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american whitewater

May / June 2001

Most Excellent
Adventure

page 42



Russian Roulette
on Cooper Creek page 36





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Journal of the American Whitewater

Volume XLI, No.3

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Greetings from AW's New

Executive Director... *Risa Shimoda*

I have a new job, one that I humbly consider the best on the planet. As of April I have taken over the helm at American Whitewater. And that means...I work for you!



Like lots of paddlers, I would love to paddle where I'd like, when I'd like. But this broadly appealing concept (to some, an unalienable right) is all too often not an option. Which... in a word... sucks.

Having said this, American Whitewater has logged dozens of successes by which we have protected, restored, and rewatered rivers and negotiated or purchased access. We have set national precedent for whitewater river stewardship. Where we can have a voice, we do. So that where and when we can boat, we will. This means ensuring that there will be whitewater for you! Whitewater rivers for competition, whitewater rivers to celebrate with festivals, whitewater rivers to explore and to video, whitewater rivers to learn on, and, most importantly, whitewater rivers for you to enjoy.

Now I have the unique opportunity to lead the AW efforts designed to deliver on that commitment. So what exactly will I be doing in this position?

I'll support the efforts of the following awesome folks, so they can be charged and psyched to kick butt in their areas of river advocacy expertise:

John Gangemi, AW Conservation Director and Perception's 2000 River Conservationist of the Year. And Jason Robertson, Access Director, who will soon be joined by Kevin Colburn, our new Eastern Conservation and Access Associate. Together, they will

drive whitewater river issues to a greater number of rivers near you.

■ Jayne Abbott, Events Director, and Phyllis Horowitz, Administrative Director. These stalwarts have been joined by David Knox, our new Events Coordinator. David will be working full-time to make sure the events we initiate, organize, and implement run smoothly, both for the participants and sponsors.

So that we can achieve and extend our goals, I'll be working with Nancy Galloway, American Whitewater Development Director to secure the resources we need, both from foundation funding and individual donations. And I'll be relying upon our trustworthy staff support persons in the Silver Spring, Maryland (Nick Lipkowski), Rig Fork, Montana (Carla Miner) and Margaretville, New York (Julie McCollister and Denis McLane) offices to keep us humming.

I'll also be calling upon volunteers (like you) who create the fabric of American Whitewater.

Most importantly, I'll be leading the effort to tell you what we have achieved on your behalf, and keeping you abreast of what we are working on. And I'll be asking you to help us define new challenges.

If you:

Are just getting started as a boater— We hope you'll soon discover that AW truly serves you in many ways, both through our programming and local networking.

Have paddled for awhile— We are here so you can continue to run rivers whose access has been threatened or denied, and perhaps discover a restored river segment that has for years been 'dewatered' by hydro projects.

■ Have kids who will be driving off to paddle in a few years— Renew your definition of 'boating' by learning to work a local park and play spot *with* them. Develop a competitive ethic that was previously only offered by roundball sports!

We at AW are boaters. We are here for you. I will continue the commitment I made to American Whitewater when I first joined as a volunteer in the late seventies. I hope you'll support me, our staff, and our fantastic volunteers and partners.

How? Oh, I can list a few ways, right off the top of my head:

If you haven't received a journal lately, your membership may not be current. If it isn't, you might want to consider remedying that situation!

Lend a hand. Offer a bottle of water to a judge sitting in the blistering hot sun at an NOWR event. Take a bag full of trash from the site before you head off to boat, or to catch dinner. Help park cars at the Gauley Festival. Write an article for American Whitewater. Tell a friend to stop scamming *your* Journal and mail in *their* \$25.

And let me know if there are issues that need to be addressed for you as a boater on rivers close to your heart. Perhaps we'll have already thought about it: but if we haven't, tell us what we can do *together* to get things moving.

Stay tuned. Get (orstay) off your butt and help. Then, go boating! We'll be there with you every step of the way. And with every stroke of the paddle!

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Lars Defends Tobacco Sponsorship

Dear Editor:

I'm writing in defense of the 98 whitewater athletes that Dieter King so hastily and righteously discounts in the Jan/Feb issue of AW and the Nov/Dec issue of Paddler. I personally know at least 25 of these whitewater kin, who represent 14 countries, and know them to be much like you and I: self-respecting, conscientious, and exemplary in the river world. In addition, they represent the cream of whitewater athletes worldwide. Many of them are or were on the slalom or wildwater teams of their respective countries. They are true athletes who live to train and compete.

While I doubt that these athletes would choose tobacco sponsorship in a perfect world, the organizers of the event are realistic about finances in a sport so fledgling as international raft and kayak competition. Nor was RJR the sole sponsor of this event; Bio Bio Expeditions, Expediciones Chile, and the Futaleufu Adventure Centre all worked to run the event in Chile. Additionally, teams found equipment support from myriad whitewater suppliers and manufacturers.

I work occasionally as a kayaker in scenic photos for a production company that caters to Japan Tobacco. That is my choice. I neither smoke nor condone the advertising approach that big tobacco takes toward children. But I argue here that the money that RJR puts into these events has positive effects on the whitewater community and the communities in which the events take place. A major focus at the Futaleufu event was to convince the Chilean government to recognize the value of the river undammed. There was no slogan of "puff a butt, save a river," as Mr. King implies. Would Mr. King be less offended were the event sponsored by big alcohol, logging, mining, land developers, or the auto industry? No matter where we look for sponsorship, there's often a downside. Why not focus on the good and positive that comes from these events?

While I don't have children, and so can't really know the joy and distress of parenting, I see in my experience that kids with open, honest, loving, and clear parents usually grow up to make wise choices. Is not the parent the first and foremost "hero" of a child? While I can understand Mr. King's despair over children targeted by tobacco advertising, what is constructive in attacking and alienating the whitewater competitors? It's a tired approach.

I too, doubt that the big name athletes Mr. King mentions would take tobacco money. They don't need to! But what if they did? Marion Jones has been sponsored in part by

Mobil Oil; Maurice Greene by Nike. What about the destruction of landscapes and/or indigenous peoples committed by most oil exploration? And the well-documented Asian sweatshops run by Nike (and every other major footwear company)? In the macro picture most huge corporations are destroying land and injuring people in some way. And most of us use some product of their creation. As middle class North Americans we use more energy than any other nation, more than ever. Our life-styles are unsustainable. And today's children are learning from our example and will inherit this way of being. Certainly I am not supporting the ethics of big tobacco, but simply putting it in perspective. Is Mr. King's nest so clean that he can dump on others for their choices?

Rather than discounting and alienating a group so large and international, of which Mr. King is a part, with comments of such negativity, why not engage them, Mr. King, in constructive dialogue and enroll them in your ideal of no tobacco money in whitewater? And why not start with the organizers or, better yet, your backyard? Most of the U.S. Women's team live just a Sierra drainage away from you. And since you clearly are no friend of tobacco, check out who owns Nabisco before you eat another Oreo or Wheat Thin.

These events will continue, with sponsorship often coming from controversial sources. Why not join the process of finding sponsors in whom you believe, and make a difference? Who knows, maybe someday your daughter will be the captain of a U.S. White-water team...

Sincerely, Lars Holbek
Durango, Colorado

More Love Trouble

Dear Dr. Kantgettenuff,

Lying here counting the ceiling tiles on one of Dayton, Ohio's better trauma centers got me to thinking that perhaps I could pass on some of what I've learned in the last 51.5 years, nearly 30 of which I have been married.

1. Communication is important in any relationship. If your beer guzzling kayaking buddy says that he can't make it to the river, but his 23 year old, blonde and blue, size 4 niece on college break can, don't wait until your wife gets you to the put-in to tell her.

2. Never start a conversation with your wife by saying, "This isn't how it looks..."

3. When introducing your wife to your beer guzzling kayaking buddy's 23 year old, blonde and blue, size 4 niece, never refer to your wife as your, "Shuttle bunny d'jour." "Mom," is even worse.

4. And, most importantly, never assume

that a kevlar spray skirt offers the same protection as a cop's vest.

Older N. Wiser
(AKA Rick Roberts)
Harveysburg, Ohio

P.S. The really bad part was getting the paddle back. The doctor's hands were cold!

No Bobby Fan

Dear Editor:

I read Bobby "Zone Dogg" Miller's article in the Sept/Oct issue of AW and had to bite my tongue. He was obnoxious, arrogant, and annoying. I could barely make it through the article in the midst of all egotistical BS. But after reading his article in the Jan/Feb issue, I have to say something. What a JERK! A really sexist narcissist. The shallow comments regarding women, children and lovin' (RIGHT, Bobby! Dream on!) were distasteful. Perhaps he's trying to be funny but he's waaayyyy off. He may be a good boater but he's a vain human being. You think his articles are irritating? You should see him on the water... Get some humility, Bobby.

Making me SIK,
Page Starling
Arlington, VA

Editor's reply: I gather this means you don't want us to send you an application for Zonedogg's fan club! Take comfort in the fact that this is a BMFI (Bobby Miller Free Issue.) But don't get too excited, the Dogg will be back.

More Disappearing Rivers

Dear Editor:

Re: Sinkhole article pg. 77-81, May/June 2000

I recently read this article and would like to alert people that rivers that suddenly go underground are not always located in areas that are geologically suspect.

The Natural Stone Bridge in Trout Brook (which enters the Schroon river just south of Schroon Lake, near 1-87, exit 26) is also a disappearing river, located in New York, not in a karst region but an area known for very hard rock (i.e. anorthosite and garnet).

An apt description of the 140 yard underground passage and its approach and portage is formed in pgs. 163-165 of Walter Burmeister's *Appalachian Waters 2: The Hudson and Its Tributaries*, 1974, no longer in print.

I guess this letter is in line with Chris Koll's fine Sept/Oct 2000 article which says that "New York State has it all for whitewater Fans" in so many words.

Betty Lou Bailey
Schenectady, NY

More Than Just Whitewater

Dear Editor:

American Whitewater has a long and successful tradition of protecting our rivers. However, sometimes your bias that the only thing that counts is whitewater shows through. In the January-February issue, the article on the Lower St. Anthony Falls calls it "the only geological feature of any importance on the entire length of the Mississippi." Tsk, tsk. Some might think the Mississippi Delta is of some geologic significance. The Atchafalaya Basin probably holds a bit of geologic interest, as does the fact that the river is the third largest drainage in the world. The constantly shifting sand bars that indirectly led to the pen name of one of America's most famous authors, Mark Twain, and that so plagued early boat travel on the river, are significant. River bluffs in Iowa, floodplains in Missouri, and backwaters in Louisiana might be of interest. While you may focus on whitewater, our rivers do offer more - and should be measured by more - than kayaking.

Sincerely,
Dan Haas
National Park Service

Editor's reply: Yeah, but what good is a geologic feature if you can't wavelheel on it?

More ADmonishment!

Dear Editor,

We've only met in passing a couple of times on the Upper Yough, but you're more likely to remember me from the "Hammer For Sale" letter-to-the-editor a few issues back in AW mag.

I do not know Gedas Kilisksas, "No More Bimbos!," Jan/Feb AW mag, and "bimbos" may have been a poor choice of words on his part because it implies a judgement about the intellectual/psychological/emotional state of the women, which can obviously not be fully gathered from one photograph in an advertisement — but our American English does have its limitations. . .

Jan/Feb AW mag, page 32, Brook's Wetsuits Ltd. ad, I agree that the two women are attractive. The more blond one is not athletic looking, the padded arms and calves while not fat, do not see much regular exercise.

Neither woman appears completely comfortable posing for the ad from the way that they are covering up. Neither are boaters. Even new school boaters are bright enough

to know how hard and sharp those rocks are and how much it would hurt to slip and fall on them while clad only in a sprayskirt.

As to that specific ad, I did phone Brooks Ltd. twice last summer and spoke with two different people there. (I'd phoned Riot once and e-mailed Riot/Corran multiple times before writing my letter.) I was told that neither woman boats in any way, although one of them had gone rafting a couple of times, and that they were employees of Brooks who had offered to be in the ads. Fine. The issue is not really with the picture. The issue is with the picture being in AW mag.

Kathy Hearn is an athlete. I don't think that she would pose that way for that ad. An ad with Kathy would show her dressed in boating gear standing holding a paddle or in her boat actually paddling. Get the point? An ad with Shannon Carroll would show her in her boat actually running the rapid in the background that the two non-paddling volunteer employees with dry hair and no other clothes on stand barefooted covering-up their breasts by not even looking at as if they're scouting. Check-out the Rapidstyle ad, same issue, page 7. I want a poster of that to place on my son's wall! I want to put it right between the picture of Winnie-the-Pooh and the photo of his mom surfing with our dog sitting on her sprayskirt.

BOATERS DO GET NAKED!! We all know that. But honestly, when have you ever seen a naked boater standing artfully on bare rocks by a river? In real life isn't it always a 30 to 40ish male boater, a bit fat with a hairy buttocks, standing naked by a busy roadside near a Pentecostal church pissing off every grandmother, sheriff, and anti-kayaking bass fisherman with a mongo-bass boat with a big-assed motor behind his mammoth SUV that passes, as Bubba drives by with confederate flag stickers on his monster truck yelling threats out of the window, wishing he'd kept his loaded gun in the truck so he could shoot the godless, gawdawful, god-damned kayakers?

The shirtless guy in the full page Harmony ad is not fighting against decades of portrayal as sex objects and sex objects only in advertising. His muscles are toned. He's not trying to upgrade the egos of a generation of future male participants in our sport. Honestly, the first time that I saw that ad in AW I said, "Oh, shit."

Now the people who don't know the difference will use the presence of this Harmony ad to justify the continuation of the ads such as the Brooks and Riot ads, creating offsetting problems instead of addressing the original issue." Equal injustice for all. Score



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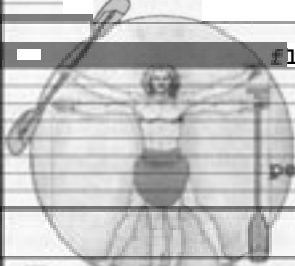
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one for Corran and the boys to the north, and they didn't even have to try. (It does seem that Riot has toned down their ads a bit. A real change or the calm before the storm?)

AW is a great magazine. You have a difficult job as editor, and I appreciate the job that you're doing. Thank-you for allowing these issues to be aired. I hope both that Mr. Zilinskas continues to be a member of AW and that he continues to work for change in the advertising content of AW mag. Feel free to send him a copy of this.

Tom Yurista, M.D. Middlebury, VT

Save America's Rivers.

Save some of those rivers from America's kayakers.

Save Yellowstone's rivers as a safe haven for bears and other animals.

Correction

In the March/April Issue Year End Accident Summary we inadvertently misspelled the name of Billy Danford, who died while paddling last year. Our apologies.

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Guidelines for Contributors

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

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

Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, 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 3-1/2-inch computer disk. (Microsoft Word if possible - others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

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

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

send us duplicates if possible; we 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 a specific 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 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.

Release For Publication

- I hereby release my work (literary, graphic or photographic) for publication in *American Whitewater* magazine.
- I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.
- I understand that I will not be paid for my work.
- I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation or agency in this work.
- I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an American Whitewater publication.
- I promise that this material has not been and will not soon be published by another magazine or publication and the rights to this material are clear and unrestricted.
- I understand that once this material is printed in American Whitewater it may be reprinted or reproduced in other publications if I wish, providing I notify them that it has already appeared in American Whitewater.

- I understand that the contents of American Whitewater Magazine, including my contribution, will be archived on the American Whitewater web site.

Signed _____

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This release must be signed by all the contributing author(s), photographer(s) and graphic artist(s).

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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, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, maintains a uniform national ranking system for whitewater

rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and publishes and disseminates the internationally recognized 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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Jayne H. Abbot, Events Manager

Split Wheel and Tricky-Wuu

Judging Freestyle Rodeo with NOWR

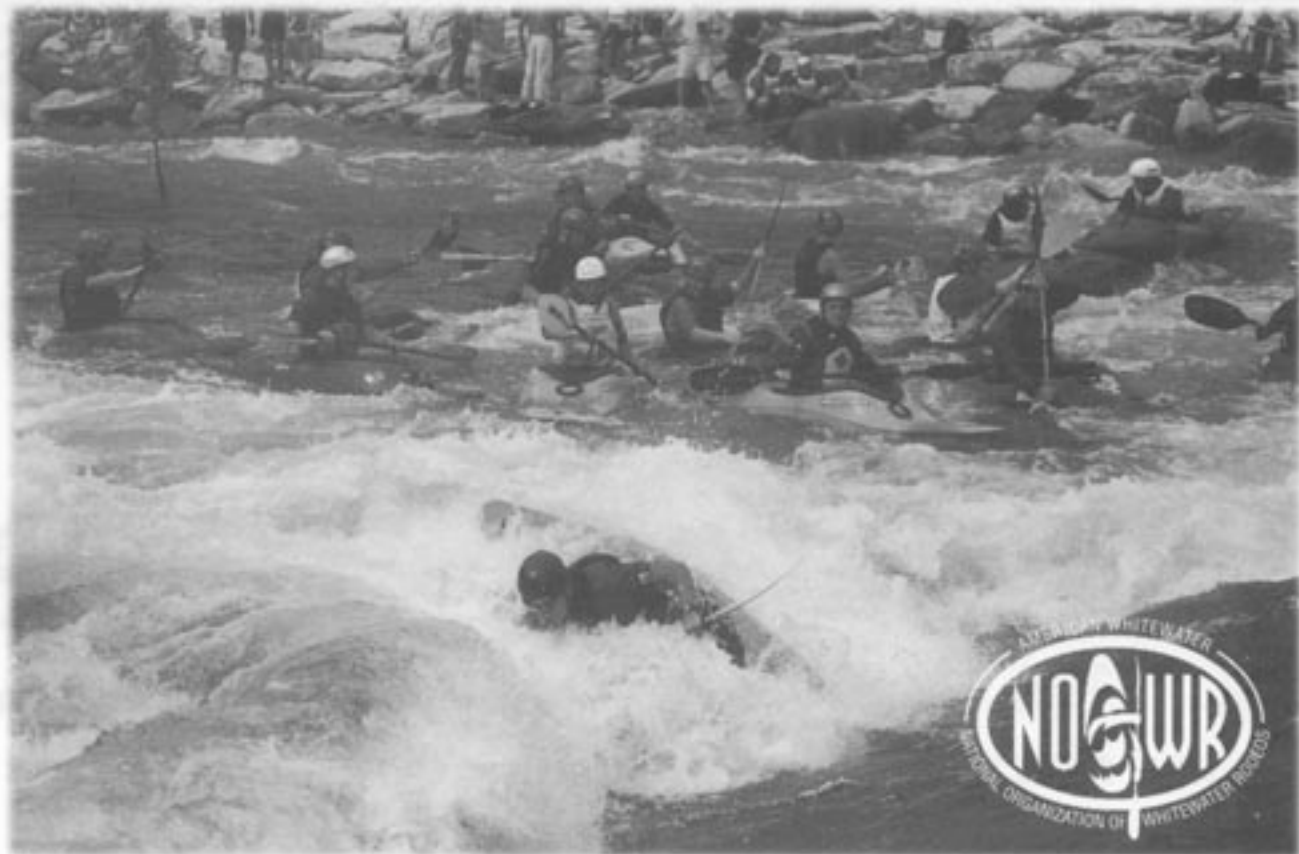


Photo by Heidi Domelsen

Teresa Gryder

The future of whitewater is rodeo, some say. Maybe so. Most new boat designs are clearly oriented at throwing down. Freestyle paddling events are springing up everywhere—even in holes that we used to think were dangerous. The rodeo circuit is a boater's traveling circus, and it gets bigger every year. Rock Island, in my home state of Tennessee, will host the U.S. Freestyle team trials in April. Rodeo is here to stay.

Jimmy Blackeney is the president of the US Freestyle Kayak Association, and a hot s**t rodeo Pro. He taught the first ever NOWR Freestyle judging clinic on March 10, where I got certified.

So you're thinking "Teresa's no rodeo star" and you're right. I'm a recreational boater who occasionally tries a cartwheel in some tiny hole when nobody is looking. The last rodeo I watched was all about doing pirouettes in Mirages. But after this NOWR class, I am ready to go see what the big boys are doing. I have never done an aerial blunt, but now I know exactly what one is.

There are two kinds of judges at a NOWR Freestyle event: technical judges (3 of them) and variety judges (2 of them). These judges watch each competitor, and speak scores into the ear of a scribe, who gets it all on paper. The final score is the Technical Score multiplied by the Variety Score. A Style bonus of 5% or 10% may be

added (by the variety judges) if the competitor did something exceptional (like be totally smooth and in control). Waving and snot wiping don't count.

Technical judging is something that virtually anybody could do. You don't need to know what a Split Wheel looks like, or be able to tell the difference between a Loop and a Blunt. All you do is quickly score each "end" the competitor gets during the allotted time.

An end is a transition from bow upstream to stern upstream, or vice versa. If the end is a flat one, meaning under 45 degrees elevation above level, then 1 point is awarded. If the end is high vertical (between 70 and 110 degrees) it's worth 4 points. A cartwheel with both ends vertical is worth 8 technical points. If the end is between 45 and 70, it's called "off vertical" and it's worth 2 points. Upside down up to 45 degrees is nothing. And to count as an end, it has to be initiated in the hole.

That's it! All the judge does is sit there and watch each ride, calling off strings of numbers. "1-1-2-4-2-4-4-4-2-2-1-2-4-2-4-4-4-4-4-2-2-1-4-1-1" would be a sik link. Getting an ender looks like this ".....4....." and getting a bunch of 360s in the corner of a hole would be scored like this "1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1."

Variety judging is more difficult. Judges have the formidable task

of recognizing each move that a competitor makes, and giving the highest possible variety score. Many moves are combinations and, at the Expert and Pro levels, they come fast. For each move, the competitor can only get one variety score, so the judge chooses among all the possible moves (and scores) to give the rider credit for the most difficult sequence completed.

At the Pro level the competitors usually judge each other, because few other people understand the sport well enough to recognize all the moves. Even then there is gray area, and the best judges are the consistent ones.

That's where the NOWR judge training comes in. We practiced judging videos and live rides at Quarry on the mighty Nantahala, and by the end, we had a clue.

Finally someone (Jimmy) was willing to explain a Matrix, show me video of it, and tell the story of where it came from and who perfected it. There are 18 different moves with variety scores, and new moves are added every year. Moves that used to count (like bow surfing) cease to have point value as rodeo wanders up the difficulty spectrum.

Starting with the most difficult, a few moves worth variety points are Aereal Blunt, Loop, Super Clean Cartwheel, Tricky-Wuu, Matrix, Back Stab, Splitwheel, and Airwheel. New and difficult "trophy" moves are awarded points at the discretion of the variety judges.

Some rodeo competitors don't know the rules of their own game. A large part of winning is in the strategy, and without knowledge there is no strategy. If you have the slightest interest in competing, you might want to study up.

The NOWR judging course was excellent. The sport is fascinating and changing fast, and the events are booming. I'm psyched to get a



Photo by Heidi Domeisen

slicier boat and throw down myself. If you haven't started to pay attention to rodeo—it might be time.

NOWR was pleased to offer the first ever NOWR Judge Certification. Many thanks to Teresa for the write up on the course, our newly trained judges for their enthusiasm and attentiveness, the Nantahala Outdoor Center for providing the meeting room equipped with TV, VCR, coffee, and comfortable seating; and Jimmy Blakeney, the classroom trainer who enlightened us all, NOWR hopes to add more training locations in the near future.

How Good is Whitewater Rodeo Judging?



Photo by Heidi Domeisen

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Photo by Heidi Domeisen

Over the past 10 years, freestyle kayaking has emerged as a major force in whitewater recreation. Freestyle events are organized around rodeos in which contestants try to outshine the competition through a dazzling array of tricks performed on a wave or in river hole. Like other competitive alternative sports such as snowboarding and mountain biking, freestyle kayaking has evolved into a multimillion dollar industry. It drives boat design, provides national

mediavisibility to whitewater activities, and has spawned a professional competition circuit complete with international events, cash prizes, and corporate sponsorships. While the money is presently meager and most pro rodeo boaters seem to live out of the back seats of their cars, the stakes are growing as prizes increase and sponsorships become more lucrative. Needless to say, the integrity of professional level competition rests upon the supposition that there is a reasonably accurate way to separate winners from losers.

Competitive sports fall into two categories in terms of what decides the outcome. In the first group, the winner is determined by some physically objective measure, for example, how many seconds it takes to run 100 meters or the number of times that a ball goes through a hoop. In the second, outcomes rest on the subjective assessments of expert judges. Sports in this category include figure skating, spring board diving, gymnastics, and, of course, freestyle kayaking. If rodeo is to be recognized as a legitimate, albeit nontraditional sport,

it is imperative that the judging be perceived by both competitors and spectators as fair and accurate.

The present judging system was developed under the auspices of the National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos and has been in place (with annual tweaking by the U.S. Freestyle Kayak Association) since 1999. In this article, I briefly review judging procedures and discuss the results of a statistical analysis I conducted of the reliability of judging at four NOWR rodeos.

The Structure of Whitewater Rodeos

Freestyle whitewater competitions are organized around classes—beginner, sport, expert, and pro—with women's, men's and junior divisions for each class. The most advanced is the pro class. Classes differ in the structure of judging and how the moves are scored. I will concentrate on the professional category as there is more at stake, and pro events use the most experienced judges.

While formats can vary somewhat depending of the features of the hole, each event is usually

composed of preliminary and final rounds. In the preliminary rounds, each contestant is typically allowed two 45 second rides. The scores of the rides are combined to determine who advances. In the first finals round, each boater again gets two rides. This time, only the highest scoring ride counts, and the top three boaters go on to the "Medals Head to Head Round." In the medals round, each contestant is allowed a single ride. The lowest gets third place, and the two remaining are allotted one final ride to determine the first and second place winners.

Freestyle judging is complex. The score for each ride is a combination of three numbers; a technical score, a variety score, and a style score.

Technical Points: The technical score of a ride is based on the "verticality" of each move. Three technical judges independently assess each move and assign it points. A move is considered low (1 point) if the axis of the boat is elevated less than 45 degrees. Off vertical moves (2 points) are between 45 and 70 degrees or 135 to 180 degrees. Vertical moves (4 points) require that the boat be oriented between 70 and 110 degrees. Given the speed of the moves, it is impossible for judges to observe the ride at the same time they are writing down the points. Thus, the judges dictate the points they award each move to a personal scribe sitting next to them. The technical score for each ride is determined by throwing out the high and low score and retaining the middle score.

Variety Points. Each ride is also evaluated by a pair of variety judges who have two tasks. First, they determine the variety score for each ride. The variety score was instituted to reward contestants with routines that contain lots of different tricks and to penalize competitors who accumulate points by simply repeating the same move over and over. This a demanding job, in part, because new tricks are constantly evolving as boat design and competitors improve. For year 2001 rodeos, there are 19 recognized variety moves for hole-riding contests and an additional 6 for freestyle-through-a-rapid events. Each trick is assigned a value in the NOWR competition guide. For example, according to the current rules, a



Photo by Heidi Domeisen

"roundhouse" gets a variety score of .1, an "airwheel" counts .8, and a "loop" counts 1.2 (the maximum). A trick counts for variety points only once per ride. For example, if a contestant performs in sequence a right cartwheel, a left blunt, and another right cartwheel, the second right cartwheel does not contribute to the variety score.

The competition guide also defines each move. For example, a tricky-wuu is described as "a splitwheel followed by a wingover in the same direction as the first end of the split, followed by another vertical of off-vertical end." Needless to say, the determination of whether or not a move should count as a tricky-wuu requires considerable experience and skill. As with technical judges, variety judges dictate their scores to a personal scribe. The final variety score is the average of the points awarded by the two judges.

Style Points. The variety judges also determine the "style score" of each ride. This is a bonus multiplier that can increase the final score by 0, 5 or 10 percent. The variety judges assign style points based on their subjective assessment of the ride as whole considering boat control, use of the entire feature, and artistic impression. This is the most subjective of the three

of individual differences, error, and inadvertent bias on the part of the judges are minimized through the simultaneous use of several judges. In most sports with multiple judges, each judge is instructed to work completely independently. This is theoretically true of freestyle whitewater events: the year 2000 competition guide stated "All judges should rely only on their own judgments." Further, the guide specified that the judges should sit far enough apart that they cannot hear the other judges dictating to their scribes.

However, while independent judges are the ideal, several factors make this difficult to achieve. First, judging stands tend to be small and crowded which means judges are sometimes within earshot of each other. Second, the competition guide allows for considerable wiggle room on the independence issue. While the rules emphasize that judges should call each move as THEY see it, it also says, "You may confer with other judges if necessary." It does not, however, provide guidance as to when conferring is warranted.

Evaluating Rodeo Judging

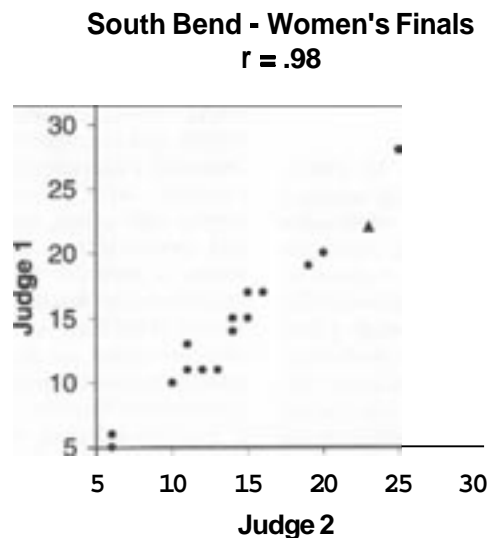
To understand how athletic judging is evaluated it is necessary to understand the concept of inter-rater reliability. (My apologies for this brief digression into the nuances of statistical analysis.) Inter-rater reliability is a statistical measure of

components of the final score. Each variety judge awards the points independently, and their scores are averaged to determine the style points for each ride.

The total score for each ride combines the technical, variety, and style points. First, the technical points of the ride are multiplied by the variety score. The style bonus is then added as either 0, 5% or 10% of the combined technical/variety score.

Undeniably, rodeo judging is somewhat subjective. The effects

Figure 1. Scatterplot of two technical judges' scores at the 2000 women's finals South Bend rodeo.



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consistency—the extent to which independent observers of an event agree on what they see. The measure of inter-reliability is a number called the **correlation coefficient** which is symbolized by the letter r . Correlation coefficients can range from 1.00 which indicates perfect agreement among two judges to 0 which means there is virtually no agreement between them.

The relationship between the scores of pairs of judges can be graphed on a scatterplot. Take a look at the scatterplots shown in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 is based on scores assigned by two of the technical judges for the women's pro finals at the 2000 South Bend rodeo. Each dot indicates the score assigned by Judge 1 (vertical axis) and Judge 2 (horizontal axis). Take the ride indicated by the triangular data point; it was given a score of 22 by Judge 1 and a 23 by Judge 2. As the graph indicates, there is a clear pattern to the judgments; the dots fall nicely along a diagonal line. This indicates that there was very close agreement between these two judges. In this case, the actual computed correlation coefficient was .97—close to the theoretical maximum of 1.00. Thus there was very high inter-reliability between these two judges for this event.

Figure 2 represents the scores assigned by another pair of South Bend technical judges—in this case, at the men's finals. Again, each dot represents how each judge scored a particular ride. Here the dots are not lined up so cleanly, indicating that there was some disagreement between these two judges. Look at the ride indicated by the triangle. It was given an 84 by the first judge but only a 50 by the second judge. Overall, with this group of rides, $r = .70$ indicating that there was only modest agreement between these two judges.

The forgoing is a simplified explanation of correlation. For mathematical reasons that I will not bore you with, reliability in sports which use several judges is best assessed by a special statistic called the intra-class correlation. The reasons for using this number are beyond the scope of this article. Just remember that the closer the coefficient is to 1.00, the better the judging.

