



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
July/August 2007

Why I'm Not Cool

A Determined Hand Paddler
on the Grand Canyon

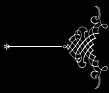
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American Whitewater Journal

July/August 2007 - Volume #47 - Issue #3

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View of the Colorado from
 Nakoweap Canyon
 photo by Scott Weems



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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.



American Whitewater Journal Staff

Editor Ambrose Tuscano
14076 Northwoods Blvd. Truckee, California 96161
e-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org

Assistant Editor Tim Catalano

Graphic Design/Production/Photo Editor Christie Dobson

Contributing Writers

Ambrose Tuscano, Mark Singleton, Sue Taft, Ben VanCamp, Kevin Colburn, Beth Gaydos, Janet Burnett Cowie, Doug Ammons, Walt Barmmann, Thomas O'Keefe, Scott Weems, Kathleen Burress, Clay Wright, Martin Talbot, Dave Steindorf, Andrew Guldman, Eugene Buchanan, Scott Winkelman, Mike Buckley, Hank Klausman, Ambrose Tuscano

Photo Contributors

Bruce Cowie, Wolf Bauer, Rob Lesser, Ted Acton, Brandon Knapp, Rich Bower, Thomas O'Keefe, Portland General Electric, Scott Weems, Kathleen Burress, Jeff West, Jonathan Shanin, Christiane Van Dyke, Charles-Etienne Tessier, Martin Talbot, Sam Drevo

Events / Advertising Coordinator Ben VanCamp
P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723
phone 828-713-5825
e-mail: ben@amwhitewater.org

Safety Editor Charlie Walbridge
Route 1, Box 329F, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525
e-mail: ccwalbridge@cs.com

Stewardship Reports Editor
Kevin Colburn, kevin@amwhitewater.org

American Whitewater Magazine Task Force
Jeff Espy, Dunbar Hardy, Dale-Marie Herring, John Mason, Tanya Shuman, Ambrose Tuscano

Missing Copies and Address Changes
carla@amwhitewater.org

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Board of Directors & Staff

**TOLL FREE NUMBER
866-BOAT4AW**

Sutton Bacon
sutton@suttonbacon.com
Atlanta, GA

Chris Bell
chris@boatingbeta.com
Asheville, NC

Rich Bowers
nwriters@comcast.net
Bellingham, WA

Dave Cernicek
cernicek@cluemail.com
Jackson, WY

Adam Cramer
cramerica@gmail.com
Washington, DC

Liz Ferrin
lferrin@deckers.com
Goleta, CA

Jennie Goldberg
jennie@nwwhitewater.org
Seattle, WA

Kristine Jackson
kristine@jacksonkayak.com
Rock Island, TN

Andrew Jillings
ajillings@hamilton.edu
Clinton, NY

Tim Kelley
tim.kelley1@us.army.mil
Potsdam, NY

Don Kinser
dkinser@ediltd.com
Marietta, GA

Mark LaCroix
mwlcx@hughes.net
Thorton, NH

Evie Locke
evelynlocke@verizon.net
Charlemont, MA

Eric Nies
nies@runbox.com
New Paltz, NY

Aaron Pruzan
aaron@jacksonholekayak.com
Jackson Hole, WY

Norwood Scott
wns111@sbcglobal.com
San Francisco, CA

Charlie Walbridge
ccwalbridge@cs.com
Bruceton Mills, WV

BOARD OFFICERS

President: Sutton Bacon
Vice President: Don Kinser
Secretary: Norwood Scott
Treasurer: Chris Bell

AW STAFF

Laura Blalock
Bookkeeper
Cullowhee, NC
laura@amwhitewater.org

Kevin Colburn
National Stewardship Director
Missoula, MT
kevin@amwhitewater.org

Carla Miner
Membership Manager
West Valley City, UT
carla@amwhitewater.org

Thomas O'Keefe
Pacific NW Stewardship Director
Seattle, WA
okeefe@amwhitewater.org

Mark Singleton
Executive Director
Cullowhee, NC
mark@amwhitewater.org

Dave Steindorf
California Stewardship Director
Paradise, CA
dave@amwhitewater.org

Nathan Fey
Colorado Stewardship Director
Ridgway, CO
nathan@amwhitewater.org

Ben VanCamp
Outreach Manager
Asheville, NC
ben@amwhitewater.org

The Journey Ahead

Journey Ahead: A Look at AW in 2006

As I write this, American Whitewater is finishing up our 2006 Annual Report. Last year was quite a year for American Whitewater. Hard changes made back in 2005 took hold and delivered a very solid year both for river stewardship successes and financial health.

Here are some examples of how our recent transition provides for a healthier organization:


In 2005, American Whitewater transitioned its river access and conservation programs into a model that embraces regional river stewardship. The fruits of this transition became clear in 2006. American Whitewater staff and volunteers are successfully building relationships within their communities to improve the quality and quantity of whitewater recreation and conservation in their backyards. Local staff and board representation, coupled with empowered volunteers, makes American Whitewater more effective in fulfilling our mission: "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely."

In 2006, American Whitewater joined forces with other human-powered outdoor recreation organizations to form the Outdoor Alliance. This coalition allows all of our organizations to collaborate on common goals of preserving and restoring our natural resources for responsible recreation. The Outdoor Alliance provides a stronger voice for our interests in Washington D.C. and is helping to shape public policy for improved recreational access and conservation on all American public lands.

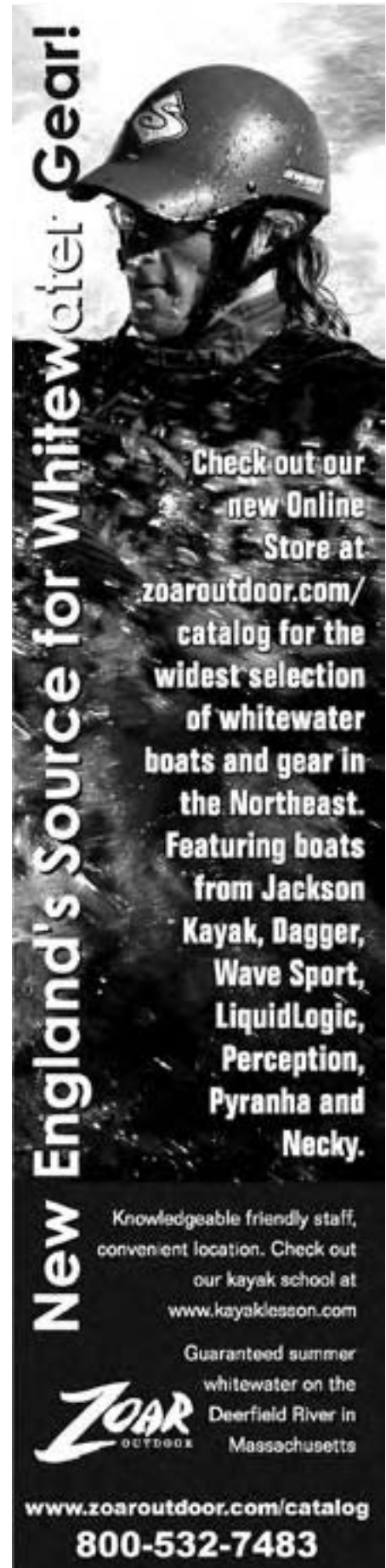
Throughout 2006, American Whitewater diversified its funding streams. To accomplish this, American Whitewater reached out to new funding sources: foundations, and the outdoor industry, and focused efforts on educating our member donors on the value of American

Whitewater's work and how support contributes to river stewardship efforts.

In the fall of 2006, American Whitewater hosted a meeting of whitewater boating interests in Colorado to create the Colorado Rivers Initiative. American Whitewater recognized that Colorado's rivers face more significant threats than those of any other state in the country. In response to these threats, American Whitewater hired our new Colorado Stewardship Director, Nathan Fey. This position will lead and support volunteers across the state to make sure paddlers in Colorado have a voice in how its rivers and water are managed.

One of the most encouraging outcomes of this transformation is seeing growing support from our member donors, foundations and corporate partners to help fund the organization. As you can see from our financial report on page 50, 81 cents of every dollar American Whitewater receives flows through to support our river stewardship program. Financial support comes in many shapes and sizes and it's ALL important! Many hands have helped to lighten the load. Thank you for your support through this transition. 

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Letters to the Editor



Mind Over Water

A Line Worth Drawing

By Doug Ammons

My kids have taught me some things about kayaking. One is, there's no escaping the strange thoughts we fall into. One might call them our private derangements. Amusingly, they lead to life's beauties and absurdities; they create our insights and delusions.

Without ever explaining it in so many words, the kids have shown me that mindsets build naturally as we live, tracking our experience, making each of us an oddity of his personal history. By exploring we learn what's what, and from the first burn on the stove to each time we crash headlong into reality, we learn consequences and control. And we learn fun. Watch the intensity of a toddler as he repeatedly flicks the lightswitch on the wall, and you will see our fate. The control of light and dark bewitches him. He is compulsive and delighted. Later nuances, like controlling the flow of movement climbing a rock wall or paddling down a river, are only natural evolutions in the Art of the Lightswitch.

Throughout each foray into control our inner world tries to accommodate the lessons of the outer, but this turns out to be an impossible job. Inevitably we get painfully smacked because it's hard to guess the answers before we know

the rules. The bad experiences become papered over by elaborate stories—none of which are really true, although they make us feel better. Often portions of the patchwork are drafty, and uneasiness or even fear swirl through. The fact of the matter is that life's edges jab at us for mistakes and we mend the wounds as best we can. Though tell-tale signs of panic sometimes appear when we near the repairs, this is just part of being human.

Arising from our imperfect control of life's lightswitches, neuroses dwell in the patchwork, but so does understanding and health. Insight, awareness, and judgment—these are built in haphazardly. Our only prayer is to be cautious and not to blunder into oblivion before we correct mistakes, and afterward not to wear the scars too lightly or heavily, but just right.

The diciest problem in all this exploration might be best expressed in a paradox: sometimes danger comes from safety. I have yet to fully understand the implications of this, but I know it's true. The problem is when we make the right decisions, do the right things in the right way, we never find out how close to disaster we actually are. When you think about it, this amounts to successful rationalization and should be cheered. Yet, sometimes we are carried into a feeling of security and our guard is lowered—then we get a glimpse of the reality beyond the patchwork. That is when we realize how well we really control the lightswitch.

It had been a great weekend. Monty and I couldn't have been happier. Weather and water levels were right, the back roads were open and, together with Paul, we'd managed to find another major drainage with an outrageous kayaking run. For the past two days our quarry had been a river-sized stream cascading down steep granite bedrock. Boundary Creek was the third of our first descents this spring, and it had been everything we'd hoped for.

We were after fluid gems whose facets no one had seen, whose waters no one had touched. Sparkling and rushing in hidden canyons, we knew they were out there. On successive weekends we'd found one, another, then another. Hard but possible, with sweeping waterslides, waterfalls, chutes, boulders And there were more waiting for us. In them we found life in a nutshell. Friendship became clear flowing water. It was our search and our bliss alone, because nobody else knew about the streams or cared and that suited us just fine. Tonight as we drove toward Northwestern Montana with another four hours 'till home, we were happy.

As usual, Monty drove very fast. Across the deep canyon at Moyie Falls we swerved around on the empty bridge, screeching to a stop, then looked into the chasm at the violent falls far below. For a few thoughtful moments we watched its ferocious beauty, eyes caught by the thick sheets of water falling, then we were off again.

Thick forest cloaked the road on either side and we worried about deer in the flattening light. The last of the sun's rays siphoned over the horizon as we sped past the junction with Highway 508 up the Yaak River valley. It was 8 p.m..

I waved a hand at the road splitting off to the left. "Let's head up to look at the Falls." Monty hit the brakes and we bounced off the road, turned and headed north on 508. "If it looks good," I said, "I might run it."

In his easy-going manner, Monty looked over at me and smiled. "Ok, Doug," he said as he shifted gears and accelerated up the steep grade, "I'll watch."

I was on a roll and not about to stop. I had paddled a lot that spring doing all the hardest runs in the region, and felt solid—very solid. Our first descents had included hundreds of hard Class V and VI rapids. Without a single problem I'd run

all sorts of convoluted drops no one else wanted to touch, drawing the line only at a few. I didn't think I was cocky, but I was confident of my control, my strength, and my judgment. I had done too many things right to believe I could make a mistake.

Yaak Falls is the exclamation point of the Yaak River. After lazily meandering through meadows and gentle forest, the river abruptly attacks upturned bedrock. Starting at the Falls is a canyon broken open by fault lines and hewn by rushing water. The walls squeeze the current into channels, zigzagging through the rock like the serrations of a saw. But despite its churning, the water hasn't had time to smooth many rough edges. Paddlers put on the river below the falls with the feeling that they're putting the Big Guy behind them, but still have to duck a roundhouse

that's coming. They paddle downstream anyway because it's a great run. You just have to be in the mood.

The falls had remained un-run for good reason. It has two sections, each with its own bizarre and fatal hazards. The upper part is a series of broken bedrock steps and when peak runoff pumps down the riverbed, deep abrupt holes form with the water furiously slamming back on itself. Several span large parts of the river, snorted like monsters, linked by sharp waves angling back and forth and spewing into violently folding piles of water. Teeth of broken rock gape in the current. But as impressive as this is, the lower half of the falls is what captures the imagination, and once viewed, no one ever sees anything else in their mind's eye at the thought of Yaak Falls.

After the guantlet above empties into a turbulent straightaway, the river rushes down a long and steep ramp into a blank rock wall. There is no pillow action, no mounding up of pressure, no momentary hesitation of force; the water simply explodes off the wall like the jet from a huge fire hose and gushes into a wildly geysering runout, then into another rapid. Of course, any paddler can see the key to the line is to miss the snorting holes above and the wall below. But like many things in life, this is easier said than done.

The first time I had been to the Yaak a few years before, several friends and I explored the possibilities of running the falls. Or more accurately, we tried to understand a spectacle of raw power, because what we saw frightened us.

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Mind Over Water

The water was high, and five of us were there to run the river. The deafening roar of the falls filled the air with energy. We were moths drawn to a candle flame by an inexplicable urge. Clambering excitedly around on the rock walls above the torrent, each view only enticed us further. We had to see what it would do, like kids at the railroad tracks when they put rocks and pennies down on the rails, then jump to safety just before the train rounds the bend and bears down on them. They cringe, feeling the earth shake as the steel behemoth drums by, close enough to touch. Holding their hands back, they fight the feeling of being snatched away as an immense presence rises, power filling space down into the pit of their stomachs. A sigh of thanks when it's past and rumbling away confined to its dual ribbons of steel. Tension released, they scramble to find the pulverized rock and mashed foil remnants of the pennies.

Standing next to the falls was like being near the tracks as those locomotives charged past, but the water never stopped, it never ended. The bank was safe enough but there was a funny feeling in the air that we all noticed. It was like gazing into the hypnotic stare of a wild animal, eager to be near it but fearing it as well. As if standing there too long would allow the river to mesmerize us, reach up, and drag us in.

The five of us had rustled about finding sticks to throw in to gauge the current—standard procedure for plumbing an unknown rapid. After eight or 10 big sticks we were stymied. Every one of them disappeared without a trace. We dragged ever-bigger pieces of debris to the edge and heaved them into the torrent to satisfy our curiosity. Still, they disappeared. Our frustration increased until we finally found a piece that seemed worthy of the powers we were dealing with, something large enough to indicate exactly what was going on down there.

It took all five of us to work the 30-

foot log into a position above the lower falls. Ah! Now we'd see what was what! "One, two, three, push!" Splash! Seized and roughly yanked downstream by the water's hands, the log accelerated toward the edge. It hesitated, then was whisked down the ramp. Like a battering ram it smashed straight into the wall with a sharp THWACK—and disappeared. We waited, waited and waited. As we hung on each second, puzzlement grew. "Where is it?" we all asked ourselves. Ten seconds later it erupted out of the huge geysers below the falls, its end in splinters. Breaching completely out of the water, it fell like a skinny whale with rigor mortis, slammed against the far rock wall, and was swallowed by the rapid downstream. We were quiet, looked at each other for a moment, then said together in low voices, "Damn." That was enough for us.

Despite such clear warnings, time and experience have a way of changing your perspective. Psychic patches grow over the fears you had, and you come to feel like the toddler who flicks the lightswitch again and again, convinced of how well you control light and dark. No doubt this is why hope springs eternal, and probably why stupidity does too. All in all, one of life's stranger phenomena is that a flexible mind can come to see the harsh negatives and sure impossibilities of the world as quite fluid. So it was between me and Yaak Falls; I considered it unfinished business. It had been on my mind like a promise I hadn't even realized I had made to myself. "Someday ..." I thought, "someday I'll run this thing."

And with a wave of my hand, the time had come. In ten minutes we pulled off at a deserted overlook directly above the cascades.

A kayak seems a pitiful twig to cast into such a world, particularly with someone in it. But it depends. Water is nature's magic. It is hard and soft, relentless and forgiving. Kayaking is all about sensing the balance

between these opposites. Running Class VI rapids requires touching the heart of the river, knowing how far to go and when to back off. Despite the implied aggressiveness, delicate intuition is the key, for recklessness or a lack of attention to details will get you killed.

I hopped out of Monty's truck and began scouting. The light would be failing in a few more minutes, so if I was going to run the falls, I had to be quick. The water was high, even higher than before, the speed and power frightening—hard big water Class VI—very different from the steep creeks we had been doing. After a casual glance at the upper section, I carefully evaluated the ramp. It was clear what to do. The right three-quarters of the river was death, but I had no intention of following the path of our ill-fated log. A huge hole spanned the river adjacent to where the blank wall ended, but there was a small gap. If I went over the ramp with lots of speed, the right angle, and hit the bottom in just the right place, I'd punch through the main hole. Then I'd have to deal with the turbulent backwash, but I could see how to do that. Any loss of angle or speed and I'd be pulled back into the hole, something that was not an option. After looking carefully, I was satisfied I could make it. I got my gear on and headed up to the top, looking as I went by the upper part and handwaving myself through it. "Ok, punch the first two ledge holes," I said to myself, "then head right past the big hole and through the diagonals at the bottom. Catch the eddy above the ramp." The line seemed clear, but I glided on a feeling, and the feeling was wrong. In my haste and certainty I didn't scout the upper half carefully. I forgot that the truth lives in the details.

