

american whitewater

March
April
1997

**Open Boating
on the Little**

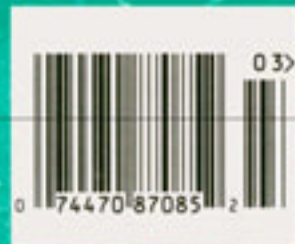
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Green
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Journal of the American Whitewater Affiliation

Volume XXXVII, No.2

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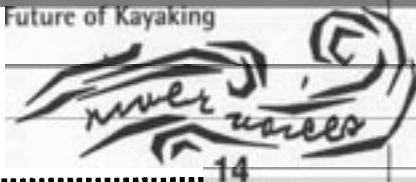
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Cover Photo: Chris Bassett surfing.
Photo by Scott Shoup
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One BIG (Happy?) Family

by Joe Greiner
AWA Board Member

family \n, 1. a group of people united by certain convictions (as of a religion or a philosophy); FELLOWSHIP 2. (a) an identifiable strain within a breed (b) as ecological community consisting of a single kind of organism and usually being of limited extent and representing an early stage of succession. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary.

I must be getting old. Too many of my sentences now start with "I remember when..." and not so many start with "No shit!! There I was..."

But I guess age is like climbing a mountain, the higher (older) one gets, the more perspective one has. On the mountain the higher one goes, the greater the risk. In life the risk of getting old is that one wants to share his perspective. Sharing can be risky. But here goes.

I remember when I knew almost all

the whitewater boaters in North Carolina. It was the late 70's and there were not that many. A new acquaintance, upon learning that I paddled, might mention a friend who also paddled. It usually turned out that I already knew their friend. Now, this has become a rare occurrence.

I remember when commercial rafting was in its infancy. Very few people had heard of the Gauley and the Upper Yough. The few outfitters who were running them frequently double-guided the rafts and required their customers to have had previous experience before they would "allow" the customers to come on such a trip. Now, these rivers are single-guided and no previous experience is necessary.

I remember when you could put on the Upper Gauley at any time and have lots of space on the river. Now the Upper Gauley runs at 1 RPM (raft per minute) during the "season". The Upper Yough was on two hour power releases but there was still room for all of us. Now, we have three hour power releases any you have to time it right to "get space".

I remember when very few knew the whereabouts of the Russell Fork. Now it's a regular gathering place for boating people in the fall.

I remember when the Narrows of the Green and a number of other streams were "unrunnable". Now there is talk of racing on some of these "unrunnable" streams.

I remember when it was an unusual sight to see a whitewater boat on a vehicle. And when we saw one, we almost always recognized the driver. Not any more.

While you can climb back down a mountain, you can't go back to the past. Nor, for the most part, would we want to. But there is one thing that I would like to get back to.

I remember when there was a real feeling of family among the whitewater community. But as our family grew larger, we seemed to lose sight of that feeling. We became divided.

But, to me, there is more that unites us than divides us. I still feel like part of a family....a very large family to be sure...but a family. We share certain convictions and philosophies; about the joy of rivers, freedom of the out-of-doors, fun, safety for ourselves and others, and about that invisible thread that connects us when we are paddling in a group on a river.

I think we are clearly an identifiable strain within the human breed. Not everyone can or wants to do what we do.

And I suspect that we are a community of limited extent in an early stage of succession. The concept of succession implies an evolutionary **change**, and that is good.

Families are made up of individuals. Individuals have as many differences as similarities. Sometimes the differences get in the way and this can lead to indif-

Staff

Editor: Bob Gedekoh, Box 228, R.D.#4, Elizabeth, Pa. 15037

Emeritus Editor: Chris Koll

Contributing Editors: John Weld, Pope Barrow

Art direction/Graphic design/Production: John K. Victor, 370 Belleview Ave., Chillicothe, OH 45601

Contributing writers: Carla Garrison, Jonathan Katz, Ed Ditto, Lee Belknap, Joe Greiner, Mark White, Bruce Farrenkopf, Nathan Lewis, Brik Miller, John Foss, Paul Tefft, Howard Davidson

Production Assistant: Richard and Teresa Augustin

Advertising Director: Phyllis Horowitz, Box 636, Margaretville, New York 12455 (914) 586-2355

Safety Editor: Charlie Walbridge, 230 Penllyn Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422; Phone 215-646-0157; fax 215-643-0668; email 73514.1714@compuserve.com.

Conservation and Access Editors: Rich Bowers, Rich Hoffman, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD, 20910 Phone (301) 589-9453 Fax (301) 589-6121, email: 72732.401@compuserve.com, 76435.731@compuserve.com

Missing Copies and Address Changes: Contact Phyllis Horowitz

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ference. Indifference can lead to loss of unity.

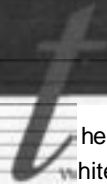
Crowded rivers can lead us to view other boaters as "interlopers" on our turf. Instead of viewing other boaters as friends, they can easily seem like the "enemy", sitting on "our wave" or in "our hole".

If we have lost that sense of unity, I'd like to see us get it back. We will never be all the same (thank goodness!) but we do all share that family bond.

It's easy enough to take a step forward to get back our feeling of family. When you see a fellow paddler on the highway, acknowledge them. Smile, say "Hi!". Wave at them, blink your lights, whatever. Let's treat the members of our boating family the way we would treat our "real" family.

Maybe some day, we'll all think twice before we cut in line on a crowded river. We'll greet other "family" members as we paddle or drive past. We'll offer a hand when it is needed.

Maybe some day, we'll be able to say, "I remember when boaters passed each other on the road and never acknowledged each other. I'm glad those days are gone." Maybe some day....



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Letters

Half The Paddle Twice The Man

Dear Editor,

As the owner of a Dagger Cascade C-1, which is a decent (although not perfect) creek boat, I was cautiously hopeful that Dagger would introduce another plastic C-1 in the foreseeable future. However, in the interview with Joe Pulliam in the AWA Journal's Nov/Dec 1996 issue I was disappointed to find that C-1 boaters cannot expect much from Dagger anytime soon.

Mr. Pulliam was asked by John Weld "Let's talk about C-1's. What's going on with C-1's these days?" Joe Pulliam, in what may have been a careless moment, answered the question by saying "Not much.....I'm sure there are a lot of frustrated C-1 paddlers out there, but maybe that's why they are C-1 paddlers to begin with, because they're frustrated".

From that response one is inclined to conclude that Mr. Pulliam has (1) little interest in C-1 boaters or new C-1 design, and (2) a poor understanding of why C-1ers paddle their demanding and elegant boats. How Mr. Pulliam developed this opinion of C-boaters is perplexing, but it might be to his benefit to broaden his contacts in the C-boater community and thereby develop a better understanding of what makes C-1ers tick. There are a wide variety of reasons why C-boaters are devoted to their craft, and I'm not going to expound on this complex subject here (it might make a good article), but I am quite sure that a frustrated psyche is not a requirement, as Mr. Pulliam suggests.

C-1ers will probably have to look beyond Dagger for innovative new boats. Fortunately, there are a number of other excellent manufacturers who can potentially do a fine job. And, if plastic boats prove to be too expensive to develop for the C-boating community - an explanation we have heard over and over again from the major companies - then we C-1ers will continue to develop our own designs and build them as composites - a very satisfying and in many ways a superior medium. Currently, two of my favorite boats (the *Extrabat* and *Viper*, manufactured by New Wave) are composites, and I suppose I could continue very happily in my glass boats. But, nothing serves better on boulder-bashing creeks than cross-linked polyethylene. "Sigh."

Bruce Farrenkopf
Bridgewater, New Jersey

Editor's Reply: In Joe Pulliam's defense, I've heard that it costs nearly

\$10,000 to produce a mold for a new plastic boat. I think that is why boat manufacturers are hesitant to develop new models for which there is a limited demand.

Stick to the Standard Signals!

Dear Bob,

I am sorry to have to be critical of your efforts, as in general your Journals have been interesting and well done. However, safety has always been one of the Affiliation's top priorities, and your unfortunate decision to print Richard Penny's poorly thought out article on Hand Signals (May/June, '96) has set the AWA back over 15 years in our efforts to promote a clear, unambiguous, universally accepted and understood set of river signals.

The system of AWA river signals, first presented in the July/Aug., 1978 Journal (copy enclosed) were not the opinion of one person, but rather the endproduct of a committee who first developed a set of "system considerations" and THEN worked out a set of signals consistent with these considerations. The "considerations" have not changed since that time,

and the so called "California System" ignores all of them—MUCH worse in all respects than the current system. Penny has too many signals to remember, several are logically redundant, and they could not be differentiated at a long distance as they are dependent on hand and (even) fingers attitudes. Once the person in the lead has made the decision that the party should proceed no further for whatever reason, a clear, unambiguous STOP signal is the essential thing. That accomplished, scouting and communication will necessarily follow, leading to individual decisions regarding the obstruction ("scout", "not okay", "portage", etc.). As an additional example of how poorly thought out is the "California System", I would call your attention to the similarity of the published photos for Penny's "OKAY" and "PORTAGE" signals where a misinterpretation could lead to a fatality. At 50 or 100 yards, how many would make the correct interpretation?? Note also that the AWA signals were carefully designed so they could be unambiguously given WITH or WITHOUT the paddle (same signal, nothing else to remember).

The editor of the Journal has a large responsibility to be aware of historical AWA efforts such as the development and

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promotion of the Universal River Signals so as NOT to publish articles that work against the best interests of boating in general and safety in particular. The publishing of the Penny article was doubly dangerous, as it not only served to publicize a bad system, but also undermined earlier work to promote a UNIVERSAL system throughout the boating community. I suggest that republishing the original article (with perhaps the better illus-

trations from the CODE) ASAP would refresh boaters' memory as to the AWA signal system and rationale, and serve to (partially) undo the harm that has been done. Safety is extremely important, and a critical situation on a river is not the time and place to "experiment and see if the signals work for you!"

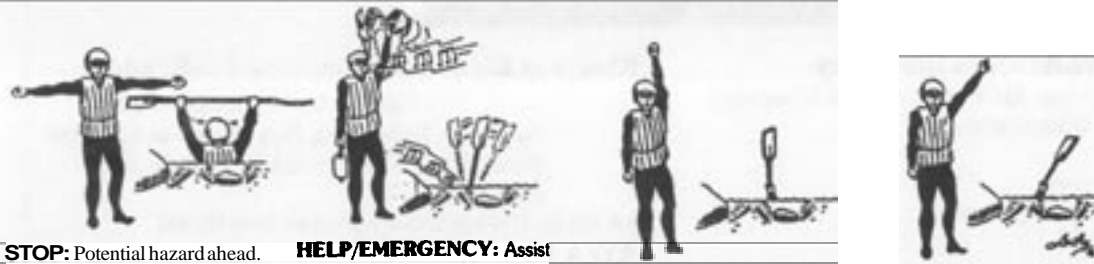
Sincerely,
 Jim Sindelar (former AWA Executive Director, and chairman, River Signals Committee)
 Contoocook, New Hampshire

Editors reply

I recently discussed this matter with Charlie Walbridge, who served with Jim Sindelar on the committee that developed the AWA "Universal" signals. Charlie agreed with me that publishing the "California Signals" was justified, in that they represent an interesting alternative to the established signals and one that merits open discussion. Charlie went on to say that he never considered "the book closed" on the subject of river signals and that, as time goes by and the matter and style of river running evolves, there

should be room for change. In spite of the fact that the "UNIVERSAL" signals have been around since 1978, I don't think very many boaters know them, since I rarely see them in use. At any rate, I am re-printing the section of the AWA safety code that pertains to the subject of river signals here.

V. UNIVERSAL RIVER SIGNALS



STOP: Potential hazard ahead. Wait for "all clear" signal before proceeding, or scout ahead. Form a horizontal bar with your outstretched arms. Those seeing the signal should pass it back to others in the party.

HELP/EMERGENCY: Assist the signaller as quickly as possible. Give three bng blasts on a police whistle while waving a paddle, helmet or life vest over your head. If a whistle is not available, use the visual signal alone. A whistle is best carried on a lanyard attached to your life vest.

ALL CLEAR: Cane ahead (in the absence of other directions proceed down the center.) Form a vertical bar with your paddle or one arm held high above your head. Paddle blade should be turned flat for maximum visibility. To signal direction or a preferred course through a rapid around obstruction, lower the previously vertical "all clear" by 45 degrees toward the side of the river with the preferred route. Never point toward the obstacle you wish to avoid.

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Respect the River

Dear Editor,

The article "Same Flood Twice", which appeared in the Nov./Dec. *American Whitewater*, includes a statement that the AWA is discussing boater registration and "river patrol". This piece of news, along with all the controversy surrounding the establishing of a more exact river classification system, leads me to believe that we are ignoring a basic fact: Whitewater is very forgiving! As with air travel the odds of dying are extremely remote; however, serious incidents, though rare, are invariably fatal.

I'll use a comparison to "Russian Roulette" to illustrate the way in which the odds eventually catch up. At one extreme are the ignorant or stupid; who, not knowing the rules, load all the chambers and blow their brains out on the first try. At the other extreme is the "hair boater"; who, knowing the odds, flinches when he pulls the trigger, and thus usually dodges the bullet when the loaded chamber comes up. The big problem is the "ten thousand shot" pistol which, after pulling the trigger for the five-hundredth or five-thousandth time, lulls us into thinking

that nothing will happen. We delude ourselves into believing that our skill and experience are our protection, when in reality it could be nothing more than "dumb Luck".

Is this why we see experienced boaters dying in class III rapids and have had multiple fatalities at known "death traps"? Does familiarity breed contempt? The river is so forgiving that it takes numerous close calls before all the variables catch up to produce a "freak accident". As long as we operate under the assumption that "Whatever doesn't kill you only makes you stronger" the statistics will continue to mount up. Although the ratios remain the same, the sheer popularity of whitewater could make the "freak accident" become common place.

If skill and experience levels are measured in terms of "surviving the attempt", then it is a base contradiction to equate safety to skill and experience. Let's get off of our high horse and start showing some respect for the river!

Sincerely,
Charley Friddell
Hugheston, West Virginia

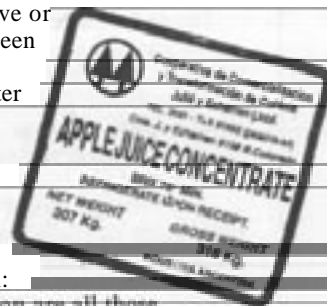
Who's the Culprit?

Dear Editor,

For the last five or six years I have been asking the same question that writer Tammy Truckenmiller posed during her trip with Davey Hearn on the flooded Potomac on September 6th:

"Where in tarnation are all those bright blue barrels coming from?" (page 23 Nov/Dec) I've probably seen 20-30 of them. Periodically I climb out of my boat and examine them and, up until last week, I've discovered them to be label free. But I finally found one abounding with information which I have included. Can someone help me track down the distributor or wholesaler or whoever is polluting the Potomac with eyesores which, unlike other debris, stay visible for generations?

Thanks
John Mathwin
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Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, AWA Briefs, River Voices, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines, Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater cartoons are also welcomed.

If possible articles should be submitted on a 3" computer disk "cassette, after wordprocessing. (Wordperfect preferred - others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

Those without access to a word processor may submit their articles typed. Please double space.

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints or color prints. Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we can not guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to

return your pictures, include a self addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Because we publish in black and white, photos with a lot of contrast work best.

American Whitewater Feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flatwater. The best features have a definite slant... or theme. They are not merely chronological recountings of river trips.

Open the story with an eye catching lead, perhaps by telling an interesting anecdote. Dialogue should be used to heighten the reader's interest. Don't just tell us about the river... tell us about the people on the river... develop them as characters. Feature articles should not be written in the style of a local club newsletter.

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to class III and IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through and don't be afraid to poke

a little fun at yourself... and your paddling partners.

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not our intent to intentionally offend our more sensitive members and readers.

Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally responsible for the accuracy of such material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

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Bob Glanville
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Landis Arnold
P.O. Box 4617
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Bob Glanville
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Pope Barrow
136 13th Street SE
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72702.1552@compuserve.com

Joe Greiner
7316 Chicora Court
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Lee Belknap
1308 Maryland Avenue
Glen Ellen, VA 23060
76513.2466@compuserve.com

Barry Grimes
124 Hilltop Drive
Richmond, KY 40475
bagriml@pop.uky.edu

Risa Shimoda Callaway
216 Inverness Way
Easley, SC 29642
risa@kayaker.com

Jay Kenney
181 Franklin Street
Denver, CO 80218
jaypk@aol.com

Tom Christopher
931 Union Street Rear
Leominster, MA 01453

Chris Koll
352 Cameco Circle
Liverpool, NY 13090-2732
cko111234@aol.com

Brooke Drury
8224 14th Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115
brooked@mountaineers.org

Sue Langfitt
Stanton Lanofitt
Advertising
1733 SW Myrtle Street
Portland, OR 97201
76675.2233@compuserve.com

Chuck Estes
114 Bay Path Drive
Oak Ridge, TN 37830-7801

Kevin Mendik
135 Nathan Lane
Carlisle, MA 01741

David Fallside
1700 49th Street
Sacramento, CA 95819
fallsideQrahul.net

Richard Penny
2499 Los Altos Avenue
Clovis, CA 93611
rpenny@ix.netcom.com

Joe Pulliam
P.O. Box 1500
Harriman, TN 37748
72002.305@compuserve.com

Ken Ransford
1775 Sherman, Suite 2000
Denver, CO 80218
ransford@csn.net

Susan Scheufele
2121 Ocean Street Ext.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
susans@eng.sun.com

Jim Scott
3715 Jocelyn Street NW
Washington, DC 20015
jscott@amfor.org

Pete Skinner
2 Snyder Road
West Sand Lake, NY 12196
skinnp@rpi.edu

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

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

Mac Thornton
6467 Wishbone Terrace
Cabin John, MD 20818
72634.316@compuserve.com

Barry Tuscano
RD 1, Box 32
Bolivar, PA 15923
tmr@westol.com

Charlie Walbridge
52 Penllyn Pike
Penllyn, PA 19422
73514.1714@compuserve.com

Susan Wilson
52 Albemarle Place #16
Asheville, NC 28801
76017.3534@compuserve.com

AWA STAFF

Rich Bowers, Executive Director
1430 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 589-9453
72732.401@compuserve.com

Rich Hoffman, Access Program Director
1430 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 589-9453
awa@compuserve.com

Phyllis B. Horowitz, Administrative Director
P.O. Box 636
Margaretville, NY 12455

(914) 585-2355
-74663.2104@compuserve.com

Jayne Abbot, Events Manager
450 Ivy Hill Road
Weaverville, NC 28787
(704) 645-5299
jhabbot@aol.com

AWA OFFICERS

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Lee Bonfiglio running Sheppards' Falls, Wind River, WA. Dave Sloner photo.

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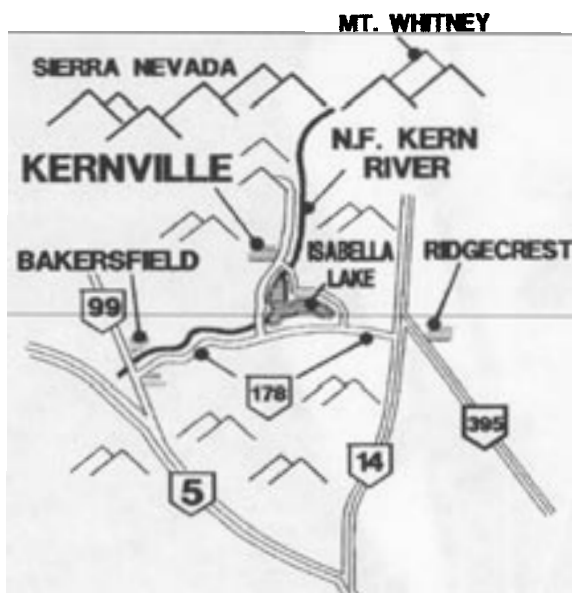
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Purpose

The American Whitewater Affiliation

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

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

CONSERVATION: AWA maintains a complete national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors threats to those rivers, publishes information on river conservation, provides technical advice to local groups, works with government agencies and other river users, and - when necessary-- takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

RIVER ACCESS: To assure public access to whitewater rivers pursuant to the guidelines published in its official Access Policy, AWA arranges, for river access through private lands by negotiation or purchase, seeks to protect the right of public passage on all rivers and streams navigable by kayak or canoe, resists unjustified restrictions on government managed whitewater rivers and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

EDUCATION: Through publication of the bi-monthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater, (AWA) provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

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

EVENTS: AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation, including the Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo in Tennessee, the Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), the Arkansas River Festival in Colorado, the Kennebec Festival in Maine and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at P.O. Box 636, Margaretville, NY 12455, (914) 586-2355. AWA is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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Hydropower Update American Whitewater's Curriculum for Restoring and Improving Whitewater Rivers!

California Hydropower Coalition Formed

In early February, AWA, Friends of the River and the Natural Heritage Institute hosted the first ever California Hydro Coalition meeting. This meeting was held at the Natural Heritage Institute Office in San Francisco, and preceded the annual Friends of the River Conference. In attendance were boaters, anglers, conservation organizations, watershed groups, and others. Special thanks to the Compton and Packard Foundations for their support of rivers and this coalition effort. For more information, contact AWA or Steve Evans at Friends of the River at (916)442-3155.

Mokelumne (CA)

On December 19th, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and United States Forest Service, Eldorado National Forest (USFS), issued a Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the Mokelumne River Hydroelectric Project.

For whitewater boaters, the six storage reservoirs, four powerhouses and numerous diversions and conduits included in this project affect the Class II Electra Run, the Class III Ponderosa Run, Class IV Tiger Creek Dam Run, Class V Devils Nose Run, and an 8 mile Class III-IV run contained within the Devils Nose Run.

AWA, Friends of the River, Foothill Conservancy, California Outdoors and the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance have intervened in this project.

In this DEA, FERC has adopted many (but not all) of the suggestions made by the AWA and others regarding whitewater, especially in the areas of improved access and improved communications for the public. FERC did not support requests for scheduled releases for the Devils Nose, Tiger Creek and Ponderosa and Electra runs, but recommends that PG&E adjust their operations at the Electra Powerhouse to provide flows of 800 cfs on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer.

Other improvements include:

-Boating access below Salt Springs Reservoir, near the Electra Powerhouse, at the Route 49 Bridge, and at the take-out for Ponderosa

-A portage around the Electra Dam

-PG&E land purchase in the vicinity of the Route 49 Bridge for whitewater access

-A toll-free flow information line for each of these river sections

-Flushing flows in each section which could be coordinated to improve whitewater boating

AWA will continue to push for improved minimum flows and scheduled recreational flows for each section of this outstanding river. If you have observations or comments that you would like to have included in our letters, contact American Whitewater's Conservation Office.

Pit (CA)

In December of last year, PG&E continued their objections to releasing water below the Pit 1 dam for whitewater. Reasons for

their objections ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous. First they claimed that restoring water to the river and increasing recreation use would impact on fisheries, bald eagles, and cultural resources (of course their power lines, dewatering of the river, and building of the dam and powerhouses were completely acceptable to the fish, wildlife and native cultures!).

Second, they claim that whitewater releases for 14 weekend days per year would result in "a net cost to society of \$3 to \$4 million over the life of the license." PG&E has determined that this is not in the public's best interest, which they define as producing power.

PG&E states that additional whitewater resources in Northern California are unnecessary due to the number of other available runs (in summer this means the Trinity and the Rogue). Finally, PG&E contends that the whitewater study completed in 1994 by their own consultants was invalid because it "inappropriately uses pre-project (pre-dam) conditions as the baseline for comparison."

To fight these assumptions and mis-statements, AWA is preparing a settlement agreement along with CA Dept. of Fish & Game, Parks & Recreation, California Trout, Shasta Paddlers, US Fish & Wildlife and others. For more information, contact Rich Bowers or AWA Regional Coordinator Kevin Lewis (916) 221-8722.

Upper Kern (CA)

On Christmas Eve, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a new 30 year license for the Kern #3 dam on California's Upper Kern River. The timing of this license subverts and disregards ongoing efforts by the AWA, Friends of the River, Kernville Chamber of Commerce, the Kernville Community Consensus Council, Kern River Alliance, and others to improve the final conditions recommended by the Sequoia National Forest, and to improve flow and recreation on this river (see last Journal).

Simply put, this license removes almost all hope of further improving the Upper Kern outside of the legal arena. The above groups are now planning to appeal this license, while continuing their efforts to improve the conditions recommended by the Forest Service.

Over the past several years, the AWA has found the relicensing process to be a great and permanent (30 years is especially permanent for us geezer boaters) way to improve rivers and river recreation, and we have had much success without needing legal remedies. Unfortunately, this is not the case on the Kern and the prize is much too great to give up without a fight! Besides winning back over 16 miles of whitewater on the Upper Kern, the ultimate outcome of this decision will affect: the overall economic growth of the Kern Valley; future recreation on the Lower Kern; and decisions on many other outstanding rivers in California (including the North Fork Kings, Feather, Mokelumne, Pit, McCloud and others). The Kern, with its amazing potential for recreation dollars, its proven track record for whitewater excellence, and the development of a significant grass-roots support system, makes this river the flagship case for improving other rivers in the state.

The Upper Kern now needs your help! To volunteer your efforts, please contact Rich Bowers - to help with donations, please send checks to AWA and mark them - "Kern River Strike Fund."

Gauley (WV)

In the January/February edition of American Whitewater, we reported on the AWA's appeal of FERC's order to approve modifications to the Summersville dam Hydroelectric project. This approval would allow transmission lines to cross the Middle Meadow and run along Glade Creek. On January 21, 1997 FERC

denied rehearing by both AWA and the Mt. Lookout - Mt. Nebo Property Protection Association. In short, FERC concluded that this transmission line would "not significantly affect the overall landscape character of the Meadow River Gorge."

As we go to press, AWA is considering the potential for challenging this approval of modification and the license itself. We are discussing the cost and benefits of appealing this decision along with the local Property Owner's Association. Stay tuned for more updates!

Snake (ID)

FERC will analyze the cumulative effects of eight Idaho Power Company hydro projects on a 360-mile-long reach of the Snake River. Included in this study are the Bliss, Upper and Lower Salmon Falls, Shoshone Falls, C.J. Strike, Upper and Lower Malad, Hells Canyon, and Swan Falls. All licenses expire between 1997 and 2010.

FERC is preparing a discussion paper "Approaches to Cumulative Analysis for the Snake River Basin Relicensing" which will explain which approach will be used. AWA is already working with Idaho Rivers United, the National Park Service and others on the relicensing of Hells Canyon dams, and will seek to restore flow, and improve recreation and access along this corridor.

Bear (Southeast ID)

In January, PacifiCorp hosted a meeting to discuss a management approach for upcoming studies in the relicensing of the Soda, Grace/Cove and Oneida projects along this river. As reported in earlier editions of the Journal, PacifiCorp has objected to whitewater studies on the Black Canyon of the Bear.

For most of this meeting, PacifiCorp continued this objection, and attempted to hold fishery issues as the only legitimate study issue. Special thanks to Bill Sedivy, AWA Regional Coordinator and Liz Paul (Idaho Rivers United) for sticking up for boaters and for natural flows on the Bear. The outcome of this meeting was that whitewater studies may now happen as early as this March, depending on water levels! (Current water levels in the Bear River area are between 170 and 200% of normal, and local papers are warning of potential flooding) Now the trick is to make sure that the studies are adequate and professionally done, and not rushed through in order to dismiss them later in the relicensing process.

Indian Pond (ME)

Central Maine Power (CMP) has just begun its formal process for relicensing the Indian Pond project on Maine's famous Kennebec Gorge. The first joint agency/public meetings on these projects were to have been held on February 26th and 27th, with final written comments due by late April, 1997.

The Kennebec Gorge below Harris Station offers some 16 rapids rated Class IV-V, including Magic Falls, one of the most outstanding rapids in the New England area. In 1996, over 40,000 private and commercial boaters were able to enjoy this river.

Currently, CMP provides whitewater flows seven days a week in the 4800-6000 cfs range for three hours per day. At issue for boaters in this relicensing is potential, addi-

tional whitewater releases of 680 cfs for instructional and intermediate enjoyment, improvements in river access, and the ability to assure water releases through this license for the next 30 years.

For the past several years, Indian Pond has been an area of serious contention between non-commercial boaters and CMP's fee system to access the river. For the past two years, AWA has negotiated with CMP to withdraw this fee, with little success. Now the issue is once again at the table, and AWA will renew its efforts to eliminate what we consider to be a discriminatory and totally unnecessary river restriction.

For more information contact Rich Bowers or AWA Director Tom Christopher at (508) 534-9449.

