

American

WHITE WATER

the Journal of the American White-Water Affiliation

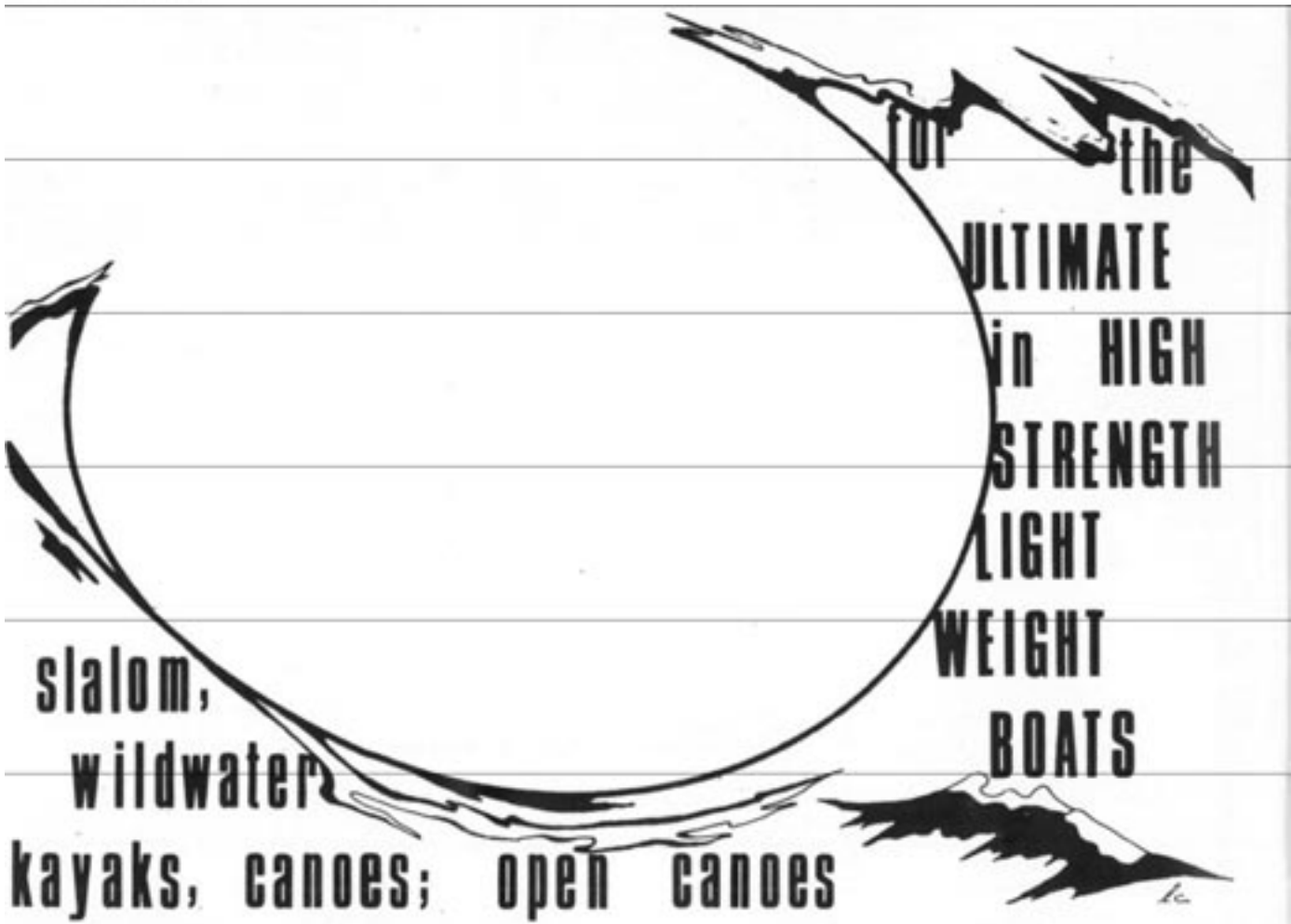


SUMMER, 1969

Vol. XV, No. 1



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SUMMER, 1969

Vol. XV, No. 1



The American Whitewater Affiliation

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Contents

ARTICLES

- World Championships 1969 **Jay Evans 3**
The Vermilion in Winter **Carl Bennett 15**
Caving by Kayak **Alan W. Byde 18**
Stunting at Chalfont (Photo) **Mike Clark 23**
Wilderness Rivers in Mexico **Pedro Lopez Perezcastro 24**
Six Beeps a Go-Go River **Walter Blank 27**
A Setting Pole for the Canoe **Jack Hazzard 28**

DEPARTMENTS

- Letters 2 Book Notes 17
Racing Report 3 Dean's Cartoon 21
Race Results 11 The Exec's Soap Box ... 30
Affiliates 32

How to Write to American White Water

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Cover: Dave Kurtz, U. S. C-1, at Bourg St. Maurice.
Photo by Mike Clark, editor of "Canoeing," (Britain)



March 13, 1969

Dear Pete:

There are many people dissatisfied with the small amount of cruise information in the magazine. I know the racers were unhappy when there was a lot of cruise material. I don't know how you can keep everybody happy unless you get rich enough and material enough to print a bigger, fatter magazine.

A geologist friend of mine who uses his canoe for geological exploration and recreation wrote to me recently saying he had subscribed to American White Water two years ago. He wondered if I knew of a magazine that published more about canoeing? Somebody may publish such a magazine one of these days and drain away members from AWA.

Well, I know you are aware of these problems, and I noted your request for cruising pictures in the summer issue.

Sincerely,
Dean Norman
14206 Gilmore St.
Van Nuys, Calif. 91401

(Our superb cartoonist and humorist must be kidding. The racers never complained about cruise articles; they sent many in themselves—and continue to do so.)



Dear Mr. Whitney:

As you know, Congress last year passed a National Wild and Scenic Rivers System Act. And as you must be aware, since that time little has happened in terms of Federal action on behalf of even those rivers named in the act. The time has come when I think they may be needing a little bit of a push. I hope the Sierra Club will soon be renewing its scenic rivers activities and work for implementation of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Certain local conservation groups are beginning to pressure the government to pick up the ball where Congress dropped it last year. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation has been given the responsibility for developing proposals on rivers to be added to the 8 so called "instant rivers." These new additions could either be from the list of "study rivers" or from any other river meeting the general requirements of a scenic or wild river as spelled out in the act.

Enclosed is a copy of one group's efforts to have their candidate river [Chattooga in the Carolinas and Georgia) studied and submitted to Congress for inclusion in the act.

In addition to efforts toward implementation of the Federal Act, other groups are working to establish State systems of scenic rivers. Tennessee, Virginia and others have made long strides in this direction. In California, Jerry Meral, of the Sierra Club's River Touring Section, is actively working to establish a California Scenic Rivers Law.

I bring all this to your attention because the wide readership of your magazine might be interested in where things stand on this matter and in beginning similar activities in their localities.

Sincerely,
Bob Waldrop
Sierra Club
235 Massachusetts Ave. N.E.
Washington, D. C. 20002

(The American Whitewater Affiliation was well ahead of the Sierra Club in this campaign. But the reminder is very much to the point. Congress expects to be pressured: politicians live in that atmosphere. Give them your push!)





The Isere River course. German C-2 teams are making their victorious run. Photo by Al Chase.

World Championships 1969

By Jay Evans
U. S. Team Coach

The goal for all white-water paddlers in the United States is now clear: Point toward the Olympics at Munich in 1972! The summers of 1969 and 1970 and the World Championships at Merano, Italy in 1971 are simply a prelude to what must be the main event itself.

The first step toward Munich was taken this year by the National Slalom Committee of the ACA when a coach and a manager were hired for the U.S. white-water team at this summer's World Championships, held at Bourg St. Maurice in the French Alps. Team members in 1967 had recommended the hiring of a non-competing coach and had strongly urged that a training ses-

sion be held in Europe some time prior to the World Championships themselves. Accordingly, it was decided that the 28-man U. S. squad would meet at 7 p.m. on the evening of July 15 at Bourg to commence preparations.

The Coaching Staff

As soon as it became obvious that the U. S. Team would be a large one — much larger than I had hoped for — it was equally obvious that much more than a one-man job would be required to avoid utter chaos during training. For a start I secured the services of Ted Young, a member of the first U. S. Team in 1961 who is bilingual in French and English, to act as an assist-



OFFICIAL U. S. TEAM PHOTO: Front Row, Jay Evans (Coach); Lucile McKee, Tom Southworth, Bill Riley, Paul Liebman, Louse Wright, Mark Fawcett, Dave Kurtz, Ben Parks. Second Row: Tom Johnson (ACA Commodore), Jon Evans, Al Chase, Brad Hager, Norm Holcombe, Dave Nutt, Les Bechdel, Peggy Nutt, Eric Evans. Back Row: John Bryson, Don Joffray, John Hummel, Gay Fawcett, Dick Church, Ed Bliss, John Connett (Assistant Coach), John Burton. Absent: Art Vitarelli, John Holland.

Photo by Stephen C. Ruhle

ant coach. He worked for the first week of our training then acted as **chef d'equipe** for the group of racers we sent to the Augsburg Slalom. He also returned for the World Championships themselves as the American representative on the International Jury.

Bart Hawthaway volunteered as an assistant coach and arrived just as Ted left for Augsburg and remained throughout the competition. Bart was particularly effective in the flat-water and wild-water drills. He, together with Tom Johnson, also filled a much needed gap by acting as riggers in boat repair.

John and Pat Connet arrived just prior to Augsburg and spread their many talents throughout all phases of the training program. It should be reported here that such was the dedication of these coaches and their heavy workload that not once did any one of them take the opportunity to paddle a boat in white water themselves.

