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Journal of the American Whitewater Affiliation

Volume XXXVII, No.3

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On the Cover:
Squirt boater extraordinaire, Harris Haynie checks out the waterfall at Coliseum Rapids on the Cheat. Photo by Skip Brown



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TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR BOATERS VISITING SMALL RIVER TOWNS



And spring came to pass and the rivers ran high and the whitewater season was once again upon them. And the residents of small river towns were sure afraid. Soon hundreds of unruly, inconsiderate boaters would sweep down upon them, more than ever before, and they were vexed. So they prayed to the river god, that they might be delivered from this plague.

And the river god heard their supplications and there was thunder and lightning and the strainers burst into flames. And when it was over there appeared tablets of solid Ethafoam, upon which the following commandments, intended for boaters, were inscribed:

Thou shalt not curse, nor be profane. Thou shalt ponder who might be listening to thy conversations and speak accordingly.

Thou shalt not change thy clothes in

public. Thou shalt not prance bout naked like Demi Moore or Richard Gere in an R rated movie. Thou art not Richard Gere, neither art thou Demi Moore. The residents of the boating town do not wish to behold thy nakedness, even for free.

Thou shalt not act like an ass. Thou shalt not act like Madonna, nor like Dennis Rodman, nor like Roseanne, nor like Howard Stern. Thou shalt behave as if they mother were watching, because someone else's mother undoubtedly is. Thou shalt strive to be inconspicuous.

Thou shalt not park thy vehicle inconsiderately. Thou shalt not block driveways, nor shalt thou block farm lanes. Thou shalt not park in the grass of lawns, nor shalt thou spin thy tires and make mud.

Thou shalt not drive shuttle like Mario Andretti at the Indianapolis 500. Thou shalt obey the speed limit and thou

shalt honor traffic signals and stop signs.

Thou shalt patronize, but thou shalt not be patronizing. Thou shalt not torment or mock those who wait at thy table or pump they gas. Thou shalt leave appropriate tips.

Thou shalt not urinate, nor defecate, nor hawk, nor spit in public.

Thou shalt not blast thy stereo in thy shuttle vehicle. If the residents of a small town had wanted to be entertained by Snoop Doggie Dogg or the Smashing Pumpkins, they would have built an arena

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On occasion American Whitewater publishes official organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

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and invited them to come perform. That they have not done so should be a hint to thee.

Thou shalt not get high. Thou shalt not talk about getting high. Thou shalt not act or look like thou art high.

Thou shalt not attempt to consort with those whom custom has deemed off limits. Thou shalt not attempt to flirt with those yet to reach the age of consent, nor those beyond the age of reason. Thou shalt maintain a respectful distance from those betrothed to others.

Remember ye this! Though thou might hail from a great city, in a small river town thy sophistication counts not. Think thee not that thou art in any way smarter than those who dwell along the river. Consider this. Those who dwell in a small river town do not spend hours in rush hour traffic commuting to their jobs, nor do they pay to park their cars, nor do they have to lock their doors at night.

Now ask theyself again: Who is smarter?

Editor's note: Please heed the words of the river god! Remember, river access is everyboater's problem.

Bob Gedekoh



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Letters

PUSHING THE ODDS

Dear Editor,

At the risk of sounding like a cantankerous old retrograde, the Jan/Feb American Whitewater prompted me to write about a subject which has been bothering me for some time.

I guess this has been gnawing at me since reading the story on "You Can't Paddle Mann's Creek": and thinking about the comments about pitoning rocks and getting caught in slots too narrow for the boat. I understand the need to explore new rivers. I suppose I probably have as many first descents in West Virginia as about anyone. (Except maybe Ed Gertler) Unfortunately for today's paddlers, we explored all of the ra rivers. Of the creeks that are being explored now, we probably looked at 90% of them and dismissed them as too small and too dangerous (including Mann's Creek, I never ran it). I passed the North Fork of the Blackwater many times and just shook my head. It was always full of downed trees. If you can see trees above water, how many are submerged, hidden in the tight chutes? I never ran it either.

When I read the article on Bill Hildreth's entrapment on the Gulf Hagas and looked at the accompanying pictures, I wondered if anyone was really surprised that it happened. The chute he was pinned in appears narrower than a boat is long. In addition, it seems that a fair amount of current pushes into the river left hand boulder which could stop and spin a boat resulting in a "taco to go". The small size of the Gulf Hagas seems to make a hard boat particularly vulnerable to broaches and pins. Now, I hope I don't sound overly critical of anyone wanting to run this kind of stream. I don't mean to be at all. This is all to make a point which will become clearer in a minute, but first a digression.

Several months ago, Charlie Wallbridge told of an entrapment experience of his own. I thought of the times that I have broached or pinned on rocks. Once I was even pinned under a log in my boat. In every case I managed to extract myself. I have been lucky. I thought that if this was the first bad experience of Charlie's, with the number of river miles he has under his belt, even with his safety consciousness, he has indeed been very lucky.

Carl Trost used to watch someone run a rapid and say, "I don't want to see what happens to someone who runs it perfectly, I want to see what happens to someone who screws up." I used to look at a difficult rapid and try to judge my chances of

dying if I screwed it up. What were my chances of screwing it up? Were they 20 to 1, or 100 to 1? Think about it. If you run this rapid 100 times, you have a good chance of dying. Or, if 100 people run it, one of them may not make it. It doesn't matter what the numbers are, the river is going to win sooner or later.

When you have 30 years of paddling in as Charlie and I do, how many times have we missed dying by inches? When you push the envelope of the more and more dangerous (not necessarily more difficult) runs, how many runs will it take before someone doesn't make it? At what risk level are streams "unrunnable"? This becomes a very personal decision. Enough sermonizing. That is my thought for today.

Ward Eister

Editor's Note: Ward Eister's is one of the co-authors of Wildwater West Virginia and a well known Appalachian paddler.

Editor's reply: I found Ward Eister's letter quite thought-provoking. There is no doubt that today's hot whitewater boaters are pushing the limits of the sport far beyond what anyone would have thought possible a decade ago. You only

need to watch a few of the new steep creek videos to see that this is true. But are these hot dogs attempting to run the "unrunnable?"

I would not presume to make such a statement. Certainly they are paddling creeks that are "unrunnable" by me. But that does not mean that these creeks can't be tackled by individuals with better skills, quicker reflexes and, yes, more guts than I.

*My point is that each individual boater has to decide what is "runnable" for **themselves**. To do so requires an honest appraisal of one's abilities, confidence and motives. One needs to honestly evaluate the risks involved and consider the consequences...not just to **oneself**, but also to one's companions and family. There is no doubt that peer pressure and a false sense of bravado too often clouds this critical issue.*

I intended to say more about this issue, but I realize that Doug Ammon's essay, "The Real Shit", published in the Rivervoices of this issue, deals with this very subject with a depth and eloquence which I could never match. I think that all those pushing the limits of "runnability" will find it most interesting.

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GULF HAGAS DANGERS CONFIRMED

Dear Editor,

I'd like to comment on Joan Hildreth's fine article about her husband's entrapment last May in Gulf Hagas. In 1992 (Jan/Feb) I wrote an article for American Whitewater about this potentially problematic run.

Back then, we were very uncomfortable with a large, unfamiliar crowd in Jaws. Our skills in those days weren't what they are today and we desperately wanted to be in the company of an experienced few or, as Joan puts it, we wanted to be with the "right people".

Since those early days, we've had more than a few near-death experiences in Gulf Hagas and it seems that a fair share of those problems have occurred at approximately 1 inch below the abutment platform.

Joan mentioned in her article that someone else besides her husband pinned in the last chute of Jaws earlier this year. I am aware of one such incident: Bill Dallam of Greenville, Maine pinned there at a minus 1" level sometime in June. It sounds like Joan's husband and Bill Dallam's pins were similar in nature. However, it sounds like her husband was pinned deeper, probably because he was in a lower volume boat for his weight. Like her husband, while pinned Bill Dallam pushed off the wall of the chute with his paddle. He was successful and never had to swim.

If we all pooled the experiences of many Gulf Hagas paddlers, I think we'd find the pin in the last chute of Jaws to be:

- 1) a left side of the chute pin
- 2) more likely to occur at about a minus 1" level
- 3) more likely to occur with boats with lower stern volumes
- 4) more likely to occur with longer boats.

Also this year, in Turnstile, just above Jaws, somewhere around the minus 1" level, I got rear-ended, pinned, lost my paddle and had a nasty, oxygen-sucking swim. In 1995, a similar thing happened at the same minus 1" level to Bob Dellert of Orrington, Maine.

By contrast, beefier water levels in Gulf Hagas do not insure safety. In April of 1995 at about plus 6" Hugh Morin of Quebec hit a huge log strainer in the last drop of the entire run and was sucked under and lodged in an unstable position with only his head exposed.

In 1996, Chase McKendry of Wyman, Maine had a similar near-death pin under the very same log in the very same place. Using Joan's formula of:

- 1) the right people, and

- 2) the right rescue equipment,
Hugh and Chase were both rescued from entrapment.

Thanks, Joan, for reinforcing some excellent safety tips especially as they relate to one of our mutually favorite runs. May we all play safe.

Sincerely,
John Frachella, Regional Coordinator
American Whitewater Affiliation
Bangor, Maine

Editor's Note: Joan Hildreth's dramatic account of her husband's close call at Gulf Hagas drew a tremendous response from our readers, all of it favorable. I thought that it was one of the most important articles we have published over the past few years. I just hope that it will stimulate discussion of the danger of entrapment, and the steps prudent boaters can take to protect themselves and their paddling companions.

RIVER SAFETY AND THE AWA RIVER SIGNALS

There have been a number of recent letters to the editor critical of the decreased emphasis on safety in the Journal, and I find myself in complete agreement. If accurately quoted, I find safety chairman Walbridge's lukewarm support of AWA's long term effort to promote universal use of the carefully crafted River Signals disappointing at best.

Whitewater boaters, myself included, are known for traveling widely to boat new rivers, often with divergent groups of unfamiliar boaters. Having a universally understood set of basic river signals is therefore particularly important, and a real safety contribution AWA can and should make that will benefit all river runners.

Although river running style have changed and may evolve further, it is nearly impossible to imagine changes negating the need for the simplest, clearest possible set of unambiguous signals for STOP, GO, and HELP ME, ASAP which the present system has. Additional signals, possibly, but I would hope that if indeed "the book is to be opened", careful consideration will first be given to the original "system considerations", i.e. that (1) The number of signals be kept to a minimum, (2) Signals be designed to maximize visibility and clarity at a distance, designing them to use paddle, oar, or whole arm, NOT hands and fingers, and (3) Signals should be possible WITH or WITHOUT paddle or other equipment, IN or OUT of boat, and facing TOWARD or AWAY from party members, whose position may not be known. The audible HELP, EMERGENCY signal has proven its value, although something equally por-

table but louder than a whistle would be better still.

Finally, the SIGNALS are the MOST VISIBLE feature of the SAFETY CODE. I suggest that boaters who find themselves in company unfamiliar with the SIGNALS would be well advised to invest in some cheap insurance by handing out some copies of the CODE and suggesting the group take a few minutes to go over it in its entirety prior to putting on the river with them.

Sincerely,
Jim Sindelar, Former AWA Exec Director and Chairman, River Signals Committee - Hopkinton, NH

NO CORRAN FAN!

Corran's column? American Whitewater, January 1997. A little humor and a nod to women doesn't hide the extreme sexism. Why do I give money to an organization that thinks this is OK? Would you publish it if it were as racist as it is sexist? Actually, I hate to read anyone talking about anyone's sweetheart, in-laws, etc. in such a mean way! There are other kinds of humor, other ways to be funny. Send him to writing school, and human being school!

Linda Peer
Phoenicia, NY

Editor's reply: I've never met Corran Addison but I've heard a lot about him. Apparently he is a colorful personality, as well as one of the world's most accomplished boaters. One thing I have never heard about Corran is that he is politically correct. But American Whitewater has never really been very politically correct, and I doubt it will be in the future. I think our occasional political "incorrectness" is part of our charm. Think of Corran Addison as our version of Howard Stern.

At any rate, we appreciate your point of view...and we will definitely not include you in our "Win a hot date with Corran Contest."



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GULF HAGAS STORY LAUDED

Dear Bob,

I especially enjoyed Joanie Hildreth's account of Bill's near miss last month. I've boated with them on many rivers, but had only heard of the incident second hand. Charlie's safety feature on the snag line was a most appropriate follow up.

Keep up the good work.

Yours truly,
Gordon Edwards
Natick, MA

JONATHAN KATZ DEPLORED

Dear Bob,

Being a female martial artist, **epa-employee** and oarswoman, I write reluctantly since I believe I'll inevitably be casting myself as a **p.c.** humor cop. However, I am compelled to lodge my disgust at Jonathan Katz's most recent story (Jan/Feb 97).

While I have never been a fan of Mr. Katz's writing, his latest story, This River is Rated M, pushed me over the edge.

This story and stories like it have no place in the magazine of an organization that purportedly represents the whitewater community. The humor is inane and offensive, relying on juvenile stereotypes and violence. I found the description of the bullets ripping through the flesh of **mantoo** rays an especially lovely image.

Sincerely,
Susan Zazzali
Helena, MT 59601

Editor's reply: I take it this means you don't want to be included in our "Win a hunting trip with Jonathan Katz Contest."

About half of our readers love Jonathan Katz, the other half hate him. There seems to be no middle ground.

A few years ago the Pittsburgh newspaper did a survey of their readers to see which comics they should publish. Their

survey showed that the comic, Nancy, was "hated" by the majority of the respondents. Readers complained that Nancy was inane and stupid. But, guess what? Nancy was overwhelmingly the most widely read strip in the paper! Apparently lots of people read Nancy everyday, just to remind themselves how much they hated it! Needless to say, Nancy is still in the paper.

Jonathan Katz is our "Nancy."

DEFENDING DAGGER

Dear Editor:

I just read the harsh critique of Dagger & Joe Pulliam for not helping the C-1 market enough (AWA Journal, Letters, March 1997). Though I will admit to partial bias as a "Team D" member, I can't let comments on C-boating go unanswered.

I do of course agree with the author on the how cool C-1's are to paddle. (See Kent's article, "TAKE THE C-1 CHALLENGE" in the Rivervoices section of this issue.)

So has Dagger ignored the C-1 population? I would propose no single thing could have benefited C-1 popularity than a US C-1 paddler winning an Olympic Medal. The spin-offs of popularity would be a proliferation of designs and happier paddlers.

Dagger spent significant resources in the past 3 years designing, producing and distributing C-1 race boats for the Olympics, specifically for Jon Lugbill and Adam Clawson. Their gamble fell short of the medals but like most Olympic tales was long on heart. Jon Lugbill, on a racecourse perfectly suited for him, experienced a rare missed gate and thus narrowly missed qualifying for the US team. Then Adam Clawson won the Pre-World Championships in Brazil rather than having his best day at the Olympics a month earlier.

I would rather praise the Dagger's efforts for C-1 promotion, than knock them for a not producing a recreational boat for the still tiny market. Even though there are only a few of us C-1 paddlers, I expect Dagger will continue RHD in C-boats in order to bring new designs to market.

Kent Ford
Durango, Colorado

Editor's Note: Kent Ford is a well known whitewater racer and instructor whose video, "Rotendo! The Art of Precision Playpaddling" was voted the best instruction and safety video of the 1997 Nation Paddling Film Festival.

HIGH WATER DEFINED

Dear Editor:

In Don Kinser's excellent account of running Little River in the Smokies (Open Boating on the Little: A Great Smoky Adventure, March-April *American Whitewater*), he reports finding the river to be well within the capabilities of Class IV boaters at 1,500 cfs, notwithstanding the "high water recommendation" of 800 cfs in the guidebook, *Southeastern Whitewater*.

I hasten to point out, however, that "high," as used in *Southeastern Whitewater* indicates the **beginning** of high flows. This usage convention should not be confused with the common practice of using "high" to designate the maximum prudent level at which a stream can be run. (See pages 50-52 of the text for details and discussion.)

"High as used in *Southeastern Whitewater* might be thought of as the flow level where advanced paddlers will begin to be taxed and casual recreationalists should consider going elsewhere. (Around 2.0 feet on the Chattooga Section IV gauge, for example; or 3.0 feet on the Fayette Station gauge.) Maximum prudent levels, on the other hand, are highly personal and continuously changing and ultimately didactic if not dictatorial.

Misinterpreting "high" in *Southeastern Whitewater* to mean maximum prudent level could result in missed paddling opportunities. And that would be an occasion for great sadness.

Cordially,
Monte Smith, Author
Southeastern Whitewater
Boise, Idaho

ANOTHER "ONE POT" RECIPE

Dear April,

I read with great interest your article in the latest issue of *American Whitewater*! I would just like to add one variation to your ideas. When I use to go hiking a favorite of our group was to use Stove Top Stuffing for a 1 pot wonder. You could make the stuffing and then we would add canned chicken (like tuna fish). These meals were great and I feel this could be cooked in the same way you discussed in your article. I realize that you would have a messy can to deal with, so you could do without and just add some freeze dried chicken. Hope you like the input!!!!

Greg Kobol



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

The editorial staff of American Whitewater carefully reviews all material submitted for publication. We are particularly interested in receiving full length feature articles, conservation and club news, special event announcements, articles pertaining to whitewater safety and short, humorous pieces.

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 cassette. (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 work 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.

Articles will be edited at the discretion of the editors to fit our format, length and style. Expect to see changes in your article. If you don't want us to edit your article, don't send it to us! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes we make prior to publication.

The American Whitewater Affiliation is non-profit; the editors and contributors to American Whitewater are not reimbursed. On rare occasions, by prearrangement, professional writers receive a small honorarium when they submit stories at our request. Generally, our contributors do not expect payment, since most are members of the AWA, which is a volunteer conservation and safety organization.

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Lee Burdige running Sheppard's Falls, Wind River, WA. Dave Sloner photo.

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Kayaker: Erina Mitchell
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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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Yes, I want to join the AWA and receive a subscription to *American Whitewater*. I've enclosed my tax-deductible contribution of \$25.00 (\$30 Canada, \$35 overseas) to help conserve our whitewater resources and promote river safety.

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Director's Corner

by Rich Bowers, Executive Director

I'm ecstatic! I'm ecstatic because so much is going on in the world of whitewater, and, as usual, this organization is in the thick of these issues. Some are good, some are outrageous, and other issues are still far too new to decipher. But all of these issues are or will be important for boaters and the rivers we paddle.

I'm also excited because so much is going on here at American Whitewater. This issue, our first ever foray into color, is a prime example. But in addition to changes to the Journal, there have been other changes - a new Executive Director, a new Events Coordinator, Jayne Abbot, and now a new Conservation and Hydropower Program Director, John Gangemi. If you have been visiting our Web Site, you will notice a new logo being kicked around, and in the future you will notice we have dropped the AWA moniker in favor of a simple "American Whitewater."

From past experience, I've learned that our membership is pretty well split on change. Some think it's great and some get upset if we switch even a font size. Given this history, I thought I'd take a few lines to explain why these changes are taking place.

The color cover is in celebration of our 40th Anniversary of conserving and restoring America's wildest rivers. Color covers will be included in the next three issues, culminating in the September-October Gauley Issue. Our feature articles demonstrate some of our wildest, most impressive, and awesomely inspiring rivers (our cover this issue is a great example). I hope that color covers will generate enough interest and revenue to allow American Whitewater to fully portray this magnificence in future editions. Having said this, I can tell you we have no plans (short or long term) to

go to full color. Look for a survey form in the Gauley issue; we really want to get your opinion on this - let us know what you think!

The increase in staff size is due to necessity. If we are to expand our protection of rivers and threats to access, we need more people. Our options are limited - back off or move forward - and American Whitewater has never been the organization to drop the ball on conservation and access.

The logo change is primarily to make us seem less like geezers or geezets, although the official line is to attract and involve younger boaters in river issues. The name change is likewise based in sound principle - very few of our friends, members, staff and directors can remember what the final "A" stands for. It is not a move away from our affiliated clubs, but is meant to represent the opposite - a move away from confusing acronyms (rampant here in DC) and closer to our grassroots membership.

All of these changes together signify a new chapter for this organization, a chapter in which we become a more involved and effective voice for whitewater paddlers and wild rivers. American Whitewater has always been your organization, and that will stay the same. Let us know how we are doing!

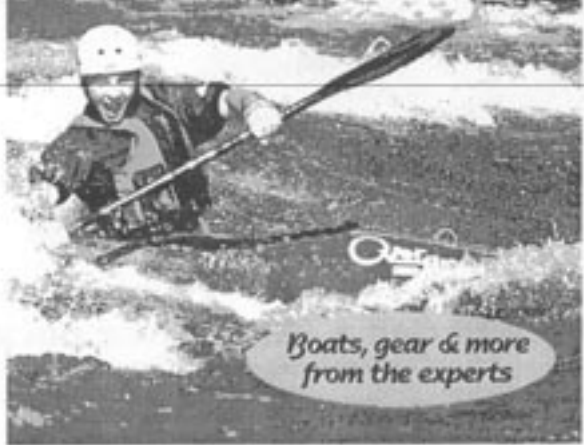
Now for our rivers. Barring any unforeseen complications, we have finally locked down releases on Georgia's Tallulah Gorge (the first three weekends in November 1997). In addition, the final license was issued for the LaGrande Canyon in Washington state which includes whitewater releases, and a whitewater study was undertaken on the Black Canyon of the Bear in southeast Idaho (May 17-18). All of these are rivers which were previously unavailable for

boating. In February, American Whitewater played an important part in creating a coalition of river interests to address hydropower reform in California. In March, we christened our first land purchase by building a parking lot and changing room in Hendricks, West Virginia. Right now, recreation and rivers are so hot that even the Administration and Congress are weighing in with new initiatives (Heritage Rivers) and proposed bills (Murkowski). For more on these issues, look over our Conserve and Access sections.

On the down side, the staff at Grand Canyon National Park took boaters to the woodshed on access to one of the premier whitewater rivers in the nation. In early April, and after months of correspondence with park staff and meetings with Interior staff in DC, non-commercial boaters and other park users gathered at Grand Canyon Headquarters and were told that, regardless of our concerns, the new fee increase would remain in effect with absolutely no change. We will definitely need your help to change this attitude!

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Gangemi Named as American Whitewater Conservation Director

In March 27th American Whitewater selected John Gangemi of Bigfork, MT as Director of Conservation and Hydropower Programs. John will succeed Rich Bowers who has recently been named as Executive Director, and will now bear the primary responsibility of achieving American Whitewater's mission to "Conserve and Restore America's Whitewater Resources."

"I foresee many opportunities for river conservation," said Gangemi. "Dam relicensing, wilderness and scenic designation, western water law reform and enforcement of the clean water act can all protect whitewater rivers and restore sections degraded by pollution or water withdrawals."

Gangemi was part of an outstanding list of applicants, and was selected for his experience and background in river work. Gangemi received his Masters degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana, with a focus on aquatic ecology, and has worked since 1992 as a research scientist with the Flathead Lake Biological Station.

In addition, he has been a field biologist and fisheries technician for such groups as the Nature Conservancy and US Forest Service, and has direct experience with dam relicensing, ecological studies of regulated rivers, and fundraising. Finally, Gangemi is an avid boater, climber, angler, and assists with coordinating the Bigfork Whitewater Festival.

"I'm extremely excited to have John on board," said Bowers. "In addition to his background and commitment to rivers, John meets American Whitewater's need to retain an expert on Western river issues. His strategic location is representative of the large number of conservation issues currently facing rivers in the West."

John will spend approximately three weeks in the Silver Spring office, and then be working out of the Bigfork area. Free contact him at (406)837-3155 or through the Silver Spring office at (301)589-9453. John can also be reached by e-mail at jgangemi@digisys.net.

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American Heritage Rivers

On February 4th, during the State of the Union Address, President Clinton announced a new initiative to enhance the enjoyment of the historic, cultural, recreational, economic and environmental values of rivers across the country. President Clinton stated that in the first year "I will designate 10 American Heritage Rivers to help communities alongside them revitalize their waterfronts and clean up pollution."

However, these few sentences, buried in the address, were all that was heard about the initiative for the next two months. Even major river conservation groups were in the dark about the nuts and bolts of this project, which rivers might benefit, and how these benefits would work!

On April 7th, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) held the first in a series of workshops designed to introduce this program to river stakeholders. This first workshop was held in Washington, DC, but other workshops were to be scheduled in other regions throughout April and early May.

The first workshop created as many questions as it answered. First, it was evident that no one, including the President and CEQ, has much information on how this will work, although there were several issues which met universal acceptance:

- Any initiative should be community driven
- The goal should be to better the way of life for river communities
- Agencies should provide guidance and technical support, not regulatory mandates
- The initiative heralds a great opportunity to heighten public awareness of river issues
- Designation should include a diverse range of rivers (urban and rural, pristine and degraded)
- The initiative should create new solutions for river degradation and conservation

— On the negative side —

The definition of "community" is not clear. Most of the language relates to local river-side communities and could lock out user groups, landowners and others

- The role of the states is completely missing
- The scope of designations is unclear. Will this protect watersheds or select segments?
- Since no new money is included, what is the "value added" for this new program?
- Will this deplete staff time and funding for existing and ongoing river efforts?

Despite the many questions and concerns, two issues were very clear from this meeting: 1) while this may be un-organized and less than complete, it is coming at us! Given the hands-off approach of the government, it will be up to river stakeholders to turn this into either an effective new tool or a missed opportunity. On the plus side, the grassroots history of river conservation may make this an acceptable risk. 2) we are looking at a new and totally different definition of river stakeholders. Included in this meeting were community officials, landowners, developers, watershed and water quality groups, and others whose connections with rivers were less direct. Some of these interests are the same that conservationists have battled in the past.

This diversity of agendas makes the possibility of a successful initiative much more troublesome. River users including boaters, anglers and others must be involved if we are to stave off at-

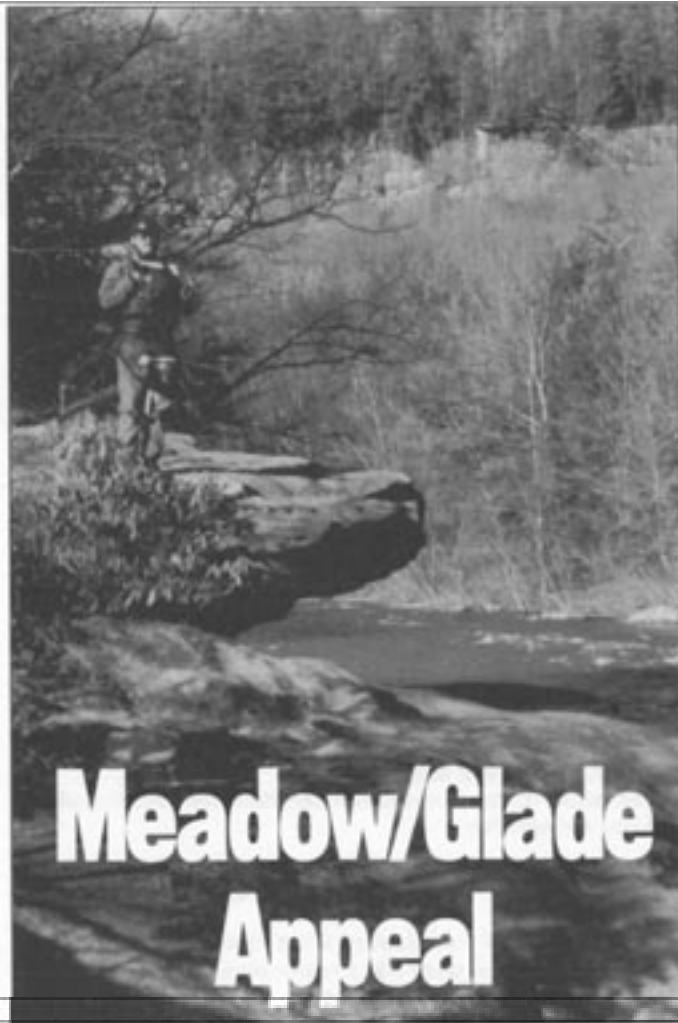
tempts to turn this into a movement which guts existing regulations and programs vital to clean, healthy, beautiful and useful rivers.

American Rivers President Rebecca Wodders was optimis-

tic, "Never before has a President committed his administration to the revitalization of ... rivers." In the end it will be up to us to help make or break this initiative. American Whitewater will be involved as

this develops, and is willing to help our members and others to have their favorite stream or river designated. The schedule is as follows: In late May the Cabinet recommends a program to the President, and

in June will release the Federal Register notice inviting Nominations for American Heritage Rivers. For updates on this initiative please call the Silver Spring office.



In the last edition of the Journal, American Whitewater was considering challenging FERC's approval of a power line which would cross the Middle Meadow and run up Glade Creek, just outside the boundary of the Gauley River National Recreation Area. In denying an earlier request for rehearing, FERC ruled that this line would "not significantly affect the overall landscape character of the Meadow River Gorge." This line is part of the proposed Summersville Project (FERC No. 10813).

American Whitewater disagrees, and believes it is time for FERC staff to grab a boat and start hiking, paddling, fishing and/or living along some of these outstanding streams. To press our case, American Whitewater has retained Richard Roos-Collins, co-author of "Rivers at Risk" and one of the most prominent river attorneys in the country to represent us. Richard will also be working cooperatively with local stakeholders who have recently formed a new watershed group, Friends of the Meadow River. Ron Wilson, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, will also represent American Whitewater in this case.

On March 21st, American Whitewater petitioned the United States Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit, for review of the FERC order denying rehearing and lifting the stay that we also requested. Without a stay, the power company could use this FERC decision to clear-cut the transmission line, resulting in permanent damage to the aesthetic value of these two streams.

American Whitewater has undertaken this legal appeal to send two clear messages - that we will tolerate no more degradation of whitewater rivers, and that the designated boundaries of the Gauley National Recreation Area do not define the boundaries of interest for boaters in this area.

In partnership with our emphasis on recreation impacts, Friends of the Meadow and the Mt. Lookout-Mt. Nebo Property Protection Association has filed a similar appeal to protect private property which would be condemned by the transmission line.



Top Left: Rock Island-Middle Meadow.
Bottom Left: Glade Creek
Bottom: Glade Creek
Photos by Donny Hudspeth



Over the last year, the Journal has reported on the vast number of dams due for relicensing on California's rivers and streams. Many, including dams on the Pit, Kern, North Fork Kings, Mokelumne and others have already begun, and over the next ten years another 160 dams will begin this process.