For more information on AWA's hydropower program, please contact Rich Bowers, AWA at (301) 589-9453 or email at 72732.401@compuserve.com/ For updates on individual rivers, check out AWA's "Hotnews" at <http://www.awa.org/>

1997 National River Cleanup Week: May 10th -17th

America Outdoors and American Rivers will be co-sponsoring National River Cleanup Week this year. Dates: May 10-17, 1997. Some 26,000 volunteers participated in 1996, and partnered with the USDA Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation.

The purpose of National River Cleanup Week is to demonstrate the importance of clean waterways and to encourage constituencies to preserve a community's streams, rivers, and lakes. A cleanup creates an alliance between public and private groups that becomes a source of positive community action for restoration of compromised waterways.

Anyone interested in organizing a cleanup effort in their area is encouraged to call for a registration form from American Outdoors at 423-558-3595 or American Rivers at 202-547-6900. Registering for a cleanup is free. Cleanups registered prior to April 1, and conducted during the official week, are eligible to receive free trash bags, cleanup kits and safety tips. A video, Organizing a Successful River Cleanup, is also available for \$10.95 with all proceeds benefiting National River Cleanup Week.

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Grand Canyon Increases Fees

In February, American Whitewater set up a meeting with the Department of Interior to discuss the recent fee increase and split allocation system at Grand Canyon National Park. The Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association and the National Parks and Conservation Association joined American Whitewater at the meeting. The goal of the meeting is to explain our objections to the new changes and to seek changes in the policy.

While American Whitewater has long recognized that federal agencies have a funding crisis, and has supported demonstration fees and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund as ways to improve and maintain federal lands for the public (see article in this issue), we have many concerns with the new fee system. During the meeting, we discussed the following issues:

There was no opportunity to provide information and comments prior to the implementation of this new policy.

While a January 9 press release states that "public involvement and support are a very important part of this project," and that "the National Park Service encourages ideas, suggestions, and feedback from the public regarding the program," the new fee system was implemented on January 15. Six days is not an adequate period for public input on such a substantial change in policy and procedure for a river of such national importance.

For non-commercial boaters, the fee increase is an order of magnitude larger than for other uses in the Park.

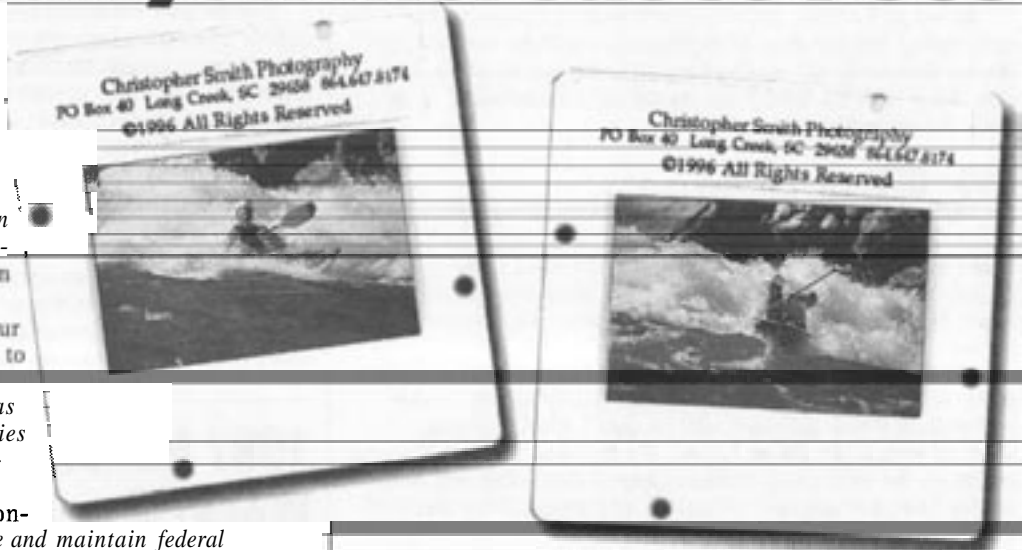
The new fee system (an increase in 3 existing fees and the creation of 2 new fees) increases the cost of a private trip by up to 15 to 20 times the current cost.

There is a lack of information about the costs associated with managing non-commercial river running, about where the new funds are going to be spent, and about the contribution of commercial river running.

Non-commercial boaters want to pay their "fair share" – to mitigate for resource impacts that we cause and to pay for necessary facilities and resources that we require – but adequate information has not been provided on these costs.

The new fee system exacerbates a permit system that greatly favors commercial use.

The existing split allocation system in the Grand Canyon allocates 68% of the user days to commercial interests with only 32% for non-commercials. Under the existing system, private boaters must wait an average of 8-10 years to float the Canyon. The new \$25 yearly maintenance fee now makes private boaters pay for their excessive wait.



From this meeting we hope to establish a working relationship with the Park Service on this issue, and to reach a suitable solution for the Grand Canyon that is both fair to non-commercial recreationists and allows increased fees for maintenance and management of the resource.

Accompanying this article is a letter on the issue.

Jan. 24, 1997

Robert Amberger, Superintendent
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Dear Superintendent Amberger:

First of all, I would like to applaud the recent decision to limit aircraft overflights above Grand Canyon National Park. It is truly encouraging to see park managers and Interior Dept. officials summon the courage and political will to correct a long-standing policy that had allowed commercial enterprise in the park to run roughshod over the right of the public to enjoy their park as it was meant to be enjoyed. However, other, similar and equally important issues remain unaddressed. It is difficult for me to reconcile the recent policy decision to limit one form of commercial enterprise in the park (aircraft overflights) because it disturbs the experience of park visitors, but at the same time allow another form of commercial enterprise in the park (commercial river trips, and the guaranteed access commercial river trip clients receive) to outright preclude some park visitors from even gaining access to their desired experience.

That said, I would like to comment on the new fee structure the National Park Service has developed for private non-commercial river trip participants in Grand Canyon NP. I see this new fee structure as an important issue, but more than that I see it as symptomatic of a much larger, more important issue – the manner in which Grand Canyon NP regulates access to river trips. My letter, therefore, will first discuss the narrower issue of the new fee structure; the bulk of the letter, however, will focus on the larger issue of access to river trip opportunities.

Recently I received notification from the Chief Ranger of Grand Canyon NP concerning the new fee structure for private

(non-commercial) river permits. While I applaud the effort of the government in general and the National Park Service in particular to charge higher fees for recreational use of our nation's public lands (as long as the increased revenue is used to protect resources and provide needed visitor services), I must protest the new Grand Canyon river permit fees as unreasonable and unfair. Consider this typical example: a person gets on the waiting list in 1997, waits 10 years for a permit, and then goes on a 16-day (15 night) river trip with 14 friends. This group will have to pay a total of \$1 620.00 in permit fees just to gain access to the river. I believe this to be unreasonable, unjustified, and unfair.

While I agree with some of these fees—such as the \$200 launch fee and the \$4/person/night impact fee—as long as the revenue is really being used to help manage and protect resources and provide needed visitor services, I am outraged at the fees being charged private boaters to get on and stay on the waiting list. My outrage stems from two basic reasons: 1) that the fees seem unreasonably high. Approximately 4000 people x \$25/year is \$100,000; plus if 400 people join the list each year and pay an additional \$100 fee just to get on the list, that generates another \$40,000, for a total of \$140,000 each year. I doubt you can convince me that it costs \$140,000 each year just to maintain a waiting list of 4000 names and addresses. And 2) that these fees represent just another in a long line of barriers to private boater access to Grand Canyon river trips, further tilting a permit allocation and rationing system that is already heavily tilted in favor of commercial clients and against private boaters.

Current river trip permit allocation and rationing procedures ensure that commercial river trip clients gain access to a Grand Canyon river trip much more quickly and easily than private boaters. This certainly makes it seem as if the Colorado River

through the Grand Canyon is being managed more as a profit center for privately owned commercial enterprise than for the public who owns it to recreate freely. I am not against commercial operators in national parks—they often provide an important service for the public, facilitating recreational experiences that would otherwise not be enjoyed. But it is one thing when the presence of a commercial operator adds to available opportunities; it is something else entirely when the presence of a commercial operator restricts the rights of the public to access its parks.

Perhaps an analogy will help illustrate just how ridiculous and inequitable the current system of allocating and rationing river access is. Let's say Yellowstone National Park decides that in order to protect the integrity of both its resources and visitor experiences, it must limit park visitation to no more than 10,000 visitors a day. Knowledgeable people familiar with the situation agree that this is necessary. Entry into the park is by reservation only. A person calls the park reservations office and asks for a permit for a particular date later that year. The park official checks and informs the visitor that he may enter the park that day, but he will be required to stay in an expensive concession-operated hotel. The visitor explains that he is not seeking that type of experience, but instead wants to camp in a park campground. The park official explains that there are no slots available for camping that night. The visitor protests that he knows for a fact the park has camping capacity for up to 10,000 people. The park official explains that, yes, there is camping capacity in the park for 10,000 people, but nevertheless it is park policy to require 68% of each day's visitors to stay in concession hotels. The visitor asks why park visitors are not allowed to make a free choice as to whether they would rather camp or stay in a hotel. The park official explains that if that were allowed,



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then concession hotel businesses might suffer from less than full occupancy. The visitor wonders to himself why concession profits should determine park policy, but decides to keep that thought to himself.

The park official then informs the visitor that if he wants to enter the park on the desired day, or any day that year, or any day in the next 10 years for that matter, he will have to agree to stay in an expensive concession-operated hotel. But if he still insists on camping, the park official will, for a \$100 fee, gladly add his name to a waiting list and let him enter the park in 10 years and camp in a campground (assuming that the visitor continues to send in \$25 each year to "maintain" the waiting list). The visitor is incredulous, and wonders why people who wish to stay in an expensive concession-operated hotel appear to receive special dispensation when it comes to receiving permission to enter the park.

The visitor asks, if there is a 10-year backlog of people who want to camp, but virtually no backlog for people who want to stay in concession hotels, then why are 68% of park entries reserved for people staying in concession-operated hotels? The park official admits that the 68/32 split was determined based on the preferences of park visitors from several decades ago. The visitor asks why the 68/32 split hasn't been adjusted to reflect current park visitor preferences for camping. The park official informs the visitor that the concessionaires who operate the hotels want to keep the 68/32 split because it virtually assures them of full occupancy. The visitor then wonders who the park is being managed for—the park visitor or the private concessions that operate for-profit businesses in the park.

The visitor wants to make sure he has understood all of this correctly: "You mean to say that if I will agree to stay in an expensive concession-operated hotel, I can enter the park virtually whenever I want, but if I want to camp [which is what I thought National Parks were all about], I have to spend \$350 and wait ten years?" The park official says, yes, that is correct, but don't forget about the \$200 park entry fee when you do visit in ten years.

Again, I am not suggesting that commercial river trip operations in Grand Canyon be prohibited—that would be a shame for many people who otherwise could not experience a Grand Canyon river trip. However, what clearly needs to be fixed are the allocation and rationing procedures that so strongly favor commercial river trip clients over private boaters. It is enormously unfair that private boaters are forced to endure waits of up to 10 or more years for the opportunity to take a private river trip, while commercial river trip clients may go virtually on demand. Now private boaters enduring those 10 year waits are forced to pay unreasonable fees just to get on and stay on the waiting list. When is this strong bias against private boaters going to end? When will river trip participants be treated equally, and everyone required to go through the same procedure to get a permit? Everyone—private and commercial boaters alike—should be required to wait their turn for a permit, and then when their time comes they should have the choice of taking a commercial or a private trip.

I am unconvinced that commercial operators deserve to have a large portion of permits reserved for them and their clients at the expense of private boaters. The NPS policy of



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A c c e s s

guaranteeing commercial river trip operators that their clients will automatically receive access to the river, while denying equal access to private boaters, amounts to nothing less than a government subsidy that artificially props up commercial operators that otherwise would not be able to profitably compete in a fair and open market.

If making all river trip participants go through the same process to get a permit concerns commercial operators, it's only because they've had an unfair monopoly for too many years—make them compete in a fair and open market! And if all river trip participants were forced to go through the same process to get a permit, and more of them chose to take a private trip rather than a commercial trip, then that is irrefutable evidence that demand for private trips is higher than demand for commercial trips, in which case the current allocation is quite clearly wrong. In fact, it is virtually impossible to argue with the fact that demand for private trips is much higher than demand for commercial trips. How do we know this? Simple—compare the waiting list for private Grand Canyon river trips with the advance bookings for commercial Grand Canyon river trip operators. Private trips are filled between now and approximately the year 2007; I seriously doubt if any commercial operators have any advance bookings past 1998.

If access must be guaranteed for commercial river trip participants (and as I've made clear, I don't believe it must), then at the very least the allocation of permits for private vs. commercial trips must be adjusted to more accurately reject current patterns of demand. In the past 20 years, advances in equipment technology and skill levels of boaters has resulted in many more people capable of, and desiring to, participate in private non-commercial Grand Canyon river trips. Similar multi-day restricted-access whitewater rivers managed by the U.S. Forest Service (the Selway and the Middle Fork Salmon in Idaho) currently allocate 70 and 56 percent of permits respectively to private boaters. It is obvious that the current allocation of Grand Canyon river trip permits does not accurately reject the demand that exists for private trips, and clearly gives preferential treatment to commercial river trip participants. Waiting list fees charged to private boaters simply further worsens an already inequitable situation.

In conclusion, I believe these waiting list fees for private boaters are unreasonably high; I believe that they quite clearly further favor commercial river trip clients over private boaters; and I believe that the allocation and rationing system for distributing access to Grand Canyon river trips is deeply flawed in that it is seriously unbalanced in favor of one user group.

I realize that you are a busy man, but nonetheless, I would be very interested in your thoughts about the issues I've raised. I hope you choose to respond. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I suspect you will be hearing from others on this issue.

Sincerely,
Steven R. Martin, Ph.D.
Professor, Natural Resources Recreation
Dept. of Natural Resources Planning and Interpretation
Humboldt State University
(and former NPS Park Ranger)

cc: Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior
Roger Kennedy, Director, National Park Service
Tim Stone, NPS National Fee Program Manager
Steven Bone, Chief Ranger, Grand Canyon National Park
Senator John McCain, Arizona
Senator Jon Kyl, Arizona
Representative Bob Stump, Arizona

AWA Comments on Canyonlands River Management Plan

In January, American Whitewater commented on the River Management Plan for Canyonlands National Park which is being revised. Canyonlands encompasses the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers, downstream of which lies Cataract Canyon. The issue of greatest concern in this management plan is the split allocation which currently portions 86% of the use to commercial outfitters and only 9% for non-commercial use.

Unlike Grand Canyon National Park, Canyonlands has actively solicited public input for the management plan revision. In our comments, we included the following points:

Cataract Canyon is one of the most remote river runs in the lower 48 and the time and effort to run this stretch of river are a natural barrier that prevents major throngs of people from flooding the river, as illustrated by the user numbers. However, the current split allocation system is the largest barrier that limits public access and makes commercial outfitters the predominant use in the corridor.

While we do not endorse or oppose split allocation systems in principle (as stated in our access policy), we question the need for regulating non-commercial boaters on Cataract Canyon. Unlike commercial operations, non-commercial boaters do not make a profit from using the resource. On whitewater rivers in the East, there are quotas for commercial use but not for the members of the public who choose to guide themselves. In most NPS and government managed resources, commercial activity is limited and regulated, while public access is generally allowed free of restriction.

In addition, on Cataract Canyon, the difficulty of the river and the length and remoteness of the run serve as natural deterrents to those contemplating the trip. Typically, trips are 4 days long with 3 days of flatwater (including traversing the head of Lake Powell on the last day) and 1 day of whitewater.

Above all, the new management plan must be fair and flexible. In order to be fair, the National Park Service needs to re-examine the 86/9 split. If the split allocation system for Cataract Canyon is maintained, fairness dictates that non-commercial users should have a roughly equivalent opportunity to gain access to the river as commercial users.

In order to be flexible, the Park Service should develop a system to adjust the quotas to keep supply and demand for both types of trips in balance over time. River managers should devise a methodology to determine true demand. The current numbers of non-commercial boaters may not reflect the true demand for non-commercial trips, because the difficulty in obtaining a permit may frustrate many people from even applying or into going on commercial trips where there are no delays or hassles. There is a growing demand from non-commercial boaters to visit this remote place, while many commercial operations must advertise in order to fill their trips.

For a complete copy of American Whitewater's comments, contact our office or check our homepage.

Events

AMERICAN WHITEWATER HIRES EVENT MANAGER

by Jayne H. Abbot

Hello fellow boating enthusiasts and American Whitewater supporters. How many kayakers does it take.....awh, forget it. I'll spare you some stupid joke said just to entice you to keep reading. Instead, I'll assume that you like getting together with old friends and making new ones at whitewater events and you want to know 'who is that?' and 'what is new?'.

I was hired in January as the American Whitewater Events Manager. I live in the Southeast outside of Asheville, NC in a 100 year old farmhouse and, as is typical of many down here, I'm a transplant from the Northeast. I have been a whitewater kayaker for 10 years, an American Whitewater member for the majority of that time and have kayaked rivers across the country. River conservation and access has been a great concern for me as I've paddled many rivers which are threatened.

In this position, I am primarily responsible for providing support to event organizers throughout the country. This includes being a central source of information on organizing events, soliciting sponsorship, consultation on development of new events, management of the National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos (NOWR) circuit including publicity, insurance and communications. This year, we have an impressive line up of twenty events on the NOWR circuit and ten other AWA sponsored festivals, races and rodeos. All of these events are more than just a good time, they promote the sport of kayaking and provide a forum to raise awareness for local and national river conservation and access issues.

*****NEWS FLASH*****

For 1997, uniform freestyle judging criteria will be used at the majority of NOWR events. Criteria to be published next issue of the journal or look for them on the NOWR web site (www.nowr.org). Thanks to all of the competitors who devoted their time hammering out the details!*****

I am genuinely interested in talking to anyone who wants to volunteer at a local event and those with even more ambitious goals like starting a new event in 1998. I am particularly interested in organizing events in the West to build better awareness of conservation and access issues in that area of the country and to have spread the fun. The 1997 NOWR and American Whitewater schedule of events are listed in this issue. If you are interested in volunteering, please call. We always need your help and so does your local river!

I will also be writing articles regularly on the events happening around the country. If you have attended an event and want to relate an interesting paddling story, provide pictures or even write an article, I'd love to hear from you.

Hope everyone has a wet and wild season of whitewater boating. I hope to see ya'll at the events this summer enjoying your friends and the festivities.

S.Y.O.T.R

Jayne H. Abbot American Whitewater Events Manager
450 Ivy Hill Road Weaverville, NC 28787 ph: (704)645-5299
fax: (704)645-6983 e-mail: JHAbbot@aol.com

An Interview with Rich Bowers, American Whitewater's Executive Director



Rich Bowers and daughter Danna surfing on vacation at Blue Hill Falls, ME

Editors note: Rich Bowers was named Executive Director on January 15, 1997. Pope Barrow, American Whitewater vice-president, sat down with Rich and discussed what's on the horizon, and what changes members can expect to see in the coming months.

American Whitewater: Tell us a little about yourself – your background in whitewater and in river conservation, and what you did before you came to American Whitewater. What have you been doing since you came to work for American Whitewater and how long ago was that?

Rich Bowers: I started boating about 15 years ago, or a little more. I was hooked immediately. My enjoyment of whitewater rivers led me to volunteer to work on river conservation issues. I started as a volunteer with American Rivers, then as a board member for the Savage River Defense Fund. Then I went on to other issues.

When I wasn't working on rivers (in my other life) I was a district representative for an international manufacturing and service company - Hobart Corp.

When the American Whitewater job came along in 1992, it was perfect – I could not imagine a better job for a boater: mixing whitewater and river conservation. Since that time I've been the Conservation Director for American Whitewater, and have been involved in program development, policy setting and fundraising.

American Whitewater: What is your vision for American Whitewater in the year 2,000 and beyond?

Bowers: My vision for American Whitewater is to build an even more effective voice for river conservation and whitewater recreation. While we have a long history of this, and have been really successful in the past several years, there is still a lot to do. There certainly is room to do more and do it better.

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A key part of this vision is to represent whitewater boaters in dealing with national, regional and local issues. Government agencies often tend to ignore whitewater boater concerns because they feel that we are not "organized" enough to be worth dealing with. We need to change this perception.

To effectively represent whitewater boating interests around the country we absolutely **MUST** increase our membership. We need to improve the reputation of whitewater boaters with other groups, including agencies, environmental groups, recreation organizations, etc. Anyone who can or should have an impact on rivers and recreation in this country should know who we are and be prepared to include us at the table when outdoor recreation issues are being discussed and decided.

American Whitewater: How does American Whitewater fit into the lineup of paddlesports groups and conservation organizations?

Bowers: American Whitewater's niche - whitewater - is well defined. Our program successes in conservation, access and events has further defined our mission and priorities, especially with other river conservation organizations where we have a solid reputation. But paddlesports as an industry is still growing and developing and changing. I think American Whitewater needs to remain involved and flexible in dealing with other groups and businesses.

It's important to remember that American Whitewater is a conservation organization of recreationists, and that recreation is a big and growing part of our society. But to really make this work, we need to build close ties to the outdoor recreation industry and to other conservation organizations and other recreationists, including climbers, hikers, bikers and others interested in nonmotorized outdoor adventure sports.

This will be a big part of my effort in the next few years. I would like to see whitewater boaters take the lead on building the outdoor recreation agenda for the nation in the next decade.

American Whitewater: Where is the magazine headed? And what role will you have in that?

Bowers: First of all, the Journal is the best link we have for communicating with our members and attracting new people to whitewater. It is also a great media, one that many other organizations would kill for!

The growth of the Journal will be directly linked to the growth of our membership, and will play a big role in this growth. To be effective, the Journal needs to address the people just getting into the sport. Our programs already do this - our conservation, access and safety work benefits all boaters, regardless of skill levels.

But we will also need to expand the following that American Whitewater has with Class V boaters. Our editor, Bob Gedekoh, has already committed to reporting more on issues which affect all boaters, and I will try to help him. At the same time, I don't think we will stop reporting on exciting and cutting edge whitewater topics, or on interviews with those who are leading the sport.

I am an advocate of converting the magazine, at least in part, to a color format soon. Our members can expect to see color on the cover in the future. Right now the only issue is cost. We do not want to spend money on a glossy magazine that we could better spend on saving rivers. On the other hand, we need to sell magazines and grow our membership to save whitewater rivers, and we have now

reached a circulation with the magazine that it makes economic sense to shift to a color format for at least 4 pages. Bob Gedekoh is behind this 100% and I am committed to it also. Look for it later this year right here in these pages!!

American Whitewater: What is your management style? – are you a hands on nit picker always looking over people's shoulders or do you allow people to take responsibility for their own work?

Bowers: Well, given how spread out our staff and directors are, anyone trying to look over someone else's shoulder is going to have a tough time. In assembling our staff we look for people who are self-starters and go-getters, and who have a proven track record on river work.

However, given the number of issues affecting rivers, all organizations must be coordinated and efficient in how they address problem solving, set priorities, and take advantage of opportunities. Unless we do this, we can't give our members their money's worth. I look to provide this cohesion and efficiency for American Whitewater.

Our Hydropower program is a good example. In the past, it was enough to do good work and then find some way to pay for it. But if we want to restore more whitewater rivers in the future, we need to deal with well-connected and powerful electric utilities and hydropower developers. We cannot do this without first doing our own planning, priority setting and funding. In short, while we want to continue to have fun working on rivers, we need to make sure the work gets done.

American Whitewater: How do you think American Whitewater can keep its volunteer spirit alive now that staff has taken on so much responsibility and the organization has grown so much?

Bowers: I think we need volunteers now more than ever! While we are growing, we are a long way from having enough staff to handle each situation. Staff can't be at every meeting, and it will be our volunteers who really represent American Whitewater. The staff's main job is to keep the internal wheels moving, and to provide the time that volunteers just don't have.

Volunteer efforts, both in the field and on our board, have kept American Whitewater lean and mean for 40 years. I will work to keep it this way.

American Whitewater: What is the role of American Whitewater's regional coordinators?

Bowers: Our regional coordinators are the eyes and ears of American Whitewater, and they are a huge asset for us in getting work done in every nook and cranny of the country. There are so many river issues popping up every day, that without a regional coordinator, or another really strong volunteer working on the issue, American Whitewater cannot be effective, no matter how many staff are involved.

We have a lot of great regional coordinators, and I am lucky to have worked with many of them over the years. But to be honest, our regional coordinator program can be improved. There has never been enough time to really work with each coordinator, or to have the coordinators working with one another. I see this as a major goal for the new Executive Director position, and one I am looking forward to.

American Whitewater: What is your plan to grow American Whitewater's membership?

Bowers: First we need to give people good reasons to join. To do this, we will place a new emphasis on each program to attract new members, and to be sure each program continues to reflect the needs of our members. This includes conservation, access,

safety, events and the Journal. We will also be looking to increase our member benefits.

Second, we need to be sure that boaters know what we do. Third, we need to ask boaters to become members and to support our efforts.

American Whitewater: How are American Whitewater's finances these days? What does American Whitewater rely on to keep the bill collector away from the door?

Bowers: Our finances are good, they have kept pace with the growth of our programs in recent years. But the combination of recent events, successful programs, and the emphasis on recreation makes this the time to really up the ante for whitewater. To assure we can be successful tomorrow, we need to increase our membership and our major donor program.

In the short term, our members will see us increase our dependence on Foundations and Corporations. But in the long term, I believe that American Whitewater will always be primarily supported by whitewater boaters.

American Whitewater: What are your plans for the Events Program? Access Program?

Bowers: I see all of our programs, including events and access, as totally integrated. For instance, there is little point in conserving rivers if you want to put them away on the shelf. This has never been a goal of American Whitewater; we want to save rivers so we can enjoy them. For us, there is no difference between conservation, access, and safety – they are all necessary parts of river running.

Events are really important. It's our way of celebrating rivers and of telling others how great rivers and boating are. American Whitewater now has a brand new events coordinator, Jayne Abbot, and she is going to be great! I really look forward to expanding the number of festivals and races, and freestyle events sponsored by American Whitewater, including those on the NOWR circuit.

American Whitewater: How do you plan to get American Whitewater's western members better representation? Or do you plan to address that soon?

Bowers: I don't think it's a question of better representation. American Whitewater is all over the west coast and nearly 50% of my time, and Rich Hoffmann's time, is spent on western issues. But it does show where a good number of future issues for boaters will be decided. To handle this workload, the new Conservation staff member will be located in the western states. This person may need to spend some time in our Silver Spring, Maryland office, but will quickly be graduating to the West.

Having said this, there are still some areas where American Whitewater could be stronger. These areas include the Southwest and the upper Rockies.

American Whitewater: How do you plan to work with the American Whitewater Board? Seems like you will have 25 can-tankerous whitewater boaters, all leaders in the sport and all clamoring for your attention at once.

Bowers: This should be one of the fun elements of this job. When I am dealing with Directors (or reg. coord. or volunteers) I am dealing with boaters who are passionate and who have really put their lives into making the American Whitewater a success.