In addition to the regular coaching staff the U. S. Team received considerable help and support for short periods of time from the competitors' wives—notably Sue Joffry—and from travelling Americans who stayed for a few days to help us out, like Rowan Osborne, and Nick Brandt and Andy MacCormack of Dartmouth, and others.

Without this entire retinue it simply would have been impossible to carry out the many aspects of our preparation.

The Training Program

The 1969 U. S. Team totalled 28 members, of whom five were slalom specialist, five were wildwater specialists. One member competed in C-2 in slalom and in C-1 in wild water. The balance did 'double duty' in both slalom and wild water.

Such a mixture created a scheduling problem of considerable proportions, but, in general, we attempted slalom training in the morning, wild water training in the afternoon and flat-water drills in the very late afternoon. These plans were subject to change depending upon the variable water levels on the river.

We were fortunate in having four basic areas in which to practice. A medium-sized flat-water reservoir was located less than a quarter of a mile from our campsite. The French permitted us to use the slalom area itself, and the wildwater course was available at all times. As insurance against the time when the slalom site would not be available, we discovered a spot on the Isere river at Landry just four kilometers from our campsite, where we set

up an 18-gate practice course that we used extensively. With some foresight gates, poles and wires had been brought over on the Ledyard and Pennsylvania trailers.

Bringing such a diverse group of people together and putting them to work at the different areas reminded me very much of trying to tune a piano. It was necessary to make a little adjustment here, to tighten up at one place and to loosen things up a bit at another in order to keep the whole in harmony. I am pleased to report that every one who went over had an opportunity to race; there were no drop-outs and no quitters.

On these various practice sites we held familiarity runs, sprints, intervals, sequence drills, time trials and three intramural races. The first was labelled the Isere River Wildwater Race held over the exact World Championship course; the second was the Landry "Grab Bag" slalom, and we completed our intramural activity with a final "Sunday afternoon on the Isere Wildwater Race." We also held a team race at Landry. These competitions were formalized by inexpensive trophies given to the lucky winners and at the same time helped the coaches to size up the team. We kept and posted complete records of all training drills and competitions.

It should be pointed out here that all practice sessions were mandatory. But for one or two exceptions, this rule was superfluous for most members of the team. The coaches soon discovered to their pleasant surprise that most team members kept asking for more—such was the excellent spirit of the squad. Many a night found the coaches asleep long before their charges.

The result of all this activity, I believe, was positive. For the first time an American team was *thoroughly* familiar with the water. Most team members had completed as a minimum at least 20 runs on the slalom course (some gates up but no at final positions), and the same for wildwater. Some of our rookie boaters gained a lot of valuable confidence and the regulars honed their skills to a fine edge. No one was intimidated by the water

and, what's more, the myth of innate European superiority evaporated in direct proportion to the number of damaged European boats we helped pull from the river. Instead of playing catch-up ball we moved into the World Championships with an air of modest confidence, knowing full well that we were going to give a good account of ourselves.

The Six Memorable Days

Competitors totalling 336 from 17 nations (East Germany and Poland withdrew at the last minute owing to a political squabble) arrived in Bourg St. Maurice to determine the world champions in slalom and wildwater. Ours was the fourth largest squad there — after France, Czechoslovakia and West Germany. A delegation of five came from Japan.

In order to assess our results one must compare our record with previous attempts. By way of background it can be said that the 1967 team had had the finest record up to then. Barb Wright had placed ninth out of 19 in K-1W slalom, Dave Nutt 23rd out of 42 in K-1 slalom, Wick Walker 13th out of 26 in C-1 slalom, and John Burton 13th out of 26 in C-1 wildwater. (Also we managed to place dead last or next-to-last in four out of ten events.)

This year in K-1 slalom we improved from 23rd to 10th when Dave Nutt uncorked a sizzling first run over the 30-gate course. In C-1 wildwater John Burton surprised everybody by his strong seventh out of 27 boats. In the K-1 wildwater class we moved from dead last in 1967 to 14th and 22nd out of 51. In K-1W wildwater, Peggy Nutt placed 12th out of 21. In the C-2 slalom two of our three boats equalled or bettered the best individual effort in 1967. And in the C-2M class instead of placing last and next-to-last, we placed 6th, 7th, and 9th out of 14 in slalom, and 11th and 12th out of 19 in wildwater. In the team races the C-2M placed third out of four in slalom and third out of five in wildwater, thus bringing us our first bronze medals.

But statistics alone don't reveal the true story of the growth and maturity of the U. S. Team. I find it ironical that in spite of those impressive placings,

many of our team members honestly felt that they should have done better. We had high hopes of placing three of our four in the top ten in K-1 slalom. Fourteenth out of 51 in K-1 wildwater was not greeted by champagne but it most certainly should have been. Such was the driving spirit of this team that nothing short of the top rungs of the ladder would satisfy them.

Bankside Support

Coach Connet devised a network of walky-talkies centered at a command post on the bridge two-thirds of the way down the slalom course. Volunteer spotters such as John Burton's sister Lynn, a large segment of the Bridge family, Jackie Paris and our wildwater specialists carefully observed the progress of each boater on the course. Any irregularities or unusual occurrences were reported directly to me at the bridge. When a U. S. boater started we charted his course completely from start to finish and double-checked times and penalties. We knew more about his run than he did.

With a pair of powerful binoculars (courtesy of the Bridges) I could get a visual sighting of the action from gate 3 through gate 22, and then, by walking across the bridge, from gate 23 to the finish line.

It was fascinating to watch the world's best boaters attack the course, and whenever we saw some maneuver we immediately reported this intelligence to the start for the benefit of our racers. At gate 20, for example, three of the best K-1's had turned left into

an eddy and had been swept down into a rock garden thus losing valuable seconds. A quick call to the start brought me in direct touch with Dave Nutt who was within a minute of countdown. After a brief chat over the radio he agreed to change his battle plan and go right—which he did: clean and fast.

Many of the boaters checked in at the Command Post on their way back up the course to confirm their worst fears or their highest hopes. Whenever we disagreed with the local gate judging (not often) or if on-course obstruction occurred (it happened twice) we were able to sign up witnesses and declare an official protest immediately.

In order to gain a perspective of the degree of difficulty of the slalom one simply needs to point out that of the 250 individual runs made on the course by the competing nations a total of 44 or 19 per cent capsized and were unable to complete the run. The American team had 32 attempts with only three DNF's or something less than 10 per cent. There were only three clean runs (all done by K-1's), one earned the racer a gold medal, the second placed seventh and the third placed 21st, behind Eric Evans! Some great names in kayaking appear far down on the list: Britain's Ken Langford 27th, Austria's Kurt Preslmayr 32nd, Hunziker of Switzerland 33rd, and the Czech Frank Valik did not finish either run.

By coming into contact with the various countries it was interesting to study the relative strengths of the classes.



The K-1 class in slalom continues to hold center stage. Nine countries fielded complete squads in K-1—more than double the next-largest class: C-2. Only one country, Czechoslovakia, fielded a complete team in C-1, and the C-2M class was not represented at all by 11 countries. In the K-1W slalom team race only four countries were entered and only two teams were able to complete the course. The bronze medal went begging. Do you hear that, Barb Wright?

To summarize it is fair to say that we have now moved out of the cellar into the top of the second division. We have given up our role as doormat at the World Championships and we are now forcing the front runners to look over their shoulders.

Recommendations

1. **Goal:** Heretofore we've never looked ahead more than two years at a time (if that) in white-water sport. The Warsaw meeting of the International Olympic Committee last June has presented us with a golden opportunity. White-water slalom will be included as an Olympic Sport in 1972 in Munich. I propose, therefore, that we put our own house in order and direct our energies toward sending the strongest possible squad to Munich and I propose that it be done in three phases:

I: Extensive training camps in the U. S.

II: All U. S. Team hopefuls **must**

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Wolfgang Peters, German C-2 winner.

compete in Europe during the summer of 1970. This is an absolute necessity.

III: U. S. Team should compete at the World Championships at Merano in 1971 and then train at the Munich site.

2. Training Period: The fifteen-day training session for the 1969 Team was necessary and it surpassed our expectations. But so long a period of orientation and preparation prior to 1971 at Merano should not be necessary. I recommend a 7 - y warm-up. In 1971 we must no longer have rookies chosen at the last minute without adequate boating experience or physical conditioning.

3. Team Selection: The revised 1969 U. S. Team Selection Method worked out very well in the East. There is no question that our strongest Eastern paddlers were chosen for the team. The Selection Committee, however, in bending over backwards to be fair, selected some who really weren't up to handling world championship caliber competition in spite of their Stateside credentials. The Selection Committee for '71 should consist of people who are tough-minded and knowledgeable about European water and who have the guts to stand up and say 'No' to friends.

The Selection Committee does no one a favor by choosing people who are simply not competent in international racing. It becomes an embarrassment to those chosen after they arrive in Europe to find that they are in over their heads; they are far more likely to damage their boats and cause injury to themselves, and they take up an inordinate amount of the time of the manager and coach. The result is at best a disappointment and at the worst a tragedy.

Since I was not a party to the selection of the Western boaters I am not in a position to say how well it worked out. From the West we had an all-rookie squad with limited racing experience and with no international competition under their belts at all. Some were selected at the last minute and therefore had not gone through the year-long physical fitness program that the Easterners had subscribed to.

It was plain and obvious to everyone at Bourg that there were several Eastern boaters not chosen for the team (because of the geographic quota system), who, had they been selected, would have performed better than some we had from the West. Yet, who can tell that by 1970 the reverse might be true?

