

*American*

# WHITEWATER



*Rocki Ross Day in the Life of a Video Madman.*

AMERICA'S OLDEST WHITEWATER MAGAZINE

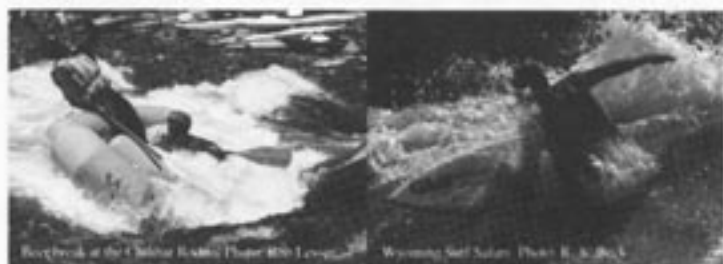
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Vol. **XXXI** No. 2



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Cover Photo: Rocky Rossi negotiating the gates. See story, page 28. Photo by John Armstrong

## KEARN RIVER TO BE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S FIRST WILD AND SCENIC RIVER?

by Patrick Carr

The Kern River east of Bakersfield will be Southern California's first Wild & Scenic River if Congress enacts legislation recently introduced that would protect 61 miles of the river's North Fork. But conservationists are concerned that the bill, H.R. 3934, authored by Rep. Charles "Chip" Pashayan (R-Fresno), could allow intensive development on the most popular portion of the river.

The North Fork Kern is known to many for the awesome alpine scenery found in its dramatic gorge near Mt. Whitney in Sequoia National Park. H.R. 3934 would add this and other wild stretches of the river to the National Wild & Scenic River System. Habitat for rare golden trout and highly endangered California condors would be protected from development schemes that have been proposed in the past for the river downstream of the national park.

But an important stretch of river would be left open to development even if H.R. 3934 were passed in its present form. Conservationists urge that Wild & Scenic protection also be extended to the "Johnsondale Bridge" stretch, which is by far the most popular stretch of wild river in Southern California. Within a three-hour drive of 9.7 million people, this 18-mile long canyon hosts 250,000 campers, anglers, picnickers, and boaters each year. It is a major recreational asset for California's most populous region, and essential for true preservation of the North Fork.

Out of every 1,000 miles of rivers in the U.S., less than two miles are preserved through the Wild & Scenic System. In the Kern, we have an opportunity to preserve one of the very few wild rivers in Southern California—an area where establishment of a protected river could help so many urban residents to develop an appreciation for natural stream values. Please write your congressional representative (House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515) and senators Alan Cranston and Pete Wilson (Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510). Ask their support for Wild & Scenic for all 79 miles of the North Fork Kern.

## KINGS RIVER LOSES OUT IN SEQUOIA FOREST PLAN

by Patrick Carr

The Kings River remains an open target for developers planning a massive dam, according to recommendations in a draft forest management plan recently released for public review for public review by the Sequoia National Forest.

One of California's largest wild rivers, the Kings flows from the High Sierra east of Fresno. A century ago John Muir called the river's canyon "a rival of Yosemite" and sought protection for the area. Only after a 59-year battle was Kings Canyon National Park created by Congress in 1940 to preserve the High Sierra portions of the Kings.

Leaving the protection of the park and flowing into the Sequoia National Forest, the Kings loses none of its spectacular nature. As part of its forest management planning, the Forest Service was to have studied this part of the river for addition to the National Wild & Scenic River System.

Conservationists feel that the Kings richly deserves Wild & Scenic protection. Slicing through the second deepest canyon in North America (7,851 feet deep), the Kings provides spectacular wilderness hiking and whitewater rafting. One of only 17 streams in California specially managed for their Wild Trout fisheries, the Kings is one of the top trout streams in the West. The canyon provides 40% of the winter habitat of the North Fork Kings deer herd, which plummeted from 17,000 animals in 1950 to less than 2,000 today as reservoirs flooded deer habitat.

Unfortunately, the Forest Service's management plan threatens to give developers a free hand. Released in late November, the forest plan recommends Wild and Scenic River status for non-controversial parts of the river, but it fails to even evaluate a spectacularly scenic 14-mile stretch that a local water development agency would like to flood behind Rodgers Crossing Dam.

Past studies have found that Rodgers Crossing would be a grossly ineffective dam. The most recent study found that the dam would provide water only once every three or four years. Yet the Kings River Conservation District, which is dominated by wealthy agribusiness interests, is re-evaluating the dam's

feasibility and may decide that hydro-power will make it profitable.

Letting a group of developers decide whether they want to dam a great river is no way to run a national forest. Letters to the Sequoia National Forest asking for a full Wild and Scenic study of the Kings are urgently needed. Only this kind of study can examine the full range of values the Kings River offers the public. The deadline for public comment is March 28. Please write Jim Crates, Supervisor, Sequoia National Forest, 900 W. Grand Ave., Porterville, CA 93257.

Concerned readers can also ask Supervisor Crates to adopt the "Conservation Alternative" for the Sequoia. This is a forest management plan developed by conservation groups and concerned local residents. It seeks to preserve the Sequoia's scenery, old-growth forests, and wildlife from increased development and timber harvesting proposed by the Forest Service.

### **OTTER BAR SIGNS 7 TOP KAYAKERS FOR EXPANDED 86 PRGRAM**

Peter Sturges, President of Otter Bar Lodge, Inc., announced the appointment of seven top instructors to lead the 1986 instructional program. The professional staff will consist of five men and two women. The men include Chris Spelius, U.S. Olympic team member 1984; Don Banducci, former freestyle and white water rodeo champion; Larry Hewett, Otter Bar senior instructor and Perception U.S.A. consultant; John Wasson, top Idaho white water boater and Patagonia consultant; Jim Phelps M.D., white water aficionado and expert instructor. The women include Cameron O'Connor, freestyle champion and Arlene Burns, Nantahala expert instructor (currently leading trips in Nepal).

Entering its fourth year the Otter Bar Kayak School has expanded its courses and facilities to accommodate the most complete program of its kind in the Western U.S.. Students will be offered a choice of four courses including beginning, basic intermediate, intermediate and advanced.

Located in remote Forks of Salmon, California on the shores of the Salmon River, Otter Bar conducts courses on the Salmon, Klamath and Trinity Rivers. During 1985 the school completed a quarter acre "stroking" pond with gates and a second rolling pond. "Advanced bookings promise to make our 1986 season the best ever", commented Sturges. "Interest in Kayak instruction and general boating is dramatically increasing". Otter Bar also conducts fly fishing schools and is used as a wilderness retreat for a variety of purposes.

For further information contact Otter Bar Lodge, Inc., Box 210, Forks of Salmon, CA 96031, (707) 444-3044 (Message Phone).

### **U.S. HELPS COSTA RICA SAVE WILD RIVER**

U.S. Ambassador Tambs and 30 American river runners at presidential signing ceremony.

On Friday, January 10, 1986, the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Luis Alberto Monge, signed an executive decree conferring protected status to Costa Rica's remote wild Pacuare River. The decree, which was made possible by a \$10,000 grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, marks the first time, outside of the United States of North America, that a whitewater recreational river has been specifically protected.

At the formal signing ceremony, attended by U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, Dr. Lewis A. Tambs and some thirty North American river runners, President Monge spoke of Costa Rica's traditional friendship with the United States, and long term interest in conservation, outdoor recreation and tourism. The President went on to say that Costa Rica's interest in tourism stems not only from its potential as a source of foreign exchange, but also because international tourism is an important avenue for international understanding and peace.

Ambassador Tams called protecting the Rio Pacuare "a chance to kill two birds with one stone." That is, to promote conservation and tourism at the same time.

In appreciation for his efforts to conserve Costa Rica's wild rivers, President Monge was presented with a plaque by a founding board member of the Eastern Professional River Outfitters Association, Mr. Jon A. Dragan, of Thurmod, West Virginia.

Afterwards, the entire assemblage joined President Monge in the entrance hall of the Presidential Office Building to view some 50 photographs of Costa Rica's white water rivers, commissioned by the Costa Rican Tourism Institute, from North American white water photographer Robert Harrison.

White water experts say that Costa Rica has a uniquely rich white water river resource. As of the present, some 90 miles of Costa Rica's wild rivers have been explored and are being run commercially. As well as the Pacuare, rafting runs are found on the Reventazon and Chirripo del Pacifico rivers, both of which are also considered to be world class.

The Rio Pacuare starts out as a tiny trickle some 6,000 feet up in a mountain range called the Cordillera de Talamanca. It flows northeast, finally emptying into the Caribbean. The river has a total of 30 miles of runnable white water, including an upper Class V+ run which drops 157 feet per mile for 15 miles and has to date only been run by a few teams of expert kayakers and rafters. The commercial white water portion of the river, which

drops 65 feet per mile, has been visited by over 1000 people, including 98 professional river guides.

Because of the world class white water and Costa Rica's proximity to the United States (two and a half hours by air from Miami), it is believed that wild rivers eventually could be an important source of tourism dollars for Costa Rica, a stable, democratic developing country, which, like most of the rest of the third world, is suffering from economic problems.

According to Michael Kaye, founder of Costa Rica Expeditions, the outfitter which did the original exploration on all three rivers, the signing of the presidential decree is only a first step. In order to truly guarantee the protection of the Pacuare, funds for salaries for river rangers and acquisition of in-holdings within the scenic corridor will have to be found.

U.S. citizens can make tax deductible donations to:

World Wildlife Fund  
Costa Rica Program  
Pacuare Project  
1601 Connecticut Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009

The Nature Conservancy  
Costa Rica Program  
Pacuare Project  
1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036

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COSTA RICA EXPEDITIONS APARTADO 6941 SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA (C.A.) PH: (506) 22-03-33

"EXPERIENCE WORLD CLASS WHITEWATER, in a tropical jungle setting"—CANOE MAGAZINE. April. 1984.

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# FORUM

27, January, 1986

WHITEWATER

Bob Smith  
1150 Crater Lake Avenue  
Suite K  
Medford, Oregon 97501

Dear Mr. Smith,

What would you say to this plan to reduce crowding in National Parks such as Yosemite or Yellowstone?

How about a LOTTERY to get into a Park? Perhaps on the average ONE YEAR OUT OF FIVE OR SIX you could visit Yellowstone.

But you have the money and want to go *this year* without having to go through a lottery like everyone else. NO PROBLEM!

Just PAY A FEE (\$500 TO \$1,500) AND YOU CAN VISIT YOUR FAVORITE PARK WITH A GUIDE ANY TIME YOU WANT!

**And how about this: While most folks have to wait to visit Yellowstone, you can visit this year AND CLAIM YOUR EXPENSES AS A TAX DEDUCTION!**

**RIDICULOUS? THIS CONDITION ACTUALLY EXISTS ON OUR NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERS AND PERMITTED RIVERS TODAY!**

To prevent overuse of Wild and Scenic Rivers the Forest Service and BLM conduct lotteries (or long waiting lists) to restrict public access. BUT, CURRENTLY ANYBODY WITH MONEY CAN CIRCUMVENT THIS RESTRICTION AND BUY THEIR WAY ON THESE PUBLIC RIVERS ANY TIME THEY WISH!

Private parties must go through a lottery to get on in most cases. But Commercial rafters sell the right to go on a river to whomever has the money.

AS A PHYSICIAN I CAN AFFORD TO PAY, AND EVEN BETTER, **DEDUCT A**

**RIVER TRIP AS A "MEDICAL MEETING."** (See enclosed Seminars on the Rogue, Grand Canyon, and Salmon as examples of "*Fabricated Medical Meetings.*") BUT WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER RAFTERS AND BOATERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A FAIR CHANCE AT FLOATING A PERMITTED RIVER?