I warmed up at the top for a few minutes, visualized the line, then headed down. I hit the first ledge hole at the wrong angle. It slapped me sideways and I instantly typewritered across into the center of the river. Spinning quickly back to the

right I was in blank territory, lost in the rapid. Twisting out of a hole and over a big breaking wave, I stared down into the gut of two huge diagonals funneling together. And behind them: death. A monstrous and malevolent hole I hadn't thought I'd be anywhere near. If I went in, I'd be lucky to flush out still conscious, but conscious or unconscious wouldn't matter, because I'd follow the log line directly into the rock wall at the bottom of the falls.

The world is a tunnel. GETRIGHT burned the wordless laserbeam in my head. Two quick strokes to angle sharply to the right as I flushed down the funnel, one more for speed into the bottom. Crushed downward by tons of water in the breaking diagonals. Stay in control. GETRIGHT. The boat reared and I felt it begin twisting and shooting upward in a towering backendo. Can't land upside down. GETRIGHT is all that matters. The whole universe is nothing but GETRIGHT. Reaching back with my paddle as I erupted into the air, I spun the boat into an airborne pirouette and landed perfectly upright moving fast toward the right bank. Two sharp strokes and a quick turn back to the left and I was on line, whisked past the edge of the hole and into the rearing, bucking diagonals at the bottom. I sped into an eddy a short distance above the ramp, shouting at myself. I botched that so bad! Jesus, I was off-line! Why didn't I scout carefully? Why didn't I look closer at those ledge holes? I could have died in that hole or what was below. I was so ridiculously, stupidly, idiotically off-line!

Not wanting to dwell on the looming implications of my near-miss, I peeled out of the eddy toward the lower falls, sure of the line. "No, No, NO!" I heard Monty screaming. Spooked by what had just happened, I jammed on the brakes, and just made it into a tiny eddy right at the edge of the ramp, thinking "What the hell?"

Then I heard Monty again. He was shouting, "Go, Go, GO!"

"I'm an idiot," I thought, and gathered myself together. I ran the second half, punching the hole and plunging through the lower runout, just as I had planned.

It was almost dark when I carried my boat back up to the truck. Monty said softly, "I was really worried about you for a second at the top." All I could do was shake my head and say, "Me too." We left it at that and drove home.

Life is a treasure. It is an evolving mirror of experience and emotion. We strive to keep it full, not to squander it recklessly. Skill, intuition and care equalize our bets with Nature, but if we don't use the few tools we have, the game goes awry very quickly. I've got a patch now for Yaak Falls, not a big one, but it still bothers me. Sometimes I

look under it to remind myself how sharp reality might be in my game of angles and split seconds.

Where should we draw the line? How well do we really control the lightswitch? As always those are unanswered questions. The point is to keep our eyes open and learn from reality's answers. That evening at Yaak Falls I nearly found the one answer I didn't want to know. And that is a line worth drawing. *AWW*

This story was original published in 2004 in the book The Laugh of the Water Nymph by Doug Ammons, available at www.dougammons.com.

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History

shuttle car circa 1963



Roof Racks: They've Come a Long Way

By Sue Taft

The roof rack has evolved quite a bit since someone first had the idea of carrying a canoe on top of a car.

I say “canoe” because at that time, probably around 1920s, kayaks were designed for portability (i.e. folding kayaks and foldboats were stuffed into a sack and transported like luggage). The designers of the first cars probably did not even con-

sider that someone would want to carry a canoe on top. Yet a few hearty souls did and thus began the quest for what is now called a “roof rack system.”

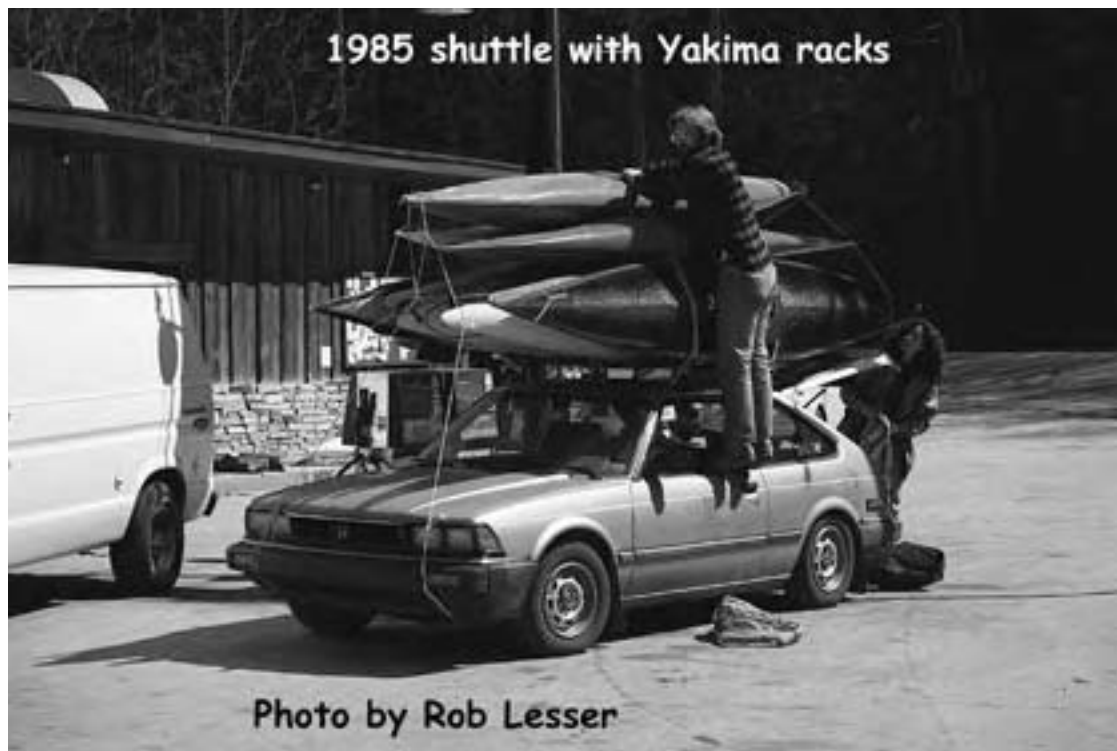
The first roof racks were home-built and required a little bit of ingenuity, particularly when it came to carrying a canoe on a soft-top car. A few boards nailed together and rope seemed to do the trick. Later hard-tops cars were easier to adapt to, particularly after luggage racks that were mounted using the car's rain gutters became available. This also allowed the growing foldboater crowd in the 1950s to un-stuff their foldboats for good, leav-

ing the foldboats/kayaks fully assembled for travel.

The advent of “rigid” fiberglass kayaks (and closed C-1s) in the late 1950s added another possibility for multi-tiered stacking, which relied on strong and durable rain gutters and gutter-mounted supports with lumber for cross-pieces. In the 1960s, the quick-n-easy gutter mount hit the market and became the standard for all rack systems used by boaters. Gutter-mounted home-built racks ruled during the boom of boating in the 1970s. Vans were ideal since their continuous gutters allowed for multiple attachments. With



History





2000 shuttle


Photo by Brandon Knapp

seemingly little concern for exceeding any gutter weight limits, elaborate rack systems were designed using multiple 2 x 4 cross pieces with black iron pipe-stands and pipe—the precursor of today’s “kayak stackers.”

By the early 1980s Yakima, the manufacturer of adjustable kayak foot braces, recognized a market for complete rack systems beyond merely providing the gutter mount alone. Just as we no longer had to build our own kayak (with the availability of plastic kayaks), we no longer had to build our own rack system from scratch. Within ten years, most cars and trucks no longer had rain gutters, which meant there was a need for more specialized mounting systems, which in turn proved to be particularly advantageous for the new market. Today we have two major players in the rack system market for paddlesports, Yakima and Thule, who design systems not only to accommodate boats, but also bikes, skis, surf boards, as well as just plain luggage-cargo racks.

The rack manufacturers do it all for us. We have gunwale brackets for our canoes, hull raisers and kayak stackers, cross-bar pads, and even fairings to reduce noise. We no longer even need to supply our own rope, nor do we even have to know how to tie any knots. Now we have heavy-duty cinching straps and even ready-made bow and stern lines with little ratchet gadgets for cinching tight without a knot. Even vehicle manufacturers provide factory-installed rack systems these days.

Problem solved. Well not quite. We still have that minor little detail called weight limits. Now for boaters like me, we just need to figure out how to carry an OC-1, a

kayak or two, and a mountain bike on the same vehicle. At least there are newer and better options than just 2 x 4s, black pipe, and rope. 

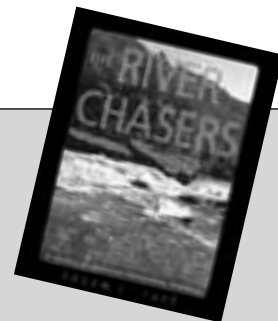
All photos from The River Chasers are courtesy of the original photographers.

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Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers*, *The History of American Whitewater Canoeing and Kayaking*. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, e-mail it to editor@amwhitewater.org and look for its answer in an upcoming issue.



Safety

Dry Drowning

by Walt Bammann

Safety Editor's Note: *In the past 20 years, AW has received a handful of puzzling accident reports. In each a person equipped with a life vest drowned while floating through Class II-III rapids. There were also several instances of rafting guests falling out of guided rafts, being pulled back in immediately, but still going into respiratory arrest. Since many thousands of normal, healthy people survive similar swims each year, these events are often attributed to serious health emergencies, like a heart attack.*

But if your whitewater experience includes a few bad swims, you know that it doesn't take much water "going down the wrong way" to make you pretty helpless. This is because the larynx, a flap of skin covering the entrance to the lungs in your throat, tries to close down over that entrance when hit by incoming water. Cold water is especially effective in causing this effect. Some water safety experts have suspected that a "laryngospasm" could result in drowning under the right conditions.

We don't have all the answers, and that's what makes the account below especially compelling. If you've had a similar experience please email Charlie Walbridge, AW Safety Editor, at ccwalbridge@cs.com.

As the raft plowed into the big wave at Bob's Hole on the Upper Clackamas and began turning and tilting as only a doomed raft will do, instinct took over.

One moment I was on the low corner of the paddle raft as bodies began sliding at me, the next moment I was underwater, looking up at the bottom (actually the top) of the raft and seeing all the pretty bubbles. I pushed the raft away and surfaced. Having done this a few times in my 20 years of rafting, the situation seemed relatively under control as the raft was nearby, albeit upside down, and I was prepared for a swim with a dry suit, helmet, Hi-Float life jacket and lots of fleece insulation. No worries, right? Was I in for a surprise!

As my head broke the surface I was naturally looking to get some air. After all, anyone who has slid off the boat, found himself under the boat and then pushed the raft away while underwater has been holding his breath for a long time—I suspect it had been about 20 seconds. It always seems longer while underwater but time moves at an unusual pace down there.

Now imagine, if you can, coming up and not being able to breathe. If inhaling doesn't work, how about coughing? Nothing doing. Try again and again. I was so shocked by this phenomenon that I gave up my initial goal of grabbing the raft. Instead, I was grabbing my throat and focusing on that. The raft got further away. I continued to try to breathe but there was

absolutely no sensation of air movement either in or out. Later I was to find I'd suffered a laryngospasm and had been a candidate for a dry drowning.

While the focus of this article is on the swim, I'm sure some are wondering how we ended up flipping at Bob's Hole. Last May, after volunteering at the NWRA Upper Clackamas Whitewater Festival event for most of Saturday, several of us thought a short raft trip that afternoon was well deserved. We grabbed a 13' raft, rescue gear, etc and had five paddlers, including three current or former paddle raft guides and two other very experienced boaters. With a strong crew all dressed to swim in either dry suits or wet suits, everyone wanted to go for the big holes on this Class III-IV run. No wussy routes allowed! I was elected paddle captain, having the most experience. We put in at Fish Creek and discovered that the Clack was running a bit over 3000 cfs, bigger than usual for May, but very runnable. We hit the good stuff in each rapid and other than having two paddlers leave the boat at Toilet Bowl, it was a smooth run and lots of fun. The big wave at Bob's Hole beckoned. Perhaps a 14' raft would have been better; for four out of the five of us, the swim was no big deal

So what is a laryngospasm? You can do some research on the Internet under drowning, dry drowning and laryngospasm. There is some correlation to the Mammalian Dive Reflex, in that all mammals may experience this involuntary reflex where the larynx closes the throat. It can be triggered by a number of things, most commonly a splash of cold water on the back of the throat or vocal cords. The research says that roughly 10% of drowning victims suffer a "dry" drowning, where water isn't inhaled into the lungs. The other 90% experience a "wet" drowning, where water is breathed in at the last moment as air has run out and the

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brain tries to figure out what to do.

There is some great information in Sebastian Junger's book, "The Perfect Storm," which tells the story of the fishing boat tragedy in the Atlantic. He devotes an entire chapter to the physiology of drowning that is quite fascinating. His research says you can't actually make yourself pass out by holding your breath. As you run out of air underwater, the brain finally figures that holding one's breath isn't working so it might as well breathe. Water is inhaled and any further hope of oxygen getting to the brain is diminished unless CPR is administered almost immediately. It is also important to clarify that a laryngospasm is not the same as having one's breath knocked out from force, or swallowing wrong and choking; nor is it related to the shock of falling into cold water and having it "take your breath away." These experiences, while uncomfortable, do not involve the larynx and, therefore, resolve themselves differently from a laryngospasm.

To continue the story, I was now floating merrily down the river wondering my fate. I could neither shout nor blow my whistle. Waving my arms was my only option but since no one was looking, I saved my strength and the remaining air in my lungs. Since help didn't appear to be forthcoming any time soon, self-rescue training took over. It occurred to me I should float feet-first on my back and if anyone was watching me drown at least it would look like I knew what I was doing. The river carried me into two minor holes and I remember wanting to take a breath just before a lot of water crashed over my head. The irony of situation then struck me as I realized I could die if I passed out. As I continued to float along I was actually thinking: "Here I am, the President of the NWRA, no less, and I'm about to become the first drowning victim at our Festival in the 23 years of its existence. How

embarrassing!" Later, I read that many drowning survivors report feeling similar thoughts of embarrassment at being in this predicament and concern over putting their families through this.

The scary part of the laryngospasm reflex is that you have no control over it. As I floated along I was struck by the odd fact that I was in no particular danger from the river in that my life jacket was doing its job, my dry suit and fleece were keeping me warm and yet I was in danger of passing out from lack of oxygen. If only I could breathe, this would be a piece of cake.

Luckily the river below Bob's Hole just moves along with a few waves. I didn't have to expend lots of air swimming for my life. The current carried me toward the bank with minimal effort. Upon reaching the bank and clambering up on a rock, the spasm abruptly ended. Air, glorious air! I coughed a few times but had no water in my lungs. Although a bit unnerved by the experience, I was able to help carry the raft up the bank a few minutes later and suffered no symptoms afterwards.

As I got to thinking about the incident months later, it struck me as odd that I didn't pass out. I had been in the river for over five minutes. Since I can't hold my breath this long and was expending energy, what happened? I can only say that I had no sensation whatsoever of any air movement in or out. Yet one of the other rafters hanging onto the raft maybe 30 feet away reported that he could hear me at times making funny noises. I know I was trying to move air during the swim. He suspected I was in trouble but couldn't get to me. But if I was making some noise, then there had to be some minor air movement. It sure didn't feel like it. All I can say is that my lungs were screaming for air and it felt like I was being smothered. It is not something I ever want to experience again.

Some of you may have seen this article posted on the PNW and Idaho Whitewater Yahoo Chat sites, which was done to elicit some information from others who may have experienced this and to hear from any medical experts. The response was interesting and I'll try to summarize:

- Several people reported apparent laryngospasms. One kayaker passed out underwater while being recycled in a hole so he never experienced any attempt at breathing. Luckily he was pulled ashore and quickly revived. Because no water had entered his lungs even though he passed out, it would seem his throat may have been closed. Other people reported on incidents that they think was the sensation and they were able to break the spasm while still in the water by shouting or who knows what. They aren't entirely sure what happened but found themselves breathing again.

- A doctor and dentist provided some medical insight about the laryngospasm in that it can also happen on occasion in hospitals and dental chairs. A spasm can

be triggered after surgery, when tubes are removed from the throat, and it is a concern for some people during dental procedures where water may hit the throat. In these situations the spasm usually relaxes before the person passes out but is quite alarming for the patient. The doctor also says that people with chronic coughs and throat irritations (drainage) may be more prone to this reflex. What I find odd is that in 20 years of rafting and kayaking with a number of similar swims, I've not had this spasm before. I don't have any particular health issues like the cough and don't remember having a cold that day that might have caused some throat irritation. Perhaps I was just unlucky.

- One person reported having a laryngospasm triggered at dinner when he swallowed a green pepper and it touched his vocal cords on the way down. Turns out he is allergic to bell peppers. (Now I've got two reasons for avoiding bell peppers: I hate the taste and they are dangerous!).

- If you encounter someone experiencing a laryngospasm, be careful of the first aid administered as injury could occur if you start chest compressions with the airway blocked. Rescue breathing would be the best first step. Hopefully the spasm would relax when the person passes out.

Based on the comments from others and my own experience, I think several conclusions can be drawn and that it is important for people to be cognizant of the phenomenon:

- In looking back on some of the drowning reports from the Deschutes River last year, one wonders if a laryngospasm may have been involved where the boater didn't call for help and may not have been trying to self rescue. Not being able to breathe certainly distracts one from thinking rationally and taking the normal steps we expect from someone in trouble. In other

words, try to help anyone in the river ASAP. They may have a problem that isn't obvious. There may be other cases like this and perhaps autopsy reports would shed some light.

- So far I've not found a definite pattern as to why or when the spasm releases. The brain works in funny ways. The situation and the person's physiology may cause variations. While I couldn't break the spasm loose while I was floating, others report that they did. For me, the brain recognized the shore as a safe haven and relaxed the spasm when I sat on the rock. Would it have relaxed if I'd grabbed the boat? Climbed onto the boat? Been grabbed by a rescuer? Hard to say, but it sure would have been easier for me to grab the raft if it had had a safety line around the sides. As it was, I was too distracted to lunge for the boat to try to grab the smooth sides with no easy handholds.

I believe this phenomenon is generally a bad thing with the rare exception of being held underwater where you don't want to breathe anyway. Otherwise, it is potentially deadly as it minimizes the ability of the swimmer to self-rescue by cutting off the air supply needed to deal with long swims in dangerous water. Recognizing the situation in yourself or a swimmer could be a lifesaver by taking steps to avoid a long swim. *AWW*

Questions and input from readers are most welcome. My phone number and email address are available at the "State Board" link on the NWRA website: www.nwrafters.org.

