

American **WHITEWATER**



AMERICA'S OLDEST WHITEWATER MAGAZINE

A THIRTY YEAR TRADITION

November-December 1985

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Vol. XXX No. 6



AWA FINANCIAL CRUNCH

As a result of its diligent work to save our endangered rivers, AWA is currently in the grips of a financial crisis. Of necessity, there has been a \$2 increase in AWA dues. In addition to upping the membership fees, Pete Skinner has simultaneously launched an all-out campaign for contributions to further fuel AWA's efforts. Please do what you can to help.

AWA RIVER RESCUE PROJECT APPEAL

Dear Claire,

I'm glad I'm not spending my nights like Pete writing testimony and fund raising letters. I'll kick in some cash to help AWA wage these river wars. Win a rapid for me! Enclosed is my check for a tax-deductible contribution* of:

\$500 \$100 \$35 \$25 Other_____

By the way Claire, I'm not an AWA member and would like to receive a couple of your unique Whitewater Journals to see what's really happening on the sport and adventure side of the rivers. Send them to the address below...

Name _____ Date ____/____/____

Address _____

City & State _____ Zip _____

Phone # () _____ (W) _____ (H) _____

SEND THIS CARD AND YOUR CHECK TO:

**Ms. Claire Gesalman
AWA Treasurer**

**6301 Hillcrest ■
Alexandria, Va 22312**

*All contributions of \$50 or more will get a freelong sleeve AWAT-Shirt and years long AWA membership!

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Paddling the Mexico Jungle. See Sam Moore story p. 24

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Cover Photo: Czechoslovakian Pop-up. Photo by J. Sup.

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

In response to your note, my answer is YES, you may reprint the article that I wrote in the October issue of "The Whitewater Paddler."

In return, I would appreciate it if you could make a correction concerning the letter I wrote to Marge Cline which you reprinted in the last AMERICAN WHITE-WATER.

In concluding my letter to Marge, I stated that "I **do** want to send you personally my best wishes..."

In your reprinting, you incorrectly quoted me as saying that "I **do not** want to send you personally my best wishes..."

While I am just as imperfect as anyone else, I do not wish to be seen as being ungentlemanly and ungracious toward someone like Marge, who has done so much for my favorite sport.

I have enjoyed your interviews with Ken Horwitz and Charlie Walbridge, both of whom I have met on various occasions, and both of whom have contributed quite a lot to the sport of whitewater paddling.

In closing, let me say that I **do** send you personally my best wishes for a joyous holiday season.

Sincerely,
Chuck Hines
Asheville, NC

Dear Editor:

Here's something you may be interested in. Honest to God it's true:

"My wife and I were traveling to Utah to paddle the Green River. We were driving our old 5,000-pound Toyota Land Cruiser with our Old Town Tripper on top. Pauline was driving on 1-80, when the lack of road striping and a strong gust of wind caused her to veer off the shoulder and lose control. The truck careened down the road sideways, rolled a back tire off the rim, slid off the highway, down an embankment and flipped over 360 degrees, landing on its wheels.

"After making sure we were both OK (we were wearing seat belts), my next concerns were for the boat and truck. Already I was making alternate plans-of-action in case one or the other was damaged beyond repair. I should have had more confidence. I was amazed to find the Tripper just as I'd last seen it. The roof racks were askew and the boat seemed to be saying to me, "Thought you'd given me something I couldn't handle, huh?" The truck was a little worse—two windows out and a side mirror smashed. I changed the tire, readjusted the roof rack, and we were on our way. The State Trooper who'd arrived could only look at the impression of the boat in the dirt and ask, "What kind of boat is that?"

"The moral of the story? If you just have to get to the river, you'd better be driving a Land Cruiser and paddling a Tripper."

Kerry Edwards
Aurora, CO

Dear Editor:

I want to correct an error in your July-August 1985 issue of *American Whitewater*. You were misinformed about the name of the person who took the photo of Ken Horwitz (your cover photo). The slide was taken by me and loaned to Ken to be used in your magazine. At the bottom of page 3 it states "Cover photo by Bridget Horwitz". This is an error.

I look forward to seeing the correction in an upcoming issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Andrea Breeding
Benton, Tenn.

Dear Friend:

As someone who enjoys Arkansas' natural beauty, I would like to share with you some information about the Arkansas Natural and Scenic Rivers Commission. Enclosed is a brochure about the Commission and its mission which I hope you will find informative. In

addition, I plan to provide up-to-date news of the Commission's efforts to preserve the State's river heritage, either through your club's newsletter or through direct mailouts from this office.

Several conservation organizations and other clubs with an interest in outdoor activities were gracious in sharing their mailing lists with me. If you do not want your name on the mailing list of the Natural and Scenic Rivers Commission or if there is a mistake in your address, please let me know. Also, if you need additional information about the agency or would like us to present the program at a club meeting, we would be glad to accommodate.

Working together, we can help keep Arkansas' rivers free-flowing and meandering and preserve the way of life they nourish.

Thank you for your interest.

Donna Etchieson
Director

Dear Dave,

Just thought I'd let you know that I thoroughly enjoyed the last AWA journal (July-August 1985). I must admit that in the previous journals I would skim through most of the articles. In this issue all the articles and even the letters to the editor were interesting enough to set down, read and digest.

Keep up the great work.

Sincerely,
Fred Lally
(alias Wade Sims)
Nicholson, PA

To all whitewater paddlers:

The enclosed flyer has been distributed to all paddlers we could reach in West Virginia during September. It concerns an issue currently before our Department of Natural Resources about establishing a commercial capacity for New River. It's primary purpose was to encourage letters before the vote to be taken by the West Virginia Whitewater Advisory Board on October 10.

The DNR's original position on this issue was 1250 to 1500 commercial customers per day, but the outfitters have rejected this proposal and con-

vinced the DNR that they can run 2400 to 2500 people down the river with no problems. The DNR officials are now bending to meet the outfitters' requests. And if no opposition is heard the outfitters will dominate the river.

Our club is taking the position of supporting the DNR's original proposal of 1250 to 1500 customers per day. There is sound justification for these numbers based on a study that was recently compiled. This figure also allows for some growth in private use.

We hope your club will similarly support this position and respond to our DNR Director and Governor as a group and/or individually. Whatever the Advisory Board decides can be overruled by the Director first, the Governor later. So even letters received by them after October 10 will have an impact. The fact that commercial rafting is bringing money into the State might be countered by actual examples of money spent by private paddlers, unsafe conditions caused by crowding on the river, dissatisfaction of raft customers with crowding. I can't overemphasize the importance of this issue. Three years from now it could make a difference in whether or not you can paddle our rivers in safe enjoyable environment.

If you need any more information please contact me at the above address or at 304-984-3879 after 6:00 p.m.

Sincerely yours,
Mr. Kim L. Casto
WW Wildwater Association

Dear Editor:

PLEASE, lets have no more of John Wilson's tacky, tasteless cartoons. Your readers deserve better.

Sincerely,
Jon Nelson
State College, PA

"A river is more than an amenity — it is a treasure."

— Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes

Dear Dave,

I am sending you the enclosed in the effort to gain more exposure for the sport of kayaking as a vehicle for the disabled to the outdoors. ETC, or 'et-cetera' as it is commonly called, has been in operation for over ten years. I recently went on an overnight sea kayaking trip with them and they provide the highest quality service. Unfortunately too few people know about it.

Anyway, I thought you might be interested in this for several reasons:

1). the watercolor. I don't know if it would suit your needs for a cover, but the thought occurred to me. If not perhaps a mention in the upfront section.

2). perhaps a short piece on the evolution of ETC

3). I think there is a need to pool information from various types of groups like this around the country.

Making kayaking more accessible for the disabled is one of my personal crusades. Kayaking allows those with lower disabilities to leave their wheelchairs behind and to drift off into the sunset with the rest of us. ETC and other similar groups needs the support of the kayaking community.

Let me know what you think, or feel free to contact ETC directly.

Best Wishes,
Cameron O'Connor
San Francisco, Ca.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRAVELING COMPANIONS

Environmental Traveling Companions (ETC) is entering its eleventh year as a non-profit agency that provides access to the wilderness and environmental education activities for people with special needs. On ETC trips our goal is to provide a supportive setting where participants have the opportunity to challenge self-imposed limitations, to build self confidence, and to experience the unique excitement and tranquility that can only be found in the wilderness. We also aim to promote an understanding of California's rich cultural and natural history. At Environmental Travel-

ing Companions, we believe that everyone, regardless of physical or financial limitation should have the chance to enjoy these opportunities.

Our programs include whitewater rafting, backpacking, cross country skiing, and wilderness schools designed for those who wish to further their leadership skills. This year we are launching our new sea kayaking program, in the San Francisco Bay to encourage accessible wilderness adventure close to home and to foster an appreciation of the unique resources of the Bay environment. This program is the first of its kind in this country.

We now serve over 800 people annually. These include individuals who do not normally have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from the earth's wild places because of physical and/or financial limitations. People of all ages who are blind, deaf, physically, developmentally and emotionally disabled, and juvenile offenders, school groups and inner city youth participate in our programs.

ETC also provides a setting for members to contribute their time and energy to an innovative and meaningful community service. Over 350 individuals comprise ETC today, including three full-time paid staff, ninety active volunteers, and additional members. Many of our volunteers have been with us for as long as ten years. We encourage capable persons with special needs to volunteer in all areas of our organization. This makes up 20% of our active force. As leaders they are excellent role models in our society.

ETC is the largest and oldest organization in California providing services of this scope and nature to a widevariety of people with special needs. ETC received the John R. May award of the San Francisco Foundation in 1980 in which it was stated, "Through it's innovative approach of bringing together disadvantaged and delinquent youth with handicapped individuals, Environmental Traveling Companions has piloted a new way of rehabilitating youth as well as providing underprivileged youth and disabled persons opportunities for growth that were heretofor unavailable."

Contact: Environmental Traveling Companions, Fort Mason Center, Building C, San Francisco, CA 94123 or call 415/474-7662.