**WHY SHOULD TAXPAYERS WHO ARE UNABLE TO UTILIZE A PUBLIC RESOURCE SUBSIDIZE PEOPLE OF MEANS TO USE THAT SAME RESOURCE?!!!**

Obviously, what needs to be done is a LOTTERY OR WHATEVER FOR ALL PEOPLE interested in floating a river. ONCE YOU HAVE A PERMIT YOU ARE FREE TO CHOOSE A GUIDE/OUT-FITTER, OR IF CAPABLE YOU MAY FLOAT THE RIVER YOURSELF.

The State of Oregon has done this for years to restrict the number of elk hunters in the Snake River and Chesh-nimnus Units. You may hunt these areas with or without a guide as you choose, but *all* hunters must participate in a drawing to gain access.

With increasing demands on our limited natural resources it is imperative that we adopt management techniques that are inherently fair to all concerned. We must not allow an individual's personal finances to be the primary determinant for access to public lands.

Thank you for your concern regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Wilson MD  
3556 Camellia Drive S.  
Salem, Oregon 97302  
(503) 364-3862

## UPPER CLACKAMAS WHITewater FESTIVAL

Carter Bridge on the Clackamas River will be the center of activity for the 1986 Upper Clackamas Whitewater Festival on Saturday and Sunday, May 3 & 4, 1986, Located 45 miles east of Portland, Oregon on Highway 224, the festival brings together two of the most popular northwest whitewater events: the Upper Clackamas Whitewater Rodeo and the Upper Clackamas Inflatable Whitewater Slalom.

Now in its fourth year, the Upper Clackamas Whitewater Festival has grown from a single-day event with 45 slalom entrants and 200 spectators to a full weekend of free-style kayaking, top-name Bluegrass entertainment, and the largest inflatable whitewater slalom in the United States. For 1986, 250 entrants and 2000 spectators are expected to attend.

On Saturday, the Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club will conduct the Whitewater Rodeo, a freestyle kayak event, at Bob's Hole, a famous northwest surfing wave two miles west of Carter Ridge. Nearly 100 entrants will compete in beginner, intermediate, and expert divisions for prizes and awards donated by local outfitters and retailers. Check-in and practice starts at 9:30 AM, with the competition starting at 11:00 AM.

Following the rodeo, the participants and spectators will travel back to Carter Bridge for the awards ceremony, a riverside barbecue, and an evening of music by Hollis Taylor, 1982 Oregon Champion Bluegrass Band and Fiddler. A perception kayak and other river equipment is scheduled to be given away in a benefit raffle. The music is sponsored by River Trails of Troutdale, Oregon.

Sunday will be the running of the Fourth Annual Inflatable Whitewater Slalom, the original and largest event of its kind in the United States. Presented by the Northwest Rafters Association, over 180 boaters from all over the west coast will test their skills thru a ten gate slalom course and in the Class IV Rapids of this challenging race. The race starts


at Fish Creek Campground and finishes at Big Eddy Recreational Area. Best viewing is at Carter Bridge, location of the slalom gates.

The 1986 competition will offer ten race divisions. In addition to heats for standard rafts 12'- 14' and 14' and over, there will be divisions for women, cata-rafts and self-bailers, paddle teams, inflatable kayaks, a downriver hard-shell kayak run, a new "Masters" division for boaters over 50, an invitational featuring some of the top boaters in the west in a specially designed Class IV+ course, and a "Trick" boat category where anything goes except motors. Slalom course preview begins at 7:00 AM and the first division starts at 9:00 AM.

Pre-registration for both the rodeo and the slalom is encouraged as entry is limited and check-in and start times are pre-assigned.

Other attractions during the weekend include river equipment displays, unique "Test Drives" of the latest in whitewater boats, information booths, and raft tips through the slalom course, provided by the Great Whitewater Experience, a Portland outfitter. Reservations for raft trips and for test drives can be made thru the festival committee. Food stands will offer meals and light snacks. No alcoholic beverages, however, will be available for sale at the festival.

The North West Rafters Association, Festival Host, has announced the appointment of Russ Snively as Festival Chairman. Mr. Snively, formerly owner of Oregon River Rats, is well known in northwest boating circles as the originator of the inflatable whitewater slalom competition.

Festival organizers report receiving invaluable assistance and generous support from Vita Stat Northwest, River Trails, Inc.,  Co-op, The Inflatable Boat Center, and Steve Sorseth of the U.S. Forest Service in Estacada, Oregon. Volunteers, including members of the NWRA and the OKCC will produce the festival.

Proceeds from the festival will be used to maintain the Whitewater Information Center at Carter Bridge, to erect safety related road signs along the Clackamas



River, and to assist the NWRA and the OKCC in their efforts at preserving northwest rivers.

For schedule and registration, contact Russ Snively, evenings or weekends at (503) 223-5954, or Upper Clackamas Whitewater Festival, P.O. Box 19008, Portland, OR 97219. Promotional contact: Dale Groetsema, P.O. Box 19008, Portland, OR 97219, (503) 692-5116, eves.

might happen to chance upon a troll or an elf. But the quiet jumble of boulders from a closer perspective is a mysterious maze of small and complex rapids and narrow chutes.

I never got a chance to look much beyond this puzzle of rocks that was my daily life while training for the 14th Wildwater World Championships, held in June 1985, on the Loisach River, near the Bavarian resort area of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, West Germany. While the river remained somewhat of a mystery, I did discover some of its secrets and was rewarded with its challenge.

Paddling a wildwater boat on the Loisach is much like playing a kayak video game. You don't have to be going very fast to feel you're in the middle of Mother Nature's version of Star Wars. A few head-on encounters with rocks

## Hayman At The Worlds

Imagine a river. Small and unassuming, bordered by a lush soft mossy forest where green spills down to the river's edge. It's an almost magical river, the kind of place where, if you look closely into its rocky nooks and crannies, you

# CHALLENGE THE BEST...

at the

# 4th Annual UPPER CLACKAMAS WHITEWATER FESTIVAL



**May 3 & 4, 1986**

Presented by NORTH WEST RAFTERS ASSOCIATION and OREGON KAYAK & CANOE CLUB.

- FREESTYLE KAYAK COMPETITION (Bob's Hole Rodeo).
- INFLATABLE WHITEWATER SLALOM (the ORIGINAL and still the BEST).  
Saturday night riverside cookout and hoedown featuring HOLLIS TAYLOR, 1982 Oregon Bluegrass Fiddler.  
Equipment displays, food stands and river information booths.
- PRIZES, TROPHIES, EQUIPMENT RAFFLES.
- Slalom course float trips.

Festival held at Carter Bridge on the Clackamas River,  
45 miles east of Portland, on Highway 224.

For schedule and registration write or call: Russ Snively c/o NWRA  
P.O. Box 19008 Portland, Oregon 97219 (503) 223-5954

Sponsors: Vita-Stat, Northwest - Portland • River Trails - Troutdale • Inflatable Boat Center - Portland • Great Whitewater Experience - Portland • REI - Portland • Santiam Whitewater Outfitters - Salem

This event is made possible by a Special Use Permit from the U.S. Forest Service, Mt. Hood National Forest and the Estacada Ranger District.

(called "pitoning") not only jars the bones and boat, but will send the most confident paddler back to the shore, where, with the unseen elves and gnomes they could watch, study and analyze the world's best as they picked their way through the maze.

The US Team had a system to decipher this chaos seen from bow-level. Affectionately called the alphabet it assigns each rapid, rock garden, drop or other feature a letter or an appropriate name. And later, over wienersnitzel and kartoffelen dinners, the intricacies of right, left or middle passage at Devils Teeth, Quasar, Icebergs or the Four Hugs were debated at length.

Achtung! Beware at Der Dom — a keyhole framed by massive boulders followed immediately by a 90-degree left turn. Try that in a boat designed to go straight ahead. Just don't try it too fast. And then try it without using a back-stroke or other motion to impede your forward progress to the finish line. Then Kiss Your A. Goodbye over a three-foot ledge slightly narrower than your boat. Pick up some speed and whiz straight through Lift Off, but watch the bow of your boat as it dances dangerously close to the rocks that define the route. After a mere six minutes, you can momentarily loosen your grip on the joy-stick. Whew!

Practice we did, reaching a point on the learning curve where only an unachievable number of runs down the river would help us further discover intricacies that are learned with speed. I, for one, had prepared as best I could in the limited time available. Time to kick back, relax, and rest before the competition began.

Opening ceremonies aren't exactly restful, but who can resist? Everyone loves a parade. And what's more, it's fun to be in a parade. Clad in our rather loud team uniform of bright red Patagonia Hawaiian shirts, featuring scenes from aquarian life, we were certainly noticeable, in sharp contrast to the traditional Adidas stripes and the classic Bavarian dress of the blonde braided young girl who led our team. Spectators could see us coming a mile off.

The overtures were a treat, complete

with schunplatte and maypole dancing, cheering fans and mustachioed, red-cheeked Bavarian brass players. Serene and eerie tones of the 15-foot Alpenhorn drifting from the high reaches of the stadium silenced the noisy camaraderie of the athletes. We endured too many speeches in too many languages. Our own mini-Olympics of canoeing, 20 countries strong, was officially declared open.

We knew that our European counterparts would easily one-up our team, but each of us hoped for our best performance ever. The wildwater event is very popular in Europe, and the virtuosos there are the products of years of amassed knowledge of training and technique, extensive coaching and development programs and hundreds of competitions. And the furthest thing from these fine athletes' minds is who is going to foot the bill.

Moreover, these competitors had played the Loisach video game at least one hundred times, in 1985 alone. For K-1 World Champion, Italian Marco Previde-Massara, avoiding Major Piton hadn't been an issue for years. He probably spent the week before the Worlds reading a good book and doing short, intense speed workouts on the beautiful Eibensee that lies in the shadow of the Zugspitze. I like to imagine German Karen Wahl, who bested the river and the women's field by 20 seconds, and Gilles Zok, the Frenchman who won his third world title in the C-1 event, off having a beer.

As for my race, I had hoped to improve on my 16th place finish at the 1983 Worlds, held on the powerful and continuous big water rapids on the Passer River near Merano, Italy. I felt the Loisach puzzle better complemented my skill and size. In the end, I was disappointed. I came in 20th.

I'd had no major difficulties in my run, but in comparison with my efforts in practice, my race pace was slow. While my knowledge of the river was intimate, I lacked the deeper understanding needed to be able to move at speed, with confidence that I was 'on line', without hesitation and assured of every stroke and lean of the boat. It is somewhat

disheartening to realize that I train faster than I compete.

But one Yankee surprised the content Europeans. Jon Fishburn earned the first World Championship medal, a bronze, for an American in any discipline of man's kayaking, edging out many top competitors.

How did the Montanan do it. Well, it is possible to train very hard during snow-bound winters in a swimming pool. It helps to wear blinders, and attack the goal just as you would pre-med classes in organic chemistry or molecular biology. Study and work hard. The Europeans had not taken notice of the calculated progress Fishburn had made in just a few short years. Fourteenth, eighth, seventh....

On the Loisach, Fishburn had an extra set of eyes. On the banks, watching, waiting, watching, was his father, an accomplished paddler himself. Noting and comparing the inches-wide lines of the German, the Austrian, the Frenchman and the Italian through Tits Two and Three, and Wisland, 'Dadburn', he understood that time is medals, and is measured in tenths of seconds—from A to Z. Glancing off one rock taking one wave in the chest would have cost Fishburn his bronze, for only 0.75 seconds separated him from a fourth place finish. Father and son were a team that shared that medal.

At the closing ceremonies, an exuberant US Team cheered Fishburn's success, as loud and as proud as the shirts on our backs. A plot was hatched amongst us and the unsuspecting Fishburn was suddenly hoisted on our collective shoulders and rushed to the awards platform. We couldn't help wanting to do our part, too.

Admiring the confusion of hundreds of celebratory athletes, coaches, managers, officials and organizers, along with beer-wielding fans, the much-coveted luau shirts were being shed in exchange for the gear of Finland, Australia or Czechoslovakia. The universal language is a smile, a clinking of steins, and a tugging on sleeves, and soon, it was a puzzle to tell who was from what country.

