



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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May/June 2009



FAMILY PADDLING

"Family" Equals "Whitewater"

Kids and Whitewater: Striking a Balance

Outdoor Immersion for Kids

The Middle Fork of the Salmon with Munchkins

Growing Up Around Non-boaters



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AMERICAN WHITewater

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

May/June 2009 - Volume #49 - Issue #3

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Xander Goldman jumps into the Rogue
River at Laurel Dell
photo by Cathy Howard



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Purpose American Whitewater

River Stewardship: An Integrated Approach

Our mission: "To conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely," is actively pursued through our conservation, access, safety and education efforts under the umbrella of River Stewardship. The only national organization representing the interest of all whitewater paddlers, American Whitewater is the national voice for thousands of individual whitewater enthusiasts, as well as over 100 local paddling club affiliates.

AW's River Stewardship program adheres to the four tenets of our mission statement:

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision-making

processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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, encourages equitable and responsible management of whitewater rivers on public lands, and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

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 American Whitewater Safety Code.

EDUCATION: AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

Together, AW staff, members, volunteers, and affiliate clubs can achieve our goals of conserving, protecting and restoring America's whitewater resources and enhancing opportunities to safely enjoy these wonderful rivers.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723; phone 1-866-BOAT-4-AW (1-866-262-8429). AW is tax exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service.



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The Journey Ahead

There is nothing like a swarm of mosquitoes to cause some trepidation about a multi-day wilderness river trip. So it was as my family rigged and loaded rafts for an eight-day Desolation Canyon trip last summer. It wasn't that I had not been warned; all the other members of our party came with full bug suits. The trip leader and permit holder had suggested that bug suits would be useful. My wife and kids asked if we needed bug suits each time we drove past a Bass Pro Shop between western North Carolina and southern Utah. "No, it's the desert, we won't need bug suits," I assured them. "Plus, it's still early in the year; the mosquitoes won't be out yet."

But as we stood at the Sand Wash put-in on the Green River, the audible sound of mosquitoes hovered—everywhere. Even the group rigging next to us from Outward Bound, those hearty experiential education types well known for their minimalism, had bug suits. As we pushed out into the slow current of the Green, mosquitoes followed and stayed with us for most of the trip.

While the constant presence of bugs added a challenging dimension, the kids and Debby had a great time—even if some nights they would dive into the tent as soon as it was pitched just to escape the little pests. Later, when the current picked up speed and the mosquito population declined, "bug free" campsites became extra special.

For my kids, these small hardships loom larger than life in their stories and songs about last summer. Our family river trips create memories that will last well into their adult years, in much the way I remember family canoe trips with my parents and brothers when I was a kid.

These experiences are significant building blocks for personal character and enhance an understanding of the inherent wildness in special places. All this helps to put current events into context and forms a base for understanding the importance of river stewardship. When the hurried oil leases went up for auction in southern



Skyler and Mckayla Singleton on Desolation Canyon, Green River, Utah

Photo by Mark Singleton

Utah this past fall, my kids understood what was going on. They had seen wells on the drive to the put-in, they knew Desolation Canyon from floating it in the summer, and they could talk about what that special place meant to them (mosquitoes and all).

This issue of American Whitewater focuses on kids and family paddling. Enjoy the read and remember that we all started paddling with someone. These stories are about those lucky enough to have started early.

See you on the river,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark".

P.S. From Skyler and Mckayla Singleton, sung to the chorus of My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean:

Bug suits, bug suits, why didn't daddy buy them, buy them. Bug suits, bug suits, we need some protection so bad...

President's Message

Paddling has provided me countless joyful experiences and memories. The most cherished of these memories are certainly those with my children as we introduced them to the joy of the outdoors and wild rivers. These are the special memories that will last forever.

Nanci and I introduced our children to the beauty of the Chattooga River at a very early age. First they rode along as passengers in my canoe down the easier sections as early as two or three years old. Next they were on their own in an inflatable kayak around age five or six, always under our watchful eye. They loved it and we had many a wonderful day splashing and floating and having great fun. As they became more comfortable and skilled on the water we expanded our river horizons and paddled more challenging water. It was great fun!

My two daughters are now teenagers and

aren't so much into paddling these days but they have discovered that the boys really think it is cool! What's most important though is that they both understand and value the beauty of wild places. When they go they love it.

My son Max, now 15, has become my favorite kayaking buddy. He has grown up on the river and it has been exhilarating as a parent to watch him progress from those days riding in my canoe down easy Class I/II to today. It won't be but another summer or two before he is leaving me behind for his own river adventures.

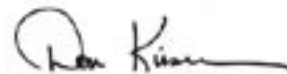
Introducing your children to the wonders of wild rivers is not only fulfilling as a parent, it is also vitally important to the future of the rivers we all love. That is because it is our children who will be the next generation of river stewards. If we don't introduce young people to the magic of wild place and teach

them to appreciate these treasures there will be fewer people to protect these places in the future. That would be a tragedy.

Paddling is also a wonderful physical activity that provides great exercise. Certainly many of today's youth need more physical activity and what better way to get them up off the couch and away from the video games. This is a gift that will keep on giving for the rest of their lives.

So take your children paddling. Teach them to love wild places. Help build a legacy of passionate river stewards to continue to cherish such places and work to protect them for your grandchildren and those generations still to come.

See You on the River,



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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Thank you so much for the very compelling "Great Debate" January/February issue. I almost stopped getting into the debate coverage when I saw a photo of Sheras Falls on Oregon's Deschutes River on page 12 captioned as "the Russell Fork."

However, I pressed on only to almost stop again on reading Tyler Bradt's comment that whitewater kayaking was, "once the world's fastest growing sport." That statement is incorrect. While kayaking grew rapidly during the 90s, it was never even close to being the world's fastest growing sport. I base this on over 35 years of covering the business side of outdoor sports.

Bradt's statement out of the way, I kept reading and found the back and forth over the whitewater sport and its future interesting and well stated on all sides. Your coverage was balanced and it was good to hear not only from the young and brash but also many old friends and colleagues.

From my standpoint as a outdoor industry observer, what's happened to whitewater kayaking has been mimicked closely in both rock climbing and in backcountry skiing. These sports, like whitewater kayaking, started small and were led by adventurers. As these sports grew and gained wider popularity, companies came into being to meet participants' equipment needs. Eventually all three sports became more edgy and glamorous to the media.

Now, all three are searching for a new identity.

Landis Arnold and Corran Addison both used ski analogies in their contribution to the Great Debate. Here's mine. Backcountry skiing has gone from a recreational pursuit focused on the adventure of being out in the wilds and hopefully getting in a few decent turns along the way to one where it seems if you're not skiing steep couloirs, outrunning avalanches, calling any slope under 45 degrees easy and not a sponsored "rider" that you're out of it.

As to rock climbing, the era of multi-day big wall climbs gave way to more accessible short route sport climbing to amazing feats like doing The Nose route on El Capitan in under three hours. Here again, the pioneers like Yvon Chouinard and his fellow dirt baggers gave way to a generation of Lycra-wearing day-trippers and then to the current crop of sponsored "athletes."

So, whitewater paddling is not unique in how the sport has developed and changed. What bothers me most is that in the process those involved in the whitewater sport have tended to relegate those who simply paddle for fun to the scrap pile.

I wholeheartedly agree with my good friend Joe Pulliam that, "Those who want to push the limits can and will do so," but that it's also, "fine to be a whitewater paddler and never push oneself beyond Class II."

Let's be clear about one thing—I am a lifelong "trailing edge" paddler who got into the sport in 1971 and almost got out of it after a couple of epic swims. But I persisted and made my first fiberglass boat before graduating to a Hollowform and over the years began to love the sport for it's sense of adventure, camaraderie, excitement, and physical demands.

Like many of my fellow trailing edgers, I did a bit of slalom and downriver racing, made a couple of first descents and never got past front and side surfing. I was happy just having the fundamentals down.

Today, looking back I cherish moments like in the mid-70s, when a group of us were driving a VW van loaded down with boats down a Northern California back road and suddenly a beat up old Chevy van with kayaks on top comes at us from the opposite direction. Wow, we thought, there are other kayakers in this world.

Both vehicles stopped and we spent two hours on the roadside talking about rivers to run, rivers we'd like to run, and gear (what there was of it at the time).

The whitewater sport to me has always been about people, friendships made, and experiences. My best day of paddling still stands out sharply in my mind some 25 years later. I joined two friends for a Class IV section that we'd all run before. But this time was different, we were totally in sync, running everything with style including a couple of lines we'd never tried before. We were a team and we ended the day paddling into a brilliant sunset ecstatic at what had transpired.

And so, as I slouch towards my seventh decade, I am happy to have a strong link to the whitewater sport, not because a great feats of daring, but by making great friends and sharing wonderful experiences.

Best,
Bob Woodward
Bend, OR



To the Editor:

I enjoyed the recent collection of viewpoints on the cutting edge of kayaking. If I had to choose a favorite, I think I would probably have to go with the one by Mr. Snyder, probably because I couldn't quite figure out what he was saying. I'm guessing he's spent a lot of time on both sides of the Edge and he probably knows a thing or two about the Great Divide — Mr. Snyder, if we ever meet at the Big Take-out, drinks are on me.

I wish to offer my own thoughts on the Edge, which I believe will have the same level of influence on kayaking as the Big Lebowski had on bowling. The Edge essays led me to Hunter S. Thompson and his work. Thompson pretty much created the concept of "Gonzo-Journalism," which is essentially living what you write about, albeit at an extreme level. One of his first forays into Gonzo-land was spending a year riding and hanging with the Hell's Angels, an experience that got him real up close and personal with the Edge.

I offer a quote from Mr. Thompson that goes something like this: "We were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold... The sky was full of what looked like large bats..." Wait, sorry—that's not the quote I wanted. That's from Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas; I wanted the one from Hell's Angels:

"But with the throttle screwed on there is only the barest margin, and no room at all for mistakes. It has to be done right . . . and that's when the strange music starts, when you stretch your luck so far that fear becomes exhilaration and vibrates along your arms.

"You can barely see at a hundred; the tears blow back so fast that they vaporize before they get to your ears. The only sounds are wind and a dull roar floating back . . . You watch the white line and try to lean with it, howling through a turn to the right, then to the left and down . . . until the next dark stretch and another few seconds on the edge.

"The Edge . . . there is no honest way to explain it because the only people who really know where it is are the ones who have gone over. The others—the living—are those who pushed their control as far as they thought they could handle it, and then pulled back, or slowed down, or did whatever they had to when it came time to choose between Now or Later."

Don Morris
Ray Brook NY

Beyond the Cutting Edge: The Next Whitewater Campaign

Introduction

The wilderness is vanishing, and the world's rivers are drying up. The loss of the natural environment is a global crisis, and it is our responsibility to take action. The American Whitewater Campaign is a national organization dedicated to the protection of our rivers and the promotion of whitewater recreation. We are currently seeking volunteers for our upcoming campaign in the Adirondacks region of New York State. The campaign will focus on the protection of the Adirondack Park and the promotion of whitewater recreation in the region. We are currently seeking volunteers for our upcoming campaign in the Adirondacks region of New York State. The campaign will focus on the protection of the Adirondack Park and the promotion of whitewater recreation in the region.

Why Join?


Joining our team will allow you to help protect our rivers and the environment. You will have the opportunity to work with some of the best whitewater kayakers in the world. You will also have the chance to meet and work with some of the most experienced whitewater kayakers in the world. We are currently seeking volunteers for our upcoming campaign in the Adirondacks region of New York State. The campaign will focus on the protection of the Adirondack Park and the promotion of whitewater recreation in the region.