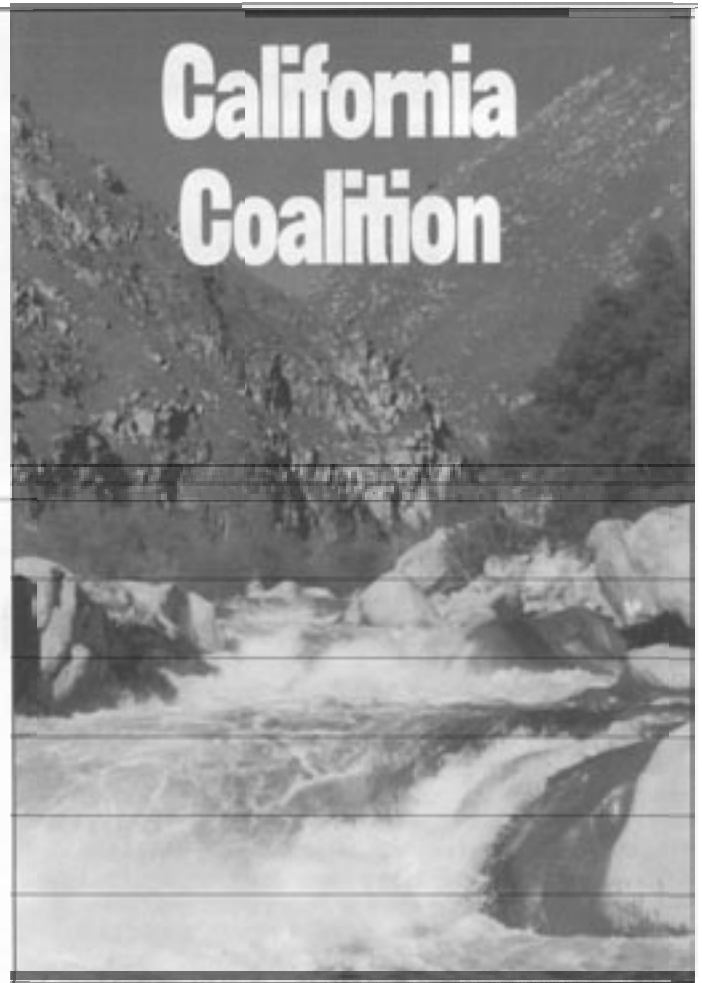
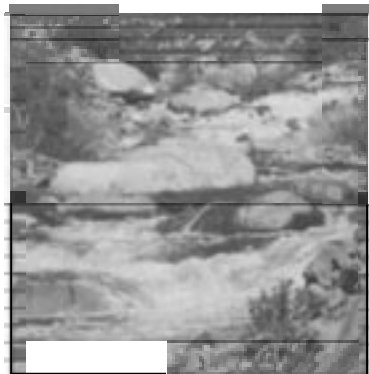
To take advantage of this opportunity, American Whitewater has joined with Friends of the River, California Trout, and the Natural Heritage Institute to form a coalition of rivers interests throughout the state. This coalition is open to any organization, chamber of commerce, or individual involved with federal hydropower issues in California. The coalition will be affiliated with and modeled after the national Hydropower Reform Coalition.

The goals of the coalition are as follows:

- Pursue early public, environmental and recreational involvement with dam relicensing
- Formally intervene in each individual process
- Create individual watershed teams on affected rivers
- Work with regulatory agencies
- Seek collaborative negotiations, and
- Conserve and restore rivers

This coalition is still in its formative stages, with several meetings being held in March and May. Tentatively named the California Hydropower Reform Coalition (CHRC), it includes, in addition to the above groups, the Foothill Conservancy, Tuolumne River Preservation Trust, Planning and Conservation League, Shasta Paddlers, California Outdoors, and the Kern River Alliance. We encourage other groups to join up and help us improve rivers in and around the Sierra range. Coalition members are actively courting other major river interests at this time.

For more information, contact American Whitewater or CHRC coordinator Maureen Rose at Friends of the River (916) 442-3155 ext. 223.



Above: "Cataracts" of the Kern
Left: Lower Kern
Photos by Rich Bowers

Tallulah Releases

In October of last year, FERC issued a final license for the North Georgia Project, consisting of six dams on the Tallulah, Tugalo and Chattooga Rivers. Included in this license were operating conditions for the dam just above the outstanding Class IV-V Tallulah Gorge, and a Memorandum of Understanding worked out between Georgia Power, Georgia DNR, American Whitewater, Georgia Canoeing Association, the Atlanta Whitewater Club and other river and recreation groups.

This MOU calls for five whitewater releases per year, the first three weekends in November and the first two weekends in April. Six hours of flows will be released each day, with four hours of ramping flows on either end. Each Saturday, 500 cfs will be released, and then cranked up to 700 cfs on Sunday. These flows were determined to be optimum levels for whitewater during a study completed in 1994. Future weekend releases will be increased or decreased based on the average an-



Woody Callaway and Ron Stewart with consultant on first site visit to Tallalah Gorge. Photo by Rich Bowers

nual boater demand (how many boaters show up!).

Since October, these groups have been working together to develop a plan of action for these releases. As we go to press, each of the above interests are anticipating the first release this November. There are still several issues which are out of our control, but all signs point to boating this year. Still to be worked out is construction of a trail from the canyon rim to the put-in just below Hurricane Falls. At present, the existing trail is subject to serious erosion and runs directly though one of the few areas where the endangered and federally listed Persistent Trillium grows. All of the above groups are working cooperatively to build a raised stairway to avoid impacts. The money to begin is in (courtesy of Georgia Power), boating organizations have found a volunteer architect, and later this summer will provide volunteer labor to begin construction. The only remaining question is whether DNR

Bo Shelby at Oceana Falls
as it has looked since 1913



can finalize surveys, and FERC approve these in time to allow construction to be completed by November 1st. Preliminary discussions with FERC staff indicate that, barring unforeseen occurrences, approval should be quick.

Because of the potential for impacts to the Gorge, Georgia DNR (Tallulah is now a Georgia State Park) is limiting access to 120 non-commercial boaters per day, and implementing a permit for this run. To assure that the permit system is fair and simple to use, American Whitewater and the Georgia Canoe Association have agreed to draft this permit.

Explanations and a copy of this permit should be available in the next Journal, and on both the American Whitewater (www.awa.org) and Tallulah Gorge homepage (www.mindspring.com/~dmcox/tallulah.html) by late July. You can also call American Whitewater's Silver Spring office at (301) 589-9453. Georgia Power has also installed a recorded message which can be accessed by calling 1-888- GPC-LAKE (hit #5 for whitewater information) or at www.southernco.com/ Until July the phone line tells you to call American Whitewater.

Whitewater & Conservation Shortstories

Conservation Alliance Award - The Conservation Alliance, outdoor industry members supporting resource protection, has awarded American Whitewater a \$35,000 grant to protect and restore whitewater rivers in California. The Alliance was also responsible for helping create American Whitewater's River Access Program in 1993. In addition to supporting our organization, the Alliance has been instrumental in protecting lands and rivers for recreation and conservation. Since its start, the Alliance has given some \$2 million to 72 organizations. With these grants, the Alliance has protected approximately 12,000 miles of rivers, halted construction of 14 dams, permanently protected more than 272,000 acres of land, and leveraged another \$1.3 million in matching funds toward the environment and human-powered recreation.

Recreational Equipment, Inc. Funds Access Summit - In March, REI Inc. awarded \$30,000 to American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association and the Access Fund to hold a Recreation Access Workshop. Tentatively scheduled for the Boulder area this November, the workshop is targeted for Regional Coordinators from all three groups. The Summit will build alliances, provide needed information for advocacy, and will support human-powered outdoor recreation.

Edwards Update (ME) - In December of last year, the FERC decided to redo the dam removal cost study for Edwards Dam on Maine's Kennebec River. This new study is to be prepared by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the findings of this study are to be included in a Final EIS for the project. The new study is scheduled to be issued in early May, with a final EIS scheduled for late July.

Changes Proposed for Lower Yough (PA) - According to a report by the Three Rivers Paddling Club (Pittsburgh), the Army Corps is scheduled to change river flows for the Lower Yough in 1999. The lower Yough is one of the most heavily used whitewater rivers in the nation. The plan is to release significantly less water (up to 18 million gallons less each day) in the late summer and early fall, and to use this for additional water supply for nearby Westmoreland County, and for a new coal washing facility. American Whitewater has no more information on this issue at this time, so please pass along anything that you hear.

Elkhorn Creek Remodeled (KY) - this spring Mother Nature took to rearranging Elkhorn Creek, one of Kentucky's most popular beginner streams. What once was a mild Class I-II canoeing stream has been transformed by spring flooding (throughout the Ohio Valley) into a unanimously declared Class III run with holes, drops and rapids befitting playboating at an intermediate level and up. For more information, contact the Elkhorn Outdoor Center at (502) 227-4492.

Cooperative Relicensing Guidelines Available - The Hydropower Reform Coalition has released its "Recommendations for Cooperative Relicensing Proceedings" and these are now available from American Whitewater's Silver Spring office. More and more, new licenses for FERC dams are following courses which are more cooperative, and these recommendations explain how to create an effective process and to identify the benefits and costs of participating in these. Recommendations are based on experiences of Coalition members in other collaborative efforts. Recommendations run about 10 pages, are semi-technical in nature, and are free. Just call and leave an address, a fax number or an email address. (301) 589-9453

The State of Recreation - On March 17th, American Whitewater staff attended a meeting to announce a Recreation Initiative which will examine the state of recreation in America, and to fundamentally restructure the confrontational climate which has surrounded recent natural resource issues. This initiative may be introduced to the 105th Congress by Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK), Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Stay tuned for more details.

Elizabeth A. Moler Nominated as Deputy Secretary - On April 10th, President Clinton announced his intention to nominate Moler, Chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, as Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Energy. Chair Moler has served at FERC for 8 years, and can be credited with most of this agency's environmental and recreational changes which have improved rivers involved in dam relicensing.

No Public Input for Grand Canyon Fees

by Rich Hoffman, Access Director

"Is it equitable to charge someone a fee for hiking a back-country trail, but not charge someone a fee for driving a back-country road? Is it equitable for one user group to be expected to pay for all costs of administering the area they use, while other groups are subsidized by the general populace? The answer to all these questions has to be no. Most people will gladly pay their share; but they have to be convinced that their share is equitable in relation to others and other uses. "Imposition of fees must be done in an open public forum. We should use the same public involvement principles that we use for environmental assessments. If our user groups have input into types and amounts of fees to be charged they will have ownership. User groups must also help decide what types of services they wish to see on public lands-and what they are willing to pay for. Simply imposing a fee because we suddenly have the authority is a sure way of alienating the very constituencies we need to effectively do our jobs and protect our resources." -*LuVerne Grussing, President, River Management Society*

"Due to the high level of interest in the river, it was essential to intensively involve the public." -*Linda Merigliano of Bridger-Teton National Forest discussing the Snake River Management Plan (from River Management Society News, Volume 10, No. 1)*

Since the announcement of the new fee structure for non-commercial boaters on the Grand Canyon in early January, American Whitewater along with the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association, Grand Canyon River Guides, and National Parks and Conservation Association have been trying to work with the National Park Service to develop a fee system that is fair, reasonable and consistent.

In February, we scheduled a meeting with the D.C. office of the National Park Service to address our concerns with the new fees. From this meeting, we scheduled to sit down with the staff of the Grand Canyon National Park to develop a fee system that the non-commercial boating community could support.

Unfortunately, Grand Canyon National Park structured this meeting (held March 29 in Flagstaff, AZ) as a purely "informational" meeting with the Park Service-disregarding the requests of the non-commercial boating community. During this meeting, the Park Service made a lengthy presentation to 30-40 interested members of the public, and then answered questions. At the end of the meeting, the public was allowed to make suggestions on changes to the fee system, but the Park Service only stated that they would take these suggestions under advisement. In short, the Park Service is not considering any modifications to the fee program at this time and want the new fee program to run its course (for how long?) so that it can then be evaluated.

This meeting did not begin to address the serious concerns that the non-commercial boating community and others have with aspects of the new fee program. This program has serious flaws that can and should be addressed now. From our meeting in D.C., we understood that Grand Canyon National Park staff

would meet with us in a timely manner to address concerns and discuss potential modifications-in particular, that Park staff would work with us to establish a public involvement process that would construct a fee program that we could support. We had hoped that this meeting would be an opportunity to make up ground and good will that was lost when these fees were instituted with no public input.

As discussed in previous articles, the new fees are a combination of two separate programs: fee demonstration and cost recovery. American Whitewater has supported the concept of the fee demonstration program. This program will be evaluated with public comment after three years with the revenue staying on-site to support resource conservation and management.

Our concern centers around the combination of the cost recovery with the fee demonstration program. Law aside, the new fee program raises over \$480,000 from non-commercial boaters, while-according to Park Service estimates-it costs them \$275,000 to manage non-commercial river use. No other use in Grand Canyon is charged this level of fees.

The language of the demonstration fee legislation states that "fees charged pursuant to this section shall be in lieu of fees charged under any other provision of law." From this language, fee demonstration appears to prevail over cost recovery. This argument is supported by the fact that the fee demonstration legislation has cost-recovery elements: "Fees under this section shall be based upon a variety of cost recovery and fair market valuation methods."

The cost recovery program is cause for serious concern. Grand Canyon National Park insists that it is "required" to re-

cover 100% of the costs of managing special park uses. However, the language of the cost recovery legislation is clear that the authority to recover costs is discretionary, not mandatory: "That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the National Park Service MAY hereafter recover all costs of providing necessary services associated with special use permits, such reimbursements to be credited to the appropriation current at that time" (emphasis added).

In 1995, the Inspector General (IG) for the Interior Department audited the Park Service with respect to special park uses. The IG Report concluded that "the Park Service did not implement its authority to collect and retain fees for special park uses in a consistent manner." By singling out non-commercial river running as a special use for which 100% cost recovery must be achieved, the Park Service is maintaining inconsistent practices.

So what is a "special park use?" It appears that no one at the Department of Interior really knows. The guideline that discusses special park uses (NPS-53) has been in revision for the past several years, and there is no schedule for the final form, despite the fact that the IG Report recommended in 1995 that the NPS expedite the revision of NPS-53. The confusion around special uses prompted the Deputy Director of the Park Service to issue a moratorium on new special park use fees in 1996: "the imposition of 'New' special use fees is prohibited until further notice." Furthermore, the authorizing committee of the Park Service disagrees with the Park's use of this authority. Chairman Jim Hansen (R-UT) of the National Parks, Forests and Lands Subcommittee has stated that "When Congress enacted the provision authorizing the National Park Service to retain such fees in 1992, it was intended to permit the National Park Service to recover fees from such special events, such as demonstrations on the Mall in Washington, D.C. In fact, the legislation was en-

acted after the National Park Service denied a permit for a demonstration on the Mall, due to a lack of funds. However, the National Park Service has never issued any guidance as to how that authority should be implemented. Instead, individual superintendents have started to describe a wide variety of routine and ongoing activities, from backcountry camping to parking as 'special park uses,' and started retaining the fees collected from such activities."

The structure of the fees is also cause for concern. One of the most objectionable aspects of the program is the up-front fees required years in advance of receiving a benefit. With the \$100 fee for additions to the waiting list and \$25 annual renewal fee, non-commercial boaters can pay up to \$350 before entering the Park. The services provided are not commensurate with the amount paid. If it turns out that you cannot make the trip when your name is called, no provision exists for a refund. The money is gone. In addition, if you miss the window for renewing your permit, your name will be dropped from the list and your money forfeited, a change from the one-year grace period that previously existed. No rationale was given for this change in policy. Furthermore, the increase in costs will provide an incentive for larger, shorter trips so that the costs can be spread out. Despite Park Service rhetoric to the contrary, it is clear that these new fees are serving as a heavy deterrent for non-commercial boaters.

It is obvious that the Park Service has funding needs and legitimate concerns. Non-commercial boaters have stated that are willing to pay a reasonable fee. So why haven't the users been involved in the decision making process?

Non-commercial river runners are big supporters of the National Park Service and devote a lot of energy to advocating for parks on the national and local levels. On the national level,

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American Whitewater lobbies for funding the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, by helping to maintain the integrity of Wild and Scenic Rivers like the Gauley and New, or by improving infor-

mation and safety about whitewater rivers in National Parks. Locally, our members are involved in countless ways, such as a recent river clean up at Great Falls National Park just outside of D.C.

Grand Canyon National Park Cost Estimate for Managing Non-commercial River Running

I. Personnel

25% of GS-13 Canyon District Ranger salary: \$16,500 50% of River Subdistrict Ranger salary: \$22,470 60% of River Permits Ranger salary: \$26,135 100% of Permits Clerk salary: \$26,400 75% of Lees Ferry Ranger salary: \$34,510 75% of Lees Ferry Ranger salary (subject-to-furlough): \$17,255 35% of River Patrol Ranger: \$15,335 35% of River Patrol Ranger (subject to furlough): \$11,885 50% of Boat operator/Equipment manager: \$18,700 25% of Meadview Ranger: \$12,930 33% of Training Costs: \$3,080

SubTotal: \$205,200

II. Supplies

Printing: \$4,675 Postage: \$9,145 EDP equipment: \$2,000 River Patrol sundries: \$2,520 River Patrol equipment: \$1,680

SubTotal: \$20,020

III. 35% of Travel Expenses: \$1,345

IV. Utilities and Physical Overhead: \$5,315

V. Vehicles: \$18,400

VI. 10% Misc. Administrative support costs: \$25,028

VII. TOTAL: \$275,308

A Message from the President of the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association

As boating rivers in the American West becomes ever more popular, advocacy and information are vital to the private boater. Federal Agencies are actively seeking input into the use of the rivers they administer. United voices are steering change in use patterns on these rivers. The voices for the private boater in the Grand Canyon, though many, have never before been unified. With this in mind, I would like to extend an invitation to you to join the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association.

This organization will be open to all individuals interested in private river trips in Grand Canyon. It is this diversity of interest which will be our united strength. Some of the many issues which we hope to address include allocation of user days, increasing communication among the various parties involved, disseminating river related information, and participating in river management planning. (This last issue is of vital importance as Grand Canyon National Park begins its revision of the Colorado River Management Plan.) Our goals include working with government agencies and the commercial sector to insure continue river access to the Grand Canyon private boater.

In order for all this to happen, we need both your financial and written support. Do you have any articles or river related stories and/or poetry you'd like to see in GCPBA's newsletter "The Waiting List"? We are also seeking your financial support. A \$20 donation covers a year's membership, \$135 covers an eight year membership, and \$277 or more, at a dollar a mile, gives you a lifetime membership.

So come join us, and let's go boating.

Tom Martin GCPBA Box 2133 Flagstaff, AZ 86003 520-214-8676 email: gcpba@flagstaff.az.us

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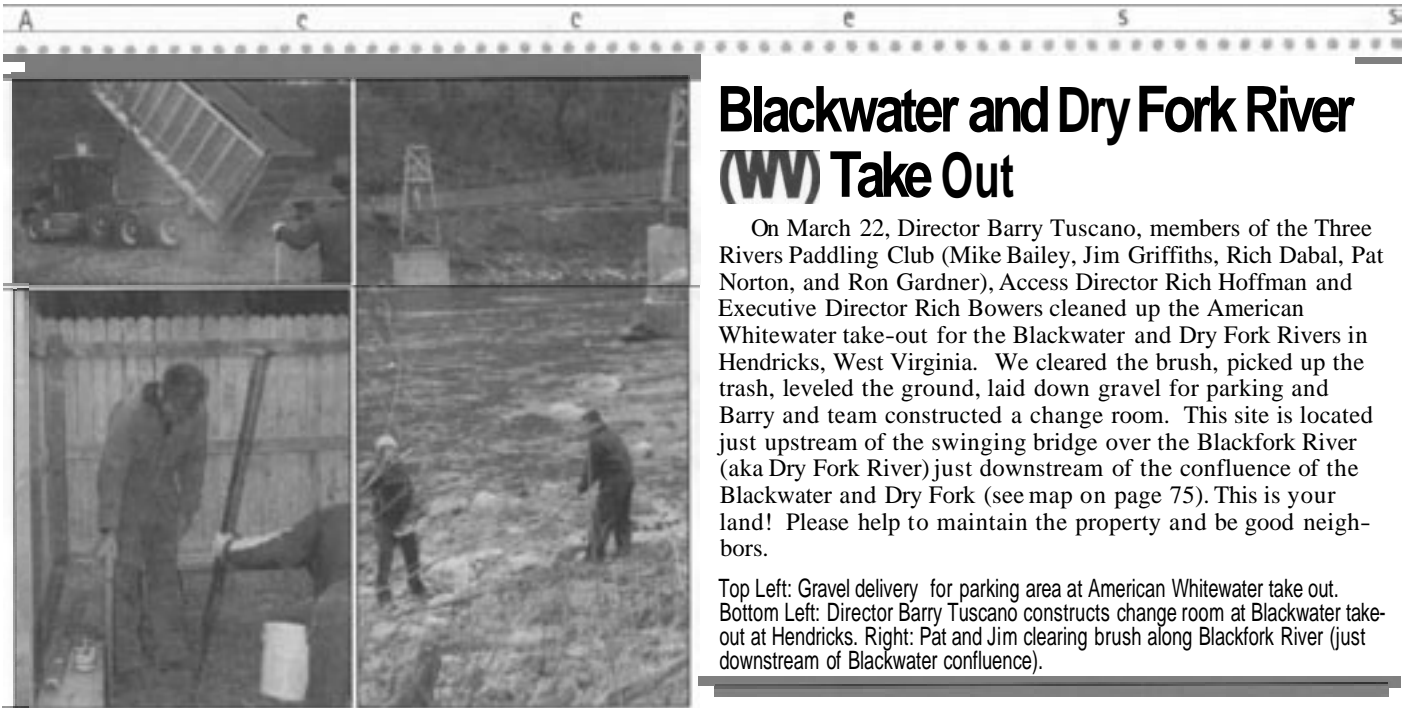
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Blackwater and Dry Fork River (WV) Take Out

On March 22, Director Barry Tuscano, members of the Three Rivers Paddling Club (Mike Bailey, Jim Griffiths, Rich Dabal, Pat Norton, and Ron Gardner), Access Director Rich Hoffman and Executive Director Rich Bowers cleaned up the American Whitewater take-out for the Blackwater and Dry Fork Rivers in Hendricks, West Virginia. We cleared the brush, picked up the trash, leveled the ground, laid down gravel for parking and Barry and team constructed a change room. This site is located just upstream of the swinging bridge over the Blackfork River (aka Dry Fork River) just downstream of the confluence of the Blackwater and Dry Fork (see map on page 75). This is your land! Please help to maintain the property and be good neighbors.

Top Left: Gravel delivery for parking area at American Whitewater take out. Bottom Left: Director Barry Tuscano constructs change room at Blackwater take-out at Hendricks. Right: Pat and Jim clearing brush along Blackfork River (just downstream of Blackwater confluence).

The Blackwater River, WV.

By Dave Saville

West Virginia's gorgeous Blackwater River faces an uncertain future.

Approximately 3,000 acres of the Blackwater Canyon area adjacent to the Monongahela National Forest have been purchased by Allegheny Hardwoods of Petersburg WV. They plan to log the area. It is unclear if the previous owner (Canyonlands Corporation of WV, who owned the property approximately 24 hours before re-selling it) has retained an area along the rim of the canyon as possible vacation home sites.

One boundary of the area is a railroad grade. The Forest Service owns one half of the grade, to the centerline. The new owners own the other half, on the river side of the grade. They have stated their plans to use the grade to access their property and to haul timber out. At both ends of the canyon the grade crosses land owned in fee simple by the FS. On the other side of the canyon the tract is bordered by Forest Road 13, Canaan Loop Road. This road is partially on FS land and partially on a ROW dating back to 1918. If home development occurs it is likely that use of this road would be sought. It is also possible that the lumber company would want to use that road for timber removal. A narrow strip of the property (236 acres) lies between the railroad grade and the Blackwater River, with the majority of the property being between the river and FR 13.

The Forest Service would need to do an Environmental Assessment (EA) at a minimum to address use of the Federal land, and possibly an Environmental Impact Statement if concerns are significant. There are a number of potential concerns. The rail line is regarded as a highly desirable rails-to-trails link in the area. The canyon is considered prime recreation area, for whitewater boating, hiking, mountain biking, skiing, etc. The State has invested considerable resources recently in mitigating acid mine drainage in the canyon and in improving the fisheries resources of the river. The land is quite steep, especially in the narrow strip between the railroad grade and the river. There is local opposition to this private land being logged. The Tucker County Development Authority has stated their opposition. The Chamber of Commerce is split.

The Forest anticipates the EA will require a year to complete.

It is possible that the timber company could pay the cost of contracting out an analysis and shorten the timeframe some. Due to the purchase price (5 million dollars) it is believed the company will want to begin logging soon. They could begin on their land without using federal land for access but it is likely they will wish to use federal land for at least some of the activity, and they have stated they plan to.

The Conservation Fund had a long-standing offer to purchase this tract from Allegheny Power Company. The amount they had offered (approximately 3.5 million) was less than Canyonlands offered (4.7 million) and less still than the current owner (5 million). It is unclear if TCF has any interest in continuing to pursue purchase of this tract or if the owner has any interest in selling. The Forest is now working with the owner to explain the analysis process we need to go through, and is researching the exact rights the Forest Service has regarding access along the railroad grade itself and along FR 13.

The Blackwater is among the top tourist attractions in the state and among the best trout streams in the state. The State DNR has invested a considerable amount of resources to reduce the effects of Acid Mine Drainage. The steepness of the canyon walls would make it very difficult to remove the timber without serious water quality problems.

Let those in positions of influence know that we love the Blackwater River Canyon, are aware of the threat and would like their support in protecting this important resource. Send a letter to Congressman **Allan Mollohan** (on the Appropriations Committee and has demonstrated considerable support for Canaan and Blackwater issues in the past). Send a copy of the letter to Senator Byrd, Governor Underwood, Chuck Meyers, Forest Superintendent, and Blackwater Falls State Park.

The Honorable **Allan Mollohan**
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Dear Representative **Mollohan**
(202) 225-4172

The Hon. Robert C. Byrd
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Dear Senator **Byrd**
(202) 224-3954

Chuck Meyers, Forest Supervisor
Monongahela National Forest
200 Sycamore St.
Elkins, WV 26241
(304) 636-1800

Governor **Cecil Underwood**
State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-2000

Supervisor
Blackwater Falls State Park
Davis, WV 26260
(304) 259-5216

Potomac Access

In the last meeting of the Potomac River Safety Committee—chaired by the Maryland DNR with the National Park Service and local search and rescue squads—MD DNR announced that it will not pursue river closure at high water in the immediate future. Currently, Doug (Hutch) Hutchins is organizing a volunteer river patrol for the Harper's Ferry area (confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers), modeled after the successful river patrol on the Delaware River. Please contact Hutch for information and to volunteer:

PO Box 211 Charles Town, WV 25414 email: kahluaQintrepid.net

Salmon River, NY Litigation by Bob Glanville, AWA Director

Last year, American Whitewater and New York Rivers United filed an amicus curiae brief in support of anglers who were cited for trespass for fishing on the Salmon River. In February, the New York Court of Appeals reversed a previous decision to conclude that the anglers were indeed trespassing.

Douglaston Manor owns approximately one mile of land along and under the Salmon River which it manages as a private sport fishery and from which it seeks to exclude the general public. Douglaston commenced an action against certain commercial fishing guides to prevent them from anchoring upon and fishing in Douglaston's "privately-owned" section of river. At the Supreme (trial) Court level, the Court held that anchoring and wading upon the river bottom owned by Douglaston constituted a trespass and was not encompassed within the right of navigation under New York law. On appeal to the Appellate Division, the Court reversed, relying upon language in an 1883 decision of the Court of Appeals (the State's highest court) that "fishing, ferrying and transportation, are preserved in all navigable waters" of the state. As a result, the Appellate Division concluded that the right to navigate under New York law includes the right to fish.

On the most recent appeal, the Court of Appeals again reversed and reinstated the Supreme Court determination based upon its conclusion that the Macomb Patent, from which Douglaston Manor acquired (indirectly) its property from the state, transferred not only the riverbed but also the exclusive right of fishery because that right was not withheld from the grant. While acknowledging that "grants by the state to private owners of land under navigable-in-fact rivers remain subject to an implied, reserved public easement of navigation," the Court concluded that this easement "does not sweep away or displace other rights accompanying the private ownership of the bed of a navigable-in-fact river, including that of exclusive fishery."

One of the objectives of our brief was to attempt to persuade the Court not to address the issues resolved favorably to boaters in *Adirondack League Club, Inc. v. Sierra Club*, 201 A.D.2d 225, 615 N.Y.Supp. 2d 788 (3d Dep't 1994), appeal dismissed, 84 N.Y.2d 978 (1995). Amici supporting the plaintiffs had urged the Court of Appeals to reject the so-called "recreational use" standard of navigability. Consistent with our position, the Court of Appeals did not address that issue.

The second objective of our amicus brief was to urge that, even if the Court of Appeals were inclined to hold that the right to navigate under New York law does not include the right to fish, that right is protected under federal law as an incident of

the navigational servitude that is imposed upon bodies of water that are navigable under federal law (this stretch of the Salmon River was determined to be navigable in a 1992 court decision regarding FERC jurisdiction). Unfortunately, that issue was neither clearly raised by the defendants nor expressly addressed by the Court of Appeals.

The Court's holding is the controlling law of the state with respect to all similarly situated landowners. Thus, any landowner in the state whose title is derived from either the Macomb Patent or from any grant containing similar language is in a position to assert its exclusive right of fisheries and to threaten anyone invading those rights with either civil action or, potentially, criminal prosecution. But while there is no right to fish, the public still has the right to float downstream.

The decision does not affect the current state of the law on scouting/portaging. The Moose River case decided by an intermediate appellate court several years ago allows persons navigating a navigable river to portage, at least if they remain below the mean high water mark. That issue has not yet been addressed by the Court of Appeals (New York's highest court).

Sections 0/1 Chattooga River

The Forest Plan for the Sumter National Forest—in effect since 1985—is currently being revised. (Under the National Forest Management Act, Forest Plans must be revised every 10 to 15 years.) December 2, 1996, was the close of the formal public comment period to identify issues to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Forest Plan. One of the issues affecting whitewater paddlers is access to sections 1 and 0 of the Chattooga (downstream from Bull Pen Road). Whitewater boaters need to write letters to the Forest Service about allowing access to whitewater boaters to these sections of river. American Whitewater has made several efforts to discuss this issue with local fishing clubs who frequent these stretches of water, including organizing a meeting in Clayton, GA. with Forest Service staff, but the fishing group have been unwilling to discuss this issue with us. Fishing groups are currently writing the Forest Service to maintain the exclusion of whitewater boating from these stretches. Direct your comments to:

John Ramey Forest Supervisor National Forests in North Carolina PO Box 2750 Asheville, N.C. 28802

Forest Supervisor Francis Marion 8 Sumter National Forest 4931 Broad River Road Columbia, S.C. 29210

In addition, please copy American Whitewater on your letters (email: awa@compuserve.com). The following comments (excerpt from American Whitewater's December 2 comments) may help to guide your letter:

Currently, whitewater recreation is allowed on Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Chattooga, yet prohibited upstream of the Highway 28 Bridge, commonly referred to as Sections 1 and 0. Sections 1 and 0 are among the most beautiful stretches of river in the watershed and contain world class whitewater. As whitewater technology and expertise have improved, the ability and desire of non-commercial boaters to safely access these steeper and more difficult sections has also grown.

Under the existing Forest Plan, these two headwater sections of the river are prohibited to whitewater recreationists. While open to many other recreational uses such as fishing, hiking, camping, and horseback riding, whitewater boaters who float through these areas are subject to fines and arrest. Compatible and non-discriminatory recreational use within the Chattooga watershed should be a major objective of any future Forest Plan. American Whitewater would like to work with the Forest Service, fishing organizations, private landowners, and others in reaching this goal.

