

american whitewater

May/June 1999

Springtime in the Rockies...
Junk Creek page 40

The
**MYSTERIOUS
CANYONS**
of the Bruneau
page 52



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Cover Photo: The cover photo is of Scott Bristow. The picture is the Best Paddling Image from the National Paddling Film Festival taken at Pummel on the Maryland side of the Great Falls of the Potomac the day before Scott died. Photos by Julie Keller. © Keller Associates, LLC Photography



Correction: The March/April Cover Photo: Jonathan Campbell descends State Line Falls, Watauga River was taken by Carl Stearns. ©

Carl Stearns is a professional outdoor sports photographer and can be reached at 828-262-3926.

We regret omitting the credit.



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A Matter of Timing

My buddies and I launched on the Big Sandy at the same time as the group from Ohio and when we arrived at the take-out they had just finished loading their boats.

One of the flatlanders looked puzzled. "At the put-in you paddled out ahead of us. How did you get behind? We never passed you." He was astonished when I told him that our party had completed the six-mile run *twice* during the time it took them to paddle it *once*. "How could you have done it that fast?" he demanded.

It didn't seem remarkable to me at all. We had set a double shuttle that morning and spent nearly an hour on the river each time. I was paddling with a bunch of expatriate guides and video boaters who were very familiar with the Sandy. It seemed like just another day at the office.

But this exchange got me thinking about paddling group dynamics and the importance of pacing. Whitewater boaters are generally an affable lot; but trip pacing all too often leads to friction on the river. In fact, when it comes to causing trouble, pacing ranks right up there with deciding who is going to set shuttle or spring for the after river pizza.

You know the scenario. Paddler "A" needs to get home for his kid's birthday party. Paddler "B" wants to practice her rodeo moves at every play spot. Paddler "C" has never run the river before and needs to scout all the big drops. Paddler "D" has packed a lunch and wants to sunbathe by the falls. But Paddler "E" left her dry top at home and is turning blue. And Paddler "F" is determined to document the whole fandango on film. The real question is not when these people will reach the take-out, but whether they will still be speaking to one another when they get there.

This kind of unpleasantness can usually be dodged with some judicious pre-trip planning. Each member of the party needs to be up front about their timing priorities. If a consensus cannot be reached, it may be best to split the group. But everyone should be made aware of and agree to this decision. This is especially true if the choice to separate is made, not at the put-in, but midway down the run. The overall safety of the group must not be compromised.

Most boaters who prefer to paddle quickly choose to paddle in small groups because



they tend to be more efficient. On the other hand, folks who like to socialize on the river often prefer larger parties. Boaters who get to paddle infrequently and those who drive long distances to reach the water often want to spend more time on the river than those who live nearby and paddle all the time. My Burned Out Canoe Club friends from Ohio often spend the better part of the day paddling the New River Gorge. There's a lot to be said for that in the middle of summer. And my friend Charlie Bokor from Maryland adamantly refuses to spend less time on the river than driving to get there. I can see his point, although I assume he waxes that rule during his summer kayaking trips to Colorado. Thirty-two hours would be a long time to spend on the Numbers of the Arkansas!

It is important to consider the circumstances in establishing a pace. Recently I paddled the Upper Yough with hair racer Roger Zbel. There was a foot of snow on the ground and the temperature was 26 degrees. We spent less than an hour and half on the 11-mile run. Believe me, you don't know the meaning of the word fast until you have followed Roger down the river in the dead of winter. Although we had icicles hanging from our helmets, when we reached the take-out we were still comfortable. But by the time we finished loading the boats, we were all shivering. Most hard-core winter boaters agree that it is best to keep moving when it is cold; dawdling can lead to hypothermia.

Many expert boaters who tackle difficult water prefer a brisk pace. They argue that when they lose momentum, they lose their edge. When experts scout, they quickly analyze the rapid and choose their lines. They efficiently set safety as part of the scouting process, and when they portage they don't waste time. This becomes critical on long wilderness runs; no one wants to wind up stranded in the dark.

Individual members of every group need to be considerate of the needs of others. Consider this not uncommon situation. Two out-of-town boaters unfamiliar with a river, approach your party at the put-in and ask if they can join you. The newcomers seem honest about their experience and abilities and it sounds like they have the requisite skill to handle the river. But before you "adopt" these strangers, there should be some discussion of pacing. If your party wants or needs to paddle the river quickly, tell the newcomers. Let them know if you do not plan to scout difficult rapids that are familiar to you. Better to be honest at the put-in then to lead them blindly into difficult whitewater or, worse yet, abandon them halfway through the run. It goes without saying that once you agree to "adopt" someone you should make every effort to get him down the river safely. Conversely, "adoptees" should not lollygag; they should make every effort to keep up with their hosts.

This isn't always easy. Not long ago, Gary Ward and Chuck Morris patiently nursed me down the North Fork of the Blackwater for the first time. They usually spend 20 minutes running the North Fork; that day it took an hour and a half. But I couldn't have done it any faster.

Untoward circumstances may necessitate a change of pace. If the weather turns sour you may need to speed things up. But if someone is getting into trouble, it is best to slow down and offer to scout the tough stuff. If he decides to portage, grin and bear it. Don't let your impatience get someone else into trouble. When someone swims, give her time to catch her breath and regain her composure. I demand at least five minutes to whine and snivel after all of my swims. Some people need even longer. It is far better to slow down a little then to charge on until someone loses a boat or gets hurt. A few extra minutes on the water is a small price to pay to avoid an entrapment or dislocated shoulder.

Obviously there is no ideal pace for running rivers. Each individual will have her preference and on any given day it is best to find companions who have the same agenda. Even then, it is important to be flexible and always make safety your foremost consideration.

Bob Gedekoh

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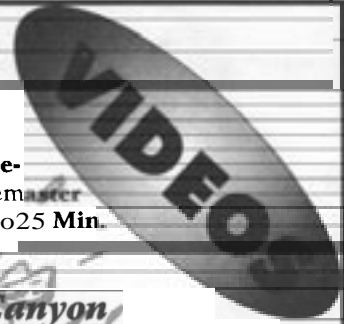
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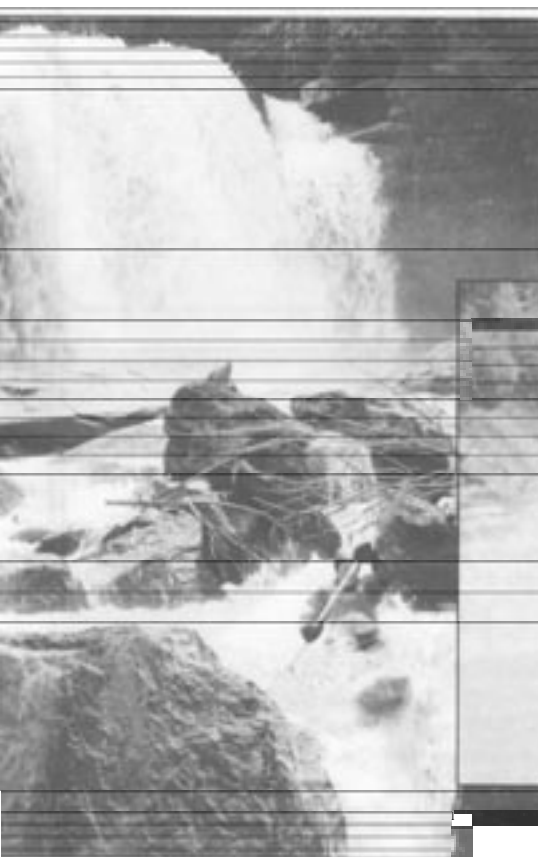
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Letters

Dear Bob,

I liked your editorial in the January/February AW in which you discussed having a premonition that an evil fate might await you if you were to paddle the Moose River. It occurred to me that if you can admit to your weird feelings, I can own up to mine. I had one just two weeks ago on one of those rare February days when the Big Sandy (W.Va.) was running a perfect six and a half feet, the temperature was in the 50s and the sun shone all day.

Already a little nervous, having not paddled good water in quite a while, I hadn't yet decided whether to run Big Splat. But what spooked me was the old hymn that just popped into my mind as that large boulder guarding Big Splat first loomed into view. I suddenly found myself humming a hymn whose title and refrain are: "Jesus, I come to thee!" Now, I hadn't heard or hummed that old favorite for at least 30 years. And nobody else out there was singing.

Where did this come from and what did it mean? Was I about to meet my maker? Stranger things have happened and I decided I would thwart whatever evil fate lurked around that corner by portaging. But as I stood in the warmth of that blue sky and watched through the camera lens as my buddies all ran it flawlessly, my fears sort of melted. Somehow, I crammed that old hymn into a teeny void in the back of my brain, walked back to my boat, and ran Big Splat more cleanly than I'd remembered doing it before.

All well and good this time, but on another occasion several years ago, again when I was preparing to run Big Splat, another old hymn popped into my mind, a hymn whose words go, "I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore, very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more." Within moments after the first bars of that old hymn reverberated in my mind, I was upside down in the first section of Big Splat, heading for that horse-shoe-shaped, nasty hole—described in my guidebook as a hole "from which swimming would almost certainly be the only exit."

While upside down I actually saw those words in my mind. But I did manage to roll, and found I'd already exited the hole in time to eddy out before the big drop. I hummed the remaining words of that hymn, "But the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry, from the waters lifted me, now safe am I!"

Another time I was out in Colorado preparing to run The Numbers on the Arkansas River with a friend. Although we'd run it before with a third buddy, my friend was a trifle worried that this time it was just going to be him and me. After the shuttle was all set and we were getting into our boats, he looked at me and said, "You know, I've got this feeling in my gut

et hurt or maybe
d no such feeling
ally very psyched
'ell, I hope you're

ready, because it's not going to be me!" We both had an excellent run.

Judging from these experiences I'd be tempted to say that premonitions are just a bunch of baloney. But wait, I have one more. It was back in '92, when I was working up to being a competent Class IV paddler, and we were doing "The Rapid" on the Upper Meadow. Dave Mills was the trip leader, and he was taking the time to show me how to make some moves. Somehow, I klutzed my way into the upstream entrance to an undercut. I felt its ceiling squeezing down on me just before I managed to extricate myself, and I heard Dave's voice yelling, "Get out of there!" Later, at the takeout, Dave came over to me and said, "For a long time I've had this feeling that, someday, I'm going to witness a death on the river, and I thought for a moment there that you were going to be it." As you know, Dave died in a pin on the Gauley at Initiation rapid in 1994. The moral? I don't presume to know, but perhaps we ought not to be overly skeptical of our premonitions.

Sincerely,
Gib McGill Volant, PA

Women on the N. Fork Payette A "Ladies' Run"

Dear Bob,

Here are a few of the women I know of that have boated the N. Fork Payette.

Lorin Gaylord of Jackson Hole—Top to Bottom a few times with no portages. Got bored one time and swam from Taffy Puller to the bottom of Golf Course. Gnarly, you should interview her.

Michelle Heap of Jackson Hole—Top to Bottom a few times, no portages. Aced the rock drop eddy in Jake's. She looked sweet!

Deedee Depercin of Jackson Hole—Ran Top Five and Lower numerous times.

Mariam Meyers—Top and Lower numerous times.

Deb Martin—Top to Bottom. , A wild woman who attacks with gusto.

Joyce Gronsten of Salt Lake—Numerous Top to Bottom runs at or over 2000 cfs.

Thanks,

Dave Pennington
Jackson, Wyoming

Correction....In the last issue we mistakenly attributed a letter, "The Envelop is Torn", to Ken Strickland. It was, in fact, written by Charlene Thompson, aka Cheetahrk. We regret the error.



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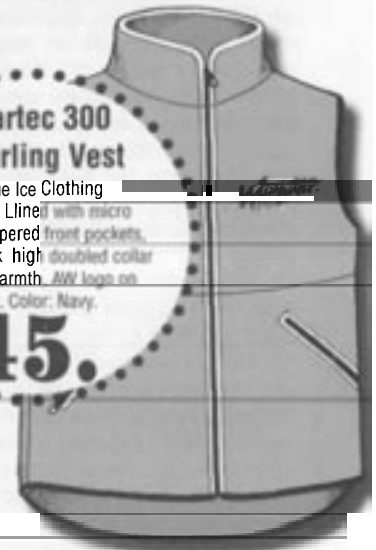
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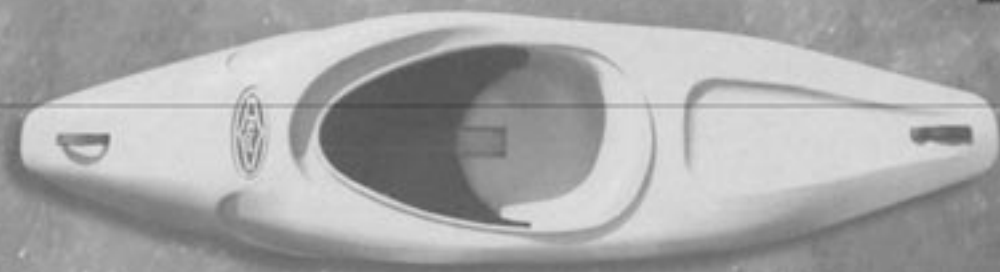
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Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, AW Briefs, River Voices, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines. Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater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

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

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

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints, or color prints. Keep your originals

and submit as duplicates if possible; we cannot 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 flat water. 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 aspecific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personali-

ties 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.

American Whitewater is nonprofit; 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 AW, which is a volunteer conservation and safety organization.

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Purpose

American Whitewater

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

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

CONSERVATION: AW 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, AW 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 bimonthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater, (AW) provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

SAFETY: AW promotes paddling safely, pub-

lishes 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 AW Whitewater Safety Code.

EVENTS: AW 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.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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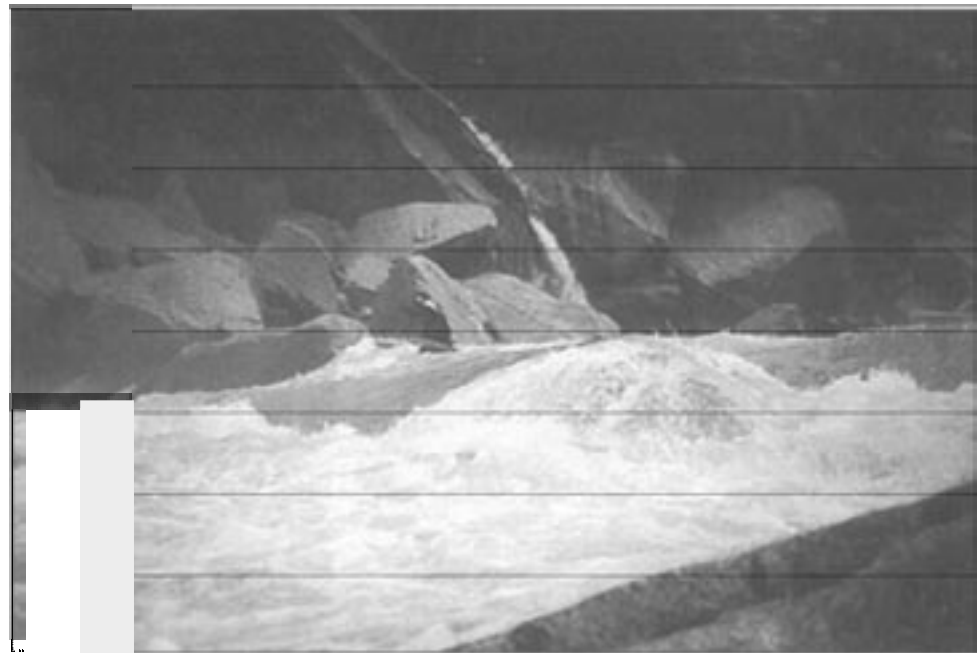
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Whitewater Feasibility Study Completed for North Fork Feather River in California

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has." -Margaret Mead

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) released water on February 27-28 from Rock Creek and Cresta dams for a feasibility study. American Whitewater, along with Friends of the River, Chico Paddleheads, and Shasta Paddlers assembled a team of kayakers, C1 paddlers, and rafters for the flow study. The team paddled a single flow for each reach. "The feasibility study was tremendously successful," claimed Kevin Lewis. "We identified a range of flows and logistics for a more detailed controlled flow study in June." Kevin, an American Whitewater board member and Conservation Director for Shasta Paddlers, has been instrumental in negotiating these releases.

Dave Steindorf, American Whitewater regional coordinator and Conservation Director for Chico Paddleheads came away from the weekend looking toward future relicensings in the watershed. "The feasibility study enabled us to develop a positive working relationship with PG&E



Norwood Scott setting up to punch county line hole.

proving we can paddle these rivers safely. PG&E now recognizes us as experts on whitewater flow issues. This expertise will carry us into the relicensing negotiations for the upcoming Poe hy-

The put-in below Rock Creek Dam.



dropower project which contains an excellent Class IV-V de-watered reach."

Previous updates emphasized the phenomenal whitewater resources on the North Fork Feather. Norwood Scott, renowned C1 boater, summed it up in a follow-up letter to PG&E, "I've been scouting the Rock Creek and Cresta sections for four years now waiting for water and the opportunity to paddle. The



Monte Leveaux "catting" below Grizzly Dome.

rapids and scenery exceeded my expectations. This is a California classic." The North Fork Feather will attract boaters due to the availability of multiple sections varying in difficulty making for a weekend paddling destination. The North Feather is also in close proximity to the road for easy access and offers outstanding scenery, camping opportunities, and additional activities such as mountain biking and rock climbing.

John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director, was elated with the grassroots effort by American Whitewater members. "These releases are the direct result of pressure on PG&E from our members. PG&E received countless letters and phone calls from American Whitewater members dissatisfied with PG&E's anti-whitewater attitude. The river advocacy of our membership has made my work in California a whole lot more fruitful."

The Controlled Flow Study in June is designed to determine minimum and optimum flows for whitewater recreation in the de-watered reaches. The results of the study will be reported to FERC along with a recommended annual schedule of releases. American Whitewater along with other groups will negotiate an annual schedule of releases for the new 30 year license.


Montana State Legislature Supports Will of the People

The Montana State Legislature defeated a legislative attempt to repeal Citizen Initiative 137, the 1998 ballot initiative which banned cyanide leach mining in Montana. The mining industry lobbied the Montana legislature to repeal the citizen initiative. American Whitewater, in concert with many other state groups, counter-lobbied state legislators emphasizing the need to uphold the will of the people. These lobbying efforts paid off in late March when the state legislature defeated the bill thus allowing the citizen initiative banning cyanide leach mining to stand.

For boaters, cyanide spills in rivers present a serious health risk. Montana is only the second state to take a strong stand against the mining industry. Last year, Wisconsin voters passed a mining moratorium bill prohibiting new permits for sulfide mines.

Contact John Gangemi (406)837-3155 for more information on the ban.

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"Patagonia has long distinguished themselves in the outdoor industry as a company with a strong commitment to conservation beyond mere marketing

loys," claims John Gangemi, Conservation Director for American Whitewater. "In past years, Patagonia has supported American Whitewater's Conservation

Program through grants."

For Patagonia, designing the American Whitewater Challenge Program is a way to actively link the connections between sport and environment. Patagonia believes that in watersports, as well as other outdoor pursuits, "where you play" is as important as "how and why." Now Patagonia is making it easy for their patrons to practice environmental advocacy thus greatly expanding their own

stewardship ethic globally.

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To request a catalog, call Patagonia at 800-638-6464. For more information about American Whitewater's Conservation Program call John Gangemi 406-837-3155 or write <jgangemi@digisys.net>.

Paddlers Wanted

Naches River, Washington

American Rivers is looking for boaters who have paddled the Naches River from the Tieton confluence to the Yakima mainstem, or any section of the lower Naches. The purpose is to establish FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) jurisdiction over a hydroelectric project that diverts a significant amount of flow from the river from approximately 7-8 miles in this reach, to the severe detriment of salmon, steelhead, and whitewater paddlers. If American Rivers can establish jurisdiction (that this section of the river is "navigable"), it will have created the leverage necessary to increase flows in this section of the river. Indeed, the operator may even consider decommissioning the project. PLEASE HELP! If you or anyone you know has paddled the Lower Naches, contact Katherine Ransel, at 206-213-0330, Ext. 11, or e-mail <kransel@amrivers.org>.

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Housatonic Relicensing

By Marc Organschi

When you think of eastern whitewater, you think "Maine" or "West Virginia," not Connecticut. Connecticut is a land of golf courses and dairy farms, right? Wrong. The Housatonic River in northwestern Connecticut provides first class, that is Class IV and V, whitewater. In fact, the best sections of the river would probably run most of the year if it weren't for two hydropower projects that de-water the river and regulate flows in a third section.

September 19, 1998 Bulls Bridge Test
Boaters waiting at George's Hole.
Photo by Steven R. Butler





The licenses for the power plants, operated by the Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P), expire in 2001. CL&P is in the midst of relicensing the projects with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The draft application should be available for comment soon. Local groups, notably the Housatonic Area Canoe and Kayak Squad (HACKS) and the Housatonic River Sports Alliance are negotiating scheduled releases in three sections of the Housatonic incorporated into the FERC licenses. These groups are planning a Housatonic Whitewater Festival in October 1999 to be dedicated to Doug Gordon, long time HACKS member and past president who was killed attempting a first descent of the Tsangpo Gorge last October. These local whitewater groups need boaters to write letters in support of scheduled releases and balanced use of the river.

The Housatonic offers many different levels of whitewater, including an excellent slalom training site where many world class athletes have honed their skills en route to World Cups and the Olympics. The uppermost reach on the Housatonic, Rattlesnake rapid, the de-watered bypass reach of the Falls Village hydropower plant, begins at a put-in almost adjacent to the pool below "Great Falls," an 80 foot waterfall, as yet unrun because of the dangers of shifting sandbars in the pool. At flows from between 800 cfs to approximately 1,800 cfs, it provides a fun Class III-IV paddle with good wave and hole surfing.

The Falls Village hydropower plant can divert up to 1,800 cfs through its three turbines. Therefore, during low-flow periods, Great Falls and the Rattlesnake are unrunnable. With river flows above the power plant's capacity, Great Falls begins to flow, and when the river is running some 2,500 cfs total, the Rattlesnake is runnable.

A
 September 19, 1998 Bulls Bridge Test
 Jeffrey Cherry running the Flume.
 Photo by Steven R. Butler



▲
September 19, 1998 Bulls Bridge Test
Marcus Organschi running the Flume.
Photo by Steven R. Butler

▲
September 19, 1998 Bulls Bridge Test
Eugene Carroll below the Flume.
Photo by Steven R. Butler



▲
September 19, 1998 Bulls Bridge Test
Mark Clarke collects surveys at
George's Hole while John Kagner
waits in line.
Photo by Steven R. Butler

*Boaters who have
trained here include
Jamie McEwan,
Lecky Haller,
Cathy Hearn-Haller,
Billy Hearn,
Doug Gordon,
E.J. McCarthy, Kevin
Michaelson, Mark
Clarke, Barbara
Kingsborough,
Dave Paton, and
many others.*

The second whitewater section of the Housatonic begins at the Falls Village hydropower plant and continues for 13 miles of Class I and II whitewater with significant amounts of quick water. Immediately below the Falls Village hydropower plant is Power Plant Rapid and the Falls Village slalom training site. Boaters who have trained here includes Jamie McEwan, Lecky Haller, Cathy Hearn-Haller, Billy Hearn, Doug Gordon, E.J. McCarthy, Kevin Michaelson, Mark Clarke, Barbara Kingsborough, Dave Paton, and many others. The gates are maintained by the HACKS, with the assistance of Jamie McEwan, and until very recently provided the only year-round slalom training site in Connecticut.

Historically, during low-flow summer months which are also the primary rental season, the Falls Village hydropower plant has allowed the pond above Great Falls to fill during the night, and then commenced generating at approximately 10:00 a.m. for a three to four hour period, providing boatable flows in the neighborhood of 1,000 to 1,500 cfs. This plan was worked out in 1989 by an outfitter, local fishing interest groups, and CL&P to provide low water in the morning and evening for fishermen and boatable flows mid-day during peak load generation periods.

The Connecticut DEP has been stocking brown trout in the Housatonic for years. Although the Housatonic presents a warm water environment, not usually thought to be an ideal environment for a cold water fish such as trout, brown trout are more resistant to the effects of warm water than are other species of trout. Also, the warm water fishery provides an opportunity for the state agency to experiment with strains of trout with greater survivability rates in warm water. Additionally, because the Housatonic is contaminated by PCBs from capacity plants in Massachusetts, the DEP has designated it a catch-and-release area, which means that the fish that survive can become quite large. Fish that survive one season to the next (holdovers) become feral and fight much harder when they are hooked. The result is a fishery with large fish that put up a good fight, with easy road access.

In the early 1990s, the DEP increased its stocking practices to include rainbow trout. Rainbows are thought to be a "prettier" fish, but are also far less resistant to the unsuitable warm water temperature, despite the genetic engineering of the hatcheries. To complicate

matters further, fishermen allege that in warm low-water periods, periodic releases from the power plant produce a surge of warm water that comes downstream and floods cold water refuges — areas where cooler water enters the main stem of the river from cold water seeps or small tributaries. As a result, CL&P curtailed summer release schedules, and summer flows are often too low to be boatable.

DEP's stocking practices and CL&P's schedule changes have had a dramatic impact on whitewater boating in Connecticut. The DEP stocks trout in 308 streams and rivers throughout Connecticut, but the Housatonic is one of only two year-round whitewater runs in the state. Brown and rainbow trout are not native to the Housatonic.

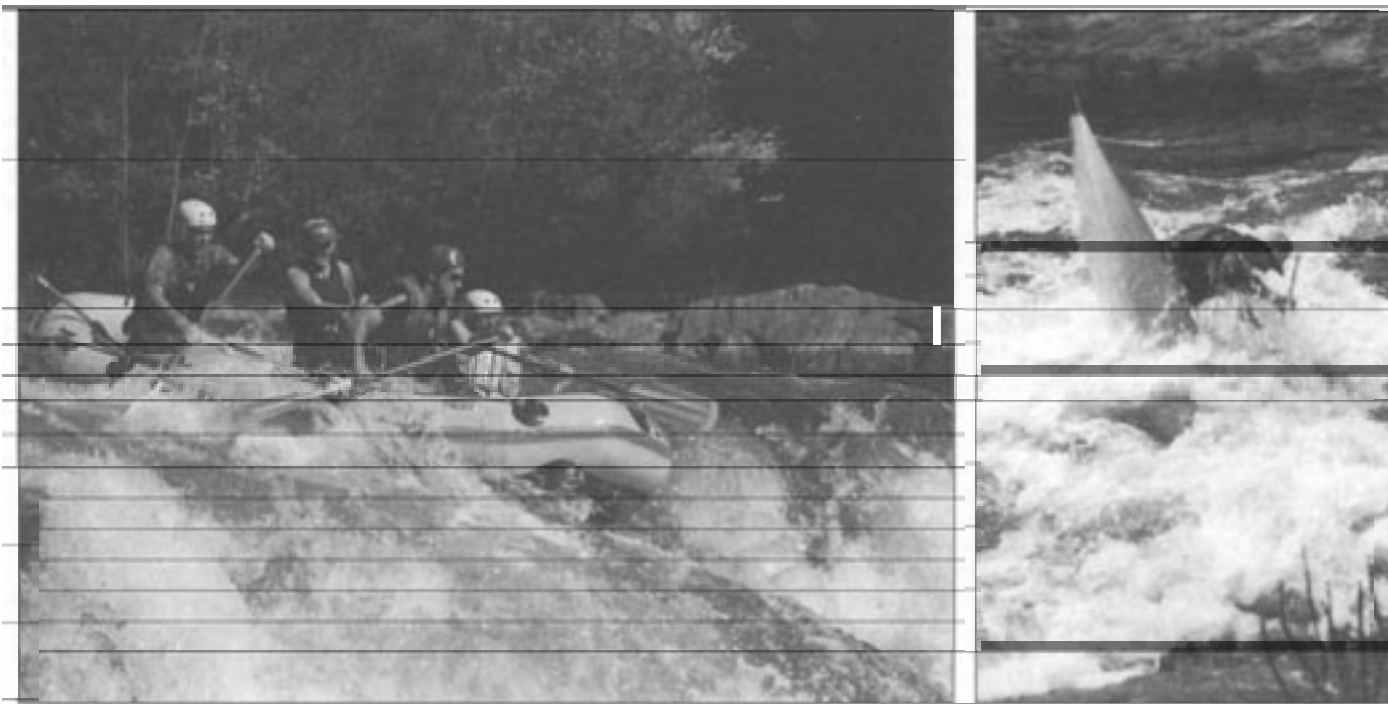
The third and preeminent stretch of whitewater, at least from a closed boater's perspective, is the Bulls Bridge section of the Housatonic. The entire run of two and a half miles lies in the dewatered bypass reach for the Bulls Bridge hydropower plant. The Class V Stairway begins with almost no warm-up.

As part of the relicensing process, the power company conducted test releases at different flows in April 1998 for the Bull's Bridge bypass reach. In September of 1998, a scheduled release in the Bulls Bridge section drew 75 boaters to the river. The release was originally scheduled for July but was canceled at the last minute, thus discouraging boaters to travel to the September release.

Boaters need to be active in the process and communicate their concerns to CL&P, local politicians, and the FERC. Send your comment letters to the following addresses. If you are from Connecticut then send courtesy copies to state and federal legislators. For more information contact Marc Organschi <mgo@browerorganschi.com>.

September 19, 1998 Bulls Bridge Test
Bruce Lessells guiding the Flume.
Photo by Steven R. Butler

September 19, 1998 Bulls Bridge Test
Dan Greenbaum at George's Hole.
Photo by Steven R. Butler



Key points to raise in your letter:

- 1 Connecticut has extremely limited whitewater paddling opportunities. The Housatonic provides quality whitewater with significant variety for boaters of all skill levels; therefore the new license terms and conditions must identify whitewater as a beneficial use on the Housatonic.
- 1 The new licenses for the Falls Village and Bulls Bridge projects must develop an annual schedule of whitewater releases for the respective dewatered bypass reaches.
- 2 An agreement must be reached for flows below Falls Village power house that provides sufficient flows for racers training at Power Plant Rapid and recreational boaters paddling the 13 mile Falls Village section.
- 3 Controlled flow studies must be conducted at the respective river reaches to determine minimum and optimum flows for whitewater.
- 4 Anon-power economics study must be conducted to quantify the monetary value of recreational activities on the Housatonic.
- 5 The fishing community has

regulatory representation through the Connecticut Department of Environmental Quality which oversees fishing use. The boating community has no regulatory representation in the proceeding, thus, boaters are underrepresented in the process. The new license must not reflect this inequity but rather must equitably balance fishing interests with whitewater interests.

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Mail Code: DLCHL 11-2
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Washington, DC 20426

Local Government:
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Executive Offices
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Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Connecticut DEP:
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Commissioner
Department of Environmental Protection
(or "DEP")
79 Elm Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

September 19, 1998
Bulls Bridge Test

Scott Barnes at George's Hole.
Photo by Steven R. Butler



Chauga River Sedimentation Study

By Brad Brewer

Everyone has seen it, but few of us have really thought about it. Winter cold fronts start moving into the Southeast giving us the highly-needed rainfall. Paddlers welcome, even dance for the winter rains to bring their local creeks up. As you pass over the local stream, you notice that it finally has some water in it, indicated by the muddy color. This is what we also see on most of our whitewater streams and rivers after heavy rainfall. What we don't realize is this muddy color, also known as suspended sediment, is the largest source of pollution on our nation's rivers, as stated by the EPA in the 1987 Guide to Nonpoint Pollution Control. Poor land-use practices such as roading, grazing, tilling, timber harvest, and storm-drain runoff are generally the cause of increased suspended sediments. High concentrations of suspended sediments produce adverse effects on aquatic organisms and riverine processes which in turn impact local economies. These impacts are evident on streams across the U.S. I've studied closely the interrelationship of land use, hydrology, and suspended sediments on the Chauga River near my home.

The Chauga River is 54 miles in length and is located entirely in Oconee County, South Carolina, neighboring the well known Chattooga River. The Chauga has a spectacular Class IV-V gorge as well as several other sections of lesser difficulty. The Chauga River Sedimentation Study was conducted during the winter of

1998, the glorious El Nino year paddlers remember well.

During the 1998 season, 250 water samples were collected using a vertical array of single stage samplers, which automatically collect water samples as the river rises. The samples were collected at six stations along the river, located from the headwaters to a few miles above the confluence with Lake Hartwell. The water samples were analyzed for Total Suspended Solids (TSS) which gives a concentration of sediment, expressed in mg of sediment per liter of water. Samples from the Chauga River ranged from 4 mg/L to over 100,000 mg/L. Average concentrations of the total samples collected at each station ranged from 128 mg/L to 4,503 mg/L. These concentrations can also be expressed as the total amount of sediment being carried by the river, called the sediment load, which is calculated by multiplying the concentration by the discharge. In other words, the Chauga River regularly carries approximately 20–50 tons of sediment during storm events, which produce less than two inches of rainfall in 24 hours. During storm events, which produce more than two inches of rainfall in 24 hours, the Chauga carries approximately 100–17,000 tons of sediment. Yes, and that is 17,000 tons of sediment carried by the Chauga River following a single storm event, which dumped 4.73 inches of rainfall in a 24-hour period.

Suspended sediment are not only affecting the organisms and

fish that live in the Chauga River, but also affect the overall water quality which is used by the City of Westminster, SC for drinking water. Sadly, this is typical for many of the rivers and streams in the Southeast and all over the United States proved by similar studies. A study conducted by Van Lear et al. (1995) titled *Sedimentation* in the Chattooga River Watershed found problems on Overflow Creek, Big Creek, and Stekoa Creek. Ongoing studies conducted by Duke Power and David Braatz have also found problems in the Lake Keowee Watershed, including Eastatoe Creek, and a few problems in the Lake Jocassee Watershed. Portions of these watersheds are also located in Oconee County, SC.

