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american whitewater

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—Bruce Penrod

ABOUT THE PADDLER

Bruce Penrod has been paddling and racing whitewater in both tandem and solo open canoes for 10 years. His experiences include many of the most popular runs in the East from Maine's Dead and Kennebec to Georgia's Chattooga. He and his wife Janice had the first known tandem open boat run on the difficult Upper Yough. Only one and a half hours away from his home in Pennsylvania, the Upper Yough sharpens his skills often for his favorite type of river. He most enjoys the tight, technical runs of the Appalachian creeks including the only recently run Paint Creek dropping an average of 150 feet per mile and loaded with water falls. His is an American Canoe Association Instructor Trainer and the owner of Penrods' Canoe, which specializes in wood trimmed canoes and outfitting whitewater canoes. He has paddled many different boats since he began but most recently has paddled a Whitesell hull trimmed in wood. His new boat is the XL-13.

american whitewater

JOURNAL OF THE
AMERICAN WHITewater
AFFILIATION

March/April 1989
Volume XXXIV, No. 2

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editor's forum

Happy New Year



March 1st—the paddling New Year.

Now, I know there's southern boaters who have been on the **water** for two months already. And there also may be some demented wackos from north of the Mason-Dixon line who have dodged icebergs for some **early-sea**-season runs.

But for the majority of us sane whitewaterpaddlers, the opening of the boating season is ushered in during the month of March. So pop the corks, raise a toast and rip that old calender off the wall.

This issue also marks the beginning of my third year as editor of American Whitewater. The magazine has changed substantially during the past two seasons—both in appearance and editorial content. I hope you approve of most of what I've done.

I'm a volunteer—as are all of our contributors. None of us do this sort of thing for a living. But I like to think the magazine looks positively semi-professional. We may never make the journalistic big league—but I aspire to the Triple-A level of the minors.

But American Whitewater is just one aspect of the **AWA's** new vitality. What is truly amazing are the number of **less** visible **accomplishments** which have recently come to pass.

- Our membership is up 20%
- Our conservation efforts have helped turn the **tide** in saving whitewater rivers in New York, West Virginia, Maryland and Connecticut.
- Our Whitewater Inventory sets the course for the first comprehensive program of preserving whitewater resources.
- Our hydro site **relicensing** promises for the first time to actually **return** whitewater to recreational purposes.
- Our annual Gauley Festival has developed into **the** largest gathering of recreational whitewater boaters in the **world**.

And that doesn't mention **half** the irons in the AWA fire. So happy paddling New Year. 1989 promises to be an exciting year.

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WHAT IS THE AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION?

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over 1300 whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 50 local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

EDUCATION: Through publication of a bi-monthly journal, the AWA provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique, and equipment

CONSERVATION: AWA maintains a national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through its "River Watch" system, publishes information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers, and provides technical advice to local groups regarding river management and river conservation. AWA also gives annual awards to individuals to recognize exceptional contributions to river conservation and an annual "hydromania" award to recognize the proposed hydroelectric power project which would be most destructive of whitewater.

EVENTS: AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation. Since 1986, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual **Gauley River Festival** in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation, other than at international racing events.

SAFETY: AWA promotes paddling safety, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, and maintains both a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the **International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty**) and the internationally recognized **AWA Safety Code**.

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES: AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 146 N. **Brockway**, Palatine Illinois, 60067. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 401(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF: Except for membership services and the Executive Director position, all AWA operations, including publication of the bi-monthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.

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letters to awa

Unfair to NRA?

Dear Chris,

I was disturbed to read in the Nov/Dec issue of the Journal a description of the National Rifle Association as being an organization noted for "waging successful campaigns of distortion and half-truths." This comment appeared not in a letters to the editor column signed by an individual member, but rather in an unsigned feature article under the "conservation" heading. For this reason I can only surmise that this opinion is intended to reflect the position of the AWA.

I have been a member of the AWA for well over 15 years and have often supported its goals, most especially so in the areas of river preservation. This support has been both financial and in the form of contributions to letter writing campaigns.

Not coincidentally I became a life member of the National Rifle Association more than 25 years ago and one of the reasons for my support of that organization is that the NRA has been a staunch supporter of conservation in general and wildlife and habitat protection in particular.

I find the AWA position, placing itself at odds with the NRA and doing so in most derogatory terms, disturbing for several reasons. Our numbers as paddlers are woefully small and though we have had several notable successes in achieving some of our goals, it is extremely short-sighted of the AWA to set out to alienate other groups which themselves often share the same general agenda. Although in the particular case at hand there appears to be a disagreement between the two groups, ludicrously the disagreement is not in philosophy, but in how a particular philosophy is to be arrived at.

I am further surprised to realize that the AWA has added to its arsenal, which has included a hitherto effective policy of reason and cooperation while working with opponent groups, the new weapon of name calling—and

that, most disturbingly, directed at an organization possessing frequent similarity of goals.

Rather than casting insults at those with whom we may not always completely agree, it might better serve the midget AWA to cultivate cordial working relationships with organizations whose agendas share some commonality with ours.

Interesting, I observe a note of envy (sour grapes?) in the AWA writer's description of the National Rifle Association as possessing a "huge, active membership." Well, eat your heart out AWA, but remember that neither the size nor the loyalty nor the activity level of this "huge" membership is based on anything other than a belief in freedom. Whereas we as paddlers hope forever to be able to cruise unrestricted by dams and other constructions and encroachments of bureaucracy, both corporate and governmental, others of us hope for similar liberty to pursue interests which are not really so remotely different.

Finally, I note the disparaging tone the AWA writer employs in describing the NRA's "ability to take revenge on members of Congress who do not toe the line." To the best of my knowledge it is still the right of voters in the United States to express displeasure with their representatives by attempting to replace them at election time. To characterize this process as revenge could with no great strain upon the imagination be itself characterized as a distortion on the part of the AWA.

Sincerely,
Anthony H. Ryan
Lyme Center, NH

Dear Tony,

Many of your observations are completely justified. The conservation article in question—a report of how the West Virginia Rivers Bill was nearly scuttled due to NRA influence—was written by one of our conservation editors and contained some subjective

letters

observations. I don't edit many contributions as closely as I should. I'll pay more attention in the future to insure news items are objectively reported.

Did that article accurately represent the AWA position toward the NRA? I hope not. As a gun-owner myself, I probably agree with the NRA more times than I disagree with it. But I have to confess, the NRA's initial actions toward the Rivers Bill is one of those times I didn't care for their actions.

I think even you'll agree, Tony, that the NRA can be pretty heavy-handed at times. Its last-minute opposition to the legislation nearly killed two years of hard work.

Because river conservationists don't have such a powerful constituency, we had to labor for a long time in order to finally develop a bill we thought could gain approval. To have the NRA come in at the end, judge the bill negatively, and then have the muscle to potentially kill the legislation...well, it was frustrating. That frustration showed in our account.

The story had a happy ending. After some negotiations, the NRA approved an amended version of the bill. And after approval in the Senate, when a presidential veto threatened the bill, the NRA added its support to convince the president to finally sign the law.

What Mistakes?

Dear Sirs,

I would be willing to proof read any issues of the American Whitewater before each publication for typos and grammatical and syntax errors. Maybe most river runners don't notice the glaring errors, but I think it lowers the professionalism of your journal to have so many errors in the use of the English language. "Maybe you should only accept articles from boaters who wore helmets."

Anyway--I am serious about proofreading if you want.

Anne Webre

"an aging but literate River Rat"
Arroyo Grande, CA

(Mistakes? Who makes mistakes? Seriously though, Anne, I appreciate your generous offer. During the past two years, we've significantly reduced the number of errors that sneak into pages of American Whitewater, but the problem still exists. Would proofreading help? Sure! The trouble is--I usually don't finish preparing final proofs until hours before the issue is due at the printer. There's not time to send the proofs across town, let alone cross country.

The AWA directors and I have racked our brains trying to find methods of speeding production. But the bottom line remains--editing and designing a magazine demands direct interaction that can't be accomplished via the phone or Federal Express with other AWA volunteers. And as I don't have a staff here in Fabius, NY--the editing is a one-man operation.

We're trying to produce a professional looking publication--but hell, I ain't no professional. In real life, I work for a commercial general contractor. But I hope most folks will agree that American Whitewater is the best semi-professional paddling magazine on the market.

More clip-lock

Dear Chris,

I am writing this "letter to the editor to comment on a possible solution for the Gerber "Clip Lock" knife problem. I too have experienced the Gerber knife coming out of its sheath. My wife and I paddle a tandem open boat and have found the knife more than once in the bottom of the boat after lots of activity, perilously close to puncturing the air bags, let alone my body. A paddling friend of ours, Meg Weesner, suggested that I tie a loop of parachute chord around the knife handle through the clip-lock mechanism. Sliding it to



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letters

wards the blade prevents the knife lock mechanism from opening. Sliding it away from the blade allows the lock mechanism to be pressed with the thumb thus allowing the knife to be released from the sheath. This can all be done with one hand under paddling conditions. Incidentally, we tested this configuration in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. It worked. I happen to wear the knife in a horizontal position located on the front near the drawstring at the bottom of my "shortie" high-float PFD.

I agree that Gerber should improve the design of the knife. Until they do and for those of us who have the current problems, give this suggestion a try.

Warmly,
Jamie Shuway
Morgantown, WV

You will swim

Dear Chris,

My compliments on the job you are doing on the Journal. Keep up the good work. In fact it is too good for your "catbox ad" and I wish you'd rewrite it. (I now read the whole thing again. Am I that Abnormal?)

Second, I applaud your "flagellation" editorial (Jan/Feb issue) and can only add that from my vantage point of 25 odd years of whitewater, I have seen many very good boaters pass through the "invincible" stage to something higher as you have. There is indeed a statistical nature to our sport. Simply stated, everybody **WILL SWIM** sooner or later and I feel it is the responsibility of AWA and the Journal to make boaters aware of this fact. Proper preparation and realistic consideration of the consequences can help limit most such incidents to the unpleasant category. **ANY BOATER**, regardless of skill level or previous experience who denies the possibility of a swim is courting disaster.

Best Regards,
Jim Sindelar
Concord, NH

Writers guidelines

American Whitewater welcomes submissions from its readers. Proposed articles should relate in some way to whitewater...river conservation...expeditionary boating...safety...interviews with river personalities...paddling techniques. Our readers are most interested in new rivers, not previously described in well-known guidebooks. Most of our readers are intermediate to advanced boaters, they do not need instruction on how to brace or roll, but they are interested in innovative designs and styles. We try to be receptive to any and all ideas.

The readers of American Whitewater are interested in whitewater...unlike some boating magazines we do not publish articles regarding flatwater canoeing or sea kayaking.

Submissions should be double spaced and neat. Correct spelling and grammar are appreciated.

Photos should be included when appropriate. Black and white prints or color slides are accepted. Photos with pronounced color contrasts reproduce best.

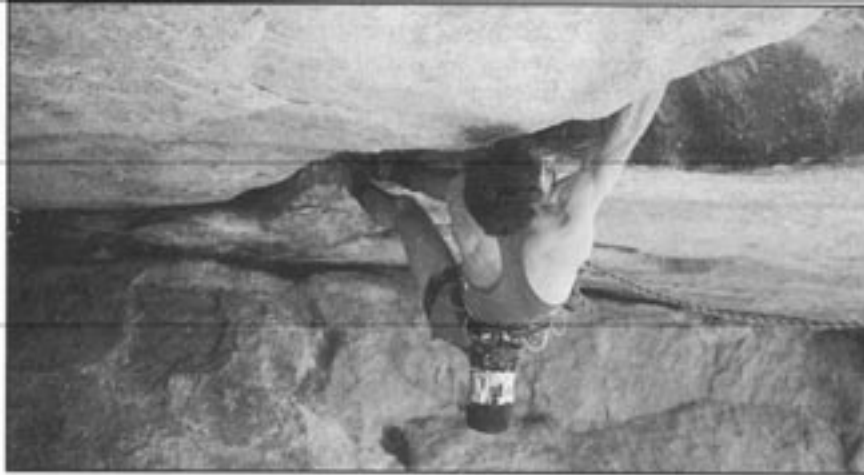
Stories must be edited as necessary to fit the format of American Whitewater. Remember that even the work of professional writers is usually heavily edited before publication. The editor of a major outdoor publication recently revealed that he rarely deals with amateur writers, not because their work is inferior, but because they are unwilling to accept appropriate editing. Expect to see some changes in your story.

Story length should rarely exceed 3000 words...twelve typed pages..double spaced. The best stories have a distinct focus or slant. This aspect of the story should make it unique and should catch the readers' interest.

Humorous stories and articles with a different point of view receive special consideration.

The editors and writers of American Whitewater do not receive financial compensation. Every effort will be made to return submitted materials but we can not guarantee their safety.

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Rules changes reflects maturity

By Kent Ford

Whitewater slalom races have undergone significant changes since the early 1960's when the United States first sent a team to world competition that was contested in the same boats used to explore rivers.

Since those developmental days, canvas foldboats and decked-over aluminum canoes have been replaced by the sleek, light specialized boats that dominate the sport while the sandlot conglomeration of penalties and other rules have been simplified.

Early racing rules were designed to test paddlers for their river-running skills and penalize them in some proportion to the severity of their mistakes. The racer was required to thread his boat through a series of gates suspended over the water. Certain touches of a gate resulted in a 100 second penalty while a 20 second penalty was assessed for hitting the outside of a pole and 10 seconds for touching the inside of a pole.

Perhaps the most complex rule was the reverse gate, which the paddler would run nearly sideways, sneaking under both poles in low-volume boats. The old rules were effective at testing the judges as well as the paddlers and often sparked emotional protests at important races.

The latest round of rules is considerably simpler to judge and understand. They represent the maturity of the sport: racing is no longer intended as a test of river-running ability but rather designed to test hand-eye coordination at high speed.

The most evident new rule is the elimination of reverse gates. Paddlers must now negotiate gates designed as either upstream or downstream. A good course designer can still force the paddlers to go reverse by

hanging two gates on one wire, or by setting severe off-set gates.

Other new rules include a 5 second penalty per gate instead of the old 10 seconds per pole. The lower penalty helps make the racing go faster

courses are popular for their proximity to urban centers and are more attractive to spectators and sponsors.

Perhaps the next set of rule changes will eliminate the 4 meter length requirement. Competition boat are now



Don Cochran photo

Increased spectator interest was evident at the Maryland Classic where large crowds flocked to Maryland's Savage River to watch last year's pre-worlds.

and more exciting to watch--and it considerably simplifies the judges' job.

While most of the racers miss the reverse gates, they enjoy the simplicity it has brought to the sport. A common fear among racers is that the sport will be changed and eliminate the premium on whitewater technique to make it more appealing to television and more popular as a spectator sport.

So far, these fears have not materialized as the only concession to popularizing the sport has been the reduction of the course length by 200 meters and the number of gates from 30 to 25. In theory, this will make the competition faster and more appealing to watch as well as ease the logistics of building man-made courses. These

longer than nearly any other boat on the river, and have fragile spear-like additions just to meet the required length. Without the length rule, boats would evolve to something closer to current recreational boats. This would help the sport become more attainable to cruisers, and would help manufacturers and racers work in closer harmony to design boats.

In addition, the top racers will soon need shorter boats to ease the logistics of travel. The new rules have helped spread the geographic participation in the sport. The U.S. racing circuit has expanded from a springtime series of races on the east coast to include a summertime series on the artificial courses in Wausau, Wisconsin,

South Bend, Indiana and the Gull River in Ontario.

The World Championships used to be an every-two-year affair requiring the occasional short trip to Europe. Now that race is augmented by a World Cup Circuit at sites in North

America and Europe. Even the off-season demands of the sport have changed as many world teams travel to South America, Costa Rica and Australia to maintain their training schedules.

Whitewater slalom racing is more exciting than ever!

River blocks on Saco River

Line Up and Breathe Into the Tube Please....

River road blocks along the lower sections of the Saco River in Maine have civil libertarians up in arms...Maine state police and game wardens have been pulling over canoeists and searching their canoes and their person for illegal drugs and illegally imported liquor.