South Bend - Men's Finals
 $r = .70$

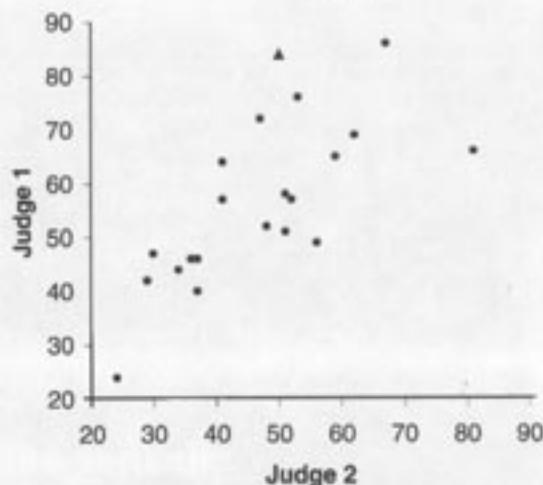


Figure 2. Scatterplot of two technical judges' scores at the 2000 men's finals South Bend rodeo.

Most studies on the reliability of athletic judging have been conducted on traditional sports like gymnastics and figure-skating. Sports psychologists typically have found that the reliability of judging depends on the complexity of the task. In springboard diving, for example, inter-rater reliability is higher when judges evaluate simple forward or backward dives than when they evaluate dives involving elaborate twists. Very rapid events are also difficult to judge reliably. Take, for example, the vault in gymnastics. Each vault lasts on average about a half second. The reliability of vault judging is typically very low (only about .50). On the other hand, the judgment of performance on a slower gymnastics event, the uneven parallel bars, is excellent ($r = .95$).

How Good is Kayak Judging?

With the cooperation of NOWR, I obtained the judges' score sheets from pro prelims and final rounds from four rodeos held during the year 2000 (Ocoee, Coosa, South Bend, and Wassau). All together, this analysis is based on 30 sets of judges, 550 rides, and 3,850 individual judgments.

The good news is that rodeo judging at the professional level is, on the whole, very reliable. For all the events combined, the average intra-class correlation between individual judges was

.89 for technical scores and .91 for variety scores. The reliability of the style scores was lower (.74) which is not surprising as this is

the most subjective element of the three components of the final score. Figure 3 illustrates the reliability coefficients broken down by men's and women's events. Note that there were no differences between the reliabilities of women's and men's events for technical or variety scores. For reasons that are unclear, the reliability of style scores for women's events was somewhat lower than for men's events.

These data reflect the consistency of individual judges. In reality, the final score of a ride is derived from the **collective assessment** of three judges (in the case of technical scores) or two judges (in the case of variety and style scores). For technical statistical reasons, the use of collective assessments has the effect of increasing the estimated reliabilities. When the intra-class correlation coefficients were recalculated using the correction factor the intraclass correlation for technical scores was .96, for variety scores .95, and for style scores .84. This means that the

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accuracy of the most important components of rodeo judging (technical and variety scores) is excellent — about the same as for judging in figure skating and uneven parallel bar gymnastics.

In short, statistical analysis indicates that rodeo judges are surprisingly consistent when it comes to evaluating rides. However, not all sets of judges were equally consistent. With some pairs of judges, the reliabilities exceeded .95. On the other hand, they were as low as .70 for technical judges, .72 for variety judges, and .55 for style judges. Intra-rater reliabilities this low are less than satisfactory in professional sports.

Factors That Influence Judging Reliability

Whitewater rodeo judging is an extraordinarily complex task that taxes the information processing capacities of the human brain. The current system facilitates fair and accurate judging in several ways. First, the separation of the judgments of verticality (technical score) from the classification of the moves (variety score) greatly simplifies the judges' task. Second, the use of scribes means that the judges do not have to take their eyes off the competitor during the ride. Third, dictating moves as they occur frees the brain from having to remember the moves until the ride is over.

Finally, in pro events, the judges with the most difficult task (variety judges) are in almost all cases, active competitors themselves. Studies of other sports indicate that high level competitors make the best judges. The use of pro boaters as judges, however, also raises problems of conflicts of interest in that they are evaluating people they know. They are called upon to judge team mates who share the same sponsor, people they like, people they don't like, and sometimes even their spouse.

While I found that judging is very good to excellent at pro events, this finding may not be generalizable to lower levels of the sport. On the one hand, beginner, sport, and expert class judging is considerably easier because the entrants are not as skilled and the runs less complex. On the other hand, the best

judges are usually reserved for the pro category, and the judges for the other classes tend to have less experience.

Improving Rodeo Judging

While pro level judges are surprisingly consistent given the difficulty of their task, there is room for improvement. Last year, the NOWR produced an excellent instructional video to aid in the training of new judges. This year, NOWR has made a concerted effort at judge education by instituting a judge certification program. Training sessions will be held throughout the 2001 season, and there will be separate certifications for technical and variety scoring.

One of the more important issues that rodeo organizers need to face concerns the ambiguity of the rules pertaining to the independence of judges. My conversations with experienced judges and observations at judging stands suggest that some judges are more likely to confer about how a move should be scored than others. This factor probably explains the differences in consistency between some pairs of judges.

From the rodeo judge's point of view, there are some advantages to the present system in which judges are allowed to confer. First, conferring can minimize the chance of a blatant er-

ror on the part of a judge. It also can reduce inadvertent bias on the part of a variety judge since they are checked by a second skilled judge. Another advantage of consulting is more complex — judging as a pair can reduce post-event pressures from competitors. Judges are occasionally accosted by entrants after the scores are posted. Agreement between judges about the scoring of a ride can take some of the wind out of the sails of a disgruntled contestant.

From a statistical point of view, however, complete independence, that is, no communication between judges, is the ideal. Indeed, communication between judges will typically inflate mathematical estimates of reliability and make judging seem more consistent than it may actually be. In sports such as figure skating and springboard diving, performance is evaluated by panels of judges who do not communicate with each other. Rodeo organizers could use a similar system. This would involve adding a third variety/style judge. Variety and style scores would then be calculated either by averaging the scores of the three judges or by using the middle score (asis presently done with the technical points).

While this solution would make for a cleaner statistical

analysis, it would create its own problems. Adding two people (the judge plus the scribe) would make already crowded judging stands even more chaotic. Further, it is tough finding skilled variety judges now; adding a third to each event would make judge recruiting even more difficult. There is little question, however, that the use of three variety judges who did not consult during the event would significantly enhance the integrity of freestyle kayaking. This summer, three variety judges will be used in the 2001 World Championships in Sort, Spain. It is possible that larger panels of independent judges could be resewed for more important professional events while the present system is maintained for smaller rodeos.

Acknowledgments

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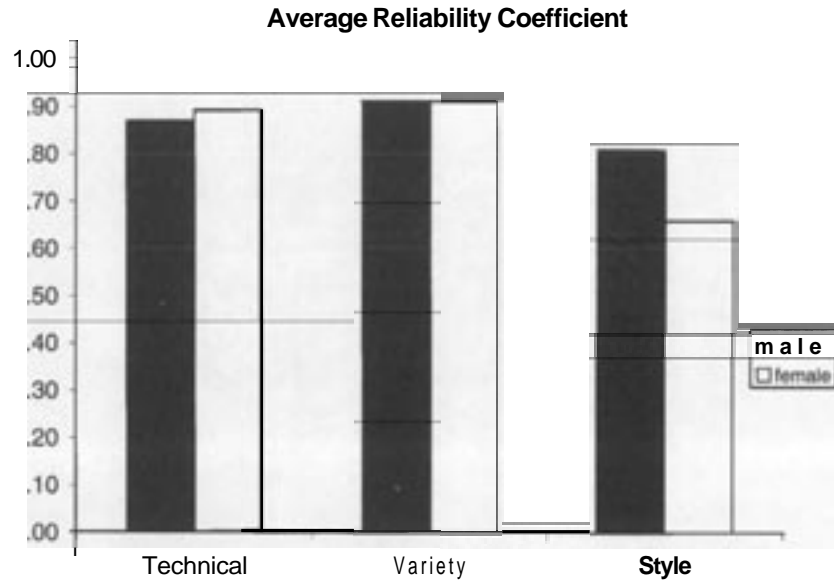
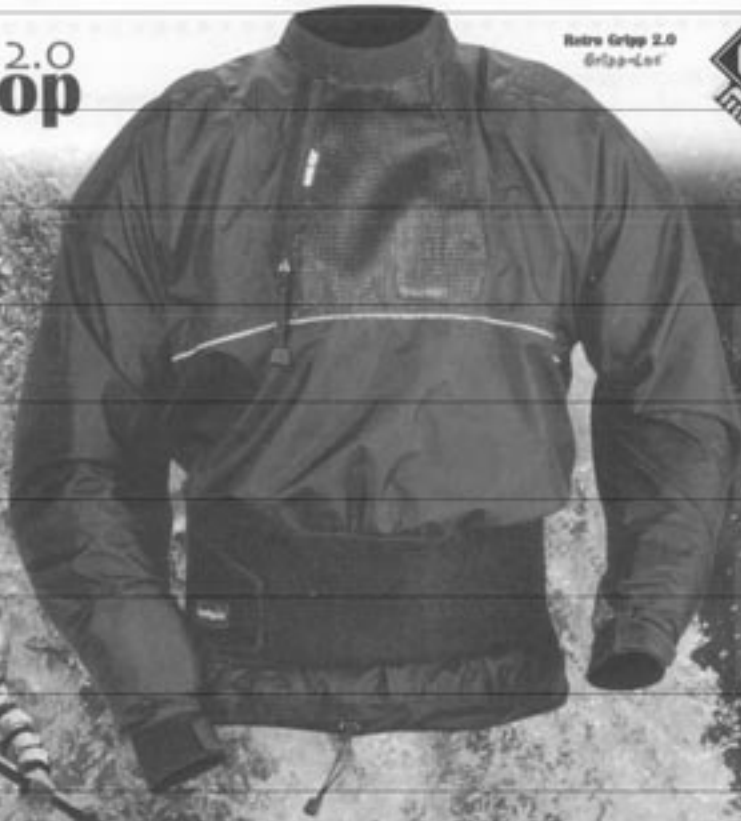


Figure 3. Average intraclass correlation of judging at men's and women's pro events at four 2000 rodeos.

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Team "S" Paddler TAO Berman, TAO Gripp 2.0 - photo: Jack Bradley



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Pennsylvania's Tohickon Hosts 2001 Wildwater Team Trials

By Chris Norbury

The US Wildwater Team Trials were held on Tohickon Creek from March 17th to 20th. Given that this was an "off" year, with a Pre-Worlds, rather than a World Championships to aim for, there was a good turnout. Paddlers came from as far away as Washington state in the West, and Alabama and New Hampshire in the East.

With only 2 days of open practice, the challenge for everyone was to learn what proved to be a technical and challenging course, one that could be hard on boats. Saturday's practice provided spills for some, particularly in the Race Course rapid, which was the site of the sprint. Water levels dropped through the day, as runoff from the rain declined, but this was compensated for on Monday and Tuesday during the race by increasing the amount of water released from the dam.

Saturday night saw boat control, with Andrew McEwan having the lightest K1 (10.1kg), despite a large amount of patching on the nose and tail, and Tom Wier having the lightest C1 (11.1kg). Bob Bofinger entered an ancient Rockschnitt C1 that looked so much like a fossil that we all thought he had dug it up. It weighed in as the heaviest boat at 18.8kg. With repairs over the next couple of days it surely tipped the scales at well over 19 kg.

As Monday dawned it became obvious the start would have to be delayed as we waited for the water. It finally arrived, and the racers warmed up on their way to the Race Course rapid, about halfway down the river. This sprint course was short, but technical, with an almost infinite number of routes to choose from. Over the weekend, many paddlers had struggled to come to terms with this complicated rapid. Others carefully compared routes and then jealously guarded the secret of which route they considered the fastest. At the top of the rapid there were two choices. The left

line was down a slide into a shallow route, where a larger proportion of the water was flowing, but the approach took a circuitous route. On the right a 2-3 foot ledge offered a narrow slot that had much easier access from the top, but a much greater possibility of costing time if mistakes were made.

Further down the sprint course, two ledges provided more obstacles. Again there was a choice between left and right, although during the race runs Chris Hipgrave demonstrated a third alternative, boofing off a rock in his 14 foot race boat, right in the middle. The bottom of the rapid provided another opportunity to pick a faster or more conservative line. Down the left, a slide led into large waves, but also the possibility of slamming a rock. In the center a narrow line provided a more direct route, but with even more potential for a piton off an exposed rock.

After the first sprint runs, National C1 Champion Tom Wier was 4 seconds ahead of Mike Beavers, with George Lhota edging out Bob Bofinger by 0.1 seconds to take third. National team member Chris Osment spun out into an eddy, losing 10-15 seconds, and putting himself out of contention, at least for the sprint.

In Women's K1, World Championship veteran Kari Crowe beat West Virginia boater Chara O'Brien by more than two seconds. It was only the second time O'Brien had paddled a glass wildwater boat. Seattle's Jennie Goldberg, an AW Board Member, finished third.

In Men's K1 sprint, expert Middy Tilghman led the field by less than half a second over Chris Norbury, with Andrew McEwan even closer in third.

During the second and final sprint run in C1, Tom Wier extended his lead, again taking 4 seconds out of Mike Beavers. And again George Lhota beat Bob Bofinger by 0.1 seconds to take third.

In Women's K1 it was all change, Chara O'Brien gained enough confidence in her wildwater boat to go nearly 2 seconds faster and move ahead of Kari Crowe. Cheryl Shiber moved ahead of Jennie Goldberg to take third.

In the Men's K1, Andrew McEwan completed the course over 2 seconds faster than his first run, but Middy Tilghman also upped the ante to stay in front. Chris Hipgrave moved up to third, taking advantage of a disastrous run by Chris Norbury that dropped him from 2nd to 7th, and out of the running.

On Tuesday the classic race ran from the

put-in to take-out, and included the East Coast Junior selection race, as well as the final selection race for the seniors. The first 8-10 minutes consisted of small chop, punctuated by larger waves, with a lot of opportunity for saving time by taking shorter lines down the inside of corners, even out of the current. The Tohickon then steepened, offering a number of ledges with very defined lines. The sprint race course rapid confronted several boaters just when they realized they had already consumed too much energy. The run out from the ledges included a number of tricky smaller rapids.

In the junior event Russell Johnson, who raced C2 at the Junior World Championship last year, showed that he doesn't need his brother (and C2 partner) to go quickly. Russell took the honors ahead of Chris Davis. In the Junior Women's event, Shannon Reeves edged out a resurgent Beth Karp, with Kathryn Dyer in third.

In the Men's C1 event Joe Barkley paddled away from Clay Wilder, with Andrew Waxman in third. In the senior event Mike Beavers showed his aerobic capacity to beat out Tom Wier, who almost caught Chris Osment (3rd) for a minute at the line.

In the Women's event, Kari Crowe showed why she gained selection to the US Marathon Team last year with a strong display over the longer distance. National Champion Jennie Goldberg battled a heavily damaged boat to capture second. Chara O'Brien placed third.

In the Men's K1 event Andrew McEwan showed why he is National Champion, finishing nearly a minute clear of second placed Chris Hipgrave. In third, Middy Tilghman narrowly edged out local Dave Bonomo. Another local, Ted Newton, missed the opportunity to capitalize on a good run after flipping and losing time at the final ledge.

Overall it was an excellent weekend of racing, with strong competition in all classes.

Sponsors for this event helped with the water releases, publicity, organization, and prizes.

They are;
iPlayOutside.com, Pennsylvania DCNR, Maximum Whitewater Performance, Shred Ready, Kokatat Mountain River Outfitters, Immersion Research, Truckenmiller Designs, Glen Echo Pottery, Little Falls Wildwater Club

In addition a huge number of volunteers helped. Special thanks to:

Ted Newton, Renee Gellblat, Joel Reeves, Ben Sandiford, Barbara Karp, Emmy Truckenmiller, Paul Grabow, Howard Rich Kulawiec

Paddlers selected for the wildwater team were as follows:

Men's K1

1. Middy Tilghman
2. Andrew McEwan
3. Chris Hipgrave
4. Steve Kauffman
5. David Bonomo
6. Ted Newton

Women's K1

1. Jennie Goldberg
2. Cheryl Shiber

C1

1. Michael Beavers
2. Chris Osment
3. Bob Bofinger

Junior C1 (2 more selected at West Coast Trials)

1. Russell Johnson
2. Chris Davis

Junior Women's K1 (2 more selected at West Coast Trials)

1. Shannon Reeves
2. Beth Karp

Junior Men's K1

1. Joe Barkley
2. Clay Wilder

Full results are available at <http://www.iPlayOutside.com/Paddle/> or at <http://ccadc.org/bce/2001wildwaterrt/2001ttresults.html>

Photos and video will be posted on the iPlayoutside.com site at <http://www.iPlayOutside.com/Paddle/>

American River Festival 2001

20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

September 7th to 9th 2001

South Fork American River

At the Chile Bar put-in

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Whitewater Rodeo - Kayak Slalom - Wildwater Race
Raft Race - Rescue Competition - Dinner - Dance
Awards - Silent Auction - Live Auction - Raffle
Demos - Exhibitor Booths

Proceeds to benefit the American River Conservancy
"Open space protection, stewardship, & education programs"

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www.americanriverfestival.org

Or write to us at...

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2001

National Paddling Film Festival Highlights

By Zina Merkin

One of the best things about the National Paddling Film Festival this year was the variety of offerings. This made for a certain amount of chaos, but hey, boaters love chaos. There were 18 motion entries; four entries each in the Amateur and Accomplished Divisions, and ten Professional films. The Festival also included a short, non-competition video by Barry Grimes which promoted AW.

Four teams of University of Kentucky students participated in the Apple Digital Video Editing Workshop and Contest, each producing an entertaining, quality, two minute video compiled from footage donated by Performance Video and shots taken by the students themselves around the festival site. Apple also gave a seminar during lunch, which was packed with interested folk, future "vidiots" perhaps? Hopefully this will lead to an increase in the number of amateur entries next year.

This year's festival took the audience to exotic places - like Nepal- with a presentation by Julie Keller. Julie won the Accomplished: Documentary and Best of NPF: Accomplished awards with a stunning slide show of images of the rivers, the landscape, and the people of this Himalayan nation. Viewers were taken virtually around the world by Chris Emerick's entry, "Full Circle." Accomplished: General Boating award winner, "Rainy Daze," by Barney Bonito, took the audience throughout the Northeast, while "Stitched in 2000 - the Mad Dog Mexico Tour" showcased, well, Mexico.

The "Get on the Bus Tour" was a terrific road trip story, the "heroes" of which took to the highway in their special bus in search of whitewater in the western United States. This amateur video ran away with the festival, winning its category, division, and the audience-voted Paddler's Choice award by a sizeable margin. The "Get On the Bus Tour" video may have been an amateur film, but at least one judge wrote on the bottom of the score sheet, "Better (and more enjoyable) than most 'pro' videos. Where can I buy this video?" The "Bus Tour" left everyone looking



Apple Digital Video Editing Workshop and Contest forward to more productions by Rob Howell.

In the Professional Division, the short film "Give Us a River - 2001," by John Davis and Kent Ford of Performance Video, was much appreciated for its hysterical, or is that, historical perspective on the changes in paddlesports over the last 40 years. Cutting back and forth between scenes from the early 60s and today, it showed that much has changed, but boaters were and still are boaters, after all. It won the Professional: General Boating and Best of NPF: Professional awards. It also took prize at the Waterwalker Festival in Canada. As one judge put it simply, "Great fun!"

The Professional: Documentary category was won by the film "Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo 2000," by Shane Reynolds of C.J.M. Productions. This film was commended by the judges for doing a "nice job of showing off the event." Other winning aspects of the film were its narration, explanation of moves and techniques, and its pacing.

This year there seemed to be a preference both by the audience and the judges for films with a strong narrative or story line. A story line with characters and a plot seemed to make a favorable and memorable impression. Another trend seemed to be a preference for variety in the music supporting the videos. As one judge put it, the music should provide "More than just speed and testosterone."

The Still Image winner was Ken Parish with his "creatively enhanced" photo "Touch the Sky." The web image favorite, from the on-line voting during the week prior to the festival, was Harvey Witt's "Fall Squirt." The Safety Poster winner was Calli Ryan, age 12, with her cute watercolor, "Keep Your Feet Up."

The National Paddling

Film Festival was started by members of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, who thought it would be fun to get together and watch each other's super-8 whitewater movies. During the last few years the Festival has showcased films from all over the United States and Canada, Britain, and even Indonesia. This year's attendees to the Festival, which was held in Lexington, Kentucky, came from not only the neighboring states of Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana and Tennessee, but also Michigan, Georgia, Missouri, North Carolina, Illinois and Pennsylvania. Over the last 17 years, the Festival has grown to be a major fund-raiser for river conservation, having given away over \$50,000 to American Whitewater, American Canoe Association, and several other river organizations. Yet the National Paddling Film Festival is still an all-volunteer event, run by members of the BWA. That energy, and the support of many generous sponsors, is what allows the BWA to give to the rivers.

The sponsors for the NPF 2001 are:

Benefactors: Kayak Magazine, Paddler Magazine and Performance Video.

Major Sponsors: Ace Adventure Center, Dagger, Kentucky Outdoor Center, Mountain Surf, NOC, Nature Outfitters, and Perception

Significant Donors: Boof Gear, Chaco, Extrasport, Lidds, iKaYaK, Musselman Hotels, SealLine/Platypus, Surf the Earth, Phillip Galls

Donors: Canoe & Kayak Magazine, Crazy Creek, J&H Outdoors, Kokatat, Pelican Products, Vid Jewel Sports.

Sponsors: Rock Hedz

continued ►

Touch the Sky.



Please let these supporters know that you appreciate their support of the NPPF, and please support them in return.

If you would like to see some of these films yourselves, check out our web page to see if there is a NPPF Road Show coming near you. If there isn't, then maybe you should organize one. It's a great way to have a lot of fun,

raise money for a local river or club, and support AW and other river causes, too. Check it out at <http://www.surfbwa.org/nppf> and click on Road Shows. And don't forget to take lots of great pictures and action-filled video this summer so you can enter the NPPF 2002!

Keep Your Feet Up.



Fall Squirt.



Rated at class 3-4

BLACK RIVER FESTIVAL

July 28-29
Watertown, New York's Riverwalk Park

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

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

Registration for the weekend clinics and events will be made on a first-come, first-served basis on the day of the festival at the AWP. Search starting at the Adirondack River Outfitters booth.

For more information, contact Steve Hall at (518) 862-8199 or by e-mail at CHALL11@att.net. A form of acceptance is required which will be available in mid-May. CAP

Deerfield Riverfest

Aug. 4, 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.

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WERNER

2001 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS

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across the country*

AMERICAN WHITEWATER FESTIVALS

French Broad River Festival	May 11-13	Asheville, NC	Chris Donochod	628-236-1209	www.frenchbroadriverfest.com
Salmon River Whitewater Festival	July 7-8	Pulaski, NY	Dan Murn	315-298-6475	dmurn@pacs.cnyric.org
Black River Festival	July 28-29	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Deerfield Festival	August 4	Charlemont, MA	Mike Coleman		colemam@beaconarch.com
"Don't Call This a Festival River Rendezvous"	September 1-2	Belfort, NY/Beaver River	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Gauley Festival	September 22	Summersville, WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355	whiteh2o@cascadilla.net
Russell Fork Rendezvous	October 1-8	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	859-278-2011	surfin@kymtnnet.org
Moose River Festival	October 13 ?	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com

Gorge Whitewater Series in Partnership with American Whitewater / \$32,500 Pro Cash Purse!

A multi-disciplinary event series crowning the best paddlers in the country! Overall winners purse of \$7,500!

Ocoee Whitewater Games (\$5,000)	May 18-20	Ducktown, TN	American Whitewater Events	926-645-5299	www.ocoee Whitewater.com
Potomac Whitewater Festival (\$5,000)	June 1-3	Great Falls, VA	Pervis Major	301-526-7378	www.potomacfest.com
Animas River Days (\$5,000)	June 8-10	Durango, CO	Four Corners Riversports	970-259-3893	www.riversports.com
Subaru Gorge Games (\$10,000)	July 14-22	Hood River, OR	Subaru Gorge Games	541-386-7774	www.gorgegames.com

American Whitewater Cascade Series

A series of premier level races from mild(er) to wilder held across the country.

Canyon Creek Extreme Race	May 9	Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	ajensen@teleport.com
French Broad River Race	May 12	Asheville, NC	Chris Donochod	628-236-1209	www.frenchbroadriverfest.com
Great Falls Race	June 2	Great Falls, VA	Pervis Major	301-526-7378	www.potomacfest.com
Colorado Creekin' Festival	June 23-24	Durango, CO	Taylor Beavers/Dunbar Hardy	970-385-5750	taylorbeavers@hotmail.com
Black River Race	July 28-29	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Gore Canyon Race	August 23-25	Kremmling, CO	Paul Tefft	970-923-3955	paultefft@enviro-actionsports.com
Animal Upper Gauley Race	September 24	Summersville, WV	Donnie Hudspeth	304-658-5016	dhud@geoweb.net
Ohiopyle Falls Race	Sept/Oct ?	Ohiopyle, PA	American Whitewater	301-589-9453	www.americanwhitewater.org
Russell Fork Race	October 6	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011	surfin@kymtnnet.org
Moose River Race	October 13 ?	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com

RiversLiv 2001 NOWR Series- Presented by American Whitewater

Teva Oregon Cup / May 5-12 \$20,000 in Cash and Prizes. \$10k to kayaking events)

Maupin Daze	May 5-6	Maupin, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201	www.okcc.org
Boater and Raft Xcross	May 7	Maupin, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201	www.okcc.org
Canyon Creek Kayak & Raft Extreme Race	May 9	Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	www.okcc.org
Bob's Hole Rodeo & Raft Slalom	May 11-12	Estacada, OR	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	www.okcc.org
Coosa River Whitewater Festival	May 11-13	Wetumpka, AL	Lonnie Carden	334-272-0952	knewton@bellsouth.net
Wyoming Whitewater Championship	May 26-27	Jackson Hole, WY	Aaron Pruzan	307-733-2471	jacksonholekayak@wyoming.com

Arkansas River Whitewater Festival (The "Ark")	May 26-28	Salida, CO	Susan Dempsey	719-539-4680	aa@amigo.net
Wenatchee River Rodeo	May 27	Leavenworth, WA	Chris Joosse	206-484-1274	chrisjoQwolfenet.com
Bigfork Whitewater Festival	June 1-3	Bigfork, MT	Mike Dezanni	406-892-2674	www.bigforkwhitewater.com
Boise County Throwdown	June 8-10	Boise, ID	Sam Goff	208-368-9837	www.boisecountythrowdown.org
New River Rolling Rodeo	June 10	Oak Hill, WV	Adventure Center	304-465-3084	www.kayakwv.com
FIBARK (\$3,000 purse)	June 14-17	Salida, CO	Susan Dempsey	719-539-4686	www.peaksnewsnet.com
Colorado Creek Festival (waterfall rodeo)	June 23-24	Durango, CO	Taylor Beavers/Dunbar Hardy	970-385-5750	taylorbeavers@hotmail.com
Skyfest	July 7-8	Index, WA	Julie Albright	206-782-4566	www.image-that.com/skyfest
Black River Rodeo	July 28	Watertown, NY	Nancy Weal	315-788-2538	fishinsp@hotmail.com
Wausau Freestyle Kayak Championship	August 25-26	Wausau, WI	Julie Walraven	715-845-5664	www.dwave.net/~wkcc
Oñawa River Rodeo	September 1-2	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223	paul@equinoxadventures.com
Annual Freestyle Pro Rodeo	September 8-9	Beachburg, ONT	Wilderness Tours	613-646-2241	www.ottawakayak.com
Canyon Doors Rodeo	September 25	Fayetteville, WV	Backcountry Ski & Sports	304-574-4005	www.bcski.com
Gauley River Rolling Rodeo	September 21-23	Summersville, WV	Ace Adventure Center	304-465-3084	www.kayakwv.com
Kootenay Rodeo		Cancelled			
Get Yer Boat Salty Surf Contest	October 20-21	Oakland, CA	Elaine Baden	510-893-7833	www.calkayak.com

(open to college students and juniors only

OTHER EVENTS

Kananaskis River Festival	May 26-27	Calgary, AB	Undercurrents	403-262-4327	tony@undercurrentsONLINE.com
Mountain Sports Festival	June 1-3	Asheville, NC			www.mountainsportsfestival.com
World Freestyle Championships	June 25 - July 1	Sorte, Spain	Lluís Rabaneda		www.rocroi.com/wwcfreestyle
American River Festival	September 7-9	Placerville, CA			
Export A - A Whitewater Rodeo Challenge	October 6-7	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223	paul@equinoxadventures.com



American Whitewater Hires Events Coordinator

American Whitewater is pleased to announce the addition of David Knox as Events Coordinator. David will be working with Jayne Abbot, the Events Director, in the Weaverville, NC Events Office. David has strong academic and practical experience in event management and an intense interest in kayaking, river conservation and the improvement of the sport. In addition to competing at events and gaining valuable insight into sponsorship, PR and marketing of events through course work at Kent State and practical application, David has assisted in past years with volunteer recruitment for the Gauley Festival. David comes to American Whitewater with an understanding and commitment to the mission. We are looking forward to having David's energy, youth and enthusiasm working for us!

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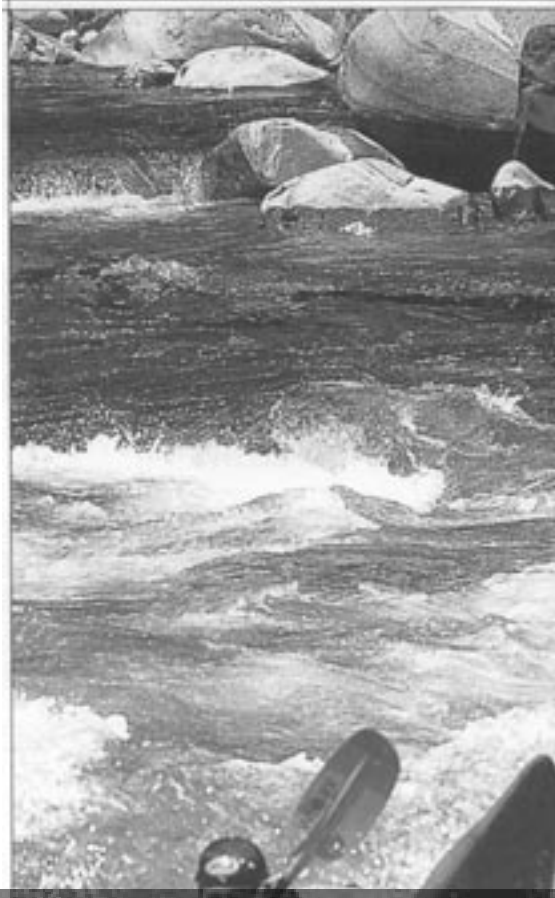


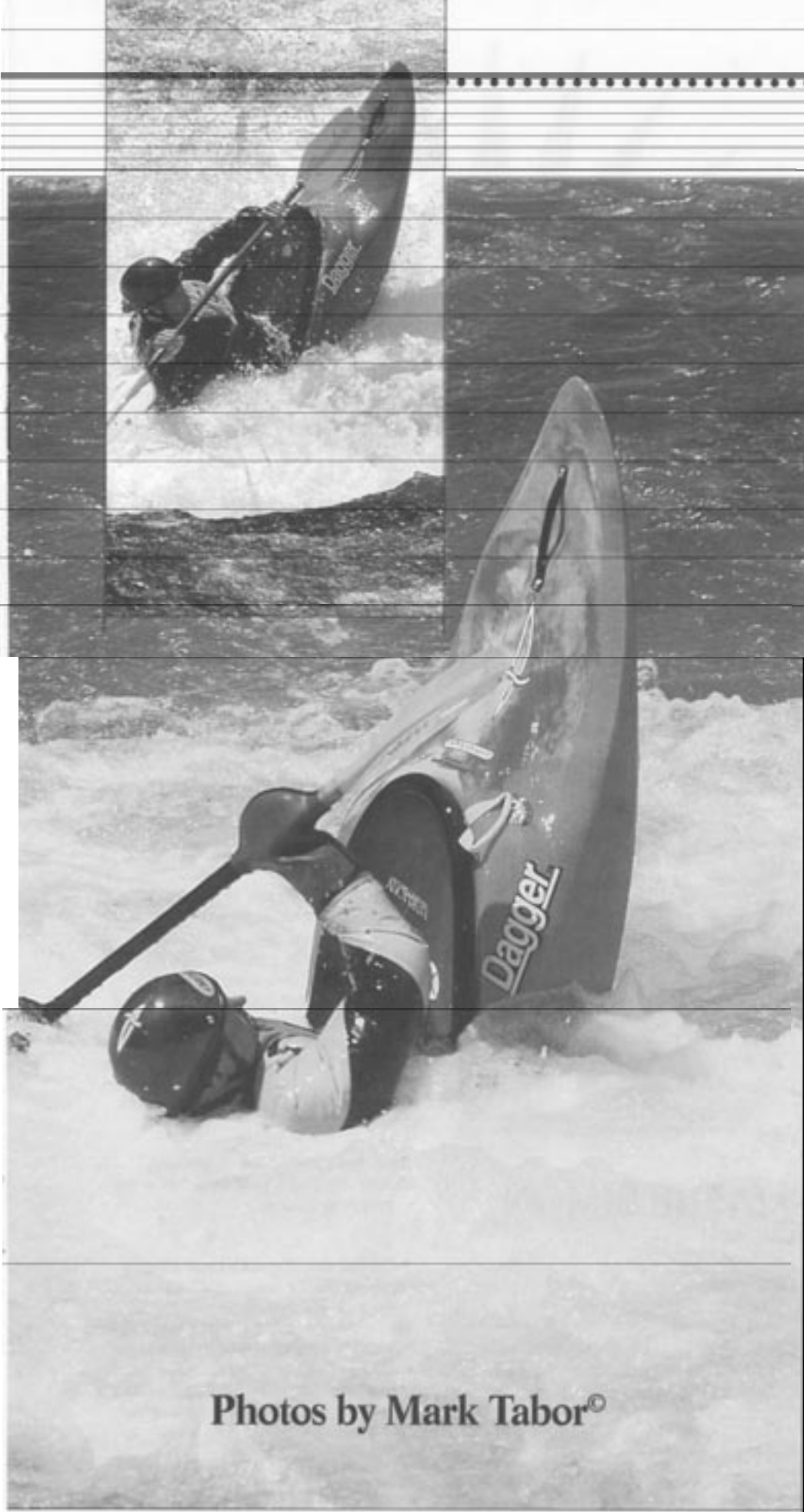
SkyFest, The 2001 Skykomish Rodeo and River Festival

By Dave Wester

SkyFest, The 2001 Skykomish Rodeo and River Festival, sponsored in part by AW and NOWR, will be held this year on July 7 and 8 in Index, Washington on the famed Skykomish River. Last year the festival brought 77 competitors from around the region for a great weekend of competition and fun. This year's events will include a freestyle rodeo through a set of rapids, a downriver race, a slalom race, and a three-legged race. Training clinics and demos will be available throughout the weekend. The event is capped off Saturday night with a huge party featuring a raffle, a silent auction, a live auction, bands, food and plenty of fun. All proceeds will be used towards ongoing river access projects in the Skykomish River basin. For more information, to register, and for directions, visit our website at www.image-that.com/skyfest

See You on the river July 7 and 8.