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Portage on Rio Santo Domingo Chiapas, Mexico
Photo John Armstrong

1997 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS

AMERICAN WHITEWATER EVENTS

National Paddling Film Festival-East	February 21	KY	Barry Grimes	606-623-9067
National Paddling Film Festival-West	March 1	CA	Linda Ivans	805-871-6790
Arkansas Festival	July 4-6	CO	Landis Arnold	303-444-2336
Kennebec Festival	July 5	ME	Tom Christopher	508-534-9447
Black River Festival	July 26-27	NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Deerfield Festival	August 2	MA	Tom Christopher	508-534-9447
Upper Yough Race	August ?	MD	Jessi Whittemore	301-746-5389
Gauley Festival	Sept 20	WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355
Gauley River Race	Sept ?	WV	Donny Hudsbeth	800-950-2585
Russell Fork Race	Oct ?	VA	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355
Moose River Festival	October 18	NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WHITEWATER RODEOS (NOWR) CIRCUIT

Kern River Festival	April 18-20	CA	Linda Ivans	805-871-6790
New River Rodeo 6091	April 25-27	VA	Roanoke Co Pks/Rec	540-387-
Chili Bar Rodeo	CANCELLED	CA	Larry Goral	916-621-1224
Lochsa Kodeo	May 9-11	MT	Jeffery France	406-721-7774
Bigfork WW Festival	May 16-18	MT	Gini Ludden	406-752-8328
Kananaskis WW Rodeo	May 23-25	Alberta	Mark Taylor	403-266-1527
Jackson Hole Rodeo	May 30-June 1	WY	Aaron Pruzan	307-733-2471
Potomac WW Festival	May 31-June 1	MD	Rich Hoffman	301-589-9453
Maupin Daze Festival	May 31-June 1	OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201
Headwaters Championship	June 13-15	CO	P.T. Wood	719-539-3174
Taylor River Rodeo	June 20-22	CO	Christian Mason	916-583-4341
Willow River Paddlefest	June 20-22	BC	Rick Brine	250-964-7400

E	V	C	N	T	S
Animas River Days	June 27-28	CO	Nancy Wiley	970-259-3893	
Derby Creek Days	August 8-10	CO	Chris Emerick	970-736-0080	
Kootenay WW Festival	August 2-4	BC	Bob Duprec	604-447-6561	
Ottawa River Rodeo	August 29-31	Ontario	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223	
American River Festival	September 12-14	CA	Larry Goral	916-621-1224	
Outer Banks Surf	September 19-21	NC	Pam Malec	919-441-6800	
Savage River Rodeo/Slalom	September 26-28	OR	Dunbar Hardy	541-482-4148	
Coosa Kiver WW Festival	October 3-5	AL	Lonnie Carden	334-272-0952	
Ocoee Rodeo	October 10-12	NC	Susan Wilson	704-645-5299	

OTHER EVENTS

East Coast Team Trials	May 28-30	TN	Tracy Clapp	423-267-5671	
West Coast Team Trials	July 11-13	CO	Dan Brabec	970-736-0080	
South Yuba Pedal/Paddle	May 31-June 1	CA	Dave Good	916-265-9653	
1997 World Championship	September 5-7	Ottawa	Mark Scriver	613-727-5388	
World Cup #1	July 5	DC	Eric/Brian	202-546-9214	
World Cup #2	July 15	DC	Eric/Brian	202-546-9214	
World Cup #3	July 19	DC	Eric/Brian	202-546-9214	
World Cup #4	July 26	DC	Eric/Brian	202-546-9214	
Extreme World Kayak	September 19-21	DC	Eric/Brian	202-546-9214	

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May 3rd

Albright, West Virginia



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The Festival is held at the scenic confluence of Muddy Creek and the Cheat River, where an indian village once thrived. A wide arc of booths surrounds the once quiet field like a wagon ring; in one corner the children's area is full of toys, the focus tent teaches of the glories and perils of the watershed, the vendors peddle their wares and take in the river air. At the silent auction, deals abound. 'Round the stage are crowds of revelers, swaying to infectious rhythms. There is no better way to spend the day than at the 1997 Cheat River Festival. And in the morning, the river awaits.

*Downriver
Cheat Canyon
Race*

Friday, May 2



OPEN BOATING ON THE LITTLE

A Great Smoky Adventure

By Don Kinser

"All the gauges are coming up, can you bag work tomorrow?" asked Steve, our full-time paddle professional when he called me Wednesday afternoon at the office. "Something sweet should run, Milt's already in."

Photo by Sara Haines. Joe Greiner in the Sinks-Little River-Approach Drops

There was no hesitation at all. "What do you have in mind?" I asked, as I began to think who I must call to rearrange tomorrow's schedule. You must have clear priorities and focus to be successful in business. I focused and shuffled meetings, making the river my top priority.

The chance to paddle a steep mountain stream in August is always a special treat. Particularly on a weekday with few others on the river.

A solid day and a half of warm summer rain had soaked the western slope of the Great Smoky Mountains and everything was flushing. It had been a pretty dry summer in the southeast and we were itching for a great trip. Week after week of the Chattooga at 1.2 feet was getting old. None of us could deal with the "O-no-ee" (a.k.a. Ocoee) crowds and in frustration we watched as the rain fell in West Virginia, out of reach in Atlanta.

"I've always wanted to paddle out Little River in the Smokies. The Townsend gauge is coming up pretty good," Steve suggested. "Already running about 600 cfs, I've heard that's an OK level. Never been there myself though. What do you think?"

"I'm there," I replied. I worked quickly and headed home early to check my guidebooks and learn about the Little River.

I pulled out Monte Smith's *Southeastern Whitewater*, one of my favorite guides. It described the Little River as the best run in the Smokies. This sounded good. The stream begins on the northern slopes of Clingman's Dome and tumbles toward Townsend, and, eventually, the Tennessee River.

My excitement built as I read Monte's account of the Little River. His taste in streams agrees with mine and I could tell he liked this run: "steep gradient, scrambled stream bed morphology, adrenaline pumping trip." Monte provided a lot of data in his guide and suggested 500 cfs on the Townsend gauge as a "medium" level. He noted 800 cfs as "high".

Leaving Atlanta early Thursday morning, we headed north toward Tennessee. Milt and I monitored the gauge with the cell phone. Steve had pulled down the exit ramp that led to the Tellico. He stopped and walked back to our Jeep. Not knowing the river, we were hesitant to press on another hour and a half and chance a river too high to boat.

We all had our hearts set on sampling a new stream, but in light of the high water, we wondered if the familiar Tellico might not be our best option.

"1,430 cubes is way past Monte's high water mark." We mulled this over as we quickly checked some other rivers in the guidebook to get a feel for the author's calibration. We agreed with Monte's flow guidelines for the other rivers that we knew first hand. Now what?

Milt and I weren't about to head for the Tellico after having skipped work to paddle.

"Tellico is way too short," I exclaimed. "I say let's go for the

Little." Milt agreed.

Steve suggested we call our old friend Joe. Joe Greiner is one of the those indispensable river buddies who always has the information you need, or knows how to get his hands on it fast. He's a walking, talking guidebook and can describe any river in the SE from memory.

"Yeah, good idea," I said as I dialed Joe's number on the cell phone. Technology sure beats guessing and spending a whole day driving around instead of paddling.

"Um, the Little has water in it? Anything over a thousand is great fun. I'm jealous," Joe quickly remarked.

"How much over a thousand is fun, Joe? It's already up over 1,400 and may still be rising," I inquired with suspicion.

"No problem," said Joe. "Anyway, the road runs along the

whole thing. If you get uncomfortable you can always hop out. You'll have a great time." He paused, then added "the Sinks and the Elbow should get your attention..." I could hear his grin over the phone.

We pressed on still uneasy, but feeling somewhat reassured. We called TVA again as we left the interstate. "Wow, 1,840 cfs at 11 AM! It stopped raining last evening. With the leaves you would think the river has to start falling soon."

It was too late to turn back. As we wound our way toward Townsend we began to glimpse the river. Swollen and brown, the Little was full. Adrenaline raised our consciousness and put us a little on edge.

The road began to climb out of the Tennessee Valley and took us into the mountains. The scenery transformed to splendid hardwood forest as the sides of the gorge closed in. The forest was lush and smelled of fresh rain. Water was flowing everywhere, cascading off the steep gorge walls into the river.

We entered the west gate of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited National Park in America. Now there was only room for the small road and the river at the floor of the gorge. The river grew noticeably steeper and we climbed up the gorge, the road and the river occasionally swapping sides with each other.

I felt the thrill that comes with the challenge of experiencing a new river. I always savor the keen sensation and acute awareness of the river as we work our way down a challenging stretch of whitewater for the first time.

Steve, Milt and I paddle together often and work well as a team. We know and trust each other's abilities and judgment. We are die hard open boaters and we love the steep, technical creeks of the southern and central Appalachians.

There is also a small, but healthy dose of competition thrown in to our relationship. We began to tell the jokes and stories paddlers always tell when there're anxious.

I looked at Milt. "Aren't many boaters up here, are there?" I mused. Milt suggested this looked like a good spot to leave the take-out car. We pulled over, rearranged our Captions for the shuttle, and completed our pre-river ritual.

Steve, just back from a 4 month western paddling trip, wasn't

It was too late to turn back. As we wound our way toward Townsend we began to glimpse the river. Swollen and brown, the Little was full. Adrenaline raised our consciousness and put us a little on edge.

Open Boating on the Little...

willing to give up his wetsuit, despite the pleasant 85 degrees.

Milt and I made friendly fun of him as we applied sunscreen in the warm August sun. Fresh peanut butter sandwiches and PowerBars safely stowed in our boats, we made sure the beer found its way to the take-out car. We scouted as we drove up the river. Nearly constant 3+ water greeted us as we rounded each bend.

We had decided to put in just above the Sinks and take out just below the Elbow, combining the best of the upper and lower sections of the Little. The road followed the river closely. Joe had suggested this itinerary, noting that if the river looked too big, we could run the flatter upper section.

The Sinks is an impressive rapid. A full head of water gushes down a quarter mile of classic Appalachian steep creek before plummeting over a final 10 foot drop. We mumbled about walking, but after discussing the line, we decided we would go for it. We piled back in the car and headed to the putin.

About a mile or so upriver we found a good place to park. We launched and peeled out into the flushing stream.

The Little River didn't feel "little". We faced continuous class 3 ledges and waves from the first stroke. At this flow many rapids approach class 4 proportions. I saw nothing but smiles as Milt and Steve focused downriver on the next series of moves. We were in our favorite element and enjoying every second.

About a mile and only a few minutes downstream the river turned sharply left over a class 3+ ledge. The Sinks' bridge came into view as we eddied out and dumped our boats below the drop. We secured them to a stream side tree and headed down the road to set safety and plan our attack.

A crowd of curious vacationers gathered along the road and watched as we each studied the line through this long, steep, difficult rapid. Over a quarter mile long, dropping at 130 feet per mile; we judged it solid 5.0. Three big ledges with near river wide, meaty holes were followed by a must make eddy above the final 10 foot drop. Peel out down the middle, work your way to the right and skirt the edge of each hole. Keep your boat dry or risk flushing into the final drop.

Standing on the bank a women with a pleasant southern accent asked "Have you'all done this before?" She had that "What are you thinking?" quality in her voice. "Not this one," I replied with a grin.

Seeing Milt's fancy waterproof video camera, another asked if we were professionals. We all chuckled and basked in the ego stroking glow of the growing crowd.

Steve went first as I watched with rope in hand. Milt rolled the tape, secretly hoping for good carnage. Steve sliced dryly through the successive drops and eased into the eddy with a broad smile. Milt was next. Taking Steve's lead, Milt pulled neatly into the crux eddy.

Heading back to my boat, I studied the line one last time, with an anxious feeling. Peeling out into the first drop I got a little too far left and took on water as I dropped over the ledge. I floated past the next eddy over the second drop a little sideways with a heavy boat.

The hole below this second drop reminded me of the hole below Chattooga's Right Crack at a level above 2 feet - a sticky mess. No place to be. Yet that was exactly where I

found myself.

Stuck in the hole, bracing hard on my left, I began to paddle hard for the eddy. Milt enjoyed the carnage through his viewfinder and Steve headed up river to help.

Better judgment took hold and I bailed, now swimming hard for the eddy. Safely in the eddy, I turned, expecting to view my



Photo by Sara Haines. Joe Greiner in the Sinks-Little River-Final drop under the bridge

Open Boating on the Little...

boat heading madly downriver without me. I was giving the crowd their money's worth. Several dozen vacation videos captured my folly for friends back home!

But the boat had followed me right into the eddy! Surprised, I grabbed the boat, acting like I had planned it, clawed my way up the slippery rock bank, and dumped. Got to look good for the crowd you know, even when self rescuing. Safely down the third drop, we all headed to scout the final plunge, just under the bridge.

We decided on a line right down the middle, boofing off a small shelf. Steve shamed Milt into going first. Milt sailed off the end of the shelf and made it look easy; the crowd cheered. I missed a half foot left, flipped right and quickly rolled. Steve missed a half foot right, flipped left and rolled. The crowd cheered even louder and marveled at our open canoe rolls. Milt gloated about his smooth run and let us know it.

Steve and I laughed as we headed down river. "That lady told me that watching us made her whole vacation." We felt good knowing that paddling in some small way contributed to these folk's quality of life! We ate a quick lunch while dodging wasps and continued on. The river was continuous class 3/4 with big waves. Curious vacationers followed us down the river as we continued the plunge toward Townsend.

Elbow was next, although we really weren't sure where. We continued, boat scouting most things, playing and surfing all the way. On occasion one of us would get out of the boat, take a better look, and then wave the others through. This is the advantage of knowing and trusting your boating companions.

We had the river to ourselves until about 5:00, when we encountered two open canoes putting in just below a nice class 4 drop. Looking back at the drop, we asked it's name.

"Oh, so that was Elbow..." Steve chuckled. We laughed as the gradient eased and we cruised the last mile or so to the car.

As we loaded the boats we swapped river stories and listened, once again, to Milt brag about his smooth launch at the Sinks, and how we had both missed the line.

As Steve and I drove the shuttle we stopped and looked at the Sinks. Although still impressive, the level had dropped and the water was much clearer. Later, after checking the TVA gauge, we learned the river had fallen to 1,190 cfs by 3 PM. We also began to notice a steady stream of boaters making the afternoon run from Knoxville. The Little River had risen and then fallen quickly, making it a tough run to time just right. We were lucky.

"I've got a real bad feeling about this," I said as we eased into the Wagoneer and headed home, already discussing what our next expedition might be, "I'm pretty sure I have to go to work tomorrow..."

Steve Frazier, Milt Aitken and Don Kinser all live in Atlanta, GA. Joe "Gauges" Greiner lives in Raleigh, NC.

Author's notes:

For a detailed account of The Little see *Southeastern Whitewater: Fifty of the Best River Trips from Alabama to West Virginia*, by Monte Smith. We have found this guide a great resource, although we respectfully disagree with Smith's high water recommendation for this run. Competent class 4 boaters will find this run a classic at flows around 1,500 cfs, nearly twice Smith's high water mark. In the summer this stream will rise and fall very quickly.

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A Backcountry Idaho Adventure

Big Creeking by Air



Part of Big Horn Crags.

by Brad Brooks

"Come on, come on, come on...I can't believe this!" I heard myself say as I stood behind Bill's 73 VW van with the jumper cables. This had been going on for almost twenty minutes - boats loaded with gear and stacked high on the van - but still five miles from the Salmon airport and now late for our 8:00 a.m. charter. Oh well, what did I expect, every trip seems to have its little miscues. The shuttle taking till 2:30 a.m. the previous night was just the first in a long line. Anyway, this wasn't

A Backcountry Idaho Adventure



Better look at Coxeey Rapid.

going to be our average trip, we were going from one extreme to another. A week earlier we had been in New York City. Now we were about to jump on a plane that would drop us off for a self-supported trip where we probably wouldn't see another person for days.

The Big Creek in Idaho runs through the River Of No Return Wilderness, is part of the largest non-roaded area in the continental U.S. Since there aren't many roads and the few that exist were still covered with snow, this trip would require us to fly in and then paddle out roughly sixty miles - forty on the Big Creek and the last twenty on the Middle Fork of the Salmon. But, of course, we had to get to the put in first. Bill's van eventually started and we made it to the airport to load our gear onto two Cessna 206s. The forty minute flight was spectacular as we passed snowed capped mountains, granite domes, and deep canyons. It was also quite helpful, since we were able to sort of scout the first 10 miles of the Big Creek. We could see a lot of whitewater and also counted a number of logjams.

As I stood on the grassy landing field, one of the pilots asked if we were experts or "something"? I replied that both Bill and Vance were "experts" and that I was the "something"; but why do you ask? He said he never seen anybody fly in to Big Creek before with kayaks. Now this got me to thinking, the guide books had said there weren't any drops more difficult than class IV. However, the western class IV that we had paddled the previous days at high water could be considered class V on the East Coast. Luckily, before I could ponder all the things that could go wrong more planes landed, bringing visitors to a nearby lodge. One of the pilots said she had paddled the river before and that she envied us.

With these final words of encouragement, we began dragging our kayaks, loaded with 80 pounds of gear, three miles to the river. Once we left the landing field there was no trail, so we bush-

whacked our way through a dense forest in the general direction of Big Creek. Over an hour later we made it to a small clearing next to an old burnt out cabin that sat alongside the river. The river was creekly here - only twenty feet wide and a foot or so deep - however, it was incredibly pristine and we were just happy to be finally getting on the water.

About a mile and a half into the run we came across our first river wide logjam, on a bend in the river. The side of the river where we eddied was very steep and we couldn't portage. We had to carry back upriver about fifty yards through a swamp, then ferry out and catch a small eddy on the other side. It wasn't really an eddy, but a three foot long open spot with a root sticking out that you had to grab - then carry another couple of hundred yards through the woods to put back in. At the put in, which was a five foot seal launch drop, I noticed that we were all sweating hard. I hoped the next portages would be easier - since we had counted at least five from the air.

A little over an hour and another por-

A Backcountry Idaho Adventure

tage or two later, we came to the beginning of a two mile gorge of almost constant class III+-IV. I had worried looking at this area from the plane because there were two strainers that appeared to be in difficult drops. We negotiated the next mile, eddy hopping and picking our way through rocks, boulders, and trees without any mishaps. Two logjams later we eddied out and debated whether we had seen last strainer or not. I thought there was still another and volunteered to run ahead and scout. I hiked about a half mile down river, but didn't see any other logjams. It was continuous whitewater with several ledgy drops.

I was beginning to think I was losing my mind because I was still positive there was another strainer and, from the plane, it had looked like the worst one. We ran the mile that I scouted without a problem and had just started into unknown territory when Vance got broached on a rock on the left side of the river. Bill had already eddied out below and I caught the first eddy I could about twenty feet below

Bill. Just as I dragged my boat out of the river and onto some rocks, I heard Bill yell my name.

I looked up, Bill was hanging onto his boat in the middle of the river. He had slipped on a rock in his rush to help Vance and fell into the river, which quickly swept both him and his boat away. I threw Bill about thirty feet of rope. He grabbed hold so I could pull him and his boat to the side. Once Bill was off the river, I raced to Vance, but he had already gotten himself off the rock. I helped him pull the boat out. We began to scout again. Fifty yards downstream a large drop had a logjam covering about 3/4 of the river. Now we all felt pretty lucky that things hadn't turned out a lot worse. We decided that since it was almost 3:00 that we should stop for lunch.

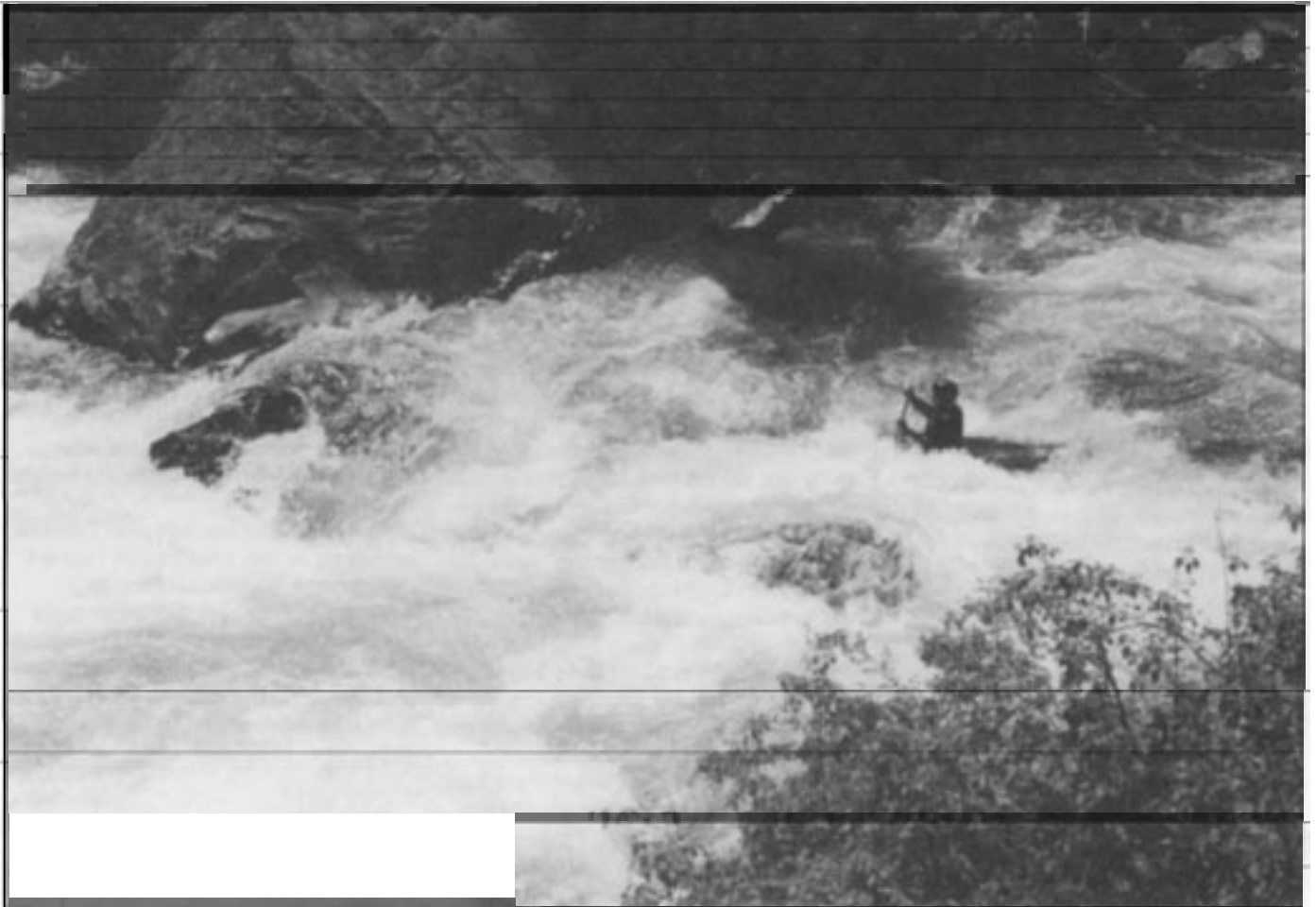
After the last strainer the river became less intense and we paddled several

more hours at a leisurely pace. We made camp in a nice grove of trees with a little grassy field behind us. Although we figured that we had only gone about 15 miles, all the portaging and scouting had worn us out, so we went to bed early.

The next morning we were joined by a mule deer, who stayed on the fringe of our camp, eating leaves while we had our breakfast and tried to work some of the soreness out of our aching limbs. Once on the river more creeks and streams began to feed Big Creek, making the paddling easier. We were able to spend some time looking for wildlife. Besides dozens of butterflies that would follow our brightly colored boats, we saw a large herd of deer and a pair of elk.

After lunch on a sand bar, we came to a horizon and got out to scout what I believe is called Coxeys rapids. The next half a mile had a half dozen drops amid large boulders and an occasional log. Of particular interest were two boulders about 3/4 of the way down the rapid that had caught several logs and created a

Brad on Coxeys Rapid.





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very ugly strainer. I was a little apprehensive because the strainer was right out in the middle with a lot of current flowing through it. Bill went first and made it almost look easy, I went next, but my ferry to the right side of the river was weak, so I initiated my run by going through a hole on the left. With my line off from the start, I proceeded to hit almost every hole, four in all, and was either surfed or shot vertically from all of them. Fortunately I never flipped, so I had plenty of control to miss the strainer. After Vance came through, he said that he too had been squirted a few times, which smoothed my ego a bit.

After this bit of excitement the river mellowed and after paddling a few more hours we found what looked to be a great camp spot, but there was already a tent set up. This was puzzling, since we were out in the middle of nowhere. Seeking privacy, we decided to camp across the river. After setting up camp - throwing our boats down and crashing on **Terma** Rest pads - it came to our attention that Vance hadn't quite allocated enough food for that night's dinner. This may have been intentional for I do recall him saying that he hoped to drop a couple of pounds on the trip. He redeemed himself, however, by having the good judgment to pack a large container of bourbon, which was gone before the end of that evening.

Just before dusk we spotted an attractive woman across the river who waved hello. I took it upon myself to ferry across and be neighborly. I surprised her a bit when I walked into her camp, but she seemed happy to have some company. She was an intern at the University of Idaho weather station just a few miles up river. For the next several hours she told me about her summer in the mountains - taking notes on the habits of big horn sheep, stepping on rattlesnakes, and occasionally bumping into black bears. This was beginning to make our trip sound kind of tame and it was getting late, so I ferried back across to our camp to get ready for the big day ahead.

The next day we soon found ourselves at the mouth of the Big Creek Gorge. This marked the last five miles of the Big Creek, which would drop roughly 80 feet per mile till it flowed into the Middle Fork of the Salmon. The run began in a granite gorge and was constant III-IV

whitewater that was technical and swift. We were having a great time, picking our way through one rock garden after another, but I was keeping my eyes peeled for a river wide hole about half way down this section that we had been **warned** about. After awhile I began to relax, figuring the high water levels must have washed out the hole. As we progressed down river Bill was in the front on the left, I was slightly behind on the right and Vance was sweep. The river began to get a little steeper so I thought it best to get behind Bill and let him probe. Unfortunately, I misjudged the strength of the current and missed an eddy that Bill caught. I was swept sideways over a three foot **pourovers** into a swirling mess of water that kept grabbing the stem of my boat. I felt as if I was in an eleven foot long squirt boat.

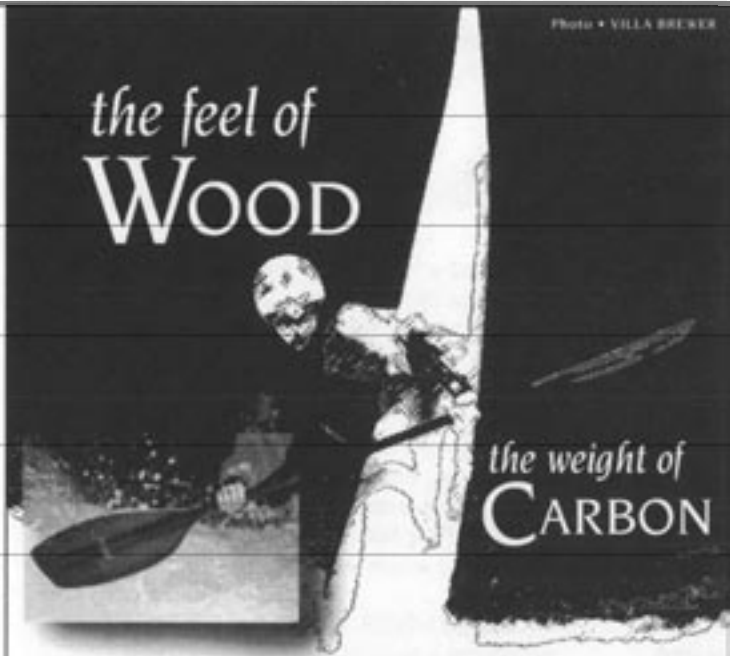
I finally freed myself, only to find that I was about fifteen feet above a deep trough that extended across the river. I was in the middle of the river heading for what looked like the deepest part of the **trough/hole**. There was nowhere else to go, so I took two or three hard strokes and hoped I would punch through. I had penetrated about half of it when I felt the stem of my boat suddenly pulled straight down into the hole. My boat went vertical and I was cartwheeled back into the trough.

I tucked and felt my boat slowly sink five feet and stop. I realized that I had found the river wide hole and remembered that we had been told that if you were stupid enough to get into this hole, you would probably have to swim out. My next thought was that I **REALLY** didn't want to be swimming here. But what could I do, it felt like I was on the bottom of the river?

Before bailing out, I decided I should at least try to roll, even though I knew I was nowhere near the surface. As I brought my paddle perpendicular to the boat, one of the blades caught the current. I locked my arms and it pulled me up and shot me out in an explosive ender. To my relief I landed clear and began floating down river. I **QUICKLY** caught an eddy.

A Backcountry Idaho Adventure

Vance Condi catches some air.



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A Backcountry Idaho Adventure



Bill Thomas is the speck.

Both Bill and Vance had caught an eddy about twenty yards up river. From this vantage Bill was able to witness the carnage, so after a very thorough scout, they snuck the right and we were on our way again.

After a couple more miles of breathtaking scenery and fairly continuous whitewater, we dropped down a final chute that had me doing 360's and flushed onto the Middle Fork of the Salmon. The character of the Middle Fork differed dramatically from that of the Big Creek. The Middle Fork of the Salmon was wide open and relaxing and we were able to enjoy the beautiful canyons that would open up to us around every bend. We were making great time, flowing through one wave train after another and occasionally catching a nice surfing wave. Of course, there were still a few surprises left. We came to a rapid that had a very easy line down the left, but I followed Bill down the middle, which was strewn with holes six to eight feet deep. After skirting the edge of two

of these holes, I was thankful I hadn't fallen in. I felt that I had already had all the hole riding that I needed for one day.

Soon, we came to a horizon line with a large curling wave on the left and a steep pourover on the right. It looked likely there would be a large hole in there somewhere. Bill took a quick peek and, without a word, plunged out into the middle of the river and disappeared. Three or four long seconds later Bill crested what turned out to be a second even larger wave and disappeared again. We hoped to hell Bill knew what he was doing. Vance followed Bill's line and had what looked to be a very smooth ride until he too disappeared. I quickly followed and entered the first wave sideways. As I came over the top I dropped about ten feet into the trough of the second wave and found myself looking up at a huge

green wall of water. The wave was very glassy and the sensation of rolling through this wave train, which then got progressively smaller, was incredible. At the end of this drop we all had a big smile on our faces.

We floated the last several miles to the take out, which we were all a little sad to finally see, because it brought to an end one of the best paddling trips any of us had ever under taken.