I reject the Qualifying Training Camp idea as well. It works to the disadvantage of the boater who has to travel far, it works to the disadvantage of the boater who is unfamiliar with the water, or the boater whose school or work schedule does not permit him to attend, or the boater with a temporary physical ailment. But most of all it puts much too much emphasis on one or two races. For example, on the results of the several European slaloms prior to the World Championships it would have been hard to defend the thesis that Dave Nutt would place 10th in the world in slalom. Yet, from his total background we knew he would do at least that well—and he did.

Perhaps the best solution is to assure that members of the Selection Committee from both the East and the West be aware of this serious problem and be willing to put the best interests of the U. S. Team above sectional loy-



Don Joffray, U. S. C-1 slalom contestant

alty. The West was very gracious this year in allowing the East to select three in K-1 slalom from the host of good K-1 boaters available this spring in the East. Hopefully this spirit of unity will continue as the skill and talent in the various classes fluctuates geographically from one section of the country to another.

My final point concerning team selection has to do with timing. No longer can we afford to choose the team at the last minute. Any of this year's team who are hard-core dedicated paddlers who wish to begin to work toward the Olympics in 1972 should be given a tentative spot on the '71 team right now. Secondly, any up-and-coming boater—and we have lots of them—must spend at least three weeks in Europe next summer and attend the international race at Merano and perhaps one or two others. You just can't beat European exposure and we'll never rise above mediocrity if we continue to pick in-

experienced rookies for the team whose first exposure to international competition is the World Championship themselves.

4. **Specialize? or go both ways:** One of the great unresolved questions of the 1969 World Championships was whether to have a boater concentrate on slalom or wildwater, or both. Herman Breiter, the fabulously successful coach of the World Championship East German Team simply snorts at the idea of specialization. Every one of his boaters goes both ways. He claims that the techniques are basically the same, and that one event complements the other and provides variety. The French, on the other hand, are so specialized that members of their two teams don't even know each other. Separate coaches, trainers, managers, separate training camps and facilities. More's the pity, because there were a couple of very attractive French K-1W's in slalom. On their own home course the French ~~won~~



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world titles in K-1, C-1, C-2, and C-2M. It is hard to quarrel with success.

I suppose for the United States it is best to maintain our posture that it is the individual's own decision. Some, like Al Chase, prefer specialization; others, like Darmouth's John Burton, '69 U. S. Captain, prefer to go both ways and are willing to pay the price of double duty. However, before a boater commits himself to entering both slalom and wild water he must thoroughly understand the physical and mental demands that will be placed upon him. There were a couple of '69 team members who bit off more than they could chew, realized it, and tried to beg off at the last minute. But, of course, it was too late.

To have some specialists and some boaters in both events is a scheduling nightmare for the coach and manager in the pre-race training period, but with careful attention to detail these obstacles can be overcome.

5. **Medicine Man:** For the general health of the team the veterans of 1967 recommended hotel accommodations and three squares a day. Because of financial limitations the 1969 team compromised by camping out during the training period, then moved to a barracks (hotel?) for the six crucial days. But the over-all problems of health were left unresolved. Unlike the East Germans, who arrived with their own doctor, we simply did not have a team physician available. Some one knowledgeable in these matters could have been of immeasurable benefit to the team: hardly a day passed when medical attention and advice were not needed. One of our K-1W's had a back problem, a C-1 had a chronic knee injury that made paddling difficult, one member of a C-2 team had a badly infected knee, one of our K-1W's received severe bruises on her leg, one of the coaches lost half a tooth, three coaches and a C-1 suffered from sunstroke. Probably worst of all, an evil assortment of intestinal ailments kept many team members and coaches well below par, Pat Connet did her best to aid the walking wounded and Alison Young generously volunteered her services as nurse. But there was defi-

(Continued on page 12)

Race Results

World Slalom Championships Bourg St. Maurice, France

K-1 (Field of 51)

1. C. Peschier France
2. W. Zimmerman Switzerland
3. W. Rosener West Germany
10. Dave Nutt U.S.A.
20. Eric Evans U.S.A.
28. Les Bechdel U.S.A.
37. John Holland U.S.A.

K-1W

1. L. Polesna Czechoslovakia
2. V. Deppe West Germany
3. J. Zverindva Czechoslovakia
14. Lucile McKee U.S.A.

K-1 Team

1. France.
2. Great Britain
3. West Germany
5. United States

C-2M

1. Olry/Olry France
2. Mestan/Mestan Czechoslovakia
3. Valenta/Stach Czechoslovakia
15. Hager/Holcomb U.S.A.
21. Parks/Evans U.S.A.
25. Church/Bliss U.S.A.

C-1

1. W. Peters West Germany
2. R. Kauder West Germany
3. Z. Pulec Czechoslovakia
14. John Burton U.S.A.
18. Dave Kurtz U.S.A.
23. Don Joffrey U.S.A.

C-2

1. Svoboda/Traplova Czechoslovakia
2. Lutz/Lutz France

3. Koudelle/Krizkova Czechoslovakia
6. Southworth/Southworth U.S.A.
7. Fawcett/Fawcett U.S.A.
9. Liebman/Wright U.S.A.

Wildwater

K-1 (Field of 51)

1. J. Burny Belgium
2. K. Preslmayer Austria
3. J. Schwarz Austria
14. Dave Nutt U.S.A.
22. Eric Evans U.S.A.
40. Art Vitarelli U.S.A.

C-1 (Field of 27)

1. J. Boudehen France
2. P. Sodomka Czecho.
3. W. Jogwer W. Ger.
7. John Burton U.S.A.

K-1W (Field of 21)

1. L. Polesma Czecho.
2. U. Deppe W. Ger.
3. A. Armslinger W. Ger.
12. Peggy Nutt U.S.A.
20. Lucile McKee U.S.A.

C-2

1. Chapuis-Feuillette France
2. Enard-Tournadre France
3. Lefauconnier-Lefauconnier France
17. Hager-Holcomb U.S.A.

C-2M (Field of 19)

1. Spitz-Ramelov Austria
 2. Svoboda-Traplova Czecho.
 3. Gavert-Lasseur W. Ger.
 11. Southworth-Southworth U.S.A.
 12. Liebman-Wright U.S.A.
- *In C-M team, the U.S. won a bronze in a field of five.

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nite need for a team physician and I seriously urge the Selection Committee to find one to accompany the team to Merano in 1971.

Of even greater importance, perhaps, are the psychosomatic illnesses which sometimes bedevil competitors when they come under pressure. On one occasion this year a racer didn't wish to compete because his ears were plugged up and he thought he might be coming down with a sore throat. Gentle persuasion, a judicious dosage of pills and a little understanding and sympathy on the part of the team doctor could have prevented what turned out to be an awkward and embarrassing situation for the competitor.

6. A **Team Rigger**: The first axiom learned quite early in our training period at the Isere College of Experience was the absolute necessity for two boats: one for rough use in practice, and a lighter one to save for the race itself. Those who compete in both slalom and wildwater will have to face up to the fact of having four boats in 1971. The French had two boats per competitor and even with that cushion

their boat repair shop was a beehive of activity night and day. In the first three days of practice the East Germans (who are well known as pretty fair boaters) totalled three boats. We Americans practiced and patched, and practiced and patched some more, then raced with boats that were far too heavy.

Lucky for us, and in the true spirit of the U. S. Team, both Bart Hauthaway and Tom Johnson saw the desperate need for boat repair and gallantly attempted to fill the gap. Considerable credit should be granted both men for giving so unselfishly of their time, skill and energy. Nevertheless, for 1971 we simply shouldn't count on a coach or a competitor to spend an inordinate amount of time repairing boats so that the next day's practice can go off without a hitch.

Specifically, we need a dedicated person willing to spend two weeks at Merano in 1971 for boat repair work. He should bring his own electric sander, blowtorch and other equipment necessary, and all repairing of team gear should be centralized under his supervision. He'll have the satisfaction of knowing that he has made a vital contribution to the total team effort. This year each person brought his own repair kit and attempted to do his own

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repair work. This did not work out satisfactorily.

7. Boats: Transport them over, or buy in Europe? Through the unprecedented generosity of the Old Town Canoe Co. six Old Town Slalom and two Old Town wildwater kayaks were loaned, fully equipped, to the U. S. team for use in Europe. These magnificently crafted kayaks drew lots of attention and admiring glances in Europe, and there were several offers to purchase them. They were genuinely appreciated by the U.S. team members, but this in-



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involved an investment larger probably than our entire fund-raising campaign, and we should not expect the offer to be repeated.

New boats are cheap in Europe, readily available if you'll write ahead and place an order, and they are good models. I believe it is better in the long run to purchase two boats (or four if a racer is doing double duty) over there rather than to go through the uncertainty, expense, and bother of shipping your own boat.

Summing Up

In summarizing the mood of the team at the closing ceremonies in the town square at Bourg I would say that it was one of cautious optimism, a few cases of unexpected delight, but nary a trace of smugness. We have come a long way, but international competition, with the exception of two classes, is real big-league stuff. We cannot afford to tread water, otherwise we'll end up safely tucked away somewhere in the second division smothered by mediocrity. We must continue the 1967-69 quantum leap on to 1971 and beyond.

And lastly, the personal friendships made during times of stress and high emotion are lasting ones. For those who gave to the fund-raising campaign, and to those who helped in other ways, in behalf of the entire squad I simply want to record in writing our sincerest gratitude and appreciation.



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The Hettingers came through fine. Photo by Carl Bennett.