Photos by Mark Tabor[©]

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Dan Gavere®

• **DANIEL KILKELLY GAVERE**

Age: 31

First Rodeo—Event, year, kayak model, placing:

Payette Rodeo 1987
 Perception Dancer
 Slalom DNF (I broke my paddle)
 Rodeo top 5 out of 5 (beginner)

US Rodeo Team experience:

Best results - Worlds / team trials:
 1993 Bob's Hole Team Trials tied with Chris Spelius for 4th
 1993 Worlds 2nd place hole ride (7th Overall, I think!?!)
 1995 Worlds 9th Place
 1999 Worlds Squirt 5th Place
 Every team trials since then I have been in the top ten (k1 freestyle), but, never the Team... Boohoohoo!

Current Job / Occupation:

Team Wave Sport Factory Pro Team
 Wave Sport Brand Management Team
 Confluence (Wave Sport, Wilderness Systems, Mad River Canoe), On-Location Photographer/Videographer

Kayaking Your Way To a Good Job

Meet Dan Gavere and Jamie Simon

Interview by Clay Wright



Dan Gavere®

• **JAMIE SIMON**

Age: 30

First Rodeo:

Bob's Hole, 1995 3rd Place

US Rodeo Team experience:

Best results - Worlds / Team trials:
 1995 World Champion and 1997 Silver medalist

Current Occupation:

Field Marketing Manager for Red Bull Energy Drink

NOW, DOWN TO BUSINESS!

• *What motivated you to enter your first competitive kayaking event?*

Dan: To see the elite paddlers on the water and improve my abilities.

Jamie: A couple of friends recommended it. They thought it would be a great way to kayak more often and lead to running more rivers.

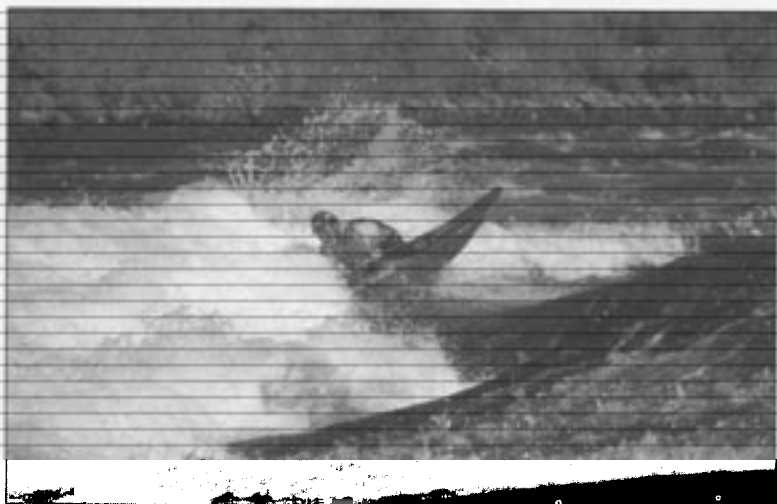
• *What were you scared of? What was your goal?*

Dan: Swimming / Not Swimming.

Jamie: My goal was to have fun at my first competition.

• *Did you decide to take kayak training seriously, or did the results just happen?*

Jamie: After my first competition I decided to continue competing because that was the best place for me to learn and improve my skills. I just wanted to be a better paddler. I was just having a great time.



Dan ■ the Upper Gauiey Photo Erica Mitchell & Dan Gavere

• *When did you realize how good you were?*

Dan: Just now, because my idol Clay Wright is interviewing me! (Just kiddin!) I first realized I was good at rodeo when I hit my first cartwheel in a Hurricane at Hell Hole and Corran, EJ, and Marc Lyle started considering me an actual threat.

Jamie: I realized my potential when I won the Worlds after only five competitions. I realized I was really good when I won the Silver at the Canadian Worlds. The consistency was reward.

• *How did kayaking prepare you for your current job - skills, having a name, what?*

Dan: I have been quite lucky to have supportive parents who encouraged my gypsy, river bum life-style. I decided that the only the way to make a career out of this was to have more skills than just my kayaking athleticism. I started taking photos of all the awesome places I visited...Europe, Chile, etc. To get into producing films I used to get my name, like the snowboarders did. After millions of fuzzy photos and countless hours of shooting and editing video, I became more proficient and actually published. Now I am happy to have achieved some of my goals. I consider myself lucky to be healthy and working at a job I always dreamed of.

Jamie: My level of determination and commitment to certain goals help prepare me for my job now. I also believe that traveling a lot brought many perspectives to my ideas that I apply at work. I paddled well and the results gave me the credibility to go to companies like Oakley and Red Bull and help them build kayak programs within their



Jamie and Jack on the Colorado River. Photo Dan Gavere



Dan Gavere®



Jamie at Kootenai Falls, MT. Dan Gavere®

athlete relations departments. I tried to look outside of the immediate industry to add value to both my sponsors and to kayakers.

• *What is the best part about your job?*

Dan: Traveling and paddling with all of my friends around the world. The opportunity to make a contribution to this incredible sport.

Jamie: The best part about my job is that not only do I get to work with kayakers, I get to work with other kinds of athletes as well. And people involved in music, culture, technology... anyone in need of energy. I get to be very creative and I have a great deal of responsibility.

• *Why do you still compete in kayaking events? Haven't you proven yourself?*

Dan: Yes, I do still compete and still will as long as I can stay in the top twelve or so. I don't have anything to prove. But every time I compete I learn more, and that's what keeps bringing me back.

Jamie: I am still a bit addicted to competing. I had a great time at the Subaru Gorge Games, which was a down river event. I feel I have proven myself at the rodeos, and do not intend to compete much more in them.

What jobs do you see opening up for other kayakers in the future? And how should kayakers prepare for these jobs?

Photo Tanya Shuman and Dan Gavere®



Dan: Designing, promoting, shooting, modeling, marketing, production... the list goes on. Basically any job that has to do with manufacturing can be obtained in the paddle sports market right now. So study, paddle and learn. The opportunities will present themselves if you keep working at it. There are careers for just sponsored paddlers, but the trade-offs are expensive and will always have time and physical limits.

Jamie: My suggestion is to pay attention to all aspects of the industry. Everyone has their own special talents in which they can apply to their own niche. Set goals and work hard to achieve them. Don't be afraid to approach people with your own ideas.

• *If you could be kayaking any spot in the world right now - perfect weather, optimum level - it would be . .*

Dan: The Michine River in Chile (Class IV with world class playspot)

Jamie: Somewhere that I haven't been before.

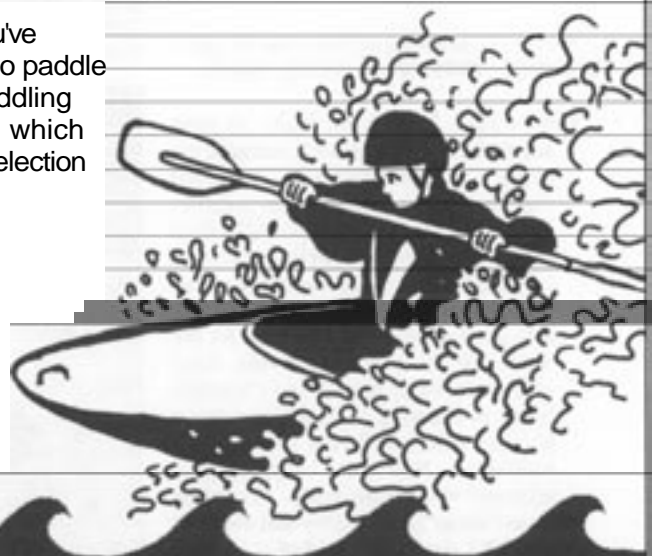


Thanks Guys! See you on the tour.

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So you've seen the latest kayaks, canoes and playboats. You've studied the specs and eyed the edges, but you really want to paddle it before you buy it. Nantahala Outdoor Center's staff of paddling professionals understands this urge to "try before you buy," which is why at **NOC's** store in **Wesser**, we've got an unbeatable selection of this year's hottest models for you to test paddle!

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NOC Asheville Outfitter's Store
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Westgate Shopping Center 240 to exit 3B

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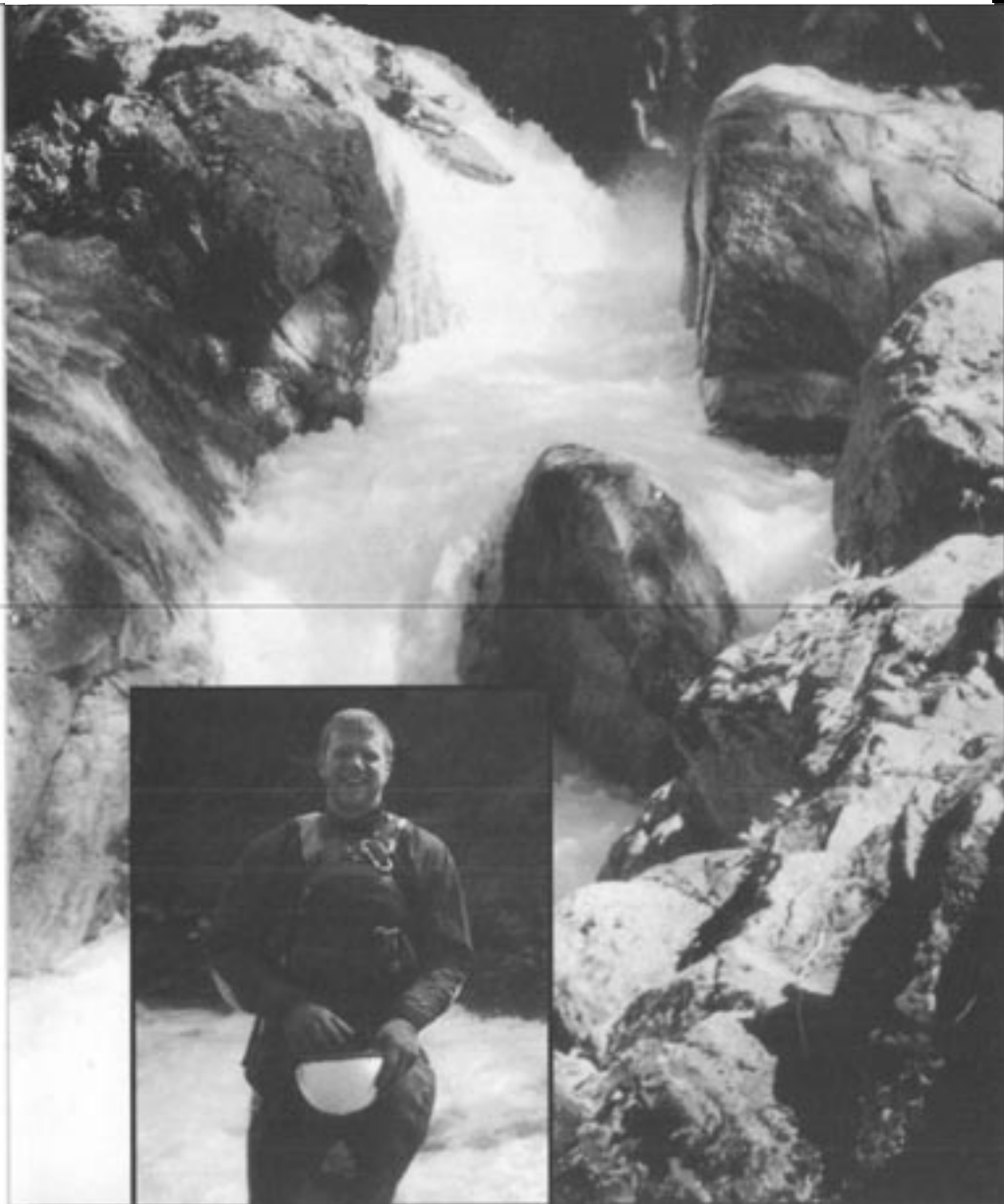
Challenging Washington's Top Tye

Jason Allen at Crack in the Rock.

By J.B. Seay

During the first two months we spent raft guiding in Washington, we lived in our vans. Since no one wants to spend the day hanging out in a raft company parking lot, especially when it's raining (and it is always raining in Washington), we would usually be up and about by mid morning. But then we got a couple rooms in a real house and it got a lot harder to get going in the morning. A slow start was getting to be inevitable for Jason and me.

So it was that we did not pull into Wave Trek's base camp until mid afternoon. The Wave Trek base camp is a clearinghouse for boaters and information in the Skykomish drainage. Here you can rub elbows with pioneer Washington river runners, world-record extreme kayakers, and junior high kids who just learned how to roll. Shannon Carroll was in town to teach a women's class, and she and Ben Coleman had already headed out to have some fun. We were able to catch up with our buddy Rob McGibbin, and the three of us decided to run the Top Tye. Rob is a raft guide/ski mountain employee, and he



The author, J.B. Seay



Jason Allen finishing Paranoia.

is a nut; one of the funniest people I have ever met. He really wanted to make the move to harder water, so he was stepping his creeking up a notch.

We rolled up Highway 2 to the take-out, where we left Rob's Blazer, then drove past Deception Falls to the put-in. While we were suiting up I heard a voice down in the canyon, so I scrambled down through the brush. There I found Shannon and Ben scouting the first big drop, the Spout. We exchanged greetings and agreed to combine our groups. It was a cool opportunity to boat with two pros on a hot creek, so Rob, Jason and I didn't mind foregoing the short warm up section upstream.

The Spout is a unique drop; the river drops about eighteen feet through a slot into a good-sized hole, with vertical walls on both sides. The line requires you to boof out and glance off of a secondary shelf on the left wall. This kicks you out past the boil line of the hole at the bottom. It is a sweet move, but one complicated by some rocky protuberances that make it necessary to boof later than one might like. Everyone stood at the lip and debated for a few minutes until Shannon said, "I guess I'll probe it." There is a short pool before the next drop, but it is vertically walled on both sides, so we set safety in case anyone ended up in the cliffed-out hole at the base of the falls.

Shannon sailed out and glanced off the left side smoothly, ending up in a little eddy against the right wall, just beyond the boil line of the hole. She was able to spin and paddle out of that eddy with no problem. She later complained about not having a "perfect run," but it looked pretty good to me.

Besides, I figure that probes get special dispensation because they go first. The rest of us followed Shannon's example with no problems. I really liked the Spout—its a cool ride—flying off the lip, then kicking off the ledge for several more feet of air time.

After only 50 feet of flatwater we were out scouting the next drop, Skin So Soft. This drop is a broken ledge with boulders strewn about in the landing zone. And like the Spout above it, it ends in a vertical walled pool. To make matters even more interesting, when we were there, a huge log had fallen from the river left cliff, and it was ducking into the outflow of the drop at about a 45-degree angle.

The left side of the drop had a slot that looked like it might be cool at higher flows, but we were stuck with the right. The only line was off the ledge through a slot that flumed out

over a few rocks. then bent to the left off a ramp into a larger landing area. I probed the flume with a stick. It looked good to Ben, and he sailed through with minimal bonking, and was able to duck under the log and eddy out. Shannon followed, with equally good results and she eddied out as well.

Rob went next, but he got kicked a little hard off the lip. As a result he pinned against the log. Despite Shannon and Ben's best efforts, he couldn't get off. I threw him a rope from above, but there was too much tension on the line for my precarious anchor point, so I had to let it go. Rob and his boat soon parted ways, and I watched as Shannon and Ben corralled him in the Class IV drop below. Jason and I quickly paddled through the drop to help them.

Rob was walking downstream and signaled that he was okay, so I paddled on to look for his boat. I found Ben and Shannon trying to get a rope on his boat, which was pinned midstream on a rock. Fortunately, I was able to hop out onto the rock and apply the Armstrong method of extraction. As the boat was just about to come off, Shannon, who was anchored on shore with Ben waiting with a rope, said, "You should clip onto the rope." I thought, "Oh yeah, great idea!?! I really want to get yanked in and swim!" But in spite of my reservations, I started to clip the rope into my rescue vest. Then I heard Shannon say with a bit of exasperation in her voice, "No, clip the rope onto the boat, not onto you!" Red faced, I carabinered the rope to the grab loop on Rob's boat.

After Rob was reunited with his boat, he handed me the throw rope I

Ben Coleman running The Spout.



had used. I was glad to see it, since it was almost brand new. Rob had even restuffed it for me. The next third of a mile of the Top Tye consisted of easily read, shallow rapids. Deception Creek flowed in from the left, and soon the gradient picked up again.

Here the Tye flows through a scenic park, and the first of two visitor overlooks marks the Monkey Cage. I've found there are two distinct kinds of spectators, the "geniuses" who think they could paddle the creek laying on an inner tube sipping a beer, and the people that are absolutely amazed we are "shooting those horrible rapids" in our little plastic toys. I prefer the latter. Its a lot of fun to run a cool drop and convince that nice couple on vacation from Peoria that I'm the nuttiest thing since a Payday bar. Monkey Cage is one of those places where this can easily be accomplished, with a platform perched on the rocks above the falls. It really is a friendly drop; just a 20 foot falls with a sloping entrance. As you descend, flakes on either side throw up roostertails, creating the sensation of passing through a misty gate. We all paddled through the Monkey Cage smoothly, then headed downstream to what has to be one of the most unique rapids I've ever run.

Crack in the Earth is aptly named. It dumps over a ten-foot ledge, then

JB at Crack in the Earth.



piles into a headwall just four or five feet downstream. The entire creek is directed ninety degrees to the right, then drops another six or seven feet. At higher flows, the second drop is a pour-over through a 5-foot wide slot. But at the lower levels that we saw, a divider rock surfaced, resulting in a too-narrow slot on the left and a choice slot on the right. When you launched off the first drop, your momentum carried you to the left, making it extremely difficult to make the correct slot on the right.

On another day during my first descent of the Top Tye, I watched one guy attempt to run Crack in the Earth. He got shoved into the too narrow left slot. The unfortunate fellow was jammed through the slot on his edge, and so was unable to take a boof stoke. As a consequence he went deep and got trashed in the hole. He eventually swam out of it. I roped him to shore, helped get his gear together, and then tried my hand at it.

I gave almost the same performance... through the left slot, failed to boof, and subsequently got surfed. I was sculling like mad in the heavily aerated water. As my head went under the first time I tried to shout, "Throw me a rope!" But I suspect it sounded more like "Mmmbbbblpfffff!" Well, no rope appeared, and I became the sec-



Falls Below Log Choke

ond to swim out of the hole that day. I can attest to the fact that the slot is very deep, and that in those depths it is very, very dark and quiet. After my swim out of the hole, I was pissed. I took it as a personal offense, and vowed not to let Crack in the Earth get the best of me again.

But on my next attempt at Crack in the Earth I got slammed into the wrong slot again! But at least I was able to *paddle* away with some semblance of dignity. So this was my third crack at Crack in the Earth, and the third time is a charm. I launched off the top boof, cranked right, and popped off the second ledge and sailed right through into the pool. Finally! Shannon, Ben and Jason made it through, although, I gotta say, they all winded up in the nasty left slot. But they didn't swim; they were able to *paddle* away from the nasty hole.

Now it was Rob's turn. I think he was still tired from his first escapade, because he, too, was driven into the left slot. But unlike the others, Rob got tooled in the hole. His skirt blew and he had no choice but to swim. Now, did I mention that he'd stuffed my throwbag for me? Well, I threw it to him, but it only went ten feet before it stopped abruptly and dropped feebly into the water, well short of its target. Tangled! Lucky for Rob he didn't get sucked back into the hole by the recycle. His boat and paddle came along shortly.

I felt bad for Rob, two swims early in the run, but he was a good sport and kept going. Happily, he had no more

problems on the river that day. We mustered out forces in an eddy downstream, then bombed through some easy Class III on the way to the next big drop.

Log Choke Falls is a thirty-five foot falls with... you guessed, logs choking up both the falls and the landing. A certain local named Tao- not once, but twice has run this rapid! But it may be quite some time before the feat is duplicated. Ben and I checked it out from the lip, there **was** a tenuous line, but I shouldered my trusty Micro and headed down the trail.

Log Choke Falls is followed immediately by a twelve-foot falls, which features a slick ramp down to a boof ledge. Straightforward and sweet, this is one of the most spectacular drops on the Top Tye, with the massive falls behind it and crystal clear water cascading over the ledge.

A delightful stretch of boogie water follows this Log Choke Falls—just fun, happy eddy hopping. There were choice rock spins and slots to hit, but soon we were at the final big drop, Paranoia. The entrance to Paranoia has the shape of an hourglass. The whole creek necks down and drops through a flume then out into a bowl. Most of the current heads straight downstream over a ten-foot ledge, which features a respectable hole at its base. There is a large crux eddy on the left just after the flume.

It was easiest to run the flume far left on a pillow built off the bank, then use the pillow jet to ride straight into the eddy. From that eddy we peeled out high and boofed the ledge far left. At higher levels, Paranoia becomes a straight shot down the flume, past the eddy, and right over the falls.

More boogie water follows, including a memorable three-in-a-row slide/ledge drop, and a big boulder cascade that you have to finish hard right. If you don't stay right the current pushes you up against a cliff wall. This forces many to swim. Nobody wants to swim in what is essentially a pool, so we were careful to be right. On an earlier trip someone hadn't been as careful, and while he retrieved his gear, I got a chance to ponder just how beautiful



JB at Crack in the Earth.

the pool was. Crystal blue water, fifteen feet deep, with fish and pebbles visible on the bottom, all surrounded by towering rock walls capped with a lush forest canopy. The Top Tye truly is a special, ethereal place.

We reached the take-out all too soon, and we were up the hill and running shuttle in minutes. Rob hopped into his Blazer, and we headed back down Highway Two. When I pulled into our driveway, Rob parked behind us. He jumped out of his car wearing nothing but a polypro shirt and said, "Dude, I left my clothes in your car!" I fell to the pavement laughing as Rob repeated his bawdy antics. We gave Rob his dry clothes, but not before Jason convinced him to take off his shirt and stick out his thumb on the side of the road for a picture. It's a good thing there wasn't too much traffic that day, because in Washington they do have laws about indecent exposure. And no, you can't see the picture. (This magazine gets enough letters about naked people!)

If you like pristine water and challenging, magnificent rapids check out the Washington's Top Tye. Anyone who has paddled it will tell you, the Top Tye is a genuine classic.

Jason Allen at Monkey Cage.



Russian Roulette on Cooper Creek

By Andrew Zimet

If I had to invent a boating nightmare I couldn't have done any better than this. Alone, deep in a remote gorge, I was stuck in a hole. After getting thoroughly pummeled, I broke out. Unfortunately, my considerable relief upon escaping the hole was to be short lived. A powerful eddy immediately sucked me back into the maw of the hydraulic.

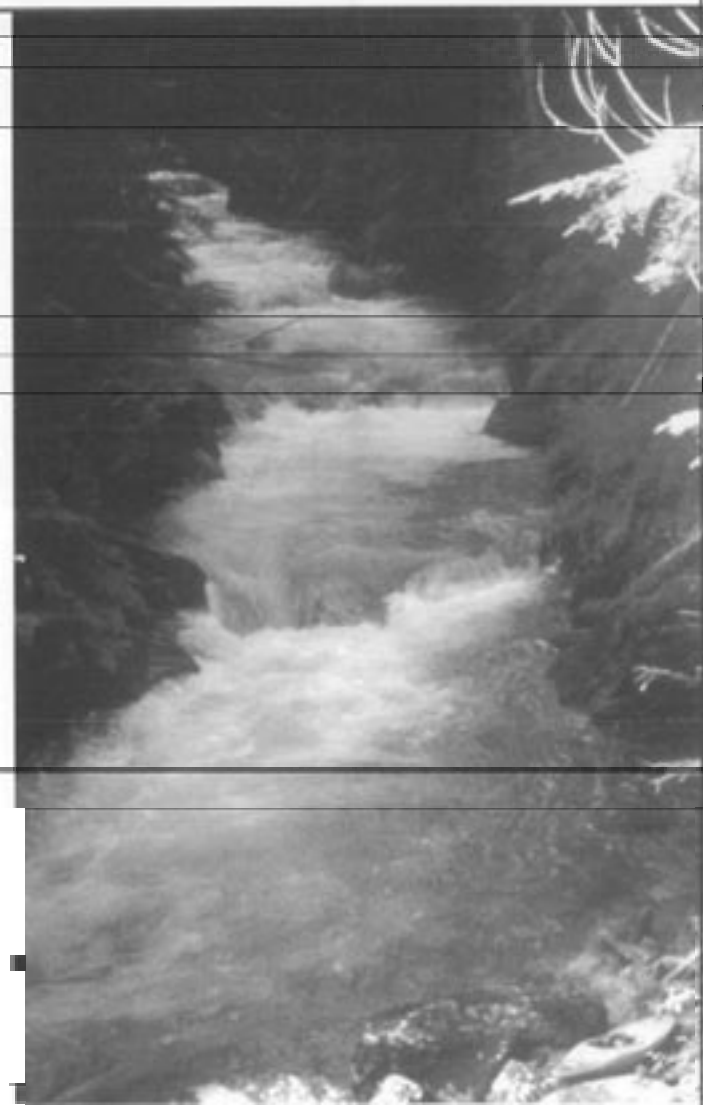
For a while I did the sequence in my boat; hole, eddy, hole, eddy, hole, eddy. Then I popped my spray skirt. The boat filled with water, giving me a better chance of flushing downstream. But I still couldn't escape the grasp of the recirculating water. Nearing exhaustion, I decided to bail. The only thing this changed was that now my boat and I cycled between the hole and eddy independently. As a last resort my adrenaline-addled brain decided I should jettison my lifejacket. Without floatation I could sink deeper, hopefully getting washed out by the current beneath the hole.

How did I get myself into this predicament? It all started with my plan to make a first descent of Cooper Creek in British Columbia. Unable to find a partner and convinced that the perfect water level was at hand, I took off on this exploratory run by myself.

A four-wheel drive road let to an alpine meadow surrounded by glacier-clad mountains, looming 3,000 feet above the creek. I hiked down an overgrown logging road, lugging my kayak. Thrashing through alders and devil's club, I reached McKian Creek. The boating was uninspiring, as were the countless portages around log jams. That night I camped at the confluence with Cooper Creek, praying that the next day would be different. I should have been careful of what I wished for.

Starting the hike into Cooper Creek for my first descent. Mt. Cooper in the background. Photo by Anita Zimet.





A beautiful, undisturbed river valley. Photo by Andrew Zimet.

crunch into a ball, so I could sink into the deep currents. Once again I popped out in the eddy, but for the first time I was near its downstream margin. I swam like crazy and was out. In the middle of the rapid below, I hauled myself onto a rock. Gasping like an asthmatic sea lion, I watched my boat recirculate in the hole.

Finally my kayak came free. I jumped in and tried to muscle it into a small eddy. While struggling with the swamped boat I took a quick look downstream and saw what looked like the start of a slot canyon. "Screw the boat," I thought, lunging for shore. Not only was I safe, but there was also a break in the cliffs above. I could hike out. I'd had more luck than any person deserves. It was like playing Russian roulette and having the bullet jam in the chamber.

Negotiating the steep side hills, dense underbrush and assorted cliff bands for hours, I finally reached the road. I felt foolish doing it, but when I crossed the bridge over Cooper Creek I looked for my boat. Unbelievably it was beached on a gravel bar just 50 yards upstream. Some

Continuous water on my first attempt. Photo by Andrew Zimet.

The rapids had character, and cedars that had clogged McKian so badly were standing in the forest where they belonged. Before long I entered the object of my desire, the Cooper Creek Gorge. It was all I had hoped for. Steep walls with enough breaks to scout and escape if necessary, enjoyable boulder and bedrock drops. I thought I had it made.

I eddied out above a drop. There was a slot leading into a hole. I wasn't sure that I could punch it. My options were limited. Vertical walls on either side of the drop prevented either portaging or escape from the gorge. However, there was a ledge angling up about fifteen feet on the left wall with a dead tree lying on it. A sense of relief swept over me. I could seal launch off the ledge to bypass the drop. I went for it. Precariously balanced on the tree's root ball, I saw a powerfully recirculating eddy directly below me. I thought I would be able to launch my boat downstream beyond it. Not surprisingly, I penciled into the eddy, which fed me right into the hole. Suddenly the nightmare became real.

For a moment during my frantic efforts to escape, I looked at the situation objectively. "What a dumb putz," I thought. Perhaps this gentle self-criticism spurred me on, because before removing my PFD I redoubled my efforts to



Scouting Cooper Creek on my first attempt.
Photo by Andrew Zimet.



evidence that the run might work. First we knew my boat made it through without any damage or loss of gear the previous year. Second, we had seen salmon in the river, so there couldn't be any big falls downstream. However, I am always amazed at the size of drops salmon manage to climb. Based on this flimsy logic we decided to continue. Each of us knew that there could well be hazards ahead that no amount of skill could surmount. We were foolishly counting on luck.

It was an awesome place. The walls, usually less than 25 feet apart, often over-

might think the gods were being generous, but as I saw it, they were taunting me.

I had to return. A year later Dave Friedman and Brian Fletcher joined me. I had to figure out how to hike in just above the gorge, so we could run it in a day. A gnarly bushwack got us down to the creek, which had a lot more water than when I ran it the previous year. The boating was superb at this level. The rapids packed a real punch. I figured my nemesis might be washed out, and sure enough the hole was gone. Now there were powerful eddies on either side with a narrow tongue between. We had to charge uphill to get past the eddies, but we ran it all cleanly.