AN APPEAL FOR HELP For the Victims of The Great Flood of Nov. '85

The rains that accompanied Hurricane Juan on its course from the Gulf Coast to the mid-Atlantic area were not particularly heavy in the Washington area. But they were in western Virginia and West Virginia, areas of which were clobbered with up to 20 inches in a very brief span. The floods spawned by this rain have altered the face of the river valleys out there beyond recognition. Eyewitnesses say that the scenes of devastation are staggering. The damage to physical plant — buildings, roads, bridges, etc. — is immense; the damage to the lives of the inhabitants incalculable.

Virtually every county out there has been declared a disaster area. Help has flowed in, especially from the Red Cross and Salvation Army. But more help is needed; it is needed now, supplies of relief clothing are described as adequate. MONEY is what is needed most. Also needed are canned or dry food, tools, toys, kitchen utensils, dehumidifiers, and some household furnishings like bedding.

You Can Make a Difference

You can send help to a general organization like the Red Cross or Salvation Army. The addresses are: Emergency Relief Fund, The American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013; Flood Relief Fund, The Salvation Army, 503 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Or you can deal with the specific organizations mentioned below. These organizations enable the CCAer to direct his contribution in money or whatever to a particular locality, in these cases areas associated with paddlers and the CCA.

MESSAGE FROM RIVER MOM

Dear AWA Members:

Watertown, New York was the site of the Eastern Freestyle Championships this summer. Hosted by AWA, I attended to watch the goings-on, help where needed, and paddle the river, not as one of the hotdog competitors. The "cutting-edge" of the sport assembled to strut their stuff and help focus attention on another river that needs saving from the hydro plants. Believe me, it was worth the drive from the Midwest! Efforts to save the Black River have been extended by AWA with the help of one of the most energetic of your Board Members, Pete Skinner. Now the final decision rests in the hands of the court. However, the court now knows a little more about the river, as members of that court, lawyers involved in the case, and the hydro companies were shown... on a raft trip over Labor Day weekend.

AWA is trying to get more involved in such activities, but this involvement can only be brought about by concerned paddlers, willing to extend the time and effort needed. You, too, can be involved, and we need new blood, from the cutting-edge" to enthusiastic newcomers to the sport. The time to hold an election is obviously here, and candidates for the Board are being sought. Do you know someone worthy? Are you interested in helping out? Is there a pet project you have in mind? We are looking for candidates who have something to offer to the paddling community. Please drop me a note, stating what you have in mind, how you can help, and volunteer to run for the AWA Board of Directors. New blood is being sought.

President
Marge Cline

March 22-23 Second Annual River Running: "The Art & Politics" Conference presented by Friends of the River. It will be held on the Sacramento City College campus at 3835 Freeport Blvd., Sacramento, CA. Join us for this fun and educational forum on the art of river running and the politics of keeping the rivers we love flowing free. Features keynote speakers, workshops, equipment sales, swap and auction, videos, training sessions and much more! Call Ingrid or Laurie at F.O.R. for more information (916) 442-3155.

KNOXVILLE CANOE AND KAYAK FESTIVAL ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR '86

800 national, international and local competitors and 40,000 public participants are expected to enjoy a series of events planned for the 1986 Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival (KCFK). In officially announcing the Festival schedule, KCFK chairman Jim Hart said, "The national and international competitions, recreational equipment exhibition and Festival Finale celebration offer something for everyone to enjoy. Our goal is to attract attention to the vitality and quality of life of the East Tennessee area while promoting canoesport nationwide."

The Festival begins on the weekend of May 31 with a whitewater rodeo followed on June 1-3 by the National Slalom and Wildwater Championships on the Ocoee River. International olympic competitors will race in head to head sprint races at the Pan American Cup Regatta on Melton Hill Lake, June 7-8. Olympic medalist from Canada and the U.S. along with teams from Mexico, Cuba and South American countries are expected for this event.

The Festival Finale scheduled for June 20-22 will attract 40,000 to the riverfront, exhibition center and 1982 World's Fair Site in downtown Knoxville. The Finale event will include a major outdoor recreation equipment exhibition, and a celebration at the World's Fair Site. A variety of canoe races, fireworks, films, skydivers and other demonstrations are planned for

June 21. The U.S. Team Trials for Marathon Canoe Racing will finish along the riverfront during the day.

Bill Willis, General Manager of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and vice chairman of the Festival said, "We are fortunate to have the world class resources necessary to attract these high caliber events to the East Tennessee area." David Brown, formerly Executive Director of the Ocoee River Council and Eastern Professional River Outfitters Association, was appointed Festival Director in June. The Festival will be an annual event. Offices are located at 530 S. Gay St., Suite 222, Knoxville, TN 37902.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS 1986
KNOXVILLE CANOE AND
KAYAK FESTIVAL**

- May 31** North American Whitewater Rodeo, Ocoee River
- June 1-3** National Slalom and Wildwater Championships, Ocoee River
- June 7-8** Pan American Cup Regatta, Melton Hill Lake Oak Ridge, Tennessee
- June 20-22** Outdoor Recreational Equipment Exhibition
Festival Finale Celebration
U.S. Team Trials, Marathon Canoe Racing
Family Class/Corporate Challenge Canoe Races
Canoe and Kayak Instructional Clinics

**America's Outdoor Expo
Is Coming to Knoxville
June 20 - 22**

A national showcase for canoes, kayaks, rowing shells, and other small watercraft plus camping and outdoor equipment is being planned for the 1986 Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival. America's Outdoor Expo will feature hundreds of products by manufacturers, retailers, resorts, and outfitters from across the United States. Educational seminars, canoe and casting ponds, and an outdoor wear fashion show are expected to make the Expo especially

appealing to the general public. The Expo will fill the Knoxville Convention/Exhibition Center, June 20 - 22, helping to provide a fitting Finale for the Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival.

The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) of Chicago, Illinois, will manage the show under contract with the Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival. NMMA will begin registering exhibitors for the event in early December. For more information, contact Ben Wold at NMMA, America's Outdoor Expo, 401 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611, phone 312-836-4740, or call the Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival at 615-524-1045.

CANOE Magazine Publishes Annual Buyer's Guide

A comprehensive product listing of more than 1500 canoes, kayaks, inflatables and rowing craft from over 150 North American manufacturers has just been released in Canoe Magazine's 1986 Buyer's Guide.

For prospective self-propelled watercraft purchasers, the Buyer's Guide represents the most complete listing available anywhere. For anyone in the market for a new canoe or kayak, the 1986 Buyer's Guide is a "must-see" resource.

While the sport of canoeing has always been popular, people are taking up the sport in greater numbers than ever.

According to a 1984 U.S. Coast Guard estimate, more than 10 million Americans paddle a canoe or kayak for recreation. The Simmons Research Bureau estimates that 437,000 new and used canoes and kayaks were sold last year.

Several reasons account for the growing popularity of paddle sports.

With the baby boom of the 1980s, new parents are discovering that canoeing is a sport they can enjoy while involving their children. No specialized skills are needed for the entire family to participate in this recreational activity.

Among more performance oriented paddlers, the recent introduction of high-tech materials and manufacturing

processes has resulted in remarkably lightweight yet durable boats with greatly enhanced performance.

With larger numbers of people entering wilderness areas than ever before, people are finding that with a canoe or touring kayak, they can explore wilderness areas rarely frequented by hikers. Paddlers can also carry more equipment than hikers, which makes long trips more comfortable.

For a copy of the 1986 Canoe Buyer's Guide, send \$3.15 (\$2.15 for the Buyer's Guide, plus \$1.00 handling) to Canoe Magazine Buyer's Guide, PO Box 3146, Kirkland, WA 98083.

First Decents:

The AWA announces First Decents, a state by state, province by province description of the 1st run on rivers and streams, volumes of water, date, etc. See form below. Let's give credit where credit is due. We are accumulating North America historical data.

PARTY MEMBERS

RIVER OR STREAM

DATE

SECTION OF RIVER

RIVER DIFFICULTY (Classification)

VOLUME OF WATER

CRAFT USED

DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR RAPIDS

PUT IN

TAKE OUT

HAZARDS

PERSONS TO CONTACT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Send to:

AWA Editor
Box 273
Powell Butte, OR 97753



Give a River for 1986

Although frozen solid right now...those rivers your loved ones dream about will be a big challenge a few short months from now. Official AWA products make river running safer and more fun — order some **NOW** for timely delivery.

(Allow 3 weeks for delivery from the time you post your order.)

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----- SEPARATE THIS PORTION & RETURN WITH YOUR CHECK TO: -----

AWA. 146 N. Brockway, Palatine, IL 60067

AWA Journal Order Chart

X = Out of Print

YEAR	Vol.	Spring		Summer			Autumn		Winter	TOTAL #
		#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6			
1971	XVI	X	X		X	X		X		
1972	XVII							X		
1973	XXVIII							X		
1974	XIX				X	X				
1975	XX				X	X				
1976	XXI							X		
1977	XXII							X		
1978	XXIII							X		
1979	XXIV							X		
1980	XXV	X	X	X						
1981	XXVI	X	X							
1982	XXVII									
1983	XXVIII									
1984	XXIX									
1985	XXX									
1986	XXXI	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		

Official AWA Products:

	#	Total \$
T-shirts (S,M,L,XL) CIRCLE ONE	\$5.00	_____
AWA Embroidered Patches	\$2.00	_____
AWA Decals (WATERPROOF)	350	_____
River Cap w/embroidered patch	\$8.00	_____
Journal sample & back issues	\$1.50	_____
Sets of 4 (Specify Yr. & No.)	\$5.00	_____
Set(s) of 60 _____#	\$40.00	_____
Article Index, 1971-1979	\$1.00	_____
Wetsuit Mitt Pattern	\$1.50	_____
Safety Codes (1 Free) 50 for	\$7.50	_____
Total Products		_____

(US \$ exchange only)

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR _____

DATE ____/____/____

New Member's

Name _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY & STATE _____ ZIP _____

AWA: Taking Issue

To Join AWA:

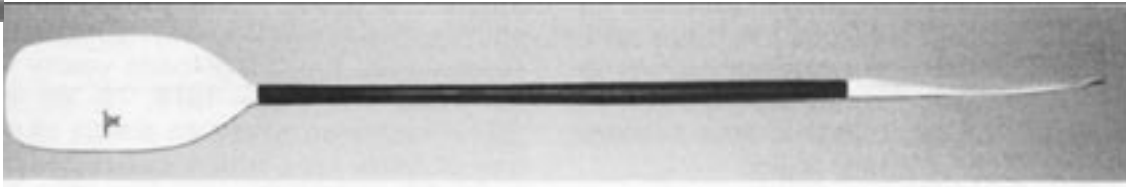
Individuals send \$12 to AWA. Circulation Mgr., 146 N. Brockway, Palatine, IL 60067. Clubs send \$15 to same address. Be sure to include club name, contact, and address as you want it listed in the Journal.