The Vermilion in Winter

By Carl D. Bennett

It's our annual custom in Kalamazoo to make our first white-water run in the spring on the Vermilion River near Utica, Illinois. So last March 28 and 29 found eleven of the Kalamazoo Downstreamers camped at Starved Rock State Park on the Illinois River close to where the Vermilion joins the Illinois River.

In the past the Vermilion has shown many facets of its character from flood stage to a point where it is practically unrunnable. But this year it was just right — a couple of feet over minimum runnable stage.

There was one hitch though — even with the sun shining it never got above freezing. Bill Carnes, our trip leader

had made sure through a phone call to Mrs. Annabell Ott, who reads the USGS gauge, that there was plenty of water, but that arctic wind turned out to be the biggest challenge of the week-end.

Our put-in point was below Lowell at the 178 bridge. We had four canoes and three kayaks in our group. The Vermilion has an average springtime degree of difficulty of from I to II and presents no problem to an open canoe except in two places. The first is Wildcat Rapids and the other is a ledge or dam at the cement factory. The Wildcat in particular presents a good place to train.

Our group proceeded to the Wildcat Rapids without event, enjoying the



Joe Ferrer and Carol Pilaar take the big wave and are swamped despite foredeck.

gentle drops and sometimes tossing waves. We looked the Wildcat over and as I was lead boat, I lined up on the tongue of water hitting it with good speed and was tossed left and right all the way through.

My 15-year-old son Mike and Danny Ferrer, 17, both in kayaks, got a smoother ride. Upon reflection, I would have to guess the heavier cargo went deeper into the holes.

Canoes Get Wet

When the open canoes had their go at it, it was a somewhat different story. When Carol Pilaar and Joe Ferrer came to the last big hole in the Wildcat it was just too much water and they were swamped even though they had a partial deck. Carol had a wet-suit but Joe didn't, so he immediately hustled over to the fire and changed into dry clothing. It was so cold icicles formed on Joe's wet clothing (**see photo**).

Next to come through were Bill Carnes and again Carol Pilaar in place of Carne's daughter Lynie, who was already cold. In the same hole Carol took her second swim of the day, while Bill was taking his first.

The John Hettingers had brought some friends along, the John Davidsons, and being new to canoeing, they wisely chose to let me take their canoe through alone for them. It was every bit as exciting as my first run with the kayak, as the canoe was held briefly on a haystack and took on some water. By paddling fiercely for a moment I was able to free myself and continue afloat the rest of the way down the rapids. The Hettingers hit the first big wave squarely and then maneuvered themselves somewhat to the left of the remaining heavy water and came through fine.

By the time we got to the cement factory where we would encounter the ledge, the sun's rays were slanting and it was getting colder. To save time I hesitated at the top to look it over from the kayak and then proceeded through without trouble, but knowing if I didn't signal the others behind me to look it over someone might get swamped.

I was a little too late, Danny came through without any trouble, but my son Mike misinterpreted my signals, ran the chute too far to the right and was hit by the powerful wave coming



Joe Ferrer grew an icicle!

off the large rock wall and went on over. Mike knows how to eskimo roll, but had never tried it under fire: although he made the attempt his paddle sliced the water and didn't give him enough lift. He said later he was **glad** it happened because he had never before tipped in water that rough. He claims his head did touch bottom and it makes me feel good to know that my insistence on a crash helmet does pay off. I believe in them: from my own experience, they are as valuable as a lifejacket.

The canoeists upon my signal pulled over to look the ledge over. The Davidsons again decided to let someone else run their canoe through for them. Danny had the pleasure this time, going solo, while Bill Carnes did the same, as his daughter elected to watch. The Hettingers made another good run. But poor Joe was in for his second dunking, while Carol took her third following the route of my son Mike. Fortunately the cars were only another 10 minutes down stream.



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Caving by Kayak

By Alan W. Byde

(Our British cousins call a kayak a "canoe")

Some time and some distance along the A5 Highway is Holyhead, on Wales' western island of Anglesey. About four miles east of Holyhead, one turns left toward the sea, and arrives at Tre-Arddur Bay, a sandy cove busy with people and boats and water skiers. Go on, turning left at the north side of the cove, along a narrow twisting cliff-top lane. Pass the next two busy little sandy bays, and after four miles on a wide and windy moorland, turn left on the cliff tops. Pass the old buildings and keep to the left, head for the cleft in the cliffs, to Port Rhuffydd. All this is to be found on Admiralty Chart 1977.

The wind blew off-shore, but under the 60-80 feet cliffs the water was smooth and unflurried. About half a mile to the right, a tide-race is to be seen, thrashing and seething around Penrhyn Mawr. It seems always to run South to North no matter what the state of the tide. River gradings would place it about grade three . . . it looks and feels, even toward the slack of the tide, like the Severn in high spate magnified three times.

Les and I potter out toward the race, I with camera slung around neck, ultra-conscious of water and vulnerability of camera. Race grumbles and talks behind rocks. Tall black birds with snake-like necks watch the race. The rocks seem lined with mourners at a wake. Some wake, it stretches away to the North in eddies and whirls.

The Narrow Passage

Between two rocks, there is a narrow passage, three feet wide. Through it appears a curl of white, small, decorative. Les will look good posed there. The race surges twenty feet beyond, tumbling surging hurrying crests. Les poses. The surge eases him back into the gap. The crest piles up and roars back through, all is flying spray and sun-sparkled chaos, paddles flying in the thrash; there comes a splintering crash. I take photo after photo.

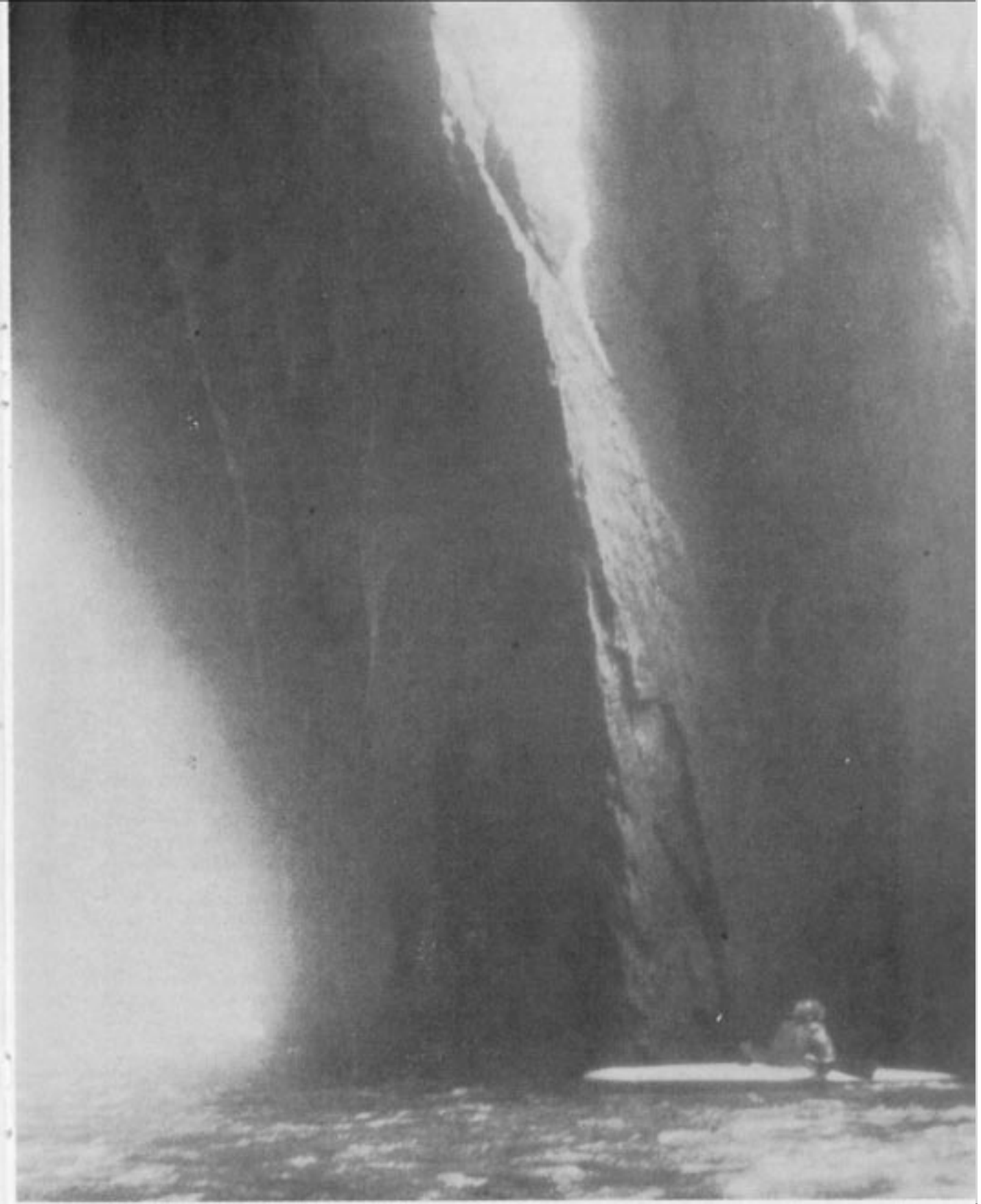
Les appears, bow cocked up on the rock, in imminent danger of falling into the sucking hole under him. Comes another smashing wave, and the canoe grinds, lifts, and is dropped on level keel on top of the low reef, bow and stern equally far from the water, four feet at a guess. Another roaring churn of water and the canoe has gone, the paddles striking at sprinters' rates, just seen above the reef top. We meet, solemn. He lifts an arm, and blood drips onto the shattered deck. His arm appears to be ripped and torn. The sea water spreads blood liberally.