How to Join

Interested in joining our team? Visit our website at www.americanwhitewater.org for more information. We are currently seeking volunteers for our upcoming campaign in the Adirondacks region of New York State. The campaign will focus on the protection of the Adirondack Park and the promotion of whitewater recreation in the region.

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Stewardship Updates

AW Pushes for a Whitewater Park in Oroville, CA

By Logan Mayville

In March of 2006, the Settlement Agreement was signed that became the foundation of the Oroville Dam's new operation license. The agreement created the Steering Committee to select proposed projects to fund and also decide the level of funding appropriate for approved projects. The current topic on the floor is a proposed whitewater park to be constructed in Oroville.

American Whitewater is represented by California Stewardship Director, Dave Steindorf, who sits on the Supplemental Benefits Fund Committee with three Oroville City Council members, two members from the Board of Directors of the Feather River Recreation and Park District, and an advisor from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). This Steering Committee will have significant input on the location of that park and has the ability to provide significant funding.

On February 18, the whitewater park feasibility study was presented at the Oroville City Council Chambers. EDAW

consulting firm delivered its findings on seven potential sites on the Feather River. The study was designed to test the feasibility of constructing a whitewater park and was not a "shovel-ready" plan to begin construction.

About 50 community members and paddlers attended the meeting and expressed unanimous support for the idea of a whitewater park. Some of the benefits cited by the crowd were increased tourism

Conceptual sketch of the proposed Oroville Whitewater Park

Photo Courtesy of Land Image, Chico, CA



in Oroville, a recreation alternative to the withering Lake Oroville, and more recreation opportunities on the Feather River. A whitewater park would greatly increase the length of paddling season in the region.

In order to close this deal, American Whitewater is pushing DWR to make the process as transparent as possible by getting the public involved. Tentative plans were made for a public field trip to the seven possible sites that the Steering Committee will attend. A whitewater park is consistent AW's objectives to protect recreational opportunities and promote positive ecological function. AW and its members want a whitewater park, the local community wants a whitewater park; it is time for action. We expect the final report to be out in July of this year.

The Headwaters of the Snake has just been signed in to law as one of the country's newest section of Wild and Scenic Rivers

Photo Courtesy of Aaron Pruzan



AW Spends a Week in Washington DC

By Kevin Colburn

Several times each year some of the American Whitewater staff travels from our offices scattered around the country to Washington, DC to represent paddlers on national policy issues. In late February we made just such a trip with our partners in the Outdoor Alliance. We met with agency leaders for the Forest Service, Department of Interior, staff of the Obama Administration, environmental organizations, and a significant number of Senators and Representatives. The buzz in DC was all about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), otherwise known as the stimulus package. While there, we shared our thoughts on how the paddling community would be affected by ARRA, mining reform, the Omnibus Lands Bill, and funding for the federal agencies. These priorities translate to healthier rivers in your backyard with public access.

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Family Paddling

American Whitewater is proud to present our 2009 Family Paddling issue.

What follows is our celebration of the role whitewater rivers play in our family lives. Those of us fortunate enough to have grown up speaking the language of eddy lines and standing waves, tongues and hydraulics are connected to rivers to an indescribable degree. Those who introduce their own children to the river do their part to anchor their family's attention in the outdoors, and give their kids a fantastic perspective on life. Hopefully

some of this magic combination of family and whitewater will be transmitted to you, the reader, in the pages that follow.

Observant readers might notice that, aside from a focus on the family, this issue of *American Whitewater* is unique in a very different way. The heft of this magazine is less than you're probably used to, its pages fewer in number. While we prefer publishing full-length issues, we simply did not receive the quantity of content from our contributors that we were hoping for in this issue. To help avoid finding truncated issues of the magazine in your mailbox in the future, please consider contributing yourself. You can

always find our editorial calendar on our website (just click on the "AW Journal" link in the "Library" menu from anywhere on our site) and you will often see calls for specific kinds of content on our front page. As a publication that depends on volunteers for all photos and text, we really do need your help to make *American Whitewater* as good as it can be. We hope to hear from you in the near future (editor @americanwhitewater.org).

Cathy Howard rows Jordy (4) Sarah Jane (5) and Ryan (4) on the Main Salmon in Idaho



Festivals 2009



Gauley Fest: Sept 18-20



Summersville, WV

Deerfield Fest: July 25



Charlemont, MA

Wenatchee Fest: June 13-14



Cashmere, WA

Family Paddling



Family Equals Paddling

By Adam Herzog

My family gravitates to water. When I was young, Dad and I spent afternoons fishing in the cold, clear rivers of the Smoky Mountains. We discovered whitewater, and as boats and paddles replaced rod and reels, we abandoned fishing in the pursuit of boating.

When I was 11, Dad and one of his buddies took me to the Upper Tuckasegee, the local Class II river. I was in a yellow Dancer, and on top of the world, as the current pulled us into another universe. My romantic vision of whitewater was shattered as we rounded a bend and entered the first rapid. I flipped and swam in the icy, shallow water. BANG! I felt my shins whack rocks. When I finally clawed my way to shore, my spongy wool sweater weighed as much as I did. I was scared but my old man gave me a hug and a word of encouragement. I got back in the water and successfully completed the run.

My life was never the same. Dinner conversations soon revolved around whitewater. On weekends we drove to classics like the Ocoee, Chattooga and Tellico. I relished the days Dad picked me up at school early to surf on the Nantahala, telling the teachers I had a dentist appointment.

Family trips were not always good, though. We frequently ran Section III of the Chattooga. The hole at the bottom of Bull Sluice always looked fearsome, and early on I was content to portage. Eventually I wanted to push myself and run The Bull. Dad was not having it. The consequence of his little boy missing the line was too great. He was just looking out for me, but I thought he was holding me back. I got mad, stomped and threw a fit more than once, putting a damper on otherwise beautiful days.

I was as troubled as any teenage boy. I was also a hapless criminal, and every time I broke a rule, I got caught. It strained my previously healthy relationship with my

parents. When things were bad we drove to my favorite rapid on Scotts Creek. We were not paddling, we were talking. The river was always soothing, and it was always there.

As I emerged from my adolescent angst, my younger sister Katie became a full-fledged rodeo star. She weighed less than one hundred pounds, but she could throw her boat around like a muscled jock. She ultimately burned out and now paddles rarely, but she can still get down. And we can always talk boating.

Katie's twin, Betsy, started kayaking when Katie did, but she never caught the bug. She would have been a natural though: her one and only combat roll was a spectacular hands roll at Surfing Wave on the Nantahala. My mother and Betsy put in plenty of time on the road, driving to various rodeos and races. Occasionally, Mom takes my cracked old creek boat down the same section of the Tuck that I swam on so many years ago.

We do not get to paddle as much together now as we used to, but still, when I think of family, I think of whitewater.



Upper: Hal Herzog (a.k.a. "Dad") surfin' and smilin'.

Middle: Adam Herzog surfing

Photo by Hal Herzog

Lower: Katie Herzog throwing old school rodeo moves in her younger days

Photo by Hal Herzog

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Family Paddling

Learning to love the outdoors through immersion

Photo by Michelle O'Malley



Immersing Kids in the Outdoors

One Family's Approach

By Sean O'Malley

My wife and I both believe in immersion when it comes to teaching our kids to be active and to love the outdoors. By immersion, I don't mean tossing them over the gunnels, I mean immersion in the sense of learning a language.

To raise intrepid kids, you need to make being active as natural as the air they breathe. In our family, we go out of our way to make active pursuits of all stripes a regular part of our life—not just paddling, but mountain biking and camping, music, dancing, and storytelling. When my daughter, Rory, does something adventurous outside and skins her elbow, my wife will hug her and say, "That's my tough mountain bike chick," or "See, girls love dirt." When my son, Donovan, throws sticks in a creek, I'll challenge him to make the sticks catch eddies or surf waves. Even literature isn't safe from our brand of immersion. The comic relief character in Rory and Donovan's favorite homemade bedtime story is Jeffery the lazy wombat, who would spend his entire life eating potato chips and watching TV if not for his intrepid siblings. Propaganda? You bet!

Parents love teachable moments and discrete lessons, but in reality kids do the majority of their learning by experience and exposure. Every day, kids add a tiny bit to their sense of what is normal and fun, based on what they do and see. Peers play a huge part in this, especially once school starts. Unless you are one of the fortunate few who live in an outdoor mecca, chances are that your kids' peers will not be into an active, outdoor lifestyle. The older your kids get, the more influence those peers will have.

As parents, we have to take advantage of the early years, when our kids' worlds still mostly revolve around us, to show them just how much fun and satisfaction they can get from being active in the natural world. After all, the default in American society is passive consumption—

television, iPods and Wiis are nearly everywhere—so be prepared to counter their influence by making your outdoor passions equally accessible.

Appropriate and Fun

Immersing your kids in an outdoor lifestyle shouldn't mean hauling them along on adult trips like a bunch of squirmy luggage packs. If you want your kids to develop a lifelong love of the outdoors, their early exposures need to be fun and appropriate. Keep the trips short, have bailout options available, don't scare them, and be prepared to dump your pre-planned schedule on a moment's notice. Don't worry if your kids have more fun wallowing around in the mud at the put-in than they do in the boat. If that's the case, shorten the trip and spend more time making mud patties!

Once on the water, resist the urge to turn the day into "Paddling 101." Most adult beginners love receiving instruction on their early trips, the more the better. With young kids, that's a recipe for disaster. The main goal should be play. Learning will come as a natural side effect, especially if

you subtly direct some of that play. Leave the structured lessons for school. In fact, until their bodies mature to the point where they get actual results from their efforts, trying to teach young children advanced strokes will just frustrate them.

Our kids' early paddling trips weren't paddling trips at all. They were camping/fun trips that just happened to involve boats. The first several times Rory and Dono went to the Yough, they spent more time splashing around at the bottom of the Meadow Run slides and throwing rocks and sticks into the river than they did in a boat. On their first overnight run down the Greenbrier, I think they probably would have been content to spend the entire time at Island Campground, wading around in the shallows of the East Branch and combing the woods for animal bones. This was as it should be. They were learning just how wonderful and cool the riparian world can be, and just how much fun you can have when you rely on your

Watching Dad play on the loop

Photo by Michelle O'Malley



Family Paddling



own body and mind.

Immersion can have unintended consequences, of course. When my daughter was three, I offered to take her for a short paddle on the headwaters of a pretty, local lake. Her response was instant and adamant. "I don't want to go." I could tell from her tone of voice that this wasn't just contrariness. After some coaxing, she finally told me in a concerned, slightly embarrassed tone, "I don't want to have to flip over." I asked her if she thought flipping was a required part of paddling. "Yes," came the wide-eyed reply.

That exchange was a real epiphany for me. My well-intentioned plan to let my daughter see me "in action" as often as possible had backfired. I thought that time spent watching me at pool sessions or playing on the Loop would demonstrate just how cool and fun paddling was. In her cautious toddler mind, unfortunately, the message became "Paddling equals being upside down," and she wanted nothing to do with that. After reassurances that flipping over was not on the agenda, we did go for a paddle that day, but Rory retained a cautious, slightly suspicious attitude toward the sport for several years after that; we ignore our kids' points of view at our own peril.