It is actually surprising that the Chauga River Watershed, which is composed of 75% forest, has so much erosion, leading to the high amounts of suspended sediment. Increased residential development in the watershed over the last decade is the most significant land-use disturbance. The upper part of the watershed has the largest number of problems, including large amounts of development along the river, tributaries, and lakes (Mountain Rest Lake, Chattooga Lake, Lake Becky, Crystal Lake, and Oconee State Park lakes). There are also problems associated with agriculture lands throughout the watershed which include cattle not fenced off from streams and streamside croplands which have no buffer strip to reduce eroded sediment. The largest problem,

however, which produces large amounts of erosion are the roads. These include mainly gravel roads, but also include clear-cut access roads and paved-road drainage ditches. Gravel roads cause problems throughout the United States because the gravel used on these roads is composed of aggregate, which is too fine and is washed into the nearby stream during rain events. This was observed to be a major problem with the aggregate used by both Oconee County and the Forest Service. The gravel roads, which are located close to the river or tributaries, cause the most problems because eroded gravel is washed directly into the river and is transported downstream. Major problems were found on roads maintained by the USFS, such as Cedar Creek Road, Ivester Road, and Hell Hole Road which are mainly used by local four-wheel-drive vehicles. Problems on the Chauga River are expected to get worse with the addition of more development, clear-cut access roads, agriculture, and gravel roads.

What can we do about this problem? Call the Oconee County Engineer and the Andrew-Pickens Forest Service to demand the use of larger gravel on the gravel roads and to stop the clear cutting in the watershed. Also suggest the use of erosion control, which can be accomplished by the use of properly installed and maintained silt fences. These silt fences can be used for construction projects, paved road drainage ditches, gravel roads,

clear cut access roads, and agriculture. These simple practices can also be used in watersheds all over the country to improve water quality on your local river or stream. So, GET INVOLVED! Lastly, there is a recent proliferation of chip/pulp mills in the Southeast. These mills require increased timber harvest which will lead to increased erosion and higher suspended sediment concentrations. Exercise your advocacy rights — comment on forest plans. Be an activist in your watershed. Fight for sustainable forestry practices.

For more information on the Chauga River Sedimentation Study or to receive a copy of the full length report call or write:

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Clemson, SC 29631
<Selmaraid@carol.net>
(864) 653-4463

In Search of Southern Hospitality

I had the good fortune to make that pilgrimage in March that most western boaters dream of—a paddling trip to the southeastern United States. The origins of steep creeks and classic runs we've all seen on video. The trip wasn't all pleasure. This was an initial reconnaissance of several southeast hydropower relicensings as well as other conservation and access issues. Naturally, I had to bring paddling gear to fully appreciate the issues.

Long before the trip, I'd heard of the south's reputation for hospitality. Eager to immerse myself in this tradition I searched for it in the Atlanta airport while I tried to locate my lost bags at 2:00 AM. Note to western boaters—you won't find southern hospitality in the airport—I left bagless.

I found southern hospitality the minute I ran into river folk. And then I hit it big. Paddlers welcomed me into their groups, provided camping gear, food, beverages, and lots of laughs. Even the creeks let me pass unscathed. Is it any surprise that paddlers were so accommodating? The camaraderie among paddlers is a large attraction for many of us to the sport. That outgoing, gregarious boater attitude is no different in the southeast, they just talk funny. All told, I owe a great deal of thanks to many individuals and groups that chaperoned my visit. A list too long for this update, but remember, y'all are welcome in Montana.

On the hydropower relicensing front, stay alert for updates on the following projects:

North Carolina-Cheoah River (tributary of the Little Tennessee); Tuckasegee River (East and West branch and mainstem); Nantahala River; South Carolina-Saluda River; and Alabama-Coosa River. This list contains only those projects we know impact whitewater opportunities. There are numerous other projects due for relicensing. The whitewater resources at these projects is yet undetermined. We need your assistance as users of these whitewater resources to attend meetings. Exercise your river advocacy skills. Explore those new runs that may be impacted by hydro. For a complete list of SE hydro projects call John Gangemi (406-837-3155 or e-mail <jgangemi@digisys.net>.

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US Forest Service Conditions for Kern River Relicense Rejected Again

American Whitewater, along with Friends of the River and the Kernville Chamber of Commerce, successfully appealed the Sequoia National Forest's (SNF) 4(e) conditions for the Kern River No. 3 hydropower project. The 4(e) conditions are mandatory conditions placed on the hydropower license. The USFS has mandatory conditioning authority on all hydropower projects on USFS lands in order to protect the public's forest resources. The 4(e) conditions are based largely on the language contained in respective national forest plans. The SNF's forest plan states that no project will divert more than 50% of natural flow. The SNF 4(e) conditions for KR3 allowed Southern Cal Edison to divert up to 90% of the river flow for power generation.

This is the second appeal granted to American Whitewater et al. for the same hydropower project relicense. In the earlier appeal, the SNF violated process protocols for involving the public in the decision. SNF will meet with the parties in the relicense and attempt to draft new 4(e) conditions that protect forest resources identified in the forest plan.



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A Turd Runs Through It – Gallatin River Threatened by Big Sky Flushers

Mike Harrelson

Despite broad-based public outcry, the Big Sky Sewer and Water District has been issued a permit that will allow 15 million gallons of treated sewage to be dumped into Montana's Gallatin River each year. The Big Sky Sewer and Water District processes poop for Big Sky Ski resort. In mid-January, the Department of Environmental Quality pushed ahead with the process before completing any formal environmental assessment.

Individuals (like you) representing Surfrider, Trout Unlimited, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, American Wildlands, American Whitewater, Montana River Action, and others have banded together to protect the Gallatin. The Gallatin is a superb fishery and whitewater river. Considering all the current crap (point source and non-point source) that's already finding it's way into the river, we support finding other options. We advocate studying all the cumulative effects and further exploring alternative solutions to Big Sky's growth problems.

It is important that we keep pressure on this situation so we facilitate an acceptable outcome. We have asked the Department of Environmental Quality for a hearing to challenge the anti-degradation decision. We need to continue writing letters to the Governor, our state representatives, Boyne USA (Big Sky Resort), as well as regional newspapers. Take the time to get involved with this issue. The Gallatin River is a local and national treasure and we river advocates must fight to protect it.

Governor Racicot
State Capitol Building
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Big Sky Ski Resort
Taylor Middleton
PO Box 16001
Big Sky, MT 59716

Big Sky Sewer & Water District
PO Box 160670
Big Sky, MT 59716

Director's Cut

by Rich Bowers

Thank you, Members!

In the November/December issue of the Journal, American Whitewater asked our members to reply to Pacific Gas and Electric's (PG&E) letter against whitewater boating. The response was tremendous and I want to thank each of you for helping out.

I also want to let you know that your efforts paid off! Since we published this article, the utility has started working with American Whitewater and other recreation and conservation groups in California. This is something that we have been seeking for over eight years – now, because of your efforts, we have a voice at PG&E.

In the past month, PG&E has participated (and initiated) several meetings with non-profits in California and Washington, D.C. Last month, they provided water so paddlers and the U.S. Forest Service could complete a whitewater feasibility study on the North Fork Feather (see the Feather article under Conservation).

Additionally, PG&E made some opening offers to help with the spring flow study on the North Fork Feather. Of course, this is just the start, and talking with us doesn't ensure PG&E's continuing cooperation in restoring rivers and whitewater, but we hope it will! Paddling and river restoration on the Feather, Lower Kern, Pit, McCloud, Mokelumne, and other California rivers certainly looks brighter now than in the past several years.

Good river conservation has always been accomplished at the grassroots level, and an active membership has long been the heart and soul of American Whitewater's work. This is just one more example of how boaters can make a difference. Thanks for helping out, pat yourself on the back, and start planning boating adventures on the rivers we are restoring. You deserve it!

And while you're feeling good, we need your advocacy yet again. We need you to write to the Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park and explain to him that whitewater boating is one of the least damaging sports around. Explain that once on the water, boaters don't even leave footprints.

Over the past few months, some groups and individuals have come out in opposition to our proposal to opening select rivers in Yellowstone

National Park. We expected this proposal to be controversial, but we didn't anticipate how extreme and downright nasty some groups would be. To push their view of how this park should be managed, they have created their own version of what our proposal says. They claim that our proposal "demands" that boaters be let in the park. And they say that, because we dare to ask to enjoy a park with nearly three million visitors a year, that boaters (and American Whitewater) don't care about the park and its wildlife.

Perhaps the lowest blow is that they now claim that whitewater boaters are just "thrill seeking visitors," and that whitewater boaters will destroy all of the river resources in Yellowstone. They claim that boaters will "damage riparian areas and cultural sites," "create trails and campgrounds," and "degrade the tranquil backcountry for other visitors." They even equate the damage done by whitewater boaters with that of snowmobiles and personal watercraft.

Here at American Whitewater, we know this is Bull! Our proposal recommends a course of action; however, it doesn't make any demands and provides answers to each of these inaccuracies. We believe that paddlers have proven their environmental stewardship on rivers across the country. The problem is that certain individuals and groups are getting press, trashing anyone who has ever picked up a paddle to float a river. They are also asking others to write to Yellowstone and promote boaters (you and me) as having a "me-first" attitude.

For me as a boater, this is outrageous. The only way that American Whitewater can stop this misrepresentation is with your help. If you have ever dreamed of paddling in Yellowstone, you need to write to the park now. Tell them what boating is really about; how boating and the river environment are so closely linked; and that allowing limited whitewater boating on select rivers is not the beginning of the end for Yellowstone. Help them understand why being outdoors is so great, and how wonderful it could be to explore beautiful rivers in America's first national park. Thanks once again for your help, and please send your letters today, to:

Superintendent Michael V. Finley
Yellowstone National Park
P.O. Box 168, Wyoming 82190

American Whitewater appoints first Development Director

By Rich Bowers

After a long and intensive search, we are pleased to announce the selection of Al Staats as the first Director of Development for American Whitewater. Al joins us from Washington, D.C. where he has lived and worked for 22 years after graduating from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Al started and has run a nonprofit management and development consulting firm specializing in assisting public-interest, advocacy organizations, and causes. His clients represent a broad range of issues, from the environment to social justice, and include several river conservation organizations.

Al has provided development assistance for river groups, both directly and as a consultant, including American Rivers for five years. He also served on American River's Board for 11 years from 1979 until 1991.

When not working in his downtown D.C. office, Al could often be found paddling on a nearby river. He worked as a weekend river guide for five years, and has traveled widely across the country in search of new river adventures. Al's favorite paddling is wilderness expedition

solo canoeing which has taken him from the lower canyons of the Rio Grande to retracing a historic Voyageur route down the Missinaibi River to James Bay in Canada.

"I am extremely excited to be joining American Whitewater and working with the Board, staff and many dedicated volunteers to build this important conservation organization," he said at a recent staff retreat in West Virginia. "I have had the good fortune of benefiting from the hard work and sacrifices of the many advocates for river conservation and the environment, and look forward to this opportunity to again contribute".

Al and his partner, Pat Case, are avid outdoor recreationists. When not canoeing together in their Mad River Explorer, they enjoy hiking, cross country skiing, and mountain biking.

Please feel free to contact Al <astaats@amwhitewater.org> at our offices in Silver Spring.

Park Service Hears Yellowstone Proposal

John Gangemi and Jason Robertson made a whirlwind tour through Montana in the first full week of April. They were spreading the word about American Whitewater's proposal for opening parts of Yellowstone to limited whitewater boating.

Gangemi and Robertson spoke to crowds of 35-100 people in Bozeman, Billings, and Missoula before formally presenting the proposal to Yellowstone National Park.

Afterwards, Robertson reflected on the positive reception that they encountered in these presentations, and thought that it bode well for the future of boating in Yellowstone. "We went into these presentations without really knowing what to expect; however, we were able to convey the essence of our proposal while also discussing the other projects that our members and affiliates are working on in the region. I think that we did an excellent job of highlighting American Whitewater's commitment to hoaters in the Northwest."

Gangemi added, "We chose to speak at these meetings because we wanted to give people in the local communities the opportunity to learn about our proposal. We felt that it was important for people to make up their own minds about our proposal and did not believe that we should try swaying their opinions."

Gangemi began each presentation with a straw poll. He observed that a third of the audiences were undecided, and the rest fell on either side of the issue.

Following the meeting in Bozeman, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition's (GYC) Executive Director, Mike Clark, explained that his organization's opposition to limited kayaking in the Park was based on concerns for a "slippery-slope."

Clark stated that he supports kayakers and canoers. However, the CYC is opposed to American Whitewater's proposal because they believe that opening Yellowstone's rivers to boating would lead to requests for commercial rafting access and activities such as hang-gliding.

However, Robertson and Gangemi explained that the slippery-slope argument is unfounded. The Park's superintendent is tasked with managing "traditional" Park uses as a right and may also allow certain "special uses" as a privilege. For instance, boating is considered a traditional use in our national park system, while hang-gliding is considered a special use. Boating Yellowstone's free-flowing rivers is the only historic use that people cannot enjoy in the Park.

As for commercial activities, these would, under a worst case scenario in which they were allowed, be strictly limited based on Yellowstone's status as a "proposed" wilderness. President Clinton has proposed more than 2,200,000 acres for wilderness protection in Yellowstone. A proposed wilderness must be managed for its highest wilderness potential until Congress either approves or denies the President's petition. Proposed wildernesses must be managed for opportunities for solitude. As the Yellowstone would be opened for day use only, and the primary runs are fairly long (up to 23 miles), the Park would have to limit the total

number of commercial launches. It is extremely unlikely that more than one small commercial group and a handful of private groups would be allowed to run the river in a day.

Instructively, the Park's administration is well aware of the management responsibilities for rivers with whitewater recreation and understands the issues related to both commercial and noncommercial boating. In fact, Superintendent Finley restricted commercial boating on the Merced when he was the Superintendent in Yosemite, and Assistant Superintendent Jensen (a boater) wrote much of the Grand Canyon's 1980 Colorado River Management Plan.

Ron Ladders, Triel Culver, Robertson, and Gangemi met with the Park's staff for three hours on a snowy morning on April 9th and formally presented American Whitewater's proposal. It quickly became obvious that Finley and Jensen had read the proposal in detail. Both men asked perceptive questions and sought clarifications on issues related to safety and the appeal of the four-river segments to hoaters.

The group received a commitment from the Park that they would respond to American Whitewater's proposal in late August or early September. As it took American Whitewater three years to prepare the detailed proposal, it is fair for the Park to take a reasonable amount of time evaluating its merits and examining their legal responsibilities.

Triel Culver observed that the Park would need to review their responsibilities under NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act). Culver said "We welcome the scrutiny of an environmental assessment. It's clear that American Whitewater's proposal won't lead to a finding of any significant impacts. Boaters care for the environment and this proposal raises the bar for other users to demonstrate that they won't have any impacts, either."

Ladders, an experienced Clark's Fork veteran, concluded "No one ever expected the struggle to readmit boating on Yellowstone's rivers would be quick or easy. I've been working on this for 15 years. However, I'm optimistic that the Park will make the right decision, and I look forward to challenging myself on the Black Canyon—legally."

American Whitewater thanks everyone who came out to the meetings, expressed an interest in our proposal, bought us drinks, and let us stay in their homes. We would also like to thank the Surfriders, Beartooth Paddlers Association, and the University of Montana for hosting us on our speaking tour through Montana.



Facing Backwards, Looking Forward

Boater Evades Arrest on King's Land! Kayakers

Flash Neighborhood! Psycho Miner Lays Down Stakes for Guns! Government Raises Taxes on Recreationists! 240 Mile Wilderness River Has 24-Year Waiting List! Small Boats, Big Drops! There's Nothing Yellow About These Greens! Logging Company Helps Boaters Get to River!

Developers Raise Chains! Navigable in Fact, IS Navigable in Law!

It's been one Hell of a year since I started working for American Whitewater. I've faced down a security guard in North Carolina with Dave Jenkins, picked up a random magazine in the airport and read about myself over Colorado, visited the White House, signed too many affidavits, broken a borrowed boat and paddle in Washington State and swam twice in two days, bought land for access, responded to more than 35,000 e-mails, floated down the Grand Canyon, submitted testimony to Congress and helped kill a couple of bad bills, spoken in front of 100 Park managers, been cursed and sworn at, assisted with 2 body searches, negotiated for access at dozens of rivers, met private landowners in smoky bars and backrooms, run West Virginia's Otter Creek and Blackwater by myself in the snow, had recommendations accepted and denied, fallen in love with western oar rigs, picked up a C1, finished a faux triathlon, worked more than a few 90 hour weeks, and had my ego stroked and bruised more times than I can count.

At times the job is fun, exciting, and exhilarating, and at other times it's trying and tedious. But I can't imagine being anywhere else. Working at American Whitewater is like floating down a river — I never really know what's around the next bend or over the horizon line. I often find a guide or partner to share the ride, but just as often I find myself navigating these waters by myself, learning new skills on my own, picking a line that looks like it'll work, committing myself, and giving it my all. However, unlike most rivers, this one never reaches the sea, and the experience grows deeper and more complex with every issue that comes to my attention.

I have to learn something new every day, whether it's how to present an idea, how to interpret case law, or where the river meets

the road. However, the most energizing thing that I've learned is how great our membership and volunteer base is! Without your help as a member, I would not be able to do my job, and we at American Whitewater would not be as successful in conserving America's rivers and protecting our access as we have been. Thank you for all your contributions.

Many of you can link the headlines at the top of the page to the issues that I have been working on. That knowledge is a sign that I am doing my job and that you are doing yours; by staying informed and caring about the problems that boaters are facing in your backyard as well as the distant reaches of our nation. Our members are as interested in opening Yellowstone and obtaining restorative whitewater releases at hydropower facilities, as they are in reading about and running the Gore Canyon, Yuba, or Green. American Whitewater aspires to serve you as well as you serve us.

I can always find ways to use your help. You already know the easiest ways to assist my program, for these are the common sense things that you can do on your favorite rivers with your friends. Start by undressing and changing in privacy. Follow this by respecting the neighborhoods and communities that you paddle in. Leave your dogs at home or teach them not to bark when you abandon them for the river. Turn your radios down. And above all, be courteous to the people you see at the put-ins and take-outs. It's always easier to solve and defuse an access issue before it blows up and draws the attention of the press and our judicial system.

The next year promises to be as engaging as the past. I'm going to continue pushing for access to Yellowstone, fighting for parking on the Green, redesigning the waiting list in the Grand Canyon, and defending our right to float down America's rivers. I hope that you will join me, and I look forward to seeing you on the river!

— Jason Robertson, Access Director



Jason Robertson. National Falls Upper Yough. Photo by Eric Brooks



Boater Etiquette

GREAT FALLS OF THE POTOMAC

SUMMARY: Boaters should avoid running Great Falls when visitation in the park is high. Morning runs are best. If you must go later in the day, go in a group no larger than four (4) and finish quickly. Never go in a large group, spend excessive time scouting, or carry back up for repeat runs when the park is crowded. Know the hazards of this Class V+ rapid before deciding to run it. Be aware that some of the dangers are not evident, even after careful scouting. And, please do your part to protect access to this tremendous resource.

At present, whitewater boaters enjoy open access to the extremely rugged and challenging Class V+ drops of Great Falls. In early 1999, boaters stepped up our efforts to maintain access to the falls and to build ties and mutual understanding with federal, state, and local authorities with jurisdiction in this area. We want to demonstrate that we are safety-conscious and responsible users of the resource. We hope that park rangers, resource managers, and fire and rescue personnel see us not as a potential problem, but as an asset on the water.

We can help by warning park visitors engaged in reckless behavior near the banks about the danger of drowning and about the necessity of wearing a life jacket. If a victim does fall into the river, kayakers are in a position to become the "first responder" who gets the victim to shore. This has actually happened several times in the last two decades. If kayakers see other park visitors littering, painting graffiti, or engaging in other harmful, illegal acts, they are encouraged to alert law enforcement immediately.

Kayakers have traditionally been careful stewards of the natural environment of Great Falls and are encouraged to demonstrate their commitment by getting involved in regular trail maintenance and cleanup activities organized by park rangers. Such efforts might include, but are not limited to, those areas of the park most impacted by us, such as put-ins and take-outs. Finally, we need to respect the concerns of park staff by following the reasonable guidelines for running Great Falls that are spelled out in the summary above.

The Great Falls of the Potomac lie within the State of Maryland about 15 miles upriver from the D.C. line. Like the rest of the river, the falls are under the jurisdiction of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Sandwiching the falls are two National Park Service (NPS) units: "Great Falls Park" on the Virginia shore, and the "Great Falls - MD" area of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, on the Maryland shore. Each of these units contains

close to 1,000 acres of protected woodlands. Great Falls is a popular destination within an easy afternoon drive of some four million people, and it is one of the premier natural attractions in the eastern United States.

Montgomery County (MD) and Fairfax County (VA) fire and rescue squads respond to reported emergencies in the parks or on the river. Both of these rescue squads, as well as C&O Canal NHP rangers, have zodiac-type search and rescue boats and are trained in swiftwater rescue. Kayakers will occasionally see these crews in training, or on actual rescues, and are asked to respect the need for such training and to give way when these rescue boats, which are less maneuverable, are coming through narrow chutes.

Kayakers are permitted access to Great Falls from either side of the river across NPS land. However, boaters may not put-in above the falls on the Virginia side. You may not put-in any higher upstream than the well marked "Fisherman's Eddy" kayak launch site on the Virginia side at Great Falls. Running the falls after putting in here requires an arduous carry up around 0-deck rapid to the base of the falls, followed by an even more arduous carry up the "flake" to the top of the falls. On the Maryland side, we are permitted to put-in above the falls, and many kayakers prefer this launch site for its relative ease. Kayakers should note that it is illegal to leave the boardwalk that runs from the canal towpath across Olmstead Island to the Great Falls overlook on the Maryland side. Do not use the boardwalk as a means of getting to the river. This rule is clearly posted, and kayakers are subject to arrest and fine for breaking it.

The falls-running guidelines spelled out in the summary above are voluntary, informal measures. However, if we disregard the concerns of park authorities, we could be faced with calls for formal restrictions or a ban on falls running altogether. Please think carefully about the impact of your actions when running the falls, and do your part to protect this whitewater resource.

In January 1999, rangers and boaters met at Great Falls Park to discuss a number of issues, including falls running. That first meeting has since evolved into what is now an ongoing series of friendly and cooperative meetings. Fire and rescue personnel attended one meeting, to discuss their role on the river and to hear what was on the minds of boaters. We looked at ways to communicate with each other on the water, including standardized "Rescue 3" river signals. The following signals may be particularly useful to Potomac boaters: to signal "I AM OK," either tap your head with your palm or form a large "O" above your head with both arms; to signal "I NEED HELP," raise one hand straight up with your fist clenched; a general distress signal for rescue zodiacs and helicopters alike is to wave both arms back and forth while holding a brightly colored PFD or other clearly visible object.

A major concern related to falls running is large groups running the falls when the park is crowded. This is a problem because it draws park visitors closer to the banks and prompts false alarms to 911. Since 1975, 29 people have drowned at Great Falls. The "Spout" is a

A major concern related to falls running is large groups running the falls when the park is crowded. This is a problem because it draws park visitors closer to the banks and prompts false alarms to 911.

particularly notorious spot. This is the 24-foot waterfall near the bottom of Great Falls along the Virginia shore. Eight (8) visitors have drowned since 1975 at this one location. The park is justifiably uneasy about kayaking or any other activity that draws unsuspecting or inexperienced park visitors dangerously close to the banks and steep cliffs along the river.

Another concern is boaters getting out of their boats in the midst of the falls and spending excessive time not only scouting, but also walking about, rock-hopping, sunbathing, snacking, wading, etc. The fear is that visitors will conclude that this activity is not very dangerous, when in fact it could easily prove fatal to an unsuspecting tourist. The fatality record bears this out. Swimming and wading are illegal. Therefore boaters may not swim or wade in the river unless it is necessary due to a wet exit. Boaters should never enter the river without wearing a fastened PFD.

The concerns about falls running go back a long time. Fifteen years ago, a handful of local boaters began running the falls regularly. Within a couple of years, discussions began between the Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington, D.C. (CCA), and Great Falls Park, eventually leading to a March 1986 voluntary agreement designed to head off formal

regulations on, or a prohibition against, falls running. The parties agreed that the falls would be run only before 9 am (which applied seven days a week year round), or on summer evenings after 7pm, provided that the park was not crowded, and even then, only Monday through Thursday evenings. In July 1989, mail-in registration with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources was added as a requirement.

Over the years, these voluntary restrictions were never really enforced and gradually became more and more ignored. Until recently, boaters often abided by the 'spirit' of the agreement, by making efforts to keep a low profile when the park was crowded (i.e., small groups, quick runs). In the last couple of years, though, it was becoming increasingly common for large groups of a dozen or more boaters to show up in the falls area on a crowded weekend day and walk around on the rocks, scout, sunbathe, run the drops, and carry back up repeatedly for more runs, while literally hundreds of curious

park visitors gawked.

So far the park service has, with one brief exception, kept the falls open (or to be technically correct, they have allowed open access to the falls) for 15 years, despite the fact that boaters have essentially

Another concern is boaters getting out of their boats in the midst of the falls and spending excessive time not only scouting, but also walking about, rock-hopping, sunbathing, snacking, wading, etc.

Trouble on the waters

If you had trouble getting to the river, let us know. Use this form to report access problems so that AW can convince legislators and government authorities where and when river access is a problem. If you have met an irate landowner, noticed signs forbidding access, or were stopped by a landowner, barbed wire fence or a locked gate, tell us about it on this form. If several boaters are arrested or involved, only one form should be filled out per incident naming a boater available for future contact.

River _____ State _____

Date of incident _____

Access code categories: List below or circle the categories. Multiple categories are ok.

Brief description of incident:

Boater contact _____
 Address _____
 City etc. _____
 Phone _____
 e-mail _____

Landowner/Agency/Sheriff contact (if known)
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City etc. _____
 Phone _____
 e-mail _____

1. Trespass. Ticket, warning or arrest for:

- 1.01 Trespass on private property
- 1.02 Trespass on public property
- 1.03 Criminal trespass
- 1.04 Civil trespass

2. Public Access Closure

- 2.01 Denied by federal law
 - 2.01.01 Denied by BLM
 - 2.01.02 Denied by Forest Service
 - 2.01.03 Denied by Nat'l Park Service
- 2.02 Denied by state
- 2.03 Denied by local authority
- 2.04 Denied by administrative edict

3. Injury from man-made obstacles

- 3.01 Barbed wire or fence
- 3.02 Low head dam

4. Obstacles running river, scouting or portaging

- 4.01 Fence or chain on land blocking access
- 4.02 Fence, wire, or tree on river blocking access
- 4.03 Posted no trespassing sign
- 4.04 Vehicle towed, ticketed, or vandalized
- 4.05 Threats or acts of violence

5. Closures: Rivers closed that were once open

- 5.01 Closed by private landowner
- 5.02 Closed by government agency
 - 5.02.01 Federal
 - 5.02.02 State
 - 5.02.03 Local
- 5.03 High water closure

New access fees

- 6.01 Charged by private landowner
- 6.02 Charged by government agency
 - 6.02.01 Federal
 - 6.02.02 State
 - 6.02.03 Local

Dam controlled rivers

- 7.01 Water turned off
- 7.02 Inconsistent flow: too much or too little
- 7.03 No notice of releases

Send to Ken Ransford, 475 Sierra Vista, Carbondale, CO 81623, 970-963-6800, FAX 970-963-6700, ransford@csn.net

Access is a constant struggle. The AW Access Committee needs your help.

abandoned the 1986 voluntary agreement. The exception occurred in September of 1989, when boaters were shocked to see an announcement posted in Great Falls Park banning access to the falls across park land. After the CCA protested on legal and jurisdictional grounds to senior officials at NPS headquarters, this ban was rescinded later that fall. This incident served as a wake-up call to boaters who had taken access for granted.

Many of today's falls runners are no doubt simply unaware of the park's long-standing concerns and of the substantial efforts made by the CCA and others over the years to protect access to the falls. Others just assume access is assured and don't bother limiting themselves to time or day restrictions they view as rigid and unrealistic. This approach has become increasingly problematic, though, with more and more boaters running the falls, in larger groups, and on busy weekend days.

Unfortunately, we also recently had our first-ever kayaker death in the Great Falls, which, for the record, occurred around noon on

a Saturday (11/28/98) in front of a large crowd. This incident had the unexpected but welcome side-effect of jump-starting the dialog with local authorities and bringing various issues of concern to the table.

With the endorsement of American Whitewater and the CCA, and in consultation with park rangers, Maryland DNR, and local rescue squads, the guidelines spelled out in the summary above are designed to serve as common reference for boaters wishing to run Great Falls. Unlike the 1986 agreement, these guidelines do not involve rigid or unrealistic time or day restrictions. Rather, they leave it up to the individual kayaker to use common sense and discretion in taking into account the visitation level at the park. If it's crowded, either go another time, or go in a small group and get through quickly.

Thanks for your help keeping Great Falls open for all to enjoy, now and in the future.

AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Jason Robertson
Access Director
1430 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 589-9453

CANOE CRUISERS ASSOCIATION

c/o Mac Thornton
Conservation Chair
6467 Wishbone Terrace
Cabin John, MD 20818
(301) 229-7430

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By Jayne H. Abbot, Events Manager

The 1999 event season started off with a load of whitewater daredevils, carnage, and thought-provoking armchair paddling as the National Paddling Film Festival took to the screen in Lexington, KY on February 26–27 (see NPPF article for winners). From Lexington, the film festival took to the road in the NPPF Roadshow with stops at the Kern River Festival and Tallulah Festival. In addition, you just might catch the show in Asheville (June or July) and in Ann Arbor, MI in October. Watch for updates in the journal and on the American Whitewater web site for an NPPF Roadshow near you.

March invoked the calm before the storm that was soon to hit in April when boaters took to the real stuff at the Tallulah River releases and enjoyed a beautiful spring day at the 2nd annual Tallulah Festival on April 3rd.

The 1999 calendar is chock full of exciting races, competitions, and just plain fun stuff to do. Be sure to note that the American Whitewater Journal and web site always has the most up-to-date information on events so stay tuned here.

NOWR

As of this writing (May 31st), the rodeo season is just around the corner and the events office has been a hub of new beginnings introducing the new standardized 1999 judging manual that, due to its complexity, precipitated designing a brand new excel-based scoring system for our organizers. That done, we're moving onto the nitty gritty of running the events and keeping track of the NOWR point series and North American Cup championships (see March/April issue). Results and event summaries will be included in the next issue of the journal.

THANKS!

At this time, I'd like to give a very special THANK YOU to volunteer Denis McLane, computer programmer wiz! Denis has spent many hours toiling away at his computer to design and maintain our NOWR database. Not only does this database keep track of mundane information like addresses, it also automatically accumulates points for the NOWR Point Series and prints reports. Not only has Denis helped out NOWR, he is behind the scene at many American Whitewater events as our electrician and all-around event handyman. Thank you Denis and, oh by the way, HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Denis enjoying himself in the Grand Canyon, 1998.



1999 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS

Come join American Whitewater in 1999 as we celebrate whitewater rivers across the country through our world famous festivals, races, and rodeos. Hope to see you there!

AMERICAN WHITEWATER EVENTS

Sacandaga Festival	July 17	Hadley, NY	John Duncan	518-696-5710	soc@whitewaterusa.com
Black River Festival	July 24-25	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	cko11234@aol.com
Deerfield Festival	July 31	Charlemont, MA	Mike Coleman	781-646-6744	colemanm@beaconarch.com
"Don't call this a Festival River Rendezvous"/September 4-6 / Belfort, NY/Beaver River J Chris Koll/ 315-652-8397 ckoll1234@aol.com					
Gauley Festival	September 25	Summersville, WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355	whiteh2o@catskill.net
Russell Fork Rendezvous	October 1-3	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011	surfin@kymtnnet.org
Moose River Festival	October 16	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com

AMERICAN WHITEWATER CASCADE SERIES

a series of American Whitewater premier level races from mild(er) to wilder held across the country

Potomac Great Falls Race	June 5-11	Great Falls, VA	Chris Cook	202-965-1917	ccindc@patriot.net
Black River Race	July 24	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	cko11234@aol.com
Upper Yough Race	July 29	Friendsville, MD	Jess Whittemore	301-746-5389	
Gore Canyon Downriver Race	August 21-22	Kremmling, CO	Paul Tefft	970-923-3955	enviro@rof.net

Rated at class 3-4.

BLACK RIVER FESTIVAL

July 24-25
Watertown, New York's Riverwalk Park

Free rodeo and surfing clinics for AWW members.

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

The celebration includes two days of instructional clinics, a novice rodeo competition, on-the-water equipment demos and other events.

Done all the "Hot New Boat" designs

Free rodeo and surfing clinics and guided river trips (if qualified) for American Whitewater members.

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 AWW booth starting at the following Riverwalk location: July 24, 10:00 AM.

For more information, contact Chris Koll at (315) 652-8397 or by e-mail at CKOLL1234@aol.com. A festival newspaper featuring news and detailed schedules of events will be available to read May—call (315) 652-8397.

Deerfield Riverfest

July 31, Charlemont, Massachusetts

Competitions:
Saturday - 3rd Annual Amateur Whitewater Rodeo and Paddles Up Race.
Sunday - Mass start downriver race on Monroe Bridge section.

In the evening we roll out the carpet for our famous American Whitewater chicken barbecue, live entertainment, marketplace exhibitors and a silent auction of awesome outdoor gear.

Come join US as we celebrate the Deerfield River and all it has to offer.