We paddle back, park the camera, stick the shattered edge of the canoe together with tape, and set off in the other direction. The blood flow eases, and it is clear that the gory wound is a series of little lacerations which soon dry and tickle.

Heading South one comes in about three miles to Tre-Arddur Bay. There are cliffs to look at, the rock twisted and convoluted in fold upon fold. The colors are tawny and streaked with veins of white, the cliff like a piece from the root wood of an old tree. The caves go into the rock a short way. We potter about, return across the tumbled water, wind-blown out from the shelter of the cliffs.

Next morning we start away again, this time to the North toward Abraham's Bosom, South Stack, and North Stack, and maybe Holyhead harbor. The tide has forty minutes to go to the top of the flood, and this should just help us through the narrow gaps by the South and North Stacks with minimum turbulence. We shoot the race that Les had his epic in the previous day, and it is not very difficult, but a mistake would land the body several miles away from the shore.

We head directly for the South Stack lighthouse, white on a large chunk of headland separated from the mainland cliff by a rock-strewn gully. A great



deal of paddling moves us very little away from Penrhyn Mawr. We angle in toward the Pen Las cliff, and find a less powerful contrary tidal drift, and move on toward the stack.

At last we turn under the suspension bridge, and find a very difficult section for the next mile, tide now contrary, and the reflected waves from the cliffs causing clapotis and turbulence close in. We move further out with some easing of the violent motion. Directly across Gogarth Bay we come in the lee of North Stack to a bay in the cliffs just under some white buildings seemingly lined along their flat roofs with fifteen-foot high hooded watchers. From the distance they look like people hunched immobile staring out to sea. Close by the bulge of the cliffs cuts them out from view, so we still don't know what they were.

Class III Tide-Race

In the narrow gut between North Stack and the cliff headland, the surge and sparkle of a vigorous race promises troubles ahead. Swirling water can be seen in the gut, and whilst I've tried I've never yet paddled **up** a grade III rapid. We seek a breather in the cliff cove, a broken cave surely — the cliff overhanging enormously, broken rock sailing, wisps of mist flying from the top.

Looking up at the vast overhang, 80 feet if it's an inch, and about 120-foot high to the last vertical pitch, above the shallow cannon-littered water, we see climbers' slings hanging from one great crack. The man or woman who did that awe-inspiring fly-climb must have contemplated the infinite from fairly close range.

Wedged among and under the fallen blocks or rock lie six great iron cannon. Their shattered carriages lie with them. Flakes of rust and a weedy 'fur' cover the marks of the makers. Each is longer than our slalom kayaks, and that puts them upwards of fifteen feet long. Some weight of scrap there! How did they arrive there? Fallen from a Civil War cliff-top fort? Wrenched from a fighting ship embayed, dismantled, wrecked in a howling night?

At the storm beach heaped at the back, I find a tripper's souvenir. A green glass float, netted in tarry cord,

cast among the rubbish at the back. I have it with me now. It reeks of the sea and a smelly old fishing port I know.

Pottering about the boulder and pebble beach among the debris of ships and homes and fishing, at the far NE end of the beach, at the far back of what appears to be a black little cave, we see the gleam of a far-off grey light. We duck our heads, and climb the boulder pile at the back of the storm beach, and descend a long high crack in the rocks, meeting the sea within about sixty feet, dead still, quiet, the quiet thunder of the race just around the far end of a high vertical crack.

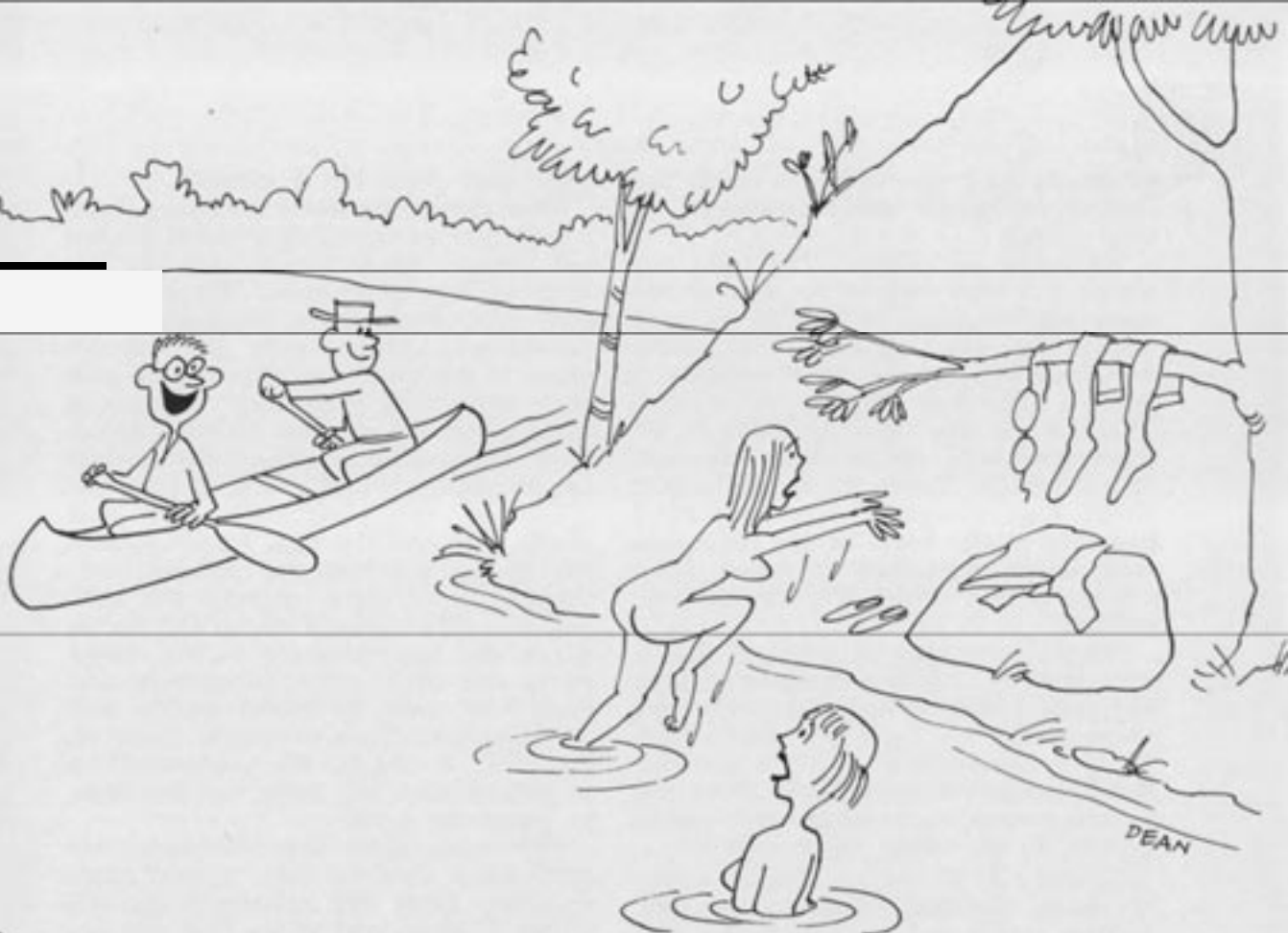
A stumbling portage with the two kayaks launches us on a quiet, still canal under the headland. Black passages lead off to either side, quite big enough for kayaks, and the sea mumbles and grunts in the crevices and we feel the eeriness of the place.

All spooky thoughts are gone in a flash as we crash out into the race on the far side of the headland. A brief excursion of a furlong or so toward Holyhead harbor breakwater, just West of Port Namarch convinces us that any attempt to bash around the point, a mere thirty feet, would be probably impossible and loaded with penalties for a wrong move. A mere brush with a rock skinned Les' arm yesterday, so what would five-knot water do with a whole body against the rock?

We react and balance our way and shoot the race through the gut inshore of the North Stack, which is quite easy and over in a moment. We still don't know if we could have made that headland — we think now, less overawed by water, that maybe we could. We agree that there should now be an Inland and Underland Proficiency Certificate.

Rapids in the Cliffs

From time to time we enter some cave and explore a few score yards into the cliff, which here springs four-hundred feet almost straight up, and overhanging against the misty blue sky. Under the South Stack, we explore the lighthouse landing, built before the suspension bridge no doubt, and the torn



"...AT THE CHARM OF CANOEING, YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU WILL SEE AROUND THE NEXT BEND IN THE RIVER."

remains of a great steel-stranded cable stapled and cemented to the rock — maybe the power supply before the bridge. People peer down from far above, heads dotted along the skyline.

Down through a grade II rapid, six feet across, and into a quiet bay. Into some caves, a dark one under the overhanging cliffs; will these rocks ever drop? They dropped once, brother! With headlamp on I point my light toward a pebble and boulder beach at the back of a dark fifty-foot cave. The roof hangs in curtains of rock and one must duck down, head almost on the deck, to look up to the back of the cave. Two bundles, it seems, gleaming black and wet at the back. Weed? No, too regular. Seal? No, they don't move. Smuggler's loot? Flotsam? I'll never know, but it could be duty-free merchandise planted against the divers' return. We potter off thoughtfully. Too many boys' stories of contraband.

In another cave we go in further than any yet. It must be 200 feet under

the cliffs. Seals watch us, and slide under the water soundlessly. Water trapped in the rock crevices, grunts and wheezes, and the dark cave sounds alive and breathing. Color on the rocks is beautiful, red, livid green, in odd patches where the plane of the shattered rock-crystal faces reflect what light there is in dull metallic gleams.