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Stewardship Updates

Outdoor Alliance Platform Explained

By Kevin Colburn

American Whitewater's National Policy efforts are focused through two coalitions: Outdoor Alliance and the Hydropower Reform Coalition (as well as on precedent-setting cases).

Through the Outdoor Alliance, American Whitewater is able to take effective action on a wide array of recreational and ecological issues, which has direct benefits to paddlers and rivers. By seeking full federal funding support for agencies, and advocating for resource protection and responsible management, we are treating the sources of many local river conservation and access conflicts.

The 2007 Outdoor Alliance Platform is based on the group's dedication to ensuring the conservation and stewardship of our nation's land and waters through the promotion of sustainable, human-powered recreation. Never before have conservation-oriented hikers, climbers, skiers, paddlers, and mountain bikers had such a strong and unified political voice. The real power of OA, though, is through our members' personal activism and actions. As such, we are writing this article to share the platform with you – our members – with the hopes that these issues will resonate with you and that you will participate in one or more of them on a personal level.

The 2007 Outdoor Alliance Platform

contains the following recommendations for congressional leaders:

- Adequately fund the recreation and resource protection budgets for the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service. OA proposed specific funding increases for these programs, which are critical to paddlers' ability to enjoy public lands and waters.
- Support trails and skill-based recreation field staff within the National Park Service. OA brainstormed a new parks program that would get staff out in the woods and on the rivers interacting with skilled users. These staff will serve as a vital link between skilled users and agency decision makers.
- Support recreational infrastructure on all public lands. OA requested specific budget increases for trails and access areas. Well-managed infrastructure is key to providing high quality recreational experiences while protecting natural resources.
- Address the massive backlog of needed Forest Service road maintenance. OA is advocating for funding of road management, and when roads serve no purpose – decommissioning. Unmanaged roads put rivers at severe risk of negative water quality impacts.
- Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is a primary tool for land conservation efforts, at least \$220 million for federal LWCF and \$125 million for state-by-state LWCF. Who paid for those really nice river access areas you occasionally use? It is likely that you did – through the Land and Water Conservation

Fund. The fund has had inadequate funds for a while now, and replenishing it will be critical to buying new river access areas and to protecting river corridors.

- Protect the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System by achieving an adequate budget and an accountable management structure, increasing public awareness, and enhancing the ability to leverage local volunteers. OA supports BLM's Wilderness Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers and wants to see them managed in the best possible way.

- Repeal the new rule that exempts Forest Service forest plans from scrutiny under the National Environmental Policy Act. Forest plans are a vital opportunity for the public to be involved in public land management decisions. Thankfully, a Judge overturned the new rule and forest plans are once again subject to NEPA and public involvement.

- Reform the 1872 mining law. Should we be giving away mining rights all over the West without collecting royalties? OA doesn't think so, and new legislation is now pending that could modernize this out-dated law.

- Protect existing roadless areas on public lands from new roadbuilding. OA recognizes that our last remaining roadless lands deserve special protections. These lands were protected in 2001 under the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which has been challenged ever since. OA believes it is time to follow the wishes of the American people and make the Roadless Rule into a law. New legislation is pending that could accomplish this.

We may be a new coalition, but Outdoor

Restoring Rivers for Salmon and Boaters

By Thomas O'Keefe

Alliance is already making a big splash in the pool of national policy. For example, a funding disaster was looming for recreation and trails on Forest Service and BLM lands. OA stepped up and advocated for increases of funding for these programs and the most recent versions of the 2008 federal budget are responsive to our request. This funding translates directly into better management of the places we all enjoy in our boats, or on trails. Many of our primary issues are being addressed by Congress this year – but all of these ambitious goals need your support.

One in three Americans – 100 million people – love to hike, paddle, climb, ski and/or mountain bike. The Outdoor Alliance platform is aimed at protecting the special places and experiences that these people value on public lands. Through protecting recreational opportunities in our back yards as well as the backcountry, Outdoor Alliance believes we can improve the quality of life of American citizens and ensure the long-term protection of the places we all treasure. You play the most important role in the Outdoor Alliance. Keep an eye on the AW website for more information on how you can voice your support for the OA platform.

Together, we can make this country a better place to play – and live – for us and our children.


For more information on Outdoor Alliance and our 2007 Platform, visit: www.outdooralliance.net.

As one of our Top Ten issues for 2007, AW has made a commitment to restoring rivers for salmon and boaters. Both fish and paddlers depend on clean, free-flowing rivers. We have found that our expertise in dealing with flow issues on regulated rivers, and our grass-roots base of paddlers who enjoy opportunities on these rivers, provides us with a unique holistic perspective on river restoration.

Earlier this spring, AW's California Stewardship Director, Dave Steindorf, presented at the 25th Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference. This conference included full-day workshops on dam removal, hydropower relicensing, fish passage barrier removal tools, estuary restoration, and an urban creek restoration workshop. AW and our colleagues with Foothills Conservancy made presentations at the workshop that included topics such as cost and incentives for dam removal, examples of successful dam removals, and opportunities and challenges with adaptive management. Making contributions at conferences like this is central to our core mission of restoring rivers.

AW continues to be involved in numerous efforts to restore salmon across the country, from dam removals on the Sandy, Elwha, and White Salmon Rivers in the Pacific Northwest to advocacy for the Habitat Restoration Fund as part of the Oroville Settlement in California. AW's formal comments requesting a full evaluation of all four dams on the Klamath River to recover salmon were highly praised by agencies and organizations involved with hydropower relicensing on the Klamath. We have also recently joined the coalition Save our Wild Salmon and this summer we will be taking our show on the road with the 2007 Road Show for

Salmon Recovery. To follow this tour, go to saveourwildsalmon.blogspot.com.

As a community who spends a great deal of time on the same wild rivers that salmon depend on, whitewater paddlers are positioned to be an effective voice for recovery of these iconic fish and the great, free-flowing rivers they need. 

Dam Removal

First of Northwest Hydropower Dams Set to Come Down this Summer

By Thomas O'Keefe

It has been several decades since a major dam has been removed in the Pacific Northwest, and while work is actively underway to remove outdated dams on the Rogue (OR), Clark Fork (MT), and Elwha (WA), it appears that Marmot Dam on the Sandy River (OR), just 25 miles from downtown Portland, will be the first.

On May 22nd, Portland General Electric (PGE) announced that the removal of Marmot Dam will take place this summer. AW has been a stakeholder on this project for several years and local volunteer Keith Jensen represented the paddling community in negotiations that ultimately led to the decision to remove the dam and retire the hydroelectric project. Speaking on behalf of the 23 organizations, agencies, governments, and businesses that reached agreement on the removal project, Julie Keil, PGE's director of Hydro Licensing said, "This plan opens the way to restore wild salmon and steelhead runs that were once among

the strongest on the Pacific Coast. The new protected area will improve habitat and increase recreational opportunities in the basin. The Sandy River will remain one of the top steelhead and Chinook fishing destinations in Oregon." AW thanks Julie and all the staff at PGE who demonstrated strong leadership in moving this project forward.

Two major benefits of the removal include enhanced recreation and improved conditions for native fish species. With flows no longer diverted for hydropower, paddlers will be treated to greater opportunities to enjoy the Sandy Gorge, which currently only sees a fraction of its natural flow. Lands currently owned by PGE will be donated and become part of a 9,000-acre conservation and recreation area. The BLM will manage lands in the gorge for public use; the agency is currently in the process of working with the public to develop a future vision for

these lands. Salmon and steelhead will have unimpeded access to approximately 100 miles of stream habitat above the dam.

The plan for removal is to divert flow around the current dam structure using a temporary coffer dam. The dam itself will then be removed over the course of the summer. When fall rains arrive the coffer dam will be washed out and movement of sediment now trapped behind the dam will begin. While it may take some time for conditions at the site to stabilize, paddlers should be able to enjoy a restored river this next winter paddling season. AWP

Matt Moreland at Revenue Bridge on the Sandy River (OR).

photo by Rich Bower



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Dam Removal

Marmot Dam diverts flow from the Sandy River as part of PGE's Bull Run Hydroelectric Project. In 2002 AW signed the Settlement Agreement that calls for removal of this dam and restoration of the Sandy River.

photo by Thomas O'Keefe





To remove Marmot Dam a coffer dam will be constructed during 2007 that will divert the river around the dam structure. The dam can then be removed.



Following removal of Marmot Dam, the temporary coffer dam will be naturally eroded as flows increase during the fall.



A restored Sandy River following removal of Marmot Dam

Courtesy of Portland General Electric



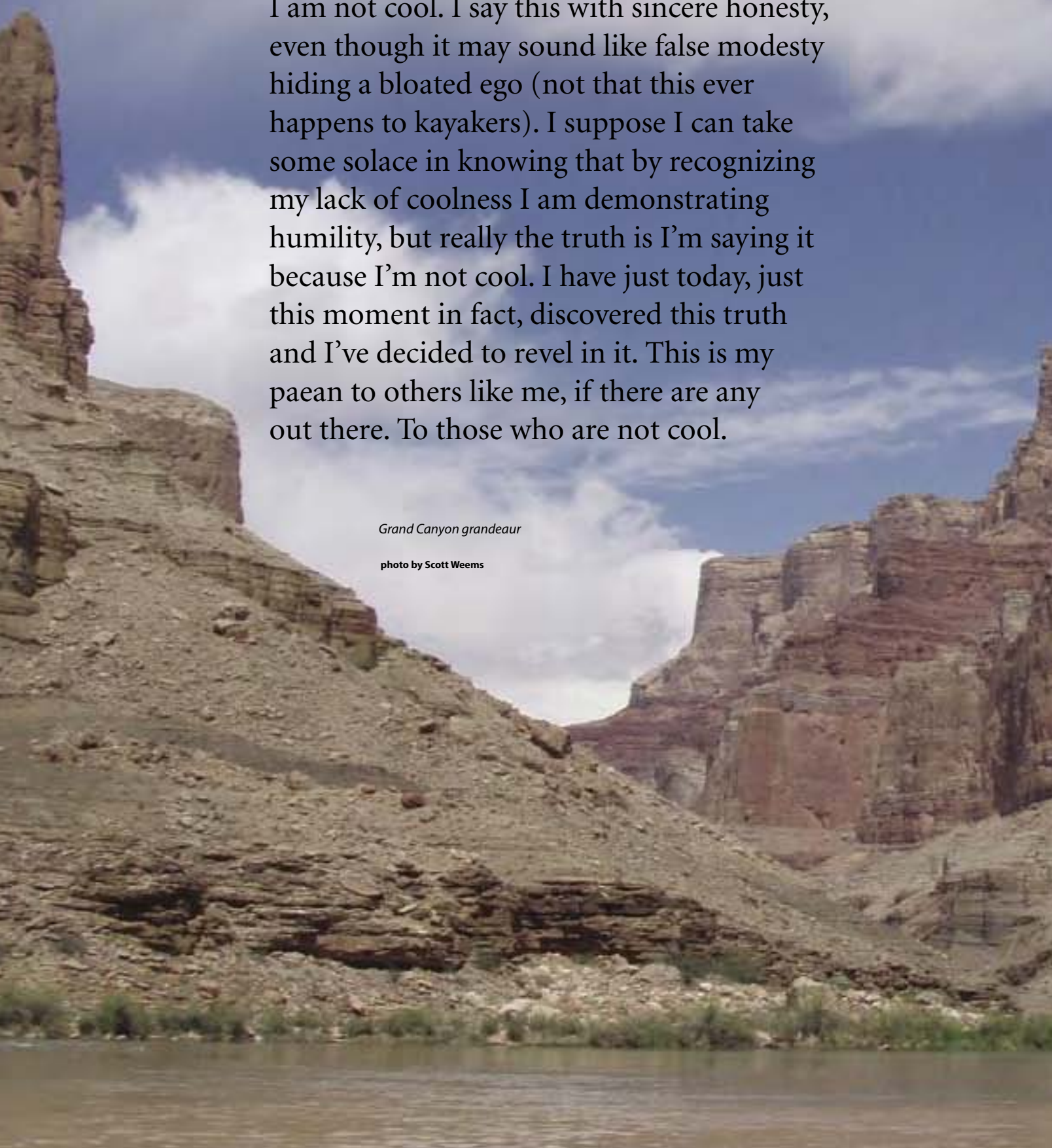
Why I am Not Cool

By Scott Weems

I am not cool. I say this with sincere honesty, even though it may sound like false modesty hiding a bloated ego (not that this ever happens to kayakers). I suppose I can take some solace in knowing that by recognizing my lack of coolness I am demonstrating humility, but really the truth is I'm saying it because I'm not cool. I have just today, just this moment in fact, discovered this truth and I've decided to revel in it. This is my paean to others like me, if there are any out there. To those who are not cool.

Grand Canyon grandeur

photo by Scott Weems

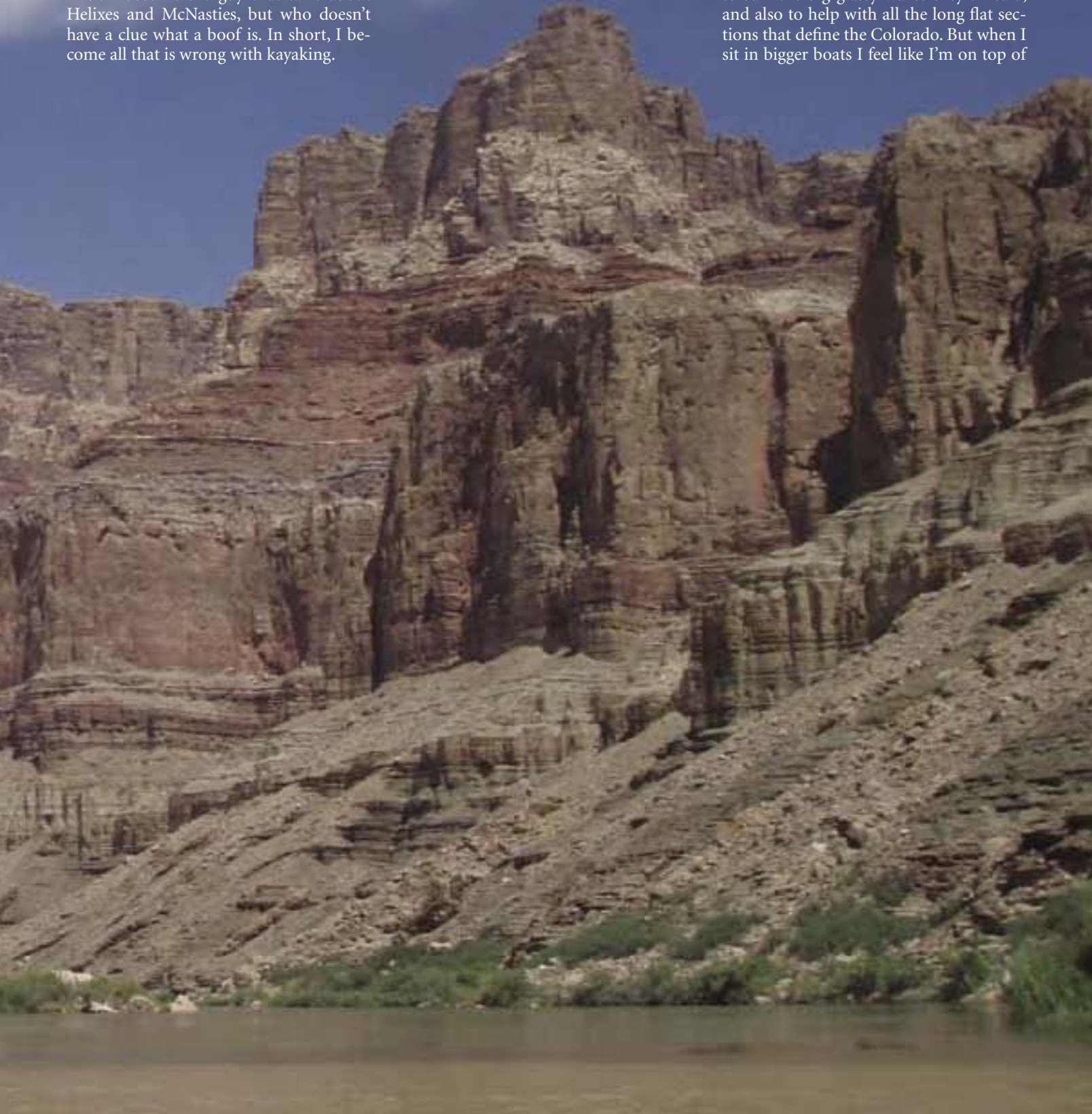


I am not cool because I am a hand-paddling playboater who doesn't even own a creek boat. This alone may make several people stop reading, and honestly I can't blame them. Playboater, hand-paddler, no creeker: take any one of those parts away and my status becomes almost forgivable. Put them together, though, and I become a destructive force. In your mind I become the guy that parks and plays at Hell Hole without having ever run the rest of the river. I become the guy that talks about Helixes and McNasties, but who doesn't have a clue what a boof is. In short, I become all that is wrong with kayaking.

I chose now to confess my sins because I have recently returned from a trip to the Grand Canyon, having slogged my Wave-sport ZG all 240 miles from Lees Ferry to Separation Canyon, using nothing but a pair of Power Pawz strapped to my frozen hands. I stopped counting at a dozen how many times people asked me why I was doing such a foolish and pointless thing. Was I trying to set a record? Did I lose a bet? "No," I answered. "I'm just having

fun." Surely, I'd at least write an article about it for AW? "What interesting thing could I possibly have to say that hundreds of others haven't already," I'd respond. "Or should I just say that the waves were really, really big?"

As with everybody that admits to an approaching Grand Canyon trip, I received more than my share of advice to take the longest, fastest boat that I own. I'll want it to surf the big glassy waves they all said, and also to help with all the long flat sections that define the Colorado. But when I sit in bigger boats I feel like I'm on top of



Why I am Not Cool

the water, rather than in it. I like the way that every little feature of the water turns my boat in directions of its own choosing. Wouldn't I have to give that up to catch these nirvana-like glassy waves that you talk about? I only asked that question to a friend once, getting in return only the same blank stare that my Golden Retriever gives when asked where I've left my car keys.

The truth is, not everything that is easier is better. Take hand-paddling for example. Without my paddle I'm slower, I can't ferry as far, and generally I can't brace as well. But there is an intimate, intensely personal experience using only your hands to navi-

gate a rapid, especially in monstrous big water. It's definitely not practical and certainly not cool, but it's an experience that I wouldn't trade for any double diamond bent shaft. And the best part: it makes rapids like Lava Falls truly unforgettable.