You're Not Getting your Journal of If ~~you~~ have Moved:

For any circulation problem, contact ~~fact~~ Peter N. Skinner, AWA Circulation, Box 272, Snyder Rd., West Sand Lake, NY 12196. Be sure to include new address and code number off your mailing label.

NEW PRODUCTS

WHITEWATER



RECEPTION INTRODUCES DIHEDRAL PADDLE

An all-new dihedral blade kayak paddle from Perception, Inc. is the latest offering in the kayak company's Harmony paddle line.

"The differences in this paddle from our other Harmony paddles are very subtle visually," says Perception marketing director Joe Pulliam. "You have to really look to notice the dihedral shape within the blade, or that there is less-than-standard curvature of the blade behind the shaft. But these changes make a marked difference in the way the paddle performs."

"The dihedral shape of the blade means the paddle tends to rise, instead of slicing through water," says Pulliam. "This is a very helpful design feature for paddlers in a roll situation."

"Because the dihedral blade is curved only slightly behind the shaft, the paddler will experience less flutter and a much more effective backstroke. These are extremely important benefits for the Aquabatic[®] or squirt boater."

Blade offset for the dihedral is 80°, as opposed to 90° on the standard Harmony blade. May be special ordered with the standard fiberglass shaft, knurled fiberglass shaft or graphite

shaft. Prices start at \$109.95, suggested retail. For the name of the authorized Perception dealer nearest you, write: Perception, Inc., P.O. Box 686, Liberty, South Carolina, 29657. (803) 859-7518.

PERCEPTION INTRODUCES NEW PILE WEAR FOR PADDLERS

Perception, Inc. and Moonstone Mountaineering have joined forces to produce an all-new line of Moonlite™ Pile Wear for paddlers, featuring the simplified tailoring and fast-drying pile a paddler demands.

Perception's Moonlite Pile Wear features a three-quarter sleeve basic sweater, long-sleeve deluxe sweater and long pants. Moonlite Pile stretches like nylon, but because it's a multi-filament yarn, instead of a spun yarn, it absorbs less water and dries faster than either nylon or polypropylene!

"We believe it's the best pile on the market," says Perception marketing director Joe Pulliam. "Moonlite Pile has 48% more insulation value for its weight and dries in half the time of the next best pile we could find on the market."

The material, however, is not the only thing new about Perception's Moonlite Pile Wear. The design is radically different from any other paddling pile wear.

"It's a totally unique material in the marketplace," said Moonstone's Fred Williams. "First, we got rid of the reverse pile commonly used to pull in the fabric at the waist and wrists. Basically, the last thing to dry is that reverse pile. Because it is located near the low points — the elbows and sprayskirt — it serves only to collect and hold water. The new pile garments are simply tapered and hemmed at the waist and wrist. We're relying more on the basic patterning of the sweater."



A round, contrasting collar of a stretch nylon-Lycra blend will avoid the stretched-out-neck look common in other sweaters after use.

"This will keep the sweater looking a lot more attractive over time," Williams said.

"We're improving the overall patterning to allow more freedom because arm movement is so critical to your success on the river," Williams added.

The sleeve design of the sweater is a highly modified raglan, three-quarter length in the basic version and full-length in the deluxe design. The deluxe sweater will also feature a gusseted breast pocket and a unique drawstring waist. The basic sweater will have an elasticized waistband.

The pile pants will fit snugly and will be tapered and hemmed at the ankle. Hand-warmer patch pockets will make these pants unique in the paddling industry. No-roll elastic, encased by the same Lycra trim used in the sweater neck, will provide the waistband.

Perception's new Moonlit Pile Wear is recommended for use under Perception Spray Wear, but may be worn under any shell garments. The basic sweater, deluxe sweater, and pile pants are available now through authorized Perception dealers. For the name of the dealer nearest you, write: P.O. Box 686, Liberty,

S.C. 29657. (803) 859-7518.



SEEKING SATISFACTION, SANCTITY, AND REALITY

by *Chuck Hines*

Guest Editorial

It's quite peaceful here at the top of the rapid, the 10th Class II or 11+ out of the 11 rapids that are encountered when paddling the "Lower Nolichucky." I am sitting in my cruising kayak, waiting for the others to catch up. It's late August. Jim Maynor and Will Pruett and I are guiding a bunch of beginners down this stretch of the river with some assistance

from Eileen Ellis. There are seven others in our group, most of them on just their second or third river trip.

There's nothing harsh or intimidating about the Lower Nolichucky, which starts below the well-known Nolichucky Gorge. I ran the Gorge once yearly for five years in a row — 1978, '79, '80, '81, '82 — and even wrote an article about one of those trips which was published in RIVER RUNNER magazine. I like the Class III-IV-V Gorge. It's exciting. But I'm more familiar with the Lower Nolichucky, having done it on perhaps two dozen occasions, usually with students from our Y kayaking classes.

I've run the Lower Nolichucky when the wind was whistling at 30 knots per hour and when a torrential rainstorm was in progress and when a fire was consuming homes along the river bank and when the water was just about at flood stage. But mostly I've run it when it was "simply another average Class II trip." Such is the case today. It's nothing spectacular. Still and all, it's a good way to spend a Sunday afternoon, and as I sit in an eddy above the 10th rapid, listening to the cascading of the water onto the rocks below, I reflect on the fact that only a few other 52-year-olds like myself can be found kayaking down a river on this particular day. Or any day.

Earlier in August, my wife and I spent several days skin diving at Key West and Key Largo. We'd had a lot of fun, had seen sea urchins and turtles and barracudas and an assortment of colorful fishes and interesting coral formations, but our dives had not been anything abnormal or unusual or spectacular. "Just another day on the reef." But there hadn't been many — any? — other 52-year-olds out there on the reefs, either.

Sometimes I wonder if I'm doing the right thing at my age. I have friends who are prominent attorneys, powerful businessmen, and successful physicians. The newspapers are filled with their accomplishments. My best friend of the '60's, with whom I once played top-level water polo, is now President of the U.S. Olympic Committee, and I've seen his picture in USA TODAY, PEOPLE, and other popular publications. I guess I'm a bit envious of his successes. He's certainly a "winner."

So what am I doing, at age 52, sitting in a kayak at the top of a Class II+ rapid? I'm a bit weary — we've been out on the river for three hours and my endurance isn't what it used to be. My back is hurting — the pain from my ruptured disc of 1982 has subsided but still hasn't vanished completely. What am I doing here?? and what was I doing at Sand Key and Rock Key and Grecian Rocks and other skindiving sites in the FL Keys? What was I doing earlier in the summer at Turner's Reef and Buck Island Underwater Park in the Caribbean? What prompts me to go cavorting around like a kid?

Ah, maybe that's it. Maybe I'm just trying to recapture my youth. To recapture a taste of adventure, of excitement, of enchantment with the world around me. To renew myself in God's Great Outdoors. To drink in the splendors of His Creation. To leave behind the appalling commercialism that pervades our everyday lives, even our sports, even the Olympics.

What is SPORT, anyway? Beating someone else? Being "No. 1?" Going for the gold? Going on strike for higher wages? I've been an athlete all my life, and I don't like what's happening. I'm not alone in my disapproval. The local newspaper reports that the number of boys playing high school football has decreased to the point that a few schools — even the larger schools — may have to drop the sport. The TV ratings for pro sports are sinking. And TV's monetary bid for the 1988 Olympics was only half of what the Olympic people expected. The ARTIFICIALITY of our athletic programs — plus the escalating conning, cheating, and unsportsmanlike behavior of so many athletes, coaches, owners, and entire organizations — is driving people away.

There's nothing ARTIFICIAL about this river, though. Or the rapids I already have run. Or the winding path through the rapid that lies just ahead. Or the stars in the FL Keys and the Caribbean. Or the barracudas encountered there. Or the stars above. That's why, at 52, I'm here.

NEW MEXICO RIVER CONSERVATION

by *Del DuBois*

In the southwestern portion of New Mexico, stands a highlands area known as the Mogollon Uplift. From this oldest

wilderness in the U.S. headwaters, the Gila and San Francisco Rivers. Each of these two main rivers begins in New Mexico but quickly take their water into Arizona. A situation many New Mexicans detest.

Recently, Congress has approved the Hooker Dam, or suitable alternative, to divert 18,000 acre feet/year for use in New Mexico. Five possible dam sites have been identified, one in each of the five fine paddling runs in the area. Engineers and developers prefer the Hooker site but this would back water up into the wilderness area. Aldo Leopold spent time in this beautiful area and was instrumental in having it preserved. The Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society can be expected to fight hard to stop Hooker. G. Hayduke has also expressed his opposition to the dam.

Unfortunately, however, there is a lot of local support for the dam, (some want all five built) but, considering the magnitude of the opposition, a compromise will probably be reached. This will most likely be the Connor Dam on the Middle Gila Box, just downstream from the wilderness.

None of the runs in the area receive much use. The season is short and elusive. Of the five runs, the one within the wilderness receives the most usage. The Middle Box is second from the bottom in usage. Local boaters are scarce, and those in the know — e.g., like what a lifejacket is for — are even rarer.