Still, we were faced with the slot canyon beyond. The only eddies we could see were up against the overhanging walls. We could use them to rest and look downstream, but there was no way to get out and scout or portage. One of my rules for staying alive kayaking is never to enter an inescapable gorge unless you can scout it to its exit.

Scouting the rest of this gorge was impossible. But we had some circumstantial

hanging the water. The river had beautifully sculpted the rock. The rapids themselves seemed less remarkable. Then we saw the log jam. Banging around in an eddy up against sheer rock walls, we had no choice but to run it. While I dithered about the best approach, Brian took the lead. He dropped down a blind slot on the far side of a boulder and eddied out behind it.

To the right was a mess, but on the left side was a single log. Water intermittently surged over it. Brian paddled hard and hit it just as the pulse died back. He rode up on



Dave Friedman on Cooper Creek.
Photo by Andrew Zimet.



Dave Friedman on Cooper Creek. Photo by Andrew Zimet.

the log, but couldn't make it over. As he flopped down, his stern got sucked under the log. I said something intelligent to Dave, like "Oh shit!" Brian grappled with the log, looking like a giant hermit crab with a kayak for a shell. Eventually he was able to extricate himself from the woody trap. He took another running start and succeeded in clearing the log.

Dave and I followed without a hitch. I eddied out below with Brian, but Dave was nowhere in sight. Down river the walls of the gorge pinched together. There were no eddies and no Dave. We were finally in a place where we could get out of our boats, but above us was a treacherous cliff—steep, crumbly and wet. Our options were limited: trying to scout or climb out seemed as hazardous as continuing blind, so we chose to follow Dave. There was a four-foot wide passage where the gorge twisted to the left. It was clean and Dave was waiting below, wondering what had taken us so long. Beyond this point, there were some anxious blind corners, but the rapids were easy.

It was a fabulous run. I was giddy with relief. We had been playing Russian roulette all afternoon but, as it turned out, the gun wasn't loaded. However, with the possibility of new log jams ever-present, and prospects of scouting almost impossible, I don't feel inclined to press the muzzle to my head again—at least for a while.

Brian Fletcher on Cooper Creek. Photo by Andrew Zimet.



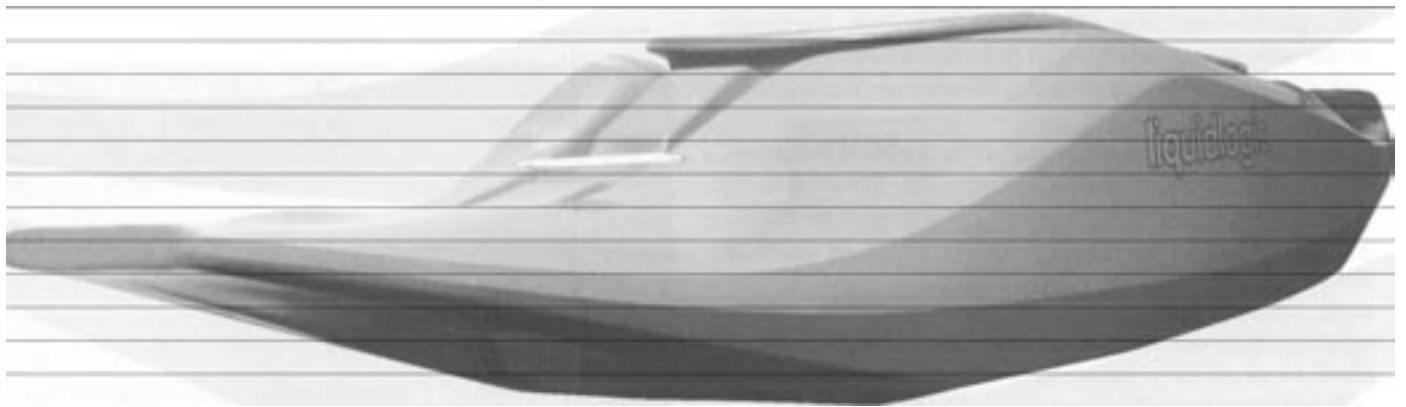


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Rip Harwood's

Most Excellent Adventure

By Rip Harwood

I'm just an average boater who came to the sport too late in life for my star to rise far above the horizon in the kayaking world. Although I am in denial over that, facts as they say, are facts! But numbering amongst the many dedicated river rats I'm privileged to call friends, are a few extraordinary folks whose stars have ascended the highest pinnacles of the freestyle kayaking world.

I almost didn't write this article for fear of drawing too much attention to their "secret" spots. But as an ex-surfer I know that secret spots, like any secrets, are by their nature fleeting. Were I not to write this article, then judging by the number of water rats already in on the "secret," somebody else soon would. If you are willing to put in the time and the road miles to get to these places, then I expect that even the locals will grudgingly agree that you deserve the quality water time they afford.

Most Excellent....

There's also another reason I almost didn't write this. Despite my best efforts, this story can't help but read like a Hollywood gossip column for kayakers. I just want you to know up front: *I can't help that!* I'm not a name-dropper, nor a good enough boater to ever aspire to climb above the lowest social ranks of the freestyle kayaking world, where I happen to be quite comfortable, thank you! I didn't *ask* these people to be there, they just were. So don't blame me for the Ann Landers overtones you might note in this article. Instead, blame the likes of Eric Southwick, Tanya Shuman, Dan Gavere, Eric Jackson, Taylor Robertson, Ken Whiting, Jimmy Blakeney, Julie Dion, Ruth Gordon, Brendan Mark, Chad Hutchins, Sam Drevo, Brad Sutton and a host of other kayaking notables.

I was coaxed up to the rivers of Eastern Canada from my familiar New Mexico desert runs by our homegrown world freestyle champion, Eric Southwick and his beautiful and talented girlfriend, Tanya Shuman. I'm one of the few boaters who can remember following Tanya when she didn't even have a roll. Imagine that, if you can! Did that stop her from smiling her way over twenty-foot vertical falls in Mexico? You can guess the answer. She's not the famous "Smiley" for nothing! But that's another story for another time. Eric and Tanya have been extolling the virtues of their favorite riparian playground to us Albuquerque locals for several years now. After finally playing with them for a week on the Ottawa River, I wonder why I waited so long!

The "play" section of the Ottawa River is located about an hour and a half west of Ottawa City, in the English-speaking province of Ontario. The section is only about four miles long. You can run all or parts of the whole thing and play on the fly, or you can "destination boat" any number of individual play spots. Just looking at the surrounding hilly, low-lying, cow-plagued farmlands, a western boater would not suspect that a scenic river with world-class play spots flowed just beyond the next pasture. The Ottawa is pool-drop, meandering into lake-sized pools and then constricting over bedrock ledges to form powerful but friendly rapids. A short section near the town of Beachburg is host to some epic play holes and waves. And because the river is near sea level, running for hundreds of miles through the *Canadian* boonies before reaching this area, it is WARM! I mean *really pleasant!* The water temp must have been in the high 60s when I was there in mid-September; warm enough most days to play in a shorty!

Wick & Tanya shared with me their three-room, riverfront cabin. There's no running water and no electricity, and a bear sometimes blocks the outhouse; but in the quiet stillness of the early mornings, through the smoky tendrils of morning mist rising from the warm water, you can silently witness, right from the living room window, stealthy herons hunting the fringes of the pine forested islands, to the lonesome sound of the loons. It is, quite simply, a place of magical beauty. Two other nearby cabins house some of the continent's other premier freestyle kayakers. Three guys named Chad Hitchins, Kevin Varrette, and Tyler Curtis run a widely acclaimed paddling school called "LiquidSkills" (www.liquidskills.com). Most of the Wavesport team was there, along with their trailer full of play boats. I arrived on a Tuesday afternoon, and in no time, at Wick's invitation, I found an already outfitted, totally customized Forplay that fit me just right—it was Dan Gavere's!

Wick and I were on the river by 4:00. We put on at a place called "Lorens," about a mile or so downriver from Wick & T's cabin. We ran the river from Lorens down that afternoon; about three miles. At

Left: surfing at Locerne, Quebec. Photo by Tanya Shuman?
Above: Tyler Curtis on the Ottawa. Photo by Tanya Shuman?
Below: Tanya Shuman and Tyler Curtis. Photo by Tanya Shuman®
Right: Julie Dion at Locerne, Quebec. Photo by Tanya Shuman?



Most Excellent.....

Lorens, you paddle across this big pool and between two rock outcroppings where the river pours through a slot and makes two waves, left and right. The one on river left is best. It's called "Pushbutton" because spins on it are automatic.

Because the Ottawa is pool-drop it is mostly considered Class III. Back in his instructor days, Wick regularly took his fledgling boaters down this stretch. If you swim or screw up in the rapids (some of which might be considered Class IV minus just because of size and volume), you generally just end up in one huge pool or another. The rapids are big but forgiving, and that combined with the warm water, makes the Ottawa an excellent all around training ground.

The Ottawa is huge by New Mexico standards; maybe 12,000 to 15,000 cfs when I arrived. During my visit it dropped to about 9,000 cfs which was a perfect level for a rapid called "Garberator" to reach what the local sultans of surf call "a really sir level." Garberator is a huge, fast, wave with a big breaking crest. It won't keep you for long, but it has a lot of power. Like all of the play spots on the Ottawa, there's a long recovery pool below Garberator, so that even the "non-pros" can jump on the wave, risking nothing more than a temporary thrashing.

There are also three runnable rapids in front of Wick and T's cabin that come down through channels around mid-river islands. McCoy's is at the bottom of the far river left. You can run it top to bottom. You start out above the island in a river right eddy called "last chance." Next to it is a surfable wave, if you don't mind playing above a big hole. There are two holes in McCoy's. The upstream one is pretty much mid-river, and ugly enough that Wick says he doesn't surf it. I've learned that when Wick says a hole will "work you" it's usually a really good idea to give it a wide berth. The lower hole, called Phil's Hole, is river right. Phils gets uglier toward the center, but is easily punched on river right. You peel out from last chance eddy, stay right, head straight for the peak of the guard wave above the hole, and then punch through the hole itself. Of course, Wick surfed the violent side of Phil's, getting windowshaded and cartwheeled, but he made it look planned and the smile on his face told me he enjoyed it!

Around the corner and downstream in the same rapid is a wave called "Corner Wave." It's another surfable wave on river right. Below it, the river slides down a shelf and into the huge pool that laps the rocks below Wick & T's cabin. At the base of this shelf, the river forms long, powerful ledge holes on river right and left, with a single narrow escape slot of green water in the center; a rapid named "Beaver." As we played on Corner Wave, Wick's advice kept recycling through my brain: "at Beaver, you don't want to be too far over on the left side." What happens to me? I blow off Corner Wave and my unfamiliar boat gets sucked into a boil. I flip and roll -just in time to sweep into... you guessed it: the river left side of Beaver! Now I'm not way over on river left, so I'm not strictly in the place Wick said to avoid, but it sure felt like a place to avoid!

Beaver is an extremely powerful, very fast ledge pour-over wave, with the river slipping under the foam at a knife edged, fifteen miles per hour. I slam into it sideways and am instantly glued into a magnetic side surf. I can feel the river whipping under the boat at light speed. Survival instincts telegraph my brain that a single millimeter too much upstream lean will mean an instant, high-speed windowshade. And believe me, Beaver is just as happy surfing you upside down! Leaning downstream does nothing, so I settle into the realization that I'm gonna be there for awhile! So I think: "Ok, I'm here. It's not too bad — panic is your enemy — don't go there!" So I just side surf Beaver for a while, crabbing ever so cautiously towards the center of the river until finally I see the escape slot of green water over my left shoulder. I spin into it, and to safety. "Schweet!" Wick says,



Above: Eric Southwick on the Ottawa River. Photo by Tanya Shuman.
Below: Tanya Shuman on the Ottawa River. Photo by Eric Southwick.



Most Excellent....

a smile replacing the earlier concern on his face. Wick and T and the other pros they hang with routinely jump into Beaver on purpose. I am told that it won't keep you for too long, but watching the experts convinced me that it is retentive enough to produce multiple cartwheels, windowshades & etc., whether you want them or not. The trick appears to be to smile, so people think you're planning it all. For that matter, most of them are!



Above: Tanya Shuman on the Ottawa River.
Photo by Eric Southwick®.
Right: Tanya Shuman at Locerne, Quebec.
Photo by Eric Southwick®.

Just below Beaver, out in the pool, is my favorite wave. By paddling around the island in front of Wick and Tanya's cabin, and across this pool, you reach the Ottawa's main channel, and one of the most fun and friendly waves I've ever played on. It's called "Baby Face." The river left half is foam, and the river right half is a 3-4 foot high glass wave. It's small enough to be friendly, but large enough to be a great learning spot for freestyle moves. You slide in on the foam and then surf over to the unbroken part. It isn't sticky, but it is retentive enough to practice whatever moves you're capable of to your heart's content. Downstream of the wave is nothing but a huge pool, so you can even surf Baby Face alone with reasonable safety, swimming yourself and your boat to shore without problem if the need arises.

After dinner a couple of nights later, we loaded up Wick and Ts truck, "Big Red," and hit the road for Corran Addison's secret spot in Montreal (Sorry, Corran!); a wave on the St. Laurence Seaway in the heart of Montreal, just a bit west of downtown. We arrived in the middle of the night so I could hear, but not see, the water. If you thought the Ottawa's 12-15 thousand cfs sounded big, try this on for size: the sight that greeted me early the next morning was the Lachine rapids on the St. Laurence Seaway. The St. Laurence seaway drains all of the great lakes, emptying into the north Atlantic between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, a few hundred miles to the east of Montreal. It is so big that an area out in the main shipping channel is host to the start of an annual, transatlantic sailing race! It is so big that you can't really distinguish the land features on the other side! The day we "ran" the St. Laurence Seaway it was "low," running a mere 500 thousand cfs!

French-speaking Montreal is situated on "rive gauche" (the left bank). The Lachine rapids are sort of on river left, too. I say "sort of," because the paddle and ferry out to them is about a mile long through some huge water with hydraulics, boils, and holes that reminded me of the The Perfect Storm. I'd have to look up the exact volume of a Forplay, but let me

tell you that whatever it is, it felt like a leaf in a hurricane on the ferry out to Corran's wave!

The Lachine rapids shelf over a bank that sticks up on the river left side out of the water. After the grueling ferry we made our way to a wooden platform built on a rock shelf in the middle of the river. There you can hang out between surfs, although the seagull shit deters any serious sunbathing, and makes for a somewhat slippery perch.



Most Excellent....

By the time we got out to the wave, or should I say, to an area in a vast expanse of turbulent water where Julie Dion, our fearless leader and navigator, said we would *find* the wave, I was already pretty intimidated. During the "voyage" out to the "area" of the rapid, Julie Dion had pointed out a spot ahead of us where she said, in her charming, matter of fact French-tinged accent, that we could eddy out and play in a sort of a hole/pour-over. When, like a baby duck, I arrived behind Julie at the general area she seemed to be talking about, all I saw (to my horror), was a pulsing ledge pour-over extending at least fifty feet in both directions. Although it was not super steep, and looked semi-friendly, I had no confidence in being able to bust through it to the relatively stable water beyond. Sure enough, it sucked me back in, and I had to side surf fifty feet or more to the river left edge and to escape, where Julie and Tanya were waiting with smiles of tolerant bemusement (they, of course had punched it with no problem!). This brush with a ledge hole "at sea" shall we say, did not increase my confidence level a great deal.

The sheer size and volume of a river like the St. Lawrence is impressive with no rapids at all. When you add huge rapids with eddy fences that are so fierce they seem to create their own horizon lines, huge boils, whirlpools, and pour-overs it can be pretty intimidating to the average boater. And believe me, in that company, I was feeling pretty downright average. Besides Wick and Tanya, I was paddling that day with Sam Drevo, Taylor Robertson, Eric Jackson, Dan Gavere, Julie Dion, Ruth Gordon, Mary Burnham, and several other boating legends whose names I can't even recall. I *can* tell you that paddling with such skilled kayakers was *enormously* reassuring, on a river whose nearest bank was so far away from the wave that people on shore looked like stick figures.

In truth, the Lachine rapids are probably no more than Class III, maybe IV minus, because of their size and distance from shore. East and west across the continent, there are plenty of rivers and creeks that rate way higher than the Lachine for sheer terror levels, but there isn't a single run anywhere I can think of, with the possible exception of the Skook, that gives you the same feeling of being lost at sea. Aswim on the Lachine requires you to get back in your boat, right it, bail it out, and then hope to make the ferry move before you drift past the last cape of Nova Scotia, and end up joining the crew of the *Andrea Gale!*

We congregated at Corran's wave in order to film Team Wavesport at play there. You'll doubtless recognize this wave in the next Wavesport promo video. It is epic: on one side it's a huge, fluffy 6-8' high foamy wave pile; on the other it's a 4-5' symmetrical,

super-fast glass wave. Eric Jackson and his wife, Christine, had rented a jet boat to "hold station" in the rapid and serve as a filming and photo platform.

For me, the wave was huge and intimidating. For one thing, it is a one-shot wave. You have to peel out of the eddy by the platform at least 200 yards above the wave and paddle hard and constantly through big water towards river right to even drop into position for the wave. And once you get into position, the huge wall of foam coming at you is the kind of sight that makes all your instincts scream "avoid!", not "drop in"! Actually, although the wave was really powerful and super fast, the pile is friendly and fluffy, and the wave is not something that will hold you or trash you too much. And when you get blown out, there's a secondary wave right behind that's half glass, half foam, about 4 feet



Above: Tyler Curtis on the Ottawa River. Photo by Tanya Shuman®.
Left: Tanya Shuman on the Ottawa River. Photo by Eric Southwick®.



Most Excellent....

high, and super fun and friendly. You can surf in and out of the foam, onto the glass face and back, and backsurf and spin to your heart's content (whether you want to or not)! Getting blown off any of these waves did call for good hang time and a bomber roll, because number one, you're out in what feels like the middle of the ocean, and number two, there are a series of pretty big wave trains downstream before you get to "calm" water. To get back to the main wave, you ferry towards river left and portage and paddle backup across a series of shallow pools where the river shoals out over the rocks supporting the platform.

As awesome as it was to watch some of the world's best freestyle kayakers ripping up the wave that day, there was yet another entertainment treat in store. It seems the jet boat driver's confidence exceeded his skill and judgment. He was keeping the boat "on station" upstream of the main surf wave pretty well until he fell victim to an on-board photographer's request to "get closer to the hole" (yes Wick, it was you!).

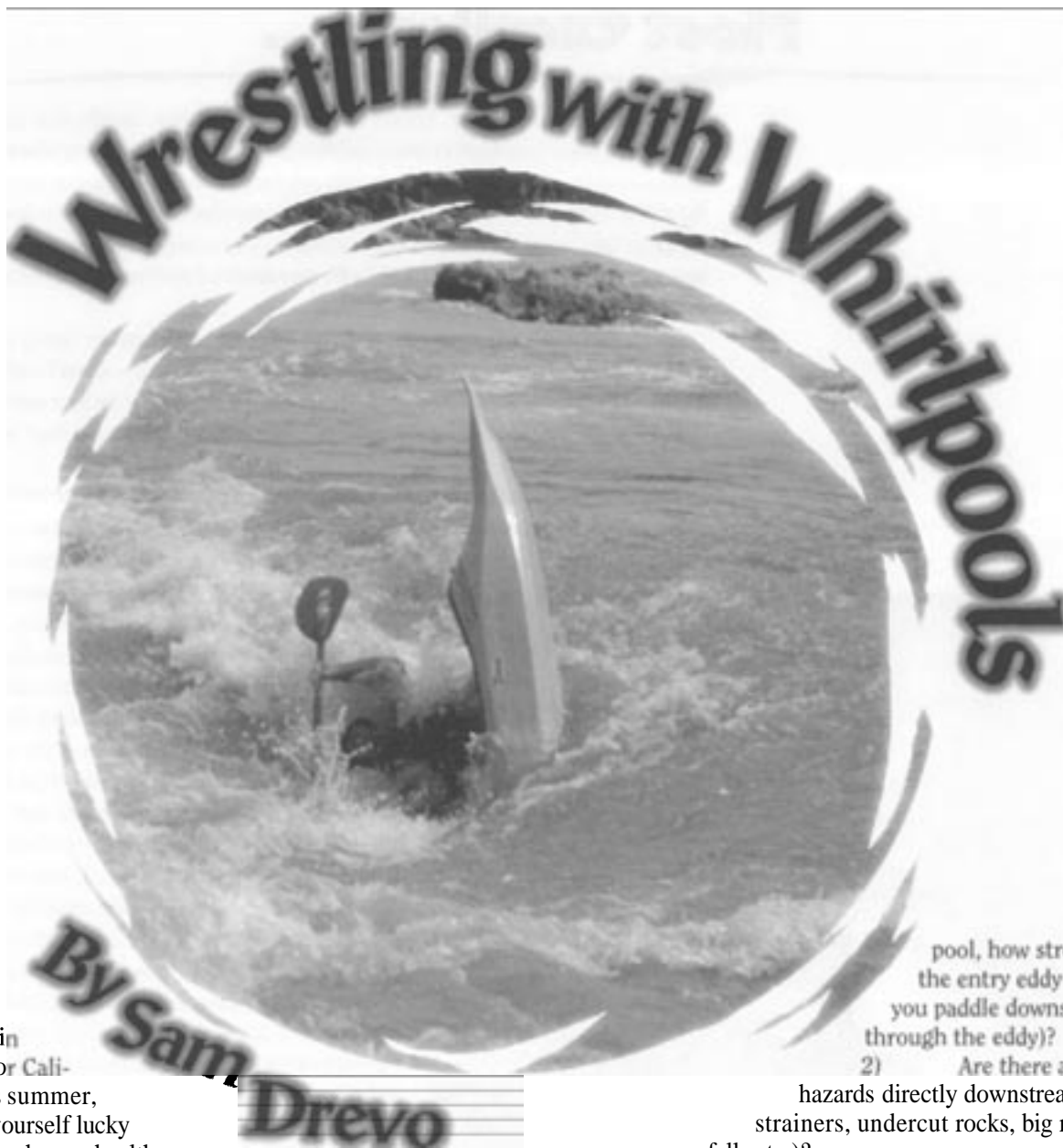
Below: Julie Dion at Locerne, Quebec. Photo by Tanya Shuman®.

Bear in mind, this was a 30 foot jet boat with a powerful diesel inboard, maybe 200 horsepower. But once it started slipping down that huge and deceptively tranquil tongue towards that hole, not even the winged horsemen of the apocalypse could have held it back from disaster! Like many an accident, this one seemed to happen in slow motion. The boat just drifted a *little* bit too far downstream and the driver realized just a *little* bit too late that he was headed for the "surf zone." He gave her full throttle, but the craft merely slid, Titanic-like, into the maw of the waiting hole! Julie, Tanya, Taylor Robertson, and Sam Drevo were on the wave and no four kayakers ever scattered faster! In came the jet boat, stern first, engine smoking; screaming uselessly. The wave poured into the stern, filling the boat instantly. Bodies washed down the decks like a scene from a Hollywood shipwreck, each strangely postured with one camera-holding hand held above high water! For a fleeting moment, the jet boat surfed majestically up that foam pile, howling in protest like a wounded hippopotamus. Then, ever so slowly, it began sideways broach. For an instant of collectively held breath, it looked like windowshade time, but then the current took hold of the increased mass of the waterlogged boat and, now submerged, it washed through the back of the wave and down the wave train, plumes of white smoke spewing from the still-protesting but miraculously functional engine.

Fortunately for boat and crew alike, it was a self-bailing model, essentially unsinkable, and with floatation built in around the thwarts. The worst outcome was one soaked camera and a bunch of skittish kayakers who kept looking over their shoulders every time it took station again above the wave!

So that was my *most* excellent adventure—a week-long guided tour of some of the best play spots on the planet by some of the best boaters around! Unlike my usual south-of-the border haunts, Canada was clean and well-ordered and—will miracles never cease—you could drink the water! And no, it was *no*fa dream. I pinched myself several times to prove it—the water was warm and so were the people. I hope to see you up there, since my old friends may no longer rescue me now that their secret is out, with this article as the damning proof that I am to blame. So please stow a bilge pump, a compass, and an extra peanut butter sandwich for the Lachine. You and I will need them for the long ferry move—to Ireland!





If you are living in Colorado or California this summer, consider yourself lucky because you have a healthy snowpack. A healthy snowpack means a solid run off, lots of water, and an abundance of seams and whirlpools. If you are an avid playboater, this is the perfect opportunity to learn more about these features. Unfortunately most whirlpools have different characteristics; so mastering the moves necessary to maximize your fun can be complex. However, practicing in these features can optimize your balance and improve your overall playboating technique. There are several factors that you should consider when choosing a safe location.

Choosing a seam or a whirlpool that is safe for a playboat is important. The decision will vary based on experience level and comfort factor of the individual paddler, but there are several questions you want to ask yourself before jumping into the suck zone.

1) How is the whirlpool being formed? Are two currents involved (these are usually the most fun), or is the water dropping into a pool? If the water is dropping into a

pool, how strong is the entry eddy (can you paddle downstream through the eddy)?

2) Are there any hazards directly downstream (i.e. strainers, undercut rocks, big rapids, falls etc.)?

3) How much water is in the river? If you are paddling in a river with more than 3,000 cfs, you want to be really careful. Even a river running 1,000 cfs can create powerful whirlpools.

4) Does the whirlpool move? You want to play in those that migrate, and most importantly dissipate downstream. Be wary of any feature that stays in one spot.

5) How large is the vortex? Even a whirlpool that has a diameter of one foot can be very sticky.

All these factors will help you evaluate the severity of the whirlpool. Remember, they come in many different shapes and sizes. Once you have decided to go for it, make sure you keep your posture throughout the whole ride. As soon as you lose your forward lean, your balance becomes compromised, and you can flip easily. It is important to paddle into the seam/whirlpool aggressively, and initiate the spin with your sweeps. Keep your weight over your boat, and remember your braces. Stay in front of the spin, turning your body in the direction that the whirlpool will take you before the



current spins you. You can try to initiate a stern pivot, and use a feathering draw to complete rotations on your stern. You can also initiate your bow (like you are cartwheeling) and then pirouette on your bow until you have the opportunity to slam your stern. I have seen some of the most unique, and innovative rides in whirlpools and seams. Remember, you are using the current to help link moves together; you're not letting the current use you like a piece of driftwood. This is

one of the trickiest and most fun equations in

playboating. Practice, balance, and enjoy. Be careful though, and even if you flip over and get a thorough trashing, keep your head, and try a backdeck roll. You shouldn't be playing in whirlpools that could make you swim, because once you are out of your boat you are exponentially more vulnerable to being held underwater. Start small, and work your way into the Tao of whirlpools.

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The Parallel Rescue



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

I was stopped on the side of the road near Jackson Hole, Wyoming, waiting for a dump truck to turn around in the midst of highway construction. It was a beautiful day. I turned my engine off and stepped out to watch the Snake River flowing past.

As I watched, a handful of aluminum Grumman's with Boy Scout logos came around the bend. One flipped in the midst of a Class II wave train. As an Eagle Scout, and a former Boy Scout High Adventure canoe guide, I was all too familiar with the standard scenario: a canoe flips, swimmers head to opposite shores, and guides pick up the yard sale of boats, paddlers, and gear for 15-20 minutes. Instead, I saw a truly amazing, graceful, and rapid rescue.

Within 30 seconds, one of the teen leaders paddled over to the capsized canoe, drained and righted it in the tail end of the rapid, and helped the Scouts back in their boat. Based on my experience, I thought the guide had just gotten supremely lucky. However, another boat flipped coming around the corner and I watched in slack-jawed amazement a different guide performed an even quicker rescue.

Later in the week, while working with River Ranger Dave Cernicek to promote the Snake River Fund, I visited the Scout Camp to borrow a tent for our American Whitewater Film Festival. I asked the Camp Director about the rescues I'd seen. How could a single guide, weighing less than 130 pounds, lift an aluminum Grumman full of water in the middle of a rapid, drain the boat, right it, rescue the Scouts in just 30-45 seconds, and all the while avoid flipping his own canoe?

This is the camp's story.

Jason Robertson

The Parallel Rescue: A Better Way to Empty Capsized Canoes

By David Kunz



"Where's my paddle!" the man yelled to his son, "Have you got yours?"

"It's behind you!" hollered the shivering boy.

Their body temperatures dropped rapidly in the chilling water of the Snake River near Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The father clamored for his paddle. A drenched hat was grabbed from the surface and slopped back on the wet hair of the boy.

Seven seconds ago, they were warm and dry. The Jackson Hole breeze was soothing their sunburns as they canoed on their scouting trip with the Teton High Adventure Base, owned and operated by the Great Salt Lake Council, Boy Scouts of America.

The father's mind raced as he wished he had paid more attention in that morning's "What to do when you swamp" orientation. He looked up from water level and witnessed something he had never seen before. He watched as his 15-foot swamped aluminum canoe was rolled on its side, pried out of the water, drained, and flipped upright in a matter of seconds.

"Climb in!" instructed the guide, "I'll hold it."

The cold had taken most of their energy, but they managed to flop their dripping bodies back into the canoe. Not a minute had passed since the canoers started their swim. Still shocked at the speed of the rescue, the father remembered when he was boy and was taught the slower T-rescue. He had never seen rescues done any other way.

"How did you do that?" asked the dad.

"Trick of the trade," the guide responded jokingly, "I'll teach you it if you can make it through this next rapid."

For over forty years, Boy Scouts and their leaders have been coming to Jackson Hole to canoe the rapids of the Snake River. What was once a small camp of the Great Salt Lake Council of the Boy Scout of America, is now called the Teton High Adventure Base. The camp offers scouts a wide assortment of adventure in Jackson Hole.

The canoeing trips take scouts down dozens of miles of the Snake River, ranging from meandering, mellow water to challenging whitewater. The early guides on these trips soon learned they had few options for rescuing swamped boats. The demands of swift current and multiple obstacles in the constantly changing water gave them limited time to perform rescues. Their choices were 1) perform a laborious and time-consuming T-rescue (also known as the canoe-over-canoe rescue) or 2) yell "Swim your boat to shore!" Both choices presented safety problems. The T-rescue worked best as a team effort—two people in a canoe working to

drain the swamped canoe. However, river guides were solo canoers and needed away to safely and swiftly unswamp a canoe by themselves.

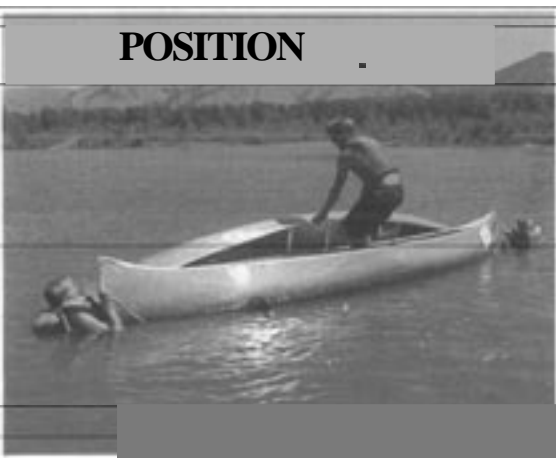
Enter the parallel rescue.

This technique involves the rescuer standing in the middle of his canoe and using the buoyancy of his own boat to leverage the swamped canoe out of the water. Similar to other whitewater techniques like the Eskimo roll, it is best if first taught and practiced in still water.



APPROACH

Use caution when approaching the swamped canoe. Be aware of where swimmers are and avoid hitting them with your canoe or paddle. The T-grip of some paddles make great hooks for reaching and grabbing a stray canoe. Once you have control of the swamped boat, direct those in the water to opposite ends of your canoe. Their grip will help steady your canoe.



POSITION

Position the swamped canoe parallel and centered with your canoe (hence the name "parallel rescue"). Stow your paddle and stand in the middle of your canoe, facing the gun-

wale. Push down on the inboard gunwale of the swamped canoe and roll the swamped canoe until it faces you. Grip it by the outboard (now top) gunwale. Gripping at about shoulder width works best. The more centered, the easier the job. For river rescues (and if time permits), place your boat upstream of the swamped canoe. This lets you face downstream and watch for obstacles. It also ensures the swamped boat to be the first

to hit potential dangers.