AMERICAN WHITEWATER CASCADE SERIES *continued*

Russell Fork Race	October 2	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011	surfin@kymtnet.org
Gauley River Race	October 4	Summersville, WV	Donnie Hudspeth	304-658-5016	
Moose River Race	October 16	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	cko111234@aol.com

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WHITEWATER RODEOS (NOWR) CIRCUIT

Oregon Cup	(May 1-91)				
Maupin Daze ▼	May 1-2	Maupin, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201	allstar@teleport.com
Oregon Surf Off	May 4	Pacific City, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201	allstar@teleport.com
Canyon Creek Downriver Race	May 6	Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	aldercreek@aol.com
Sunset Falls or The Wheel Rodeo	May 7	Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	aldercreek@aol.com
Bob's Hole Rodeo ▼	May 8-9	Estacada, OR	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	aldercreek@aol.com
Coosa River Whitewater Festival ▼	May 14-16	Wetumpka, AL	Lonnie Carden	334-272-0952	
Bigfork Whitewater Festival	May 15-16	Bigfork, MI	Derreck Thomson	406-862-4926	
■ Ocoee Rodeo ▼	May 21-23	Ducktown, TN	Jayne Abbot	828-645-5299	JHAbbot@aol.com
Jackson Hole Rodeo	May 29-30	Jackson Hole, WY	Aaron Pruzan	307-733-2471	JacksonHoleKayak@wyoming.com
Potomac Whitewater Festival ▼	June 5-6	Great Falls, VA	Chris Cook	202-965-1917	ccindc@patriot.net
Clear Creek Festival (<i>exhibition freestyle</i>)	June 5-6	Golden, CO	Chuck Cremer	303-277-0133	
Boulder Rodeo	June 12-13	Boulder, CO	Kevin Sloan	303-931-3029	
Headwater Championship/FIBARK ▼	June 17-20	Salida, CO	Susie Dempsey	719-539-4686	zusan@bewellnet.com
■ Animas River Days ▼	June 25-27	Durango, CO	Nancy Wiley	970-259-3893	info@riversports.com
Skyfest	June 26-27	Index, WA	Randolph Pierce	206-789-0444	pierce3@eskimo.com
Gorge Games – WW Rodeo	July 11	Hood River, OR	John Trujillo (Tree)	541-386-4286	tree@gorge.net
■ Wausau Whitewater Rodeo ▼	August 28-29	Wausau, WI	Julie Walraven	715-845-5664	design@dwave.net
Ottawa Kiver Rodeo ▼	September 4-6	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223	paul@equinoxadventures.com
Outer Banks Surf/Kayak Rodeo	October 1-3	Nags Head, NC	Pam Malec	252-441-6800	pam@khsports.com

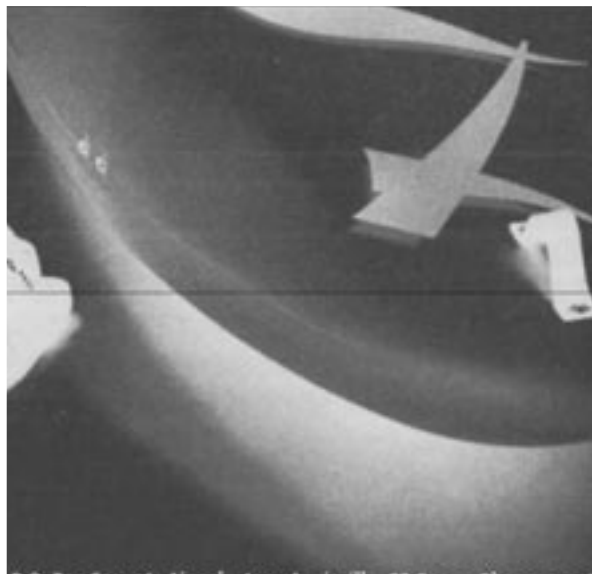
■ (Animas, Ocoee and Wausau comprise the **North American Cup** competition within the NOWR event schedule.

▼ (Kern, Gillman, New, Maupin, Bob's, Coosa, Ocoee, Potomac, Fibark, Animas, Wausau and Ottawa are events at which NOWR registered Pro/Elite athletes can earn points towards the 1999 NOWR Point Series Championship. Athletes top five event points earned will be counted to determine champion.

OTHER EVENTS

2 nd Annual Festival on the French Broad River	May 21-23	Asheville, NC	Chris Donochod	828-236-1209	
Kananaskis Whitewater Rodeo	May 29-30	Calgary, AB	Mark Taylor	800-656-8288	rmrpc@info-pages.com
East Coast Team Trials	May 29-30	Rock Island, TN	Christie Dobson	423-756-9861	christiechic@mindspring.com
Willow Kiver Yaddletest	June 18-20	Prince George, BC	Rick Brine	250-964-7400	
West Coast Team Trials	July 24-25	Eugene, OR	Brian Tooley	541-334-0696	btooley@compuserve.com
Kootenay Whitewater Festival	July 30-Aug 1	Castlegar, BC	Gerry Harmon	250-362-7259	
American River Festival	September 11-12	Placeville, CA	Larry Goral	530-621-1224	
Export – A Whitewater Rodeo Challenge I	October 9-10	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223	equinox@globalserve.net
World Freestyle Championship	Dec. 1-5	Rotorua, New Zealand	Andi Uhl (No phone calls please)		NZFKC@clear.net.nz

Schedule subject to change. Updates provided bimonthly in American Whitewater and as soon as possible to www.awa.org



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Reflections of the Green

By Mark H. White

AWA Executive Board Member

"It's not even 500 miles," I said to Chris between bites of pecan pie.

"If we paddle thirty miles each day; it'll take about two weeks." My friend was equally convinced of our capabilities. "If we can't cover thirty miles a day, we deserve to be shot", Chris replied confidently.

We had challenged one another to embark upon this voyage for so long that backing out was not a respectable option. The dares and lofty talk gradually evolved into late night planning sessions at the neighborhood coffee shop. Soon Chris had suavely told every attractive waitress about our adventurous intentions to kayak 500 miles of a remote, dangerous river. My total commitment to the trip occurred when it became apparent that renegeing would jeopardize my honor in the eyes of the entire wait staff.

The object of our grandiose scheming was the entire Green River – which is born of Wyoming snows, then flows into Utah, then Colorado, then back into Utah, where it meets the Colorado River and eventually fills Lake Powell. Full of youthful enthusiasm, we planned to paddle every inch of it. At least to Lake Powell - and possibly beyond. We naively assured ourselves that if we did reach the Grand Canyon, we would coolly finagle a permit and continue another 300 miles to Lake Mead.



Nathan Galloway (guide) and Julius Stone (passenger) on first commercial trip in Grand Canyon.

As D-day neared, we busied ourselves by stocking up on beef jerky, macaroni and cheese, and Carnation Instant Breakfast. We assembled a minor first-aid kit and a major fiberglass repair kit. We even sawed the handles off our toothbrushes to save weight. As was the custom then, we epoxyed tennis balls stuffed with twine onto the front of our brittle kayaks, to pad them from impact. Multiple layers of duct tape provided an extra degree of protection at the boats' seams.

Forty-eight hours prior to departure, our enthusiasm lured a third friend, Smitty, into aiding and abetting our endeavors. Smitty entered the equation with an enviable list of credentials; leviathan arms from big wall climbing; a reliable eskimo roll, and a real novelty...a kayak made of unbreakable plastic. Smitty was also in possession of another invaluable asset—a car that would play a pivotal role in the 900-mile shuttle, which traversed a large chunk of the American west.

We arrived at the Green River late in the day, packed provisions to the kayaks' brims, then paddled off into the sunset. Ten miles of cold, Class II disappeared in our wake. I had floated this Red Canyon section countless times before with my grandfather's small commercial rafting operation.

The following day was spent drifting through scenic Swallow Canyon, then into an expansive region known as Brown's Hole, which served as a hideout for the bank robbing Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch. Brown's Hole

(now more politely known as Brown's Park) has seen little change since then; the only noticeable enhancements being a few rusty barbed wire fences and a lonely ranger station at the Gates of Lodore.

More than 100 years before, our ex-

made with silty water from the Green River.

Earlier that afternoon, we had encountered a section of river in Brown's Hole which was remarkably wide and only inches deep. It was so shallow that we were forced to exit our boats and

drag them for nearly half a mile down the sandy river bed. To an observer, it would have appeared we were walking on the water's surface. Of course our tennis shoes had gotten soaked, so we placed them by the campfire to dry out. In the midst of our meager supper, the acrid smell of burning rubber indicated my only pair of footwear was melting. I ran to the burning Adidas and delivered a dousing of Carnation Instant Breakfast. It was, however, too late. The shoes were terminally damaged.

The next morning dawned cold. I slid my feet into what remained of the torched tennis shoes, walked across the beach of frozen mud, and joined my colleagues. They were discussing the ominous

rapids which waited just downstream. Disaster Falls, Triplet Falls and Hell's Half Mile were all long, boulder congested Class III to IV drops boasting impressive histories and intimidating names.

In the churning gut of Hell's Half Mile, Chris center punched a boulder with his boat. The fiberglass kayak exuded a painful cracking sound; like a bat meeting a fastball. Boat, boater, paddle, helmet, stowbags, and various paraphernalia were instantly scattered into the torrent. Smitty and I scrambled wildly to rescue our comrade and recover his floating yard sale. Once on shore and covered with blood



Nathan Galloway and his cutting edge whitewater boats. Photos courtesy of Roy Webb of Marriott Library Special Collections

act trip had been completed by a small party led by John Wesley Powell, a retired Civil War officer. They had been commissioned by the Federal Government to explore and map the Green and lower Colorado River basins. A few miles into Lodore Canyon, Chris, Smitty, and I camped on the very site where Powell had camped. Unlike Powell's men, who shot and ate a big-horn sheep, we feasted on beef jerky and Carnation Instant Breakfast—

from a lacerated eyebrow, Chris proudly admitted he possessed minimal kayaking experience and absolutely no concept of an eskimo roll. To Smitty's and my surprise, Chris was undaunted by his whitewater baptism, and eager to continue. "It's really no big deal" he observed, "just a bunch of rocks and water."

In the following days, we paddled past the Yampa River confluence and through big rolling rapids in Whirlpool Canyon and Split Mountain. We stashed our boats in the weeds near Highway 40 and walked a few miles into the tiny town of Jensen, Utah for supplies and a change of menu. Our brief return to civilization was rewarded with greasy patty melts and fries, but the hike put an end to my pathetic footwear.

The Green River below Jensen was not really a river at all. It was more like a long, skinny lake that seemed to stretch indefinitely through the weathered bluffs of Eastern Utah. We decided to cover this painfully flat section as quickly as possible and vowed to paddle to the point of exhaustion.

We occasionally refueled with beef jerky and Tang (The official artificial orange flavored drink of Apollo astronauts!) but remained in our kayaks through the entire day. As the sun sank behind weathered mesas, we spotted two boys who stood on the shore of the Ute Indian reservation. Of course we were eager to meet them, so we waved and paddled toward them. Our friends-to-be waved back, then produced two rifles and fired a few good-natured shots over our heads. So much for hospitality.

Our trio continued to paddle into the night. When the full moon made its appearance on the eastern horizon, it glowed an eerie, vivid red. A distant range fire was sending smoke and ash into the sky, coloring the moon in this bizarre way. The yips and howls of coyotes singing to one another across the broad river enhanced the surreal experience in stereo. This setting called for something special, so we opened an industrial sized can of beef stew and

passed it around—still sitting in our boats, of course.

We paddled several more hours and finally stopped to camp in a grove of ancient cottonwood trees. Fatigue and mental delirium from the day's 87 miles of flatwater quickly sent us into a deep sleep.

I dreamed of childhood whitewater forays on the Green River with my father years earlier. My dreams also summoned my great, great uncle Nathan Galloway back from the grave. Nearly one hundred years ago, Nate was the first person to boat the nearby White River and the first to navigate the entire Green and lower Colorado rivers—including the Grand Canyon—by himself.

Considered the family's blacksheep, Nate discovered that river running was an excellent means of hunting and fur trapping. He designed and built a flat bottom, rockered wooden boat and sealed the seams with pine pitch. But unlike his predecessors, Nate oared the craft while facing downstream. Previous river explorers had propelled their rowboat-like craft seated backwards.

Some years later, Nate's son Parley proved to be the family's true radical. He was arrested and jailed on a long list of charges in Vernal, Utah. Parley spun such wondrous tales of boating adventure that his captors, the Hatch brothers, offered probation—if Parley would teach them how to construct Galloway-style boats and run rivers. Although the younger Galloway disappeared shortly after he was released, Parley had shared enough knowledge to propel the Hatch Brothers into what is considered to be the first commercial river outfitting business.

The desert sun arrived much too early the next morning and melted away dreams of river pioneers. Our sore rear ends were soon back in the cockpits and traveling downstream. In the days that followed, we bounced through the Class III rapids of Desolation and Grey Canyons, where the muddy Green had swollen to well over 40,000 cubic feet per second.

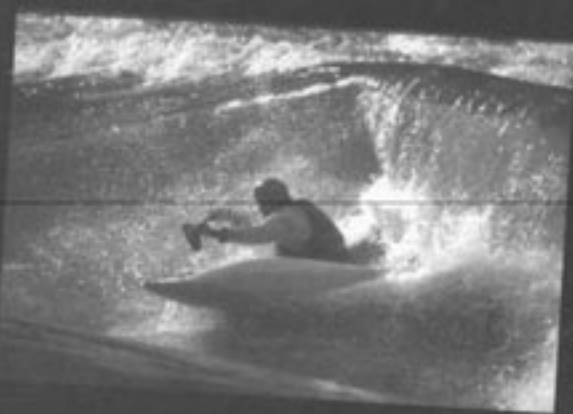
Late one afternoon we found ourselves battling a miserable head wind. A phenomenal gust blasted sand and spray into our eyes, then knocked all three of us over. I rolled, and went back in. A few more failed attempts and I popped to the surface in a frantic breaststroke—only to discover Chris doing the same. When we hauled our waterlogged carcasses to the shore, we discovered that everything inside our kayaks and so-called drybags was soaked; including our goose down sleeping bags.

That evening was a miserable one. We bivouacked not far downstream from the town of Green River, Utah in a mosquito infested jungle. The clammy wet bags did little to conserve body heat and the ferocious insects gorged on our anemic blood.

A survey of our situation the next morning revealed minimal food, one cracked kayak, two wet sleeping bags, and three extremely tired paddlers. We had covered roughly three hundred miles, but ahead lay another 200 miles of flatwater and 15 miles of what we believed was the most treacherous big water on the continent—Cataract Canyon. We could repair the boat, dry out our sleeping bags, tough out the flatwater, and portage the thunderous drops. Instead, we chickened out and went home.

There are singular events in our lives which set the course of our lives. That trip with Chris and Smitty twenty years ago proved to be one of those events. The stark beauty of the canyons and echoes of ancestors' voices who had pioneered them would haunt me. My casual interest in rivers and kayaking transformed into an obsession, which by all indications will last a lifetime.

NOTE: Author Mark White is proud to say that he and Chris regained their courage and returned a few years later to paddle another 400 miles to Lake Mead.



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probably looked like a puppy whose master had just returned home, opened the door, and set him free to tear around the back yard. It is always a long winter in Colorado, waiting for rivers to run again, and spring finds me shaking with excitement. My buddy Rob had told me of an action packed little spring run nearby called Bear Creek. By April I was calling the flow phone from work to check on it; 'Nope, master isn't home yet.' As May rolled around, I was wagging my tail with anticipation, then Rob finally called with the good news. Just then the door flung open and I was free!

I could hardly contain myself while driving up the canyon. Every glimpse of the water revealed wholesome, Class IV goodness, peppered with bigger drops! When Rob pulled off the road, I popped out of his truck and was halfway dressed to paddle, when he smiled, "We'll want to scout this one." I breezed past the sign which read, "No swimming, bathing, contaminating, or rafting allowed in Bear Creek," confident that I could explain to anyone that my kayak was definitely not a raft. "That's why they call this one 'No-Fun Falls,'" he said.

Springtime in the Rockies!?!

A Tough Kickoff on Junk Creek

By Barret Burke
Photos by Mountain Spots
Photography - Mad Max[©]





Springtime
in the Rockies!?!

After looking at the rapid I wasn't so sure, however, that the sign was really the only source of that name. This was definitely the biggest drop on the run; a long and chaotic Rocky Mountain style rapid that got steeper and steeper until splashing over an 8-foot ledge at the end. Getting stuck in the bottom hole didn't look like much fun at all. As it turned out, that rapid was going to be the least of my worries.

A couple of quick scouts later and we were finally up at the put-in. The water level was high and looked fast, but manageable. With all of my adrenaline I knew that I would be on the ball. My smile was ear-to-ear for about 10 seconds after getting into my boat. Then, not a stone's throw from the put-in, we encountered a pile of logs. A portage already? Hmph, let's try this again. We got back into the quick current and within half of a mile I saw Rob's eyes bug-out after boofing into an eddy ahead of me. The hump that he had

boofed was created by a river-wide log, without any eddies upstream! Luckily, I made my way safely past the completely submerged tree trunk. We started to worry about wood downstream, but continued on.

Around the next corner, we came upon the first rapid; an amusing s-bend which shot me through a deep groove of alternating currents. I turned around at the bottom in time to see Rob being pushed through the same funky channel and I laughed out loud. A couple of good sized holes later I realized that my sunglasses had somehow washed from around my neck. "I was ready for a new style anyway," I reasoned to myself. "I wonder where I'll get the money?"

As the riverbed began to narrow, I noticed that the water was flowing right through the bushes on the shore and the current was cruising just a little faster than I wanted. After ducking under a low hanging branch, I looked for an eddy to stop and catch my breath. Unfortunately, that wasn't an





option, so I grabbed at some tree roots in a relatively slow spot. I saw Rob fly by, flashing a terse smile that revealed his honest feelings.

We finally stopped in the only calm spot on the run. Unfortunately, it was caused by another log jam. Staying in our boats, we climbed up onto it and bumped down the back side. We ground our boats over about 20 feet of nearly dry riverbed and reentered the main channel. This was really starting to feel like a junk creek. Rob's attempts to encourage me were all but fruitless, for No-fun Falls was just ahead! Admittedly a bit nervous, I allowed Rob to lead the way.

As I entered the rapid and thought to myself that I would have to do more than just hold on through this one, I saw Rob facing upstream in a full bow squirt right next to the cliff wall. Before I knew it, I was past him and boofing off of the falls. Wow, a clean run! After his short, mid-rapid side surf, Rob fought his way to the bottom, inadvertently boosting my confidence.

Now I took the lead, knowing that a ramp drop was around the bend. I lined up to hit the right line. A crashing wave surfed me a bit too far right, I hesitated, then suddenly I saw the sky—then water. Two failed attempts to roll up in the ledge hole, then 'clunk.' I was flushed against a slightly undercut rock that stuck out from shore right next to the hole.

Still upside down, I shifted the paddle over to my off-side, rolled up, and found myself side-surfing again. A quick window shade, another failed roll, and I was over



Springtime
in the Rockies!?!

Rob runs left off "No-Run Falls".



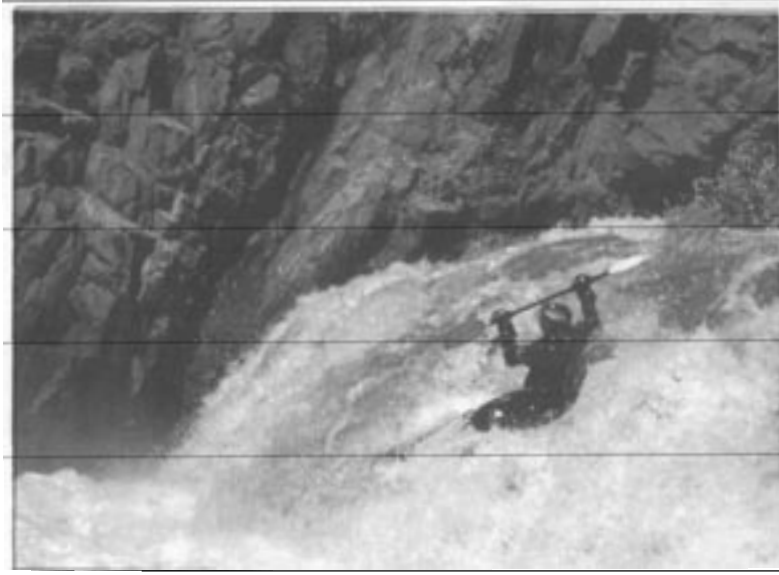
Springtime in the Rockies!?!

come by that quiet, sickening feeling that a swim was impending. I decided that enough was enough. 'Only May and I'm already swimming,' I thought, but that was quickly replaced by a realization that I had better get out of the river, and fast! I was already close to shore, so I grabbed hold of a big rock. Then as bad turned to worse, the rock slipped off the bank and crashed onto my anxious-to-step-onto-land foot. My next grab was more successful and I scrambled out of the water.

Rob had paddled right over me and watched the escapade from an eddy. He asked if I was O.K. I nodded yes, so, in true river-guide fashion, he said that he would paddle downstream to look for my boat while I walked. The next time I saw him he was walking back up the road, having found the boat "secured against a rock in the middle of the river. I was on the opposite side of the river and he tried to throw his rope to me so I could get across. It fell short and we later agreed that it was time for him to buy a new throwbag! By then I had realized that it was also time to buy myself a new paddle, as mine was nowhere in sight. 'Guess those sunglasses will have to wait.'

I swam safely across the river at a calm spot and made my way down to the boat. The daylight was fading. My hopes of getting the boat were too, but Rob puffed up his chest and swaggered to the plate. He volunteered to swim out to it while I fed a rope to him from shore. We were cautious and slow, but it paid off. He was able to clip the rope onto the boat, loosen it so I could swing it to shore, and remain safe on the rock out in the river. We then roped him back to shore and decided with little more than a nod that we were out of there.

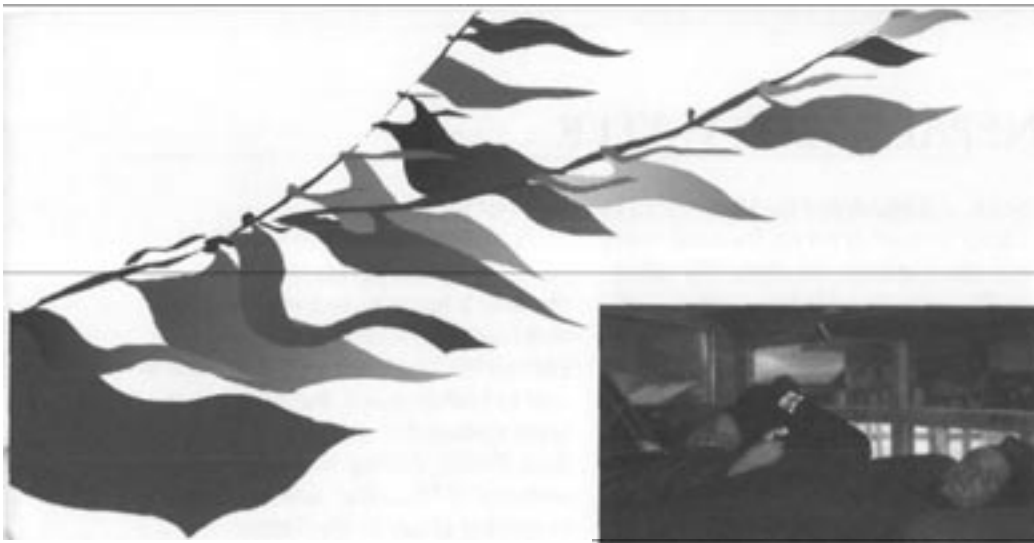
I was still trying to shake off my anxiety from the swim when Rob returned after hitching the shuttle. Strangely enough, two kayakers appeared, running down the road in search of a kayak of their own. Rob suggested that we join their pursuit and look for my paddle while we were at it. We put in a decent effort, but finally gave up. I was content to have gotten away without enduring a long, painful swim—or worse. That junk creek can have my stinking paddle!





Photos by Dunbar Hardy ©





Dunbar's stopwatch read 92 hours 30 minutes and 15 seconds. The time it took us to reach the put-in of the Tamur, one of Nepal's beautiful, yet hard to reach, multi-day rivers.

What I knew about the Tamur wasn't much. Not a whole lot of people had done it, and it was difficult to get to. So, when Beaz let us know (at 6pm November 15th in Kathmandu), that it would be okay for Dunbar Hardy, Bernd Sommer, and me to hop on Ultimate Descents' gear bus headed to the Tamur, we were all over it. The bus left at 8pm.

Our plan was to get a ride with Ultimate Descents' gear bus, then the three of us would self support on the river. We weren't packed, hadn't bought food, and didn't want to miss our shot at getting into the Tamur. Our first mission was to buy food for what we thought would be four days on the river. At the closest grocery store we loaded up on noncrushables; rice, noodles, tuna, and chocolate. Feeling some team stress and the clock ticking, we reached the check-out counter and the power went off. Realizing we were out of cash, Bernd paid with Visa. Dunbar and I split for the guesthouse while Bernd stayed and finished paying.

With the power out, the guesthouse was dimly lit with a few candles. In the dark, we ransacked our room throwing together the gear we would need. Challenging our organizational skills, we managed to find our paddling gear, camping stuff and dry bags. Incredibly, the only thing I forgot was a baseball hat and a book.

Our gear packed and food bought, we hailed a taxi. I didn't know exactly



Above: En route to the Tamur River. Day 3 on the bus. Page 44 Polly Green on the Marsayandi River, Nepal

where we were meeting the gear bus, but Beaz drew us a map, which I showed to the driver, and that got us there. Relieved to see the bus hadn't left, we loaded our boats on the already full roof.

Anticipating a long journey ahead, Dunbar pushed start on his stopwatch and at 9pm the bus started rolling out of Kathmandu. We honkered down for the upcoming ride. Bernd and Dunbar claimed the back of the bus and were able to fully recline on top of the gear. I had two seats to myself, but was soon jealous of the boys' backseat score.

The bus stopped at 11pm for evening dahl bhat (the Nepali all-you-can-eat mainstay meal of rice and lentils), then continued on through the

night. I managed to sleep some and the boys were totally out. As daylight broke, we drove along the east west 'highway' in southern Nepal. Looking out the window, it was hard to believe we were actually on our way to paddle. The landscape looked flat for miles and it was hot. The bus rambled on through the day, and we started singing along to the high-pitched, repetitive, Nepali music the bus driver was playing. (Seasoned Nepal travelers always have a walkman.) Day turned to night and we left the main road. We began the bumpy ride from hell. Needless to say I didn't sleep much that night, and the snuggle buddies in the back didn't get much either.

Once again, day breaks. According to the locals, we are 12 hours behind schedule. By now we have all the Nepali tunes memorized and wonder if there really is such a thing as the



Camp on the Kali Gandaki River, Nepal

NEPAL, WHITEWATER



Polly Green on the Bhote Kosi River, Nepal

Tamur River and if we are ever going to get there.

3pm on the 17th, the bus comes to a stop. We are in the middle of nowhere Nepal, in a town we fondly call "S...ville" because of the human waste that lines the sides of the street. The bus driver says this is as far as he goes. It's time to unload, he needs to go back. The strategy from this point is to continue on by truck. The only thing is, there isn't a truck in sight. We unload the gear on the side of the road. The bus takes off. We wait. Day once again turns to night. The only truck that comes to town is the Coke delivery

truck, and the driver isn't interested in taking us further on up the road. Without other options, we spend the night in "S...ville." Our lodging consists of a small room with no electricity, running water, or toilet, two crying kids, and a barking dog in the next room. All at the high price of 50 cents each.

The next day begins at 5:30am with the sound of rain on the roof and the nonstop honking of a bus horn. I pull my sleeping bag over my head trying to delay waking up to another day in "S...ville." Eventually I greet the day and figure reading might be a good way to pass some time. Wishing I had that book I forgot back at the guesthouse in Kathmandu, I ask Bernd if I can read his copy of *Seven Years in Tibet*. (At this point, I feel like I could write my own book, titled *Seven Years Trying to Get to the Tamur*.) After reading a few chapters, and drinking my tenth cup of tea, word comes that a truck is coming! This is great news and we make our way to the gear pile

and wait for the truck.

11am November 18th, a truck arrives! The driver agrees to take us up the road 5 hours or so to the trailhead that leads to the river. Loading the gear on the truck, we are careful not to step in human waste, but notice that some managed to get on a few pieces of gear. Finally driving away, I say good riddance to "S...ville" and am happy to be getting closer to the Tamur.

Beginning the next leg of the journey, I understand why the bus had to

Loading up again for the Tamur River, Nepal





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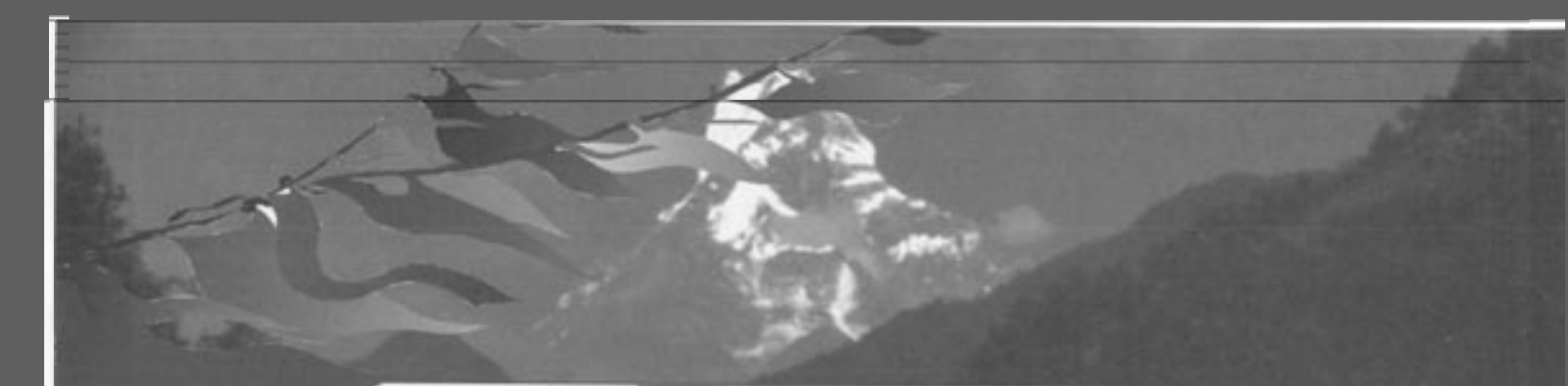


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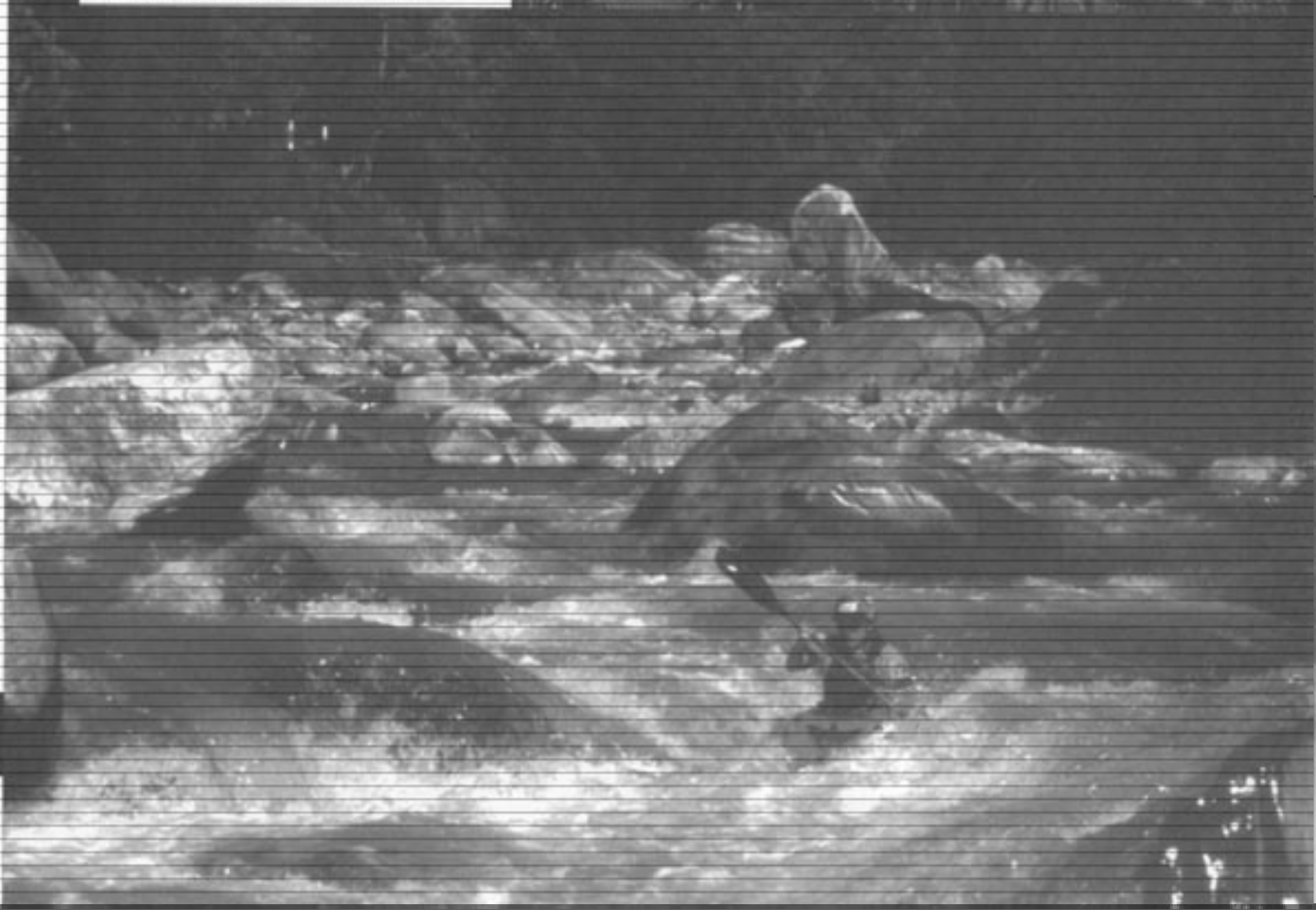


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turn around. The truck makes it's way up a muddy one lane road with two foot deep ruts, an endless cliff on one side and a sheer rock wall on the other. I try to relax and think of other things besides driving off this cliff in Nepal on the way to a river I haven't even seen yet. An hour into this sketchy truck adventure, the truck stops. We all get out and watch as the driver crawls under the truck to repair the drive train. He disassembles the underside of the truck. It takes about an hour for him to fix whatever the problem was, and we continue on. Four hours later the ▶

Right: Head up the Marsayandi River, Nepal. Behind: PollyGreen on the Upper Modi Khola River, Nepal



NEPAL WHITEWATER



truck turns around, stops and drops us off. Once again we find ourselves on the side of a muddy road with all our gear. We set up camp, and begin the process of organizing porters to haul our gear the five hours down to the river.