The section between Fryburg and the Maine coast runs along the New Hampshire border, and sees 2,000 canoes pass the "river blocks" on a busy summer weekend. The Maine Civil Liberties Union and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife locked horns in Maine Superior Court in Auburn over the search and seizure issue, which is expected to be decided early this year.

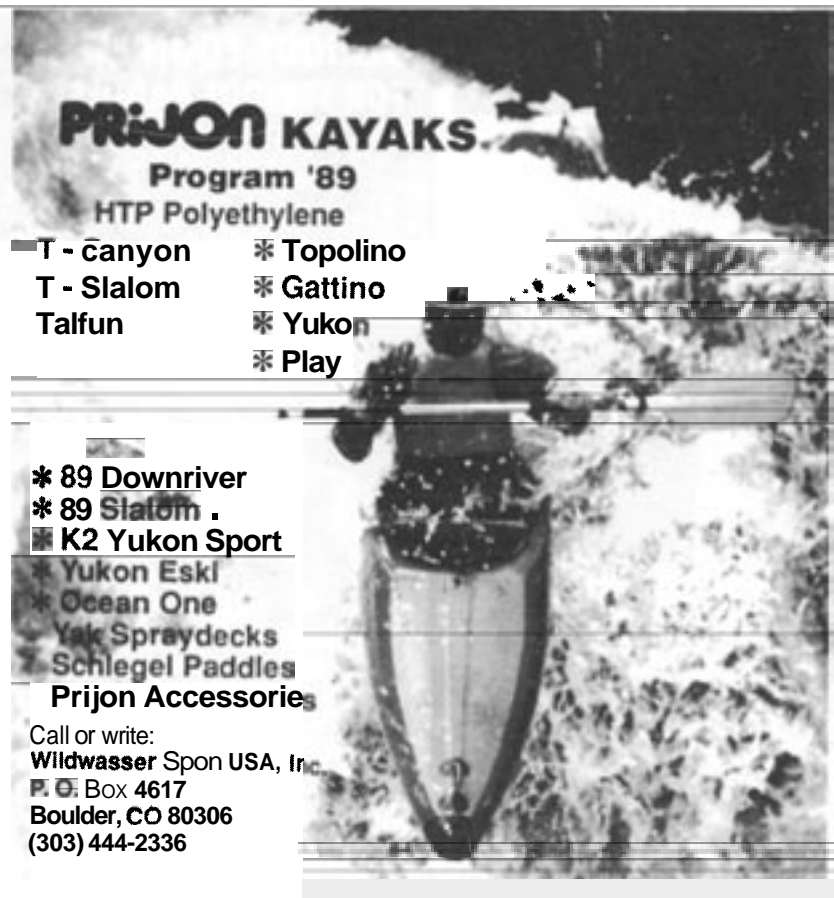
Sniper attacks menace Rio Grande float trips

If you are planning a float trip down the Rio Grande River below Big Bend National Park, you had better wear a bullet proof vest under your lifejacket. Texas Rangers and Mexican trackers continue to search for clues into a November sniper attack on a rafting party on the Rio Grande that left a Texas man dead.

Up to four snipers were believed to be involved in the attack which also wounded the man's wife and their

river guide. Officials believe between 20 and 30 shots were fired from high cliffs on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande downstream of Big Bend National Park in southwestern Texas.

Outfitters in the area said they had some cancellations on their rafting expeditions in the wake of the shooting, the second such incident reported on the Rio Grande this year. There were no injuries in the incident that occurred in March.



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awa briefs

Open canoe downriver race scheduled

The Maine Canoe and Kayak Racing Organization will host the 1969 Whitewater Open Canoe Downriver National Championships on Maine's Lower Dead River on July 17-18, 1989.

The Lower Dead has been the site for the WWOC Nationals several times since their inception in 1970, most recently in 1982. The course from Spencer Stream to The Forks consists of 16 miles of class 2-3 rapids at the planned water-release level of 1,300 cfs.

The Monday and Tuesday race dates will minimize conflicts with other river users and also permit competitors to make practice runs on Saturday and Sunday.

There will be total of 21 classes for open canoes: 11 for competition

canoes conforming to current ACA WWOC rules and 10 for ABS and polyethylene canoes with simplified rules in order to permit more paddlers to participate in championship-level competition using the canoe they already own. Paddlers who have previously placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in a WWOC National Championship may not enter the ABS/poly classes.

Additionally, as the New England Downriver Championships, Maine CKRO will offer 7 classes for kayaks and decked canoes conforming to ICF wildwater rules, and 2 additional classes for recreational kayaks.

For further information, contact race chairman George Walsh. PO Box 63, Jay, ME, 04239.

Slalom course created

Sixteen 5-ton boulders have been placed in the Merrimack River in Manchester, New Hampshire to create a year round slalom and recreational training site. Mark Ciborowski of Concord, New Hampshire has been overseeing the two year project which will eventually include permanent gates and lighting to allow for night time training.

The project coincided with the replacement of a highway bridge at the

site, with a number of contractors involved with that bridge construction donating time and equipment to load, transport, unload and place the boulders in the riverbed. Public Service Company of New Hampshire, which controls river flow with its Amoskeag Falls hydro project, agreed to restrict flows during the actual boulder placement. A job well done that offers year round and nighttime paddling opportunities to Boston area boaters!

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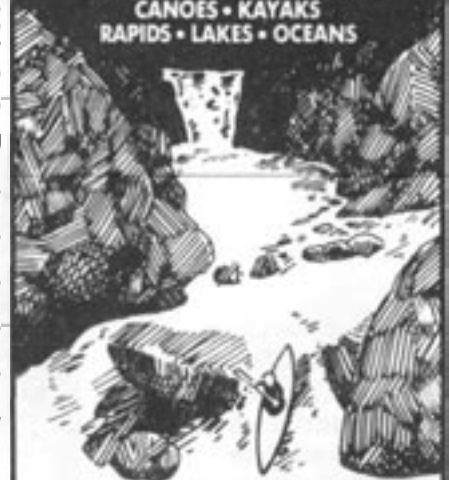
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Section IV of the Wolf reopens

After a nine-year hiatus, Midwestern boaters had the opportunity this past fall to once again run the section of the Wolf River which flows through the Menominee Indian Reservation in northern Wisconsin. Known as Section IV, this part of the Wolf had been closed to private boaters after conflicts developed between boaters who wanted to run its challenging rapids and Indians who felt the river belonged to them.

Incidents between boaters who tried to sneak on the river to avoid paying a "Yrespass" fee and Indians who vandalized these same boater's cars caused local law enforcement officials to ban all private boaters from the Indians' section of the Wolf several years ago. Only commercial rafters who patronized an Indian outfitter were allowed the delights of Section IV.

A tribal rafting company based at Big Smokey Falls was sold in the spring of 1988 to Ralph Lyons, a member of the Menominee Nation. The possibility of providing a shuttle service to private boaters encouraged Lyons to lobby for the repeal of the boat-ban ordinance--and his efforts were successful when the tribal council unanimously voted to allow access to boaters paying for Lyons' shuttle.

During September and October, almost 300 private boaters seized the opportunity to paddle the lower Wolf, resplendent in its fall colors. As the drought of '88 was devastating to river-related businesses in northern Wisconsin, the additional revenue for was welcomed.

The conditions of Lyons' contract required that the shuttle service be

stopped at the end of October, but it should be in readiness this spring. You are not allowed to set up your own shuttle at any time. Paddlers should drive to Big Smokey Falls, purchase the \$12 shuttle tag, and your car will be driven to the takeout where it will be watched...and safe.

Is running Section 4 of the Wolf worth \$12? This section of Menominee County is true wilderness; there is no electricity; there are no telephones; are no homes along the river. Tribal laws prohibit any new development, so it will remain that way.

Even at drought condition levels, you'll find class 3 rapids here. Higher water will push some of those rapids to 4's. The lower Wolf is consistently runnable from May to October, but don't let please turn to *page*



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AWA's Hydromaniac/Hydrovisionary Awards

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Western Power named Hydromaniac

The second annual AWA Hydromania Award for a hydroelectric project qualifying as an environmental insult of national magnitude goes to Western Electric Power for its project on the North Fork of the Payette River in Idaho.

Each year AWA bestows its Hydromania Award to the hydroelectric power project which dis-

plays the highest degree of insensitivity to a natural river environment. The award will be presented by Risa Callaway, Executive Director of AWA.

On-site inspections of projects in California, New York, Idaho, Pennsylvania, Maryland and elsewhere were made by AWA volunteers. Western Power was the hands-down winner in rec-

ognition of the permanent, irreversible damage its project would do to the world-renowned whitewater, the fishery, natural resources and the picturesque scenery of the North Fork of the Payette.

The North Fork provides whitewater enthusiasts with outstanding class III, IV, and V rapids; travelers with majestic scenery; and fishermen with plentiful catch. Unfortunately, the attributes that make the Payette a great whitewater run make it irresistible to the

hydromaniac.

Whitewater fans, environmentalists, land owners, local business leaders, recreational users and sightseers have joined together under the banner of Friends of the Payette to oppose Western Power's plan to violate this treasured national resource for the purpose of selling nonessential energy to faraway places for private profit. The national award given by AWA highlights the national significance of Western Power's proposed project.

Glen Park Associates cited as Hydrovisionary

The first annual AWA Hydrovisionary Award for a developer who cooperates in a farsighted manner to meet hydroelec-

tric development needs while maintaining the environmental integrity of a river goes to Glen Park Associates. The award was

presented to Thomas R. Kennedy of The Edgewater Companies and F. Michael Tucker of Mercer Companies, Inc., the joint venture partners of Glen Park Associates.

The award was given for a farsighted agreement made between AWA, Adirondack River Outfitters, and Glen Park Associates which regulated the usage of a \$40 million hydroelectric project on the Black River, just outside Watertown, NY. This agreement resulting from negotiations between Glen Park and the two river groups, was comprised of four main elements.

provision of water releases for portaging and paddling, resulting in access and water releases consistent with present level of use;

addition of a wide-ranging set of recreational enhancements;

development of mechanisms to reflect future use trends; and

creation of release bank to hold water for special uses.

These people and I were adversaries when all this started. I remember threatening to have them arrested for trespassing. Things have changed significantly. I am happy to tell you that we have a very successful project here—one where we, the environmentalists and the public all win," said Tucker.

The award was presented to Glen Park Associates at a meeting of the executive committee of AWA in Washington, D.C., January 30.



The Black River near Watertown

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In the waning days of the 100th Congress, a bill was passed which promises a boon to whitewater releases at several important Army Corps of Engineers dams in the East. Nicknamed the "project purpose" bill, the legislation amends the list of authorized purposes of 13 Corps dams to specify that the dams must "protect and enhance recreation," including specifically, "downstream whitewater recreation." Among the 13 dam projects affected:

"Project Purpose" approved

- Savage River Dam, Savage R.
 - Bloomington Dam, N. Branch Potomac R.
 - Bluestone Dam, New R.
 - Summersville Dam, Gauley R.
 - Water Dam, Lehigh R.
 - Yough Lake Dam, Yough Lake Dam, Youghlougheny R.
 - Bailey Lake Dam above the Russell Fork R.
 - Sutton Dam, Elk R.
- The legislation was sponsored and skillfully guided through the legislative process by West Virginia Congressman Nick Rahall, and ever able staff member Jim Zola. Rahall got the legislation attached to the big Corps authorization ("pork barrel") bill, which was signed into law by President Reagan on Nov. 17.

Maine rejects hydro

In a precedence setting action, the Maine Supreme court has upheld a Maine state agency decision to reject attempts to reconstruct a 45 million dollar dam and hydroelectric project on the Penobscot River in Bangor. The Maine Rivers Act which decision supports the species that hydroelectric projects cannot be built if they lead to the diminishment of natural resources, such as natural fish runs, on the river segments protected by the act. The Supreme Court's first ruling concerning the Maine Rivers Act's provision for licensing hydroelectric powerplants, setting a precedence for future dam related cases.

conservation

In a nutshell, this legislation means that paddlers have a legal right to demand that these projects be operated to benefit whitewater, to the extent compatible with other project purposes. All too often in the past, the Army Corps has treated paddlers as unworthy supplicants for leftover water. Thanks to Nick Rahall and Jim Zola, never again!

1988 conservation issues: Mid Atlantic region

by Mac Thornton

The early fall of 1988 brought a bounteous harvest of victories for river conservationists in the Middle Atlantic states. The first big plum occurred when the Maryland state government killed the hydro project pending on the Savage River. Then the fruit picking switched to Capitol Hill. Congressman Nick Rahall's bill to establish a Gauley River National Recreation Area survived several deadly attacks and was passed. Rahall then worked some more magic and got a bill through which amended the official project

purpose lists at 13 major Army Corps dams in our area, including several of critical importance to paddlers. The operations of these dams must now take into account "downstream whitewater recreation!"

Alas, as winter came, new challenges to free flowing rivers have emerged. The Savage is threatened by a new hydro developer. And three hydro projects have been proposed for the James River in Richmond. We will need more harvests of victories in years to come.

Lower Potomac.

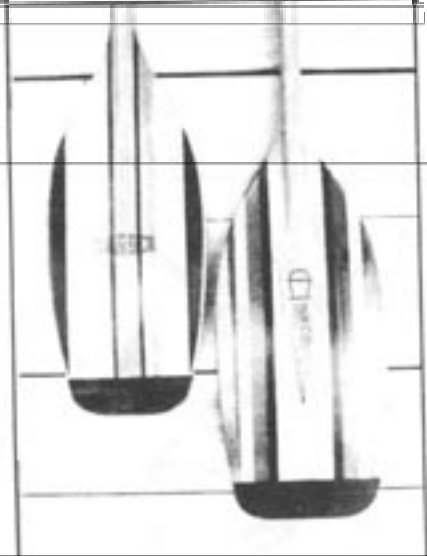


Water spews from the tubes of Summerville Dam on the Gauley. The Gauley received added protection in 1988.

Great Falls paddling for experts has been an genie in a bottle for years. The top of the bottle blew off when The Washinaton Post published an article talking about a "showdown" with

the National Park Service (which controls both banks of the river in the Falls area) over racer Eric Jackson's plans to run a highly publicized slalom race over the Falls.

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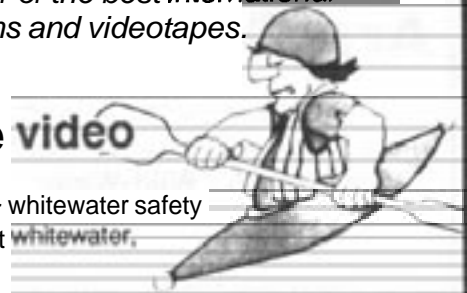
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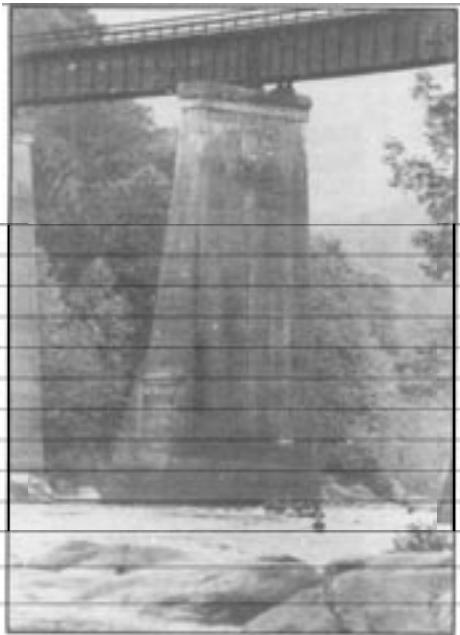
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Looking downstream at the Yough's Railroad Rapid—hydro threatens the Yough's minimum flow.

Washington's Canoe Cruisers Association (CCA) has been meeting and negotiating with the National Park Service, to head off any unjustified restrictions on Potomac paddling. But Pandora's box is open: Great Falls paddling registration regulations have been proposed by the Maryland Dept.

of Natural Resources

(DNR), which controls the river itself.

Savage. Haunted


by the specter of hydro on our beloved Savage racecourse, paddlers with the Savage River Defense Fund succeeded in persuading the Maryland DNR to deny permission for the developer to use state-owned lands adjacent to the Dam. FERC then dismissed the developer. Thank you, Maryland DNRI

But a few days after Halloween, FERC pulled a trick out of its witch's brew of procedures: it issued a preliminary permit for a study of hydro on the Savage by a new hydro developer. In this different type of proceeding, the opposition of the State will not block the developer.