EDITORS NOTE: Because you must paddle out a short distance on the Middle Fork of the Salmon to reach the take out, it is illegal to run Big Creek without a Middle Fork permit. These permits are very difficult to get. This is a serious access issue which has never been resolved. Those who make adventure runs on Big Creek advise against camping on or near to Middle Fork - to minimize the risk of arrest.

For further information contact Bill Thomas W - (212) 305-1243.

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Last year's festival was attended by 350 people and included displays from all the major boat manufacturers plus other vendors from throughout New England. This year's event will be the first time that AWA will be able to provide tent sites for camping at the festival site and will also include food and entertainment on the day of the festival. Guaranteed to be a first rate party with the best whitewater in the Northeast.

Besides the rip-roaring Kennebec River, the Union Water Power Company has agreed to provide releases on the Dead River for three days. Friday, July 4—1,300 cfs, Saturday, July 5—1,800 cfs, and Sunday July 6—1,000 cfs. All are excellent levels for beginner or early intermediate boaters.

The relicensing of Harris Dam and the Indian Pond Project began in February of this year and AWA will begin negotiating with the Central Maine Power Company on a number of issues that are important to boaters. AWA members should make a special effort to support our work in Maine this year. We need our membership strength which has significant financial impact to demonstrate how important the Kennebec River resources are to boaters and other recreationists. Without your help we stand to lose ground in this relicensing procedure. Your presence this year especially, is very important, and will help send a message to those who would restrict our access to Kennebec whitewater.

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Last year's festival was attended by 700 people in spite of a horrible rainstorm and AWA put on it's first "Killer Chicken Barbecue" cooked entirely by AWA volunteers. A good time was had by all with plenty of tents to shelter festival fans from the rain and the barbecue never tasted better.

The Deerfield River has been the site for national championship races in both canoe and kayak events and continues to build its reputation as the next major league whitewater mecca in the Northeast as thousands of boaters now travel to western Massachusetts each summer. Through the cooperation of the New England Power Company and the landmark "Deerfield Settlement Agreement" boaters now have the opportunity to enjoy great whitewater just a short distance away from most of the large population centers in New England.

With so many dams in New England still mired in the relicensing process, river festivals play an important role in establishing the American Whitewater Affiliation and our members as important players in the process. The more positive economic impact we present to communities near whitewater resources, the easier it is to generate local support in our negotiations with public utilities. The more credibility we establish as an important user group, the greater our chances for future success.

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has been reporting fatal accidents and near-misses for the American Whitewater Affiliation and American Canoe Association for over 20 years. These narratives contain many lifetimes of hard experience; reading them, while painful and unsettling, can help paddlers of all skill levels avoid making similar mistakes.

In these two books from Menasha Ridge Press Charlie condenses over two decades of hard lessons from the pages of American Whitewater.

The River Safety Report describes over 100 fatalities occurring between 1992 and 1995, along with many near misses. These are expanded versions of the summaries that appeared in American Whitewater, and are frequently written by the participants themselves. 166 pp; softbound, \$8.95 + \$2 postage.

The River Safety Anthology describes thirty-five of the most significant river deaths and 35 near-misses occurring between 1975 and 1992. Charlie's accident descriptions are combined with additional material from Jody Tinsley to organize the material and drive the message home. 130 pp; softbound, \$12.95 + \$2 postage.

For more information contact:
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RIVER RANGERS!?!

STORY AND PHOTOS

BY SCOTT SHOUP

This summer I had the delight of traveling west, chasing the sunsets with no call or reason. My trusty station wagon eventually carried me into the middle of the Payette river system in the rugged terrain of western Idaho. On a hot afternoon I found myself in the shelter of the Banks Cafe, escaping the heat, and perusing the menu with a vagabond's eye for volume and low cost, with two of my fellow boaters from back east. After a quick bite the South Fork of the Payette's cool water beckoned us to the put in for the class IV section known as the Staircase. This turned out to be a real gem, with big water lines through rapids such as Bronco Billy that would entertain any expert. Playing was a real treat, particularly to those of us used to the heavy river traffic so common on popular rivers in the east. After a few hours we reached the well maintained Forest Service takeout, located at the confluence of the North and South Forks of the Payette.

Photo: Jim Ciardelli talks to a local boater on the South Fork of the Payette.





Photo: Jim Ciardelli and Chris Bassett talk to a boater on the South Fork of the Payette.

from the plight of this hypothetical boater and to my own survival, in the not so Coast Guard approved lifejacket I was wearing. Then I remembered my high float vest

in the car, but no, it too was not Coast Guard approved. "I must flee this place!"

Ten seconds later I returned to my senses. After all, I had actually had a few positive experiences with the Forest Service and I had never had any problems with my lifejackets before. My companions, who apparently hadn't even noticed the truck or at least didn't care, started to load our boats. Shortly thereafter the little green truck's driver arrived, threw a kayak in the back and began to rearrange his clothes in the cab. Briefly confused, I realized I was witnessing my worst nightmare, a ranger that actually paddled and patrolled the river - violating the sanctity and separate reality which boaters relish as their own hidden secret.

Then -

The Driver of the green truck: "Hey Scott, I couldn't miss that rig anywhere, but it's a long way from home, so it took

me a minute."

Myself (Crap, who is this guy, oh, its Don Piper, great!): "Hey Don, how are you, and are you in trouble with the ranger?"

The Guy: "No! I am the ranger. How long are you around for, can you do some boating? In a few days I have some time off."

Myself (Oh shit, its not Don, but I do know this guy.): "I am not sure how long I'm going to stay. I don't really have any plans."

After a bit of squirming and being uncharacteristically nice I managed to recall the ranger's correct name... Chris Bassett. Chris, the river ranger, had to go, but said that he would be around if I wanted to paddle and that it was good to see someone from back home.

Slowly the gears began to grind in my head. Working backwards through time I finally recalled my days as a retail jockey at the Nantahala Outdoor Center. Chris had worked there, too, as a line cook for River's End. In fact we had done a bit of boating together. Great, I've been here six hours and I'm already on good terms with the river ranger!

As I walked up to the parking lot I noticed a small lime green pickup with a squirt boat in its bed parked near my station wagon. But what was this? Upon the door of this vehicle was the mark of "the enemy"; the emblem that for years has elicited a Pavlovian response of dread that makes you want to crawl under a rock and cry out "No, No, just leave me alone!"

I approached and read the words, "United States Forest Service." Amghhh! It was if a stifling blanket had been drawn over the scene. I remembered previous, vile, encounters; but then once again my attention was drawn to the squirt boat in the back of the truck. What did this mean? In my mind's eye I could see a lone squirt boater being lead away in cuffs by men in sunglasses and uniforms for being a squirt boating hoodlum. Snapping to, my thoughts turned away

RIVER RANGERS!?!

Photo: Chris Bassett surfing on the South Fork of the Payette. Note USFS lifejacket.



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RIVER RANGERS!?!

The following days my friends and I paddled the Staircase several more times, once late in the day - greatly enjoying the play of evening light on the water. Later, we also ventured to the South Fork's Canyon. Here we found ourselves in a deep narrow gorge rounding blind comers to find delightfully big waves and a few surprises. Of course, eventually my attention was drawn to the North Fork of the Payette, 16 miles of whitewater that has always held a true place in boating lore. I spent an evening scouting the run from the road. As I did I remember the stories told by many boaters about the legendary North Fork and its rapids. What I saw was not completely insane, but, then again, it gave me a somber, humble feeling.

The next day I wanted to run the North Fork, not in pieces, but from the top to the bottom. Unfortunately my companions had other ideas, climbing a route known as the Crack of Doom at Idaho's City of Rocks. So I staked out a parking spot at the takeout in an effort to find some new boating partners. After an unfulfilling morning I retreated to the Banks Cafe for a milkshake, then returned to my watch. Finally Chris, the river ranger, rolled in, with the same idea about running the North Fork.

Chris collected two more boaters and we drove to the very top of the North Fork, scouting along the way. Between us no one had run the upper half of the river, so we spent a bit of time trying to set the order of the rapids in our memories. What followed was one of the best paddling experiences that I have ever had.

Over the next few days I spent more time with Chris and he introduced me to several more runs in the Payette watershed.

While this occurred I learned more about Chris's job as a river ranger and spent part of a day tailing him and Jim Ciardelli, who is also with the USFS. I was surprised to learn that Chris's position had originally been a voluntary service by Jim Ciardelli and others. Officially, Chris is a "River Technician" and has no law enforcement powers, but he can quickly call for it on a radio that he carries with him. He has many duties, including cleaning the bathrooms at the Banks takeout, but two things are most important. The first is to give the Forest Service a presence on and off the river. The second is to promote "river ethics".

Chris makes people aware of the fact that most of the access points along the

river are cared for by the Forest Service. It is all too easy to take our access to rivers and the work done by public agencies such as the Forest Service for granted. Yet access is one of the toughest issues that boaters face today, whether the land is privately, or publicly owned. For instance, you can't legally paddle the Yellowstone River in Yellowstone National Park, even though you, as a citizen own it!

Since Chris is around the Payette most of the season he stays up to date on most of the runs in the area. He posts signs at access points warning boaters of high water, mandatory portages, or new trees. While Chris warns people of hazards, he does not dictate when individuals can and can not run the river. He gives strong recommendations, ones that come from a knowledgeable boater. I personally don't mind being warned about a run - it makes you think twice, but I do mind being told that I'm not allowed to do a run without a fair shake.

Chris is able to relate the concerns of the boating and rafting community to the Forest Service because he is out there, on the water, talking to people day in and day out. As a river ranger Chris finds himself rearranging the way people park, listening to requests for steps at a put in, and monitoring the impact of commercial traffic on the river.

Closer to Chris's heart is his role in promoting river ethics. While he is warning a group of Sunday rafters about alcoholic beverages on the river, he can also talk about how wonderful a recreational resource the Payette and other river systems are, and how important it is to protect them. People often do not understand the impact that they have as an individual, or the "big picture threats" that our recreational resources face from development.

I find the Forest Service's creation of this position, and the use of an experienced boater to fill it, admirable. Chris is willing to promote what he believes in, and we should support him. As whitewater boating continues to grow in popularity we are going to heavily tax our recreational resources and the agencies that manage these areas. By having folks like Chris out there the Forest Service will be better able to provide what communities, boaters, locals, tourists, etc., want.... while preserving the rivers that we all care about.

Racing the Green Narrows!



by Leland Davis
Photos by Lee Belknap

"How many people slept well last night?" No hands raised.

"How many people did this all night long?" Woody asked next, snaking his hand through the air like a kayak running a rapid. Heads nodded all around.

"I must've run the notch a hundred fifty times in my sleep last night," Chris Harjes muttered, the steam of his words meshing with the breath of all the other paddlers gathered in the Saturday morning chill. All I could think was, "If these guys are this nervous, what the hell am I doing here?!?"

"We really need to make a smart decision," Woody continued.

"We're setting a precedent here. I don't want to be written up in the next American Whitewater as those idiots who ran a race too high." I felt the same way, since I was likely to be billed as chief idiot. I shivered and wished again that we weren't doing this in December. I didn't pick the date.

Photo: Finishing the Gorilla

Down at the pool the water was high, cranking out of both forks of the river at a level greater than the sixty percent releases on which I learned the lines through the gorge. The water released through the power plant would not amve for a while, meaning it would be a wild day, race or no race.

"It'll drop a good bit through the day," I offered in response to Woody's proposal that we postpone until Sunday. "As the water comes through the power plant, the lake drops and less comes over the dam. It might be reasonable by this afternoon. Maybe we should do a morning run to let people see what they're getting into, then think about racing this afternoon."

Heads nodded. "All right," Woody said, "what time do y'all want to meet back here to decide? One thirty?"

More nods. No one seemed to be in a hurry to put on in the freezing weather. Little groups formed, talking to pass the time, exchanging stories of each person's highest water experience in the gorge. Some of the less worried folks headed off for breakfast, a bit disgruntled that we had met at eight AM, only to decide to meet again at one thirty.

TRIAL RUN

Those doing a first run all piled into the van, seventeen boats on the roof. When we got to Big Hungry the crew began to suit up, getting ready to find out what high water on the Green was all about, and to decide whether the nerve they had been building to race this river would sustain them through the added anxiety of bigger water. Woody and I walked down ahead to check the level on the rock we use as a gauge. That there was only three inches of water running over the top of it was tremendously encouraging, and we felt better on the half mile walk back to the van. We smiled at the others walking down the trail, reassuring them that there would be a race, and wondering if they would be in it after they saw what the river looked like at that level.

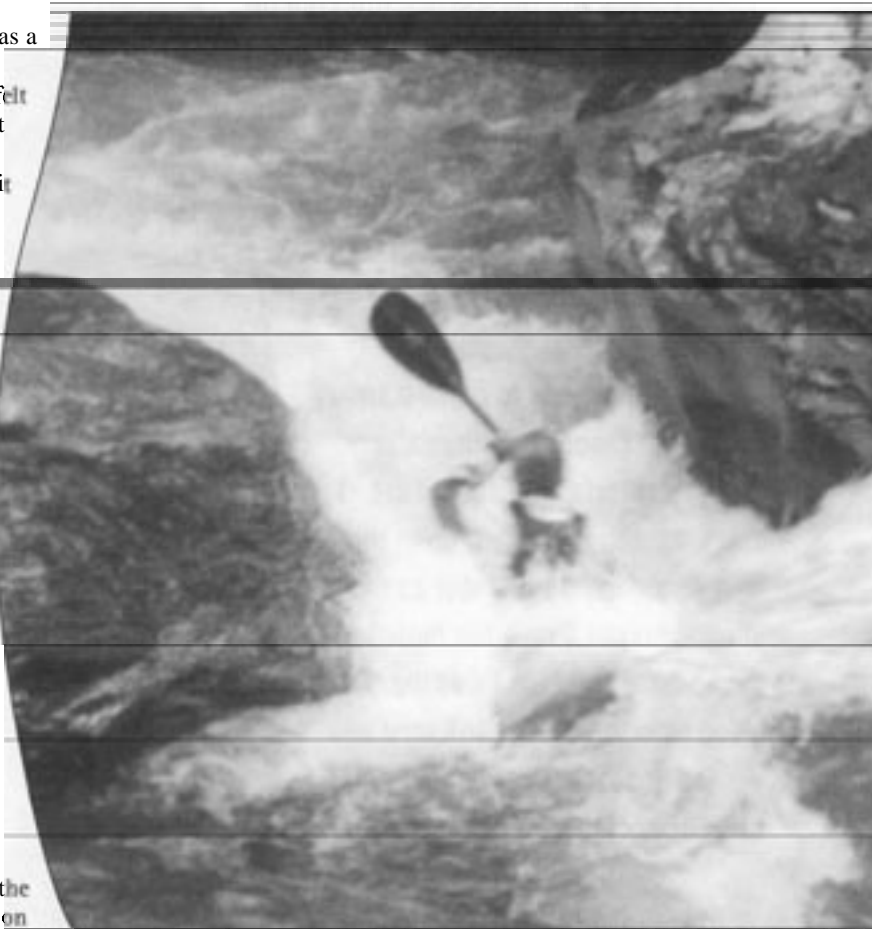
One hundred percent of one unit is the standard summer level - the level that most people know on the Green. It amounts to about 250 cfs in the Narrows, considerably lower than the four hundred cfs that were ramming their way through the four foot wide slots that morning. I pulled on my damp capilene and headed down the hill, finding Chries Bell and Hipgrave waiting at the bottom. We slid our boats into the water and set a brisk pace, one hour for the 3 mile run.

It was juicy, more than I had seen in a long while. I ran the rapids head on, catching no eddies, but stopping in the pools after two or three rapids to catch my breath. The holes were bigger, surely, but there was a bit more room as well. The old knot in the stomach began to form at Zwick's, and it rolled over and did tricks when I landed the sneak at Chief. There was a group of prospective racers ahead at Gorilla, and they were taking the FAR left line, boats shouldered without hesitation as they looked for a friendlier route down the next seventy yards. Hipgrave charged ahead, eddying on the left above the notch, visibly psyching himself up for the run. What was I doing here??

He charged, smoothly building speed to bang through the notch, where he subbed out and was launched into the air on



Top: Boofing on the Green Narrows
Bottom: Entering the Gorilla



a huge back ender that ended as he went over the twenty-two foot precipice. I dropped eight feet over the Pencil sharpener, marveling at the roar... not of the water, but of the crowd, as Chris finished his run far below. There must have been sixty people on the rocks bordering the drop. As I ferried to the river left set up eddy, I prayed that I would not swim in front of all these folks. My charging heart propelled me through the notch at outrageous speed and into the eddy at the lip of Gorilla.

The pulsing swirling eddy line tested me on the peel out, trying to flip me one way and then the other. I had to brace and struggle to keep the proper position and angle, as if the river were trying to check my credentials to see if I were worthy. Water filled my field of vision as the boat accelerated to roller coaster pace, careening beyond my control through the flume at the bottom of the drop. Someone called out, "Nice line, Leland", which was news to me, but good news. It settled my nerves as I shook water from my eyes and prepared for the ten foot plunge at *Scream Machine*, which I was already entering.

God, that hole was big! The danger of the surf on the left side was extended all the way across the right line, so I squared up and took it in the chest, hoping to punch through the small weakness right of center. I rode down the foam pile on the back of the hole into *Nies' Pieces*, accelerating back to class V speed as I slid through the fifteen foot double drop and carved into the right side eddy. I was dangerously close to the hole.

It was going to be a wild afternoon, I thought, as I hooted and celebrated with *Hipgrave* in the eddy. Chris told me of his surf at *Scream Machine*, while Chris Bell hurtled down the last drop to join us. I got out at the finish line below *Rapid Transit* and walked up to talk with friends in the crowd at *Gorilla*, and to contemplate the rapid that had given me the fastest ride of my life. Of course I was hoping an even faster ride that afternoon.

OFF AND RUNNING

Five, four, three, two, one, go! I was off, leaning forward to dig my single blade into the water and pulling back from the waist, thrusting my knees and the boat forward to build speed as I rounded the corner and entered *Frankenstein*. I started right, going through the standard entrance slot, then intentionally blew the ferry and dropped over the left slot onto the rocks, angling left so that I wouldn't shoot into the huge undercut. I ducked the edge of the rock and dug my paddle in several more times, flinging myself over the left side six foot curling boof, kicking my hips to keep the nose from burying. I plugged through the next hundred yards of class IV, paddling hard in the easy stuff, so that I could relax in the lower, steeper stuff.

By the time I got to *Boof* or *Consequence*, I was jazzed. There was an electric tingle in my brain and a looseness in my body as I wiggled through the "too narrow" entrance next to the strainer sieve and turned right for the *Boof*. I could do this. I slid into the sneak at *Squeeze*, sliding through on another of my fastest and smoothest lines down



Right: Racing the Gorilla

my favorite river. I managed to cut my angle left, away from the grabby eddy, and launch into the current at the bottom, hitting a line I tried for as long as I can remember and never before nailed. I boofed over the next three foot ledge and pulled for Reverse Seven Foot, less nervous about Zwick's than I had been in a long time. I flew through the race line on Zwick's, over the rocks straight downstream. I charged into the main drop at Chief, ignoring the extra five strokes that would be needed to get me to the sneak.

There were the cameras, the crowd, the notch, the Gorilla, and lots of water...not the four hundred cfs of the morning, but three hundred at least, and my nerve faltered. I had lost more than a hundred feet of elevation in the last four minutes and felt good. But at my present rate I would lose another hundred in the next thirty seconds, and increasing my rate of fall by eight times was more than I was ready for. My head was sure that I could run the river left race line on Pencil Sharpener and straight into the notch, but my gut

told me that wasn't a good idea. I guess this is where the boys were separated from the men, and this particular boy was happy to slide over the right side drop and into his first eddy in six or more class V rapids.

I began to ferry out as soon as I landed, and scooted into the river eddy where my manhood had snuggled with my larynx that morning. I didn't pause this time, but peeled out with big cross bow forward strokes, driving me toward the notch and that swirling, pulsing eddy line. I didn't even slow down as I blasted through, skittered twelve feet before the launching pad, and then I lifted off. I knew I was too far right, but was too tired to fight my way back left. My speed flung me out into air, but flipped when I hit the bottom and was smashed and stuffed into five foot wide flume by the three hundred cubic feet of water coursing over the drop in the second behind me.

The crowd erupted in cheers when I rolled, which was moderately gratifying.

Like any good sports fans, they had been waiting for just some "crash and burn", but when pressed were glad that they would not have to watch me get really pummeled. Too bad that rolling was my only way of getting a cheer. I ran on through Scream Machine, strength draining from my limbs as I slipped through the space that the lower water had opened to the right of the hole. I was too tired to correct my angle over Nies' Pieces, and lost all balance and flipped left when I hit the hole at the bottom. I rolled up much more slowly this time, and forced myself to correct my failing angles as I charged into the twenty five foot drop of Power Slide.

I ended up spinning all around at the bottom of Rapid Transit, but Andrew and Gretchen still congratulated me after I back paddled my stern against the finish rock. It was over! I popped my skirt, pulled my thigh straps, and stood up; half a mile, three hundred feet, and six minutes from the countdown that had hurtled me into the infamous tunnel of white



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froth and rock that is the Green.

I hiked back up to Gorilla in time to watch the last of the competitors finish. Other racers were milling around, grinning and exchanging stories and handshakes as they relived their runs. I didn't even think to figure out who won for fifteen minutes or so...it didn't really matter to any of us...yet. We were riding the high of just having done it, and celebrating with the folks we knew would understand. When we finally did figure out who won, friendly congratulations went around, and we climbed back in our boats for a laughing run over Groove Tube, Sunshine, and out to the parking lot.

THANKS

Thanks to timers Alex Zendel, Gretchen Bates, Andrew Parker, and Bill Mesmer; to Woody Calloway for key shuttles; to everyone who hiked in to hold ropes, cameras, and to cheer; to everyone who gave valuable input as to how this event should go off; to Woody for tremendous organizational help the morning of the event; and to all the racers who participated.

RESULTS

Paddler	Time	Boat
1. Clay Wright	4:57	Mountain 300
2. Shane Benedict	5:03	Overflow X
3. Chris Hipgrave	5:13	Freefall LT
4. Jeff West	5:15	Response
5. Danny Inman	5:19	Response
6. Ted Keyes	5:25	Frankenstein
7. Brad Brewer	5:33	Overflow
8. Chris Harjes	5:37	Dancer
9. Richard Oldenquest	5:47	Gravity
10. Woody Calloway	5:49	Overflow X
11. Eric Young	5:56	Overflow X
12. Leland Davis	6:07	Cascade (C-1)
13. Chris Bell	6:35	Crossfire
14. Bill Mesmer	7:52	Gravity
15. Eli Helbert	9:28	Cascade (C-1)
16. Clem Newbold	DNF	Freefall LT

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A First Descent in the
**Shadow of
Mt. Washington**



**The West Branch
of the Peabody**

by Tom Diegel

We had come together for our legendary hair boater Greg Hanlon's marriage on a granite ledge atop of Cannon Mountain at Franconia Notch, New Hampshire. As a "bachelor party" eight of us spent the day paddling with Greg on the upper Pemigewasset (Pemi); a classic New England steep creek. At the takeout Scott Murray (of Wiggly Stik paddle fame), began talking about paddling the West Branch of the Peabody, located just north of infamous Mt. Washington.

Scott had flown it, friends had hiked up it, and, after talking with Bill and Joan Hildreth (local New England kayak gurus), we were confident that no one had tried to kayak it. The topo maps indicated that it was about 500 feet/mile, which was "wicked"

steep (as the New Englanders say). But I had done a 400 feet/mile creek the week before and glibly figured that, with the right amount of water, 500 feet/mile might be "doable".

The weather was warm for New Hampshire springtime. There was still considerable snow on Washington and a brief thunderstorm inundated the wedding party the night before, so we gambled that these conditions would provide a water level that could, at least get us down the river.

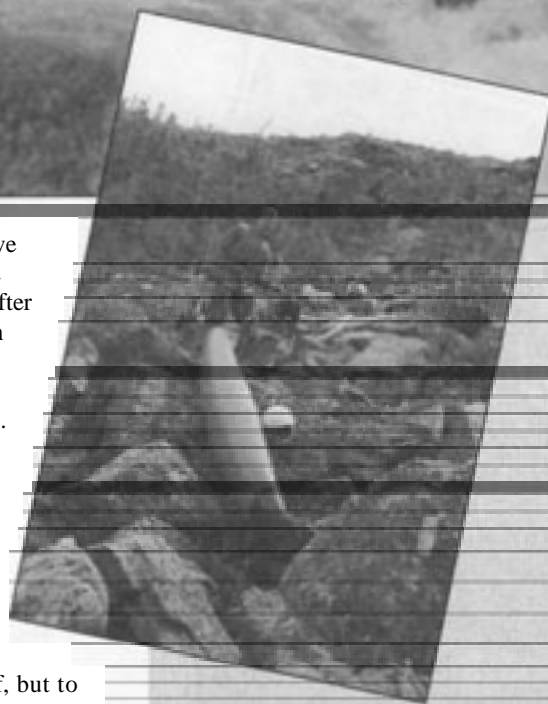
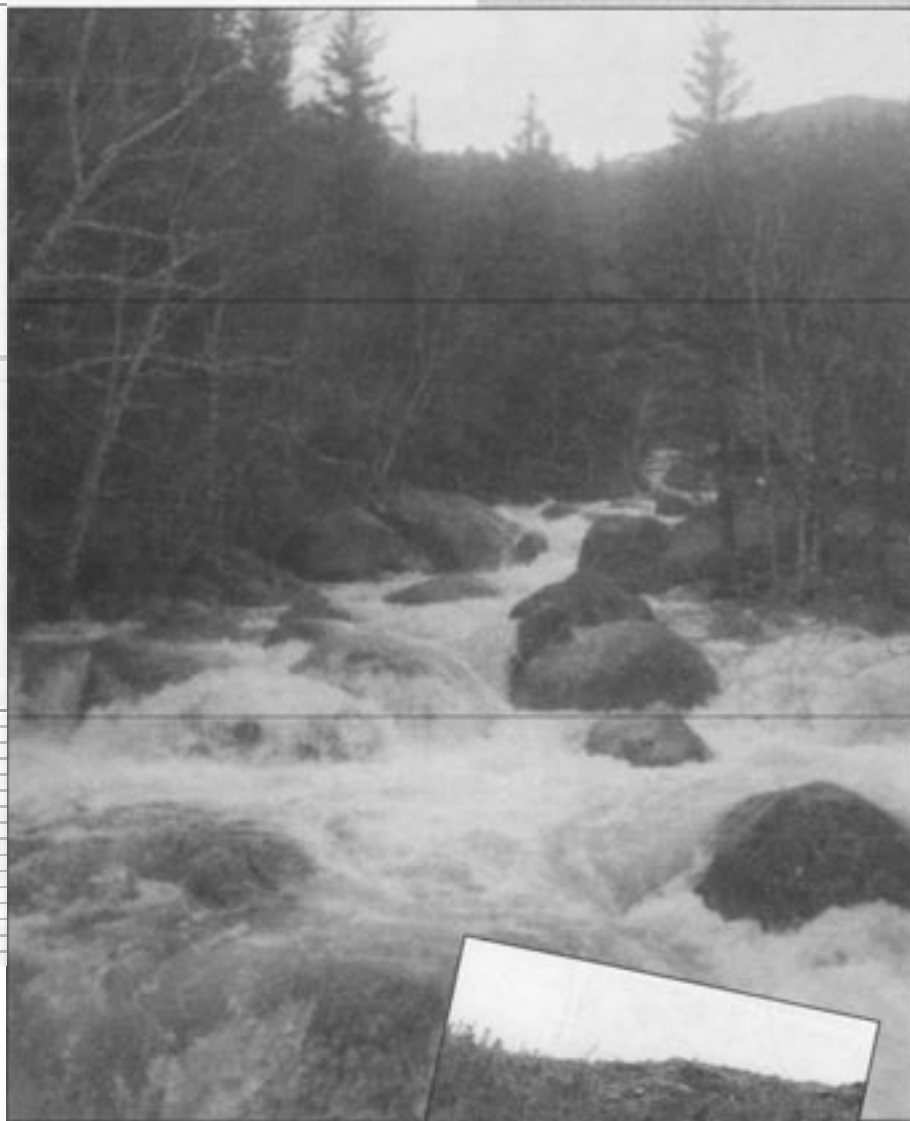
The day began at 10:30 am; plenty of time for a rugged hike to the put in and to paddle the 3-4 mile stretch. Scott, John Gureirre (who had made two other first descents in Vermont and New York this winter) and I drove up to the gusty 4000 foot level on the Mt. Washington auto road and unloaded our gear. Some tourists watched in disbelief as we shouldered our boats, seemingly miles from any water.