The American Whitewater believes that there is no compelling reason for the current ban on whitewater boating on Sections 1 and O. Arguably, whitewater boating on these stretches would have less of an impact than other uses: boaters float on a medium that leaves no trace and make contact with land only occasionally when scouting and portaging around obstacles. In addition, learning how to navigate difficult whitewater is a skill that takes a lot of time and experience; as they learn how to safely navigate whitewater, boaters become aware and practice river conservation and stewardship techniques. The local canoe and kayak clubs and commercial outfitters frequently organize river clean-ups to remove garbage from the river and riparian zone.

While American Whitewater is sensitive to the desire of other users for solitude and a wilderness experience, these values are important to whitewater boaters as well. However, putting a higher value on the solitude of one user group over another is not equitable public policy. During our meetings and conversations, the other user groups could not provide significant reasons to justify the ban on whitewater boating on these stretches. While some user groups may have a reluctance to use Sections 3 and 4 because it may be popular to whitewater boaters on certain days, this fact does not provide a rationale for prohibiting boating on Section 1 and O.

American Whitewater does not believe that boating and other uses (in particular, fishing) are incompatible in Sections 1 and O. Nor would shared use necessarily impact on the solitude and remoteness sought by both user groups. As outlined in the September 7, 1994 letter from American Whitewater to the Forest Service (attached), whitewater boating on these two sections is only possible at high water levels when the fishing is not good. In addition, due to the natural hydrograph of Section 1 and Section O,



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whitewater flows usually occur only during periods of low use for fishing (i.e. during winter and early spring). If whitewater boating is allowed on these stretches, use will remain low because they would only have sufficient water infrequently and the water would drop quickly, and because the whitewater is difficult.

These stretches of river run through several different management jurisdictions, including the Sumter National Forest boundary. One goal for the revision of the Sumter Forest Plan is to make this plan consistent across administrative boundaries, including those boundaries which effect access to these two separate Wild and Scenic river segments. To accomplish this, this revision seeks to coordinate management directions for the Chattooga River watershed, including the Chattahoochee and Nantahala National Forests, and the Ellicott Rock Wilderness area. We fully support this effort to coordinate management directives.

In order to ensure both boating and fishing use, we recommend that the USFS adopt a management plan that will allow boating during certain windows of time, for instance, high flows or certain months. Prohibiting whitewater boating on these stretches is a discriminatory practice and must be studied and eliminated from future Forest Plans.

Letters to the Access Program

Letter from J. Brent Austin:

I received your mailing of November 12, 1996, describing access **problems** related to Davey Hearn, Cary Weiner, and Breck McAlexander. I have some comments about the above-referenced incidents:

First, I would support the AWA financing and/or assisting Mr. Hearn with a lawsuit against the appropriate police officers for use of excessive force, brutality, and perhaps false imprisonment. Likewise, for the South Plate incident, I am somewhat familiar with the problem since I have a number of friends in Colorado who have been harassed, had rocks thrown at them, had video tapes taken of them, and received verbal assaults by landowners who taunted them with pending arrests since they would be required to portage a spot intentionally set up by the landowners to force people to trespass on their land. In those situations, I believe a license has been offered to people traveling on water-ways, and any criminal prosecution arising out of that, is purely malicious for which civil actions could be brought. These are a couple of situations which could be aggressively pursued with probable success. Sometimes, the best way to get the attention of a mule is to whack'um across the head.

It is amazing how willing people become to negotiate and/or cooperate when faced with litigation.

I would be happy to assist in any matter such as this if you need. If you ever decide to evaluate litigation strategies to resolve certain access issues, I would be pleased to participate in any way possible.

Letter from Thomas Quarles, Jr.:

I read your attached article in the September/October 1996 issue of American Whitewater with interest. I have handled the defense of a number of whitewater drowning deaths and supplied AWA with material for a talk to dam owners and government officials on recreational use liability.

I also do a fair amount of civil rights defense work where the defendants are municipal or state governmental entities. There is a legal doctrine called "discretionary function im-

munity" that should provide further protection to the State of Maryland on Potomac access and liability issues. Discretionary function immunity applies only to governmental actors and immunizes the managerial decisions of a governmental agency (or its individual officials).

In the context of your Potomac situation, for example, if the Maryland authorities sat down and decided that because of the danger to rescuers on a high-water situation, the state should make a policy decision not to attempt any rescue of boaters (or any rescue under any water conditions for that matter) then that policy decision would be respected by the courts and no liability could attach to the governmental agencies or officials, unless and until, they failed to carry out their own policy, and that failure caused the injury to the plaintiff.

The doctrine essentially allows the governmental agency to "make the rules" and grants the agencies and its employees complete immunity, unless and until, they violate their own clearly established rules and procedures. The concept behind the immunity goes back to constitutional law and the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial branches. The rationale is that it is improper for the judicial branch, to attempt to second guess and interfere with the management and operational decisions of the executive branch, by holding out the threat of legal liability, if and when, a jury decides they don't like a particular governmental policy.

While I know nothing about Maryland law, I would be very surprised if this was not an established principal of either Maryland common law and/or its statutes. For example, in New Hampshire, discretionary function immunity is a common law doctrine as to municipalities, but is statutory relative to the state. As far as any potential liability of the National Park Service on the Potomac access issue, I can state with certainty that discretionary function immunity is a rock-solid principal of federal law protecting the federal government as well. In fact most of the decisions on this doctrine are from our federal courts since they decide most civil rights claims which are brought against government entities or their employees: federal, state and municipal.

I have enclosed some seminar materials that discuss the doctrine. This should be helpful in your continued negotiations with state and federal entities on the Potomac situation, and all your other access and liability issues as well.

Americans for Our Heritage and Recreation

The coalition of groups working to restore and revitalize funding and programs for natural resources is currently working on the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the FY 98 budget. American Whitewater has contacted legislators in key whitewater districts to urge their support for earmarks in the appropriations process. Representative Rahall of West Virginia is supporting this effort and promote funding for the New and Gauley Rivers.

Please consider writing a letter to your representatives on Capitol Hill:

(Sample Letter) The last election confirmed that Americans share a deep concern for the environment. Voters challenged us to find cost-effective, bi-partisan solutions to our environmental problems. I would like to draw your attention to the Land and Water Conservation Fund as a non-regulatory strategy with an amazing track record for preserving our natural resources.

In 1964, Congress made a contract with the American public to create the Land and Water Conservation Fund to support the creation of parks, forests, clean water, and open spaces and to

guarantee outdoor opportunities and a clean environment for Americans. Each year the fund receives \$900, primarily from federal off shore for oil and gas revenues.

All Americans share in the legacy of the land and Water Conservation Fund. In its 30 years of existence, it has been responsible for the acquisition of nearly seven million acres of parkland and open space and the development of more than 37,000 parks and recreation projects. From playgrounds and ball fields to national historical sites, scenic trails, and nature reserves, LWCF is arguably the most successful environmental program of the century.

Unfortunately, in almost every year since 1979, Congress has failed to appropriate as much as 85 percent of the fund. In the last few years, the states, which should be receiving a portion of this fund as block grants, have not received any of the money they are due. Every year, we lose countless opportunities to preserve precious resources and create open space for people to enjoy.

I support Americans for Our Heritage and Recreation, a national coalition of representing environmental, urban, recreation, and business interest. Together we would like you to support full funding of the land and Water Conservation Fund and to specifically support an FY 98 LWCF appropriation of \$400 million. Given the \$11 billion backlog of unappropriated funds and the enormous backlog of high priority state and federal projects, I urge Congress and the President to fund all priority projects identified by the states and Departments of Interior and Agriculture in FY 1998 and in years to come.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a non-regulatory approach to conservation, and it does not cost taxpayers a dime. The time has come to fulfill the promise made to the American people. I urge you to make restoration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund a priority.

Oregon Navigability

There is a flurry of activity in the Oregon Legislature right now regarding the navigability issue. At last count, there are 4 House bills and 1 pending Senate bill. Two of the House bills and the Senate bill are very damaging to public access/rights of passage on Oregon streams. The other two House bills were sponsored at the request of the River Recreation Rights coalition, made up of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders, NORS, ACA, local paddling clubs and fishing groups, and American Whitewater. These bills mimic the Montana Stream Access law that is extremely favorable to river recreation.

It appears as if none of these bills will make any progress, and the coalition is gathering momentum for future efforts. For more information, contact Access Director Rich Hoffman at (301) 589-9453, awa@compuserve.com.

South Fork of the American River (CA) Management Plan

Phase II of the river management plan for the South Fork was completed in March. American Whitewater submitted comments regarding the management alternatives that were presented in the report. We did not feel that the alternatives adequately addressed the range of management alternatives that should be considered.

Three issues are of primary concern in the Phase II Report: 1) private boater surcharge, 2) carrying capacity, and 3) large group regulation.

1) The Phase II Report recommends that private boaters be assessed a "surcharge" as a matter of equity and to pay for the "ac-

tual County cost of river management." As we state in our access policy, we are not opposed to fees that are charged to all users of a public resource, that provide needed facilities, and that are implemented with input from the boating community. The Phase II Report, however, does not recognize that private boaters already pay considerable fees to use facilities at access sites (Chili Bar, Heningsen-Lotus Park, Camp Lotus, etc.). Additional fees must target specific programs that are necessary for non-commercial river management. With respect to the equity issue, the County must recognize that non-commercial boaters are distinct from commercial rafting, a business which makes a profit from the resource.

2) The Phase II Report should recognize that controls on the numbers of non-commercial boaters already exist, such as large numbers of commercial crowds, limited water flows, and limited access sites. Alternatives 3, 4 and 5 recommend limits on the number of both commercial and non-commercial boaters. However, the 1996 Peak Weekend River Use Levels in the Phase II Report document that commercial use is twice the amount of non-commercial use. If non-commercial boaters are to be limited, use numbers should be equitable. However, the Phase II Report should recognize 1) the essential difference between the use of a resource by a business vs. a member of the general public; and 2)

that on most rivers in the U.S., commercial use is limited (comparable to other businesses that operate on public land) while members of the general public are allowed to recognize their right to access navigable waters, articulated in Article 10, Section 4 of the Constitution of the State of California: "so that access to the navigable waters of this State shall be always obtainable for the people thereof." We are concerned that the "threshold" levels identified in Alternative 3 are subjective and could easily become more an indication of politics than objective scientific fact.

3) Pages 5-10 and 5-11 outline regulations that groups with over 3 vessels and 18 people must follow. For example, these groups must obtain a permit and file reports on the trip(s) with the County. We are concerned that these regulations, taken collectively, will discourage valuable and longstanding educational efforts on the South Fork. Throughout the history of our sport, canoe and kayak club trips have been a primary source for education and information about safe and considerate river recreation. It is necessary for trip planners to have some degree of flexibility when organizing these trips. New regulations should recognize this need.

For a copy of the Phase II Report, contact El Dorado County Parks and Recreation at 916-621-5349.

Fear and Loathing on the South Platte

By Jay Kenney

July 14, 1996 was a beautiful day on the South Platte River, but the beauty was lost on Park County Sheriff's Deputy Bob Horn. He was concerned, concerned that the Sportsman's Paradise Club in beautiful Lake George, Colorado was being inundated by marauding kayakers. Initial reports from club members suggested kayakers were using guerilla tactics to invade the club's version of god's country, tactics that suggested an escalating level of aberrant behavior. When he responded to the club in his PTU (police transport unit) he learned some of the members had had direct and unsettling contact with the renegade kayakers. One kayaker wore a helmet to disguise his hair color and "had dark smudges under his eyes, much like football players use to reduce glare." Another, a male, had hair worn in a pony-tail. Two "were thought to be female," one of whom was wearing a "WWII type German military helmet." One floated through in a boat with the word "PYRANNAH" air-brushed on it. Accounts varied about the boaters level of civility when told they were trespassing. Some politely ignored the requests - one said: "It is my god-given right to float this river."

Horn learned the boaters were becoming more numerous - 12 boats in June, 16 in July - and settled on a plan. He armed the Sportsman's Club with video cameras and told the club to take pictures first and ask questions later. Horn did not have to wait very long. As fate would have it, Gary Weiner and Don Beveridge set out at dawn on July 16, 1996 to boat the Cheesman Gorge, a low volume class V gem three hours south west of Denver. The first three miles of flatwater took them through the Sportsman's Paradise property. They encountered an artificial rock obstruction, encumbered by an I-beam and a steel cable. Most of the crew slithered under and around. Weiner and Beveridge hopped out, skipped around the obstacle and climbed back in their boats. Horn responded to the Sportsman's Paradise at 0759 hours and learned that seven kayakers had snuck

through the Paradise in the early morning light and were captured forever in a series of Kodak moments. Uncertain of the boaters precise location and concerned that trying to follow the boaters to the presumptive take-out near the Cheesman Lake might take him out of his jurisdiction into Douglas County, Horn determined to set up surveillance at the Happy Valley Campground on the 1975 van and 1994 pick-up truck registered to the putative suspects, Beveridge and Weiner.

Time passed slowly for Deputy Horn. A full six and a half hours passed before two white males returned, on foot and without boats, to claim their vehicles. They first denied they had been boating. Horn pressed them. He had pictures, he said, and they quickly admitted they had been part of a group of boaters. "Oh, that guy with the video camera?" Horn wrote up summonses charging the two with second degree criminal trespass and warned them that the bridge at the Sportsman's Club now contained 4"x6" chicken wire designed to force a portage onto private property. Weiner countered with a guide book which he claimed listed the river as floatable and asserted there was an attorney general's opinion permitting boaters to float through private property. Horn was suspicious of Weiner's claims, especially since Weiner kept referring to the attorney general as "HE," and Horn knew the present attorney general was a woman. Beveridge asked "whether he could share his summons with the other boaters." Horn advised that he would provide them with a summons of their own, if Beveridge would provide their names and addresses. Beveridge declined, saying they were from Salida and he didn't know them that well anyway.

Horn, as it turned out, was wrong and Weiner was right. A 1973 attorney general opinion does interpret Colorado law as allowing a right of passage on Colorado's streams and rivers so long as no contact is made with the land under or alongside the river. Determined to press the issue, Weiner contacted the CWWA

legal defense team ("the stream team") and the lawyers from Dewey, Cheatum and Howe, a branch office of the silk-stocking firm of Hummerdink, Hummerdink and Hummerdink. Clearly there were dragons to be slayed, windmills to be tilted, and applecarts to be upset. Sadly, however, not even the mighty people's representative, the district attorney in and for the eleventh judicial district of the state of Colorado, could find a way around the attorney general's opinion. On October 31, 1996, the district attorney asked the court to dismiss the case. His reason? "Insufficient evidence."

A group that included a highly placed individual from a prominent whitewater shop along the front range of Colorado ran the Gorge on August 3, 1996. They were forced to portage when they came to mounds of rebar, trees, limbs, rocks and an I-beam. At a bridge immediately below the obstruction they found chicken wire stretching from the bridge to the river leaving only a drainage pipe to slide through. The encounter with the club members was predictably unpleasant. Obscenities were yelled. Pictures were taken. Choice comments included: "Why the hell are you trespassing on our land, you little shits?" "This is my water, smile for the fucking camera so we can see you in court." No arrests were made and no summonses issued.

The CWWA and the AWA continue to believe that boaters have the right to pass freely on any river or stream in Colorado and the right to protect themselves from unnatural and dangerous obstacles thrown up to impede the right of passage. If you find yourself in such a situation, remain calm, portage as little as safety and common sense dictate, and avoid confrontation and escalation of the conflict. Carry a copy of the attorney general's opinion with you. Don't leave a shuttle vehicle at the Happy Meadows Campground - find someone to remove it to the takeout. If you get arrested or a summons, call the CWWA for free legal advice. At its December, 1996 board meeting the CWWA agreed to begin negotiations with the Sportsman's Paradise in an effort to calm the waters and secure free passage through or around the property. Results will be posted in the Spray.



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THE KENNEBEC RIVER FESTIVAL

**SATURDAY,
JULY 5, 1997
WILDERNESS
OUTFITTERS
ROUTE 201
THE FORKS
MAINE.**



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

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.

THE DEERFIELD RIVERFEST

WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY AUGUST 2, 1997. THIS FESTIVAL WILL BE HELD IN THE LARGE FIELD ACROSS THE STREET FROM ZOAR OUTDOOR OUTFITTERS, ROUTE 2, CHARLEMONT, MASSACHUSETTS.

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.

Get out to the New England festivals this summer.

This is the year to make the Big Trip for guaranteed wet days and cool summer nights.

Tom Christopher Fall Brook Farm 931 Union Street Rear Leominster, MA 01453

Phone 508.534.9447 Fax 508.840.6645

by Jayne H. Abbot

American Whitewater/NOWR Event Manager

As I sit here feeling the first breezes of spring coming through the screen door of my North Carolina farmhouse, my mind roams to a summer full of whitewater paradises and the rodeos and festivals just around the corner. It's also the first day of spring today but by the time you read this article, we will be well into the NOWR (National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos) schedule as well as other exciting events.

The first of the NOWR rodeos, the Kern River Festival, is sure to have been a success as well as the New River Rodeo, Lochsa Rodeo, Bigfork Festival, Kananaskis Rodeo, Maupin Daze, Jackson Hole Rodeo and the Potomac Festival (pew, that's some schedule!). Additional events to have passed by the time you read this will include Canyon Creek Days and the East Coast Team Trials. Results and highlights from these events will be included in the next issue of the journal so be on the lookout.

For those of you who are reading this column and scratching your heads saying, "who is this person and what does she do?", let me repeat myself. I was hired in January as the American Whitewater Events Manager. I reside 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.

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 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 am also 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 to see you at the events this season! or **S.Y.O.T.R** (translation: See You On The River - for those of you who don't know this funny little acronym...)

Jayne H. Abbot
American Whitewater/NOWR Event Manager

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Weaverville, NC 28787
ph: (704) 645-5299
fax: (704) 645-6983
e-mail: JHAbbot@aol.com

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
Butte Creek Spring Round-Up	April 12	CA	Kate Robinson	916-538-6003
Canyon Creek Days	May 3-4	WA	Andrew Wulfers	503-285-0464
Arkansas Festival	July 5	CO	Landis Arnold	303-444-2336
Kennebec River 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 21	MD	Jessi Whittemore	301-746-5389
Gauley Festival	Sept 20	WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355
Gauley River Race	Sept 29	WV	Donnie Hudspeth	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

Kem River Festival	April 18-20	CA	Linda Ivins	805-871-6790
New River Rodeo	April 25-27	VA	Roanoke Co. Pks/Rec	540-387-6091
Chili Bar Rodeo	CANCELLED	CA	Larry Goral	916-621-1224
Lochsa Rodeo	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	403-266-1521
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	970-641-1683

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WHITEWATER RODEOS (NOWR) CIRCUIT continued

Willow River Paddlefest	June 20-22	BC	Rick Brine	250-964-7400
Animas River Days	June 27-28	CO	Nancy Wiley	970-259-3893
Derby Creek Days	July 26-27	CO	Chris Emerick	970-736-0080
Kootenay WW Festival	August 2-4	BC	Bob Dupee	250-447-6561
Ottawa River Rodeo	August 29-31	Ontario	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223
American River Festival	Sept. 12-14	CA	Larry Goral	916-621-1224
Outer Banks Surf/	Sept. 19-21	NC	Pam Malec	919-441-6800

Kayak Rodeo

Savage Rapids Rodeo/ Slalom	Sept. 26-28	OR	Dunbar Hardy	541-482-4148
Coosa River WW Festival	October 3-5	AL	Lonnie Carden	334-272-0952
Ocoee Rodeo	October 10-12	NC	Susan Wilson	704-658-1332

OTHER EVENTS

East Coast Team Trials	May 28-30	TN	Tracy Clapp	423-267-5671
South Yuba Pedal/Paddle	May 31-June 1	CA	Dave Good	916-265-9653
West Coast Team Trials	July 11-13	CO	Dan Brabec	970-736-0080
1997 World Championship	Sept. 5-7	Ottawa	Mark Sriver	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 Championship	Sept. 19-21	DC	Eric/Brian	202-546-9214

Rated at class 3-4.

BLACK

Free rodeo and surfing clinics for AWA members.

RIVER

The Black River Bay Campground has a special section for Festival camping.

July 26-27,
1997 at
Watertown,
New York's
Riverwalk Park

- Featuring two days of "on the water" activities—the Black River Festival promises to be an exciting change from the AWA's typical festival format.
- The celebration includes two days of instructional clinics, a novice rodeo competition, on-the-water equipment demos and other events.

FESTIVAL

Registration for the weekend clinics and rodeo will be made on a first-come, first served basis on the day of the Festival at the AWA booth starting at the Adirondack River Outfitters put-in.

■ For more information, contact Chris Koll at (315)652-8397 or by e-mail at CKOLL1234@aol.com. A festival newsletter featuring maps and detailed schedule of events will be available in mid May—call to receive more information.

American Whitewater Organizes Colorado/Arkansas River Festival

American Whitewater is presenting the Colorado/Arkansas River Festival to be held on the Arkansas River on July 5th. The festival is being added to American Whitewater's growing list of annual events including the famous Gauley festival as well as the younger Kennebec, Moose and Deerfield festivals held in the East. Some of you may remember the Colorado festivals held on the Arkansas over the past 3 years and organized jointly by the Colorado Whitewater Association (CWWA) and American Whitewater. This years Colorado/Arkansas Festival is fundamentally a new event sponsored solely by American Whitewater and represents the expansion into the West of American Whitewater sponsored festivals.

The festival provides the setting for a fun and informative gathering of paddlers to enjoy the spectacular waters of the Arkansas River and highlights conservation and access issues which American Whitewater works to alleviate for all boaters nationwide.

The festival will be held during the afternoon and evening of July 5th at the takeout to the world famous class IV/V Numbers section of the Upper Arkansas as well as put-in to the class II-IV Harvard Estates/Frog Rock run which ends 5 five miles downstream in Buena Vista. The riverside location and easy access to takeout/put-in make this an excellent place to enjoy the festivities before or after your Arkansas River run of choice. The site is located at Railroad Bridge approximately one mile downstream of rapid number five and the Otero Pump Station Bridge. Camping will be provided at the Railroad Bridge site with overflow camping information provided at the festival grounds

In conjunction with the festival will be the running of the Colorado Cup Slalom races (contact: Chris Bainbridge at 719-539-6681) and the CWWA triathlon a run, bike paddle contest (contact: Bill Baker at 303-972-8437). Classes will be for both pro-racing and recreational boaters in both events. There will also possibly be an ender contest at the famed "ender rock".

Booths from a number of national and regional paddlesport companies will be there with kayak and equipment demos available to festival participants. American Whitewater directors, staff and members will be in attendance to provide information on conservation and access programs and with American Whitewater membership applications. A silent auction and raffle will be held on Saturday evening with the proceeds going to American Whitewater's conservation and access programs.

Exhibitor and participant information is available from Landis Arnold, the event organizer and Jayne Abbot American Whitewater's Event Manager.

Landis Arnold
c/o Wildwasser Sport
P.O. Box 4617
Boulder, CO 80306
fax: (303) 444-2375
e-mail: landis@wildnet.com

Jayne Abbot
450 Ivy Hill Road
Weaverville, NC 28787
ph: (704) 645-5299
fax: (704) 645-6983
JHAbbot@aol.com

We need your help to make this event a success. If you want to volunteer or be a part of the "Fest Committee", please give Landis or Jayne a call/fax/e-mail. Come join us July 5th for a rockin' good time!



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Whitewater Freestyle Event Format and Judging Criteria

The following is the long awaited event format and judging criteria for this years events. This is the same format that will be used at the World Championship this year in Ottawa and is required for all NOWR upper tier events. Funtier events are encouraged but not required to use this format.

Whitewater Freestyle Event Format and Judging Criteria

Event Format Preliminaries: Athletes are seeded in heats

Hole riding

The run begins as the paddler crosses the eddy line and continues until the time limit, regardless of being washed out of the hole and downstream.

Kayak and C-1

Hole Riding - 2 runs of 60 sec., both scores count

Open Boat

Hole Riding - 4 runs of 30 sec., best 2 scores count

Squirt

Eddy line - 2 runs of 60 sec.

Hole Riding - 2 runs of 60 sec., all four scores count

Freestyle through a Rapid (OPTIONAL FOR 1997 NOWR EVENTS) and preliminary scores

K-1, C-1 and Open boat can compete in the Freestyle through a Rapid event. This event counts as 35% and hole riding as 65% of the preliminary score. The top score in each of the two events per class will be considered perfect scores (35 for freestyle and 65 for hole riding) and the rest of the scores will be determined converted to percentages of those tops scores. This will determine the final score and standings for all competitors except for those who qualify for the finals. *Squirt does not compete in the Freestyle through a Rapid event.*

Tie Breaking

For K-1 and C-1 in the preliminary rounds, the tie will be broken by the highest score for a single run of the two hole riding runs. If the tie remains after this formula for the finals qualifying position, both competitors will advance to the finals.

In OC-1, the tie will be broken by the highest score for a single run of all four runs. If the tie remains for the final qualifying position for the finals, both competitors will advance to the finals.

In Squirt, the best hole riding and the best eddyline run combined will count. If the tie remains after this formula for the finals qualifying position, both competitors will advance to the finals.

There is no tie-breaking formula for the Freestyle through a Rapid event.

Finals: Athletes are seeded by preliminary results

33% of the class to a maximum of 12 and a minimum of 5 will advance to the finals.

Hole riding and Freestyle through a Rapid preliminary scores for finalists do not count in the final results.

Kayak, C-1

Hole Riding - 2 runs of 60 sec., best score counts

Open Canoe

Hole Riding - 4 runs of 30 sec., best 2 scores count

Squirt

Eddy line - 2 runs of 60 sec., best score counts

Hole Riding - 2 runs of 60 sec., best score counts

Tie Breaking

If there is a tie in the finals for first place for K-1, C-1 or OC-1, both competitors will have a 60 second hole riding run - best score wins - the other competitor automatically places second regardless of their score in the tie-breaking round.

If there is a tie for first place in squirt, the two competitors will have either a 60 second hole ride or a 60 second eddyline run - best score wins. They shall choose by mutual consent or the toss of a coin.

If there is a tie for any place except for first place, all final runs of the tied competitors will be counted to determine the final position. If the tie remains after this formula, there will be no tie breaking hole run and the tie will remain.

Open Boat Specifications

- The depth of the boat must be at least 14 inches in the middle 2 feet of the boat.
- The gunwale line may not drop more than 3 inches from the center of the boat's end.
- *Neither deck may exceed 22.5 percent of the length of the boat.
- Tumblehome may not exceed 3 inches including gunwales and foam outfitting.
- Floatation must be removable and attached only with cord.
- Completely solid bulkheads are not permitted. Bulkheads with holes for knees are allowed.
- *There is no length restriction.

Judges

There are 5 judges with one scribe assigned to each judge. As each move is performed, the judges verbally give a point value or letter to their scribe who records that number or letter. The judges should be close enough to confer, if necessary, but far enough away not to hear each other as they call scores to their scribes. Once the technical, style and variety scores are added, the high and low scores are eliminated. In the case of less than 5 judges, the top 3 scores will be counted.

Judging Criteria -

Hole Riding

Technical Score (cumulative) *REVISED February 4, 1997*

No points for entry onto the wave.

No points for window shading.

One point for each 180 degree directional change in the hole or foam pile. *Scribes would mark 1 on the scorecard (or two points for full 360 degree flat in the hole or foam pile).*

One point for an established front surf or front blast. *Scribes would write FS for front surf or blast and tabulators would add one point.*

NOTE:

- a front surf into a front blast does not constitute an additional move.
- a directional change is not scored if it is broken by a surf. For example, a side surf left to a front (or back) surf, then to a side surf right, would be scored one point for the surf.
- a one point directional change is scored for going from a back surf to a front surf or vice versa.

Two points for an established back surf or back blast. *Scribes would write BS for back surf or blast and tabulators would add two points.*

Two points for off vertical end in the hole or foam pile (20 to 70 degrees and 110 to 160 degrees). *Scribes would write 2 on the scorecard.*

Three points for each vertical end in the hole or foam pile (70 to 110 degrees). *Scribes would write 3 on the scorecard.*

Two points for each directional change or flat spin from surf to surf on a smooth wave (without the use of the break). *Scribes would write 2 on the scorecard.*

Three points for each off vertical end on a smooth wave (45 to 70 degrees NOTE: must be at least 45 degrees) (without the use of the break). *Scribes would write 3 on the scorecard.*

Four points for each vertical end on a smooth wave (70 to 110 degrees) (without the use of the break). *Scribes would write 4 on the scorecard.*

Four points are awarded for directional changes while in the hole linking two vertical or one vertical and one off vertical move (split wheel). Four points will be awarded for directional changes while on a smooth wave linking two vertical moves or linking a vertical and an off vertical move. *Scribes would write D on the score card and tabulators would add 4 points.*

Four to five points for pirouette (four points for 180 pirouette, 5 points for 360 pirouette). *Scribes would write 4 or 5 on their scorecards accordingly.*

**Judging Criteria (continued)
Trophy Moves - Scribes put a T followed by the point value on the score card:**

- Clean 360 - 8 points
- Airwheel (Aerial) - 2 points for each end of a cartwheel that is extremely elevated and not supporting any of the paddler's weight.
- Loop - 8 points
- Retentive Pirouette - 8 points
- Olie oop - 8 points. Must be completely airborne and most of the 180 degree rotation takes place in the air.
- Olie - 3 points. The boat must be completely airborne.

Style Score

From 1 to 5 for Open Canoe

From 1 to 10 for K-1 Women, K-1 Junior and C-1
From 1 to 15 for K-1 Men

This is a subjective score given by each judge following each run. The emphasis is on:
'Boat control, timing and rhythm.
'Use of the wave (more points are given for using all features of the wave/hole).
'Artistic impression and choreography.
'Variety of moves is not included in this score.

Variety Score (cumulative; MAX. POSSIBLE score of 10)
This is an objective score that will be added by the tabulators. The tabulators will add 2 points for each of the following moves that are marked on the scorecard:

Cartwheel Variety: Following each run, the judge will direct the scribe to mark on the scorecard an R if a 3 ended cartwheel (including vertical or off vertical ends) was performed to the right and an L if a 3 ended cartwheel was performed to the left. These can be separate moves or linked by a directional change (split wheel).

- L - More than 3 linked ends to the left vertical or off vertical.
- R - More than 3 linked ends to the right vertical or off vertical.
- D - Directional change or split wheel.
- 4+ Any move scoring 4 or more points including trophy moves, pirouettes and vertical wave moves.
- S - Front or back surf or blast.

**Freestyle Through a Rapid Event
Format (Optional Event for
1997)**

Competitors will start in an eddy at the top of the event rapid. The run will be considered complete when 2 minutes are up or when the competitor passes a point set by the course designers of the event.

A team of course designers will establish the course and reveal it the morning of the Freestyle through a Rapid event. No practice runs will be allowed after the course is revealed. The team of course designers will be rodeo competitors who are not competing in the event. The team will consist of not less than 1 male, 1 female, 1 K-1, 1 C-1, and 1 open boater.

The course designers will set up 5 gates and will assess a point value for each gate. If the competitor completes that gate, those points will be added to their technical score. Competitors can also add points to their technical score by performing hole riding moves at various formations in the rapids. The hole riding scoring system will be used. A maximum of 10 hole riding points can be assessed at any particular formation.

