
- Fabulous Texas style barbeque
- Kayak, canoe, and rafting opportunities for paddlers of all ability levels
- Silent auction including paddling gear, hiking gear, river trips, safety courses, etc.
- Boat Demos
- Boat Raffle for a free kayak
- Family and kids activities with hands on crafts, games, and more
- T-shirts
- River Race
- Other exciting activities and events

Please join the APEs for these great activities and enjoy a weekend on the beautiful Nolichucky River for the benefit of American Whitewater. 

If you would like to set up a vendor booth, donate items to the silent auction, or would like more information about the festival, please contact Rebekah Morrow at (423) 360-6976 or rfdotson@hotmail.com.



Domestic Travel

Roads & Rivers

By Robert Payne

As a whitewater enthusiast, you can probably appreciate the commitment it takes to pack up the car and drive many miles to your favorite river. Usually, you also have to run shuttle, and then there is the long drive back home. You stare at the road through cracked capillaries produced by relentless sun with a tired smile produced by miles of majestic scenery and quality whitewater. It is all worthwhile, but it comes at the expense of extensive wear and tear on the driver, his or her car and his or her wallet.

When I lived in the Southeast, driving to my favorite rivers was long, but not a journey of epic proportions. It was a couple of hours to the Green, Overflow, or Chattooga, but I never felt put out by it. When I moved to California seven years ago, driving to the river took on a whole new meaning. Not only was the price of gas significantly higher, but the distances were exponentially greater.

Living in Lake Tahoe and traveling to Cherry Creek, the Middle Fork of the Feather, Fantasy Falls, or Hells Kitchen required many miles behind the wheel. Of course, there was never a lack of beautiful scenery or amusing road moments along the way. I've launched kayaks off the roof racks, experienced flat tires, snow drifts and a broken timing belt on the way to the put-in, been stuck at a karaoke bar in Sonora, been bogged down in mud and in snow, stranded at the base of the Sierras when snow closed the highway over Donner Pass, pulled over by the cops with open containers in the car, towed trees off the road, gotten lost, and encountered many other detours along the way. Still, none of these have prevented me from eventually getting to where I needed to be.

I never really believed in karma until I accidentally hit a deer going down to the take-out for Hells Kitchen late one summer afternoon. I got out of the car to see what the damage was, and I noticed a little fawn just off the road, wondering

if mom was okay. I already felt awful but this made it even worse! At first mom was unconscious, but then she came to and tried to stand. I was encouraged, but she was very shaky and couldn't get up. After a long time of waiting, it was decided that there wasn't much to do but drag her to the side of the road and hope she improved.

That night I slept horribly as I thought about all of the must-make drops and tight gorges we would be paddling in the morning. Hells Kitchen is 11 miles of committing, fairly consistent Class V+ whitewater with the possibility of carnage always imminent. Furthermore, we had Alex Nicks along with us on this trip, and after paddling in Peru with him I knew that he liked to move fast. My insomnia was further aggravated by the inescapable guilt I felt for hitting that poor deer. I told myself that if it were not for my tireless pursuit of rivers in my gas guzzling SUV, the lives of two unassuming and totally innocent deer would never have been impacted. Guilt kept me awake until morning rudely arrived, and I climbed out of the back of my truck feeling less than satisfactory. Nevertheless, I didn't drive all that way not to go kayaking. I was going!

We drove up the same road we had come down the night before, and passed the spot where I had hit the deer. There she was—standing! I was so relieved! But as we drove past, she gave me the most evil stare as if to say, I know you; you're the one that did this to me! Almost in unison, my buddies said, "You're going to swim today!" Their curse was no comfort to my already diminished psyche. Couldn't they be just a little bit sensitive to the fact that we were going to be paddling an extremely dangerous river? Hell no!

After four-wheeling down the put-in and making the half-mile hike to the



Interstate 80, 10 miles east of Truckee, California; the boulder that abruptly ended my plans to paddle Fordyce Creek.

Photo by Robert Payne

confluence of the North Stanislaus and Highlands Creek, we put on a classic California run with all the trimmings. Clear blue sky, towering pines, and beautiful white granite lay before our eyes as we proceeded downstream into the steep gorges that awaited us. Alex allowed us to lead for a little while since he'd never been there before, but as the saying goes, "It's hard to keep a good man down." He is by no stretch a professional, though he paddles with perfection. Eventually we were all breathlessly following his lead as he navigated the tight, challenging lines of Hell Kitchen. At this point I was starting to feel pretty good, and thoughts of the deer incident fell away before the task at hand. We were just above the last rapid before the start of the Ramsey section when my fate was realized.

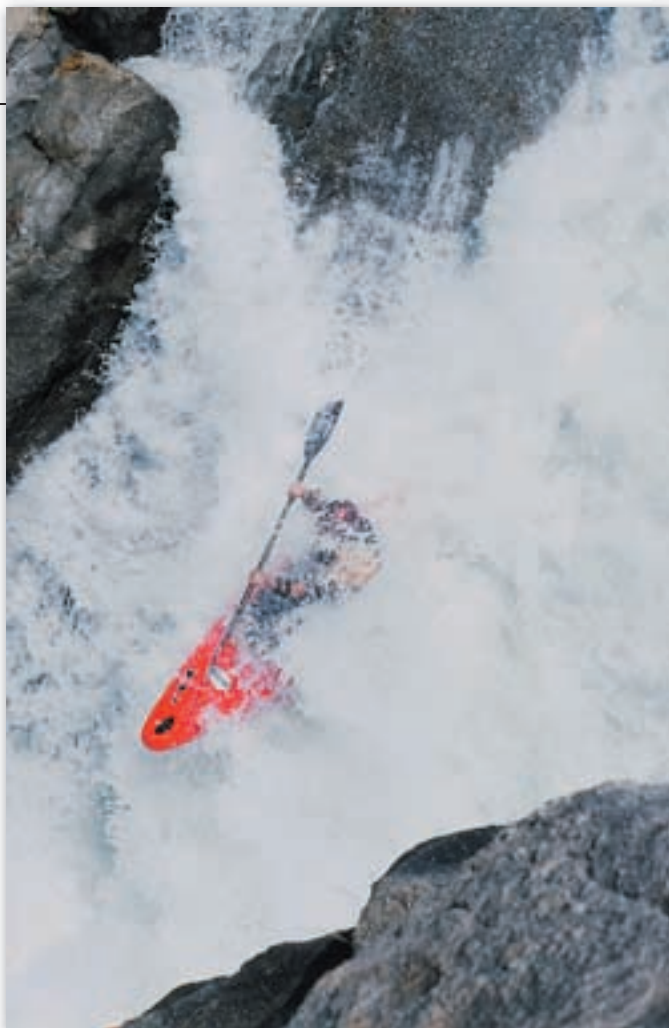
The last rapid has no official name, so we simply call it El Whappo. The entrance is a narrow sluice that has one last eddy before it plunges over a 15-foot double-ledge that, for all intents and purposes, is one drop into one big hole. Practically every run I have seen there has consisted of a total meltdown at the top, and then some sort of scramble out of the hole at the bottom. "Clean" is hardly ever used to describe a run at this drop. I came down the sluiceway doing my best to make the last eddy, but was rudely thwarted by the guard rock and propelled back into the main current. I had but a second to turn straight and throw in a boof stroke, but it was to no avail. Darkness.