Collision With Seals

I have the headlight, and so I lead. Les pushes up beside me in a very narrow place. The swell heaves us up and down gently, and down below the fallen boulders show clearly in the translucent green water perhaps twenty feet down. Overhead, the rock hangs in great folds — curtains is the only way to describe it — and we must squeeze down onto the decks in order to go on further. Just ahead a seal breaks surface, breathes like a sleeper in a dream, and slides away again. The light swings with my head and I learn to point my face and not just my eyes at what I wish to see. Frankly, I feel

as spooky as I ever did as a child: the feeling, although quite irrational, is very strong.

We move on a little. The light becomes lost well before the end of the next long passage in a film of mist toward the end. Vague grunting noises are heard. Is it the rock, or animals? I move a little forward, Les just behind. There is no room for paddles, so we push along with our hands on the rock at each side. There is a commotion ahead. Out of sight, down unplumbed passages in the heart of the mountain rock, beasts slide into the water from black beaches, breath wheezes in their nostrils.

"Back, Les, they're coming! Back, man, back" . . . A line of white appears at the far reach of the light, and surges towards me . . . Oh my dear Lord. There is not room for it, Les, and me, and I'm nearer to the collision than Les. By this time Les is in kinks, my distress is clear in my voice. "Gerrout'vit!"

He doesn't. The water heaves under my bows, the kayak slips to one side. A huge whiskered head, with bulging red eyes — how far apart they are! — stares at my one-eyed headlight. Terror grips me . . . and it. It rolls the whites of its eyes and hurls its head backwards like a sprinter starting a backstroke race. In the explosion of spray I see nothing more. I huddle against the rock waiting for doom. Water tinkles back from the rock to the water. Silence is broken only by the helpless laughter of Les, now alongside me. "Man, did you travel fast backwards!"

I'm out in the larger cave, I don't


remember how, but I moved.

That cave must go on for many more yards than we travelled. Beyond the usual boulder beach at the end and the feral stench, what then? More passages? This should be a wonderland for cavers with proper gear and experience. It seems to me that a new and very interesting branch of canoeing is developing, where one goes to delectable sections of coastline just slalom people seek out lovely bits of rivers.

Further, the great cliffs drop vast pieces into the sea thus forming little islands just out from the cliffs with associated waterways between the rock and the cliff, through which the waves surge and the tide-race swirls. Some parts are easy, some dangerous, and each kind may be found within feet of each other. Such cavorting about on the cliffs is not for the inexperienced or unprepared, but great fun for those at advanced level.

Returning from the seal cave, we came upon five climbers on two ropes climbing from the sea level up the cliffs. It seems odd to me that one begins the climb by abseiling down and then climbing out, instead of the converse. Here we landed very gently on a shelf of rock cushioned with weed, and as the gentle waves receded we could step out onto the rock and have lunch on the off-cliff rocks with a grandstand view of the climbers. I took some photographs which may be useful. The South Stack light glared white in the sun, and the rock baked us gratifyingly. A lovely place on a hot summer afternoon, but what must it be like with a Westerly gale blowing and the seas reaching for the lowering sky and all the cliffs a howling tumult?

Further on we went right around the bay called Abraham's Bosom, and saw the piled up wrecks of many cars wedged and hanging mangled in crevices above the seaways in the cliffs. What will the next ten years do to this lovely place? Car disposal must be made less difficult or great cliffs like these will be horribly scarred.

Geoff Dinsdale of the Chalfont Park Canoe Club, England, tries to 'loop' a C1 in the 'stopper' below the Hambledon Weir on the River Thames. Photo by Mike Clark 

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Mexican Rivers Are Really Wild

By Bob Burleson

Last week an AWA member on his way to Mexico called while passing through Temple, Tex. The discussion eventually resulted in tentative plans for him to join us on a forthcoming exploratory trip on one of the fine rivers that drain the Sierra Madre Oriental along the eastern coast of Mexico, where the heavy rainfall of the upper mountains finds its way through the limestone and winds its way through jungle canyons to the Gulf of Mexico.

This got me to thinking about our neighbor, Mexico, and of the wonderful opportunities that exist for white-water sport in Mexico's wild and beautiful back country. It also brought to mind some general information about the country that might be of interest.

Mexico occupies perhaps the pre-eminent position among Latin American nations, and is one of the fastest growing nations in Latin America not only in terms of population, but in terms of economic growth. Its productivity is keeping pace with its population growth, but just barely, and the pressure on natural resources is growing each year, just as in the United States.

An Opportunity

The point of this is that, at present, Mexico has many wild and beautiful rivers and back country that match and in some instances exceed anything we have in the United States, including jungle canyons of Grand Canyon size with Class V water at the bottom, and desert canyons of similar dimensions. But nearly all of these areas of natural beauty are coming under the same pressures of population and exploitation that our own rivers and back country are subject to. It seems to me that there is plenty of room for exchange of information and for cooperative efforts between the beginning groups of Mexican white-water boaters and our groups here in the United States.

There are many differences in our two countries with respect to the position of outdoor and individualistic recreation. Only in very recent years has

there developed in Mexico a sizeable middle class with enough money and leisure time to get interested in such outdoor recreation as mountaineering and white-water sport. But the interest is growing and I fully expect eventually to make contact with and exchange information with kayak and canoe groups throughout Mexico.

When this happens, the first thing I am going to send to our Mexican friends is a set of back issues of the AWA Journal, with emphasis on the articles dealing with reading the river, equipment and technique. When you read the following letter (translated from the Spanish) from a nascent river runner in Mexico, you will see what I mean. It is truly a beginning sport in Mexico, and we can see the parallel to our own early development when we read of the exploits of this group. Here is what happened to them on the Rio Balsas:

Puebla, Puebla
January 10, 1969

Dear Mr. Burleson:

"I am answering your kind letter of September 23.

"My delay is due especially to the organization of various events during the Olympic games in October, and, thereafter, to our Christmas work. Now that things have calmed down, I am pleased to answer your kind letter and hope you will excuse my delay.

"In the name of our small group in Puebla, we extend to you the most cordial welcome to join our Exploration Club of Mexico (Club de Exploraciones de Mexico).

"With respect to the information which you desire regarding rivers in Mexico, we regret to say that we have not traveled in boats on any of the rivers that you mentioned, and our experience is limited to our slight knowledge of various rivers in the southeast part of our country and to the Rio Balsas on which we have boated from its source to its mouth.

"The experience gained on boating on this river during several years per-

haps qualifies us to talk about rivers, because, among other things, we have made three expeditions, two of which we terminated in shipwrecks. The same thing happened to the third, but we were able to save the boat and the motor with which we finally finished the trip with success, including a voyage in the open sea from the mouth of the river in Punta Mangrove to Puerto de Zihuatanejo.

"The facts regarding this river which we think you will find useful, are as follows:

"We traveled on this river from its source in the State of Puebla, first on foot and later in Kayaks which we made ourselves. For some of the parts we used automobile tanks because the country is so rough that we had to walk much of the way.

Building Boats en Route

"To leave the State of Puebla, we traveled the River Mixteco which flows down from the mountain Oaxaca (Sierra Mixteca) which increases considerably its flow of water. At this point we had to build a boat of sheets [metal or plastic?] 5 meters long with a rudder and two oars. We navigated for 10 days until we crossed the Mexico-Acapulco Highway, and scarcely 10 kilometers from this point our boat sank in a very dangerous rapid which is called 'San Francisco.'

"Later on we were able to make another boat of [lamina]* (we insist on making them of lamina in order to withstand the impact against the rocks of the rapids which are many and dangerous), but this time we put a 12-horsepower motor on the boat.

"We started our trip again, not from the State of Puebla, but from the Mexico-Acapulco Highway in the same place where our boat had sunk.

"Four hours after we boated in our new boat, we sank again, but we saved the boat because we had taken the precaution to tie automobile tanks all around it. We continued almost without equipment and without shoes for self-preservation during 12 more days until we reached a point where we were able to escape from the nightmare and adventure and we truthfully had to fight for our lives.

**Precise English equivalent unclear.*

Shipwrecked in Wilderness

"Rapids of various kilometers in length and vicious whirlpools kept us in constant danger until we were surprised by a cataract which finished everything and from which fortunately the four of us escaped. However, we still had problems to get out of the area, because it was an unexplored region.

"Time passed and we always wanted to return and finally we obtained a boat of glass fiber and an outboard motor of 25 horsepower.

"We began our trip for the third time and this time from the Mexico-Acapulco Highway from the Bridge of Mexicala to be exact, and with more experience we made the first leg of the journey from this point to the Village of Balsas, Guerrero, which is one of the most dangerous, but at the same time, very beautiful. (Take note.) Afterwards we continued without much danger to the place of our previous misfortunes, but this time we did not have any problems because of the construction of the dam 'El Infiernillo' at exactly the place where the dangerous rapids and the famous, cataract was located. (Now we know that it was famous, because of its fury.)

"At this place, the engineer in chief of the dam helped us to transport the boat from the dam to the river and we continued our journey, but the river protested again, notwithstanding the wonderful equipment that we had and we sank again for the "umpteenth" time, scarcely two kilometers from the dam.

We Start Again

"Our boat had tanks of air and also a cable tied to the bow which experience taught us we should always have and we were thus able to rescue it and later to regulate the motor. We continued through the most impressive area of the trip — not only because of the powerful rapids, but also because of the dangerous and enormous whirlpools. It was a day of navigation because of these conditions, but in reality perhaps, it was the most dangerous of the whole trip, because our fights against the whirlpools were constant. As soon as we left one we would fall into another, and if any one of them

had overcome us, you can imagine what would have happened with the river flowing 800 cubic meters per second [about 24,000 c.f.s.].