The Middle Box is an extremely narrow granite gorge. At one spot, a fallen tree trunk spans the gap at it's rim, 25 or 30 feet above the river, placed there a few Decembers ago when the water peaked at somewhere over 100,000 cfs. This spring I ran that gorge at a peak of 400 cfs. The seventeen mile run has two one mile sections of almost continuous class III-IV water. This is by far the toughest whitewater in the area. The wilderness section has innumerable class II's with a few class III's and several barbed wire fences. The Gila Lower Box has no rapids, and the runs on the San Francisco are no tougher than the wilderness run. The Middle Box is in both BLM and Forest service roadless areas, but neither agency has recommended the area for inclusion in the National Wilderness System.

So here we have a lonely, little known, seldom run canyon, far from any population center, being prepared for sacrifice to the gods of political compromise. New Mexico can't allow it's fair share of water to slip over the border for Arizona to use. There are Interstate Compacts to uphold, money to be made, and the need for the water is great. Requests have come in for 69,000 acre feet of the 18,000 available. Besides, nobody uses the canyon.

Boaters have their hands full trying to protect the nation's major rivers, along with the popular runs close to their hearts and homes. The mainstream environmental organizations have the Gila wilderness to protect. A worthy cause. But if this river and others like it are not saved, boating in the future may be limited to weekend forays on crowded local runs, with occasional trips down large western rivers when you win the lottery. Or we could all move to Alaska.

So what can be done? Aren't we already writing letters and signing petitions? What more can we do? We can't be expected to write letters for every little creek that's threatened. That's a lot of letters. It's a lot easier to fight real hard for a few major rivers and hope that our legislators get the message for the whole deal. Don't count on it! They are going to dam every river that they can, until all that's left are the most popular rivers of today, with six year waiting lists or lotteries with impossible odds and pages of regulations on how to dispose of your personal wastes, dreams and ambitions. And then they will try to dam those.

So what can be done? Organize. We already are organized to a degree, but we need more. There appears to be adequate national organization, and we don't want to duplicate efforts. Many local areas are sufficiently mobilized, but most are not. Every boating community needs it's organization. Local groups are ideally suited to keep track of local threats to rivers. They can put pressure on local and state politicians. They can urge local boaters to write more letters. Letter writing tables are an extremely effective way to accomplish this last goal. Grass roots organization is a key to more effective national organization.

All it takes to start a local group is two or three somewhat committed indi-

viduals. The constituency is there, it just needs focus. If you already have a local organization, drop us a line, we'd like to find out what you are doing. We'd also like to help out in any way we can. If you don't already have a local group, why not start one. Again, drop us a line, or call. We would be glad to help out. Let us know what rivers in your area are threatened, and by who. If we work together we might be able to accomplish something. There are very few, if any, rivers that we can afford to lose.

Contact the AWA Editor if you would like to save a river or stream.

BULLWINKLE'S CORNER: THE 30 MINUTE BOAT WORKOUT

Even though the workout I'm about to describe won't ever make it to syndication or Cable TV, it can be provided free of charge through the newsletter. The hot-shot racers call this workout a pyramid, and although I've had success with it in racing, it can be a very useful tool for cruising as well. Not only will it keep the paddling muscles tuned up, but it will give you the bladespeed needed to make critical ferries (like the one above the Washing Machine at 2000 CFS!), bust back up into holes that no one else can get to, or grab surfing waves off marginal eddy lines.

All you'll need for the exercise is your boat, life jacket, paddle, etc., a body of water, and either a watch with a sweep second hand or one of those nifty little digital watches with the stopwatch built in. Prepare yourself to do a lot of counting, like to 150 or more. Kayaks will count a stroke as being each time the right blade hits the water (actually 2 strokes but who wants to count to 300!) and the canoes count each time their paddle hits the water. Make sure you arm up properly first as don't want to tear your shoulders up during practice, do you? Below, you'll find the table in which the pyramid sequence is run. The numbers in parentheses are for the canoes.

- 0:00 — Start watch and paddle 30(40) strokes and rest until...
- 1:00 — Paddle 60(70) strokes and rest until...
- 3:00 — Paddle 90(105) strokes and rest until...

cont. on pg. 16

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cont. from pg. 14

- 6:00 — Paddle 120(140) strokes and rest until...
- 10:00 — Paddle 150(80) strokes and rest until...
- 13:30 — Paddle 150(180) strokes and rest until...
- 17:00 — Paddle 150(80) strokes and rest until...
- 21:00 — Paddle 90(105) strokes and rest until...
- 24:00 — Paddle 60(70) strokes and rest until...
- 26:00 — Paddle 30(40) strokes and rest until...
- 27:00 — 30:00 COOL DOWN!!!!

If you'll notice, you gradually increase the number of strokes while gradually decreasing the amount of time (AND REST!!) you get to do the set. Don't feel bad if you can't do the 150's right away and don't resort to sloppy form just to get the strokes in. Kayakers need to concentrate on shoulder rotation and keeping the top hand at about eye level. Actually punching the top hand forward as the torso pulls the bottom hand and blade through the water and removing the blade once it arrives at the hip. One way to check for shoulder rotation is to watch your life jacket zipper (assuming that it fit snugly) out of the bottom of your eye. If the zipper is moving back and forth laterally across the spray skirt chances are pretty good you're getting good rotation but even better is to have a friend watch. Canoers, too, can benefit from torso rotation to ease the strain on the arm muscles. Common sense would dictate that the shoulder and back muscles are much larger and therefore better equipped to carry the load than the smaller arm muscles. Some paddlers will flail away looking fast and flashy but not get anywhere. The bottom line is moving the boat.

After you get to where you can get the 150's in with 10 or 15 seconds of rest in before the next set, you deserve some sort of medal! The best I've ever been able to do is get 40 seconds of rest in but then I'm not a speed demon by any means. You can vary the routine to prevent boredom by paddling half of the sequences backwards (in a straight line of course!). Canoers have the option of using the cross-over forward stroke (quicker but more tiring) or switching hands (slower but giving the body and equal workout on both sides. Ambidexterous paddlers (I hate 'em) may do the first half of the routine on one side and the 2nd half on the other.

There are no guarantees but most sports coaches will tell you that you don't go out and bike 20 miles a day to become a better weightlifter and you don't lift weights if you want to be a better runner. To quote the German slalom coach, "As much as possible, time in the boat!"

THE UPPER YOUGH— TWO PERSPECTIVES

by Robert Glanville

Western Maryland's Upper Youghio-gheny ("Yough") has an intimidating reputation. It is a steep (up to 120 ft. per mile), boulder-choked, small volume (500 cfs at normal flows) stream that demands precise boat control and immediate route recognition.

My first trip on "the Upper," as it is widely known, was more than two years ago and occurred shortly into my paddling career. It was my first experience on a steep, tight stream and, although I was in the company of two veteran Upper Youghers, it was a frightening trip. The succession of mini-waterfalls

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that forms the core of the difficult middle section of the river blurred together into a single horrendous rapid some five miles long. My objective was simply to survive and, while there was at times some doubt about whether I would, we all made it safely off the river. My wrist ached for weeks from the death-grip on my paddle during a pin at Zinger and the abrasion on my nose from an encounter with the river bottom eventually healed. My ego took somewhat longer to recover from the bruising it took.

This Fall I returned to the Upper on Friday, September 20th — the day before the Gauley Festival. Dozens of other paddlers had the same idea. Since the Upper is dam-fed and, except during the Spring, is blessed only with a two-hour release, Monday through Friday, we decided to make it a three-day weekend and break up the 7½ hour trip to the Gauley by spending Friday on the Upper.

This year's trip was made in a Noah Jeti on loan from my wife. Although the Jeti is an 80 gallon boat, it is only 9 ft. 10 in. long. While some paddlers disparage the Jeti and urge you to get a "real boat," the Jeti's short length and great turning ability proved ideal for the quick maneuvering often required on the Upper. Its high volume nose kept it up on the surface in the many steep drops and out of the weird sub-surface currents that make maintaining control difficult. While the two plus years of paddling experience I had accumulated since my last trip to the Upper undoubtedly contributed to converting a nightmare into a pleasurable experience, the Jeti was also partially responsible. It's the perfect boat for that river.

It's hard to be intimidated by a river, no matter how difficult, when you see a dozen paddlers in every eddy—they've obviously survived the next drop and not **all** of them can be **that** much better than you are. Thus, river crowding has its consolations.

The Upper starts out slowly at Sang Run, some eleven river miles upstream from Friendsville. After several miles of riffles and swift water, the paddler arrives at Gap Falls, the first significant drop. Gap Falls is a Class 3 at normal water levels. It is a river-wide sloping ledge, that is usually run in the chute on the far left, which contains a good

surfing and ender hole. There follows about two miles of fairly continuous boulder bed Class 3 water where the paddler can (and should) practice catching micro-eddies in preparation for things to come.

Thereafter the steepest section of the river is encountered. It features a 120 foot per mile gradient for nearly four miles (one of the steepest in the East). This section is marginal Class 5 at 2.0 ft. on the gauge and gets exponentially more difficult about 2.5 ft. A number of very good paddlers have reported that it becomes terrifying above 3.5 ft. Portions of it have reportedly been paddled as high as 6ft. The major drops include The Bastard, Charlie's Choice, National Falls, Tommy's Hole, Zinger, Hinzerling Falls, Meat Cleaver, Cheeseburger Falls, Powerful Popper, and Wright's Hole, among others. Many of these drops consist of a series of narrow, twisting waterfalls— 3-6 ft. each—with bizarre crosscurrents and house-size boulders obstructing the line of sight. The pinning possibilities are endless and there is no room for indecision. Routes through these boulder mazes are often not obvious and occasionally the paddler finds himself saying, "that can't be the way," later to learn that it is the only way. Accordingly, unless you have extraordinary boat control and route finding ability, it is best to paddle the Upper in the company of someone familiar with the river. Such people can be found in Friendsville almost any Friday morning and a number of them live there.

After Wright's hole the gradient lessens fairly abruptly and the river finishes with four miles or so of swift water interspersed with minor rapids and riffles. The takeout is in downtown Friendsville.

Several years ago, before commercial river running became well-established on the Upper, it was thought to be unsafe to leave shuttle vehicles at the put-in because of the risk of vandalism. There now appears to be a detente between river users and local landowners and this risk apparently has diminished substantially.