The porters show up the next morning and strap humongous loads of gear to their head. This is one of the most amazing things I have ever seen. They were able to carry more than twice their weight loaded on a strap balanced off their foreheads. One porter was carrying an entire deflated raft by himself—barefoot. It took 50 porters to carry all the rafts, kayaks, coolers, raft frames, and food to the river. A large portion of Nepali people live

Bernd Sommer surfs on the Tamur River, Nepal



Camp fire on the Karnali River, self support, Nepal.
Behind: To the put-in of the Upper Seti River





far from roads and spend a lot of their time walking and hauling loads back and forth to their villages. They are amazingly fit and strong and I have great admiration in their abilities.

Needless to say, I feel like a super slacker, carrying just my paddling gear, but had carried my own boat for five hours on a previous river excursion and had no desire to do it again.

The trail to the river descends through small villages and rice paddies. The boys take off ahead of me and I figure with so many porters I would have no trouble finding the way. I can always follow one of them. Somehow I make a wrong fork in the trail and end up in the middle of a rice paddy. Luckily a villager notices I am lost and asks me where I am going. Miraculously, I remember the name of the village at the put-in and he points me in the right direction. I finally reach the river.

Relieved, hot, and tired, I spot loads as they arrive at the put-in. I ask Dunbar what the time read on his stopwatch. 92 hours, 30 minutes, and 15 seconds is his reply. What an epic journey! Smiling at the sight of the crystal blue Tamur, and the fun continuous Class IV rapids that await, I realize paddling is going to be the easy part!

Editor's note: Polly Green began kayaking nine years ago. She didn't realize then that kayaking would become more than just another sport, but an entire life-style. She has traveled to Nepal, New Zealand, Honduras, Guatemala, and Ecuador, paddling, competing, and instructing. She believes getting there is half the fun and anticipates more epic put-in adventures throughout to the rest of the world,

Top: loading and sorting gear. Below: Polly Green surfing on the Tamur River. Behind: Camp just above the Tamur-5 hour hike to put-in from here.



When It Floods in Cleveland

· TINKER'S CREEK ·



by
Matt Muir

Well, I learned something.

I mean, I could've figured it out, had I thought about it. But it had never occurred to me to think about it. Given their scruffy, itinerant nature, many paddlers have no doubt known it for some time, from personal experience.

What did I learn? I learned the following: *You can't open the car doors from the back seat of a police cruiser.*

Makes sense, doesn't it? But, as I said, it hadn't occurred to me. Here's how I know. This is a story about creeking. It's a story about fun. It's a story about access...and riding in police cars!

Friday night, January 22, the TV was flashing its little "fun logo" at me. You know the fun logo. You've seen it, plenty of times. The curious thing about the fun logo is that they use code words. Instead of simply saying "fun times ahead," which would be obvious to anyone, they say: Flood Warning.

Sometimes they even get a reporter on-screen, next to a raging river; maybe a flooded car or two shows up. For some reason, the reporter is never in drysuit and PFD, holding a paddle and grinning like a Barnum & Bailey chimp. Go figure.

But we know what they mean,

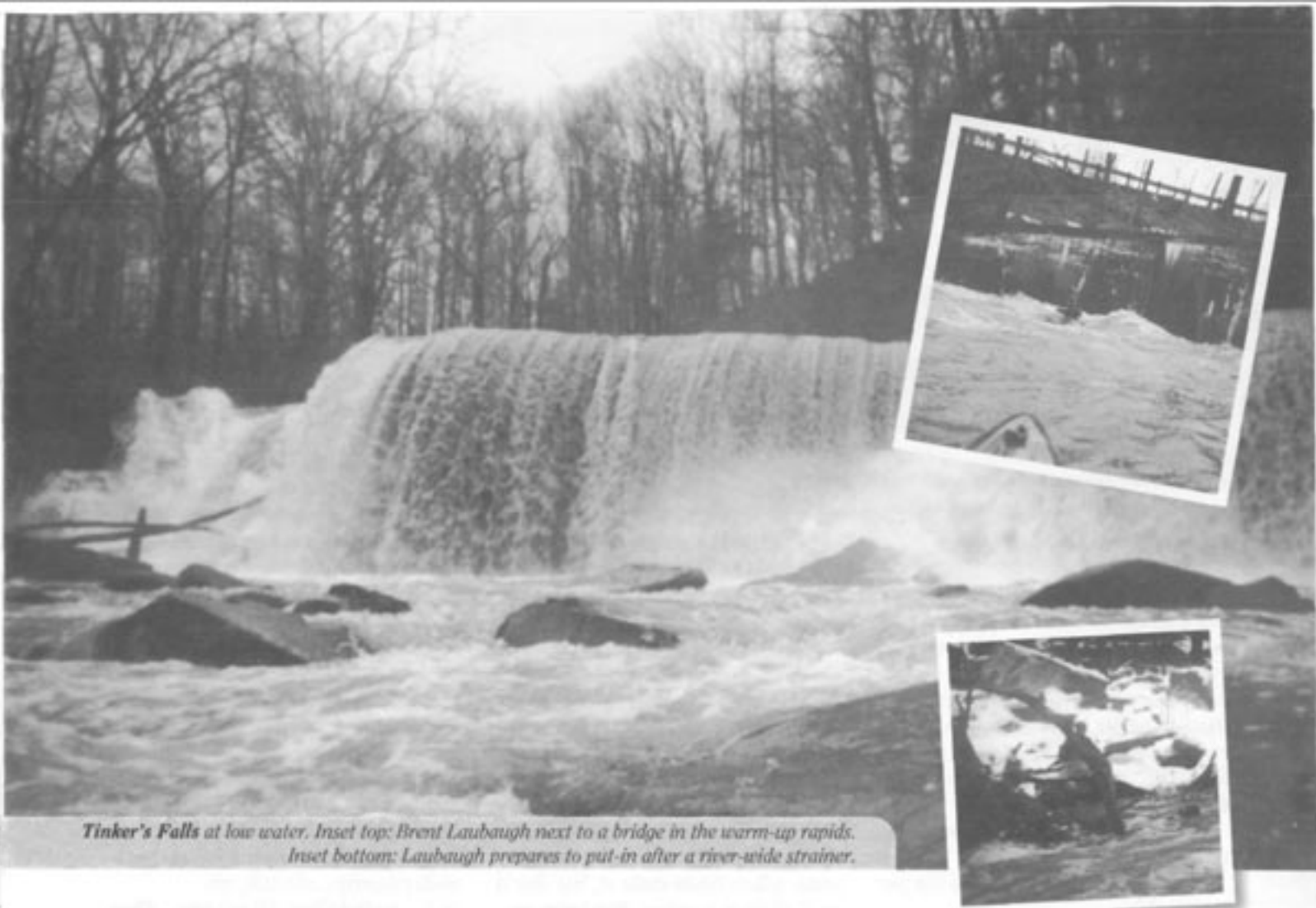
and I suppose that's good enough. I went to work. I e-mailed the e-malees, and I phoned the cyber-free Neanderthals. I had checked out Pigeon Creek, and it was looking very encouraging indeed.

Now, Pigeon Creek isn't exactly everyone's cup of hairboatin'. It's a little drainage ditch that runs through my property. It's runnable when there's been a heavy rain (yes, I have a first descent to my credit!), but it's only 50 cfs of quickwater (when it's flooded), and there's nothing resembling a rapid in the quarter mile between the unrunnable bridges in people's backyards. No, Pigeon Creek is only an indicator.

An indicator of fun up North. Bedford, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, is the home of Tinker's Creek. Tinker's Creek is the largest tributary of the Cuyahoga River, and despite its decidedly urban character, it has to be the best whitewater in Ohio. When it's running, that is; it only comes up about a dozen times a year, when the TV is issuing those cherished flood warnings.

This little honey drops at over 100 feet per mile (the topo is hard to read in that region, but it's steep) through a deep gorge for about a mile. Before the steep mile is about a mile of playful Class-II warm-up; following the solid Class-IV steep section, it peters out into Class III, then finally II, with more playful waves and holes than I've





Tinker's Falls at low water. Inset top: Brent Laubaugh next to a bridge in the warm-up rapids. Inset bottom: Laubaugh prepares to put-in after a river-wide strainer.

ever had the energy to do justice to. In short, this is one fun run, comparable in difficulty to the Middle Fork of the Tygart or Big Sandy Creek in West Virginia. And it's less than 30 minutes from my house. You get this kind of gradient, true beauty within the gorge, and infrequently runnable flow, and you can understand what I'm talking about. I'm talking "Tinker's is running today — can't we celebrate Grandma's 80th birthday tomorrow?"

But... I digress. You want to know how I ended up in the back seat of the cruiser, don't you?

See, the Cleveland MetroParks authorities really don't like the idea of kayakers running this little creek. They seem to have the idea that it's dangerous. Don't know how they got that idea; maybe it's the dozen or so kids that, rumor has it, have drowned in Tinker's in the past 20 years. Of course, these kids were either rock-climbing or deliberately swimming, with no PFDs

and no knowledge of whitewater, but the authorities' concerns are understandable. And this stream has some very real hazards, in the form of undercut and big-ol' logs, and one nassssty waterfall. The logs are the biggest concern. I know where Tinker's Falls, a 5.1 on a par with Big Splat, is, so I can eddy out above it and scout or portage as I wish. But there are numerous trees in the river. There could be a new and scary strainer around any corner. You have to be on your toes.

Strainer action: lest you think I'm exaggerating, understand that this creek has a ton of wood on its best days. The river appears geologically new. The riverbanks are very unstable, crumbling shale. You could never hope to count all the card-carrying members of Future Strainers of America that line the banks. How unstable is the riverbank? Picture yourself running the river on a high-water day, a day when runoff is pouring into

the gorge from both sides, all the way down the river. Picture yourself surfing a wave next to a 200-foot vertical cliff; picture little bits of shale falling on the water, your boat, and you from 200 feet up. Picture yourself being glad you're wearing a helmet.

Since the powers that be don't like our running this stretch of river, we generally do a Stealth Put-in. We get dressed at a gas station, miles from the river; then drive to the put-in, hide our boats in the brush, and run shuttle. Once I was taking out with the Possum King (a local legend who introduced me to the obsession that is Tinker's Creek), and a ranger happened along. "Where'd you put in?" He asked. The Possum King told him. "Dangerous!" expleted the ranger. "Well," shrugged the Possum King, "beats bowlin'!"

This time I was sitting in my boat, trying desperately to stretch the skirt on the cockpit rim in the 33-degree weather, and I heard a toot. Dave



*Muir in an eddy after emerging the Tunnel.
Photo by Brent Laubaugh.*

looked around and informed me that it was a ranger's vehicle. I briefly considered pretending ignorance (I wear earplugs when boating in the winter, and don't hear well with them on), but thought better of it and approached the ranger. Dave was a Tinker's Virgin, so I felt it was incumbent on me to handle the situation.

"I can't let you onto the river. It's too high".

"Really?" I responded. "This is a perfect level."

"No," he wasn't buying it, "we don't let people run this river."

A short discussion ensued, in which I tried to assert our right to float a navigable river. He didn't care. It didn't matter to him whether we put-in on park property or on public property; if we floated through park property, he told me in no uncertain terms, there would be consequences. I tried to point out the right of navigability, once we had legally accessed the river. It was evident that my persuasive powers were not meeting the challenge. At one point,

he suggested that I didn't understand.

I understood very well. I understood that this ranger didn't know the law regarding river access. I also understood that this was neither the place nor the time to assert our right by violating an order issued by a law enforcement official. Further, I understood that our day of major fun was in serious jeopardy. I asked to speak with his supervisor.

He couldn't speak with his boss on the walkie-talkie, so he offered to head back to the station and make a phone call. I asked if I could be a part of the phone call, at which point he offered me a ride in the patrol car.

I sat in the back, staring at the big-old shotgun on the floor of the front seat. We spoke cordially. "We're not out to get you, you understand," he offered, "We don't even allow rafts on this river." You can imagine the points that made with me. I shuddered at the thought of a big-01' raft negotiating the very technical rapids. I'm sure some rafters could make it, but they'd need all their faculties. But I also un-

derstood his position; he didn't make the rules, he was just enforcing them. And he didn't want to be searching for bods in the riverbed in the middle of January. We introduced ourselves by name and spoke a little about the river. I tried to be very civil with him. "I don't want to be creating problems for you," I assured him, "I mean, you've got that gun and all I've got is this paddle."

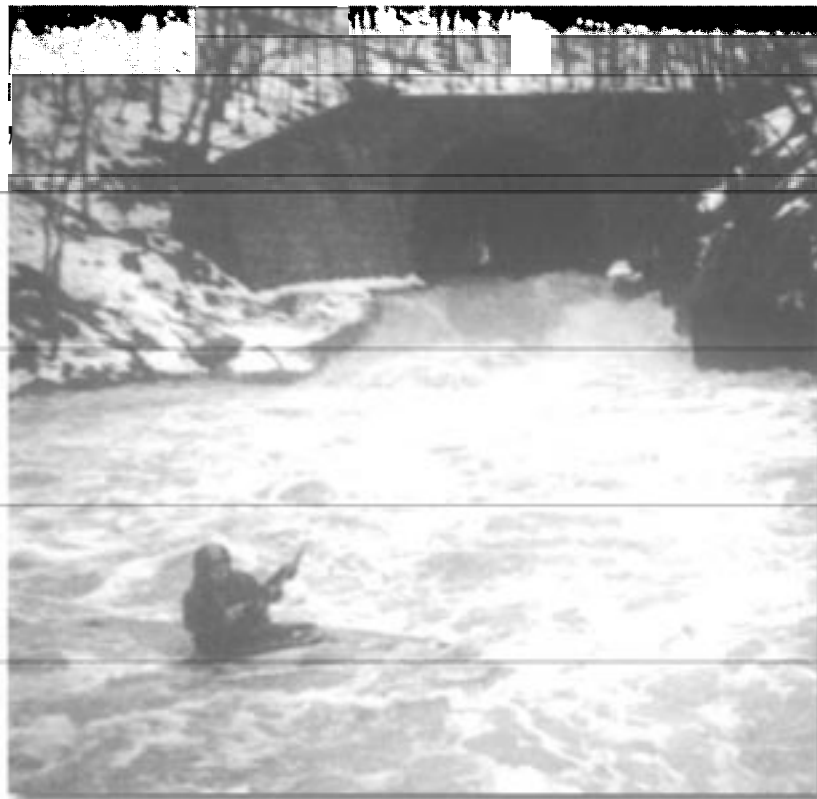
We got into the station. At that point, he told me that he'd have to come around and let me out. The child-proof locks, of course, are necessary when you consider the unsavory characters they encounter (some of whom, incidentally, are not boaters). He spoke a little with me to clarify my position, taking care not misrepresent me to his boss. He dialed (well, he push-buttoned; nobody dials anymore). The conversation went something like:

"33 calling 125. Yes, Sarge, we have a kayaker who wants to paddle Tinker's Creek. He says he believes that he should be able to float on the stream through the park, as long as he has accessed the river from public land, not park property...uh-huh, uh-huh...really? Okay, I'll tell him." Then,

to me: "He says you can put-in on park land, but it's at your own risk."

This was better than I'd been dreaming of. This meant we wouldn't have to put in upstream, right by the waste treatment plant, and paddle two miles of flatwater. Ranger Bob asked, "Is there anything you'd like to say to him?" "Yes," I replied, "tell him 'thank you very much.'"

Oboyoboyoboy, oh boy! I was thinking on the way back to the put-in. I told him about the Keel-haulers Canoe Club, how we run rivers all over the country, and I assured him that we did not



Muir set to run the first slot below the Tunnel. Photo by Brent Laubaugh.

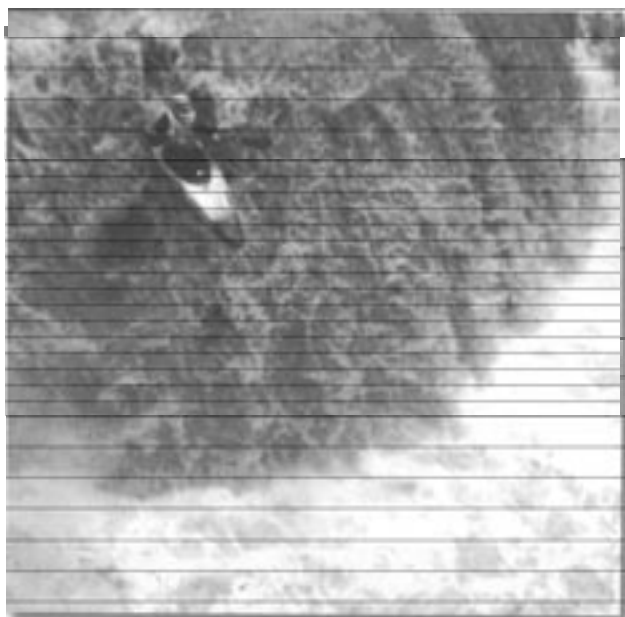
take Tinker's lightly. He told me that he would inform the other rangers who patrol the park that we were allowed to access at our own risk. To me, this doesn't sound like an official policy; we could be denied access any time, but that's a fight for another day.

Once Ranger Bob let us go, we played down the playful warm-up stuff. Dave seemed a little tentative; he didn't appear to want to play every last wave and hole, and he didn't go for any but the biggest eddies. It was clear that he was nervous about Tinker's Falls downstream. Well, we walked Tinker's Falls (I'm still nervous about that one after a solid trashing last year) and put in below, heading toward the Tunnel.

The Tunnel. Ain't nothing like it nowhere. The river goes under a very high railroad bridge. The Tunnel is 450 feet long; it takes a bend to the left halfway through, so there's not much light. Better stay upright through the reflection waves in there, as it's pretty shallow. It gets a bit dark, and it slopes

Oboyoboyoboy, oh boy! I was thinking on the way back to the put-in.

I told him about the Keel-haulers Canoe Club, how we run rivers all over the country, and I assured him that we did not take Tinker's lightly.



Muir running Tinker's Falls, September '86. Photo by Ron Whitley.

downhill, so you're accelerating all the way. When you emerge, you face a steep water slide, shoving you inexorably into a huge wall-o-water hole. This is the fastest you'll have been in a kayak if you haven't run Oceana on the Tallulah. Luckily for you, the hole isn't a keeper. The whole thing carries the same aura as any Class-V drop.

Tinker's never fails to exceed expectations. George Carroll and Brent Laubaugh on Saturday, and Dave Broer on Sunday—all were astonished by the continuousness of the rapids, the beauty of the gorge, and the experience—the adrenaline rush—of the Tunnel.

After the Tunnel is the work. The Ledges section has tight drops, with fast water, nasty rocks, boiling eddies (at high water), not to mention the omnipresent threat of a vicious strainer around every blind or obstructed bend. On Saturday, Brent had attempted an attainment right next to an ugly rock. (Blame me; I believed he'd be better off upstream in the eddy, better set up for a ferry, so I motioned him to make the attainment.) When the squirrely flow flipped him against the rock, he bailed after two roll attempts. George and I practically lost our paddles recovering his boat in an eddy full of telephone-pole-sized logs. They chose to walk the next rapid, which had a few tree-fingers hanging down in critical spots; I man-



Muir fed into a slot-hole by an eddy. Photo by Brent Laubaugh.

aged to avoid the Tickle-fingers of Death, and took out in the eddy below to avoid the nasty river-wide log that's been there since 1996. At that water level I didn't want to try limboing it; call me a wussy-boy. Knee-deep snow complicated the portage.

Back to Sunday with Dave, we eddied out after the Tunnel: I scouted to assure myself that there were no unexpected "twigs" in the blind drops. Then we got busy. I ran the first and second drop and caught the screwy eddy to watch Dave. I managed to catch him on film before he got mauled by the diagonal hole. He missed his first roll attempt, but (thankfully) rolled up about three boat-lengths above the river-wide strainer. Sunday brought lower water than Saturday, so he was able to limbo the tree. I still hadn't caught up to him, so he ran the next two drops by the seat of his pants. He managed two more flips and rolls before he found an eddy to his liking. Now, those were combat rolls.

There's more twig action after that, but the gradient starts to mellow, so we could relax and play to our hearts' content. And there were plenty of good spots for surfing.

At the end of the trip, Dave mused sarcastically, "You know, my feet are freezing. I can't feel my toes. But I don't suppose I'd better sue the Cleveland MetroParks for allowing me on the river in the cold."



FEATURE

Millions of years ago volcanoes covered southwest Idaho with a massive layer of lava. Through the eons, the Bruneau River and its tributaries have carved magnificent canyons, up to 1000 feet deep, in this volcanic rock. The combination of spectacular scenery, excellent whitewater, and no permit requirements have made this river basin a boater's paradise.

The MYSTERIOUS CANYONS of the Bruneau

by Andrew Zimet

The Bruneau River, a two day Class III–IV river trip, is formed by the confluence of the Jarbridge River and the West Fork of the Bruneau. Of the two sources, the West Fork has tougher boating with a number of Class V rapids, whereas the Jarbridge runs in a much more impressive canyon. Each of these runs can be combined with the Bruneau to give a four day river trip. Two other tributaries of the Bruneau are boatable: Sheep Creek, which enters from the west about a third of the way down the Bruneau, and Clover Creek (East Fork of the Bruneau), which joins from the east about half-way down. In addition, Sheep Creek has a runnable tributary called Mary's Creek.

I am enchanted by mysterious waterways. On the way to the Jarbridge River put-in I saw Clover Creek flowing sluggishly across the high desert looking suspiciously like an irrigation ditch. Three days later (boating the Jarbridge into the Bruneau) I saw it entering the Bruneau, a frisky Class II creek. But the nine miles between, with the "constricted canyon" and "sheer cascading drops" that Grant Amaral described in his guide book, could only be seen by running it. I felt drawn to this creek with an irrational intensity, as if it would lead me to Nirvana. Perhaps it was my experience on another Bruneau tributary that led me to feel that way.

The situation was similar. On the way to the West Fork of the Bruneau we crossed Sheep Creek and, like Clover Creek, it was a flat muddy stream. Three days later we saw Sheep Creek enter the Bruneau, coming out of an impressive canyon. But we were only able to hike 100 yards up it before being cliffed-out. This creek was not in the guide books. On the map it looked like it was about 30 miles long and as far as I knew no one had ever boated it.

I returned about a month later with two friends to run the West Fork again. Now the water was much higher. When we got to Sheep Creek I stopped the car

and got out to take a look. It had plenty of water in it. I mentioned the possibility of changing plans, boating Sheep Creek instead of the West Fork. Then our shuttle driver gave us some bad news. He said that some guys from Boise had put on Sheep Creek the day before, and that they thought it might be a first descent. What a bummer!

I was hoping for a first descent, but the next best thing would be to jump on it before we knew how the earlier party had fared. This idea was met with such hostility I wished I'd worn my pyramid hat to absorb all the negative vibes. I thought I could convince Jack to come along, since he has an adventurous spirit, even though I knew he wasn't keen on the possibility of having lots of Class V creeking to do. The third member of our crew would present the biggest obstacle. I desperately appealed to his sense of discovery and the excitement of venturing into the unknown. But that was a stupid move, those were exactly the reasons he didn't want to go. So, of course, he just dug his heels in harder.

In a way he was right. We didn't have a map. We had no idea what we would find. We could be trapped in the bottom of a canyon hemmed in by sheer walls with unrunnable rapids. But, I argued, if we waited to hear what the Boise boaters had found, it would be a totally different trip. The edge would be gone. How many true adventures does one get to experience? How could we let this chance slip through our fingers?

But we did; I was overruled. I suppose I could have soloed it, but I did not want to desert my buddies. They agreed

to do Sheep Creek later if we got a favorable report.

We returned and ran Sheep Creek. The white water was not exceptional. There were a couple of short Class V drops, which I ran, but they could be easily portaged. Some Class IV and a lot of easier water made up the rest of the run. But the Sheep Creek canyon is deep and narrow. More than 800 feet high in places, the soaring walls come down to the creek at times not much more than a boat length apart. And this pristine gorge goes on for many miles with incredible rock formations around every bend. Sheep Creek was



Something About Mary's Creek...

above: at the put-in

...in a tearful voice
she said,
"Andy I NEED you."

as magical a place as I have ever experienced. The awe inspiring beauty helped heal the rift caused by my anger at my companions for being so conservative and their anger at me for pushing them to take more risk then they felt comfortable with.

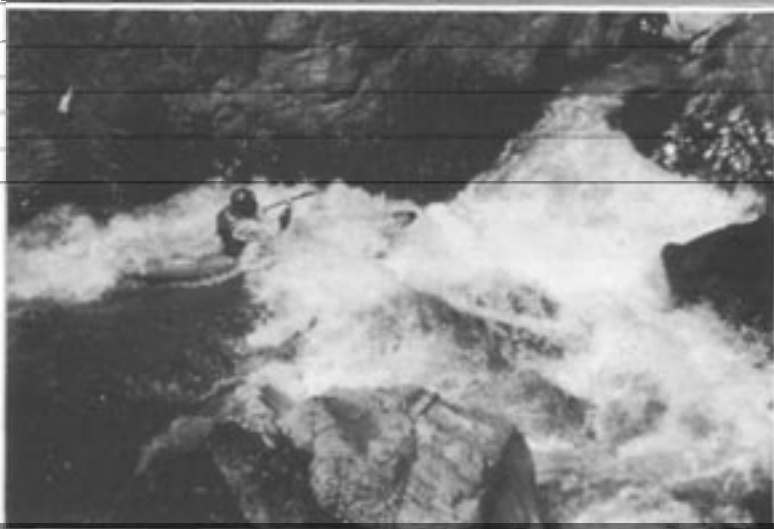
I did not think that Clover Creek would be as spectacular as Sheep Creek, but the lure of that hidden passageway was compelling just the same. It was only a year later on the way to the Jarbridge River with Jack, Chris and Jon that we crossed Clover Creek and saw that it was high enough to boat. This is a rare event and I wanted to take advantage of it. We had planned to boat the Jarbridge and Bruneau in four days, then head over to do Sheep Creek again. I figured we could finish the first trip in three days, not four. That would give us a day to run Clover Creek before heading over to Sheep Creek. Once again my enthusiasm was not shared by my companions. But with their bemused blessing I powered down the Bruneau, alone, on my way to a rendezvous with Clover Creek.

I got off the Bruneau on the afternoon of the third day. Immediately, I arranged a shuttle and organized my

gear. I couldn't believe my luck, I was going to run Clover Creek. But, all the time I had been getting ready, I was struggling with a dilemma. My girlfriend, Anita, lived in Missoula, along the Clark's Fork River, and it had been forecast to reach flood stage. I knew if I called her and her home was flooded I would have to go to Missoula to help. If I didn't call I wouldn't know and could continue boating. My sense of responsibility won out and I made the fateful call. Anita told me her yard was a lake, and that she had been sandbagging for three days, while I had been enjoying myself on the Bruneau. I had hopes that with those 1500 sandbags filled and stacked everything might be under control and I wouldn't have to leave, but then in a tearful voice she said, "Andy I NEED you." My fate was sealed. High water giveth and taketh away.

It was late and I was exhausted from my frenzied trip down the Bruneau, so I decided to leave early the next morning.

After leaving a note on my friends car saying I wouldn't make the Sheep Creek trip, I took off on the 450 mile journey north. As I left Clover Creek



▲ Andrew Zimet Sheep Creekin' Class V ▲

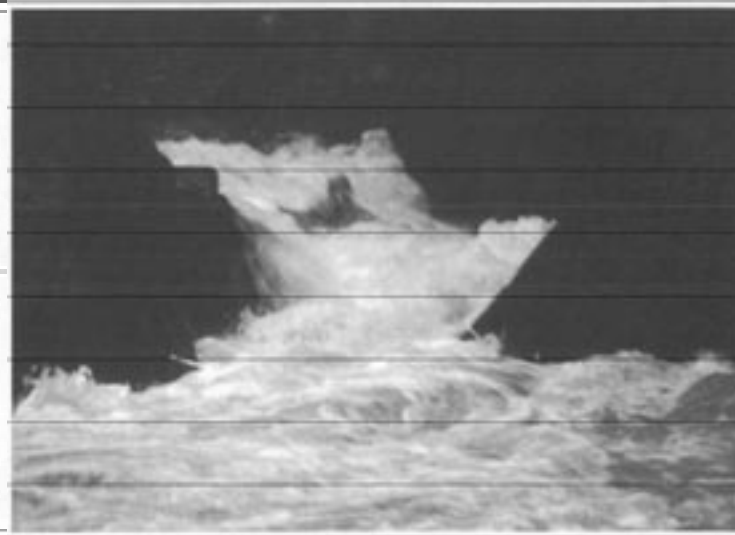
behind I felt my soul was being ripped out. Boating mysterious creeks is what I live for and considering the unusually high water levels needed to run Clover Creek, and the fact that I lived over 600 miles away, I knew I might never get another chance to kayak it. But it was either the creek or the girlfriend. She won, but not by much. Imagine my shock, when I got to Missoula eight hours later, to see that there was no water in her yard. Since I had spoken to her the water had receded. I was numb with anger and frustration.

The next morning at 5am Anita looked out and saw that the water had not come back up. Because of that and the foul mood I was in, she decided to go to work. Suddenly I got inspired. If I left by 6am I could get to the town of Bruneau by 1pm, find a shuttle to Sheep Creek and put-on by 3, paddle hard, and meet up with Jon and Jack before dark. Then, after that, I might finally get to run Clover Creek.

I went from the crushing depths of despair to the giddy high of mania. I drove like a bat out of hell, peeing in a bottle so I wouldn't have to stop driving and lose precious minutes. I hadn't

known that my old Toyotawagon could still cruise at 90 mph. My mind was racing just as fast. Call the shuttle driver; think of an alternate if he can't do it; maybe I should run Clover Creek first; what food do I need to pack; what do I need to buy; hey, why is that bozo up ahead going so slow; it will really freak those guys out when I show up; am I just a selfish a..hole or does Anita have a right to be p...ed off; where should I buy the food; careful with that pee bottle, damn, you just sprayed the seat; should I run Mary's Creek into Sheep Creek, will it be high enough, if Anita really understood me she would never have expected me to miss out on Clover Creek; this relationship is a big mistake; and on and on for the 6-1/2 hour trip to Bruneau.

There I hooked up with my shuttle driver Ed and headed out toward Sheep Creek. But, by then I had decided that I really wanted to run Mary's Creek, which we would cross on our way. You see, like Clover Creek and Sheep Creek before it, I had also seen Mary's Creek on the desert plateau, looking more like a stagnant cow pond than a creek, and then seen it again where it entered Sheep Creek as a Class III stream. I had



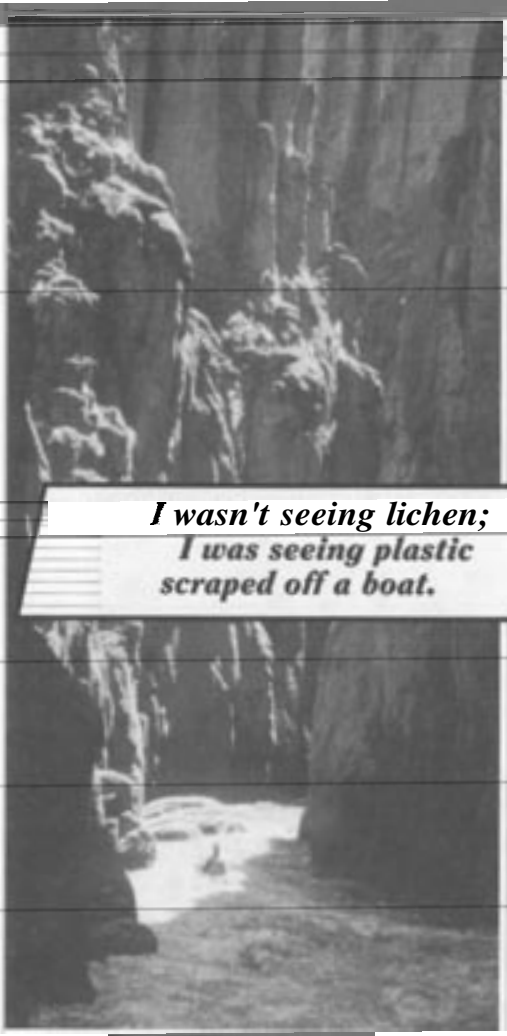
▲ Jack Herbert on Sheep Creek

no idea what lay in between. It was another mystery. Neither Ed nor I had heard of anyone running it, so it could be a first descent. Though Mary's Creek looked on the low side when we got to it, I decided to kayak it anyway.