A team of 5 judges will assess a style score for the run based on the variety of moves, paddling style and complete use of the river. The top score in each class will be considered a perfect score and the rest of the scores in that class will be assessed as percentages of the top score. This formula will be applied to both the technical score and the style score. The two scores will be added together to get a final score for the Freestyle through a Rapid event.

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PROBE 12	12'8"	28.5"	15.5"	49 LBS	KAYALEX	1875	1612.50
PROBE 12 II	12'2"	27.5"	15.5"	46 LBS	KAYALEX	1875	1612.50
PROBE 14	14'2"	30.5"	15.5"	58 LBS	KAYALEX	1940	1654.00
VIPER 11	11'8"	27.5"	15.5"	45 LBS	KAYALEX	1875	1612.50
VIPER 12	12'8"	27.5"	15.5"	49 LBS	KAYALEX	1875	1612.50
XL 13	13'2"	30"	15.5"	54 LBS	KAYALEX	1920	1644.00
XL 14	14'2"	32"	15.5"	60 LBS	KAYALEX	1940	1695.00
XL 15	15'4"	35"	15.5"	65 LBS	KAYALEX	1970	1726.00



Doug Gordan in the far lower left.

Photo: J. McEwan

EXPLORING HOMATHKO RIVER ADVENTURE BRITISH by E.J. McCarthy YOU'VE GOT TO BE TOUGH!!! COLUMBIA



At Butte Inlet waiting for the plane, left to right, E.J. McCarthy, Doug Gordon, Jamie McEwan.

It was a cloudy and cool day in July when we paddled to the south end of Tatlayoko Lake. A stiff wind blew in our faces and a faint drizzle was in the air. Ahead lay the Homathko River, which we intended to follow for its entire length to the sea at Butte Inlet, some sixty-five miles away. Doug led the way, as he would frequently, while Jamie and I followed. We moved our eighty pound boats slowly across the lake and into the cool head wind.

Our information about the river was limited, but we knew that the Homathko had plenty of whitewater. We would have to contend with three canyons and the inflow from more than fifteen significant side creeks that pour down from glaciers and ice fields thousands of feet above the river. No roads penetrate into the

Homathko valley, so we had arranged for a plane to meet us at the take-out. None of the bush pilots that we spoke to had ever picked up any kayakers at Butte Inlet, but one had salvaged a few empty kayaks a few years back. He wasn't even sure that they had come down the river. But he did say, "They sure were all beat up."

It seemed very unlikely that our run of the Homathko would be a first decent, but it would be a first decent to us, and that was all that mattered. Doug Gordon, trip leader and former U.S. Team member, had been on several river expeditions. Jamie McEwan, had been on the U.S. Team for many years and had won a bronze medal in the 1972 Olympics. My years of racing had not yielded stellar results, but I had plenty of hair boating experience and was

"It wouldn't be an adventure if you knew everything that was going to happen."

ready for whatever the Homathko had to offer. I had worked with Doug for months, planning, studying maps and readying equipment in preparation for this trip.

British Columbia is a Canadian province teeming with ancient forests, majestic snow capped mountains and rugged wilderness. Hundreds, maybe thousands, of glacier fed creeks pour down from the Canadian Rockies and the Pacific Coast Mountains into rivers that wind through deep valleys and desolate canyons. Anyone seeking a real whitewater adventure can certainly find one in B.C.. But there is little, if any, boater's information about many of these remote rivers. So, those who decide to paddle them must be prepared for more than a test of their whitewater boating skills. The well equipped team should be ready for the ultimate challenge of their endurance, resourcefulness and their friendship, because once on the river, the only way out is downstream.

The Homathko spilled from the end of the long, narrow lake near a dilapidated shack perched on the water's edge. We found the tiny creek to be about twenty-five feet wide and flowing, perhaps, 300 cfs. Small by any standard. None of our research had indicated how much water we might find at the river's origin, but we were hoping for low volume and it seemed we had lucked out. Still, we had our first of many river side conferences to decide if we should proceed.

"It wouldn't be an adventure if you knew everything that was going to happen."

That was our expedition motto. We buttoned up our dry suits and slipped silently downstream.

The little river moved swiftly through a valley of birches and aspens. Within the first three miles, four creeks fed into the river, changing its clear waters to silty gray. Tributaries boosted the Homathko's volume quickly and within a few hours the icy river was running over 2000 cfs! We knocked off several miles of easy rapids before coming to a section that was noticeably more steep and continuous. The river was getting powerful. Over the next mile we scouted several times.

By late afternoon the head wind had become so strong that paddling was difficult. Our faces were stung by spray being whipped off the waves and it got cool as the sun fell behind the mountains. We set camp on the shore of a long rapid and made the best of a less than perfect site strewn with logs and piled high



somewhere in the first 15 miles.

McEwan

with car sized boulders. We dried our gear near the fire while we ate and studied ~~our~~ maps to see what lie ahead.

The Homathko already had plenty of water. Maybe too much. Judging by high water marks left along the banks, the river sometimes ran much higher. But, it was clear that the river wasn't exactly low either. There would be more tributaries ahead and things would be getting big before long. There could be no turning back. So, with that thought in mind, we slept along the banks of the Homathko. It was a cool night and a few drops of rain fell on the tent.

The next day started with several miles of pushy rapids. Eddies were scarce and we scouted frequently. The first big rapid was a solid class V. It was a ten foot ledge, formed like an upstream vee, with an approach through large crashing waves. The entire left side looked horrendous. The "best" line on that side would lead to a chaotic, boiling cauldron that plunged over a second, smaller

drop. A boater too far left would be slammed into a nasty undercut ledge that jutted out from shore. So, all this considered, we decided to go down the far, far right. A nice theory.

Jamie peeled out into the current first, but found that getting to the right was tricky. The water was pushing hard for the left and he lost his line when he got a bad surf on a powerful, surging eddy line. He tried to ride it out and work himself back to the right, but was rejected and forced to commit to the turmoil on river left. Jamie drove hard for the center of the vee and plunged over the edge, disappearing in the chaotic foam pile below. But he surfaced quickly and paddled over the second smaller drop with a huge smile on his face. His unintentional probe of the left convinced Doug and I to follow the same route, which we did, without incident.

As we moved downstream every creek we passed was nearly bank full, pumped up by glaciers melting in the summer sun. The river got bigger with each passing mile and the gradient steepened as the high canyon walls closed in upon us. We thought this section might be the Great Canyon that was shown on our map, but a short stretch of easier rapids and the entrance of Nude Creek from the right awakened us to the fact that it was still ahead.

The river bent to the left and disappeared over a river wide

horizon line. We approached cautiously and tried to get a look downstream, without success. I thought that I might get a better view into the canyon if I were to wade around a huge ledge that jutted out from the right shore.

Doug reluctantly agreed chiding, "Wading only, no swimming!"

I tied off and was belayed around the rocky outcrop. I had no intention of getting myself killed, but I'm sure this move wouldn't win any safety awards. Unfortunately, my excursion around the ledge offered little insight to what lay beyond the canyon's bend. The rapids didn't look user friendly and there was no visible shoreline, only vertical canyon walls. I blew the whistle and they reeled me back upstream around the rock.

THE DEATH MARCH

We had anticipated a hard portage, but nothing could have prepared us for what lie ahead. It was late afternoon by the time we started up the left shore. The hillside was extremely steep and we had to haul our boats upwards, hand over hand, using our throw-ropes. Two guys would climb up to the base of a cedar or fir tree and toss a rope down to the third, who would hook up the boats. Once hauled up, they would be hooked into webbing around a tree or boulder to keep them from plunging back down, like plastic torpedoes, to the bottom. The third man would frequently have to scramble up with each boat to guide it over rocks or branches that interfered along the way.

After five hours it was clear that we would never reach the summit without camping. It was nearly dark, we were exhausted and desperately thirsty. So while Doug and I scrambled back to the river for water, using a stow-float bag for a huge canteen, Jamie set up our mountainside bivouac. Our struggle seemed even more depressing when we were able to get back down to the river in only 40 minutes!

The next day offered more of the same, although Doug did spice things up when he stepped on a bees' nest and was stung a dozen times. Near the top of our climb we were able to "double carry", taking our gear and our boats in two separate trips. We would carry our gear a few hundred meters, ground it, then return to get our boats.

By noon we had reached the top of our climb — over 1200 vertical feet above the river! Still, snow covered mountains rose far above us. The view was spectacular and we could see several miles of river valley ahead. From this vantage we could use the compass to accurately locate our position on the map. This was important since we were well-away from the river and it would have been very easy to get lost in the dense forest. Finally, something I'd learned in the Army put to good use!

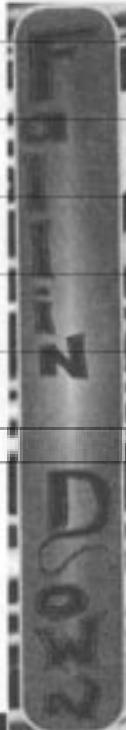
Getting down was tough. We sweltered in the sun as we carefully belayed our boats and rappelled down short, but steep, cliff faces and long slopes of unstable rock. The cool, wet weather of our first day was only a memory. Our drinking water was gone, which made our decent even more trying.

If things weren't exciting enough, a frayed grab loop on Jamie's boat broke at the top of a long talus slope, sending the C-1 careening and cartwheeling down the hillside. We stood awestruck as his boat did barrel rolls down five-hundred feet of rock slide before coming to rest against some downed trees. The air was filled with the anticipated smell of epoxy fumes as the boat's expedition lay-up was put to the "mother of all endurance tests." We scrambled down to find the boat had been given a solid and thorough beating, but, amazingly, it wasn't too badly damaged! We laughed hysterically and breathed a giant sigh of relief.

We reached the river before dark and were rewarded with a terrific campsite on top of huge, moss covered boulders. Exhausted after not drinking all afternoon, we guzzled river water like men who had been lost in the desert. Our view upstream revealed little about what lie inside the canyon we had spent thirty hours portaging. Only big rapids sluicing between sheer canyon walls.

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BACK ON THE RIVER

The next morning we paddled less than a mile before coming to another canyon. We took out on the left and easily ferried across Doran Creek, which lay in our portage path. The flooded torrent combined with the Homathko to become a churning maw that fed into a long, narrow and spectacular gorge. Its vertical walls squeezed until the gorge was only fifteen feet wide and eighty feet deep! Our decision to portage was quick and we set out to get it done as soon as possible. The going was easy when compared to our previous ordeal and we were able to portage the second canyon in only five hours.

We launched back into a narrow and boily rapid in mid-afternoon. The river had become much more powerful and the eddies were churning wildly. Even small, glassy waves surged to become munchy, crashing holes. Still, we managed to cover a few more miles before we were forced out of our boats again to portage another short canyon. Now it was early evening, so we hauled our boats up to camp overlooking the short, violent gorge.

KLATTASINE CREEK

The next morning we were back on the river early, but found ourselves portaging again within a mile. The Homathko was proving to be a formidable challenge and even the portages took an interesting twist.

Klattasine Creek, an extremely steep tributary that blocked our path, made an otherwise easy portage into a major project. We were forced to set a zip line in order to ferry our boats and gear above the water. Sure, this sounded simple, but we still needed to get someone across the torrent in order to set and operate the scheme. Doug sent Jamie and I upstream to find a sane place to cross while he searched downstream for a narrow place to set our line.

We scrambled over a tangle of logs to an island and found a narrow, but treacherous-looking possibility at the brink of a trashy drop. Jamie thought that he could ford the icy waters on a partially submerged log if I belayed him from shore. I studied the route carefully and pondered his plan.

"Jamie, I realize that you know much more about this type of thing than I do, but ... Are you fucking nuts?"

"No, really, I see the line, I can do it," he said.

I really thought that McEwan was losing his mind. Maybe he had struck his head somewhere along the way. Disgusted, I stormed upstream to find a better place to cross, but returned shortly, ready to face the grim reality. Jamie was right, this was the best spot and I conceded that it would be my job to help him.

With belay rope set Jamie began crawling across the log, moving slowly as he struggled to hold on with his arms. The rest of his body hung downstream in a body-surfing fashion. The frigid water piled against his chest and occasionally surged over his face as he

inched along. I diligently worked the rope that kept him from being swept downstream over the next drop. Within a minute he reached the other side and we quickly set up a rope for my uneventful crossing. Maybe this wasn't so bad after all.

Doug had found a great place to set up the zip line and had all of our gear ready to go. Things went well and we moved our boats and gear across the creek without any problems. Now all that remained was to get Doug to our side, so we could resume our march.

Doug came upstream to where we had crossed and looked puzzled, as if to say, "How the hell did you guys cross this mess?"

Communication was difficult over the roar of the rapids, but he got the idea and began to fasten his gear for the crossing. Suddenly, Doug slipped and fell into the creek and was swept to the very brink of the trashy boulder sieve! Luckily, he grabbed onto the same log that Jamie had used to cross and then the rope. We acted quickly to tighten the belay. Doug's fight to stay above water seemed an eternity as he tried, without success, to work himself over to our side. Finally he retreated and crawled back on shore, exhausted and visibly shaken.

To avoid further problems we set up a double rope traverse above the creek and Doug carefully shimied across on the precarious bridge. We celebrated when he was finally safe on our side, grateful that this obstacle was behind us. After a tense two hours we had barely moved ahead fifty meters.

A few more hours of bush-whacking got us back on the river at mid-afternoon. We ran some really big whitewater and so covered the next few miles in only an hour or two. There were a few scouts and a few sneaks, but we were moving. We needed to move, too, because we still had thirty-five miles to cover including Waddington Canyon. Our plane was supposed to pick us up the next day and we would only be on time if all went well.

By late afternoon the rapids got easier and the valley opened up. We became optimistic that the river's intensity had waned. But then the

walls choked in abruptly. We knew that we had reached Waddington Canyon. Our map showed the narrow gorge with only one contour line crossing the river. Still, considering the size of the rapids that we had run all afternoon, we had serious reservations about what lay within the mile long canyon.

Once again we were faced with a major scouting problem. We could see nothing from the left shore except the beginning of the big entrance rapid. We climbed high above the river and still saw nothing. Jamie tried to climb up a bald rock face for a better look, but his footing broke loose and he was forced to retreat. Disgusted, we ferried to the other side of the river to see if that was any more promising. Somehow, it seemed unlikely that we would make our plane the following day.



Crossing gear over Klattasine Creek. Doug Gordan in the tree on far shore.

photo: J. McEwan

Our view of the canyon was slightly better from the right. The first rapid had turned to run-out and downstream we could see one big eddy against the far left wall. The Homathko was moving like a runaway freight train and the left shore was a three hundred foot wall!

Jamie and Doug went on a recon mission while I set up camp. They returned late with indefinite results. Even from high above the river they were unable to see into the throat of the canyon. It's high walls tapered back for thousands of feet, making any view of the water impossible without some serious rock climbing. Their only observation was that the sounds of the rapids seemed to be quieter. I was not put at ease. While another "Death March" wasn't appealing, it did seem better than committing to a blind canyon.

We discussed our options over a late dinner. For me, the decision was obvious. Paddling blindly into Waddington Canyon, with well over 25,000 cfs.

on the hunch that it sounded "quieter" seemed a little reckless. We all had seen other canyons upstream. They were chaotic, drowning machines that would make a meal of anyone that chose to take them on. Still, Doug and Jamie seemed willing to paddle down to the far left eddy for a look around the bend. The problem was that there was no way to retreat from that eddy if things looked bad. The current was too strong to paddle back upstream and we had neither the skills or equipment to perform a rope rescue from the high cliffs above. Outside rescue would be the only option.

While I admired their bravery, I did not admire their reasoning. I was afraid that concern for getting out on time was clouding their judgment. Jamie more than Doug; but Doug seemed more worried for Jamie's sake.

We would be a day late, so what?! I argued that our success would be measured by arriving at Butte Inlet safely. The biggest failure would be for one of us to die, or to require outside rescue. We got ourselves into this thing and we would damn sure get ourselves out!

The group discussion was emotional, but civilized. Now, the decision would rest on Doug's shoulders. He was faced with his toughest choice as trip leader. He would have to decide what direction the group would go. The decision would be made in the morning. I don't think that any of us slept soundly that night.

THE FINAL CLIMB

We got an early start up the hill. Although it was very steep, we double carried much of the way. One section of exposed ledge forced us to use ropes, but only for a few hours. We worked feverishly to end what we hoped would be our final portage. After thirteen hours we decided to call it quits. It was dark and we were beat, having gone all day without stopping. We set camp in the forest high above the river.

The next day offered the steepest terrain yet. We were still over



Doug Gordon at the port-in below Klattasine Creek portage.

Photo: J. McEwan

500 vertical feet above the river. Jamie went ahead to scout a manageable route down the mountainside. He was obviously feeling pretty comfortable on the rocks, so he dragged us down the steepest, most direct route to the river. I am not a climber so my butt cheeks were pinched pretty tightly. We were on belay constantly and the going was very slow. It took nearly six hours to get to the water. About half way down Jamie grinned and admitted sheepishly, "I guess this is a little steeper than I thought."

BACK ON THE RIVER... FINALLY

Our difficult decent ended as we dangled our boats to the water and climbed down to the swirling eddy on some exposed tree roots. Not a great put-in, but everybody, especially me, was glad to be back on the water. We drifted over to

a gravel bar to fasten our gear and look back up into Waddington Canyon. The big river was churning, but we still couldn't see any real rapids. We began to wonder if we had portaged in vain.

From high above the river, during our portage, there appeared to be a long, playful rapid just downstream of the canyon. But from water level we saw a major horizon line and felt the roar of a substantial rapid. The Homathko was plunging through the last major drop of the trip with Grand Canyon size waves, huge crashing holes and giant log jams. This was the river's last hurrah. The chaos stretched out before us for nearly a mile. We ferried like our lives depended on it to the far shore for a good scout, then began to work our way down the big rapid. It was mid-afternoon and we needed to reach Scar Creek, a logging camp three miles down. It was the only place within a hundred miles that had a radio-phone, and we needed to contact our pilot and get word out that we were O.K.

The river moved at an incredible rate and we made it to Scar Creek within an hour, straggling into the isolated camp like aliens from another planet. The place was quiet, with most of the workers out in the forest. Only the camp cook and some engineering students were around. They were puzzled as to what we were doing out on the river.

"Aren't there rapids up there?" one asked.

The pilot had looked around for us the previous day while on another pick-up, but didn't see us and figured we were running late.

"Yeah, and your wife has been calling," he said to Jamie.

We would need to meet the pilot the next morning, down at the inlet, twenty-eight miles away. It was already late afternoon, but we were determined to make Butte Inlet...even if we had to paddle into the night.

Once on the river we spent all of our energy trying to get the hell off of it.



Jamie McEwan runs a rapid. Tiedman Glacier in the background. Photo: D. Gordon

Jumping back onto the Homathko was like grabbing onto a roller-coaster. We careened towards the sea on swift, but easy rapids that were flowing at over 31,000 cfs. A little paddling moved up the pace and we were able to cover the twenty-eight miles in only three hours!!

BEWILDERED

Butte Inlet was strangely silent as we drifted in the calm water; amazed and bewildered. The last thirty miles had whizzed by in what seemed an instant. The previous thirty had taken us a week. We had completed the Homathko River, from the mountains to the sea, with our bodies and our friendships intact. For a week we had run huge rapids and endured horrendous portages.

Wasn't it funny? We had spent so much time, effort and planning to get ourselves onto the Homathko. Once on the river we spent all of our energy trying to get the hell off of it. I guess that's what an expedition is all about.

Our flight back up to Tatlayoko Lake answered a few questions and left others a dark mystery. Waddington Canyon did appear runnable from high above, but we never could see what lie inside the first Great Canyon. From thousands of feet above the river we sat in exhausted silence, gazing down into the valley we had just traversed. The roar of the plane's engine made conversation impossible.

Maybe we could have learned more about the river if we had scouted by plane or helicopter beforehand. There were some horrendous portages, perhaps more than we would have liked. But, the real reward of the Homathko was that we went where only a few boaters have ever been. And, judging by our experience, its a place that few are likely to go.

Sure, we could have studied more and planned every step of our way, using only the most reliable information, but...

...It wouldn't be an adventure if you knew everything that was going to happen!

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A WHITE WATER RAID



Eco Racing in South Africa

Corran Addison is a well known boat designer, extreme racer and rodeo boater, as well as well as a founding member of the World Kayak Federation.

by Corran Addison

Imagine a race where a team of five athletes run, ride, climb, bike and raft across Southern Africa. Make it 700km long, and give it a 12 day time limit. Then make 200 of those 700km whitewater. Now that sounds like my kind of race.



The Umkomass proved to be a challenge to all the team, but I knew the river like the back of my hand, and so we quickly made time on the other boats.

Photo: Outdoor Magazine

Well this race exists. It's called the Raid Gauloises, and it has been coined the "hardest and longest endurance race known to man". This year's, the 8th, is Frenchman Gerrard Fussill's masterpiece.

And what a place to have such an event. South Africa; a country of mixed races and religions. A country who's history of apartheid had suppressed 35 million blacks, coloreds and Indians for 42 years. Now the new, free South Africa, the Rainbow nation, would host the most grueling competition known to man, on the most demanding terrain. In these very hills King Shaka led his fearless armies time and again against the invading British. The British never once were victorious in battle, beaten by the land as much as by Shaka's Impi (army).



Photo: Outdoor Magazine

And to the North, Lesotho. A natural, impregnable fortress that is home to the Basotho people. A Nation that even Shaka was unable to conquer. To this day Lesotho has retained its independence, despite being completely surrounded by South Africa's borders. Above, a hole in the Ozone so large that it guarantees the inhabitants skin cancer and any intruder - particularly those of fair skin - serious burns.



Orienteering was an important part of the Raid Gauloises. It doesn't matter how fit your team is if you get lost. The Swedish team, that was one of the favorites to win, took a wrong turn the first day, and never caught up to the front again.

So if it wasn't fame and fortune, then it must be something deeper...more primal. Perhaps the need to prove that in adverse conditions we could survive. Perhaps, for me, it was the fact that all my life I had pushed the limits of my sport technically, but not once had I pushed my body to those same limits - not even when I was training for the Olympics.

Finally, after 16 hours of walking and running, I fell asleep with the knowledge

Fifty teams would enter the race, but only 21 would finish in the rankings. The elimination of one member of a team results in immediate disqualification from the rankings, though the rest of the team may continue for personal satisfaction. But isn't that what this is about anyway? The financial gain is minimal - \$20,000 for first place. Not much when you consider that it costs \$15,000 to enter a team. And fame? Well, perhaps if you fall off the edge of a cliff in front of a helicopter. Short of that, there is not much chance of fame, either.

My team consisted of Philippe Lepoul, a four time veteran of the Raid and French Olympic slalom coach; Kim Carter, a professional Triathlete ranked in the top ten world-wide; Jose Lopez and Peter Ndlovu, both sergeants in the South African Special Forces; and myself, a whitewater nut and enthusiastic mountain biker and rock climber. Having been assembled only two weeks before the Raid, we were not expected to go far against the teams that had been training for the whole year. In fact, most people wondered why we were even here.

And as I lay in a mud hut we had found after the first day's hiking up the face of the Drakensburg mountains into Lesotho, I, too, began to wonder why we were here. What had made us, five otherwise sane (clinically) individuals, take a challenge such as this. We knew that there was little chance that we would win the event, even with two highly skilled whitewater paddlers. After all, the French team ErTops (who in fact won for the second year) had 5 time world downriver champion Giles Zok on their side.

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that in the morning we would come to Senqu river. There we would make our mark.

By 4am we were once again at our near-run pace, up the face of a mountain and back down the other side, arriving finally in 33rd position at the beginning of the first canoeing section. The constant buzz of press helicopters guided us to the headwaters of the Senqu.

There we picked out our inflatable Metzeler and began to pump them up, while the rest of our team members packed our gear in waterproof bags. To one side, the French all-girls team, already reduced already to four by the grueling march through the African sun. On the other, another team like ours that had walked through the night, worn and ragged.

We were three hours behind the leaders when we finally set off in our boats, three in one, two in the other. The only whitewater experience the other three team members had was two days in a raft on an open river. Nothing had prepared them for this tight, technical mountain stream. But they were not daunted and fearlessly they pulled as we began to pass one team after another.

The casualties were high. Here we came across teams sitting on the banks staring blankly at their torn, deflated boats. There, a canoe wrapped around a rock, its passengers standing on the bank wondering how to get the boat off. Our goals were immediate, focusing each time on the next team ahead, stroking hard until we passed them. By the half-way mark we had passed 16 teams and had established ourselves as the fastest boats on the water by 30 minutes. Press helicopters ducked

down to water level to film our speedy descents through the rapids as we made steady progress.

Tributaries constantly fed the Senqu and it swelled. The rapids became bigger and the consequences of a flip more drastic. Here and there we came across bits of gear from other teams that were nowhere to be seen. So far Philippe's boat had flipped only once, but that was to change.

Tired, hungry and cold [we were paddling at 9000ft, and it had begun to rain], I began to lose concentration. Suddenly I was pulled off the back of the boat into the swirling water. I rose just in time to see the boat hit the next hole sideways, and the canoe and its occupants were dumped into the water. With only 30 minutes to go before a compulsory stop was enforced (six o'clock being the cut-off time for safety reasons), and 2 miles to go before the end, it was imperative that we wasted no time.

Still in the rapid, we righted the canoe, and began to climb aboard. By the time we exited the rapid we were paddling again. As hard as we could we stroked. We rounded the last bend and pulled up to the finish with ten

minutes to spare. To our surprise we were met by TV cameras and photographers, climbing over themselves to get a shot of our very unlikely team. In just 6 hours we had passed 21 teams, and moved into 12th position.

But things would not run as smoothly from that point on, and we struggled to hang onto our position. One night all five of our head lamps blew and we walked in circles for hours, finally arriving at the checkpoint in the wee hours of the morning, in 15th place.

The following two and a half days of horse riding proved to be more difficult than we had expected. But we maintained our position, walking the Lesotho ponies up the near vertical face of one mountain, just to slide down the muddy back-side of another and into a flooded river. Across the mountainous roof of Africa we went until we finally arrived at the next check-point, in 17th position.

And now for the hard part. Nearly 70 miles across some of the most rugged terrain I have ever crossed on foot. For 32 hrs straight, with only 30 minutes of rest, we plodded on, arriving at the top of Giant's Castle - the majestic

monument towering 10,000ft, only 120 miles from the sea. There, once again in 12th position, we began the mile long traverse across its face to a 300ft rappel down to the cliff base. With almost 1500ft of exposure, the going was slow. And the long day, exposed against the cliff in the sun, took its toll.

We were never to continue on to the next rafting section as a team. That night, at the next check point, Philippe fell gravely ill; a combination of diarrhea from the water, sun stroke and fa-

Photo: Outdoor Magazine



Walk, run, hike, climb, and then walk some more. Going without sleep for three days, carrying minimal food, and at the end of that, getting a few hours rest before doing it all over again.



Photo: Outdoor Magazine

tigue. We spent the night with him, waiting for the fog to lift so that he might be evacuated. Though we slept, our first rest in days, we were not only to lose our standing [officially we were now disqualified], but we were to succumb to more bad luck as the days passed.

Now in 30th position, we ran from check point to check point, passing one team after another. But a knee injury and a weakened ankle on the opposite foot from the weight compensation plagued me. Kim began to develop blisters. By that night we were reduced to a hobble. We arrived at the put-in for the next rafting section by mid morning, and there collapsed in the medical tent, waiting our turn for a miracle cure.

To our disgust all of the good rafts were taken and we were forced to depart with an unappealing barge with a leaky valve. The rafts were not supplied with a repair kit or pump, so we could only hope that the boat would make it to the next check point, where we could pump it up again.

The Mkomaas has some very challenging rapids. Every other rapid was marked with a notice to scout or portage. We paid no heed. I yelled to the officials that it was my home river and I knew the way. I had, in fact, never in my life been up that high on the river, and so each rapid was a complete mystery to me. We were on a time clock, the raft deflating quickly, but we began to pass one team after another. By mid afternoon we had passed 10 teams. We were finally forced to stop, the boat was simply too flat to continue.

We pulled over and there we sat, waiting for one of the helicopters to



pass over. After three hours one of the security choppers flew overhead, doing it's 6pm sweep. We flagged it down. A rather interesting concept, I might add, pulling over a helicopter as if it were a taxi-cab. They returned minutes later with a pump. But there we were, stuck for the night on the side of the river, rather than walking as we would have been had we completed the first section of the rafting.

The morning took us quickly to the next check point, where we began the 20 mile walk around the Deepdale gorge. The gorge boasts some of the best class 5 paddling I have done. Big waterfalls, slides and holes, all mixed into one...but this was not part of the Raid.

Neither Kim nor I were to finish. Our injuries were so bad that we crawled the last mile to the check point at the brink of Deepdale falls - a spectacular 30 foot waterfall, 300ft wide. At its brink was a tellifer line that each athlete had to cross in order to complete the walk to the second rafting section. We were ordered off the Raid by the doctor and helicoptered out to the next headquarters for medical attention.

Airborne, we waved goodbye to Jose and Peter, who would continue to the end, hooking up with the Belgian Cadac team that was down to three members.

But Kim and I were not to be stopped so easily. We had come this far, and we were going to finish. So, at dusk we took off on our mountain bikes (careful to avoid the Raid doctors that had been attending to us all day), and began the 150 mile cycle

to the finish. A night and a day it took before we finally arrived. Though we could not cross the line, we knew that we had done it...that we had gone all the way to the end.

Recovering at the five star Wild Coast Sun hotel, stiff drink in one hand, ice cream in the other, we were surrounded by the evacuees of other teams, and the first finishers of the Raid. There we waited for our team members to finish, meeting them finally on the beach as they walked the last few hundred meters to the end.

While I congratulated them for their heroic finish, I could not but feel envious of them. They had accomplished that which I had set out to do...and failed. They had realized that dream of pushing their bodies to the very limits, overcoming all obstacles, for the final goal.

But there will be another time. The next Raid Gauloises venue was announced at the award ceremony: The Philippines. Already I am putting together another team. There I shall endeavor to accomplish what I failed to do this time.

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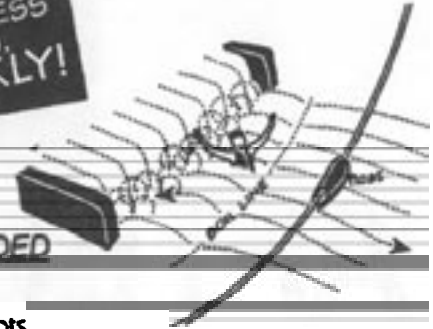
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Charlie Walbridge

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.

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TASTING QUEBEC'S WHITEWATER BOUNTY
by
Jeff Arco

AFTER THE DELUGE

"Oh then the Aux Ecorces will be a step up for you." This was inevitably the remark the veterans made when they learned that the hardest river I had ever paddled was West Virginia's New. I was wondering just how big a step it would be.

But here we were, in the Northern Quebec August twilight, trying to judge the level of the Aux Ecorces. Unfortunately, the gauges were concealed by trees twisted onto bridge pilings, 10 feet above the current waterline. The veterans had to rely on a three year old sketch of a concrete slab drawn in the margin of a 15 year old guidebook written in French. Their discussion focused on how many inches the slab should be showing in order for the river to be runnable. Their uncertainty was balanced by two facts: this part of Canada had been pounded by flood waters in July, and we were going to be among the first to get back on the river. After 15 minutes our trip leader, Robin Willard, announced we would tackle something different in the morning and return in the evening to re-check the slab. The veterans wondered if the river had changed; I wondered if I was ready.