The last thing I remember about that

long night when the 1985 World Championships came to a close was me as a passenger on a bicycle piloted by a young Norwegian and copiloted by a young Yugoslav. Their last names I may never know. Magically, we passed the misty, cobbled Garmisch streets in total control. Honestly, I'd had only one beer. Well, I have to admit it was a very hefty liter, which goes a long way, in more ways than one.

It's impossible to take it all in. In the midst of competition, there is sometimes frustration and disappointment. But, I am forever glad that later, I can step back and take a look, with admiration, at those who reach the top, perhaps to stay there for a brief while. No one leaves these championships defeated, but comes away with not only the challenge and mystery of the river, but also the friendship, fun and spectacle that is also international competition.

*by Elizabeth 'Boo' Hayman*

Courtesy of Canoe Cruiser Association of Washington D.C.

## First Descent Follies On The North Tuolumne

*by Walter Garms  
Paddlers' News Bulletin*

The North Fork of the Tuolumne drains the low Sierra mountains in Central California, between the Tuolumne and the Stanislaus rivers. Most of the snow melt from the high mountains drains into the Stanislaus to the north, and the Tuolumne's other tributaries, Cherry Creek and Clavey River, to the south. This leaves only rain and early spring runoff for the North Fork. Most river runners know the North Fork from hiking up the canyon from the Main Tuolumne during the summer, when the river is only a trickle of warm water feeding some quiet swimming holes. However, it is not unusual to find flows of 600 cubic feet per second or more after an early spring thaw.

From the town of Tuolumne, the North Fork drops over 1400 feet in the last eight miles to the confluence with the

Main Tuolumne, with a peak gradient of 250 feet per mile for two miles. This inspired my curiosity several years ago, but a flight over the river revealed two horrendous waterfalls and an imposing canyon. My interest flagged, and the Tuolumne map slipped to the bottom of the heap. By the spring of 1985 the map finally rose back to the top as the least ridiculous of the few remaining exploratory possibilities, and a second flight revealed that the waterfalls had miraculously disappeared. Either I had imagined them on the first flight (in a highwing plane), or I did not see them the second time (at dusk in a low wing plane). I chose to believe the former.

The only remaining obstacle was to find out whether the run was truly unspoiled, or whether Chuck Stanley and the boys had already used it up. I called Chuck, and although they had considered it often, they had not run the river. I swore him to secrecy and invited him on my trip on Saturday, three days hence.

The news travelled fast. It seems that Chuck called Lars Holbeck, ostensibly for some other reason, but Lars, noticing his hesitation, quickly extracted the information. Lars immediately declared that, coincidentally, he had been planning to run it on Friday. Sure. Lars invited Dieter King. Chuck decided to join Lars, asking Richard Montgomery to join them, and neglected to remember to call me back. I might never have known, but Richard needed a ride, so two hours after my first call I got a call from Richard, asking if I would like to go on a 'secret river' somewhere in the mid Sierra. The trip was on.

Despite our excitement over a fresh run, none of us had any illusions about it being anything other than a portage-athon. 250 feet per mile of pool and drop is not particularly promising. I began to have second thoughts about eight miles of 'walking the dog' (my term for dragging a hollow-dog kayak down the bank of a river), and almost decided to take my 18 pound race boat. After all, the rules of a first descent are that if you transport a kayak from the put-in to the takeout without putting it on a car, you have run the river. In the end optimism

prevailed, and we assembled in the town of Tuolumne on a beautiful April morning and set off in search of the river.

At the put-in at Riversidecampground on the Tuolumne — Cherry Lake road, the river was running near its optimum flow of 600 cfs. It started out with a long series of tight, twisting class four drops over boulders as it dropped into the canyon, with an occasional 'easy five' to spice things up. Good progress was made and our spirits rose. Numerous stone foundations and rusting steam engines, water wheels, and stamp mills bore evidence that this deserted canyon was once swarming with hardy forty-niners. Deeper into the canyon the gradient steepened, and many rapids required careful scouting. Here the rapids were much longer, requiring eight or ten distinct moves to get to the final drop, where it was imperative to be in exactly the right spot.

A pattern developed at the harder rapids, I, at 32 the old fossil of the group, would portage. Lars would agonize for a long time, and finally run the rapid, since he hates to leave anything for the next group. If Lars was successful, Chuck would then be required to re-scout, ammend his decision to portage, and run the rapid. Likewise Dieter would use up another ten minutes. Total elapsed time: 30 minutes, 1 rapid. By four o'clock I figured that we were less than halfway down, and began to fret about having to spend a night on the river. The others ignored my concerns until about 5:30 whereupon we all began to race for the takeout. I, of course, was left at the back of the pack.

The rapids continued to be hard, steep, and long, but surprisingly most of them were runnable, and the portages were short. Many of the drops were now over bedrock ledges instead of boulders. During one portage Richard climbed down a rock ledge and I passed both of our boats to him. He took firm hold of his boat, but managed to drop mine into the river, and it promptly peeled out down a series of Class V rapids. Richard, feeling guilty, lept into his boat in hot pursuit. I, feeling worried about both Richard and my kayak, scrambled frantically down the shore,

signaling to Richard the routes through the rapids. We found that it was the fastest way we had ever seen to transport two boats down a difficult stretch of river, and certainly well within the rules of a first descent.

About two miles from the end of the run is the steepest section, where the river drops 100 feet in a quarter mile. Lars carried easily on the right, but the rest of us, portaging on the left, found ourselves boxed in. Unable to cross to the right, we spent an extra half hour extricating ourselves from the corner pocket.

Half a mile after the steep section we encountered the only real waterfall, about 15 feet high, with no obvious portage route. Lars was in his 'bombs away' mood, so off he went, leaving us with a sick feeling since we would probably have to run it ourselves if he were successful. Fortunately, he hit bottom and surfaced with the front of his kayak bent skyward. Chuck and Dieter bolted for the poison oak patch on the right, and Richard and I found a ten foot 'atomic' put-in off an over-hanging rock on the left.

Just a few rapids later we found ourselves at the confluence of the Tuolumne River, and as darkness fell we had a peaceful paddle down to Ward's Ferry. The run had been much better than any of our expectations; there were no major portages, plenty of exciting paddling, and beautiful scenery. I would certainly call it a Class V run because of the long, intricate rapids where a single imprecise move could result in getting pinned. However, I think of the river as friendly and alluring in character, and with the proper respect it is a delightful run.

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## RIVER ODDITIES

by *Hank Hays*

Lower Columbia Canoe Club

Ocean tides occur almost everywhere and back up most rivers that flow into the sea. They affect the Columbia system all the way to Willamette Falls and the base of the Bonneville Dam, 145 miles from the mouth. There are tidal effects on the grandfather of rivers, Brazil's Amazon, as far as 500 miles upstream.

The "giant economy size" version of a phenomenon seen in just a few parts of

the world occurs on the Amazon. The Pororoca, or "Big Roar" as it translates from Portuguese, is a product of the tides that affects the area around the mouth of the river. Conditions have to be just right for the Big Roar to happen. Unusually high tides when the river is low—plus a setting full moon, according to legends. What these conditions create is a tidal wave, or "bore," that starts traveling rapidly upstream. In deep water the wave may be only a foot high or so, but when the water is less than 25 feet deep—look out. A breaking wave 12 or more feet high wreaks havoc in its path by dragging trees from shore and inundating floodplain. In 1850, a huge Pororoca cut through a 60 mile wide island creating a new channel between the two halves.

Vincente Yanez Pinzon, skipper of the good ship Nina on Columbus' American tour had trouble with the Big Roar during his own cruise in the year 1500. While exploring the mouth of the Amazon, a larger than usual Pororoca picked up his small sailing ship—with all aboard—and carried it westward for a ways. The wave subsided when it reached a deep area and left the boat and sailors unhurt but badly frightened.

Today, charter boat fishermen at the mouth of the Amazon will sometimes use the Big Roar to play a joke on friends. When conditions are right for a Pororoca, they'll anchor their boat in deep water—just upstream of a known shallow area. The huge breaking wave appears and the uninitiated practically has a heart attack as it comes closer and closer. The boatman, who's had his back to the wave the whole time, turns and says, "What...is something wrong?" just as the huge wave turns to a little ripple and goes under the boat!

The same effect but on a smaller scale occurs in England. Tidal bores race upstream on some of the rivers and the local kayakers surf them, competing for distance records. I first read of them 15 years ago before my subscription to a British canoeing magazine ended. Mick Evans, A WKCC boater living near Salem, who I met on a 1981 trip is originally from England. He mentioned that he used to surf the tidal bores before he moved to Oregon. I told him I remembered reading ten years ago in the early 70's. "Yup, that was me!!!" he exclaimed. Hmmm... "Hey Mick! Wanna try for a new ultra-long distance record?"

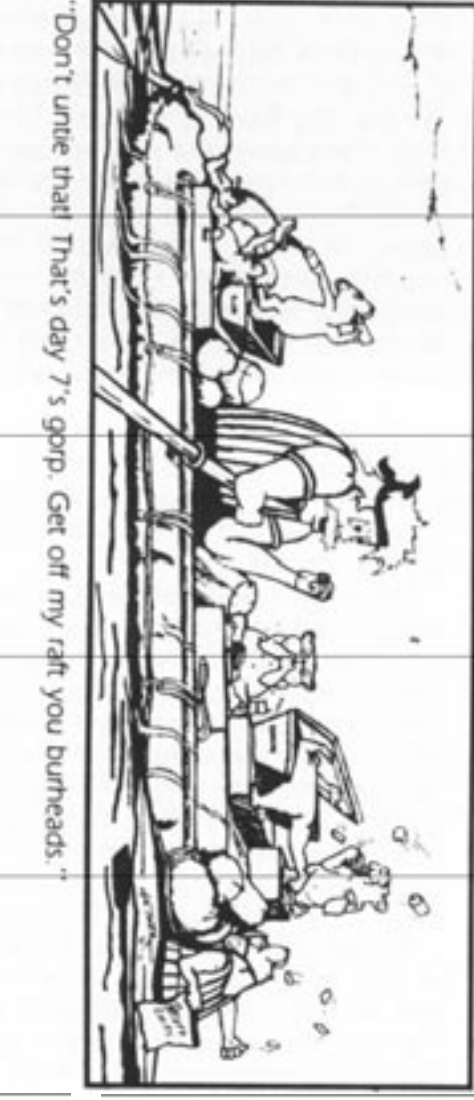
# Attack of the Kayak Gerbils



"Nothing like a peaceful, sunny day on the river..."



"Not again, it's not lunch time yet..."



"Don't unte that! That's day 7's gorp. Get off my raft you burheads!"



"Next river trip, there will be no raft support for those crazy kayakers..."

Courtesy of The Boulder  
**WHITEWATER**

## OUTFITTING YOUR CANOE FOR PERFORMANCE

by Max Wellhouse

Many paddlers that purchase canoes either new or used simply accept the outfitting that the manufacturer (or the previous owner) put in the boat and assume its the way it must be for everybody. Just tain't so! Most boat manufacturers come up with a nice generic set up that will suffice for most recreational boaters. The new Blue Hole Starburst has adjustable seats to compensate for paddlers of different weights. Logic would dictate that the same set up for a 230 pound stern paddler and a 120 pound bow paddler would be different than a pair that weighed 175 pounds each even though the net weight is the same. Sometimes even a 2 or 3 inch shift one way or other makes a marked improvement in the handling of the boat. It seems that the more rocker the hull has, the more sensitive the boat becomes to shifts in weight. Mad River sends a great percentage of their boats with the thwarts not installed for that very reason. Unfortunately canoes don't come in sizes like blue jeans or shoes, so its up to the owner to make the alterations.