For those who would prefer to see the river for the first time from a raft, at least two outfitters regularly run trips on the Upper: Upper Yough Outfitters and Precision Rafting, both headquartered

in Friendsville.

In sum, the Upper Yough can be a nightmare if you're not up to it, but it can also be one of the most exciting river trips in the East, if you have the necessary skill and are in the company of someone familiar with the river. I've tried both approaches, and I much prefer the latter.

EXTENDING YOUR KAYAK SEASON

by *Jim Ongena*

We Eastern paddlers, and, to a lesser extent West Coast Kayakers as well, are more or less content to begin our season in April and end it in October. This year I decided to push the season a bit and continue right into December, and in Montreal this means short, cold days and very few partners. Why, you ask, would anyone in their right mind want to paddle in such conditions?

One cold mid-November day I asked myself this question as I sat in an eddy trying desperately to decide if I had a paddle or not: I could see it right there in my hands but damned if I could feel it. I also had intermittent shivering sessions and usually couldn't feel my feet. On top of all this, the desire to play wasn't there and I found myself just "floating" the river. We reached the take-out after dark (due to the short days) and no one had their usual "ender" stories as we silently carried our boats to the car.

This day got me thinking and made me realize that we either had to pack up our boats for the year or learn a few things about cold weather equipment. I wasn't willing to put my boat away yet because I find paddling in the late Fall very enjoyable; it is a good time to paddle without the usual crowds that prevail in the summer months. This meant that I simply had to learn more about cold water equipment.

The next weekend I began researching new gear and experimenting with ideas for the hands, feet, body and head. (It was obvious to me that the **only** reason no one enjoyed the previous weekend was the cold and I believed there had to be a solution.) Here is what I came up with from the head down: a

bathing cap under my helmet worked wonderfully. I still got sharp pains in my ears whenever I tipped however, and learned to pull it down over my ears. This meant I couldn't hear quite as well but I no longer minded being upside down... one step closer to comfort! Other ideas that help are neoprene caps or wool tuques. The type of helmet makes quite a difference also as the "pro-tech" covers more area, has more insulation and is therefore warmer than the "ace".

Over my body I traditionally wore polypropelene, pile, or bunting under my spray jacket with a farmer john wet suit. This worked O.K. until temperatures got down to 0° and then the only recourse was a dry suit. I tried different types and found all to be superior to my wetsuit. This garment, like much of the gear I experimented with, was borrowed from the sailing or wind surfing people. These sports are being innovative with cold water equipment and we kayakers are just beginning to borrow from them. Dry suits can be made of 4 different materials; PVC, nylon, neoprene, or breathables such as Gore-Tex or Avitalastic. I preferred the 2 piece, nylon suit primarily because it had boots attached and was very supple and easy to move in. Dry suits do work wonderfully but they also have drawbacks. They are expensive and more fragile than wet suits. If they tear early in the trip you may have **no** insulation for the rest of the day unless you carry duck tape or wear a wet suit underneath. You basically have the same options under your dry suit as you do under your paddling jacket except you don't need nearly as much because you've trapped the air and it helps warm you. Polypropelene is best because it wicks moisture away from your skin and keeps you feeling dry. On very cold days it is best to go with an expedition weight polypropelene rather than pile or bunting because of overheating. My last experiment was with pile under the dry suit and I had to keep rolling just to cool off... in fact I was too warm on a -4° day. Don't expect any dry suit to keep you perfectly dry or you'll be very disappointed; They're good but not perfect.

A final possibility and a very effective & versatile option is a farmer john wet suit under a dry top with a jacket between them. This is a very good system and adaptable for summer or winter.

The hands prove to be the most difficult thing to deal with because you must maintain a good "feel" for the paddle while insulating them from the cold. A wood paddle is preferable to metal as it conducts less cold. Pogies do help but are a bit awkward and useless when temperatures get down to -3° ish. The neoprene model that closes completely over the hand works quite well, however, it freezes solid when you stop for better grip, dryness and wind protection, however this only works when temperatures are between 5°C and 10°C. There are many types and styles of neoprene and rubber gloves that grip the paddle well and still give insulation. A piece of good advice here is to try different ones and add wool or polypropylene liners on the colder days. The best idea I discovered for the hands is a 1/8" neoprene 3 fingered mitt with nylon on the inside and neoprene on the outside. It must be thin or you'll lose the feel for the paddle and it must be neoprene because nylon or lycra coatings slip on the paddle. There is a new product called Aquaseal that can be put on the palms for better grip; it is also great for repairing anything rubber or neoprene.

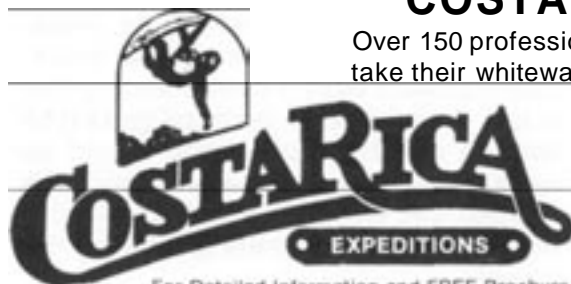
The feet are the last area of concern. Thanks to the wind surfing or scuba diving people again, we no longer must wear our old sneakers over wool socks. There are a number of good neoprene boots, available complete with heavy soles which work very well. These can be 3/4 inch for extra warmth because "feel" is not important here. Another good solution for the feet is a dry suit that comes with latex feet. They are thin and fragile so must be covered with a sneaker or neoprene bootie. Wool or pile socks next to your skin offer more insulation on the colder days. The cold we're protecting ourselves from is the

cold of immersion in the water or the cold from the air above or both. If the river is warm and easy but the air is cold, then you would layer up the upper body and not be terribly concerned about a swim. On the other hand, if the water is very cold and the air reasonably warm, you must protect yourself against the possible swim — especially if your roll is unreliable or the river is difficult. The worst situation is a cold day on a difficult, cold river and this would necessitate protecting from the convection of the air and the conduction of immersion; a wet suit under a dry suit with a pile, synthilla, or wool jacket between!

A word must be said about the dangers of kayaking in cold conditions. Things don't always go as smoothly as one is used to in July. Portages are icy and very slippery, your throw line freezes enough to become useless. Your gloves freeze solid if you take them off and your upper body and helmet get a nice little glaze of ice over them. A swim becomes much more serious and paddlers must really make sure they can deal with hypothermia as it becomes a real possibility. You will have to chip the ice out of your boat every morning unless you sponge it completely after use and all your gear must be kept warm overnight. I have even had ice droplets form on my eyelashes; what a feeling that was!

In summary, I can say that I now enjoy my kayaking very much on days when the air is -3°C and the water is -5°C. I am warm and no longer intimidated by the cold so I can play as much as I could in July. Cost is a problem and so is finding partners but to offset this you have the rivers to yourself. I used to spend many November and December weekends wishing for dry rock to climb or waiting for the ice to form up; but now I am usually surfing a hole on one of our local rivers with the old feeling of solitude in an uncrowded playground.

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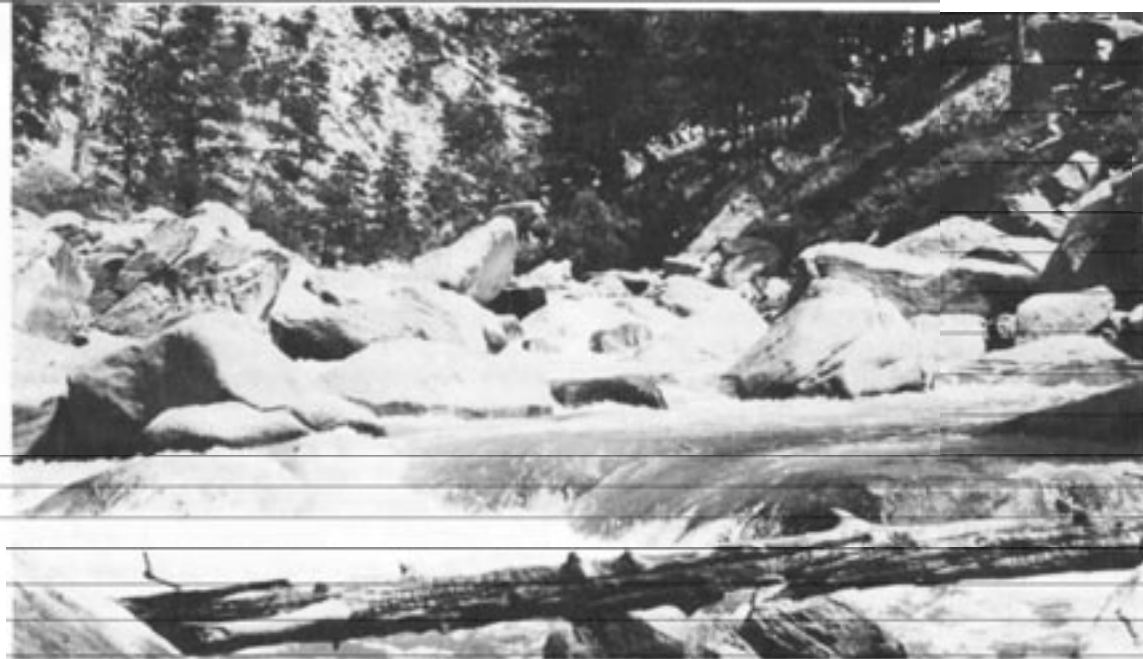
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LARAMIE CANYON RUN

by Jim Rada

In mythology there are several stories of places that will appear for a day or a few days and then disappear for many years. There are rivers which undergo the same almost mystical transformation: coming to life for a day or a week after decades of natural or man made drought. In the summer of 1983 I was there at the witching hour.

My summer of Western boating was just about at an end. It had been eventful and memorable including 12 days on the Grand Canyon during flood, a selection of some of the finest runs of the Rockies and days spent in the company of friends. It was with a mixture of sadness and satisfaction that I tied the boats down in Encampment, Wyoming for the long drive back to Minnesota. Two of my friends, Pete Cary and Tim Nelson, were already probably halfway home, flying across Nebraska on the interstate. Tom Schellburg and I were going to take a leisurely trip back, maybe hiking for a day somewhere.