Now, paddlers are stirring a new kettle: to per-

suaide Maryland to pass legislation requesting Federal administrative designation of the Savage as a Wild and Scenic River. If successful, this action would drive stakes through the hearts of the howling hydromaniacs.

Cheat Tributaries. The 500-year-plus flood in November, 1985 spawned a hydrological study paid for by West Virginia, which proposed the construction of five "dry" dams in the upper Cheat watershed: Gandy Creek, Laurel, Dry, Shavers and Gladly Forks. The Army Corps is skeptical about the economics of the proposal, but has been furnished with financing for a major flood control study. The study will look at,



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among other things, "headwaters reservoirs."

Lower Youghiogheny Access. Lead by CCA and Three Rivers Paddling Club, paddlers have designed a way to get the daily quota of Lower Yough hardboaters (192) increased, that is, a rulemaking petition to the Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Resources (DER). The 192 figure was based originally on a river capacity study of prevailing conditions from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm. Why not allow hardboaters over 192 onto the river after 3:00???

Lower Youahioahenv Hydro. The Yough Lake Dam hydromaniac took irresponsibility to new depths when

he proposed constructing his project over the summer, and providing only 125 CFS of water to downstream whitewater interests. Disaster was averted, largely due to Pennsylvania DER, which required 650 CFS for Ohiopele over the summer. Late in the year, the hydro license was transferred to a new party, and FERC again ignored A.W.A.'s pleas to impose reasonable assurances for Ohiopele whitewater.

Upper Youghioahenv Land Acquisition. The "Upper" is proving to be the Middle East of river issues. Some paddlers are enthused about mounting a Savage-style raffle to benefit land acquisition for the Upper

Yough, but the Natural Lands Trust (NLT), a private organization, is presently unsure of its future in the Valley. NLT is about to acquire several tracts of land from Swallow Falls to Friendsville which now belong to Pennelec. But NLT may then close up shop, unfortunately.

Maryland DNR's land acquisition efforts are stymied for the moment due to local landowner problems, as well as the existence of an overall cap on the amount of land which the State is permitted to own in Garrett County. The Canoe Cruisers Association is leading the effort to figure out how paddlers can help preserve the Upper Yough corridor through fundraising, politi-

cal activism, etc. But these are deep, dark waters, folks.

Upper Youghiogheny Rafting Regulations. Maryland DNR's capacity study of the Upper Yough got started too late to look specifically at the major problem: raft/kayak jam ups during summer two-hour releases. Despite this serious flaw, the study will hopefully establish the need for restrictions on rafting, especially during these short summer flows. Washington paddler Steve Taylor is doing the hydrological aspects of the study.

Gauley Meadow. Bluestone. New. Victory in Congress as the Gauley and Lower Meadow gain permanent protection as

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the Gauley National Recreation Area, under the management of the National Park Service. Also, the Middle Atlantic area gets its first (other than the Delaware) federal Wild and Scenic River: the lower 13 miles of the Bluestone.

Late in the year, Congress made downstream whitewater recreation an official project purpose of all

major dams affecting flows on the New and Gauley. A lucky thing too, since the Army Corps bungled the flows in the drainage area so badly over the summer that the fall Gauley season had only one weekend of full flows.

Greenbrier. Paddlers are looking over the plans of the Army Corps to cook up a justification for

flood control structures on the Greenbrier. Four dam sites between Cass and Marlinton are under consideration.

James. Paddlers in the Richmond area are facing the potential loss of most of the major rapids on the James in the city as the result of three separate hydro proposals. The details have yet to be

sorted out, but two of the projects are in the Hollywood - Belle Isle area, and one downstream at Manchester Dam (Twelfth St.). A.W.A., the Coastal Canoeists and other organizations are intervening in the FERC proceedings.

More conservation updates on page 47

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Use the winter months to prep gear for the upcoming whitewater season

The months before spring move slowly for whitewater paddlers. For many of us, thoughts turn to winter sports such as skiing or ice climbing. Even hardy winter boaters usually find that there are a few weeks when it's just too cold for fun boating. But before you take to the water again, take a moment to think about your gear. Just as paddlers must react to changing river con-

ditions, they must also be aware of problems which develop in their equipment over time. Whether you're repairing normal wear and tear or modifying a product to suit your particular style, a little time spent now will make paddling safer and more fun when the water flows again.

Outfitting check

Every paddler has a responsibility to maintain his or her boat so that it paddles comfortably, yet allows an obstructed exit. Muscle

power and well-designed outfitting, not a tight fit, is the key to the fit needed for good boat control. Designing the correct outfitting may take some time and trouble, but it is necessary for comfort and safety.

I am continually amazed to find skilled and knowledgeable paddlers refusing to make their outfitting fit correctly. My favorite example of this craziness is a nationally-ranked C-1 paddler of my acquaintance who will not modify a thwart that hangs so low that he cannot pull his feet clear quickly. He was almost killed in a race some years ago when he missed his roll; the boat wrapped around a rock and only the fast thinking of a fellow competitor

stood between him and death, surprisingly, even this frightful experience has not motivated him to change his seating arrangement. Today he has many imitators within the squirt boating community who fit so tightly in their boats that they cannot escape quickly in an emergency. Some have paid for their stubbornness with their lives.

Most outfitting problems are less dramatic, but no less real. Whitewater canoes and kayaks must be outfitted for a swift, clean escape in the event of trouble. You must know from your own experience that you can get out quickly; if you seldom bail out on the river practice your wet exits at pool sessions until you're sure that everything is lined up right. Perhaps your boat is just too tight, and needs a new, larger cockpit opening installed. This is a major job, but other glitches are simpler to solve. Perhaps you keep catching your feet in your thigh braces when you bail out of your canoe, and a different style of outfitting is needed. Maybe you keep cutting yourself on a sharp object inside the cockpit, or bruising yourself because your knee pads are worn too thin to give sufficient protection. The solutions to these problems require only a few minutes of your time. Do it now before you hit the rivers again!

This is also a good time to check other key components of your boat's safety system. Grab loops are often overlooked, but they are important when making rescues. They eventually become frayed, and should be replaced with high-quality climbing rope.

Foam pillars should also be inspected, since they are necessary to prevent deck collapse in covered boats. Many older kayaks feature shoddily-installed walls which can fall over, creating additional problems for the user. In fiberglass boats the walls can



By Charlie Walbridge
AWA Safety Chairman

simply be **reglued**; I recommend "Liquid Nails", a widely available paneling adhesive which spreads like peanut butter and is easy to use in tight places. When the fit is poor, the walls should be replaced. In **roto-molded** boats glue does not hold, and the walls must be attached mechanically to the deck and hull with brackets. This may require considerable ingenuity, but it must be done.

Sprayskirt fit

A whitewater **sprayskirt** has two contradictory functions: it must stay on when the boat and paddler are **thrown** around by heavy whitewater while rolling, yet release in an instant when the experience becomes too intense. Pre-release can cause severe problems in big water; no release at all is potentially fatal. Now's the time to make sure that the **sprayskirt** fits right.

Occasionally, pre-release is due to a cockpit rim with an insufficient lip or a too-tight fit that only a replacement with a custom-made spraywver can deal with. But if your **sprayskirt** is **pre-releasing**, take the following steps before rebuilding your cockpit rim or buying a new cover:

1. Tighten the shock cord if possible, although not so much that the release is compromised.
2. Put the sprayskirt on your kayak and leave it there for a week or more. The neoprene will stretch slowly. **conforming** perfectly to the shape of your boat. I do this with all new **sprayskirts**.
3. On rob-molded boats, rough up the cockpit rim with **coarse** sandpaper. If this does not help, apply a thin **coat** of **wetsuit** glue. Messy, but it works!
4. If buying a new spraycover, the fit should be slightly loose rather than drum-tight. a spraywver which is merely snug across the cockpit opening will absorb the force of crashing waves ad huge holes, or the thrashing of an inverted paddler hying to roll up.

If a **sprayskirt** will not release cleanly, it may be too tight. Loosening the shock cord may help, but the man-

hole-style gum rubber strip models will not come off without a grab loop. If you choose a tight spraycover, the grab loop must be strong and foolproof. Don't use it if there is any question in your mind about its effectiveness.

Check protective gear

This is also a good **time** to examine your protective gear. Here's a checklist:

LIFE JACKETS--Check the zipper and fabric for wear; check the floatation for compression. If possible, floatation test older life jackets. Replace if not in good shape.

HELMETS--Examine foam liner and straps. Repair or replace worn parts. Also, if you've started **running** bigger stuff it may be time to retire that lightweight helmet, replacing it with a top-of-the-line model.

WETSUITS--Glue tears with **wetsuit** glue. Badly worn areas can be built up with Aquaseal. This remarkable product is great for repairing worn areas on sprayskirts, gloves and booties, too. The finished repair wears longer than the original surface.

DRYSUITS--Cuffs should be sprayed with **silicone** prior to storage to keep them from drying out. Cuffs which are cracked or worn should be replaced before they fail on the water. Suntan lotion, chlorine and salt water is very bad for cuffs. Often **the first** indication of your mistreatment is a cuff which has inexplicably rotted away. Rinse thoroughly with fresh water before putting the suit away in the closet.

If the cuffs are in good shape but have stretched out until they are starting to leak, take them in by folding them over on themselves, gluing the fold down with **wetsuit** glue. This will get you **an** extra season's use (or more) from your gaskets without the extra expense. It's also an appropriate technique for those of you who bought suits with cuffs that were always too loose.

If your suit leaks, take it into a dark room with a flashlight. Shine the light **from** the inside; the leaks will appear as pinpoints of light. Mark these spots for later **sealing** with dabs of

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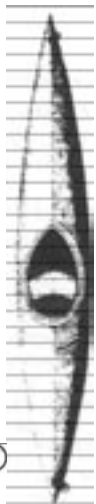
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Aquaseal.

PADDLE JACKETS, PANTS
AND PILE--Now's the time to get holes
repaired, seams sewn up, and elastic
replaced. If you need new gear, the
selection at the paddle shop is best in
early spring.

Safety equipment maintenance

Good paddlers use their res-
me tools so seldom that it's important
to give them the once-over from time to
time.

KNIVES--Sharpen and check
safety latch and attachment to PFD. If
the latch does not work, devise backup
or find a different position to attach it.

Gerber Knife Users: I disagree
with the person who feels that the de-
sign of the knife is defective. If the knife
is carried in the sheath with the clip
towards the life vest (as the article in a
previous American Whitewater de-
scribed) the vest can push the clip down
and cause pre-release. Carry with the
clip facing AWAY from the life vest to
avoid this problem.

Tekna Knife Users: The gate
on the Tekna can become worn so it
does not grab the holes in the handle
effectively. To make the catch more
positive, reshape the "hook" on the
gate with a small circular file.

Frankly, I don't trust any of
these clips, and since you seldom need
a "quick-draw" with a river knife I
prefer to carry a folding knife. The Gerber
"Exchange-Blade" knife is my choice,
since you can exchange the blade for a
very effective small saw for cutting
people free of roto-molded kayaks.

CARABINERS--Carabiners
will become very stiff after prolonged
exposure to water. Lubricate the gate
until it snaps back and forth freely.
Also: try to find another place to attach
the "biers" other than across the back
of your life vest shoulder. I know a
number of people who have been badly
bruised when a rock hits the "biner"
during a roll or swim.

RESCUE BAG--Check rope for
wear; bag for signs of deterioration.
Replace if needed.

FIRST AID KIT--Replenish

supplies.

WATERPROOF BAGS AND
IBOXES--Check for wear and leaks. Small
holes can be repaired with aquaseal;
replacement gaskets are available for
boxes.

Whitewater sport demands on
the individual taking personal respon-
sibility for managing the risk. The buck
stops with each paddler and starts with
his equipment. Don't delay; do it now.

Basic first aid a prerequisite for boaters

by Stanley B. Burdick

Is there an EMT in the group?

These words were the first
indication we had that someone was
hurt.

The weather this past summer
in New Hampshire was similar to eve-
rywhere else in the country, hot and
dry. Our usual summer play holes, 15
to 30 minutes from Concord, had dried
up. The weekend releases from Ayers
Dam in Bristol were hardly large enough
to support the fish life. Each weekend it
became harder and harder to "get wet."

This weekend, myself and three
others decided to make a trip to the
Androscoggin River in Errol, NH. From
Concord this figured out to be three
hours driving to the river and three
hours driving home again. You have to
need a "river fix" pretty bad to make
this a one day excursion, and we did.

The section of the Androscog-
gin that we were aiming at comes
complete with a dirt road along one
side, a camping site, a river outfitters
store, a bridge for viewing and a big
pool at the take out. It's a great spot for
beginners and classes are usually going
on each day.

The river itself is dam released,
mostly class two in this section which is
several hundred yards long and falls
beneath the Route 26 bridge. This spot
serves as the site of a number of races

because of its large waves and strong play holes.

Crowds of tourists line the bridge to watch the "crazies" make their boats dance and dive.

We had already made two descents trying to work out the kinks of the long car ride. At the end of each run we played in the pool working on our rolls. Bob Berliner and Greg Hritcko competed in what they called the "Great American Roll Off". The stated purpose was to see how many times you could continuously roll over and over before you succumbed to the chronic dizzies. I don't remember who actually won, but it was great entertainment.

To get back to the top for another run, we would just drag our boats in the grass along side the dirt road.

We stopped at the river outfitters for a drink and a chance to watch the tourists who had stopped on the bridge to watch us.

As we sat there, we heard the calls and saw a group of four or five persons running up the road from the takeout with an aluminum canoe between them and a young boy sitting in the middle.

Both myself and Greg are National Ski Patrollers. We've learned never to go anywhere without our loaded patrol belts. I offered my assistance and Greg ran to the car to get my belt.

It seems that the family had been watching all the fun from the bridge and decided to give it a try in the family canoe.

Dad sat on the stem seat,

daughter on the floor in the middle, Mom on the bow seat and the five year old boy in the front of Mom on the floor.

Witnesses to this accident said both children looked petrified as they approached the roughest water. The boy in the bow was screaming in terror as each wave broke over his head.

To no ones surprise, the boat flipped over just under the bridge. All passengers did have PFD's but the boy evidently had his leg pinned between the boat and a rock.

My primary assessment indicated a surprisingly clean laceration about six inches long and about on half inch deep.

A secondary assessment indicated no broken bones, strong distal pulse, and no other injuries.

Treatment consisted of stopping the bleeding, and treating for shock...simple, basic, first aid.

Simple and basic. but no one in the group that had pulled the family out had any idea what to do in that situation.

It's amazing to me so few people take the time to learn basic first aid.

Our sport is no more dangerous than any other when people are trained, well equipped, and use good common sense. But all sports have a certain amount of inherent risk. Likewise, all sports enthusiasts, especially those whose sports take them into wilderness areas, should take the responsibility for knowing what to do in case of a medical emergency.

The majority of accidents can be handled with a very few basic first aid skills.

In this instance, as first responders, we had to deal with two problems; 1. Bleeding and 2. Shock. Complicating the situation was a 45 minute drive to the nearest hospital.

To control most bleeding, you need to remember just two directions: 1. Pressure--Apply direct pressure to the wound. This is best if you happen to have a sterile dressing but if you don't use anything you've got, a shirt, a towel, your hand. A dirty wound is better than bleeding to death. 2. Elevation: Elevate the wound above the heart. In this case we were able to lay the boy down on his back with his feet slightly raised.

To control shock, you also need to remember only two directions: 1. Heat--Maintain body warmth. This doesn't mean build a fire under them, just keep them from losing or gaining further heat. On an extremely hot day it may actually mean moving them out of the sun so as not to over heat. 2. Position--Put them in the shock position which is generally on their back, head flat with feet slightly raised.

This was all anyone could do for this boy. We were able to stabilize the injuries, prevent further damage, and make him comfortable for transport to the hospital.

If you have never had a first aid course, take one. If you've taken one in the past, get out your old books and dust them off.

See you on the river.

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Reintroducing...the Otter



Colorado wildlife officials have reestablished populations of the otter.