We talked one of them into driving the truck down the mountain. Scott implored our newfound friend to keep the truck in low gear down the steep hill. He said not to worry, that he drove big rigs and knew all about that "steep hill stuff." We figured that hooking up with a trucker must be a good omen, so we optimistically headed down the trail towards the river far below.

We quickly discovered that when the trail wasn't super steep and rocky, we were postholing through wet snow. It quickly became apparent that the hike was going to be nearly as rugged as we anticipated the river to be. The trail criss-crossed a raging, waterfall-studded tributary multiple times. This required some bold moves and safety lines. After losing the trail several times during the 2-3 hour descent and struggling with our boats in the underbrush, we finally arrived.

The creek looked tremendous. Crystal clear, beautiful, steep, and apparently paddleable. After a quick lunch on the bank we saddled up and put on. The first rapid was a pleasant little triple drop; but a quick scout of the second indicated a significantly steeper drop. Even though the line was a bit rugged, we all ran it successfully. However, the pushiness of this "creek" was surprising and gave us strong incentive to be prudent. Scott, our designated probe, headed down out of sight, then reappeared on a rock and waved me down. I followed, catching micro eddies carefully as I saw the gradient steepening considerably.

While in one of these little pockets I watched as John got worked in a hole that I had barely avoided. I hoped he would be able to extricate himself, but to my chagrin he ejected and floated past. I screamed to Scott, and was suddenly confronted with that familiar-yet-always-very-tough decision-....whether to paddle to attempt a rescue on a completely unfamiliar river (and jeopardize myself), or to take the safer, but slower route on the bank. Knowing that two people in trouble would be much worse than one, I chose the latter and scrambled out of my boat and grabbed my throw bag. Fortunately, John had floated right towards Scott and was able to wedge himself between two rocks until Scott could pull him out. Scott had also had a quick, but scary, swim, but fortunately was able to do a self rescue.



**"Down Mt. Washington
the hard way"**

West Branch of the Peabody



**"High water...500 feet
per mile, WAHOO"**

By now John's boat was long gone, so he started thrashing through the dense undergrowth in the hope that it had pinned somewhere downstream. We were able to get Scott's boat off the rock it was pinned on. But I fell while portaging the next nasty drop and my boat slipped out of my hand. I watched helplessly as it bounced into the river and went for its own ghost ride. Fortunately it pinned a few hundred yards downstream and, after another half an hour of working, we were able to retrieve it.

As I pulled it out, however, I groaned at the sight of a gaping hole where the (borrowed) Freefall's retro-fitted drainplug had been. Something had caught the grab loop and plug loop and tom them both right out of the plastic.

We realized that although we had plenty of ropes, biners, spare paddles, a saw, and other safety gear, we had forgotten a essential ingredient

to any adventure: duct tape! As we looked around for something to plug the hole, Scott and I both spied the one piece of gear that had been salvaged from John's lost Overflow : his back foam.

We decided that since he didn't have a boat anymore he wouldn't be needing all that foam, so we fashioned a fairly effective plug for the Freefall. Scott and I put back on the river, which, though very steep, was still manageable....for a while. Soon Scott was again on shore scouting and motioned me to join him; however, I got hammered by a hole and washed past upside down. I had caught a glimpse of a tree in the river

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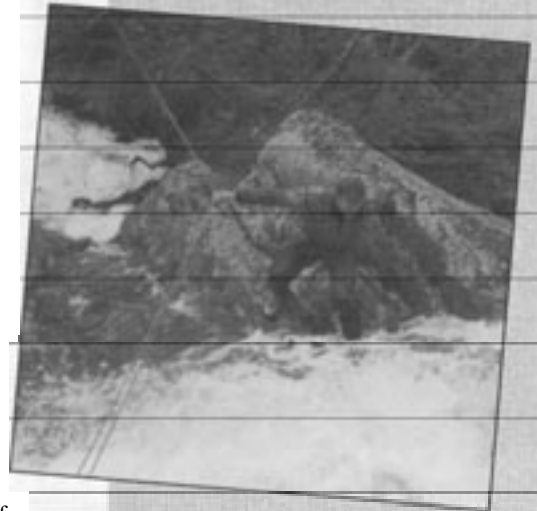
below, the image of which filled my mind as I struggled to right myself in the maw. I came up slightly disoriented. The first thing I heard was Scott's voice, clear as a bell over the roar of the river, screaming "RIVER RIGHT!!!" I paddled hard, ran a series of nasty holes and narrow slots, and blasted into an eddy below the tree-surprisingly unscathed. I was also relieved to discover the red of John's errant boat underwater, washed up against a rock just below. After some struggling we got it off and John was reunited with his kayak.

After traveling less than a half a mile in 2+ hours, with two lucky swims, and two **almost-lost** boats, we decided that we'd been hit over the head enough. The water was a bit too high for us and (magically) a trail appeared paralleling the river. And so we opted to take our boats for a little walk. This was fortuitous, for the gradient increased and rapids got even more horrendous. Scott noted wryly that we normally had to drive all the way up to Quebec to get hammered this badly.

Down and down we walked, bouncing our kayakers along the trail, until the gradient seemed mellow. After a quick check we decided to put back on. The rapids seemed to be relatively straightforward class V's, but after a couple of drops John was taking on water. He ascertained that his boat was not as intact as it had appeared. He found a significant crack in the bottom.

Scott elected to solo the relatively straightforward last mile to the confluence with the main Peabody. John and I thrashed our way back to the trail and hiked the rest of the way down. We all hooked up again at the footbridge across the main Peabody. After a few laughs we headed for  and beer, **secretly** thankful a couple of boats were the only casualties!

After hearing about our adventure we doubt that many folks will be lining up to repeat our "feat". But if you are determined to get a "This Car Climbed Mt. Washington" bumper sticker we can give you the beta on a more exciting way down!



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Cooking in a Coffee Pot



The day starts at 1:30 in the morning. It's twilight here on the Mackenzie River above the Arctic Circle. On the 9th of July, it never gets dark. A good thing because Dick and I are paddling by 2:15 to escape early-afternoon winds. The water is calm and beautiful—blues, mauves, and lavenders subtly repeat the sky display. Gradually peaches and yellows creep into the palette. The sun comes up about 4:30, then sets, then rises as we pass by hilly banks. Precipitous hills run right to the river shore. Some so steep only grass grows on them. Spruce trees cover the land elsewhere and shade **sun-loving trees**. **Fast-growing alders and birches** seize ice-cleared areas along the shore. We paddle past spruce and an occasional grove of birch trees for nine hours then stop at a snow-melt stream gushing into the river. Lunch! Clear stream water, jerky, granola, and dried apples. No fuss. Then back to paddling for another five hours. We reach a **burned-out** area before the winds come up. Too tired to go any farther. We made **fifty-five miles** today.

We stop for the night here. I scoop river water into the coffee pot. Dick builds a fire from a litter of driftwood which strews the shore and pushes the coffee pot against the burning wood. I've been paddling for fourteen hours straight. Do you think I feel like making dinner? Actually, I don't mind because it's almost done! By this time, the coffee pot is bubbling. I pour water for a couple of cups of tea, lace the tea with a dollop each of

by *April Holladay*

vodka, and drop a package of rice and a foil-sealed packet containing Salisbury steaks in the coffee pot. Ten minutes later the rice is ready and steaks are hot. Mindful of cleanup chores, I line our dinner cups with gallon-sized plastic bags. Two snips with the scissors opens our meals. I pour them into the cups. Dinner's served. Delicious! Just two spoons and the teacups to wash in the

river. No messy pots, no messy dinner cups to clean. **Burn** the plastic-bag liners and I'm done. That's the only way to survive the ardors of camp life. Keep it simple. Cook in a coffee pot.

Once you've decided on one-pot cooking and therefore the simple life, you need to think about three things: what pot to select, the food to cook, and the way to package the food so cooking in a coffee pot works.

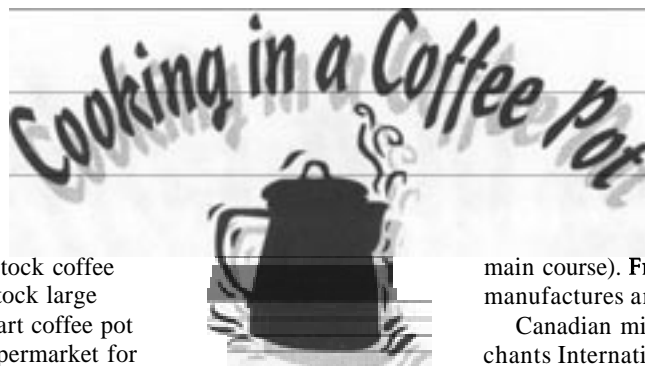
THE POT

Give a little thought to your appetites since you'll be doing all your cooking in this one pot. How many rice and dinner packets, for example, are necessary to feed your group? The pouches must fit in the pot, leaving room for water to boil. Two people with medium-size appetites (one rice and one food pouch) will find a three-quart capacity about



Lunch! Clear water, jerky, granola, and dried apples

taste good after a nine-hour paddle. Dick checks the map before we continue.



right. Many outdoor stores don't stock coffee pots this large although they do stock large kettles. You can find a good 3-quart coffee pot in a big sporting-good store or supermarket for under \$15. Larger appetites call for at least four quarts so **you'd better** pick a kettle. You might use your pot as a sea anchor as well so get one with a strong bail handle.

A simple-life principle is "never get your pot dirty". Discard the coffee pot innards for actually brewing coffee; you'll only boil water in your pot. Make hot drinks from freeze-dry coffee, teabags, cider mix and such powdery concoctions. What other 'china' and utensils do two people need? Not much—two plastic 8-ounce cups for hot drinks, two plastic 16-ounce cups for the hot meal, two stainless-steel teaspoons, a pair of scissors for cutting open food pouches. That's it. Simple, right? By the way, 16-ounce measuring cups make good dinner cups. Another tip: keep plenty of gallon-size plastic bags handy for lining your dinnerware. **FOOD**

You can cook all kinds of food in a coffee pot but here's what I recommend for the standard dinner: tea, rice and a freeze-dry dinner or an MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) main course. Tea is warming and filling if you load lots of brown sugar in. You can't beat rice for solid food value per weight or volume. It's a winner—tasty and satisfying. Rice goes well with almost all freeze-dry and MRE meals: beef stew, chicken supreme, chili and beans, to name a few. Uncle Ben brand rice sells a handy product for the field: "boil-in-bag" enriched, long-grain rice. Just drop the bag in your coffee pot of boiling water and presto! Three cups of fluffy rice in ten minutes. You can also package other kinds of rice for boiling in a coffee pot. More about that soon.

MREs are the ultimate in no-fuss cooking. You don't even have to add water; just heat. If heavy rains discourage fire making or stove lighting, you don't even need heat. Just eat. These meals, made for the U.S. Armed Forces, have a shelf life of 15 years without refrigeration. (Ken Nolan Inc., phone 714-863-1531, a mail-order catalog company, sells MREs for about \$3 a

main course). **FreddyChef**, a company in Canada, manufactures an even tastier version for the

Canadian military. [Order from **General Merchants International Inc.**, M.P.O. Box 11871, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 3L1, Phone: (403)

463-0904, FAX: (403)

466-3024]. You merely

drop one of these foil packages in the pot to heat with the rice.

Freeze-dry dinners are almost as easy to fix and weigh considerably less, a consideration for paddle craft.

Every inch of freeze-board counts. The dinner instructions are simple enough: add hot water and let sit

for ten minutes to reconstitute. However,

cooking freeze-dry dinners in a coffee pot works better because

the meal doesn't cool while sitting. I repack-

age freeze-dry dinners at home by dumping the dinner and an extra

gallon-size bag in a zip-lock bag. My **bags** can survive the coffee pot.



The simple life--all you need to make dinner. Two food packets, a couple of cups and spoons, and a coffee pot.

It helps to vary the standard dinner once in awhile. One idea is soup. You can get excellent noodle soups from the supermarket that are meals in themselves. **REI** (Recreation Equipment, Inc 800-828-5533) markets more expensive but delicious soups like black bean soup or clam chowder. **Cost Plus Imports** deals in savory and exotic soups by Nile Spice Foods for about a dollar. In all cases, just add water. I bet you've got some favorite menu variations of your own. Please send your tips to me in care of **Canoe & Kayak** or send me e-mail at **GWSJ88B@prodigy.com**. I'd like to try them and compile a cookbook article to share the best.

Moving on to breakfast in a coffee pot. Most of the time you'll munch cold stuff while paddling, like granola, dried apples, or jerky. Anything else takes too long unless you're beached because of wind. In that case, you might try oatmeal and grits or freeze-dry scrambled eggs. They all cook well in the pot.

PACKAGING

The idea is to package food into pouches you can drop into the pot. It's easy. There's two basic kinds of food: (1) that which

Cooking in a Coffee Pot



requires water for cooking, like oatmeal, or (2) that which merely needs heating, such as, an MRE. Here's how to package each kind, using oatmeal and an MRE as examples.

At home, measure a serving of oatmeal (a half a cup for me) into a small reclosable (zip-lock) plastic bag. Put in any extras—brown sugar, dry milk, raisins, a sprinkle of cinnamon, nuts—plus a little card saying how much water to add (one cup) and a gallon-size plastic bag. When you're out in the wilderness, take the gallon-size bag out and, of course, the card. Add a cup of water to the small oatmeal bag. Zip the small bag closed. Drop the small bag into the larger bag and tie a knot in the larger bag. Drop the bags in boiling water. It can get rowdy in a fast-boiling coffee pot. The double bag keeps your oatmeal from busting out. Remove the bags from the pot after about ten minutes. Snip the knot off the larger bag, open the smaller bag, and pour the contents into your dinner cup. Don't forget to line your cup with a plastic bag first so you don't have to wash a messy oatmeal cup. This procedure works well for freeze-dry food, rice, and anything else needing water to cook.

On to packaging food you merely heat. It's already in a sealed packet so you don't have to do anything but drop the pouch in boiling water to heat. How's that for easy? **COLD FOOD**

When things go wrong, it's good to have instant food. The mosquitoes and black flies got so bad in the delta of the Mackenzie River, we couldn't cook for four days. We ran out of ready-to-eat food the last day and endured the bugs hungry. Besides that, cold food is handy. We eat it for most breakfasts and lunches. I've already mentioned my favorites: granola, dried apples, and jerky—all home-made.

Cheese is another good standby. Most supermarkets sell 8-ounce vacuum-sealed bars of cheddar cheese, which store OK for at least a couple of weeks unrefrigerated in cool climates. One

day I serve cheese and the next jerky as our cold food "meat entree" for the day. Packaging cold food at home is a snap. Pour enough granola for each person in a small reclosable, zip-lock bag. Ditto for the dried apples and jerky. Figure on quantities

which will sustain a person snacking through the day for both breakfast and lunch. Dick and I each consume about two cups of granola, two ounces of dried apples, and 2.5 ounces of jerky. Then put the granola, dried apples, and jerky or cheese in a large zip-lock bag. The large bag contains the cold food for a person for a day. In the morning when you break camp, grab a couple of bags from the food box, toss one to the other guy, and you're both set for the day.

Double bagging your cold food protects it from getting wet. Zip-lock bags are the best seals I have found. short of hot

sealing. You can further safeguard food by storing it in a food box that floats. REI sells such a box made by Rubbermaid for about \$30.

10TH OF JULY, ON THE MACKENZIE

Another early day. Up at 1:30, on the river by 2:50 to find calm waters but also hordes of mosquitoes. We paddle with full head-net regalia peering ahead trying to discern the channel among the sandbars. A long spit fools us, costing about an hour's paddle. An island with sheer mud cliffs looms up. We paddle closer seeking a navigable channel. **KERBOOM!** A great hunk of cliff falls off the island into the river. We keep paddling through the maze, finally stopping at 14:30—a mere 12-hour, 40-mile day today. That makes 95 miles in two days. Do you think I feel like fixing dinner today? You're right, I don't mind because I'm cooking in a coffee pot. It's almost ready!



Dick checks dinner simmering merrily in the coffee pot. Our lined cups are ready and so are we.



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Drawing by Tatiana Prokhorovskaya - Aztec site of Piedras Negras

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by Charlie Walbridge

The summer and fall of 1996 set the wettest on year record in most parts of the Eastern U.S. One hurricane after another hit the coast for weeks on end. This made for a long and eventful river running season, but also provided more opportunity for accidents. The death toll for the second half of 1996 includes four commercial rafting guests and four hard boat paddlers. Two of the hard-boat victims were expert kayakers. As always, I'm indebted to people who took the time to send me accident reports and clippings. I'd also like to thank AWA members Larry Stone and Kevin Sulewski, who regularly forward relevant postings from Rec.Boats.Paddle.

MULTIPLE FATALITIES AT LOW HEAD DAMS

High water and low head dams have always spelled danger for inexperienced paddlers. Two dam-related fatalities followed periods of heavy rain. On August 1 two kayakers were running the Little River halfway between Knoxville and Townsend, Tennessee. This section of the river is mostly flat water. The Knoxville News-Sentinel reported what happened when the pair encountered the Rockford Manufacturing Company Dam in Rockford, TN. Kyle Tyree, 24, scouted the drop and attempted to run it. He was immediately caught in a huge hydraulic, along with a considerable amount of debris.

The son and grandson of a state senator, Earnest and Chip Koella, witnessed the event and attempted to assist. The pair was courageous, but lacked swiftwater training. Both made the mistake of tying themselves to a rope. First, the younger Koella tied a rope to his waist and swam into the hydraulic. He was caught between the dam and a large log and killed. The elder Koella then tied himself into a rope and attempted to wade across the lip of the dam to reach his son, but slipped and fell over the dam. He was released, badly beaten up, moments later. Rescue crews arrived and the bodies of Kyle Tyree and Chip Koella were recovered some distance downstream. In addition, a swimmer was washed over another dam miles upstream and killed on the same day.

On October 23 a television crew filming recent flood damage along New Jersey's Raritan River witnessed a drowning at the Elizabeth Water Company dam. The Raritan is a popular Class I canoe route. The dam, just above the confluence with the Millstone River, was the site of

another drowning in April of this year. The Garden State Canoe Club pressured the water company to post warning signs and to create a marked portage trail after this incident, which was widely reported in newspapers throughout New Jersey.

James Thomey, 40, was paddling a tandem canoe with a friend. The river was running at 3', which local paddlers tell us is the worst level for the dam. Neither Thomey nor his partner wore PFD's. His friend saw the signs and insisted on getting out. Thomey had run the drop before, so he dropped her off, scouted, then got back in his boat and paddled over the lip.

The drop is only two or three feet high, but his canoe flipped instantly and threw him into the river. He was pulled under water and recirculated several times, but was able to alternately hold onto his canoe and a large log between dunkings. After his boat was pushed out of the hydraulic, he clung to the log for a few minutes before disappearing underwater for a considerable period. Then his body reappeared and recirculated slowly for several hours. Firemen were called to the scene and tried many different techniques to snag him. Finally, he disappeared entirely, and, several days later, his body was still missing.

Despite the well-known dangers of low-head dams, these incidents occur with numbing regularity. Part of the problem is that at low flows a dam often becomes a harmless water slide, scrapy, but safe. It assumes a dangerous configuration only after the water rises and a hydraulic forms. This explains why you may run a dam successfully one day, only to encounter trouble on later attempts. It takes considerable experience to tell the difference between a dangerous hydraulic and a safe one.

TWO FOOT ENTRAPMENTS ON THE NANTAHALA

In North Carolina two rental raft customers died in separate foot entrapments on the Nantahala River, a popular Class II-III run. Both were guests of the Nantahala Outdoor Center, a respected outfitter with over two decades of experience on the river. This information comes from press releases issued by the outfitter and various newspaper articles and Internet postings. Although several hard boaters have drowned in the Nantahala over the years, these are the first rafting fatalities. It is worth noting

that all 5 Nantahala fatalities that I know about were caused by foot entrapments.

On August 4 Jack Meadows, 58, fell out of his raft at "the Bump", a small poulover on river left in the rapid just upstream of Nantahala Falls. He attempted to stand and caught his foot 30-40 feet downstream. The recovery was made by private paddlers from Camp Merrie Woode, Western Carolina University, and others. They lowered a raft downstream to Jack and pulled him free, an operation which required 15-30 minutes.

On September 25 Ryan Allison, 16, was participating in a high school field trip when her group elected to rent a raft for a trip down the Nantahala. The group's raft hit a rock part way down Patton's Run, the first class III rapid, throwing four of the eight paddlers into the water. Allison, floating feet-first and face down, apparently attempted to stand and she caught her foot. She disappeared under about 3' of fast-moving water. The group first noticed that she was missing when her PFD floated free.

An NOC guided trip arrived about 15 minutes later. The trip leader, belayed in a rescue PFD, was able to work his way out and grab one of the victim's arms. Ropes were attached, and the guides pulled from several directions for fifteen minutes until the victim floated free. They brought her to a slippery ledge and began CPR. Rescue squads arrived a few minutes later and took Allison to a hospital where she was pronounced dead.

It is difficult to imagine what more could have been done to prevent these tragedies. The Nantahala is heavily used, with dozens of outfitters and tens of thousands of rental guests making successful runs each year. NOC, the leading outfitter on the river, takes great pains to prepare its rental guests. In addition to signing a waiver warning them of the dangers, their rental clients are required to watch an orientation video which specifically discusses how to avoid foot entrapment. Anyone not wishing to take the trip after seeing the video has the option of signing up for a guided trip or receiving a refund. In addition, the bus driver discussed the lines through Nantahala Falls and Patton's Run during the drive to the put-in. I believe that if enough people travel down a river, regardless of difficulty, some of them will get hurt.

HEALTH PROBLEMS LEAD TO OUTFITTER DEATHS

Heavy rains from Hurricane Bertha

raised water levels in Maine's Kennebec Gorge on July 16 to just over 10,000 cfs, more than double the usual flow. Outfitters were warning their guests of the added danger and advising those with health problems, especially heart trouble, not to take the trip. Full refunds were being given to anyone opting out. In addition, many outfitters were double guiding their rafts. A man with a history of heart trouble did not follow this advice. He fell out of a Wilderness Expeditions raft in the Alleyway, which, that day, was a wild, continuous wave train with waves up to 15 feet high. He was recovered in Cathedral Eddy and brought to shore, where he collapsed and died. I was in the area and talked with several of the guides who were at the scene.

On September 22 there was an unexplained commercial fatality on the Lower Gauley. The Park Service reported that the victim was 52 year-old woman with a history of asthma. She was taking a trip with one of the area's largest outfitters when she fell out of her raft in "Rocky Top", a minor rapid on the Lower Gauley near "Chicken Ender". Guides reported that the spot she fell into was probably no more difficult than Class II+. She was pulled into the boat quickly and brought to shore. CPR was initiated and a life flight helicopter was called. The victim was picked up 30 minutes later, a remarkable response time in such a remote area, but she could not be revived and was pronounced dead at the hospital. It is clear from this and other incidents that asthma probably increases the risk of drowning in whitewater.

MEADOW RIVER CLAIMS EXPERT KAYAKER

West Virginia's nasty Lower Meadow River has once again claimed the life of an expert kayaker. Scott Hasson, 25, was the manager of a kayak shop in Roanoke, Virginia. Before this year he lived in Fayetteville, West Virginia and had made over 100 runs on the Class V rapids of the Lower Meadow. A veteran guide and video boater, he was well known and liked by area river runners. I discussed the accident with several of them when traveling through the area a few days after Scott's accident.

On September 9th the Meadow River was flowing at 700 cfs and dropping slowly, a moderate level. Hasson was running in a Micro 230, a short, blunt boat, with a single companion. He missed a boof move into an eddy in "Hell's Gate", the second big rapid below Route 19. His bow hit a rock, causing him to miss his line. He disappeared completely into a large, hidden suck hole just downstream, where, ironically, he had gotten into

trouble the previous year. His partner eddied out, but there was no sign of Hasson or his boat.

Other groups arrived within minutes and began searching the area without success. Four hours later Rob Dobson, Class VI's guide manager and a good friend of Hasson's, arrived at the scene. Dobson knew the rapid well, and had a good idea of where to look. He was lowered on a rescue PFD towards the drain, where he located Hasson's kayak under several feet of water. He then proceeded to a spot just downstream, where Scott's body was spotted between the huge boulders. Ropes were attached to the boat, and, after considerable manipulation, his body was pulled out on the downstream side of the drain.

The Meadow River is notorious for undercut rocks and boulder sieves which add considerable danger to this already difficult run. Several boaters have been forced under giant boulders over the years, with most popping out downstream. Some boaters have suggested that the short length (10') of Hasson's boat may have been a liability. Although very maneuverable and hard to pin vertically, short boats may fit into cracks and sieves, while longer boats can bridge the gap and slide across.

BROKEN PADDLE RESULTS IN DROWNING

On December 1 a broken paddle in a dangerous rapid took the life of an expert Tennessee kayaker. The TVCC Newsletter reported that Todd Smith, 28, was part of a group of seven boaters doing some steep creeking north of Chattanooga following two days of heavy rain. When they first checked the Possum Creek gauge it was running at 5'. This was way above over the group's previous high of 3.5', so they scouted some other local creeks and returned. The gauge now read 4'. Since previous runs had been a bit scrappy, this level seemed reasonable.

The upper part of Possum Creek is quite steep, with several large waterfalls. These were run without incident. Below the big drops the group split in two to reduce crowding in eddies and to give the two open boaters time to bail. After running a series long, continuous class III rapids the first part of the group encountered a rapid which had caused trouble on previous runs. Here the creek runs under some low tree limbs on the right bank, narrows in width from over 30 yards to less than 6 feet, then drops four feet over a ledge. The left side of the "squeeze" is badly undercut.

The low-hanging tree caused three of the four kayakers to flip in the approach. As Todd Smith rolled up, his paddle hit

rocks and broke. Unable to steer, he ran the drop backwards and bridged between an 3" diameter log and the undercut left shore. The log was under water and completely hidden from view. His boat, a high-volume creek design, wrapped around the log that was jammed in base of the crack. The force of the water bent the wall in Todd's kayak and knocked the bulkhead over, trapping his legs under the deck. Todd was facing upstream, and the current pushed his body against the back deck and forced his head under water.

The group responded immediately, using ropes and other rescue gear. One person actually climbed out into the water and stood on the pinned kayak. He grabbed Smith's body, but could not hold on. The second part of the group arrived minutes later. After two hours of unsuccessful rescue attempts they sent a boater downstream to summon help. The Sale Creek Volunteer Fire Department sent their Swiftwater Rescue Team, a group of thirty volunteers, who traveled upstream on 4x4's and ATV's to reach the accident site. Although water levels had fallen significantly, the team took almost four hours to recover the body.

Smith was a very strong boater who had paddled the river several times before. The rest of the group was also competent and prepared for rescue. The accident was unusual in that gear failure played a central role. A broken paddle, combined with a flip, left the victim helpless above a dangerous hazard. The paddle, a lightweight graphite model, was a replacement for one that Smith had broken previously. It was probably not strong enough for creek boating, and this incident reminds us that lightweight gear should be used with caution in difficult whitewater.

A CORRECTION

I'd like to make a correction to a previous report. Kayaker Luka Sribar of Slovenia died in Drainpipe Rapid on the Golden Gate Run of the South American, not on the Slab Creek stretch. The Slab Creek reservoir separates the two, and this probably caused confusion on my part. People with accident and near miss information, corrections, or clarification can contact me at 230 Penllyn Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422. My phone number is 215-646-0157; my fax is 215-643-0668; my email address is cwal@compuserve.com.

1997 promises to be an exciting year for river runners, particularly in the West. A heavy snowpack has built up, and the big floods in the Northwest will certainly change many rapids in the Olympics, Cascades, North Coast, and Sierra. So, please be extra careful!

1996 WHITEWATER NEAR MISSES

by Charlie Walbridge

A near miss is an incident which could have caused death or serious injury, but didn't. If no one is badly hurt the story is not often told. Close calls are worth studying because they provide real-life examples of how paddlers deal with danger. They may contain important lessons for river runners, or warn us of potentially dangerous situations before someone is hurt or killed. Outdoor organizations like Outward Bound track near-misses, along with accidents and injuries, as part of an ongoing effort to minimize risk. The rescues of Bill Hildreth and myself from vertical pins in two separate incidents have already been discussed in the pages of American Whitewater. Here are a few more incidents which occurred this year. Please note the frequent use of mouth to mouth rescue breathing in these events. This underlines the importance of training in this life-saving skill.

There were two dam-related near-drownings in central Kentucky which point out the dangers of getting too close to a hydraulic on the downstream side. Both incidents were reported in the Bluegrass Whitewater Association's Newsletter and the Louisville Courier-Journal.