As I lay on the rocks below, coughing out the last of the river water lodged in my lungs, I observed a family of grebes effortlessly punching the bottom hole and eddying out in front of me. They chirped and called to one another as they made

River Story Contest Entry

Ben Stookesbury styling the first drop on Hells Kitchen.

Photo by Robert Payne



their way downstream, and I momentarily envied their existence. They didn't have to go through all the effort to get here. They could fly unimpeded wherever they chose, and have little impact on anything or anyone else. Must be nice. It took every bit of courage I had to shake off my swim and make it out of that river gorge to face whatever might present itself downstream

Not long after this incident, I bought a house and moved to Reno. Despite having the new Truckee River Whitewater Park in close proximity, my favorite rivers were now all a little further away. Fordyce Creek is one of my favorite runs because it is about as close to "backyard Class V" as it gets in Reno. The shuttle is still no small effort, however, and in big snow years the put-in road can get washed out, making it impassable to everything but high clearance trucks. I've almost flipped my truck in there, and I have warped every one of my rims pounding down the big ruts on the way to Fordyce Dam. Even so, it is all worth it because the whitewater and the scenery are stellar!


I got the call that the dam was releasing the desired flow, and excitedly strapped my creek boat to the top of my brand new Subaru Outback. I had recently decided that I was willing to trade all of the benefits of a truck for a more fuel-efficient vehicle with added safety features. Gas had gotten to be \$2.60 a gallon, and it didn't look like it was going down any time soon.

I was pushing 70 mph, climbing up what many of us have come to call "Death Canyon I-80," when the unthinkable happened. Thoughts of my entrance at Split Drop, or whether I might run the Lunch Rapid, were abruptly cut short when a magnitude 5.0 earthquake struck,

unleashing a 4'x 4' boulder onto the highway. I only had a second to react as I slammed on the brakes and collided with the monstrosity that suddenly appeared before me. Darkness.

I awoke to the smell of gunpowder coming from the air bag. I opened the door and got out. I couldn't believe I was still alive. I patted my body down, waiting for blood to gush forth or for a limb to not work, but neither of these things happened. I was, for all intents and purposes, okay. My kayak had managed to shoot across two lanes of oncoming traffic without piercing the windshield of some unsuspecting family out for a Sunday drive. It was laying across the highway perched on the edge of a precipice waiting for me. I continuously shot nervous glances up at the hillside, expecting the boulder's brethren to join the scene but none came. My car was totaled along with my plans to paddle one of my favorite creeks, but the important

thing was that no one was hurt.

Who knows? Maybe something awful would have happened to me on the river that day. We all go through a lot to kayak: managing and maintaining gear, researching new runs, risking relations at work and at home, nervously rehearsing the lines in an intimidating rapid, risking our lives on highways and in the hearts of dangerous river canyons, and burning countless gallons of fossil fuels to get where we want to go. I constantly ask myself why I do it, and sometimes I think I won't any more. Seems like a handful of paddlers die each year, and I am not getting any younger. Isn't life dangerous enough already? But then I am reminded of my run-in with deer and my encounter with the boulder. Do we really ever know when our time is up? If the moments you feel most alive are spent doing what you love the most, then you never stop. 

International Paddling

River Conservation in Ecuador: Ecuadorian Rivers Institute

By Matt Terry

The Ecuadorian Rivers Institute (ERI) works to help protect and conserve unique watershed resources in Ecuador for recreational use and provides travel information and river beta to visiting paddlers. More than five years of exploring and documenting the rivers of the Ecuadorian Andes and observing the growing threats to many of those watersheds led to the formation of the Ecuadorian Rivers Institute. The ERI is incorporated in the state of Colorado as a US non-profit 501c3 organization, and is a small, volunteer-driven group, which works at a grassroots level with local communities and partners in Ecuador to produce lasting results.

What do we do?

Ecuador presents a special opportunity for paddlers because the majority of the country's rivers are free-flowing and have not yet been exploited for hydropower and/or water diversion projects. This puts the country at least 20 years behind

Costa Rica and Chile in terms of water development. Meanwhile, the popularity of paddle sports has gained important influence on the politics of watershed management. American Whitewater has set the standard for the recognition of recreational river use in hydropower relicensing and watershed management in the United States. We have found that these same arguments are also strategic for mitigating new hydropower and water development projects. Most importantly, in Ecuador, we still have a chance to get a foot in the door during the planning process before these projects get built in the first place.

That said, we have a lot of work to do and WE NEED YOUR HELP! We are now at the most critical stage in watershed development planning in Ecuador. This is one of the last frontiers for paddle sports in the world. It is also equally attractive for hydro developers and other large-scale water diversion projects. In the end, we have to find a balance of providing drinking water for growing population centers, generating renewable energy for the masses, keeping water in the irrigation ditches, and preserving healthy whitewater resources for the enjoyment of future generations. It is possible to meet these demands with good planning, open communication, a lot of education, sound

reasoning, and persistence on our part.

The key strategy for a successful river conservation campaign is to get involved early and gain local support. This was perhaps the biggest lesson learned in the fight to save the Bio Bio River in Chile in the 1990s. Therefore, the underlying philosophy of the ERI is to educate the people of Ecuador about the importance of preserving their watershed resources and empower them to become directly involved in making informed decisions about the sustainable management of their natural resources.

Recreational Use

The ERI has also been actively trying to get recreational river use recognized as part of the criteria for watershed management on the national level in Ecuador. This is most important during the permitting process of the water concessions for hydroelectric and water diversion projects. The Ecuadorian Ministry of Tourism has officially recognized that rafting and kayaking form a significant part of the tourism economy for the country. This designation has helped gain some ground within the government, however, the Ministry of Energy is very powerful, and has an aggressive agenda to build hydropower projects which will affect many of the rivers used for paddle sport recreation. The ERI reached a good compromise and set an important precedent for recreational use against the hydro project on the Jondachi River, but the fight is far from over. The Quijos, Topo, Pilaton and Toachi Rivers all have newly proposed hydro projects, and we are struggling to stay on top of all of these projects and maintain an edge.



Duncan Eccleston on the first descent of the Rio Llushin in Ecuador.

Photo by Matt Terry

Working Within the Community

Besides hydroelectric and water diversion projects, the other big threats to the rivers in Ecuador are deforestation, sewage discharges, waste management, gravel mining, poor land management practices, and other problems associated with rapid and uncontrolled growth. Resolving these issues requires working at many different levels and getting local community and political support.

The ERI prides itself on the use of innovative strategies to gain local support and acceptance for river conservation initiatives. One approach has been to socialize paddle sports with special events and make the recreational use of the rivers accessible to the local people through low-cost, organized river outings. Because rafting and kayaking are gear-intensive, expensive sports, in developing countries like Ecuador, the majority of the local population rarely has opportunities to indulge in such novelties as commercial rafting trips or kayak lessons. Without such experiences, it is often difficult for them to appreciate the quality of the river resources they have. Here are some of the ways that the ERI is working to make a difference in Ecuador:

• *Napo River Festival*

The Napo River Festival began in 2001 to give vast sectors of the local population a chance to try out rafting and kayaking and experience a new perspective on the use of their rivers. We hoped to win valuable local allies and raise awareness of watershed issues. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. The annual Napo Festival is now in its sixth year, and continues to grow and engage more diverse sectors of the population. Based on the success of the Napo Festival, many local governments are now including rafting and kayaking events in their annual fiestas and programs, which give paddle sports more exposure throughout the country and keeps the ERI on the move. In addition, several local paddling clubs have since formed and are now organizing their own competitions and



events. The result has been a visible change in the interests and priorities of local government authorities, and an open acceptance to river running by the people of Ecuador, which makes it a welcome place for boaters to visit and travel.