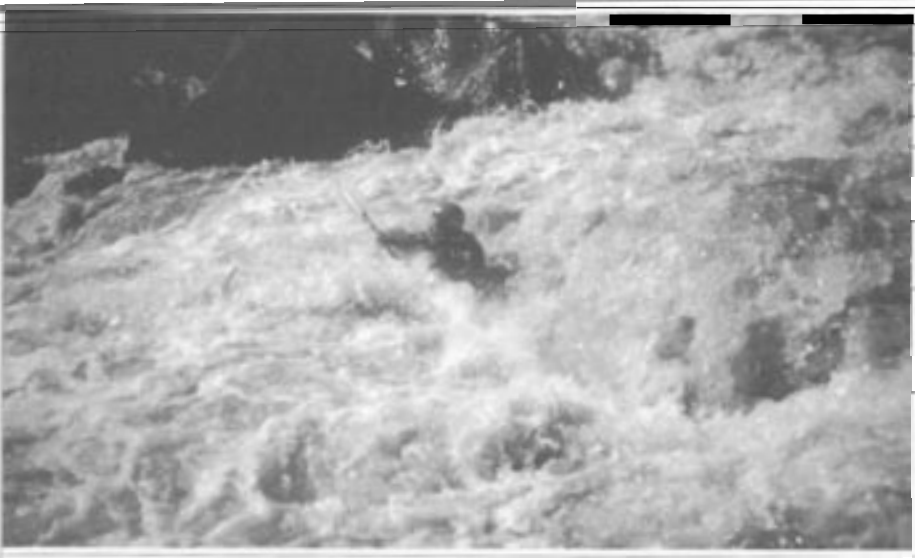
It was low, but runnable...barely runnable. After a mile or two where it started to drop steeply, the creek was choked with sticky volcanic boulders and many of the rapids ran through large expanses of willows. It would have been hard enough just to maneuver through the tight Class IV boulder gardens at this water level, but the thickets of brush prevented me from turning my boat, so it became almost impossible. I got pinned and broached innumerable times. Portaging over the boulders was difficult with my boat loaded with camping gear and food, so I just stayed in the creek and bashed my way down. Strangely, almost every time I got stuck, I noticed that the rock I was against had patches of red on them. What a colorful species of lichen, I thought. But as I

continued to grind my way down that gnarly little stream, the awful realization finally hit me. I wasn't seeing lichen; I was seeing plastic scraped off a boat. Someone must have run the creek earlier, when it was higher. So, I didn't have a first descent! The canyon was pretty but not at all spectacular and the boating sucked. At that point I just wanted to get to Sheep Creek, and finally, about four grueling hours from the put-in, I did.

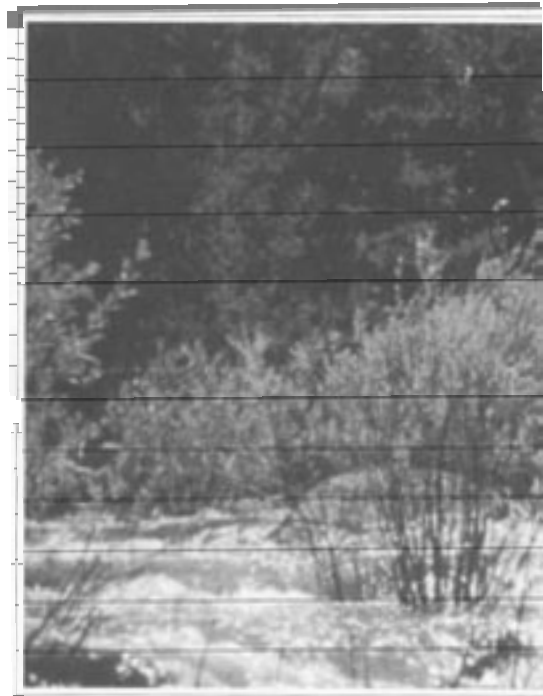
It was seven at night, I had been in overdrive for three days, but I knew that in about an hour I would reach the camping spot. It was a small sandy beach with a few gnarled pine trees, nestled up against the sheer wall of the canyon, the last place to stop before the canyon gorged up. Just before dark I got there and startled my buddies, who thought I was gone for good. It was great to see them and we laughed about my recent adventures. Dead tired, I lay on the sand, quieting my mind by



***I wasn't seeing lichen;
I was seeing plastic
scraped off a boat.***



▲ Jack Herbert running *Julie Wilson Rapid*,
West Fork of the Bruneau



▲ Mary's Creek

watching the stars as they popped out in the darkening sky. I soon slipped into a deep dreamless sleep.

The next day we boated the Sheep Creek gorge and it was just as enchanting as I had remembered. We knew that rescue would be impossible from this remote cleft in the desert, but, because the rapids were generally easy, we got complacent. All of a sudden Jack, who was leading down a Class III rapid, got pinned across the only channel that could be navigated. Jon and I were able to eddy out behind some large boulders. But the boulders had overhanging sides and we were in a canyon with vertical walls dropping down to the creek. There did not seem to be any way we could get out of our boats to help. If Jack's boat was stuck, it would block the only passage out of the gorge. It could have become a desperate situation, but luckily, by bracing off the bottom and rocking

his boat, Jack worked himself free. The rest of the trip went smoothly. But my heart sank when we got to Clover Creek's confluence with the Bruneau. The water level had dropped significantly over the last three days; Clover Creek would not be high enough to boat.

Since that time, I have had the joy of exploring many mountain creeks that drop through impressive gorges, but there is something special about the desert canyons in the Bruneau country. For me, they are sacred places inhabited by gentle spirits. Though it may be years from now, I know that some spring when the Bruneau is overflowing, I'll rush down to Clover Creek and finally experience its mysteries. It is waiting for me, a gift from the gods.

For me, they are sacred places inhabited by gentle spirits.



Top: Lunch Stop on Sheep Creek. Below: Sheep Creek ▲

7 Kayakers, 2 Years

and 20,000 Miles

By T.J. Walker



"You wanna do what?" I yelled at Corran as I strained to make my voice heard above the music flooding the van. "A kayaking film!" was his reply. "With your experience working with ESPN and all the nutty stuff we've been doing lately I think we can make something that's different from your everyday, ho hum kayaking movie. You know something different, something with a little style."

And thus began the two year odyssey, with stops around the world, whose culmination was the creation of *Operation: Zulu*, the latest kayaking film from Bad Lil' Monkey Productions. Make sure your seats are in the upright and locked position, and that your tray tables are stowed.

There's an old proverb, which says that a journey of twenty thousand miles begins with a single step. In the case of *Operation: Zulu* that first step took us to the Riot Squad's local hang-out, the Lachine Rapids. Fast gaining notoriety as one of the world's premier playspots, the Lachines did not disappoint. If I had only one sentence to describe the place it would be, "The most unbelievably cool, biggest, nuttiest, raddest, uncrowded, splendidly epic, 500,000 cubic feet per second, kayaking playground in the world!" And all that with a bike path running alongside, full of gaudy, lycra-clad women and beefy,

toothless hockey players on roller blades, not to mention the pizzeria and bar within 30-second walk.

What was even more amazing was the moves these guys were pulling. Spins, shuivits, ollie oops, cleans, blunts, and

airs (Yup, you heard me right . . . airborne moves in a kayak!). My opinion of what can be done in kayak was forever changed. Suddenly, I understood the crazy looking boats that they were paddling and why Corran had opted to move his company to Montreal. With a playground like this, why would you ever leave home? They surfed and spun two and three abreast into the evening, as I moved my camera about the bank, looking for the perfect angle, the perfect shot to capture the perfect wave.

Once the notorious Zambezi boys (Steve Fisher and Dan Cambell-Kunnt) arrived on the scene the team was complete and we set out on the next stage of *Operation Zulu: The Fabled Waters of the Golden State*.

Our contact man in California was a transplanted Brit by the name of Alex Nicks who has a penchant for tomfoolery and a love of the extreme. The stage was set, as Alex would say, for "a most excellent adventure."

On day one of the California adventure the Zambezi boys, Brad Ludden and Corran, made the trek into the relative isolation of Dry Meadow Creek expecting a spiritual, adventure-filled run down this world famous creek. What they were greeted with instead was reminiscent of a Super Bowl press conference. Each bank of the creek was lined with photographers and videographers looking for that elusive

footage that would "set them apart from the pack." In fact, a quick headcount revealed that there were more lenses alongside Dry Meadow creek than there were paddlers on it.

Immediately Steve was boggled by the string of kayakers plummeting over the drops who seemed to be attempting to pull their sprayskirts off half way down. Seeing Steve's confusion, one of the paddlers on another team informed him that they were "pulling grabs." This did not sit particularly well with the South African who, along with Corran, decided right then and there that if you're going to do something off a waterfall it should be as spectacular as the falls itself. Moments later, Corran headed for the brink of the first drop and threw a cartwheel or "freewheel" as he plummeted down the face of the falls. The crowd went nuts. Steve and Brad followed, with Steve's first attempt falling about 90 degrees short of the requisite rotation, while Brad got completely airborne. The gauntlet had been thrown down and a new era of what was possible on "hair" runs was ushered in. From the bottom of the run Steve, Brad, and Corran watched as paddlers scrambled up the steep granite rushing to emulate what they had just seen. The ensuing chaos was delightful.

Unfortunately, the dangerous nature of this type of activity was tragically highlighted the following day. Back on Dry Meadow Creek for more video footage we watched in utter horror as New Zealander Bruce Barnes became disoriented in the canyon's steep walls and paddled over an unrunnable 60-foot drop that lands on a rock. Adrenaline coursing through their

7 Kayakers, 2 Years and 20,000 Miles

veins, Corran and Steve sprinted to the edge of the drop, and peered over the edge into the pool below where they were surprised to see Bruce floating face up, still conscious, although critically injured. He was in great peril, however, as the current threatened to sweep him over the next drop, a 100-footer that lands directly on rocks. The key now was to act fast before Bruce became hypothermic or too tired to keep himself afloat. Corran was the first to react, pulling off a 5.11 climbing move on the mossy cliff face behind the fall itself (that was later described as "something only a superhero could do"), before diving into the freezing pool to make sure Bruce didn't wash over the next drop.

Bruce was alive, but only just. Both of his arms were broken, his face was bloody and swollen, his legs were without feeling, and he was cold. Very cold. After Corran pulled him to the side, and secured him to a rock, he proceeded to climb back out. Before he reached the top, however, Corran fell about 20 feet directly onto Bruce who let out a yell. Without time to spare, Corran made a second, successful attempt to get out of the canyon. The rescuers then lowered Corran on a rope, which was then attached to Bruce and used to pull him up from the river.

Space blankets, Clif Bars, and warm clothes were sought as the paddlers on the bank striped to their underwear. While they were cutting Bruce free of his wet clothing, the exposed bones of two compound fractures on his arms began to spew blood. They splinted him up, fed him, and then began the 1000 ft. climb out of the near-vertical gorge. As Corran said later, "Anyone else would have died on the climb out of the canyon. Bruce is alive because he chose to live. We were just there."



Unfortunately, every hand was needed for the rescue, so no film was shot of the ordeal.

After this near tragedy, followed by another month of running the toughest, flood-swollen, hair runs of California and the other western states it was decided that a little rest and relaxation was in order. The adrenaline-soaked brains of our crew were in need of a change, so it was off to British Columbia to take on the World Famous Skookumchuk tidal phenomenon.

Upon our arrival at the "Skook" we found that things were not exactly as we had anticipated. Huge whirlpools, almost 30 feet deep and a hundred feet across greeted us instead of the monstrous playspot we had hoped for. In the past these whirlpools have been responsible for sinking ships, including a hundred and sixty-foot tanker. We realized quickly that to fall into one of these things in a kayak was not recommended.

Dan, who had elected to paddle down to the wave rather than hike like the others, was suddenly greeted with true Class V moves on what was supposed to be a relaxing day at the beach. Although Dan is as macho and daring

of a guy as I've run across, he decided that the morning would be better spent sunbathing on an island rock, rather than tempting fate at the hands of the "killer" whirlpools. Making himself at home in the wild, Dan stripped down to his birthday suit and started working on that elusive "total body tan."

Just as he was drifting off to sleep, Dan was jolted awake by the roar of a twin engine seaplane as it swooped by, not 20 feet overhead. Again and again the plane swung by as Dan scrambled to find something to cover himself with. After five or six passes, the plane flew off into the horizon and all was seemingly calm again.

But Dan's battle against tan lines was not to be won, as a mere

20 minutes later, just as he had begun to relax again, Dan was shocked by a booming, megaphone enhanced voice coming from a nearby eddy. "Attention on the shore. Are you in need of assistance?" Jumping up from the rock, naked to the world, Dan stared out at a Canadian Coast Guard patrol boat, which had crept silently into the bay. It seemed that the seaplane pilot had mistakenly assumed that Dan, in his less than dressed condition, was the victim of some sort of nautical disaster and called the Coast Guard. Quickly Dan sorted out the situation, shielding himself with a nearby shrub. He decided that he was better off taking his chances against the whirlpools than to stay here and sunbathe much longer. By the time he arrived at the site of the Skookumchuk wave it was beginning to take form and the real excitement was about to begin. For posterity's sake, no naked footage of Dan was to appear in the final cut of the film.

Our experience at Skookumchuk can best be described as the ultimate in "soul surfing." Once the tide reversed, the wave began to grow and grow. Each time we would paddle up the

7 Kayakers, 2 Years and 20,000 Miles

eddy, the wave was larger than the last. Within 20 minutes the wave had reached epic proportions. I scrambled to find the best camera angles as Dave Harrington, a Montana native, laid down the coolest greenwave side surf I have ever captured on film. Dave gave the nod to Corran and Dan and they joined him on this absolutely gigantic "dream wave." Now they surfed three abreast, each of them throwing spins, shuvits, and cleans with room to spare. Around and around they went like kids on some sort of carnival ride—the kind that most people would wait in line all day for. But this day this ride was all ours.

After nearly two hours of nonstop action the boys began to settle down a bit, putting forth soulful carves, water spraying high into the air from each edge of their boats as they worked their way from side to side. The sun began to sink in the sky and the late afternoon light lent a surreal feeling to this truly special place. It bounced off the water in the air giving the wave the aura of some magical playground which, in fact, it was. At the end of the day Skookumchuck was anything but restful. But the trade-off was worth it, as the only things that rivaled the size of the wave were the smiles on our faces.

All too soon our team was forced to split up. Corran returned to Montreal, Dave to Montana, Alex to California while Dan and Steve make the long return trip to Africa. However the action showed no indication of slowing down. Upon their return to the Dark Continent, Dan and Steve were reunited with their fellow Zambezi compatriot, Nico Chassing, a nutty Frenchman with an appetite for jumping into the biggest holes he can find. It was this sort of demented behavior which was to supply us with some of the most breathtaking footage ever captured.

When descending the Zambezi, most mortals are left awestruck and breathless by the volume of water flowing through the gorge. The river is extremely pushy with eddyline whirlpools capable of sucking man and boat down into the dark water below, never to be

released. These whirlpools claimed at least one life during this year's monsoon season floods, snatching an unfortunate kayaker from the surface and finally releasing his body two minutes later over a quarter mile downstream. The rapids here seem to be built on a gigantic scale unlike anything else in the world. Absolutely monster-sized holes, large enough to swallow double-decker buses, block the lines of nearly every rapid. Add to this the constant danger of animal attack (hippos are notoriously vicious) and the fact that if you survive a swim through one of the rapids you still have the crocs in the eddy to worry about. The Zambezi is not to be taken lightly.

When kayaking with Nico one learns quickly not to follow his lines through a rapid, for invariably he has a tendency to head straight into the largest, most horrific feature on the river. Sitting above a terrible looking rapid, the earth around us trembling beneath the force of the water, our ears filled only with the roar of the rapid, Nico would let out a boyish little smile and simply drop over into the abyss. A minute or two later he would



emerge at the bottom (after an absolutely terrible beating), his smile transformed into an ear-to-ear grin. He would motion for the others to follow, daring them to test their mettle. For most, his call goes unanswered, as they choose instead to walk the rapid or to take the sneak route. After watching Nico throw a wave wheel above the meanest hole I have ever laid eyes upon and then seeing him get the beating of a lifetime, I don't question their judgement or their courage.

Yet Nico seemed to revel in the grandeur and danger of this magnificent place, using the extreme nature of the Zambezi to push himself to greater accomplishments. It was with this sort of maniacal action that we chose to end our film and our two-year-long adventure. It was an unforgettable journey filled with special memories, insane antics, and a heck of a lot of fun. If you get a chance to see the film, I hope you have as much fun watching it as we did making it.



Yank Rodeo Stars Visit Japan



Tanya Shuman, Saiko Hole, Nagara River.



Kenji, Wick, Tanya, Daisuke ready to paddle at Oni & Saiko hole on Nagara River.

By Eric "Wick" Southwick

Earlier this year the Sanwa Corporation invited Tanya Shuman and me to represent Team Wave Sport in Japan. There we would paddle a number of rivers during a ten-day stay, culminating in the intense competition of the Japan Open. With complete enthusiasm and a little trepidation, we embarked on an incredible cultural and whitewater adventure.

Our destination was the island of Honshu, the biggest and most populated. Our plane landed in Osaka located on the eastern coast of Honshu. Osaka is known as the Second City - "second" only to Tokyo.

When we arrived I realized I had entered a different world. The major highways are built in the sky to save space; the signs are in Japanese; the buildings are covered head to toe



Wick in the Oni Hole, Tanya in the Saiko Hole closest to us

with vibrant, neon ads; the airport is on a man-made island; the cars are equipped with the latest technology... Everywhere you look innovation is at work. In a city so heavily populated, it surprised me that crime is rare. Bicycles in downtown Osaka are never locked up. I never felt threatened, even when cruising in the back alleys or side streets. Japan is a safe and friendly place.

Japanese food is an experience in itself. Exotic as it might seem, the basic formula for a traditional Japanese meal is quite simple. It starts with hot noodle soup and tea followed by an entree of rice and sushi. My favorite restaurant was a Japanese Sushi Bar. Here everyone sits at a counter as small plates of rice and sushi pass by on a conveyer. The prices are set by the color of the plate, ranging from one to four dollars. Diners pick the dishes off the conveyer and are charged according to the number of plates you have stacked up. I liked this system because you can try a small amount of a large variety of foods. Although salmon eggs weren't my favorite, I liked just about everything else.

Having tested some of the Japanese culture, we moved out of the city into more familiar turf, whitewater. The region where we paddled, Gifu, is in a mountainous area 3-1/2 hours west of Osaka. Hiro Enomoto from the Sanwa Corporation was our guide. He and Team Wave Sport Japan, consisting of Daisuke, Marcy, Kenji, and Kou, paddled with Tanya and I during our stay. The water is generally low in the fall. However, two typhoons had recently passed through Japan, so the water was raging. In fact, upon our arrival in Japan, our plane had to be detoured for ten hours due to 95-

mph winds and horrendous downpours.

The first day of paddling we went to the Yosida River. The river lies in a deep gorge surrounded by dense forests. As we paddled, we caught a glimpse of native monkeys hanging from the trees. The Yosida is ten miles long and consists of Class III and Class IV rapids. Three miles into the run there is a 45-foot dam. You need to portage it on the left. Two other dams need to be scouted. No need to worry, though, all of these dams have calm water above them, making it easy to scout or portage.



Wick & Tanya sightseeing overlooking the Gifu region. Very mountainous

Take note, most Japanese rivers have fish traps and low head dams. The fish traps span the rivers and make great strainers to catch kayakers. The dams, of course, are river wide and are used to keep the rivers from taking out small villages during typhoons. The best play spot

on the Yosida River is located at the beginning of the run, the Arnold hole. This hole is not violent and all tricks are possible there. Most Japanese paddlers just go to this play spot and don't even run the river. But don't miss running this beautiful river, because there is great play and scenery throughout the run!

With rapid dramatic water level changes, play spots appear and vanish. Japanese rivers offer great play at all levels. The best two holes that we found were Oni and Saiko on the Nagara River. Located side-by-side with eddy access, Oni and Saiko are a playboater's dream. Oni is a wave hole, perfect for flat and blunt spins. Saiko, located closest to shore, is a small hole, perfect for doing multiple ends and splits.

The Japan Open was held on the eighth day of our adven

Yank Rodeo Stars Visit Japan

ture. The site of the Japan Open was the Konner wave on the Nagara River. At lower levels, the Konner wave is one of the best play spots in Japan. This wave has a perfect pile where one can do endless spins and link multiple ends without flushing. Eddy access is easy.

Unfortunately, with the recent rains, the Konner wave was flushed, making it difficult to do maneuvers. However, a ledge pour-over and small waves for wave wheeling formed above the Konner wave, offering challenges of their own. The competition turned into an exciting freestyle through the rapid. It was also fun to see some of our American friends there; Clay Wright, Mark Lyle, Dustin Knapp, and Brad Ludden. The competition was well organized and there were some incredible performances.



Marcy & Tanya in the eddy at the Saiko Hole.

After the awards, we all headed to the Japanese baths. Bathing has been part of the Japanese culture for centuries and it became part of our daily rituals. Baths are for washing and cleaning but they are also for relaxation and pleasure. The public bath houses are extremely sanitary. They offer every type of bath imaginable and more. Be careful with the electrical baths, it's a "shocking" experience. After a wonderful day on the river, slipping into a hot, soothing bath is extremely relaxing.

Japan offers a unique whitewater and cultural experience. There are many rivers yet to be explored and first descents to be bagged. Tanya and I had an incredible experience and we hope to go back soon!

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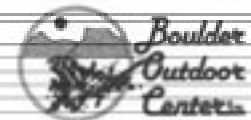
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1998 Whitewater Near-Miss Reports

By Charlie Walbridge
AWA Executive Board

Near misses in whitewater fall into two categories: those which resulted in serious injury and those which could, with less luck, have caused a fatality. Although the reports submitted to American Whitewater in 1998 are just a small sampling of what's happening nationwide, they give us a sense of what's happening on the river. This year there were a number of impact injuries suffered by expert paddlers on high-gradient rivers. I can remember a time when broken bones were extremely rare among kayakers; this is clearly no longer true. Foot entrapment still continued to be a problem for less-trained paddlers and river swimmers. And lastly, courageous efforts by injured paddlers to assist in their evacuations greatly shortened the time it took to get them out safely.

On the morning of February 22nd the Potomac River was running at a very high 8 foot level. Tom Hamilton, a Washington, D.C. boater, was out on an early morning paddle when he encountered two people on a small island just above Angler's Inn. AW's Steve Taylor reported in the CCA Newsletter that the pair, who were wearing survival suits, had camped illegally along the river the night before and entered the Potomac below Rocky Island at dawn. The pair were quickly swept through Mather Gorge. Stranded on the island, they called for help. Their calls were answered by a hiker, who left to summon rescue squads. The pair asked Tom to tow them to shore. When they got to shore they promised they would use their cell phone to call off the rescue. After practicing the tow in an eddy, Tom brought them over to the Maryland side. With the police helicopter in the air above him, he paddled to Angler's Inn.

Tom was greeted there by rescue personnel who angrily asked him "What are you doing on the river?" After they calmed down, he passed on the information on the two people. Unfortunately, the "shore" that he had taken the woman to was actually a high-water island. She was later picked up by rescue boat. The man was found at the illegal campsite; he denied being involved, so the search continued. Eventually the pair were arrested and charged with illegally swimming in the river, and for weapons violations (a concealed pistol). The Park Police eventually drafted a "thank-you" to kayaker Tom Hamilton and are suing the pair for the costs of the helicopter.

In April of 1998, Bruce Barnes, a kayaker from New Zealand, lost track of where he was

while running the many unusual waterfalls of Dry Meadow Creek, a tributary of southern California's Kern River. The river cuts into a steep granite shelf, forming the smooth, sheer-walled potholes that create the falls. The last two drops are unrunnable. The victim paddled on after running the third ledge from the bottom. Despite shouted warnings from his companions, he paddled across the pool into the next falls, a 60 foot drop onto a smooth granite dome. The nose of the boat tucked under and glanced off the rock, throwing his body forward so he landed on his forearms. The impact broke both arms just below the elbow. Barnes bailed out and swam weakly down a sheer-walled gorge, across a jet of water into a right-hand eddy. This was just above the final 100 foot falls that would have undoubtedly killed him.

Corran Addison, who spoke with me to clarify his rec.boats.paddle posting, witnessed the accident from the opposite shore and moved into position to help. He was able, after some delicate 5.10 barefoot rock climbing, to cross the river behind the 60 foot waterfall and make his way to the eddy. Here Addison grabbed the victim and eased him onto a rocky shelf. After making Barnes as comfortable as possible, he went back across the creek to find more manpower. He sent a photographer to call for help, then brought two other people back across the creek. They attached a line to Barnes's rescue life vest, and, using this and other ropes, slowly raised him out of the rocky defile. They laid him in the sunlight and splinted his arms. Everyone stripped down to provided Barnes with extra clothing.

The photographer returned at this point with the news that a helicopter would be

there in 20 minutes. Three hours later, with the sun setting behind a ridge, there was still no sign of help. A breeze carried spray from the falls leaving all involved cold and wet. Barnes, an experienced mountaineer, elected to try and walk out over steep 5.8 terrain rather than risk spending a night in the open. The group created a makeshift climbing harness from rope. They then kept Barnes, who could not use his arms, in a tight, supportive belay all the way to the top. The chopper arrived at dusk, soon after the group reached the crest of the ridge.

Addison called the rescue "the biggest epic he's ever been on", and notes that anyone less tough and experienced than Barnes would probably not have survived. He reports that Barnes is now permanently disabled, having lost the use of one arm and having only limited use of the other. He also observed that Dry Meadow Creek is becoming quite popular, and that on the days Corran Addison was there he saw a lot of people swimming "just like on the Ocoee." Several people came close to dropping over the same falls! Although Dry Meadow Creek is only 45 minutes from downtown Kernville and the runnable drops are not extremely hard, the steep and unusual terrain makes this a committing and intimidating venture. The slowness of the helicopter's arrival was not unusual; it is often difficult to call in these craft on short notice. Most people recommend calling the chopper, then initiating an alternate rescue plan.

In early July 1998, Nick Lipowski, a Chicago boater, got into serious trouble at Big Splat, a Class V+ drop on the Big Sandy River near Morgantown, WV. A lengthy report posted on rec.boats.paddle by Dag Grada, one of his companions, describes the incident as follows: The victim, who was running the river with two friends at a low (5.4) level, ran the difficult top drop of Big Splat cleanly. Unfortunately, he lost control while peeling out of the eddy below. He rammed the wall on river right, caught an edge, flipped, missed two rolls, and punched out right above the final big drop. He dropped over the 12 foot final ledge on river right, landing just upstream of the "splat rock". He then disappeared for a long time, trapped against the rock, before surfacing and swimming into a downstream-left eddy.

The force of the water tore off Nick's PFD, glasses, and boating shoes. His entire body was battered, and his companions were hard pressed to find an area larger than a hand that wasn't bruised, scratched, or abraded. A deep cut on his leg and knee injuries made it impossible for him to stand. His two companions, who had seen him go over the drop, were relieved to see him but shocked by his appearance. One of them, a doctor, evaluated the injuries, splinted his leg with an air bag, and prepared him for evacuation. The victim was ferried to the river right shore, at which point his friends were fortuitously met by another group of nine paddlers. One had an

inflatable kayak that was converted to a stretcher. The patient was covered with a space blanket and tied in with a throw rope. Local paddler Bill Young paddled swiftly downstream to get help (covering 2.5 miles in 20 minutes!), everyone else provided the muscle to wrestle the heavily-loaded ducky 50 feet uphill up to the old railroad grade that runs along the river on the right.

The railroad grade is surprisingly rugged, being blocked by fallen trees and cut by passing streams. It was very slow going. A mile upstream, below Wonder Falls, the group was met by firefighters and paramedics from Bruceton Mills. They checked the patient and provided welcome relief for the litter carriers. A medevac helicopter landed on the open ledges upstream of Wonder Falls and transported Lipowski to a hospital in Morgantown. There he began a slow but full recovery from his injuries. He returned to the river six weeks later. The water was very low and he was able to recover the prescription glasses he'd lost with the aid of a diving mask, just downstream of the splat rock.

The author of the r.b.p. report notes that the names "Wonder Falls" and "Big Splat" are not known to the locals, who refer to the drops as "Big Falls" and "Little Falls", respectively. The take-out, Jenkinsburg, is known locally as the "High Bridge" or "Bull

Run." Always remember that place names used by paddlers often differ from those in local usage when summoning help.

A former rescue squad member got into serious trouble while wading in the "Sinks" of the Little River, a popular Class IV run in East Tennessee. Lee Slice, 25, was wading and swimming when he lost his balance and was swept down a narrow chute. Although he is 6'4" tall and tried hard to keep his feet up, he became trapped in 4 feet of fast, cold water. Rescue squads, including Slice's father and many former co-workers, were called to the scene. They put a life vest and wetsuit top on Slice and used ropes to help support him in the relentless current. After four hours, with rain falling and the river rising, a crew of 25 men managed to pull him free. He was taken to the hospital and treated for bone chips, rope burns, and hypothermia.

At about the same time, Patrick Patterson, a "river surfer," was using a board tethered to the NC 217 highway bridge over the Cape Fear River in Eastern North Carolina. After the rope broke unexpectedly, Patterson attempted to stand in the current and caught his leg on an obstruction. His friends tried to reach him quickly; but were not successful. David Wormaldi, a Boy Scout leader, then entered the river and tied a rope under Patterson's arms. He then "treaded water"

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for over an hour to support Patterson until rescuers arrived.

On July 24th Adam Dzialo, 12, a student at an outdoor adventure camp run by Greenfield Community College, caught his foot near the bottom of a Class I rapid during a swim drill on the Deerfield River in Western Massachusetts. The accident occurred in full view of one of Crab Apple Whitewater's commercial raft trips. The guides, lead by owner Frank Mooney, immediately began a rescue. After considerable effort Adam was freed using a tethered raft lower. He had been underwater 20-30 minutes. Emergency medical personnel were on the scene and were able to revive him; he was airlifted to a trauma center. Today he is at home, recovering from severe neurological damage. Questions about the conduct of the trip created a furor in the Deerfield area and prompted an extensive investigation by the College. It reminds us that swim drills, which are ostensibly designed to prevent accidents, are not without risk. Care must be taken in instructing students prior to swim drills, especially when they are very young.

In the late afternoon of August 30th a commercial kayaking class encountered trouble while running California's South Fork of the American River. The school director reported that a student wrapped his kayak around a tree in the rapid below Lotus Lodge

and became trapped. One of the two instructors saw the accident happen. He quickly eddied out behind a gravel bar, then swam and ran to the pin site. Because the student was underwater and apparently unconscious, the instructor immediately freed the boat and jumped in after it to pull the student free. Helped by a second instructor, he kept the student's head above water. With the assistance of the other students, the pair pulled him to shore. The victim was not breathing. The instructors performed two Heimlich Maneuvers to clear his airway. The student coughed, then began breathing on his own. The student was taken to a local hospital, held overnight for observation, then released.

There were several very close calls during Gauley Season. On September 27th two men flipped near the top of Pure Screaming Hell on the Lower Gauley. One of the men swam right and was washed into a very well known and dangerous sieve just above the final hole. The swimmer grabbed hold of a tree limb wedged under a rock at the lip of the sieve. He screamed that his leg was caught! Several people tried to lower lines to him and one person managed to grab his wrist. Eventually he used these to work his foot free. Then he flushed under some giant boulders and emerged screaming for help. Afterwards he

said he had no idea what rapid he was in or that there was a sieve downstream.

Even strong boaters can encounter trouble on the Gauley. On September 27th Chris Bell, an expert paddler, missed a tight line in the "fun-looking, twisting slot" on river left in the rapid below Insignificant on the Upper Gauley. In his Rec. Boats. Paddle posting Bell states that he hung up on a barely exposed knob of rock that was deflecting a substantial amount of water into an undercut rock on shore. Suddenly the tail of his playboat was forced under the rock! As Bell calmly waited for help the situation deteriorated. When the entire boat was sucked under the rock he bailed out. Aknee brace he was wearing hung up for a second, but he was able to wiggle free. After being carried deep under water, he saw a patch of light and swam for it. He popped free, very happy to be alive! He later learned that several video kayakers have pinned in this slot over the past few years.

In a similar episode, Ben Kadas reported a very close call on the weekend of October 18th at Kevan's Folly, the last rapid on the Lower Gauley. He was in a tight chute to the right of the main flow when the low stern of his playboat sank under an undercut. As the boat reached vertical he bailed out. He was sucked underneath the undercut and, much to the joy of his companions, was quickly washed free. He said that the suction was terrific; it

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felt like he was being flushed down a com- mode!

In these latter two cases lower than normal fall release levels (2400 instead of 2800 cfs) necessitated by the drought left exposed rocks in the chutes that had not been encountered in previous runs. You often think you "know" the river until a small change of water levels reminds you of your limits. These incidents point out a real downside to the popular scooped-stern playboat designs. Slots like this are essentially creek moves, and Chris Bell feels that he would never have been trapped there in his creek boat. It also emphasizes the dangers of running the obscure side-channels on the Gauley, even in the easier, unnamed rapids. Some of these chutes are quite difficult and careful scouting is recommended.

Harriet Taylor, a video boater on the New and Gauley Rivers, suffered serious injuries while running Oceana Falls in Georgia's Tallulah Gorge in late October. Clay Wright, in a Rec.Boats.Paddle posting, reported that Taylor had successfully run North Carolina's Green River Gorge at 200% earlier in her Southern road trip. She arrived at the Tallulah on the last day of AW's scheduled releases. The run includes Oceana Falls, a huge sliding ledge where a number of paddlers get banged up each year.

On reaching Oceana, she scouted, got in her boat, then got out and scouted again to be

sure of hitting her "mark." Despite these efforts she was off her intended route. She collided with "The Thing," a huge block of rock halfway down the slide that sends a gigantic plume of water high into the air. After a wickedly hard hit, her boat rocketed up and over the rock, then flushed through the rest of the drop upright. Here Ms. Taylor exited her swamped kayak and swam. She was immediately helped by a group of rodeo boaters who were at the scene.

Her small, low-volume playboat was badly bent and the footpegs were severely deformed. Ms. Taylor suffered compound fractures and other severe injuries to both legs and feet. A first aid kit, donated to AW by Adventure Medical Kits and kept in place at the base of the falls during the releases, was put to good use. She was carried to the top of the falls where, despite her injuries, she got back into her boat and ferried to the other side of the river. She repeated this feat above two more drops that separated her from the put-in. State Park rangers saw the accident from an overlook and sent EMTs and additional boaters down the 500+ steps at the put-in to carry her up. The evacuation took three hours, and would have lasted much longer without Ms. Taylor's gutsy performance. She was taken to a hospital in Athens, GA where she had four surgeries. She expects to spend two months in a wheelchair and four months on crutches. As of this printing she is back in school but

still can't walk unassisted. The dam release continued for an extra 30 minutes to allow those who helped in the rescue to paddle out.