### SOLO BOATS

The great debate still continues over which is better; the thwart seat, the saddle, the pedestal, or the "elephant ears" seat currently marketed by Perception. It has been my experience that the Perception saddle is satisfactory for a trip down your favorite stream and by adding a set of Yakima foot braces from a kayak to the lower end of the sides of it, you have adjustable foot braces that really lock you into the boat (enabling you to roll it if needed). The disadvantage of the saddle is it restricts both lateral and fore and aft weight shifts, important whether playing on the waves or running a slalom course. The homemade ethafoam or minicell saddle allows your knees etc. to shift around somewhat, but that depends largely upon where you put the thigh straps in relation to your thighs. I personally prefer the thwart seat and upon observing many of the top boaters in the

country, they seem to use it as well. An alternative to the thwart (more like a compromise) would be the pedestal seat now being sold by the Dagger Paddle Co.). (at \$250.00) This seat is very similar to the design used in Perceptions Gyramax C-1, only enlarged slightly to fit under canoe thwarts. They certainly allow for the shifting of the lower torso. I'll experiment with them at least for the tandem positions this year. The thwart seat probably will inhibit your attempts to roll the canoe, but in a slalom race rolling up a boat full of water won't serve your finishing score any tremendous advantage!

Another variable as far as the seat goes is how high do you want it. Three factors come into play here: stability; comfort; and safety. The higher you sit in the seat, the more leverage you'll have over the boat; i.e. more power in your strokes. The down side of that is that the boat gets more unstable at the same time. The lower you sit in the boat, not only does the power diminish, but so does comfort, and if you use thwarts the chance of entrapment increases the lower you go. The key here is to EXPERIMENT!!! With my kevlar ME, I started out with a 12" thwart height and could hardly keep the boat upright. I dropped it down to 9" and could paddle it easily at the cost of losing a second or two in a 50 yard sprint. It also made my 59" paddle seem a little too long for optimum leverage. This year I'll try a 10" to 10 1/2" seat and hope to compromise. The paddle feels perfect at this level. You'd be amazed at what a little of an inch will do to the way the boat feels. If you use a thwart, I've found that a 15 to 25 degree angle on the works pretty well, again depending on the height.

The other consideration for a solo boat is where to locate the saddle in relation to the middle of the boat. Again the key is experimentation. Ideally you'll want the seat somewhere between 6 to 10 inches behind the center. But isn't the solo thwart on the Blue Hole OCA 18" or 20" behind the center? Sho is!!! It has been my experience that even a Blue Hole can benefit from moving the seat forward.

Look at it this way, if you're going to sit that far back in the boat, your reverse sweep stroke will be awesome and your forward sweep will be pitiful. By moving to the center of the boat, doesn't it make sense to have equal power for both maneuvers? All the really good open boaters in the country are right behind the center of their canoe. Sure this means moving the center thwart forward and sure this makes it harder to balance the boat while you carry it over your head, but do you spend more time paddling the boat or carrying it? By having the weight toward the center, the boat now catches eddies better as there is more weight on the bow for the upstream water to grab, especially if you lean forward slightly as you cross the eddy line. Conversely, if the standing waves are coming at you, you can lean back slightly to take more weight off the bow and avoid as much water rolling over the gunwales as would've come in otherwise. I've got some wedge shaped ethafoam in my garage that very neatly glues or duct tapes under the outwale of the gunnel that really sheds the water. A great idea if your headed for a big water run.

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### REVIEW OF 1985 WHITewater HIGHLIGHTS VIDEO FROM GRAVITY SPORTS FILMS

In this whitewater video, Rocky Rossi, the producer of numerous previous videos, has emphasized what he does best and minimized what he does worst. He has given us plenty of action and almost no narration. This results in a fast paced montage of whitewater adventure throughout the western U.S.

The video consists of 14 short and independent segments of various aspects of whitewater activity. These range from rafting the Forks of the Kearn in California and the Grand Canyon, to stormy sea kayaking. However the majority of the segments are of river kayaking, including some excellent whitewater rodeo footage.

There are three non-boating segments included, one on telemark ski

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## Book Reviews

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racing, another of a steep bicycle race, and a Columbia Gorge wind surfing sequence. They do not fit in too well with the other segments but with the exception of the rather dull and poorly filmed bicycle race they are worth viewing.

The kayaking segments are quite good. They convey a sense of action that makes a boater sitting in front of a television ready to grab a kayak and head for moving water. All segments are accompanied by music which ranges from some eerily effective classical to good ole rock n' roll. In one well done segment of both kayakers and surfers vying for the best ride on a wave on the Snake River in Wyoming, the Beach Boys provide the right tune for the scene. The segments of kayaking the Virgin River in Zion National Park and a trip on Arizona's Salt river were the weakest parts of the video and could have been left out.

Although there is still more jumpiness and abruptness in the editing, that is Rossi's most professional video to date. He has spared us the storytelling narration and instead produced a very enjoyable hour of whitewater and music.

*by Larry Dunn*

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### RIVER RUNNERS' GUIDE TO TO UTAH AND ADJACENT AREAS

*by Gary C. Nichols*

The second edition of Gary Nichols's popular and informative *River Runners' Guide to Utah and Adjacent Areas* focuses on ninety river trips and contains new information on waterways in the region since the heavy flooding in 1983-84. This edition has been expanded, too, to include some runs on rivers outside of Utah's boundaries that would be easily accessible to Utah river runners.

Gary Nichols's handy guide will assist beginning and experienced white water enthusiasts in determining the best and safest trips to take and will help in planning and preparing for a variety of river running experiences. The author points out major danger areas, river running

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obstacles, and applies general difficulty ratings to rapids. Information is included on river access, where gauges are located, what topographical maps to use, other good books on river running, and additional sources of information, including river running organizations.

An emphasis on safety is an important aspect of the volume, and the author has relied on his considerable experience as an instructor at the University of Utah's Division of Continuing Education where he has taught canoeing and kayaking for six years. Mr. Nichols has been running rivers in the West for over fifteen years. The River Runners' Guide to Utah and Adjacent Areas is a must for all those who run or want to run Utah's rivers.

130 pages, illustrations, photographs, maps ISBN 0-87480-254-7

**\$14.95 April A Bonneville Book**

## "SOGGY SNEAKERS" IS BACK!!!

The success of "**Soggy Sneakers**" over the past five years has convinced the Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club that it is time to revise the "scriptures" of Oregon paddlers. Once again, the call went to the river running community to "get those write-ups in". And we got them!

**Soggy Sneakers** Second Edition will add 80 new run descriptions and a chapter on surf kayaking. It will be approximately 220 pages with photographs throughout and detailed drainage basin maps. The cover, depicted on the flip side, will be color.

**Soggy Sneakers** will retail for \$9.00, wholesale at a 40% discount (\$5.40/10 copy minimum order). To place your order send a P.O. to: WKCC — Soggy Sneakers, P.O. Box 1062, Corvallis, OR 97339

## KNOXVILLE FESTIVAL FINALE WEEKEND Scheduled for June 20-22

The Southeast Marathon Championships, America's Outdoor Expo, a Country Cookout and free concert promise to make Knoxville's Canoe and Kayak

Festival Finale Weekend, June 20-22, one of the most exciting events in the history of canoesport.

The Outdoor Expo, June 20-22, will feature up to 300 exhibits of muscle-powered outdoor recreation equipment along with seminars, films, and outdoor-wear fashion shows in the Knoxville Convention and Exhibition Center. Activities around an indoor canoe and kayak rolling pond are also being planned.

The Southeast Marathon Canoe Championships will start and finish in downtown Knoxville just three blocks from the Exhibition Center on June 21st. U.S.C.A., I.C.F., and pleasure classes are included in this race, which is appropriate for paddlers of all skill levels. A sea kayak class is planned as part of the 15-mile race. After the race, paddlers and spectators will enjoy a concert and cookout at the 1982 World's Fair Site.

For entry forms and more information about the Finale Weekend, contact the Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival, 530 South Gay Street, Suite 222, Knoxville, Tennessee 37902.

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# NEW PRODUCTS



AWA's Risa Shimoda

## MIRAGE SERIES III REDEFINES THE CLASSIC

(Liberty, South Carolina) Perception, Inc. introduces the Mirage Series III — a newly refined version of the classic whitewater kayak.

Revolutionary in concept, the Mirage was the first Gyraflow-molded kayak to incorporate high rocker and defined rails for sizzling performance. Mirage Series III updates that original design to reflect the latest trends in whitewater design.

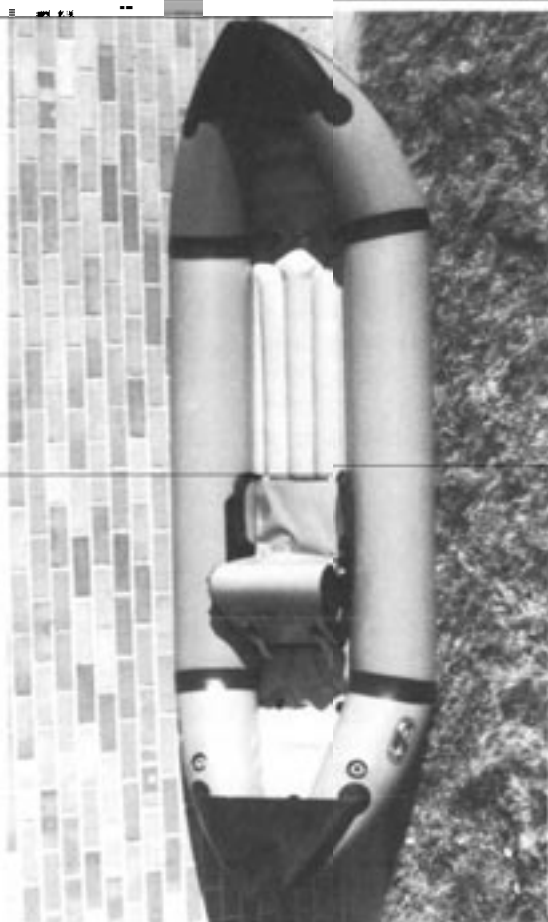
The design changes are subtle visually, but you'll discover the difference the first time you slip into a Mirage Series III. The refinement begins with a bigger cockpit, to give you greater freedom of movement, better access to the interior, and easier entry and exit.

Perception has also developed a radical new thigh hook for the Series III that allows better control, yet doesn't obstruct entry and exit. The overall hull length of the Mirage has been shortened by two inches, gently rounding the ends. And finally, the foot area is larger, to give feet more room to breathe.

The Mirage hull shape remains unchanged as a tribute to the original design. High rocker and defined rails still make this Perception a quicksilver performer in the river. Just like always!

### FEATURES

- rails that "carve" the water when the boat leans into a turn
- shallow-arch hull profile that allows the boat to lean without the abrupt point of instability often felt in flat-bottomed boats
- moderate to high rocker for quick turns maneuverability
- unique interior outfitting includes minicell foam walls and sculpted, structurally mounted seat
- weight, 36 pounds; volume, 74 gallons; length, 13'; width, 24"
- suggested retail price, \$639.95, plus shipping



## CHALLENGER

We've been excited about this new self-bailing inflatable kayak ever since we saw the prototypes on the Rogue River last year. It is an innovative PVC model with just the right 9'6" x 3'2" dimensions, 12" tubes and a smooth floor that allows it to move almost like a hard-shell kayak in whitewater. The key to the smooth floor design is a flat semi-rigid ethafoam floor that fits snugly inside the boat when it is inflated and gives it enough stiffness so that you can actually put each end of the boat on a chair and stand in it with the middle unsupported (don't try this if you weigh over 200 lbs.) An optional 4" inflatable I-beam floor is available if you need a boat that will pack smaller than the foam floor will allow. The inflatable floor is a separate structure that fits inside the Challenger and is held in place by air pressure when both it and the main tubes are inflated. Since there is no change in the design or construction of the kayak for either floor option, the same smooth exterior floor is present in each model. Four 2" reinforced holes in the fixed exterior floor that match up with similar size holes in the inflatable and foam floors will self-bail the Challenger from brim-full in 10-15 seconds. The material is 22-oz. reinforced PVC with butted and double-taped seams. One-inch low-profile one-way valves are standard equipment, as is a unique semi-rigid foam seat that has an adjustable backrest and straps in position anywhere you want it. Foam floor is 4" in the center, 2" in the bow and stern sections, and breaks down into 4 pieces for transporting. Colors are blue with black semi-wrapped floors.