Since the Napo Festival began, a watershed forum has been incorporated as a prelude to the event to add a formal educational component and stimulate community participation. Local governments and political authorities were directly involved in the process, and this has helped bring watershed issues to the forefront of the political agenda. This widespread local interest in watershed management has allowed the ERI to introduce the concept of watershed-based planning at the community level. We are using the Napo River Festival and Watershed Forum as the context for applying this model to build a participatory process that will allow for more effective results in watershed management. Once different community groups are identified and working, we hope to be able to get a water quality monitoring program successfully off the ground using this established community-based network.

• *Paddle Sports Program*

As mentioned previously, one of the keys for winning local support is providing people the opportunity to experience the value of their river resources first hand. The ERI Paddle Sports Program has introduced many Ecuadorians to the sport of kayaking in a safe and controlled manner for a nominal fee, which is scaled to fit the local economy. It is important to associate a token value with the service we provide to build respect for everyone involved and to avoid degenerative cultural expectations. A number of ERI alumni have bought their own equipment, and now work as guides and safety kayakers, or paddle just for fun. These are the people who are making a stand for the

Dan Dixon cleans the Hollin Chico, one of the outstanding rivers draining the slopes of Volcano Sumaco in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Photo by Matt Terry

International Paddling

rivers in Ecuador and form our volunteer base in the community. The ERI would like to give special thanks and recognition to Snapdragon Designs, Northwest River Supplies, DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking, Endless River Adventures, and Small World Adventures for their support of the ERI Paddle Sports Program with the donation of boats and equipment.

• *Quijos Tourism Development Plan*

The ERI is currently working on a tourism development plan with the local governments in the Quijos watershed, which will provide an economic alternative for the area and help prioritize conservation of natural resources. As part of this initiative, a watershed management plan is being developed with extensive community participation. Goals for the local governments are the prioritization of regional waste management and sewage treatment systems.

In the end, we must recognize that environmental problems are strongly related to economic problems. Before we can expect to see a complete change in attitudes, favorable economic conditions must exist. If the majority of the people are impoverished and struggling to survive, it will be difficult for them to consider environmental issues as a main concern. The ERI works with other organizations in promoting various sustainable economic alternatives for the local population at river events. This is one way we can help. Now, more than ever, the presence of foreign paddlers is needed to promote the recreational use of the rivers and support local economies with tourism dollars.

Donate to ERI

You can support the ERI with your tax-deductible contribution. Look for instructions for donating online at www.kayakecuador.com, or send a check made payable to the "Ecuadorian Rivers Institute" to the following address and include your name, address, e-mail and phone number:

Ecuadorian Rivers Institute
Attn: Brooks Stanfield
10445 - 5th Avenue SW
Seattle, WA 98146-1518

Thanks for your interest in the ERI. If you have any questions or would like to get involved in our programs, or help out in any way, please get in touch using the contacts below.

For more info contact:

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Ecuadorian Rivers Institute
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www.kayakecuador.com



Above: Gynner Coronel contemplates 480-foot San Rafael Falls, the biggest waterfall in Ecuador.

Bottom: Gynner Coronel runs the razor's edge on the first descent of the Rio Negro in Ecuador.

Photos by Matt Terry



The Napo River Festival is about sharing between cultures.

Photo by Matt Terry



Tena Whitewater Park: Pioneering Sustainability in the Developing World


By Matt Terry

Few paddlers have visited the Ecuadorian town of Tena without noticing the potential for a whitewater play park at the confluence of the Tena and Pano Rivers in the center of town. It has taken some time for the necessary components to fall into place, but the Tena Whitewater Park is finally coming together with plans for construction to begin in January, 2007.

The Ecuadorian Rivers Institute teamed up with the Hydraulic Design Group and presented a proposal to the municipal government of Tena this January, to fund a feasibility study for the whitewater park. The proposal was accepted, and in April, Nick Turner, from the Hydraulic Design Group, came to Tena to gather the necessary data and complete a site analysis for the Tena Whitewater Park. After Turner completed the feasibility study and performed computer modeling analysis with two design options, Brian Fuller, of the Hydraulic Design Group, put together a drawing of the concept plan. The Ecuadorian Rivers Institute then translated the final report into Spanish and presented the project to the municipal government of Tena in August. The design consists of one river-wide structure that will have three main features that will be optimal at different flows for wave and hole features. The rest of the play park will be complemented by eddy features and obstructions that will manage flows and help maintain scour pools. At higher flows, the eddy rocks will be designed to create good cartwheel features. Turner says that the site is fairly complex and challenging due to the relatively low gradient, the extremely high sedimentation rates, as well as the dynamic changes in flows experienced at the site on a daily basis.

The Tena Whitewater Park will be the first artificial play park built south of the US Border, and Nick Turner hopes that it will stand as a model for sustainable development in developing countries throughout the world. Turner points out that whitewater parks help recuperate sections of rivers in urban areas, and that all of the play parks implemented in the United States have produced direct correlations with significant boosts to the local economies where they are located.

I believe the whitewater park will create an important tourist attraction in Tena and I view the play park as the crux tool to force the municipal government to implement a new system of sanitary collectors and a sewage treatment plant for the growing population of Tena, which is a pre-requisite outlined in the feasibility study for building the park. It will also be a major asset for stimulating the interest of the community in watershed issues. The Mayor of Tena, Washington Varela, is very excited about the project and has incorporated the play park into the strategic plan for his administration. The municipal government has already completed the studies and applied to the World Bank for funding a comprehensive sewage treatment system in Tena, and has pledged to support the project with municipal funds.

The ERI is currently working to determine the exact cost of the project in Ecuador and looking for additional sources of funding. The reference price for the project if built in the United States is \$270,000. Since heavy machinery and material costs in Ecuador are up to 70% less than US prices, the ERI expects to be able to complete the project at a much lower cost. 



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Stewardship Updates

Protecting and Restoring the White Salmon River

By Thomas O'Keefe

On August 2, 2005, the President signed the Upper White Salmon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act into law, ensuring long-term protection for the upper reaches of this fabulous river. Over the past few years, Representative Brian Baird and Senator Maria Cantwell worked hard to successfully move the Upper White Salmon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act through Congress. AW has worked with a coalition of groups to raise awareness of this issue and identify the importance of the river for recreation. In particular,

we wish to recognize the efforts of local resident, Phyllis Clausen, who provided strong leadership on this issue.

The White Salmon, profiled in this past summer's *AW Journal*, is well known to paddlers as a classic summer run and one of the finest creek runs in the country. Given private property concerns along the middle reaches of the river, only the upper section within the National Forest was included in this legislation. Now both the lower section (BZ run), previously


protected as Wild and Scenic in 1986, and upper sections (Mt. Adams run) are protected with a gap in the middle along the Farmlands and Green Truss runs. AW will continue working with the rest of our partners to realize a long-term vision that includes protection and restoration of this entire river system.