Stephen Besch reported a scary incident last November on Skction IV of Georgia's Chatooga River. With the level a moderate 1.6 feet, a group of nine reached Jawbone rapid and stopped to scout. The victim, a first-timer, scouted the drop with the group, but once in the river lost track of her line. She hit a small rock in the final drop, spun, and jammed stern first into the pothole at Hydroelectric Rock. She could not get out and there was a real concern that she and her boat could be pushed deeper into the pothole and held underwater. Paddlers immediately swam out to the rock from river left to stabilize the boat. Then a rope was thrown and attached to her broach loop. When the group pulled, the boat started to move. The rescuers on the rock pulled her out of the kayak before the boat floated free.

American Whitewater's Safety Committee is very interested in the close encounters you experience. If you're willing to share them with our membership, please send them to Charlie Walbridge, 230 Penllyn Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422. My phone is 3215-646-0157; my e-mail is CWAL@compusewe.com. You can also contact our safety chair, Lee Belknap, at rivergyppy@sprintmail.com. Let's have a fun filled, safe year in 1999!



Photo by Collin Meagher; Dan Gavers at Kootenai Falls Montana

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Testosterone Toxicity?

By Ron Rathnow

It was definitely a full-blown, out-of-control case of TESTOSTERONETOXICITY. The balls had staged a coup and overthrown the brain. The brain, beaten to a pulp, was just happy to be alive and let the balls have their way for the moment.

I had an interesting experience running the Black the other day. While scouting Glen Park Falls we noticed a group of boaters putting in at the dam and heading straight over to look at the falls. Apparently they elected to bypass Knife's Edge rapid and the minor stuff above so they could get right to the GOOD STUFF. At that point I assumed (Bad Assumption #1) they must know their stuff and just wanted to do a gorge run. It didn't occur to me there might have been other possibilities.

The falls consist of three ledges with the final ledge approximately 15 feet high. The whole drop is about 30 feet total. About 30-40 feet below the final ledge the river runs

directly into a rock wall with most of the flow deflected to the right following the river channel. The rest goes to the left into a large recirculating eddy which feeds back into the falls. At lower levels the eddy isn't too bad, but at higher water a swimmer could find himself easily pulled back into the drop while trying to get to the bank. If you decide to go into the left eddy, good ferrying skills will be needed to cross the boil below the falls, back to river right, without getting shoved into the cliff below. The higher the water the harder it gets to make the ferry. One might assume, if one decides to run the falls, one might also have the skills necessary to make the ferry. (Bad Assumption #2)

There are different options on where to run the falls depending on water levels. As you look downstream following the main flow, you'll notice a large peak in the flow at the lip of the final drop. At low water you want to be heading to the left of the peak. A nice boof and you'll jump the hole and drop into the large eddy on river left. The right hand line dries up at lower water. At higher water

the right hand option allows one to stay to the right of the peak, avoiding the left-hand eddy all together. Although the right hand side of the final drop is lower than the left, it's not a sneak route. You have to make a good ferry above the final drop to reach the right side line(s). Generally, the farther right you can get the lower the ledge and the easier it becomes to boof the hole.

It's the first two ledges that can cause a run to go bad. The first ledge (3 feet) is easy enough unless you just go over in the wrong spot and get fed into the big hole on the left created by the second ledge (6 feet). The first ledge has no real recycle to speak of, while the second ledge has a hole from one end to the other; it gets worse the farther left you are. The second ledge hole is punchable at lowerwater, but gets stickier at higher levels. A good surfer can deal with this and work his/her way out the right side if necessary. Others may find themselves swimming the final ledge. The problem with the first two ledges is the water is only a few inches deep along most of the approach. This makes it tough to



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get a decent paddle stroke and, if you're off-line, chances are you're going to go where the water takes you (which is over the left hand side of the second ledge and into the meat of the hole). This is what makes the initial ferry important. The correct lines, potential problems, and hazards should easily be deduced by anybody who can read water. You might even assume that boaters scouting the falls, with the intentions of running them, can read water (this would be: Bad Assumption #3).

were carrying back, we noticed the water level was rising quickly. There has been heavy rains and more water was being allowed to spill over the dam upstream. The right side became the better option as the water kept going up and up.

In the meantime, after the other group got tired of jumping up and down, thumping each other on the back, strokin' each other and yelling "You da' Man," one of them decided to take his chances and make his attempt. He went right down the left side,

electing to try our line. The first two managed to make the ferry, but beyond that any semblance their line had to ours went right out the window. The first guy started correctly, but really didn't try hard enough to stay on line. He wasn't even really paddling. Just sort of floating and trying to keep his boat lined up with the current. It reminded me of a beginning boater. Naturally the current took him towards the hole at the second ledge.

Apparently the river gods were in a good mood that day. After coming out of the hole

The first two managed to make the ferry, but beyond that any semblance their line had to ours went right out the window.

When we first arrived at the falls that day the water was low. After scouting the left side, a couple of our crew made the run and had no problems. They ferried out just until they were about 50 feet from the bank. At that point they turned and slid over the first ledge, worked a little farther right to clear the nasty part of the hole at the second ledge, then worked back to the left of the peak and boofed into the eddy. Then they took out and began to walk back to do it again. As they

going directly toward the hole at the second ledge. He did manage to punch it, but got flipped, rolled before the final ledge and dropped into the left-hand eddy. At the moment we thought it was pretty ballsy to go for the hole at the second ledge. But as time went by and we watched the others, we realized it was probably something other than balls.

The other three tried a different tact. Having watched our guys have good runs, while their guy had a questionable run, they

upside down, he did manage to roll. He still didn't paddle, though, so he had no forward speed as he went over the final ledge into the hole. Somehow or another he managed to slip away from the recirculation and made it into the eddy. Now we were left with two.

The next one peeled out clearing the first ledge and actually managed to miss the worst part of the hole at the second ledge. Once again he wasn't really paddling and the current took him right over the peak into the

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worst part of the backwash. After getting backended into the falls and thrashed, the river gods smiled and let him go. He flushed out to the right, rather than into the left-hand eddy.

The last one blew the initial ferry and got blown left, but managed to stop himself at the top of the first ledge. I didn't think it was possible for someone to stick their fingers into solid rock, but I'm sure he must have done it. He crawled out of his boat and we helped him back to shore, where he started again. This time he did manage to hit the line at the first and second ledges, but went over the final drop without paddling at all. After he and the boat disappeared for five seconds, the falls finally gave him up. He also managed to roll and make it into the left-hand eddy.

We headed out next and ran the right side line with no real problems and caught an eddy. The conversation soon turned to the other four boaters. It was fairly obvious to us they were lacking in most skills, except for rolling, and they had no clue regarding the dangers involved. The three still in the left-hand eddy confirmed this by trying to make

the ferry to river right. Each one of them blew it and got shoved into the rock wall. We thought, at that moment, they would possibly reevaluate their skill levels and come to the sane realization they had escaped by the skin of their butts, but this was not to be.

Later four of them got back together on the bank and proceeded to do their "You da Man" dance again. While they strutted around, chests puffed up and slapping each other on the back, we could hear snatches of conversation. "You were awesome, dude." "Did ya see my clutch roll?" "It was so cool the way you disappeared." and "Can't believe we're running Class 5." It then became apparent to us what the problem was. It was definitely a full-blown, out-of-control, case of TESTOSTERONE TOXICITY. The balls had staged a coup and overthrown the brain. The brain, beaten to a pulp, was just happy to be alive and let the balls have their way for the moment.

Evidently they learned nothing from their experience. This is sad. Surviving a bad run is one thing, understanding your mistakes is another. Learning allows one to progress

and improve his/her skills. Without understanding and learning from your mistakes, you'll likely become a statistic. I suppose we could have talked to them and attempted to point out where they went wrong. More than likely they would have told us to "SCREW OFF!!", wondering who the HELL we thought WE were telling THEM they needed to re-evaluate the situation. And maybe they would be correct.

I mean, who are we to meddle with the principles of natural selection? Hey, maybe the gene pool does need a little thinning sometimes! As it was, we left them to fumble their way down the river and didn't see them again.

These days this scenario seems pretty common. We see a fair number of boaters out there that seem to be over their heads.

What Do You Think?

The question is do we attempt to help or interfere with people we don't know? Or do we just let them go on their merry way, hoping they'll catch on and progress in the right direction?

The Kid

By Ken Kyler

I sat in my kayak staring at the river, trying to fathom its sense of humor. Coming downstream I had just glimpsed the hole, and only barely escaped its clutches as I knifed through one edge, punching into the eddy. I had been way too busy dancing through the eddies, peeling out, elevating back up river and then s-turning back down again. The dance was rhythmic. Drive into the eddy, slight downstream lean and sweep, feel the stem sink and the bow rise. YES! Another perfectly executed stern-squirt.

I should have been paying more attention. A mistake I often make when I'm caught in a river dance. Like a couple on a ballroom floor, the river and I had been in perfect rhythm. I occasionally forget the river isn't my friend. I play it; it plays me; each searching for mastery of the other. I swear it was trying to lure me into a false sense of security, so that I would foolishly drop into the hole and get hammered.

I eventually got out and walked upstream, trying to get a better look. The hole was huge and mesmerizing. There, in the middle of the hole, was a perfect glassy wave. What a rush it would be to surf the wave. Was the hole smiling upstream or down? If I got into the hole, could I get out? I tossed a limb into the river, sacrificing it to the river god, hoping for a sign. A stupid ritual; but one I often perform. As usual, the limb told me nothing. It floated into the maw, recirculated for a long time, and then nonchalantly slid out the edge. Damned limbs, if only they would talk. But no, like the river, they keep their secrets to themselves.

The seductive taste of adrenaline finally convinced me there was a slight, ever so slight smile downstream. I had to surf the wave. I had to...the river beckoned. "Here, come play. Right here in the center where the wave is glassy. Feel the power...taste the adrenaline. Come play with me." The picture

in my mind was painfully clear: my 3D flat spinning to a back-surf, riding to the top of the foam pile, spinning to a frontsurf... it won. I walked back to my boat and got in.

By now a crowd was starting to form on the banks. I really hadn't noticed them at first. I was too hypnotized by the hole. I could see in their eyes, though, that they were expecting carnage. My paddling buds were too. They got out their throw bags and cameras to record for posterity my impending destruction. This was a big hole and the river was about to humiliate one more foolish kayaker. Setting on rocks and sucking on Gatorade, they looked like Romans waiting for the lions to feed on a hapless Christian. I paddled up the eddy on river left and looked again into the mouth of hell. If only I could slide across the back of the foam pile and get on the glassy wave.

All I saw was the hole and the wave; nothing else mattered. I visualized each

By now a crowd was starting to form on the banks. I really hadn't noticed them at first. I was too hypnotized by the hole. I could see in their eyes, though, that they were expecting carnage.



stroke; the left blade slicing the water drawing me into the current, weight sliding forward to load the bow, a few hard forward strokes and I would be there. I could do it. I knew I could do it.

Whatapitiful firsteffort; the river laughed, or was that the crowd? It didn't matter. A rouge wave flipped me on edge and I rolled. The river knew. I hadn't really wanted it bad enough. I had made a half-assed attempt. I could hear the river laughing; "How dare

But the wave prize almost seemed trivial now. This hole needed to be taught who was Master of the River. I reached out, grabbed some water, and drew the boat back into the current again. This time I almost made it to the wave, but an out-of-control newbie slammed into me just as I reached the wave. No doubt the newbie was glad I was there. He avoided the hole. I didn't.

I rolled up in the hole and immediately got window-shaded. Next araft came through.

boat on end to drain the water and looked at the hole. As I blew the first gallon of river water from my sinuses, I saw the kid.

She was a scrawny little runt, possibly 10 or 11. Her boat was poised on the lip of the rapid above the wave. I groaned; its one thing for an adult to be mutilated by the hole, but the kid? This cute little girl? This wasn't going to be pretty. We grabbed our throwbags and ran upstream. She spun smoothly, made a few strokes and was on the wave.

She was a scrawny little runt, possible 10 or 11 Her boat was poised on the lip, of the rapid above the wave. I groaned; its one thing for an adult to be mutilated by the hole, but the kid?

you! Am I not worthy of your best? Come little boy, come..." Backup the eddy I paddled.

The second attempt was better but I didn't get to the wave. I was too far forward on the pile and I sunk into the hole. I could barely see the feet of the people on the shore. It was a deep and violent hole. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I heard a voice. "You're insane! THIS is NOT a place for a good, corn-fed Hoosier! OUT!" But I was committed. There was no time to think, only to react. The bow pearly and I leaned back. The bow slid back on top and I leaned slightly forward again. Balance, balance, all I could think of was balance. Get the rhythm, feel the power, small moves, stay centered...balance. The boat hull was flying. Lifting my right knee I let the bow slice through the water rather than pearl again. It was a dance, now the left knee, back to the right. Back and forth across the hole I went, dancing and dancing.

Opportunities come in nanoseconds. I didn't think about it. It was just there. I had surfed to the side where the eddy-line was the sharpest. I threw my weight forward. As the bow sunk, I twisted the boat so the bow would knife through the current. Instead of being pushed out, I shot straight up. Reaching across the bow I grabbed some water with my paddle, rotated the boat, and landed back in the hole facing downstream. YES! *I* was the Master of the Hole!

There is a strange thing about holes. They only let you think you're in charge. Immediately after the boat landed, the flat stern was caught by the downstream flow of water as it rushed into the hole. I wasn't ready. The stern sunk out of sight. The bow reached for the sky. I reached out to brace, only found air...over I went, and I flushed out. More laughter, this time I knew it was the hole.

The battle had begun. I paddled up the eddy again. I was focused, as I had never been focused before. This was no longer about surfing the wave. This was a personal battle. Me against the hole. The prize was the wave.

Why not add insult to injury? The raft slammed into me just as I rolled up and separated my boating unit into its component parts. I hung onto my boat and stick, and swam to the shore. My partners were rolling on the ground laughing hysterically. Nice friends. They hadn't seen a show this good in a long time; me either, for that matter. I unscrewed the drain plug, stood the

What humiliation! Her boat slid to the top of the foam pile and she spun, and spun, and spun. Endless 360s, flat spinning on the wave. She made it look effortless. My jaw hit the rocks of the stream bank as it fell from my mouth. Her boat rotated to a perfect back-surf then to a front-surf, then into the hole.

Damn! I knew it! This wasn't going to be entertaining carnage. This was different! She

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was a little kid! Her boat ended and we readied the ropes to throw. She smiled, pirouetted the boat and landed back in the hole. My heart quit and I sat down to watch. She worked that hole like a master. It wasn't fair! She did all the moves, popped out, gave a cute

pixyish smile and a wave, and floated down stream.

My buds looked expectantly at me and I glared at them. I had to think fast. I blew another gallon of river water out of my sinuses, complained about an old shoulder

injury, and declared it was lunchtime. But they knew. The reputation earned by fifteen years of hard-core kayaking had just been destroyed.

Damn kid—why couldn't she have stayed home and played with her dolls?

We all live downstream.

By David Olson

"OK, gang. Coming up around the bend there, we're going into the Keeney Brothers rapids. Three huge drops in a row. This is big time."

My raft crew stares at me. As their hired guide, it is my responsibility to let them know what's coming up, beyond that big horizon line, where the rafts in front of us disappear into the distant, roaring sound of whitewater.

The couple from Canton in the front of the boat smile and nod their heads. The guy next to me just swallows. Hard.

"You'll see that humped rock down there, in the middle of the river? That's Whale Rock, and we really want to go behind it. So as we pull even with it and I point the boat left, I'll call 'All ahead' and this time I mean it. You've

got to paddlepaddlepaddle and drive this boat in behind that rock. OK? Any questions?"

My crew continues to stare. The guy next to me swallows again. His son, seated in front of me, checks his life jacket. Then his helmet.

There are rarely any questions. I can see it in their eyes: Your job is putting this boat where it needs to go.

"Stay ready, stay ready. OK! All ahead! All ahead! PADDLE!!!"

My crew listens well, paddles hard, and doesn't seem to mind the close call with Juicer Rock. In the calm stretch of flatwater at the bottom of the rapids the couple up front lean together and whisper "That wasn't that bad," and I am silent for a long while, toughing out my panicked hypoxia because I'm the only one onboard who has any idea how close we had come to getting thrashed.

The New River flows north from its headwaters in the mountains of North Carolina, through southwestern Virginia, and finally

drops into the steep New River Gorge in West Virginia, before its confluence with the Gauley River forms the mighty Kanawha. The Lower New, through the deepest part of the Gorge, is filled from May to September with canoes, kayaks, and hundreds of rafts from over twenty commercial outfitters. These boats are led by trained guides such as myself, and crewed by hordes of commercial guests who, time and again, turn out to be from somewhere in Ohio.

Our raft drifts down the river between immense sandstone boulders. A great blue heron stands on a half-submerged rock near shore, silently watching the river. I point him out to my crew. Barry Lopez calls the heron a "river monk." I had seen the bird along this stretch of river several times, and had come to anticipate the benediction.

The heron lends authenticity to the journey. Overburdened rafts jostling for good entrances into rapids called "Surprise" and "Miller's Folly" give these trips a patina of fun, like an aquatic Disneyland or Six Flags. The heron reminds us that the river is much more than a playground.

The river is an artery, and the creeks that branch into it look, on a map, like veins and capillary beds. An essential network that greens the long ridges of West Virginia, that feeds the lush riparian borderlands between water and mountain, where the great blue heron, with a single wing beat, glides over the sandstone bones of the gorge into the sky.

The original modern commerce in the Gorge was coal mining. In the waning years of the nineteenth century, after the fresh-laid railroad line had opened an easier way into this rugged land, town after town sprouted along the banks of the river. And, as the coal veins ran dry, the towns disappeared. A tangled chaos of forest swallowed the remains.

As our boats pass the old town sites, each guide waves a lazy hand towards the woods and tells their version of the mining history that was made there.

I talk to my crew about the Gorge. I tell some old mining stories, like the one about Melciny Fields, who was a maid in the Beury mansion. The town of Beury, like the rest of the towns in the Gorge, folded up and died



decades ago. But Melciny stayed on, living in the old abandoned mansion for years, all by herself.

But I also say how much I love all the different shades of green we could see in the trees spilling down from the ridgeline, and that a century ago the original forest had been completely clear-cut. I tell my guests to get out and swim in the calm pools between rapids as often as they wish, but that they shouldn't drink the water because dangerous wastes leak into the river upstream.

For this is my opportunity, fundamental and immediate, to help conserve this beautiful river and others like it. My guests spend most of their time in an aircraft parts factory in Canton, or a law office in Miami, or in school near Chicago. They're out helping the world go round and I appreciate them for it. Work can be the most moral thing a person does. But unfortunately, for some, their suburban lives mean that the "environment" they keep hearing about on the news remains abstract, like a Ansel Adams calendar.

Taking a whitewater rafting trip can either be just a yahoo good time or an opportunity to connect with the larger, wilder world. As the guide, as both coach and teacher, I have a definite say in which kind of experience it will be. At best, the trip can be both a killer ride and an education.

I know. River outfitting is not totally eco-friendly, with those gas-guzzling buses chugging down narrow roads to the put-in, and lunch always sewed on paper plates. But I am willing to overlook these small transgressions for the larger victory: putting as many consumers and voters face-to-face with what's at stake in the war over the environment. Having fun and being tested in the great outdoors can make my crews that much more likely to come to the defense of the river and the rest of the environment. I have to at least provide the chance to really see what's at stake. That's what I can do.

As Chris Kelly wrote in a recent American Whitewater issue: "Every river user is a potential environmental ally: the more a person paddles, the more likely it is that she will bestir herself to defend the resource."

We paddle our raft through the last set of rapids and head for the shore where the buses are waiting.

"Well, gang, I'd like to thank you for rafting with me today. I had a great time and

I must say that's the closest look I've had at Juicer Rock this year." My crew turns and stares. The guy next to me says: "We came close to a lot of rocks today. Which one was Juicer?"

The couple up front looks at each other. Whichever rock it was, it just wasn't that bad. The bus picks up the guides and guests at the take-out and negotiates the winding road back to the freeway. As we get close to base camp, my trip leader stands at the front of the bus and starts his talk-down. After thanking everyone for rafting with our company, and after a few shameless plugs to stop by our store and have dinner in the restaurant, he ends: "And folks, let's not forget, that if you had a good time today, part of the reason was because there was water in the river and trees on the hills. These resources are getting harder and harder to preserve every year. So, the next time you shop, and the next time you vote, and the next time you talk to your friends, remember the good time you had today and the reasons behind it. So, did everybody have a good time?"

As we pull into base camp, the bus erupts into cheers.



www.innervationresearch.com

A Kayak builder's tale.

By Charlie Walbridge
AWA Board Member

Although many commercially-produced kayaks and canoes are now available, 30 years ago river gear was hard to find and most whitewater paddlers made their own. When I first began paddling in 1968 you either built your own boat or bought it from a small backyard builder. This practice continued until the mid-1980s, when roto-molded kayaks started to dominate the market. The self-reliant era of home-building will never be forgotten by those who lived it.

Fiberglass construction begins with a vile smelling liquid plastic called resin. When mixed with an equally unpleasant hardener, the resin hardens. Catalyzed resin is applied to the inside of a mold, then fiberglass, and other loosely-woven cloth reinforcements like nylon, polypropylene, Kevlar, or polyester are laid on top of it. More resin is applied to saturate the cloth, air bubbles are worked out, and additional layers of cloth and resin are applied. The exact order of construction is known as the layup. When the resin has cured, the cloth reinforces the resin like steel reinforces concrete. The result: a tough, good-looking river craft.

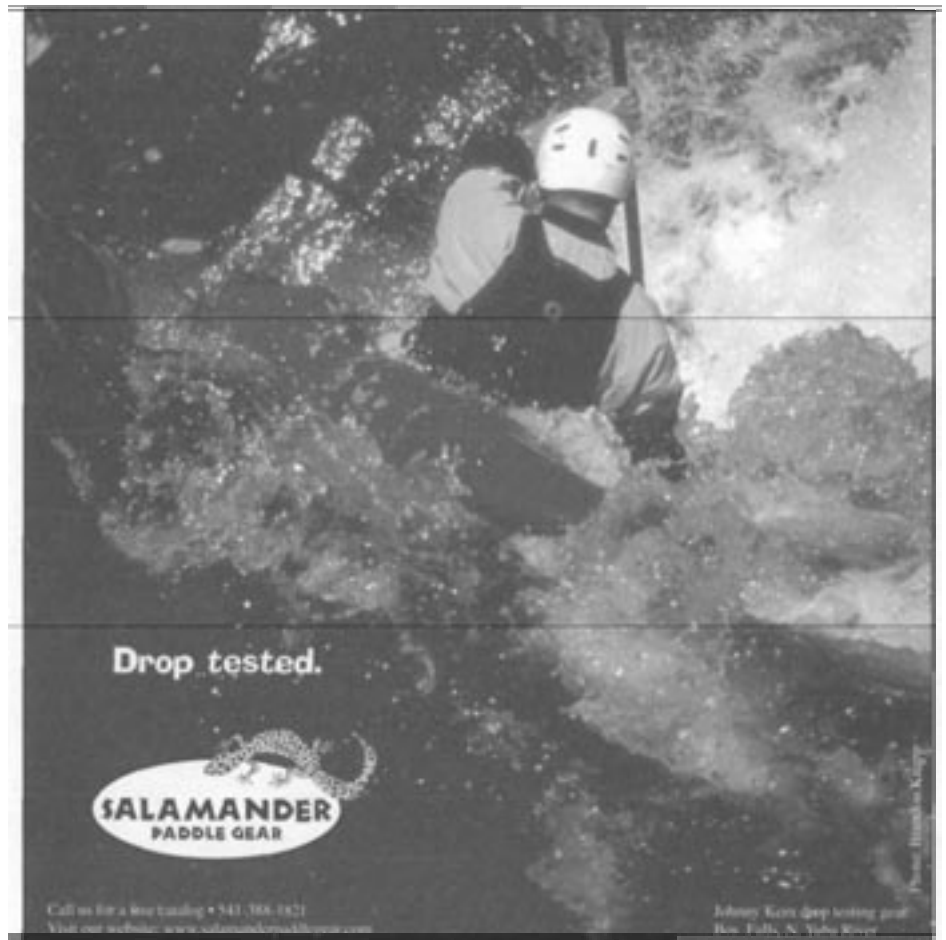
Although fiberglass technology was widely used in marine construction in the 50s, early efforts to produce "fiberglass" kayaks and canoes resulted in heavy, fragile boats. During the late 60s members of college outing clubs in places like M.I.T., the University of Wisconsin, Dartmouth, and Penn State started building kayaks and canoes. Students applied their extensive training in science and engineering to create lighter, tougher river craft. When these college boaters moved on to careers in corporations like Allied Chemical and DuPont they carried their paddling interests with them. Pretty soon club-level kayak and canoe builders were using aerospace materials in their backyard shops. Kevlar, for instance, was first known as PRD (for Product Research and Development) 49. When DuPont

started making experimental quantities, some PRD 49 quickly found its way to paddlers. Eventually, material was donated to top racers and home-made river kayaks were used in DuPont's ads. But that's another story.

Boatbuilding was an important off-season activity for many local whitewater clubs. Beginning kayakers typically started out with a used home-built kayak. If they wanted a new boat, they made it. Because this is a difficult job for one person, an informal apprenticeship program developed. If you helped an experienced member build his kayak or C-1, he'd show you how to do it and help you build yours. When you needed to build again, you taught these skills to your helpers. Building a kayak means about 40

hour of hard work, but paddlers could usually sell their used home-built kayaks for the cost of materials needed to fabricate a new one, roughly \$208-\$300 in 1975. In essence, each home-made boat you made after the first one was free!

Molds for whitewater boats were obtained through a wide-ranging interclub racing network. Top American racers went to Europe to compete and brought back the latest designs. But although European designs of the mid-70s were the best in the world, their materials were not nearly as good as the stuff U.S. home-builders were using. Racers usually "putted a mold" off these European boats soon after they arrived here and made lighter, tougher, cheaper copies for themselves. Once they even stole a hot racing C-





2 at a major European race, molded it overnight, and returned it by morning. Somewhere in this process the ends of the deck got reversed, but it still paddled pretty well. Since mold-making was an expensive and time-consuming process, molds were then rented out to others at \$25 per boat. That way new designs became available to the average club paddler.

In the late 60s and early-to-mid 70s most serious whitewater paddlers raced slalom. Molds were car topped to these events and transferred there. The racing circuit also supported a bustling trade in boatbuilding materials, especially exotic fabrics and specially formulated resins. This was supplemented by bulk purchases of standard resins and cloths by local club members. Clubs sometimes made their own molds from existing boats. Thus, a design moved from a single imported boat to a number of molds scattered throughout the country.

Mold use was often tightly scheduled. It was not unusual to have only a few days to build the latest hot design, before you had to pass it on to the next guy. This meant marathon after-work building sessions that continued until the wee hours of the morning. The exotic smell of resin and the loud behavior of the builders themselves resulted in restlessness among the neighbors. Bob Henk, boatbuilding guru for the Philadelphia Canoe Club in the late 70s, was once assaulted by his neighbor after a particularly annoying stretch of late night sessions. Others, usually those who had a small custom boatbuilding business on the side, were charged with zoning violations.

Those without access to a garage or workshop had to resort to extreme measures. Paul Singley and Lit Wilkinson, two friends of mine from Tennessee, rented a space heater, drove 14 hours to Philadelphia, built their boat in my barn with a mold they rented from a guy in my canoe club, then drove home, all in a single weekend! I really don't know when they slept! Another guy waited until his parents had left for the weekend, covered their living room with sheet plastic, and built his kayak. Trouble is, the styrene fumes from polyester resin are absorbed by fresh foods. All the milk and bread in the house was tainted, and the smell lingered in the drapes and upholstery for weeks! While in college I built a kayak with friends in the basement of a duplex in Lewisburg, Pa. Soon the neighbors were making polite, but insistent inquiries! I also remember doing a major patch job on a boat in the men's room of the campground at Ohiopyle State Park. Fortunately the ranger on duty had a sense of humor.

By the time I began paddling the Yough the technology was evolving rapidly. The only things my non-paddling friends dreaded more than river talk was boatbuilding talk!

At put-ins, take-outs, parties, and those after-paddling dinners at Glisan's, people gathered around boatbuilding gurus like Jack Wright, George Hendricks, Dave Kurtz, and John Sweet to get the latest info. A guy talking about a boat he'd built might sound like this:

"Yeah, I used Dave's mold when it came through town. I like Jack's epoxy; it's expensive, but it wets out nice and has a long working time. He also has S-Glass and Kevlar, but you'll get a better price through Clark in Colorado. Just don't get the satin weave; it's too tightly woven for hand layup. I used three layers of 7 ounce S-Glass and two layers of 6 ounce Kevlar in the hull, dropped back one layer of S-glass on the deck, with the usual reinforcements. Pass me a napkin and I'll sketch out where I put them. I got the pigment from Sweet, but you don't want to use too much of it or you'll degrade the resin. 2% by weight is about the max; you've got to mix the pigmented resin in one batch with an electric drill to get even coloration. I added about ten grams of cabosil to the gallon to prevent pinholes and runoff. I cured the boat for six hours at 180° in Bob's oven. You don't have to, but it increases cross linking and raises strength 25%. That's what Jack says, anyway. You don't want to put the mold in the oven; it's polyester and you might warp it. Just let the boat set up hard at room temperature, pop it, seam it, then heat cure it. The boat popped out easily with the Teflon wedges I got from Steve when he came from Wisconsin to run the Cheat. I used a five layer seam, two out, three in. One of the inside layers was a 2-inch strip of Kevlar cut on the bias. If you don't have an oven you can leave the boat in the sun on a hot day. I think George still has some ethafoam; get him to tell you how he does his cockpit rims....."

Things got really heavy when the engineers arrived. Many active paddlers in the 70s had advanced degrees in science or engineering. Terms like flexural modulus and heat deflection temperature were bandied about, and advice on resin formulations and layups were freely given.

Carbon fibers, matrix thickness, honeycomb construction, filament winding.....It was like taking a post-graduate course in fiberglass technology. Chip Queitzsch, a regular paddling buddy, wrote his master's thesis on the physical properties of "heterogeneous epoxy laminates" using the facilities of the University of Virginia's materials testing lab. When he graduated he got a job at Boeing.

After a few years of listening and building, I wrote *The Boatbuilder's Manual*, putting a lot of this knowledge into print for the first time. Twenty-four years, six editions, and tens of thousands of copies later it finally went out of print in 1997. I hear a number of paddlesport industry bigwigs used it to get started!

Needless to say, each whitewater boat was unique. When you saw boats on a car you knew who was around. People took great pride in their creations. John Sweet's boats were always translucent and flawless, Ted Waddell's were shiny as a new car. Mine, like most people's, were rough, but serviceable.

Jack Wright built some of the toughest kayaks around and was always eager to show them off. One day at the Savage River Races he was showing off the strength of his latest S-Glass, vacuum-bagged, heat-cured-epoxy creation by bouncing rocks off the deck. As a crowd gathered, he started using bigger and bigger stones. Eventually he was lobbing small boulders down from the top of his van. Eventually someone passed him a football-sized rock. He slammed it down on the deck, cracking it badly. Silence followed. Finally John Sweet said quietly, "Well, I guess its back to the old drawing board, huh, Jack?"

It was inevitable that some people would be bitten badly by the boat-building bug. Some, like Bill McKnight, Steve Rock, John Brown, and Jesse Whittemore became highly sought after custom fabricators. Others, like Jim Henry (Mad River), Bill Masters and Jim Snyder (Perception), John Schriener (New Wave), John Jaycox (Wave Sport), and Andy Bridge (Dagger) became major players in the growing paddlesports' industry. Some folks were less skilled and their unusual hobby drove their families crazy. One person I paddled with burned half of his house down with a jury-rigged curing oven!

But although the materials we were using were exotic, the hand lay-up process we used is actually pretty simple. Anyone who is at all handy with tools can do it. The overhead and labor costs of backyard builders were so low that for a decade it was almost impossible for full scale manufacturers to compete. Tom Wilson, who started High Performance Products (Later Hyperform), the nation's first major kayak manufacturer, obtained U.S. rights to Toni Prijon and Klaus Lettman's designs. Unfortunately, these were the same boats that club paddlers were pulling molds from! Frequently the newest designs came out of the backyard shops before Wilson could gear up to produce them at his plant in Boston. Needless to say, this frustrated and angered him.

"Copying" eventually became a major issue, but despite much jawboning, few home-builders were deterred. Legally you can make pretty much whatever you want for yourself, as long as you don't try to resell it. Back-yard



boatbuilders, like folks who copy the latest designer fashions, also made minor modifications to the copied boats prior to molding to foil litigation. The idea of suing hundreds of widely-dispersed, influential paddler/builders who were making kayaks, would have been pretty difficult for any manufacturer. After Hyperform stopped making kayaks, Wilson left to start Phoenix Products. He was a major player in the paddlesport industry until the roto-molders at Perception and Hydra overwhelmed him. He now produces "poke boats," lightweight, specialized kiwi-style kayaks for hunters and fishermen.

The first roto-molded kayak was the Hollowform River Chaser, made by a west coast roto-molder, in the late 70s. The designer was whitewater pioneer Tom Johnson, who incidentally also built the first neoprene sprayskirt. But this did not spell the end of the backyard builder! Although the "River Chaser" design was pretty good for its day, roto-molded plastic could not compete with fiberglass for performance. "Plastic keeps turkeys fresh longer" was the retort of many paddlers, who would not tolerate the sloppy handling. And, although the shell was very tough and cheap (\$125 introductory price), the outfitting was truly awful. Most people simply ripped everything out and started over. Some people got awfully good at doing this!

Soon after the River Chaser came onto the market, Tom Daniels, an enterprising KCCNY paddler and long-time AW activist, ordered a tractor trailer load of hulls. He hired a foam fabricator to cut walls; and a fiberglass shop to make seats. The newly-designed Yakima footbraces were ordered and eventually the makings of over 100+ boats were piled in his backyard. The lucky paddlers who signed onto the program filed through like military recruits, picking up the components. Once assembled, the biggest problem on the river was telling which yellow river chaser was yours after lunch!