PRY

With one foot forward and one back, keep a low center of gravity. With the forward foot, push your boat down to tilt it underneath the swamped boat. Tilt the gunwale of the swamped boat toward yourself.

DRAIN

The weight of the swamped canoe can be lifted *primarily* by leaning your boat back toward your back foot. Lift the gunwale up and toward your lap while leaning your boat back to drain the water. Let the buoyancy of your canoe do the majority of the lifting. Be aware that the swamped boat will quickly become lighter when draining, so compensate your leaning when this happens. (If you continue to lean back and pull when the boat becomes lighter, you may continue backward and end up in the water too! In practice, this can be quite entertaining!)

FLIP

The fun part. Once the boat is dripping dry and the area is clear, quickly flip the boat upright and away from you. The second it lands on the surface grab the inboard gunwale to prevent it from getting away.



The Parallel Rescue



REENTRY

The options for reentry are many. A partnership can enter simultaneously from opposite sides. The canoe can be held and stabilized against the guide's boat while the former occupants climb in. Solo swimmers may also hop in independently (or with a stabilized boat).



The Teton High Adventure Base has been using this technique for over forty years. It has in-

creased the safety of its river trips by reducing the personal injuries and equipment accidents otherwise inherent in whitewater activities. Its benefits:

- The parallel rescue is much faster than the T-rescue. (I have seen it done in less than ten seconds)
- It can be done on flat and rapid water
- It can be done on both aluminum and plastic canoes
- It only takes one person to perform
- Since the technique uses the rescue boat to do the lifting, the rescuer doesn't have to be the "Incredible Hulk" to be able to do perform the task
- It is easy to learn
- It reduces the time the canoe spends



swamped thereby decreasing the risk of damaged equipment on rocks or strainers

- Most importantly, it reduces the time the canoers spend in the water and thereby cuts the risk of hypothermia or injury from river obstacles

As with all responsible canoeists, we at the Teton High Adventure Base share a couple of important objectives: maximum safety and maximum fun—always in that order. We encourage you to practice and use the parallel rescue in your recreational canoeing adventures. It can increase the safety and fun of your trips. Once you master this technique, you'll never go back!

About the author: is a District Executive in the Great Salt Lake Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He currently serves as one of three camp directors at the Teton High Adventure Base in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. He has guided canoeing and rafting trips on the Snake River for six years and can be contacted at (801) 582-3663 or dakunz@gslc-bsa.org. For more information about the trips available at the Teton High Adventure Base, please call (801) 582-3663 or visit www.gslc-bsa.org/camps/teton/index.htm.

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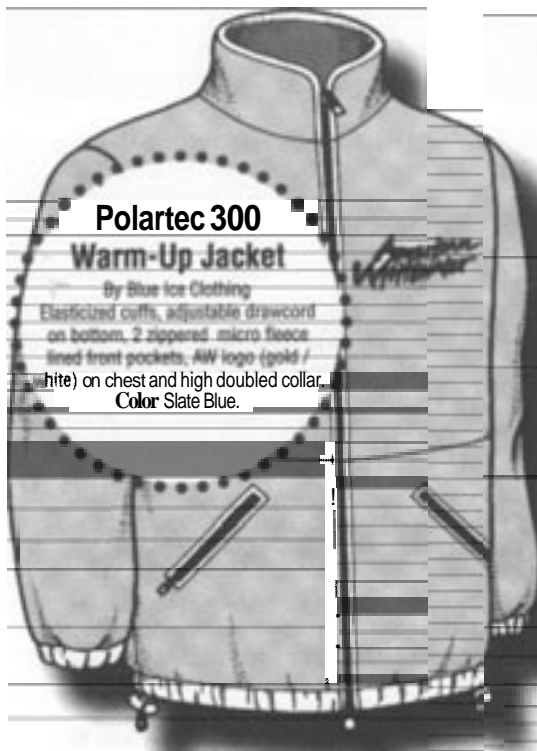
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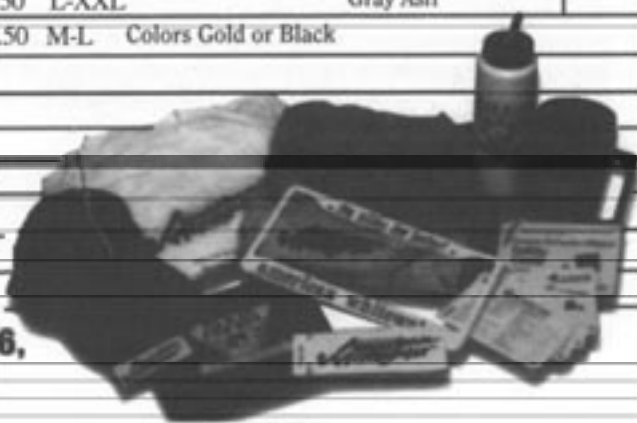
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Conservation Short Takes

Bigfork Hydropower Project, Montana

FERC hosted scoping meetings in Bigfork in March as part of the relicensing procedure for this project. Conservation Director John Gangemi toured the famous Wild Mile with FERC staff impressing upon them the significance of the whitewater resources and the need to secure permanent access to the river. At present boaters cross private land to get to the river. This land is owned by PacifiCorp, owner of the hydro project but lies outside the project boundary. American Whitewater believes FERC should expand the project boundary to include these access points as well as improving access at other locations.

Tuckaseegee and Nantahala Relicensings, North Carolina

Duke, formerly Nantahala Power and Light, has convened a technical group to develop a whitewater controlled flow study plan for the East and West forks of the Tuckaseegee and mainstem below Dillsboro as well as the Cascades section of the Nantahala River. American Whitewater, with the assistance of local representatives on this technical team, will work closely with Duke to study, design, and execute particularly the range of flows. Both forks of the Tuckaseegee have multiple dams used to store and divert water for hydropower generation. The Nantahala and tributaries have several dams diverting water to a powerhouse. These facilities are undergoing relicensing.

West Branch Penobscot, Maine

Great Northern Paper has agreed to conduct a whitewater controlled flow study as part of the relicensing of the Seboomok and Canada Falls dams on the West Branch of the Penobscot River in Maine. American Whitewater will work closely with local boaters designing and executing the study. The results of this study will be included in the annual water management plan for the river.

St. Regis River, New York

American Whitewater is working closely with New York Rivers United and the Adirondack Mountain Club to reach a settlement agreement with Orion power at their hydropower projects on the St. Regis River. American Whitewater has requested public access at the respective put-ins and take-outs and release of real-time flow information for the bypass channels.

Kern River, California

Borel Hydropower Project: Southern California Edison (SCE) is relicensing the Borel hydropower project. This hydroproject diverts water from Isabella reservoir (located downstream from Kernville) to the Borel powerhouse dewatering 6 miles of the Kern in the process. This year SCE will conduct a survey of recreational users on the Kern River to ascertain the potential impacts of hydropower operations on recreation opportunities. Please cooperate with the surveyors. In fact, seek them out so you get the quality of your experience recorded. The results will in part shape future flow conditions on this reach of the Kern River. American Whitewater is also asking SCE to conduct a whitewater controlled flow study in this reach of the River.

Kern River No. 3 Hydro project: Just upstream of Kernville is a 17 mile stretch of the Kern River with great whitewater. Unfortunately, SCE's Fairview Dam steals 600 cfs from the river making this section boatable only when sufficient water spills over the dam. American Whitewater along with many other parties were involved in the relicensing process for this dam from 1992-1997. SCE hired a consultant to do a whitewater flow study on the 17 mile bypass reach. Participants in the study felt the flow recommendations made in the consultants final report were not supported by field data. American Whitewater, along with other groups, successfully challenged the U.S. Forest Service's proposed

conditions for the new license in court. As a result, the project still has not obtained a new hydropower license but continues to operate on annual licenses under the old license conditions.

Rick Dancing, a resident of the Kernville area and river activist has put together a new study design to help break the impasse over recreational flows on the Kern. Rick developed a survey form for boaters to self-evaluate the quality of the flow for each day boated. Rick's goal is to develop a quantitative data set that documents the optimum boating flow by the end of this season. Survey forms will be available at boxes along the river. Please take the time to complete a survey form each day you boat this reach. Hopefully the results of this study can be plugged into a new license for this project allowing whitewater opportunities on this reach of the Kern to extend into the summer season.

Whitewater Park Proposed for Superfund Site, Missoula, Montana

At the confluence of the Blackfoot and Clark Fork Rivers just upstream of Missoula, Montana sits Milltown Dam, a nearly 100 year old hydropower dam. The project generates a meager 1.7 megawatts of electricity. Since the dam's construction it has trapped toxic metals washed downstream from the copper mines around Anaconda and Butte, Montana. The reservoir sediments are a listed superfund site by the EPA. Numerous plans to clean up this site have been proposed but met the opposition of Asarco, the party responsible for cleanup. Peter Nielsen, a Missoula environmental Health Department employee, ingeniously saw opportunity to break the cleanup impasse. Peter reconfigured the most recent reclamation designs to incorporate a multipurpose river channel designed for whitewater boaters and anglers as well as adjacent pedestrian paths. Needless to say, this ingenious solution went over like a wet blanket in the town of Bonner adjacent to the reservoir. Locals were concerned that removal of the dam and powerhouse would result in the loss of \$170,000 in taxes received from the facility. These same individuals doubted that boaters would set a 2,200 foot artificial river channel as a destination for paddling or angling. Clearly these individuals are not versed on the growth in paddlesports and the rodeo scene. You can help by sending the Missoula City Council a short letter stating your support for the whitewater park concept at the two rivers site. Address your letter to Attention: MISSOULA CITY-COUNTY Commissioners. Mail to American Whitewater, 482 Electric Avenue, Bigfork, MT 59911. We will hand deliver these letters to the Commissioners.

Spokane River, Washington

Nestled right in downtown Spokane downstream of the Spokane Falls, lies a beautiful run on the Spokane River. This reach contains the Bowl and Pitcher rapid, a drop whose aesthetics far outpace its difficulty. The Spokane River slams directly into enormous basalt boulders to shape this rapid with a backdrop of ponderosa pine parkland. Truly an appealing setting moments from downtown Spokane. Flows in this reach are influenced by Avista's multiple hydropower facilities stair stepped along the Spokane River. Avista is just launching the relicensing process for these facilities. American Whitewater along with the local affiliate Northwest Whitewater Association will be actively engaged in this proceeding. Key issues are improved public access below project dams and public accessibility to real time flow information.

Klamath River, Oregon

PacifiCorp has initiated the relicensing process of their six hydropower facilities on the Klamath River in Oregon and California. This is just the start of the five-year relicensing process. American Whitewater filed written comments in late March on PacifiCorp's initial licensing package for these projects. PacifiCorp's facilities divert water from significant sections containing whitewater opportunities. American Whitewater would like to see flows restored to these sections on a seasonal basis. Some of the powerhouses are operated in a peaking manner. This can either greatly enhance whitewater opportunities or create low flow situations that are unboatable. American Whitewater will be working closely with the commercial rafting community dependent on the consistent flows below the powerhouses for booking trips. American Whitewater will also be seeking improved access and publicly accessible real time flow information.

For more information about these or other river conservation issues contact John Gangemi American Whitewater Conservation Director phonelfax: 406-837-3155/3156, email: jgangemi@digisys.net. Please contact John if you would like to work on any of the above conservation projects or alert American Whitewater to additional conservation issues in your area.

Gangemi Challenges American Whitewater Members

"American Whitewater has done extraordinary river conservation work thus far, but with a hydropower workload growing by leaps and bounds, it is imperative that we increase the number of knowledgeable volunteers,"

John Gangemi, Conservation Director for American Whitewater, was presented with Perception Kayaks' River Conservationist of the Year award on February 12th, 2001 in recognition of his leadership on American Whitewater's river conservation program. John has driven this program to its undisputable preeminence. He has elected to organize a challenge grant using the \$1,000 cash prize that came with this award.

"For years, Perception has recognized those outstanding individuals who work tirelessly and selflessly for the conservation of our valued resources," stated Jim Clark, President of Perception Kayaks. "We are honored to present this year's River Conservationist of the Year award to John Gangemi because his dedication to the preservation of

free-flowing rivers combined with his clear understanding of how the relicensing process works has yielded some of the most significant victories for recreational releases to date."

In the twenty year-history of this award, four of the other winners have been American Whitewater volunteers: Pope Barrow (1987), Pete Skinner (1989), Mac Thornton (1994) and Tom Christopher (1997). They are extremely proud of John's recognition, as it further illustrates American Whitewater's long history of top-notch river conservation programs.

In each case, they reinvested their cash prizes into American Whitewater's river conservation work. John has continued this trend of 100% reinvestment. Each was recognized for the individual impact they had on riv-

ers. They also recognized the need to reinvest and expand the scope of this effort, particularly by better engaging and training American Whitewater's volunteers.

"American Whitewater has done extraordinary river conservation work thus far, but with a hydropower workload growing by leaps and bounds, it is imperative that we increase the number of knowledgeable volunteers," states John Gangemi.

But hydropower relicensing and access issues require volunteers on the ground all across the country, maintaining constant vigilance to ensure owners live up to the requirements of settlement agreements. On the Deerfield River in Massachusetts, for instance, since the settlement was signed in 1994, watchful volunteers have taken the owners

to task at least six times over the years.

In light of this, John is hopeful his cash prize will serve as the starting point in an effort to raise \$25,000, and have it matched by a foundation, bringing in a total of \$50,000. This money will be used to further train and empower American Whitewater's volunteers — the paddlers who are on our rivers every day and can serve as our vigilant eyes and ears to protect what we gain in our hard-won settlement agreements and work to win even more.

Join us in meeting this challenge, and ensure the continued preeminence of American Whitewater's volunteers in river conservation!

For more information, or to make a donation in support of *Individual Impact*, please contact American Whitewater's Development Director, Nancy Galloway at our Maryland office (toll free 1-866-boat4aw or e-mail: nancy@amwhitewater.org).

Hydropower Relicensing and Recreational Liability

By Jason Robertson, Steve Ledbetter, & Bob Glanville for American Whitewater

INTRODUCTION: A handful of hydropower owners have expressed concern during the FERC relicensing process that sharing release information or providing releases for the purpose of recreation exposes their companies to liability. This concern is a distraction from the real issue, and is generally considered a red herring or non-issue by FERC and other groups that are intimately familiar with the licensing process.

License requirements that project owners provide free river access, instream flows, or flow information simply recognize that, but for the construction of the dam, in many instances whitewater access would otherwise be available in the absence of the project. The dam has obstructed the stream and eliminated the upstream whitewater and altered downstream flows. To the extent that the river is navigable, the project operator must allow passage above, around, and below the artificial obstruction that it has erected. Thus, in permitting or even facilitating river access through modified flows, the project operator is merely acquiescing to that which the law of navigability already requires.

CHELAN CASE STUDY: In May 1999, the Chelan County Public Utility District (Chelan PUD) in Washington State wrote a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) requesting a directive regarding a feasibility study for releasing recreational flows. The letter expressed concerns for the extent of the public ability to navigate difficult whitewater and the company's liability if an injury were to occur. Citing *Ravenscroft v. Washington Water Power*, 969 P.2d 75 (Wash. 1998), the utility claimed that re-watering a 4-mile bypass channel constituted an artificial condition for which their company bears liability responsibility.

If supported by other courts, the Ravenscroft decision could deal a blow to recreational rights on rivers with hydropower projects in Washington, and might have value as precedent in other regional courts. In essence, the court ruled that the utility was responsible for a boating accident that occurred at low water within a reservoir. The decision was based on the utility's ability to regulate the level, and their responsibility for maintaining a safe lake level.

The utility also cited an ongoing case in which the plaintiff

claimed the company was liable for his injuries as the injury producing aspects were fluid, not fixed; because they changed, they were not patent. *Schuyleman v. Chelan*, No. 16561-2-III, 1998 WL 303735 (Wash. Ct. App. III June 9, 1998). The utility was reluctant to release recreational water flows since, in the event of a lawsuit, the courts might find that prior knowledge of a hazard on a dam-controlled river may constitute negligence and therefore liability.

Two of the cases cited were merely dealing with liability waivers and exculpable clauses. In both cases the waiver was upheld. *Schuyleman v. Chelan County PUD* didn't really mean anything in a legal sense. Chelan moved for summary judgment. The trial court granted it. However, the court of appeals reversed the decision because: 1) the trial court made a procedural error in not considering a supplemental declaration and memorandum; and 2) the court of appeals felt there could be an issue of material fact as to whether the condition was patent/latent. The bottom line is that none of the cases cited are actually on point with the facts of a hydro company releasing water.

American Whitewater and other national recreation organizations opposed Chelan PUD's interpretation of the relevancy of these cases. Likewise, FERC decided that the issue of liability was essentially irrelevant to the matter of conducting a whitewater controlled flow study for the license. The implication of the Commission's decision was that liability concerns were a non-issue; as long as a general standard of care was met, then liability concerns would remain a non-issue. In their decision, FERC reminded the utility "Whitewater boating is a public use of waters affected by a hydroelectric project that needs to be considered with all other uses."

Where the project owner won't consent to access, FERC has authority to resolve the dispute. In the Chelan case, FERC made it clear that, if the matter couldn't be worked out, they would order that access be allowed. American Whitewater suggested that, under those circumstances, the fact that access was compelled over the objection of the landowner would arguably provide some incremental protection against liability. Obviously, we don't like to rely upon either one of these conditions, or upon any obligation to provide the landowner with insurance against liability arising out of access. Hence our return to the primary argument that long established principles of navigational law apply: if the stream is otherwise navigable, persons navigating it have the right to portage around obstructions, whether natural or artificial. Thus, if the stream is accessible upstream of the dam and the water body is navigable, then we can get injunctive relief enabling boaters to exercise their right to navigate and, incidentally, to portage.

DISCUSSION: Recreation rights for boating and fishing on rivers that have been impacted by the hydropower industry should not be limited. The requirement that a project owner provide whitewater access, flows, or flow information simply represents a recognition that, but for the dam, in many instances whitewater access would be available upstream of the project. The dam has obstructed the stream and eliminated the upstream whitewater. To the extent that the river is navigable, the project operator must allow passage around the artificial obstruction that it has erected. Thus, in permitting access through the project area, the project operator is merely acquiescing in that which the law of navigability already requires. This was the point made by New York DEC to NIMO on the Sacandaga years ago: having obstructed the river with its dam, NIMO could not prevent passage down the river by prohibiting portaging on its land.

It is difficult to generalize about the significance of license-mandated access upon the potential immunity of the project operator under recreational use statutes; the language of the statutes varies from state to state and, even where the statutory language is the same, decisional law often varies from state to state. Interestingly, the Chelan PUD expressed the view that their liability might be reduced if access were required by FERC. It was for that reason

that they insisted upon a FERC direction that a whitewater feasibility study be conducted.

While some utilities assert that whitewater boating entails greater risk of injury and thus greater liability potential for the project operator than other recreational activity that might take place on the project properties, this is a subjective claim not buttressed by any data. Rescue expenditures by public agencies disproportionately involve those involved in the more casual pursuits of hiking, swimming and non-whitewater boating, although climbing and whitewater rescues catch much more media attention. Moreover, in most jurisdictions, the assumption of risk doctrine is still a defense to liability and given the public perception that whitewater boating is a daredevil activity, that potential defense is likely to be a significant deterrent to litigation. Indeed, there are very few instances where private (as opposed to commercial) whitewater boaters have initiated litigation arising out of a boating incident and even fewer where they have prevailed. This bogeyman is an excuse, not a justification, for limiting access.

Even in California, where the state reportedly imposes a higher duty as to "invitees," it is not at all clear that, where access is mandated by FERC as part of the relicensing project, the user would be considered an "invitee."

Most states have exceptions to the recreational use statutes that involve a duty to warn of latent hazards known to the landowner, particularly if artificially created. The recent Washington case dealt with this issue. These statutes don't impose a duty of inspection and our experience with projects across the country involving tens of thousands of river user days demonstrates that the risk to the project owner is minimal to nonexistent.

On a somewhat related note, the Electric Power Research Institute Hydropower Relicensing Forum suggested in its interim report, dated December 2000, that one way to reduce liability risks is to "have defined periods of water releases, so the public knows what to expect, when." Common ways of defining release periods are via scheduled releases, 24-hour advance notification on the Internet and a phone recording system of releases, or even 3-hour advance notice of releases for peaking or spinning facilities.

Some project operators have also expressed concern that whitewater boaters are self-selecting and not screened for competence. That factor is the essence of the assumption of risk doctrine. If someone were foolhardy enough to assume responsibility for screening boaters for competence and implicitly assuring them or the project owner that the boater is competent to undertake the trip, that probably would enhance, not diminish, the potential for liability in the event of an accident.

OTHER THOUGHTS & OBSERVATIONS:

Before fantasizing about an elaborate scheme to address the "problem" of facility operator liability, we should have some evidence that there is a problem. To date, American Whitewater and many utility companies have searched and failed to find any citations or cases where a project operator was sued, let alone held liable to a whitewater boater for a boating accident on or below project property. If there has never been such a case, then there may be no problem to be fixed.

In most jurisdictions, releases and assumptions of risks executed by the person seeking access can enhance the protection to landowners afforded by recreational use statutes. For example, if they contain an express acknowledgment that there may be latent hazardous conditions resulting from the artificial enhancement of flows, and that the boater assumes all risk of such conditions, that may afford the landowner protection beyond that provided in the statute. In many states, effect is given to such documents so long as they are sufficiently explicit and the landowner doesn't charge a fee for access.

Kevin Colburn, American Whitewater's Eastern Conservation and Access Associate

I am honored and excited to be writing in this journal for the first time as the new Eastern Conservation and Access Associate for American Whitewater. It seems as though I have been working up to this job since I was a little kid playing in creeks in Pennsylvania. My toys got bigger but I am still playing and working with rivers with the same amount of energy and curiosity that I had then. I paddled my first whitewater river in 1989 and have scarcely missed an opportunity to boat since. I have been down rivers in Maine, Alabama, British Columbia, California, and almost everywhere in between. Paddling has taken me to the most beautiful places I can imagine, introduced me to some wonderful people, and instilled in me a deep respect for rivers.

I moved to North Carolina in 1994 to study ecology and restoration at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. While there, I started a university paddling club with Leland Davis and Chris Bell that is still going strong as a fun and talented group of paddlers. In 1998 I enrolled in the Environmental Studies graduate program in Missoula, Montana to study river ecology and watershed management. The Northern Rockies turned out to be the perfect classroom for studying the effects of land management and politics on rivers. Juxtaposed in this region are some of the most natural wilderness rivers in the lower 48, and some of the most impaired. Through my experiences paddling these rivers and through my work as a graduate student, I have honed my skills as an ecologist and an activist. I am happy to now have the opportunity to give something back to the community and the rivers that have given me so much. My love of rivers and everything I have learned over the past few years will soon come together in my work to help the whitewater rivers of the east flourish.



American Whitewater announces the 2001 Ocoee River Symposium

American Whitewater is hosting a symposium focusing on future whitewater releases on The Ocoee River. The symposium will be held Friday, May 19, 2001 from 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm and coincides with American Whitewater's spring Board meeting and the Ocoee Whitewater Games. The Forum will be held at the Ocoee Whitewater Center on the banks of the Upper Ocoee River near Copperhill, TN. Space is limited so please contact Nick Lipkowski at American Whitewater's Silver Spring office, 301-589-9453, email: Nick@amwhitewater.org to reserve space.

The Ocoee River Symposium is designed to be an educational opportunity focusing upon the Ocoee River and the recreational and economic impact of it's flow. Speakers from various backgrounds and perspectives will present current Ocoee River information including individuals representing the Tennessee Valley Authority, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Congress, Recreational Outfitters and others. (Note that the exact speaker list for the symposium has not been finalized at press time. Please check with American Whitewater for more information.)

Currently, on the Ocoee River, raft company outfitters reimburse TVA the equivalent of the lost power generation for whitewater releases into the Upper and Middle (Lower) Ocoee. Whitewater releases spill over the dam into the river channel rather than being diverted to the flume and eventually the powerhouse. In addition the original agreement, dating from a 1997 contract constructed by representatives of the rafting industry and the TVA, called for the release of 13 days of no fee "event flow" to the Upper Ocoee River for a period of 5 years following the 1996 Summer Olympics and construction of the \$36 million dollar USFS Ocoee Whitewater Center. It is the position of American Whitewater that the TVA's demand for payment to restore the Ocoee River's flow creates a situation with severe and negative ramifications for recreation, the regional economy, and the public in general.

According to John Gangemi, Conservation Director for American Whitewater, "The TVA unfairly charges the commercial rafting industry and therefore the public for whitewater releases on the Ocoee River. The water in the Ocoee is a public trust resource. The TVA has no right to charge the public for a resource they rightfully own. The TVA's policy must be reformed."

In 2000, the TVA informed American Whitewater and the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team that events must pay for whitewater releases starting in the 2002 season. American Whitewater opposes this policy and objects to payment for any whitewater releases.

Gangemi Joins River Conservation's 'Who's Who'

(Silver Spring, MD) - John Gangemi, Conservation Director for American Whitewater, has been awarded the River Conservationist of the Year Award for 2000, by Perception Kayaks. John joins an illustrious roster of river advocates who have created the momentum and awareness for the need to protect and restore whitewater rivers; John has driven the American Whitewater conservation program to its undisputable preeminence.

"John has brought to American Whitewater the valuable combination of being an experienced field biologist, athlete, and outdoor educator," notes Rich Bowers, American Whitewater Executive Director. "He is the acknowledged authority on whitewater relicensing and has weighed in heavily on other national issues on behalf of whitewater recreation."

"What I find impressive about the award winners is that all of the names I recognize are of spiritual leaders in the field of river conservation," notes Jason Robertson, Access Director for American Whitewater. "These are the people that shape the paradigms and beliefs that the rest of us use."

Robertson added, "John's particular gift is his ability to develop science-based strategies and philosophical arguments for our coalition partners and affiliates to use. Once John has structured the national debates about hydropower relicensing, we hear echoes of his voice in the media, the halls of Congress, the agencies, and the materials that FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission)

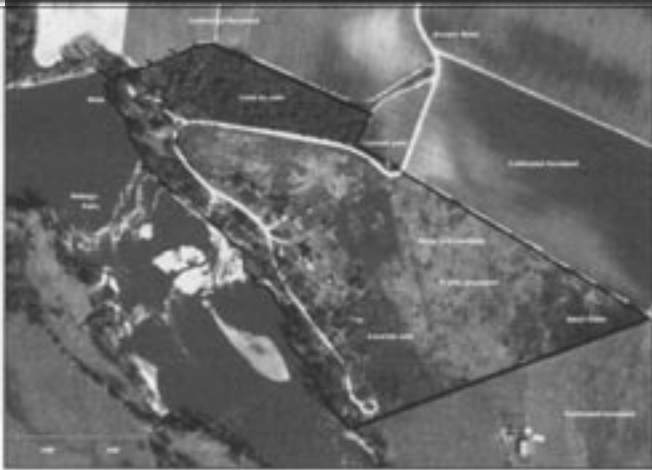
develops. He's the ghost in the political machine that has made river conservation a tenable societal objective that can be balanced with dam removal, energy production, recreation, and fisheries protection. Perception could not have chosen a more deserving winner for this year's award."

"For years, Perception has recognized those outstanding individuals who work tirelessly and selflessly for the conservation of our valued resources," states Jim Clark, President of Perception Kayaks. "We are honored to present this year's River Conservationist of the Year award to John Gangemi because his dedication to the preservation of free-flowing rivers combined with his clear understanding of how the relicensing process works has yielded some of the most significant victories for recreational releases to date."



HIDALGO FALLS ACCESS ACQUISITION, TX

By Jason Robertson



In January, twenty acres of river front property on the Brazos River, including the parking area for the popular Hidalgo Falls park n' play rapid were put on the market. Boaters responded quickly and donated nearly \$50,000 to acquire 7 acres including an access easement just below the falls and to the popular "slide" put-in just upstream of the fall line. American Whitewater Regional Coordinator Steve Daniel provided leadership and advice on the acquisition. Steve also worked closely with other volunteers and boaters in the area to find funding and an owner for the site. A local river advocacy group, Texas Rivers Protection Association (TRPA) will hold the title to the land and manage the site for the boating community. The final details are being worked out regarding access, so be sure to check out our website for updates (www.americanwhitewater.org/access).

American Whitewater is accepting tax-deductible donations for the acquisition, which we will forward to TRPA to manage the site. Donations may be mailed to Hidalgo Falls Fund, c/o American Whitewater, P.O. Box 636, Margaretville, NY 12455.

Whitewater Injury Survey

By Dr. David Fiore

Editor's Note: Dr. David Fiore is an associate professor of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Nevada School of Medicine in Reno, W a n d an avid kayaker. Some of you may have participated in this study, which was conducted via face-to-face and web-based interviews, with a link from American Whitewater's web page.

My research team recently completed a survey of kayakers concerning injuries they have had in the past five years. In this retrospective study of kayakers, approximately 60% of respondents reported at least one injury within the previous five years. Twenty-one percent of the reported injuries were chronic. Class I/II and V/VI boaters had a higher than average rate of reported injuries, but most injuries occurred to the Class III and IV boaters (the majority of kayakers), usually while kayaking on water within their skill level. They were almost always injured while in their kayaks (87%), and most commonly injured the upper extremity (62%). Most injuries were fairly evenly divided among abrasions (25%), tendonitis (25%), contusions (22%) and dislocations (17%). Although 30% reported missing more than a month of kayaking due to injury, very few reported a poor recovery (4%). Here are the basic findings from our survey; we'll let you draw your own conclusions:

- Date of survey— 1997–1998
- Number of respondents—469
- Number injured 264 (56%), 335 injuries with 56 respondents reporting more than one injury. ** cannot assume this represents an overall whitewater injury rate. Our survey technique may over/under represent injured paddlers. (In the

data collected by hand (mainly face-to-face) the injury rate was similar - 54%).

- Gender: 83% male, 17% female. Injuries are reflected appropriately 84% male, 16% female.
- Age of respondents: 10-19>3%, 20-29>28%, 30-39>15%, 40-49>19%, 50-59 =28%, 60 and up>7%.
- Years boating: 0-1>9%, 2-4>30%, 5-10>33%, 11 and up >28%.
- Days boating/year: 0-5>5%, 6-10>7%, 11-20>28%, 21-50>7%, 50+>53%.
- The more days per year boating, the higher the injury rate.
- Craft: 82% of respondents were kayakers, 5% C-1, 10% rafters, and 1% open canoeists.
- The greatest proportion of injuries (35%) was in boaters who were Class IV at the time of injury.
- The higher the class boater at the time of survey- the higher the injury rate. (This may reflect the fact that the higher the class boater (at time of survey) also reflects the number of days and years boating). Activity leading to injury: 82% while boating, 8.5% while swimming, and 9.5% while portaging.
- Mechanism of injury: impact - 45%, traumatic stress - 24% (e.g. force of water against body, shoulder dislocation), over-use 23%, other 8%.
- Medical care: 52% sought medical care, 48% did not.
- Outcome: Full recovery - 55%, Good recovery - 40%, Poor recovery - 5%.
- Time off from boating: None - 34%, <one week - 15%, <1 month - 25%, >1 month - 26%
- Flow: most acute injuries occurred on "moderate" flows

Whitewater Injury Survey continued

- Difficulty of rapid: Class I - 3%, II - 12%, III - 29%, IV - 23%, VI - 2%. Not specified (chronic injury, etc) - 20%

BODY PART INJURED

- Head 11%, (52)
- Neck 4%, (19)
- Torso (back, pelvis, ribs) 9% (39)
- Lower extremities (hip to toes) 14% (63)
- Upper extremities (shoulder to finger tips) 62% (280)
- Total: 453

TYPE OF INJURY

- Tendonitis (97)
- Abrasion/laceration (87)
- Contusion (85)
- Sprain (74)
- Dislocation (56)
- Fracture (44)
- Hypothermia (8)
- Near drowning (7)
- Total Injuries: 458

Stonycreek River Economic Impact Study
**Benscreek Canoe Club
 builds support for
 Quemahoning Dam
 releases**

By Brad Clemenson & Mark Antonik, AW Regional Coordinator

Impact gets attention, but when seeking broad community support for a whitewater stream, "impact" means "economic impact." Advocates for the Stonycreek River between Somerset and Johnstown, Pennsylvania, are using that point to generate support for dam releases for whitewater activity, and they're making progress.