Watching Them Grow

I'm primarily an open boater so I use a custom, triple-outfitted Dagger Dimension as my kid carrier of choice. When I first started doing this, I used the boat like a big OC-1. Rory and Donovan would grab the gunnels and shriek with a mixture of glee and terror as we splashed through wave trains, but helping paddle had little appeal for them. They would try valiantly, but eventually either tire or grow frustrated. I can't really say I blame them, either. They had neither the strength nor the coordination to consistently handle

Donovan demonstrates proper use of a squirt stick

Photo by Sean O'Malley

even a kid-sized boat in flatwater, let alone a 75 pound tripping canoe in current. So I didn't push the issue—if they didn't want to use a paddle, there were homemade super soakers close at hand.

For my daughter, things changed radically this past year. We were doing an overnighter on the upper Greenbrier, the first trip of the year. Most of the time, I had no problems putting the boat where it needed to be with the two kids plus camping gear on board. Every now and then, however, we would encounter headwinds or the occasional Class II-ish move. When that happened, I would ask Rory to do some hard forward strokes. She obliged happily, and the boat would leap forward as she put her torso into it. Several times, I had to tell her to back off to keep us from overshooting our line. What a difference a season makes!

This sort of sea change is not something that's unique to whitewater. It's a natural part of the way kids mature. For some, things might click as early as age 5. For others, it could be 9 or later. When they're ready to be on their own, you'll know. At age 6 my daughter could ride a bike on level ground without much trouble, but bumps in the yard gave her pause. Put her on a trail, and she was terrified to the point of tears. At age 7, that all changed. After one tearful, eye opener trail ride where her mom convinced her to push past her fear, she realized she really could "do it" and began looking forward to trail trips. By the time she turned 8, she was styling technical descents better than I do and hollering at us to please get out of her way on the climbs.

Donovan, being three years younger, spends his trail time on a tag-along even though he knows how to ride a two-wheeler. He and I ride the same trails as my daughter and wife. I just have to adjust my lines and occasionally walk an obstacle or two. I see a tandem boat like my Dimension as the whitewater version of a mountain bike tag-along. It allows my kids to experience runs that are beyond their individual capabilities without undue risk. At the same time, they get a

feel for balance and learn firsthand about picking good lines and knowing when to pull over and walk.

The Case for Rafting Class I

People who know the Middle Yough will question my sanity when I say that I willingly take an eight-person raft on that run. The Middle has only five rapids in 12 miles. The hardest is an easy Class II. In between are flatwater pools measured in miles not yards, with winds that always seem to blow upriver. In summer, several long, bony shoals demand a good eye and precise maneuvering to avoid having to walk. For most serious boaters, this is a run to be avoided.

Reset your priorities, though, and the view changes. The Middle Yough Valley is

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Family Paddling

beautiful. Other than a set of train tracks on river right, there is almost no sign of human development. It runs all year—even during the hot summer months it has plenty of kid friendly swimming holes, and if you're not in a hurry, the flat sections have at least some current.

My kids have their entire lives to decide if they wish to answer the call of fast water and big drops. I see no need to turn them into accomplished freestylers or steep creekers before they know how to write in cursive. In fact, I'd rather they experience river running at a more relaxed

pace. Doing an easy run in a craft that is way overqualified lets them do just that. It also lets us share the beauty of a mountain river with our extended family.

Every year, we do at least one 'floating picnic' on the Middle Yough. My wife's parents drive in to meet us in Confluence Pennsylvania, and we load grandparents, parents and kids into an eight-man raft for the day: three generations together on the water. Other than trips with us, my in-laws are not paddlers. Rafting the Middle with us lets them experience the challenge, fun and beauty of river running in a low stress environment.

In the flat sections, we mostly just drift, enjoying each other's company. The kids swim off the side of the raft or fall asleep

in the bilge. In the rapids, we make moves instead of just blundering down the center. None of the moves are necessary, of course, but making them adds some challenge and lets me teach both kids and grandparents alike how to read the river and pick a line. Floating through the riffles, I point out eddies and tongues. The kids call out downstream and upstream vees. At the end of the day, we all troop back to the Lucky Dog for good food and good company.

Even though I only get a few chances a year to paddle challenging water, I don't for one minute regret time spent on trips like this. In fact, I would do more if the opportunity presented itself. The satisfaction on my family's faces after we make that big rubber bus dance through

The whitewater tag-along ready for action

Photo by Michelle O'Malley



a long, bony shoal without hitting a single rock says it all.

The next time you see a tired family humping a raft or a faded old Dimension up the Middle Yough take-out in Ohio, pause a moment before you shake your head in pity. They have been outside, doing for themselves, raising the next generation of intrepid outdoor kids.

Sean, Michelle, Rory and Donovan O'Malley live in Athens, Ohio but often can be found on the trails and rivers of surrounding states. Sean can be reached at somalley.home@gmail.com.



Three generations on the water

Photo by Sean O'Malley

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Family Paddling

Boating with Munchkins

By Link Jackson

The idea hatched in my mind and immediately took flight. With permit in hand, floating the Middle Fork of the Salmon (MFSR) in Idaho was a given. The notion of taking a bunch of rambunctious munchkins on the wildest adventure of their short lives without their mommies to tame them was viewed with skepticism by various friends and associates. I reasoned

that kids are far more fun to hang with than most adults I know. This was not welcome news to my many river friends who wanted to be invited along. In Idaho, having a Middle Fork permit is more valuable than gold. It means that everyone is your friend. And so the kids were in. Our group consisted of four dads, one single adult, seven kids ages 10 through 15, three rafts and a bunch of inflatable kayaks.

It would be an early August run. The water then is low and clear. The dry fly fishing is

spectacular, the beaches are heavenly, and rapids become less pushy; competition for good camp sites tails off a bit and the pace is slow and easy although the river becomes very technical. We planned on taking the full allotted time of eight days and seven nights to complete our adventure. Having run the river 20-some times before, I was the most experienced and thus the trip captain by default. I also had most of the gear we would need for a comfortable trip. I reasoned the key to happy kids was to be well equipped, have lots of great food, and



Connor (CJ) Jackson celebrating on the Middle Fork Salmon

An advertisement for Centre Torrent kayaking trips. The text reads: "EXPLORE YOUR POTENTIAL OUR PLAYGROUND". Below this is a small image of a waterfall with the text "Trips across Quebec for all levels". Further down, it says: "We love our kayaking to be a mix of big water, big waves and big fun! Based in Chicoutimi, close to the best rivers in Quebec, Centre Torrent, offers guiding and instruction for all skill levels in canoes or kayaks." At the bottom, it says "CENTRE TORRENT 418.817.2735 WWW.CENTRETORRENT.COM".

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to keep them all engaged in the process of planning, executing and thoroughly enjoying the many tasks needed to get the trip done.

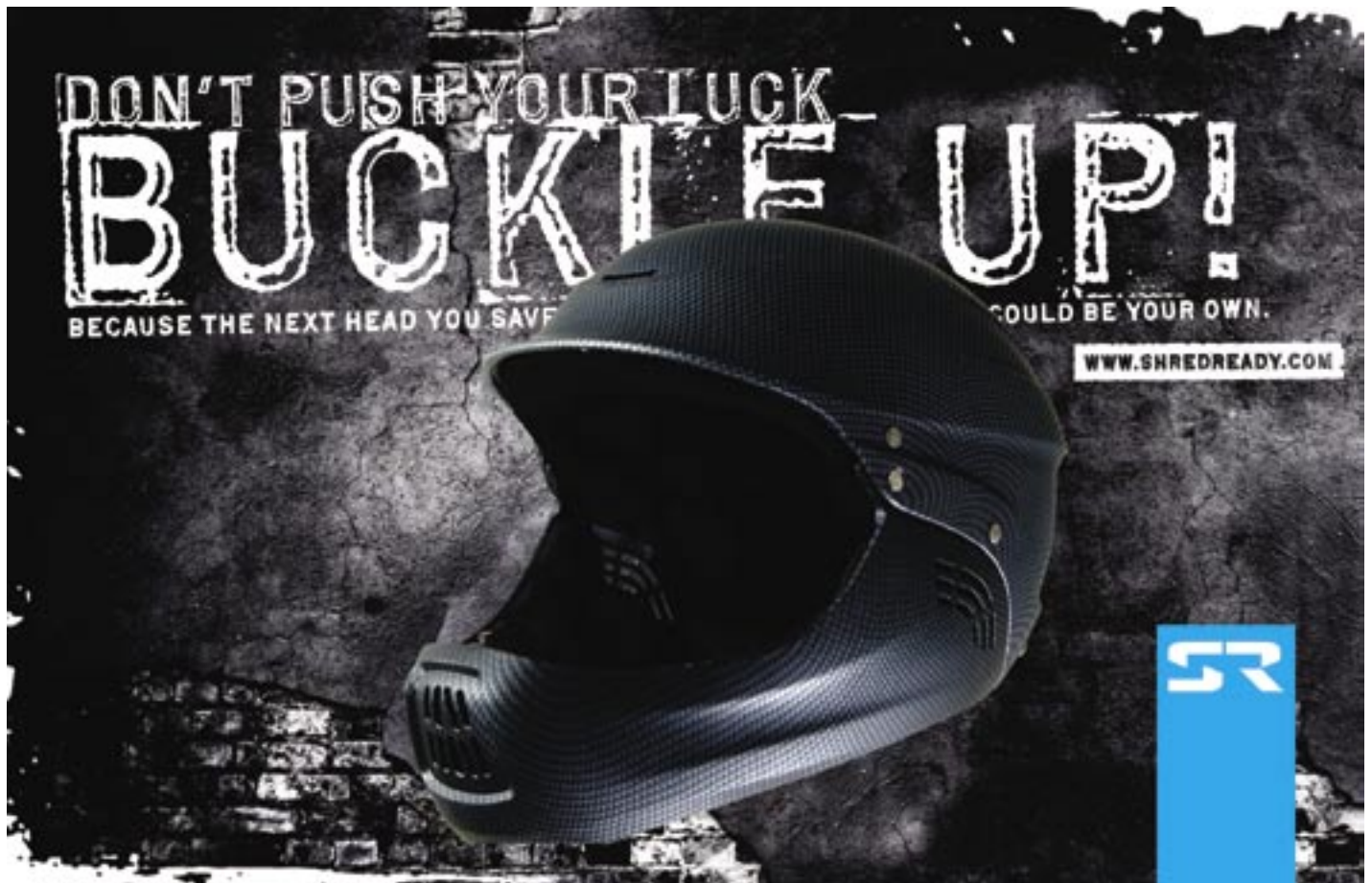
There is magic in the eye of an excited child. As our launch day drew near, the anticipation simply overwhelmed my son Conner and younger daughter Brindi. Conner was a seasoned veteran, having floated the river the year before in his e-bay Sevylor inflatable kayak. He had even rowed some of it in our Streamtech Inflatable drift boat. Now he was 11-years-old and had a sporty River X inflatable kayak to paddle. He figured he was the man of the hour, especially since fellow dad Bryan Breen would be along in his hard shell kayak to be the pied piper of the inflatable ducky corps. Bryan had taught me to kayak three decades prior and the

kids were looking forward to milking him for all his river knowledge.

My daughter Brindi was wide-eyed and full of wonder at the prospect of spending a full week floating through the massive Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Brindi had seen her father drive away several times in her short life to float this mysterious river full of deep alpine canyons, clear waters, wild rapids, hot springs, and beautiful beaches. Now she would be included for the first time. To add spice, she would have two friends her age to share the trip with. Early in the trip Brindi, Lauren McLeod, and Kelsey Breen came to be known as “Charlie’s Angles.” I was their trusty oarsman, “Bosley.”