A few years later the Perception Quest arrived. It was the first boat to come off the shelf in paddleable condition. The next year

Bill Masters made the daring decision to close his fiberglass shop and concentrate totally on rotomolding. Many others followed. Rotomolded boats are much tougher than fiberglass ones and buying one is a lot easier than building. There are dozens of excellent U.S. designs on the market now and paddlers seem to have plenty of money and no time. The toughness of these plastic shells has allowed boaters to attempt rivers and do tricks that would pulverize a fiberglass craft. The home-building network slowly fell apart. Today only a few people outside of the industry remember how it was done.

I'm one of them. I'd love to buy a boat I can use off the rack, but a C-1 paddler, 6'5", 245 pound, nobody's making anything. On the east coast in the 70s, C-boaters outnumbered kayakers 10 to 1; now they're an endangered species. I'm too big to convert a kayak to a C-boat and the few existing C-1 designs are too small. Modern race boats are really not suited for general river running and they're hideously uncomfortable. The reality is that nobody's likely to make what I want soon. I used to pay a custom builder, but most of the small custom fabricators now work for the big rotomolders. I have to build or do without. This past winter I planned to work with Bart Jackson, an old paddling and building buddy. We would make two Hahn C-1s, one for each of us.

The Hahn C-1 was made for the 1972 Munich Olympics and was considered pretty hot and sporty back then. I got my first one in the spring of '72, switching from a John Berry "Modified Czech," which was 10 cm wider and considerably higher volume. Like most boats of that era, its volume is huge. But it's quick, stable, roomy inside, and carries my weight well. Bart, myself, Ed Gertler and a few other dinosaurs still paddle them.

John Sweet obtained permission from Paul Hahn, the designer, to produce his molds. The boat was widely made throughout the east coast, and it was the basis for the Perception HD-1 open Royalex playboat and the Warwoman fiberglass C-1. Sweet later added more rocker to the hull to create the "Hahn-Sweet-Hahn." I bought his mold after paddling the latest "hot" roto-molded contraption. I made inserts for the mold to blunt the ends and reduce the hull length to just over 12 feet. The result paddles like a high-performance open C-1 playboat, except you never have to bail!

There are some excellent material suppliers around now, but I miss the regular consultations I used to have with other paddler-builders. Years ago I could talk to a half a dozen people who had used similar materials. I'd heft their boats, discuss layups, and get helpful hints. John Sweet in Mustoe, Virginia still sells materials at good prices and I bought my S-Glass and Kevlar from him, along with some of his custom-woven seam tapes. I'd used his vinylester resin be-

fore, but the stuff smells just awful and the working time isn't nearly as long as I'd like. After reading up on what was available, I bought an excellent epoxy from FiberGlast Developments in Dayton, Ohio. Then I bought mold release, PVA film, protective gloves, and other necessities. There was a bit of sticker shock! Material costs for my home made boat was \$850!

I set up shop in an old farm building that I used for storage when I ran Wildwater Designs. I bought kerosene for the heaters and called Bart. We waxed the molds, placed the inserts, and coated the whole thing with PVA, a second layer of mold release. Then we cut the fiberglass and Kevlar cloth. John Sweet sold me his patterns with the mold, and that helped a lot. So did a 5'x12' cutting table left over from Wildwater Designs. Still, it was slow work. Kevlar is very tough and hard to cut, and we had to stop often to sharpen the scissors. Fiberglass dulls scissors quickly, but is easy to cut. We kept a trashy pair of shears handy for that. Preparation took about four hours.

Laying up the deck or hull is a long, messy process. We changed into old clothes and put on protective gloves. I mixed the epoxy using a recently purchased digital scale, then stirred each batch for one minute. You coat the mold with resin, lay down a layer of cloth, then smooth the cloth into the mold. Then you repeat the process on all six hull layers and five deck layers. Working out air bubbles and wrinkles in the cloth is a real hassle, especially at the ends. Some resins have a short working time, and smoke and stink when they start to "kick off." We ordered an epoxy with a long pot life, so that wasn't a problem. The rounded ends of the modified mold were especially difficult to laminate, and since we made the ends ten layers thick this took some time.

This Epoxy needs to cure for 3 days at 70 degrees before removing the boat from the mold. We used to "pop" boats by banging on the outside of the mold with a rubber mallet, a violent process with some real potential for mold damage. I popped our boats using some recently-purchased plastic wedges. Very slick!



Then we trimmed the "parts" and prepared the deck and hull for seaming using another new tool, a grinder. This was a lot faster than using my old tools: a hacksaw and a piece of sandpaper on-a-block. The seaming process is especially nasty; you have to push strips of fiberglass and Kevlar down the seam and get it to lay down along the inside of the boat. This involves sticking your head inside, too, working in a very tight, bad-smelling place, with a long stick. Get some resin in you hair

and you have a permanent spiky hairdo!

Now for the remaining steps. First, prep, apply, and smooth the outside seams. Then pour the ends one by one, drill, and attach the grab loop. Make the cockpit rim, molding over a length of vinyl tubing. Trim and smooth the cockpit rim with the grinder. Cut and install the foam walls and seat. Install thigh straps and knee pads. Now you're ready to paddle. Whew!

Strange as it seems, I enjoyed the process.

It gives me a lot of satisfaction to make what I paddle and paddle what I make. While I miss the self-reliant era of the home-builder, I know that nowadays a lot of the energy we used to expend making equipment is now spent paddling. I'm sure that a lack of manufactured boats kept the sport small and obscure for years. Now the vitality of the paddlesport industry, lead by some of those old-time homebuilders, continues to advance.

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Creating intricate patterns on the flow-
ing tapestry

It is the dance of Life,
Crests of serenity,
Holes of wild abandon

We become part of the energy,
vibrating to the pulse,
we see a Line of meaning,
tasting the cool consequences,
We inhale the liquid beauty

An instant of decision,
A picture of promise,
Time stopped.
A world beyond understanding,
An Earth needing no translation,

Shattering Explosions of Lightning
and
Peace

Together,
Separate,
Unbreakable
A moment in time,
An eternity in Love

The promise of an awakening dream,
Endlessly beginning,
One of the winds that fills our souls,
The river is our home

By Joel Atyas
Nashville, Tennessee



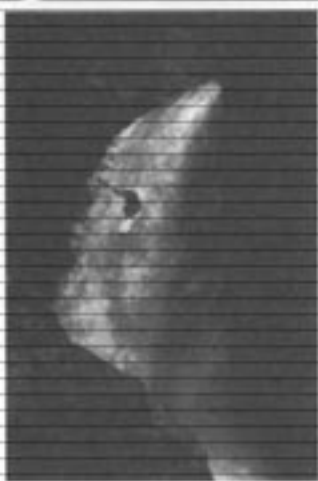
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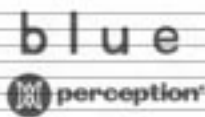
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Briefs

1999 Wolf River Youth Paddling Camp

By Charles Fisk
Photos by Bob Obst



Instructor Simon Twigger

Would you like your kids to become real topnotch paddlers but don't know how to go about it? If you're like most parents your paddling skills are self-taught, and are a mixture of correct and incorrect techniques that you have accumulated over the years. You're good enough to get down the river or across the lake but hardly of instructor quality. The solution to this problem is to send your child to paddling camp.

The Wolf River Youth Paddling Camp was established nine years ago to get more young people involved in paddling and to improve their skills. The camp was the brainchild of Bob Obst and Colleen Hayes, a husband and wife team that won a silver medal in tandem canoe at the 1989 Nationals. Wolf River Paddling Club, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, runs the camp which is sanctioned by the American Canoe Association and the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team. The camp is held at the Wolf River Refuge, a private nature preserve near Langlade, Wis. There are usually three sessions each summer. The sessions are three to four days in length.

Intended for paddlers age 8-18, the camp accommodates everyone from first-time paddlers to young people training for national and world competition. Beginning paddlers start their training on area lakes and progress onto moving water stretches of the Wolf River. Intermediate and advanced paddlers train on rapids and slalom gates on the river. Instruction is provided for kayaks, C-1 and C-2, and open canoes. The camp can provide boats and equipment for those paddlers who don't have their own.

The Wolf River and the surrounding area provide a beautiful environment. The Wolf River has stretches ranging from moving water with no rapids (perfect for beginners) to Class IV whitewater, the ultimate challenge for the advanced paddlers.

Most sessions feature an ACA certified instructor for every three paddlers and some sessions have had one instructor for every two students. This allows the instructors to fine-tune their teaching to the skill levels of the paddlers. Past instructors have included world champion Kent Ford, Junior National Champion Megan Stalheim, and Olympic Gold Medalist Joe Jacobi. Safety is a foremost consideration. Every paddling group includes adult safety boaters who assist with capsized boaters and their equipment.

The kids get more from the camp than just paddling instruction. They camp in a beautiful pine woods above the river, enjoy sing-alongs and storytelling around the campfire at night, and make lifelong friends. Parents are encouraged to attend with their kids. The parents help as volunteers driving shuttles, paddling safety boats, and helping in the kitchen with meal preparation. Interested paddlers are urged to get your registration in early since camps are limited to low numbers, usually 20, and fill up quickly. For registration information contact Wolf River Paddling Club, Inc., 606 Eugenia Ave., Madison, WI 53705-3405; 6081233-6728 evenings; <WRPCINC@aol.com>



Camps for youth paddlers:

Kayaks and decked canoe instruction (strokes, eddy turns, ferries, surfing, Eskimo rolling.)

July 2-4

Beginner to Advanced

Cost: \$160"

July 16-18

Beginner to Intermediate

Cost: \$160"

July 30-Aug 1

Intermediate to Advanced

Cost: \$160"

Canoe and kayak adventures for youth paddlers and adults ages 13 and up:

April 29-30 and May 1-2, exploring Northern WI and UP of MI Whitewater. Advanced only, spend your evenings enjoying the area's finest food and accommodations, days exploring whitewater rivers. Cost: To be determined: limit 10.

WRPC ACA Instructor Development Workshops:

Sept. 11-12 ACA instructor methods update, development, or certification exam for canoeists from flatwater to whitewater levels. Cost: Methods update-\$200*—Instructor certification exam-\$120*

Sept. 17-19 ACA instructor camp for kayakers. Costs same.

"Wolf River Paddling Club members receive a 20% discount on all fees and may use WRPC equipment at no charge.

AWA Home River Volunteers Named To Provide Info, Monitor Access and Safety

By Chris Koll, AW Board of Directors

During the course of a typical paddling season, I field hundreds of phone calls and e-mail postings regarding water levels, release schedules, paddling conditions and requesting general advice about the Moose, Beaver, and Black Rivers. In addition, I provide informal "on-river" advice to dozens of paddlers who recognize me and ask for guidance while on the water. I'm not complaining. I figure local boaters have an obligation to promote the sport by sharing information such as water levels, river conditions, release schedules, and shuttle details for whitewater rivers of which they possess a genuine knowledge. And because local boaters have significant experience on their home rivers under a variety of conditions, they are best suited to provide awareness of potential safety hazards to paddlers who are visiting the river for the first time. That started me thinking: why can't AW provide a similar service for paddlers for a variety of commonly run New York rivers? Or for that matter...rivers across the country?

The result is AW's Home River Volunteers program. AW has recruited a network of volunteers to serve as Home River Volunteers in New York state. Each volunteer is intimately familiar with one or more particular whitewater runs in the state and has agreed to share their expertise with the paddling community.

The New York program will serve as a

model for networks to be established across the country by AW in the future. So-how does the Home River system work? A list of New York's commonly utilized whitewater runs along with their associated Home River Volunteers will be publicized on the AW web site (www.awa.org) and in American Whitewater. Boaters seeking information regarding the rivers can contact the Volunteers over the phone or via e-mail. Volunteers can generally provide the following information:

- *what are appropriate flow levels?
- *how difficulty is effected by different water levels?
- *what is the river currently doing and what levels will exist in the immediate future?
- *if there is a release schedule — what dates are the releases?
- *what are local weather conditions and how will they effect boating?
- *what are general use patterns — will there be people on the water?
- *how does a boater find take-out and put-ins?
- *the existence of particular difficulties or hazards.

In addition to providing information regarding their Home River, Volunteers are encouraged to act as gracious hosts and to extend common courtesies to visiting paddlers they might encounter while on the water. If group size allows, Volunteers are

encouraged to allow visitors to accompany their party or share a shuttle. Volunteers should also be willing to provide commonly known information such as commonly used portage and/or scouting routes and known potential hazards.

However, under no circumstances are Volunteers obligated to leading paddlers down a river, providing shuttle service, offering advice on how to negotiate a rapid, or judging whether the river is appropriate for a paddler's ability. Finally, Volunteers will serve as a conduit of information back to the American Whitewater staff. Any access or conservation issue that arises on a home river can be reported to the AW access or conservation directors. And finally, in the event that a serious accident occurs on a home river, the Volunteer should investigate circumstances surrounding the event to the best of their ability and report all information to the American Whitewater safety committee.

Volunteers should be available under normal circumstances to provide information to the paddling public. That means the Volunteer should be willing to accept phone calls or e-messages between the hours of 7–10pm and provide prompt responses to e-messages. For more information regarding the AW Home Rivers Program, contact Chris Koll at (315) 652-8397 or cko111234@aol.com.

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Beaver River Releases Announced

The 1999 Beaver River release schedule will produce optimal paddling conditions on three sections of New York's Beaver River during the first three weekends of September. The releases are a product of negotiations by American Whitewater with the Niagara Mohawk Power Company that resulted in a series of 11 whitewater releases spread over three challenging sections of Beaver River whitewater. The sections are dry except for release days when Niagara Mohawk allows water to spill back into the natural river bed creating whitewater runs ranging from Class III to Class V.

The runs are typically short—varying in length from one to four miles; and on most release days water is scheduled on two different parts of the river. Boaters can easily paddle one section of the Beaver in the morning and then catch a second section in the afternoon.

Morning releases are scheduled from 10am–2:00pm while afternoon runs are slated for ~~12:30pm–4:30pm~~. However, releases are gradually ramped up and down so that adequate paddling conditions can be found for an additional hour before and after the scheduled release period.

The whitewater sections include the Taylorville run—a 1.5 mile stretch that features six Class III–IV drops. While some of the drops appear intimidating—particularly a steep 30-foot slide—the rapids are fairly straight forward and are appropriate for strong intermediate paddlers looking for an introduction to steep creeking.

The Moshier section is the jewel of the river—a four-mile run that includes two runnable waterfalls, a number of easy Class III rapids, and concludes with a long, technical Class V rapid composed of four discernable drops. The section is appropriate for experts or strong intermediates with judicious scouting and/or portaging.

The Eagle section is short and demanding. Only a mile in length, the run starts off with four Class V drops where the river drops the equivalent of 475/fpm. Eagle is a demanding expert run.

The 1999 release schedule is as follows:

- Saturday, September 4:
Taylorville (am); Eagle (pm).
- Sunday, September 5:
Moshier (am); Eagle (pm).
- Monday, September 6:
Taylorville (am only).
- Saturday, September 11:
Taylorville (am only).
- Sunday, September 12:
Eagle (am only).
- Saturday, September 18:
Taylorville (am); Eagle (pm).
- Sunday, September 19:
Taylorville (am); Eagle (pm).

The Beaver River originates from Stillwater Reservoir in the western section of the Adirondack Park northeast of the village of Lowville. The area is undeveloped and camping is available throughout the area.

Questions regarding the Beaver can be directed to Chris Koll at cko111234@aol.com or by calling (315) 652-8397.

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Official Trip Report of the Yarlung Tsangpo Expedition

By Tom McEwan

On October 5, 1998 four American kayakers launched boats onto the Yarlung Tsangpo River in East Tibet, at the town of Pei. The river was medium-brown, flowing swiftly and about 1/3 mile wide. Considering high water marks left recently on the banks, the river had crested about ten days before. Now it was estimated to be at a medium-high level, 10–20 feet lower on the banks. Over the next few weeks, water levels continued to drop 2–4" daily. Considering the level, the team expected to travel far less than the original plan of 140 miles.

The river team considered the stretch from Pei to Gyala, about 18 miles, a warm-up before entering the heart of the gorge. From topographical information the gradient was not judged to be as steep above Gyala as would be encountered below. A well-traveled trail following the river allowed the support team of Harry and Doris Wetherbee and videographer, Paulo Castillo, to walk to Gyala, and provide resupply.

During this part of the expedition the four paddlers, Jamie McEwan, Roger Zbel, Doug Gordon, and Tom McEwan were able to assess the "Himalayan" magnitude of river and terrain, and to develop appropriate methods. Paddling and carrying, usually avoiding the main flow, and scouting far ahead, they took four days to arrive at Gyala. Jamie paddled for only two, because on the second day, preparing to launch, he slipped off a rock along the edge of a large rapid. His sprayskirt was not fully attached allowing his boat to fill with water and he was forced to swim. While he easily attained an eddy, his boat and all his equipment disappeared downstream. From that point he was forced to hike to Gyala. Later, his boat and all his equipment would be found and returned to Gyala by Tibetan hunters and pilgrims.

Leaving Gyala the four kayakers, expecting to spend significant time on foot scouting the river, carried 15 days of food. Their plan was to meet up with the support team of Wick Walker and Dave Phillips near Rainbow Falls, about 26 miles from Gyala. The latter were hiking up the gorge with porters and supplies for the Expedition's next segment.

On October 16, at about 11 am. Doug Gordon was swept upside down into the main current while attempting a run along the left bank. (Described in detail in section titled "October 16, 1998.")

The search for Doug began immediately. Tom and Roger raced over rocks down the



Doug Gordon. Photo by Jamie McEwan

shore, while Jamie unloaded his boat, carried the stretches of difficult rapids, and paddled down the river. The next four days were devoted to moving downstream and scanning the shores for any sign of Doug or his equipment. Wick and Dave (support-team), alerted by satellite phone, reached the river and began a search downstream. On October 20, 8.5 miles below the accident site, the two groups met and the search was called off. Doug was presumed dead. All local and national authorities, as well as families concerned, were notified of the accident.

At this point, team members made the decision to discontinue the expedition and to return home by the most direct route. There were still seven days of hiking and three days driving from Lhasa. A small ceremony was held along the river, with the local Tibetan porters and the Americans participating. Both Tibetan and American songs were sung. A square stone with Doug's name written on it was cast into the river according to local custom.

The next day while all were preparing to leave, the porters, hoping to bargain for more money, decided to threaten abandonment of the Americans and their equipment. They packed their bags and marched out of camp, only to return in a couple of hours when their maneuver did not seem to be working. The Expedition arrived back in Lhasa Nov. 3.

The river team traveled a total of 35 miles down the Tsangpo (out of the 140 mile gorge originally intended), passing between the 25,000 and 23,000 foot peaks of Namcha Barwa and Galiperi respectively. New methods of long range scouting were developed to prevent the team's being trapped into a position of no escape. This allowed the team to make the progress that it did. The support team was able to meet up with the river team deep within the gorge after journeying over some of the most extreme Himalayan terrain.

The expedition members deeply regret the death of loyal friend and team mate, Doug Gordon.

Account of the Fatal Accident

October 16, 1998

By James McEwan

We spent the morning of October 16 slowly picking our way, paddling and portaging by turns, down the left side of the river. At about 11:00 we came to a section of rapid just above a clearly unrunnable section. There were several possibilities: three chutes that all led to the same second drop; or a single eight foot drop to the right of these (and so close to the main flow of the river). A large rock divided the relatively slow current that came off the various chutes on its right side the current flowed out into the main river. Running the larger, most river right, of these drops would put you into the main current, headed right. There the river flowed as down a ramp, exploding below us into a series of outsized waves and holes.

After about a half-hour discussion and examination, Doug Gordon declared that he would run a small chute with barely enough water to scrape over the rocks, and thence over the second drop. There was a considerable pulse, or surf, coming off the main rapid; therefore, choosing this chute would require coming down to an eddy just upstream and waiting for a surge to carry him through between the rocks.

Roger had already declared his intention to portage. I was undecided—as often, I was waiting for someone else to go first to see how it seemed. Tom had voiced no opinion.

Roger and I stood on the rocks, to one side and slightly upstream of the main drop. Tom worked his way to a rock downstream of the drop.

But instead of paddling down close to the chutes in order to watch the surge, Doug warmed up upstream. "I think he has his eye on the big drop," said Roger.

This seemed unlikely to me. Although Doug was noticeably the most daring, most skilled, and the acknowledged drop-probe of the four of us, he was definitely aware of the risks. That morning he seemed, if anything,

particularly cautious, having at one point commented that he had already made three minor bobbles, so although an "out and back" move,

venturing into the current and then ducking back into the eddy behind a large rock, looked easy; he would instead hug the shore. "And the consequences..." he had added, pointing to a large hole downstream.

I had also heard Doug say, twice, that the problem with the "big drop" route was that if you flipped or something happened to you in the hole at the bottom, you would be carried out into the main current. I did not know that subsequently, as Tom and Doug had passed each other, Doug had remarked that the thing he

liked about the single drop was that the approach was more straightforward. I imagine that, looking at the chutes from a slightly different angle, he decided that a fast charge over the larger drop would be preferable to waiting for the irregular surge of the slot he had at first chosen.

Doug came down with good speed, angling left with a right-hand stroke as he approached the brink.

But he did not succeed in "boofing" into the eddy; instead his bow plunged deeply and he was stopped in the hole. He surfed, upright, on the

bubble for two seconds, meanwhile being "typewritten" toward river right. When he reached the right-hand side of the hole, the falling water pined up on his stern, and he was back-ended. He was then surfed, being bounced around in the hole, for a total of

about ten additional seconds. Once, he rolled most of the way up, but was flipped back over again. Then his boat worked free of the hole.

Here was Doug's "fall-back" time—I am sure that he would not have been willing to run the drop if he had not felt that, if things went badly, he could still roll up and paddle to safety. Moving slowly, his boat floated downstream and toward river right. After a moment Doug attempted to roll. His head came up, but the boat did not follow. Passing to the right of the large rock, the boat slowly picked up speed as it began to feel the pull of the main current. Doug tried to roll again—I was sure he'd come up. There was still time for him to paddle into the eddy behind the rock, or failing that, behind a pour-over below. Again, his head came up, but not the boat; it was a slow, forced roll, with no snap.

This would have been hard to understand, except that we had seen this happen once before, in the very first rapid we had run on the river, where Doug had been tumbled for fifteen or twenty seconds in what had seemed

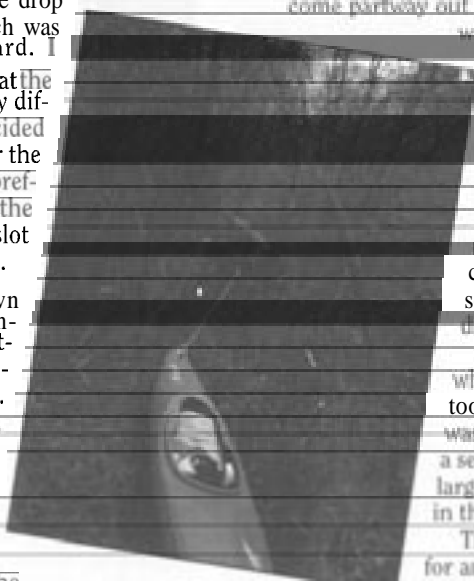
a "friendly" wave. Washing free, he missed several roll attempts before coming up; his roll then had this same slow, labored look. Doug had explained afterward that he had come partway out of his boat. The boat

was somewhat large for him, he said, and he had not been prepared for the violence of the wave hole; next time he would grip more tightly. And indeed, between these two incidents, he had rolled several times without difficulty.

By his third attempt, which also failed, it was too late; the boat was washing into the first of a series of five or six very large crashing wave/holes in the main current.

The boat disappeared for an appreciable time for the first of these holes, then reappeared momentarily before washing into the second. Roger saw it briefly again as it tumbled into the next of the holes. He neither saw Doug in the boat, nor separate from it.

Then the boat disappeared for the final time.





Friends Remember Doug Cordon

Excerpts from the Memorial Service

[Excerpted from letters and comments made at this Memorial Service]

Ken Stone

Doug was a mainstay of the U.S. Whitewater team from 1981 until 1987. I got to know Doug best—in fact, we all, in my opinion, became closest as friends—in the spring of 1984 when I was a U.S. Team Coach during a nine week European racing tour. The team stayed in one place a great deal that summer and often ate as a group. We laughed and joked continuously, discussing every topic under the sun. We wagered on which Canadian C-1 would flip in the "washing machine" in Augsburg. We irreverently threw worthless money out the window and laughed at the ridiculous inflation.

It was during this summer that Doug achieved one of his personal goals when he won a bronze medal at a major European race at Merano. He undoubtedly won the party—very uncharacteristic of him—as Bruce and some of the other bad guys fed Doug shots of Brancamenta, the most hideous-tasting mint liqueur ever known to man....

When I think of Doug's wife Connie and her children, sometimes I get very angry with Doug. Kayak racing is not a dangerous

sport, but Doug has this insatiable desire to be on the edge. He made choices to race—which put his intellectual life on hold; which put his career life on hold; which put his family life on hold—because he had a quest—a burning desire to have that one run "in the zone." When I am angry with him I think that, once he had a family that was no longer on hold, he should no longer have taken chances on dangerous rivers. But then I think river-running, for Doug, must have been the ultimate race.

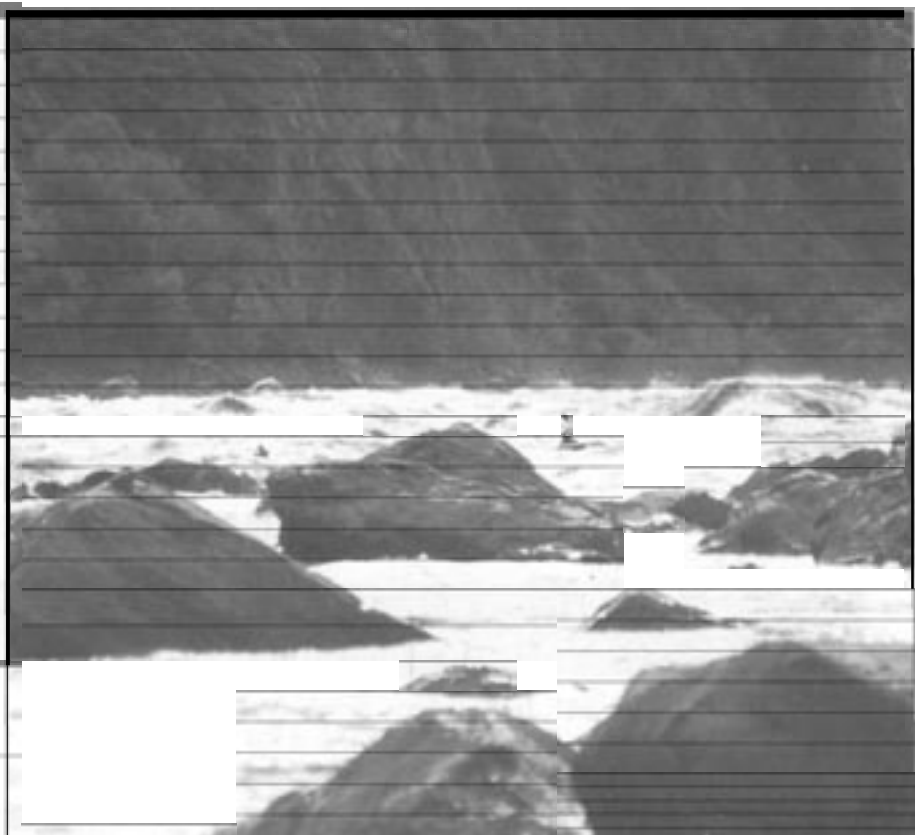
I have heard many a boater come home from a hairy river-running experience and half-jokingly say, "I talked to God today." Perhaps that is not simple hyperbole. And perhaps that is what Albert Einstein meant when asked if he believed in God. He said that God was in all things that were held sacred and even inspirational by man—from the simplest everyday task to the truly holy. Perhaps the beauty of that one fast and clean run, better than anyone could imagine, was—and is—the racer's connection to God. Perhaps Doug's God drew him to those places where his experience on the river felt almost holy. And perhaps this is where he finally met his God and will be with him for all eternity. I thought about this, and him, more than you can imagine—too much, in fact—and I certainly have no answers.

I do know this: Doug is one of my heroes. I admire him for his achievements, for his wonderful mind, for the quality of his character, and for his mentoring of others.

Tom McEwan

When you go on an expedition there's quite a bit of challenge and stress involved. And it doesn't always bring out the best in people. That's always a concern—the quality of people that you're out there with. But I always had a sound, sound feeling about being out there with Doug. The four of us on the Tsangpo had this sense of familiarity with one another and confidence in one another—confidence in the judgment each would use, confidence in our built-in ability to put aside personal irritations that can crop up in days and weeks of camping out together.

Driving into Tibet, we had many long discussions about what should be our method of operation: how we would be able to handle the formidable challenges of enormous landscapes and a very difficult unrun river. Doug was probably the most rational of all of us. His voice was a very strong influence, prob-



ably the strongest of the four of us, and I always appreciated his input.

On the river Doug was the first among equals. Anyone of the four of us could have been the leader of the trip. Not only were we equal in terms of being leaders but I felt that we also understood what leadership was about; we all knew that it was important also to be able to follow. Doug was a great follower as well as a leader. If a decision was made that he didn't quite agree with, he was still there, one hundred percent. Sometimes we decided to carry things that he may have wanted to run, but he was there one hundred percent, helping us carry gear, hauling boats up cliffs, and working our way around difficult places. I felt that it was also important that those who did carry, myself oftentimes, were there to provide safety and help to those who decided to run rapids.

After the accident, our experience changed dramatically. Before we had marveled at the snowcapped mountains that would appear suddenly through the clouds, 25,000 feet high, beautiful vistas, glaciers that came down to the water. Around every turn it was magnificent. Afterwards, the scenery didn't change—it was just as magnificent—but it was empty. We had to continue for another four days to get out, paddling and hiking down the river, and all of the magnificent scenery and beauty of this landscape was no longer there for us. And I almost expected—I almost felt that Doug would appear from behind a rock any moment and say "Where you guys been? I've been waiting for you." But it wasn't to be.

► Bill Endicott

I first became aware of Doug in 1981 when he made the U.S. team in a bit of a surprise. In those days to make the team you had to win one of four races, and Doug won the fourth. Some people thought it was a fluke. But Doug did it again in 1983, 1985, and 1987. Later I discovered that Doug had had a speaking role in the classic whitewater film, *Fast and Clean*. There he was explaining the technical difference between a fast run with penalties versus a slow but clean run. He was always like that, a technical kind of guy, always questioning and explaining things.

I particularly remember one time when a bunch of us were debating the fastest way to do a river ferry. Doug and Chris Doughty ended the discussion by producing a mathematical formula showing that it was better to ferry fast and low rather than high and slow.

And now he's gone, and I need an explanation for that. Doug would have been quick to provide one. I am slower. But after much thought I realized that he is, like all of you listening to this, a personification of the adventuresome spirit that is necessary to accomplish things in this world.

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▶ E.J. McCarthy

I was lucky enough to go out to Salt Lake this spring, and hang out with Connie and Doug and their sons, Tyler and Bryce. Then we went out and met Jamie and a couple of other fellows from Salt Lake to do some kayaking in northern California.

One of my favorite things about hanging out with Doug started when I was just a beginner. I first met Doug about this time of year, in 1984. I'd just started kayaking and Doug was one of my heroes. I would try to keep up with him in the workouts—and couldn't. Gradually I got better and eventually I could actually keep up. But it started when I was a beginner: Doug would say, "O.K., Eej, here's the move:..."

It would usually be at the end of the day, as the workout was wrapping up, and he'd describe a move to me: "Upstream over here, downstream over there, around that rock, above this gate, down that gate." It was a great game, I loved it. Fourteen years later in California it was just as much fun. Doug would pull out above a rapid that maybe wasn't particularly difficult, but good fun all the same, and you could see some potential in there to do something a little more challenging, a little bit off the beaten path, a little bit more difficult. And he'd say, "O.K., Eej, here's the move:..." and he would do it, just like old times.

I'm going to miss that about the old Kayak God of New England.

▶ Landis Arnold

I first got to know Doug the summer after my freshman year, out in Colorado, where I'm from. The water was really high that year. One day we were camping out and this group from Aspen asked to run the river with us. We said sure. We put on and the water was amazing; it was flying. Doug went out in front and I took up the tail of the group. There were four people between us. And, it was weird, but it was like we were connected, somehow, through them, like a

school of ducks. I still think today of just being out there—it was really a good place to be—and to this day that was one of the most incredible experiences...

I had never met a boater who was as solid as Doug; he was just where he wanted to be, all the time. He trained and was going for the team, but he'd also go out and run the rivers, which is remarkable.

He had as long a racing career as I can remember anyone having, at an extremely high level. But after he stopped racing, he kept kayaking. There's that poster that came out of a trip to Mexico, a picture for all times: Doug's flying out of the water... it's beautiful. That was ten years ago. Ten years, and Doug never stopped exploring.



His purpose was to go to the wildest places. He wasn't doing it to be famous, or to be the one that everyone would look up to—many paddlers haven't heard of him—but I think he was seeking out the most true form of exploration that there is.

Doug was part of the only American team I know of to run the Homothko, an extreme river in Canada. And running the Tsangpo is like, like going to Mars. To me, he is as big a hero as the astronauts.

Jamie McEwan

Doug was my friend; and Doug had all the virtues that make someone a good friend. He was strong enough to be sensitive to other people and to care about them. He was also the most rational person that I have known. Not, I hasten to say, "coldly rational,"—no, he was *warmly* rational. Too rational to ever think that his mind should suppress his emotions or that he had to deny what he was feeling. He had fire—he had desire, he had—I don't know how else to put it—he had a "hot" approach to life.