Contact Cascade Outfitters at 1-800-223-RAFT.

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## IMPROVING ON A PROVEN DESIGN

Lee Moyer, kayak designer and owner of Pacific Water Sports has recently introduced the new Sea Otter Series 500. A design refinement of the popular Sea Otter, the Sea Otter Series 500 (500

centimeters long) is available in three depths: the "LP" (Low Profile), low volume and low windage for the smaller person and light loads; the "GP" (General Purpose), for most people going on week-end or week-long trips; and "EXP" (Expedition), for the larger person who carries larger quantities of gear.

New features include an arched deck for more foot room and less windage, recessed coaming for better fit at the knees, recessed back deck for ease in bracing and rolling, recessed stern deck hatch for excellent protection from direct wave impingement, and a forward deck accessory platform for a deck mounted compass or other equipment.

### Additional statistics:

Length: 16' 4"

Beam: 25%"

Cockpit size: 17" x 31"

### Depth at Center:

Series 500 "LP" (Low Profile): 11½"

Series 500 "GP" (Gen. Pur.): 12¼"

Series 500 "EXP" (Expedition): 13"

Length at waterline: 16'

Beam at waterline: 23%"

Stern hatch size: 14" x 19"



## Easy Rider Drip Rings—

New this year, a set of urethane convex drip rings which can be split and then tightened anywhere on the paddle shaft with a brass (non-rusting) screw. So simple, any Swiss pocket knife is all that is needed to make an adjustment on location. (No need for cutting or taping.) These drip rings are much wider than previous models and will prevent larger amounts of water from pouring down the arms, yet they are streamlined and non-wind grabbing. One of the best values for all paddlers whether for sea-cruising or whitewater. One size fits all. Available exclusively from EASY RIDER CANOE AND KAYAK COMPANY, P.O. Box 88108, Seattle, Washington 98188 206-228-3633; Retail Price: 3.50 per pair.



### STOHLQUIST DRY SUIT

Experienced western whitewater paddlers and board sailors nationwide are enjoying the new dry warmth sensation and freedom of movement that the STOHLQUIST Dry Suit provides. Excellent for all boating conditions, the drysuit eliminates that "boating soggy" feeling. The natural feel and superior seal of new latex gaskets is outstanding and comfortable.

We whitewater paddlers and board sailors feel, however that there are two serious drawbacks to virtually all suits previously available:

- 1.) They have been very pricey.
- 2.) Solo entry and exit is impossible.

The new STOHLQUIST design DRY SUIT has eliminated these hassels. New concepts in design and advanced construction techniques bring easy front entry, with easy closure and low cost. This new dry suit is built specifically for whitewater sports like rafting, canoeing, kayaking and board sailing. Rugged neutron-seal coated oxford body fabric provides long lasting durability as it seals water out. Front entry is unique and excellent. Features newly engineered hinged front fold-lock entry seal. Neck, wrist and ankles are fitted with latex seals. Seams are heat seal tape welded for "the totally dry" experience. Inside cache pocket for storage of key or cash. Each suit comes complete with customizing, care instruction packet.

**Color:** Royal Blue

**Sizes:** XS • S • M • ML • L • XL



### STOHLQUIST SEMI-DRY SUIT

Excellent new full coverage paddling suit incorporates many of the same features and similar dryness qualities of a full drysuit, at a fraction of the price. The SEMI-DRY features an advanced closure system and neoprene gaskets to seal water out. All seams are double stitched and heat seal tape welded to eliminate water entry. Body fabric is a supple yet rugged 200 denier Oxford with a special heavy waterproof coating for long lasting durability and good looks. Fitted with isoconic, cylindrically shaped gasket style neoprene cuffs, velcro-cinch ankle closures, and "sealing" neoprene collar.

Front entry features newly engineered rolover placket to provide ease of entry and exit and a leak proof seal. The SEMI-DRY is cut roomy and is made to be worn over poly-pro, Sports Pile, or even a wetsuit for an efficient "layering system." Other features include inset pocket, elasticized waist and ball cut raglan style shoulders for freedom of movement. Gathered elasticized waist and built in stash pocket for key or money. A superior garment for many kinds of watersports activities.

**Colors:** Spanish Yellow/Black, Royal Blue.

**Sizes:** XS • S • M • ML • L • XL

# A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

## *An Interview with Dave Weber and Pat Mueller*

by Marge Cline  
Chicago Whitewater Association

CWA members have recently been entertained by fantabulous tales of rivers in Nepal recounted by Pat Mueller and Dave Weber at our general meetings and social events. This "Trip of a Lifetime" has been shared with their many arm chair paddling friends by a slideshow and movies they have prepared. Both Pat and Dave were hesitant to write a trip report, afraid that repeated showings of their adventures were redundant. However, the ensuing report, captured on tape during a three hour interview will, I'm sure entertain:

### **Why did you decide to go on this trip?**

Because it sounded exciting! We knew about some of the rivers after reading about them in the AWA Journal and other publications, and we had gotten a recommendation from Payson Kennedy, founder of Nantahala Outdoor Center. After investigating several different guide services and reading the literature they provided we chose what we thought were some exciting rivers.

### **Did you set up your own itinerary?**

We chose the rivers from the materials they gave us to read. We did add one river, the Marsyandi, which they had never run.

### **Who went on this trip?**

Pat and Dave paddled kayaks and Chris Malloy rode the raft. Rob Rosen and Lillian Thomas were initially on it, but due to last minute business considerations, had to cancel out. Dan Dixon, also from the Chicago area was along as part of the staff.

### **Is this a trip the average paddler can afford to make?**

We actually had been working on the plans for over a year and saving for it just as long.

### **What was involved in getting there?**

NOC provided a list of recommended general equipment. We brought all our own paddling gear except boats; NOC supplied these. They also supplied all the food and made arrangements for the shuttles and local porters necessary for some of the rivers. We contacted the

travel office of Northwest Hospital to get their recommendations for necessary inoculations. We also contacted the Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, Georgia. It was predetermined that Pat would have lots of contact with monkeys and hence should take the rabies series of shots. As it turned out, we were all overrun by monkeys! Our shot program was started a good two months before we left, and basically we went down there every other week. We had inoculations for cholera, a series of three for Japanese encephalitis, typhoid, meningitis, polio, and hepatitis. The side effects of the prescription to prevent malaria were so bad, that Dave opted not to take the pills and would serve as the control to see if anyone came down with malaria. He survived!

### **How did you actually get there?**

NOC set up the travel arrangements which worked reasonably well. We went from Chicago to Dallas, then on to Seattle, Tokyo, and Bangkok. There was some question if it was really necessary to go to Dallas, but we think that NOC was so used to traveling out of Atlanta, they just assumed the rest of the world began in Dallas. The actual added cost was minimal, but by the time we found out the actual itinerary, it was too late to make a change. Dan went the other way around the world, starting out in New York, then flying to London, Moscow, and New Dehli. He finished up the journey with a two week bus ride from New Delhi to Kathmandu. Dan also brought his own boat along. After much deliberation over which of his several River Runners he wanted to take—as he knew he was going to have to leave it there—he removed all the bracing from the inside of the boat and drove a car over the kayak. Then he folded it and tied it up, shipping it as a piece of baggage. Upon arrival in Nepal, the unfolded kayak resembled a wrinkled alligator, but didn't look much the worse for wear.

### **What were your first impressions of Kathmandu?**

Just tons of people! After getting through customs, we immediately hired two taxis to carry all our gear to the hotel. Between the three of us, we actually had only seven pieces of luggage, plus our carryon bags. Then we got into the traffic pattern of Nepal which is total chaos. Everyone has the right of way. There were a few streets that looked like modern day paved thoroughfares, but the rest were left over from the old city and shared by pedestrians, pedal taxis, dogs, and sacred cows. Our hotel cost 870: a day, and for that you got a room with two beds, a table, a couple of bare lightbulbs and an outlying shower building with a limited supply of hot water. None of the water was considered potable. One time while Dave was brushing his teeth with his supply of bottled water, he looked up and there was a lizard crawling across his reflection in the mirror.

### **What was the weather like?**

Nepal is about the same latitude as Florida, so usually during the morning and evenings we had to wear long sleeved shirts and trousers, but during the day, we could get away with shorts and t-shirts.

### **How long did you spend at the Hotel before heading for the rivers?**

We spent three days there initially. The first was just to get acclimated. The second and third day were spent changing our gear from suitcases to river bags and outfitting the boats to our bodies. The better part of one of these days was spent at the local market shopping for food for the river trip. A mini bus had been rented for our group—the three of us; the two official guides from NOC, Arlene Burns and Dave Allardice; and three unofficial guides—NOC employees who had come over there on their own just to go along on the trip—Dan Dixon, Nick Williams, and Bert Dye. Payson Kennedy was also along on the trip. Arlene had asked us if we minded if some other people came along, and when we found out that two of those others were Whit Deschner and Carol Haslett, we were delighted, as Pat knew them from an earlier trip to New Zealand.

### **Once loaded with all these people and gear, where did you go?**

We had about a four hour drive through mountainous roads to get to the putin for our first river, the Sun Kosi. (One does not say the Sun Kosi River, for the Kosi is Nepalese for river.) At one time or another on this drive, everyone suffered from motion sickness, but all the Dramamine was packed in the river bags, and inaccessible. Working our way northwest from Kathmandu, we were traveling on one of the few roads in Nepal. You have to realize, that in 1965, there were only two roads in all of Nepal, and they are just now developing a road system. That's why there's so much trekking there; there are no roads.

### **What was your first impression upon seeing the river at the putin?**

Looking down at the river from the road, it was just a beautiful blue. This was glacial melt that literally shimmered in the reflected sun. When we got a little closer, we realized that the shimmering effect was partially caused by lots of little flakes of mica in the water. It was quite beautiful, but after ten days of that stuff in your hair, and in your food, and in your sleeping bag, it got to be a real nuisance.

### **What was the Sun Kosi like?**

We had virtually Class II-IV stuff all the way down. The putin was a little bit involved as the kayakers putin about 10 kilometers further upstream than the raft. We covered that 10 kilometers so fast, we ended up passing up the raft which had putin on a small tributary just out of sight of the main river. We discovered this just by chance, when we passed another raft on the river and its passengers made a comment about the raft they had seen. After discovering our raft was behind us, we stopped and waited for them and in about an half an hour they caught up with us. That first day we ran the first few of the 180 miles of the Sun Kosi that we were to cover in the next nine days. We never saw another road for the rest of the distance, although there were bridges across the river for the trekking trails and the locals to use. We only passed one or two villages, but did see quite a few homes along the way, and all the land possible was cultivated in terraced hillsides.