The Benscreek Canoe Club worked with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council to revise American Whitewater's template for an economic-impact survey and have produced an economic-impact study showing that the Stonycreek Rendezvous brought an estimated \$35,000 into the local economy from non-local boaters in just one weekend.

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The Rendezvous each year is promoted by the Benscreek Canoe Club and American Whitewater. The weekend event includes various water-related activities on the Stonycreek Canyon (Class III-IV), Upper Gorge (Class IV) and on seven tributary creeks (Class III-V). The weekend features a designated campground with food, music, gear and equipment auctions, and a rodeo and race.

However, water levels usually are sufficient for whitewater boating only in the early to mid-spring and after heavy rains. So local boaters can enjoy these streams after a summer storm, but those living farther away come infrequently.

Boaters interested in extending the paddling season into warmer periods have been joined by whitewater outfitters, environmental groups and American Whitewater in proposing timed releases from Quemahoning Reservoir, which would feed the Stonycreek Canyon between Hollsopple and Carpenter's Park. The purchase of the "Que" by a new public authority moved this discussion into the public arena for the first time last year.

While many whitewater rivers have sizable pools between each section of rapids, the Stony Canyon has a favorable ratio of whitewater to flatwater, and offers more than 100 hydraulics and surfing waves in a wide range of size and configuration. As a result, the river can accommodate a large "playboating" population of diverse skill levels without becoming overcrowded.

Initially, the newly formed Cambria-Somerset Authority indicated it would not consider whitewater releases. But after a concerted push by the Benscreek Canoe Club and other river advocates, the authority has informally agreed to consider releases after it completes a detailed assessment of the reservoir's hydrology.

"The economic data was a key in getting the authority to listen to whitewater enthusiasts," says the Benscreek's Canoe Club president, Steve Podratsky.

The Johnstown-Somerset area in the 1980s had the nation's highest unemployment when the coal and steel industries plum-

meted and it still struggles to overcome that legacy. The region has diversified into defense manufacturing, health services, R&D and tourism, and a study published last year by the Milken Institute listed Johnstown among the nation's 50 cities with the greatest growth in high-tech jobs. But the community typically still has the highest unemployment rate among Pennsylvania's metropolitan areas.

"Unemployment has remained relatively high because this area has a low cost of living, safe and friendly communities, a wealth of outdoor recreation and beauty, and many people with strong family ties who just won't leave town even if they don't have a job," says Len Lichvar, president of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project, a local watershed advocate. "We're trying to build on our strengths, outdoor recreation is one of those strengths, and I think our community leaders are finally beginning to recognize that we need to do everything we can to maximize the economic bang we can get from our rivers through tourism."

Since the Stonycreek is near the four-lane Route 219 and easily accessible via the Pennsylvania Turnpike from Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and the Baltimore-Washington area, the Stonycreek Rendezvous has been attracting many non-local boaters.

The boaters were surveyed during the Rendezvous on April 9-11, 1999, and another survey was conducted two weeks later on April 24-25 during the Stonycreek Raft Run, an outing conducted by professional outfitters from Ohiopyle, Pennsylvania.

Three distinct sets of data were generated from the two weekends of surveys:

- Data on participants in the nationally promoted Rendezvous weekend April 9-11; analysis of survey results indicates that local spending by approximately 500 participants totaled \$37,670 for the weekend, with \$34,970 of this spending coming from non-local boaters.

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- Data on participants in a locally promoted raft trip; analysis indicates that 144 participants spent \$5,070 on boating-related activities; however, because the event was promoted only in the local area, very few boaters came from outside the local economy and there was almost no influx of dollars into the local economy.
- Data on kayakers who happened to be on the river during the raft outing; this was a very small sampling (12 boaters), but their spending patterns were very similar to those during the Rendezvous, providing at least some support for using Rendezvous data to project annual impact from hard boaters over a year-long period.

During the Rendezvous, 158 people or 31% of participants filled out the survey forms, a sufficient sample to project spending by the entire group.

Among the demographic findings that are helping to build local support: a large majority of the Rendezvous participants — 80% — reported that they had come to the region specifically to boat, meaning they are "importing" dollars into the local economy. And hard boaters in general are better educated and have higher incomes than the local raft-trip participants. The striking figure that 75% of the hard boaters surveyed had at least a college degree is consistent with other demographic reports of people who participate in this sport. Likewise, one-third of hard boaters reported incomes over \$60,000 per year, and 28% of the hard boaters had incomes of \$40,000 to \$60,000 per year.

Some respondents did not answer any of the spending questions. The study assumed that these respondents spent nothing. In addition, many surveys were filled out

in the middle of the weekend and therefore may not reflect spending that took place later in the weekend. These factors suggest that the economic projections used in this report are likely conservative and may understate actual spending.

Survey respondents reported that they had spent \$16,070, or an average of \$101.71 each. If each respondent was paying for 1.35 persons on average, then average trip spending per person was \$75.34. If that number accurately reflects the spending patterns of all 500 participants, then total spending for the weekend was \$37,670.

In measuring economic impact, it is necessary to distinguish spending by people from outside the area; "economic activity" originates when new dollars are brought into an economy. Respondents were asked to provide their zip code, so it was easy to distinguish locals from non-locals.

Of the 158 survey respondents, 127 (80.4%) were from outside the local area. Applying that ratio to 500 participants indicates that 402 of the participants were not locals.

Non-local respondents reported that they had spent \$14,362, or an average of \$113.09 each. But each reported paying for 1.30 persons on average, so average trip spending per person was \$86.99. Respondents on average stayed 1.85 days, so average spending per person per day was \$47.02. If the estimate of



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\$86.99 per person accurately reflects the spending of all 402 non-local participants, then new dollars spent in the local economy this weekend totaled \$34,970.

As expected, people who traveled further distances to attend the event spent more money on average than those who came less distance. Eighty of the 158 survey respondents (50.6%) traveled more than 100 miles to participate, and they averaged \$99.89 each (\$53.99 per person-per day).

Surveys asked how many trips were made to the Stonycreek River each year, and how many more trips would be made if the river had boatable flows.

Non-local respondents reported, on average, that they had boated the Stonycreek River 2.0 times in the past 12 months, but that they would make an additional 4.8 trips per year if the stream had reliable flows. If spending patterns reported on Rendezvous weekend accurately reflect spending patterns during other visits, then annual local spending by the 402 non-local people on three trips over the year would be \$104,910, and if they averaged 7.8 trips each based on dam releases assuring boatable flows, the direct spending would be \$285,963.

Twelve kayakers were surveyed along with the raft-trip participants on April 21-22. This is not a statistically significant sampling, but total spending reported this weekend was very similar to spending reported during the Rendezvous. Kayakers surveyed this weekend spent on average more on lodging than Rendezvous participants who had a low-cost camping option; but Rendezvous participants spent more on equipment and gear with the vendors who were on hand that



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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 _____

- Trespass. Ticket, warning or arrest for:
 - Trespass on private property
 - Trespass on public property
 - Criminal trespass arrest
 - Civil trespass lawsuit
- Public Access Closure
 - Denied by federal law
 - Denied by BLM
 - Denied by Forest Service
 - Denied by Nat'l Park Service
 - Denied by state
 - Denied by local authority
- Injury from man-made obstacles
 - Barbed wire or fence
 - Low head dam
- Obstacles running river, scouting or portaging
 - Fence or chain on land blocking access
 - Fence, wire, or tree on river blocking access
 - Warning of no trespassing or posted sign
 - Vehicle towed, ticketed, or vandalized
 - Threats or acts of violence

- Closures: Rivers closed that were once open
 - Closed by private landowner
 - Closed by government agency
 - Federal
 - State
 - Local
 - High water closure
- New access fees
 - Charged by private landowner
 - Charged by government agency
 - Federal
 - State
 - Local
- Dam controlled rivers
 - Water turned off
 - Inconsistent flow: too much or too little
 - No notice of releases
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 - Lawsuits to block access.
 - New legislation to enable river access.
 - Lawsuits to enable access.

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weekend. The trade-off, paying more for lodging but less for equipment, resulted in almost identical spending numbers: \$98.20 per person on this weekend vs. \$101.71 on Rendezvous weekend.

This suggests that kayaker spending on other visits to the Stonycreek region may be very similar to that reflected on the Rendezvous weekend.

Economic multipliers estimate the impact of spending as it circulates in an economy. For instance, in buying lunch, some of the money goes to out-of-the-area food producers and suppliers, but much of it stays in the local economy in local purchases of goods and services by the restaurant (indirect impacts), and in earnings and benefits of owners and employees (induced impacts). The total of direct, indirect, and induced impacts are known as total impact.

Although multipliers are developed from complex models, a local study on travel and tourism calculated a multiplier of 1.6. Using this multiplier, the total impact of spending by non-locals during Rendezvous would be \$55,952. If this select group of boaters averaged 7.8 trips per year, total impact would approach a half-million dollars a year: \$457,541.

And these numbers reflect only the spending that would be generated by the Rendezvous participants. If the Stonycreek could boast boatable flows during warm weather, far more people would come and the river's reputation would grow.

With a realistic projection that the Stonycreek can bring an influx of over a half million dollars a year into the local economy, our river is finally getting the attention it deserves.

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Legend: Running Recommended Flow		
State River Name	Section	Class
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WV Gauley River	Summersville Dam to Mason Branch	IV-v
WV Gauley River	Bucklick Branch to SWISS	III-IV(V)
WV Gauley River	Mason Branch to Bucklick Branch	III+(IV)
WV New	Thurmond to Fayette Station	III-V

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Report on Dimple Rock Rapid, Lower Yough, PA
 American Whitewater board member and safety expert Charlie Walbridge reports on safety meetings with park officials at Ohiopyle Falls State Park to address safety issues at Dimple Rock Rapid on the Lower Yough.

[Read More](#) Posted: May 29, 2001

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Time: 10:00
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Embracing Icicles

By Jason Robertson
AW Access Director

When there's water in West Virginia it's hard to imagine any place I'd rather be. This past February two fronts collided over the Appalachians, so I made a beeline for my cabin in the mountains near Parsons. There I met Mr. Riverbot, Christian Skalka.

Saturday morning I awakened to snow and ice. It was Zero Hour; there were no shadows and little light. Skalka had started banging around before 7 fixing a cold fracture in his boat. Not the way I prefer to wake up after only four hours of sleep, but it was gonna be another boating day on OTTER Creek, so I rallied. We drove to the take-out and met a couple of Skalka's friends before 9. By this time the temperature had dropped a few more degrees below freezing and the wind was starting to rip. The sun was trying to peek through the clouds, but it was still snowing heavily. My friends know that I'm not a morning person and no fan of cold days, and I started waffling when the sun briefly disappeared. But this was Otter Creek! How could I really think of backing out when it was running?!?!?

After the hour shuttle and an hour of dithering we finally got dressed. I was wearing 3 layers of capilene, a fuzzy rubber T, a fleece sweater, and a dry suit. When we launched at 11 we had 5" of water in four-foot wide Condon Creek, maybe 5 CFS, but there would be plenty of water downstream for our run. When we started the shuttle, the gauge at the take-out had been 3.8, an ideal, slightly padded level; but at the put-in the gauge beside the trout liming operation read 1.7, suggesting a medium to low flow. Otter Creeks drops fast!

The first four miles of serpentine flat water in the Otter Creek Wilderness were beautiful. We were still warm, though we had a 1/4 inch of ice caked on us before we hit the first rapid. When we portaged around blowdowns we had to bang the ice off our skirts to fit them back on our boats.

Skalka and I had each run the river five or six times, but we knew different lines through the major rapids. This made things interesting—he would go left when I would've gone right, and vice versa. The only rapid that caused trouble was Ankle Breaker. I've run

this rapid three times and had good lines, but I opted out this time and slid over the rocks. The rapid is a total ball buster. I've seen 12 people run this rapid, and only two have had clean lines. Saturday was no different. Skalka led and looked clean. Then Brian pitoned hard and bounced out with a dent in his bow. Ryan flipped in mid air and ran the next several drops fighting the ice cream man. It was just too cold for that nonsense—I'd been knocking 2-inch icicles off my helmet and scraping the ice off my glasses every 10 minutes since we started through the whitewater section. I couldn't imagine dipping my head in this stuff.

About two miles down while I was pulling sweep, I watched Brian boof into a broach. His boat jammed on edge between two rocks, horizontal to the current with his skirt under water. I'd never seen this before, but he had a rope stored ON the bow of his Gradient under a bungee web. He just had enough time to yank it out and throw it to Ryan, who was setting up to boof the next six-footer. Ryan looked startled to find a rope flying across his bow, but he managed to grab it, settle into the boiling eddy at the lip of the boof, and stabilize Brian by putting tension on the rope. Brian was fighting to keep his head above the surface.

I found a shallow eddy, beached my boat and paddle and dove into the rapid, lunging for Brian's stern as water began pushing him onto the back deck. On the third try I managed to grab his loop, plant my feet, and lift his stern up over the rock. We were lucky his skirt held and the boat didn't fill with water. As soon as the tension on the rope released, Ryan surged out of his eddy and floated over the 6-footer. I'd lost all feeling in my hands and feet—they felt like four dead clubs—and I had to get out of the water immediately. I managed to get to shore and, after I did 15 minutes of jumping jacks, the feeling returned to my heels and toes. The whole rescue took about 45 seconds. We'd pulled together as a team and everyone had done the right things at the right time when it counted.

The next six miles were uneventful. We were cold. It was snowing. The sun was out. We were having fun. It was magic.

It was a remarkably fast trip; we got to the car at 3:30. When we passed the gauge at the take-out the river had dropped to 3.4 feet (3.2 is my minimum level for this run). Some of the guys had their helmets frozen to their hair. The neck gasket on my suit was frozen to my neck, and the Croakies strap was frozen to my ears and hair. I could only see through a dime-sized window that I'd managed to keep free of ice in my glasses.

After changing, I drove back to the cabin in a flurry of snow, stoked the fire, made hot chocolate, melted a stick of butter, grated some cheese, and poured it all over pasta, which I quickly wolfed down. After eating I passed out for an hour. When I woke, I skipped out of the cabin, braved the whiteout on route 219, and caught up with some friends for a second high-cal dinner—salmon, fettuccini, asparagus, and home brew. It was a classic ending to a classic day on a classic West Virginia creek.

As Skalkasays, the Otter isn't that hard. It's just continuous Class III-IV-V for 8-10 miles—once you get past the first four miles of twisting Rhodo-flats. However, Otter Creek can be tough on psyche. It wears you out and beats you down. And just when you think you're almost done, you discover you still have four miles of cold Class III-IV to go. Neither the cold nor the rapids let up until you reach the take-out at the confluence with the Dry Fork of the Cheat.

Once when I ran Otter Creek in 1999, I paddled it solo. I packed my boots, a pot & stove, ramen, a bivy sack, a fleece hat and shell, and a backpack in my dry bag. I finished the river in just over five hours, made soup, then jogged and hiked through snow back to the put-in. A half-moon was shining, so I had no trouble seeing my way through the night.

Yes, Otter Creek is a special place. Good karma. Keeps me on my toes, and is personally challenging without being terrifying. Otter is like the Watauga or Section 00 of the Chattooga in the southeast, or the Greys in Wyoming... only prettier, longer, and colder. Unfortunately, it runs much less frequently. The sense of satisfaction that I feel after completing this challenging run is what keeps me coming back... despite the fact that I'm convinced Otter Creek is the coldest place on earth!

Relationship Counseling for Skirts and Kayaks

by John Mason
Mt Surf

(Why doesn't my squirt boat skirt fit my creek boat?)

As a sprayskirt designer and manufacturer I would love to make a single indestructible skirt that would provide a bombproof dry fit on both your squirt boat and your creek boat. Regrettably, it just ain't going to happen. I don't believe that any single skirt can be all things to all kayakers. Life is never that simple. If you ever find such a skirt, please let me know... because I'd like to buy one for myself!

Realistically, my goal is to make a dry, secure, easily removable, and indestructible skirt. Unfortunately, skirt manufacturers face the thankless task of designing skirts to fit boats after those boats are on the market. And some boat makers just do not design their cockpits to enhance skirt seal or to optimize skirt life span. To make matters even more complex, there are no industry wide "standard" cockpit shapes and sizes.

Cockpits of current boats range from 29 to 37 inches in length and 16.5 to 20.5 inches in width. Every time a new boat is released, sprayskirt designers must scramble to produce a skirt that provides an acceptable fit.


Imagine if each car manufacturer produced wheels of different sizes and shapes for every model of car and truck they make? Tires that fit correctly would be hard to find, not to mention expensive! Well, sprayskirt

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designers and manufacturers have been dealing with analogous circumstances for years.

Meanwhile, boating skills have progressed exponentially and boaters are venturing onto increasingly difficult and turbulent white-water. And New School rodeo moves pose an incredible challenge to spray skirt fit. We are tackling rivers and pulling moves today that would have boggled my mind just five years ago. When I started kayaking 27 years ago using a canvas skirt, I could never in my wildest dreams have envisioned what white-water boating would be like today.

Kayaks and sprayskirts share an interdependent relationship. The kayak needs a dry, secure, removable and durable seal, while the sprayskirt needs a cockpit rim designed to enhance these performance characteristics. A well designed rim will help any skirt do its job better, but a badly designed skirt on a good rim will still make a poor fit. It is also possible to design a kayak rim so badly that even the best designed skirt will not seal properly.

Sprayskirts have also come a long way, but the demands on them have also increased tremendously. Keyhole cockpits are now 25% to 35% larger than the old standard (Dancer) cockpit size. And keyhole cockpits just keep getting larger. The old bungee cord skirts

that sucked up tight around your waist when you were out of your boat were fine for the old fiberglass and plastic boats with small cockpits. But these bungee cord skirts just do not work efficiently on modern plastic keyhole cockpits. It takes a lot more skirt rim tension than a bungee cord can provide to create an efficient mechanical and hydraulic seal on a large cockpit.

The purpose of a keyhole cockpit is to make your boat easier to exit in the event of entrapment. Keyhole cockpits are longer and wider, so there is a much greater surface that must be covered by the skirt. This large surface area increases the vulnerability of the skirt to damage. Fortunately, many of the new boats have recessed cockpit rims to help shield the sprayskirt from paddles, rocks, and other boats.

Cockpit Design and Performance

From a sprayskirt designer's point of view, the ideal cockpit shape would be perfectly round. This would distribute the tension around the skirt rim evenly. Of course, keyhole cockpits are longer than they are wide. In an oblong or keyhole cockpit the

tension on the skirt is greatest where the curvature is most acute (the front and then the back), and least where the curvature is less acute (along the sides). That is why the sprayskirt seal is always less effective along the sides, and why it is difficult to slip a skirt over the end of a keyhole or oblong cockpit. The more oblong the cockpit, the more noticeable this will be.

The shape of the rim itself is also critical. It is meant to hold the sprayskirt in place during normal use, but it should also facilitate the quick release of the skirt when you pull the ripcord. Ideally rims should have a one-half to three-quarter inch lip to hold the skirt in place. And the distance between the lip and the deck of the kayak should also be one-half to three-quarters of an inch. You should be able to reach under the rim with your fingers and pick up the boat without pinching them or feeling like the boat wants to slip off your fingers. Also, the radius where the skirt seal seats on the underside of the rim should be as large and the underside of the rim as level as possible so that a good seal will be obtained, without making the skirt too difficult to remove. Imagine that you are going to hang from the rim of the upside down boat by your fingers. The more secure your grip, the better it will hold a skirt.

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Cockpit rim design also has a great effect on skirt longevity. Recessing the cockpit rim not only makes the hydraulic seal less vulnerable to high-pressure blasts of water, it also makes the skirt less vulnerable to abrasion and impacts. Some popular rims are so deeply recessed that when you lay your paddle across your deck, it won't even touch the cockpit rim or skirt. Other rims protrude so far above the deck that they leave the sprayskirt vulnerable to impacts from above (including your paddle). Try this test to see if the rim on your boat will be hard on skirts. Gently kick your cockpit rim while the boat is lying on the ground. If your foot glances off the deck and over the rim, it's a good bet that a skirt will be fairly well protected. But if your foot squarely hits the rim, it's a good bet that a rock, paddle, or another boat will do some damage, no matter how tough the skirt you choose.

There are several other aspects of rim design worth considering. There should be adequate space in the well around the rim to allow you to put your skirt on without busting your knuckles. And the rim should have a soft rounded lip to reduce the "knife edge" effect. This will minimize the damage to the skirt when impacts occur. The underside of the rim should also be square; this will provide a better purchase for the skirt seal. The rim does not need to be as aggressive at the front because the curvature is so great and you want the skirt to come off here, so it should be less aggressive here.

Sprayskirt Design and Performance... the Other Side of the Equation

To understand how a skirt works, you must understand the functions of the different parts of the skirt and how they work together as a whole.

There are four key components to any sprayskirt: the seal, the ripcord, the deck, and the barrel. The design of each of these components and their interdependent relationship with each other, the boat, and the paddler will determine the performance of the skirt.

The seal creates the physical bond between the skirt and the boat (cockpit rim). The shape, tension, and elasticity of the seal synergistically contribute to the hydraulic and mechanical seal. The seal must conform to the cockpit rim to produce a seal without gaps that would allow leakage. The shape of the seal also contributes to the mechanical seal; some shapes inherently grip the rim better than others. Tension is a double-edged sword; greater tension will result in a

better mechanical and hydraulic seal, but it will also make the skirt harder to put on and remove. The elasticity of the seal also has advantages and disadvantages. A very elastic seal will allow the skirt to fit a wider range of cockpit sizes, but it will inevitably compromise the mechanical and hydraulic seal.

The ripcord should be strong and secure enough to reliably remove your skirt without causing undo stress on the deck or compromising the seal. It should also have a handle that is easy to locate and grab when you really need it.

The sprayskirt deck size and shape also affects the efficiency of the seal, durability, ease of getting the skirt on and off and, of course, the cost. Neoprene is an elastic and expensive material. The elasticity of neoprene allows us to make the sprayskirt deck smaller than the cockpit. This saves on materials and reduces costs and it contributes to a tight deck, but there are trade-offs. A sprayskirt deck cut narrower than the cockpit will diminish mechanical and hydraulic seal on the sides, where there is not much curvature to the rim. This is where most leakage occurs and where skirts are most likely to pop. A sprayskirt deck that is cut too short for the cockpit is less likely to result in a leak or a pop, since the curvature of the rim is greatest in the front and back. But it could result in a skirt that is difficult to put on and remove. A tight deck also will not absorb the energy when it is stressed by water pressure and transfer more energy to the seal causing leakage or failure. Tight decks also compromise durability, since neoprene under tension is more prone to wear and tear. A tight deck also restricts the ability of a skirt to fit larger cockpit sizes, reducing versatility. All things considered, the sprayskirt deck should be as large as possible in relation to the cockpit rim that you are using, without being baggy (which would allow the annoying pooling of water).

Durability of the skirt is dependent on the strength and abrasion resistance of the deck material at the critical point where it wraps around the cockpit rim. Generally, as laminates and coatings become more abrasion resistant, they also become less elastic and flexible. This diminished elasticity and flexibility can make the skirt harder to put on and compromise the mechanical and hydraulic seal. Kevlar laminates have given us durability and performance but greatly increase the cost of the skirt.

The size, shape, and placement of the barrel are also critical to skirt performance. Barrel size (diameter) affects the seal at your waist; the tighter and taller the barrel, the better the seal. Just like drysuit gaskets, neoprene skirt barrels can be trimmed down in height. But the placement of the barrel in the skirt deck is critical; it must mirror the placement of your seat with respect to your cockpit rim. If the barrel is set too far back in

the sprayskirt deck in relation to your kayak's seat, then the skirt will put disproportionate pressure on your abdomen and try to pull you backwards off the seat. This can compromise the hydraulic seal behind you, and, in a worst-case scenario, cause the skirt to blow off at the back. A barrel set too far forward in the skirt deck will result in the reverse scenario. Again variations among seat/cockpit relationships among boat manufacturers make this a challenging issue.

Construction methods also affect the cost and performance of your skirt. Gluing and tape sealing is the most dry and secure method of seaming neoprene. Sewn seams are much less expensive to produce, but even taping both sides will not make a 100% dry seam.

What's Best For You

Each individual kayaker must decide what his or her priorities are when purchasing a new sprayskirt. The difficulty of the water you paddle, your ability level and confidence, the likelihood that you will need to make an emergency exit, your tolerance for leakage, your strength and body habitus, and, of course, your ability to pay are all important considerations. Compromises are inevitable. A skirt that is easy to put on may tend to leak a bit or pop in severe turbulence. A bomb-proof skirt that never leaks may be a bit difficult to slip off and on. If you plan to use the same skirt on several different boat models, some compromise in function must be expected. If you only paddle occasionally, a cheaper skirt may be acceptable. But if you are on the water a lot, a more expensive and durable skirt might serve you better.

These days there are skirts on the market to fit virtually every size and shape of boat and paddler. If you take the time to choose carefully, you should be able to find that perfect sprayskirt to meet your particular needs. Try your skirt on your boat before you buy to be sure that you get the appropriate skirt for you.

That's my story and I'm stickin' to it!

Editor's note: Mt Surf owner John Mason has spent twenty-seven years paddling some of the world's wildest rivers and creeks... field testing his spray skirt designs. He has had his share of wet miserable days because of leaky and blown skirts, but these days he almost always comes off the river warm and dry!



Chattooga Outfitters Association Sponsors Low Water Study

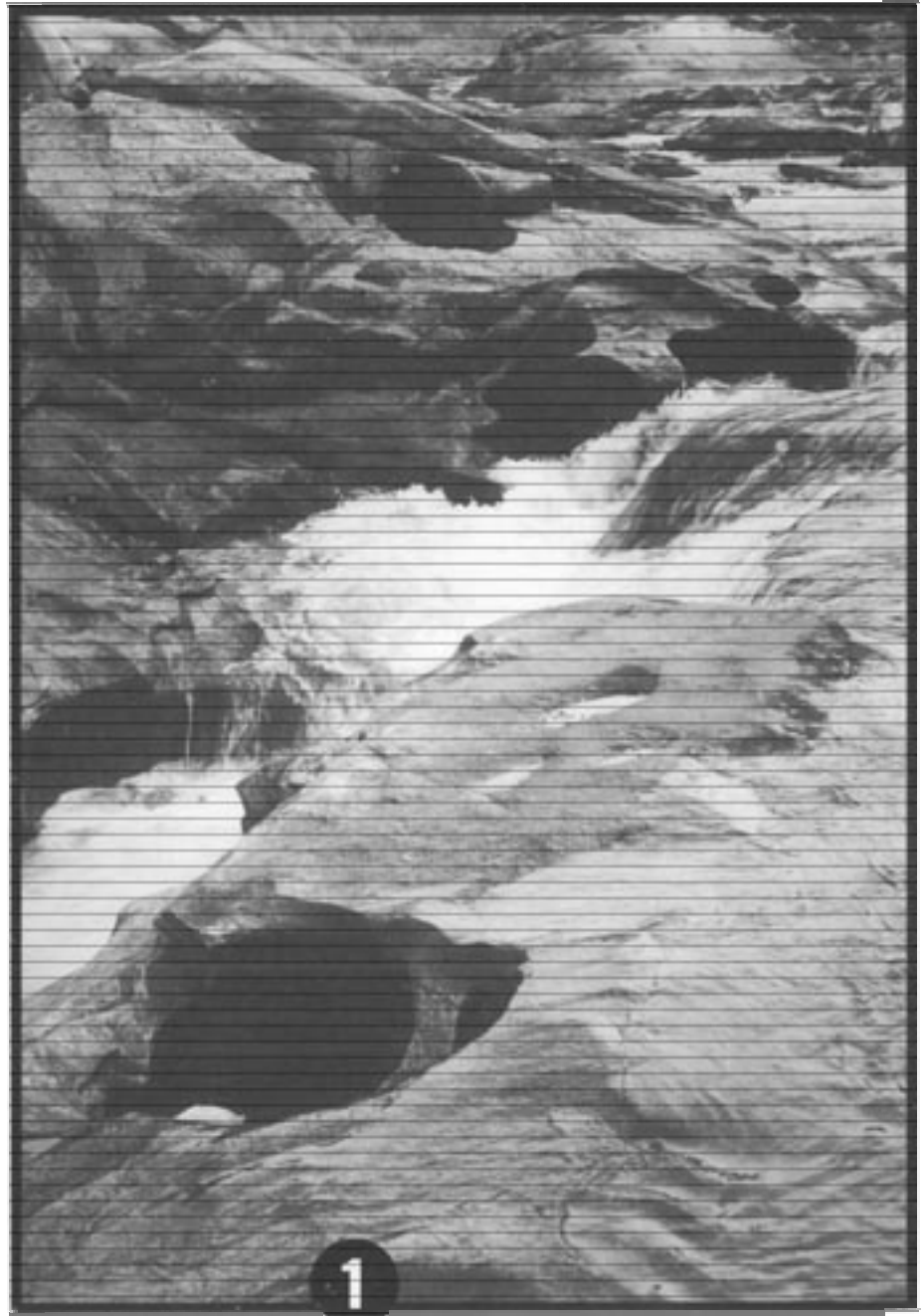
By J.A. Hinton
Photos by J.A.Hinton

The Chattooga River is one of the oldest waterways of the world. For many years it has meandered off of the southern highlands, cutting and eroding away the land to expose the bones of the Earth. The rock formations left behind are responsible for the Chattooga's reputation of both untold beauty and danger. Over the past 20 years many people have come to know both faces of this waterway first hand, and for the families of those who did not survive this encounter, the Chattooga has also become known as a river reluctant to give up its dead. Lack of knowledge about the riverbed has made some recovery operations exceedingly lengthy, gruesome, and risky for all involved. The same geology and hydrology, which can hold someone underwater unwillingly and indefinitely, also makes rescuing or recovering these victims challenging for river personnel. Thus, a need developed for educational tools that can allow rescue workers to better evaluate a situation, and give both the public and family members a better understanding of a drowning scenario.

One such tool, a low water photographic study, was made this year with funding from the Chattooga Outfitters Association. The project consists of images of Chattooga's most notorious rapids taken at very low water levels. Diagrams of the rapids and an indexing system were also developed to help identify where the picture was taken.

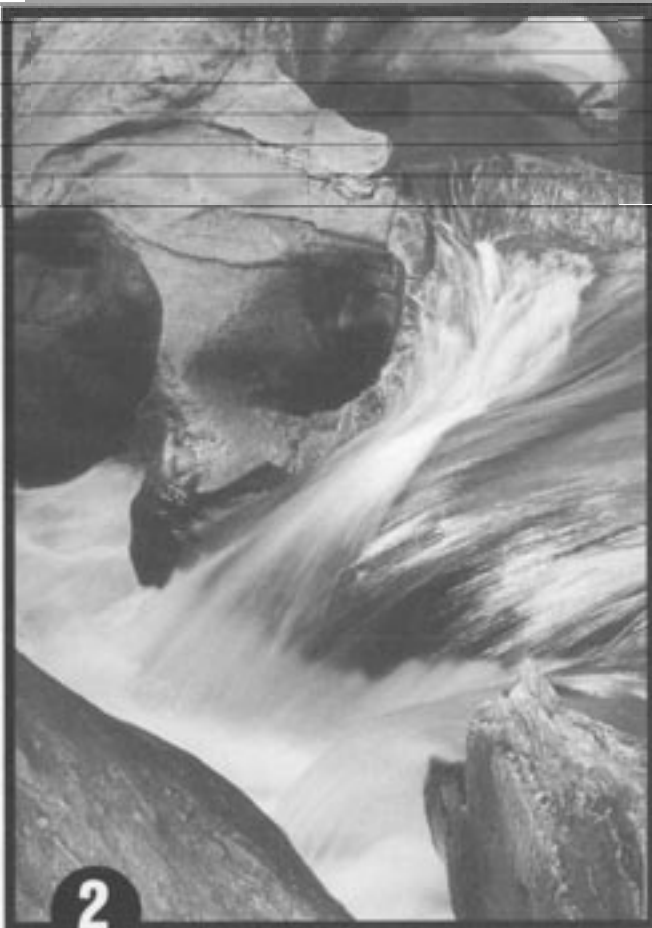
The purpose of this book is to document many of the hazardous areas along the river where rescue or recovery operations could be complicated at best. By examining these features at low water, both river and rescue personnel will have a greater understanding of what areas to avoid, how to better facilitate rescue operations in these areas, and recover bodies in a more efficient and safer manner.