All I'd heard about for the last five days was the Riviere Aux Ecorces. This was to be the centerpiece of the Greater Baltimore Canoe Club's two week Canada trip. Mentioning it always provoked debate regarding its ranking with the Upper Yough and Upper Gauley. With only two years of experience, I only aspired to run those "Uppers". But, here I was, skipping over those to run a river that might be even more difficult. In addition, no one could be sure of what lay in

wait as a consequence of the flooding. I agree that if you aren't uncomfortable you aren't being challenged, but this extra day of waiting was going to be unbearable. I was eager to run, but tomorrow, not the next day! Didn't Robin and the river gods know that I needed to sleep?

The campground suggested the severity of the flooding. Someone commented on the coating of dirt three feet up on all the vegetation. I foolishly attributed it to road dust, but then observed that the dirt was plastered to everything in all directions - the result of being submerged. The alarming aspect was that the nearest water now was a lake more than 300 yards away! All that water had come from somewhere, and that somewhere was the Aux Ecorces. Now my dreams, if I slept, would be filled with strainers and fresh, jagged rocks.

The next morning the female mosquitoes rose to a breakfast of blood. They wouldn't be disappointed. But I was determined to suppress their appetites for mine. I sat in my poorly ventilated K-Mart tent and pumped DEFT-Plus all over. After I stopped coughing and my eyes cleared, I realized I had just broken nearly every safety warning printed on the label. At least I didn't drink any of it, and the mosquitoes were staying away.

Our substitute river for the day was the

Shipshaw. We drove through town to find the take-out and joked about stopping at the curb-side car wash the local fire department was having. We probably looked like potential customers to them. We waved politely and continued to the takeout bridge. They were a bit disappointed when, twenty minutes later, we were back—stymied by flood damaged roads—and only wanted directions.

Even though our party's French consisted only of the refrain of the Beatles' "Michelle," Robin and Norm Fairhurst, our 62 year old birthday boy, attempted to get directions. The firefighters eventually grasped what we wanted. As men will do, they congregated and argued in French about the best way to the bridge. Realizing this was draining manpower from his carwash, the chief broke up the dithering by indicating he would ride along and direct us to the bridge. I felt certain that bold actions like this had elevated him to his current rank.

The put-in for the Shipshaw is on raft company land. There is a nice picnic area next to it with a glassy three-boat surfing wave extending into a grabby hole. It was easy to imagine moonlit rodeos. Our downstream progress was delayed while we played.

Once downriver we previewed our scenery for the next four days. Dark, tannic water and vivid green foliage, broken only by the white trunks of the birch trees; all under a canopy of deep blue

I never thought class VI water could be a relief.



Trip leader Robin Willard running the second drop of Double Ledge on the Aux Ecorces.

sky. But mud stained trees knitted horizontally into the tree line detracted from the splendor. The veterans were eager to see if the *Shipshaw* had been altered by the recent flooding.

Unfortunately, one thing that had not changed was the "lake/drop" nature of many Eastern Canadian rivers. The "lakes" exact a price of patience and endurance for the good of whitewater. We ran several class III and IV rapids, one requiring a brief scout. Then we reached an unrunnable waterfall. We admired it, portaged it, then began our one and a half hour flatwater grind to the takeout.

The whitewater on the *Shipshaw* had kept my mind off the pending Aux Ecorces trip. With that behind, my questions about the big run began to resurface. How big a step up was the Aux Ecorces? Was I ready? Should I excuse myself and run something different? Considering all the downed trees, could rapids still be portaged? Relief from all this nagging came in the form of the last rapid above the takeout. I never thought class VI water could be a relief.

We scouted this monster from the flood-closed bridge at the bottom of the rapid. River left and center offered class six drops into giant hydraulics. River right offered a class five sneak.

This route had slim lines on left and right, with a jagged, rooster-tail filled sieve occupying the center. The right line was the most accessible, but it had bridge piling rebar at strainer level that extended into the tongue. To access the left line required negotiating a hole directly above the sieve. No margin of error existed between glory and a nasty grating. My decision should have been easy, but my judgment was distorted by anxiety and the flatwater drudgery. After some internal debate I came to my senses grabbed my boat, and walked like everyone else. Everyone, that is, except for Chris Paraino.

Chris didn't spend much time on the bridge deciding. He was joining us fresh off a 17 hour drive from Baltimore and a week old descent of the Upper Blackwater. He wasn't here to walk the class five stuff. He only paused long enough to allow us to set safety on shore and in the pool below. Once preparations were completed, we watched him run our walk. He started in the pool from river right, crossed a pushy current, crested the guard wave, then slammed into the hole above the sieve. He side surfed it to the left, peeled out into the tongue and whooshed to the bottom of the rapid. Clean as a whistle! "Why do some paddlers have to make it look so

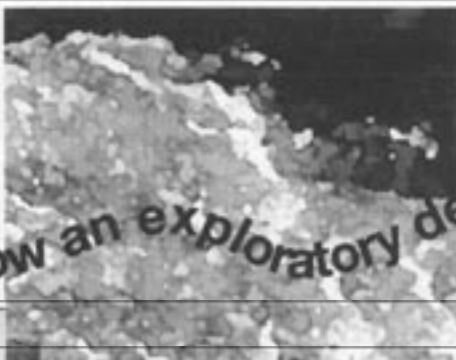
easy?" was my new question.

That night we celebrated Norm's 62nd birthday by letting him choose the restaurant. He picked the "green one over there." French-Canadian pepperoni pizza perplexed the group. Some claimed it was salami, others swore it to be a low-grade lunchmeat conglomeration. Others actually believed it was pepperoni. We also learned that "barbecue chicken" in French means french fries smothered in beef gravy and cheese. Katie, our youngest paddler at 14, fared best by bringing McDonald's from next door. Our hostess from the "green one over there" frowned at this maneuver. By the time we left a visit to the bridge to view our slab was out of the question. For me it would be another night of speculation.

The next morning our visit to the bridge over the Aux Ecorces showed the concrete slab still under too much water. The substitute for today would be the Belle Riviere. As best we could decipher, the Belle is rated a continuous class III, with three class VI's. After scraping through the first two rapids, we tried to buoy our spirits by talking about rivers that start bony, but develop into great runs. But now hand propulsion was getting equal time with the paddle.

The "fun" run

was now an exploratory descent of a new river.



Kim Willard on the last drop of the Aux Ecorces.

When there was water, it was just enough to get pinned. Soon we were sitting on our decks in the middle of the river, eating lunch, realizing that this river was a bust. Yesterday we complained of the "lake/drop" nature of the Shipshaw. Today we had "continuous". Too bad we had no water. If we had known that "Belle Riviere" in French means "dry gulch", we would have taken our chances on the raging Aux Ecorces.

The grueling character of our seven mile scrape did not hide the extreme flood damage around us. There were the usual mud stains and felled trees, but there were also entire hillsides that had slid into the river. Large sections of the river bed were studded with new, sharp rocks.

After six hours of manual labor we arrived at the take-out. There was the bridge, or what was left of it. There were the summer chalets. There was the road. The only thing missing was shuttler Bob Opatchko and the van. We hauled our boats from river to shore, (there was very little distinction), and began to look for Bob. A crowd of 20 locals quickly gathered to gawk at the foolish folks who had just crawled down their waterless river. We asked if anyone had seen a blue van. They looked at each other,

shrugged and shook their heads.

Minutes later an older man pulled up on an ATV and unfurled a topographic map of the region. Using recognizable points, we learned that our seven mile paddle was actually supposed to have been 14. Our shuttle van was probably awaiting us downriver at a bridge too far away. Another resident offered a ride. By the time Bob and the van were reunited with us, the sun and temperature were going down. Retrieving the other vehicles would take at least an hour.

Back at the take out we found the others sitting comfortably around a fire and sipping hot tea in the back yard of a chalet. While we were exchanging raunchy jokes, they had been exchanging pleasantries with their **French-Canadian** hosts.

The next morning we were back at the Aux Ecorces bridge for another look at our concrete slab. It had dropped, but still not enough to suit Robin and Norm. Today's substitute would be the Metebetchouan. Robin, his wife Kim, and Norm assured us it would be fun since the Met was a continuous class III. This was going to be a great way to spend a day waiting for the Aux Ecorces to drop.

Flood damage met us at the put-in; what had been a cozy riverside chalet was now nothing more than a foundation. With that to our backs we began our "fun run." The first two rapids delivered as billed. We picked our lines with a premium on **surfing** waves. In the pools below, we congratulated one another on good surfs. Smiles and laughter all around.

Then the metamorphosis began. The mood of the trip reflected these changes. The "fun" run was now an exploratory descent of a new river. The rules of the day also changed. We now played follow the leader through the new rapids, Chris taking probe. In the pools below we congratulated each other on dodging this hole or avoiding that pinniig rock. Now the smiles were grim and the laughter was nervous.

The Metebetchouan turned out to be a good test, but I suspected that tomorrow would be the final exam. This was our fourth night in **Hebertville**, two more than we'd intended. Next day we would run the Aux Ecorces, regardless of the amount of water in it. I hoped I was sufficiently tired to sleep.

Monday morning arrived with a scud of low, gray clouds; a contrast to the three days of blue **sky**. I wondered if it was trying to warn

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me of something. I kept telling myself that this was just a normal phase of the jitters. We drove to the bridge for one final peek, then each paddler made his/her decision. Some decided to go back to the Met but I suppressed the urge. Evening rendezvous plans were set, the groups split, and our adventure began. If growth is the result of being uncomfortable, I was in a spurt.

The day was eventful from the start. The road to the put-in became impassable so we had to put in upstream. The result was an extra three miles of flat water on a six mile whitewater run. More time to think, just what I needed. There was no **chit-chat** at the put-in, only Robin reminding us to double-check our ropes, breakdown paddles, extra food, med kits, and river saws. There was no way of knowing what we would encounter downriver and Robin wasn't going to let us get caught unprepared. Norm broke the silence by telling a story about a silent put-in before running Lava Falls during a Grand Canyon trip. It produced no conversation. If I had been the only one brooding I would have written it off, but everyone not talking was too much.

Action is what I needed. Instead, I got three miles of flatwater. Of course, I paddled solo far in front, accompanied by my jitters. Jeff Charuhas paddled up. As I said "It could be worse, it could be raining," it began to rain. That produced a good laugh that was broken by the roar of the first rapid.

Double Ledge is its name. Norm reminded us to carry our ropes on every scout, since you never know what will happen. Chris ran **first** after we scouted and set safety. Inspired by his success and eager to focus on action, I ran second. It was a great tonic for a case of the jitters. **All** speculation was banished once we were committed to the run. In the pool below Robin offered us a last chance to take the road back to the trucks. We all declined.

"The next scout was for a river wide hole with a slim line on river left. Before we could say we were walking, Chris was back in his boat, angling for the sneak. Fortunately, we all had our ropes, because the "line" fed back into the hole. Chris was immediately drawn in and side surfed, desperately trying to get to the exit. But the hole was not cooperating. Robin hit him with a rope, but Chris window shaded. When he came up, the rope appeared to be twisted around his chest.

After another power roll, he wet exited, leaving his boat in the hole. Two more ropes failed to reach him, but, by then, he was in an eddy watching his boat and other gear wash downriver. Robin, Kim, and Norm jumped in their boats and raced to collect Chris and the wreckage. Jeff and I policed the ropes. When we finished, we realized that everyone else was somewhere downriver around a left

bend. My jitters reappeared.

Jeff, a solid Class V boater with years of experience took charge of reuniting the group. After seeing the failed shore rescue and swim, I was eating plastic just by sitting in the boat. Jeff shouted to follow his line and catch all his eddies. We continued in that manner for about 200 yards until we rounded the bend and the group waved us in from shore. Chris was fiddling with a broken breakdown when Norm spotted and retrieved his two week old Silver Creek paddle. We ate a small snack, then shoved off.

The river continued as **III/IV** until we heard a roar. This was "On the Wall." The scout from river left was not encouraging. A massive hydraulic yawned from the **cliff** on river left to a pinning rock right of center. The old sneak on the right was now a maze of exposed jagged rocks thanks to the recent flooding. We saw no **runnable** line, and on first look, no feasible carries, either. After some scrutiny, Robin spotted a one boat eddy just above the gallery rocks on river right. The move was to ferry between two holes, then catch the must make eddy. A miss meant a certain pin. The uncomfortable feeling that accompanies challenge and growth reappeared. We all pulled it off without a hitch.

Around the corner Triple Drop lurked. We boat scouted and ran the first two, then shore scouted the third. Satisfied that the **third** was **runnable**, Chris, Robin, and Norm showed the way. Seeing each of them successfully take a slightly different line made me feel better. Below this rapid was a 12 foot waterfall, our last scout of the day. Emboldened by Chris's example, we all took the plunge. We had smiles on our faces as Robin told us that the last section of the run after the confluence with the Chicoutimi was nothing more than continuous class **III**. Robin claimed we could "put our paddles on the deck and relax."

This description was very appealing to us after all our flat and whitewater exertion. Too bad it was no longer accurate. Yes, the Chicoutimi was continuous, but since the flood it was class N. There were new rocks, holes, and drops. Once again we were playing follow the leader through the rapids. This section had been rearranged just like the Metabetchouan.

Eventually the whitewater surrendered to flat water and we were into the two mile paddle across Lake Kenogami. Once again, I was out in front, alone with my thoughts. This time I wasn't harassed by my fears and anxieties. They'd been subdued five hours earlier at Double Ledge. Instead, I was basking in elation and confidence. The floods of July had changed these rivers, and in a small way, they had changed me, too.

Willie Kern, coach, Team Adventure/The Academy at H.Q. launching off the 50+ foot, postcard falls, Aqua Azul Mexico.



IN THE LAND OF AN ACADEMY AT ADVENTURE QUEST' JOURNEY "EL NORTE"

by Peter Kennedy

"You are better off without us," Whitney translated the excited Spanish, yelled by our Guatemalan National Police escorts, as they proceeded to spin their police car around and high tail it in the opposite direction. As the traffic came to a screeching halt and smoke billowed on the horizon, we began to get the big picture — PROTEST, Guatemalan style. Our facial expressions said it all - How did we get into this mess?

Let's drift back a few weeks, when our eventual group of fourteen departed from Woodstock, Vermont. This inaugural journey of the Academy at Adventure Quest was comprised of six student athletes and



eight staff (tutors and coaches), two vans, and a trailer full of slalom and rodeo boats, not to mention the mass of camping equipment, books, video cameras, slalom gates, first aid kits, a portable keyboard (music, not computer), personal computers, and one chess set. We were about to drive the 4000+ miles to LaCeiba, Honduras - our whitewater training grounds for the Winter. The Academy is dedicated to providing young adventure oriented students and competitive whitewater athletes with the opportunity to travel, train and compete, without compromising their academics. The Academy is based on the successful formula developed by some of the nation's ski academies.

The Academy's at A.Q.'s champa classroom, overlooking the Rios Cangreal, outside of La Ceiba, Honduras.



Our journey began on a cold January 17th, 1996, with extreme boater, Willie Kern; Academy education coordinator, Josh "Bones" Murphy; and myself ("el jefe" - roughly translated into "the boss", I think!), putting the final touches on van #1. Next, four of the six students accepted for the Winter term, Adam Boyd, Kyle Marinello, Justin Souter and Silas Treadway, arrived with their gear.

"Everything loaded?" Bones asked the assembled crew. We nodded and were off. Two hours south, we realized that Will's C-1 was not on board. Thanks to my wife, Kitty, and a side trip to pick up Academy tutor, Laura White, the boat and group were reunited, with little loss of time.

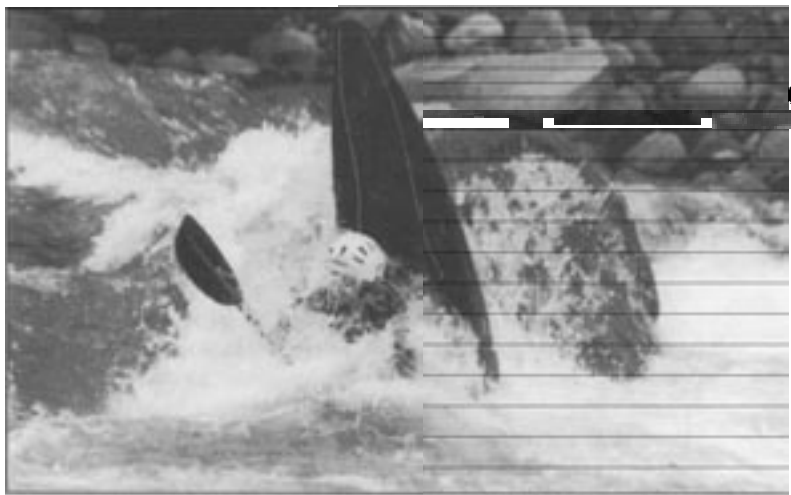
In North Carolina we picked up our second van, plus rodeo coach/tutors Shane Benedict (men's World Rodeo bronze medalist) and Jamie Simon (women's World Rodeo champion) and who would come to be our eventual savior, Spanish tutor/teacher/interpreter, Whitney Lonsdale. An uneventful, though tiring, straight

through drive landed everyone in San Antonio, Texas, the rendezvous for our assault on Central America. Here we met with student athletes Ethan Winger from California and Will Peterman from Idaho, plus slalom coach, Lee Leibfarth. Our crew was finally complete. A stop at The Alamo (our first history lesson!) and we were off towards Mexico.

We are not quite certain what the Mexican customs agents thought of our group. Personally, we didn't care, as long as ALL of our boats (over 30) and all of us got to the other side of the river. Mexico provided us with some of the more interesting moments of the journey, beginning with our first few days at expatriate Idahoan Grant Amaral's whitewater operation. The multiple drops of the

Micos Cascades proved to be an excellent venue for a test flight of Shane's new Perception Whiplash prototype. In the evening several students tested the patience of one large (and angry) tarantula as it crawled across the terrace! Too soon, it was goodbye to Grant and on to the ruins of Palenque and the cascades of Aqua Azul in Chiapas, Mexico.

Kyle Marinello gets a face shot on the Rio Cangreal, Honduras.



The Academy's Ethan Winger, slalom training in Honduras.



We'd been warned about entering Chiapas due to recent Zapatista uprisings, yet the lure of amazing ruins and big drops was too much for us to ignore. Seeing the stunned faces of our students as they exited the jungle and entered the clearings at the Palenque ruins would please any teacher. Where in the U.S. can you climb up, down, around, and though a major historic site? Our students were totally blown away at the immensity of Palenque, as they touched and studied ancient Mayan history. Loud hoots from the trees proved to be several Howler monkeys, also having a field day. That evening, we arrived in the valley of the Aqua Azul.

Turquoise blue water is hard to imagine unless you have seen it with your own eyes. The cascades of Aqua Azul came to U.S. attention with a photo ad of Jeff Snyder dropping off lofty Postcard Falls. But Jeff's boat and body took a bit of a beating on that pioneering descent. The 15 - 25 footers upstream,



looked exciting enough.

Yet, as the photo/video crew followed the group down the river, it soon became evident that Willie Kern, our education coordinator, was going to take - the "Postcard Plunge." Postcard Falls is a riverwide wall over 50 feet high, which terminates in a travertine pool. After a few looks over the brink, Willie's bright blue Hurricane slipped over the edge and into thin air. As Willie swam his slightly tweaked boat over to the pool's edge, the grin on his face told the whole story - Awesome flight! Our stay at Aqua Azul ended with a flip and dive contest from some of the lesser drops. An evening dinner of fried chicken and fish (eyeballs and all!) and it was time to head for Guatemala.

Shooting photos of armed troops is not a **super** idea we reminded Bones at our last Mexican **gas** stop! Traveling across Central American borders with a group of young students can be a physical and mental challenge. We'd heard all of the "horror stories" about traveling through these countries, but so far, few problems. At the Guatemalan border we were met by our National police escort, arranged through the embassy. Several hours later, after wrangling with the customs people ("yes, we need all of those boats - no we are not selling them in Guatemala"), we were off to Antiqua, our stop for the night.

An amazing city, Antiqua. Students from throughout the world come there to study Spanish. Our students were enthralled by the sidewalk shops and learned first hand the ancient tradition of "bargaining." Soon everyone was bedecked in colorful shirts.

PROTEST

This brings us back to the beginnings of our story. As the smoke billowed and traffic crawled to a halt, we learned that this protest involved the National Police. Evidently some recent murders in the local village had gone unresolved. The National Police were being blamed for turning their backs and supporting the local "mafia." Our wise escorts assured us that once the protest cleared (about



The Academy's Will Peterman, slalom training in Honduras.

two hours), we would be met again, on the other side. Sure enough, once safely through the burning tires and mobs of locals, a new police cruiser greeted us and, with blue lights revolving, led us to the border. In retrospect, having the police escorts certainly helped allay some of the jitters that we (and the students' parents) had about crossing Guatemala. Entering, passing through, and leaving Guatemala proved to be one of the easiest parts of our journey. Now, came Honduras.

Dick Eustis of Rios Honduras, our host, had warned us to take the "highland" border. So had Ray McLain and Tom Foster, who had made this trip only a few months before en route to Costa Rica. However, our escorts were concerned with the poor condition of the dirt road and suggested we take the "main border" instead. What a mistake! Senorita Whitney, to the rescue. After three hours of wrangling with customs agents (BIG customs agents) and negotiating bribes, Whitney managed to whittle \$600 down to \$30.

Now we were off into the wilds of Honduras - in the dark, no less. We'd been told, several times, not to drive at night. After dark the roadways become mass foot paths. Plus, most Central American drivers honestly believe that using their car lights will drain their battery.

But we had no choice! We eventually crawled into Santa Rosa se Copan around 9 p.m., found a place to stay and a decent pizza joint.

Late afternoon the following day we arrived in "The Land of El Norte." This weather phenomenon sweeps through coastal Honduras frequently, bringing torrential rains to the region. Just our luck, an "El Norte" had just blown through, flooding the roads and delaying our move into our living quarters. No problem, Dick arranged for us to stay at a wonderful, beach front hotel in La Ceiba.

The surf was literally UP (about 8-12 feet), providing the gang with several days of outrageous shredding. Two days later, we moved into our beach front house. For the next six weeks the staff and students took in

The Academy's cadet star, Scott Mann, getting a "second helping" on the Ocoee.



all of the sights, sounds, and experiences of Honduran living. Our new found friends, Pepe and Kent, opened their **champas** and properties to us, providing the finest in slalom and rodeo training sites on the Rios Cangreal, as well as the "coolest" classroom in the World. Where else can you study AP Chemistry from a hemp hammock, then, to cool off, just climb on the railing and drop three stories to the river below? We also learned a lot about Central American rules and regulations.

Whitney had to appear in court (and get fined), because I had ignored a police officer the day before (I wasn't wearing my seat belt!). After a while, we all got used to carrying \$30 in lempiras to pay fines. We learned to heed advise about peeling ALL fresh fruits and veggies - a bout of amoebic dysentery for almost everyone.

We took in the beauty (and frailty) of the surrounding jungles, islands, and reefs. A weekend flight to Roatan Island provided hours of world class snorkeling (watching Kyle swim after 3 ft. barracuda, not a great idea!). One field trip to a local nature reserve taught us volumes about rain forest destruction. The destroyed **chainsaw** monument required no explanation. Hiking into the **Pico Bonito** National Preserve, the countries highest and most remote peaks, provided hours of tramping among the flora and fauna of Honduras.

Above all, we learned about the warmth and friendliness of the Central American people. Playing soccer with



Silas Treadway, shredding up the "holodeck" playhole on the Rio Cangreal.



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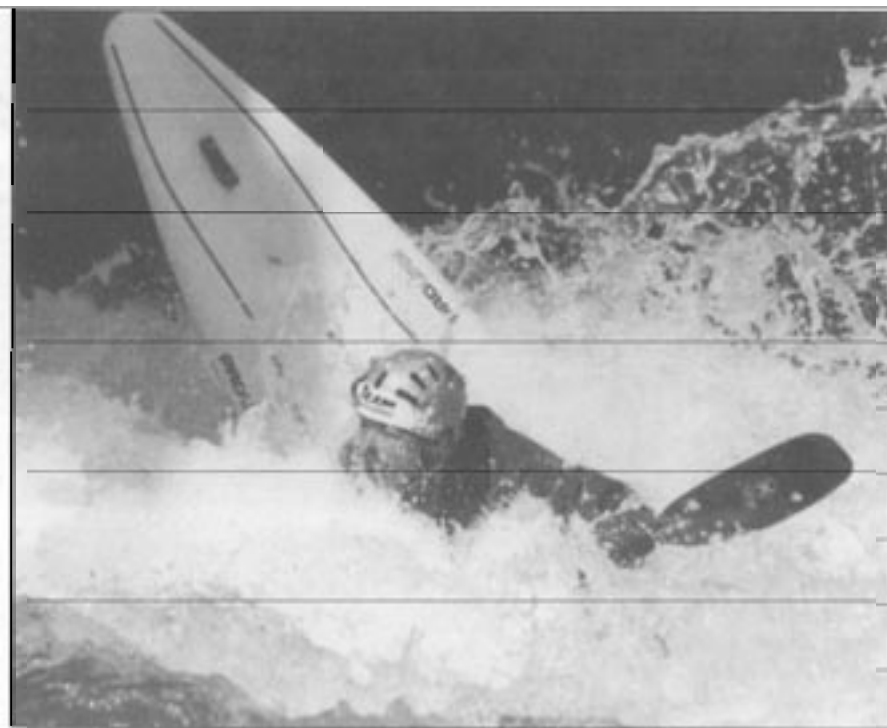
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The Academy at A.Q.'s, Nathan LaBrecque, tearing it up at the Ocoee.

the kids down the beach (even at age 8, they kicked our butts), taught our students more Spanish than any book. Being awakened each morning by Carlito (the young son of our campesino caretaker) setting off the van's alarm system, though annoying, was somewhat amusing. Finally, there was young Friday. He watched over our slalom gate 24 hours a day to be sure that the locals didn't take the much coveted wire and string (which we gave to him and the locals at the end of our stay). We also felt guilt and pain as we watched little kids dig through our garbage at the local dump. The scene reminded us that we were but "wealthy" Americanos in a very poor and simple culture.

Our six weeks in Honduras came and went too fast. As a big "thank you" for our new found friends and neighbors, The Academy staff and students hosted the first Rio Cangreal Whitewater Festival. Beginning with a slalom race in the

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morning, the Festival continued with a rousing whitewater rodeo contest in the afternoon and, as the daylight turned to dusk, concluded with an outstanding barbecue at Pepe's champa. The next morning, we all said goodbye to our hosts and started the long drive home.

Our trip home provided The Academy students with more opportunities to learn about and absorb the past and present. The ruins at Copan, though not as awe-inspiring as those at Palenque, provided a more in depth look at the archeology of the Mayan culture. Within a few short days, we were once again passing the long lines of cane trucks, en route to the sugar refineries in Mexico. Then, it was back across the border (were we supposed to stop at Mexican Customs?) and onto U.S. soil. The U.S. customs agents were a bit surprised that we had completed a 4000 mile journey with all of our "stuff." Would we do it again? In a heartbeat. But in the wise words of our host Dick Eustis, "Driving to Honduras once is an adventure, twice is a pain in the neck." The next time, we'll fly!

Was The Academy experience worth it for our students? We'd think the results speak for themselves. All six athletes returned to the United States, fully prepared to return to their home schools, as well as to immediately enter their competitive seasons. Silas and Adam qualified for Olympic Trials; Kyle made the Junior U.S. Team; Justin won the Junior K-1 class at the first Eastern rodeo of the season. Silas, Kyle, Justin, and Adam cleaned house at the

Potomac Festival and Great Falls Race. Justin and Adam graduated from high school (Justin to Fort Lewis, CO and Adam to Emory University, GA). Adam, Kyle and Will were top honors students; Kyle's Kellogg's kayaking commercial aired on National TV. Adam went to Europe and brought back the first C-1 medal since 1988 in Junior International competition. Will, Ethan, Kyle, Adam and their team mates went to Junior Olympics, bringing back tons of gold, silver, and bronze, as well as the "Team Trophy" for most medals won. Adam wins the C-1 bronze medal at the '96 pre-World Rodeo Championship and finally, Ethan, Kyle, and Adam win big at the Ocoee Rodeo.

The ending? No, this is just the beginning of The Academy at AQ story. This Winter of 1997 saw 14 Academy students and 6 staff, living, training, and studying in New Zealand. Based on it's success, The Academy has been given the green light to begin developing it's own curriculum. Our eventual goal is to become a fully accredited school for competitive paddlers, skiers, snowboarders, and adventure oriented students. The World is a huge classroom. We want to utilize every inch of it.



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Avoiding "LOW ANGLE" Vertical Pins

by Dana Edward Castro

If you think that you are too much of an expert for it to happen to you, don't read this. If you think you know all the techniques for avoiding vertical pins don't read this. If you think you "do ok" and that technique articles oriented toward safety are either for the extreme boaters or for the safety-techno-nerds, then don't read this. But if you think you might have something to learn, or at least could do with some review of a critical subject, read on.

The vertical pin. If there is a kayaker's nightmare, the vertical pin is it. Nothing is quite so overwhelming, terrifying, and unpredictable as the vertical pin. Giant recirculating holes, undercut rocks and strainers, while also potentially lethal, offer visible warning signs in most cases. Horizon lines with steam or flat foamy water behind them, or rocks with little or no upstream pillow, or the presence of sticks or logs protruding from the water are signs that even intermediate boaters can recognize. A deliberate effort to recognize these signs, coupled with constant alertness make these threats reasonably manageable.

However, the vertical pin typically gives no warning. You may be precisely on what you think is the best line. You may be within inches of the line taken by the previous dozen boaters. One moment you feel in control, then BAM, you are stuck solid, under water, with a fire hydrant pushing you from behind, wrapping you around the front of your cockpit rim. Yes, the vertical pin is another story.

The vertical pin, as it is called, is somewhat of a misnomer. They are in fact rarely vertical; while the bow of the boat is by definition lower than the stem, the boat may be steeply pointed down, or, in some cases, down only a little lower than the stern. What all vertical pins have in common is that while running downstream the bow of the boat has been stopped by an obstruction. Something then keeps the boat from pivoting around the obstruction and floating free. Water coming downstream pours onto the back of the boat holding it there, often with an enormous force, far in excess of the buoyancy of even high volume boats. While it is easiest to visualize this occurring in a steep narrow chute lined by rock walls, it is important to understand that it also can occur when rock is not visible above the surface. Even on popular intermediate rivers one often sees boaters plunge over small ledges and pourers, the boat diving deeply, then popping to the surface,

most often with a happy smile on the paddler's face. This is, in fact, quite fun almost all of the time. But the paddler has unknowingly learned to rely on a technique that could one day prove lethal.

The essential factor to understand is the action of the water on the boat once the boat has been stopped by an obstruction. If something such as a submerged wck or projection prevents the stem from swinging downstream, water will immediately start to pile over the stem, sinking the boat, even crushing it on the bottom. Minor and/or momentary instances of this probably have happened to nearly everyone who has ever savored whitewater.