Simon DeSzoeko enjoying the White Salmon River.

Photo by Thomas O'Keefe



Our next major effort is ensuring that removal of Condit Dam proceeds on course. AW was a party to the original settlement agreement that called for dam removal and last year we signed an extension to that agreement that calls for removal in the fall of 2008. The next step in the process requires a permit from Washington State given the expectation that sediment release associated with dam removal will violate the letter of the law with regard to state water quality standards. Local property owners contend that the dam should not be removed because of this expected impact. We have formally responded to the State Department of Ecology's analysis by making a strong case for dam removal and river restoration. We await the state's decision in the spring of 2006.

A key component of successfully realizing the recreational opportunities that will be gained through dam removal is planning for river access. AW is currently researching this issue with the hopes of developing a plan that can be implemented by the time the dam is removed. 



Above: Omar Jepperson on Washington's Wild and Scenic White Salmon River.

Below: Congressman Brian Baird, our paddler in Congress presents Phyllis Clausen with a framed copy of the signed Salmon bill that explains Wild and Scenic designation of the White Salmon River.

Photos by Thomas O'Keefe





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Stewardship 2006

2006 Challenges and Opportunities in River Stewardship

By Kevin Colburn

Each year American Whitewater publishes a *Journal* article which highlights the organization's conservation and access work. In past years we have presented our Top 40, Top 20, Top 10, and even just our Top River Conservation and Access Issues. This year we are going to toss out the arbitrary number, and simply show you our work-plans. That's right, through this article you will get a complete view of the work we are doing. We want you to know exactly where and how we are spending your precious membership dollars. Before we get into the work-plans though, you should probably know who we are!

AW is made up of seven staff members, four part-time contractors, about 25 volunteer board members, hundreds of active volunteers, 100 affiliate clubs, and about 6,700 members. Three of the seven staff members focus on river stewardship work directly, and the other staff manages membership, events, the *AW Journal*, the money, and everything else. The river stewardship team is made up of me (Kevin Colburn, National Stewardship Director), Tom O'Keefe (Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, who also handles the upper Midwest), and Dave Steindorf (California Stewardship Director). In 2005, both John Gangemi and Jason Robertson left AW to pursue new careers, after nearly a decade of great work. These were big shoes to fill but the new team is doing great. With enough funding support, we would love to have a Stewardship staff member in every region of the country.

There have been other big changes too, including the name of our program. We have grown the AW Conservation and Access Program into the new River Stewardship Program. The change represents our recognition that grassroots volunteerism and personal responsibility are the paddling community's biggest

strengths. As staff we hope to more fully engage, inspire, and empower the paddling community to play an even more active role in river management. To accomplish these goals we are rehabbing our volunteer program by creating new volunteer tools and focusing on volunteer support.

The AW river stewardship program staff does a lot of work that doesn't fit easily in our work-plans, yet is vital to attaining our goals. Specifically, we do the following:

- Answer a constant flow of questions from paddlers, the press, river managers, and partner organizations about conservation, access, and safety issues
- Put out brushfires every day! There are constant challenges to river conservation and access that leap onto our plates on an almost daily basis.
- Tackle bad state and national legislation and support good legislation
- Fundraise through grant writing and other avenues
- Present paddling related talks at national conferences and regional events

- Participate in numerous coalitions and partnerships

- Write web alerts, *Journal* articles, and educational materials

Most of our working days are spent in meetings, on the phone, and glued to our desks—and here's why! Below are the main active projects we are working on as we round the bend into 2006. There are many more on the back burner! We think these are some really exciting projects on some incredible rivers, and we hope you agree!

Andy Bridge looking back up at Last Nasty on the Sultan River.

Photo by Thomas O'Keefe



Pacific Northwest

The northwest has it all right now: new dam relicensings and removals, access closures, international projects, Wild and Scenic designations, and river festivals. AW is focusing on building partnerships in the region and leveraging the expertise of our PNW Director, Thomas O'Keefe.



Top: The Lewis County PUD has continued to stall on meeting the obligations of their license to provide public access following construction of this dam on the Cowlitz River.

Bottom: Omar Jepperson enjoying a surf at House Rocks rapid on the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River where AW has worked closely with local clubs to formalize access sites.

Photos by Thomas O'Keefe

State	Class	River	Project	Lead Volunteer
BC	II-V	Sea-Sky River	Various	Stuart Smith
OR	III	Clackamas	Relicensing	Keith Jensen
OR	III/IV	McKenzie	Relicensing	Jason Hartz
OR	III-V	NF Rogue	Relicensing	Bill Cross
OR	All	Statewide	Navigability Legislation	Common Waters
OR	V	White River	Access Closure	Seeking
WA	III	Spokane	Relicensing	John Patrouch
WA	V	Chelan	Relicensing	Seeking
WA	III	Cispus	License Compliance	Chris Wittenfeld
WA	IV	Elwha	Dam Removal	Rich Bowers
WA	III	NF Nooksack	Access Closure	Devin Smith
WA	III	MF Snoqualmie	Access	Affiliate Clubs
WA	IV	Sultan	Relicensing	Andy Bridge
WA	III	Wenatchee	Dam Modification	Chris Joosse
WA	III-V	White Salmon	WSR Designation	American Rivers
WA	III	White Salmon	Dam Removal	American Rivers
WA	III	Wenatchee	Wenatchee Festival	Jennie Goldberg

California

California is currently the land of dam relicensings—and of dynamic challenges in restoring dammed rivers. We recently held a volunteer training at Donner Summit to increase our volunteers' negotiating skills in order to help meet these challenges. Luckily we have Stewardship Team Member, Dave Steindorf in the state to attend the seemingly endless meetings. The result of these efforts will be the restoration of over a dozen whitewater river reaches that currently flow through pipes rather than riverbeds, and hopefully an integrated season of releases throughout the state.

Class	River	Project	Lead Volunteer
III-V	SF American	Relicensing	None
II, V	Butte	Relicensing	Roland McNutt
II/III	Feather	Oroville	None
III/IV	Kern	Borel Relicensing	Kris Schmidt
III-V	Mokelumne	Relicensing	None
III-V	NF Feather	Poe Relicensing	None
III-V	NF Feather	RC/ Cresta Relicensing	None
II/III	Piru	Relicensing	Rick Norman
III-V	Pit	Relicensing	None
III-IV	San Joaquin	Relicensing	Paul Martzen
III-V	SF Feather	Relicensing	Eric Peetlock
All	Various	Regional Schedule	None
All	Various	Pulsed Flow Research	None
IV+	Klamath	Relicensing	Bart Baldwin

Stewardship 2006 Challenges and Opportunities

The Rockies

Rockies paddlers are lucky to still have so many wild rivers, and AW wants to make that luck last. Throughout the west there are challenges to in-stream water rights, possible new storage dams, mining threats, and large permitted rivers that require collaborative management. 2006 will offer some terrific opportunities to create long-term protections on many rivers through Wild and Scenic designation, and by building a strong case for the societal and ecological value of keeping water in rivers.