Maybe you can see one.,, if you're a class V boater,

by Bob Gedekoh

Whitewater enthusiasts paddling several popular rivers in Colorado may be fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of some of North America's most elusive and uncommon inhabitants thanks to the Division of Wildlife of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. Since 1976 more than one hundred otters have been released in Rocky Mountain National Park, in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison River, along the class V section of the Piedra River and, most recently, along the Delores. The Division hopes to reestablish the species in the state; the last native Colorado otter probably perished about 80 years ago.

The otter release project represents just one aspect of Colorado's unique program to protect and reintroduce endangered species. Perigrine falcons, black footed ferrets, bald eagles, and greater prairie chickens are also among those targeted by the non-game "Do Something Wild" campaign.

The non-game endangered species program is budgeted at nearly one million dollars this year. Approximately \$372,000 of this total was raised through a voluntary state income tax check-off last year, reflecting strong public support. The remainder of the budget was met with matching funds

from the federal government and with reserves from previous years. During the past ten years Coloradoans have donated more than 5.1 million dollars for the management and protection of threatened and endangered species. Colorado's prototype wildlife tax check-off has been so successful that more than thirty states have adopted the plan; last year more than nine million dollars was raised nationally.

Of all the endangered species included in the project, the otter is most likely to catch the fancy of whitewater boaters. After all otters and boaters share the same playgrounds. The otter's proficiency in navigating whitewater commands our respect and its lifestyle elicits our envy.

Otters were prevalent throughout the North American continent until the eighteenth century. But as their riparian habitat was disturbed by settlement they became increasingly scarce, eventually disappearing completely from at least fifteen states, including Colorado. As things stand, most Americans will probably never see an otter in the wild, which is unfortunate, since they are among nature's most beguiling creatures.

The North American River Otter (*Lutra canadensis*) is a member of the Mustelidae family, as are the weasel, mink, martin, wolverine, black-footed ferret, fisher, badger and skunk. And though its relatives may not be particularly endearing creatures, the otter has attained a widespread popularity, thanks, at least in part, to the frequent portrayal of its playful antics in televised wildlife documentaries.

Unlike most of its relatives the otter is known for its sociability, both towards its own kind and towards man. Intelligent, active and quick, otters have attained a fun loving reputation because of their exuberant approach to life. Otters play alone, with one another, and even with man, rolling, tumbling and sliding along riverbanks, juggling pebbles underwater and engaging in aquatic wrestling and gymnastics.

They are uniquely adapted to their aquatic environment and rarely wander far from open water. On land their undulating gait appears decidedly comical but in water their streamlined form and superb swimming abilities

The Piedra: Technical, precipitous rapids

Described as a little sister to the magnificent Animas, located nearby, the Piedra has a charm all its own. While the Animas flows between towering peaks through an expansive valley, the Piedra flows through a series of precipitous box canyons and steep forested slopes. The Animas features continuous big water action, while Piedra offers technical, precipitous rapids that are, for the most part, pool-drop.

Most parties launch at the Piedra Road

Bridge about ten miles north of Pagosa Springs. Immediately below the put-in paddlers enter an intimate mini-gorge which serves as an appetizer for what is to come. The Piedra is tiny here, but within a few miles sev-



eral tributaries add significantly to the volume. Several class IV rapids lie within a stunning box canyon. Those who have difficulty here should take out at the Hunter Campground, not far downstream, for the rapids in the next box canyon are decidedly more difficult. The Hunter Campground can serve as an alternate put-in when water levels are low.

Boaters should be vigilant as they enter the box canyon below the Hunter Campground, especially at high water, when a swim in one rapid could mean a swim through the next. The canyon contains a series of class IV-V rapids. Midway through this canyon a steep slide/falls should be scouted and/or portaged depending on the level of the water and the party's ability.

Shortly below the box canyon lies the Piedra's most difficult rapid, the Eye of the Needle. This rapid features a potentially deadly pinning situation and should be scouted carefully. Most will choose to portage on river

right, especially at high water.

After traversing several more technical rapids the Piedra eases up. The Lower Piedra Campground, located about twenty miles from the put-in, is a convenient take-out and a delightful place to camp. It can be reached by turning right off route 160 immediately after crossing the bridge over the river. The town of Pagosa Springs, located midway through the shuttle, contains several hot springs which are worth visiting after a long day on the river.

Kayakers will need advanced skills to tackle the class IV-V action on the Piedra. At high water, over 1500 cfs, expert skills are required. The gradient is 55 feet/mile overall, but is greater than 100 feet/mile in the box canyon below Hunter Campground.

For more detailed information and a map consult Doug Wheat's excellent guidebook, *The Floater's Guide to Colorado*, published by the Falcon Press, P.O. Box 279, Billings, MT 59103.

durability and rich texture. The coat of North American otters is brown; those found in the north and east generally are darker than those found in the south and west.

Their underside is pale, sometimes almost silver. Ranging to four feet in length, one-third of that tail, they have small rounded ears, a broad muzzle and fully webbed feet.

Otters are diurnal creatures, they may be active almost anytime during the night and day, and they do not hibernate in winter. They feed primarily on fish, amphibians and mollusks but also eat reptiles, birds, insects and small mammals on occasions. "Crustaceans such as crayfish are candy to otters," according to Mark Konishi, a District Wildlife Manager in the southwestern portion of the state. Konishi spent more than forty days exploring the inaccessible box canyons of the Piedra River to monitor the progress of the released animals, and, in 1987, he sighted an immature animal.

This was the first documented reproduction of the transplanted animals and was no small cause for celebration among the project's supporters, since the primary goal of the reintroduction program is to establish breeding populations.

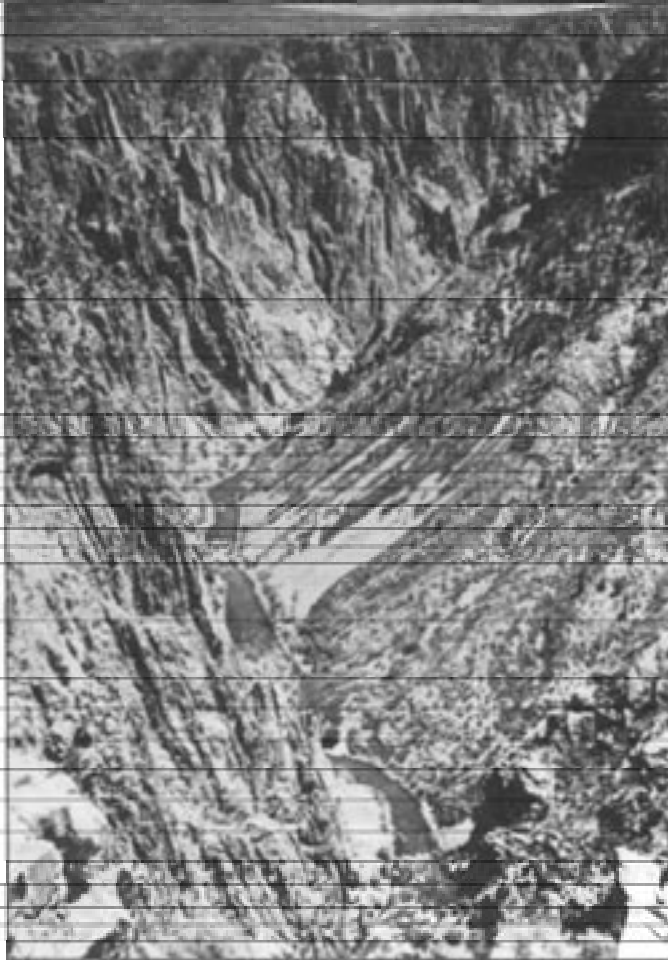
"When I was transferred to the Chimney Rock District, I began trying to monitor the Piedra on my own. And there's no effective way to do that except to walk it during the winter," Konishi observes. "Otters are pretty slippery and hard to catch up with. I thought that it was real possible that they had reproduced and that it hadn't been confirmed because the Piedra is so inaccessible."

Konishi is enthusiastic about the otter reintroduction program and has asked the assistance of kayakers tackling the Piedra River.

He reminds boaters not to disturb the animals and asks them to report any sighting to the District office in Durango.

"Late June and July are critical

and vulnerable times for the otters because that is when they teach their young to swim and hunt. Since they are intelligent creatures much of their behavior is learned and not innate."



The rugged Colorado canyonlands offers an isolated environment away from man's encroachment.

Whitewater boaters on the Piedra may well witness this otter education, since June is the peak boating season on the Piedra.

Located in southwestern Colorado near Pagosa Springs, the Piedra offers a 26 mile premiere wilderness unrated class four or five depending on water levels. Two intricate and pristine box canyons with near vertical walls highlight the trip from the Pagosa Bridge to the Lower Piedra Campground. Several steep, technical rapids punctuate the second half of the run and at higher levels portages may be mandatory. Advanced kayakers are more likely to site the otters on the easier sections of the river, since they may well be preoccupied on the

more difficult segments. Otters have reportedly wintered near the put-in, while others migrated downriver to the section below the take-out. Trapping on the Piedra has been

restricted to protect the otters; Konishi reports that local sportsmen have been cooperative.

Otters released in Colorado have been obtained from Newfoundland, Wisconsin, Washington and most recently Oregon. A four year hiatus in relocations ended this year with the release of six otters on the Delores River, two of them female. Division officials are understandably reticent to reveal the exact location of the release but confirm that it is on a section of the river frequented by recreational boaters.

The Delores offers boaters nearly two hundred miles of navigable river; including the option for multi-day raft runs. Popular sections of the river include the Ponderosa Gorge and the Slick Rock and Gateway Canyons.

Animals released this year on the Delores were implanted with eighteen month transmitters which will allow biologists to monitor their location and survival. The Division plans to release additional animals on the Delores during the next two summers.

Obtaining suitable animals for reintroduction into

the wild has not been easy; otters are notoriously difficult to trap and transport unharmed

Otters can adapt their reproductive behavior and physiology to their environmental circumstances. They generally breed in late winter or spring but through some poorly understood mechanism, they can delay the implantation of the fertilized eggs for up to 280 days. Birth occurs about fifty days after implantation, usually in early spring. In some areas otters apparently bear young every other year, while in other habitats they give birth yearly.

Litter size ranges from one to six, although two to four are most common. Birth occurs in a natal den along the river.

Expedition boating: Not for sissies

Traversing the Gunnison through the National Monument from the East Portal to the Monument boundary is a twelve mile ordeal that is not for sissies. Sometimes the kayak carries the boater and sometimes the boater carries the kayak. Discouraged by the prospect of long, mandatory portages through brutal terrain, many experts choose not to attempt the run at all.

Bounded on either side by sheer cliff walls one-half mile high, the Gunnison's gradient averages 100 feet/mile but ranges to 240 feet/mile in the unrunnable section upstream of the famous Painted Wall. Here the river flows around and under gigantic slabs of rock that have toppled into the river. Class VI cascades terminate in inescapable siphons. So much of the flow passes beneath the rocks that at some sites it is possible to cross the river without getting your feet wet.

Most of the second day is spent carrying loaded kayaks over, around and under stone monoliths and across cliff faces festooned with poison ivy that is chest high. Progress is excruciatingly slow and there is no room for carelessness. A serious injury would be catastrophic; it is difficult to imagine how evacuation could be effected from much of the Canyon.

Expert boating skills and basic rock climbing skills are essential. Camping gear must be minimized because of weight considerations, but carabiners and a fifty foot length of dependable rope are required.

There are beautiful sites for camping along the river but they are few and far between. The scenery is, needless to say, incomparable, and the fishing is excellent,



but it takes a lot of fortitude and a sunny disposition to appreciate these aspects of the experience.

All expeditions must be cleared through the National Monument Superintendent in advance. Considering the seriousness of the undertaking this is a reasonable requirement. The Monument rangers report that, to their knowledge, no one has ever kayaked the Canyon twice.

At 380 cfs the river is scrappy but passable. Doug Wheat suggests a level of 300-500 in his *Floater's Guide to Colorado*. Others have suggested 1000-1500 as optimal, though the considerable dangers of the run are doubtlessly enhanced by higher levels.

Most parties elect not to carry out below Warner's Point or at Red Rock Canyon, but continue on the river through the Gunnison Gorge. After surviving the Black Canyon Run the Gorge seems almost effortless.

Anyone considering this expedition should carefully review the information in Doug Wheat's book as well as the fine article by Scott Gerber and Gary Ratcliff in the April, 1988 issue of *River Runner*. They are not exaggerating. Do not underestimate the seriousness of this undertaking!



The newborn are blind and helpless, but are otherwise fully formed replicas of the adults. The pups are introduced to the water at about seven weeks of age and weaning occurs at three months. Female otters are very attentive parents, teaching the pups to swim and capturing and releasing live prey, giving the pups firsthand hunting and foraging experience. These small family groups reflect the sociability of the species. The offspring from the previous breeding season often remain with their mother into their second year. Females aggressively protect their young from danger; this behavior accounts for the rare instances of attacks on humans.

Individual animals may range ten to sixty miles on a watershed. Males travel more and may breed with several females during a single season. Sexual maturity is achieved by age two but young males may not breed for several years because of competition from older animals.

Otters rarely do much burrowing

on their own. They appropriate the abandoned dens of beaver or utilize natural shelters such as hollow logs, log jams or rock piles. Over the years several such dens have been identified near the release sites on the Gunnison and the Department has received recent reports of sightings of otter within the Black Canyon. These may, in fact, be the offspring of the twenty otters that were relocated there in the late seventies, since those original otters should be near the end of their lifespans. But monitoring the otters within the Black Canyon has proven particularly difficult since the river is so inaccessible.

Otters were released at the East Portal, which serves as the boaters' put-in for the Black Canyon Run, and near the junction with the North Fork, which serves as the take-out for the Gunnison Gorge Run.

The Black Canyon Run, starting at the East Portal and continuing twelve miles downstream to the National Monument boundary, offers some of the most

difficult expeditionary kayaking in the west. Requiring at least three days, the Canyon Run is rarely tackled by more than one or two parties of expert boaters a year. A significant portion of the river is quite unrunnable, flowing under slabs of rock that range to three stories high.

At some points the river lies nearly 3000 feet below the rim; the cliff walls are the highest in the state. Access to the river is limited to several steep draws, and there are no marked trails.

A few intrepid trout fishermen brave the precipitous descent to visit the

Gold Medal waters of the Gunnison. Rainbow and brown trout attain immense proportion in the bowels of the Canyon where special restrictive fishing regulations are in effect.

The Black Canyon National Monument boasts black bears, coyotes and occasional bobcats and cougars, all capable of preying on otters. But it is generally believed that otters rarely fall victim to such predators if they have ready access to the sanctuary of free flowing water.

The lower section of the Black Canyon, known to boaters as the Gunnison Gorge, lies outside the National Monument boundaries. This 16 mile class 3-4 stretch of river is more accessible to river runners and appropriate for those with intermediate to advanced skills. It is here that boaters are most likely to encounter the otters. Beaver and muskrats are more common and their sign may be confused those of the otters. Golden eagles and red tailed hawks frequently circle overhead and thousands of cliff swallows nest along the river, raising a ruckus as boaters drift by.

Fishing in the Gunnison Gorge is nearly as good as that upstream in the Canyon, and several raft companies offer float fishing expeditions.

Although fish make up a large portion of the diet of otters, Colorado fishermen have been reassured that the reintroduction of the species should not adversely effect trout populations. In truth it may actually enhance trout fishing, since otters tend to feed on slower, non-game "rough fish", which compete with trout for food.

It is also good news to the Division personnel who released more than 110,000 fry of the threatened greenback cutthroat trout in Colorado streams during the past five years. Like the otter, greenback cutthroat trout had been extirpated in Colorado during the past century, but the Division hopes that they will be restored to game fish status by the end of the decade.

The reintroduction of native species like the otter and cutthroat trout may well serve more than an aesthetic purpose according to Mark Konishi. Populations of these animals may serve as an early indicator of developing environmental problems. For instance the disappearance of otters from West Virginia and in parts of Kentucky and Tennessee has been attributed to acid drainage from mining opera-



tions.