One time, on the Tsangpo, just the two of

us spent hours on one scouting mission, working our way along this steep dirt and gravel bank. At one point we were clinging onto these low bushes and Doug turned to me and said, "You know, one thing that makes all this portaging and hiking worthwhile, is just the great smell of these herbs." And I kind of looked at him—you know, until then I hadn't noticed any smell at all. Which was surprising because there was indeed a very strong smell coming off of them.

To me that says a lot about Doug: that while I was just hot and sweaty and bummed out, he was noticing, "Wow, what a great smell." He was very analytical, but he didn't just think his way down the river, he was also experiencing it more fully than most people ever do.

And that's why it's so hard for me, and I think for everyone, to realize that he's not here—he's gone. Because he was more alive, more awake to what was around him; both thinking more about what was around him, and feeling more, all at the same time. That was why he was really a special person and why, when I think of him, I'll hold him not just as a memory, but as a kind of ideal.

Barbara Kingsborough

Once at a meeting of the H.A.C.K.S., Doug was the president of the club, and he needed someone to run the Covered Bridge race. "Do I hear any volunteers?" The room, of course, was completely silent. No one wants to run a race. Then I raised my hand. And Doug broke out into this giant grin and got everybody to give me a round of applause. He was so appreciative.

I had to do a mailing for the race, and believe it or not, I spent \$300 to do a mailing. And we had never spent a dime, really, on a race before—not that much, anyway. And I thought, "Oh, I've got to talk to the president of the club" and "He'll be so aggravated." Of course he wasn't: he said everything's fine, here's the check, you're doing a good job.

The other memory I want to share is from the end of the Rattlesnake Race. Abby Kingman and I were the only two C-1 dubs. I never ever made all the gates in the race—I'd always miss one here or there—but I finally, actually did get down the course. And sitting right at the finish line, oh-so-happy I made it down the course, I looked across the way. Doug was at the finish table, and he yelled "Yeeeah Barb you made it—great! Yeeeah!!!"

Doug, I just wish you were here with us. I guess he's where he felt he had to be.

Lamar Sims

I've known Doug since 1975. I went to Law School at Harvard when Doug was an undergrad. One day I walked into this little kayaking store—long since gone—right off

the Square. Doug had put up a sign looking for someone to paddle with. And I, I made the call. And that started the most exciting three years of my life. It had nothing to do with Law School.

Many of you have had the experience of having someone who you travel with, you paddle with, you talk to. There are all kinds of memories, all kinds of little things. You become part of one another.

We both started racing while we were at Harvard. We trained on the Charles River. We called it "the river Chuck." We would paddle up-Chuck and down-Chuck. You can't string gates on the Charles, so we got these sixteen-foot dowels and stuck them in the mud. So sneaking became a problem.

I remember one time...Ken talked about it, "meeting" our God. Some of you might remember Vladimir Vonja, who had some kind of late model 1960s car, with steering that pulled in one direction and brakes that pulled in the other. Which was *good*, you know, if the driver was watching the road.

But I don't know that I've ever been as scared as the time that Doug and I took a ride to a race with Vladimir. And the race was

okay, but coming back Vladimir was driving, and this involved talking to everybody in the car, which included Doug in the back. And of course he could only *talk* to us while he was looking at us. The only thing that made me feel safe was that Doug was with me.

▶ Mark Clarke

I was lucky enough to get to spend a lot of quality time with Doug. He was a ton of fun. He jumped in and took over a rag-tag bunch of whitewater racers...and helped us when no one was able to help us. He was willing to deal with how stupid we were; how we didn't train, and how we partied too much. And he never put us down for that.

It was an incredible experience to be with him on the river. I always felt safe when Doug was there. Doug wasn't going to let anything happen to me. He was that good—he wasn't going to let it happen. So it was good to be with him: it was a secure feeling.

During his stay here in H.A.C.K.-land, Doug developed two nicknames, neither of which I think he liked. One was "Mr. Business," because of his overpowering linear thought, his ability to just slice through the

crap and develop his ideas and make you feel really stupid without really meaning to. He was also Mr. Business in his boating. Doug was never reckless—I've heard it thrown around over the last couple of weeks that this was some thrill-crazed lunatic, out trying to get himself killed—but this was not Doug. Doug calculated like crazy, everything was weighed with this and that. He just never threw himself into something if he wasn't sure it was going to work.

His other nickname was "Kayak God of New England." He was by far the best kayaker we knew and just a hell of a lot of fun to be with, even when he got mad, which he did at me a lot because he worked for me for a few years. And I know some great Dougisms that will radiate in my mind forever, and I hope everybody else remembers these, because they were so great. One was when he *really* disagreed with what you just said. He'd just go "No, no, no, no, no, no." And every time you knew it was coming. But if he only *slightly* disagreed with you, he'd say "Cleeearly"—this is not the case; "Aaaactually" it was something different! I hope that I'll never forget how that sounded.



David Halpern

The day before my first pool rolling session, I sat in a chair pretending I was upside down and I swept a broom along an imagined break between water and sky. Doug Gordan sat next to me explaining first the mechanics, then the physics and finally, in all likelihood, the chemistry of the kayak roll. I stayed with him through vectors and leverage, momentum, rotation and torque, but when it came to the chemical analysis of water displacement, all I could really understand was H₂O.

Doug was beginning his second year of paddling and so the next afternoon he came to the pool to polish his own roll and help demonstrate the roll for those of us new to the sport. I did hip twists on the side of the pool and then on the bow of his boat. I then told Doug I was ready to try rolling with a paddle and he laughed, not unkindly, but certain that my broom-sweeping practice session the day before was not likely to yield the results I expected. Nonetheless, he got out of his boat and stood next to me to help reorient me when I tried to defy the odds.

Other Friends Pay Tribute

I flipped over, did a ferocious sweep, and popped right up. I was pretty pleased, but it was Doug who was whooping and hollering with enthusiasm. Apparently, I swept so aggressively that the lead blade didn't stop at the usual 90 degrees, but continued for a full 180.

Pushing down, twisting, nearly corkscrewing out of the boat, I somehow came up on the other blade. Doug was laughing so hard he could hardly talk, but when he did his words were not quite the praise I wanted to hear. "You'll never do that again!" he said, and then he described the twisted mechanics of the roll I'd just performed.

He was right, of course. I didn't roll again that evening, and I never managed to duplicate the odd version of my broom-trained sweep that somehow got me up. I was a little discouraged that I had, at best, invented a hideous and useless cousin to the river roll. Doug, on the other hand, remained delighted. My roll had somehow challenged his assumptions about levers and momentum and he was clearly entertained by the prospect of calculating the odds against it.

Doug's ability to marvel at life's unexpected moments and to embrace whatever challenges presented themselves was infectious and invigorating. He never stopped thinking, challenging himself and those around him, encouraging all of us to reach a little further, and enjoy life a little more than

we would otherwise have done. I learned a lot from Doug, about levers, about sportsmanship, about the bond between fun and work, and most of all about the bond between friends...

▶ Bruce Lessels

Doug's death shocked me because I always thought of Doug as being fully involved in life—his own, his family's, and his friends'. It's hard to imagine not being able to pick up the phone and call him for advice, or talk about our respective families, or have a good old friendly argument.

I remember paddling with Doug and the other H.A.C.K.S. at Bulls Bridge in Connecticut. We would scout the first drop—a difficult Class V—psyching ourselves up to run it while Doug rationally weighed the odds in his head, found the line, and entered the river above it. He believed that if you saw the line and knew you could make it, you shouldn't let fear get the better of you. On the other hand, he also realized that if he was having a bad day, he needed to be more conservative than usual. He was someone whose judgment I respected immensely.

When discussing the accident with a friend who hadn't known Doug, he asked me if Doug was tough in big water; if he was the kind of paddler who would get in there and roll when he needed to; if he kept his head in difficult situations. I said I had used Doug as an example of that kind of boater, and that I

thought for this to happen to him, something must have gone wrong with his equipment. It turned out that he probably fell out of his outfitting.

I find myself wanting to defend Doug to paddlers who might think he was foolish for trying such a difficult river in such a remote place. If I had to pick a person who epitomized rationality, it was Doug. I also find myself wanting to defend him against those who say he was irresponsible to undertake such an expedition with a young family at home. Maybe he underestimated the risk, or maybe he just rationalized it away, but I know he wouldn't have undertaken the trip if he had thought there was a significant chance he wouldn't return to the family he loved.

John Steinbeck wrote about his life, "I did not want to surrender fierceness for a small gain in yardage." Doug was fierce about his love for paddling, his pursuit of his career in chemistry, and especially, his devotion to his family. I believe he lived his life well.

Brian Kinkel

In 1969 there was a new kid in class. Doug was different. He spoke Newyawkish, and was probably the first in the class to dress in what became 1970s "chic." Dress zip boots that came just above the ankle, well tailored bellbottoms, shirts with long cuffs and longer

point collars. In a class of self-proclaimed iconoclasts, he fit right in.

Doug didn't hesitate to set his own agenda. I suppose that's why he turned out for freshmen football. Just about the youngest kid in the class, Doug was at that time pretty small, but brave enough to play football. His greatest moment on the team came not during a game, but during practice. Coach Doug Thiel had us doing fumble drills. He'd throw out the ball, and two guys would scramble for it. Whoever got the ball earned a "nice going" or some such praise. I guess that made the knee gashes and dislocated fingers worthwhile.

One time Doug was paired off with Bill Polly for the fumble drill. Coach Thiel threw out the ball. Bill was faster than greased lightning. The ball took a bounce toward Doug, however, and Doug and Bill grabbed it at the same time. Bill twisted and turned and yanked, but Doug held on for dear life, getting tossed around like a feisty fish getting reeled in. The whole team was hollering as this spectacle went on at least a minute — Bill's evident frustration was as funny as Doug's tenacity. Finally Coach Thiel broke it up, and Doug rose triumphant with the knowledge that he was equal to the task. This became a well-established pattern in Doug's wonderful life.

An extraordinarily talented guy — and good friend — Doug will be profoundly missed.

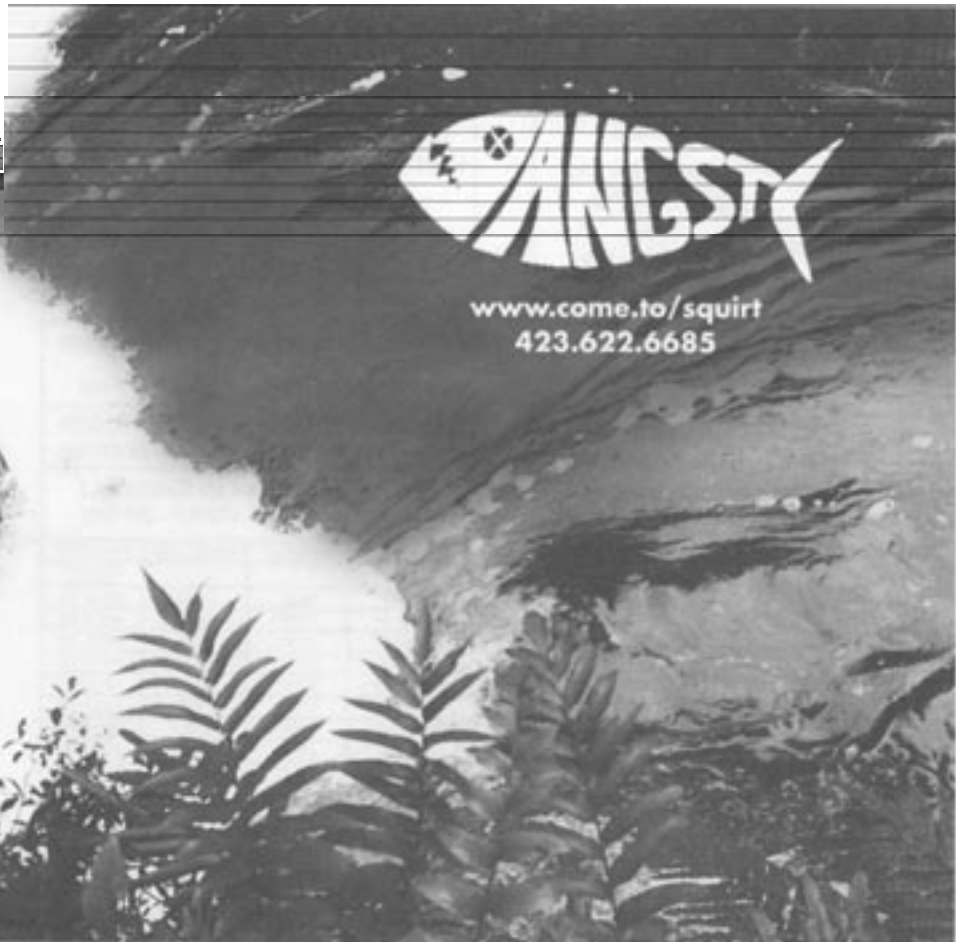
Chris Doughty

I first met Doug Gordon in the winter of 1982–83. He came south to train with a group of us who had decided to make the U.S. team in 1983. We didn't have any idea of how to go about doing this, but Doug apparently did. He had "come from nowhere" to make the team in 1981. That winter it became apparent that Doug was no fluke. He not only worked harder than anyone else, he worked smarter than anyone else. Doug taught me a lot that winter. He taught me how to be a better boater, but more importantly, he taught me to be a better person. He taught me not to listen to the doubters, to waste effort on them, but instead to prove them wrong by doing it again. Doug made the team the first day of the trials that year.

As we trained that winter, I was rapidly improving, thanks to Doug. By the end of the spring I was a threat to make the team, and thus to take up one of the four precious spots. For most competitors it becomes every man for himself as team trials approach and the pressure builds. Doug was different, he never held back advice, never failed to reveal the secrets that only he was smart enough to figure out.

The next year I made the team. Doug and I competed on the team for the next four years. He remained the same, always ready to help to the full limit of his ability. He was the biggest reason for the success I had in kayaking.

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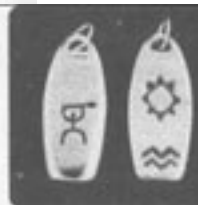
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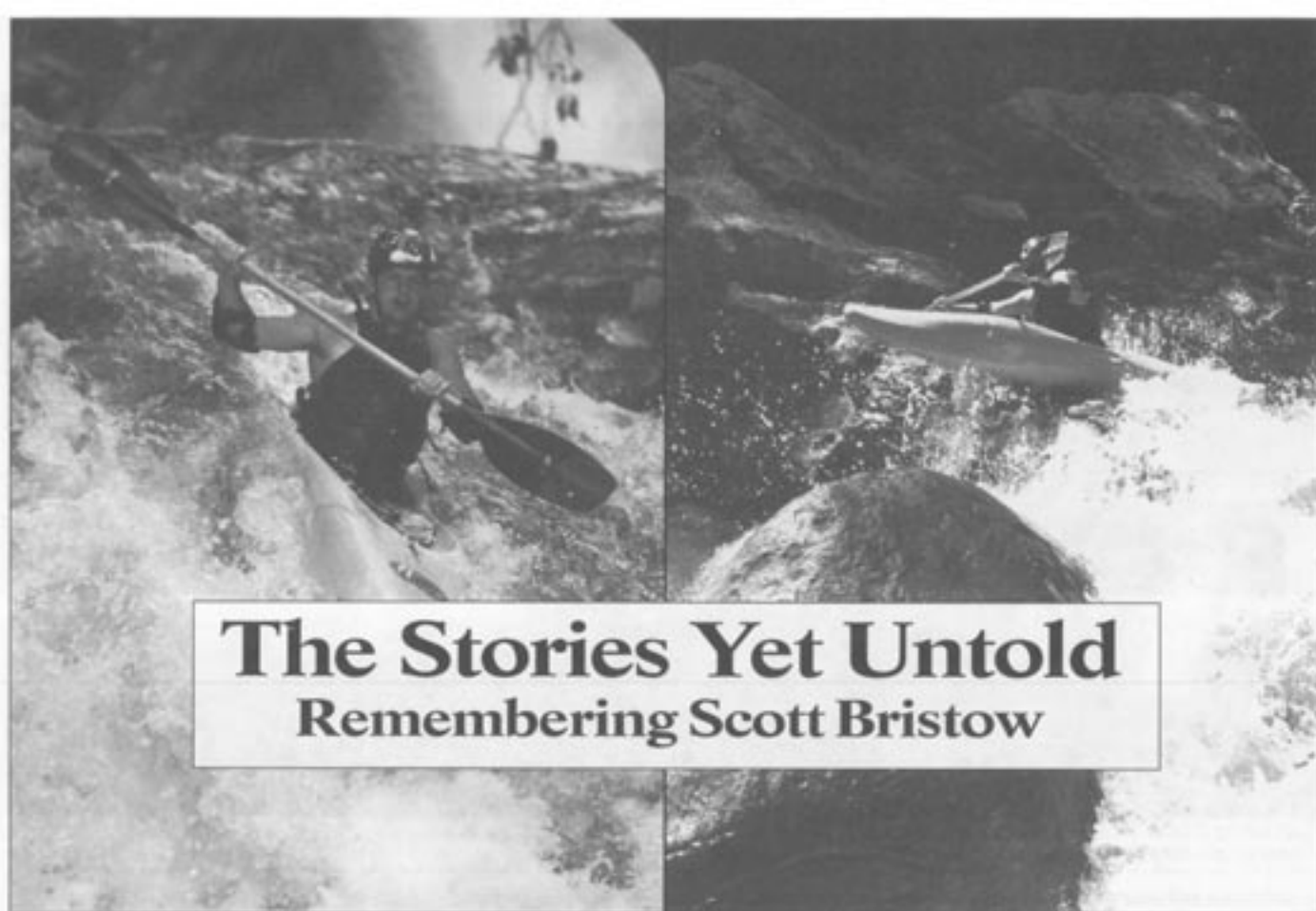
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The Stories Yet Untold Remembering Scott Bristow

Left: Scott at Scream Machine on the Green Narrows in June 1998. Right: Scott at Chief on the Green Narrows in June 1998.
Photos by Julie Keller © Keller Associates Photography

By Sheila Chapelle
Yakmom

Although I only knew Scott Bristow through cyberspace, his life and death touched me deeply. United through our passion for paddling, our love of the outdoors, and our mutual addiction to the Internet newsgroup rec.boats.paddle, we were connoisseurs of each other's paddling tales. His told of hand paddling the Green Narrows at 270%, getting spanked in an open boat in the hole at Nantahala Falls, and running a tandem kayak down the Ocoee. Mine spoke of tamer stuff—moonlight surfing at the Maryland Chute, history lessons from the days of 13 foot boats and "Women in Rubber" or capturing the smile on my seven year old's face on his first solo run of Weaverton Ledges. We both used the newsgroup to quip and banter, to share information, and to encourage other paddlers. Like me, Scott was an RBP regular.

I began many mornings laughing aloud, with a cup of steaming tea at my elbow and one of Scott's tales of carnage on my computer screen. As I retold Scott's adventures at the dinner table my kids roared with laughter.

In anticipation of Scott, Julie Keller and Joe Day's pilgrimage from Georgia to D.C., David Mackintosh organized an RBP dinner. The banter on the newsgroup reflected the excitement of those of us would be meeting in person for the first time. On Friday, David, Scott and Joe ran Great Falls, while Julie shot photos. Saturday's plan was to include another Falls run, playing the Gorge from O-Deck to the Maryland Chute, then culminate

with the visitors joining the D.C. RBP crowd at That's Amore restaurant. Sadly, Scott did not make it to that dinner.

Saturday morning Scott ran Pummel clean, then apparently missed his line on the approach to Z-Turn and ended up sliding stern first into Charlie's Hole. After a series of violent cartwheels, he exited his boat and disappeared, presumably into a rock sieve where his body still rests. Life and Death, Before and After, the line divided by a few heartbeats—in the aftermath of the accident many of our lives were forever changed.

Here is a tribute I posted on RBP shortly after Scott's death.

Scott,

I don't know if they have Internet access where you are, but if they do, I bet your server never crashes. Each time you download the equivalent of r.b.p. it is packed with messages about extraordinary trips and enticing new boats. The spell check on your e-mail program is instantaneous. :-)

At the restaurant that night, after hearing you were lost, I mentally rearranged the rocks at Charlie's Hole—creating a cave under the one now called Scott's Rock. There you sat with a laptop, typing out your trip report, waiting to be found. But I knew it couldn't be that way—because David, Julie and Joe would never have left the river if there was any shred of hope that you were alive. Still, I liked that image more than the one that appeared when I closed my eyes—so

I clung to it through the night.

Sunday morning, Pete, baby Rowan and I journeyed out to the Observation Deck at Great Falls. En route we met Julie and your parents, returning, accompanied by a park ranger. He stepped discreetly aside when our introductions turned to tearful embraces. We knew then that none of our absurd semi-hopeful nighttime dreams had come true. At the platform we were riveted by the picture of desolation before us - David alone on the rock - methodically probing for your body with his kayak paddle..... Joe and Rob standing elsewhere on the island scanning the drop at Horseshoe. Shock and grief hung heavy among the paddlers present.

In sharp contrast to the grim mood, the day unfolded with idyllic weather. A day you would have relished. Sunlight glinted on the water, a cloudless sky stretched overhead, the temperature called for shorts. Oddly for D.C., the flawless weather continued all week. Those who gathered at the Falls to celebrate your life and grieve your death were able to stay outdoors as long as they needed or desired.

In addition to your family and their friends, many from r.b.p. and the paddling community arrived during that week. Some helped with the recovery efforts. Others supported those who loved you. And some came simply to offer their condolences and pay their respects. Together, we tried to understand that which cannot really be grasped.

The tributes to your life, your warmth,



Scott surfing at North Shore waves on the Ocoee River in May 1998
 Photos by Julie Keller Keller Associates Photography

your humor and your generous nature poured in on r.b.p. Testimonials written by close friends who had paddled rivers and laughed around the campfire with you. Or by those who based their choice of hand paddles or boats on your gear reviews. Or by "newbies" whom you encouraged on-line when they popped their first combat roll or made their first run on the Nantahala. Several people wrote of crying in front of their office computer screen when they downloaded r.b.p. on Monday morning, even though they had never met you. The Boy Scouts from your troop posted their remembrances too—boys you mentored, boys who looked up to you for achieving the rank of Eagle.

Scott, there were action oriented tributes too. You would have appreciated that because you enjoyed helping—whether it was to help build a rodeo hole on the Ocoee or pull stranded motorists out of a ditch in a Georgia snowstorm.

In the days after your death, paddlers rescheduled meetings and commitments, then traveled many hours to Great Falls to help look for your body. Equipment was furnished—tandem canoes, climbing harnesses to belay those searching from the rock, two way radios, a yellow telescoping pole for probing. It seemed no matter what the need, no matter how small or large, someone had the equipment, expertise, and time.

Those who probed and belayed needed physical strength. In addition, the emotional stamina spoke volumes. The ability to care and comfort—to juxtapose rejoicing at meeting friends for the first time IRL (in real life) with the tears that were inevitable. In groups or solo, people paddled the Gorge, poking in

every crevice, pushing aside fear—hoping they would find your body. Many gathered around your dad when he was belayed to the water's edge so that he could say goodbye to you in his own way.

In your death, you drew us together, in a new and deeper way that I wish you could have been part of....

Scott, the shell that once housed your personality, your dreams, your spirit, rests now at Great Falls. You never got to paddle down river through Mather Gorge. The scenery there, between the Falls and Anglers, is some of the best we have in the mid-Atlantic. You would have liked it. Many people have described that area in their tributes and I would like to add my voice.

I saw the Falls first when I was four. Clad in canvas sneakers I'd run along the old wooden boardwalks to keep pace with my dad. No signs demanded that one stay on the boardwalk then—so we explored Offut Island.....looking for wildflowers and animal homes and climbing the rocks—even scaling the cliff in front of the Observation Deck.

We ventured out in all seasons, savoring the earthshaking pounding of the flooded Potomac in spring, skipping rounded stones across the quiet pool next to 0-Deck in late summer. Sometimes in winter we'd light a fire on the cobble beach and roast hotdogs for lunch and drink cocoa from a thermos.

We visited Great Falls and hiked the Billy Goat trail at the edge of the Mather Gorge for several years before sighting our first boats—a couple of paddlers in aluminum canoes making their way through what we now call Wet Bottom Chute. Entranced, dad and I rented a canoe at Fletcher's boathouse in the

tidal Potomac and paddled to Key Bridge, thus beginning our career of messing about in boats.

One summer the rains from Hurricane Agnes washed out the pedestrian bridges to the Observation Deck, effectively closing access to the Maryland side of Great Falls. Years passed before I returned to the cobble beach at 0-Deck, paddling a Mirage and married to Pete.

Numerous afternoons, Pete and I paddled up the C&O canal through Widewaters—past the beavers and nesting vultures with their fluffy white young. In the summer, kayaks shouldered, we'd duck through a tunnel of red trumpet creeper in bloom, grabbing handfuls of sweet wineberries to quench our thirst en route to the Sand Beach put-in—a loop off the main Potomac. There, tall gray cliffs hint at the power of the river that carved this ancient gorge.

Scott, you remember how the deep, coarse sand fills your sandals and you have to sit on your boat and rinse your booties before you wiggle into your cockpit.

Pete and I stroked across the quiet pool and then pushed or carried out our boats out to the Potomac. The fast ferry at the outflow of Fishladder sometimes flipped us in early spring. Oh yeah, we'd realize, this is the Potomac—powerful. In the days of wetsuits and wool sweaters, we rarely boated Mather Gorge in the winter. From the Fishladder we paddled and dragged our kayaks up to 0-Deck. Lunching and sunbathing at the cobble beach we pretended that we'd landed on a wild north woods island.

We'd heard rumors that paddlers ran the Falls—but we never saw anyone do it.

After feasting at 0-Deck, on dynamicsurfs,

confidence building rolls and an occasional ender, we'd peel out and turn hard downstream, powering through the waves, plunging through the hole at S-Turn—then hitting the eddy at Rocky, grinning. When the river was running 4'2" and boats were 13 feet long we found the firstwave at Rocky smooth and exhilarating. We'd "park and surf," watching the water run under our boats.....water from the cranberry bogs and beaver ponds of the Allegheny Front. Scott, I heard you backpacked the entire Appalachian Trail from Kathdin to Springer Mountain, I'm sure you would appreciate backpacking in the headwaters of the Potomac.

The move alluded me one day at Rocky. My frustration and disappointment showed, but a friend coached me with words that taught a life lesson. He said, "If you can't get on the firstwavethen ride thesecondand capture the joy that is there." I knew he meant not only waves but also careers, relationships, and dreams for the future. From what I have read of your life, Scott, you were surfing the firstwave much of the time—but when you had to grab the second wave you were still smiling.

Sometimes in December, Pete and I paddled up the Gorge to watch the sunset reflect off the walls. We'd surprise herons fishing in the shallows. And we were silent—there was no need for words. In those times the Gorge was a place for healing. It still is today.

Occasionally the river crested above flood stage. Waves formed and exploded against the walls of the cliffs below the falls. Massive whirlpools formed and disappeared. We watched the river from the Observation Deck. Those who craved a hard-core run paddled. We savored their tales.

Scott, the Saturday before you died, Pete and I brought our one-week old daughter Rowan to the Falls. We wanted her first outing to be someplace very special—and we agreed Great Falls was that place.

Two-week old Rowan began her paddling career, cradled in my arms, in the bow of our canoe at Violette's Lock, a few miles upstream from Great Falls. Friends from r.b.p and the Monocacy Canoe Club joined in celebrating her debut. That same morning you sailed over Pummel—smiling I'm sure, and then moments later took your final strokes Charlie's Hole.

Two paddler's lives. One beginning. One ending. I don't know how these things work, but I like to imagine, that somehow, in some way, you and Rowan had a moment together, when you imparted to her a bit of your passion for life, for wild rivers and wild places and for the tales that go with those times. In the week after your death I know those who came to search and grieve found comfort in cuddling newborn Rowan.

One night several of us waited on the Observation Deck for r.b.p. er Wilko van den Bergh to arrive from the Netherlands. Sun-



Scott at Woodall Shoals on the Chattooga River in June 1998
Photos by Julie Keller Keller Associates Photography



Scott at Raven Chute on the Chattooga River, June 1998.
Photos by Julie Keller Keller Associates Photography



Left to Right: Joe Day, Scott Bristow, and Dave Mackintosh scouting Z turns at the Great Falls of the Potomac on November 27, 1998 (the day before Scott died).

set passed and the Falls glinted, reflecting the nearly full moon. We spoke in hushed voices as the warm air enveloped us and the smell of whitewater rose up strong. A heron fished between Z-Turn and Horseshoe. When Wilko arrived his presence among us confirmed the depth of relationships formed through the internet—for he too had never met you face to face.

Scott, the Potomac, from Great Falls to Anglers is one of my favorite places on the planet—a place I have loved all my life. The Falls in particular provide a spectacular setting for each us to reflect on the impact of your life. Then revived and healed we can venture forth, honoring you by living our own stories, yet untold.

Winter Water

By Sheila Chapelle (yakmom)

Winter water rolls under my bow.
Dark water - reflecting the sky.

Water released from oak and poplar

Of the ancient Appalachians.

Water cycling to the sea.

A reminder in the depths of winter

Spring will come again.

And so I surf on.

Remembering Scott

By Chip Mefford

Scott
Is gone, leaving us to ourselves.

We'll get by until the time comes then those who are left have to deal with it.

It don't think there is such a thing as a life too short,
Only a life unexplored.

Of Scott's sins
-if they need be counted at all-
this is not among them.

Update: Project – Water for the New River Drys

The newly formed grassroots coalition Project: Water For The Drys has been working on improvements for the "Drys" section of the New River.

1. River Takeout: The New River campground was recently sold to the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Their group has been very cooperative in dealing with the needs of private paddlers for a take-out. They are currently making upgrades to the campground which will eliminate the current parking for take-out vehicles along Route 60. They have generously agreed to allow take-out vehicles in their campground. This allows secure year-round parking away from road traffic. We are currently trying to arrange a permanent area on their property for take-out vehicles. This may also include use of restrooms and a changing facility.

2. Gauge: Through cooperation with Elkem Metals, a permanent whitewater gauge

will be placed on the bridge at the Cotton Hill put-in. Due to fluctuations in the water diversion through Hawks Nest, tunnel river levels often change in the Drys section despite consistent levels in the New River Gorge. The gauge will allow accurate assessments of levels in the Drys section. This will prove useful in determining optimal levels for proposed Drys releases. We will continue to work towards real-time flows available on the Internet. So far, Elkem Metals has been cooperative in agreeing to fund the cost of gauge placement.

3. Tributary Restoration: We are in the process of developing a work plan for conservation and restoration of both Laurel Creek and Mill Creek. Both feature Class V+ whitewater, which has been paddled only by a select few. Laurel Creek is best known by its appearance on the cover of the Fallin Down video. Both creeks currently are supporting

stocked trout populations. We are attempting to devise a plan which would allow the local communities to participate in the stream restoration. The town of Anstead has acquired ownership of the railbed along Mill creek and is currently formulating a rails to trails program.

4. American Heritage Rivers Initiative: The New River has been included in President Clinton's American Heritage Rivers Initiative program. Project: Water For The Drys is formulating a work plan to include tributary restoration along Mill and Laurel Creeks as well as a proposal for whitewater releases into the Drys.

5. Whitewater Releases: Project: Water For The Drys has continued to develop political and community support for recreational releases into the New River Drys. Our proposal would designate a six-weekend release schedule each spring.

For information on how you can be involved in Project: Water For The Drys stop by our booth at the Cheat Fest or contact: Tim Daly, 300 Hickory Rd., Scott Depot, WV 25560, 304-757-8571 – timdaly@prodigy.net.

WaterWorks via e-mail: waterworks@main.nc.us

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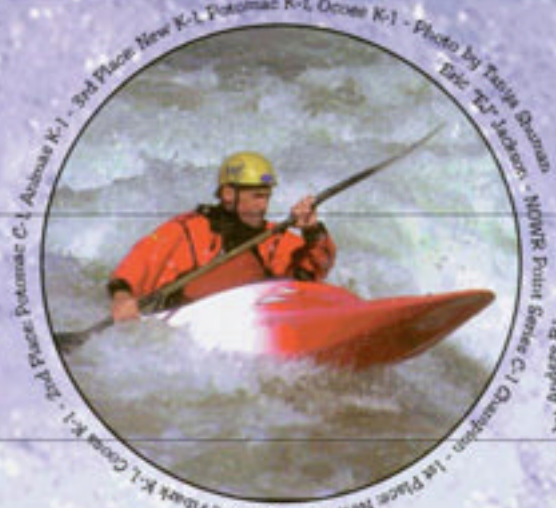
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WAVE SPORT



1st Place Potomac C-1 - 2nd Place New K-1 Potomac K-1, Ocoee K-1 - Photo by Tania Shuman
1st Place Potomac C-1 - 2nd Place New K-1 Potomac K-1, Ocoee K-1 - Photo by Tania Shuman



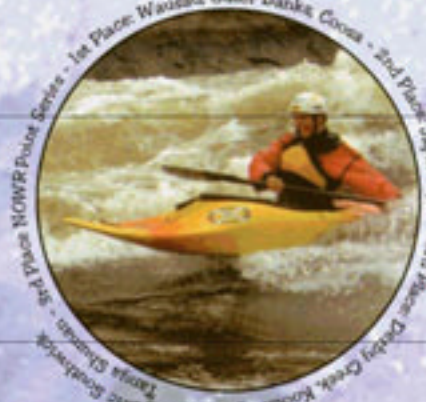
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1st Place Santa Cruz Surf Slab - 2nd Place Kanawake



1st Place Kanawake
1st Place Kanawake



1st Place Wausau Outer Banks
1st Place Wausau Outer Banks



1st Place Kanawake Kootenay
1st Place Kanawake Kootenay



1st Place American
1st Place American



1st Place Bigfork Jackson Hole
1st Place Bigfork Jackson Hole



1st Place Kern American Reddick
1st Place Kern American Reddick



1st Place Jackson Hole
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1st Place Anzales Nuggett
1st Place Anzales Nuggett



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1st Place Merced



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