On March 30 David Jakalyn, a member of the Bluegrass Whitewater Association of Lexington, saw a tandem canoe launch, then capsize in an eddy just below a dam on Elkhorn Creek. The paddlers and their boat were pulled into the hydraulic and recirculated. Jakalyn waded chest-deep into the eddy, getting as close as he dared to the hydraulic, and rescued one of the boaters with a throw rope. His partner, Cameron Ditty, waded into the 45 degree water and grabbed hold of the canoe and pulled it to shore. The second paddler had a death grip on the canoe, and she would not let go, even after being pulled to safety. The pair was taken to a local hospital where they were treated and released.

On June 16 Tom Poirier and his son Jim were paddling with Scout Troop 327 on North Elkhorn Creek in central Kentucky. The group portaged a dam, but soon after launching the Poirier's canoe was sucked into the hydraulic and overturned. Here they recirculated for several minutes. Another adult who jumped into the river to attempt a rescue was also caught in the hydraulic and thrashed to within an inch of his life. Both father and son were eventually spit out. As the son reached shore, he saw his father floating helplessly. He reached out, grabbed his father, dragged him to shore, and began CPR. Rescue squads were called and Mr. Poirier was evacuated to a local hospital

for treatment.

On April 28 I witnessed a near-miss on West Virginia's Big Sandy. Dale Barton, an open canoeist from Arkansas, missed his line in the upper part of Big Splat rapids. Barton had run this nasty class V+ drop successfully a year earlier, but this time he hit a rock in the approach to the first ledge, spun out, flipped, and rolled. He then dropped sideways over the first big ledge, braced deeply, popped a thigh strap, and bailed out. Next he washed over the right side of the 15' high second ledge, recirculated momentarily above the large flake of rock, then washed under a downed tree, where he was grabbed by paddlers who had portaged the drop ahead of him. Despite a badly bruised thigh and strained ligaments in his knee and ankle, he managed to paddle out under his own power. He was evacuated from the take-out by ambulance to Morgantown for treatment.

An Oregon paddler wrote in Rec.Boats.Paddle about an experience his group had on the Salmon River near Mt. Hood. The group was making an early May run when they encountered a river-wide strainer. The group elected to ski-jump one end. There were no problems until the person just ahead of the last boater hesitated to watch. The last boater slowed down, stalled out while crossing the log, and got sucked back and pinned, stem first and vertical, against the log and the river bottom. The boater bailed out and washed under the log to safety. It took the group a half an hour to free the boat; eventually it, too, was shoved under the log. The next time everyone will be a lot more careful about spacing in tight places!

Philip Young of Knoxville, Tennessee reported on the Internet that on July 7 a kayaker broached and pinned on the Ocoee, breaking both his legs. This occurred on river right above Double Suck, the same spot where a number of similar incidents have been reported over the last few years. Ocoee boaters should avoid this area.

Brock Loveland, the Idaho Whitewater Association Safety Chair, reported a near miss which occurred on the South Fork of the Payette River on June 24. This popular roadside run an hour north of Boise was running around 5000 cfs, a high level. Sue Compton and Jack Nall flipped their Shredder in Class IV Bronco Billy Rapids. Nall righted the shredder, but Compton could not get back into the raft before the pair entered the next rapid. She lost her grip on the boat in the drop and became separated from Nall.

Compton had been floating helplessly for almost a quarter mile when she was rescued by another group. She had no breathing or detectable pulse. The group began CPR at once. An ambulance arrived 20 minutes later and she was taken by life flight to Boise. She recovered completely, but has no recollection of her trip. Loveland suggests that if you can't get into a raft quickly after capsizing during practice sessions, you should swim for shore rather than hanging on.

On June 30 Neal Larson, a kayaker from New Zealand, encountered trouble on the Selway River. The river, a class IV multi-day trip in northern Idaho, was running high. An Internet posting from Doug Purl reported that Larson got caught in a big hole in Class V Ladle Rapids. After numerous roll attempts he bailed out. He then washed several miles through three big rapids before his group caught up to him. Because he was weak and exhausted the group made camp on the spot, at Cedar Flats.

That evening Larson threw up and had a terrible headache. The next day several of the group became concerned about his condition, and they hiked down to where an outfitted trip was eating lunch and asked for help. A guide with Northwest River Company who had EMT training and a doctor who was on the trip hiked up to the camp and examined Larsen. Their concern was that kidney failure might be setting in as a result of long swim. The group had a satellite phone, and used it to call a life flight helicopter. Larson spent the next three days in a hospital in Missoula, Montana.

On July 14 Rocky Contos, an experienced southern California boater, tried a new route through Class V+ Royal Flush rapid on the Kern. This account was published on the Internet by Rocky himself. He and his boat were pushed into an undercut wall on river left. After bailing out of his boat, he stalled out underneath the overhanging shelf in a "little whirling alcove". He tried to swim down and out without success. He was successful the second time, but only after removing his PFD so he could dive deeper. He washed through the final drops of the rapid and into the class II runout before getting any air; a total time under water of 60-90 seconds. He was too exhausted to save himself and had to be pulled to shore by a friend in a kayak.

In mid-August a group encountered trouble on the Shenandoah Staircase near Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. As described in the Blue Ridge Voyageur's newsletter by Ed Evangelidi, they were nearing the end of this popular Class II run when a double kayak pinned. Both paddlers were ejected, and one paddler washed into a side channel where his foot became caught. He was having trouble

keeping his head above water until one of the other paddlers in the group landed and reached out to him with a paddle. Using this for support, he was able to stabilize himself and free his foot.

On Friday, September 27 a group of five paddlers were running the Lower Gauley at the normal release level of 2800 cfs. Al Kubeluis reported on the Internet that he was running through waves in the rapid above Pure Screaming Hell when he hit a rock sitting just beneath the surface, behind a small, smooth wave. The loud crash of the impact got the full attention of his group! The rock was undercut, and an instant later he was vertically pinned. He dropped his paddle and tried to exit, but could not reach the grab loop on his skirt because the water was pressing him against the back deck of his kayak. He finally pushed himself out of his kayak with his legs. The swim and rescue was uneventful. Kubeluis reports that the rock is difficult to spot, and urges continued vigilance by Gauley paddlers.

Jackie Hoglund, responding to this thread on **Rec.Boats.Paddle**, reported that a friend once had a hard time popping a sprayskirt when the grab loop had been tucked in accidentally. He released the skirt by pinching material along the cockpit rim and pulling it out. I've used this technique myself at pool sessions, and think that everyone should try it, just in case.

During the past season a side channel of Great Falls on the Maryland side, known as the Fish Ladder, was run regularly. This is a very serious piece of water in the class V+ category. An Internet posting by Gil Rocha reported two instances when a boater swam and was stranded. In each case the party did not have a throw rope and did not set safety. Since they could not make the rescue, the Park Service helicopter was called upon. In each case the victims were in no immediate danger, but once the rangers "took over" they refused to allow the victim's companions to retrieve a rope from their car a half-mile upstream. This cavalier attitude (failing to carry a throwrope) is pretty indefensible. These incidents constitute an unreasonable drain on Park Service resources by people who ought to know better. Boaters must always be prepared to effect their own rescue, and this includes carrying appropriate rescue tools. If this sort of thing happens again it could result in this area being closed to boating.

This past fall Shannon Carroll, an expert kayaker and video boater, decided to surf the inviting wave at the lip of Initiation Rapid on West Virginia's Upper Gauley. Local guides report that the wave surfed her into the dangerous suck-hole on the right side of the drop. This spot has killed two boaters in the past decade,

and has been the site of many narrow escapes. She was rescued after a desperate struggle. There are several well known dangerous spots on the Gauley. If you don't know where they are, find out before you put on the river.

In early October a group of three students from Virginia Tech were running West Virginia's Upper New River in canoes. The river was running high and fast, so they completed this class II run and reached their proposed takeout (above 17 foot high Sandstone Falls) hours earlier

than they expected. Both people in the tandem canoe went over the falls; they reached shore after a terrifying swim. There is no doubt that their life jackets saved their life! The other paddler lost his canoe and was marooned on a small mid-stream rock where he spent a miserable night. After a helicopter could not get close enough to help, rescuers closed the gates on Bluestone Dam. This allowed them to throw him a rope and pull him to shore.

On October 6 Ken Ross, a very com-

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petent Florida boater, nearly drowned in Triple Drop on the Russell Fork River on the Virginia-Kentucky border. Extensive reports on the Internet stated that Ross did not run the normal right-side line on the top ledge. Instead he attempted to follow the person ahead who had just run it on river left. He was caught in the hydraulic and surfed to the center, where the hole is very deep and nasty. After four or five minutes of aggressive surfing, he bailed out and tried to swim to safety. He was recirculated in the hole 5-7 times, each trip taking about 20 seconds. At one point he straddled his kayak but could not hold on. Numerous ropes were thrown, but he was unable to see or reach them. As he lost consciousness a rope landed upstream of the hole and was carried down to him by the current. Ross's hand reappeared, holding the rope. Rescuers quickly took up the slack and pulled him to shore.

The group initially began CPR, but Ross's PFD was still on and the chest compressions were probably ineffective. Then, assisted by Dr. Richard Sullivan, a paddling physician, they cut the **drysuit** gaskets, cleared the airway, and continued rescue breathing. Once the neck gasket was cut a carotid pulse could be detected. After 5-10 minutes, of mouth to mouth Ross started breathing weakly on his own. Forty-five minutes later he was in a weak, semi-conscious state. His skin color returned and he could answer questions, but he could not move. Dr. Sullivan worked to expel water and keep the airway clear. A commercial outfitter radioed for help.

Paramedics from Haysi, Virginia ran 2 miles down the tracks to the accident site. They called a helicopter. It landed nearby and Ross was transported to Bristol, Virginia, where he spent several days in the Intensive Care Unit. He was still feeling tired and battered two weeks later.

There are several comments about this incident that are worth passing on. While rescue breathing (mouth to mouth) never does any harm a very thorough check for a pulse should precede the application of chest compressions. It may be difficult to feel a carotid pulse through a **drysuit** gasket. I know that finding a pulse on a wet, cold body with your wet, cold hands is pretty difficult! Giving chest compressions to a person who already has a pulse, but who is hypothermic and weak, could cause fatal heart arrhythmia. On the other hand, not giving them to a truly pulseless victim will inevitably result in death.

On another subject Jim Snyder, commenting on the accident in **Rec.Boats.Paddle**, recommended popping the sprayskirt to escape big holes. The boat rides deeper as it fills with water, and this helps to expel it.

I have a sketchy Internet posting from John Kehl reporting that an 18 year old woman had to be revived after pinning on a log in the left side of Zwick's Back Ender on North Carolina's Upper Green. This accident probably occurred around the first of the year; she'd run the river the day before in her rodeo boat without incident. She was pinned and slowly

pushed under the log, getting less and less air for about ten minutes. She was pulled out blue and not breathing, but after three rescue breaths her respiration started again. She was extremely hypothermic, so the group started a fire and offered warm clothes. Later she was able to walk out of the gorge where she was met by EMS personnel. It is reported that two other boaters also pinned on the log the same day.

My thanks goes to all of you who helped to publicize these near-miss situations, and especially to **Larry Stone** and **Kevin Sulewiski** who regularly forward Internet postings to me. I am always interested in learning more. Send newspaper clippings, club newsletter articles, and personal accounts to **Charlie Walbridge**, AWA Safety Committee, 230 Penllyn Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422. The phone 215-646-5034, the fax 215-646-0157, send email to cwial@compuserve.com.

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Chris Good on Great Falls Photo by David Patterson. Graphics by Emmy Truckenmiller



TWO MODEST PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE OF KAYAKING

By
The **Orakle** of Shred
and
The Old Man of the Deep Water

The First Modest Proposal

Fellow shredders, it's been clear over the past few years that kayaking needs to do SOMETHING about its image, and i KNOW what this should be. Last year i saw a lame story about a pretend whitewater amusement park, but it's **NOJOKE**, 'cause this IS the **AWeZOM FUTURE** of kayaking.

Everybody's got to realize that the **WHOLE** purpose of kayaking is for rad **duDes** to do tricks in playholes, pile off waterfalls together, and stomp gnarly runs to **rocKin'** music. i **CANT BELIEVE** that everyone has wasted a lot of time worrying about things like dams and pollution. You just gotta look at the **problemo** the right way! Dudes - thank the new rodeo **gnarLymen** for **settin'** things straight and let's go **mainstreamin'**!

You gotta check out this change. Money is going to **POUR** in when everyone realizes that kayaking isn't about nature or **BORing** personal challenges, but about being **RADIKULL**. Everybody knows the river's a cuhl place to hang - **coppin'** power poses and **chillin'** with the **duDes**, **BEin'** hot with a **MohaWK** and **gargoyLe** shades. It's time, for paddlers to get with the program tho, cause the whole gig is about other people doing things for us. The paddling companies are coming to US to show their gear - **sucKin'** up already cause we've got the image and the buying **POWER**. Lotsa others'll want to be part of our gig too. Mountain Dew and Ralph Lauren, a **coupla** us got hit up by Chevy

the other day. The **bigmoney** corps want to look cuhl or enviro-friendly - and they'll be **paying** us to do our thing! **RacerheaDs** got corporate sponsorship but they sold out for peanuts and Champion's **twistin'** them by the gnarlies. It's **our** turn and we're gonna do it **right**. Ha! **MisSy G's** makin 600K a year with a **clucKer** bike and a dead fish round her neck. The money's there, we just gotta **SQUeeZE**. This is all about the **AmeriKan** Dream, rebel spit-in-your-face flat out coolness.

You probably heard that we're already hitting the **Mainstreamin'** market. **WEGOTPLANS** for professional teams, dogfightin' with **stiff/hot** rivalries like in the NBA - **SizZlin'** personalities with **atTiTuDe** and our own rap music! You can't miss our boats. They're decked out with stickers - Marlboro, Exxon, Noranda, and Timex. A **hunK** a **CASH** for each **sponZor**. We're gonna surf this trend and be **miLLionnaires**. The best thing is give us your money right off the top so we can show you **HOWZITSDONE**. **GetchuR** parents to invest. **NIB** off the trust fund to help. Think about it: **profeZZional** teams **rippin'** the river. **EVERYone** wants to see it, **noone** can ever get **enoUGH**. We'll be **weighin'** in with **heavy/awesome** interviews from **TheMenWhoDolt**. New shreddin' designs, looks, **yarfin'** new skills - and most of all - fame and money for the studs who make it possible.

We need sompthin' to set us up. First thing ista make the river do what we want and the **Corpse of Engineers** has been doing this for a **hunDerd** years. Get their minds off damming the Pacific

ocean and turn them toward making **deZsigner** controlled playspots by the frickin **thousands**. All we need is a **coupla** feet of drop and a few hundred cubic-feet-a-second, anything more is **graVy**. Fine-morph a plastic ledge to make the dezsired hole or wave, turn on the spigot, and **presto!** Surf, **endo**, cartwheel, boof, and squirtin'll be **yur FRENZY**.

Just between us, you gotta realize that the main deal in **Mainstreamin'** is that it doesn't have risk. Now don't get me wrong here - we're gonna **sell** it on the hook that it's mega-risky because that's part a **bein'** a **MAN**, but heck, it's just show biz. It's all about tricks and hype. That's the fun. Take a look at the vids we're pumping out, like Paddle Frenzy, Paddle **FuRy**, Paddle **LuSt**, Paddle **GnaRly**. The sport at its best!

This'll be a new era of paddling. Every rapid on every river is gonna be channelled into a zillion different play spots. Thinka the possiblities.

OutRAGEous playgrounds for us to strut our stuff. Why let natchural rivers **waste** water and gradient when we can make them into something **bitchin'?** Dam 'em and make them better! Build bleachers around the best places so **DATRIBE** can hang on every slickmove we do. With **BIGscreenTV** and video playback so everyone can see us again and **aGain** - cheerin' or gawkin' with **envy**.

There are other things comin' tooo. Like, pretty soon we'll soon be able to get the whole raddikal paddikal experience **indoors** with a pool and a pump.

Think of it! No rain, no wind, no chill. We can be **EXtREME** in comfort.

And what a place to hang! Studs and Babes, Dudes and Duettes **doin'** their **thINGs**. Nose- and cheek- and butt- and belly-buttoned **beRINGED** and **HONED**. **SleEEk** and goldpainted, strokin' our ships, smokin Camels and looking buff and ripped.

The name? It'll be called "The Place". We'll just say we're "There." Is that biff or what?

There's more! We'll be ready to **betacam** any **radiKal** happening moment that happens by. With an **IMAX** viewin room so that the best moves can be watched along with awesomely **rocKin'** **musiK** and **VIRTUAL REALITY** waiting for the next **FURY-ous dude/ETITE**.

The biggest draw is gonna be the **deZsigner** playspots. It's what's **missin** from **NATCHural** rivers. We'll make up for Nature's being lame, and fix things the way God shoulda done in the first place, if he'd only been **ONTHEBALL**. Awesome playholes with **PERFECT** eddies and a **SPIGOT**. In town, on the **GAUL'** Grand Canyon, on Havasu Creek in front of the babes - everywhere.

This is **MAJOR MOTION** waaaay **beYOND** whitewater **Mainsstreamin'**. The Place'll have climbing walls, and **skate-board/snowboard/street luge/bungie** jumping. We'll add any **NU** sport that **TRU DUDES DU**. It'll be the "**MaLL** for **aLL RadikaLL**". And, for the 'Net Surfin' crowd, **Ssssssmokin'** hot Pentium 4X - **1000MHZ** **maCHines** will be up and onlinin' into "**extreme.radikul.there**" so that each new move can be sent out for millions of fans 'round the world to download and be blown away by.

The ball's gonna **KEEPPONROLLIN'**. **ESPN** is gonna see that their "Extreme Games" are **passay**, the "X games" are **SUCKAGE**, and give shitloads of money to these centers. Owners are gonna make megabucks (hint! hint!). The amazing athletik moves that push back The Edge'll be packaged in **ESPN's** new show, the "**FrenZieD X-FoKkin' gaMes**". A new episode'll be shown each evening with **MTV** heavy tunes. Yeah!

Signup wid us! We'regonnabe everywhere! We're gonna grab the money for races too - slapfunkin' and jammin' down waterfalls and **GNARLrapids** with **BIG** bucks for the winners and **YOU** could be one of 'em!

Hollywood's gonna show. Brad Pitt'll play a **FURY-ious** in-your-face dude of mythical proportions, a cool loner paddler type who doesn't **GIVEASHIT** but is followed around by a **HORDE** of **photog-**

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raphers and hot babes. The Smashin' Squashes musiK will be hammering, slammin', jammin' and rockin' *The Place*, pumped directly into the water so the arena is VIBED.

And fellow raDs, you gotta keep it all in PERSPECTIVE and remember - it's our duty to diss the old bearded men who started the sport. Do everything you can to wRithE them. Piss in the river and trash it. At the put in, play *Spurt of Slime* at 200db and grind your cig butts into their windshields. We're FOREVER YOUNG and they're *reekin'* with envy. Remind them they're gonna be EXTINCT like so many brontosauruses. It's NOLOSS. All they ever did was yak about acid runoff, savin' trees, and rivers that no real duDes paddled anyway. Enviromentalists? They're a bunch of LAME whiners who can't SHRED.

The *Place is movin'*. We're already rockin'. The next step is *happenin'* - a new 'Net 'Zine of the raddest 'n baddest. DazZlin and aWeZome! Give us your applauZe! You'll *crave* for everything we do. You *know* you won't be able to help yourself. We'll show what the sport can be! Are you excited? ThriLLed? i KNEW you would be.

Forget about pollution and dams. Stop your bummin'. The opportunities of *Mainstreamin'* are limitless! Jump on the wagon! Dam the rivers and get our HOT spots! The 'dozers are cranking' and the dammers will make sure we're going to get the water and the head. Cubic feet and drop! MaJor stunts. Who needs free flowing rivers? They're WASTEWATER. We'll build enough great playspots to keep the largest crowd of *shredDers JMN'* and everybody else besides. Our motto is "*More of everything, Now!!*"

Signed,
The OraKle of ShRed
Aeration Way
Waterfall, USA

Another Modest Proposal

Fellow boatmen, it has been obvious for some time that kayaking is going to hell in a handbasket. There is controversy about what the future of our sport should be, led by so-called "rad dudes" who want to charge forward and not worry about the fate of our rivers. We need to eddy out and think about where things are going.

First, it is clear that the purpose of kayaking is to respect and enjoy the water, and that people seek personal challenges, beauty, or fun in different ways. Regardless of the choice though, one thing is true: we all must treat rivers with care because if they are not healthy our sport can't exist.

After consideration, I'm sure you'll agree that money is the evil which is stalking our sport. If you think back to when kayaking had no money in it, life was simple. When there was no glitzy advertising or sponsorship no one tried to milk other people for publicity, and there were no offensive advertisements goading us into new fads. Paddlers didn't hire publicity agents to tell the world how great they were. It was an age of innocent bliss and pure challenge.

But now comes the Age of Glitz where money and social reward bring egotism to the fore. Hype gives egos a podium on which to posture and play to a crowd that in Bygone Times would never be found on the river. Bliss is no longer innocent - but a marketing strategy for selling boats and personalities. Challenge is no longer pure - but massaged to be sold in the latest "radical" video. Friends, our pristine rivers are turning into moral muckholes!

So I say, *commercialization* is the ruin of kayaking and we must remove it and its Evil Twin, *competition*. The cure is drastic, but necessary. It is time to stop saying "tut tut" and looking down our noses at these transgressions of good taste and decorum. There is a proper way to kayak and an improper way, and we must pass our judgment.

That judgment is easy to make. There is a ghastly proposal to fulfill our desires by manhandling rivers. It says we should take river evolution into our own hands and shape playspots in every rapid on every river, making the river better than Geology or the Hand of God can! But these suggestions prostitute the river for the pleasures of the kayaker. It is clear that these people are proposing Houses of Whitewater III-Repute. River bordellos, if you will.

The proposal hides the truth of what is greater: man's desire for pleasure and money, or his respect for Nature. A dam builder who puts a river into a pipe wants the money his water power will bring. The industrialist who pours poisons into the water wants his profits and no

responsibilities for what he pollutes. We can't allow kayakers to become the rapists of their own rivers.

In the past paddlers were different because we sought out the river for its own sake, on *its* terms and not ours. We went to find its challenge and peace, not to *shred* it. There's now a widespread movement to cater to the Young and Obnoxious, where pure pleasure is served up with a jaunty sneer - as if the river has no other use than as a vibrator for our pleasure centers, and that it's cool to tell people they are assholes.

What is wrong with this? The shredder dude demands Nature give him everything while he takes no responsibility for protecting her. A spade must be called a spade: the OraKle of ShRed and his ilk's proposal of kayaking amusement parks is nothing more than the dam builder posing as kayaker. The industrial polluter and river rapist posing as paddler.

What needs to be done is clear.

Instead of changing rivers to our whims, we must eliminate all of man's interference with Nature!

Think about what must be done. For the last 20 years we have accepted mass produced plastic boats - but if you've ever used a glass boat you know that tupperware lets people ignore their impact on the river. Instead of being precise, they ram rocks and grind over obstacles. They don't *paddle* down a river, they *trash* down it. The corollary is: Treating their boats this way, they come to treat the river the same.

Also, the manufacture of these kayaks is polluting from start to finish. We cannot care for Nature when we ourselves pollute her in such ways. For these reasons, it's clear the use of plastic boats is harmful and hypocritical.

So the real solution is to turn back the clock. The only question is, how far? Paddlers, face your sins and bite the bullet. Look in the mirror and eliminate the pollution that YOU contribute to the river! The first step is simple and must be: **ban all plastic kayaks**. The only vessels allowed on the river should be made of brittle S-glass like the kayaks we used to make in our garages, so if people wish to paddle they will have to painstakingly manufacture their own flawed, leaking, and brittle boats. Then each rock in the river will come to be treated with reverence because otherwise, it will sink you. Thus people will be forced to paddle in a careful balance between the river's power and their skill.



This is an honest start, but it's not enough. Some of you won't like the further proposals, but that's tough. To be consistent, we must realize that we defile the water and the air in other ways that we take for granted. A perfect example: vehicals with bad gas mileage that pour exhaust into the air while we drive to the river! **Horrific oil spills** and gluttonous gas guzzling are vile results of this hypocrisy! Contributing to such things is a lie. Thus, anybody who has a motorhome, truck, or sport utility vehical that gets less than 30mpg must be considered a River Killer. A Rapist of the Air.

There's more to own up to. Some paddlers pound their chests about their whitewater feats. These poor souls delude themselves by thinking they are challenging Nature In The Raw, when the reality is that kayaks and all our gear separate us from the river's power, they protect and shield us. How can we call ourselves adventurers? How can we pat ourselves on the back for so-called exploits? The fact is we are wimps not to face the river directly and anyone who thinks differently is a dishonest fraud!

These things add up to one simple conclusion: ALL kayaks be banned! In the end if we're honest, we must go naked in the rivers of the world like Adam and Eve. We must put ourselves at the bare mercy of the water. Our bond with the river should be a Pure Thing, based on Moral Principle and True Consequences.

We must always remain vigilant because people will cut corners to avoid

the Truth. Consider the climbers who brag about doing harder and harder climbs, but use rubber shoes that stick ten times better to the rock than the soles of their predecessors. Changes like that destroy true challenge. So what if you can climb a route because your shoes stick so much better? And similarly in our own sport, so what if you can paddle a rapid because your boat makes it a grade, or two grades easier? So what if you can do a run because your boat can stand a trashing on the rocks? So what if you can do a cartwheel because the boat is built to make it easy? People are deluding themselves! Those who think they are "cutting edge," are really cheating by making things easy! They cheapen and dumb down everything! They aren't radical, they're gutless!

And note, even after kayaks are banned, this gutless undercurrent will remain. People will want to use fins, special suits, air tanks, blowup dolls - anything that makes dealing with the river easier. This is the weakness in human character that innovation caters to. Thus, for the Sake of Rivers, we must pass one final judgment. All innovations which make things easier should be against the law. Nothing should be easier. Everything we do must be harder, so that we know the true worth of our experience.

It will be a long, hard road against the hedonistic people in our culture, but we cannot let them change our rivers, because the true purpose of paddling is to change ourselves! The Truth is the planet must be beyond the reach of intemperate men.

Anyone who argues for radicaling, changing the riverbed, or

savaging^m the river should be wrapped in 8-ply S-glass and soaked in epoxy in an old Prijon Mark IV mold. When stiffened, they should be cast off Niagara Falls with the mantra, "Go and ye shall Shred in Hell, thou Heathen!"

Let us fight those who care only for themselves and their pleasures. To those who want no-fault, no-risk life, we say, for God's sake man, life is risk! Life is pain. But pain is fun! Let's go back to a time when the sport was young, when someone who was "radical" was a communist, and men were men and not dudes!

Shred the money and money-grubbers! Bum the bulldozers. Hang the polluters. Bring our dead rivers back to life and hold the living in sanctity. Let me hear you sing Hallaleuya! Our motto is "I want less than nothing, Now!"

Fellow mariners, the future is in the yast!

Signed,
The Old Man of the Deep Water
Clear Current
Big Eddy, USA

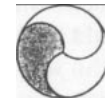


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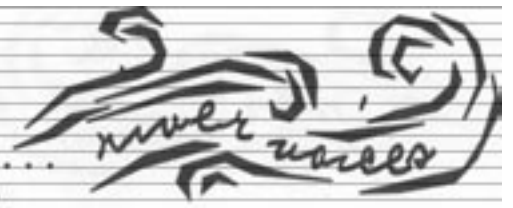
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Widowmaker

by W. Scott Morris

I stared down into the huge hole. The entire river dropped over an eight foot falls and exploded in a chaotic caldron of boiling whitewater. The noise alone should have scared some sense into me, but I was convinced I could see a line down the left shoulder of the drop. Not an easy route, but I had not expected anything easy.

The books rated this monster a solid class 5 and recommended a portage above 3,000 cfs. It was now running close to 5,000 cfs and there was no doubt why it was named Widowmaker. Even if you survived the initial drop, the frenetic surface of the river below the pourover was creeping back upstream. It would pull you back under the falls to be clobbered again and again and again... It was a

keeper hole, and with 150 tons of water per second crashing into it; there would be little chance of a fair fight for any unfortunate boater that got sucked into it. I shifted my footing on the steep slope and had to piss so hard my mouth went dry.

The surreal spires and hoodoos that inhabit this strange and haunted canyon stared grimly down at me, but said nothing. I briefly pondered a portage, definitely the wise thing to do. But the idea of carrying my raft and camping gear over the rugged boulder field lacked appeal. That wasn't why I was here.

My initial interest in river trips had been to immerse myself in spectacular wilderness canyons. Whitewater had, at first, seemed little more than a dangerous nuisance. Over time, however, I came to

treasure the challenge rapids offered and, eventually, to embrace them as an embodiment of nature's passion.

Big powerful rapids were particularly enchanting. Against my better judgment I became infatuated with that immense rush of life that intensifies as you accelerate into the grip of potentially lethal forces; to dance with the elemental madness of the universe.