Konishi sites a well known example. Had it not been for the reduction in numbers of raptors such as the perigrine falcon, the environmental impact of DDT might not have been grasped for years. DDT, now outlawed in the United States, causes thinning of eggshells that leads to breakage. As recently as 1972 there were no successfully breeding pairs of perigrine falcons in Colorado; last year there were at least 23. The Division of Wildlife, in cooperation with the Perigrine Fund and federal agencies, released more than 300 falcons between 1973-87.

A number of these falcons have settled in southwestern Colorado, several nest near the Piedra Campground, frequently utilized by boaters paddling the Piedra and Animas Rivers.

Others nest in the Black Canyon

But because DDT is still widely used in Mexico and South America it continues to be a problem for the falcons according to Judy Sheppard, a Division specialist in non-game terrestrial species. Both the falcons and their prey winter migrate south of the border and since falcons are relatively high on the food chain DDT is concentrated in their bodies. As a consequence many female falcons still have a high incidence of egg breakage.

To reduce this problem eggs are sometimes removed from the nest and shipped to the Perigrine Fund in Boise, Idaho where they are hatched. Often the falcons lay another clutch of eggs, potentially enhancing the multiplication of the species.

It is important to minimize the exposure of the artificially incubated birds to humans when rearing them in captivity, Sheppard says, because they need to imprint with falcon and not human behavior. Some of these juveniles are exposed to captive falcons during this formative stage, while other artificially incubated fledglings are replaced in active falcon nests.

Saving an endangered species is never a simple matter according to Sheppard. It is expensive, time consuming and often frustrating. Ideally species should not be driven to the brink of distinction in the first place. But there are encouraging signs.

A few years ago there were only seventeen black footed ferrets in existence, all in captivity. Now there are fifty eight,



Gunnison Gorge: Scenic, intermediate water

Below the National Monument boundary the Gunnison River continues to flow through a deep canyon, known to boaters as the Gunnison Gorge. This section of the river features class III and IV water that is rafted commercially and can be tackled by kayakers with intermediate to advanced skills.

Although it is possible to put in below Warner's Point or at Red Rock Canyon, most boaters elect the easier, one-mile carry in at Chuckar Gulch. This is not easy to find. To reach the put-in turn east on Falcon Drive off U.S. highway 50. Falcon Drive becomes Peach Valley, a rough, dirt road that must be traversed for

several miles before reaching a BLM picnic site.

From Chuckar Gulch it is 13 miles to the take out at the junction with the North Fork at Delta. The Gorge can be run as low as 400 cfs but Stohlquist recommends 2500 as an optimal level in his Colorado Whitewater. Overall gradient for the run is 24 feet/mile.

The Gorge is extremely scenic and remote, the long stretches of flatwater interspersed throughout the run provide an opportunity to look for beaver, otter, eagles, red-tailed hawks, deer and bighorn sheep. Pike and trout fishing is exceptional but check with local authorities, special "Gold Medal" regulations are in effect.

and biologists hope to reintroduce some of them to the wilds in 1991.

The citizens of Colorado have taken an important first step toward restoring their wilderness environment. Hopefully for animals like the otter and the perigrine falcon, their commitment will not be in vain.

Editors note: Last summer Bob Gedekoh spotted one of the aforementioned otters in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison while on a three day kayaking expedition.

Squirt Boating South of the Border

by Pedro Barrow

*"If the sound of the trumpet be not clear,
who will answer the call to battle?"**



the dream



the reality

Advice from famous Mexican General, **Jugo de Naranja, explaining the need to address the **man-**agement emphatically in Mexican restaurants.*

THE DREAM

Warm tropical breezes softly caressed my face. Palm trees towered above the river bank. Hawks soared overhead as a crimson sunset reflected on river's surface. A fish splashed across the water. Dense jungle underbrush coated the canyon walk, **hiding** the secrets of ancient Toltec warriors and **Olmec** priests. I imagined their pyramids still hidden in the forest, **crumbling** under vines thick with orchids and other exotic species, never seen outside the most remote Central American wilderness.

Nearby I listened to the roar of whitewater, beautiful crystal clear class V whitewater, seldom paddled by gringos. There was no other sound except the occasional call of an exotic bird, high in the tree tops on the canyon rim. The rainy season was just winding up. Rivers were bank-full as they ~~plummed~~ down from the volcanic peaks of Mount Orizaba, the second highest peak in North and Central America.

It was **warm...even** at night. The freezing slush of North America was thousands of miles away. So was the **traffic**, air pollution, anxiety and pressure of work. The cooler was full of the **best Mexican Dos Equis** beer, just next to thick delicious **steaks from range-fed** beef. A **campfire** glowed quietly as I drifted off to sleep on a plush air mattress, dreaming of day after day of fabulous Mexican whitewater, followed by idyllic riverside campsites, and huge **ranch-style** breakfasts.

*This was how I imagined it was going to be...an exotic escape from the southeastern drought, the blown-out Gauley season, and the cold and misery of November in West Virginia. No more frozen zippers on leaky dry suits. No more frost-bitten hands and toes. No more dragging my boat down to the Blackwater through knee-deep snow. No more West Virginia cuisine-- hostess **twinkies** washed down with warm cans of Milwaukee's Best (ugh!). **No, not for me.** I was going to escape to the tropics. I was going whitewater boating in Mexico.*

THE REALITY

Peaceful tropical nights were a rarity in Mexico. During the more than 2 weeks I was there I built up a world-class sleep deficit. Sometimes I was too stiff from a 10-hour shuttles on bone crushing roads, crammed in the rear of a van like a sardine in a can.



Pope "Pedro" Barrow

Sometimes I was roused by the sound of burros tethered just inches from my tent, braying in distress all night long, backed up by a chorus of crowing roosters. The burros were dying, or at least they thought they were dying. The sounds they made at night were like the sound of an alien creature being slowly squeezed to death in a huge vice. Occasionally I felt the urge to mimic their mournful braying. This was even less popular with the other campers than the authentic burro sound itself.

The roosters had problems too. Something went haywire with their timing. Roosters are supposed to wake up and **crow** once or twice at dawn then

go back to the business or roosting-- keeping their beaks shut and making the hens happy. But not Mexican Roosters. First of all there are far too many roosters in Mexico, thousands of them all over the countryside, and probably not enough hens to go around. Second, their internal clocks are completely **out-of-whack**. Plus, they are inconsiderate of other sentient beings, **including** any exhausted **kayakers** trying to sleep in barnyards on the river banks.

When a Mexican rooster makes an announcement, he goes for it **full-bore**, crowing like he has the ultimate answer to the mystery of life, even if it is 2 AM. And when one Mexican rooster announces this, all the rest of the roosters in Mexico have at it too, passing the word along throughout the entire nation. The result: from 2 AM till dawn, roosters control the Mexican countryside. Their only competition is from the dying burros.

Even when you take a break from sleeping out in the barnyards, graveyards, soccer fields, and hydroelectric powersites, a good night's sleep can be hard to find in Mexico. People apparently do not go to Mexican hotels to sleep. In some hotels they install Mariachi bands in a central courtyard-- large, loud Mariachi bands-- and instruct them to serenade the guests until dawn. In some hotels vendors stay up **all night just outside your hotel win-**



Senior Barrow and his **compadres** did manage to find some whitewater during their Mexican excursion. Above the group scouts a **runnable** waterfall.

dow hawking tacos and beer at top volume until sunrise.

O.K. so you don't get any sleep. Big deal. What about that world-famous Mexican cuisine? Well...this is where "adventure travel" really earns its name. If you can eat Mexican food and drink Mexican drinks--in Mexico--for two weeks without being so sick you want to die, you win the adventure travel lottery. No one has even won this lot-

tery. Its not that Mexican food is all bad. Sometimes it is good--like the huge freshwater shrimp caught in the same rivers you paddle. Then sometimes it is just plain weird.

Like the "tacos de came" they sell at the Oaxaca bus station for example. These are tacos filled with some kind of meat ("came"). But even the woks claim not to know what it is. When you ask the cooks what kind of "came" is this, all they do is giggle. I did notice, however, that road kill doesn't last long on Mexican roads.

Mexican restaurants can really be a test of strength. To attract the attention of the waiter, an obnoxious whistle is always necessary. And it may be necessary to follow up with an irate visit to the kitchen. The menu is usually 6 or 7 pages long. This poses major decision making problems, especially if your command of Spanish is limited to "Si" and "No" and some other words from the song "La Bamba".

On the other hand, nothing on the menu is ever actually available so the decision making problem soon goes away and you just eat whatever happens to be in the kitchen at the time. And hope like hell that your number is not up.

When not eating the local restaurant fare, I usually resorted to cold peanut butter and jelly tacos. For me, this was lunch almost every day. The alternative was Mexican rope cheese--more like rope than cheese.

I was pretty smug about local cuisine in Mexico. I ate most everything that was cooked, and drank only things that were bottled. Sometimes I even ate other boater's food when they did not

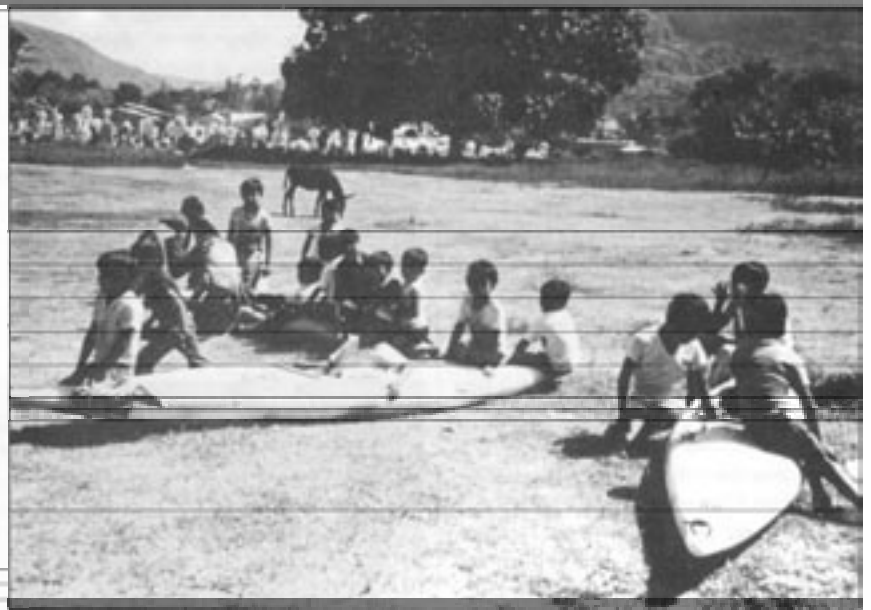
have the intestinal fortitude to go for it. This strategy worked...for a while. I got to watch 11 other people fall prey one by one to the infamous Montezuma's Revenge, sometimes for 2 or 3 days at a time. But finally my secret stash of lomotil ran out, and so did my cache of Pepto Bismol. I knew I was in for trouble. On the last day before leaving Mexico, I learned, like everyone else on our trip,

lines do not inspire a lot of confidence. The airline from Oaxaca to Puerto Escondido, for example, went out of business as I was negotiating with the ticket agent for a one-way flight to the famous West Coast surfing beach.

Why? Because they had only one plane, a DC-3, and the front wheel of this relic broke off as passengers were boarding. When the wheel broke



Left: the wing fell off as passengers were boarding. the aged aircraft; children found kayaks a curiosity. Right: make-shift bridges proved to be a menace to navigation.



why they call Mexico the Squirt Boating Capitol of the World.

O.K. so you don't get any sleep and you get sick from the food, what about travelling? The roads are good, and buses are better, except that if you get on a bus you are not allowed to get off until the bus reaches its final destination. In other words, the capacity of your bladder determines your travel arrangements.

What about planes? Planes go everywhere in Mexico, but it's tough to carry kayaks around on Mexican planes. Also some of the smaller air-

off, the wing hit the tarmac. When the wing hit the tarmac, gasoline spilled out. When gasoline spilled out the maintenance crew hit the road. The last I saw of them was a rear view as they disappeared--pronto--into the scrub across the road from the airport. On the other hand, the 12-hour taxi ride from the airport to the coast was not all that bad. and we did make it in time to see the local señoritas strut their stuff in the Miss Costa Esmeralda contest.

O.K. so you don't get any sleep, you get sick from the food, and traveling by public transportation can be kind

of dicey? What about the local customs and all that. Things are colorful in Mexico. But sometimes they can be a bit difficult to understand.

For example. I arrived on El Dia de **los** Muertes, the Day of the Dead. Mexicans are really into this one. They have been ever since the **time** of the Aztecs. As far as I can tell El Dia de **los** Muertes is just a big party in the

the result of an accident on the Rio **Mezquital**. He was pinned upside down underwater and damaged **his** arteries **and** blood vessels in extricating himself from his boat. The canyon was so remote and inaccessible that it took 2 days for his **companions** to obtain rescue. This was not soon enough to save his legs.

Another problem is **water**

intestinal problems, there is a lot of bad stuff flushing out of those Mexican cities. A good general rule for **survival** might be: Do Not Kayak Downstream of any Sizeable Town in Mexico.

Despite these drawbacks, for the truly desperate, there is some **white-**water here and there in Mexico. In the State of Vera Cruz, for example, you might find some small waves to surf on the ocean. For rivers, in the State of Vera Cruz there are the Actopan and the Antigua in Vera Cruz.

The Actopan is a short **run** with some class III rapids, beautiful green-blue water, and a **runnable** waterfall at the put-in. The **Rio** Antigua is a much bigger river with some extremely scenic "park-quality" canyon scenery. It also has several nice whitewater sections, one with a fabulous sulfur hot springs at the take-out, and three or four interesting rapids downstream of Puente Pescados. The only rapid with a memorable name is "**Mala** Via" (or "Bad Route" in gringo language). The most interesting section of the Antigua is above Puente Pescados, known as the "**Barranca** Grande" section.

In other States, there is good **Jatate**, the



graveyard. Everybody goes out to the cemetery with a lot of food and huge plastic flowers. (They have to use plastic flowers because real flowers would last about 14 seconds under the intense Mexican sun.) The next day they go back for whatever food the dead did not eat up. Naturally this is a substantial amount so they have a huge blow-out. The whole thing is kind of colorful, if you don't mind hanging around graveyards.

O.K. so there are a few inconveniences and cultural adjustments for gringos traveling in Mexico, let's get to the point. What about the whitewater? After all, that was my ostensible excuse for going south of the border in the **first** place.

To be honest, I **think** there is some good whitewater in Mexico, but I really did not see much of it. It must be pretty hard to **find** because the experts from the **Nantahala** Outdoor Center found only two rivers.

With Mexican rivers, access is an issue. So is rescue. In a tragic incident in December of 1986, for example, a gringo kayaker lost both of his legs as



quality. I did not observe a great many environmentalists running amok in Mexico when I was there. Sewage treatment, and water pollution control in general, is not exactly a top political priority. With the second highest population rate in the world, and with 50% of the population suffering from **gasto-**

Santiago, and the **Usumacinta** and further north, the Santa Maria and the **Moctezuma**. There must be a lot more and a lot better stuff if you have the time to really look for up, but it is going to take boaters with cast iron guts to find it. As for me. I may try out the food in Chile next winter.



Constitution State whitewater

This is Connecticut?



John C. Porterfield

Connecticut. Everyone knows about Connecticut.

It's the Constitution State...the nerve center of the nation's insurance industry...the final stop of the commuter train heading north out of New York City...a state with significant whitewater opportunities.

Now wait a second. Something doesn't sound quite right here. Connecticut is the epitome of modern suburbia--a place you leave on the weekend. Can you imagine Connecticut as the destination of a paddling trip?

Connecticut!

But if the truth be known, most of the country holds a misconceived perception of Connecticut--as well as much of New England. Outside of the metropolitan areas, much of the state is dominated by rugged, mountainous topography that hides a fair share of top-notch whitewater.

Connecticut's offering of whitewater excitement is centered primarily in two watersheds, the Housatonic River watershed in the western part of the state, and the Connecticut River watershed, which bisects the state into its eastern and western cultures. A variety of boating opportunities exist for paddlers of every ability level.

For initiates, the wide open Class III ledges of the scenic Covered Bridge section of the Housatonic River makes good sense. For big water and big stakes hydrogambling, the turbulent Bulls Bridge section of the Housatonic further downstream roars to its growing group of followers. For those who like it tight, the steep and deep technical boulder dodge of Sandy Brook and Still River Gorge in the northern part of the state meets the requirements.