State	Class	River	Project	Lead Volunteer
AZ	V	Colorado	GC Permits	Kevin Lewis
CO	I-V	All	Statewide Access	CWWA
CO	III	Delores	Dam Management	Kent Ford
CO	IV/V	Animas	Relicensing	None
ID	III-V	Salmon-Lolo	Wild and Scenic Des.	Lynne Westerfield
MT	II/III	Clark Fork	Dam Removal	Triel Culver
MT	V	W Rosebud	Relicensing	Ron Etc
UT	V	Bear	Relicensing	Charlie Vincent
WY	I-III	Various	Wild and Scenic	Aaron Pruzan

The Midwest

The Midwest is not flush with whitewater rivers, which makes the few that are there inordinately important to regional paddlers. AW is excited about the chance to stop a new hydro development, and instead remove an aging dam, on the Cuyahoga. We are also keeping our eyes on a few dam relicensings coming up, which could restore terrific whitewater resources in the region.

State	Class	River	Project	Lead Volunteer
KY	III	Elkhorn	Access Area Mgmt	Zina Merkin
OH	III/IV	Cuyahoga	Relicensing	David Hill
WI	III	Red River	Development	None

The Northeast

While the active dam relicensing work has calmed down a bit in the Northeast (with epic results!), there are still big challenges and opportunities throughout the region. We look forward to a big victory for paddlers on Vermont's Class II Little River this year, and on finally wrapping up our contentious work on the Ausable Chasm. We are now looking forward to an era of volunteer driven, proactive stewardship in the region after a long hard fight for our basic rights on dammed rivers.

State	Class	River	Project	Lead Volunteer
NH	All	All	Boat Registration	Mark LaCroix
NY	IV	Ausable	Relicensing	None
NY	III+	Black	River Alteration	Steve Kittleberger
NY	IV/V	Saranac	Relicensing	Tim Kelly
NY	III-V	Various	Release Mgmt	Tim Kelly
VT	II	Little	Relicensing	Tom Christopher

In 2006 AW will be advocating to protect the Lower Salmon River as a Wild and Scenic River, ensuring that there will never be a dam built on the river.


Photo by Mamie Smith



The Mid Atlantic

The Mid Atlantic faces unique challenges. The population pressures are huge, the laws are sometimes funky, and the dams are managed by everyone but the FERC. Still, for every issue there is an energetic group of paddlers ready to help, and there are creative solutions. Regional volunteers have set up new partnerships for collaborative river management that serve as a nationwide model and prove what is possible. In regions of high population density, it is increasingly important to create a societal demand for healthy accessible rivers. We hope to focus on just that through a diversity of on-the-ground projects in 2006 and beyond.

State	Class	River	Project	Lead Volunteer
MD	III-V	Potomac	River Mgmt	Jason Robertson
MD	III/IV	NB Potomac	Dam Mgmt	Larry Lubers
MD	III/IV	Savage	Dam Mgmt	Larry Lubers
MD	IV+	Yough	Access Area Mgmt	Charlie Walbridge
MD	IV+	Yough	Relicensing	Adam Cramer
PA	III	Lehigh	Dam Mgmt	LVCC
PA	III	Muddy	Access	None
PA	III/IV	Stonycreek	Dm Mgmt	Barry Tuscano
PA	IV	Yough	Falls Access	Barry Tuscano
VA	IV	Johns	Access Area Mgmt	Lynn Aycock
VA	All	All	Access Laws	Travis Graham
WV	IV	Blackwater	Access Area Mgmt	Charlie Walbridge
WV	IV	Cheat	Access	Charlie Walbridge
WV	IV	Cheat	Land/River Mgmt	Charlie Walbridge
WV	IV	Gauley	Land/River Mgmt	Charlie Walbridge

So that is roughly what the three of us will be up to next year (gasp!). Our biggest problem is that there are way too many great projects! With 10 times the staff we currently have, we would still be dizzy with the opportunities before us. Fortunately the paddling community is willing to help protect the rivers it enjoys. We hope to make volunteering on river stewardship projects easier, more fulfilling, and more productive than ever before in 2006. We would like to thank every paddler that volunteered in 2005, and we'd like to encourage everyone to keep up the great work in 2006! Thank you for all your support. 

The Southeast

Last but not least, the South, where the whitewater rich just keep getting richer. We are up to our necks in several major dam relicensings, and are still fighting the ridiculous ban on paddling the Chattooga—but our success in the region is inspiring. The big upcoming challenges in the South will be managing all the great resources we have. Paddlers will have to pitch in to help agencies and private landowners manage river access and conservation projects in coming years. AW is happy to help create these opportunities and to continue our role in actively co-managing many southeastern classics.

State	Class	River	Project	Lead Volunteer
AL	III	Coosa	Relicensing	Lonnie Carden
GA	II	Caretcay	Access Area Mgmt	None
GA	IV+	Tallulah	Relicensing Mgmt	Sutton Bacon
NC	IV+	Cheoah	Relicensing Mgmt	Rob Baird
NC	II-IV+	Nantahala	Relicensing	None
NC	IV	Tuckaseegee	Relicensing	Ryan Kerby
NC	IV	Watauga	Access (Put in)	Dennis Huntley
NC	IV	Watauga	Access Area Mgmt	Dennis Huntley
NC	IV	Wilson Creek	W&S Designation	None
NC/SC	II/III	Catawba	Relicensing	Andrew Lazenby
NC/SC/GA	IV/V	Chattooga	Access	Nathan Galbreath
SC	III/IV	Twelvemile	Dam Removal	Kevin Miller

Humor

The Seven-Year Itch

By Julia Franks

I told myself everything was fine. Granted, the routine was maybe a little predictable, but essentially it was fine. There was the same paddling group I had been with for years, the same Friday afternoon flurry of emails, the same pages bookmarked on my computer (weather, AW, gauges).

It was my seventh year of paddling and people were already starting to call me “Old School.” OK, so I did have a plastic helmet, an eight-foot long play boat, and a bit of duct tape on my dry pants. So what. What bothered me more was the occasional young hair-boater who mistook me for his buddy’s mom.

Perhaps it was time to make a change. Perhaps it was past time for a new boat.

I spent the next few months demoing, advice seeking, and bargain hunting. What I ended up with was a six-foot long box of a boat with side rails that were higher and steeper than the push pads in a Wonder Bra. It was perky and cute, and it was advertised as an anti-gravity machine. I couldn’t wait to get it on the river and begin cart-wheeling and looping. *All will be mine within a few short months*, I thought as I headed for the Olympic section of the Ocoee.

My husband, Jim, said, “Don’t you want to try it out on something easier?”

“Relax,” I said. “I’ve paddled dozens of different boats. I have a great roll.”

“Suit yourself,” he said. “I’m not crazy about the idea.”

Easy for him to say. A couple years earlier he had undergone a total reassessment of his kayaking career. He had, to my eye, over-analyzed every aspect of his paddling technique. It hadn’t been a good idea. Before he knew it, he had analyzed himself right out of a roll. In my opinion, it is better to leave muscle-memory reflexes where they belong: in the intuitive, instinctive part of the brain. If you have

to think about 13 different actions when you’re upside down, you won’t be able to do any of them.