### What were some of the interesting things that happened along the way?

One of the major rapids we reached on the third day was called Meat Grinder. Up to this point, we had played our way down an easy river, but when we got the Meat Grinder, there was an obvious horizon line which merited scouting. Our guides had been down the Sun Kosi the previous year, and also on a scouting run two weeks prior to our run. But the river had been much higher both times, and had once made the same trip in four days. In fact, at some of the rapids, they had all portaged, so we were lucky to be able to run at a little bit lower level. At Meat Grinder, Pat made the comment, "This is probably as difficult a rapids as there is on the entire Colorado River!" "Including Lava?" was Dave's question. "Including Lava!" replied Pat. The river dropped down and formed a huge tongue on river left center, and then flowed into a huge jumble of river-wide exploding waves. Just to the right of the tongue was a huge hole where all the currents converged, a place too obviously to be avoided. We spent about three hours here, most of it scouting. The consensus was to run down the tongue and try to work to the left as much as possible. Dan Dixon was our river probe and he ran it first. Setting up in an eddy above the tongue on river left, he went straight down through it, happily realizing along the way that the river was going to let him work left. Dan made it look easy. Dave chose to run it a little bit differently by starting our right, weaving through some little holes, and then working left. When he hit the narrowest part of the tongue, he was flipped and didn't roll up—he was 50 or 60 feet down into the exploding waves. Arlene's run in a spud boat resulted in her getting tossed around a bit, but she, too, made it O.K. The raft came next, and did fine. Kiwi Dave manned the oars, while others walked around. Dave chose to run it backwards, not to avoid seeing what was coming up, but to maximize the power he could apply to the oars. Even so, the raft buck led when it smashed through the foam at the bottom. Pat, running last, had her adrenalin up quite high by the time her turn came. When she hit the vortex of the tongue, the entire boat was

thrown into the air. That was our introduction to the really big rapids on the Sun Kosi. After that, we paddled down aways, and stopped for lunch where another interesting event occurred.

There was a small village located aways from the Meat Grinder, and many of the villagers had come down the river to watch us. They had even let the school out, and a couple of hundred school kids were there too. One of the local men had been talking a lot to Arlene and indicating that he wanted a ride in a kayak. When we stopped for lunch, he again approached. Asking if he could swim and receiving a "Yes!", Arlene agreed to take him for a short ride across the river. She got into her kayak without a life jacket or sprayskirt and the Nepales perched on the back, also without a life jacket. They didn't get very far before they tipped over, and that was when Arlene discovered the fellow didn't know how to swim. Fortunately, he was smart enough to hang onto the boat. Arlene hung onto the boat and her paddle on one side of the boat and reached across the boat and hung onto her dislodged passenger as well. Watching the goings-on from shore, Dan and Dave hurried into their own boats and tried to reach the pair before they reached the next rapids a short distance downstream—a solid Class III. By the time they got there though, the two had already gone through the rapids, and were rescued in the pool below. The Nepalese was obviously shaken, cold and wet, and over a mile away from where he had started out.

Another big rapids on this river was Black Hole, where Dave provided a few thrills for the troops when he dropped over a large pourover and then got cartwheeled out of the turbulence at the bottom. At Mad Hatter, the river took a turn to the left, with a series of holes to be avoided on the left side. However, the strong current made it very difficult to take the preferred route down the right side. Here Dave again gave the group a thrill by getting window shaded on one of the holes along the way.

One of the days was designated as a rest day, and we chose to visit a family that had come to our camp the night before. The hike up the terraced hillside

to their home, proved to us the Nepalese were much more conditioned to this type of terrain that we were. Arlene's knowledge of Nepali enabled us to visit. We stayed ■ lunchtime and after hiking back down to our camp, were surprised with a return visit from the family. We decided to treat them to a raft ride, and Dave paddled them across the river and back again...with life jackets on. Just as he finished, a good friend of theirs appeared on the opposite bank. We sent Dan across the river to ferry their friend to our side. This fellow immediately sensed what Dan wanted him to do, and put on the lifejacket and lay down on the back of the kayak, hanging on tightly around Dan's waist. We had saved him a considerable walk up the river to the closest bridge or dugout ferryboat. These dugouts were made from hollowed out trees, and strategically stationed at places along the river where there were big eddies on both sides. If anyone wanted to cross the river, the services of the ferry were used. The guys who paddled them were very good, and could take eight to ten people across at once. They were well familiar with peelouts and eddy turns also. We were fortunate to observe one of these boats under construction.

The "Mouse That Rowed" was another funny thing that happened. We were all paddling along, and all of a sudden Bert wanted to get to shore real fast. He jumped out of his boat quickly, looked into the boat, and hollered, "Hey, there's a mouse in my boat!" The critter had evidently crawled in there during the night and went unnoticed ■ he started to crawl up Bert's leg. He was caught and released to find a new home several miles from where he had stowed away.

At the takeout we were met by two Land Rovers we had rented and caught a ride into the town of Dharan Bazaar, which was really nothing more than a shopping center. We had paid a real handsome price for the use of these four wheel drive vehicles, because there was a real shortage of land transportation in this area. Here our group split up. Part of us took a minibus ride to the next town, and then planned to take a plane back to Kathmandu. The others were to take all

the gear on an overnight ride on a minibus back to Kathmandu. Even with all our careful logistics planned, we found out that the best laid plans of mice and men, sometimes go astray. When we split up, Arlene had asked Dave to get her ammobox containing camera equipment and the plane tickets and make sure it got on the minibus. Dave grabbed the ammobox and all got on the bus. The bus was absolutely stuffed with people, but everyone was very friendly. Our group found a hotel and then dinner after arriving in the next town. We were in the middle of eating dinner, when there was a power failure, but dinner proceeded by candlelight and with the addition of a new game: Hide The Cricket. Gobs of these creatures had surfaced and were attracted to the candles on the table. Hide the Cricket consisted of stuffing crickets under bottle caps from the beer bottles. There were not near enough caps. In the midst of this, Kiwi Dave appeared. He was supposed to have been with the other group taking the equipment back. We didn't understand why he was there until he exclaimed, "Here are your plane tickets!" Dave had picked up the wrong ammobox and just by chance the mistake had been discovered by the others. We would have been stranded unless Dave had managed to find us in this town of 30,000 people.

#### **Where were you off to next?**

Another paddler had arrived when we returned to Kathmandu. After Don Weeden offered to take us on a river we hadn't planned to run, we made a quick decision to go for it, and instead of having two or three days to get ready again, we only had one. He had offered to guide us on the upper section of the Marsyangi, and we left the following day after another repacking session and shopping spree. On this trip we knew it would take us a full day to get to the putin. After a four hour drive on a paved road, we would still have another 30 kilometers to go on a side road. There were police checkpoints along the way, where we had to stop, state our intentions, and recognize their authority before being allowed to pass. Also, another minibus had had a break down



and was blocking the road. So, before we could travel through, we had to push it out of the way. It took another four hours just to do that 30 kilometers, so that night we stayed at a small hotel in a local village. They had only two rooms left, one with two beds, and one with six. We took the one with six beds and put nine people in there. You never heard such a roomful of snorers and sleep-talkers before! The next morning, local porters had been hired to carry the kayaks the next two or three hours to our putin. The porters left about 6 AM, and after we finished breakfast, we followed on the eroded path they had taken. The porters got paid 500; for their labors, as the going rate for carrying a pack for a trekker all day was \$2.00. These were kayaks, but they only carried them for a couple of hours. Tourists were not even allowed into Nepal until 1955, but now the tourist business is this country's second largest industry after agriculture, and forms a major part of their economy.

The putin on the Upper Marsyangi was located just below a very narrow and beautiful grotto section of the river. It looked like a very busy and technical river, quite ready for the 13 people now in our party. Once again the raft did not putin with the kayakers, but waited for us down near the village we had just hiked from. We playfully eddy hopped our way down to a point where the river was joined by a major tributary and nearly doubled in size. Here we stopped to scout because the river took a significant drop and picked up in velocity.

Starting down through this area, the lead boats were having a grand time, and didn't realize the carnage that was going on behind them, until they started wondering where everybody was. Seems Nick (A.K.A. Nick, the Sneak) had eddied out above a big hole, and the others, by now knowing his paddling style was to sneak, had followed him into the eddy. A five boat eddy will only hold 5 boats, and when Pat, #6 tried to get in, there was no room at the inn. She wound up going into the same hole that Nick was trying to avoid, and after four attempts finally rolled up. Now there was no other way out of their haven, and all

had to exit through the hole...all except Nick the Sneak who declared, "I'm walking!" and Bert who followed him. Even sneaking was not without penalty, however, as when Bert was getting back into his boat, he somehow ended up in the water without his paddle. Carol got trashed in the hole, and had to swim out of it. When her boat was entered on the way down, and observed by those who had already made it through, concern mounted. They soon realized that it was a bodiless boat, however, and rescued the boat and its former occupant. We named that hole...Everybody's Hole. It took a little while to regroup, but we soon had everybody back together again and paddled on into a very pretty gorge. Pretty soon we exited this narrow section, and there was the raft and whole crowd of people waiting for us.

There were very few named rapids on this river because they all seemed to blend together and were so continuous. We spent four and a half days on the Marsyangi River and ran about 35 miles in that time. The last half of the last day was about five miles of one significant rapids after another. This river drained the Annapurna mountains and those magnificent peaks were in the background much of the time.

After the Marsyangi, the group split up again. Four boaters went back to Kathmandu, while the remainder went to do the Seti. Nick and Bert were the only ones who had ever seen this river before and were to be our guides. This proved to be a very interesting run also, and we discovered a new type of rapids none of us had ever experienced before. The river started out quite small, but more than once took an absolute right turn. The water would smash into a rock wall and then would turn off and go right or left. A T-bone effect was created at these places, with the river dashing off to one side or the other, but creating a whirlpool on the opposite side. These T bone configurations made great play spots. You could run down the main current, ride up the pillow formed at the intersection, then side off either right or left into the whirlpool and come back and do it all over again. We ran about 30 miles of the Seti in three days.

The first morning started out kind of

quiet, but a little ways down we came to a set of cascades where the river dropped into a narrow gorge. There were four rapids here, with very short pools between each. We named these rapids ourselves because to our knowledge we were only the third group to every run this river: Saniflush, LubeTube, Elliot's Hole, and Fat Man's Dilema.

**Explain the significance of those names, please.**

Well, Saniflush looked like the vortex in a toilet bowl! The river narrowed to something like 15 feet wide and dropped maybe 20 feet into a sheer rock-walled canyon. There were huge reaction waves bounding off both walls. Pat christened the next one Lube Tube, but never explained why. Elliot's Hole was named after a previous paddler who had declared at the top, "There's nothing to it!" and then got trashed in his namesake halfway down. At Fat Man's Dilemma, the river, which certainly had been wild enough not to cause concern that a boat could get through, was split in two by a building-sized rock and each channel seemed narrower than the raft.

**Now that we have some background, tell us what happened here.**

We had been playing at a T-bone rapids a short distance upstream from this area, having a wonderful time sitting on the frothy platform formed in the middle of the rapids, sliding off and doing it again. We noticed a large crowd of people gathering downstream and couldn't figure out why they weren't coming to watch us. By this time we were all seasoned hams, and did our best to entertain. What could be more interesting than watching us play at the T-bone? At that point, they knew Saniflush was just around the next bend, but we didn't. Our two guides, who had run the river just a couple of weeks before had seen the area as just a huge roller coaster ride as the river had been much higher at that time. With the lower levels, a whole different rapids lay before us. This was obviously the most difficult rapids we had encountered thus far.

Pat decided to sit this one out, especially since Dan was eager to run it

twice, once in his boat and again—for fun—in hers. Contending with the swarms of children who wanted to try on her helmet, blow her whistle, and look through her camera was enough of a challenge. They were much more interested in her possessions than the drama that was to unfold on the river before them.

After safety ropes were set up, Dan went first, running straight down the throat, but completely disappearing from view in the curler at the neck of the throat. After popping back up, he eddied out for a bit, then continued on down through all the waves bouncing off the walls. He made it look easy, as Dan is wont to do. Dave again tried things a little differently, and wanted to ride the top of the sidecurler down. The ride on the curler was a delicate balancing act, but he, too, made it through—he hit a very turbulent part that knocked him over and just as quickly righted him again. Arlene braced so hard in the aeriated water, she tipped in the foam and got flushed the rest of the way through upside down. She'd been down for so long, her head came up first just for air, and the resulting picture earned her the name "Snorkle Lips!" Kiwi Dave ran the whole thing upsidedown, as well as running the raft through later. When the raft hit the pillow at the bottom, the entire raft and Dave disappeared for a few seconds, spun around and came out backwards. After Saniflush, the fun still wasn't over, and the crowd stuck around for Lube Tube. Our lunch stop was just below here, and the river was no longer accessible for our audience, so we ran Elliot's Hole for ourselves. Dave decided to test the namesake hole in this rapids, and suffered the same fate that Elliot had. Getting through Fat Man's was not much of a problem for the kayaks, but only Kiwi Dave's expert maneuvering with Chris' help, got the raft through that narrow slot. The next two days on the Seti were full of magnificent scenery, flocks of birds, and troops of monkeys, much to Pat's delight.