But what about creeks that just aren't safe in a small boat? Well, so far I've decided not to run them. This is so far an unsatisfying solution, but one that my paddling friends have demonstrated great patience in accepting. You can't blame them for the inevitable protestations though, "Dude, you hand-paddled the Grand Canyon and you won't run the Upper Yough?" I respect the fact that my friends don't try

to talk me into it any more. It's simply an unfortunate consequence of my awkward decision to stay under 60 gallon. And, worst of all, I'll just have to accept my fate when people ask what I normally run and I have to respond, "Yough and Gauley." When the inevitable follow up question comes, the answer itself removes any doubt about my status: "Lower, man. Lower". AWW

View of the Colorado from Nakoweap Canyon

photo by Scott Weems



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Photo by Dave Rimmer



Day 10, Mile 136: Rudy, Markon, and Anthony out through Deer Creek Narrows. Topents sandstone slots, limestone creek, shallow plunge pools, drainage slots and gravel, exposed boulders and rocks, ankle-high water



The original sport sandal. The future of outdoor footwear. ©TEVA 2007

Kids and Whitewater



Amazing Young Kayaker, Lauren Burress, Age 11

By Kathleen Burress

"Sometimes I get scared to do a drop or a certain rapid, but afterwards I feel so good about myself for overcoming my fears, and I always want to do it again because it was so much fun. So, the next time you feel scared or have butterflies in your stomach about something, just push yourself to do it, and you will be so glad you did."

-Lauren Burress, age 11

Eleven-year-old Lauren Burress was born in Evansville, Indiana, where she attended a traditional elementary school and began kayaking with her dad at the ripe old age of six. She fell in love with kayaking from the moment she stepped into her first kayak, and she hasn't stopped!

Since that time, she has paddled in many states including Tennessee, South Dakota, North Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Alabama, and Colorado. A solid Class IV kayaker, she has paddled rivers like the Tellico, with fun 15-foot Baby Falls! Bold and adventurous, with a "can do" positive attitude, Lauren has learned that she has the ability to paddle even some very difficult river runs. She has paddled some Class V creeks, like Richland Creek in Tennessee, and loves to play at the Ocoee River, the site of the Olympics in 1996. She has even paddled some rivers out West, like the Arkansas River and Gore Creek in Colorado.

While in Colorado, Lauren competed in the Teva Mountain Games in Vail. When entering the competition, she discovered she was the only child to sign up for the race! That meant she would have to compete against adults. She went ahead and entered the race anyway and much to everyone's surprise, Lauren placed 2nd in the Amateur Contest!

Her family's support for Lauren's continued

involvement in kayaking motivated them to move to Cleveland, Tennessee not long ago, so they could be near the Ocoee River, a place where Lauren can continue to improve and realize her amazing kayaking potential. "Our family has always been close, but kayaking is another family in itself," says Kathleen Burress, Lauren's mom. "Lauren learns patience, practices safety, and teaches others to respect what Nature has given us."

Lauren is now home-schooled so she has enough time to practice her kayaking skills, which she does often. She is one of the youngest kayakers ever to attempt Class IV-V rivers!

Her plans for the future are to keep practicing and paddling her favorite rivers and hopefully someday compete in the Olympics. "I want to be a good team player," she says. "Kayakers are my extended family."

Lauren's parents' support for her involvement in kayaking has made all the difference. For parents who are considering getting their own children involved in the sport, the Burress family is quick to offer the many valuable benefits which they attribute to Lauren's experiences with kayaking:

"Lauren learns patience, practices safety and teaches others to respect what Nature has given us," her mother says. "Her confidence level is at an all time high as well."


Lauren not only enjoys kayaking in white water, she also loves freestyle playboating, where she surfs, cartwheels, catches enders, bow stalls, and loops.

But as much fun as kayaking and play boating can be, Lauren knows that safety always comes first. In fact, she is always

checking to see that, in addition to her own, everyone else's PFD (personal flotation device) is also fastened correctly and is rated for whitewater, and their helmets are always intact. She is quick to speak up if they are not!

Lauren wants other kids to know that if you follow the safety rules, kayaking can be a lot of fun. She says "When you run the rapids, it feels like you're on a roller-coaster ride!"

She also wants kids to know the importance of keeping our rivers and waters clean so she, and all of us, can enjoy them forever. She has been working to get more people involved in river conservation with American Whitewater (www.americanwhitewater.org).

Lauren's motto is: "Paddle hard, don't litter and keep our rivers beautiful." It should serve her well for many years to come. 



Field Notes



photo by Jeff West

Ben Friberg and TVF

By Clay Wright

Do you like creekboating? Oh, sure, but I mean do you REALLY like creekboating? Enough to drive before sunup to the steepest thing running, poach as many shuttles as possible, then drive to the next run as levels fall off and not quit till sundown?

If so Ben Friberg has created the perfect way to test your stamina against the toughest boaters in the Southeast during the entire month of March: the Total Vertical Feet (TVF) competition. Between running the Steepcreeks.com website and the TVF competition, Ben has probably caused more boaters to boat more often than any man in the history of the sport. Skeptical? Just check out the TVF score-

board on the Boatertalk web site and see for yourself.

To find out more about the TVF and about what make Ben Friberg tick I decided to ask the man. So Ben, here are your questions:

What is the TVF and how did it get started?

TVF is a creekboating competition where competitors are trying to drop as many vertical feet as possible in a single month. The steeper the run, the faster you can get points. The idea was a combination of a competitive spirit, a love for steep arenas, and thinking about how much paddlers drop on the vertical axis on runs like Roadprong.

How has it changed over the years, from original concept to where

it is now? (Did you predict mad-lapping and night paddling?)

Originally this competition was going to be a way for Tennessee and North Carolina creekers to settle the score, who has the ultimate terrain and determined creekers. During the first two years of the comp we had little to no rain in March, so TVF turned into a lap fest on Tellico, Wilson's, and the Little of the Smokey's. This was good for the Young Lions category since many of these competitors have quickly advanced to solid IV+ boaters and even some solid V boaters through the years. Most Sik Birds simply don't have the time to camp out for 31 days to defend their titles. So, the future for Sik Birds lies here: $(\text{Creek Height} / \text{Creek Distance}) \times \text{Creek Height}$. With this equation we are multiplying the steepness of a creek's slope with the creek's height. This really

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shredready.com/titub to see SHRED READY's support of the Green River effort.
fort.tv/bling.htm search Oct '06 archives to read about the fund raiser

Field Notes

separates the Sik from the not. The competition is also expanding to recognize additional accomplishments, including some on an individual basis. For example, this year we started the "Mile High Club," a framed diploma awarded to competitors who drop a vertical mile in a single day.

What are some of the most impressive accomplishments brought about by this competition, the highlights that you can't forget from the last three years?

There really are too many: teams paddling all night to win their category, teams

knocking off first decents covert operation style, individual competitors knocking off over a vertical mile in a single day

I see the Westerners are jumping on the bandwagon with a similar comp. Could this be a new format evolving that will spread across the globe?

Yes, I believe it will.

You've got a great website, Steepcreeks.com. Has that taken a back-seat to the TVF comp or will it continue to expand and evolve as well?

Steepcreeks.com will continue to grow as a resource to all creekers but only with fresh info. If it's not fresh, right brain, or worthy, why bother? It's really been a community effort throughout the years, that's why you don't see my name tagged to it. The creeking community has such a diverse skill set outside of whitewater, so Steepcreeks.com is a product of that

Finishing Lap #17 at sunset. The Stanley Steamers from left to right: Chris, Jonathan, Mark and Jeff.

photo by Jonathan Shanin



diversity and willingness to help create this presence. TVF is much of the same. I would like to see the memorials and safety page beefed up.

Do you still have time to go boating? (Ben competes in the TVF as well as organizing it.)

Most of my boating is local: creeking the plateaus during the winter and squirting the Ocoee during the summer. I bought a shredder a couple of years back so I'm really enjoying getting others into the whitewater experience.


Can you name a TVF MVP or two? Who are the 'big dogs' of this new sport and what does it take to succeed?

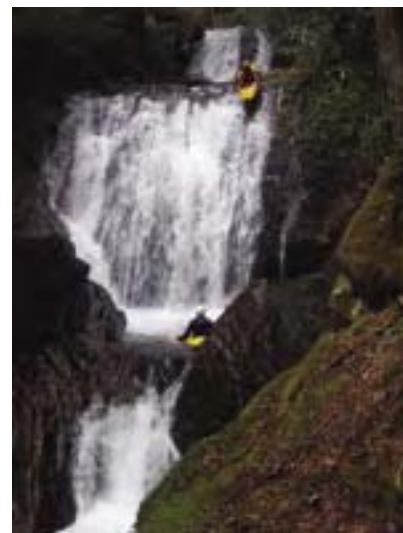
Jeff West fa sho. He's already blazed a vertical mile in a day and he believes two vert miles are totally doable (Jeff also lapped 10 runs on the Green last summer). The man paddles till his palms are skinless and bloody. For 15 years people have called this man a robot. TVF just illustrates what we already knew. Nate Helms has stepped up to the plate as well as many others. Hopefully this list will continue

to grow. We've been careful during these first couple of years to balance the recognition for the individual. We didn't want to push one person as much as the team because we didn't want anyone to get injured as a result of the format. But we are heading more in the direction of the individual as well as the team.

Open mic for Ben Friberg time: What do you want to say to our readers?

I'd like to give a shout out to NOC and NRS for really standing by this comp since day one. They truly believe. If you've been creeking or kayaking in the Southeast for a while and have a competitive spirit, give this comp a shot. With so many sub categories emerging in the comp there is bound to be one that you could strive for. I'd also like to thank everyone who has contributed to the think tank. Those who have expressed ways to make the event bigger and better on a format level, geographic level, and safety level.

Thanks, Ben! Look forward to watching next March's installment of gravity feuled feats of stamina and skill. 



Chris Townsend (top) and Jonathan Shanin (bottom) paddling during TVF on Dodd (Dukes) Creek.

photo by Jeff West

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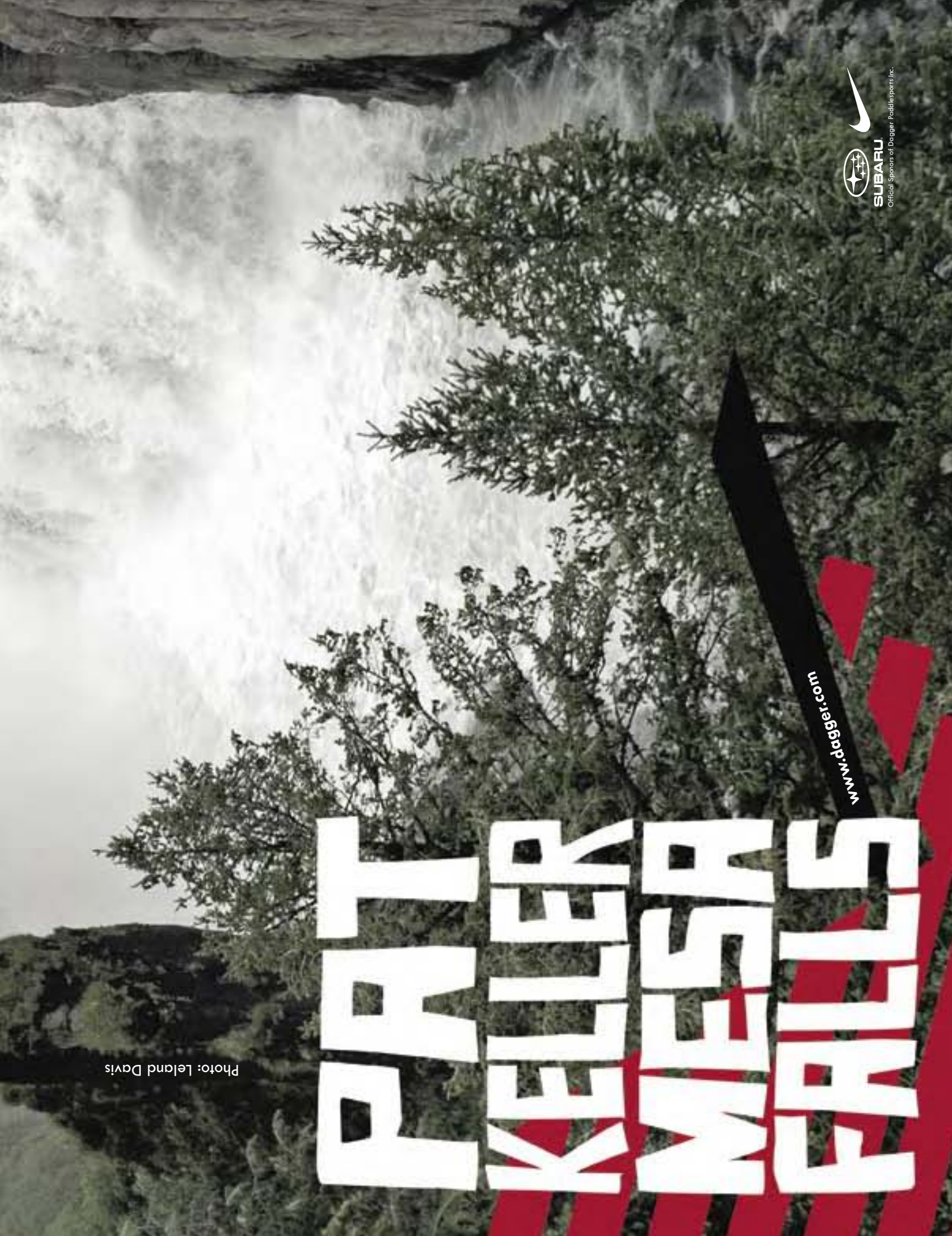


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Events

Kayaks can do that too.

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11th annual Upper Gatineau Whitewater Festival Dedicated to river preservation

By Martin Talbot

The Upper Gatineau Whitewater Festival was created in 1997 as a canoeists' initiative to protect this magnificent river section against hydro damming. Over the last 10 years, the festival has grown to attract over a thousand boaters for a friendly get-together. All proceeds go to the Quebec River Preservation Fund, helping preserve the Gatineau along with other Quebec rivers in their natural state.

Think of it as the Gauley Festival's little brother. You are all invited to the eleventh edition, which takes place on August 24th to 26th, 2007.

Situated 90 minutes north of Ottawa on the Trans-Canada Highway, Maniwaki is about a 9 hour drive from NYC, Boston or Harrisburg, PA, and merely 16 hours from Raleigh, NC. About 750 kayakers and canoeists, plus 250 rafters are expected to attend the festival this summer.

The descent itself consists in a superb five-mile succession of six high volume (>6000 cfs) Class III-V rapids separated by pools, all amenable to portage, through secluded wilderness and magnificent geological features. For paddlers on a more leisurely pace, the Class II Desert River is a great alternative. Other more challenging sections of the Upper Gatineau are within reach.

Shuttles will carry paddlers and their boats to the put-in and back to the camping site Saturday and Sunday. Following dinner on Saturday evening, paddling goods from our sponsors will be auctioned off, 'door' prizes will be distributed, and a band will be playing for your enjoyment.

Rafting companies will offer their services and Esquif, a major sponsor, will have

demonstrator canoes to lend on site both days.

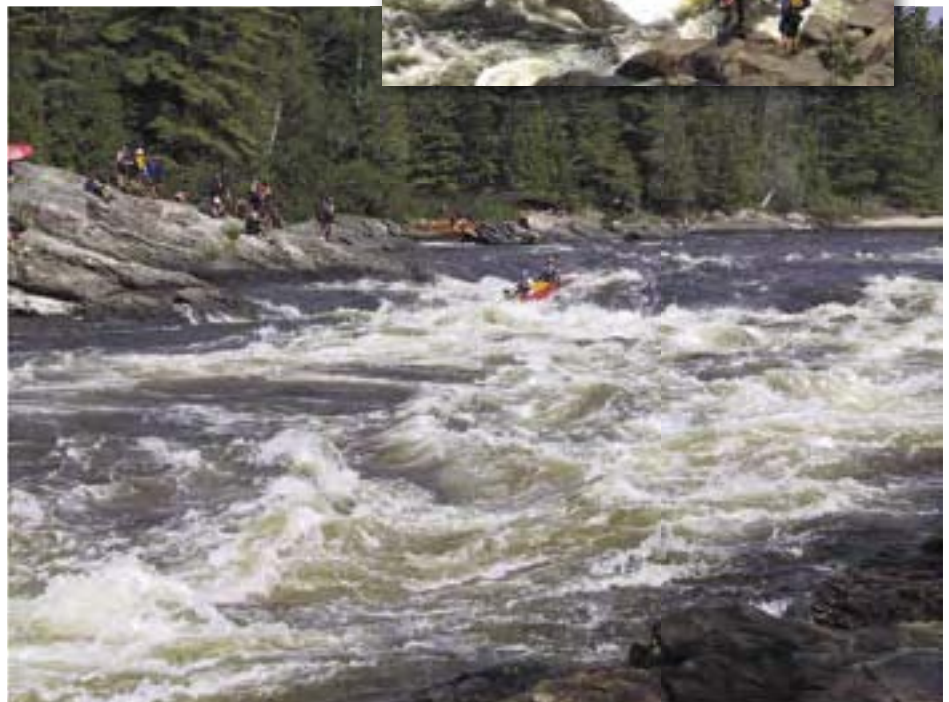
Also noteworthy: on your way north to the Festival, you could stop for a little warm-up at the world-class rapids of the Ottawa river Main Channel (Class IV-V, runnable all summer), or at the famous Lachine rapids in Montreal – although planning and organization is up to you.

For more info and registration: visit www.gatineau.org or contact martin.talbot@mac.com.

Don't miss it!

Below: 16 footer in Haute-Gatineau Class IV

photo by Charles-Etienne Tessier and Martin Talbot



Whitewater Symposium Prepares for Its 5th Consecutive Year

By Bob Campbell

On October 19-22, 2007, the country's top paddling professionals, instructors, manufacturers, retailers, journalists, and program leaders will descend on McHenry, Maryland and the world's first mountain-top whitewater park for the Fifth Annual Whitewater Symposium – a three-day event that uses presentations and open-forum discussions to generate new ideas for growing and refining the whitewater kayaking industry.