Jim and I had seen this kind of thing before: paddlers we had great respect for who suddenly lost it; their rolls and their confidence vanished overnight. And these people weren’t just wannabes either; they were great boaters, Class V paddlers all. Even legendary paddlers had confessed to me that they had had the problem. One professional creeker put it like this: “One year my roll just went on a long vacation. I kept paddling the same stuff and, after a while, my roll decided to come back.” Then a woman I admired got a divorce—her husband took the car, the dog, the TV and her roll; another, a kayaking instructor, found that in the middle of her teaching season, she couldn’t right her boat; and a play boater I knew who had spent entire weekends tethered to Hell Hole was suddenly sidelined, all as a result of mental ju-ju.

Sure I had occasional twinges. But, in my opinion, it was a matter of willpower. That was it, no analysis, no 13 actions, no mental ju-ju. I wasn’t going where my husband had gone. Ever.

“Are you sure you don’t want to try the new boat out on something Class III,” Jim asked. I could see the gears in his head working, analyzing, envisioning the worst-case scenario, calculating the possibilities, creating life-threatening situations in his mind—mental ju-ju.

“Yes,” I said stubbornly. “Sure as sure can be.”

It was this conversation I was thinking about later that day when I was out of my boat and flushing through the Olympic section of the Ocoee. The shoreline was going by alarmingly fast: the Wildwater Center, the stairs and the bridge, the old rodeo hole and the lunch spot, a lot of truly enormous waves. How amazing that I had never noticed them or the swiftness

of the water before. It was remarkable how difficult it was to get my breath. Swimming was more unpleasant than I had ever imagined it could be.

A second year paddler offered me the stern of his boat and paddled me over to an eddy. “That was like 19 roll attempts,” he said with enthusiasm. “Wow.” He was the only one who showed any mercy at all.

“See any fish?” a friend asked. My gear was everywhere. My new boat was gone. I hadn’t even managed to hold onto my paddle.

“Is it any warmer down there at sea level?” someone else said.

“I was going to help you,” said another, “but I was distracted by all the free stuff floating down the river.”

Everyone was having a grand time.

The weeks that followed were a miserable blur: 200 lake rolls (and yes, I counted), a swim from a Class II play spot, and Jim’s excruciating critical analysis.

OK. Maybe I had developed some habits that were less than ideal. Maybe my once textbook C-to-C had devolved into a sweep roll. Maybe my paddle wasn’t coming all the way out of the water. So I was using my upper body instead of my hip snap. So what? Maybe I was throwing my head back and twisting myself up. To hear Jim tell it, it was divine intervention that had ever brought me upright at all. Either that or it was the bizarre gymnastic gyration that, Jim said, reminded him of the professional dancers in the topless bars downtown.

I heard lots of advice, all of which I already knew. I understood the principles, yes, and after a few weeks’ drilling, I was sure I was incorporating all of them.

But the river is a cruel judge.

continued from page 39

So I told a friend I was going to sell the new boat and go back to something easier to roll. He said to give it at least four or five river trips.

I said it had been eight.

He said: "Oh."

Then he said, "You have to push through this or you're going to be stuck at this plateau forever." The statement had an annoying ring of truth.

In the meantime, two other friends lost their rolls. One of them had been paddling the Green Narrows for years. And both of them had been paddling as long as I had—seven years.

Wait a minute. *Seven years.*

That was when it hit me. The divorcee, the creeker, the Hell Hole addict, the weekend instructor, Jim, me. How long had each of us been paddling when we lost our rolls?

Seven years.

That explained everything. It was a jinx, a curse. It was The Itch. And if it was a curse, then there would be some counter spell that would break it, some charm or incantation, some ... talisman.

That very Saturday it happened. Jim was sitting in an eddy when he chanced to look down at the bow of his boat. Suddenly he lurched backward.

"Whoa!"

It was a sizable snake, writhing on top of the security handle on his boat. He instinctively flicked it into the water with his paddle. But how had it gotten up there?

How indeed. I may not be a genius, but I know that the snake has long been a mythological symbol of rebirth and healing. Cultures around the world


have been attracted to the metaphor of shedding the old skin for the new. There have been snake healers throughout much of human history. Even American hospitals and ambulances display the healing caduceus—two snakes intertwined around the staff of Hermes.

A few minutes later Jim said, "Hey, I just thought of something. Maybe you are doing a hip snap, but it's coming after you've already initiated your roll with the paddle blade. Try initiating the roll with your hips and letting your upper body follow."

Bingo.

That was it: the counter-curse, the password, the key, elixir, and antidote.

Jim says people get too comfortable with their rolls. He says they roll up consistently even though they've developed an array of bad habits. Everything seems fine until that last bad habit comes home to roost. Then one day—boom—they can't roll up at all.


I tell him he's over-analyzing. I tell him there's a perfectly simple explanation. You have to push through, yes, but you also have to find the right counter-spell. You have to exorcise The Itch. 

"I already had that conversation, and all I got were grunts. It was a long cold ride from Stanley, and I am in no mode for games."

Jan looked at me and gave an understanding smile.

"I was driving down from Salmon when Brian fell asleep," she began. "Below Challis, I missed the turn to Stanley and ended up 30 miles down the wrong road. When Brian woke, he took out a map and found a dirt road to Sun Valley and Ketchum. When we arrived in Ketchum he called the Sheriff in Stanley and asked him to go to the airport and tell you to come here."

Jan's explanation left a lot to be desired, but I could see that it was the best she could do, so I gave her an understanding hug and decided to forget about it.

Brian finished his drink and we all climbed into the station wagon for the return trip to California. It was a very quiet fifteen-hour ride back home. Brian drove the entire way. 

Donor Profile



ClifBar Flowing Rivers Campaign

In early 2003, Clif Bar approached American Whitewater asking how they could best support AW's work to implement change at a regional level, and build a stronger support base for the organization. The AW/Clif Bar Flowing Rivers Campaign was born. Today, American Whitewater's Affiliate Clubs can apply for a \$500 grant from the Flowing Rivers Campaign. These grants are distributed to clubs for projects that best promote conservation, access and/or safety education on America's rivers. These modest grants are often the seed money necessary to implement a critical conservation, access, or safety project on a local river or stream. For three years, numerous AW Affiliate Clubs have come to us with a variety of needs. With the Clif Bar Flowing Rivers Campaign, we are able to provide some financial support. This issue's Donor Profile highlights the projects that Clif Bar has impacted.

2003

Gold Country Paddlers was awarded a grant for their work to improve the Greenwood Creek river access trail. The trail is located four miles northwest of the town of Coloma, CA, between State Highway 49 and the South Fork of the American River, near the confluence of Greenwood Creek.

The Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club grant replaced aging safety equipment used in their annual "Safety Weekend," which provides river safety training to the community through the efforts of volunteer instructors. "The American Whitewater/Clif Bar grant helped the WKCC keep costs to a bare minimum to encourage participation from those who may not have had the financial means to attend a more expensive class providing certification," explains Mark Taratoot, president of WKCC. "Even without offering any certifications, the WKCC Safety Weekend provides participants the basic knowledge they need to help them be safer boaters." The event is still going strong; 2005 was the WKCC's 7th Annual Safety Weekend.

2004

Iowa Whitewater Coalition is seeking to "reconnect rivers" that have been separated by low head dams. As part of a statewide initiative to create water trails across Iowa, the IWC proposes to retrofit dams to provide safe passage and class II-III whitewater parks. This AW funding has initiated the process in Des Moines as a pilot for other projects. The next step, a feasibility study by the City of Des Moines, is expected to begin soon.