At the Boundary Creek put-in, it was like a page out of a fairy tale for the kids. We

rigged boats and prepared everything while they ran this way and that trying to be helpful and hunting for mischief. The preliminary group talk by the launch ranger was eye opening for them. Simple things like fire pans, scouring our camps on departure for micro trash, keeping soap far above water line, straining dish water and, of course, dealing with the portable river toilet were all new things to all but Conner. And what of this terrible threat of bears, rattle snakes and poison ivy? I was amazed at how helpful they all were given the thick air of anticipation and excitement that danced around them. Finally they could handle the preparations no further. They all cut out to hit the river in the IKs, and the play began. Us dads were left to lower the boats down the long log ramp and into the spectacular waters that would cradle our souls for the next



Family Paddling

eight days. All that remained was to have our final review of safety equipment and protocol and then push off to Rapid #1, or what I call "Let's Make a Deal," where you pick door number 1, door number 2 or door number 3. Of course, I knew that the only real choice is door number 2, but it was fun to make them all guess and see how well they could read the water.

Day one on the MFSR is an oarsman's dream. It is fast, it is technical, it is rocky, it is narrow, and it is relentless. Our kayak corps on the first day consisted of Conner and Ethan McLeod and my son Conner. Their adult mentor and leader, Bryan Breen would not join our group until day 2 at the Indian Creek Landing Strip.

He and his daughters flew in with some extra gear we did not take on the upper river due to extremely low water levels. The boys did a fine job of negotiating their way down the river in the IKs with a raft ever close at hand just in case of the yard sale that never did come. After lots of fun river action we spent our first night under a crystal clear alpine sky alive with billions of stars at Dolly Lake.

The next morning we ran Pistol Creek Rapid and then met up with the Breens and had lunch at Indian Creek Landing Field and launch. Now we had the full strength crew and the IK-ers were just itching for a fight with some waves. They got what they wanted. It was comical to

see Bryan leading the kids single file down the rapids like a bunch of baby ducks chasing momma.

Our trip was a complete wonder. We went to all the hot springs. We hiked up the side canyons. We climbed up the cliffs and looked at the expanse of Salmon River country. We hiked to a shower at Veil Cave and viewed the many fragile Indian petroglyphs along the river corridor. We cooked elaborate meals and kid concocted deserts in the Dutch ovens. We played tricks on one another. We built little mini rivers and had toy kayak competitions on flows from the kitchen buckets. We had heated competitions on the beaches playing "Barts," a game like horseshoes

Right: The group poses for a photo on the shores of the Middle Fork

Below: Charlie's Angels try their hand at fishing.

Photos by Link Jackson



played with pop cans filled with sand and the tubs from the kitchen dish washing supply. We endured a torrential downpour that brought rockslides into the river. The girls sang in the rain while I faithfully rowed the Angels along. We stopped at Whitey Cox Hot Springs and warmed up after being pelted with the downpour for hours. It was an almost mystical experience that none of us will ever forget.

Since our trip, we have done many more rivers. In the short couple of years since that first trip on the MFSR, the kids have gone on to become accomplished kayakers who now tackle many of the difficult rivers in the area obsessively throughout the year. Many thanks to the expert instruction they gained by membership in the Idaho River Kids organization shepherded by the Long family and their Cascade Raft and Kayak Company on the banks of the Payette River. We have also done many other river trips with a group of families including the Grand Ronde in Oregon, Hells Canyon and many other rivers throughout Idaho. Us dads often reflect on what a good decision it was to expose our kids to the wonders of river running. It has

become the backbone of our recreational lives. Last summer I took Conner, Brindi and Ethan on a two-week trip through Idaho and Montana guided by the *Play Waves of Idaho* book Conner had. The group included my drift boat, five kayaks, three kids and one dad who thinks he is a kid. This was their choice of vacation. We could have done most anything, but the river tour chasing play waves is what they chose. Every third day they had to row me down a river and let me fly fish. That was a non-negotiable rule.

The future will offer up many more priceless river experiences for us. It is a way of life. It is an incredibly rewarding way to spend time with your kids. In the words of Conner's boyhood friend Michael Palmer, who placed 3rd in the world in freestyle kayaking last summer, "it is more than an interest, it is an obsession."

Having a blast rigging the rafts at Boundary Creek

Photo by Link Jackson



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Family Paddling

Family Paddling

By Alden Bird

In my family, paddling was less a communal activity than it was something not entirely endorsed. I do not come from a boating family—the type in which siblings and cousins are familiar with release dates, family picnics dissolve into Z-Drags practice, dogs are named Ocoee (or El Horrendo), children knot their shoelaces with trucker's hitches, the Summersville Police force is an inherited nemesis—that sort of thing. No, in my family I was—and am—the lone boater, a sect of one. Where I come from, heading out the door during a named hurricane with an expectant look on one's face—as we all do from time to time—was the type of thing that was greeted with a healthy skepticism.

Not all families are like mine, I have come to understand. My friend Steve told me that his father, a boater, introduced Steve to paddling at a young age, and immediately cast him in the role of “probe.” On early trips, father expected son to test big holes for group appropriateness. If young Steve appeared to be enjoying himself, his father would happily shoo him from the hydraulic, and begin surfing. Yet, if the boy was getting beaten up, father would make a careful note to avoid that pour-over in the future. These formative experiences ingrained in Steve a probe's mentality—as well as several physical scars—leaving me to wonder what great feats I myself might have accomplished had I been instilled with less reserve. Instead, I hear my own parents' voices dissuading me from risk. My mother, for instance, quit alpine skiing because she was afraid of riding the chairlift. While she was a courageous woman in many respects, she had no time

for recreational daring. Still, she treated its participants with a certain humor. “Don't do anything I wouldn't do,” she'd joke, rather nervously, as I'd leave to paddle. Or she'd ask, “You're not going to do anything dangerous, are you?” “No, Mom,” I'd respond. “That was yesterday.” Her preferred mental stance evolved into a kind of willful delusion, especially after I moved away. “I feel better if I don't know what you're doing,” she'd say abruptly.

My father was another matter. While years ago he might have made a right reckless paddler, by middle age his demeanor had begun to reflect the logo on his ubiquitous company shirts: “Safety First.” Maybe he was bringing his work home, or maybe his hours as a volunteer fireman and ski patroller were marking him. Whatever the reason, his role began to consist of identifying anything around the house that one could slip on, or trip



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Photo by Kent Noble

over. Stray electrical cords were subdued with reams of duct tape, icy patches of driveway assaulted with sand, half-inch gaps in the carpet identified with all but police caution tape. Soon he had every square foot of our yard lit with motion sensitive lights.

Ironically, my father's fastidiousness increased as my brother and I got older. By age 21, my football-playing brother towered well over interlocutors in a bar, yet to my father, this was a sign to consider installing padding on the tops of our house's low doorways. My father had begun checking my 90 year-old grandmother's car for "dings"—signs that she should no longer be driving—yet he inexplicably carried the practice over to his 25-year-old son's car as well. Once, seeing my father inspecting my car after a weekend of back road shuttle driving, I half-expected to be sat down for a gentle talk about how my eyesight and coordination might be slipping.

Yet despite all this, we actually did go paddling as a family a few times. I remember one trip clearly. It was a Saturday morning in the summer of 1996 when we put on the West Branch of the Farmington River in my hometown of Riverton, Connecticut. I paddled my new pink Perception Overflow, while the rest of my family assumed their roles in an Old Town Canoe: my father shouting directions from the stern, my mother cheerfully ignoring them from the bow, and my little brother equipped with a half-sized ash paddle between.

That morning fishermen lined the Farmington, a renowned fly-fishing stream. Many waded far out into the river, and navigating the maze of lines and bodies seemed to strain the technical abilities of the Old Town that morning.

In one flat stretch I saw ahead a lone obstacle: a fisherman standing mid-stream with his back to us. With at least a quarter-mile to prepare, I easily passed him wide to the right and drifted silently by.

Seconds later, impact broke the silence!

I turned to see that my family, arguing over which side to pass the fisherman on, had in fact chosen no side, barreling into the man, stowing him safely at the river bottom for a moment, and careening on. The man resurfaced with great speed and began declaring to my father several intentions. Yet the offending vessel was quickly out of sight around the bend, leaving its victim to wonder, no doubt, just how strained paddler/angler relations had become in this stretch.

My parents' reactions to the impact had not been uniform: incapacitating laughter on my mother's part, and frustration on my father's part at the mutiny that had occurred in his own boat.

As one can imagine, this became quite the story in our family. My mother delighted in retelling it, embellishing it, as I recall, with something about "spearing a fisherman," and doing so with an enthusiasm that left one wondering if perhaps her aim had not been as faulty as imagined.

It strikes me whenever I hear that story again that I watched it from afar. Some kids might have wanted to be in the canoe that day, but I didn't. It also strikes me that the number of fishermen on the Farmington just might have been declining since 1996.

Alden Bird is the author of the guidebook Let It Rain: The Whitewater Rivers of New England, New York, Quebec and Ontario.



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Family Paddling

Dad's Perspective: Hunker Down!

By Andrew Goldman

I hadn't guided a raft down the Gorge in years, and I was a little amped up. The Class III South Fork of the American was feeling like hair-raising cataracts—probably because we were carrying precious cargo: our two kids, Xander, 10, and Jordan, 7, as well as our friend Liam, 7. The three kids were having a ball, laughing and paddling, but the three parents in the raft were all business. In addition to the traditional paddle commands in rafting, we have an additional one for the kids: Hunker Down. Basically, this means butts on the floor and both

hands on the paddle. A typical rapid goes something like: "Forward, Stop, Forward, Stop, HUNKER DOWN! Wahoo!!!!!" Jordy started rafting before he was two, and hunkering down was awkward for him. He couldn't see anything, the faceshots were fierce, and it was hard to get back up afterwards. After a while the stubborn cuss refused to hunker down, leading to some memorable river battles. The climax was the famous Trinity Standoff of 2003. Given the ultimatum of "Hunker or Walk," Jordy opted for the latter. Fortunately, patient Grandma was there to assist. Personally, I would have sent him up to the road to hitch a ride home.

Thankfully, at age seven, Jordy has mastered the Hunker, which we put to good use as we fly, thump, and splash

our way through Fowler's Rock, Haystack Canyon, Satan's Cesspool, and all the other fun rapids that the Gorge section of the South American has to offer. As we drop into Hospital Bar, the biggest wave on the run, I get distracted by the wall of water ahead of us, and inexplicably forget to call for a Hunker. Big water follows big air! Liam's dad, Ken, shoots me a "que pasa?" look as he grabs the back of Liam's life jacket. By the grace of God, we all emerge wet but intact.

Rafting and kayaking have been important

Xander's 10th birthday party on the South Fork of the American River, featuring (left to right, back to front) Joey, Bennett, Xander, Hunter, and Cade

Photo by Cathy Howard





Family rafting extravaganza on the South Fork of the American River, June 2006

Photo by Cathy Howard

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Family Paddling

to my wife Cathy and I since way before we had kids. The beauty and isolation of the canyons, the Zen focus of paddling, the camaraderie of the team, and the adrenaline rush are all strong draws for us. We both worked as raft guides in California, Idaho, Oregon, and beyond. Our first date was on Cherry Creek. The year before Xander was born, we logged 20,000 miles on our truck kayaking rivers all over California, plus an Idaho excursion. Sharing our love of rivers with our kids has always been a priority and great pleasure.