Both recreational and racing communities are strong in the Constitution State. Racing interests center at Tariffville Gorge on the Farmington River where U.S. Whitewater Team Coach Ken Stone trains, and at the River House in Falls Village where Olympic

Opposite page: Bob O'Brien is left open-mouthed while descending through 'The Funnel' in the Bulls Bridge Section of the Housatonic River. Photos by Jim Michaud.

C-1 slalom bronze medalist Jamie McEwan hosts the Housatonic Area Kayak and Canoe Squad members, both established and up and coming racers. Slalom races are held annually on the Housatonic on the treacherous Rattlesnake Rapid and at Tariffville Gorge where many levels of slaloms are held, including past Olympic trails and the present Eastern Championships.

Recreational boating is also keen during the summer months at Tariffville Gorge, and during the spring run off on three sections of the Housa-

the put-in below into a large pool. At certain levels it is possible to paddle through the curtain of water dropping over the falls and into a large "room" behind. The views through the water curtain are spectacular! Below, the narrow riverbed drops quickly through a course deeply gouged into the bedrock. The run culminates in an eight-foot waterfall, a real boatbreaker if you line up wrong.

Covered Bridge Section,
Housatonic River



Photo by Bob Palmieri

An open boater descends through the Bulls Bridge section of the Housatonic.

hfi

tonic, Sandy Brook, the Natchaug River and for kamikazes in the Still River Gorge.

The following sections offer a wide variety of boating opportunities to a range of boating abilities. Only you know if you should be on a particular run.

Rattlesnake Section, Housatonic River

This northwestern Connecticut run flows during the spring runoff and in the fall for about a month when water is diverted from the Falls Village Hydro plant for annual repairs. This two mile section hosts an annual slalom, famous for breaking race boats.

A sixty-foot waterfall defines

This section can be run as a five mile or a thirteen and a half mile jaunt through primarily through Class II-III ledges and waves. A great run for developing boaters, it offers easy access to Route 7 (which runs alongside) and winds down through the beautiful Litc eld Hills.

A covered bridge in West Cornwall marks the most difficult rapid of this section. The put-in for the longer section is found opposite the Falls Village Hydro plant, the short stretch starts a mile north of the West Cornwall covered bridge. Take outs can be made along Swifts Bridge Road or at the Lower Housatonic Meadows State Park.



photo by Jim Michaud

Bill Adamson drops down "The Staircase" in the Bulls Bridge section of the Housatonic at low water. The jungle of exposed boulders is should open the eyes of paddlers accustomed to seeing this stretch with more water.

Bulls Bridge Section, Housatonic River

This section found just below the town of Kent is where the big girls and boys come to play in early spring. Bulls Bridge is a cross between the Ottawa and the Gauley, a big water technical experience not for the faint of heart. The top drop, Staircase, is almost always rated a Class V; the rest varies between a Class IV+ and a Class V depending on the level.

The bedrock underlying this run is a maze of carved kettleholes and devil's cauldrons, pulsing and draining the water through sieves, creating weird currents. There are three major rapids; the Staircase (or Stairway to Heaven or Stairway to Hell, depending on who you talk to), the Funnel, and the S-Turn/Pencil Sharpener combo. The Staircase pounds down a series of ledges through nasty pourovers.

The Funnel's lip finds flows from the main current and another

branch of the Housatonic, enigmatically called Dead Horse Gulch, combining and complicating the set up over the ten foot river wide ledge. S-Turn is reminiscent of Greyhouse Bus Stopper but bigger, while Pencil Sharpener is a half-mile long series of holes, more holes and even more holes narrowing down into a pencil sharpener. Generally, five to seven feet on the USGS Gaylordsville gauge means the bull is bustin' loose in Western Connecticut.

Sandy Brook

When the National Weather Service says there is a flood warning in the Berkshires, it's time to pack the car and head for Sandy Brook in Sandisfield, Connecticut. A narrow stream with a small watershed, the levels on the Sandy can fluctuate as much as a foot in an afternoon.

Only a handful of miles down Route from the Upper Farmington stretch

in New Boston (this section is a great warmup) this Class IV (V in high water) steep creeking run demands quick boulder dodging skills through a granite minefield that starts just below the put-in and ends at the take-out. For 4.3 miles, the Sandy pushes relentlessly down the Litchfield hillside, with few eddies, many holes, and quite a few dead-end routes to avoid. Atypical of Connecticut whitewater, this one can scare the pants off of you. Seasoned local boaters who have mastered some of the best runs in the southeast (the Russell Fork, Meadow, Upper Yough above 2.8) say they "saw God" on a recent run at 6.3 on the Sandy Creek gauge.

Still River Gorge

Anything but still, this short but succinct Class V run just down the street from Sandy Brook will give you nightmares if you miss the route. Steep

and rocky, there a half dozen ledges and an undercut cliff face to contend with. For the true kayak kamikazes, this run is found between Sandy Brook and the town of **Riverton**, where the Hitchcock Chair Factory is found.

Natchaug River

Across the Connecticut and north of Hartford lies a quick, short run through a narrow ledgy gorge that can be **run** multiple times in an afternoon. The Natchaug intersects Route 198 in South **Chaplin** near Mansfield State Forest and the University of Connecticut at **Storrs**.

Rapid names like Mousetrap, Cow Sluice and Michaud's Hole label steep ledgy drops with "interesting" hydraulics. While the rapid names on this Class IV section may not strike fear and trepidation, its still a great place to paddle during the spring, **summer** and

fall when it only takes an inch of rain to bring it up to enjoyable levels. Besides, its only a few minutes off of Interstate 86.

Tariffville Gorge Section, Farmington River

Besides the abundance of slalom racing and a slalom training **course** below the main whitewater section. Tariffville Gorge is about the only place to paddle during the summer in Southern New England. Located near the intersection of Routes 187 and 189 on the Tariffville-Bloomfield-East Granby town lines. Tariffville Gorge is about 15 minutes west of Interstate 91.

While not as crowded as **Disney Land**, T-ville (as its called locally) attracts its share of "organized trips" usually intent on destructing canoes, canoeists, and other boaters. A sandy beach, a series of **surfing** waves

and a couple of play holes provide ample entertainment value on a weekend **afternoon**. **Tubers** add to the entertainment, providing that natural selection really is at work.

John Porterfield is the AWA New England Director and is the co-author of Appalachian Whitewater, Volume III: The Northern Mountains which covers Eastern New York State and New England.



photo by Gary Marshuk

Jim Michaud grins as he negotiates the final drop into an eddy on "The Block" on Connecticut's Sandy Brook. The Sandy is the Constitution State's answer to Appalachian steep-creekin'.



The Manchild comes of age

"Body of a man--mind of a child." That derisive assessment of Steve Massaro by his fellow whitewater guides was eventually shortened to simply "the Manchild"--and the nickname stuck. But the AWA had a man-sized job to perform, and despite his eccentricities, Steve was the only one willing to accept the challenge. Who would have thought that Steve was the right man for the job...and that the job was the right experience for the man.

By Peter Skinner

Funny, there is a light on the house--I thought I'd turned them all off before I left yesterday.... Oh yeah, Steve must be back, scrounging food and Scotch. His trusty mutt companion, D.O.G., is cavorting on the front lawn and my river car rust bucket, the much fixed and battered 1981 **Subaru** stationwagon on permanent loan for **AWA's** hydro-site inventory, is planted in the driveway, listing decidedly to starboard.

Dragging myself in the door, I'm met with a vision of hydro chaos--topo maps, slide trays, 3-ring binders, light tables, camera gear, markers, camping stuff and every other imaginable type of hydro-fighting debris is scattered and piled across every surface. The boy is back from another two weeks of AWA hydro site evaluation and the time has come again for resupply, redirection and refinancing.

This isn't new--Steve Massaro. A.K.A. the "**Man-child.**" from **Watertown**, New York has been arriving without **warning** for months. Steve, momentarily re-circulating in a sort of eddy in his life, offered to dedicate this part of his life to preparing a hydro site inventory for AWA. He is at work again.

Although each visit seemed to get more civilized. Steve always brought home some new stories of near death under the wheels of trains on trestles hundreds of feet above raging waterfalls, close shaves with rock slides on the rim of deep chasms, and the never **ending** vehicular breakdowns at all the wrong moments.

One time, the concrete atop a 40 foot dam crumbled, tumbling him to its base along with D.O.G. With the hands and **commitment** of a Superbowl wide receiver, he held the camera high and it escaped undamaged, although Steve's knee did not fare as well. Another time, he posed as a workman with his construction **hardhat** and toured an entire set of projects unrecognized. Still another time, he eluded curious police by driving through a labyrinth of tumbled down hydro project junk. His normal motel was the sleeping bag on a friendly floor or in the back of the car parked by the roadside.

This trip is no different. The front of my be-draggled **Subaru** now looks like it was hit by a very large disc harrow at least five feet wide. Steve corrects me--it was 18 feet wide and blocked the whole road. "There was just no place to go." he says with a shrug. "I got the kid's address..." he snorts. "I'm **gonna** sue him!" He drains the bottle of Scotch into my glass and his and we toast completion of another dozen hydro project site packages.

But then. Manchil's life was never dull. No dummy. Steve excelled in some courses in high school. He loved to write and science was self-evident to him. But his severe stutter and inability to focus too long on any one thing put the cabosh on graduation.

So at 17, without a backward glance, he enlisted--in the Navy, where else? His failure to **arrive** with a diploma, however, nearly left him a **swabby** below decks. But, somehow the Navy gave him a second chance and he checked into anti-submarine warfare school. But after a year of special schooling in Memphis, he flunked the **final!**

Although each visit seemed to get more civilized, Steve always brought home some new stories of near death under the wheels of trains on trestles hundreds of feet above raging waterfalls, close shaves with rock slides on the rim of deep chasms, and the never-ending vehicular breakdowns at all the wrong moments.

He drains the bottle of Scotch into my glass and we toast completion of another dozen hydro project site packages.



Steve Massaro and his constant companion D.O.G survey a stretch of potential whitewater below a New York hydro site. This stretch, now not utilized by New York boaters, could be reestablished with favorable relicensing.

"I was great at all the applied stuff--the 60 hertz submarine prop resonance, mechanical things, navigation... but those damned equations...." his voice trails off. Eyes agleam though, he recounts the story of his post-flunk academic hearing where a fooseball injury the night before (he was studying for the test, of course...) convinced the officers that he had been impaired during the test and passed him anyway.

Sent out to sea on aircraft carriers for helicopter service, Steve went on to serve America with distinction. Something of a renaissance non-com, he became an expert in helicopter mechanics, navigating, piloting, reconnaissance photography and just about anything else on shipboard he was given access to. But after four years of life at sea, numerous close shaves with death (including a tour in the Persian Gulf), many awards for photography and

service proficiency, and promotion to E-5, he left, yearning for something new.

As a civilian back in Watertown, he found construction wasn't it. He tried welding, body-work and restaurants, and lots of other jobs, but just couldn't settle down.

In the early 1980s, Adirondack River Outfitters began to run raft trips down the dreaded Black River Canyon near Watertown. In his spare time, Steve happened to hang out there too. Dressed in his heavy duty Navy survival rain gear and bearing ropes, crowbars and acetylene torches. Steve returned day after day in his role as self-appointed river cleanser to remove rebar and decades of hazardous river junk. Very curious sight indeed.... When surprised customers asked, the raft guides just said. "Oh that's the 'Man-child' (body of a man--mind of a child) at work," and the name stuck.

Eventually, Steve became a raft guide and fixture at the ARO headquarters. His commando style investigations of the controversial Glen Park Hydro Project resulted in the discovery that it was being constructed twice as big as it was licensed for. That discovery provided the fuel for AWA's lawsuit which eventually created the climate for the historic compromise and settlement agreement.

I first met him in 1985 when without guidance, he calmly set up and eventually took over the job of glibly announcing and spinning river tunes at AWA's Black River Festival--hardly the stuttering dropout of a few years earlier.

Raft guiding on the Black was perfect for him--a chance to shepherd down and occasionally rescue terrified young women from threatening whitewater and then drive them back in the bus. His mirrored glasses, dark tan and

good looks, curly black hair and sheepish smile inevitably left them swooning. His apparent lack of clear direction always brought out the mother in each of them too.

In between resupply visits, my phone would ring on and on, a plaintive new cutie from Syracuse, Rochester, Albany, or Queens inquiring whether Steve had arrived yet. That's usually all the warning I'd get that he would soon be pulling in. hungry and thirsty.

He offered his help to AWA at just the right time. Faced with over 500 hydro project proposals in New York state alone, paddlers realized that they had no choice but to pick their fights carefully--only the projects threatening ruination of the most beautiful and paddleable segments could be challenged. Funded in part by the generous support of Yvon Chouinard of Patagonia, AWA contracted with Steve to find and photograph the sites, using our inventory project of this state's threats as a demonstration to the rest of America that the job could be done quickly and cheaply.

Although the original idea seemed simple and manageable, actually locating hidden facilities on unnamed and often gate-blocked backroads turned out to be much bigger hassle. Optimistic projections of 25 plants per week flushed away like deadwood over a falls, Major car repairs--CV joints, brakes, bearings, exhaust systems, etc. became the norm, forcing Steve to temporarily drop our camera and wield socket wrenches instead.

The maps and slides and other chaos on the floor, however, were always gone by morning--along with more of my best single malt. The three ring binders on the makeshift shelf in the river room were filling up fast. Each of hundreds of hydro site permit files were becoming fat with new information and data. Steve memorized every FERC number and site location and never tired of pushing new initiatives. He generated literally hundreds of pages of site descriptions and about five thousand numbered and cross-referenced slides. Each trip netted a new hydro horror, either already underway or threatened. His successes during each trip provided us home-huggers with new vigor to fight the paper wars.

After a Spring sojourn to Costa

Rita as a raft guide. Steve made another big growth spurt. Trading in the junkyard candidate Subaru, and everything else he ever owned, he became the proud owner of a Toyota pickup truck, replete with laser beam ralleye lights and bed cap for him and D.O.G. to sleep in.

Once again, Steve's availability proved timely. We needed to clone his work out West where the hydro battles flared on like the forest fires nearby. So, with his characteristic enthusiasm for AWA investigations, he criss-crossed the states of California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho, driving over 14,000 miles to hunt down bad small hydro projects and relicensing facilities ripe for whitewater improvements. He sought out all the hydro fighters from J.V. Henry in California to Wendy Wilson in Idaho. He visited dozens of project sites and came back loaded down with box after box of river inventory and hydro project documents.

Of course, his adventures there too were legion. Like his interruption of a robbery in progress in Fresno where his ralleye lights drove off intruders who were busting into the Sack of building. Like meeting the indomitable Harriet LaFlamme who single handedly sued FERC and blocked the operation of the Sayles Flat Hydro Project. Like the loss of D.O.G. in Kings Canyon National Forest where Steve stumbled through miles of puckerbrush and near vertical terrain to eventually track down the dog.

He came back with tales of horror about Simplot's (the Idaho potato king) Payette North Fork project. This project would pump [yes, that's pump!] water uphill 1.3 miles from the river at Smith's Ferry into Round Valley (which would then become Round Reservoir after a dam was built and camps removed). From there, 20 foot diameter penstocks would conduct the water underground all the way to Banks--some 14 miles. Needless to say, the impact on the North Fork--America's ultimate whitewater run--would be disastrous. "This project is most insidious project I've seen yet," Steve announced upon his return. Based in part on his vehement support, AWA has chosen the North Fork Payette hydro project for its annual HydroManiac award.

And, of course, the proverbial

brief encounters with the womenfolk. Like the impressionable young sweetie in the laundramat in Dales, Oregon who offered to wash and fold his laundry, etc... while he searched for a late evening dieter. Instead of a restaurant, he and his pickup ended up straddling the third of four railroad track lines on a straightaway with a 100 car freight bearing down. Fate smiled again--the train was on the second track, not the third! Relieved, but unfed, Steve's dreams of a night in unfolded laundry were dashed when he found that her Dad was at the laundramat when he returned.