Sunday morning I woke early on Battle Pass and went for a walk. There were still patches of snow in the Sierra Madre, but they were dwindling, and the rivers, too, were falling, now after the "Great Flood" of '83. Serenity filled me as I spent a few moments lingering beside an alpine lake, a last sniff of the wind blowing over the Continental Divide, then we plunged down to the prairies below.

As we crossed the antelope speckled prairie of the Laramie Plains, Tom and I decided to take a little detour, just for fun to look at the Laramie Canyon. Four years earlier Tom and I had spent a memorable day just west of Wheatland, Wyoming running Bluegrass Creek (See AWA XXVI, 5). Over the years We returned to run Bluegrass again as well as a section of the Laramie below Wheatland Reservoir #2. On every occasion only a trickle of water was running into the Laramie Canyon for immediately above the canyon water is diverted through a tunnel to be used for irrigation elsewhere. For the past few decades the Laramie Canyon has been nothing more than a brook, a little water sliding down the throat of this dynamic slit through the Laramie Mountains. 1000 feet of elevation lost in 10 miles, in a lurking canyon hundreds of feet deep, for the most part unknown and unapproached by man—these are the statistics. But since the tunnel, home for dam-building beaver and small willows taking hold where once a river roared.

Suddenly we were almost there, crossing Bluegrass Creek, the water lower than a snake's belly. I'd been hoping that in this year of floods, perhaps there'd be enough water so that some would be spilling down the Laramie—it didn't look hopeful. Oh, well—it's a nice area to hike we thought as we turned off toward the tunnel.

For a few miles we whizzed over newly laid asphalt, which caused us to laugh, reminiscing about the rutted road of year ago. Then it was back to the dirt, but smooth. The lovely hills and mountains brought back fond memories. Over one more hill and we'd be there.

I could see the river—my jaw dropped it was running!!! I stared in awe as perhaps 1500 cfs slid beneath the one lane bridge, down into the Canyon. "What should we do?!?!?!!!!" echoed simultaneously in both my mind and Tom's. Two o'clock in the afternoon—ten miles—1000 feet down—inaccessible canyon—forty mile shuttle—only one car—are there trees? fences? how long will it stay up? has it ever been run?? WHAT IS GOING ON???

I had no maps with me, we were in a quandry—how can we do this and still get back to Minnesota Tuesday night? God never allows one to be tempted without providing a means of escape. Down the road towards us came a four wheel drive containing a friendly Colorado geologist out collecting specimens. He shared with us a wealth of information: water is spilling because earlier high water clogged the tunnel with debris, the water has dropped substantially in the past week, he'd seen no kayakers, the river hadn't run like this in at least 20 years, he had over the years walked almost the entire canyon, and thought scouting/portaging would be possible as there are never sheer walls on both sides. Fences? He can't remember.

He shows us a topo map and a plan develops. It's too late to start such an epic run today so we'll first walk in to scout from the cliffs to get an idea of the difficulty, then check out Palmer Canyon Road (the takout), get water and food in Wheatland, and if time permits, check out a ravine which appears to be usable as a takeout after the first three miles.

The hike from the dirt road to the canyon rim is an education in the harshness of the land, sun beating down and cactus spines creating a slalom hike. Soon we are in a paradise, though. Ponderosa pines, meadows of grass speckled generously with blue and yellow wildflowers, and the big boulders. One of the reasons I love the Laramie Range is because the rock outcrops



Tom stairsteps down the Laramie.

often consist of huge pinkish-brown boulders with excellent traction so that you can clamber around like an elf in a giant's sandpile. Clamber! Clamber! Then the roar of water, birdssoaring, the rocks open and I gasp. Hundreds of feet below the Laramie crashes between, under over and on mammoth boulders that were once brothers to those I'm standing on. A full mile of the river is visible at my feet—and what a mile! Two rapids which easily must be IV+, probably V stand out. It looks like the living, screaming, pounding end of the world. I'm glad we didn't just put in at 2p.m. The rest of the day passes quickly-takout is fine (water is running over the road!), we get water, have a barbeque, I light off a few fireworks, and then sleep finds us at the put in.



Tight maneuvers in the Laramie Canyon.

We wake early, eat a quick breakfast—but something has changed—the river has dropped to only about 500 cfs! As we suit up, our geologist friend drives by, the tunnel is unplugged—that's why the drop in flow. We put in about 7:30, I'm a bit relieved that the intensity of the river has diminished. I want to see the whole canyon and this water level may permit it. Our plan is set. Tom offers to take out at the three mile point and pick me up at the end of the Canyon. I'm very grateful to Tom for offering to do this as there was no way we could both run the whole canyon and then do the forty mile shuttle through the outback.

After a bend or two we enter the canyon—it is a delight! We stair-step down between the towering boulders and enter the shadowland of the Laramie. On a ledge high above us a huge bird sits on a rough nest of sticks, the sky is rimmed by the cliffs we stared down from only yesterday. Drop—drop-drop-DropDrop. The chutes follow one another rapidly—we leap a five foot drop—snag eddies for a quick look downstream—laugh and smile inside and out. How can I be so lucky? Here I am running one of the rivers of my dreams—known to me for years, but written off as dead. Today it lives!!! So do Tom and I.

I take pictures, we occasionally come to willow thickets, but in general the

river has blasted itself clean, sweeping away the accumulation of the years, breathing a riverine breath of waves, holes, chutes, bubbles. The beauty of the scattered pines, meadows and rocks is like elixir—I am profoundly happy.

The river begins to ease, the cliffs slide back and a grassy bowl opens. Tom and I look for the ravine. We see one, it looks right and Tom and I say goodbye as he heads for the road far to the south. I am alone on the river now, moving easily downstream. For a while the rapids dwindle, the country is open, I see the gate of a ranch road, then the river turns sharply left and I slowly enter the main canyon.

The river gradually intensifies, the walls climb—heaps of jumbled rocks above the pine parkland floor. I stop for pictures, water, a bit of chocolate. Sometimes I think "Boy, this would've been nicer with more water," but soon these thoughts are forgotten as the gradient increases. Eddyhopping becomes necessary and then I see a towering block of rock squarely damning the river. I scurry to shore and scout. It is a place of ancient and spartan majesty. From high on the right cliffs a stream of boulders stretches down to the river. The boulders have jammed in them the decaying logs of a flood long ago, cobwebs thick between the rocks. The river plunges and sieves between these monuments—I could see no way through. As I portaged over these humpbacked gremlins, I paused to watch three vultures floating high above me. "A sign?" I chuckled to myself.

It was a sign. The river was serious now, many games of tag were played between me and the river—catching slots—some barely wider than my boat, eddying above rockpiles—some of which proved runnable, some mean, ugly, crashing into undercuts or containing impassable zig-zag chutes. A second portage came, then a third, a fourth. There were many rapids as well. How far had I come? I didn't know. What time was it? The sun refused to tell. What direction was I going? Downstream.

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The canyon walls rose higher, a small spring bubbled in. I was growing a little tired, a little worried. Another portage—and now there was poison ivy on the shore, forcing an arduous portage over the boulders. Downstream the river fell away again through a maze of chutes, and on either side cliffs edged in. Another series of drops sped beneath my boat and I was in another eddy, craning my neck for another look, hoping for another chute. I had to scout—no passage. The portage was difficult. I began to wonder if this was the beginning of an ordeal.

After a brief rest I put back in, I had to keep moving, and then God provided the way of escape, for a good sized valley came in on the left (Duck Creek?), the river eased and the canyon opened a little. Soon I passed a small ranch on river left. The whitewater kept coming but it was more open, easier, wavier. The canyon was no longer as deep. The rock changed nature, and changed again. I was past the toughest stretch.

The canyon wound down slowly with many more drops of open boulder sort and I knew I was well on my way to exiting the canyon. One last burst of big rounded boulders, then I swung out past a cabin into ranch land lined with cottonwoods. I couldn't relax yet, I had to watch for fences (I have a good scar from one fence encounter). My eyes ached as I squinted in the last afternoon sun. No fences. They had all been swept away, the strands dangling along the shoreline. It seemed to take hours to reach Palmer Canyon Road—there it was, there was Tom.

It was 5:30. I'd been on the river 10 hours, not dallying except to take some pictures. I was tired, thirsty, hot. My eyes burnt out. We loaded up and headed out. There were many miles to Minnesota. As we drove I hung me feet out the window in the 100° heat. My mind dimly pondered the day: one of the great western canyons—now I'd seen it, been part of it. Started the run immersed in beauty and joy, ended tired and silent. I watched a thunderhead pile up in the east, we talked of the next time we would run it, but when would that be?

It was nearly sunset an hour later when I stuck my head out the window and looked back. The wind of driving made my hair flow into space. Across a plain of grass stood the gray bulk of



Pines, a tranquil beach and a friendly boat. Only "thou" is missing. The gradient eases.

Laramie Peak, the pimples of the other peaks, and I thought of the nick where the Laramie Canyon lay. The cool of evening had revived me, and I smiled, "I have been there, in the heart of the Laramie Range, in the shadow of the canyon walls. This was the one magic day of the century when the river was again a river, alive, and I was there to know it and for a day to share its secrets."

Whatever happens, whether the Laramie runs again or not, whatever dam-builders do, this day can't be erased—it is mine. July 18, 1983, a day of magic—and thank God. I was there!

— First Descent —

Footnote: In July of 1984, Tom and I were returning from another trip to the Rockies. We decided to stop and look at the Laramie again because there had been very heavy rains in the Laramie area causing flash flooding. We arrived late in the afternoon, the trees still hung with drops of rain, and creeks booming.

cont. on pg. 35



Where Toucans Dare — Part II Paddling in Southern Mexico

by Sam Moore

the competition for light and water. Strangler Figs mounted trees on the canyon rim and their vines extended all the way to the river. The light reflecting into the canyon had a magical effect on my spirit, making the hardships endured seem worthwhile.