But for us that hasn't meant letting them push the limits of their skills. The Gorge

Andrew Goldman guides Jake, Ben and Jordy down Shirt Tail Canyon on the North Fork of the American River, July 2006

Photo by Cathy Howard

is the biggest whitewater we've run in seven years of rafting with our kids. We have emphasized their active participation over attempting difficult runs. To my surprise, the day after their first trip down the Gorge, they are eager to return to the familiar Class II Coloma to Greenwood section, so they can get the paddles back in their hands. The Gorge was fun and all, but on the river, as on the road, Dad's driving is a threat to life and limb.

The next day as we prepare to launch in our duckies, the kids face their usual dilemma: is the extra weight of carrying Mom or Dad worth the increased sense of security? Meanwhile, Cathy and I confront the accompanying parent's dilemma: should we let them go it alone? I figure it builds character (and muscle) for them to tow us around. Plus, they find some great lines. They bring refreshingly open minds and

boundless curiosity to the game. Can we surf that? Can we fit through there? Where does that channel go? Look at that rope swing! I continually learn new tricks and have fun seeing the river through their eyes.

Increasingly, Xander flies solo these days. Seven years of paddling have given him a powerful stroke, and he has his mother's ease and grace in the water. Over the years, he's swum enough to master the counterintuitive trick of inhaling in the trough and exhaling at the crest of waves. Feet downstream and on the surface is second nature for him now. The world of the river blossoms when the fear of swimming recedes. Xander reads water expertly, understanding eddies, holes, strainers, the centrifugal force of a bend, ferry angles, and the like. Xander shows us the way through the waves and reads rapids on the run, including Old Scary,



Barking Dog, and Highway Rapid. Jordy is well on his way, paddling the ducky down all the rapids by himself, although he still endures the extra weight of a passenger. Barking Dog is the crux of this run, and he aces it with style. Right down the gut! Paddling an adult ducky is a challenge for a little guy. Short arms have to stretch to reach over the side tubes. Adult paddles are awfully long. This sport will only get easier and more rewarding for the young bucks as they grow. I can't wait to continue exploring it with them!



Mom's Perspective: Family and Whitewater: a Beautiful Balance

By Cathy Howard

It all began when Andrew came flying from the driver's seat of our raft and smacked his nose on the top of my helmet as I was obediently paddling forward in the front right seat. There was blood everywhere, but we were right side up, and it was love from that moment on.... We spent the next nine years rafting and kayaking the rivers of the American West and even some abroad. It was hard to imagine leaving the river life behind, but eventually we decided to start our family. We thought life on the river would never be the same. We were right ... and wrong.

The summer Xander turned four and Jordy was almost two we returned to the river as a family. We had just moved back to the Sierra Nevada, and the Truckee River ran right through town. We had a couple of inflatable kayaks and we bought our first raft, the "Mini Me" (an eight-foot self-bailer). Andrew couldn't wait to get the boys on the river, but mom wasn't in any hurry to expose her babies to the perils of whitewater. Andrew's enthusiasm won out, but my sense of caution was a necessary counterbalance for the adventures ahead. After all, Andrew was just like one of the kids.

Every single time we got on the river the kids heard the safety talk we had given so many times when we were working as river guides. We tightened buckles, and talked about strainers, wraps, feet downstream, poison oak, rattlesnakes, and our favorite command, "Hunker Down." The boys listened to what we preached and we never strayed from the Class I and II sections of the river. That was all that Mom's worry could handle.

Eventually, when the boys had learned the routine, we started bringing our friends and their two- through six-year-olds. Were we nuts? Probably. But, we wanted to share the joys of the river with all of our adventurous

outdoor friends who now had families of their own. We kept the whitewater small and the adventure huge. The kids were invited to participate in whatever they felt comfortable doing. Some were in and out of the duckies all day, others clung to a parent's lap, many paddled in the raft, and all took part in the playful water fights. The older ones learned to swim gentle wave trains. All the kids learned how to pull a swimmer back in the boat and how to "Hunker Down" in the rapids.

We have shared our love of the river with many local families. In the summer of 2005 we did an eight-day Main Salmon trip with four families when the oldest kids were just eight years old. The group was deep in experience both on the river and in the greater outdoors. On that multi day trip the kids learned that the time off the river can be just as magical as time spent on the water. The kids have so much fun roasting marshmallows, making camp, being on the cook crews and exploring the side creeks. Time on the river is an experience full of whitewater thrills accompanied by the acquisition of outdoor experience, leadership skills, and teamwork.

The river has created a bond in our family that will always be there. We have as much fun in the Mini Me with our children as we ever did kayaking or raft guiding years ago. Little did we suspect that, with kids, life on the river is the same as we remember, only better.

Family Paddling



Class II Will Do

by Axel Thomsen

As we approached the canyon entrance, the river narrowed and the current picked up. As the lead boat, we were pulling over to stop at the Great Sand Dune to let the kids climb and play as our Chinese friends hung up their loaded canoe on a rock. We quickly waded out to their boat, helped out their kids as the canoe began to fill up and wrap. The parents themselves got out quickly too. Fortunately the current was not too strong, so we were able to wrestle the boat off the rock and it popped back into shape as if nothing had happened.... This was during the first day of another trip down Boquillas Canyon on the Rio Grande, a stretch of easy whitewater but immense beauty in Big Bend National Park.

A little bit of background: I am parent of two girls aged seven and twelve. I have been a dedicated Class V whitewater

boater for a number of years and my wife has kayaked and canoed Class III whitewater. At the time we started a family, we moved from the whitewater Mecca of the Southeast to central Texas, far away from any Class IV rapids. Our family whitewater adventures revolve around the canoe. Once we had kids, we re-discovered the canoe as our paddle boat of choice, and we are having plenty of fun with easy Class II-III whitewater, like the San Marcos and Guadalupe River. In a canoe we could take the whole family back when our kids were only a year old. We could go to the magical places in the backcountry when our kids can not hike far and we need to carry all their stuff, places like the Devils River that not many people get to see.

Our group on this Rio Grande trip was quite a mix. We help to teach canoeing skills and lead trips for families within

Campfire USA. This trip included families from China and India, three generations of a Texas family, and people ranging from two to seventy-two years old. It is so much easier to get the kids excited to go when their friends are going too.

We play at the sand dune, then paddle a little farther into the canyon before we find an excellent campsite. A Thanksgiving feast is served. Canoes are great when it comes to hauling stuff! Food, kids, kids stuff, everything you need. The canyon walls rise 1200 feet around us—it's a magical place. The children are building a terraced city in the sand of our campsite while the parents enjoy the views, the atmosphere, and later, the stars. Our trips are generally easy on the whitewater and high on the fun factor. Just being there together is the most important part.

Rio Grande scenery - Boquillas Canyon is in background. Pictured Axel, Anja, Maya Thomsen, Stefan Fehr

Photo by Alex Thomsen

The next day we canoe onward. Funny water tips another canoe, but it is an easy rescue here. Later at lunch we stop to hike into a nice narrow side canyon. The kids are more interested in the mud on the riverbank and end up covered from head to toe. After lunch we paddle on through easy riffles to another nice sandy campsite.

On the last day we exit the canyon and paddle through a wide open desert landscape. A few miles before the take-out, the river cuts through a little ridge, a mini canyon. Right here are the two biggest rapids of the trip—Class IIs—but we all pass through without trouble. These days our kids enjoy rapids, that was not always the case. Nowadays one of their favorite canoeing stories was when our canoe slowly filled up as we were paddling down a wave train on the Guadalupe. We took on water with every wave, managed

to stay upright, but finally submerged the boat still upright.

We get to the take-out in the afternoon and load up. Smiling faces everywhere. Good memories, lots of quality time together, many Kodak moments. And hopefully we spread the love of wild rivers and wild places. As a parent, I hope that these experiences plant the seeds and that 20 years from now we can paddle with three generations of Thomsens as well. Just Class II would be fine by me.

Anja is ready to launch for another day on the Rio Grande

Photo by Alex Thomsen



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River Voices

Wilson Creek Memoirs: Messages from the River Gods

By Donald Dearborn

As I approach the lip of the drop, it becomes apparent that I am not exactly on line. Although “not exactly on line” might be an understatement, it wasn’t a big surprise to anyone at Wilson Creek that day. “Anyone” was a pretty short list, including me, my boating buddy Bill Goodnight, and three locals hanging out just to watch the carnage. The fact that this group found me off line in high water in Ten Foot Falls, can be chalked up to stubbornness and a refusal to acknowledge a mailbag full of bad omens sent to us by the River Gods that day.

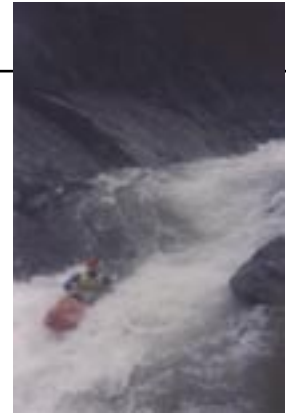
The first omen appeared when we arrived at the take-out for our first run of western North Carolina’s Wilson Creek. Rather than drive two cars all the way from Chapel Hill, we had Bill’s trusty 10-speed bike for the shuttle. Upon seeing the river, we were a bit worried we might need an emergency vehicle at the take-out, so we opted to shuttle first, leaving the car at the bottom. In retrospect, we might have been wiser to delay the shuttle, leaving the car at the put-in to make it easier to get out of Dodge after a pummeling in the first rapid. In any case, our plans for the bike didn’t matter because its front tire had been mysteriously ripped to shreds on the drive from Chapel Hill. A sign? A warning from the River Gods? We didn’t see it that way. I was in my early 20s then—now that I’ve passed 40, I’m much, much wiser.

The second warning came directly from the river. Wilson Creek is a tight mountain stream that tumbles over large boulders, sloping ledges with grabby holes, and near-vertical slides over cheese-grater rocks. The gauge for the run is in a wide, shallow section just downstream from the take-out. The American Whitewater website says “The river can be run as low as minus 6”... Zero to 6 inches are the preferred levels. Anything over a foot puts you into a Class V day with big ledge

holes.” Thus, Wilson Creek has a fairly small range of reasonable levels, because the river is quite narrow upstream from the gauge. We probably should have been troubled by the fact that the gauge reading that morning was 15 inches. After all, we had little creek boating experience, we had never before seen this creek, and there were just the two of us. In truth, we should have been high-tailing it for home, trying to avoid becoming the subject of one of Charlie Walbridge’s accident reports. But our line of reasoning may sound familiar to you: “Heck, we can scout the whole thing on the way to the put-in, the road is right here in case we change our minds, and we can just cut these pages out of the guidebook and take them on the river with us. We’ll be fine. Besides, maybe the hard stuff will be washed out. And anyway, it’s only a 2-mile run. How long could that possibly take?”

We scouted on the way up river, making frequent bathroom stops, as if our bladders knew what we were in for. Omen #3: We looked around at the put-in and noticed a pair of raft paddles float by. We scrambled upstream to see what was going on. Two guys were standing on a rock near shore, watching their little raft toss and turn in a particularly grabby hole. They eventually gave up and went home, a bit wiser for the experience. We, of course, figured that the River Gods had already vented their anger on those two schmucks and would be much kinder to us.