Chota Canoe Club has helped create a grassroots awareness campaign for Crooked Fork Creek. Crooked Fork Creek suffers from pollution from a number of abutting towns that dump their sewage directly into the creek. The Club intends to create a campaign that includes educational and promotional materials aimed at both the local and visiting paddling communities. The Emory-Obed Watershed Association will be a partner for the project. Using the AW/Clif Bar Grant, the Chota Canoe Club has secured an additional \$825 for the project. "The Flowing Rivers Campaign grant helped CHOTA fund the research of the problems surrounding Crooked Fork Creek and to develop a position paper. As a result of this work, many other groups are now involved with the project. The grant was important in creating awareness of the situation, and in creating public advocacy to address the fundamental issue of water quality," says Trey Coleman, CHOTA's President.

2005

West Virginia Wildwater Association has upgraded the Jenkinsburg Access. Located at the junction of the Cheat and Big Sandy Rivers, this spot has served as the take-out for both the Cheat Canyon and Lower Big Sandy Rivers since the mid-1950s.


The WVWA grant has been put towards repairing damage and creating a safe, secure path for people to walk from the upper to the lower parking lot and on to the river. In the process, they are repairing the severe erosion damage caused by ATV's on the current trail. The completed job will cost somewhat more, and additional funding will be raised by donations from

the paddling community. "The Clif Bar grant was an important part of what turned out to be a \$25,000 project. Our take-out project brought many groups and individuals together to raise the needed funds. Just goes to show you that every contribution is a major part of the overall project," says Turner Sharp of WVWA.

Ozark Mountain Paddlers is partnering with Ozark Greenways to develop the community's first water trail on the James River. The James River Water Trail will be a three-mile long project utilizing two existing Missouri Department of Conservation access points; it will tie into the MDC Nature Center and lands under management by the Springfield Park Board.

Friends of the Rivers of Virginia is taking on the Cushaw Project. This joint effort by FORVA and the Float Fisherman of Virginia will develop a new take out on the Balcony Falls section of the James River in Virginia. The current takeout involves trespassing on railroad property, a steep climb with boats, and 1.6 miles of flatwater paddling after the whitewater section. This new access location would eliminate each of these concerns for some of the best whitewater in Virginia.

AW and Clif Bar

"Clif Bar is committed to supporting those groups that make the opportunities that we all have for responsibly enjoying our natural resources possible. While some of us take some of these opportunities for granted, many of AW's members are out there actually making them available. Working with AW allows us to get involved with local community improvement initiatives and contribute directly to those efforts. That's what the AW/Clif Bar Flowing Rivers Campaign is all about," reports Grady O'Shaughnessy of Clif Bar. 

Applications for 2006 will be available in mid-March and due June 1.

International Paddling **Earthquake on the Colca**

continued from page 23

dangerous and that they would have to rely on their Karma either way.

I awoke early the next morning, ready for more action, but as we rallied, I realized that two members of the trip had some serious problems with their digestive systems. Randy and I had arrived early, and already had one river and three weeks of adaptation behind us, but Dave and Tom had contracted a local stomach bug.

They were moving slowly, but some hot tea helped them revive. We managed a late start and cruised through an absolutely stunning canyon. Chocolate Canyon, named for the amazing shades of brown rocks swirled like ice cream amidst the reds and yellows of the immense sheer walls, is surely one of nature's finest works of art.

The steam from the hot springs and the occasional giant Condor made us feel as if we were dropping ever deeper into a great abyss. But while we were falling under the spell of the incredible scenery, the rapids were becoming a bit more serious. There were a lot of Class IIIs and IVs and a few Class Vs, but we managed to eddy scout most of it, with only one short portage.

Every time we scouted a rapid, Dave went running off behind a rock. He was definitely not at his best, and he told us that he would really prefer to not paddle any Class V that day. But there were no places to camp and we had to move onward, because the walls of the canyon were becoming even more sheer and the current was getting stronger.

"That looks like Reparaz," Randy said, as he pointed to a large pyramid shaped rock marking the beginning of the dreaded rapid. "I didn't think that we were that far, but that sure looks like what Duillio described."

The steep walls of the canyon closed in, but I managed to catch a small eddy on river left. There was a big drop below me that I could not eddy scout, but I managed to climb onto a small boulder. Tom and Randy caught a small eddy on river right, but Dave was already too far downstream and was forced to share my eddy. He was

the sickest of the group that morning, and now he was forced to share a tiny eddy on the brink of a deadly drop! He was looking a little green, but he managed to stay focused, finding a small handhold, and waiting patiently in the tiny eddy while I climbed up on the rocks to scout.

There was a clean line, and I directed Tom, who was waiting upstream. He made the entrance boof, then the left to right move through a bunch of undercut boulders. He got a big tail stand, and the current pushed him a little too far left, but he scrambled and managed to barely escape a very large hole.

Randy followed with a clean run, and I climbed back to where Dave was still clutching his small handhold. He's a tough Old Mountain man, and faced his destiny with dignity, paddling over the edge of the first drop and disappearing from my sight. I headed downstream alone, and managed to catch a surging eddy on the left. The current was very strong, but I paddled hard and popped out at the bottom to find a happy group.

The wonders of adrenaline had suddenly cured Dave's stomach, so we found a sheltered spot and celebrated with a lunch of jerky and power bars.

We had traveled much farther than we'd originally planned, and had reached an open section of canyon with low-angled walls and no danger of rock-fall, so we camped early and enjoyed a relaxing afternoon without the threat of falling rocks.

Our only water source had been the Colca, which was very clean at the beginning, but had become increasingly tainted by the sulfur from the many hot springs along the way. Mixing this with iodine for purification created a concoction that was truly disgusting, but I managed to choke down enough to satisfy my basic needs, and settled in to an early sleep.

"Whoa! What is going on?" We awoke suddenly to the sound of curses and the sensation that someone was kicking our tents; the ground was shaking beneath us!

It was no consolation that this was one of the most dangerous places in the world to experience an earthquake. There was a very large rock slide just across the canyon from us, but our camp was safe, and we survived the quake. If it had happened the night before, we probably would have all been killed. I can only imagine what it must have been like that night at the Condor shower!


After the shaking stopped, none of us could sleep, so we waited anxiously for the dawn and got a great view as the canyon came to life.

"Lets get out of here before the ground starts to shake again," Dave said. We all agreed because there was still one more serious gorge to complete, and we were all eager to get out of the canyon.

"That's it," Tom shouted to us as he caught a small eddy on river right.

The Polish Canyon is a long nasty sieve, full of big boulders and steep gradient, but we found a ledge that allowed us to portage most of it. We needed to use our ropes to pull the boats up to the narrow ledge. We were still somewhat nervous from the quake, and the exposure of the narrow ledge made my legs feel watery. My knees were a bit shaky and the rocks in the canyon seemed to vibrate as we carried our boats along the narrow ledge with the rushing river just below us.

The portage ended before the rapid, but Tom found a clean line, and the rest of us followed him. Safely in the flatwater at the bottom, we celebrated with the last of our jerky and dried fruit.