Through exploring the nature of quality instruction, state of the art equipment, best practices in safety, promoting positive media images, and creating a broader range of paddling opportunities in general, the Symposium gathers a unique meeting of minds who are passionate about paddling and who strive to be pro-active in fortifying its future. Because of its inter-active format, the difference between presenter and audience is often imperceptible, as the range of experience among the participants is so broad that almost everyone has something vital to contribute.

The idea for the Whitewater Symposium came about from a group of industry leaders entertaining a couple of simple questions: What lies ahead for whitewater



A business marketing roundtable at a past Whitewater Symposium

photo by Sam Drevo

boating and what can we do to prepare and guide the way? They sought to involve two main groups in discussing these ideas: 1) Instructional Program Providers (including clubs, university programs, and paddling schools) and, 2) Equipment Manufacturers and Retailers (including their reps, tech teams, and pro paddlers). The bulk of the Symposium's presentations are directed at these and other groups who present/deliver whitewater to the public and who have the most potential to influence what new

directions it may take.

The first Whitewater Symposium was held at Zoar Outdoor on the Deerfield River in Charlemont, Massachusetts in 2003. It was a great first success and brought together key players from all ends of the whitewater spectrum, including river running, racing, rescue and rodeo. Since that first gathering, the Symposium has been held in a different location each year - in Bryson City, North Carolina at the Nantahala Outdoor Center, on the



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American Whitewater California
Stewardship Director Dave Steindorf
and family enjoying the Feather River.

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Events



An on the water session of the symposium

photo by Sam Drevo

Colorado River in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, and in Lotus, California, hosted by Current Adventures.

Each local organizer has taken on the bulk of logistical preparations required by the event, including providing a base of operations, on and off-water venues, local transportation, lodging options, and meals. This year's Symposium will

be hosted by the Adventure Sport Center International (ASCI) on the top of western Maryland's Wisp Mountain – just a stone's throw from the put-in for the Upper Yough.

ASCI will be showcasing their new recirculating river, recently completed this spring and on which most of the Symposium's 'hands-on' sessions will take place. Of special interest to attendees will be the constructed channel's adjustable features that can change the shape and size of the whitewater with the touch of a button. This 5th incarnation of the Symposium also seeks to improve communication of its key messages and better engage an ever-growing active industry network. A complete multi-track schedule of program sessions is being planned and will include presentations, open panel discussions, small group seminars, and on-water clinics that will allow critical issues, cutting-edge practices, and visions for the future to be explored and shared by all who attend.

The program will include offerings by the likes of Wayne Dickert, Mike Mather, Eugene Buchanan, Woody Calloway, Janet Cowie, Pam Dillon, Sam Drevo, Kent Ford, Joe Jacobi, John Kahn, Eric Jackson, Bruce Lessells, Will Leverette, Anna Levesque, Joe Pulliam, Risa Shimoda, Mark Singleton, Charlie Walbridge, and Mary & Phil DeRiemer, to name just a few It will be a virtual "Who's Who" of the whitewater world and they'll be ready to weigh in with a plethora of perspectives.

For more information about the Whitewater Symposium, visit <http://www.wwsymposium.com/>

Feather River Festival


By Dave Steindorf

The Feather Festival is back, bigger and better than ever before!! Having water in this very dry year in California is something to celebrate. The Festival will be happening August 24 through 26. In addition to the two-day flow release on the Rock Creek reach, the festival includes a film festival on Friday night, a slalom race on Saturday, and a downriver race through the exciting Tobin section Saturday afternoon.


Friday's films will include world premieres from some of the best filmmakers and photographers in the business, including Ben Stookesberry, Scott Lindgren and Taylor Robertson.

The slalom race Saturday will be appropriate for all ages and ability levels. Prizes will be awarded at the party on Saturday night in Belden. We will also be having a huge gear raffle starting at 7:00.

The downriver race through the Tobin section is sure to be a crowd pleaser. Watch the big dogs test their mettle on the best mile of whitewater around.

Saturday evening at Belden, we will be featuring the sounds of Alice DiMichele and her Band. According to Bonnie Raitt, "Alice's music has that great combination of earthiness and groove that keeps it funky from the inside out. She's for real." Things will get started at 7:00, Music at 8:00. Admission to Belden Town, paid at the bridge, will be \$10 for adults, kids 12 to 20 will be \$5 and children under 12 will be free. Camping is available at Belden. Come on out and help us celebrate AW and the Feather River!! 

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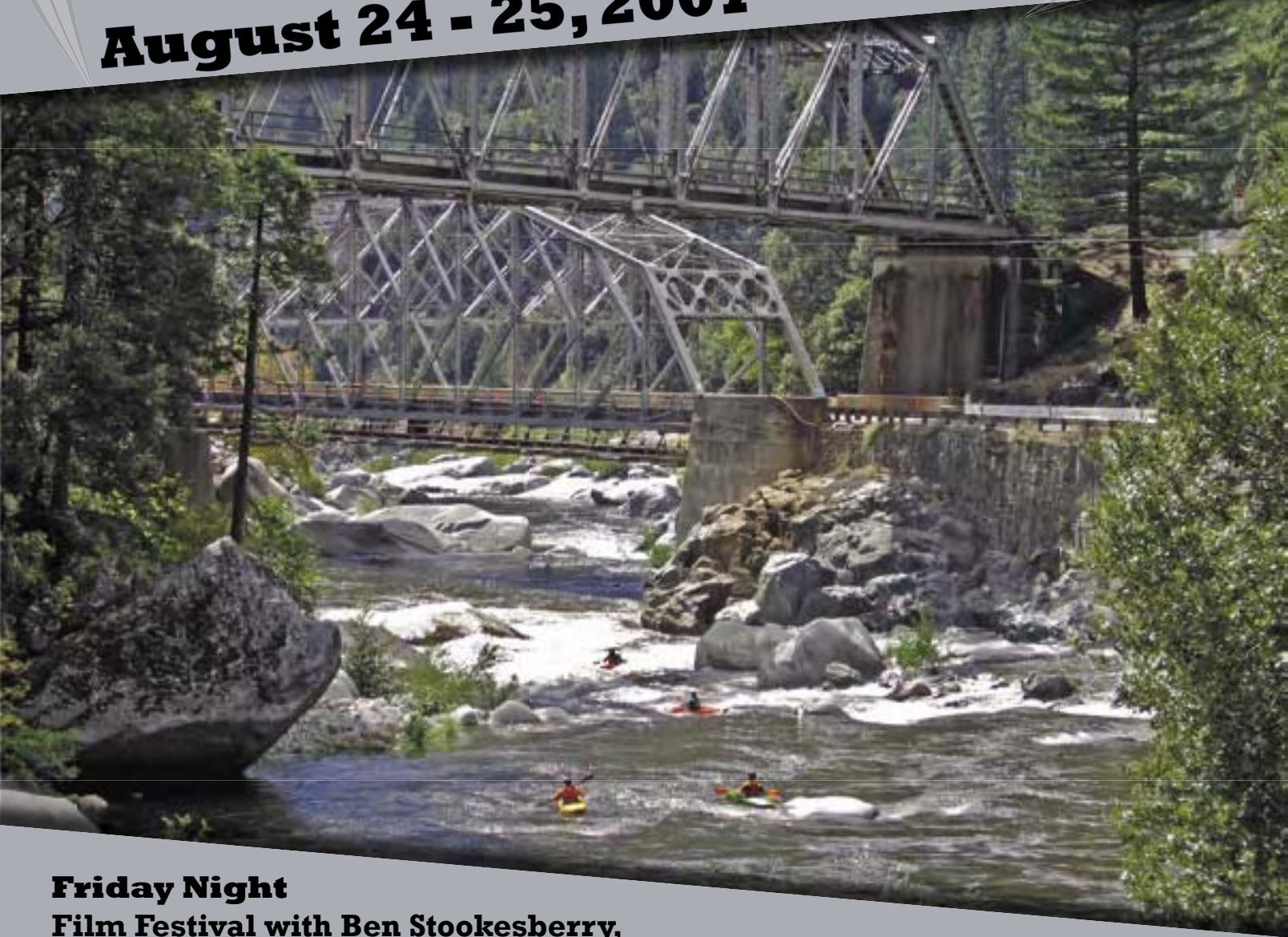


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Reviews

Review of *Brothers on the Bashkaus*, by Eugene Buchanan

Reviewed by Andrew Goldman

Bublik is the Russian word for bagel, and the nickname for Russian rafts made by connecting two giant bagel-shaped tubes standing on their sides. Two paddlers drive the bublik, each one sitting in the hole of one of the bagels. They paddle it like a mutant cataraft. Because the tubes are round and vertical and because the paddlers are strapped into their seats, bublikis are virtually impossible to flip. If a bublik gets tossed upside down it will right itself, like the old Weeble toy.

For the same reason, they don't come out of holes. If a bublik gets stuck in a big enough hole, it will tumble over and over until the raft is eventually torn apart.

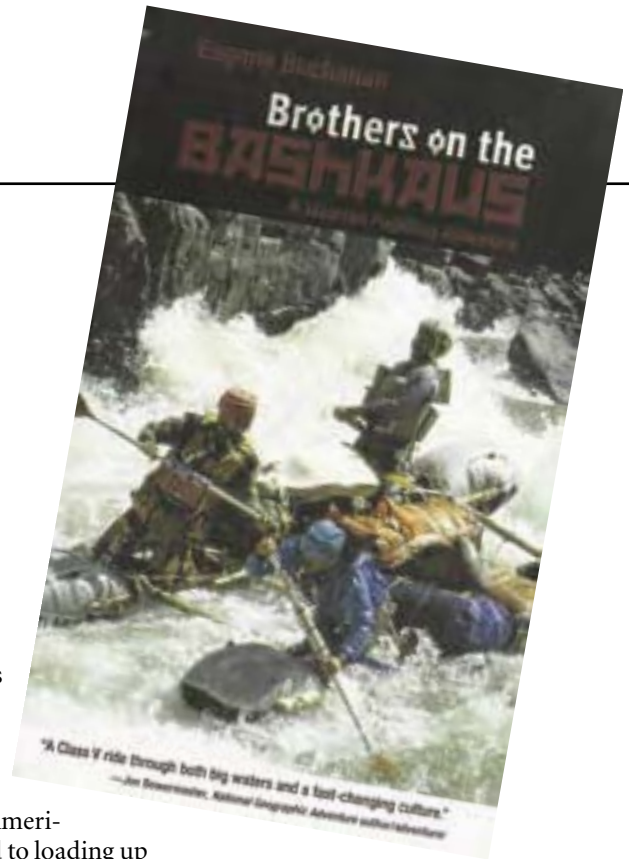
My friend John Weir shot some rafting video in Siberia in the mid-1980s for National Geographic, which prominently featured the bublik as well as several other types of Russian rafts. That footage is the best ever! I remember seeing brave Russians paddling these homemade rafts down some huge rapids, using homemade gear. Ever since I saw that video, I have been curious to learn more about Siberian whitewater and the courageous souls who venture onto it.

Eugene Buchanan's book, *Brothers on the Bashkaus* provides insights into a genuine Siberian rafting expedition, like the one featured in the National Geographic video. Eugene and his rafting buddies won a Shipton/Tilman Grant to explore the Kalar River in Siberia. Their carefully planned itinerary unraveled when their local contact failed to materialize. Instead they found themselves on the Bashkaus River with a group of Latvians. The Bashkaus is a steep, rarely-run, remote, obstacle-strewn Class V run in the heart of Siberia, one that has claimed the lives of many of its pioneers. The whitewater passages in the book do not disappoint.

I found the cultural hurdles of running whitewater in Siberia as interesting as the whitewater itself. Just getting to the river was a major expedition. We soft American paddlers are accustomed to loading up a 4x4 pickup and driving to put-in, while leaving another 4x4 pickup at takeout. Not in Siberia. Eugene's team endured a lengthy and unpredictable journey by train, bus, and van to get to put-in. They didn't even think about how to get from take-out back to civilization until they had survived the whitewater. No point in wasting time futilely trying to plan something that might never happen.

Once at put-in, the Latvian team (with help from the Americans) chopped down trees to build the frames for their rafts and their paddles. These Latvians like to chop down trees! I found myself growing increasingly curious to try it (maybe when REI and NRS go out of business). Each member of the Latvian team had their own lifejacket that they had designed and built. These lifejackets included body armor and large amounts of flotation, and were a source of great pride. The Latvians admired the compactness of the American lifejackets but felt they left the wearer too exposed to rocks.

Latvian rafters have their own unique dietary preferences. Instead of Cliff Bars and pizza, these guys favor hot fish water and pork fat chunks. I guess few foods pack the calories of pork fat. The Latvians brought a few bottles of vodka to trade for supplemental food with the notoriously violent, alcoholic locals. As soon as the first bottle had been traded (and immedi-



ately consumed), subsequent negotiations got tougher. The team was able to acquire a goat and several loaves of bread through this barter.

Eugene Buchanan's *Brothers on the Bashkaus* is a fascinating insider's story of an authentic Siberian expedition. In addition to chronicling some hair-raising rapids, it opens the door to a whole different world of whitewater, far removed from our consumer society. Eugene's Latvian hosts enjoy the whole package of the expedition: scraping what they need from the land, building a profound sense of camaraderie, and battling for their survival.

Excerpt from *Brothers on the Bashkaus*

By Eugene Buchanan

Editor's Note: The following excerpt of Brothers on the Bashkaus is courtesy of Fulcrum Publishing. Copyright 2007 Eugene Buchanan.

If linebackers embrace rookies into the National Football League with a voracious hit, this is the Bashkaus's welcome mat. The hole at the bottom of the slot buries us, only our homemade frame keeping our raft from buckling. Where the earlier Class V had us paddling straight forward to maintain momentum, here, we can not. Once through the hole, we employ a variety of strokes to zigzag our way past the maze of boulders. Faster than I can call for it, Edge throws in a draw stroke at

the perfect time to bring our bow around to the right and around a rock while Ben simultaneously executes a sweep stroke, fanning his paddle blade in a wide C shape across the surface to turn the boat from the opposite corner. Without relying on my commands, everyone intrinsically knows immediately what to do and does it. We're a great team. In a series of tight, well-executed moves, we waterbug our way down and complete the run without mishap.

"Nice line, guys," Edge says in the calmer water below, as we high-five our accomplishment.

"Yeah, nice Lugbill you threw in there," I add, referring to Olympic slalom paddler Jon Lugbill, known for contorting his body into a pretzel when making a difficult stroke. We all made the right moves in the

right instant, in perfect coordination, and we know it. Fear activates us, together. At this moment, our commitment to stay with Team Konkas feels right. We breathe hard, satisfied.

Our commendations are short lived, however. Little do we know, we're fast approaching our first taste of Portage Hell. Almost as soon as we put back on, the next horizon line, marking the entrance to Barricade Rapid, confronts us. We did not anticipate it. We're barely through Unpopulated Rapid when more mist rises from a cataract below. We eddy out above it on the right and see Ramitch's raft. Soon, Sergei's craft pulls up and joins us. It's all we would do today.

"Camp place, carry things," says Ramitch.

We unpack and carry our gear a half



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Reviews

mile downstream to camp. Barricade's thunderous roar drowns out our curses as we stumble over the loose boulders.

It's not much of a camp, if it can be called that at all. It's our tightest quarters yet. About thirty feet long and five feet wide, there's barely two feet of width apiece for fourteen sleeping bodies. Worse, it's interspersed with uneven rocks. Worse still, we're sharing it with the six members of the first ploht team we met, the ones hiking out at the next major drainage. Even though they're taking the easy way out—at least as far as adrenaline goes—by hiking over to the Chulishman, they still have to get through several more Class Vs, including Barricade, to reach salvation. Vladimir's group is nowhere to be seen. With him at the helm, they must have pushed through quickly and kept going.

Ramitch shows me a boulder ten feet away from my ground pad that tumbled down when he was camped here three years ago. A trail of snapped trees, like broken toothpicks, leads to its former home in the cliffs. Welcome to the lower gorge. If the starvation or rapids don't get you, the rockfall might.

I try to relax by settling into Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, a not-so-easy-to-follow tale about four brothers who become involved in the murder of their father. It's easier to read, at least, than the complicated waters of the Bashkaus. As much as I appreciate Dostoyevsky's work, it does little to settle my nerves. Sentences flow into each other like scattered, random currents, and run on like a piece of driftwood with nowhere else to go. Nothing like a little easy-todigest

Russian literature to take your mind off a Class V drop you hear all night and have to run the next day.

Though the reading does take my mind off the rapid, it doesn't do much about the tree-snapping boulder resting just ten feet away from my head. Buried in shadows, it hunches there like a gargoyle, ready to pounce at any moment. I can almost feel it mocking my insignificance. "I'm only ten feet away," it snickers. "And I have plenty of brothers in the dark still waiting over you, higher up." Unable to concentrate on *The Brothers Karamazov* over thoughts of the rock and the river's roar, I finally fall asleep with the book open on my chest. Thankfully, the river drowns out the nearby snores.

The next morning, Yevgheny is down by the river whittling a small, two-foot cataraft



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Erin Clancey surfing on the Lochsa, ID © David Blue/NRS

out of wood. But it's no toy. He ties a rope with an adjustable toggle knot to one end of the peculiar craft and then heads farther down shore with a coil of rope over his shoulder. He calls it the Little Ship, or Korablik, and it's yet another homemade invention, this time a rescue system. He uses it to ferry a rescue rope across the river, much like flying a kite. Putting the boat in the water, he gives it a shove and then feeds out some line. Held fast by the rope, the boat ferries out into the current as if powered by remote control. The result is a taut line extending across the river for rescue, but one that isn't tied off at both ends to create a strainer. Feeding out line and constantly adjusting the boat's angle, Yevgheny positions it at the bottom of Barricade as a final safety net.

It's the most impressive of their inventions that I've seen yet. Better than the boats made from germ-warfare suits, the backpacks from army cots, the tents from parachutes, Valeri's rock-deploying safety device, or even Ramitch's sleeping-pad-life-jacket-flotation. And the innovation goes beyond Yevgheny's Little Ship, offering a rope to a passing swimmer. Attached now to the bottom of each cataraft is a new wooden pole. One end is tied with a long piece of rope to the frame, and the other is attached to a carabiner. If you flip, you can try to crawl up on the overturned raft, grab the pole, and try to clip the carabiner through the rope ferried out by the Little Ship. When it catches, the Little Ship's rope slides through the carabiner until the carabiner snags on the Little Ship. Then the whole contraption—pole, Little Ship, cataraft, and you—pendulums to shore and safety. It's an ingenious system, but one we hopefully won't have to rely upon.