Thus reassured, we decided to put in. We showed enough common sense to choose a starting point downstream from the hole that was still munching on the little raft. Bill had volunteered to literally “run” shuttle, so I waited for him at the put-in and got a bit more tightly wound about what we were doing. Omen #4: A truck arrived with three locals (including an eight-year-old). They started the conversation by telling me that it took weeks to recover the body of the last person to drown here, just a month ago. When they discovered we were planning to paddle, they were so eager to witness the beat-down that they drove off to find Bill and give him a ride back up to the put-



Bill Goodnight surviving Boatbuster at high flow, Wilson Creek, North Carolina

Photo by Donald Dearborn

Ten Foot Falls: The author, off line but feeling lucky in Ten-Foot Falls

Photo by Bill Goodnight

in. As we were fidgeting with our gear, the little kid asked enthusiastically if we were going to crash. We told him that we hoped not, and he looked disappointed.

Bill decided to skip Ten Foot Falls, right around the corner from our intended put-in, so he started just downstream. I was nervously eager for the big stuff and convince him to hold a rope for me at the bottom. I arrive at the lip, after the 3 seconds it took to get shot through 50 yards of “Class II” stuff upstream from the main drop. I’d been in the water just long enough to think the all-too-familiar thoughts: “Gee, this sure is a lot faster than it looked from the road” and “Hmm, I’m at the top of the hardest rapid I’ve ever run and I seem to be a bit off line.” This was followed rather quickly by a giant pillowed rock zooming by much farther to my right than it should have been, then a big bunch of churning white. When it was over, I was right side up, in the eddy on river right (how did I get over there?) and feeling a bit nauseous. Bill’s eyes were wide open, as if he was just hit on the back of the head with a two-by-four. In hindsight, being offline may have saved my butt. My plan, for reasons that no longer seem clear, was

to punch the central folded part of the hole at the base of the drop. Concerned about the exploding pillow on the right, I erred too far left, where I was slammed into the hole anyway. I surfed across to river right and then out. Had I hit my line into the meat of the hole, I'd have probably put on a good show of shoulder-dislocating rodeo moves in my 79-gallon Corsica.

Victorious, we continued downstream. The remainder of the trip is now mostly an incoherent blur. Boatbuster Rapids is vaguely memorable because of the speed with which we blasted through the slot. I also seem to recall repeatedly having trouble getting out of the grip of the blistering current in time to catch what had initially been my "eddy of last resort." I remember not a moment of relaxation, of fun, of feeling in control of what would happen next.

Fortunately we were able to stop in time to inspect Razorback; we promptly portaged. Razorback is one of those cheese-grater slides that, on river right, begins and ends with a pile of rocks. On river left, it ends in a deep hole backed by a boulder the size of my old apartment.

Aside from Razorback, we ran the rest of it, for the most part intentionally. In one memorable spot the entire river was pulsing and surging, alternating between flowing downstream, as is reasonable, and flowing back upstream to feed two giant offset terminal holes. We waited just above, trying desperately to stay in eddies so small and unstable as to seem imaginary. We surged up and down, back and forth, frantically clawing at the smooth low-angle rock slabs that lined the banks while we tried to figure out the pattern of pulses into and around the killer holes.

Later (or perhaps previously—I really lost track of the sequence of events), we caught the absolute last chance eddies above what we later decided must be Stairstep. This rapid has a nasty hole backed up by a submerged rock that is described as "coffin-shaped." Great! Of course, we couldn't see the rock. In fact, at this level the river looks nothing like the map that

we had ripped out of William Nealy's guidebook. Where were we? How could we be so confused in a run that's only two miles long? It was a near epic experience just getting out of our boats in those tiny eddies and scrambling up the terrifying wet slabs (attention physicists, we found a system with no friction!). During the hurried scout, trying not to lose our boats, Bill and I somehow miscommunicated our thoughts about what the best line might be. I got back in my boat and paddled straight for the hole, for a speedy frontal assault. I miraculously missed the underwater coffin-rock and, surprisingly, didn't cartwheel in the hole. Bill, not enamored of my line, managed to tweeze the two-foot-wide path between the hole and the wall of the left bank, his mouth open in horror as he watched his bow scream along at Mach 2 just inches from the shelf of rock.

Somehow we avoid death and dismemberment. At the take-out, on the long drive home, and for several days afterwards we were the mental equivalent of two-year-olds. We gibbered, we drooled, we couldn't form coherent sentences. Scenes replayed in our minds, and we made wild-eyed faces and uttered things like "oh boy, big" and "dear God!" Nealy's guidebook from that era has a glossary in the back whose definition of hair boating is accompanied by examples. One of these is Wilson Creek above 1 foot. We were not Class V paddlers then, and we

have never been hair boaters. We lack the attitude and, more importantly, the skills. This year we finally ran Wilson Creek for a second time, after a hiatus of nearly 20 years. We'd like to believe that the long delay was caused by schedule conflicts, moving away from North Carolina, and feeling the allure of other challenges. But, deep down, we know the real reason: we're pansies. To our credit, our second run was uneventful. We have paddled harder rivers in the intervening decades, but we have never gotten in over our heads like that early high-water run. And if you thought we were superstitious before Wilson Creek, you should see us now.

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A kayaker in a red kayak is navigating through white water rapids. The kayaker is wearing a black helmet and a life jacket, and is using a paddle to maneuver the kayak. The water is turbulent and white with foam. The background shows a rocky shoreline.

River Voices

Returning 60 North

By Simon Tapley

In the summer of 2007 Ali Marshall and I attempted the first whitewater kayaking expedition to Greenland. We experienced harsh conditions and mini epics involving storms, tents and rough seas. At the same time, we were lucky enough to be exposed to the vast wilderness that belongs to this arctic island, within which we found huge rivers with great rapids and slides interspersed with monstrous waterfalls—any of which would top the list of tourist attractions in most other countries.

This summer, after spending a year thinking about what we could have done better and how we could learn from our mistakes, we set off again to try and exploring Greenland's southern tip.

What we learned from the first trip:

1. We need more people. Two weeks at a time without seeing another human can send the most calm and collected individual ever so slightly mad, especially

when that other person is a crackpot full of silly ideas that normally result in trouble. Plus paddling's just safer with four people instead of two. Last year it was a case of camera over throwline...to an extent. This time, we invited (blackmailed/bribed/forced) Graham Milton and Mike Scutt along for a laugh. Unlucky lads!

2. Don't trust Google Earth. We didn't learn this lesson very well.

3. Follow sheep. Last year the flies nearly got us sectioned. We kept close to the sheep farms this time, which kept the mossies to a minimum.

4. Shorter trip (smash and grab). A six-week trip last year meant we were broke for most of this year. A shorter trip with a definite plan that we knew we could stick to and be comfortable with was a lot more realistic and achievable. Even still, any plan on this island will change from

hour to hour. Everything is dependent on something else: if it's not the weather it's the ice or the polar bears affecting routes and times.

5. It's hungry work. More food means happy kayakers. Even if it is instant mashed potato for weeks at a time.

The plan was to touch down in the world's most boring town with an international airport, Narsarsuaq. It's worse than Slough. It has only a hotel, a hostel, a café, and a shop, but it's really stunning and was a perfect place for Graham and I to detox after a week long "end of uni" bender and also great for Ali and Mike to rest and recover from their 10-week training schedule, load up on some carbs, and stretch. From Narsarsuaq we planned to get a ferry to within a day or two's sea kayak of our river. Two things stopped this from happening: Our boats were being held in Kangerlussaq because some plonker

up North felt it was more important to put food on the plane instead of kayaks to keep the town from starving. We tried to bribe them with power gel to keep them going 'til the food came on the next flight, but someone in town was making a lasagne and had run out of Ragu. Selfish! The other obstacle was the thousands of icebergs blocking the fjord, preventing the ferry from landing.

The result? Plan B was unleashed: A four day journey over land and fjords to the Isortoq River Valley. It all sounded simple enough, we just needed to go to the airport and check the route on their high detail flight charts. We discussed it with the kind gentleman working in the airport who seemed quite concerned about us. He asked if we had checkpoints and someone who would know where we would be in case we got into trouble. To which we replied:

"It's ok. We have the satellite phone in case anyone gets hurt."

An uneasy expression on his face let us know there was something up his sleeve. He turned to us and said, "hmmm, what if one of you gets eaten?"

"Eaten?"

"Yes, eaten."

"By...?"

"Polar bears."

"No, there are no polar bears...last year they said there had been no polar bears here in years."

"Yes," he said nodding "many polar bears... eighteen this year so far—and they are hungry. They have been brought round

from the East on the ice and are now starving. They will eat anything."

"Even—"

"Yes, even kayakers."

We went to buy a gun, but the guns were £400, so we settled on a flare and a handy book which told us to either play dead, stand up to it if it's bluffing, or fight back. It very kindly left the options up to you, depending on the situation.

Panic ensued for a while, and then packing, as amidst the kafuffle our boats had arrived and we were now due to leave in the evening. The 24-hour daylight meant that we could pretty much do things whenever we wanted, so we paddled 'til around midnight before pitching our tents and catching some dinner: freshly caught sea trout with freshly picked mussels. The chat earlier on about eating our meals at

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River Voices



The Team

Photo by Ali Marshall

least 500 meters from camp and doing all the washing up straight away to avoid bear attacks lasted all of a few hours before a lacklustre approach was adopted under the philosophy that there were sheep about. The sheep weren't too clever, weren't too scary, and furthermore, were conveniently fenced in. If I were a polar bear, I know what I'd choose if sheep and Micheal Scutt were the only two items on the menu.

The next few days were spent either sea kayaking or smiling and chatting to farmers with tractors, who were fortunately going the same way as us and happened to have an empty trailer. We struck lucky quite a few times and made good progress thanks to our friends with the automobiles. There was only really one "Endurance" day, where we spent a long time off route stuck in a canyon that had looked fairly passable from up high.

Having made good progress on the land

crossings we made it to a destination in time to get to know some of the folks in the tiny little village of Sletten, which had more houses than people. We did a bit of dealing and arranged a lift to the mouth of the river in the morning. As soon as the deal was made, the boat owners stood up assertively, pointed at what looked like a Wendy house and shouted "Kaffe mik!" which translates to "Have Coffee!" I'm sure we all wanted this but at the same time felt like we were following orders. Either way, we potted over to the Wendy house, where we got quite a shock. Inside was a massive Plasma widescreen and a smooth sofa. I kept looking outside to see if I'd missed the Land of leather outlet that was apparently near Argos. So we sat down in our thermal trousers looking the height of kayaking cool and shared a cafetiere while watching Germany vs Austria on a plasma wider than Jersey.

A few beers and a good night's sleep did us well for the morning when we stocked up on food and mosquito nets before taking the speedboat to the river. We whizzed past icebergs in the sea and waterfalls crashing

down the sides of the fjord that loomed up, dark and grey on either side of us. Hans, our driver, settled us down on the only sandy beach we could find. Luckily it was fairly close to the river mouth. We could just about make out the last rapids churning out of the final canyon as dusk set on a nervous camp. Hans scampered about in the undergrowth for a short while occasionally presenting us with various edible plants before he left us and we were on our own.

It was time for the big slog. We had our nine days worth of food, our kayaks, our tents, sleeping stuff, and cooking appliances all packed up and ready to go. The river from the sea went up through a canyon and then a couple of plateaus with waterfalls between; it then split into two tributaries which we intended to explore, in addition to the canyon. However, after taking a few glances at the bottom canyon, we realised that we had massively underestimated the flow. It was huge. Big brown, silty water with big drops and long sections of hard water separating them. The consequences of missing an eddy or being thrown off

line were incredible because there were so few places to get out. Any mistake would have definitely been fatal. As a group we decided to miss out the bottom canyon altogether.