We lunched just below the confluence of the Jatate and the Santa Cruz at an abandoned Mahogany ranch. With the noonday sun beating down and the air temperature approaching 90 degrees we paddled into the Land of the Maya. Our first encounter with these friendly people came while in our boats. We paddled up to a group of children in a 20 foot mahogany doughnut (kayuoko). They were frightened at our sight and left. I paddled up to the boat and inspected its construction, made from one great Mahogany tree.

We paddled some 20 miles that day encountering only class II water. Paddling through the lush valley rimmed by 6000 ft. peaks provided a visual treat. We made camp in a field infested with chiggers and carpenter ants. Setting up camp proved to be a scratching experience. Relief came only when we constructed a three tiered hammock city in the few trees that were close to camp. We spent the evening hours swinging in the breeze and story telling. As the sun set a large flock of parrots flew over our camp, chattering angrily.

A few of the locals gathered in camp, watching as we made supper from the freeze dried pouches. They were very interested in our stoves that used no wood and our "Plastico" boats.

In the morning we bade farewell to the chiggers that remained in camp and paddled deeper into the jungle. The rapids were small but plentiful, making the miles go quickly. We passed several villages along the route, small rafts and kayuokos lined the bank. The people in these villages were short in stature and very dark skinned. When they smiled you could see the influence of refined sugar in their diet sans a tooth brush. They wore colorful clothing, many women and girls wore long golden earrings. I tried to photograph these people but their shy nature and my not being able to speak Mayan hampered the effort.

We made camp near the small village named Avinal. We were invited to spend the evening with the only representative of the Mexican Government in the area, the hydrometric station attendant. He told us of a small revolution a few years ago in the area which sparked all our interest, and how the army had been sent in to quell the uprising. After supper many children gathered around our camp quietly watching as we cleaned up the dishes. At this time Dave Weiland and Mike Weeks reached into the dry

bags and produced toys, frisbees, and balloons for the children. They played until dark. At first light the next morning a crowd gathered at our camp. All the children from the village had gathered in our camp ready to play. Dave spent a great deal of time teaching them to throw the Frisbee. All the villagers watched from the river bank as we departed doing eskimo rolls for their enjoyment.

A mile downstream from Avinal the limestone mountains were broken by a narrow crevice. Here the flat pastoral waters of the Jatate changed their character by some mix of physics and chemistry, into a gorge of travertine dams. The area surrounding the river is noted by the karst topography with sink holes and caves. The river is supported by a large underground river system with high levels of calcium. As water travels through the gorge calcium is deposited in the cascades much like the formation of stalagmites and stalagmites in caves. The Jatate here has a azure blue color and looks like a group up Havasu Creek.

Approaching the first major drop the anxiety and frustration of the past few days dwindled into history. I had come the long and winding road to get to this gorge, it would be worth the effort. Past the first rapid, small waterfalls came cascading into the river at a large pool. Lush plants towered all about, and I looked up a thousand foot to the rim above with awe. In the first hour we ran 10 or so class III-IV drops, these were a mix of travertine with boulders interlaced for good measure. Every hundred feet or so the group stopped to boat scout the next drop. The water volume was around 1500 cfs here and the gradient was averaging 200 feet per mile. It was truly Nirvana, a whitewater paradise uncluttered by human footprints and garbage. With the first flips came the first minor injuries. Travertine ledges are sharp and will collect the skin from knuckles if contacted. The rapids grew larger and more technical with each drop. Violent eddy lines directed our boats like we were under tow. Looking up stream from below the rapids we would shake our heads and pinch each other to make sure it wasn't a dream. In conversation that afternoon we had moved the Jatate from its idyllic spot to

any number of places each in our own back yard.

I paddled up slowly to a drop so large that from its lip I could not see any pool below. As people emerged from their boats some looked for a sneak route through the rapid. Neil Kahn looked at me as I walked up, "Looks pretty knarley to me" he said. Although I had never heard knarley used in this particular context I knew exactly what it meant. As some did the boatwalk around this drop others were looking for the eternal line. The spot of least resistance and maximum ride through a rapid. A fair bit of scouting indicated that this rapid would be runnable. Four members of the group toppled down the cascade, bouncing off rocks into the rush. All started from the same part of the river, but I don't think anyone ran the drop as planned. At about 4:00 pm we found a level spot of ground. A machete and plastic paddle blades proved to be good instruments for clearing the jungle. Here we made camp. The full moon that night illuminated the limestone walls with an erie light that reflected on the river and rapids below.

We were on the river early the fourth day. Our plan was to paddle to the confluence of the Rio Tzaconeja (pronounced soc-o-ne-ha) some seven miles and 1400 feet below our camp. From the first paddle stroke large travertine rapids were the rule. Paddling up to the granddaddy rapid I could not see the tops of the trees below the drop. Below the clean horizon line, the river turned into a long green tongue tipped with a maelstrom of holes and cross-currents blasting away at the river bottom. Several folks ran off the soles of their booties looking for the line. Others stood on the bank like a statue not wanting to show emotion. Cully led the drop descending the first 15 foot slide then sweeping right to avoid the large hole in the center of the drop. Cully fired off a couple of paddle strokes as he emerged from the slide that pushed him into to the train of exploding waves. Here he was able to descend the next 15 foot drop with enough speed to escape the river wide hydraulic below. Boater after boater challenged the drop all having successful runs. Cameras followed each boater clicking away to document the descent. An hour was

spent at this rapid, playing and admiring its impressive drop. The sensation of glory soon faded into the next rapid and the next. We were overcome with the sheer number of rapids bunched into one river. Imagine paddling down a 25 foot sliding board with limestone towers reminiscent of Chinese temples surrounding you. As you reach the bottom you're catapulted over a 5 foot vertical drop. This is the Jatate river at its best, almost more fun than legal. As the day wore on we began to boat scout many of the rapids, saving time and energy. The group paddled nonstop throughout the afternoon except a short time for lunch. Approaching a horizon line Cully luckily remembered this one was good for a scout. A glance at the large boulder resting at the bottom of the drop convinced even the most skeptical, a portage was in order here. Carrying our boats around the left side of the drop we passed the entrance to a cave. Water emerged from the underground chasm, but we had no time to investigate.

As the day wore on the Jatate tested not only the mettle of our spirits but our equipment as well. The group began to split into several units of 4 to 5 boaters working as a team. Late in the afternoon we emerged from the canyon proper to see the river separate into channels. The canyon walls receded away from the river slipping into the large mountains that surrounded us. After the canyon broke away I could smell smoke, the first signs of man since Avinal two days ago. Around each island we looked for the confluence of the Rio Tzaconeja, our camp, only to find another rapid. I eddied out above a rapid in time to see Gary Welch paddle over a drop then pitch his kayak on a rock. The boat appeared to be in a fixed vertical position then suddenly the Mirage folded over. Trying to escape he managed to twist the boat from the pin sending him sans the boat swimming in the hole below. Worn to the bone we portaged the drop as Gary performed a self rescue. While Gary emptied his boat and restraightened his walls others looked for alternative routes through the drop. Some fifty yards below the drop we reached the Tzaconeja and camp.

Our two shuttle drivers had hiked five hours from a road head to the con-

fluence at our camp. With them came a resupply of tequila, and Candice Butterworth carrying an inflatable kayak. She would join us for the rest of the trip. We revelled at our success of the day lifting liquid spirits until the bottles were empty. All slept well under the full moon.

The Confluence with the Tzaconeja brought an abrupt end to the travertine rapids. I reasoned that an influence from the pH of the Tzaconeja water might account for this phenomenon. This change on the fifth day revealed rapids with familiar boulder strewn rock gardens and other characteristics of Eastern rivers. The Jatate at times was clogged with huge boulders and routes were barely discernable from the shore. At the first large rapid Charles tested the strength Fiberlastic tm. as a rock breaking material. The rocks won! In the lower canyon the presence of man was more evident. We saw numerous trails extending to the river bank, several Balsa rafts lined the banks at these intersections. Few of the locals were to be seen.

The gradient of the stream had lessened from the upper canyon but an increase in volume had countered the difference. Numerous waterfalls cascaded off the green canyon walls into the river from various heights. Below our lunch stop several large waves provided just the break for a surfing contest. After paddle throwing stunts and other hot-dogging we headed down stream for new game. Approaching the next drop I could see this rapid would be serious business. Looking at the 70 foot drop I knew it would be more fun than I could stand. So did everyone else! A decision was quickly made to portage the rapid and a route was selected. This portage brought home the adage "easier said than done"! The rapid had sucked all the banks into its hold and left nothing but cliff around the edge of the rapid. The portage was one to be proud of, 18 independent individuals working together not unlike a bucket fire brigade of the old west. We slipped throw ropes around the cliff and portaged the equipment efficiently taking only 90 minutes. The portion of river we portaged was so intense that none of our groups could even rate this drop into a class VI. We made camp below the drop on a large sand bar. The evening routine was

broken up by a popup contest in the wash of the large rapid.

The goal of day was to paddle some twenty miles to a town called San Quentine where Cully had a resupply of food flown in. Below the put in at the first drop indecisive paddle strokes gave way to spectacular backenders. The remainder of the rapids were unremarkable save one we named Dads' Delight. Upon entering the last eddy above the drop Dave Weiland (affectionately known as Dad) flipped on the eddy line. Fortunately he was not above the surfaceto see his plight as his boat carried him over the 9 foot cascade into the hole. I watched as Dave demonstrated the hole was not a keeper. In the afternoon rapids gave way to swift current where a section of lowland jungle was unfolding before our eyes. Large leafed plants stretched into the river, and an abundance of birds were our constant companions. The tracks left on the banks by monkeys and Jaguars always drew a crowd. Strange smells of the river flora would send noses into the air searching for the elusive plant from which the scent came. Indian women were now a familiar site washing clothes in the river.

As we approached the area around San Quintine we passed under the first bridge (small foot bridge) since the put in some 70 miles upstream. At San Quintine we loaded the 4 burlap sacks into Glenns' raft for a short paddle to our camp. Locating a large sand bar we made camp and divided the food. Now that the rapids were over our attention became focused on the refuges again. Looking at the maps we targeted 30 miles for day seven camping at the entrance to Colorado Canyon on the Rio Lacuntun.