Ramitch gives us an hour to decide if we'll run Barricade or portage. It's a decision for each boat crew, and not necessarily the team as a whole. In a kayak, on a less remote run, it would be within my capabilities. On a homemade cataraft miles from civilization, it's another story.

There is talk of following the other group, bailing out, and hiking over to the easier Chulishman at the next camp. But that's still several Class V—plus drops away. And these rapids are not one-move wonders. In Barricade, I count eight specific maneuvers needed to get through safely. Three cups of American-style coffee with an extra handful of grounds snuck in by Van do little to settle my nerves.

Neither does the fact that we spend hours contemplating whether or not we're going to run it, letting the cocoon of our stomachs hatch full-grown butterflies. Again, the Latvians' approach to river running reminds me of their political roots. There seems to be no incentive to do things fast or efficiently. For us, time equals money. The more time you waste, the more money you or your company wastes. Not so with their upbringing. While we stew, the Latvians mill about aimlessly smoking cigarettes before we make our decision. After watching the other group nearly flip in the top move, we all wisely decide to portage the entry and put in right below. The games of Russian Roshambo have now gotten far more crucial than they ever were for leftover pork rinds. Ramitch, Sergei, and I throw out fingers. The total is eleven, and I'm standing to Ramitch's left. He starts counting with the rapid and then moves to me before counting around in a circle. By the time he counts eight, I know it's going to land on me. Again, I was caught standing in the wrong place or throwing the wrong finger. We're first.

Still unsure of the myriad choices of poor routes through the holes, sieves, and boulders, I ask Ramitch which way he's going to go. He doesn't need to speak English to explain. "I watch you," he says with simple, universal sign language, pointing to his chest, eyes, and then me in successive order. It's communication at its most basic, like De Niro in *Meet the Fockers*. The message comes across loud and clear. Before hiking back up to

the boats for our run, I put my sidushka around my chest for extra flotation. I figure every little extra bit will help.

Keeping our gear down at camp, we hike back up and paddle out of the eddy just below the deadly sieve. We make the ferry to the left okay, but then clip a hole with our right pontoon and spin off line. We're now in what Edge refers to as "read it and eat it" mode, paddling by instinct, reacting to whatever happens. It's a life-or-death game of chance, stimulus, and response, and taking things as they come. A wave stalls us and turns us sideways. Van reaches out over the water and digs in with his paddle blade. We react together with a right turn to straighten out.

It's a difficult, adrenaline-filled run, but we make it through still upright and, most importantly, safely. I can't imagine what might have happened had we run the upper portion. Finished with "I watch you," Ramitch's and Sergei's crews carry their boats down and put in even lower than we did.

*To order a copy of *Brothers on the Bashkaus* call 800-992-2908 or visit www.fulcrumbbooks.com.*

Whitewater of the Southern Rockies is the New Bible for Western Paddlers

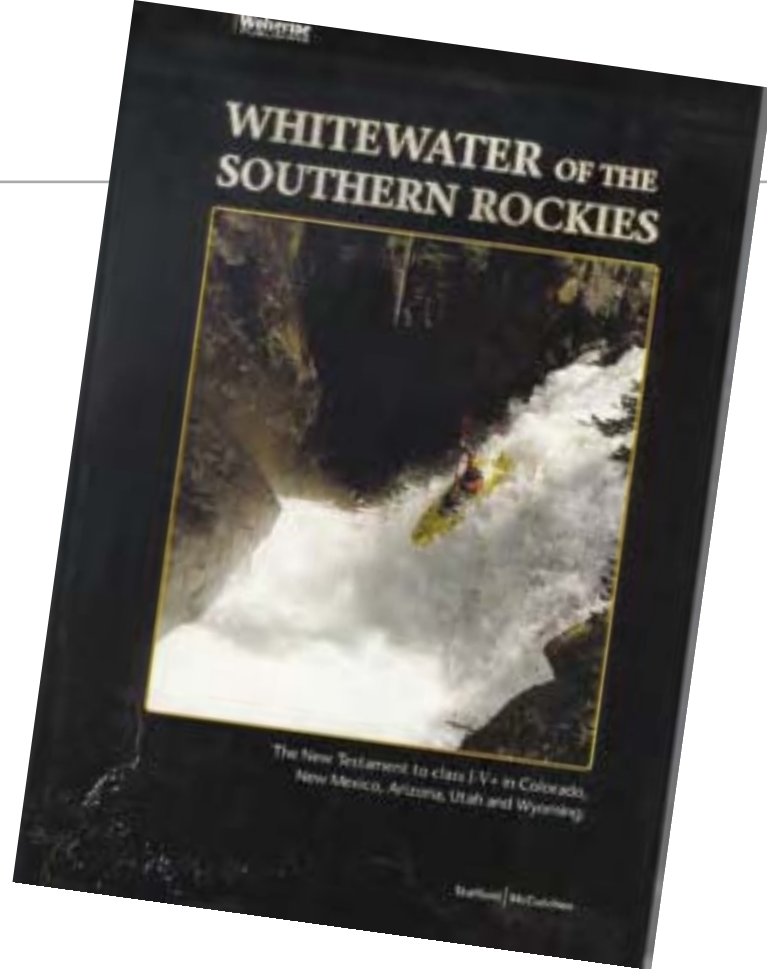
By Scott Winkleman

All kayakers in the West know the feeling. It's early season and the weather is starting to warm up. You get out on the river a few times, maybe scraping over some rocks but enjoying the hell out of it. And then it happens: run-off starts and 2,000 cfs of water turns an enjoyable day into a wild, adrenaline-charged, consciousness-altering adventure.

For all the boaters who have a tattered copy of *Colorado Rivers and Creeks II* (CRCII) that you've been re-reading all winter, here's the news. Metaphorically speaking, run-off has begun. *Whitewater of the Southern Rockies* (WSR) by Kyle McCutchen and Evan Stafford has been published, detailing over 400 runs in the region. This new guidebook covers the same old ground as CRC II, but also brings it to a higher level by encompassing runs in Arizona, Wyoming, and southeast Idaho, as well as new runs in Colorado, Utah and New Mexico.

The inspiration for the book began one day in 2005 when Kyle, after running Lake Creek in the Arkansas Valley, found out that CRC II was going out of print. He had spent many nights in his youth perusing the first two editions and, having a background in print production and design, figured a new, updated guidebook would be an ideal enterprise. On his way back to Denver, Kyle called his paddling buddy Evan, and they began brainstorming on ideas for a new book. By the end of that year, they had a publisher lined up and spent much of 2006 hitting every section of river around, sometimes arriving at the put-in at 4:00 am after driving all night.

The pair drove over 30,000 miles last summer alone to get beta on runs in the book but also relied on over 170 contributors to provide knowledge, expertise and photos to make the book



as comprehensive as possible. They view their book as a product of the boating community and have dedicated nine pages to acknowledge those who contributed.

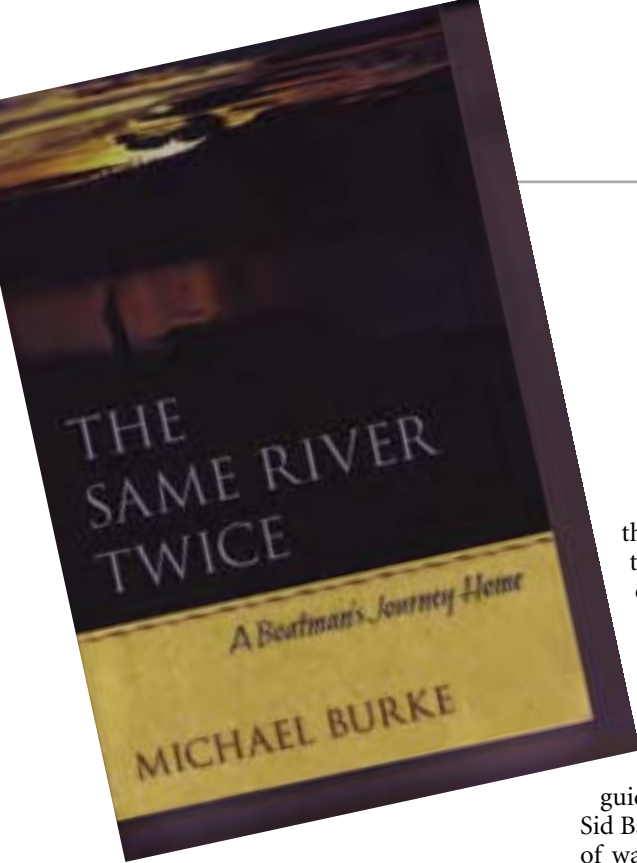
WSR has been well thought out and organized into 25 regions or drainages that make it easy to find the run you're looking for fast. Regional maps have also been included that mark runs by both color-coding and page number. In addition, there's an alphabetical listing in the back of the book for all 400 runs. Other listings include run difficulty by chapter and quality by run difficulty. The "quality" rating they assign is a one through five-star ranking that is completely subjective and may change depending on flows. A "beta box" is provided for each run for a quick glance at the specifics. The details in the box vary a little from run to run but generally include the minimum flows, class, quality rating, gradient, season length, run length, the gauge to check flows for that run and directions to the put-in and take-out.

The biggest difference between WSR and CRCII is its comprehensiveness. If there is a run within a day's drive, whether it's a Class I float or a "not recommended" (think over V+) creek you'll find it in this

book. The book also includes descriptions of playparks and squirt boat runs and includes many inspiring, full page photos. Also scattered among the run descriptions are an assortment of river stories, some humorous, some frightening, and a sobering dedication honoring paddlers who are no longer with us.

Whether you're a beginning kayaker looking for your first easy run or a grizzled hair-boater, you'll want this book. Run-off is here—go get ya some.

Whitewater of the Southern Rockies is available at www.wolverinepublishing.com.



Review of Michael Burke's *The Same River Twice: A Boatman's Journey Home*

By Mike Buckley

The age-old proverb "no man can step in the same river twice" reminds us of the world of changes we live in. Michael Burke's *The Same River Twice: A Boatman's Journey Home* explores a world of personal change through an account of a two-man, self-supported rafting trip to the Stikine and Taku watersheds in Alaska and British Columbia.

The Same River Twice opens as a doctor examines Burke's ruptured eardrum. For Burke the moment is foreboding. He is preparing to leave on a last great river adventure, a trip that follows in the footsteps of a distant relative, Sid Barrington, a legendary river pilot. Burke is injured, his wife is seven months pregnant, and he is torn. He hears the call of rivers, the call of history, and the call of family. He understandably struggles to resolve the discord.

Despite the emotional conflict, Burke does not present us with a moody book. Burke is a man with a deep love for rivers and the wilderness. His passion shines

through in sparkling descriptions of the landscape and poetic accounts of river life. Burke also introduces us to the perspectives of other river travelers. We see the reactions of Max, his companion for the trip, as he is introduced to rafting. We meet colorful characters from Burke's past as a professional guide. We read the gold rush history of Sid Barrington. The sum, like the merging of waters, is greater than its parts. It is a narrative that illuminates the enduring draw of rivers for multiple generations of boaters.

Burke's adventure is not a last-shot-at-glory assault on the wilderness. Faced with a colossal and challenging land, Burke admits that his original plans are unrealistic. He and Max adjust accordingly. Other changes follow as circumstances and environment dictate. The soul of Burke's book lies in these moments of adaptation. Both men are acutely aware of their responsibilities to family and the greater world. The consequences of their absence and potential accidents weigh on them throughout the trip. The book climaxes appropriately with a crucial decision about whether or not to portage a particularly hairy rapid. The decision, which Burke describes as a matter of listening to the river, speaks to the central question of balance at the heart of the memoir.

By the time the book reaches its conclusion, Burke gives us many rivers many times. As he tracks Sid Barrington, he doubles back on his own life as well. The story is a shifting stream of memories from countless days on numerous rivers. For paddlers with similar experiences, *The Same River Twice* is thought-provoking reading about the occasionally turbulent confluences of the many tributaries of our lives.



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Reviews

Guidebook Review: *Whitewater in Southwest British Columbia* by Claudia Schwab

Review by Thomas O'Keefe

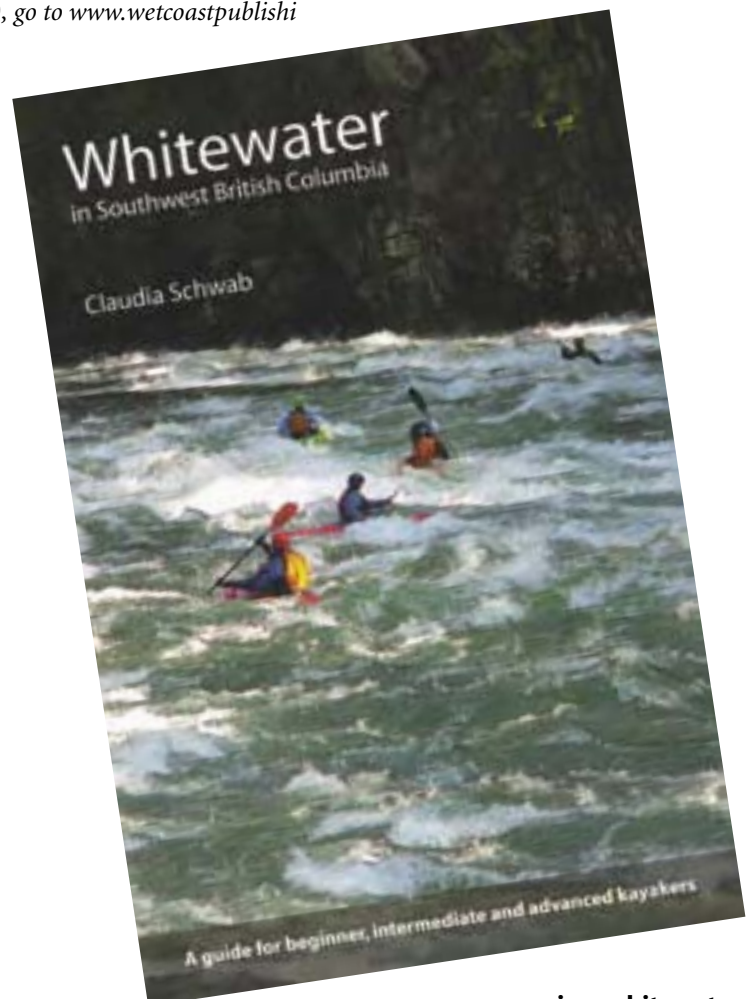
Upon moving to Washington State, I quickly learned that some of our most spectacular rivers were so cleverly hidden that they weren't even in the state—they were across the border, in British Columbia. For years Washington paddlers have been making the trek north to sample some of the finest whitewater in the world.

What has always been a challenge is finding where the runs exist. Claudia Schwab has answered the call with *Whitewater in Southwest British Columbia*, the first comprehensive guidebook to the region's rivers in more than two decades. While part of the fun of going north to BC was the chance for exploration and self discovery, it's become clear that time is running out for many of these gems as the pace of hydropower development increases. With only a small base of advocates who know and love these rivers, it makes the job of hydrodevelopers who want to squeeze every drop from these rivers that much easier.

Claudia's guide will help you find the rivers and become an advocate for this year-round kayaking destination. Included are 79 river runs and play spots from Class II to Class IV with detailed maps, comprehensive descriptions, best levels and paddling season and tips for other attractions and activities nearby. The book contains plenty of information for a road trip or first-time visitors with lists of local kayaking clubs, stores, schools and outfitters, a list of popular creek runs, links to useful websites, and a bunch of entertaining stories and tidbits.

While the guidebook does not provide detailed descriptions of the expert creek runs, many of which have put southwest British Columbia on the map as a creeker's paradise, you will find just enough information to get you started on your own opportunity for exploration and self discovery. *AWW*

More information about the book (including a table of contents and ordering information), go to www.wetcoastpublishing.com.





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2006 Annual Report

2006: What a year!

by Mark Singleton and AW Staff

This past year was American Whitewater's best yet! Here are examples of how our recent transitions provided for a healthier organization in 2006:

Regional Stewardship Work: In 2005, American Whitewater transitioned its river access and conservation programs into a model that embraces regional river stewardship. The fruits of this transition became clear in 2006. American Whitewater staff and volunteers are successfully building relationships within their communities to improve the quality and quantity of whitewater recreation and conservation in their backyards. Local staff and board representation, coupled with empowered volunteers, makes American Whitewater more effective fulfilling our mission: "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely."

National Representation: American Whitewater joined forces with other human powered outdoor recreation organizations to form the Outdoor Alliance. This coalition allows all of our organizations to collaborate on common goals of preserving and restoring our natural resources for responsible recreation. The Outdoor Alliance provides a stronger voice for our interests in Washington D.C. and is helping to shape public policy for improved recreational access and conservation on all American public lands.

Financial Stability: Throughout 2006, American Whitewater diversified its funding streams. To accomplish this American Whitewater reached out to new funding sources: foundations, the outdoor industry, and focused efforts to educate our member donors on the value of American Whitewater's work and how support contributes to river stewardship efforts.

Primed for growth: In 2006, American Whitewater hosted a meeting of whitewater boating interests in Colorado to create the Colorado Rivers Initiative. American Whitewater recognized that Colorado rivers face the most significant threats found anywhere in the country. American Whitewater committed to hiring our new Colorado Stewardship Director, Nathan Fey. This position will lead and support volunteers across the state to make sure paddlers in Colorado have a voice for how its rivers and water are managed.

I would personally like to thank the many volunteers that contribute their valuable time, our Board of Directors and staff for their support making this transition a reality. Working together, American Whitewater's members, staff,

and volunteers will continue to make a difference in the effort to save and restore America's whitewater treasures.