The rapids I chose to photograph are based on accessibility, drowning potential, and the time constraints of the project. Some of the images examine places where foot entrapments are probable and rescue problematic. This includes Sandy Ford, Woodall Shoals, and Stekoa Creek Rapid. Other images are sites where bodies could become lodged or hidden from view at higher water flows such as the Narrows, Tunnel of Love, or Shoulder Bone. But predominately, the



**The indicated water levels
are on the bridge gauge.**

1. The swimming pothole and notch at Bull Sluice at 0.52. A canoeist drowned here several years ago when he was washed into the pothole at higher water and was unable to find the exit at its base. At medium water levels numerous paddlers have been pulled into the pothole backwards and pinned briefly in their boats.



2. Seven Foot Falls at 0.5.

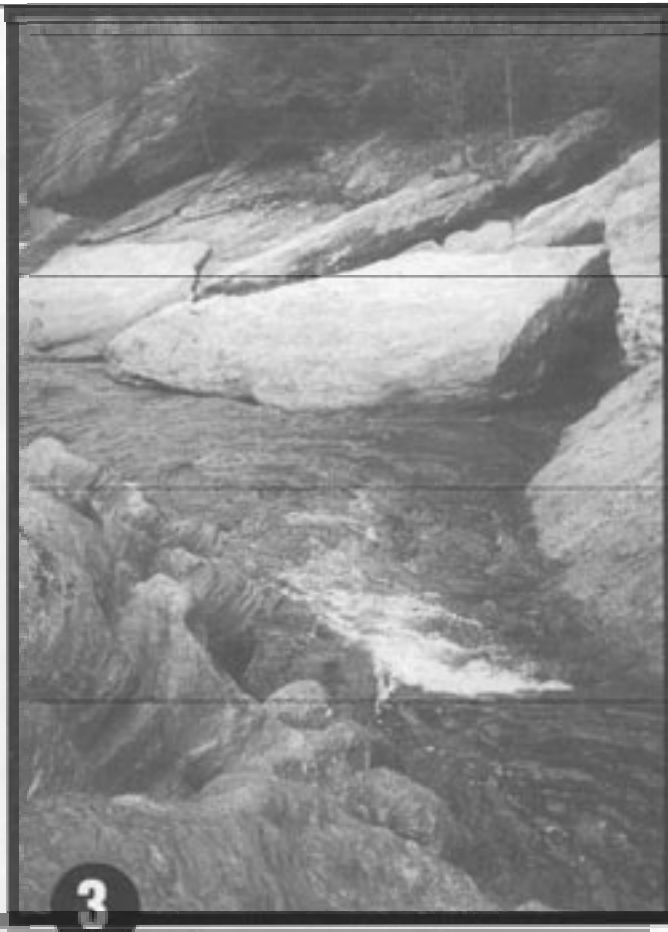
3. Middle rapid of the Narrows at 0.5.

4. Andria Baldwin overlooks one of the larger undercuts of the Narrows.

5. Potholes and Decapitation Rock on Bull Sluice at 0.52. A young hiker was swept into the drop last summer and drowned when she became pinned to a log lodged under this rock.

project focuses on zones in every rapid where greater knowledge of the riverbed could make the difference between a quick rescue or a lengthy recovery.

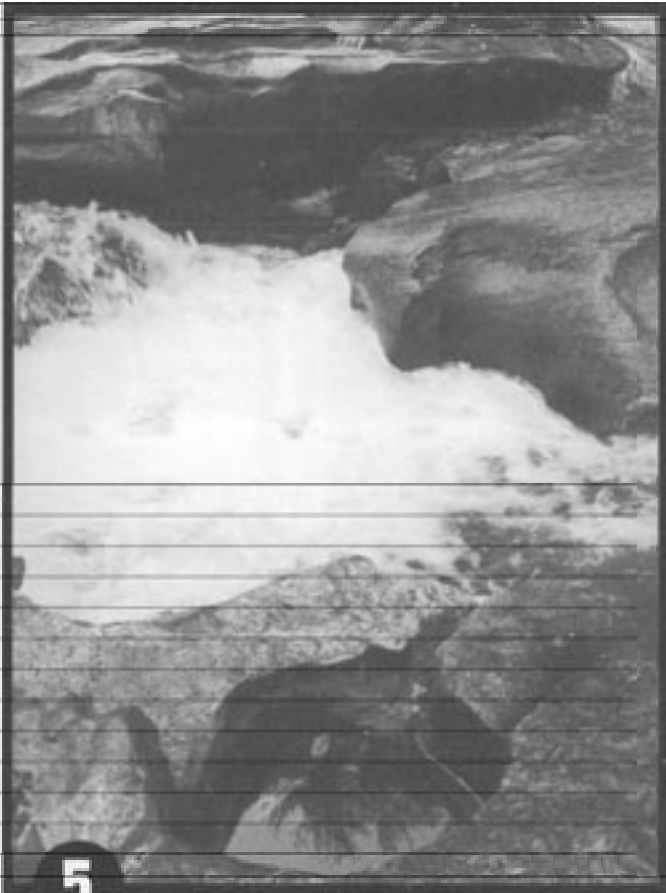
This book will never replace a river sense that can only be obtained by working, studying, and playing in the water. However, it can accent that knowledge by giving us a better understanding of the Chattooga's underlying features. These features are what make the river dance, they are its soul. Greater awareness benefits all who comes in contact with the river due to hazardous or tragic conditions, whether he or she is a victim, rescuer, or family member. Through this enlightenment, we gain both respect for river and responsibility for our actions.



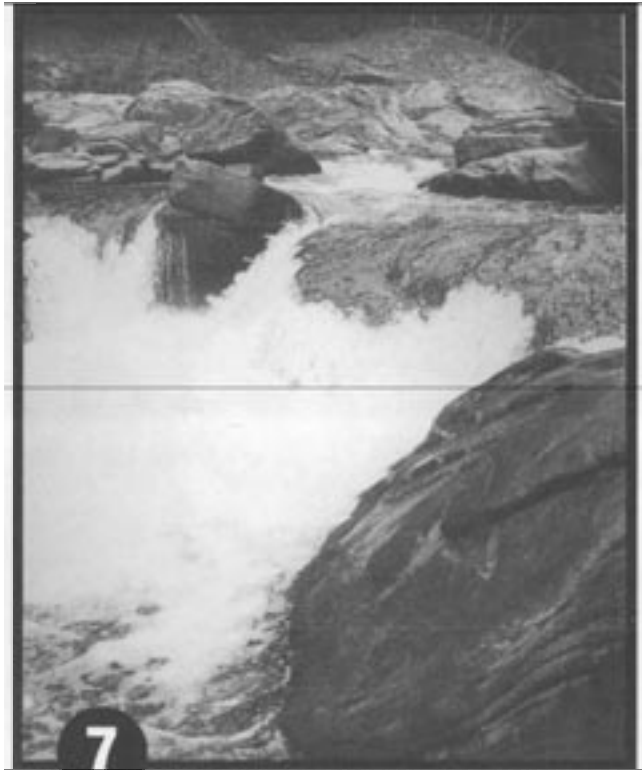
6. The "Launch Pad" at Sockem-Dog is high and dry at 0.5

7. Andria Baldwin scouts Corkscrew at 0.5.





5



7



6

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Reminiscences:

Racing Through the 70s

By Charlie Walbridge
American Whitewater Safety Editor/
Board Member

During the late 60s and early 70s whitewater kayaks were hard to find and kayak schools didn't exist. You learned to boat from the guys at the local paddling club if you were lucky, or by trial and error if you weren't. If you were serious about running hard whitewater, you raced. My buddies and I stumbled on racing in the spring of 1969. We'd been paddling open canoes for several years while going to college in Central Pennsylvania. We ran lots of Class II, struggled with some Class III, and wanted to try harder stuff. One weekend we found the Loyalsock Races by accident while running shuttle. Those guys in their sleek 13-foot long slalom kayaks looked pretty hot. We stopped and talked to the racers. My buddies bought a couple of used kayaks there, and I later went home to New York City and bought a new Klepper for \$200. Now all we had to do was learn how to paddle them.

The Penn State Outing Club had been a big presence at the Loyalsock Slalom. Their campus was only an hour from ours, so I wrote them, asking for help in getting started. My letter was answered by someone named John R. Sweet, who invited us to their pool sessions. We arrived to find their group dominated by serious racers. Sweet and Norm Holcombe, both top-ranked C-1 racers, were working with Tom Irwin, an "up and coming" C-1 racer. Steve Draper and Frank Shultz were dancing their end-hole C-2 through the complex "English Gate" sequence. Draper and Jon Nelson, the best kayakers we'd ever seen, nailed hand rolls and flew through gates. We were impressed. We soon learned that the State College area was a major center of whitewater racing nationally. Penn State Outing Club Canoeists had been a force to be reckoned with at national races since the days of Bill Bickham and Dave Guss. The Wildwater Boating Club and Explorer Post 32, both coached by Dave Kurtz in nearby Bellefonte, PA, produced many hot young paddlers. In addition to Draper and Shultz, their roster included Les Bechdel, Keith Backlund, Steve Martin, Johnny Fisher, and Drew Hunter. We could not have found better teachers.

Slalom racing involves maneuvering through gates, which are pairs of poles hanging above the water. The poles are exacting teachers: your boat is either where it's supposed to be, or it's not. When you hit a pole in a race, you get a 10-second penalty; miss a gate and you lose 50 seconds. Gates are placed in moving water to take advantage of the current, and it may require a series of lightning-quick linked moves to paddle a tight sequence clean. It takes plenty of skill to run even an easy course without smacking the poles. Sometimes the course was designed to require that you run a big drop backwards. Eddy gates would make you or break you; and getting in and out fast was really hard! Wildwater racing, a straight-timed run downriver, was more straightforward and a lot more work. I didn't get involved with that discipline until later.

The next year, after many pool sessions and runs down local rivers, my group entered the Loyalsock Slalom. Flowing through World's End State Park in north-central Pennsylvania, it is one of the coldest places around. There were snow flurries on and off during that late April weekend. Despite this, the hotshot Wildwater Boating Club kids, too broke to afford wetsuits, were running around barefoot wearing only shorts and a paddle jacket! The race was a full 30 gates long, culminating in a tight series set in the "sluice," a break in a 4-foot high low-head dam. We'd run this powerful Class III drop in open canoes the previous spring after much scouting. Now we were in a course that required us to drop over the sluice backwards, go through a gate, spin forward quickly to catch another gate, then charge into an eddy for a third. Because Norm Holcombe said I was too big for a kayak, I had traded in my Klepper for a new John Berry C-1. I wasn't very good, and I got lots of roll practice in that icy water. My buddies didn't finish too well, either, but we agreed that racing taught us many things that river running didn't.

Races were also the best place to check out the latest equipment. Outdoor stores

didn't carry whitewater gear, and almost everything was home made. The kayaks and C-boats we used for general river running were the bastard offspring of boats brought back by U.S. team members from Europe. Molds were made from European designs as soon as they arrived in the U.S. Then, after the mold-maker made a boat for himself, the mold was rented out to others. Often someone would then take the mold to a distant city, make a boat, and immediately pull a mold from that boat! Molds and materials frequently changed hands at races. Some competitors were engineers with access to unique or exotic materials like Kevlar or carbon fibers, which were likewise passed around. People wandered between the boats lined up on shore near the start, discussing new boat-building and outfitting techniques. You could learn a lot by being there.

A few paddlers made extra money by producing whitewater gear in their spare time and selling it at the races. Some of this stuff was cutting edge. I saw my first neoprene sprayskirt, made by Tom Johnson of California, at a pool slalom in the late 60s. A year or two later, tired of my flimsy nylon fabric sprayskirt, I bought some neoprene from George Hendricks, then found a friend who taught me to make my own. Several years later I'd started a business, selling life vest, wet suit, and sprayskirt kits from the back of my truck at races. My customers provided lots of feedback, and I kept modifying my products until they were right.

Citizen racers comprised the majority of the entries at every race. They competed five or six times a year and traveled great distances to enter events. Kayakers and C-boaters were so rare then that two cars travelling in opposite directions carrying whitewater boats would stop so the drivers could get out and talk—even if they were roaring down an interstate! But at a race there were dozens, even hundreds of us! Every few weeks the group converged on a different race site, so you quickly got to know a lot of people. They were a great source of information on local rivers; you could even get an invitation to



paddle with them on their home waters. We'd coach and cheer each other during the race, then take off later for a quick run down the river. Afterwards, we'd talk gear and rivers around a campfire until late at night. Paddlers of all ages and abilities mixed freely, like a big extended family. Even the most successful racers were generous with their advice. Often I'd arrive at a race site well after midnight, exhausted, only to stay up for several more hours chatting excitedly.

Racing was the focus of serious whitewater paddlers in the seventies, and it changed the sport significantly. The top racers, who were either going to school or holding down jobs, were known and respected in the same way that rodeo stars are today. Because the sport was so small, even the best paddlers were accessible to everyone. There was no "old school" or "new school"; we were all in the same school, influenced by the rivers, the events, and each other. To be known as a "precision paddler" was a high compliment (this term survives in the name of Precision Rafting, an Upper Yough outfitter in Friendsville, Maryland). Once I graduated from college I had the time and money to travel the Mid-States race circuit. Each race had a distinct flavor. Here are a few of my favorites:

The Penn State Pool Slalom in February drew competitors from Philadelphia, Baltimore, D.C., and Pittsburgh. It was a great way to "jump-start" the racing season, and we all wanted to know who was training seriously. Similar events were put on in most major cities, and some of us attended two or three of them during the winter months. It was not unusual for novice paddlers to compete against seasoned experts just for the experience.

In late March the Petersburg Races, held on the North Fork of South Branch of the Potomac in West Virginia, drew a huge crowd. It consisted of a slalom race, a serious downriver event, and a "cruiser class" on the easier water upstream of Hopeville Canyon. In addition to the hundreds of "locals" from neighboring states, you'd see Southerners from Atlanta, Charlotte, and Knoxville and Midwesterners from Chicago, Madison, and Minneapolis. The race eventually got so large that it overwhelmed the resources of this beautiful valley. Campgrounds, restaurants, and other facilities were overloaded, and people parked by the dozens along wide stretches of road and camped out. Finally, in the late seventies, the race coincided with the spring break at several West Virginia

colleges. The college kids cut through farmer's fences and drove their vehicles right down to the river's edge. Here they amused themselves by throwing beer cans at passing racers, starting fires, tearing up the fields, and generally acting like idiots. Sheep and cows escaped through holes in the fence and wandered out into the road. Several got hit by cars. Traffic was heavy, and there were several serious accidents. It was more than the area's small police force could manage, and the locals who had sponsored the race for over twenty years decided not to run it the future.

In mid-April I went to races held in the Tariffville Gorge near Hartford, Connecticut. This was an opportunity to compete against the New Englanders, especially the crew from the Ledyard Canoe Club of Dartmouth College. Jay Evans, a Dartmouth admissions officer, was an early leader in the sport. As the advisor to the Ledyard Canoe Club, he coached people like John Burton, Wick Walker, Dave and Peggy Nutt, and Sandy Campbell. His son, Eric, was national kayak champion for over a decade. Eric won many of his races by a few seconds, but as a buddy of mine said, to do that once is lucky, to do it time after time is something else again! Jay was also the U.S. Whitewater Team Coach.

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The rivalry between the Ledyard-ites and the top Mid-States paddlers was fierce. We referred to them (amongst ourselves) as "the green goons" because of their sharp green warm-up outfits. But they were all right, mostly. At spring flows Tarrifville Gorge develops some pretty good-sized holes. One year Tom Irwin "accidentally" dropped his paddle during a practice run and hand-surfed the biggest one, much to everyone's amazement. An informal ender and hole-riding competition, a precursor of rodeo, began as soon as the race ended. There were pictures of Wick Walker showing off in a 1968 AW Journal, the first copy of the magazine I ever saw.

Races like Tarrifville were put on by the competitors themselves. When local volunteer sponsors were thin, you would find yourself stringing the gates the morning before the race. Competitors were each assigned jobs like gate judging, timing, and safety. A few non-paddling spouses played key roles, and some, like Rosemary Bridge and Bonnie Bliss, became better known than their famous paddling husbands. At big races boats were checked to see that they met the minimum length and width requirements. If they passed, a design was stenciled on their deck. Then as the season progressed, you could see where people had been by looking at their boats! Many home made craft wouldn't pass, but we were all boatbuilders, so it was a simple matter to place a glob of fiberglass mat along the sides or to build up a worn-out bow with scraps of foam and cloth.

I hated gate judging. Things happened so fast, and sometimes you really just couldn't see what had occurred! Fortunately, we worked in groups, so we could discuss it. I also learned to note exactly what we saw if a top competitor made a touch, so we could defend the call if there was trouble later. For example, in addition to writing "10" as the score for a gate, I'd note: "hit the green pole with tip of his stern." Sometimes friends of a competitor would follow him down as he made his run. They might check your judging sheets and give you a hard time! One year my partner and I had a loud argument with the formidable Canadian Hermann Kerckhoff over a touch that cost his daughter Claudia a top finish. We were saved when the race organizer came by and told Hermann to pony up five bucks and file a protest like everyone else. The disagreement was aired further, in front of the protest committee. I never wanted that job!

When you raced you were at the mercy of the elements. Tarrifville, for example, often had wicked upstream winds. One racer would have a great run because the poles were blown high off the water by a strong gust, and the next one would get all kinds of penalties when the wind died down and left the poles swinging. You could also end up running just

behind a "turkey" who hit lots of poles and set them in motion. As I became more knowledgeable I'd ask the starter to change my race order so a top racer could run ahead of me. If that didn't work, I'd ask them to increase the interval between our starts. Later, as I got better, I'd do the same thing, but in reverse. Gate judges had whistles so they could signal a paddler who was being overtaken to get off the course. If the boat ahead interfered with your run, you got a re-run, but by the end of a long course the idea of dragging your boat back upstream and going again had little appeal. Luck is always a factor in slalom, and bad luck can ruin months of hard work. Rich Weiss was denied a medal at the World Championships because of a bad gate judging call. The waves, not his boat, set a pole in motion! When I offered my sympathy, he shrugged and said, "that's slalom."

The Lower Yough was a popular site for races. The wildwater races held here in May took advantage of the late spring flows, creating a course that alternated between powerful rapids and fast-moving flat water. Slalom races were usually held at Dartmouth Rapid, so named because the Ledyard paddlers would travel down from New Hampshire during Spring Break and set up a slalom course for training. Then in early September the Keelhauler's Canoe Club ran a huge slalom that drew several hundred racers. The action started at 8:00 AM and continued until 6:00 PM, with breaks to allow commercial and private paddlers to pass through the course. We'd all scream, "Don't touch the poles" as they floated through, but sometimes a rafter would grab a slalom pole and pull it down. The race would stop until the damage was repaired. The first time I raced there the course was set in Entrance Rapid. This was an interesting venue, especially when the water rose from 2' to 4' in a single day! By my second run things were getting intense. I charged into an upstream gate hung over what had been a mellow hole on river left. As I surfed out to my offside, I realized that it was a LOT bigger than I remembered. I got trashed and ended up swimming all the way down to Cucumber Run. My score for the run was listed as "DNF for "did not finish." A paddler who swam was said to have "DNF-ed."

My non-racing friends always said that races must be pretty boring because you have to sit around all day to make two, three-minute runs. Clearly they weren't with my group! On the Yough, for example, we'd be on the river at dawn for practice runs. We kept it up until the race officials ran us off. Then many of us would enter two, or even three, classes! After our race runs, we paddled the river. We'd surf ourselves silly at Swimmer's Rapid and reach the old Stewarton take-out at dusk. Dinner at Glissan's Restau-

rant never tasted so good! Since Ohiopyle State Park hadn't built their campground yet, we then retreated into the countryside to car-camp. Sometimes we'd park in an outfitter's parking lot, but more secluded locations were preferable. Places like "the gravel pit" (now somebody's house), "the strip mine," "the old church" (rude boaters got us thrown out by drinking beer there one Sunday morning), and "the water tower" (my favorite) were gems you shared only with your closest friends. I woke there in the misty morning, high on the hill above Ohiopyle, to the sound of cars rattling the timbers on the roadbed of the old Yough bridge.

The Icebreaker Slalom was held on a small, dam controlled creek near Unadilla, New York. This was a popular end-of-season event; a chance for Mid-States boaters to race in gates and see their buddies before winter set in. The water was Class II at best, but the gates, especially under the bridge, were tight and challenging. I was living in Philly then, so I joined the Philadelphia Canoe Club. Although we had had only seventy members, more than fifty of them drove four hours up to the race. We had some world class C-2 teams (Chamberlin and Stahl; Dyer and Cass, and Knight and Knight), but the rest of us were also-rans. But because we got one point for each person who finished the course we always outscored mighty Penn State for the team trophy. It was here, in 1974, that a racer attempting to stand up in the middle of the course during a swim caught his foot on the bottom of the river and drowned. We didn't know what foot entrapment was back then. What impressed me was that about a dozen Yough River guides were on the scene. They were the best river rescuers any of us knew, and could do nothing to help despite the easy whitewater. My write-up of this accident, which coined the term "foot entrapment," was the beginning of a long career in accident reporting and river safety.

After the race we faced the nasty job of taking down the course. Many of us tried to skip out so we could go paddling! Another hassle was getting the competitors to turn in their numbered bibs. A \$5 deposit was taken with your entry, to be given back when the bib was returned. Alternatively, someone sat at the finish and collected bibs. Usually the race chairman and a few loyal friends tidied up the loose ends. I had a lot of respect for all the folks who made my fun possible.

My favorite event was Western Maryland's Savage River Races. Joe Monahan, an active C-1 paddler in the sixties and seventies, lived in nearby Cumberland. Although not a top racer himself, he was a great river runner who's list of first descents included a run down the Upper Blackwater in 1971! He discovered the Savage River, and being a friendly fellow, developed a relationship with him. He



was often able to persuade the damkeeper to release an hour or so of water for a case of beer. He was impressed with the five miles of continuous Class III-IV rapids he encountered and told his friends, including some racers from D.C. and Penn State. They made the trip, and decided that the Savage had the potential for a slalom course that would rival the speed and intensity of the great European sites at Merano, Tacen, and Spittal. The Savage Races were born!

Joe and his buddies formed the Appalachian River Runner's Federation (the ARRF) to run events there. The first few slalom races in the late 60s were much more intense than anything seen in the U.S. before. Many racers swam, and rescuing their boats was difficult because the rapids were so continuous. The carcasses of their canoes and kayaks were carried down to the Potomac where they ended up in the intakes of the WESVACO Paper Mill in Luke, Maryland. Dave Demaree, who lived along the Savage, used to go to the plant after races to see if anything good had washed up. By my first race in 1971 there were two races a year: one in the spring, and one in the fall. Paddling the river after the race at 1,000 cfs became one of my favorite things, especially in the area of the "Triple Drops" and "Memorial Rock." The river had everything — tiny eddies, wicked fast ferries, quick spins in holes, and powerful waves! To play the river you had to be very, very quick. It's speed and power taught me a great deal about paddling and sharpened my technique. Sometimes during the fall race, hot air hit the icy water, creating an almost impenetrable mist. When racing downriver you sometimes weren't sure quite where you were! The Savage was to be the site of many outstanding races, including the 1972 Olympic Trials, several Pan Am Cup races, and a number of U.S. slalom and whitewater championships.

The Savage was a great river for team racing, which was just an excuse to run the course a second time. You had to get three paddlers through the "team gate" in fifteen seconds. Top racers paddled very close together; the best teams danced down the river in a precision ballet that was a pleasure to watch. If you weren't that good, you simply gathered everyone in an eddy before proceeding. At my first Savage race in 1971 I ran team with Ed Gertler, who afterwards invited me join him for a run on the Gauley a few weeks later. At another race Phil Allender got sick, and I was asked to race with the ARRF team of Joe Monahan and Todd Martin. These guys were serious party animals. They carried a wineskin down the course and passed it around before attempting the team gate. Naturally I had to continue the tradition.

In the Spring of 1973 I drove down to the Savage in a pouring rain. I was forced to stop

and spend the night in a rest area because the weather got so bad. The next day, just outside Luke, a boulder big as a house rolled into the road. Dozens of racers were stuck behind it. We waited an hour or so for road crews to arrive. They dynamited the boulder and pushed the debris aside so we could continue. When we got to the Savage it was running at 2,500 cfs, two and a half times what we expected. The speed and power was truly impressive. Many people who made the long drive took one look, then left! Those of us who stayed modified the course and spent the entire morning trying to paddle it. Everybody rolled a lot, but after the first round of practices when a dozen boats were lost there were very few swims. Tom Irwin won the National C-1 Championships with the best run of the day, but the rest of us were happy to survive. After Saturday's runs I took a wild run trip down the entire river with Bill Kirby, skirting huge holes above the Triple Drops and sneaking Memorial Rock on the far, far left. Late Sunday afternoon Ed Gertler and I went creeking after the race.

Years later I met my wife at the Savage. But that's another story.

The 1972 Olympics marked a turning point for U.S. competitors. Until now U.S. Team members were either full-time students or held jobs. But in the winter of '71-'72, Jamie McEwan and a group of other racers postponed their other commitments to train with Tom Johnson in Kernville, California. They camped in vans along the Kern River at a spot they called "Peanut Butter Park." They worked out every day in moving water gates, and that spring they dominated the racing circuit. Several of them made the Olympic Team. When Jamie won his bronze medal in Augsburg, Germany, he inspired Jon Lugbill, Davey Hearn, and a whole new generation of whitewater competitors.

In 1973 I qualified for the U.S. Slalom Team Trials, held on the West River in Vermont. Here I learned that the selection of the U.S. Team was a political event as much as an athletic one. Jay Evans, the coach of the U.S. Whitewater Team, was a dedicated volunteer who had a lot of influence. For years he picked the team himself! He wanted to concentrate his limited financial and coaching resources (everyone paid most of their own expenses) by selecting a small team that was comprised only of people who he thought could win a medal. Most of them, not surprisingly, came from Dartmouth. Mid-States paddlers believed that only Eric Evans and Jamie McEwan had any chance to win a medal. They felt that we should field as large a team as international regulations allowed to allow our athletes to be seasoned by high-level competition. Even those who did not win medals would be valuable to our racing program as coaches and officials. This philosophical difference caused endless argument.

Jay was also not happy about being responsible for teen-aged competitors. He tried to keep Lynn Ashton, Cindy Goodwin, and Louise Holcombe off the Olympic Team because "those teenaged girls" would distract his male kayakers from their training. But they were great competitors, and he was overruled. But this year Kevin Lewis, now an AW director, qualified for the U.S. team in C-1 at age 15. Jay refused to take him because he "was a coach, not a baby-sitter." There was also a controversy about Steve Draper and Mikki Piras in C-2 Mixed (C-2M). Steve met Mikki, a Penn State varsity gymnast, and convinced her to paddle doubles with him. After training together for less than six months they made the team, beating several more experienced pairs. There was much unhappiness about allowing such a "green" doubles pair to qualify for the team, but they did well in Europe. I was not a contender, so I hung out with friends as the arguments continued until late at night.

Mixed doubles was very challenging mentally. A man is always going to be physically stronger than his female partner, so it takes excellent communication and plenty of practice to keep a canoe under control in slalom gates. Take two competitive individuals, place them in C-2s, add whitewater, cook under pressure, and fights will erupt. Add a little sexual tension, and things get pretty hot. I was sitting on shore watching practice runs at Loyalsock when the top four C-2M teams started screaming at each other. It really didn't matter if they were married, travelling as boyfriend and girlfriend, or simply two athletes training together.

I also remember the impressive team of Chuck Lyda and Marietta Gilman from California. Chuck, at 6' tall and 180 pounds, he was one of the most powerful whitewater athletes of his era. Mary was a petite blonde, weighing less than 100 pounds, who wore butterfly decals on her helmet. In those days, men paddled bow for maximum power and women controlled the boat from the stern. Marietta maintained control of their boat despite their huge physical differences. The other women who paddled C-2M joked that Chuck was simply paddling a big, heavy C-1. But when they got in the boat with him they could not control it! Unfortunately, C-2M is no longer contested internationally. The Eastern Europeans got tired of having their teams defect, and lobbied hard to eliminate it. But before this happened, the Chladeks and the Sedlviks made their escape from Czechoslovakia. Both couples came to the U.S. and contributed a lot to the sport.

A few weeks later Norm Holcombe and I tried out for the U.S. Wildwater Team in C-2. We lived several hours apart, but planned to work out individually on weekdays and paddle together at the races. We never had a chance.



This year several excellent doubles teams trained together daily, including two pairs from Philadelphia and the Bramans, a father/son team from upstate New York who were active in marathon racing. We finished 6th. But Norm had won a spot on the slalom team in C-2M the previous week with his wife, Barb.

In 1974 I worked at the Nantahala Outdoor Center with a number of other racers. At the end of each day we trained on a slalom course hung from the Appalachian Trail Bridge. There were just four gates, not the elaborate setup you see today. I got into excellent shape. I decided to make a full-scale try for the 1975 U.S. Whitewater Team. But I needed to make a difficult choice. Although I loved slalom, I knew that my chances of making the team in C-1 were very poor. Behind Jamie McEwan were people like Angus Morrison, Tom Irwin, and several other boaters who usually beat me badly. But the competition was much less intense in C-1 wildwater. I made myself a wildwater C-1 and started working out in earnest.

Mikki Piras, who had also worked at NOC, had moved to D.C. to train for the wildwater team. Through her I met a coach from the U.S. flatwater team, refined my stroke, and developed a training schedule. Back in Philadelphia, training alone, I paddled intense 3-hour daily workouts on the Schuylkill River throughout the winter. I only missed a few days due to extreme cold. I took regular whitewater training runs on weekends with the doubles teams from the Philadelphia Canoe Club, covering ten to twenty miles at a fast clip. But solo training was not without its pitfalls! One frigid night my trusty Norse paddle snapped miles downstream, and I found myself swimming in the icy water. Fortunately I was wearing my shorty wetsuit! I quickly swam to shore, stashed my boat, and staggered out to East River Drive. I soon realized that with my large size and strange clothes no one was going to give me a lift. So I ran four miles back to the Philly Canoe Club where I sat in their shower for a long time.

By Spring I was in the best shape of my life. I won a couple of downriver races and even moved up a few positions in slalom. I knew I couldn't beat Al Button, the muscular ex-marathon racer from Minneapolis who had designed his own wildwater C-1 (the Seagull) and paddled on both sides with equal skill. I thought that Tom Irwin, who I could never compete with, would probably take the second wildwater team slot. But the third spot would be mine!

That was not to be. A few weeks before the team trials were held on the Yough, my workouts started feeling sluggish. I just didn't have any snap! At the Yough, I took a long warm-up but still didn't feel right. I did O.K. in the rapids of the loop, but lost lots of time

in the long flat stretch between the bottom of Railroad Rapid and the top of Swimmers. In the end, I lost "my" slot to people I had beaten earlier in the season. Looking back on it, I think that I was probably over-trained and should have cut way back on my workouts before the race. But working alone, without a coach, I just didn't see it. The guys who beat me simply trained smarter. The next day I went over to the Cheat, hopped in my slalom boat, and played the river with total abandon. At the take-out, I wasn't the least bit tired.

Although I continued to race for several more years, I never trained with that intensity again. As I passed my 30th birthday the children of my citizen racing buddies were reaching maturity. The Lugbill Brothers, Jon and Ron, made the U.S. Team in '75 at age 14 and 15. They were a great pair, and this time no one griped about their age. In the years that followed they, along with Dave and Cathy Hearn, lead the "D.C. Kids" to worldwide fame. They dominated the 1979 World Championships in Jonquiere, Quebec, Canada. And that was just the beginning.