Back in 1965, Claude Brown wrote a best selling autobiography, Manchild in the Promised Land about a crime hardened Harlem dropout who barely survived a brutal adolescence to become a writer and lawyer. Contemporary book critic. Nat Hentoff, gushed about Brown. "Sprung from the alley, a rare cat...a survivor among the dying and the dead..." In many ways, Claude's story foretells Steve's maturation in the hydro wars and mirrors the rebirth of the Black River and other rivers across the country as meccas for paddlers, thanks in part to Steve's sacrifices and skillful work.

Our Manchild of the rivers continues in 1989 to fight the good fight for relicensing and against bad hydro and pollution. His work is irreplaceable and a beacon for others to try to match. But keep close watch on your Scotch and your women--you never know when the Manchild will drop in.

Post Script

Perhaps, thanks to the rigors of the AWA project, the Manchild has grown up a lot. Although still very much a free spirit, he has gone out and gotten a "real" job and pays on time for his "real" truck. He has accepted a 4 day/week fire fighter post at the local army base at Fort Drum. But....,that still leaves 3 days each week to do what he loves best--saving rivers. The other firefighters don't object to his firehall shelf full of hydro site binders and occasional days off to testify on river issues.



A double dose of

BIG WATER

Sure, a tandem open canoe is a great way for a couple to share whitewater action...but isn't boating the Grand Canyon taking togetherness a little far?

By Betsy Pyle

The longer you boat, the more you hear about rivers. Rivers of mythic proportion. The lure of big water is a powerful thing. Inevitably the Colorado becomes an obsession. You learn the names of the rapids by heart; Crystal, Lava, Hance, Hermit and Grapevine...finally you're hooked. You have to see them for yourself. You have to find out if you have what it takes.

For a long time we'd known that we wanted to run the Colorado. The question was when and how. Jamie felt more confident in his kayak than I did in mine, so always assumed that I'd wind up riding the support raft. But that assumption changed dramatically after we'd moved to Morgantown, West Virginia and spent a couple of solid seasons tandem open boating. We developed confidence in our ability to put our boat where we wanted it on the Cheat Canyon, the New River Gorge and the Lower Gauley.

We believed in our boat, a Mohawk Scamp custom outfitted by Bruce Penrod, and we practiced "Zen and the Art of Canoe Maintenance", carefully fine-tuning it to our idiosyncracies. We felt that we were as ready as we would ever be to tackle Big western Water. We were told that all eastern boaters needed to do was dig and confront the power of western rivers. And so we said, "Let's go for it."

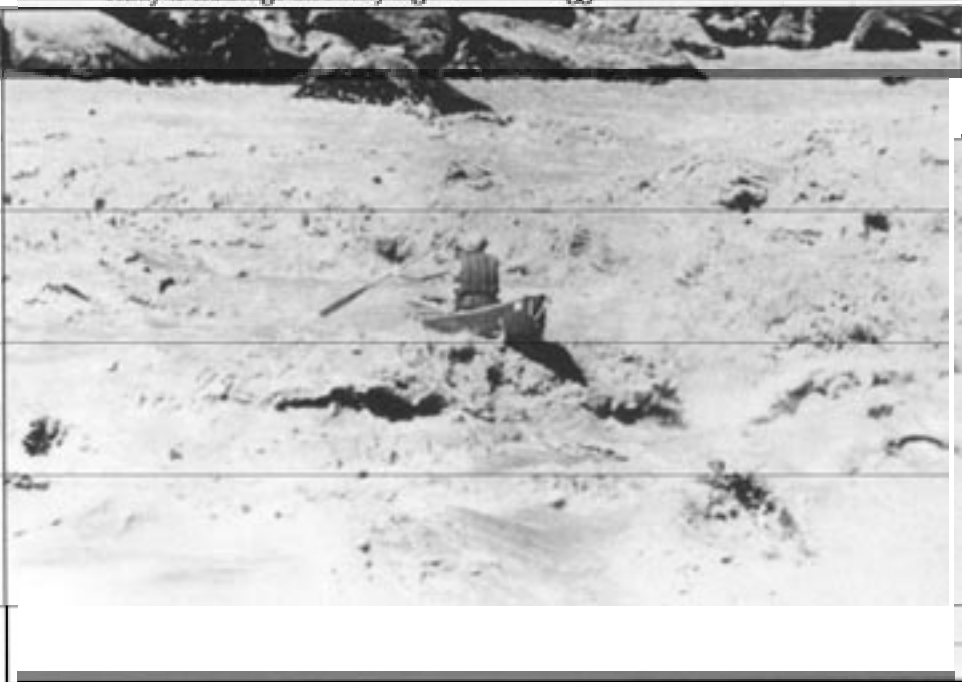
The reaction from our paddling acquaintances was mixed, to say the least, when we announced our intent to paddle a tandem open boat through the Grand Canyon. "You guys are crazy," was an all too familiar retort. Some of our "friends" took delight in listing the names of the drops they thought we would swim. Words of encouragement were few and far between.

In September of '88 our dreams came true. Our group assembled at Marble

Canyon Lodge, a few miles from Lee's Ferry. The trip was organized by Bill Atkins of Knoxville's Chota Canoe Club with Colorado River and Trail Expeditions providing raft support. Two other members of Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Paddling Club joined us, Meg Weesner, a ranger at the New River, and Paul Kammer. Meg had been kayaking for just a little more than a year. Paul had lots of eastern boating experience but had to be convinced that he was ready to challenge the Really Big Water of

power...and not a drop more. That meant low water conditions for us. But lower on the Colorado does not necessarily mean easier-at diminished flows more rocks are exposed and juicy holes open up. Bill told us that during the preceding year flows ranged from 20 to 30 thousand, while we experienced flows from 4 to 15 thousand.

Why had I believed them when they told me that the Colorado would just be open chutes, no rocks, few holes and bigger waves than I had ever seen? At the



Left: Betsy Pye and Jamie Shumway pause for a "yes, we really did it" photo in a calm stretch of the Canyon. Above: Hugh Worthy picks a clean line through Horn Creek rapid.

the West.

The remainder of our party consisted of five kayakers from the Winston-Salem (NC) club, an open boater from Lexington (KY), and three solo open boaters, two kayakers and a C2 team, all from Tennessee.

At the put-in we swapped stories about our sleepless night. The anticipation was overpowering; we felt like children the night before Christmas.

The Colorado was crystal clear at the put in but it didn't stay that way for long, at mile one the Paria riffle added a load of silt, compliments of thunderstorms during the preceding week. After the Little Colorado joined the river at mile 61 the river attained the color of chocolate pudding.

Because of the draught the Bureau of Reclamation was conserving water, releasing only enough through the turbines at Glen Canyon to meet the demand for

first major rapid...Badger...I learned differently. It looked big alright, but there were lots of rocks and holes. Rapids on the Colorado are rated 1-10. Badger was a 7. Could this be extrapolated to a 4.2 on the AWA boating scale?

Yes, we swam the first rapid, a disappointing start. Yes, it was a cold swim and, yes, it was a long one. But we had company, though Paul and Meg did not make the list.

And then we swam the second big rapid, Soap Creek. I managed to hang onto my paddle and stay with the boat, enjoying a more buoyant ride down the river than my unfortunate husband, who was swept away from the boat and bounced over a number of rocks before taking sanctuary in an eddy midway through the rapid.

Afterwards we had one of those heart-to-heart talks that are so necessary to maintaining a serious tandem-boating relationship, not to mention a marriage. Same

encouragement from veterans of previous trips on the Colorado helped. We had been trying to stay out of the really big action to avoid swamping our boat, as a consequence we had been getting caught in the pour-overs near shore. We were advised to commit our boat to the well-defined "V" of each rapid, then turn it to the right or left to meet the reactionary waves coming in from the sides.

What a difference! Our redemption came later that day with a flawless run

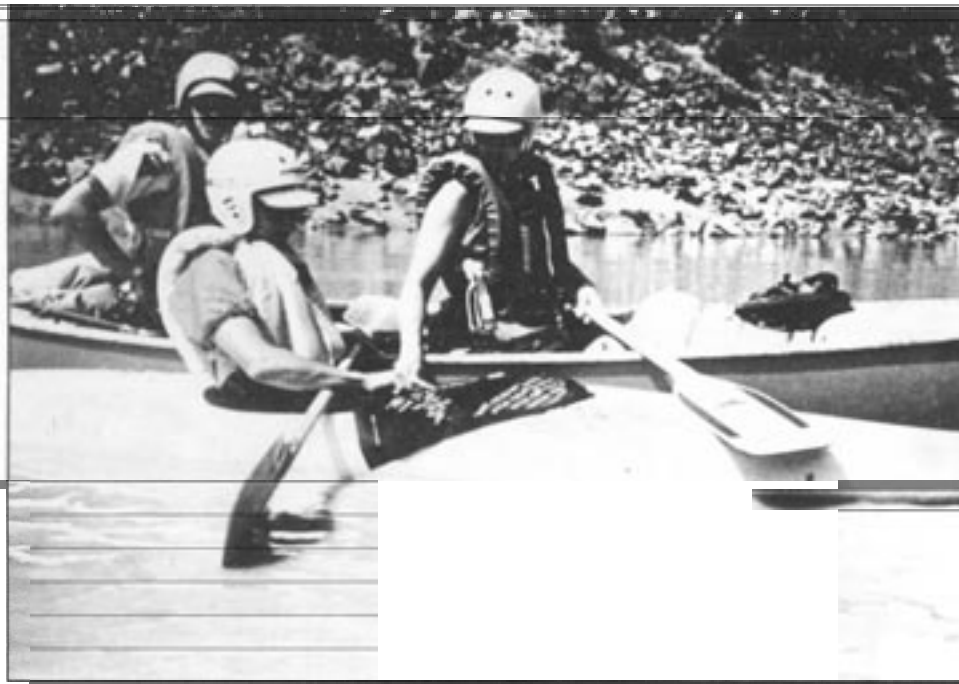
time during our trip, near the junction of the Little Colorado.

"Got a spare gunwale?" they called from shore. They had broached on a rock near the bottom of Kwagunt Rapid, just a few miles upstream. We knew the rock that had caused their trouble; we had a closer look at it than we would have preferred.

On day four, I spotted the Desert View Watchtower on the South Rim. How

low in the water and banked upon our combined power to maneuver the boat when it was full.

The steep walls of the Granite Gorge blocked the late afternoon sun and seemed to be getting dark. Our group had dispersed after Hance, with most of the kayakers paddling ahead. We were tired and hungry, and as we rounded each bend we hoped we would find our camp. Jamie and I were starting to remember our April



Which way is downriver? Betsy and Meg consult handy river-map bandana.

Fool's Day experience on the Laurel Fork of the Cheat River...a voyage that was interrupted by an unexpected cold night's bivouac in the middle of nowhere. Finally we spotted our party on the shore just above the Kaibab Trail suspension bridge. Several of us had warned the raft crew not to pass Phantom Ranch before camping; we were determined to have our postcards packed out by mule-train.

The following morning we rehearsed the order of the Big Ones.

Horn Creek-Granite...Hermit...Crystal. It would be a day to remember.

Mark Tygeson, the commander of our support raft, estimated the flow at Horn Creek to be 8,000. It was nasty. Larry Steven's Colorado Guidebook rated it a 10 at that level. There were huge holes and pulsating waves that intermittently revealed the top of a rock near the bottom

of House Rock Rapid, rated an 8. The cheers we heard as we eddied out at the bottom of that rapid with a boat full of water made me feel great. Better still was the compliments we received from another tandem open boat team sitting in the eddy.

Frankly, we were surprised to see another tandem team on the river; far fewer canoeists paddle the Colorado than kayakers, and even fewer canoeists try it tandem. These new acquaintances, natives of Salt Lake City, paddled a Mad River Explorer with a customized cordura, full spray cover.

When we told them we were from West Virginia they didn't look a bit surprised.

"We knew you must be from the East," they observed, "since you're paddling a real open canoe."

We encountered them one more

well I remembered standing up there, peering down at the river, wondering what it would be like to run it. Not far ahead lay the Granite Gorge section of the Canyon, where the pace of the action and the scale of the drops really escalates.

We stopped to scout Hance Rapid, a long class 9, from the right shore. When the C2 in our party was devoured in a large hole at the top, we quickly decided not to attempt that route. Instead we followed Bailey Lewis's Sunburst into an eddy behind some large boulders near the top center, then worked hard to the left. Success!

We maintained our confidence with great runs through Sockdolager and Grapevine...both rated 8. We were managing to stay upright but our boat looked like a bathtub full of water at the bottom of each rapid. This came as no surprise because our boat was designed for solo use. We rode

of the drop that didn't look the least bit inviting. We elected to portage, as did the team in the C2.

The others all ran it, with varied success. Mark Copeland kept his squirt boat, a Ferrier, vertical through most of the drop. But poor Meg experienced what I believe to be her first bona fide swim at Horn Creek. Her only other swim occurred just a few miles at Granite, a class 9.

We dumped at Granite as well, half way through the best roller coaster wave train I've ever experienced. We analyzed our swims and decided that every time we flipped it was on Jamie's side. His resolve to perfect his brace paid off in the class 9 wave train at Hermit Rapid. As we dropped into the big hole he leaned way out...head in the water...and sculled until he could snap us up and on our way again.

Even at low water the top two

holes at Crystal were impressive. Much **bigger** and much nastier than anything I wanted to sample. Some of us carried around the **holes**, others snuck along the shore. Hugh Worthy, **padding** a Mohawk Scamp, was the only brave soul to run the meat of it, **heading** left of the top two holes. **His** run **was** flawless.

The river mellows a bit after Crystal. Most people enjoy the change of **pace** and take the opportunity to hike up some of the spectacular side canyons, like **those** at Tapeats, Deer, and Havasu Creeks. We also explored the Elves' Chasm, another **enchanting** location.

At Deubendorff, a class 8, **Meg** drifted too far to the left straight toward a gigantic hole at the **bottom**. **She** was so surprised when she crashed through it upright that she **stopped** stroking and flipped in the backwash. But **Meg** executed one of those **bomb-proof combat rolls** that she had been perfecting and joined us in the eddy.

Paul **Kammer**, who hadn't **been** **sure** he was ready for Big Water but clearly was, had a moment of glory at the Upset Rapid. This seldom mentioned **class 8** gem featured a nearly river-wide hole that is, at low water, **every** bit as **impressive** as the one at Crystal. Everyone carried or snuck along the right shore except Paul, who stared at it for a long time from shore, then negotiated a hero **route** on river left that touched the edge of the hole. His **run** was perfect and he arrived in the eddy at the bottom grinning from ear to ear.

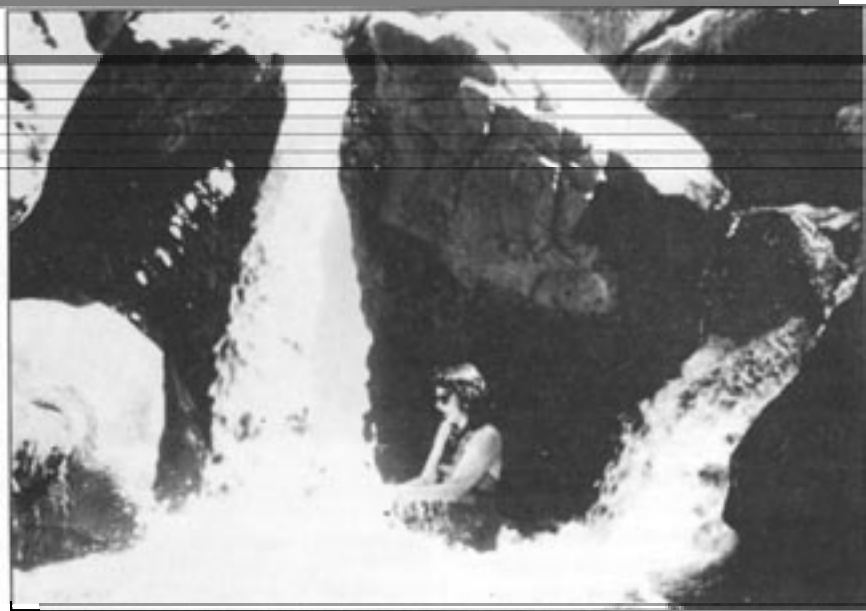
Jamie and I each shot a roll of film at **Lava**, perhaps the Colorado's most notorious rapid. Most of our group ran right, heading into a V created by two enormous, **crashing diagonal waves**. **Many**, but by no means all, finished upright in their boats. Paul **Kammer** had a clean run, while Carolyn **Kerr**, the only **woman** in our group who challenged **Lava**, was separated from her **Dancer** near the bottom.