I knew that someday, if I kept pushing my luck, I might have to crawl out of one of these wild canyons with nothing left but a broken body. But it hadn't happened yet.

Scary as it was, I was glad to be there. I actually felt grateful for the opportunity to face this thing that scared the piss out me; to feel the juices of life rage like the river below and wonder if this was the event for which life had been preparing me.

My focus returned to the left shoulder of the drop. Just upstream of the pourover a couple of car sized boulders squeezed the river toward the center, creating a thick lateral wave two or three feet high that extended straight downstream over the drop. To make a clean run I would have to get enough right to left momentum to punch through this guard wave, onto the skinny shoulder of water that appeared to skirt the hole below.

But the river was moving fast, very fast, and the window through the wave was only 15 feet long. If I hit it too high I would crash into the rocks and bounce back over the falls into the hole. If I was too low, I would drop sideways into the same fate. To complicate matters, the only way to get enough power to punch the guard wave with my raft was to row backwards with all out now-or-never pull strokes; navigating by landmarks on the opposite bank and my proximity to the end of the world on my left. No problem.

I studied every wave, rock, and hole leading into the falls until I had them memorized. I knew exactly where each blade was going to slice the river. I could visualize perfectly the halo of water sprayed over my head as I smashed backwards through the guard wave, up onto the safety of the left line. Piece of cake.

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Back at the boat I donned my dry suit, helmet, and large life jacket with survival gear in a back pocket, just in case I lost my whole rig. This was a solo trip on a remote stretch of the Owyhee River in Idaho and Oregon. I had not seen anyone in five days and, if things went badly, there would be no help. I tightened the straps on all my gear, topped off the tubes with air, and made sure that both bags of rescue gear with ropes and pulleys were fastened to the outsides of the tubes, where they would be accessible in case of a flip or wrap.

The lead in was washed out, but fast and pushy. I maneuvered around some big holes to get river right as I approached the drop and then, just as I came abreast of a memorized rock, I turned sideways to the current and started pulling like mad, backwards across the river toward the left bank. Just downstream was the smooth edge where the river dropped off into an invisible and unthinkable roar.

Every fiber of my being was focused on precise and powerful oarstrokes. Each blade was planted perfectly in the meat of each wave, catching air was inconceivable. I was dreadfully close to the brink, but clearly gaining momentum toward the shoulder as planned. One more power stroke and I had it made, or did I? Was I aiming a little too high? Would I smash into the boulder? I hesitated long enough to turn my head to see where I was going. Perfect. The shore was flying past; there was the boulder and the guard wave. It was a lot bigger and meaner than it looked from shore, but I was right on course. One more superman stroke and I'd be home free, but it had better be now, right now!

I planted my oars just a fraction of a second too late, the time it had taken to turn my head and check my course. Just as I started the last desperate pull the river dropped out from under my left oar, leaving nothing but air to pull against. Only my right oar was effective and it spun the boat sideways just as I hit the guard wave, spoiling the critical move. I still had considerable momentum and the boat rose up the side of the wave, just as the bottom of the world fell out below me. The boat teetered on the falling wave but couldn't clear it. A fraction of a second later there was no wave, only a sea of screaming white.

At the last moment, as I was being helplessly sucked into the heart of the hole, I became disoriented by exploding whitewater all around me. The only things I could see were my hands clenching the oar handles. I felt terribly frustrated and anxious, like a skydiver whose

rip cord just came off in his hand. Then the falls hit me like a bomb and flipped my boat so fast and so violently that it felt like the world exploded and the boat got turned inside out with me underneath.

I was ripped from my seat by tremendous currents and thrust downwards into a bursting black hell. Suddenly my arms were yanked up hard. I still had a strong grip on my oars and their blades had come up short in the oarlocks. I let go of one and started clawing my way, hand over hand, back up the other, battling fierce currents to my upside down boat. The worst part was the noise. It felt and sounded like I was being run over by a freight train, like I was engulfed by a never ending explosion. Powerful vibrations shook my body like a rag doll. It was stunning. I couldn't see or breathe; I couldn't think. It felt like the end of the world.

I came up in the center footwell of my raft. It was stuck sideways under the poulover with the stupendous pressure of the falls trying to sink it entirely. It would get pushed almost completely under water, pop up, then sink again. It was like being in a paint shaking machine. The boat was shaking so violently I could never keep a firm grip on anything, yet I didn't dare let go. The backwash was trying to strip me off the boat and pull me under the falls. Only my tenuous position up in the footwell protected me from being swept away.

I poked my head desperately into the tiny bouncing pockets of foamy air that occasionally surged in through the self bailing holes around the edge of the floor, often getting as much water as air. It seemed inconceivable that violence of this magnitude could last this long. My sense of time was totally twisted, but I know I survived this thrashing for several minutes before getting desperate for air.

My only other option, perhaps inevitable, was to let go of my boat and hope to flush free of this nightmare. All my instincts, however, told me to hang on until the bitter end. Without the flotation and protection of the boat, this hellhole might keep recirculating me forever. Even with the boat I was barely surviving. The relentless beating, paralyzing noise, and lack of air were taking their toll. It was difficult to tell if the intervals of blackness were from being pushed under the muddy water, or from losing what little consciousness I had left.

Suddenly the beating stopped and a large air pocket appeared magically around my head. The world turned from mud brown to boat blue, and the roar of the falls started to drift away. The boat

had popped free of the hole.

I swam out from under the boat into a different world. It felt as though I had passed through a time warp. There was a strange glow and everything seemed to sparkle. As I floated downstream hanging onto the boat, I gazed at the towering cliffs and spires of this outlandish canyon, thinking that it really did look real, but knowing that it probably wasn't. I was probably in some parallel universe, viewing my former surrounding through some strange filter. But which world I was in was of little consequence. I was elated. I was alive and breathing and very, very happy.

I was still befriending the sparkles in the light when, SNAP!, one of my oars got ripped off the frame as the boat slammed into a barely submerged boulder. The boat stalled out, then my body was drawn under it by the current. Next the boat broke free, dragging me rudely over the rock. Reality was calling.

Climbing on top of the overturned boat was difficult until I got a foot on the remaining oar. As the boat floated through a short flat stretch, I unfastened a spare oar from the side of the boat and tried to paddle to shore, kneeling on the wet slippery bottom of the raft. I almost made it, but got swept away into the next rapid, where the rocks and holes had their way with me. I clung to the bottom like a barnacle.

Awkwardly wielding the oar, I paddled furiously for eddies. Three times I went all out but failed; each time getting pounded anew by the relentless river. Although I understood the urgency of the situation and acted accordingly, I never felt any real fear. The ordeal in Widowmaker had altered my perspective and I had the rather irrational conviction that if I could survive the hammering in that hole, nothing downriver was going to be a problem—even if I was totally spent, upside down and out of control.

Finally, near exhaustion, I spotted the perfect eddy, not far above the next big bonecruncher. I barely made it. I collapsed, clinging to a crack in the cliff, gasping for breath for a long time. Physically, I was at the end of my rope but I felt great; life was fabulous. Even the rock in my face was beautiful.

Eventually I regained enough energy to tie off the boat. The eddy was small but calm, tucked into a cliff that had a couple of convenient ledges and a perfect spot, 10 feet above the water, to anchor a z drag. Soon I had the boat righted and was surveying the damage. One of the oars was gone, along with the oarlock. The oarlock stand, a 1.5 inch diameter



chunk of cast alloy, had snapped clean off at the base.

My efforts to strap everything down securely before running Widowmaker had clearly been inadequate. The intense shaking under the falls was far worse than anything I could have anticipated and the beating that followed while careening through the rapids downstream had only added injury to insult. Two ammo boxes, one with my medical kit and the other with signaling gear, were gone. Many other things were trying to ooze their way out from under the cargo net. Fortunately the repair kit with a spare oarlock and stand was still on board.

I took my time untangling straps, repacking gear, and replacing the oarlock. There was no rush.

Life seemed very sweet. Even fixing my gear was something to be savored. When all was ready I stared at the river awhile, then pushed off into the current in search of a sunny beach to dry my gear and camp for the night.

It was a long drive home and I had time to think about my adventure in Widowmaker. Was that a bad thing that happened to me out there? Or was it good? I couldn't decide. In retrospect it didn't seem too terrible and I felt somehow refreshed by the experience. Everything around me, all the way to the edge of the earth, felt very real and very wonderful.

I thought again about my desperate predicament in that hole, and I admonished myself several times with the old quip, "I guess that taught me a lesson." But it had a hollow sound to it. Did it really teach me a lesson? Would I do it again? The answer surprised me. Yes, I probably would.

There is a terrific thrill in running difficult and dangerous whitewater. All life and hope is squeezed into here and now. For just a moment the fate of the universe is in your hands.

The pounding I took at Widowmaker was much more than punishment for a misplaced oarstroke. It was a confrontation with the primal forces of the cosmos. It was as close as I'll ever come to doing hand to hand combat with the gods.

If I could survive that experience unscathed, I could go anywhere, do anything. I was clearly invincible; probably immortal.

Editor's note: W. Scott Morris lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and has published before in American Whitewater (9/94) and Canoe.

REMEMBERING A FRIEND

One Zany Morning on the Ocoee

by Perri Rothemich

"Come on, get up Perri. I've got a plan." 5:00 am and Jeff was waking me up! Why? Zany Jeff had decided to go for an early, naked, run of the Ocoee. I rolled out of my sleeping bag, still sore from an encounter with a massive hole the day before that absolutely was NOT my fault, Jeff was making coffee and handing out doses of Pepto, paddler's choice cocktail. We started loading boats and working out a shuttle.

"Per, you guys take the van to the put in and we'll meet you there."

"Whoa, wait a minute. How will you meet us there, if you're taking the car?"

"Wait and see," Jeff replied mysteriously. Jeffy was a little odd, to say the least. We'd learned to paddle together, and had spent every summer for the past three years on this or that river having god knows how many "interesting experiences." This would be no exception. At 6 am the Ocoee isn't exactly warm, and the thought of a naked run is... terrifying! We'd carried the boats to the lip of the river and waited for Jeff. The next thing I saw was a naked guy with long blond hair skateboarding down the ramp to the put in. He was headed straight for the water.

"Stop Jeffy! What are you doing? Have you lost your mind?" Beth wasn't completely sold on our outlandish scheme. She'd only paddled the Ocoee a few times, and she wasn't that confident. Not that clothes would make that much difference.

Jeff stopped, and sat next to me. "What is this? A paddling jacket? I don't think so Periwinkle! This is a naked run. The definition of naked is: The lack of clothing, or attire. Paddling jacket definitely doesn't come under that definition. Let's have it. Off it comes."

I relented my jacket and shorts and I was ready for the trip. I was comfortable on the Ocoee and since it was so early, no one else was there. (Would the fact that it was a Tuesday morning help?) Getting Beth and Craig to disrobe was a little more difficult. After much persuasion, they relented and we shoved off.

"Yahoo! Look at me!" The next thing I knew, Jeff was standing up in his Crossfire. I'd never seen anything so crazy. Except of course for Jeff Snyder, and he had his clothes on! He should have met Jeffy. They would have clicked.

The sun started to come up and our moods lifted. The air was warming and soon we were shredding everything in sight. It was a perfect day. Until Diamond Splitter. Beth didn't exactly stay on line. (I'd say running left into Witch's Hole wasn't exactly on line.) She flipped and wet-exited. Jeff grabbed her boat and paddle while I ferried her river left. Jeff and the Matrix went river right with Craig, who, by the way, caught a stern squirt like I'd never seen a Corsica do.

"Come and get it, Bethy-baby. You gotta swim! You can do it!" Jeff yelled over to me. Poor Beth was shivering but refused to emerge from the water because "my skirt isn't long enough!" I had to agree with Jeff, but as her friend, I couldn't make her get out of the water. Some are a touch more modest than others. I'd say Beth was one of the more modest ones. I was surprised that she even agreed to paddle naked. Her lifejacket didn't exactly cover all.



A VERY LONG DAY ON THE GAULEY

by Ed Bumpass

There were four in our group. The plan was for Eric and I to take Paul and Elmer down the Lower Gauley. But Eric wanted to run the Upper. His solution? The whole dam(n) thing. He and I would pick up the others at Koontz' Flume. I'm easy...if not smart.

I was in my Cruise Control: different, squirrely, and dreadfully slow carrying my 210 pounds. It was, at least, a nice day for a swim. Every time I'd flip I'd slide right out of the boat. I'm told a backband helps. At Iron Ring I was on target, looking at that pretty green 'V', when I caught water over the deck, went vertical, and dropped square into Woodstock Hole. After washing around a while I abandoned ship-only to come up under a raft. It was that kind of day.

We arrived at Koontz' a half hour early and enjoyed lunch on the rocks. An hour later we considered the options. Either our friends were waiting at Five Boat Hole or my van had broken. They'd had four hours to run shuttle. Lateness was unthinkable.

No one at Five Boat. Hoping to catch up, we blasted down the Lower with only the obligatory surfs.

We arrived at the Swiss take out tired and thirsty. We could see the cooler and

dry gear in Eric's van. We had no key. I stayed in the parking lot with the boats while Eric went to watch the river. An hour passed. It was getting dark. There were only a couple of cars left in the lot. Eric came back up to the van. Passing boaters had told him that a pair matching our missing comrades description was not far behind. Eric and I both walked back to the river. We waited. Finally, hoping to catch the last ride, Eric ran back to the parking lot. His van was gone! So were our boats, paddles, splash jackets and polypro. It was getting cold. As we walked to Highway 39, it started to rain.

Hitching can be difficult when you're a wet, bearded longhair wearing a skirt. We instinctively knew to try cars with boats. We recognized a Suburban with a Cataract from the campground. He didn't even slow down. There was only one car left. The time for subtlety was past. He would have to run me down. I stood squarely at his hood ornament as Eric explained our problem. Although this kind soul was going the other way, to Charleston, he drove us from Swiss to Battle Run.

We could see a warm light in Eric's van as we slogged across the campground.

Paul was dry and reading a book when I opened the door. The utter lack of understanding on his face as he gazed at me, a sopping apparition, made it very difficult to appear stem. "O.K.," I said, "Tell me a story."

They were indeed late to the put in. It seems that they had encountered a soiree at Carnifex Ferry, complete with keg and buffet. Not wishing to appear unfriendly, they got in line. They say they arrived at Koontz' before we left, but, no matter, we didn't meet. Later, at Swiss, in the few minutes Eric and I were both at the van, they missed the first take out and followed other boaters to the second. Realizing their error, they caught a ride to the first take out. While Eric and I were back at the river, they loaded our boats and gear, and drove off. What they were thinking I'll never know.

We showered and just made dinner at Ponderosa before closing. By the time we retrieved my van from Koontz' Flume and returned to the campsite it was almost midnight. A long day indeed.

Although my morals have often been questioned, I feel compelled to attempt to draw one from this tale. Communication may be important, but contingency planning is also a good idea.

PARDON ME, IS THIS ROCK TAKEN?

by Allison Snow Jones

This is the story of how a bicycling, horseback riding poet abandoned common sense, ran some rapids against her will (and better judgment!) and eventually found happiness on the river. It all began when a friend took me up to the White Mountains in New Hampshire early last Spring to show me a river that he runs. The water rushing over and around rocks enthralled my poet's heart, promising adventure, mystery, beauty and inspiration. On returning home to Maryland I found that rivers and streams had become compelling to me. I would stop in the middle of bicycle rides and sit for hours watching how water flowed in streams and creeks. It drove my biking buddies crazy. They were constantly having to drag me away from water's edge. I began pestering my kayaking friend with questions about the dynamics of whitewater. He was patient

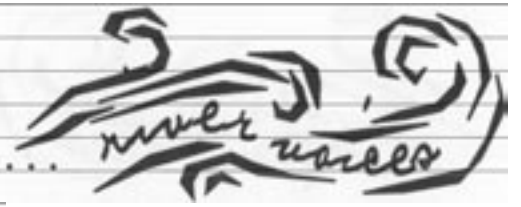
and thorough but the more I learned, the more compelling whitewater became.

Wanting to be sensible, I began sea kayaking on the Chesapeake last Spring. I thought it would be a way of getting "closer" to water without actually taking the risks of whitewater. A variety of unpleasant experiences in the past involving me, water, and not being able to breathe made me reluctant to actually kayak white water. (I believe my exact words to my kayaking friend were "There's NO WAY you will ever get me into a whitewater kayak.") Unfortunately, I had not taken account of the weird genetic defect that has left me hopelessly addicted to adrenaline and "pushing the envelope." In a past life, I three-day evented, a sport that is something like running Class V rapids on horseback. It's the sport that put Christopher Reeve in a wheelchair. I *thought* I had finally grown up, come to my senses and become sedate. Instead,

this former cowgirl found kayaking on the Chesapeake a little too tame. Whitewater continued to beckon.

Having exhausted all substitutes, it was clear that there was only one solution: whitewater. I had just begun a two month sojourn in Western Pennsylvania near some of the best whitewater rivers in the country. It seemed like destiny. One phone call and I was enrolled in a beginner course at a "school of paddling". I find it amusing that the names of magazines and schools that deal with kayaking and canoeing often sound like they could also be for people who are into sadomasochism.

On the morning of my first lesson, I found myself wondering if this was more than coincidence. I emerged from my tent to a cold, gray, rainy dawn. I was bone dry and freezing cold. It wasn't hard to imagine just how much colder I would feel immersed in water. At breakfast I



learned that the instructors had been out on the cold river since dawn and that they regarded this as fun. It was at this time that I began to seriously question the wisdom of my decision. When the instructors turned up after breakfast soaking wet and apparently oblivious to their wet state, I became convinced that I had made the mistake of my life. What was most disturbing to my mind was that there were no signs that they felt cold or that they felt a need to dry off.

This was my first clue that kayakers are different from the rest of the human race. You know...those who value warmth and being dry. In fact, they just looked exultant. It was clear to me that this was more than a sport, it was a form of worship.

My instructor was a young Canadian woman who radiated happiness and enthusiasm. She suggested that I go put on my bathing suit. Stifling an impulse to laugh, I suggested that we find a wet suit for me since there was NO chance that I was going to remove clothing given the ambient temperature on this particular morning. She seemed surprised at my request, but was agreeable. After locating a wet suit, we proceeded to the lake.

My first lesson consisted of me being flipped upside down in the water (while being cautioned to "kiss the kayak", i.e., lean forward). The first time this happened I felt a strong impulse to be somewhere else immediately. I remember thinking that needlepoint seemed awfully attractive as an alternative activity. I'm not sure which is more challenging: being upside down under water in a boat or trusting that another human being will bring you up for air. It was a little like being "dipped" on the dance floor, something I've always had trouble with because of a firm conviction that I will be dropped - even if it were Arnold Schwarzenegger who was dipping me.

Fortunately, I got lots of practice with the "upside-down-under-water" position (henceforward to be referred to as the UDUW position). For example, I was asked to perform other exciting tricks like hanging upside down from the boat and tapping on the hull a predetermined number of times, before the boat was righted. This was pretty challenging as I'm only good for about 10 seconds under water. Then I panic. It was during this exercise that I discovered that this is also a great way to fill your sinuses with water. The water will then remain in them for several

days, usually trickling out at inconvenient moments like when you're talking to someone you were hoping to impress. Interestingly, some men who kayak are so devoted they seem to find this attractive.

The remainder of the morning's lesson was spent learning the sweep stroke, stem draw, high brace, low brace, and basic paddling technique. The challenge here was to paddle in such a way that the boat goes straight. It was during this phase on instruction that I earned the nickname "Snake Wake". The wet exit was also part

**"Tis better to brace than to flip."
Nay, "Tis far better to brace than
to flip." Nay, "Tis far better to
brace than to swim." Even
"Twere possible to roll, twould be
better to brace." I think
Shakespeare said this first.**

of this lesson. It's pretty simple, just exit the boat while under water. And it's easy because this is something that every fiber of your being wants to do when you're under water. However, it was not without some difficulty. There was a brief instant where I lost track of "up". Fortunately, the personal flotation device (PFD) that I was wearing knew which way to go. Hence my advice to beginners: When in doubt, follow the PFD! The wet exit is also another really superlative way to get lots of water up your nose.

After lunch, we went out on the Middle Youghiogeny River just above Ram Cat rapids. It was during this phase of instruction that I had the opportunity to watch other students capsize and learned an important kayaking fact: NEVER LEAN UPSTREAM. Fighting a strong feeling that I wanted to be anywhere but out in that current, I managed to ferry from river right to river left. After a few more of these, we practiced peel outs and eddy turns. For anyone who is reading this because they think they might like to try kayaking, let me just explain that these are two essential skills in kayaking. They allow you to exit and enter eddies. Eddies are those quiet spots found behind rocks and outcroppings

where a tired or frightened kayaker can seek respite. Eddies are our friends. But like all friends, there is a shadow: the eddy line.

This is the place where water flowing past the obstruction that produces the eddy meets water that is behind the obstruction, water which is flowing in the opposite direction. What this means for a kayaker is that this is one of the places on the river where you are most likely to end up in the UDUW position. It was during this phase of the learning process that I was told that I have a REALLY GOOD high brace. Of course, the high brace was purely instinctive on my part. I thought of it as "grasping at straws." The last desperate attempt of a doomed kayaker to remain upright. Because of it, I managed to avoid the UDUW position on several occasions. And it was in this way that I learned another important maxim of kayaking: "Tis better to brace than to flip." Nay, "Tis far better to brace than to flip." Nay, "Tis far better to brace than to swim." Even "Twere possible to roll, twould be better to brace." I think Shakespeare said this first.

My next task was to do an "attainment." As far as I could tell, this was not much different from ferrying, except that the kayaker ends up upstream relative to where she started. I began this exercise well enough and got about to midstream before things began to fall apart. I'm not sure how much of what happened was attributable to fatigue and how much was the result of panic and inexperience. But the net result was that I ended up running some rapids.

The first clue that all was not going well was that I was finding it difficult to keep the boat pointing upstream. The current kept turning me broadside and my stem draw had become ineffective. I also noticed that I was beginning to travel downstream with what seemed to be increasing speed. I believe that it was at this precise moment that my eyes met those of my (now) trusted instructor and a four letter epithet meant to express extreme chagrin escaped my lips. I remember her looking a little shocked, so I'm pretty sure memory is correct about this.

In that moment, I realized that I has two choices: 1) run the rapids facing backwards or 2) run the rapids facing forward. The second option seemed superior. I think it had something to do with wanting to see the rock that killed me. Having come to grips with my peril, my



instinct for survival finally kicked in and I managed a effective enough stern draw to get the ७*४@ boat facing downriver.

Much of what followed is a blur. I remember looking to the left and seeing what looked like a huge, gaping, sucky, keeper hole. I know they were only Class II rapids, but I swear that is what I saw. My stern draw did not desert me and I was safely past it, only to find a large rock looming to the right. Again, an adequate stern draw and I was past it as well. By this time, heady with success, I managed to regain enough composure to realize that I REALLY NEEDED TO GET OUT OF THE RAPIDS SOON.

Below me on river left I spotted the guys from a more advanced class sitting in a large eddy. They appeared to be cheering. I decided that it might be a good idea to join them since they seemed so friendly and encouraging. Unfortunately, that would have required more control than I could muster. I managed to get over near them, but found myself heading right for a rock. Immediately, descriptions of broached boats and pinned drowned kayakers filled my head. (Here's some more important advice for beginner kayakers: DONT read any books on kayaking prior to taking lessons. Especially, DONT read the annual safety report in AWA magazine!)

I was completely panicked and unable to direct my boat anywhere but at the rock. Fortunately, the rock turned out to have a gradual slope on the upriver side and I was able to gently "beach" the boat on it, looking for all the world as though that was my intention all the time. (This is a trick I learned while showing horses. No matter how bad things are going, always look like what is happening is exactly what you wanted to happen!) Arriving on the rock was a little like the arrival of the Queen Elizabeth II at dockside.

The boys were cheering and gesticulating wildly. If they had had confetti they would have thrown it. You see, they thought it was an "instructor sanctioned run" and that I as SO GOOD that I was being allowed to run the rapids my very first day on the river, when they had not been allowed to run them until their second day. What they didn't realize was that I was planning to establish squatter's rights to the rock, build a house there and NEVER leave it! Fortunately, I was eventually persuaded from my safe haven because the next day it was completely submerged in the flood of the century.

But I had other problems requiring my attention. I was now on the side of the river opposite the take out. I took a moment to gather my wits. I wanted to get

my breathing under control. Also, my heart was beating so loudly I was having trouble hearing people speak. Finally, I was able to talk, albeit several octaves above my normal speaking voice. I told my instructor as calmly as I could that "I need to get out of this boat NOW."

She said, "Well, the take out is on the other side of the river."

I said, "No. You don't understand. I NEED TO GET OUT OF THIS BOAT NOW." She seemed to sense that she was dealing with impending hysteria. She gently said, "OK, you can get out of the boat over here, but sooner or later you're going to have to get back in it and paddle it across to the take out." Feeling as I did at that moment, I realized that if I got out of the boat I would NEVER get back in the boat. At least not that day. Against my better judgment, I was going to have to go out into the current and ferry once again. This was, I think, the kayaker's version of "getting back on the horse."

Well, I got back on the horse, but the horse was not entirely cooperative. I remember my instructor mentioning something about eddies in the middle of the river, but I was still too high on adrenaline to fully comprehend what this meant. What it meant was that in the middle of ferrying across, I'd hit an eddy and start going upstream like a rocket. Suddenly large rocks that had been 30 feet upstream were looming large off my bow. I knew something was horribly wrong. In my fear sodden brain I concluded that a malevolent force was determined to smack me into rocks at all costs. So, in a panic, I turned the boat back toward river left, and ended up in the eddy that I had started from. I repeated this maneuver at least three times.

My instructor couldn't figure out why I kept going back from whence I was trying to come, like a demented lemming determined to remain stranded. After I demonstrated to her the weird alien force that seemed to propel me upstream in the middle of my ferry, she figured out that I was behaving so bizarrely because I didn't realize I was in an eddy. (At the time, I remember my addled brain thinking that eddies could only be at the SIDE of the river, not in the middle.) She explained that I was in an eddy and that when in it I should stop ferrying and paddle across it. She did this in a tone of voice one might use with a very young or mildly brain-damaged person. Did I mention that she was very patient and kind?

A (finally) successful ferry brought me to the take-out, where I decided to call it a day. I was tired and cold and wet. That night the heavens opened and dumped

more rain on Western Pennsylvania than had been seen in one night in nearly a century. I spent the night in my tent watching lightning flash and counting by thousands until the thunder rolled. I figured that as long as the flash and the roll weren't simultaneous, I was safe. I also entertained myself by listening to the river rise. My tent was originally 70 feet from it. By morning, it was 30 feet from it. The REAL kayakers were ecstatic. For us beginners, classes were canceled.

Two weeks later, I returned to learn to roll. It took me two mornings to master the sweep roll on flat water. There are three critical elements to success with this maneuver which I will pass on to the uninitiated: 1) make sure the paddle in your forward hand is above the water line before commencing the sweep, 2) keep your head DOWN close to the water until the boat has been hip-snapped upright (this is the LAST thing you will feel like doing when you're underwater, by the way!) and 3) wear nose plugs so you aren't distracted by half the lake going up your nose. I will never forget the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction I felt when one of the instructors said to me, "There are two kinds of people in the world: rollers and non-rollers. You are a roller. You are now one of us. When the revolution comes, you'll be OK." One of the truly great moments of life!

Four months have passed since that first unexpected run of Ram Cat rapid. I now own a kayak. I own LOTS of fleece and polypropylene clothing as well as a wet suit and a dry suit. (It IS possible to be simultaneously wet and warm if you're willing to spend enough money!) I've run class III rapids and I've been swimming in REALLY COLD rivers (no, I don't have the roll down in whitewater - yet).

I've surfed waves and one hole. And I've been boofed. On weekends, I live in an unheated, largely unfurnished farmhouse in Western Pennsylvania to be closer to whitewater and my boating buddies. My friends and family fear that they are witnessing my descent to a lower life form, that of kayak bum. But I'm getting lots of metaphoric material for my poetry. And the rivers are beautiful and soothing to my soul. There are views from the river that surpass anything you can see from the shore. The people I've met who kayak and canoe are just terrific. And there'll be plenty of time for needlepoint when I'm (much) older...



KEEPING THE FREEZE OUT OF ROLLING

by Jon Southwick

Winter is here and the water is freezing. There is no better time to perfect your roll (in a pool, of course). Many local clubs offer pool rolling sessions to help you improve your roll. Probably the biggest downfall to beginner and intermediate boaters is the lack of fast, split second rolls. Here are some useful techniques on shaping up your roll:

Try to make your roll faster, quicker and a little spunkier. If you have problems with rolling or rolling quickly, there are a few common mistakes that might be causing you not to roll. (1) your head must come out of the water last and it must be relaxed, (2) you must have a powerful hip snap. The snap is what gets the boat upright. Finally, (3) not clearing the pivot hand out of the water. In other words, if you are trying to roll on your right side your left hand should wrap around to the bottom of your boat, directly below the middle of your seat. Having your left hand out of the water and wrapped around the bottom of your boat will give you more leverage in order to come upright.