Well, guess what? It doesn't take much water velocity and flow to generate enough downwards force to sink even a high volume boat to the river bottom. In short order the paddler pulls the spray skirt (now there isn't even much buoyancy left), and tries to get out. Well, try getting out (even of a keyhole cockpit) with a 300 pound gorilla pushing on your back. How about a 1,000 pound gorilla, if the current is really fast? Sure, high volume symmetrical boats like the Freetail, the Mongoose, the Crossfire, etc., are a little more resistant to this situation, but if you think it can't happen to those sort of boats, think again. And the new generation of nimble surf boats like the Hurricane, Sleek, and Pirouette S/S are tailor made to snag the bow, and sink the stem, and settle down for a little siesta on the bottom. Those wishing to enjoy these boats need not despair, however; for, as we will see, they offer certain distinct advantages to those willing to learn how to exploit them...

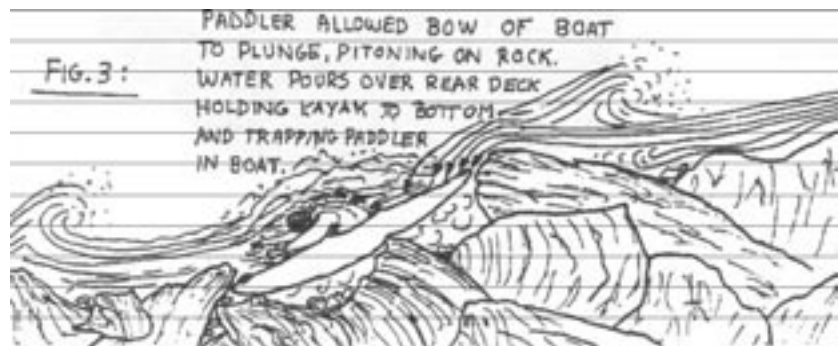
Below is an illustration of what I would call a "low angle" vertical pin occurring in the midst of a rapid.

Being even more unexpected than those which occur in steep and narrow chutes, low angle pins are even more ne-

farious. The point of risk is when passing through foaming water. There may or may not be a classic hole; nevertheless, the foam indicates some sort of depression in the river bottom which by definition must have rocks at the downstream end. If there is significant gradient and the underwater rocks at the downstream end of the depression are craggy or tilted upstream, then the possibility of a "vertical pin" exists. It is of note that while figure 3 depicts a kayak pointed dead downstream, there is typically at least a little angle to the side, with water going somewhat diagonally across the stem. Paddlers still in the earlier part of their learning curve should know that this can occur easily on intermediate, class III rivers, especially when rocky!

Considerable creative effort has gone into finding a way to help paddlers survive vertical pins. Breakaway cockpit rims, quick release foredecks, keyhole cockpits, handles or ropes on the back deck, and even breathing tubes through the spray skirt have been or are available. The keyhole cockpit in particular is a great advance. And the rescue technique of the tag line, as described by Charlie Walbridge (*American Whitewater*: January 1997), is something all paddlers should know.

What I am suggesting here, though, is based on the idea that "it is easier to stay out of trouble than it is to get out of trouble." There are a couple of techniques that can be incorporated into one's paddling style that will significantly reduce the risk of encountering a vertical pin. As a beginner 15 years ago I experienced several vertical pin situations. But in the last few years it has not happened, despite spending most of my time in squirt boats, and, more recently, plastic boats such as the Perception SS and now the Whip-It. I would be the last person to say "it can't happen to me", but the routine use of the techniques I will describe makes the likelihood less. I did not invent the techniques I describe below. However, while the majority of paddlers can "boof" adequately over a ledge into an eddy, fewer understand the application of boofing to "nor-



mal" paddling to reduce the risk of pitons, pins, and entrapments.

Remember, the risk is less under the foam. You can't always know what's down there, no matter how good you are at reading water! The technique is to use a final sweeping stern draw stroke when descending the green water and crossing the foam. While doing this one leans TOWARDS the side of the paddle stroke. This will raise the bow of the boat as well as accelerate downstream.

The angle of lean depends on the volume of the stem and how badly you want to avoid having the bow sink. A fifteen degree lean in a squirt boat would produce a head high stern squirt, but in a surface boat will raise the bow only a few inches. (Yes, the bow WILL go up some; at 165 lbs, I can easily crank up a Response a few inches.)

This must be coupled with the proper boat angle. If you want to cross a potential danger zone and exit heading to the left, one would approach pointing to the right slightly. (See Figure 4.) In the final few feet before hitting the danger spot, initiate the sweep on the right, beginning at around the cockpit area and sweeping back into a stem draw. The bow swings to the left, rotating through dead downstream as it rises up and a little over the obstacle (or at the very least does not sink). (See Figure 5.)



Maintains the sweep/draw long enough to get the boat pointed towards the left. At that point the draw will function as a brace (which will, at that point, be on the downstream side). If the paddle is kept down in the green current below the boat, it will also function as a propulsive stroke, driving the boat downstream, lessening the chance of becoming stuck in the hole. (See Figure 6.)

Finally, the left angle will also help to keep the boat from going deep, even if you do "lose the bow a little." When done properly, this move is not particu-

larly flashy or violent, like a boof off of a high ledge. Instead it is fluid stroke which is incorporated into a dynamic and continuous paddling style.

The choice of which side to sweep on depends on where you want the boat headed after exiting the danger zone. If you wish to head left, start the sweep pointing slightly to the right of dead downstream, as described above. It is worth noting that if you sweep on the right and don't manage to get the boat pointed at least a little to the left when you hit the white, that you will most likely end up conducting trout sightings. It is also worth noting that if the foam pile is a huge hole with white up to your eyeballs, this technique will not get you through as well as going straight and deep. On the other hand, if the foam is a flat recirculating hole, this technique might enable the boater to stay entirely on the surface.



Although this move contains many of the elements of the classic airborne boof, there are some notable differences. One is that while a last sweep is usually used with a boof, the paddle is typically moved forward in the air to allow an entirely new stroke upon landing in the water below. Another difference is that the boof is most typically a flashy move over a ledge, this move is a river running stroke that is barely distinguishable (to an observer) from the normal paddling strokes taken elsewhere on the river. Finally, the boof is most often into an eddy, while the move I am describing is designed to penetrate and pass by or over obstacles while running downstream.

If you start working with this technique on little holes and small breaking waves, the motion will slowly become internalized and will seem natural in more powerful water. The move constitutes a powerful river running tool because when done properly, the stroke is accelerative both before and after hitting the obstacle, the brace will be on the downstream side, the paddler will have a (chosen) direction

upon leaving the obstacle, and the bow will stay out of trouble. This move will contribute to making a fluid and dynamic paddling style in the rapids that just plain old feels good.

Now, here's a variation for the lazy-heads; a sneak-move, if you will. Unless a hole is huge or you absolutely know it to be safe, DON'T go through it straight on! I know this runs counter to what you probably heard as a beginner, but think about it. After a piton, the bottom of the river doesn't have to work too hard to hold you in place if your boat is lined up with the current. Get a reasonable side angle to start with, however, and the chance of rotating around the piton will be pretty good. Angles of up to around 45 degrees can be used without raising the chance of getting stuck in a hole TOO much, especially if you keep a paddle blade pulling down there in the green water. Most typical kayaks (Pirouette, Hurricane, Crossfire, etc.), can be angled quite a bit; truly plump and bulbous ones such as the Freefall and the Mongoose, less so.

Unless the water is truly extreme I believe that although lower volume boats may be slightly more likely to get pinned than bulbous ones, with the techniques I have outlined, the greater measure of control over boat attitude may often actually reduce risk.

So what I am talking about here is something to be used routinely, not just to be pulled out of the hat when necessary. It's work, but it's fun too. If you just want to get to the take out, drive there. If you just want to see the sights, take a raft. If you want to paddle, why not explore the technique? Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, maybe nine hundred ninety nine times out of a thousand, this stuff will be unnecessary. The one time that it was necessary, you won't even know that it was. That's the idea, right?





THE REAL SHIT

by Doug Ammons

Preface: At some point probably all of us tried to answer the question, "Why do we paddle?" It might be raised by a non paddling girlfriend (or boyfriend), parents, or even people who are just trying to make sense out of what we're doing in all that strange gear beside a big river. A harder question might be asked of the relatively small percentage of kayakers who pursue the sport to the upper levels of class five, which by definition is where you can expect to find both a high degree of difficulty and potential danger. When it comes to class five the question, "Why do we paddle?", becomes even more insistent.

So what is the attraction of paddling hard class five? The following is an essay by long time expedition paddler Doug Ammons who responded to a question originally posed by Trip Kenny. That question was: Why do you do it? Why do you paddle class five? Why do you fling yourself over huge drops, through monster holes, into places that by all rights should kill you dead or dirt? What if you mess up?? What really keeps you going over those horizon lines? This is Doug's answer.

WHY CLASS V?

I started out paddling because I loved the water. I learned the basic skills and, after a couple of times on the river, found it was the wildest, funnest, most playful, and beautiful damn sport I'd ever tried. The people were great, the rivers were beautiful and every horizon line stirred all the fun and questions anew. It was challenging, exciting and there seemed no limit to what I could do or where I could go. By my second or third time on the

river, I was hooked. By the end of my first year, I was a fanatic.

I ran my first class five after I'd been paddling about two months. I didn't know very much, but as they say, maybe ignorance is bliss. I was paddling with a group of older guys on a wilderness river they knew well, and we came to a rapid that they had always portaged. I'd been told the rapid was unrunnable, and at first I believed that. But after looking closely I suddenly realized there was a straightforward line in an otherwise class six drop. The key was seeing past the intimidation around the line. I committed, and ended up running it twice with no difficulties. It was a little scary, sitting in the eddy above and feeling the river surge beneath me. But what led me to paddle over that horizon line was a quiet sense of certainty. I knew what I'd seen. The mind blower came afterwards: realizing if you looked just right you could find a thread that carried you through all the dangers, right into the heart of the river. I'll never forget that feeling. The river opened up and beckoned so enticingly, so exquisitely, that I just had to follow. I couldn't help it. Somehow, it had to do with seeing something true and deep about the water and myself. More than the excitement and more than the challenge, it was that sense of truth that led me on.

So I had a new goal that added something even more compelling to the fun and excitement. By the end of the first year, I was doing class 5 with regularity, paddling with the best guys in the area. Well, with good role models to learn from and great rivers to run, you can bootstrap yourself up pretty quickly. I went looking for new places, mostly steep creeks tucked away in remote canyons. Thing led to thing. There was exploring **topo** maps, **recon**, first attempts, failures, waterfalls, rappels, complex portaging - all to find wild lines down beautiful sparkling streams. I shared them with my best buddies, made new friends, committed to little adventures. Sometimes we'd get thrashed, but we always came back. Who could ask for a better world to live in? I found a place clean and pure, where the sun and snow melt laughed with you as you paddled over the edge of the drop, and the next and the next... We solved outrageous puzzles of movement and timing - playing games of speed chess with the water, just at the edge of what we

could handle, weaving ourselves completely into the river. We lived for those moments of clarity, when you were totally committed to the line. To that thread of truth. And all those days of friendship and worry and concentration and smiles melted together into the best feeling...

The water is so beautiful. All that power and complexity, all that mystery and unknown. I found myself sitting and watching little eddies, tiny whirlpools and subtle turbulence. I could sit for hours watching and feeling there was something magical there, that I couldn't quite touch. And who wouldn't be mesmerized by 10,000 cfs pounding off a 30 foot ledge into a massive hole? Do you like looking at reality? Do you like seeing truth laid out in front of you, sunlight glinting off the spray while the boulders you sit on shake with its power? And do you answer when you hear it calling?

I got asked by my mentors on more committing trips, and I went. In some ways it was more of the same, but with the greater commitment came new territory. The places got more spectacular, and more dangerous. More importantly, the trips changed their tenor. I found it was one thing doing first descents near home, whether it was class five steep creeks or big water. At least you weren't far from people. But doing it up in the wilderness of Canada, Alaska, the jungle, or farther away still, was another thing altogether. The pure fun of zipping a clean line becomes less the point, and something else steps in. The moves might be similar, but a new set of emotions becomes important when you're out in the middle of nowhere, deep in the bottom of some canyon, alone with a friend or two. You look up at the vertical walls. The river disappears in front of you around a corner, and all you can hear is a roar. Then you know the whole game has changed. I call it "the real shit". Lots of people, even experienced paddlers, don't necessarily like it. But some people do. You start paying attention to different things when you're totally committed.

Every sense comes alive. Your awareness heightens in every way. The water is your life, and you see and sense everything about it. You listen to yourself and your partner and there's no bullshit. You stretch yourself out and there's no dividing line between you and the beautiful, dangerous place you're in. Every decision you make has huge consequences and so



you treat it with care, with a delicacy and intensity that puts you entirely in that moment. The smallest details become immense. Each surge of the current, each paddle stroke, each word had an importance beyond what it could ever have in any other place. And for those minutes, hours, or days, you become a different kind of person.

At some point over the years, I realized that for me kayaking was no longer a sport, it was much more. The decisions I made out there gave me something I needed. I needed the water and its beauty, its power and subtleties, its chal-

lenge and inspiration. I needed the friendships it had helped me make. I trained like mad, concentrated on every skill I could, and committed myself to my judgment. The harder the trip and the more it stretched us; the more humbled and small I felt. And the happier. It was like seeing a little farther into a special world. Sharing something beyond friendship with the people I went with.

The point isn't that you fling yourself into huge drops and monster holes, it's that you learn to live each moment with care and skill.

I have a lot to thank my friends for,

not just their help in approaching class five, but what it means. They taught me how to look at more than the hard whitewater. That it was a privilege to be in those spectacular places. How important it was to respect and meet the river on its own terms. And never to lose sight of the fact that it is bigger than you in every way. Most of my best friends are people I've spent those times with, and I can't separate them out from the feeling of approaching the horizon line. So friendship is a part of class five, too.

I've messed up and been hurt. In 15 years of class five paddling, I've had three serious accidents. I dislocated my shoulder the first year I was paddling, right in the middle of a long class five rapid. My paddle hung up on a rock and I didn't let go. Luckily, I was able to roll and get to the side. My friends reduced the shoulder there on the talus with a foot in the side and a couple of yanks. That was a good lesson that lasted for 12 years of healthy paddling. But sometimes you forget even the best lessons. I had a bad season two years ago. Maybe I wasn't in as good shape. Maybe I was distracted. Maybe my

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Chris Good on Great Falls

BECAUSE



time was up. First, I hit a ledge underwater going off a 50+ foot waterfall. I had scouted the thing carefully, even swimming below to check the pool. It looked okay. Shallow, but manageable. The approach and lip of the falls had some weird things going on, but I ran it exactly the way I thought it should be run. It was a full-on car wreck at the bottom. Concussion, tweaked ribs and a lesson I thought I already knew: sometimes you can take care of everything you see, and still not take care of everything. Later in the year, a cavalier moment left me plastered upside-down at high speed on front of a boulder. Dislocated collarbone, separated shoulder, crunched ribs, and more. The disturbing thing was that the cavaliness itself wasn't directly the problem. However it led to a decision that rolled up to me many seconds later, set in motion by that short lack of attention. The decision itself was like thousands of others I've made, but it had very different consequences this time. Sometimes an accident isn't caused by an outright mistake, sometimes, it's the result of just another decision. A lack of care for a second or two was swept by the river into a lot of pain and a year of rehab. It could have easily been a lot worse. So reality's there. I've checked it out some. In the end it'll keep you honest, no matter who you are.

Other things have happened to me and close friends that are so strange that they could only be put in the "shit happens" category. I try to keep in mind that people can get killed by strange things.

The river has power, direction, and pushes relentlessly toward the future. Nowhere is that more apparent than in class five. And if you enter its flow, you had better be prepared to deal with the future.

If you seriously go looking for your limits eventually you'll find them, but you might not like what happens there. The obnoxious thing is, you might not even realize you're there until it's too late. I'm certain that it is possible to get away with more than we realize now, and people will always be plumbing this margin. I don't think we will ever find a clear edge. But the water also does some weird, weird things. You can't always see them - no matter how closely you look, or how cautious and skilled you are. I've run lots of rivers and thousands of hard rapids over the last 15 years. Quite a number of them were first descents. I've faced a lot of questions about whether something was runnable or not. I go on a rational analysis of what I see, sometimes it's meticulous. But mostly I go on a kind of deep intuition that comes out of my relation-

ship with the river, my feeling that day, at that minute, on that run. My choices have been carefully made and always spot on - almost. But the more complex the water, the more things can happen. There are several times when I've been broached, pinned, or tangled with submerged logs which could never have been seen, no matter how long we scouted. Other, more bizarre things have happened. I've needed help from friends. I've helped them to. I've pulled a couple of bodies out of rivers, which was not enjoyable, but it was a damn good reminder of what might be on the other side of luck.

The most upsetting thing I've ever experienced didn't happen to me. It was watching my best friend go for the worst thrashing you could have and still live - when we were running something we thought was clean. But that was just the start. He lost his boat and was left with the choice of trying to swim through a series of huge ledge holes, or climbing a 500 foot vertical rotten cliff to get out. He climbed. I could do nothing but watch. The scariest thing is being helpless. It's an empty, terrible feeling. It took him a long time to get up, I decided during that climb that I don't like being a witness. He made it, finally. That was some years ago and we both have scars. I think his are much worse than mine, but mine bother me too. After experiences like that you have to ask yourself where to put the balance point. And you've got to realize that sometimes there are things you might not see which turn out to be the point of the whole show. Anyone who treats the river cavalierly is just a little more ignorant than he thinks he is.

I've always pushed to do harder runs, but I consider myself a careful paddler. You've got to balance those tendencies. I've run lots of bizarre rapids - from steep creeks to big water-things that are extremely intimidating. But I have never run a rapid I was afraid of. On really hard rapids, I make my decision if, as I analyze it, an intuitive feeling of balance and clarity comes over me, a certainty that the moves fit, and that I can do them. Sometimes it feels as if I've poured myself right into the river. If I don't find that feeling, then I walk. Every top paddler I know does the same kind of thing, but with his own twist. Some are more analytical than others, some more intuitive. A few are impulsive, but very few. And none of them goes looking for trouble, although some people might think they do. All of them are honest with the water, even though they might have problems in their normal lives. Within my own intu-

ition, I have an ear out for subtle feelings or doubts, and that has saved my life and a friend's life at least once that I know of.

The thought above depends upon having a choice about whether you'll run a rapid or not. Twice, I've been in the first descender's nightmare: alone and far in the wilderness, walled out with no portage possible, and being forced to run what looked like a fatal rapid. These situations were caused by decisions made long before reaching the actual rapid, in a sense they were inevitable once the ball had started in motion several days before. I think the point is, though, that I didn't deliberately go looking for them. These are the only times I've ever headed into something that I actually didn't think I could run, but had no choice except to try. I can only assure you that you feel pretty damn small at that moment, and pretty damn lucky afterwards. Both turned out, neither was pretty. You never know exactly what you are up against, no matter how experienced you are. No knowledge can ever substitute for taking the step into the unknown. So stepping through that door should never be done lightly. Maybe when all is said and done, those rapids weren't as hard as they looked. All I know is each one looked really, really bad from the one place I could scout. I know that in facing those questions about the unknown, you find yourself climbing over a lot of emotions and asking a lot of questions. You think pretty hard about what led you into that situation and what it might mean.

I've seen people get a lot of different things from the river and from class five. It's all in what you bring to it. If you go looking for challenge or for mystery, you'll find them. Treat it like a snowboard in a half pipe and that's what it will be. If it's for bragging rights, getting scared, looking for a rush, celebrating friendships, being cool - it can give all these too. I guess I feel that it's such an incredible gift it should be used well. I think most people who stick around know how big a gift it can be, whether or not they put it into words. It's the greatest balance of fun, seriousness, and truth I've ever found.

There are some other lessons too. Most class five from 30 years ago is class four now, or even less. We've upped the ante a lot, as we kept looking for the edge. Disregarding all the grays about ratings, really, the way we use the term, class five, just means whatever the edge of runnability is at a given time. Each time we do another harder river, nip off another portage, find a steeper run, go for

.....
a higher water level, that's water under the bridge. Pretty quickly we look for something higher, bigger, faster, or weirder. We change, and the class five changes. We never stop exploring, both it and ourselves. So to me class five is also a word for a special kind of learning. It says, "push hard, but remember - what you do in the next few seconds means everything." Class five is a rapid, a physical place with a beginning and an end. But it is also all the things that the physical place touches inside you, all the ripples of meaning it has for you, and those are things which go on as long as you live.

Class five is about your limits and taking the next step beyond them. It is about what you can control, what you can come to with a steady, clear mind. Those limits change within you, even on a single run. They change with equipment and experience. They change from person to person, and year to year. Some of the guys in my generation may already be getting too old and stiff to keep pushing the edge of class five. They've been there, done that, and now they have families and other concerns. But even for those of us who continue, there's always a new set of people who will try to take it past anything we ever thought possible. And when the new guys push as far as they can, the next generation after them will already be hungry for more. After you're around for a while, you realize you've received a baton from the past, and at some point you'll end up passing it to others and stepping out of the way. I think though, over time, everybody who touches that baton probably asks the same questions, because the river has the power to say certain things.

And take my word for it, there's always some pretty wild stuff going on. There are guys out there looking for the real shit. You just don't hear about a lot of it because it stays where it matters most - between a few close friends and the river.

Whenever you enter the game, whatever door you come through, that's what you accept as your base. If you've got the desire to find answers, the river will have the questions. So I always keep in mind that no matter how hard we push, there is no end and there are no final limits. The river will always have more.

Doug Ammons

-with thanks to the rivers I know, and my friends.

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From The Desk of The WKF President

Why should I take kayaking lessons?

by Eric Jackson

I grew up kayaking in New Hampshire in the late 70's and early 80's, paddling a Phoenix Savage, and later, a Perception Mirage. (TO AVOID READING A LONG STORY AND TO GET RIGHT TO THE PART WHERE I SHOW YOU HOW TO BE A BETTER BOATER, SKIP TO SECTION HUMBLY TITLED, "EJ's Wisdom.")

Me, my dad, and friends Yuk Yuk, Bob Potter, Opie, Jim Potter, JJ, and other kayak nuts went out every chance we could for a good time on those NH and Maine rivers. Did we ever take a lesson? Are you kidding! "Lessons are for wimps who can't tie their own shoe laces." We jumped in every hole we could find, did ends every where you could ender a 13 foot jumbo kayak, and terrorized any swimmers (in our group) until they went and cried in their tent. This was the Merrimack Valley Paddlers Club in 1980. As reward for our mettle, we only had 7 dislocated shoulders in a 30 day period on the Dead and Kennebec Rivers in June. For sure we were the bad boys on the block—we could run any river and surf any hole (by 1980 standards).

So the question is, did we need to take lessons? The answer is a big "No." However, could we have been better boaters and learned much faster if we had taken lessons? For us, the answer to that is a big "maybe"—if we were lucky. See, my dad always said, "Eric, those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." This simply means that most people with true ability use that ability on a practical level instead of teaching. There are a good number of exceptions to that rule, and these are what I call "Master Instructors." Those who can teach AND do. Now, in New Hampshire the only ones teaching kayaking were club instructors. These instructors were. . . well. . . they meant well. So we didn't take instruction and, because we had the "go for it" attitude that was new to that region of the country, we got

"good quickly" and became big fishes in a little pool.

EJ'S THOUGHT PROVOKER

So my story raises a question for paddlers in many regions. You are a good paddler, maybe even a class V boater. You can surf waves, ender, surf holes, catch eddies, boof, etc. Do you need lessons?

Before I answer that, let me share with you what you might not know, what most people don't know. It is how that secret society of elite boaters does it. These are the people who have that "little something" to their paddling, the something that makes everything they do seem so much easier than when you do it. It's how they never seem to miss those hard moves, boofs, eddies, waves, etc. They seem to learn rodeo moves so quickly, they don't get tired as easily, etc. You get the idea. How does someone get that little something for themselves that makes everything go so much easier?

EJ'S WISDOM—

Let's say for demo purposes that there are a total of 100 skills to be **learned** in kayaking to know everything you need to be an "expert boater." Of these 100 total skills, you can become a Class V river boater who can do some rodeo moves and feel confident on many rivers and rapids with skills 1-7, 10-13, 15, 17-25, 29-32. Other Class V boaters will reach this approximate level with a different group of skills. However, for most advanced **kayakers**, gaps develop among key skills. These gaps arise because you've never seen the technique, or your home river doesn't challenge that skill, or whatever.

In most cases, the missing skills are basic ones that can be learned on class 1-2 whitewater.

If you are not one of those "with the extra little something" that I described, then there is no doubt you are missing some of the most basic skills. It is simple as that. The "elite" boaters are elite not because they can do the great stuff, but because they have mastered the basic stuff. It is that base that enables them to do the great stuff. It is also that base that is critical to good boating.

Oh, and the elite fall into rank, too, just as "black belts" range in rank. Many "elite" boaters are missing some skills, or need some work on basic skills to get to the next level, too. So, you have to ask yourself, "Do I want to know what I don't know already?" It isn't just more time in the boat or more practice in the rapids that will fill in the gaps. You either have to be shown the technique or re-invent the wheel. Or, of course, you can be happy where you are. Remember, how much fun you have on the river isn't directly proportional to your skill level. However, I personally have more fun the better I get. (Anyone who knows me knows that I have as much fun when paddling as anyone ever could.)

EJ'S ADVICE

(This section is for those who've decided they want the higher knowledge, the next level, and all the fun that goes with it.) (Editor's Note: Sounds suspiciously like Heaven's Gate!)

I am going to list the things most likely to be missing in a person's skill list, and then give you a few potential sources for getting instruction from a "master instructor."

Your skills list: (some of these things will seem simple, trivial, useless, or confusing to you. I will describe the techniques in detail in future AWA issues.)

1. Forward leaning posture during most paddling. (aggressive, ready, stable);
2. Good forward stroke from the bow (pulls boat, less yaw, ready for next stroke);
3. Proper turning strokes: Forward Sweep (toe to hip, head and body looking in direction of **turn**) Reverse Sweep (stem to hip, head and body looking in direction of **turn**) C-Stroke (ability to use paddle as a keel, conserve spin momentum, and keep boat carving without sliding the stem on the turns);
4. Proper bracing (high and low, sculling)



5. Proper rolling (set up, not set up, paddle deep, shallow, hands only, etc.)

6. Solid understanding of the four basic concepts that determine where your kayak is going next. (Your complete understanding of these concepts and ability to manipulate them to the circumstances is "everything" in kayaking.) Are you ready? SPEED, ANGLE, TRAJECTORY, SPIN MOMENTUM.

(These are best learned in class 1 and then applied to bigger whitewater).

You are a master of the above concepts when you can do everything with one blade that you can now do with two.

I am going to stop listing skills for now because what I have already listed is truly what makes a good boater become great. For those of you who can't afford instruction from someone who knows this stuff, stay tuned to American Whitewater's for your first lesson.

I will offer an incomplete list of instructors who can teach you these concepts. They might use different terminology than I, but I am confident that they will get you off on the right foot with the basics.

Peter Kennedy at Adventure Quest (for kids), VT

Chris Spelius, NC, or Chile
John Trujillo at River Visions (Hood River, OR)

Ken Casteroff at Endless Rivers, NC
Shane Benedict at NOC, NC
Sam Drevo, Portland, OR
Eric Southwick, Silverton, CO
Kent Ford, Durango, CO

■ **Corran** Addison, somewhere on Earth, or maybe somewhere else.

This list is incomplete and is presented without the knowledge or consent of the people listed.

In conclusion, my answer is "Yes" instruction is good—if the instruction is good.

If you think your name should be on my list of "Master Instructors" please email to adventur@erols.com. My WKF email hasn't been working for two weeks, time to change don't you think?

Or call me at 301-320-7205 (please don't call after 9pm!).

That's all for now. See you on the river!

WOMEN CAN PUSH LIMITS. TOO

An Interview with Jamie Simon Will women compete in the World Kayak Federation Championships this September?

I really hope there is a good showing for the female class. I know of at least three women who, if they have their way, will be there. Those women are Buffy Bailey, Katie Neiert, and myself. The fact that a female class has been added will really influence the decisions for the women. Many women are capable of competing in this field, and because of the sport's infancy there is still a lot of room for growth and success. This could be a very exciting field for many people. The female class is very supportive and, we would like to see it grow in a non-threatening, positive manner.

We are entering an era where women are becoming increasingly comfortable with extreme sports. It's no longer a man's game. Although, it is definitely dominated by men.

Extreme racing does not require the strength of a man. As Nancy Wiley once said, "No man or woman is stronger than the river." Extreme racing involves precise water reading abilities, a certain knowledge of the course, advanced technical skills, and a strong will and desire to run class V rivers. When you add the clock to class V, it adds a new dimension to kayaking. Your skills are bound to improve.

Women have the advantage right now. We have better chances to succeed and more room for growth. The men have it rough. There is so much good competition right now that they have to be perfect in order to have a chance at winning. Yes, women will compete and I think you'll see more and more every year.

How did you break the mold in female kayaking in freestyle and in extreme boating?

This is a flattering question—I didn't realize that there was a mold to be broken. Maybe that is what it takes, not seeing the limits. I have always believed that the beauty of kayaking is that there are no limits. You can always improve, you can always learn, you can always paddle another river.

When I was learning to kayak, many people felt I was pushing the boundaries too far, too fast. I wanted to be respectful of more experienced kayakers, but I also had to satisfy my own desires in the water. I was safety conscious, but my limits were clearly different than most people's. With some people, I developed the reputation that I was trying to kill myself. This rumor had no merit whatsoever. Once I was introduced to kayaking, I wanted to live for the sport. However, people still found it difficult to believe that I would run the Upper Gauley and Section N of the Chattooga my first summer of boating. Now, five years later, these kinds of runs are very common for enthusiastic, first year boaters.

I entered the sport on the bubble of "old school" turning to "new school." My timing was impeccable. From the get go, day one on moving water, I liked playboating. I was completely into surfing and "playing" in holes. One thing led to another, and before I knew it, after only five competitions, I won the World Championships. This is a fast growing

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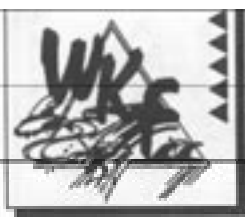
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sport, and my learning scale was keeping up with the growth pace of the sport. In the 1993 Worlds, not one cartwheel was demonstrated by a woman. In the 1995 Worlds, the top three women all performed cartwheels. This year, I suspect, anything less than two and three point cartwheels will be unacceptable. Don't be surprised to see our class performing spitwheels in Canada at the Worlds!

In terms of running hard stuff, I did not break the mold. I am definitely out there running hard stuff, but there are a few predecessors who paved the way for women. The Wiley sisters out of Durango have always been role models in my eyes, because they were running hard stuff long before most other women. Risa Callaway and Susan Wilson, back east, were running the Green before I even knew what a spray skirt was. There are several other women who deserve recognition, and I apologize that I do not know all of them to give them credit here.