Above the confluence was where we wanted to be. Most of the water was coming in from the Northern tributary, which was also brown and scary. The southern tributary however, was full of beautifully polished slides and falls with a good, manageable volume. We spent a couple of days hiking up the side of the river until we reached the glacier that fed it. We had a quick team photo at the source and promptly put on to drift down the shingle rapids of the upper section. The calm and gentle braided section was brief, and before we knew it we were at the first drop. The river split and one channel went over a single falls that crashed into a wall before turning 90 degrees. The idea was to hit the lip with no speed, pull off a boof stroke and twist to land in the channel, all without hitting the wall. Ali, first up seemed to somehow do a pan am movement off the lip and came out backwards and smiling like he'd meant to do it that way.

Mike was up next. Now, Mike's done a bit of slalom and some marathon racing, so going slowly is a little bit unfamiliar to him, as exemplified on this falls. He hit the lip with speed but without twisting, and fired straight into the opposite wall and disappeared into the boils at the bottom. Mine and everybody else's first reaction was that he must have at least broken his boat, probably his legs and was possibly now shivering in a cave somewhere beneath the fall. I don't know how, but he popped up into the channel without a mark on him. His Everest was fine and his legs may be made out of the same stuff as the T 1000—we were a bit too scared to ask him.

Graham and I chose to tackle the channel on the other side of the river, which was less scary. As long as you missed the siphon near the top and didn't hit the rocks at the bottom, you'd be fine. Graham nearly got sucked into the siphon but missed the

rocks. I missed the siphon completely, but got up close and personal with the rocks at the bottom. In fact the eggshell helmet I was wearing didn't do too much to prevent me forgetting where I was for a few seconds. It was at this point that I most regretted failing to check if I had packed my own helmet.

It wasn't the best start to the river for us but we quickly put that behind us and spent the rest of the day doing some classic Greenlandic slides and rapids. Fun fun fun in the sun sun sun.

We took out halfway down the river, above the last section of big slides. There was one slide in particular that laid heavily on Graham's mind that night. The rest of us had already decided not to run it, but he waited to make his decision. In the morning he was quiet and subdued and we all knew he was going to do it. Nobody asked him. A few warm up slides led us down to the big one, and immediately Ali, Mike and I walked our kayaks round it. We waited while he paced up and down the rocks beside the slide, weighing up all the thousands of factors, each flume and rock that could knock him one way or another. The height and length of the slide was only half the problem. If you did make it to the bottom in one piece there was an eddy of death swirling round, back into the flow and then into an undercut wall. Any swimmer in that eddy would have little chance of reaching the surface. After a while Graham stepped up and asked us to set up safety for him, to which we answered, "Yeah, of course we'll film it."

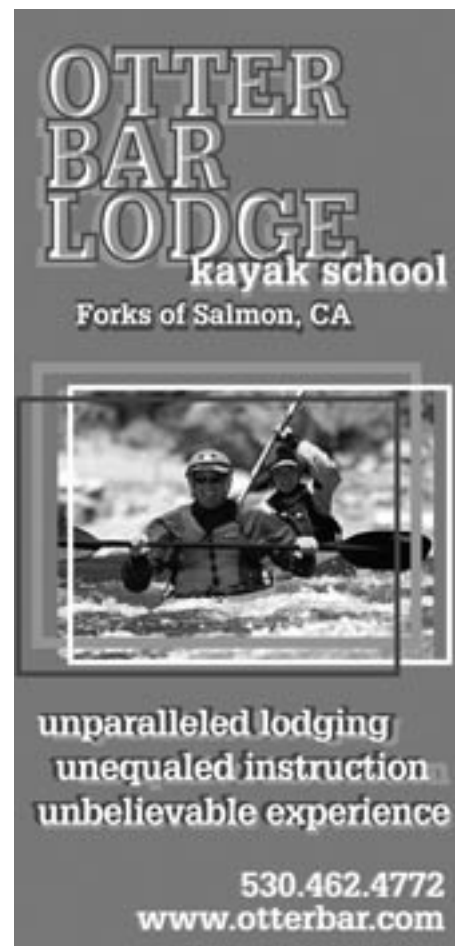
We patiently waited at the bottom for his green Everest to emerge from the skyline and hurtle down. He hit the step in the middle and flew into the air landed back on the slide and nearly lost balance, having to use his hand to correct himself he hit the pool, edged hard and powered away from the death eddy. Glory was Graham's and everyone could relax and enjoy the last fun section before the confluence.

We pushed on past the confluence and started our walk out around the bottom canyon and a day or two later we were out and safe in the fjord. The sun had shone

nearly the entire time but as soon as we left that valley and paddled into the fjord the clouds rolled in and a storm hit the valley, as if to tell us we'd been lucky to escape.

All the action, all the gore and more can be seen on the new film *Sixty Degrees North* available from all good kayaking stores and the website www.fatcatsproductions.co.uk Keep an eye on this site for many more adventures coming this year.

Special Thanks to Pyranha Kayaks, Typhoon, Palm equipment, Lyon, Whitewater the canoe centre and all the guys who helped us along the way.



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Movie Review

Movie Review: *20 Seconds of Joy*

By Ambrose Tuscano

It's not often that we at *American Whitewater* review a book or film that does not include a single whitewater boat (to the best of my knowledge we have never done so before). Yet the movie you're set to read about bears just that distinction.

I first saw *20 Seconds of Joy* when the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour came to my town last spring. Of the dozen or so films I saw that night—including several fine whitewater movies—the only one I could still remember distinctly the next week was this one. It spoke to me as a participant of a so-called extreme sport, but more so, it spoke to me as a person.

This film, which is principally concerned with the transition of a professional freeskier into BASE jumping, asks astonishingly blunt but important questions about why humans take risks; the answers it presents are nothing short of breathtakingly honest.

As refreshing as *20 Seconds of Joy* is, it's also more than a little uncomfortable at times. Yes, there are scenes in which I found myself holding my breath as the heroine seems to be headed for eminent doom at near terminal velocity. But what was more memorable—what haunted me still many days later was the quiet, nagging question inside my own head: Am I like this too?

20 Seconds of Joy, directed by Jens Hoffmann, is a documentary about Karina Hollekim, a Norwegian professional BASE jumper. In one of the early scenes, atop a gigantic cliff, Karina, in perfect English, explains to the camera why she has tucked her jacket into her pants. It's to prevent the jacket from blowing over her pilot parachute, she explains, which would make it impossible for her to deploy her primary canopy before hitting the ground, "And we wouldn't want that," she quips in clear understatement.

On this level, the film is totally accessible to paddlers, most of whom are familiar with this type of flippancy in the face of serious consequences. Which leads to the obvious conclusion: different sport, same mentality. But then, just a little way into the film, another professional BASE jumper is introduced—Karina's mentor. His name is Jeb Corliss, and he's talking about Karina almost like an expert witness explaining a psychopath to a jury of average Joes and Janes. The more he talks, the less and less common ground I see between whitewater paddlesports and jumping off tall things with a parachute. As Karina herself says later in the film, "There are no supersafe jumps." At this point I was wondering what my paddling career would have been like if there existed no whitewater easier than Class V. How would I have gotten started? How long would I have survived? To which Jeb Corliss responds, "The average lifespan of a BASE jumper is about six years." Chilling.

Almost from the very beginning, *20 Seconds of Joy* is filled with images of Karina & Company jumping off massive cliffs. As someone who's never experienced sustained freefall, and who's generally afraid to get up on his own roof, I found these scenes both thrilling and beautiful. The camera work is phenomenal, following the human specks as they whiz along past sheer precipices, often seeming only inches from ruin. Much of the best footage comes from cameramen who jump right behind the feature athletes, following them over the edge. The first few times it can really make your stomach drop when you catch a glimpse of all that open space stretching out before and below the jumpers. And yet, this sort of scene is typical of any film about BASE jumping. Go online and search YouTube for BASE jumping clips, and you'll find some this same kind of thing...over and over and over. It's like the waterfall scene in so many whitewater films; the first dozen times it makes your arm hair stand up on end, but after a few hundred scenes more, you're propping your eyelids up with toothpicks just to make it through.



So how is *20 Seconds of Joy* different? Early on in the film, after the director has hooked you with a few fantastic scenes of Karina tumbling through the air, rushing toward the magically blue water at incomprehensible speeds, the focus shifts to Oslo, Karina's hometown. There, we meet first her friends, then her parents. All of them are asked to comment on Karina's pursuit of her BASE jumping career, and their responses are honest to the point of causing audience discomfort. The director also inserts short scenes of a German psychologist (the only character in the film who requires sub-titles) giving some theoretical explanations of risk takers. While some of his hypotheses are hard to swallow, it's not long before the footage of Karina starts to seem like hard evidence in support of the theory.

Karina's friends seem like very typical Norwegian women, and Karina seems to long to be satisfied with the sort of mundane life they lead. But at the same time, she talks about the pull of adrenaline that keeps her living on the road 300 nights a year in pursuit of progressively harder and more dangerous jumps. In one sequence, Karina is shown describing her motivation for BASE jumping in consecutive scenes—each about a year later than the previous one. In this progression, it's clear that her compulsion for the sport drives her to do more and more dangerous stunts. At this point Karina is using a wingsuit to fly close to the walls, and skiing off massive cliffs to

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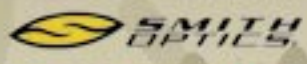
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Each day American Whitewater faces new challenges that threaten our whitewater rivers. To aid us in this fight, we rely on support from members, donors, foundations, and partners in the industry. Companies throughout the whitewater and outdoor industries are stepping forward to support AW's River Stewardship work. American Whitewater urges you not to make purchase decisions blindly. When you buy your next piece of outdoor gear there are many factors to consider: quality, dependability, comfort, safety, and fashion. American Whitewater hopes you will add one more consideration to this list: corporate responsibility. Support companies that support your rivers



Founded in 1972 by Payson Kennedy, Aurelia Kennedy and Horace Holden, the Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) has grown from a roadside inn to the nation's most popular whitewater recreation destination. Our Paddling School introduces more people to the sport than any other, and our Outfitter's Store on the bank of the Nantahala River has provided generations of paddlers with the best available equipment and advice. NOC is a special place where paddlers and outdoor enthusiasts from all over the Southeast congregate to share their love for the outdoors and to begin new adventures.

It's also where our staff members, committed to active, outdoor lifestyles, have chosen to make their careers. Every NOC staff member works at NOC for the unique lifestyle and community it offers, a community that values outdoor recreation, responsible environmental stewardship and a commitment to personal and organizational excellence. To this day we're still an employee-owned organization dedicated to providing the highest quality products and programs in outdoor recreation and education. Sharing these primary values with our guests remains one of our highest priorities, and as a company we still invest 100% of our proceeds back into our community and programs.

Like AW, NOC is committed to promoting access to this country's whitewater resources. We enable people to safely enjoy whitewater rivers that would otherwise be unable to, we expose them to the beauty of river gorges and we share with them the

sublimity of riding rivers to new places. Surely some of our guests simply enjoy the rush of running the rapids, but most leave with an appreciation of the place they've been and a new understanding of how rivers have intrinsic worth as well as recreational value.

That's why NOC is a Class IV sponsor of AW. We've always been there to help AW with their mission: We sat side by side with AW at the Cheoah River relicensing meetings; we ran shuttles at the Tallulah River for AW (until the take-out road claimed too many of our transmissions); we offer AW members a 10% discount in our Outfitter's Store; we always welcome AW fundraisers at our events, and American Whitewater is consistently a favorite during our annual Staff Charitable Contributions Day. We believe that our support helps American Whitewater be the best it can be.