A few more kilometers of Class III brought us back to civilization where the local highway workers welcomed us. They stopped their work to congratulate us, and we practiced our Spanish with them while we waited for a mini bus, which took us to a heroes welcome in Aplao. There, a quick phone call reassured us of our friends' safety and we were all happy for our Colca adventure. 

Join



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Today!

American Whitewater has been extraordinarily fortunate in our ability to leverage a strong grassroots base—members and other volunteers—to assist our limited staff with many whitewater river conservation and restoration efforts.



Over the years, American Whitewater volunteers have participated in numerous hydropower meetings as well as instream and recreational flow studies; filed comments and assisted with an uncountable number of filings; appeared as expert witnesses; lobbied; worked to fight new dams, remove existing dams, deny licenses, and improve public access to rivers and streams. In nearly every river stewardship issue AW has been involved with, the outcome has been favorable to paddlers. Not only has AW secured favorable decisions for the paddling community, but we are the only national organization representing paddlers as these decisions are being made.

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the U.S. American Whitewater currently has 6,300 active members. When considering the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join American Whitewater. If you are a member, please

be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual Annual Memberships are only \$35. If you are a member of your local paddling club and your club is an Affiliate Club member of AW, join as a Club Affiliate Individual for \$25. This is a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

Join on-line today at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership>, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723



P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723 • 866-BOAT-4AW

Membership Application

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Club Affiliation _____

Individual Membership Levels

- ___ \$25 Junior/Senior (under the age of 18 and over the age of 65)
- ___ \$25 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (SAVE \$10 if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club)
- ___ \$35 Individual One Year
- ___ \$45 Family (immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18)
- ___ \$65 Two Year Membership
- ___ \$100 Ender Club* (Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-shirt FREE)
- ___ \$150 Five Year Membership
- ___ \$250 Platinum Paddler* (Receive AW's exclusive Patagonia Platinum Paddler Polo Shirt FREE)
- ___ \$750 Lifetime Membership (Receive AW's Lifetime Membership Stained Glass FREE)
- ___ \$1,000 Legacy Membership* (Receive AW's exclusive Paddling Wet/Dry Gear Bag FREE)

* A portion of your contribution may be tax deductible. If you would like information about the tax deductibility of your contribution please speak with an AW Staff Member.

Organizational Membership Types

- ___ \$75.00 Affiliate Club (Join our growing network of paddling organizations across North America)

Additional Donation

- ___ \$5.00 ___ \$10.00 ___ \$25.00 \$_____ Other
- ___ \$24.99 Kayak Session subscription (Add Kayak Session to your membership at a 40% discount)

Amount

Membership subtotal \$_____ Do NOT Mail me the AW Journal. I will read it on-line.

Donation subtotal \$_____ Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups.

Total \$_____

Indicate Ender Club or Platinum Paddler shirt size (S M L XL XXL)

Transaction Type

___ Cash ___ Charge ___ Check# (payable to American Whitewater)

Card Type: MC Visa Discover AMEX

Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____

Name as it appears on card _____

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Affiliate Clubs

AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1957 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over 100 clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club consider joining one.

For 2005, AW is excited to announce several programs for AW Affiliate Clubs.

2nd River Stewardship Institute: A week-long conservation and access training program designed to prepare river activists with the tools necessary to successfully save their rivers.

2nd Flowing Rivers Grant Program, sponsored by Clif Bar

BRAND NEW Affiliate Club section of the AW Journal dedicated to promoting your club and its events with the whitewater community at large. If your Affiliate Club would like to be one of the first to begin listing your club's major events in the Journal, please email ben@amwhitewater.org for more details.

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham
Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Central CA Canoe Club (C4), Nevada City
Chico Paddle Heads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
River Touring Section, Angeles Chapter
Sierra Club, Los Angeles
Sequoia Paddling Club, Windsor
Shasta Paddlers, Redding
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, San Jose
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Granada Hills

Colorado

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood
Grand Canyon Priv. Boat. Assn, Englewood
FiBark Boat Races, Englewood
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West
Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, Englewood
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

Florida

Project Challenge Inc., Miami
North Florida Whitewater Assoc., Ocala

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Association, Atlanta
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay
Peachtree City Paddlers, Peachtree City

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kansas

Kansas Whitewater Club, Olathe
Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky

Bluegrass Whitewater Association, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville
Bardstown Boaters, Frankfort

Maryland

Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Smithsburg

Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter, Lunenburg

Minnesota

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Mitchell Paddles, Canaan
Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover

New Jersey

The Paddling Bares, Milltown

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

FLOW Paddlers Club, Rochester
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia
Whitewater Challengers, Old Forge
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk

N. Carolina

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Dixie Division of ACA, Tuxedo
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Indian Trail
Warren Wilson College, Asheville
Triad River Runners, Winston Salem
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Keel Haulers Canoe Club, Westlake
Outdoor Adventure Club, Dayton
Toledo River Gang, Waterville

Oregon

Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton
Pacific Outback, Forest Grove
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
KCCNY, Philadelphia
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Pine Creek Valley Whitewater Association, Jersey Shore

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Gray
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport
E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville

Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston
paddletexas.com, San Antonio

Utah

University of Utah, Salt Lake City
USU Kayak Club, Logan
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

Virginia

Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke
FORVA, Roanoke
Richmond Whitewater Club, Mechanicsville

Washington

Outdoor Adventure Club, Redmond
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreation River Runners, Renton
Whitman College Whitewater Club, Walla Walla

West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Assoc., S. Charleston
Friends of the Cheat, Kingwood

Wisconsin

Badger State Boating Society, Waukesha
Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
Pure Water Paddlers, Eau Claire
River Alliance of Wisconsin, Madison
Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, LaCrosse

Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson Hole

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Canada, Ontario

Madawaska Kanu Camp Inc., Ottawa

Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Carla Miner
Membership Coordinator

In the recent past, AW has been offering discounted AW memberships to whitewater enthusiasts who are also members of one of AW's Affiliate Clubs.

We now have the ability to offer this discounted membership online! For each club, AW will create a unique URL that will automatically offer the discounted membership and/or we will provide a coupon code that is specific to your club that will allow individuals to receive the discount on the normal AW Membership Page.

Both options work equally well and help make life easier for members of your club.

Several clubs have already set up the program and their members are enjoying the benefits of joining AW for only \$25!

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact me and I would be happy to help your club set up this program. I can be reached at: 866-BOAT-4AW or membership@amwhitewater.org.

Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

"10" Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for a spot in the AW 2005 River Stewardship Institute.

For more information, contact Carla Miner at membership@amwhitewater.org or sign-up on-line at: www.americanwhitewater.org/membership

Guidelines for Contributors



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

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 white prints, or color prints or electronic, digital photos, 300 dpi tiffs, Photoshop or high res jpegs minimum 3"x5." 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. The better the photos the better the reproduction.

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water.

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 II, III & IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

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, please don't send it in! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes made prior to publication.

American Whitewater is a 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.

Send your material to:
Journal Editor
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Cullowhee, NC 28723
E-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org

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The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a person in a Star inflatable boat navigating through white-water rapids. The boat is tilted, and the person is leaning forward, holding the oars. The background shows a rocky riverbank with some vegetation. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, sans-serif font. A large five-pointed star is positioned in the upper center of the image.

ARE YOU COMMITTED?



Brian Kirk, Team NRS, Italy. © Tanya Shuman



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