Our last night on the river, we had planned to camp in the Royal Chitwan National Park, which is a game preserve for tigers, leopards, and rhinos. We gave

some thought to which side of the river to pitch camp on, but the decision was reached that all wanted to camp on the animals' side. Late in the afternoon, we found the perfect sandbar, liberally sprinkled with rhino and tiger tracks. There were paths leading off into the jungle that had obviously not been manmade. We called our campground Rhino Beach, and that night, instead of taking up our usual quarter mile of beach, pitched our tents in only 100 feet. We did not have any nocturnal visitors, but Pat and Dave got up before sunrise to watch for any morning company. No one ventured very far into the bushes during our stay either.

On the last morning, we were to look for certain land marks to find our takeout. We had seen lots of trails leading away from the river, but spotted one that had a rope hanging from a tree. Dan and Arleen decided an excursion down the trail was necessary to see if this was the right place, so dashed off wearing only their swimsuits in a mad footrace into the bush. They surprised the guests assembled for breakfast at the camp at the end of the trail, noticed a bar set up, and asked if they could have a beer. Then, just as abruptly as they had appeared from the wild, dashed back into the bush, earning the names Tarzan and Jane.

We did find our takeout after spotting the Land Rover and a makeshift dock made out of rocks. We spent three more days at the Tiger Tops Lodge in the park and had an elephant ride. (Our plans for an elephant shuttle had not materialized, due to a shortage of the elephants). We spent some time in the blinds watching fortigers and were fortunateto catch a glimpse of one for a short time. The tigers are so shy, you must take your shoes off when approaching the blinds, and no cameras are allowed in the blinds. The river were behind us, and the trip of a lifetime was finished...much too soon.

**Do you have any recommendations to anyone considering this time of excursion?**

Get a good guide service. NOC was right for us, they're knowledgeable and their style is, you are a guest and they

will do their best to show you a good time. November seems to be the ideal time to go there. Much earlier, and the area is still in their monsoon season, and later on, it's much colder. Make sure to cook your food really well to kill any giardia. No one seems to escape this; it's in their system, even the fresh vegetables. Take the antibiotics prescribed for this condition, even if you're not suffering at the moment. Treat the water with iodine, always, and you'll have the healthiest thyroid when you come home.

**Is there anything you'd do differently if you went back again?**

Even after showing the slides and movies an uncounted number of times, we never seem to tire of them and relive the trip each time. Next time, we'd stay longer!

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**First Decents:**

The AWA announces First Decents, a state by state, province by province description of the 1st run on rivers and streams, volumes of water, date, etc. See form below. Let's give credit where credit is due. We are accumulating North America historical data.

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PARTY MEMBERS

\_\_\_\_\_  
RIVER OR STREAM

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DATE

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SECTION OF RIVER

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# A Day In The Life Of A Video Madman



Photo of Author — by John Armstrong

by Rocky Rossi

Actually there are three days that stick out in my memory from last summer. I'm Rocky Rossi, and I make my living videotaping whitewater, usually with equipment that I carry around behind the seat of my kayak.

The first one was on Memorial Day at the Lunch Counter rapid on the Snake River (near-Jackson Hole). This is a wave that breaks close enough to a rock ledge that it is possible to jump onto with a surfboard. While there are lots of waves that would be potentially "surfable (with a surfboard)", the limiting factor is that without a paddle it's nearly impossible to counteract the speed of the river as it flows "through" the wave.

I first saw people surfing Lunch Counter in 1978, when I was playing around with my first Super 8 movie camera, and learning how to paddle. I shot some footage, and ever since then I've wanted to see world class surfers "shredding" on this wave. Most of the early Lunch-

counter "surfers" were paddlers who had access to one surfboard, and who learned to surf on the river.

Ron Greene, who was then marketing director for Body Glove, saw some of my old footage and asked about the wave... One thing led to another, and on Memorial Day 1985 "team Body Glove" arrived at the Snake, and The Wyoming Surf Safari happened. What was amazing about that weekend was that on Wednesday the water was too low to surf, and we were worried that the whole thing wouldn't work. Then mother nature helped with two days of warm rain followed by three more days of intense heat. The river came up to the proper level, and I got some classic footage.

The next day that sticks out (this one sticks in my throat as well as my mind!) was two weeks later on the South Fork of the Salmon. I had invited Jim Cassidy to bring out a crew of paddle rafters to make the first (filmed) raft descent of the

overnight stretch of the South Fork. Once again we were caught trying to second guess the weather.

This is a fairly steep stretch of wilderness river that I first ran in 1984 at about 2 feet. We had hoped for four feet, but when we got to the put-in, the gauge was at 5 and a half feet. From all accounts this was the hairiest level for this river, and everybody said we would be crazy to take a raft down at that level. But once Cassady and his crew saw the river, there was no holding them back. Even in the misty drizzle, the South Fork is so beautiful that they had to see the rest of the river. We put on fairly late, so we didn't go far the first day. And early the next morning we got to the first serious drop called Devil's Slide. It didn't look much like it had at 2 feet, and it was hard at the level!!! I just barely caught the "scouting eddy" and as I was struggling out of my kayak in the turbulent eddy. I saw John Armstrong, one of the kayakers, hit the rock at the top of the eddy, tip over and drop over the edge upside down and backward. I thought about chasing after him for one microsecond, and decided that there was no way I was going to drop into that boiling water blind. Fortunately, another of our kayakers had seen a slot from above, and went after John. Who, after several lengthy hole rides, had to abandon ship.

My first instinct on scrambling up the slippery rocks to the scout vantage point was to look for a reasonable portage. All three of us kayakers, (Paul from Seattle, and Jenny Goldberg), agreed that we wanted to walk this one, but there was no way. We were too low to ferry across to the other side, and on this (river left) side there was only a sheer rock wall... How could anybody get a raft through this drop?!? It was nothing but a series of seven or eight holes offset just enough so that missing any one put you in line for at least three others, the largest of which looked about like the ledge drop at Lava Falls and took up about 75% of the middle of the river. After a long look, Cassady and company decided that they had no choice but to run it, and I was wishing I'd never gotten involved... I was sure they would flip, and had

feelings of guilt. But, I had to film it anyway. Everywhere I tried to set up, had some obstacle to a clear view of the whole run, or involved a serious risk of falling off the cliff. So there I was scrambling around trying to get the right perspective of imminent death, and all the time wondering how I was going to make it through that "toilet".

And then came the raft. They were right on their planned line which involved punching one of the smaller holes, hopefully with enough momentum to avoid getting pinned against the wall or surfed into the huge hole in the middle of the river. Cassady was captain and steering from the stern, and as the raft passed under me, I could see that he was no longer aboard. But the raft was still upright, and right in the slot...

An unbelievable run, and some outrageous footage. Now all I have to do is get myself and my video gear through the rapid. Paul went next, and he got stopped for about fifteen seconds in the first hole, and got knocked over by the big lateral coming off the wall. But he rolled up instantly, and all of a sudden it was my turn. I was not happy. I would rather have been anywhere. . . else.

I managed to get my gear stashed in the dry bag behind my seat, but it took a while because my hands were shaking. After almost tipping over in the boiling eddy trying to get my sprayskirt on, I realized that the eddy was so squirrely that the hardest part of the run might be getting out of it with any kind of momentum. The last thing I wanted to do was "float" into the first hole that had to be run. Well, here goes nothing . . . .

I just barely got out of the eddy when a lateral wave started to pull me into the center of the river. I paddled frantically trying to get up some speed, and move to my left, and dropped into the hole with almost no speed, and at about a 45% angle. Immediate back ender! I tried to stay upside down for a few seconds to let the hole flush me, but when I rolled up it was with that sinking feeling of, "Oh no I'm still in the hole". After about twenty seconds of violent bucking, I had rocked around to what should have been another backender, ended up as a slam dunk. I

stayed upside down until I could feel the current pulling me down stream, and came up just in time to get knocked over by the same lateral that had dumped Paul. Three rolls later, I was through the rapid, and still in my boat.

I pulled into the eddy where Paul and the rafters were, and just started laughing hysterically. They were pretty happy too, and told me that they had been more than a little worried. They had seen me drop in the hole, and were starting to look for pieces floating down. When they saw my boat again, it was upside down, and seemed to stay that way for a long time. Actually each time I rolled, I went over again so fast that they never really noticed. But we had made it through this incredible drop, and all I could think of was: "Oh, boy. That was only the first serious drop! I just want to make it through this alive." Actually Devil's Slide was the worst drop until the last one, known as Triple Drop. Having survived such a wild ride, my confidence was boistered, and I started feeling really good.

The third day that really sticks out was in October on a kayak support trip down the Grand Canyon with OARS. It was my second Grand trip of the summer, and I knew all the places I wanted to "shoot". And about half of them come on the same day, from Mile 77 to Mile 95. This stretch includes 6 "name" rapids; Hance, Stockdolager, Grapevine, Horn, Hermit and Granite. It's not that any of these rapids scare me, but they are all very worth filming, and that makes for a very hectic day. Especially when you throw in a change of passengers at Phantom Ranch (mile 88).

We had camped just above Hance, and so I took off just before the rafts were ready to roll. By the way, we camped on river right at about 74%; and it's one of the prettiest camps in the canyon. I was anxious to get a look at Hance at a new water level. The last several days the water had been steadily dropping, and the guides were guessing there were under 10,000 CFS. I'd never experienced less than 16,000 CFS, and my last two trips were at 25-30,000 CFS!

At the back of everybody's mind was would the water hold through Horn? The guidebook tells you that Horn is not recommended between 4-8,000 CFS, and I was curious to see it at that level. But now we were at Hance. The scout there is quite a way from the actual drop, and Hance is one of the longest rapids in the canyon. I almost ran it blind, but pulled over for a look. I ran down to see if my line would work, and ran back to my kayak just as the first of the rafts were pulling in.

One of the things I try to do when filming is get plenty of "color" footage: scouting and discussing rapids, and that kind of drama and tension. So I wanted to get down there and set up before they headed back to their boats. But first I had to get my "wet" camera on Terry's raft set to go. I had mounted it back at camp, but to get it ready to film, I had to open the Ikelite housing, and turn it on, then make sure it was pointed in the right direction. Just before "dropping in", Terry would just start it running, and I would get classic POV (point of view) shots.

That done, I ran back down to where my video gear was already hooked up and ready to shoot. Being so long, Hance is a tough one to shoot, and as always there are several options. Go for the wide shot showing most of the rapid look for the one spot most likely to produce the "wettest" action, or isolate one aspect of the run, like the entry, which is usually the most critical time for rafts, but not always the most exciting visually. Turns out I had plenty of time, because this is one of the rapids they like to watch half the rafts, before they run it. As opposed to the "gang" approach of running all the rafts close together. I understand why commercials run close together, but it makes it tough on the idiot, because you never get to film all of anybody's run. You can only guess where the best action will take place, and there is no feeling like switching the camera off a raft just before something really dramatic happens.

So goes the excitement of a hectic schedule of a video madman.

# GRAVITY SPORTS FILMS FIND "HOME" IN ROCKY'S BUSINESS

Biography  
by Rick Brunelle

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Years ago, Rocky Rossi was the classic "ski bum" in winter and "kayak bum" in summer. His life revolved around the slopes; the ski capital of Aspen, Colorado; and an endless search for premium "powder." His summer life focused on finding the best white water in the Rockies.