Top: Guests take advantage of a beautiful festival weekend at NOC, where pool rolling and boat demos are available at our famous Outfitter's Store on select weekends

Left: The Camp Cup returned to the Nantahala River in 2008. NOC encourages people of all ages and abilities to share the joys of whitewater

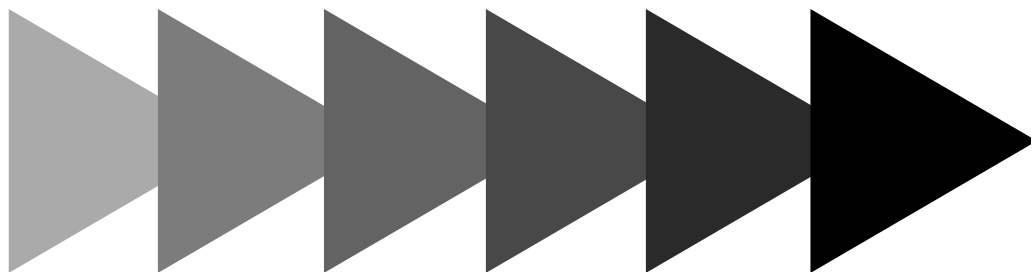
Photos courtesy of NOC

Join



AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!

American Whitewater has been extraordinarily fortunate in our ability to leverage a strong grassroots base—members and other volunteers—to assist our limited staff with many whitewater river conservation and restoration efforts.



Over the years, American Whitewater volunteers have participated in numerous hydropower meetings as well as instream and recreational flow studies; filed comments and assisted with an uncountable number of filings; appeared as expert witnesses; lobbied; worked to fight new dams, remove existing dams, deny licenses, and improve public access to rivers and streams. In nearly every river stewardship issue AW has been involved with, the outcome has been favorable to paddlers. Not only has AW secured favorable decisions for the paddling community, but we are the only national organization representing paddlers as these decisions are being made.

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the U.S. American Whitewater currently has 6,300 active members. When considering the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join American Whitewater. If you are a member, please

be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual Annual Memberships are only \$35. If you are a member of your local paddling club and your club is an Affiliate Club member of AW, join as a Club Affiliate Individual for \$25. This is less than a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

Join on-line today at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership>, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

New Member Renewing Member

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Telephone () _____ e-mail _____
Club Affiliation _____
(if claiming club discount)

*Note: American Whitewater will never share your information with others

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- \$25 Junior (*Under the age of 18*)
- \$25 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (*SAVE \$10 if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club*)
- \$35 Individual One Year
- \$50 Family (*Immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18*)
- \$65 (2) Year Membership
- \$75 Affiliate Club Membership
- \$100 Ender Club (*Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-Shirt FREE Circle Size: S M L XL XXL*)
- \$250 Platinum Paddler (*Receive Immersion Research's "Creek Bag" FREE*)
- \$500 Explorer Membership (*Receive a Dry Bag from Watershed FREE*)
- \$750 Lifetime Membership (*Receive AW's Lifetime Membership NRS Paddlers Duffle FREE*)
- \$1000 Legacy Membership (*Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Knappster Shorty Top FREE*)
- \$2500 Steward Membership (*Thank you items will be arranged on an individual basis*)

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR SUBSCRIPTIONS

- \$5.00 \$10.00 \$25.00 Other \$ _____
- \$30.00 Kayak Session Subscription (*Includes a \$5 donation to AW*)
- \$40.00 LVM Subscription (*includes a \$8 donation to AW*)

JOURNAL OPTIONS

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- Do NOT mail me the AW journal, I will read it online (*saves paper and saves AW money!*)

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- Name as it appears on card: _____
- Signature: _____

Affiliate Clubs

AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1957 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over 100 clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club consider joining one.

Clif Bar and American Whitewater are pleased to announce the 7th annual Clif Bar Flowing Rivers Campaign, pledging \$2,500 to American Whitewater Affiliate Clubs for river stewardship work. Funding for this very effective program is provided by Clif Bar.

American Whitewater Affiliate Clubs have the opportunity to apply for one of two \$1,250 grants. Grants will be distributed to clubs for projects that promote river stewardship, conservation, access and/or safety education on our nation's rivers. This program provides Club Affiliates with the seed money necessary to implement programs in their backyards.

The 2008 recipients of the Clif Bar Flowing Rivers Grant were the Atlanta Whitewater Club for river clean-ups on four separate rivers and the Fairbanks Paddlers for their project on disposal of human waste on river trips. Congratulations again to these two Affiliate Clubs!

Each of American Whitewater's Affiliate Clubs will receive an application for this year's funding. Please take this opportunity to improve a local access, conservation, or safety issue in your region. Applications for the grant must be received at American Whitewater no later than July 1, 2009. For additional information, contact Jeff Paine, Outreach Director jeff@americanwhitewater.org.

AFFILIATE CLUBS, we want to know what you are doing. Send your events to us at carla@americanwhitewater.org and we will include them in the Journal.

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Ch., San Jose
Sierra Club SF Chapter, Livermore

Colorado

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

Delaware

Wilmington Trail Club Paddlers, Wilmington

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Assoc., Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Chicago
Team SICK, Carbondale

Indiana

Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kentucky

Bardstown Boaters, Frankfort
Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington
Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Topsham

Maryland

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Silver Spring
Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Baltimore

Massachusetts

AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers, Honover

Minnesota

SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Mississippi

Mississippi Outdoor Club, Clinton

Missouri

Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover
Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Franconia

New Jersey

KCCNY, Flauders

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
AMC NY-NJ Chapter, New York
Colgate University, Hamilton
Flow Paddlers' Club, Ontario
Hamilton College, Clinton
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
KCCNY, New York
St Lawrence University, Canton
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia

N. Carolina

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Indian Trail
NCSU Outing Club, Raleigh
Triad River Runners, Winston, Salem
Watauga Paddlers, Boone

Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Keel Haulers Canoe Club, Westlake
Outdoor Adventure Club, Dayton

Oregon

Face Level Industries LLC, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton

Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Northwest Rafters Assoc, Portland
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis
Oregon Canoe and Kayak, Portland

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Inc., Lehigh Valley
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Tennessee Scenic River Assoc., Nashville
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Essex Junction

Virginia

Coastal Canoeists, Blacksburg
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Richmond

Washington

Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
The Mountaineers, Seattle
Venturing Crew 360, Snohomish
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton
Whitman College Whiteater Club, Walla Walla

West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Association, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

NE Wisconsin Paddlers Inc. Appleton
Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, Madison

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Discounted AW Membership for Affiliate Club Members

By Carla Miner, Membership Manager

AW offers a discounted Affiliate Club membership of \$25, a \$10 savings. If you are renewing your AW membership or joining as a new member, select the Affiliate Club Discounted Personal Membership online at <https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Store/?crn=199>. Or, if you are renewing or joining by mail or telephone just mention the name of the Affiliate Club you belong to and you can take advantage of the \$25 membership.

A list of AW Affiliate Clubs can be found on our website at https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Affiliate_view_. If you do not see your Club listed here please encourage them to renew their Club membership or to join AW as a new Affiliate Club. Your Club's membership and your personal membership enable our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. When you join or renew your membership your support is helping to meet the many challenges whitewater rivers face.

If you have any questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please contact me. I can be reached at 866_BOAT-4AW or membership@americanwhitewater.org.

Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

10 Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for the 2009 Clif Bar Flowing Rivers grant

For more information,
contact Carla Miner at
membership@americanwhitewater.org
or sign-up on-line at:
www.americanwhitewater.org/membership

Affiliate Clubs



Affiliate Club Spotlight

The Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club has been an American Whitewater Affiliate Club member since 1995 and just recently became an American Whitewater Lifetime member. American Whitewater would like to take this opportunity to thank the OKCC for their continued support and their stewardship efforts in the Pacific Northwest.

The OKCC is a group of boaters in the Portland, Oregon area who have joined together to pursue a common interest in whitewater boating. Their primary focus is to organize river trips at various skill levels. Safety, as well as enjoyment, is considered important on all of their club-sponsored trips. They are also involved in ocean kayaking, slalom races, instruction, and river conservation.

The OKCC hosts and sponsors many events and parties for its members. Past events have included their annual Permit Party & Paddle in January, their annual Safety Day in late summer, their annual Tieton camping trip in September, and pre- and post-season trips on the Rogue River with the Oregon Whitewater Association. Nearly every weekend of the year, OKCC members can find club trips led by knowledgeable, safety-oriented paddlers on a variety of different rivers. No matter what your skill level, there is usually a trip for you. During the winter months, OKCC pool sessions are the place to be on a Tuesday night. Pool sessions are held at the North Clackamas Aquatic Center, Milwaukie, Oregon.

To learn more about the OKCC or to join their club, check out their website at <http://www.okcc.org/index.htm>. And remember, current members of the OKCC receive a \$10 discount off their AW membership. Thanks again OKCC for your support of American Whitewater!

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spice things up. From this sequence, it's very easy to draw a comparison between her drive for risk taking and chemical dependence. In the later scenes, her face appears drawn and brooding as she describes the lengths she now must go to to experience a rush. Even before I could start to feel sorry for Karina, a doubting voice whispered, "Are you any different?"

For many paddlers, this might be the most compelling part of the film. When Karina says that the only things that could make her quit BASE jumping are paralysis or death, the audience cringes a little. I found myself knocking on wood.

So what ultimately becomes of Karina Hollekim? Obviously a movie review is no place for spoiled endings, but I can tell you that it's definitely worth your while to find out. Suffice to say that if you can get to the part of the film where Karina coins the movie's title without feeling euphoria, empathy, self-doubt, or fear, you've got a whole different machine operating in your head than the rest of us. *20 Seconds of Joy* combines all the best elements of adventure and documentary filmmaking, and whether you're a BASE jumper, paddler, or just an average Joe, it's really something you should see.

Getting your hands on a copy of *20 Seconds of Joy* can prove a bit challenging. It's being released in the US by Seventh Art Releasing (www.7thart.com), so a good place to start looking for the DVD is through them. You can also visit the movie's website, www.20secondsofjoy.com to watch a trailer and to put your name on a list to be contacted when the DVD becomes available for purchase (hopefully that will happen by the time this review appears in print). In the meantime, I highly recommend checking out this year's Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour (<http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture/tour/>) when it comes near to catch other great films like this one.

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

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 or electronic, digital photos, 300 dpi tiffs, Photoshop or high res jpegs minimum 3"x5." 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. The better the photos the better the reproduction.

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water.

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 II, III & IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

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, please don't send it in! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes made prior to publication.

American Whitewater is a 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.

Send your material to:
Journal Editor
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723
E-mail: editor@americanwhitewater.org



PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723

www.americanwhitewater.org

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I hereby release my work (literary, graphic or photographic) for publication in American Whitewater magazine

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- 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.
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Send your material to:

American Whitewater Journal PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723 or via email to editor@americanwhitewater.org

Px MY PADDLE PRESCRIPTION

PADDLER: JOHN GRACE

I'M A: WERNER SHO-GUN

TYPE: STRAIGHT

DIAMETER: STANDARD

LENGTH: 200 cm

HEIGHT: 5'11"

OCCUPATION: VIDEO GURU

LOVES PADDLING:

BECAUSE IT FORCES ME TO FOCUS - AND THE CONFUSION OF LIFE SUBSIDES FOR A BIT.



I choose to support American Whitewater through the Healthy Waters Program.

First descent Petite Mecatina, North Quebec

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- < and have more fun on the water

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- Kids Kayaking Camp - **June 14-19**
- Kayak Instructor Training - **May 4-8 and June 1-5**

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