Lugbill and Hearn's slalom C-1 design, the Max II, revolutionized slalom. Our old practice of leaning back to "duck" your stern under a pole was much easier in this low-volume design. The "kids" evolved the technique further. Kent Ford told me about one night when the group was practicing at the David Taylor Model Basin, a huge indoor pool used for testing naval ship hulls. They started competing to see who could sneak under a gate the furthest by lowering one pole down into the water. Soon they decided that it was easier to see whose bow could climb up higher on the opposite pole. This quickly evolved into the stern pivot turn, which lifted the bow out of the water for lighting fast spins. Kayakers watched the C-boaters, learned from them, then re-worked their gear and skills. Racers throughout the world copied them. Later, pioneering West Virginia squirt boaters turned this move into the sternsquirt. Many others squirt and rodeo moves evolved from here.

Their coach, Bill Endicott, turned training for whitewater events into a science. The U.S. Slalom Team became the one to beat in international competition. With success came financial support. Where once the athletes camped out at the Worlds and lived on peanut butter, now their expenses were met by sponsors. Eventually elite boaters in each class were "sponsored." It was exciting to watch this develop. But I couldn't fit into the small slalom boats or, more importantly, compete with all this young talent. By the late 70s my finish at big races dropped from "the top ten" to the high teens and beyond. It was time to move on.

I was not alone. When I started paddling, the boat designs that the top competitors used were the same ones that everyone wanted for river running. But this changed when the low-volume boats arrived. Race courses kept getting tighter and tighter until you couldn't possibly make the moves without one. But these small boats were just too small and unstable for most river runners. As the athletes became more talented, fit, and focused it was harder for a citizen racer to realistically aspire to racing glory without also planning to quit their job and train full-time. By the early 80s the first roto-molded kayaks appeared. The River Chaser was followed by the Mirage, then the Dancer. The Dancer was much too short to be race-legal, but by now no one cared. So ironically, as the U.S. produced more world-class racers than anyone, lots of citizen racers like me dropped out. Attendance flagged, and races that used to draw several hundred competitors ended up with a few dozen. So despite the growth of whitewater kayaking, there are probably fewer racers today than there were in the late 70s. Racers used to be role models for the whitewater community; now that role is filled by competitors in the booming sport of whitewater rodeo.

By now I realized that I was having more fun running rivers than racing. I stopped travelling to races, and began working as a safety boater for raft trips on the Cheat River. By this time you could actually walk into a store and buy a kayak, and paddlers could learn the skills they needed without racing. Most of the strong boaters I ran with in the 80s, like Johnny Brown, Peter Zurfleigh, Jim Hammil, Al Louande, and Pete Skinner; had no racing in their backgrounds. I began cruising up to northern New York to paddle with Skinner and his bunch. I got called occasionally to help with race safety at the Savage, which was always a good excuse to run the river and see old friends. Sadly, releases on this river have been curtailed during the last decade by fishing interests. This is a real loss to paddlers everywhere, and I hope we'll find ways to get back on the river in the future.

The International Canoe Federation accepted a U.S. bid to run the World Championships on the Savage in 1989. For many of us who raced in the 70s, it was the fulfillment of a long-time dream. Finally, the Euros who we had learned so much from and looked up to for so long were coming here. They, not our guys, would deal with jet lag, bad food, culture shock, and unfamiliar whitewater. I joined many other ex-racers in a three-year effort to make the event work, coordinating a fifty-person safety team. I saw Jon Lugbill make what was arguably the two finest C-1 runs ever seen at a World Championship to win the gold medal. But more than that, I saw a lot of familiar faces along the shore. The old gang was gathering at the river one more time!

The Low Brace

Solo Open Canoe Roll

By Don Getzin

We are in the midst of our pool paddling session here at NJIT, and my thoughts have uncontrollably turned to teaching solo open canoe rolling. Perhaps I should not be the one to teach this, because my roll is unreliable. I tend to bail out too soon! However, I have taught a number of canoers to roll, and a few now have bomb-proof combat rolls. [What is the adage? "Thems that can, do, and thems that can't, teach!"] So here's how I teach rolling. I first learned this method from Kent Ford.

Boat Outfitting. The absolute prerequisite for learning to roll is to have proper outfitting. This invariably means having foot blocks or toe pegs. Without them, you will immediately fall out of your boat when you capsize. Some students worry about being entrapped by such outfitting. Let me assure you: Falling out is really easy...staying in is hard!

The Set-up. When you first capsize, you will find yourself upside down under your boat, facing upwards toward the surface, leaning forward toward your bow airbag, but (hopefully) with both hands still holding on to your paddle. Move your paddle so that the back of your shaft hand is at your solar plexus (the lower end of your sternum). This usually requires you to "choke up" on your paddle. In my case, my hands end up only 18" apart. The fingertips of your grip hand are probably touching your chest. Now use your grip hand to rotate your paddle 1/2 turn toward your paddling side. If done correctly, the back of your *knuckles* will now be touching your chest, your wrist will be bent at an uncomfortable angle, and the powerface of your paddle will be up, facing the surface.

Digression #1. If you have a small-to-medium bow airbag, there will be plenty of space in front of your knees, and you will now have a big airpocket there. If you move your head to the side, off your shaft hand, you can poke your head up into this airpocket and breathe easily. This is a reasonable way to "hang out" for a few moments until you and your boat flush down the drop into the pool at the bottom, where it is easier to roll up.

Digression #2. If you have overinflated your airbags, your boat will probably be canted toward one side or the other, rather than lying flat on the surface with both gunwales in the water. Most likely your on-side gunwale will be out of the water, and your off-side gunwale in the water. To roll, your boat must be canted the other way. Move your torso across the centerline of your boat toward your off-side, but keep the back of your shaft

hand in contact with your forehead. As you do this, the off-side gunwale will come out of the water, and your boat will cant the other way.

The Stretch. This is the hardest part of the roll. Move your body out from under your boat, *but toward your off-side, not your on-side* (trust me here!), until you and your paddle extend 90 degrees from your hull. Keep your paddle in the set-up position, with the back of your shaft hand pressed against your forehead and the wrist of your grip hand uncomfortably bent at your chest. When you start, you are under your paddle, so that you end up facing downward. Since your paddle does not rotate, but your body does, the wrist on your grip hand unbends and is no longer at that uncomfortable angle. Your fingertips, not the back of your knuckles, should now point toward your chest, and your paddle's powerface should still be up, facing the surface. You are in a deep low brace position, with your face in the water. Your boat is probably now canted at a 45 degree angle, instead of being almost flat: It has already partially rolled. Stretch, arch your back, and bend your head back, reaching toward the surface. Make certain that your paddle blade is flat on the surface. It is OK to move your grip hand out from your chest to get your paddle blade up on the surface, but your forehead must stay in contact with the back of your shaft hand.

Digression #3. A typical mistake is *not extending* your body and paddle out at right angles to your hull, because it is hard to judge that angle. Another mistake is trying to keep your body close to your boat. The farther out you extend your body and your paddle, the easier it is to roll (more mechanical advantage). Your instructor, or a buddy, can grab the shoulders of your PFD and help you properly position your body and paddle. Imagine yourself as a water bug, floating lightly on the surface of the water.

Digression #4. This move requires you to have considerable flexibility in your torso. You must rotate toward your on-side until your shoulders are almost 90 degrees to your pelvis, while at the same time arching your back as you stretch upward toward the surface. If you can't do this, you need to begin daily stretching exercises.

Digression #5. Bob Foote teaches a different set-up position. He sets up outside his canoe, with his paddle plastered against his off-side hull. When he moves his torso out to 90 degrees and rotates to face downward, he must "covert," or flip his paddle over. This

low brace roll does not require you to convert your paddle.

The Roll. After you have positioned yourself properly, *slowly* pull up on your on-side knee, push down on your off-side knee, bend at the waist (contract your abdominal muscles, as if you are doing a "crunch"), and push your head down toward the bottom. Ignore your paddle. If your paddle is initially in the proper position, it will automatically do the right thing without you thinking of it. This roll *does not have a hip snap*, as a kayak roll has. This is a *slow and deliberate* roll. Again, drive your head down toward the bottom. If you attempt to lift your head too soon, your roll will fail. Give your boat some time to roll up; don't rush it! As your boat rolls, your off-side gunwale moves away from you, and your on-side gunwale moves under the water and comes up under your body. You should find yourself draped over your on-side gunwale, still facing downward in the water. Now carefully sneak your head into your boat, making sure your nose first touches your on-side gunwale, then moves across the centerline of your boat, touches your off-side gunwale, and finally goes beyond your offside gunwale.

Digression #6. Timing is everything! You want to transfer some of the angular momentum of your rolling canoe to your torso and head, as you sneak back into your boat. Too soon, and your canoe has not rolled up enough or does not have enough momentum; too late, and all momentum has been lost. Most students try to sneak back into their canoes much too soon, so I try to get them to err in the other direction.

Digression #7. Imagine a line between your gunwales. If your nose is above that imaginary line at any point as you sneak your head into your boat, your center of gravity will be too high, and you will be unable to complete your roll. I suggest that you attempt to touch your nose to the bottom of your hull (it's actually impossible to do this) as your head moves from your on-side gunwale to your off-side gunwale. But keep your head moving!

Digression #8. Some boaters sweep their paddles toward the bow (i.e. like a sweeping low brace, with their blade at a climbing angle) as they sneak back into the boat. I prefer to ignore my paddle, and simply bring it into the boat as an afterthought. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages.

Editors note: Reprinted with permission from Paddle Splashes, the AMC - NY - NJ Chapter Newsletter.

Winter Boating

in Ontario

First Time on the Irvine

By Dax Jacklin

We arrived at the put-in for the Irvine just as the sun was breaking free from the clouds. It was shaping up to be a great late winter day in southern Ontario, the Irvine was up and running at a good level, and I was finally going to get my chance to run it. There were lots of boaters out, including some good friends that I hadn't paddled with in awhile. We had a large group, about ten kayaks, so we headed out in two loose groups. We put-in directly above the old stone bridge, the first drop was immediately below the bridge.

The first rapid consisted of medium-sized waves and a four foot ledge. Everyone made it down safely, the hydraulic at the bottom made for some interesting surfing. Erwin enthusiastically made several forays into the shallow hole. The river bounced his little Prijon around like a ping-pong ball in a washing machine, but his infectious grin never left his face.

We headed downstream, surfing all the waves. A man tending to his yard watched us while we surfed a wave behind his house, fascinated by our attempts at catching the rather finicky wave. He probably thought we were crazy to be on the water in February.

Rob informed us we would soon be at The Ledges, and that we should take a look at them. Since I had no idea what to expect, I agreed wholeheartedly. The drop didn't look too hairy, a river wide hole (the non-keeper type), then a sloping ledge pouring into another river wide hole (the sometimes-keeper type). Dave and I led. No one had much trouble with the stickier hole except for Andy, who had elected to paddle his new boat, a Disco. That little tub sure didn't want to punch through the hydraulic! Paul, the least experienced paddler in the group, ran the drop the cleanest. His smile at the bottom was almost as wide as Erwin's.

A small crowd gathered on the little bridge that crossed the river just below the rapid. We all took turns surfing the Bridge wave while the throng watched from above.

We were now to portage the dam that marks the beginning of the Lower Irvine gorge. We made the short walk up the road through Salem to the put-in for the lower run. Erwin suggested we rope the boats down into the gorge, because the stairs leading down were quite narrow and the footing at the bottom was precarious at best.

The boats all safely and efficiently lowered, we climbed down ourselves. We found a spot on the narrow icy ledge to climb into our boats. The current was swift and large chunks of ice were sweeping by.

One by one, we set off into the Irvine gorge. Rob pointed out a spiral staircase, I'm

sure only dwarves could have built so fine a stone stairway. We traveled downstream, catching eddies. Irwin informed us that the "big drop" of the run, known as "Triple Drop," was just below.

As we approached the last eddy above Triple Drop, Rob gave last-minute instructions. "Whatever happens, keep paddling!" Now I've heard that one before!

Dave went first, paddling confidently, though he hadn't run the Irvine in a few years. He disappeared over the top of the rapid. Then Gary, then Erwin... I punched out of the eddy to follow Erwin, a little too closely, perhaps, I like to call this my "duckling maneuver." Over the first ledge, then the second, no problem. The last ledge became visible, a good eight foot drop to the hole at the bottom. Remembering Rob's classic advice, I started paddling like hell.

I slid down the sloping ledge into the ugly hole at the bottom, my paddle flailing. As I emerged from the backwash, I let out a shout that turned to gurgling as water poured into my open mouth. What a funny sport, that induces shouts and laughter which can lead to drowning! The rest of the group came down the drop, Andy in his Disco, once again having some trouble with the hole. What do you expect when you try to tackle a Class IV rapid in a Tupperware container? With the group now safely at the bottom of Triple Drop, we relaxed and headed down river.

The group spread out now that the big drop was behind us. The surfing was excellent and there were plenty of waves just waiting to be carved up.

We surfed our way down the gorge, making our way slowly towards Elora. The high stone bridge was soon visible. The gradient increased, and the white water went from easy Class II to easy Class III. We all took turns surfing a wave, then I peeled out and headed downstream. As I made my way down through the next series of waves, I noticed a guy on the rocks at the edge of the gorge wall. He was filming me with a large commercial video camera.

When I realized that I was being filmed my posture stiffened, and my paddle strokes became more fluid. It's amazing what a camera can do for your paddling technique. I eddied out opposite the camera guy, still

under the scrutiny of the lens. Gary now came paddling down, the camera guy now focused his soul-stealer on my Brother. Gary eddied out beside me, and we speculated about the guy filming us. Gary remembered seeing a CTV van earlier on the road in Elora.

We soon learned that the cameraman was a friend of Kevin's, who was not out boating that day. The cameraman suggested since Kevin wasn't here to do what he does best, that maybe I could say a few words for the camera. My first reaction was to decline, but then I saw Andy eddy out down a ways, and the words of another Andy Warhol came to mind. This was my 15 minutes, or probably much less.

"What the hell," I thought. After a quick interview for the local news (it turned out to be less than 30 seconds of fame) we paddled away, once again under scrutiny of the lens. I tried very hard at this point not to screw up and flip—what an image that would be for the six o'clock news! It was a short paddle down to the confluence with the Elora gorge, where we all regrouped. We made our way down into the Elora gorge for the last leg of the day's boating. With the large flow coming out of the Irvine, the Gorge was at a decent level. We soon came to the last significant rapid, the "Chute," a narrow jet of foamy Class IV white water.

Everyone made it down okay with the exception of Paul and Rob. Paul tried it backwards! And Rob decided upside down was the way to go! Off we went, down under the High bridge. The hydraulic under the bridge was bigger at this higher flow, and it surfed a paddler from another group till he swam. Late February is a cold time for a swim in Ontario, and by the time he crawled out below Trolls hole he was shivering! After some surfs at Trolls, we continued down through the last few Class II rapids. The Cascade was flowing nicely, with some beautiful ice formations hanging from the lip of the gorge. We took out at the Low bridge as usual, and carried our boats up to the road. By now the sunshine was long gone, replaced by a cloudy gray sky, and the warm February day was a thing of the past. A strong northwesterly wind had sprung up. Changing by the side of the road was a chilling experience to say the least.

We agreed to all meet at the Dalby House in Elora for some apres paddling beverages and hot food. There's truly nothing better after a great day on the water than mixing the warmth of a fire with a cold beer surrounded by good paddling friends.



Remembering Isaac

By Mark H. White
AW Board Member

"Well, Isaac's dead." The voice at the other end of the phone line belonged to my friend Roy. "Yeah, he died this morning." I felt a surge of emotion as memories of time that Roy, Isaac, and I had spent together came rushing back.

We three had shared countless adventures skiing and climbing in the Wasatch, mountain biking in southern Utah, and drinking fine wine wherever we happened to bivouac. But mostly, our time was spent whitewater kayaking and driving to various riparian destinations throughout the western United States. For over a decade we were obsessed with kayaking new and far away rivers. Well, actually, Roy and I were obsessed; Isaac was just happy to be part of the team, so he ended up being dragged along to our misadventures. Now he was gone.

Certain indelible memories epitomize every friend's persona. My most prominent recollection of Isaac was etched one morning while on a padding trip to the California Sierras. Everything about the trip had been wonderful. We had eluded the annoyances that often seemed to haunt our Golden State sojourns; deer ticks, poison oak and snowstorms. This time the sunny warm weather and late spring runoff had been perfect and we were bagging a river every 25 hours. The three of us were up early this particular morning, eagerly anticipating our next risky venture. Roy doused the ancient Coleman stove with white gas and lit it on fire to vaporize a squirming colony of earwigs that had moved in during the night. As the stove rested on the tailgate, sputtering blue circles under a skillet of potatoes, we sipped gritty coffee and made plans for another excellent day.

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We had exhausted the river running options in the Toulumne drainage, so we decided to head north in search of new conquests. Perhaps we'd stop near Santa Cruz for some ocean surfing in our squirt boats, then camp near the Napa Valley, where we could indulge in a bottle or two of cabernet. Before departing though, Roy suggested that we check out Rainbow Pool Falls. This dramatic waterfall appeared in full color on the cover of the brand new *California Whitewater* guidebook and it was only a few miles away from our campsite. We packed up and headed off to the falls.

When we reached Rainbow Pool it was still early in the morning. We were warming ourselves up with gargantuan mugs of coffee. We decided first to check out the falls, then, if it looked fun and photo worthy, we'd pull the boats from the truck and take turns plunging off the 15-foot drop. Exiting the truck, Isaac knocked the steaming coffee from Roy's hand in his eagerness to scout the falls. Not even looking back to survey the mess he had caused, Isaac jogged ahead and disappeared around the corner.

Seconds later, a panic-stricken fisher-

man ran toward us screaming "Your dog's going over the waterfall!"

Roy and I raced toward the river. Sure enough, Isaac was in the water, swimming defiantly against the swift current. The shallow river's clarity allowed us to see his legs churning frantically. We reached the water's edge as Isaac's tail and hind end drifted into the waterfall's funneled brink. For a brief moment, he was able to grasp the shallow riverbed with his front paws, but the current forced his entire body underwater. We could actually see his terrified eyes, wide open and just below the surface, staring up at us with a look that pleaded "Do something — can't you see I'm in trouble here?" Roy desperately lunged toward Isaac's submerged collar, almost falling in himself, but the effort was nanoseconds too late. Isaac lost his grasp and disappeared over the edge.

We had no idea what was below. If the water dropped onto sharp logs or rocks, Isaac would be seriously hurt or even killed. It was possible that the waterfall base would create an inescapable hydraulic where Isaac would recirculate, tire, and drown, before we could rescue him. Roy and I had spent enough

time on rivers to appreciate the dangerous situation that Isaac was in. For a second, it was quiet. Then we heard a loud splash. A high velocity golden retriever had slammed into Rainbow Pool. We scrambled to the slippery edge and peered into the base of the falls. There was Isaac, vertically positioned, still attempting to swim upstream. He bobbed up and down as the South Fork of the Tolumne pounded down on him. Fortunately, Isaac was quickly flushed out and swam toward the safety of the pool's edge. Once we realized that Isaac was unscathed, Roy and I laughed so hard, we nearly fell into the river.

Roy went to the truck and returned with a camera in hopes of capturing Isaac running the falls again. But Isaac was not about to be fooled again.

Isaac's life was exceptionally rich. He loved rolling on rotting, putrid deer carcasses, violently body surfing on both coasts, eating plastic honey bears, consuming and painfully expelling ponderosa pine cones and personally marking the 'Welcome To' signs of 28 of the United States. However, Isaac's quintessential fifteen seconds of fame, in my opinion occurred on that early California morning at Rainbow Pool.

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Did you see what she was paddling?

By Alison Snow Jones

A woman I know took up paddling about a year ago. In her forties, divorced, with one child, the idea of getting out on weekends surrounded by nature was quite appealing. She also liked the idea of introducing her daughter to a sport that she might eventually decide to pursue on her own. Like many new paddlers, Sara had no interest in moving up to Class IV-V hair runs. In fact, she wasn't sure about whitewater, but wanted to give it a try and see how things went. She figured that if her sense of fear didn't decrease over time, she could always drop back to lakes and Class I rivers. She also wanted to start out slow and work her way up because she knew that if she had a really frightening experience early in her paddling career, it would probably end it before it began.

Sara did what most sensible people would do: she joined a paddling club. She wasn't sure what kind of boat she wanted to paddle, canoe or kayak. When she sought advice from members of her paddling club, she was informed in no uncertain terms that if she wanted to paddle whitewater, the only boat to consider was a kayak. Not realizing that she might be getting a rather one-sided view of whitewater paddling, she took the advice, acquired a kayak and gear, and enrolled in the club's beginner kayaking course.

After completing it, she had a bit of trouble logging river miles because the club didn't seem to offer much in the way of organized trips that were in the Class I-11+ range. When she did find trips and went on them, she was surprised to encounter ridicule when she commented on how beautiful the scenery was. One of her fellow boaters actually admonished her, "If you have time to look at the scenery, you should be paddling harder rivers." This bothered Sara a bit. She had not undertaken paddling in order to "prove" herself or to advance up the river difficulty ladder. She took up paddling because she needed a break from the sorts of things we all face in our jobs and lives: pressure to perform, pressure to conform to someone else's expectations, and pressure to be constantly proving our own worth. Now, suddenly, she was experiencing the exact same sort of pressure on the river.

This pressure was also apparent when she purchased her boat. She chose a Dagger RPM, knowing that it would be a reliable boat for a beginner. It's relative stability and predictability promised not to catapult her into

unexpected and unpredictable moves as she learned to read and run easy whitewater. She wasn't really interested in doing stern squirts or throwing cartwheels, at least at this early stage in her paddling career, so it seemed like the perfect boat for her. Imagine how she felt when she was told by a member of her paddling club that she had just purchased a "timid old lady" boat. Fortunately, she is old enough to ignore this sort of thing and, in fact, to take some comfort from the thought that if the RPM really is a "timid old lady" boat, then she had probably made the right choice.

Sara isn't alone in experiencing this pressure to paddle the "right" boat and harder rivers. A young man I know took up paddling within the past year. Unlike Sara, he *would* like to move up to harder rivers eventually. One of his friends is encouraging him to skip the Nantahala for his first whitewater experience and, instead, paddle the Ocoee. Fortunately, Sam had enough sense to ask around. He learned that the Ocoee is much bigger and harder than the Nanty and that it would be dangerous to try for a first whitewater paddle. Sam had a good question though: *"What is wrong with people who encourage other paddlers to jump into a situation that could kill them?"*

Sara and Sam are continuing to paddle despite tremendous pressure to paddle harder water and to move up faster than they would like. For Sara, her willingness to persist despite the pressure is largely due to a handful of paddlers in her club who have been good friends and supportive of her efforts to learn. For Sam, it is because of friends who are suggesting a more measured, careful approach. Sam recognizes that these folks are true friends. As he puts it: "they care enough to say 'whoa, buddy, let's walk before we run'."

I wonder how many Saras and Sams we lose from the sport every year because they listen the minority of paddlers who are pressuring them to buy the latest hot play boat and paddle harder rivers? Remember back in high school when you were judged by what you wore and who you hung out with? And if you didn't wear the right style of clothes and hang with the right crowd, you were beneath contempt unless someone needed a target to ridicule publicly? Unfortunately, there is a small minority in the paddling community that, to my mind, strongly resembles high school. The idea that if you don't paddle the "right" boat and you aren't pushing yourself up to Class IV as fast as you can then you're not and never will be a "real" paddler has got to be recognized for what it is: snobbery. It's actually worse than high school snobbery because it puts pressures on newcomers to move into potentially dangerous situations they are not ready to face.

Paddling isn't just a sport. Paddling is a way of life. As such, there are as many ways to

do it as there are lives to be lived. I've watched people who have canoed for thirty or forty years, seldom running much above Class III. But when they run a Class IV rapid, they have absolutely NO problem. They usually are on the best line and take on the least water. Are they less of a paddler because they've never run the Russell Fork Gorge or Narrows of the Green and never want to? What about folks who spend weeks in the backcountry, paddling lakes in all kinds of weather? Are they not "real" paddlers?

I know the majority of whitewater paddlers are responsible and would never do or say any of the things I've related in this article (all of which are true, by the way). But there is a small group of often vocal whitewater paddlers that are making us all look bad. At best, they are discouraging many newcomers to the sport. At worst, they are endangering them. I'm hoping that in reading this article, some of that minority will recognize themselves and think for a moment about the consequences of what they are doing when they behave this way.

If ever there were an obvious place in which it is clear that we all share a common bond, it is on the river. We almost lost three potential paddlers, Sam, Sara, and Sara's daughter, because some of us couldn't leave high school behind and recognize that bond. Because some of us couldn't be *truementors*: to Sara while she finds her own niche, the one where she's comfortable, on the river and in the paddling world, and to Sam so that when he reaches the Ocoee, he's ready for it and will enjoy it.

To paraphrase from a former political campaign: It's the river, stupid. It calls to all of us, but not in the exact same way. What unites us is that we all hear and heed that call.

Alison Snow Jones unapologetically paddles a Crossfire and keeps one in reserve since they are no longer manufactured. She has paddled the Ocoee and hopes one day to feel comfortable enough on it to look at the scenery.

New National Parks Map and Guide for 2001

The official 2001 National Park Service Map and Guide to 365 park sites is available in limited supply for \$4.95, shipping included, from the National Park Society, 5335 Whip Trail, Colorado Springs, CO 80917. For more information contact email@nationalparksociety.com or call 719-572-5739.



My Refuge

By Dustin Urban

This moment with the water rushing by,
This pause in action, chaos, ceaselessness,
Does bring about reflection as to why?
The river is my soul's best source of rest.

The churning waters are the brisk, swift gusts
That please the sailor, clear his cluttered mind;
The ripping rapids serve us paddlers thus,
They drive, reset, retime our inward rhyme.

And at the end of this, a well spent day,
Away, beyond the thrills of crashing creeks,
I know that then in peace I'll firmly say
That ease will fill my mind for many weeks.

Indeed as time resumes and chaos returns,
I know the river's where my essence burns.

By: Dustin Urban

Age: 15 when written, currently 16

This poem was written for an English class and follows the form of a Shakespearean sonnet.

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The Doctor Is In!

Is your love life playing havoc with your love of the rivers? Or is it the other way around? In either case, send your questions to Dr. Juste Kantgettenuff, AW's whitewater love expert. Remember, when it comes to answering difficult questions of the heart, Dr. Kantgettenuff puts the ass in asinine!

Doctor Kantgettenuff appreciates the many wonderful gifts he has received from his devoted readers. (Message from Dr. K to Melanie in Boston: Thanks for the lovely cactus. It certainly is a big one. But, I have one question. If I put that cactus where the sun never shines, how will it grow?)

THE ULTIMATE FIX!

Dear Dr. Kantgettenuff,

Me and my roommate need your advice and we need it now. Not for ourselves, mind you... we've got the LOVE THING down pat. We are living the schweet life and there are never any vacancies in our Smackdown Hotel! (Well, almost never.)

Unfortunately this is not true for our good buddy, Pid L. Sprung. Lately when it comes to dealing with the opposite sex, Pid is out of control. It's like he is in the middle of some terrible delayed adolescent crisis. During the last few weeks Pid has become completely obsessed with women. As a result he has lost his part-time job, been tossed out of his apartment and is about to flunk out of college. But even worse, Pid's skirt chasing has started to interfere with his paddling!

Pid used to boat with us three or four times a week. He was the first to reach the put-in, raring to go. But, no more. Oh, Pid still talks about boating and he promises to meet us at the river. But more than half the time he doesn't show up. He's become completely unreliable. When we confront Pid about this, he makes all sorts of lame excuses. But we know where he's been. Out womanizing!

Just yesterday Pid was supposed to meet us to paddle the lower Meadow. But he stood us up again! Told us he had a flat tire. But we found out later that he was bobbing around in a filthy hottub with some woman who isn't even a boater! The boy is sick!

Is there anything we can do save Pid from this terrible sex madness?

Concerned and loyal friends,
Dun Benny and Jay Bean
Morgantown, West Virginia

Dear Jay and Dun,
It is just as normal and healthy for a young man to desire the companionship of the opposite sex as it is for him to desire a good meal. But sometimes, as is apparently the case with Pid L. Sprung, this instinctive drive for interpersonal gratification escalates to the level of an unhealthy obsession. This can lead to an uncontrollable and devastating sexual addiction.

These poor souls inevitably lose their sense of perspective. They find it impossible to study, to work, to eat and even to sleep. In advanced cases they lose interest in even the most important basic life functions, like running whitewater! I know this is hard for you to accept and understand, but there is no denying the facts. Yes, your poor friend Pid is well on his way to becoming what we psychopathopsychologists refer to as a Sex Glutton! During my years in practice the good doctor has encountered many such unfortunate individuals, and it is never a pretty sight. But there may still be a ray of hope; you may be able to save the unfortunate Pid L. Sprung.

First, you must continue to entice Pid to the river. When he shows, do everything in your power to make sure that he has a marvelous time. But, on those occasions when if he fails to materialize, leaving you shuttleless, you must track him down and administer a severe thrashing. You may need to kick Pid's sorry ass several times before he perceives the error in his ways.

Unfortunately some Sex Gluttons are so profoundly ill that even negative reinforcement will not work. If that proves to be the case with Pid, and he continues to allow his womanizing to interfere with his (and your) river running, there is only one option left.

That's right. If all else fails, Pid will just have to be neutered!

THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

Dear Juste,

Well, things are going marvelously for me here in Boise. The spring melt has started and the rivers are full... of water... and of really yummy looking men! So many to choose from!

There is one guy that has really caught my eye. He works in development for Micron, so I know he makes oodles of money. He drives a brand new Explorer and he lives in a gigantic house. And he is a totally awesome boater. You wouldn't believe all the nifty tricks he can do!

But before I set my sights on him, I wanted to check in with you for some reliable advice. I have a couple of concerns about him and I figured you could ease my mind. I know you will think my questions are silly... but please indulge me. One of my boating friends, Carla Garrison, is telling me that I shouldn't bother going after this guy because he paddles a really itzy bitsy rodeo boat. Carla swears that it is a proven fact that guys who paddle little tiny boats are... how shall I put this delicately... tiny in other respects... if you know what I mean. I told her that was crazy, but she swears that it is true.

But even if it is true, I've read lots of articles in Redbook and Good Housekeeping that say that size doesn't matter. But, on the other hand, articles in Cosmo say it does. I don't know whom to believe.

Well, you're the expert, Dr. Kantgettenuff, and you've never failed to give me good advice.

So what do you think?

Just a bit confused,
Goldie Digere
Boise, Idaho

My Dearest Goldie,

I hate to burst your bubble, since it sounds like you really had your heart set on this young man. But, alas, it is my professional responsibility to tell nothing but the truth. That is why I must advise you to forget this rodeo boater's sorry ass.

I'm afraid your friend Carla is correct. Extensive research done by Dr. P Cœ at MIS-NTS (Montana Institute for Serious Fluid Interaction, Training and Study) has demonstrated beyond any doubt that there is a strong correlation between the size of a male paddler's boat and the size of his other equipment... if you know what I mean.

That being true, we must now address your second question... does size even matter? The articles that you read in Good Housekeeping and Redbook that said that size does not matter no doubt quoted the sweet old homily, "It's not the size of the wave...it's the motion of the ocean." But, to be honest with you, those articles were no doubt written by some sad woman whose man paddles a very small canoe.

Unfortunately, Goldie, the articles in Cosmo were correct. Size does matter. And don't let anyone paddling a little tiny rodeo boat try to convince you otherwise. It's like my grandmama Connie Kantgettenuff used to say, "The only thing worse than a puny mutahala, is a conniving puny mutahala!"

But, don't despair, Goldie. I'm sure that somewhere Mr. Right is patiently waiting in an eddy for you. And some day you will surely find your way to him.

(By the way... just for the record... Dr. Kantgettenuff paddles an absolutely enormous Prijon Tornado.)

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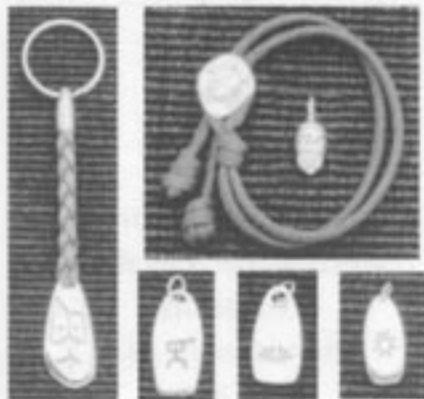
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