That search extended even beyond traditional ski resorts. Rocky took to back country skiing, touring into mountain areas inaccessible by road or chair lift. On one day of helicopter skiing, he shot some footage with a borrowed super 8 movie camera. And what he saw on those few feet of film so excited him that he knew he was on to something.

"I became addicted to making films," he recalls. "I began experimenting with my photography, editing it and adding music."

The trouble was that when he started looking for films by others on the so-called "gravity sports" — such as kayaking, skiing, hang gliding, canoeing, rafting and mountain climbing — he found they were next to impossible to locate. And when he finally did get to see some of these films, at the 1981 Telluride Mountainfilm Festival in Colorado, he was "blown away" by the experience.

"At Telluride, I saw an incredible collection of films hardly anyone ever gets to see," says Rossi. "I knew I had to find a way to show these films to some of my friends."

Thus, the annual Utah Gravity Sports Film Festival was conceived in 1981. And from the festival grew Rossi's own film and video sales and rental company, Gravity Sports Films, Inc. Other film festivals followed too, including the National Whitewater Film Festival in Lexington, Kentucky.

A gravity sport, Rossi will tell you, is any sport not involving a ball or motor that in some way is largely dependent on gravity. "You're either depending on

gravity for a free ride," he explains, "like in kayaking, hang gliding or wind surfing, or else, you're fighting gravity, like in mountain climbing and biking."

Gravity sports don't generally attract large numbers of participants and spectators, says Rossi. For that reason, audiences for gravity sports films are comparatively limited, which means that a great whitewater film isn't likely to be programmed by one of the commercial television networks unless it is related to the Olympic Games or another high-profile event.

Even so, there are still literally millions of potential viewers who don't know these films exist. "Every outdoor enthusiast is a prospect for viewing a great adventure film," says Rossi, "especially if there is a convenient way to see it. However, people normally don't go searching for gravity sports films because they don't know they're available. The main goal of my festival and company is to promote these films — to let the public know these films are entertaining, educational and available."

Each November, on the campus of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Rossi conducts the Utah Gravity Sports Film Festival, which awards cash prizes for the best films and videos in various categories. The city is an ideal festival site, he says, because "Utah is full of gravity sports 'fun hogs.'"

Films and videos exhibited in the festival have come from all parts of the United States and Europe. But in keeping with how difficult it is to locate these works, Rossi describes the festival-organizing process as "detective work."

"Finding films and videos means calling tons of contacts, writing for catalogs and getting information from other sports film festivals," he says. "In itself, organizing the festival is a 3 month-long, full-time job."

Films shown at the Utah Gravity

Sports Film Festival have documented sports as diverse as white-water kayaking, climbing, skydiving and wind-surfing. One of the best of these films and a festival award winner, says Rossi, is *Dudh Khosi, Relentless River of Everest*.

This film, by English filmmaker Leo Dickinson, graphically portrays a 1978 kayaking expedition down the Dudh Khosi River, which flows off Mt. Everest and drops 13,000 feet in 50 miles. Another festival winner is *The Longest River*, a film documenting a three-person rafting trip down the Bio-Bio in Chile, considered one of the world's most dangerous rivers.

Robert Cohen, maker of the *The Longest River*, describes the 1981 film not only as a documentation of the rafting trip, but also as a portrayal of the two men and one woman who made the trip.

"The film explores why these three people have chosen white-water rafting as a way of life," Cohen says. "The film asks the question: Why are these people vagabonds and not working to get ahead on the fast track?"

John Armstrong's new release, *Pau-cartambo — Inca River* block buster film is a potential festival award winning film nationally at Telluride and internationally at Banff and Terento, Italy. It is the new "Gone With the Wind" classic film of expedition kayaking, according to Bruce Stafford.

Many of the films and videos shown at the Utah Gravity Sports Film Festival

now are sold or rented through Gravity Sports Films, Inc. (GSF). Rossi operates the three-year-old business from his home, and with the boom in home VCRs, the gravity film business finally appears to have found a marketplace, Rossi believes.

"GSF has been scraping along on a shoestring," he admits, "but now that people realize that home VCRs enable them to program their own entertainment, things are looking up for us." GSF's clientele, Rossi says, consists of "a little of everybody," including college recreation clubs, sports retailers, specialty organizations such as ski and mountaineering clubs and individual VCR owners who are gravity sports enthusiasts.

GSF currently sells and rents 55 titles. The selection is broken down into four basic categories: "Whitewater," "Winter Sports," "Climbing and Mountaineering," and a "Miscellaneous" section that includes films on cycling, windsurfing and sky diving.

Rossi plans to keep expanding GSF, increasing his advertising in specialty magazines like AWA devoted to white-water, climbing and other gravity sports enthusiasts, and possibly hiring some sales representatives.

"I'm right at the point where GSF is starting to take off," he says, "so I've got to keep taking forward steps. I can't forget that since many of the films I carry are 'obscure,' I've got to work extra hard at promoting them to the public."

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# ESCAPE SYSTEMS

by Dana Castro

I am fond of telling people that kayaking is really a safe sport that just looks dangerous. I do believe this especially if one takes care to match the river difficulty with the paddler's ability. However there are certain risks which are difficult to predict or prepare for and can be very serious.

One of the worst of these is a pin or a broach situation in which the boater is facing downstream and the current is pressing against his back preventing his exit from the boat. The head may be above or below the water. In either case life expectancy under these circumstances is very limited and immediate escape is the order of the day as rescue by others may be too late.

The most common way this may happen is in running short steep drops in which the nose of the boat dives deep and searches for rocks to stick under. A different situation which has the same result would be snagging the grab loop or stern painter, or wrapping the stern of the boat on an obstruction. It was this last situation which resulted in the death of N.O.C. guide Rick Bernard on the Chattooga in 1979.

Lest anyone doubt the difficulty in exiting from a kayak when there is any amount of force pressing the paddler into the boat, I can suggest the following experiment: Stand the kayak on its nose against the wall of a building, in a corner so the boat won't tip over. Place a ladder next to the nearly vertical boat and with a friend stabilizing the boat, climb into the cockpit. Then try to get out.

Attention is finally being focused on this hazard. Newer short boats with blunt bows such as the Noah-Jeti and the Perception-Dancer are much less likely to pin in the above manner than the now older style 4-meter low volume boat. (Unfortunately, the increase in the use of Squirt boats for general river running may lead to an increase in the number of such incidents.)

Another approach is the quick-release foredeck that is now being seen on rivers. This is commercially available as an aftermarket installation on some boats and may someday be available on

production boats. I have also attempted to create some self-rescue systems, which are the subject of this article. Essentially they consist of variations on the stern painter idea but with some alterations which I believe will eliminate some of the dangers inherent in a stern painter, and others which may add some additional functions.

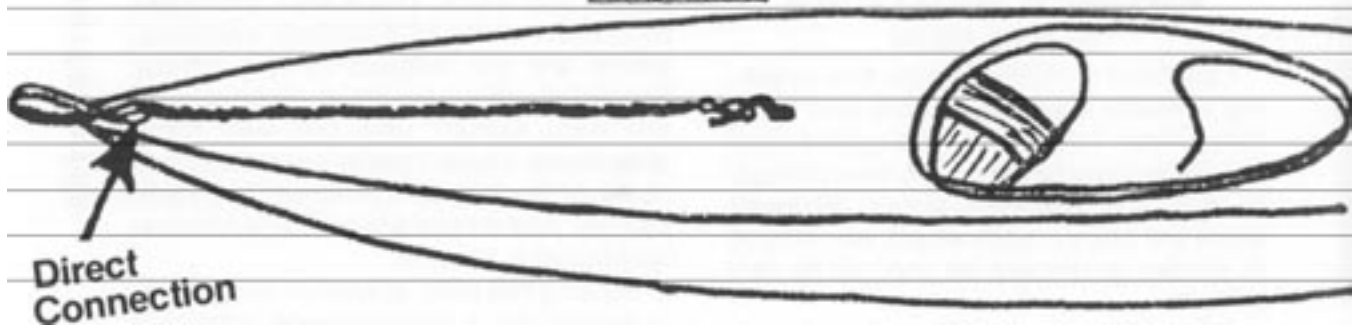
My original idea, shown in diagram A, is essentially a polypropylene rope that runs from the stern grab loop down the center of the rear deck. A number 2 bronze snap hook is spliced into the end nearer the cockpit and this is clipped onto a stainless steel "deck strap" which is bolted onto the rear deck about 14-18" aft of the cockpit. Stainless steel bolts with large washers on the inside of the boat provide a powerful attachment. The snap hook allows the line to be released easily but prevents waves or rocks from knocking it loose, as can happen with the black plastic "jamb" cleats recommended by some. On this note it is important to note that if the stern line comes loose and snags on something then the very situation that the device is supposed to help you escape from is created, only now there is no escape system!

The final aspect of the system is that I use  $\frac{3}{4}$ " 3-strand polypro which is spliced back on itself the entire length: this creates a strong 6-stranded line about  $\frac{7}{16}$ " thick which is very easy to grip. That's it; you twist, grab the line, and climb out of the pinned boat. Full length walls don't interfere, and climbing out of the boat against a force of a couple hundred pounds is a snap.

## Diagram A

A second design also allows the easy towing of other boats, provided conditions permit. Anyone who has experienced the joys of trying to nose sunken runaway boats to shore in continuous fast current might take a look at this. This system uses two deck straps, one positioned in the center as before and the other about 24" - 30" behind the cockpit, about 6" off center, (to the right if you are a right hander). The polypro line is again spliced on itself the entire length, but this time with #2 snap hooks spliced into both ends. The line is

Diagram A



clipped to one deck strap, then passes through a carabiner hooked to the stern grab loop, then back down the deck to be clipped to the other deck strap. See diagram B.

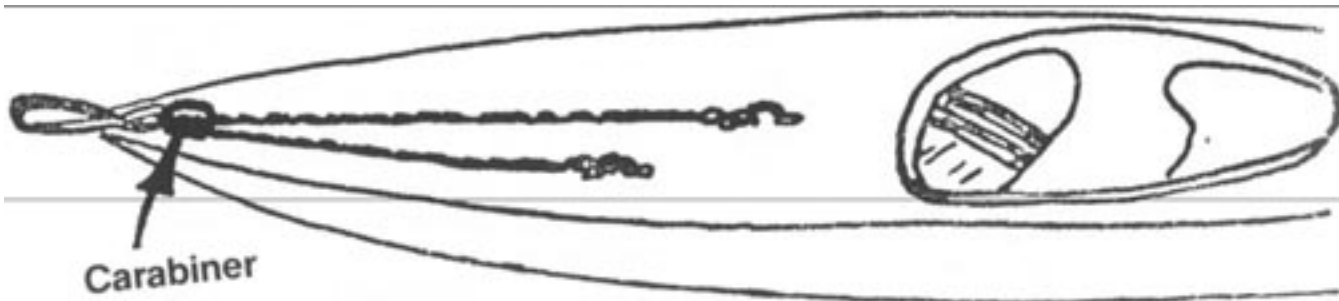
Diagram B

When chasing a runaway boat, one releases the off-center snap hook then grabs the part of the line that runs down the center and pulls it through the carabiner. On reaching the runaway boat one may then clip the loose end to the runaway boat. It is then possible to tow without losing the ability to steer since the tow point is just behind the cockpit. If conditions become too dangerous to tow, the line may be easily

unsnapped from the towing boat. The self rescue function operates in the same manner. One final refinement is to modify the stern grab loop so that there is a small second loop to which the carabiner may be attached leaving the main grab loop free to be used normally.

It is the function of these systems to reduce the unpredictable risks of boating. They are not meant to be used in lieu of standard safety measures which include carrying throw bags and keeping them where they can be reached quickly.. I welcome feedback on these ideas from other paddlers. Contact Dana Castro, 52 Sandy Hollow Rd., Port Washington, NY 11050.

Diagram B



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