What follows is a summary of our complete Annual Report. The full, color PDF file is available for free download from our website at: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Article/view/articleid/10560/display/full/>

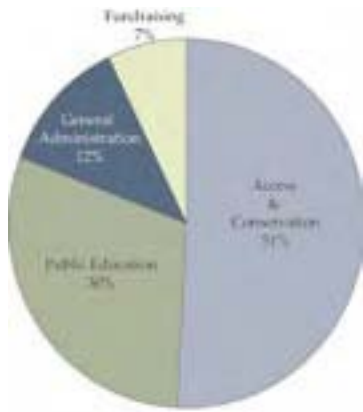
American Whitewater



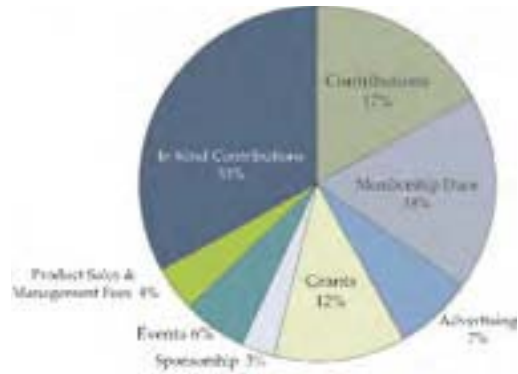
Annual Report

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

Expenses



Revenue



Financial

Revenue

American Whitewater’s gross income for the year ending December 31, 2006 was \$1,364,440. The gross income amount is comprised of Membership Dues, Contributions (unrestricted, restricted), In-kind Donations, Grants, Journal Advertising Sales, Events, Management Fees & Services, Product Sales, and Other Income.

Contributions accounted for 17% of American Whitewater’s total gross income. Membership Dues accounted for 18% of American Whitewater’s total gross income. The remaining 65% was generated through In-Kind Contributions, primarily legal services (33%), Grants (12%),

Advertising (7%), Events (6%), Products (2%), and all other revenue sources (5%).

Expenses

Expenses in 2006 incorporated general operating costs as well as the costs of publications (6 Journal issues), membership solicitations, event costs, Stewardship labor, and professional fees. Those expenses, which aid American Whitewater in achieving its conservation, access and education goals, totaled \$1,206,562 in 2006.

American Whitewater uses 81% to serve its members and their goal of conserving and restoring America’s whitewater resources

and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. Access and Conservation expenses totaled \$606,093 and Public Education expenses totaled \$365,764. This means for every dollar spent, \$.81 was used to further American Whitewater’s River Stewardship program and core mission. Management & General (12%) and Fundraising (7%) accounted for the remaining 19 percent.

The Outdoor Alliance Executive Directors, on their first combined visit to Washington D.C., and legal council Adam Cramer worked to advance mutual goals for the enjoyment of public lands



2006 Annual Report



*Chattooga River - North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia
AW continued efforts to bring nationally consistent river
management to the Chattooga river and lift the ban to
boating that violates both the Wilderness Act and the Wild
and Scenic Rivers Act.*

Regional Stewardship

Upper American River (CA)

American Whitewater helped to negotiate a settlement agreement that will create a reliable whitewater flow schedule on the South Fork American River and South Fork Silver Creek.

Catawba River (NC/SC)

American Whitewater signed a settlement agreement in August that will restore flows to dewatered and regulated sections of the river and provide new public riverside parks to improve watershed residents' connection to the river.

American Whitewater was a lead creative voice for restoration of the Great Falls of the Catawba.

Chattooga River (NC/SC/GA)

American Whitewater continued efforts to bring nationally consistent river management to the Chattooga River and lift the ban to boating that violates both the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. We filed a lawsuit in Federal Court that was dismissed in light of studies that finally got underway in 2006. While the court provided us with an opportunity to revisit this issue in the future we are currently focused on working cooperatively with

the Forest Service to conduct the User Capacity Analysis.

Chelan River (WA)

Federal regulators released a new license for the hydropower project on the Chelan River that will, for the first time in decades, restore summer flows to the Chelan River and provide some rare summer boating opportunities.

Cheoah River (NC)

After more than 70 years of dewatering the Cheoah River in North Carolina, a utility is now required to provide water in the river and release ecological pulse flows that also provide opportunities for whitewater recreation. We worked for several years to develop the new flow regime that provides local economic benefits and has been embraced by the community. The results of our work were recognized in an article published in the *New York Times*.

Cispus River (WA)

After more than a decade of stalling, the utility finally constructed an access for the Lower Cispus River as required in the license for their hydropower project. While some challenges remain with access to the site, we made significant progress in 2006. The bottom line is utilities that utilize a river for hydropower must provide public access for fishermen, boaters, and the general public.

Clackamas River (WA)

American Whitewater signed a comprehensive settlement agreement for the hydropower project on this river that will allow continued hydroelectric production while instituting critical measures to improve river health. Recreation facilities will be improved to provide the public with quality opportunities to enjoy this river.

Feather River, Oroville (CA)

American Whitewater signed the settlement agreement for the Oroville Project on the Feather River in California. Pending approval by federal regulators this agreement will provide funding and a plan to create habitat for salmon and steelhead. The agreement also provides

*Top: Pit River - California
AW has been involved in the Pit watershed since 1993.*

*Below: Feather River, Rock Creek - California
The restoration of the Rock Creek and Cresta reaches of the North Fork Feather continues to be a major success in the West.*



2006 Annual Report

funding to explore the feasibility of integrating a whitewater park as one element of structures designed to mitigate temperature impacts of the project. We also negotiated improved access to public waters through a shuttle to serve the North Fork and Middle Fork runs, trail improvements, and access to Class I / II paddling opportunities.

Feather River, Rock Creek (CA)

The restoration of the Rock Creek and Cresta reaches of the North Fork Feather continues to be a major success in the West. Being one of the first projects to be relicensed in California, this has been a testing ground for a new concept, specifically adaptive management. Many

important lessons have been learned on this project that have helped us craft better agreements on other projects. Because of American Whitewater's continued involvement, we have become viewed as experts not only in creating settlement agreements but also in their implementation.

Klamath (OR/CA)

American Whitewater highlighted the benefits of river restoration for river recreation and formally requested an environmental analysis that evaluates the full range of alternatives including removal of all four hydropower dams on the Klamath River.

Lehigh River (PA)

American Whitewater and regional clubs successfully advocated for improved recreational opportunities on this river with a new flow regime that provides enhanced opportunities for public enjoyment of this river.

Merrimack River (NH)

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 weakened the ability of federal land managers to impose conditions on hydropower projects that protect our natural resources. Through 2006 owners tested these new provisions and we were the sole non-government stakeholder representing the public interest on the Merrimack River where we ultimately signed an agreement



*Upper Yough - Maryland
During 2006 paddlers joined forces and negotiated a new schedule of releases on the Upper that will add ten new summer Saturday releases in 2007.*

upholding critical protections for the river.

Ohiopyle Falls (PA)

Successfully addressing agency safety concerns, paddlers added several days of legal boating over the falls in 2006 and the future looks bright for expanded opportunities to enjoy this waterfall.

Pit River (CA)

American Whitewater has been involved in the Pit watershed since 1993. In 2006, American Whitewater was involved with restoring flows on the Pit 1 Project. American Whitewater has been working with PG&E to improve the flow schedule to maximize recreational opportunity

as well as hydropower production. We are also developing a flat-water and whitewater access to the upper sections of the Pit canyon.

San Joaquin River (CA)

After six years of hard work, American Whitewater hopes to sign a settlement agreement early in 2007 on the Big Creek Project on the San Joaquin River. This settlement marks a change in focus from simply increasing base flows to restoring critical functions of the snow melt hydrograph. We were able to provide ecosystem restoration as well as whitewater recreation.

Sultan River (WA)

American Whitewater participated in the study planning phase for this hydropower project and successfully advocated for studies to examine flow needs for fish, river function, and recreation. These studies will be conducted over the next 2 years and our ultimate goal will be improving the overall river health.

Susquehanna River (PA)

A coalition of paddlers is seeking protected and enhanced whitewater opportunities to mitigate for impacts proposed by the owner of Holtwood Dam. American Whitewater has provided leadership by drafting documents, attending a site visit, and leading a negotiations meeting



*Sultan River, Washington
AW participated in the study planning phase for this hydropower project and successfully advocated for studies to examine flow needs for fish, river function, and recreation.*

2006 Annual Report



*Feather River, Oroville - California
AW signed the settlement agreement
for the Oroville Project on the
Feather River in California*

in 2006. Paddlers offered to support the proposal to add additional hydropower generation capacity and to improve fish passage at the dam, in exchange for limited mitigation of impacts to paddling resources.

Upper Yough (MD)

During 2006 paddlers joined forces and negotiated a new schedule of releases on the Upper that will add ten new summer Saturday releases in 2007. This proposal has broad support based on careful negotiations and will provide additional guided and unguided river experiences for urban residents of Washington DC, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh.

West Rosebud Creek (MT)

American Whitewater and Beartooth Paddlers negotiated a new gage and a plan for whitewater releases on West Rosebud Creek, marking a successful milestone in the Nation's first Integrated Relicensing Process.

White Salmon (WA)

American Whitewater with assistance from colleagues in the Hydropower Reform Coalition provided a leadership role in bringing stakeholders together to develop a coordinated plan to deal with threats of a local utility to acquire the Condit Hydroelectric Project through condemnation. We have engaged local community members and are actively working to remove this dam and restore the river for the benefit of salmon and new recreational opportunities.

National Stewardship

Over the course of the year, we improved our effectiveness in the national policy arena where our work focuses on conservation and sound management of public lands and waters. We also further increased the capacity of our hydropower program where we work to restore flows for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and people.

Increased presence in Washington, DC

For several years outdoor recreational users have searched to find a voice in policy discussions that take place in our nation's capital. For many years motorized recreation has been the dominant voice but this past year American Whitewater formed a coalition with Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American



*Clackamas River - Washington
AW signed a comprehensive settlement agreement for the hydropower project on this river that will allow continued hydroelectric production while instituting critical measures to improve river health. Recreation facilities will be improved to provide the public with quality opportunities to enjoy this river.*

2006 Annual Report

*Ohiopyle Fall - Pennsylvania
Successfully addressing agency safety concerns,
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opportunities to enjoy this waterfall.*



Hiking Society, International Mountain Biking Association, and Winter Wildlands Alliance with the goal of effectively representing the interests of human-powered recreation on public lands. Our organizations have a collective goal of advancing conservation and stewardship objectives while providing opportunities for the public to enjoy our public lands. Bringing this group together has been a major accomplishment that will have a significant impact on improving the management of our public lands.

Protecting the nation's bedrock environmental laws

In 2006 the US Supreme Court heard a case challenging the application of the Clean Water Act to dams managed for hydropower. In this case a hydropower company made the absurd argument that dams had no impact on water quality. Given our technical experience and understanding of hydropower projects, American Whitewater took a leadership role in drafting a brief for this case. Over four dozen organizations joined our brief

that outlined the ways dams affect water quality. Our arguments were specifically cited in the 9-0 opinion supporting application of the Clean Water Act delivered by Justice Souter. [AW](#)

*San Joaquin River - California
After six years of hard work, AW hopes to sign a settlement agreement early in 2007 on the Big Creek Project on the San Joaquin River.*



River Voices

Chaos Un-checked on the Cheoah

By Hank Klausman

May 20, 2007 marked an epic day on North Carolina's mighty Cheoah River for our group of five. This was my fourth time, but I have never attempted the Big Falls. Knox Worde had paddled it many times and was our unofficial leader, even though he had swum the day before in some hole near the top of the run. Peter Elkon had paddled as far as the Big Falls several times until either bad swims or lost gear forced him off. Tom Welander our sole canoeist had nailed many successful runs here, and became our entertainment with several "must-make" rolls above some nasty spots. David Asbell, a veteran of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, the Tallulah and Chattooga Section IV was our only first timer. He took some convincing because he'd heard all the scary initial trip reports and about David Ashley's swim over the Big Falls, which completely shattered his wrist.

The setting that day was perfect. We had clear sky with temperatures in the 70s and clear, cool water. The promised release was 850 cfs, but the Bear Creek gage, about seven or eight miles downstream showed 1050-1100 cfs, which put the difficulty at Class IV+.

We put in at O'Henry's parking lot, just below Joanne's store. It was worth missing the first mile or so for the convenience. At this level, and since most of us knew approximately where to be in each rapid, it was generally a Class IV run until just above Bear Creek Falls (A.K.A. the Big Falls).

But it was very busy. Later, in an e-mail, Tom commented that everyone looked so smooth and comfortable that day, but when we were actually there, gathered in the eddies, our facial expressions were different than usual. After a mile or so of nonstop boogey water, someone asked David if he was finally getting relaxed. He replied that excited and anxious would better describe his feelings.

We took a break after about four miles, as we knew the bottom dropped out in the last two to three miles. As we crashed our way toward Big Falls, I knew I didn't want to miss the take out above the scout/portage. The 100-plus yards approach to the Falls is a minefield of rocks and holes. In fact, I now officially designate this section as "Minefield." There is no agreement on which side to run and both have their own hazards.

I was thinking about trying this lead in and then the Falls for the first time, but was unsure what side to start down and how to run the Falls. There are three routes over the 12-foot Bear Creek Falls. The far right is a curving sluice with hole at top, diagonal curler in middle and hole at bottom (plus rocks below). While scouting and videoing this route, I had seen people flip in the top hole, get slammed onto rock by the middle curler and either stuck or flipped at the bottom. Several paddlers came up with bloody faces from rocks below. Inspired by this lesson, I had invested in a facemask for my helmet. The middle part of the Falls is called the Creek Route because you glance off the left guard rock on the first of two drops. Then through a line hole and finally off a ledge about six to eight feet. The far left was a straight 12-foot drop but at low water it looked bony. Plus if you didn't get enough momentum it looked like you could piton and be pulled back under the falls. Besides, this is the ledge David Ashley had swum over, nearly ending his paddling career.

I was leaning toward the Creek Route because it broke the drop into two parts. But the youngster who gave me a shuttle ride convinced me the left side was easiest as a single shot—not technical, so all you needed was momentum and knowing where to go off (about eight feet left of rock).

All of us pulled out river right on the road side to inspect, except Knox. He waited until I set up a rope then ran the right side of Minefield with no trouble, which convinced me that would be my path. He ferried across and ran left ledge cleanly. Tom started down the left side of Minefield and smoothly cut to center to put himself above the Falls. He took the right sluice and midway down he was slammed into the rock on right. He made his second roll; I was a little surprised his face didn't come up bloody.

That left me, Peter and David watching ... and thinking. Peter said he had been very apprehensive all day. As we completed each section, he felt like it hadn't been so bad and was relieved, until he started getting anxious for the next part. This was the first time he had made it to the Falls without having to take out. He knew the last two miles were the hardest, and didn't want to push his luck. He had done well so far and decided to take out here. Asbell was aware of the difficulty to come and wanted no part of the Minefield approach or Falls. I keep looking, but the messy lead in and confusion on where to run the Falls ruined my nerve. I remembered the advice of my Costa Rica trip leader, Greystoke, who had paddled worldwide: "If you don't see a clear route within 30 seconds, then walk." David and I carried our boats around the Falls and rejoined the others. Now there were four of us.

The last couple of miles of the Cheoah come quick and dirty, with no let up. David followed me closely to avoid certain dangerous places like the next ledge below Big Falls and the left side monster holes at Tapoco Lodge. Tom flipped right above one of the bigger holes. He floated past me and David while we were sitting helplessly in an eddy, hoping he would roll in time. Tom hit his second roll just at the lip. Of course, the canoe was swamped and we still don't know how he made an eddy



*Suspense:
It's not just for
movies
any-
more!*



Presents...

(Back by popular demand)

The 2007

American Whitewater

Story and Photo Contest!

See www.americanwhitewater.org/contest for categories and details. Deadline: August 15, 2007. Submit by e-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org, or mail: Journal Editor, c/o Ambrose Tuscano, 14076 Northwoods Blvd., Truckee, CA 96161

River Voices

to bail. I think everyone had some roll practice, Tom probably more than anyone, but we all stayed in our boats all the way to the lake. There were no boats or gear in the lake for us to tow across, as in earlier runs. I can only conclude the paddlers are getting better or smarter.

We didn't get home until 10 p.m. and I slept for over nine hours. The next day I sent an email to all: "What a great day we had together. David did an awesome job on first time run, as I knew he would. Knox was solid as a rock (I guess he didn't want to show us how well he swims. I don't think anyone has ever seen him swim). Peter and I were on our games, and Tom provided all the entertainment (rolling above holes, etc). Regards, Hank"

Asbell answered:

Thank you. It was indeed a fine day. I would characterize my Cheoah experience as exciting, satisfying, and leavened with persistent fear that I was about to paddle over some blind drop into a keeper hole. There are very few good places to swim. The long, continuous stretches of difficult rapids remind me of the Watauga. Many of the Cheoah's rapids are reminiscent of the Upper Ocoee, particularly Blue Hole and Trash Can.

Welander replied:

Everyone looked so smooth and comfortable to me, little stands out as noteworthy except when we gathered in eddies and I could see people's facial expressions were a little different than usual. I'll send my POV on my wipeouts by tomorrow.

-Tom

Hank to Tom:

Thanks Tom: Can you explain about our expressions? Stark terror? We did all admit to NOT being relaxed. Thanks for saying I looked smooth and comfortable. But I was never really comfortable until the lake. Never have been on that river. Same as Section IV after Bob Geoghy died in Left Crack in 1975???, before I ever ran that section. Hank

Per Tom:

When we gathered in eddies below a couple of those wild drops, you had a look of blank astonishment like I haven't seen before ... as if you had been abducted by space aliens and just returned from the ship, and you were pretty sure it actually happened but you probably ought not to mention it to anyone.

Thoughts upon capsizing: (per Tom)

1. Decide. Decide. Oh man. I can't tell whether I'm clear of the hole that ate me. Decide, hurry, decide.


2. Maybe I'm free. Maybe I'm way downstream. Roll up NOW!

3. Okay, right, that doesn't work.

4. Turtle up NOW! Get inverted. Retract into the shell. Head, get up there with Knees. Lips, go find air! Move it. Go! Go! Where on the river am I? I hear Jim McCool, my SWR instructor, say "I gotta feeling something reeaal bad's fixin to happen!"

5. Inhale once. Inhale twice. This time set up first. Go now!

6. Okay that worked. Great. I'm a swamped orange locomotive headed for hell. Gimme an eddy! Please. Eddy. Gimme, gimme, gimme

We plan to go back next Sunday. Maybe one day I'll attempt Minefield and the Bear Creek Falls. But either way, what an awesome run. 

Cheoah River Reborn

By Kevin Colburn

The term "dam relicensing" may have mild sedative properties (yawn), but the word "Cheoah" is the polar opposite. The Cheoah River has quickly become part of the southeastern paddling community's collective psychology – instilling feelings of excitement, joy, and for some, trepidation. It has become the classic that we had hoped it would be.