Running the hard stuff requires a certain mentality. A great deal of focus and commitment are required for the "goods". I believe my extensive background in springboard diving established this for me. I enjoy pushing myself and feel very accomplished when I clean a class V rapid. It is as much as an accomplishment for me now as cleaning my first class III run. The adrenaline is the same, and that is what I love about this sport. When I was running the rivers for the "Good To The Last Drop" video, I'll be the first to admit that I was scared. The Little North Fork of the Feature was very steep with lots of water. People had been in there before, but a lot of these drops had never been run. We have a strong group of people with the abilities needed to get through that stuff. I'll never forget the way I felt when I landed off that really big waterfall. It was bigger than any of us had anticipated, in fact 56 feet! If you look carefully in the video, you'll notice that there is a small section in the middle of the drop that is not vertical, and, thank goodness, because that was huge. We definitely felt alive at that point.

For the last few years, I have been one of a few women to run a lot of hard stuff. This is obvious in "Paddle Quest", "Fetish", and "Good To The Last Drop" videos. However, this scenario is rapidly changing. Look out for Buffy Bailey and Katie Nietert. Katie shows her stuff in her video "Fallin Down." She has one of the flattest learning curves of anyone I have ever seen.

One of my favorite stories comes from one day last fall on the narrows of the Green. It was Katie, Buffy Bailey, three guys and myself. One of the guys had

never run the Green before. He was excited to be on the Green with three women, but that seemed to change when we got to Gorilla and none of the women scouted. We had been there the day before and felt confident that we still knew

the lines. I think that guy was feeling a little funny about this. When you get to Gorilla, most people scout. It deserves that. Anyway, times are changing.

This is a great time for women to get involved in both freestyle and hairboating.

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Everyone has room to succeed because there are a few of us out there paddling for the "goods." There is a lot of support for women. It is nice to have a little balance. And some advice: Please do not be intimidated by the people who may be jealous of your successes or threatened by your rapid increase in ability.

What do you think it will take for the women's class to catch up to the men's class in rodeo and extreme boating?

There are many factors to consider here. I do not want to get caught up in comparing women to men because we do not compete against each other. Statistically, there are almost always at least three times as many men competing than women, and the scores are generally three times as high.

One of the biggest factors in helping women take things to a new level is the new wave of boat designs. Boats are getting smaller and more manageable for woman's physique. Proportionately, we have been at a disadvantage with the size of boats for many years. It is no coincidence since most of the boat designers are men. Their argument for larger dimensions is that the market is mostly men so we have to make them bigger. Well maybe the market would be twice as big if it were opened up to women more, i.e., tailoring boats to fit them.

Two of the best male rodeo paddlers are Mark Lyle and Dan Gavere. Their styles are opposite ends of the spectrum. One uses an amazing amount of muscular power and the other uses a light touch. Both of them exercise very precise timing. In short, it is not big muscles but the power of visualization, practice and timing that are critical to success.

As far as women in hair boating, the numbers are amazing. There are always a ton more guys on the hard runs. Ladies, you are crazy! Get out there! You will most likely be one or two amongst seven or eight guys - all trying to be super macho. They want to impress you, yet look after you at the same time. All you need is the desire and the skill to run class V. Once you develop the skills, it is no more scary than your first class III run. The only difference is you will have a bigger sense of accomplishment. If that is not incentive enough, then I don't know what is. So practice up, and challenge yourself.

The last thing that I would like to say is there is nothing more attractive than women who can be a little extreme, yet still stay feminine. Please do not try to paddle like a man. It won't work. Yes, you need to be aggressive, but when you don't need that, remember to move like a women. Practice both ends of the spec-

trum. I love to put on a dress after I run something really hard. Try it, it's fun.

Jamie Simon won the biannual 1995 World Freestyle Championships in Augsburg, Germany and is pre-qualified for the Worlds this summer in Canada. When not in her boat, Jamie teaches elementary school and works as a massage therapist. She is

also a member of the WKF Pro Team and will be writing for the WKF regularly from the road, which she hits soon with golden retriever Jack. Readers seeking more info on the WKF may contact the WKF at PO Box 15430, Washington, DC 20003; (301)320-7205.

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TRIUMPH ON THE TRINITY *or River Goddess for a Day*

by Belinda Sanda

I have always envied natural athletes, because I am not one. They try new sports and make it look like they've been doing it for years. One of the reasons I'm not a natural is because I first tried kayaking, cross country skiing, sky diving, hang gliding, inline skating and mountain biking after turning 30, so the fear factor seems to always rear it's ugly head.

In the last five years, my outdoor passion has been whitewater kayaking. I'll never be a Class V boater, but I'm starting to feel comfortable in Class III. My latest personal triumph was a clean run of a section of Northern California's Trinity River, from Pigeon Point to Big Flat. According to the Forest Service there are two Class III+ and five Class III rapids in five miles. It is not extremely difficult, but in ten previous runs, I swam at a rapid called Hell's Hole each time. I also swam at Grinder, Pin Ball, Sailor's Bar and even at rapids that have no name.

The weekend of August 10, 1996 was the fourth annual "Guy's Only Weekend".

About 20 men got together to camp, drink, tell stories, smoke cigars and boat the Trinity River. I changed my name to Fred and so was allowed to kayak **with** them, but not camp. On Friday the weather was perfect and the river uncrowded. I was a little nervous because the last time out Grinder ground me up and spit me out with a huge bruise on my thigh. Hell's Hole didn't treat me any better.

Grinder is a boulder strewn drop. One must catch a left eddy at the top, **ferry** river right, then turn downstream and paddle hard. Last time I didn't have enough speed and the hole caught my stem, causing me to backender and flip.

My husband Gary and friend Richard went through each rapid first and waited for the rest of the gang at the bottom. They gave me the "all clear" sign. I took a breath and said my paddling mantra CHAR (Competent, Happy, Alert, Relaxed). I made the eddy and ferried over to the right. **As** I turned the boat downstream, I was pretty close to the drop. I

paddled as hard as I could and barely made it- but I did make it. I thanked the river goddess and mentally prepared for Hell's Hole.

The California Whitewater Book describes Hell's Hole as "a steep vertical drop." Since I had never successfully run Hell's Hole, I asked everyone's advice. Stay left - stay right - paddle like hell through the hole - paddle hard, then stop and get ready to brace! As we scouted, several boats went through. The percentage of successful runs was 50-50. Gary went right and had a great line; Richard, Bob and Dave went left, and made it too. My turn - deep breath - mantra - go. I went left, paddled hard and, before I could shout, "Oh Shit", Hell's Hole swallowed my boat and I was swimming. Luckily there is a deep pool at the bottom so the only thing bruised was my ego.

The rest of the run went smoothly. Sailor's Bar had nailed me several times before, so I was pleased when I made it though upright. The last Class III rapid is Fishtail. The river narrows here and there are rocks everywhere. At the end it's best to be river right, but I got turned side ways and ended up left. I squeezed between the two rocks with inches to spare, and thanked the river goddess again.

Saturday the guys boated the **Hayden** Flat section, while I went home to think about daring Hell's Hole again on Sunday. My friend Kathy, (named Joe for guy's weekend) her husband, Larry, and I drove to the put in. They had never done this run, so they asked me for advice. I told them, "Don't follow me."

This time the river was very crowded. Besides lots of kayaks and canoes, there were several commercial raft trips. I was feeling pumped from Friday's run, but cautious about Grinder, Fishtail and Hell's Hole. As I pulled into the small eddy at the top of Grinder, I almost ran into two other kayakers. One was out of her boat, but okay. I couldn't stay long because the current was pulling me downstream. I had a poor ferry angle and almost lost it. People were going every which way and there were a few swimmers.

There were at least **20** people below the drop at Hell's Hole, and 10 waiting in line to run it. I couldn't see the end of the rapid, but I heard the cheers every time someone made it. I paddled hard up to the left side and through the top drop. I stopped paddling and prepared to brace,

TAKE THE C-1 CHALLENGE

by Kent Ford

C-1 paddlers take a lot of kidding, and usually smile quietly, knowing the fun a C-1 has to offer. On behalf of C-1 paddlers, I will try to offer a little insight into why others should consider paddling C-1.

Kayakers will enjoy paddling a C-1 because of the visibility and leverage added by kneeling rather than sitting, as well as for the precise blade control the T-grip offers. Kayakers often experience less back pain in a C-1. Contrary to popular misconceptions, C-1s need not be uncomfortable unless you are inflexible, extra large in body build, or paddle long river trips.

Open boaters often like the C-1 because it's a smaller and lighter craft, easier to transport, and more responsive on the river. Besides it doesn't fill up! In a C-1 you feel closer to the water, as though you're wearing your boat.

In addition, C-1's are easy to wet exit and are the easiest boat to learn how to roll. C-1 paddlers are the most versatile, and are typically able to paddle any kayak, canoe, or C-1 with ease.

On the other hand, C-1's are not the easiest boat to paddle. The single blade needs to be worked with finesse to get the boat going forward. The double blade paddle makes propelling a kayak absurdly easy by comparison. Open boats generally track better so they are easier to paddle forward than their decked counterpart.

It is true you can't just hop in a C-1 and be comfortable. You have to personalize the outfitting. Posh kneepads should offer support without raising the bony tip of your knee more than a few millimeters off the hull. A wide saddle will help support your weight at the butt. Choose your **legware** and **footware** carefully.... shorts and **barefeet** are the comfort ideal, river conditions allowing. It usually takes me a few short early season paddles to regain my flexibility and comfort, so ten minutes is not a fair trial of a boat! There are a few other tricks, so study the outfitting on a variety of boats, watch C-1 videos, and adapt your own boat for comfort.

If you want a little extra challenge in the sport, without running steeper, more dangerous whitewater, try a C-1. Paddling a C-1 is a technical delight, you'll learn to use the river very precisely and to make the boat dance on the water.



but before I had to, I saw the hole go by on my right and I was upright at the bottom. I heard the cheers, but I still couldn't believe it. Then Joe (Kathy) came through and made it too. One of the guys proclaimed us "River Goddesses." That day I felt like one. I even surfed some of the waves that I usually avoid.

On the way home, we stopped for Thai food. My fortune cookie was right on, it said, "You will be blessed with much happiness."

After that great weekend, Hell's Hole and Fishtail managed to hammer me again. But I did make it through Hell's Hole once more, this time on the right. This season is over, but I can't wait to see how I fare there next year.

Editor's Note: Belinda Sanda was president of The Conservation Alliance in 1994, when American Whitewater received a \$40,000 grant. She is currently the Intergalactic Sales Director of Backpacker's Panty.

CALIFORNIA DELUGE: BIG WATER BRINGS BIG SMILES

by Steve Sylvester

It all began in December. The Sierra Nevadas were buried by snow that fell all the way down to a thousand feet. It snowed in Placerville and it snowed in Auburn. Hi-way 80 was closed for two days. It was the kind of snowstorm that makes skiers and snowboarders babble and drool. It was cold and deep - eight feet at its best. What a way to start the usually late Tahoe ski season.

I was all smiles making turns at Alpine Meadow Christmas day. Steep, deep and cold, the snow couldn't have been

finer. Little did we know it would all soon be in the river. Barely three days later, the rain began to fall.

From Hawaii, with love, the "Pineapple Express" raised temperatures and dropped rain. Storms were packed up over the Pacific like shoppers in malls before Christmas. The line started in Japan, went over Hawaii and ended over the Sierras, where it even rained on the very tops of the mountains themselves. The supersaturated snow spontaneously melted and the rain continued.

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New Years day seemed like a good day to paddle the South Fork American at floodstage. What other California river can be paddled during a severe flood? The rate at which the water rose was phenomenal. It rose ferociously, as much as ten thousand cubic feet per second per hour! Up and down the river people were gaping at the visibly growing hydraulics.

That morning the flow started at twenty thousand CFS. Within hours it doubled to forty-thousand. By the time we rallied at Chilli Bar around one o'clock people were guesstimating the flow about fifty grand! The gauge was no longer functioning. The river was about fifteen feet below the upper parking lot at Chilli Bar and still rising.

Surprisingly, many boaters were there carefully contemplating their skills and the river's ravenous rage. Even if you had caught the highwater the past two years (twenty and twenty-five thousand CFS), which I had, this was easily double that. The river was still rising, too, like our heartbeats and blood pressure.

Rampant debris ripped downriver: picnic tables, propane tanks, coolers, logs, lumber, drainage pipes, parts of

buildings, barns, trash cans, and trees - trees, trees, trees - roots, trunks, branches and all. The debris was out of control, completely unpredictable. A swim in that floatsom could work you; kill you, even, possibly, maybe, hopefully not!

It was now or never. We decided to put on. I robotically suited up. Seal launching from the parking lot; Brenda Ernst, Brook and Ethan Winger, Thomas Baumann, Barry Hughesby, Brandon Nelson, Grady Garlough and myself took the plunge. We discussed our gameplan. Essentially, keep plenty of space between ourselves, look out for each other and always watch the debris. Speaking for myself, I added, "Its a good day to die, but I'm gonna try my best not to."

It was a hell a fast ride from the get-go. The river's edge was a veritable graveyard. Small trees whipped wildly and large trees accumulated in massive strainer piles, creating huge sieves. Eddies were rare and inhospitable. Debris would thud on your boat's bottom. Big logs would pass you by like tractor trailers on a narrow road. Everyone was big-eyed and paddling hard. We were

all wondering: Is this sane?

Our first real test presented itself quickly. Meatgrinder, every class three boater's nightmare, transformed into a behemoth wave jambolia. Waves were moving every which way. They would grow out of nowhere and push upriver. They would pile up beneath you and break with an awesome snap that would launch you completely out of the water. Other times you'd paddle up, up, up and over or, if not so lucky, you'd get crushed and momentarily surrender to the power. Brace for your life, to and fro. Laterals would send you sidesurfing ten and twenty feet instantly.

The non-stop action hurled us into Racehorse Bend. I could see kayaks flipping like pancakes at the Coloma Club. Survival demanded bomber rolls. Chaos prevailed. Constantly changing, influx, wild and random; you could not read the river. It was all unfolding and happening underneath us as we went. You could easily be fooled by what you saw ahead. Hydraulics would grow and form, munch and crush, then, just as suddenly, dissipate and disappear. It was frightening. We paddled for our lives.



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boat control



Somewhere around Maya we saw an unfortunate woman desperately clinging to an Alder tree in fierce current surrounded by strainers. Her precarious situation and rescue warrant a story of its own. Let it suffice to say this. She eventually let go, swam briefly, and reattached herself to the back of Barry's Crossfire. He paddled her through some heinous stuff, even flipping and rolling. By sheer luck he deposited her safely on shore.

Other boaters that day flirted with death as well. Several rafts attempted the gorge and all flipped at Fowler's, the first rapid. Overestimating your skills and underestimating the river can be a disastrous combination. Fortunately, everybody was OK. Unfortunately, these incidents precipitated the "boating ban" that was implemented late New Years day and lasted about a week. Punishable by confiscation of gear, five hundred bucks and a ride to jail.

Back to the story.

Rescue successful, we continued down the maelstrom. Ethan got the ride of his life on a massive breaking wave. Out of

the wave came a massive tree that towered above Ethan and looked like it was going to eat him. It somehow got sucked out the back of the wave as Ethan went troughbound. He sure shreds.

Our final exam, Troublemaker, lay ahead. My wife and the Winger's dad (their shuttlebunny) were there watching and waiting. They had seen empty kayaks ghost riding down. A VW bus went through Troublemaker, going faster than it had ever gone under its own power. The steel cable that normally hangs high above the river was swinging violently at decapitation level. We scurried by as far left as we could.

Minutes later, amidst spectators' cheers, we passed under the hi-way 49

bridge. Mentally and physically beat, we cheered too. Surfing a few waves and congratulating one another, we spent the last of our energy. We took out at camp Lotus, catching an eddy behind the bathrooms next to the store.

That day and through the night the river continued to rise. The valley was closed and people were evacuated. Officials feared the Chilli Bar or Ice House dam might fail. January second the river peaked at an estimated sixty-five thousand CFS at Chilli Bar. It was perhaps eighty thousand down in the gorge. At any rate, the river was big and, boats ashore, feet on firm ground, so were our smiles.

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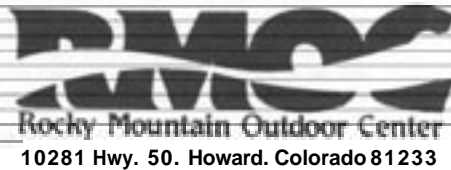
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Briefs

POTOMAC RIVER WHITEWATER RACE WEEKEND ANNOUNCED

American Whitewater and the Canoe Cruisers Association have announced that the annual Potomac Whitewater Festival will be held on May 31 & June 1, 1997, and the Potomac River Downriver Race will take place on June 1, 1997. The weekend will offer a two-day cornucopia of exciting whitewater competition.

The Potomac Whitewater Festival features a series of dazzling contests requiring

kayakers to demonstrate mastery of the enormous power of the fast moving water near Great Falls on the Potomac River. This is the only event of its kind in the area - a two day spectacle with hundreds of competitors from around the nation, many spectators and a variety of local media.

Most events will take place within 1/4 mile downstream of Great Falls on the Virginia side from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00

p.m. on Saturday and from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Sunday. In addition to the Great Falls Race - which requires kayakers to descend one of the country's most treacherous stretches of whitewater, Great Falls - contestants and spectators can choose from a wide variety of exciting races. Events include a squirt boat contest, an upstream race, freestyle kayaking contests, and a head-to-head sprint.

The Canoe Cruisers Association Downriver Race, to be held on Sunday, June 1, adds an exciting long distance downstream racing challenge. The annual race has been held on the Potomac since the ear-

liest days of whitewater kayaking, attracting kayak and canoe speed demons from around the Mid Atlantic States.

The 1997 Potomac Whitewater Festival is sponsored by Perception, Dagger/Headwaters, Clydes Restaurant, Stark Moon, Springriver, Outdoor Excursions, Patagonia, Rapidstyle, Kokatat, Croakies and numerous other companies from around the Washington, DC region and elsewhere.

Contacts: Pope Barrow (202-546-3766) or Bea Grause (703-893-7540) CCA Downriver race only, Jim Long (703-331-5800). SEE PAGE 76

Map to the AWA take out for the Blackwater and the Dry Fork



1997 POTOMAC WHITEWATER
FESTIVAL &
GREAT FALLS RACE
SAT MAY 31 & SUN JUNE 1

GREAT FALLS NATIONAL PARK,
GREAT FALLS, VA

Please Read This!!!

The Potomac is a free flowing river. Water levels are unpredictable. The scheduling of events will depend on water levels on May 31 and June 1. Events may have to be rescheduled on any day, moved from one day to another, or canceled. The Potomac often has big, pushy class III, IV, and V water. Some events are not suitable for beginning boaters or boaters without a reliable roll.

To compete, a waiver and release must be signed and returned by the participant or by the parent or guardian in the case of a competitor under age 21.

To enter, complete this form and mail it with your check to: PWF, 180 Talbott St. #108, Rockville, MD 20852.

The deadline for registration is May 29, 1997.
Preregistration is required. Park rules prohibit acceptance of cash in the park.

There is a \$4/week fee to enter Great Falls Park. Parking is limited so plan to arrive early.

Call 301-589-9453 for more information

Entry Fees

Check only one space below
Make checks payable to AWA

For registrations Postmarked

Before **May 24** **May 24** or after
One or more events: \$17 \$27
Events and banquet: \$25 \$35

Banquet only: \$10/person \$15
Number of banquet attendees:

Number of additional T-shirts @\$15

Total paid: \$_____

All competitors get a FREE T SHIRT

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Gender: Male Female

Age: _____

Please check one:
Junior (under 18) Senior (18 or over)

Masters: (40 or over)

Directions to Great Falls Park, VA

1. Take I-495 (the beltway around DC) to VA just south of the Potomac River
2. Get off on exit 13, Route 193 and head west
3. At intersection of 193 and Old Dominion Drive turn right at the stop light into Great Falls Park
4. Immediately after fee booth take sharp right to lower parking lot

YAKKIN' IT UP

by Gordon Edwards

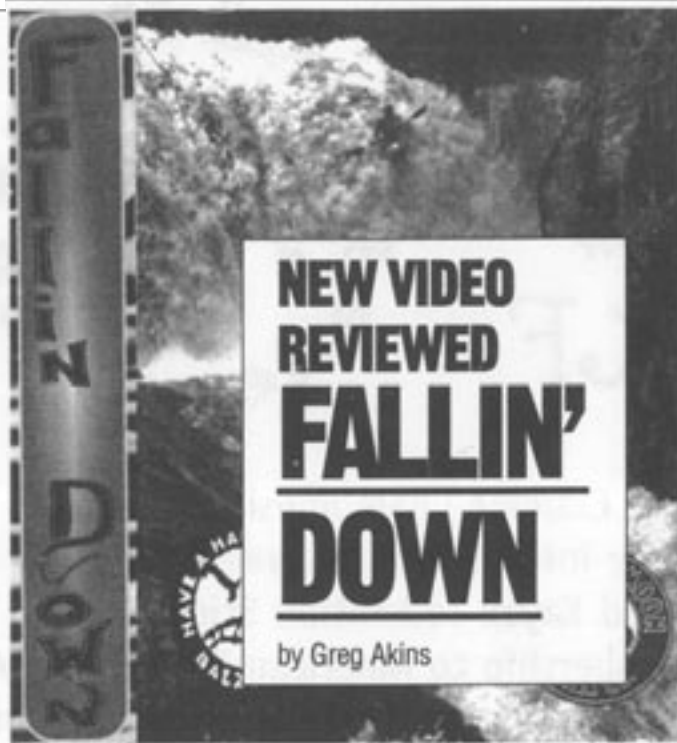
The river has a secret rhythm,
My paddle punctuates the rhyme,
I dance the 'yak the tune its given,
My breathing measures out the time.

My hands are cold, my smile wide,
But then a mean upriver eddy
Betrays my age, my slower side,
And catches me, alas, unready.

Aw shee! I shout just like a fool,
Exhaling all, as down I go -
Timing now - don't rush - stay cool,
Reach up - snap hips - and keep head low.

Most times I'm up and sit there grinnin'
But today, 'gainst all my wishes,
The boat gets pinned, I end up swimmin'
Sure is fun, this countin' fishes.

Some folks shake heads, they think I'm crazy
But 'till new leafs upon the tree,
With glasses fogged and vision hazy,
The Swift or 'toocut's where I'll be.



Most paddlers are so turned on to paddling they will watch anything that includes the briefest glance of a steep creek or some cool surfing. Trust me, I didn't watch The River Wild for its cinematic brilliance, I watched it for a glimpse at some huge western whitewater. Fortunately, Fallin' Down fills that basic need in the intro clips - then hands out 34 more minutes of tongue hangin' out, eye poppin', hard core hard boating.

Fallin' Down is the inaugural video offering from Falling Down productions. It features 35 minutes of paddling accompanied by original music from Morgantown, WV area bands: The Circle Six, Joint Chiefs, and the Bare Feet and Company. Included in the video are first descents, steep creeks, big water, and rodeo by B.J. Johnson, Clay Wright, Katie Nietert, Colby Mackley, Tracy Clapp and others.

The back cover of the video box reminds us that evolution is what kayaking is about. Comparing this video to those that came before reminds us that videos evolve as well. The editing is exceptional. Rodeo, creeking and even crash and bum footage are assembled so that just before the viewer gets tired of seeing flawless runs of twenty foot drops, he is presented with flawless retentive moves. Then, just when you think Clay Wright never has a bad run, you see him get pummeled under a thirty foot waterfall. Speaking of crash and bum, ever wonder what happens when you try to fit a ten foot Crossfire sideways through a eight foot slot?

Five runs are noted throughout the video. Four of these, Laurel Creek, Leatherwood Creek, Wolf Creek and Elzey Creek, feature epic steep, tight, low volume boating. Laurel Creek is notable for Captain Crunch Falls. The video pans from the unrunnable boulder strewn left side to the 'runnable' right side. Any boater who doesn't question the sanity of paddlers dropping off this horizon should either be in the video or in counseling. Leatherwood Creek features the old party game 'The Limbo' with a

new twist: under strainers through a class V+ drop.

I was surprised to see the Moose River included along with these newly run creeks. But after all four featured boaters were mystery moved at the bottom of the first drop, I discovered a new found respect for this classic New York run. Elzey Creek follows soon after. It proves that elbow pads really do make sense. In fact boaters should get shoulder pads and face masks before even walking near this diminutive rivulet.

Finally, Wolf Creek is highlighted. This is the creek which runs alongside

the road to Fayette Station at the New River Gorge. If you are like my friends, you have stopped to marvel at this beautiful, but "unrunnable", creek. If you are like BJ, Clay, Katie, Colby and Tracy, you pulled over, untied your boat and had a blast.

The rest of the video shows a number of unidentified creeks. This is the only negative criticism I will offer. Some great looking western boating is subtitled only "Washington" and "Colorado." Recognizable are Adrenaline Falls on Lime Creek, Big Splat on the Big Sandy and Pillow Rock on the Gauley. There are a number of other drops and play holes which are never named. Maybe somebody was afraid their favorite spot would become inundated with hair boater wannabees if these rivers were identified. Nevertheless, I was left feeling disappointed, not knowing the location of some of these spots. Moreover, the video packaging claims four first descents are included, but never identifies them. It is, however, easy to overlook these small criticisms when watching perfect cartwheels, precision boofs and infinite surfing.

The bonus of this video is even when you get the film memorized, you can still pop the video in just for the soundtrack. Preferences differ, of course, but most of the music is upbeat, cutting edge alternative, perfectly suited for cutting edge paddling. I heard of a complaint regarding the graphic nature of the music, but I would rate it PG: solidly between gangster rap and Barney sing alongs.

Even if you have every other paddling video made, you collection will be incomplete without this one. If you don't have any other videos, get this one and you'll never have to watch Meryl Streep run the Gauntlet again. You'll even get a really cool sticker to plaster on your boat, helmet or shuttle vehicle.

Contact info: Falling Down Productions, P.O. Box 242, Lansing, WV 25862 - Phone: 304.547.1949 - Price \$24.95 - or check your favorite paddling store.

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American Whitewater

PRESENTS

THE 1997 COLORADO/ARKANSAS RIVER FESTIVAL

JULY 5, 1997

ON THE BANKS

OF THE WORLD FAMOUS

ARKANSAS RIVER

Mark your calendar now!

Join fellow paddlers, river activists, and the local community for a day of fun and fellowship at the takeout to the class IV - V numbers section of the Arkansas River.

Booths from a number of national and regional paddlesport companies will be there with kayak and equipment demos available to festival participants. A silent auction and raffle will be held on Saturday evening with the proceeds going to American Whitewater's conservation and access programs. Camping is provided at the Railroad Bridge festival site with overflow camping information provided at the festival grounds.

In conjunction with the festival will be the running of the Colorado Cup Slalom races (contact: Chris Bainbridge at 719-539-6681) and the CWWA triathlon a run, bike paddle contest (contact: Bill Baker at 303-972-8437). Classes will be for both pro-racing and recreational boaters in both events. There will also possibly be an ender contest at the famed Ender rock providing the water level is good.

COME CELEBRATE WITH US!

For more information contact:

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645-6983 JHAbbot@aol.com

1997 National Paddling Film Festival Winners

by Barry Grimes

It's official, the scores are in from the East and West Festivals. Congratulations to the winning entries of the 1997 National Paddling Film Festival from the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, the Kern River Alliance, American Whitewater, and the American Canoe Association! 15 videos from across the nation and world competed, with these 5 voted the best of the fest! Thanks to all of the volunteers, sponsors and artists that flowed together to produce over \$5000 for waterway conservation and help premier the latest and greatest in paddlesport videos and images.

The Adventures of Johnny Utah: River Stories From A Different

Point of View

An adventure in storytelling and an inquiry into "why?" ... people boat. By Paul Bonesteel & Tom DeCuir of Atlanta, Georgia. Johnny Utah delighted the imagination of both the East and West audiences who granted it their favor by voting it the coveted "Ender Award". These river stories told in new currents returned glowing reviews from the 12 Representative judges as well. The amateur judges panel, made up of recreational boaters representing clubs from across the nation, converged on Lexington, Ky. and Bakersfield, Ca., volunteering their time for waterway conservation by viewing and scoring all 10 professional entries. They honored Johnny Utah with the "Best of Show" professional division award. Paddling scenes from a different point of view of the southeast's Green River were dramatically provided by a boat mounted camera. Within this visual whitewater chaos, streamed the "stories" and philosophies of the mythic figure of Johnny Utah, and those who knew him. Clever, interesting, different and fun, The Adventures of Johnny Utah is a must see video.

BEYOND THE MISSIONARY POSITION,

by Rick Gusic of Versailles, PA., took the "Best of Show" amateur division with a hilarious and innovative entry. The panel of professional judges, comprised of professional paddling illuminaries, media and manufacturer representatives, voted it their top choice in the amateur competition. With "...easy drops made hard" and "...hair boaters that don't take themselves too seriously...", beyond The Missionary Position made most all who saw it happy.

RETENDO! THE ART OF PRECISION PLAYPADDLING,

by John Davis & Kent Ford of Performance Video, Durango, Colorado, captured a win in the "Instruction & Safety" professional cat-

egory. In addition to winning it's hotly contested category, this outstanding instructional entry scored second overall in the crowded professional division. **Retendo!** The Art of Precision Playpaddling innovatively explores new rodeo moves like Whippets, **McTwists**, Splitwheels and **Screwups**. Creative computer animation, combined with other visual tools, explain and simplify these fun, new, river play tactics. Experienced instruction by Kent Ford, Scott Shipley, Chris Spelius, Marc Lyle, and others should put this video in every whitewater playboater's collection.

Deep Creekers at Dry Meadow Creek,

by Winston Offill & Joshua Offill, with video by Chris Nuthall, and featuring music by Private Ale Ceder Pines Park, CA. This visually stunning winner of the "Recreational & Scenic" amateur category combined crisp editing with dramatic video of Southern California's magnificent Dry Meadow Creek.

PADDLE ON

Classic paddling scenes on streams in Tennessee, combined with music featuring Chota's own Russell Hopper, earned Chota Canoe Club the top "Club" amateur category award. The video featured canoe and kayak enders on the Obed, and Tellico Ledges. "The judges enjoyed the open boat carnage...interesting footage...some great shots..." Submitted by Ron Crass, President, Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville, TN.

Best Paddling Image Award as picked by the NPPF audiences in Kentucky and California went to Joel Lecaptain of **Waterville, Ohio** with his "standing river surfer" slide.

Many thanks to all of the generous sponsors of the NPPF who make this event a strong fund generator for waterway conservation, safety and instruction. The Emory/Obed Wild and Scenic River, Kern River, American Whitewater and the American Canoe Association will directly benefit in 1997 from these sponsors' commitments to the NPPF. Please remember these names and return to them what they have given to the river through their support of this event.

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Please be sure to visit the National Paddling Film Festival's World Wide Web site at: <http://www.surfbwa.org/nppf>. There you'll find the latest about the NPPF, entry rules and how to enter plus what makes the NPPF so great. There are also pages that allow you to get information about any of the hundreds of entries from the Film Festival's past 14 years. You can

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read a brief synopsis of each entry quoted from the actual program and also obtain the film maker's address for contact.