"We arrived at the place where they were building another dam named Jose Ma. Morelos and at this point the slightest carelessness or inattention on our part would have resulted in our being swallowed up in the foam tunnel of the dam. Finally we were full of emotion, but from this point to the mouth we experienced two hours of peace and quiet. This rested us and restored our nerves, and the next day at 5:00 in the morning we pointed the bow of our boat toward the light of dawn and we sailed out on the Pacific Ocean. We left the coast following directions of fishermen and sailed on the quiet and peaceful ocean until we arrived at the Port of Zihuatanejo where we were severely reprimanded by the Captain of the Port.

"And Mr. Bob Burleson, it has been a pleasure to chat with you.

"With respect to the way you could make this trip, we recommend the area from Mexcale to Balsas, because you can leave the City of Mexico by the way of the highway to Acapulco and half way you will come to the Bridge of Mexcala below which flows the River Balsas. Its average depth in dry times is approximately 2 meters, but it has many holes.

"Approximately 10 kilometers from there you will find the first serious rapids (or 'fierce' as they are called by the natives of that region) but there are no rocks and only a strong current, and I believe it is ideal for kayaks with the proper precautions. Five kilometers further along is the rapid 'San Francisco' with which you should be careful not to be surprised by it, because it is very strong and, as I said before, it sank our boat 5 meters in length. Before crossing you should touch the land to study it, preferably on the right side of the river. If you decide to cross it in your boat, it would be very exciting. (Do not lose the opportunity to take movies of those who cross.)

"The flow of the river is variable and for this reason its danger varies. Also, one cannot know ahead of time wheth-

er or not he can cross the rapids. It is a question of judgment on the spot which one has to make. With our boat and motor we were able to cross all the rapids, but in kayaks I believe it would not be easy.

"Three kilometers further on beyond this point is the rapid of St. Elena which is equally dangerous. Afterwards, there are two or three little rapids which are not so bad and finally the Bridge of Balsas. This bridge is that of the railroad on which you can ride to the City of Mexico with your kayaks. In the village there is a small rustic hotel where you can spend the night.

"If you desire to continue the trip, there are no other dangers of any consequence and there are places where you actually touch the highway and you can continue for several days in the midst of beautiful panoramas and on a river which runs through the Madre del Sur. mountains. The last recommended point to leave the river would be Coyuca de Catalan, because after that begins the lake of the dam and the river has practically no current and at this point it pushes you backwards and the use of oars would be tiring and monotonous for you.

"The area from the dam of Infiernillo to the dam Jose Ma. Morelos is definitely not recommended for kayaks.

"I hope you will be pleased with our information.

"I am happy to remain your friend and faithful servant.

Pedro Lopez Perezcastro

PS: If you desire a map for making the trip, I will make it for you with much pleasure. Let me know.



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Six Beeps A Go-Go River

North Creek, New York has gone to direct dialing. Therefore, if you have the old Hudson River number, it is not good any longer and the operator will not give you the new number. The new number is (518) 998-3014. If you call this number you can tell the depth of the Hudson River and its suitability for canoeing.

After dialing the number a series of bells are rung. After a short pause, there is one buzz, then another pause. Get ready to start counting. The next series of buzzes are number of feet, then a pause. The next series are tenths of feet, then a pause. The last series are hundredths of feet (Dave Binger

disputes this and says the second series are inches and not tenths).

Three point five feet is minimum canoeing level. Four feet — minimum exciting canoeing level. Six to seven feet is exceptionally high water and makes ofr an exciting run.

I once went through the Hudson gorge on a raft on 2.7 feet. This is about minimum for taking a raft through.

Walter Blank

— **KCCNY Newsletter**

Automated flow metering devices are being installed in many rivers. Diligent inquiry with the Corps of Engineers or Bureau of Reclamation may yield their location and the code.

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A Setting Pole for the Canoe

By Jack Hazzard

Provided a stream is not too deep (one to four feet are reasonable limits) it is safer and more convenient to travel either up or downstream with a pole than with a paddle. Perhaps not as exciting, but still safer and easier. For one thing, the shod pole can be dragged forcibly along the bottom slowing the canoe and providing a positive brake in all but the fastest water. Swift, shallow rapids difficult to traverse under the paddle are of small concern to the canoe-man provided with a proper 'setting pole', particularly when travelling upstream.

The pole should be from twelve to sixteen feet in length, of good straight spruce or ash, two to two-and-a-half inches in diameter at the pike, tapering to one and a quarter at the opposite end. It should be worked paddle-smooth and varnished or oil-finished. Rings of metal 1/16" to 1/8" thick by one inch in width are driven on the end of the pole before it is bored to receive the pike which should enter some five or six inches in a driving fit leaving about three inches exposed.

The pike of tool steel should be not less than one-half inch in diameter. The five inches entering the pole may be forged square and tapering like a square cut nail or may be left round at the cost of additional weight, but in either case should be boldly roughened and scored with a cold chisel to hold firmly.

Shouldered Steel

A shoulder is needed to prevent the pike from driving back and splitting the pole. This can be accomplished in various ways. Threading the projecting three inches of the pike and screwing on a similarly threaded washer 1/8" thick and large enough to cover the end of the pole is one good solution. Or the whole pike may be machined from a large rod, leaving a disk at the appropriate place. If a blacksmith can be located, he will form the shoulder while tapering the tang and tempering the working end of the pike. To provide a cutting, gripping edge all around,

a conical depression is drilled into the end of the pike, its largest diameter equaling the diameter of the pike end. The tip of the pike should be drawn to "dark straw" temper.

With perseverance and lots of elbow grease a good pike can be made from a large-diameter mason's star drill, though it takes a deal of hammering, filing, hacksawing and drilling to produce the correct shape, dimensions and weight. Drilling the conical hole is the hardest and most exacting job and drills may be ruined in the process even if a small gauge is first used down to the greatest depth desired, followed by larger and larger drills each cutting less and less deeply until the last, (a half inch one) merely countersinks the mouth of the hole.

Tempering The Pike

It is not at all impossible to temper the pike by home methods. Smooth the pike and heat the end over a blow torch, electric hot plate or gas flame until it glows "cherry" red. Quench in water or oil. It is now "glass-hard" and much too brittle for use.

Polish thoroughly so that the "colors" may be observed as it is reheated. Dip in oil, heat evenly and when the desired "straw" appears quench quickly. Success requires practice, but as the metal can be heated and quenched again and again without damage there is no danger of spoiling the pike and only patience is required.

In fact, the pike will have to be sharpened and re-tempered from time to time and the heating can be handled without damage to the pole by wrapping it in wet cloth, for only the tip of the steel is heated.

The Pole in Action

Now as to handling the pole and canoe: It is possible to kneel with the shorter poles, but the most efficient position is standing. Standing in a canoe is for canoe-men. It is an acquired art — all canoemanship is for that matter — but it is **best**, so that's the way to go about it.

Put both feet on the center line at a point which will trim the canoe "by the stern" for upstream work and "by the head" for downstream travel. This should be between the stern thwart and stern seat in an empty canoe and when loaded the duffle may be adjusted to trim properly with the operator in this desirable position.

Head exactly into the current, meeting each deviation as it occurs.

Find a firm grip on the bottom before each push and shove deliberately, climbing the pole hand over hand.

Control of Direction

To head left, place the pike well out to the right and draw the stern to the pole as you shove.

To head right, shove diagonally outward pushing the stern to the left as you forge ahead.

If the pike catches and will not release do not attempt to yank it loose but allow the canoe to drift back slowly until the pole can be loosened.

Do not reach too far nor hurry the forward swing. Even in fast water the canoe will "hang" an appreciable time before starting to drift back.

Select the apparently deep channels, avoiding shallow, rock-dotted water.

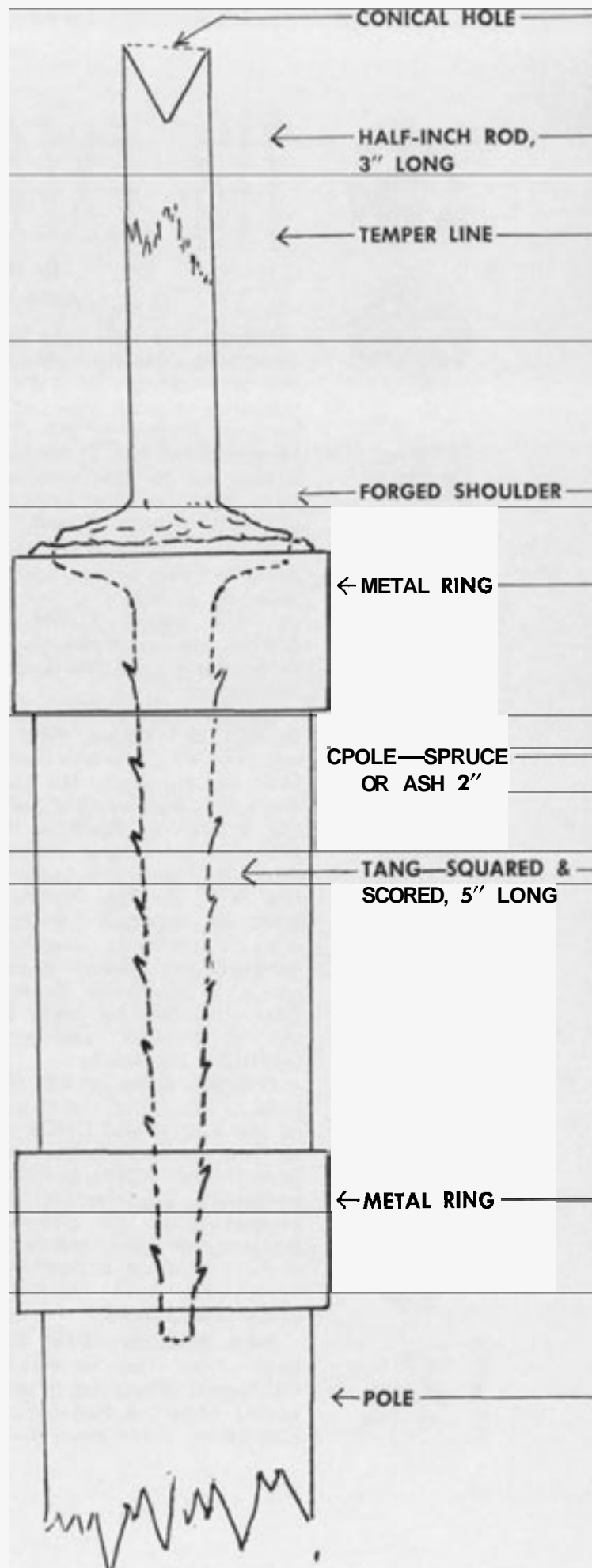
If the pole or feet slip or if balance is lost, drop to the knees quickly. "Crumple" is a better word than "drop". If it proves impossible to keep headed upstream, back into an eddy, thus avoiding a wild diagonal dash across the current and a possible upset.