Just two years ago – and for the 77 before that – the Cheoah River was a brush-filled, nearly forgotten, boulder lined ditch. Through the 5+ year dam relicensing process (yawn), AW and our partners brought the Cheoah River back to life. Now, it is a river once again, supporting a wide array of biodiversity and recreational enjoyment. It has seen thousands of descents in kayaks, canoes, and rafts. Recently, Congressman Heath Schuler paddled the Cheoah on a commercial rafting trip. Now Graham County is recognizing the Cheoah as a significant asset for their vital ecotourism economy.

Bringing water, wildlife and people back to the Cheoah is something that all AW members can be proud of. As a community we had a lasting and profound effect on a very special river. Our management efforts on the Cheoah are far from over, though. Monitoring efforts are just starting up that could chart the future of the releases. Buy those wrist bands so that your enjoyment of the Cheoah is counted! We are working on similar challenges throughout the nation, and are excited about wrapping up the dam relicensings (yawn) on the Nantahala and Tuckasegee rivers (wahoo!) very soon.

We could not have restored the Cheoah without your financial support, your volunteerism, your letters, and your membership.

Whether you're just getting started, or you're on top of your game, we want to know all about your adventures.



Enter the 2007 AW Story and Photo Contest today!

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Prizes provided by:



Contest deadline is August 15th, 2007. See: www.americanwhitewater.org/contest for rules and details.



AW Corporate Partners

Class V Sponsor



In 2006 Keen's contributions will aid American Whitewater's projects in the Southeast, and the Pacific Northwest. In the southeast Keen's support will help American Whitewater's work restoring the Catawba watershed. Additional funding from Keen will support AW's projects on the Columbia River Basin and the Cascade range in the pacific northwest.

Class III Sponsor



Kokatat remains one of AW's strongest allies by continuing support of AW's membership and river stewardship programs. By providing American Whitewater with valuable membership and donation incentives, Kokatat will create the support we need to continue our stewardship of North American rivers.

Class IV Sponsors



At Dagger we love what we do because it's all about the water, and American Whitewater is the organization that helps put water in our rivers. That is why Dagger has long supported American Whitewater and is proud to continue our support of their river stewardship program today.



Teva and American Whitewater have worked together for nearly a decade to protect access and conserve whitewater resources for paddlers and rafters nationwide. Teva and AW have partnered on numerous tours and events over the years, including AW's 50th Anniversary Gala in 2004.

Class II Sponsor



Boof Sponsors



Wave Sport is American Whitewater's longest standing and largest philanthropic supporter. Both Wave Sport and AW are committed to one thing, whitewater.



As part of Jackson Kayak's focus on environmental responsibility, the Jackson's have long supported AW through promotional efforts. In 2006, as part of their commitment to 1% For the Planet, Jackson Kayaks will be supporting AW's river stewardship work.

Wave Sponsors





Class V Sponsor and Supporter of River Stewardship Program

KEEN is a Class V sponsor of American Whitewater's River Stewardship Program, supporting stewardship projects in the Southeast and the Pacific Northwest, as well as its new initiative in Colorado.

Member Get a Member Campaign

KEEN's knows that American Whitewater is only as strong as its membership, which is why they have partnered together on the Member Get A Member Campaign. This campaign encourages American Whitewater members to recruit new members. KEEN will be raffling off over 100 pairs of sandals to both new members and existing members who participate in this membership drive. Liquid Logic Kayaks will also be participating in the membership drive by providing a whitewater boat of choice to the AW member who recruits the most new members during this campaign.

The Member Get A Member Campaign will be showcased on American Whitewater's website for the months of July and August as well at KEEN's booths at the following events in 2007:

Wenatchee River Festival
June 9
Wenatchee, WA

Xterra Tri
July 7-8
Holiday Valley Ski Resort, NY

Potomac River Festival
July 14
Washington D.C.

Xponential Music Festival
July 19-22
Pittsburgh, PA

Rio Grande Urban Assault Adventure Race
July 22
Boulder, CO

Rocky Grass
July 26-29
Lyons, CO

Deerfield River Festival
July 28
Charlemont, MA

Rio Grande Urban Assault Adventure Race
July 29
Denver, Colorado

Gore Canyon River Festival
August 18
Kremling, CO

About KEEN

Founded in 2003 and known for its patented toe protection technology, KEEN Inc. is more than an Outdoor company. As leader in hybrid performance products, KEEN encourages everyone to live a Hybrid.Life, one in which you live balanced and outwardly.

In keeping with this philosophy, KEEN partners with environmental, conservation and social organizations on a global level through community, understanding and education. In the United States, KEEN supports American Whitewater, Big City Mountaineers, The Conservation Alliance, Friends of Forest Park, and Leave No Trace Center. Internationally, KEEN supports non-profit organizations in Canada, Japan and Europe.

KEEN, Inc. is headquartered in Portland, Oregon and its products can be found in over 1500 retail locations in the US and is distributed globally in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Asia as well as Central America, South America and Europe. Visit www.keenfootwear.com to learn more.



The Last Word

A Very Fine Line

By Ambrose Tuscano

When events conspire against us or our optimistic plans collapse under the weight of reality, it can be hard to hang on to the idea that what you're doing is still fun. The realization that we're unprepared for events that arise unexpectedly can be downright depressing. But working backward through a chain of events to identify the root of a problem or the moment things began to go wrong is often neither simple nor pleasant.

Less than a week ago I finished an epic whitewater expedition. For me this was a holy grail of sorts, something I'd set my sights on years earlier. It was a trip I knew demanded the utmost respect. It wasn't the sort of venture that could be undertaken without physical and mental training, sound logistical planning, and an honest weighing of the risks and rewards.

When the opportunity finally arose and my name was tossed irrevocably into the ring, I began to experience doubts. I hadn't been paddling the hard stuff as much these past couple of seasons, and I wasn't at what I considered to be the peak of my whitewater paddling prowess. In the large group I was joining, I only knew and had paddled frequently with one person. Our group had done what bonding we could in the course of shuttling and hiking to the put-in, but it still felt like many of us were just better than strangers. Water levels were not optimal but our plans were laid and there was no turning back. We all seemed to share a sense of uncertainty and hesitation, bordering on premonition—things just weren't quite right. What was I getting myself into?

I expected to find the answer the day we put on the river, but actually I'm still not sure I know.

In whitewater paddling, there is a truly fine

line that separates fun and adventure from fear and survival. Sometimes that line can be crossed when a paddler or group makes an error in judgment or when an unexpected bit of bad luck strikes. In the case of our group, it may have been a bit of both that pushed the expedition over the line.

Of course, evaluating luck is a subjective thing. We're always biased by the belief that events transpiring smoothly, rapids run well, are the result of our own competence and that only bad outcomes are the province of luck. But on our trip, it was easy to see how we may have overdrawn our luck credit on the first day.

At one of the first major drops of the trip, we encountered a tall two-tiered slide. The first two paddlers to attempt it ended up pulling off rolls in the virtually non-existent pool between the drops. Had either of them missed a roll, or been just a heartbeat slower on their execution, we could have seen some serious face-grinding or muscle-pulling. Instead, we breathed a collective sigh of relief and promptly forgot all about it.

The next morning, at the very first rapid of the day, one of our group members put a 12-inch crack in the hull of his kayak. After a serious on-river patch job he was able to continue paddling, albeit with frequent sponging and draining. That night he noticed a second, seemingly unrelated crack in the hull. None of us failed to notice this manifestation of bad luck; we were beginning to feel snake-bit.

On our fourth day, in the midst of the hardest, steepest section of river, another paddler and I gave a bad set of instructions to the rest of the group. We were out of our boats scouting what appeared to be

an innocent rapid and decided that the channel along the far shore seemed best. Without fully scouting the rapid, we sent three paddlers into that river-left channel. There, each of them encountered a sticky hole above a dicey second drop. In our hurry to tick off river miles, we had been too hasty in our scouting. Luckily, each of the three who followed our line made it through with nothing worse than a short beating in the first hole. When we all met up at the bottom of the drop, group morale felt palpably low. I had no doubt that we had made a mistake, but I'm still not clear how pivotal that mistake might have been.

A couple of hours later one of our group members took a normal stroke in the midst of a relatively simple section of Class III-IV whitewater. His paddle hit a rock and his right shoulder was partially dislocated. He began a series of high braces and roll attempts on his right side as he floated slowly toward a blind horizon. The rest of the group watched from shore, imagining that he would roll on his next attempt. Surely he was just running into a bit of bad luck. He would roll just in the nick of time, and then ... the nick of time was gone and he swam away from his boat over the unnervingly tall horizon.

For the next several minutes everything was a blur of running, shouting and uncertainty. At the time, we were all too adrenaline hyped to recognize this as the moment when we stepped over that fine line.

We were all very fortunate, not least of all my friend, who was able to walk away from the experience with nothing more than bruises, some torn and strained ligaments in his shoulder, and the memory of swimming a Class VI rapid.

The rest of the group suffered, too. For the rest of that day we became a fractured set of individuals, with virtually no trust for or bond with our fellow paddlers. In my mind this was a direct result of the reorganization of priorities that come along with crossing that fine line. In survival mode, a group becomes a nearly non-functional team. But it also harkened back to the incident earlier that morning, when we had steered other paddlers into a place where we would not have wanted to go ourselves.

In the end, we made it. Aside from some extensive portaging, and mental anguish, we all finished the trip safe and sound (minus one shoulder). However, the tone was completely different than I'd imagined when we set out. When we reached the take-out there was no loud victory whoops, no demonstrative high-fives, no celebratory toasts. Instead there was a definite sense of relief, a shared knowledge that we'd survived. In one very clearly defined moment, the trip had gone from a pursuit of fun, to a survival situation.

Now, I know not everyone who paddles has a major expedition on their schedule, but the moral of this story seems to apply to everyone all the same. Most of us have been known to push our limits in whitewater from time to time. And when we do, it becomes harder to define boundaries in that unfamiliar realm. To me the line that we should all be very aware of is razor thin, but critically important. Stay to the good side of it and you're having loads of fun. Step across and it's easy to be scarred by the unfamiliar and unpleasant emotions that go along with our animal instincts to survive.


Clearly our group was victimized by bad luck. How many times do unexpected



A time lapse example of good luck and a timely recovery

shoulder dislocations occur in innocent whitewater directly above Class VI? But we also benefited from good luck on this trip, which makes it harder to say we weren't somehow at least partly to blame. I know that I'll still be thinking about my friend swimming into the horrifying unknown for a long time to come. But the memory I'll be haunted by longer is that of steering comrades into a bad place simply because I was too lazy to scout completely.

Luck—both bad and good—is often the thing we focus on and take away from a memorable experience. But as I'm still

struggling to digest and make sense of this most recent expedition, I'm going to try to remember the mistakes I made because they're the only events I have the power to shape for the better next time. 

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 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



P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723 • 866-BOAT-4AW

Membership Application

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Club Affiliation _____

Individual 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
- ___ \$100 Ender Club* (Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-shirt FREE)
- ___ \$250 Platinum Paddler* (Receive AW's exclusive IR Polartec shirt FREE)
- ___ \$500 Explorer Membership* (Receive a drybag from Watershed FREE)
- ___ \$750 Lifetime Membership (Receive AW's Lifetime Membership NRS Paddlers Duffel FREE)
- ___ \$1,000 Legacy Membership* (Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Gore-tex Drytop FREE)
- ___ \$2,500 Steward Membership* (Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Gore-tex Drytop and Pants FREE)

* A portion of your contribution is tax deductible. If you would like information about the tax deductibility of your contribution please speak with an AW Staff Member.

Organizational Membership Types

- ___ \$75.00 Affiliate Club (Join our growing network of paddling organizations across North America)

Additional Donation

- ___ \$5.00 ___ \$10.00 ___ \$25.00 \$ _____ Other
- ___ \$24.99 Kayak Session subscription (Add Kayak Session to your membership at a 40% discount)

Amount

Membership subtotal \$ _____ Do NOT Mail me the AW Journal. I will read it on-line.

Donation subtotal \$ _____ Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups.

Total \$ _____

Ender Club and Platinum Paddler indicate shirt size (S, M, L, XL, XXL). We will mail gift certificate for Kokatat gear.

Transaction Type

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Card Type: MC Visa Discover AMEX

Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____

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Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

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.

This is the fifth year that Clif Bar has sponsored the Flowing Rivers grants. Clif Bar and American Whitewater are happy to announce the recipients of the 2007 "Flowing River" grants. The Flowing Rivers campaign, a joint initiative between Clif Bar and American Whitewater, puts money in the hands of people who are protecting the rivers that are running through their backyards. This year's funding will support initiatives from the Foothills Paddling Club (SC) and the Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club (OR). The Foothills Paddling Club will use their funding to enhance an access area and purchase water quality equipment while the Willamette Club will use their funding to organize a safety education weekend. To read more about the two projects see <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Article/view/articleid/29549/display/full/>.

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

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham
Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Country Paddlers, Lotus
River Touring Section, Angeles Chapter
Sequoia Paddling Club, WindsorGold

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

Colorado

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder
Front Range Paddle Asso, Lafayette
Grand Canyon Priv. Boat. Assn., Colorado Springs
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

Florida

North Florida Whitewater Assoc., Ocala

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Association, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Assoc., Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Chicago

Indiana

Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville
Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kansas

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky

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

Maine

Outward Bound, Newry

Maryland

Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers,
Smithsburg

Massachusetts

Brian White, Boston
Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont
AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers,
Honover

Minnesota

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater
Charlie Sawyer, Maple Plain
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City
Kansas City Whitewater Club, Kansas City

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Franconia

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
FLOW Paddlers Club, Rochester
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk
KCCNY, New York
Wildriders, Millwood
St Lawrence University, Canton

N. Carolina

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Davidson Outdoors, Davidson
Triad River Runners, Winston, Salem
Watauga Paddlers, Boone
Dixie Division ACA, Tuxedo
UNCG Outdoor Adventures, Greensboro

Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Keel Haulers Canoe Club, Westlake
Outdoor Adventure Club, Dayton
Toledo River Gang, Waterville

Oregon

Face Level Industries LLC, Portland
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
North West Rafters Asso, Portland

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Bens Creek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg

Conewago Canoe Club, York
Easton Whitewater Parks Commission,
Bethlehem
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Lehigh Valley White water Club, Lehigh
Valley

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Gray
Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport
E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis
Tennessee Scenic River Assoc., Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston
Kayak 4 a Kure, Amarillo

Utah

University of Utah, Salt Lake City
USU Kayak Club, Logan
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
FORVA, Roanoke
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Richmond

Washington

Outdoor Adventure Club, Redmond
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Venturing Crew 360, Snohomish
The Mountaineers, Seattle

Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
NE Wisconsin Paddlers Inc. Appleton

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

*by Carla Miner
Membership Coordinator*

AW offers discounted AW memberships to whitewater enthusiasts who are also members of one of our Affiliate Clubs.

We supply a unique code that will automatically offer the discounted membership specific to your club allowing individuals to receive the discount on the normal AW membership renewal form or online at www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.

Both options work equally well and help make life easier for members of your club.

Discount codes are in place for all AW Affiliate Clubs and many members are enjoying the benefits of joining or renewing their individual AW membership for only \$25.

If you are interested in taking advantage of the Affiliate Club discount, please contact me and I will be happy to let you know your Club's unique code. I can be reached at: 866-BOAT-4AW or membership@amwhitewater.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 a spot in the AW 2006 River Stewardship Institute.

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

Guidelines for Contributors



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

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.

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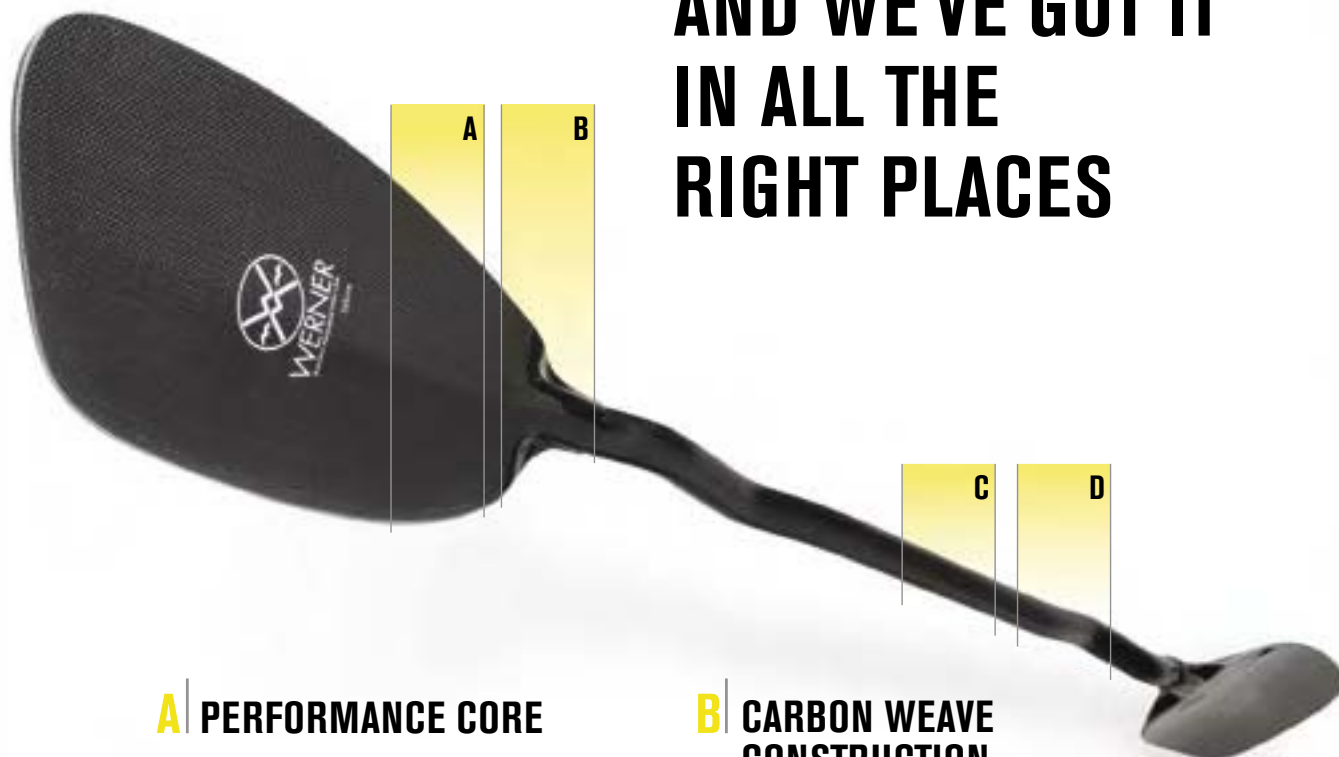
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