It is essential that you have a roll on both sides. The only way to accomplish this is by practicing on each side until there is no on or off side. After you have a bomber set up and roll on each side, it is time to challenge your skills. Remember, innovation is your own horizon. First, set up on the right side and switch under water to roll on your left. Then do it in reverse. This is necessary in learning how to slice your paddle through the water and how to hang on under pressure.

Practice your back deck roll. A back deck roll is exactly like a forward roll, except it starts at the rear of the boat, and you come forward out to 90 degrees and roll. This helps you in positioning your paddle and lets you know that you can roll up from anywhere. Be careful, a back deck roll can put stress on your shoulder.

Rolling with your momentum is also critical. If you go over to your right, roll left. If you go over to the left, roll right. This will aid you in most circumstances. Remember, in a hole the only way to roll is down stream.

Equally important is the hand roll. A hand roll should be perfected on both sides. If you lose your paddle, you should still be able to roll up. No excuses like "my skirt popped", or, "I lost my paddle." Try this drill: flip over and stay under the water for a long time. While under the

water, touch your nose a couple of times, blow bubbles, let go of your paddle and find it again. Have some fun under the water. The point is to push yourself to stay calm in tense situations. Being relaxed under the water is extremely important in kayaking. Something that I have found to help relax me and my students under the water is a good pair of nose plugs. Discrete and comfortable, Smiley's nose plugs are the best. More importantly, when spring rolls around, these nose plugs will not fall off when you are playing in the biggest of holes. (Wearing nose plugs also reduces sinus infections. But don't totally rely on nose plugs. Make sure you do a lot of rolls without them.)

Here are some drills that you can do with a partner. One drill is to fill your boat with water three quarters of the way. Do several rolls in the shallow end of the pool with a spot. Then move to the deep end. Now have your buddy lift the stem of your boat completely up so that you are vertical and push you over. After practicing from the back, try doing this in the front. If you are up against the side of the pool, it simulates being up against a cliff. Make sure to roll up on both sides. (Make sure these maneuvers won't damage the edge of the pool.)

I hope these drills and my advice are helpful in making your roll faster. If you practice these rolls until they are instinct, the river will be safer and more enjoyable.



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1997 WHITEWATER FREESTYLE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ON OTTAWA RIVER ANNOUNCED

by Mark Scriver

On Sept. 5-7, 1997 the best freestyle paddlers in the world will once again assemble on the Ottawa River for the World Championships. The organizers expect to exceed the attendance at the 1995 worlds in Germany, at which there were 200 athletes from 20 countries. Each country will qualify a maximum of 36 men and women to compete in Kayak, C-1, Open Canoe and Squirt classes. New boat designs, new moves and new trends in the sport have premiered at World Championships in the past.

The Canadian site is an excellent location for rodeo spectators and manufacturers will be on hand displaying their wares. Arrive early and compete in the Ottawa River Rodeo, an NOWR event that will be held on the weekend prior to the Worlds. It will include classes for novices, and intermediates, as well as for experts. For more information visit the world freestyle championship web site:

<http://www.synapse.net/~canyak/rodeo/> or contact the organizing committee by mail at 1759 Ainsley Dr., Ottawa, Ont. Canada K2C0T3.

1996 WHITEWATER FREESTYLE PRE-WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS REVIEWED ON THE OTTAWA

by Mark Scriver

145 whitewater athletes from 8 countries came to the Ottawa River near Beachburg, Ontario last Labour day weekend to compete in the Whitewater Freestyle Pre-World Championships. There was a strong showing from Canada and the US, and 30 competitors from Great Britain and Germany. Athletes came from as far away as Japan and New Zealand. The 1995 world champions from each class were present. The hole riding event was held in the holes and breaking waves at the bottom of McKoy's, the first rapids on the well known Rocher Fendu section.

The hole on river right has a bit of a tongue close to shore and a stickier spot towards the center of the river. The river left hole is deep and consistent and provides access to a 3 meter wide tongue that can be surfed. From either hole the competitors could drop into "Baby Face". With a smooth section and a breaking section, there was potential for flat spins, as well as vertical moves.

In the Freestyle Through a Rapid Event, the athletes were judged as they performed freestyle maneuvers through the entire length of McKoy's rapids. This rapid includes violent eddylines and some hard screaming ferrys above a big trashy hole. Similar Freestyle Through A Rapid Events have been included in pre-

vious world championships to test river running skills. While previous events had gates requiring difficult moves and sometimes time limits, the 1996 event was subjectively judged. The competitors could go anywhere and choose from numerous formations to accumulate points, based on holeringing. Following this experiment, a new format will be used at the '97 worlds that will combine the freestyle hole riding moves with some difficult, required moves.

The pre-worlds are held in the year preceding the world championships to give the host country a chance to work out the logistics of putting on a world class competition.



RESULTS

K-1 MEN

Marc Lyle	USA
Bernd Sommer	GER
Clay Wright	USA
Dan Gavere	USA
Bob McDonough	USA
Ken Whiting	CAN
Eric Jackson	USA
Richard Oldenquist	USA
Arnt Schaftlein	GER
Marco Colella	CAN

SQUIRT

Bob McDonough	USA
Chuck Kern	USA
Bob Campbell	GBR
Chris Taudevin	GBR
Adam Boyd	USA
Scott Sullivan	USA
Brad Sutton	CAN
Nate LaBrecque(Jr)	USA
Kyle Marinello(Jr)	USA
Shane Benedict	USA

K-1 WOMEN

Jameson River	USA
Roxanne McDonough	USA
Susan Wilson	USA
Amy Wiley	USA
Brenda Ernst	USA
Gillian Wright	CAN
Barb Moore	USA
Nicole Zaharko	CAN
Courtney Ludden	USA
Shannon Carrol	USA

C-1 MEN

Allen Braswell	USA
Shane Benedict	USA
Adam Boyd	USA
Jeff Richards	USA
Pete Orton	GBR
Ian Holmes	CAN
Jonathan Sooter	USA
Mark Scriver	CAN
Chris McDermott	CAN
Paul Danks	CAN
Cody Boger	USA

K-1 JUNIOR

Rustuy Sage	USA
Andrew Masters	GBR
Fred Coriell	USA
Silas Treadway	USA
Harley Masters	GBR
Gavin Murdoch	CAN
Evan Mounsey	CAN
Nathan LaBrecque	USA
Brad Ludden	USA
Ethan Winger	USA

OPEN CANOE

Mark Scriver	CAN
Paul Danks	CAN
Ian Holmes	CAN
Allen Braswell	USA
Ian Thomson	CAN
Jeff Richards	USA
Ryan Moore	CAN
Joe Langman	CAN
Paul Mason	CAN
Pete Orton	GBR

1997 NORTH BRANCH OF POTOMAC RELEASES

by Ed Gertler

Once again the Corps of Engineers has tentatively consented to schedule four weekends of recreational water releases from Jennings Randolph Dam (aka Bloomington Dam) on the North Branch Potomac River. The dates will be as follows: April 12, 13, 26, 27 and May 10, 11, 24, 25. Flow will be 850 to 1,000 cfs. We expect to have at least seven hours of water each day from 9 am to 4 pm. But if we have a dry spring, either flow volume or duration of discharge could be cut back.

For that reason paddlers are advised to confirm the releases a day or two beforehand by calling the Corps of Engineers Baltimore District Hotline (410-962-7687), U.S. Weather Bureau River Forecast Center (703-260-0305), or Canoe Cruisers Association Hotline (301-656-2586).

Also, be aware that in the event of unusually wet weather, which might force the Corps to release more than 1,000 cfs, the Corps will officially state that the release is "canceled". This does not mean that the dam is shut off. It just means that because more than 1,000 cfs is being released, which the Corps believes is a dangerous level, the Corps is disavowing themselves of liability for anyone getting in trouble.

The North Branch is located in western Maryland, along the West Virginia border, near the Savage River, site of the 1989 World Whitewater Championships. The water release breathes life into a six and a half-mile stretch of Class 2 and 3 whitewater set in a remote and scenic gorge. Comparable to the Lehigh,

Casselman, or Nantahala, this is the sort of stream that novice and intermediates will enjoy as a downriver run and more advanced paddlers will enjoy as a playground.

If you are unfamiliar with this river, its shuttle route, etc., just show up at Bloomington, Maryland on any release morning and look for cars with boats. There will be plenty of them and someone will be glad to adopt you.

If you desire more information on Mineral County facilities, call the Chamber of Commerce at 304-788-2513. There are some really nice campgrounds near the Randolph Dam (probably available for May releases) and at Big Run State Park in Maryland. Unfortunately, the Corps has insisted on passing on their extra costs to the users. Paddlers can anticipate a \$2.00 access charge to use the Barnum put-in. Also, Westvaco has posted most land at Bloomington. While we have so far had no problems taking out at the mouth of the Savage, be prepared for the possibility of Westvaco enforcing their warnings. Please do not give the security guards a hard time. An alternate take-out would be just upstream of the stone arch railroad bridge in Bloomington, with parking up at the school parking lot in town.

Finally, note that the popular parking lot in front of the two-story brick building is private property. Please take care not to block the driveway, change clothes in the open, or do anything else to offend this company's very tolerant owner or caretaker.

Stuart Soff Remembered

By Jordan Tappero

As the weekend approaches all most paddlers can think about is being outdoors, catching eddies, squirting our sterns, spinning 360's, popping enders, throwing a few pirouettes, or maybe grabbing a hold onto that elusive *retendo*. We make that phone call to our best paddling buddy. "When you com'in in? What's the level? Who's paddling with us? How about the shuttle?"

The weekend comes to an end, you're loading boats, feeling pretty whipped, exchanging high 5's about your respective lines down that last "nar-nar" rapid, and gloating about your stud ride in the big hole. And that's basically it; you say your farewells until the river brings you together again. But for most of us, that's really not it, though we are rarely conscious of it. Sometimes tragedy strikes, and we're forced to take the time to reflect about what our weekends and paddling holidays with our closest paddling buddy are ail about. Paddling is an intense, intimate experience with a close friend, nature and self.

Recently, AWA lost an avid supporter, Stuart Soff, attorney and paddler, on day 5 of a week-long paddling adventure down the Zambezi River. Did you know him?

Perhaps you met him paddling rivers in western North Carolina, or out west, or even in Latin America. Or perhaps you know someone just like him. He's the one who always has something light to say, with an odd, quirky smirk when your feeling a bit gripped scouting a big rapid. He's the homie with joke af-



ter joke, making that mindless, endless paddle out go by so quickly after a full day of exhausting whitewater. I'm guessing that you've met someone like Stuart; he's the one you look forward to getting down river with whenever you can break away. Paddling is an intense, intimate experience with a close friend.

Like most of us, Stuart was at his best on long, multi-day trips down river, experiencing life to its fullest through the nature surrounding him. "I love camping out along a river in a canyon after a day of paddling.

There's nothing so restful and peaceful."
Stuart Soff - Nov. 16th, 1996

Paddling is an intense, intimate experience with nature.

Like most whitewater enthusiasts, Stuart thrived on the paddler's oxymoron (concentration + fatigue = relaxation). "What's so great about these trips is how little you think about the world; the concentration one needs

to do these rapids, the fatigue, and the seclusion make for the most relaxing situation." Stuart Soff - Nov. 17th, 1996

Finally, as with all of us, paddling was an intense, intimate experience for Stuart, calling upon his judgement, skills and courage. "I see the line on the left and contemplate running it. The most discouraging part is the swirling water below."
Nov. 19th, 1996

Stuart died on Nov. 20th, running a waterfall - he was on line, only to be caught tragically in a recirculating eddy at the bottom of the drop.

YOUGHIOGHENY RIVERFEST ANNOUNCED

Riversport School of Kayaking has chosen Saturday and Sunday, April 19 and 20, for their annual **Riverfest** to be held in Confluence, Pa. Camping will be free at the **RiverSport** Site and Saturday morning there will be a free breakfast of pancakes and coffee.

Representatives of Dagger, Patagonia, Perception and Prijon will be on hand with equipment demos. Popular runs close to Confluence include the Yougioghenny, the Cheat, the Big Sandy and the Casselman. On Saturday night boaters will be able to relive the day's events at a party that will feature videos and a free keg.

Those wishing additional information may contact Riversport at (814) 395-5744.

Padding Paradise Seeks Physician

Friendsville, Maryland, take-out for the famous class IV-V Upper Yough, is actively seeking a primary care physician. Located in western Maryland, Friendsville is less than one half hour away from the Lower Yough and Big Sandy, and less than an hour away from the Cheat, Blackwater and North Branch of the Potomac. There is an active group of class V paddlers living in town.

Deep Creek Lake and Wisp Ski area are less than ten miles away. Morgantown, West Virginia, home of WVU, is a one half hour by interstate. Pittsburgh is ninety minutes.

Physicians trained in general practice, family practice, internal medicine or emergency medicine will be considered. For more information contact Jerry Wolford at (301) 746-5881, or jerwolford@aol.com.

1996 NEW ENGLAND SLALOM SERIES RACE RESULTS

Through the generous sponsorship of Adventure Quest, Mad River Canoe, Millbrook Boats, and Mitchell Paddles, the New England Slalom Series has just finished it's 8th season. This 9 race series is geared toward novice and intermediate boaters who wish to improve their whitewater skills in a social slalom atmosphere. About 375 different boats raced in the 29 classes ranging from cadets (age 14 and younger) to Masters (age 40+); in kayaks, C-1's, C-2's, and single and tandem canoes.

It was an exciting spring with the first race (The Salmon River Slalom) having the highest turnout in years. Another race (The Fiddle Head Slalom) was canceled because of high water, but everyone who showed up received a free race T-shirt! The Blackwater Slalom and Covered Bridge Slalom included a fun filled "must be present to win" raffle, and Mother Nature cooperated by allowing enough water for all the Fall dam release races to go on schedule.

The N.E.S.S. awards (best 5 races) for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place were hand thrown and painted pottery plates made by Alma Shmidt of Pine Tree Potters. There were 13 qualifiers for the perfect attendance award, a hand thrown and sculpted paddler mug by Melinda Arthur of White Tree Pottery.

To receive a race packet and information on this year's NESS series send a S.A.S.E. to: N.E.S.S. 55 Darton Street Concord, MA 01742

FINAL RESULTS:	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
OC-1 Short:	J. Kazimierczyk	C. Wendler	R. Ingram
OC-1 Med:	C. Wendler	P. Cleary	
OC-1 W:	C. Miner		
OC-1 Master Short:	W. Nonnemache	R. Ingram	
OC-1 Master Med:	S. Hunt	W. Nonnemacher	M. Cook
OC-1 Junior:	W. Amidon		
OC-1 Rec:	W. Amidon	B. Lichtenburg	M. Murtha
OC-2 MIX:	LeClair/LeClair	Berry/Lowman	
OC-2 Masters:	LeClair/LeClair		
OC-2 Cadet/Senior:	Hunt/Hunt	McGrath/LeClair	
K-1 Men:	T. Jones	C. Carter	B. Kerrigan
K-1 Women:	G. Watson	P. Allison	R. Gelblat
K-1 Junior:	A. Clarke		
K-1 Women Junior:	A. Hunt		
K-1 Master:	T. Jones	C. Carter	
K-1 Cadet:	S. Mann	M. Kmon	A. Huck
K-1 Women Cadet:	S. McGrath	F. Larsen	L. Jorgensen
K-1 Women Rec:	D. Barber		
C-1:	S. Montague	B. Putnam	J. Rifflemacher
C-1 Women:	C. Miner	K. McGrath	P. Lowman
C-1 Junior:	J. Emerson		
C-2:	Lowman/Rifflemacher		
C-2 Mixed:	Miner/Montague	Lowman/Berry	Gelblat/Kulawiec

J. CALVIN GIDDINGS REMEMBERED

by Jim Sindelar

AWA Executive Director
1972-1980

Member, 1975 Apurimac
Kayak Expedition

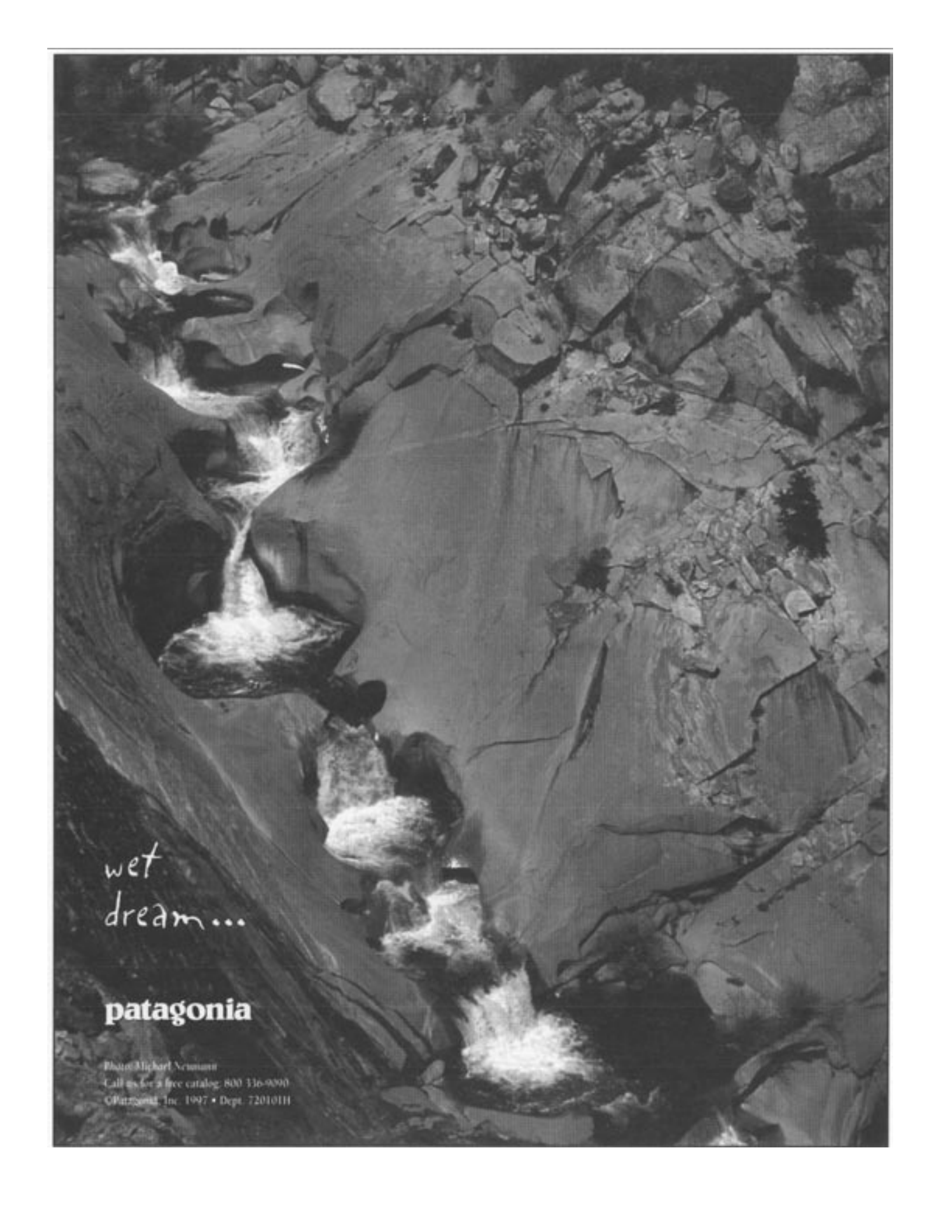
1996 marked the passing of riverman and longtime AWA supporter and contributor, Cal Giddings. A distinguished professor of chemistry at the University of Utah who loved exploring rivers by kayak, Cal started running whitewater in open canoes with the University of Wisconsin Hoofers Outing Club in the 1950's. With his companions from the Salt Lake City area, he made first descents of a number of sections of western rivers including Cross Mountain Canyon of the Yampa in Colorado, the South Fork of the Salmon, Big Creek, Falls River, and Teton River in Idaho, and the

San Rafael, Escalante, Virgin, Muddy, Price and Bear Rivers in Utah. Accounts of several of these appeared in the Journal during the 60s, 70s and 80s.

His most noteworthy first descent was the epic 6 week self-supported kayak expedition down Peru's Apurimac River in 1975. This expedition, of which I am proud to have been a member, was finally detailed in his newly released book (finished just prior to his death of cancer in late 1996) **DEMON RIVER APURIMAC**, Univ. of Utah Press. Following a decade later, the widely publicized Amazon Source-to-Sea Expedition (National Geographic Magazine feature article and Joe Kane's book, *Running the Amazon*) failed to mention that Cal's expedition had

preceded them through the most remote and difficult sections. Even now, despite numerous improvements in river running equipment and technique, the 240 mile section first traversed in 1975 has seldom been attempted, due to poor access, numerous nasty portages, and the armed and hostile guerrillas of the Sendero Luminoso.

Cal served on AWA's Board of Directors from 1972 to 1980, and as President of the Board from 1973-76, giving critical support during those trying times. He will be greatly missed by his wife, Leslie, his kayaking sons, Steve and Mike, and all the rest of us who had the pleasure of working and boating with him.



wet
dream...

patagonia

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5TH GAULEY RACE

HIGH WATER...FAST TIMES

by Maura Kistler
Photos Courtesy of
Whitewater Photography

It's the morning of the 5th "Animal" Upper Gauley Race and race organizer Donnie Hudspeth is a happy man. Standing behind the registration desk in the parking lot below the rocky flanks of the Summersville Dam, he's grinning and repeating to the registering racers, mantra-like, "2650 cfs from the dam plus 1200 from the Meadow." That's about 1000 cfs above normal Gauley season flows. Extra water equals extra excitement and the milling throng of racers are buzzing, stripping off layers of fleece and whacking black flies as the indian summer day heats up. A bit of eavesdropping reveals that there's disagreement about what more water will mean. Comments range from a confident "It'll be a highway," to a stressed "Second Drop is gonna kick my ass." But everyone agrees: times will be fast.

No wonder Hudspeth is happy: gorgeous weather, extra water, a stellar field of racers, including the legendary but usually nonracing Nolan Whitesell, and a staff of 25 experienced volunteers, including numerous National Park Service River Rangers. Sipping strong coffee and munching sticky buns courtesy of Fayetteville's newest café, Aussie's, the racers circle Hud for last minute instructions. "Yes, it is okay to swim across the finish line," he says, wrapping it up with a final dusting of gold glitter for good luck.

OFF AND RUNNING

Precisely at one o'clock four time overall winner Roger Zbel charged out of the starting eddy, chased by the shouts and whistles of the waiting racers who followed him at one minute intervals. Even though the racers were boating "alone", the safety factor was considerably higher than normal, given the large number of volunteer boaters along the course. Was it my imagination or was there really someone clutching a **throwbag** on every single rock in Lost Paddle?

By the time the last racers cruised past the finish at Postage Due, it was clear that the expectations had been correct: times were fast. To no one's surprise powerhouse Roger Zbel continued his domination of the Wildwater class and the event,



Top: Colleen Laffey stroikes for broke.
Bottom: Katie Neitart making time in the 2nd drop of Lost Paddle Rapid.

shearing a minute off his previous best time and outpacing his nearest competitor, Mike Hipsher, by nearly two minutes. There were no surprises in the Men's Wavehopper or Slalom classes either, as defending champs (and cousins) Clay Wright and Howard Tidwell blazed to victory, also setting new course records.

It was left to the women to add drama to the race. The big surprise came in the Women's Wavehopper class when Kathy Howerton, an open boater from North Carolina, put it all together to defeat defending champ Colleen Laffey with a record time. The low key, affable Howerton swam on every one of her training runs and had considered dropping out of the race. But she didn't.

Laffey knew she was in trouble when she glanced back and saw Howerton bearing down on her. "I knew it was all over; she was in the zone." Katie Neitart, displaying her usual chutzpah by paddling a Wavehopper for her first time ever, looked casual and relaxed during the first part of the race, but ran into trouble in Tumble Home when she "just couldn't turn the damn thing in time." She stuffed her boat in the Mailbox Slot and had to swim. Look out for her next year, though—the girl is strong.

In the Women's Slalom class, super-fit Deb Ruehle squeaked past Mary Bethune to set a new course record. Stiff holes in Tumble Home messed with people all day, including defending champ Jocelyn

Right: Roger "the Champ" Zbel at a record pace at the second drop of Lost Paddle



Hernried, who got hung up there, losing valuable time and coming in third.

The crowd favorites were clearly the tandem teams. Dave Bassage teamed up with the imperturbable Kathy Zerkle in the K2 class. The wisecracking pair managed to keep their Topo Duo upright and on line... much to Bassage's relief—he swam three times on last training run (with another partner). Husband and wife canoe team Tim Aycock and Lynn Spangler definitely won the Most Dramatic Finish Award. After they flipped on the curler below Sweets Falls, Lynn treated the spectators to a display of chivalry by swimming across the finish line, allowing Tim to roll the boat. The crowd went wild!

Post race festivities began at Sweets Falls with food, beer and story trading, then continued that evening at North American River Runners with a pasta dinner, the awards ceremony and a good, loud, thrashy band. Racers were pleased to receive complimentary race photos from Whitewater Photography in Fayetteville.

Hudspeth, with an even bigger smile and traces of glitter still in his hair, pumped up the keg and reflected on the success of the day. "There's no doubt this race is gaining credibility every year—it's long, it's demanding and it's exciting. Next year will be even better, when it is part of the West Virginia Whitewater Series, which includes races on the Cheat and the New."

He predicts that the new playboat class will grow and that the number of women racers will continue to increase as it has in the past years. His final prediction: the new course records will stand for a good long time because "who knows when we'll have so much water again on a race day."

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Special thanks to all the volunteers that helped with safety and timing, the National Park Service for all their help, and the Army Corp of Engineers for turning up the juice.

1996 ANIMAL UPPER GAULEY RACE RESULTS

Wildwater	Time	Overall	Class
Roger Zbel	44:03	1	1
Mike Hipsher	45:41	2	2
Steve Kauffman	46:29	4	4
Brent Reitz	45:48	3	3
Chris Hipgrave	48:58	6	6
Ted Newton	48:41	5	5 'class switched, 4 meter rule

Wavehopper Men

Clay Wright	49:36	7	1
Tracy Clapp	50:35	10	3
Paul Hoda	49:48	8	2
Edward Owens	61:23	34	5
Woody Callaway	53:49	19	4

Wavehopper Women

Carolyn Porter	60:29	33	3
Colleen Laffey	53:30	17	2
Kathy Howerton	53:06	14	1
Katie Neitart	68:20	41	4

K1 Slalom Men's

Howard Tidwell	49:51	9	1
Eric Lindberg	52:45	13	4
Chris Emerick	53:07	15	5
Dan Brabec	51:15	11	2
Sherwood Horine	52:26	12	3
Wayne Amsbury	55:43	25	11
Brant McLaughlin	59:57	31	15 play boat

1996 ANIMAL UPPER GAULEY RACE RESULTS CONT.

class, 9'6" or less			
Joe O'Leary	53:41	18	7
Micheal Bums	56:50	28	13
Anthony Vega	62:10	35	16 play boat class
Micheal Wagner	58:20	29	14
David Persolja	53:49	19	8
Tim Huff	53:22	16	6
Casey Nelson	65:47	39	17 play boat class
Jeff Nelson	55:07	23	9
Matt Darpin	55:22	24	10
Ken Krueger	56:00	27	12

K1 Slalom Women

Jocelyn Hernried	55:44	26	3
Mary Bethune	54:34	22	2
Deb Ruehle	54:29	21	1
Anita Adams	62:40	36	5
Gia DeAngelis	60:28	32	4
Maura Kistler	62:48	37	6

K2

Dave Bassage/Kathy Zerkle	59:42	30	1
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OC2

Tim Spangler/Lynn Aycock	68:18	40	1
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OC1

Nolan Whitesell	64:08	38	1
John Dearnorff	69:10	42	2

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PROBE 12 II	12'2"	27.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	9-BA	\$675	\$612.50
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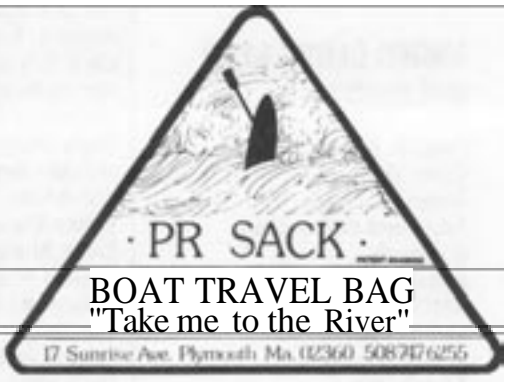


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