For immediate gratification you can even download segments of past video entries. In cooperation with selected videographers, the NPF is proud to be offering paddling videos for sale from all 13 NPFs. Some are rare videos that have never been offered for sale before and unseen publicly since their original premier at the NPF. Remember, the few dollars spent for these videos as well as all other profits the NPF generates will go straight to waterway conservation the American Canoe Association and American Whitewater. We will soon be adding many more videos for sale including those from 1997; The Adventures of Johnny Utah: River Stories From A Different Point

of View and Retendo! The Art of Precision Playpaddling.

A standing ovation to all of the volunteers in the Bluegrass Wildwater Association and the Kem River Alliance that worked for the rivers and waters they love to bring off this event. The NPF continues to bring together the talents of a diverse group of committed paddlers who share the common goal of generating funds for waterway conservation, safety and instruction. Through their energy the NPF has fostered variety and a higher quality of paddlesport images, naturally increasing the popular exposure of all types of paddlesports, in turn providing education and inspiration for paddling. The energy of people working together, having fun giving to the rivers and waterways completes a natural cycle. See you on the water and in the movies!

For more information about the 1998 National Paddling Film Festival please contact:

NPF
PO BOX 4231
Lexington, Ky 40544
www.surfbwa.org/npff

NEW WEB PAGE ON SWIMMING HOLES

Tom Hillepass, of the Canoe Cruisers Association (Washington D.C.) recently put up a new Web page devoted to swimming holes in the Eastern US. It includes free information on natural swimming places in rivers, creeks, springs and waterfalls from Maine to Florida. There is an electronic form for visitors to add their favorite swimming holes. Also included are links to related pages on whitewater paddling, river conservation, hot springs, camping information and the like.

Visit this site at "www.nicom.com/~hillepass".

GORGE GAMES

JULY 12-19TH 1997

Last year's most exciting kayak event is back for year number two. The Gorge Games 100% All Natural Sports and Music Festival is a celebration of outdoor sports featuring competition in: Windsurfing, Mountain Biking, Kayaking, Snowboarding, Paragliding, Hawaiian Canoes, Kiteskiing, Stairclimb, Trail Run, Climbing, Sailing 49er Class and much more.

The Kayak portion of the Games includes the White Salmon Races - Downriver and Slalom Events on July 12 & 13th. On the morning of the July 12th, Jr. Olympic Paddler and owner of the new Cascade Whitewater Company, "Tree" will offer a beginner slalom racing clinic for all interested paddlers. These events are open to all levels of paddlers. Entry fees are \$25 and include a T-shirt and other goodies. Other beginner and advanced clinics will be scheduled throughout the Gorge Games week.

Later in the week, the top guns will be on hand for the second running of the upper White Salmon. This section of river contains Class V waterfalls including Big brother (30' drop) and double drop (18' each). Eric Jackson will be on hand to retain his title on this event. The Gorge Games Extreme Event is offers \$5,000 in prize money and will only be open to qualified boaters. For more information about qualifications please contact Ted Cramer at Cascade Outdoor Store 541-387-3527.

For more information about the Gorge Games contact our web site www.gorgegames.gorge.net or call 541-386-7774 or email at gorgegames@aol.com

Safely Report Corrections

My summary of the drowning on the Lower Meadow and the near-miss on the Russell Fork in the last issue of the AWA Journal contained some significant errors which I would like to correct.

On the Lower Meadow, mention was made of Rob Dobson's outstanding efforts to recover Scott Hasson's body. Mr. Dobson is affiliated with Wildwater Unlimited, not Class VI as the article stated. Because of his knowledge of the river he succeeded where others failed. Hasson actually flipped in the rapid, was pushed into an undercut, then washed into the drain area. The body was recovered from upstream, not downstream as the report suggested. Dobson feels that boat length was not a factor in the accident as others had speculated. Rather, it is the sort of thing that can happen to anyone, regardless of skill, when running a river as difficult and treacherous as the Lower Meadow. Given his experience with this run I consider this opinion definitive.

On the Russell Fork, contrary to my write-up, the initial rescue, recovery, and resuscitation of Ken Ross following his lengthy recirculation in a hole was performed by a second group of paddlers who arrived on the scene. They made a series of decisions under great pressure which ultimately saved this man from certain death. They should be very proud of their successful efforts. Any comments I made about CPR technique in the hopes of helping others who might be faced with a similar situation in the future should not be taken as criticism what was, in fact, a successful rescue. Although the doctor mentioned in the article did not arrive until after the victim began breathing on his own, his presence and support was a major source of help and comfort to the rescuers. The facts were quite clear from Internet accounts, but were expressed poorly when I wrote the summary.

I offer my sincere apologies to those who were upset by these mistakes, and encourage anyone with information on accidents or near misses to contact me directly.

Charlie Walbridge

1996 GORE RACE VIDEOTAPES STILL AVAILABLE

In the last issue of American Whitewater we misprinted the telephone number to be used by those wishing to order videotapes of the 1996 Gore Race. The correct contact is Phil Kantor; (303)444-8414. Sorry for the inconvenience.

GET INTO RACING!

1997 NEW ENGLAND SLALOM SERIES

by Connie Miner

Challenge your skills, improve your technique, meet new people who share your love of paddling and are eager to share their knowledge and joy of whitewater slalom racing. Imagine yourself at the start of the race course, ready to test your paddling skills against the pure energy of the water currents and the strategic placement of the race course designer's gates. How do you think Dana Chladek and Jon Luginbill got started?

The New England Slalom Series, a point race series designed for unranked and C/D ranked boaters, is about to begin its 9th season. There are race classes for cadets (kids) up to Masters (40+ years); for just about any kind of whitewater canoe, kayak and decked canoe, plastic ABS or Kevlar, tandem and solo. You name it, we've probably got it!

The NESS is made up of 9 individual races throughout New England, with the first race on March 23. You can enter as many as you like, but to qualify for a NESS award at the end of the year you must complete at least 5 races in the same boat class. Points are tallied from the finish standings of each race until the final race, which is the Farmington Slalom on Oct. 18th and 19th. The New England Slalom Series Awards Ceremony will follow this race. Individual races vary in water difficulty from class I to difficult class III, so make sure you check the water difficulty for the races you choose to enter. All details, rules, and the full race schedule and instructions are explained in the race packet. This race series is sponsored by the generous support of ADVENTURE QUEST, MAD RIVER

CANOE, MILLBROOK BOATS, and MITCHELL PADDLES; all New England companies and organizations dedicated to the development of whitewater paddling.

So come join the FUN! You do not have to have any previous racing experience to try racing, you only need to possess solid class II skills and ask lots of questions.

The 1997 NESS race packet should be mailed to previous participants by March 1. If you do not receive a packet by this date, or are new to the series send a SASE to:

Sam Montague
55 Darton Street
Concord, MA 01742

A NEW ELKHORN CREEK EMERGES FROM FLOOD

The Flood of '97 has transformed the Elkhorn Gorge in Kentucky from a mild Class I and II stream appropriate for beginners by adding some solid Class III to its menu. A number of trees felled by the high waters resulted in strainers.

"It's time to do some chain-sawing." Jim Pickett, STREAM GUIDE 8 RESCUE President/Trip Leader/Guide, observed. "We've been practicing for this kind of operation during a number of previous floods; but no one could have anticipated these changes. We need to make the Creek as safe as possible and quick," he added; "Spring cleaning, so to speak."

Trees have been spotted at the Upper Railroad, Stedman's Mill, middle chute of Three Roses and the end of Barking Dog rapids. "In addition to this situation, Mother Nature has redirected water flows such that these rapids are much more challenging than they were previously," explained Corey Council, Operations Vice-president and Safety/Rescue Director for CANOE KENTUCKY. "We need to re-evaluate our own safety program for renters," he continued.

Elkhorn Creek attracted an estimated 50,000 paddlers last year, impacting the local economy with about 7.5 million dol-

lars. "These numbers show the relatively important role this natural resource plays in our economy," declared Dr. William Gillespie, Georgetown College Public Relations/Communications Professor and Director Georgetown-Scott County Tourism Commission. "We had a great year on our end of the Creek renting canoes," he added; "and our Festival of the Horse

committee is considering an event on the Elkhorn with canoes, too."

Paddlers who have been on the Elkhorn prior to the flood may check out the obstacles and water levels with CANOE KENTUCKY at (502)227-4492 locally, or 1(800)K-CANOE-1 long distance. E-mail is available at <http://www.canoeky.com>.



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BLACK RIVER TO HOST AWA FESTIVAL

Fun...Fun...Fun

Featuring two days of "on the water" activities—the Black River Festival promises to be an exciting change from the AWA's typical festival format.

Scheduled for July 26-27, 1997 at Watertown, New York's Riverwalk Park, the celebration includes two days of instructional clinics, a novice rodeo competition, on-the-water equipment demos and other events. Camping and a traditional Saturday night party will also be offered at the nearby Black River Bay Campgrounds in Dexter, NY.

Watertown's Riverwalk Park might be the perfect venue for a whitewater event. The paved 20-foot wide pedestrian walk parallels the river for nearly half a mile and overlooks three class 2-3 rapids—including a superb set of surfing waves, several dynamic squirt lines and one of the best play holes in the Northeast. The Black's dependable water levels guarantees optimal flows of warm water at the time of the festival.

And of course, just downstream from

the Riverwalk lies the Black River Gorge—one of the East's best summer play runs. Rated at class 3-4 at normal summer flows, the Black also includes a runnable (but easily portaged) 15-foot waterfall.

Festival organizers plan a unique activity for the weekend: free rodeo and surfing clinics for AWA members. Representatives from Perception, Prijon and Pyranha Kayaks have already volunteered to lead hour-long instructional sessions during the day. Clinic size will be limited to 20 AWA members per session and, of course, memberships will be available the day of the event.

In addition, retailers will have virtually every make and model of kayak available for on-water demos during the day. Paddlers will be able to borrow a boat—check how it performs under river-running and play conditions—then easily walk back through the Park to borrow another.

On Sunday, a rodeo for novice competitors will be held at Hole Brothers—the

Black's premier play spot near the end of the river walk. Open free of charge to all AWA members who have not competed in a rodeo event other than in a novice division—the rodeo is designed as a "fun" event.

For "first-time" Black River paddlers, AWA representatives knowledgeable of the river will be available throughout the weekend to show the best lines through the rapids or the best play spots on the river.

For paddlers, the Black River Bay Campground has designated a special section for Festival camping and a special price of \$4 per person per night. A Saturday night bonfire has been scheduled with beverages. Admission is free to AWA members.

"We've made a conscious effort to make this event different from other AWA events," said AWA coordinator Chris Koll. "Our first priority isn't trying to raise money so we aren't charging any admission or staging raffles or auctions. Instead—our intent is to provide a service to AWA members and to encourage other to join.

"We're also trying to introduce more people to the Black," Koll said. "It's really an underutilized resource. As a summer river, I think it's much more interesting than the Lower Yough, Kennebec or Ottawa—but a big day will only see 30 boaters. It can handle a lot more."

The city of Watertown has actively supported whitewater activity and has provided use of the Riverside Park to the AWA free of charge. The city hopes to extend the park further than its half-mile length.

"It's amazing how public perception of the river has changed in the past 15 years since whitewater rafting and boating has come to Watertown," Koll said. "Local folks used to see it as hombly dangerous. Now they're building parks and encouraging recreational use." Registration for the weekend clinics and rodeo will be made on a first-come, first served basis on the day of the Festival at the AWA booth starting at the Adirondack River Outfitters put-in.

For more information, contact Chris Koll at (315)652-8397 or by e-mail at CKOLL1234@aol.com. A festival newsletter featuring maps and detailed schedule of events will be available in mid May—call to receive more information.

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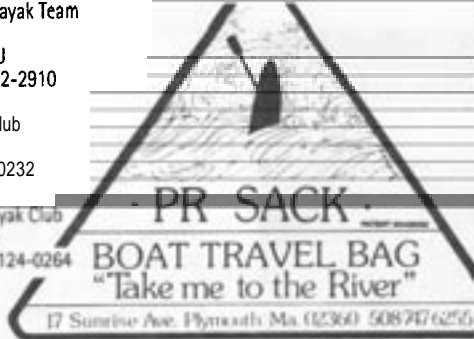
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FED UP

by Jonathan Katz

Flat-faced and determined, the two IRS agents strode through the front doors of McBride-Omaha Chemical Company on official business. They were looking for Omaha, and they had a warrant.

Headquarters was dead. At the reception desk Arden was wearing a peach knit minidress and painting her toenails. She had one naked foot propped on her desk as she bent forward, reaching with the applicator. Her hair was down. The agents saw a huge spray of thick red tresses, a cleavage deep as Hellis Canyon, a nude, exquisite leg projecting across their line of vision at a wondrous angle. For all their training, and all the force of their bad attitudes, they were merely men. The view at the reception desk stopped them in their tracks.

Arden heard them and glanced up. Not bikers. Not boaters. Not dopers. And they didn't have that burnt around the edges look the scientists had. Trouble. She smiled alluringly. "Hello, gentlemen. May I help you?" she asked, as she pushed the panic button under the desk with her left hand and slowly removed her leg from the desktop. Yes you certainly can, thought Treason, the taller of the two agents.

Arden stood up and strolled around the desk toward the men. Just over five feet without heels, she walked with the posture of a ballerina and the body of a Playmate. An All-American girl: red lips, white skin, blue eyes. She had known since she was twelve that she had a disturbing effect on men. Now she spoke sweetly. "Please excuse my bare feet. My toes are still wet."

Oh my god, her toes are wet, Treason thought. Arden's remark gave the IRS men an excuse to look at her feet, her ankles, the whole nine yards. By the time Arden got around to asking them their business their hormones had disabled them: they were in love.

She examined the warrant carefully before she replied. "Mr. Omaha is not on our payroll any more, and I haven't seen him around here for a while." Both of which were absolutely true. Omaha drew his salary in drugs and

ammo instead of cash, and the "while" was at least a couple of hours.

"He owes the United States of America a great deal of money. He has been drinking free beer for nearly two years now. We subpoenaed Keystone's records. Would it surprise you to learn he drank over \$192,643 worth of their product in tax years 1993 and 1994 alone? Where we come from, that's income. And he hasn't paid tax on a nickel."

"That's terrible," said Arden. "Keystone, I mean. The poor man, pissing away his money like that. How much tax do you think he owes you?"

"Not 'you', us. We're all in this together. And it's tough to say how much, since he doesn't bother to file returns. But if we let him have his exemption and the standard deduction, we think he owes us over fifty thousand for the beer alone. Not counting penalties and interest."

"Or pretzels," the other fed chimed in. "He must have some deductions," Arden said, stalling for time. "Back when

I first met him he was spending a lot of money on dru... medicine."

"The government didn't know he was ill."

"Oh he's sick all right," she said, and smiled at them and profled. "Do you want to wait here? Can I get either of you anything to drink? Caffeine-free diet cola perhaps?"

"No thanks, Miss. We're on the job. And if you don't mind we'd like to search the building. Maybe he sneaked in."

"Just rest yourselves here a minute and I'll get someone to show you around."

"We'll look by ourselves, if its OK with you."

"You really don't want to do that, Mr. Treason. You see, there are experimental labs in here. If you open the wrong door you could be exposed."

"Exposed?" the smaller agent asked, involuntarily checking his fly. "Exposed to whom?"

"Well, I'm just the receptionist and I can't understand all the science they do here, but just the other day I heard Dr. McBride say something about hantavirus."

"Hand to what?"

"Hantavirus. Hopsi mouse fever. Kills on contact."

"We'll wait here."

When the panic alarm went off in the basement of Headquarters Omaha was under his van with a wrench in his hand. The sound made him jump. He banged his head on the transmission and swore. IRS! Gotta be! They were pissed about the free beer. Bunch of sore losers is all.

Best sneak out the back, Omaha thought, yanking on his drysuit and hoping the neck gasket would hold up. It was rottenóyou could see through it. He ran for the dock. The regular afternoon release was running full blast, but it only had another hour to go. He had maybe five minutes before the Feds got past Arden and sealed the building. Time to head down river, he thought. Time to disappear.

Normally it took two hours to run the Gorge. Omaha knew the river cold and could do it in 45 minutes. And if the

FED UP

feds ran out of water, well, they'd have a bruising walk through the boulders and shrapnel in the riverbed. He slipped into his lifejacket and shoulder holster, checked to be sure he had a full clip, chambered a round and hopped into his canoe. Thirty seconds later he was in the rapids. He rounded the first bend just as the men in suits burst onto the dock.

Treason saw Omaha's boat disappear behind a boulder and screamed at Arden. "You lying witch! He was here all the time! Give me a boat, right now!"

Slow them down, Arden thought. "A boat?" she asked. "You mean a motor-boat?"

"A canoe, dammit! Now!" The smaller Fed had his gun out and gestured to the wooden boat rack bolted to the wall.

"Are you sure you wouldn't rather have a squirt boat? They're more fun."

The little agent's face grew red with fury. He lifted one end of a lightweight fiberglass tandem canoe with a huge red **airbag** bulging in the middle. "I'm commandeering this boat right now in the name of the President of the United States of America."

"You mean Mr. Clinton? I think he's so cute, so... morally dynamic!" Arden pressed on, buying Omaha precious seconds. "You have to sign a release form for us, Mister. You know, I never even got your name."

"Special Agent Krakka." The fed grabbed a couple of paddles, tossed a life vest to his partner.

Arden extended the clipboard with the forms on it. "What's your first name?"

The agent looked uncomfortable, but did not respond.

"Your first name, Mr. Krakka. Please? Its for me. I'll get in trouble if I don't fill out the form properly."

Treason, busily admiring the way Arden filled out her dress, got irritated. "Tell her your name, Krakka, and sign the form so we can catch Omaha before he gets away again."

"All right. Its Graham."

"Graham Krakka?" Arden asked.

"Well, dip me in milk and bite me for a bedtime snack!"

The feds dropped the canoe into the water and got in. Treason sat backwards on the kneeling thwart in the bow as Krakka wedged himself into the tiny space between the stern thwart and the stem. Seated backwards and dangerously out of trim, the feds managed to paddle into the **swiftwater** and get the boat oriented parallel to the current. Then they drove hard for the first drop. They were running into trouble.

Omaha caught sight of the agents' canoe in the distance, and his heart flooded

with mischief. Despite his bouts of depression and suicidal willingness to risk absolutely anything in an open boat, Omaha was at heart a fun loving good old boy. His idea of a good time was driving his van down to the dump with his girlfriend and spending the day drinking and drugging, shooting rats and making love. When the sun went down he'd crank up the music, set some tires on fire and party with his buddies till he passed out at dawn. He knew that if the IRS agents caught him they'd send him to prison, but even the prospect of a decade in Leavenworth couldn't stifle his sense of fun. So he eddied behind a big boulder in the middle of the first rapid to watch the action.

The IRS men did not do well in the first rapid. Paddling their boat stem-first they plowed into the big standing waves in the middle of the rapid and shipped a lot of water. Their swamped and logy canoe got crosswise in the current. The two agents did not know enough to paddle on opposite sides of the boat. The canoe slid into a modest hole and the men leaned upstream and capsized, cursing. They hung on to the canoe and swam it to the bottom of the rapid, where they managed to pull it into an eddy and up on the bank. They sat there in their soggy business suits, soaked and gasping. Suddenly Omaha peeled out from behind his rock and swiftly paddled past them. As he went by, he waved.

Boiling with rage, the two G-men dumped out their craft and gave chase. This time they sat the right way in the boat. They paddled hard, but always Omaha kept well out of reach, perhaps two hundred yards ahead. Halfway down the second rapid they crunched their bow into a boulder. The rock snagged the fiberglass and slewed them round sideways, and they dumped again. They took a bruising swim, and when it was over they looked up on the riverbank. Omaha was standing there grinning at them, the ball of his right fist pressed into the palm of his left hand, thumb and fingers wiggling, making International Sign Language for turkey.

Krakka stared at Omaha, and for the first time he noticed the shoulder holster and realized that the rogue taxpayer was armed. Instinctively the agent reached for his weapon, but it was gone, lost to the river during a swim. Impotently he shook his fist at Omaha, and the chase resumed.

Ken Omaha took his time running the rapids. Sometimes he'd eddy in the middle, sometimes he'd wait at the bottom. Each time he watched the Treasury

agents point their canoe into the thick of things and get creamed. Sometimes they swamped, sometimes they swam, but they made nothing look easy. Omaha savored each disaster, sometimes ferrying back and forth to get the best view. Once he shouted, once he blew his whistle, once he flipped them the bird. Those feds were going to **earn** whatever few pennies of income tax they managed to gouge from his hide.

Four rapids and two swims later Krakka freaked. He ripped Treason's automatic out of the bigger man's shoulder holster and blazed away at Omaha, firing half a clip at the canoe bobbing in the distance.

Omaha had not been under fire since the **shootout** on the Amu Darya, and he did not cherish the feeling. The fourth or fifth round punched a jagged, splintered hole through his paddle. His paddle! Wounded! They might as well have shot him in his Jackson. The nerve of these people, shooting him in the paddle!

At the base of the next drop he eddied and stared upriver, waiting. The federal boat, dented at the bow, slewed into sight within a minute. The lead fed was paddling hard, digging into the big waves, leaning forward into his strokes and panting with his mouth open. Omaha drew his nine millimeter and watched the oncoming IRS men. They were demanding that he pay tax on free beer, of all things, on beer he had earned by paddling his canoe over Niagara Falls! They had hounded him at his job, hassled his ex, **chased** him down his home river, threatened him with prison, and shot him in the paddle! He was fed up.

But Omaha did not raise his weapon. Instead he reflected on the shots he had made in the past, the hours **heid** spent training for wildwater biathlon, the hundreds of bottles he'd blasted off rocks on this very river as he paddled by. He remembered pigeons he shot while doing time in Penatanguishine, the empty liter of vodka he'd smashed on the fly as it tumbled and glinted in the glare of the Russian sun. A hundred fifty yards upstream the feds' boat bucketed and rolled in the meat of the rapid. Omaha knew with the certainty of tomorrow's dawn that he could put a round into the bow paddler's mouth at that range and never touch a tooth, shower the stem boater's shocked face with his partner's tax-added brains. But still he did not raise his gun hand. Blowing the head off a fed would unbalance his rap sheet. Besides, he had a flash of inspiration. He peeled out and hurried downstream.

The Deerfield ends with a bang, two real solid class fours in close succession: Dragon's Tooth and Dragon's Ass, which

FED UP

the Chamber of Commerce calls Galaxy. At the Tooth the river rushes by a huge set of glacial boulders on river right, and boaters pass virtually under the spectators on the left riverbank. Omaha beached his boat at the bottom of the rapid and climbed back up to the boulders. There he spent a few minutes finding what he wanted and lugging it into position. Then he waited for the G-men to resume their relentless, doomed pursuit.

They paddled into sight a few minutes later. Omaha watched them work their boat. They had gotten better, paddling on opposite sides, showing some familiarity with the essential leans and braces. The river was a harsh teacher, and they had learned fast. But Omaha knew Dragon's Tooth would be too heavy for them. In fact, he guaranteed it!

The Federal canoe gathered speed for the big plunge through Dragon's Tooth. The accelerating current caught the boat and propelled it forward even as the agents powered ahead through the big water, their paddles churning. They stared at the froth below and did not see Omaha standing on a jutting shelf of rock twenty feet above them. They did not see Omaha as he bent forward and got a classic two handed caveman grip on the jagged boulder he'd found. And they did not see him as he reared up, raised the hundred fifty pound chunk of granite high over his head and slammed it down with all his force into the center of their canoe. The boulder hit the middle of their airbag, rupturing it with a huge bang and tearing a gaping three foot hole through the bottom of their fragile fiberglass hull.

The canoe stopped dead in its tracks, flooded and rolled downstream, dumping the stunned feds into the heart of the rapid. They thrashed and tried to swim while the relentless current carried them to the bottom of the drop, through the short, fast pool below, and into the boulder studded maw of Galaxy, the worst swim on the river. Omaha knew they'd take a beating in there, and think twice the next time they thought about flushing a river rat out of his hole. As he fumed across the rapid to the trail on river right he smiled.

Then he remembered. Galaxy ended with a bang, a sloping five foot ledge dropping into the Black Hole, a hydraulic so sticky that not even light could escape. Anyone with any sense sneaked the Black Hole on the far right. But nothing these guys had done so far showed that they had any sense. Now they were swimming out of control, particles about to be sucked into the Black Hole.

Omaha felt the window of opportunity open, and he dove through. Swiftly, ig-

noring the half dozen neat moves that presented themselves in the top half of Galaxy, he ran his boat to the bottom of the rapid. He skirted the Black Hole just in time to see the two feds and their mangled boat slip over the ledge into the epicenter of the hole. Instantly it sucked them down.

Omaha beached his boat and grabbed his throw rope. Thirty feet from him the two feds and their shattered canoe were getting trashed in the hole. The G-men were struggling to climb atop their swamped craft, only to have it dump them off, back into the sweet spot of Black Hole. Omaha judged their chances of escaping from its grip at zero. Ideal conditions for resolving his tax troubles, once and for all.

While the Feds recirculated, Omaha negotiated his tax deficiency. In exchange for an agreement to cancel all penalties and interest, Omaha tossed the rope to Krakka and pulled him out of the hole. But getting a refund out of Treason was much tougher. Three times Omaha had to

tease him with the rope, landing it just out of arm's reach, before the exhausted IRS agent realized that it wasn't worth drowning to protect the contents of his precious Individual Retirement Account. Ultimately Treason offered Omaha seventeen thousand dollars in exchange for one hole-extraction rescue. Hearing the number, and figuring that it should just about cover the cost of his transmission repair, Omaha lovingly restuffed and lobbed the throw bag. He timed his toss to catch the Fed on the rise, at the boil line where he was begging again for mercy. The sodden bag hit him square in the nose.

Omaha reeled Treason in like a drugged carp, and stretched him out next to the twitching body of the soggy Graham Krakka. The two men lay on the rock beach, gasping and coughing and looking half-drowned.

Finally they got their wind back enough to ask a question, and the two men spoke as one.

"Please, Mr. Omaha, do you think you might sell us some canoeing lessons?" they asked.

"Jonathan Katz, March 2, 1997

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AWA EXPOSES ALL

by Ed. E. Lyne

I felt slightly uncomfortable. It was something to do with the way the boat seat stuck to my backside. "But what the Hell," I thought to myself, "It's a warm day. The sun is bright. So go with it."

There I was all dressed up in helmet, life jacket, spray skirt, and a pair of Tevas, being watched by a large crowd as I demonstrated the eskimo roll. The only odd thing was that, except for kayak gear, I was buck naked.

Thank God for the spray skirt! It worked better than a fig leaf, even when wandering around the crowds off the water. "Good cover," I thought "although it does flop around a bit."

"Man Oh Man!!!" I thought to myself, "It would be embarrassing to be an open canoeist in this place."

Despite what you may be thinking, I was not engaged in some sort of sick, perverted exhibitionist thing. I was at an important conference demonstrating whitewater kayak techniques. I was one among hundreds of people wearing only sporting gear. There were volley ball players, scuba divers, roller bladers, mountain bikers, skiers, runners, horseback riders, and softball players. Someone from almost every outdoor sport. And everyone was in their birthday suit.

How did I get into this situation?

I was asked to be the AWA representative to the 1996 Outdoor Nude Recreationist Conference in Naples Florida. Naturally, I jumped at the chance.

Of course, I WAS the obvious choice. My interest in nudes was well-known to AWA ever since I submitted my spectacular pictures of the West Virginia U. coeds at Wonder Falls to the AWA Journal (which prudishly refused to publish them.)

Within a week after receiving the details of the conference, my kayak was on the roof rack and I was headed off to south Florida to see what the exciting world of nude recreation was all about. I was really excited to be officially representing AWA and the world of whitewater sports in a new and exciting venue.

It was an informative event. I picked up some very important tips. According to experienced nude recreationists at the event, the main thing to worry about (other than the constabulary, of course) is poison ivy. Poison ivy is the absolute scourge of nude outdoor sports person. It can ruin a fine frolic in the woods for just

about any weekend nude hiker, kayaker, or camper.

Traditional kayakers have on so much gear that they seldom perceive the seriousness of poison ivy menace, but most nudists are utterly terrified of poison ivy. At the Naples conference they had countless seminars on the identification and avoidance of poison ivy and poison oak.

Going boating in the buff is somewhat of a new thrill for many whitewater enthusiasts, but, if this conference was any indication, kayakers can expect to see a sudden spurt of interest in nude boating in the near future.

Canoe clubs all across the country are setting up nude outings for members who prefer to boat in the nude. Some rivers are now more populated by nude outdoor recreationists than they are with the fully clothed variety. The Middle Fork of the Yuba in California, comes to mind.

New Wave is designing boats with cool nude art work of the exterior and Colorado Kayak Supply is selling a new dry top, called the "Nudex", aimed at the nude kayaker market.

One zealous sports promoter has even started a new organization, the Nude Kayak Federation (NKF), to help professional kayakers get commercial sponsors for their most extreme nude kayaking exploits.

In Europe, of course, the development of nude outdoor recreation is far more advanced than here in the colonies. In fact, the euros are rather blasé about nude sporting contests these days. There are hundreds of nude kayak clubs in Germany, France, and England. Some observers predict that almost no one in Europe will be kayaking with clothes on 5 years from now.

Here in the more puritan USA, nude kayaking is taking a bit longer to catch on, but its popularity is inevitable. One previously staid canoe club, the Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington (CCA), recently hosted a picnic for nude kayakers from around the East Coast. Hundreds of people showed up for a barbecue and party. The amazing thing was that no one wore anything but Tevas! (Editors note: Even the most strident nudist groups tolerate the wearing of shoes or sandals. Some even allow socks.) Even the band seemed quite comfortable wearing only their instruments and ear rings.

While the CCA party had an unusual flavor, most participants seemed rather nonchalant about the absence of clothing. Not me, however.

This was my first introduction to the nudist scene and I sat hunched over the picnic table, making frequent, but quick, dashes back and forth to a beer keg about 12 feet away. At this point in my nude kayaking career, I was still more of an on-looker than a participant.

AWA will definitely not be left behind as the nude thing catches fire in the kayaking world. In 1997 there will be AWA sponsored nude whitewater festivals, nudist exhibits at the Gauley Fest, nude class V races, nude whitewater videos, and even a nude AWA whitewater rodeo in Southern California. Anyone who would like to help organize one of these events should contact the main AWA office.

AWA is also seeking to hire a Director of Nude Kayak Events to publicize and promote AWA's commitment to nude whitewater recreation. Anyone interested in the job can send their resume and photographs, together with a description of their nude outdoor recreation experiences, to Ed. E. Lyne, at 136-13th St., SE, Washington. DC 20003.

The American Society of Nude Outdoor Recreation has published a list of questions and answers about nude outdoor recreation. Here are a few samples:

Q-What are the benefits of nude recreation?

A-Nude recreation has both physical and mental health benefits. Body-mind health benefits include a positive self-image, increased self-esteem, and stress relief through total relaxation.

Q-If I like skinny-dipping, will I like nude recreation?

A-Yes. In 1985, the Roper Organization reported that 40 million Americans have skinny-dipped in mixed company. Currently, more people than ever, from all walks of life are enjoying nude recreation in the 1990's.

Q-Will I feel self conscious being nude?

A-After the first 10 minutes, most people begin to feel very comfortable. Most people say "I feel so relaxed! I wish I'd done this years ago."

For more information on nude outdoor recreation, contact the American Nudist Research Library, 2950 Sun Cove Dr, Kissimmee, FL 34746.

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