Never attempt to "snub" the bow by placing the pole far forward. In a strong current a pole vault overboard and a capsize will promptly result.

Canoes for this work should be 'rock-er'-bottomed and have little or no keel.

Where shallow fast water alternates with very deep holes it is well to use an extra long and strong paddle with a square, tool-steel pike projecting from the end of the blade. A forked tang is sawn into the pike, the blade sandwiched into the slot, and the whole is made secure by metal straps riveted through and through.

See "Let's Go Upstream," by Peter D. Whitney, Vol. V, No. 2 (Autumn, 1959).





THE EXEC'S SOAP BOX

By BOB BURLESON
AWA Executive Director



I hope you will join me in extending a hearty welcome to the new officers of AWA for the present year. They should be well known to all of the membership, but to bring everyone up to date on them I have assembled a brief biographical sketch of each.

Ed Alexander, President — Ed is 48 years of age, with two teen-age paddlers in his family. His twins, Audrey and Robert, are reported already to be teaching their dad the latest techniques.

Ed and his wife Miriam live in East Brunswick, New Jersey, where he is active in many civic organizations. He has always led an active life, including a stint as Division lightweight boxing champion while he was in the Army during WW II. This means we have an aggressive President who is probably capable of keeping the Board hard at work. I personally prefer to deal with him by mail, since my profession encourages fighting with words.

Between bouts he has found time to be one of the founders of the Kayak and Canoe Club of New York, and has served in numerous offices in that organization. Ed is active in the promotion of all phases of white-water sport, and is presently compiling a manual on organizing and running a white-water race.

John Bombay, Vice President—John lives in Oakland, California, where he is an engineer with the famed Kaiser Engineers. John was born in

Holland and Ed Alexander in Germany, and both of them have approached their AWA jobs in the past with the industry and intelligence shown by the nations of their births. John came to the United States in 1956 and has been a valued contributor to the work of AWA ever since.

John is married to Barbara, a Texas gal whom he introduced to kayaking in Tennessee, the father of two future paddlers, a boy and a girl.

John's contributions to white-water boating and AWA would do credit to one who has been in this country all his life. He has been our Safety Chairman in the past, and one of the best we have ever had. He held the same post with the River Touring Section of the Sierra Club's San Francisco Bay Chapter and also served as chairman of that group. He was moved to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, for a while and there organized the East Tennessee White Water Club, which pioneered the sport in that area and explored many new streams. He also coordinated the production of the AWA training films, with the help of many other active clubs and individuals.

Recently, his efforts have been concentrated on the preservation of our few remaining natural streams and wilderness areas. He feels that AWA rightfully has an important role to play in this effort across the nation.

Harold "Deacon" Kiehm, Secretary—Deacon Kiehm is one of the old reliables of



AWA, and has probably personally welcomed more new members to the group than any other person. His long years of service and his accomplishments are known to all of us. When I think of him I always get the mental picture of Deacon hunched over his battered old typewriter, hammering out his correspondence in a friendly, conversational style, and turning out tons of letters with that awful blue-ink typewriter ribbon that must be an antique by now.

Chicago and midwestern canoeing just wouldn't be the same without Deacon. He has been on the scene there in many capacities, serving as AWA's representative from the Prairie Club Paddlers for several years. He has been Executive Secretary, Circulation Manager, Membership Chairman, and corresponding secretary of AWA for a number of years, and has always been a willing worker when any project came up.

Deacon is primarily a cruising and camping canoeist, although he boosts all aspects of the sport. His present efforts, like those of John Bombay, are directed at river and wilderness conservation.

Let's give these three fellows and the rest of the Board of Directors of AWA the support and encouragement they need to do the job at hand. They have the ability and are willing, but they need our help.

There are a couple of items of pending business before the Board of Directors that also need to be called to your attention. For one thing, we need a new Editor for the AWA Journal. Peter Whitney agreed to come back temporarily to serve as Editor, and has done his usual excellent job, but we cannot continue to impose on Peter forever. If you

have any volunteers or suggestions, please make them known to me or Ed Alexander as soon as possible. It is my feeling, personally, that the editorship should go East for a while, since the last two Editors have been from the Midwest and the far West [there has never been an Eastern Editor]. However, the right man will get the job, regardless of his geographic area, if he is willing to undertake the task.

I might also insert a plea here for good pictures of white-water action, and good articles on the latest trips, equipment and technique. If you have something to contribute, ship them on to Peter right away. The usual good picture spreads in the Journal will suffer unless we get some current materials soon.

Another item coming up for Board action is the revision of the AWA Safety Code. We just reprinted our 1963 code as a stopgap measure, and in looking it over, agreed that some revisions are needed. Particularly, there should be more emphasis placed on the use of protective headgear and flotation bags in the boats. A committee will soon be appointed to work with our new Safety Chairman on this, and if you have any suggestions on the revision, please make them known to me.

From Your Editor

Let your Editor hastily explain that he isn't trying to "get out of" the job of producing your magazine. He does have a strong conviction, however, that the job can be better done: for one thing, in middle age, he isn't boating as much as he used to. Meanwhile, he solicits strong contributions of writing, photos and drawings for the upcoming 1969-1970 issues.



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
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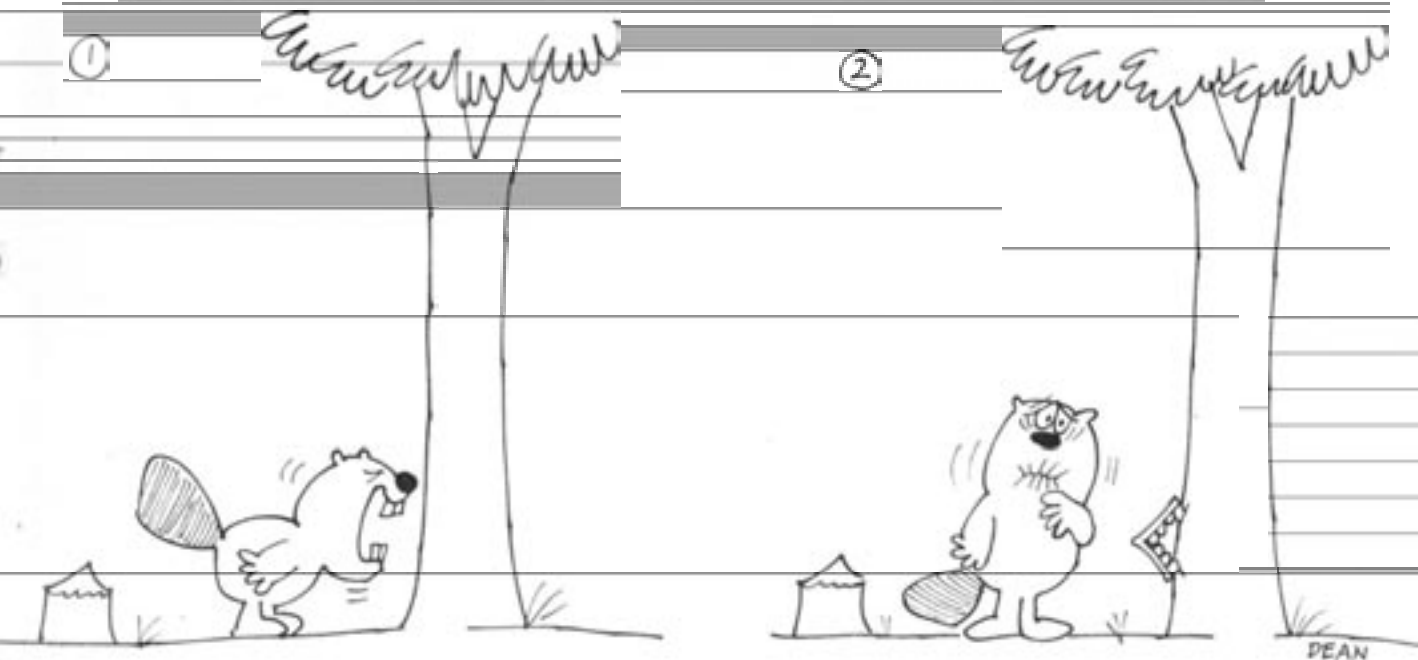
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