Andrew Carr bow and stern squirted his kayak through the whole rapid.....**spectacular...but** intentional? Ben Van **Meter** eddy hopped his Mad River ME through the turbulent water located on river left.

Our hero at **Crystal**, Hugh Worthy, discovered that **Lava** looked different at water level and **missed** his line, sailing directly **into** the dreaded hole at the top. He **enjoyed** (?) a momentary surf, then his open boat **entered** out of the hole. We held **our** **breath** **until** his yellow helmet surfaced



Padding is only a small part of the attraction of a Grand Canyon trip--the side canyons offer a variety of amusements. Above: Hugh Worthy records first inflatable whale descent of Havasu Creek. Below: the author cools off under a side canyon cascade at Deer Creek.



in the bubbling, brown water...a long way downstream

After Lava everyone relaxed a bit, through camp life remained lively. We hiked to the Indian pictographs at Whitmore Canyon, played volleyball and tried to chip away at our inexhaustible beer supply. The meals provided by our outfitter exceeded our expectations.

Colorado river outfitters often compete with one another on service criteria, rather than price. We had fresh fruit for breakfast each morning and entrees like grilled salmon for dinner. The lunch spread was a veritable delicatessen, with tomatoes, red onions, avocados and lettuce...all the trimmings. The river did a great job of chilling our beer and sodas and the raft crew cheerfully tossed us a drink on demand.

Tension in camp was minimized since our commercial support team did all the work. We were free to devote all our energy to enjoying the river, canyon explorations, and the company of those in our group. Boaters were responsible for getting their gear to the rafts each morning and not much more. The raft crew handled all the cooking, clean-up, and the party's sanitary needs. Concerned about maintaining a quality environment, the Park Service requires that all solid waste be packed out of the Canyon.

A commercial trip is more expensive than a private one, but there are advantages. We avoided the long waiting lists for private trips and were able to schedule during a pleasant time of the year, early September, after the rainy season, with daytime highs in the 90s and balmy nighttime lows in the 70s.

On the thirteenth and last day of our trip we paddled the last few miles to Diamond Creek, 225 miles from the put-in. Knowing that we'd replay this scene often in our minds, we tried to enjoy the rapids and soak in as much of the scenery as possible. Many of the boaters in our party had run the Colorado before and know Jamie and I knew why.

It is possible to explore all the side canyons in a single trip. We had been unable to visit the fluted rock passages of Matkatarniba. Others wanted to see what



Into the abyss--Hugh Worthy misses his line at Lava and heads toward the rapid's famed hole.

the big drops looked like at different water levels. Paul Kammer, now a Big Water specialist as well as consummate photographer, wanted to take more action shots.

Now that our first taste of western whitewater is behind us, we're like the others; we hope to return and perfect our

tandem open-boating skills on the Really Big Water of the Colorado.

We never really doubted our ability to make it down the river—but did we fully realize the proportions of the challenge?

The answer is probably "no." But we'd be ready to go again tomorrow!



Before their trip west, Jamie and the author honed their tandem open-boat techniques on the clear water of the lower Yough's Cucumber Rapids near their home in Morgantown, WV.

Paddlers petition for increased L. Yough access

Canoeists and kayakers frustrated by the rigid enforcement of quotas last summer at Ohiopyle State Park in Pennsylvania can take heart. Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Paddling Club, the largest whitewater boating organization in Western Pennsylvania and an AWA Affiliate, has petitioned Arthur Davis, the Secretary of the State Department of Environmental Resources, to "reinterpret" the regulations pertaining to hardboating on the Lower Youghiogheny River, one of the most heavily utilized whitewater runs in the United States.

Problems arose on the Lower Yough last summer primarily on weekend days when the park rangers initiated a policy of allowing only thirty

hardboaters access to the river in any given hour. As a result many boaters were forced to wait as much as three hours at the put-in. The overall daily quota of 192 boats per day was reportedly met only a few times, only because many angry canoeists and kayakers left the park in disgust without running the river.

The quota system at Ohiopyle was based on a study of river usage done by Charles Strauss of Penn State University in 1975. A total of 1920 individuals are allowed on the river per day. Fifty percent of this total is allotted to the commercial raft customers.

Of the remaining 960 slots, 80% are allotted to "private rafters". Most of these individuals rent rafts at the river and run without guides. This leaves only 192, or 10% of the total, for canoeists and kayakers.

Until recently this quota seemed adequate, but the increased popularity of hardboating as opposed to rafting has placed pressure on the system.

The imposition of a 30 hardboat/hour quota this summer precipitated angry confrontations between rangers and boaters. Relations between local boaters and the park staff, which had previously been friendly, deteriorated to an alarming level.

The petition does not specifically request an increase in the hardboat quota. Rather it asks that hardboat launches after 3 p.m. not be counted, since they occur after the 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. "river day", defined as the time of peak usage by commercial raft customers. The petition argues that as a consequence of the current system the upper reaches of the river are underutilized in late afternoon and that a valuable whitewater resource is being wasted. Hardboaters competent to paddle the river should be able to reach the take-out within two hours of putting on the river.

TRPC anticipates that many local boaters will elect to put on in late afternoon in order to avoid the congested



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tion. This should allow hardboaters who have traveled a distance to run the river earlier in the day and head for home at a reasonable hour.

The petition also asks for the elimination of the 30 boat per hour quota and unlimited access to the "Loop" before 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The "Loop" consists of the popular first 2 miles of the river; those running the "Loop" take out at the Ferncliff Peninsula.

Proposals contained in the petition require only a reinterpretation of current regulations rather than an actual change. The petitioners felt that asking for a major overhaul of the regulations would likely lead to a bureaucratic and legislative conundrum that would leave hardboaters stranded for years.

The membership of TRPC voted unanimously at their November meeting to proceed with the petition after meetings with Larry Adams, head ranger at Ohiopyle State Park, failed to achieve any compromise. The petition was drawn up by attorney Jane Swan-

son, a TRPC member. Ray Yutzky, Chairman of the TRPC Parks Committee, Mac Thornton, ACA Conservation Chairperson (Middle States), and Bob Gedekoh, member of the AWA Board of Directors, participated in the development of the petition. The petition was signed by Patty Snow, current president of the 450 member club.

Risa Shimoda Callaway, AWA Executive Director, has submitted a

letter supporting the petition to the DER. Other boating clubs in Pennsylvania are being asked to formally support the petition and Pennsylvania boaters are being encouraged to contact their local legislators to voice their opinion.

The members of TRPC and the officers of the AWA are cautiously optimistic that a solution can be reached before the peak boating season this summer.




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If you have been restricted or prohibited by local, state or federal agencies in attempts to gain access or paddle class IV-VI streams, please complete and forward the *attached* form.

In addition to current access problems, please report locations where access has been limited in the past or where there are indications that it might be limited in the future. Please note that

we are not primarily seeking information about areas where access limits are imposed as a result of high use (i.e. the Grand Canyon, Lower Yough, etc.) but rather restrictions relating to non-commercial, higher-grade whitewater in the class IV-VI range.

This information will be used by AWA as it fights access restrictions. In certain locations, undocumented con-

cerns about the safety of whitewater boating and the potential of liability exposure have influenced governmental agencies to close access to high-end whitewater. The AWA Access Project is working to identify potential trouble spots and gather hard facts regarding the alleged dangers to paddlers.

Please complete this form and mail to the address below

(BLM, Park Service, Forest Service, specific state or local agency—please name) managing agency

name of stream	state	approximate class rating	approximate miles	managing agency	type of restriction

(Optional) Your name _____

Telephone # _____

Please clip and forward to AWA Access Project, 7967 #5 Road W., Fabius, NY 13063

OMITTED FROM LAST ISSUE

Photo credits for the fine pictures accompanying the article "Kwazulu" which appeared in the January/February issue of American Whitewater should have been attributed to Robert Harrison. Sorry for the oversight.



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When the ice goes the Tsunami flows

Tucked away in the recesses of the Adirondacks resides a tiny community of the world's most expert whitewater hair boaters: the Adirondack Tsunami Club.

The spiritual leader of the club--Norman Sterling--is typical of the group members. A jaded **adrenalin** freak. Sterling's love of whitewater faded after running class VI rapids lost its challenge.

"There used to be a certain appeal to running drops you knew no one else had done," Sterling said. "We were down on the Upper Blackwater back in '75 and hit the Linville and Overflow Creek 'bout the same time. It was great--no one was even thinking of running them back then. Hell, now that stuff is even written up in magazines.

"I mean, hell, even my favorite play river--the Lower Meadow--is ruined. You can't hardly surf a wave there now without some **white-knuckled** geek crashing through and knocking you off."

So the group warehoused their gear and quit the boating scene. That is, until Sterling discovered the ultimate paddling thrill: Adirondack Tsunami boating. The group abruptly emerged from retirement and the club was born.

"I was hiking along a river up in the Adirondacks in early spring, and I thought, '**Jeez--the** water is high,'" recalled Sterling. "Turned out there was an ice jamb downstream and dammed the whole crick back. 15-20 feet high. I was standing there and there's a **helluva** crack. like a 30.06 going off by my ear, and the jam broke out right in front of me.

"The water poured **through** in a huge, green wave--just like on of them Tsunami waves over in Japan after an earthquake. I thought--what a rush. The ultimate surf."

Sterling gathered his forces and stalked the **Adirondack** river **banks** during the spring. Initially, catching

...you can keep track of the boaters, watching their colorful helmets bob along above the trees.

the break-up of an ice jam required considerable guess work and just plain luck.

"But after a while, we **started** to see a pattern in these things," Sterling said. "The jams usually occur in certain locations--usually at constrictions of the river. And the time they happen is also pretty predictable. It varies from river to river, but **normally** our season centers around April 1."

Still, catching the crest of the Tsunami requires uncommon skill and experience. It's vital to be poised on the crest of the jam at the exact moment of break-up.

"At fit, we spent a helluva lot of time sitting in our boats on top of the jam just waiting," Sterling said. "Spent a night in my boat one time. The temperature dropped during the night and my skirt froze solid to the boat. By the time somebody pried me loose, I had to sponge out my boat--and my hull didn't leak.

"We have a better feel for the time of break-up, now," Sterling said. "I can feel a vibration. And when the ice goes--the Tsunami flows."

The sight of the Tsunami Club, screaming down the face of a 20-foot wave at the moment of break-up, is indeed an awesome spectacle. Like their brethren of ocean waves, the Tsunami surfers carve their way up and down the face of the wave--but they take care to remain ahead of the wave's crest because just behind the foaming head rumbles chunks of white ice the size of automobiles.

The wave careens

along at a fearful pace. A spectator in a car can follow along with the tide, as long as there isn't a 35 mph speed limit. And even when the road veers away from the water, you can keep track of the boaters, watching their **colorful** helmets bob along above the trees.

Once committed, the Tsunami **Clubbers** are in for the ride. There are no eddies on a Tsunami. They ride the wave until it dissipates **downstream**. The length of the **run** depends upon the steepness of the streambed.

"Once we jumped a Tsunami at the head of a canyon," Sterling said. "Didn't know about it before time and that damn wave kept up for 40 miles--never flattened out. We were on the water for near two hours."

Needless to say, Tsunami riding involves a certain amount of peril. The Club has lost several of its members.

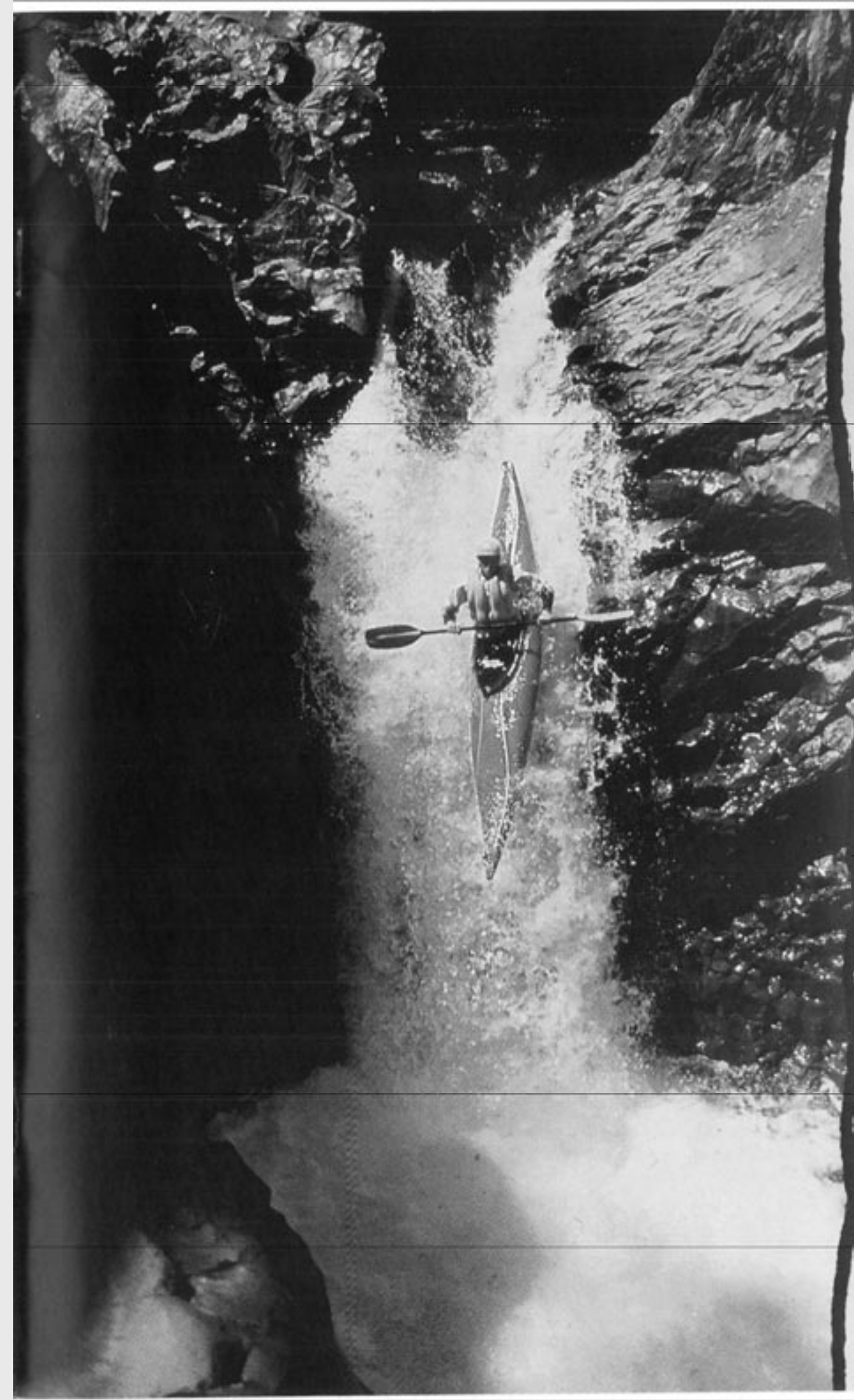
"One fella was riding a wave when he encountered another ice jam downstream--he got caught between that and the ice behind," Sterling said ruefully. "His Mirage ended up **lookin'** like a squirt boat."

Another member met disaster when the wave carried him into a road bridge. He was able to squirt the boat up out of the water and onto the **asphalt**--but he was struck by a passing pick-up truck.

Despite the obvious risks, the Adirondack Tsunami Club **continues** to pursue its perilous past time.

"Just don't write this up in no magazine," Sterling said. "Or the next thing you know we'll have open boaters and squirt boaters and even geeks in wet-suits trying to swim the Tsunami and we'll have to **find** something dangerous to do all over again."

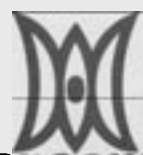
by Gary Carlson, a boater whose membership was rejected by the Adirondack Tsunami Club when they discovered he once scouted a class 5 rapid.



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