The first boats left camp at 8:00 am the next day. After some 3 hours paddling we approached a large launcha with a 70 horsepower Mercury engine. Bret went up to a house to talk with the owner while we admired this piece of American Craftsmanship. Within a couple of minutes Bret emerged saying the owner had no gas. If he could get any it would cost \$4.00 per gallon. After hearing this our boats were pointed downstream in search of moving water. By midday the Sun brought its rays on us full force and having no rapids the heat was intense.

Late in the afternoon we passed the confluence of the Rio Santo Domingo. We paddled by with little fanfare as several locals watched with great interest. In the heat of the afternoon the group spread out taking breaks from the sunlight as necessary. We stopped for the day at the entrance to Colorado Canyon. Our camp was a beautiful sand beach protected from the evening sun. After a period of two hours our entire group had not arrived, and speculation was given on their whereabouts. An hour later three boats came into view, but I could see only two people. When the boats came closer I could see one boat was towing another and still only two heads could be seen. Candice paddled up in the kayak first telling that Dave had become ill after lunch and Mike had laid him in the inflatable kayak because he was too sick to sit up. As they paddled to shore I took immediate steps to address the situation. Upon examination it was my feeling that Dave was suffering from heat stroke. In the 90 degree temperature Dave shivered under three sleeping bags while Cully prepared a liter of Gatoraid. I encouraged him to drink it all. Afterwards he was able to sit up. During the evening he drank two more liters of water. At dusk two locals visited our camp. In conversation several of our group picked up a lot of misinformation which bred paranoia in the camp. They told us there would be no gas on the lower Lacuntun. The gurrellias were frequent visitors in the area, and banditos were on the river. Their major concern was the difficulty of Colorado Canyon where our boats would sink. This last tidbit was the least troubling story.

We were on the water by 7:00 am on day 8. Dave looked much improved but he said he was still weak. With our first paddle strokes we sped into Colorado Canyon. The whole force of the river was constricted into a channel no more than 20 feet wide in certain places. Although the gradient was low there were forceful crosscurrents moving our boats in directions not of our choosing. The canyon had a mysterious aura at 7:30 in the morning. I could imagine guerillas behind every tree peering down on us through the morning fog. Luckily the canyon was only a few miles long not



Footbridge along the Jatate River in Southern Mexico.

allowing my imagination to get out of hand. Below the canyon we regrouped as the Lacuntun opened into a broad valley. Here it appeared the river turned into a lake, all current stopped. Now only paddle power would bring us to the launcha we needed. At mid morning could hear the faint drone of an engine. Our first response was to look for a launcha. We had to settle for a view of two Piper Cubs as they buzzed 300 feet above. Shoulders to be grind we paddled on. The lack of current had a debilitating effect on our psyche. Some five miles downstream from the canyon the current picked up. With the current we could make miles and pass on an area where the river flows as close as one Kilometer to Guatemala. At around 11:00 we passed the mouth of the Rio Lscan. As we passed a large launcha motored up behind carrying several passengers and cargo. Bret made no delay in contacting the driver. Not wanting to look to desparate we paddled on. A few minutes later Bret rejoined the anxious group. As he paddled to catch up with the lead boats rumors preceded him. We stopped long enough to hear the good news. Bret said the driver would take us out in the morning for the equivalent of \$240 in pesos. When will he take us, when do we pay, how long will it take, and a myriad of other questions came from the group. When Bret answered with tomorrow and one day, I could see the boats virtually levitate above the river. This is psychology at its best or so I thought at the time. Another mile or so down stream I heard the drone of the planes again. They were headed in

the opposite direction but paid more attention to our group on this pass. We waved and smiled as they flew over. An hour from now the pilots could be popping a cole one in the shade. There was no shade on the river.

We lunched on a sandbar talking of what other rivers we might run later in the week. Glenn commented that the next bend would bring us within 1 Kilometer of the border with Guatemala and we would pass the first refugee camp. Our plan was to pass quickly and quietly. Soon we were on the river again. As I neared that fateful bend I could see locals standing on the bank and several boats near. One of the men yelled at the lead boat and motioned him to the bank. In several minutes we all were gathered on the bank searching for our identification papers. Bret encouraged our patience as he talked to the Migracion Officer. Then Bret asked for a volunteer to unpack their boat. The volunteer laid out the contents of the boat to be examined by the Migracion Officer. Once the official saw a camera he took a keen interest in the contents of our boats asking for more volunteers. As more gear was examined, a small pile of cameras was set aside from the rest of our gear. Several people gathered in the shade to watch the officer perform his duties. Soon we were told we could repack our gear, back to the river, "alright". Next we were asked to follow our host to sign in officially at the camp. Climbing the small knoll I could see a large compound to the right of the trail. Smoke filled the air over the camp making it hard to see good detail of what

was exactly over there. We travelled a wooden sidewalk for some 500 yards to the official headquarters. One at a time our presence was requested in the hut to sign in. Entering, the first thing I noticed was how out of place the steel desk and ledger seemed in comparison to the thatch hut built without a nail. After the formalities, Bret was called inside to explain our case. With our story told, our host made a series of radio calls. Bret came out to say we had been expected, the planes radioed our position and our whereabouts was news to all Migracion stations in Southern Mexico. The radio messages were garbled to say the least and when the radio would squeel the operator would beat the transceiver with the handset. To add to the radio problem the car battery used to power the device was losing power. Each morning it was carried outside the hut and placed in the sunlight. This seemed a little frivolous to me but what ever worked was ok with me. One of the officers told us that he had been requesting a new battery for a month. Things happen fast in Mexico.

We hoped that they would want us to leave as soon as possible, since we had seen refugees and the camp. While we waited, a group of 26 new refugees came to the camp. This halted our processing by the officials for more urgent matters. Forming a single line they marched in with a look that one comes to associate with refugees from watching too many war films. Toward the rear of the column was a man carrying a woman on his back. She was sitting in a chair. In front of the hut he stopped. Several men assisted him in lowering the chair to the ground. The women sat motionless. Once placed in the shade, several children gathered around her. Soon the camp doctor came to her and looked at her leg. She had been shot above the knee. I was told later her husband had carried her 20 days through the jungle to this camp.

All eyes turned to the young man coming up the trail. He was carrying medical supplies. After receiving instructions from the doctor he began to clean the wound. The woman remained quiet although I saw a tear on her cheek as he poured a mercurichrome compound on the wound. He dressed the leg and left. The new residents followed a camp attendant to their new home. Our

group was awestruck by our insignificant problem when compared to that of the refugees. One of the officers came out after another long radio call and said "No problem, Mannana". We quietly resigned ourselves to an overnight stay on the beach at Camp Puerto Rico. On returning to my boat I noticed the beach campsite had become an amphitheater for the refugees watching our group with great interest. They were preparing supper from freeze dried pouches. After dinner many of the spectators went bathing in front of our tents. Only after dark did the crowd dwindle to 50 or so. I tried to fall asleep as soon as possible but the heat of the evening and my own trepidations about the days events kept me awake for some time.

At seven the next morning a large launcha arrived. We recognized the driver from the day before. Without haste we inspected the craft and determined right where each of us would sit on the daylong journey out. At about 9:00 we gathered outside the hut awaiting instructions from the radio. After a long period of radio communication Bret was called into the hut to receive our travel orders. Emerging from the hut Bret told us that the officials in Palenque wanted the Migracion officers to hold and question us for another 24 hours. Several people were outraged. Group cohesion theories could be seen flying out the window. Glenn Goodrich summed up the whole affair by reciting the lyrics of a Jimmy Buffet song "Please don't say Mannana" and saying "I can't believe this is really happening". Somehow the lecture Cully gave us at the airport vanished from everyone's mind. The launcha driver shook our hands and bid us "buena suerte" (good luck), then left the camp. Immediately as the launcha left we quickly veyed for the best hammock spots.

Oh if I had only had beer to cry in. The facts were, we were being held without our papers, no way to make contact outside the jungle, a guard had been posted to watch our movements since our arrival, and ultimately we had no idea when and if we would be released. The group had entered a new low for spirit. Neil put on a long face and went to the Michigan officials telling them he wanted to go home to his family. This didn't help his mood. Many of us just

whiled away the afternoon talking about good movies, home, other river runs, and any subject that would take our minds off the dilemma. All through this Cully remained exceptionally cool. He accepted verbal jabs as though they were candy. In a conversation with him he revealed a new and comforting term which I had not heard before. "The third world factor" he said in Mexico plays a particularly strong role since no individual wants to take responsibility for anything, hence nothing gets done. At least right away. He told of his first trip south of the border. The group had a forced layover in the jungle, where he paced, cursed, and fidgeted around to no avail. "So now I take it all in stride" he said. I was envious but still it did not help.

In the afternoon a small plane landed on the airstrip and took the injured woman away. I hoped some important document paving the way for our speedy release might be in the plane. No luck there either. The plane hardly stopped long enough to stop the propeller. Before I could run to the airstrip it had taken off. I guess no one wants to stay in Camp Puerto Rico longer than necessary. After dinner I went to the hut to find out if there were any new developments. Bret and Candice were there also. The answer was no! Bret told the officer that we had airline reservations, jobs and families we needed to return to. At this the officer didn't bat an eye. Then Bret used the clincher. He told the officer we would run out of food if we didn't leave by tomorrow. The officer responded coyly "no problema — we feed five thousand every day, twenty more won't make any difference". Thoroughly shaken I left for camp.

Wednesday morning's breakfast did not set well on my stomach. I was anxious to find out what this "mannana" would bring. When I arrived at the hut Bret said the first message would be at 8:00 am. Promptly at 8:45 the call came, but no good news. We waited patiently for the next message which should come at 9:30. Although deep inside each of us knew the message would not come on time we were frustrated when the radio was silent at 9:30. I tried to comfort myself thinking of the "the third world factor" to no avail. At 10:30 the radio buzzed with a raspy voice. A long list of

instructions followed but none were for us. At 10:45 a new group of refugees arrived from the jungle, about 26 was the count. As they arrived I resigned myself to the hammock for one more day since their case would take precedence over ours. After they were checked in the radio operator made another call. Soon Bret was called in and told of our pending release. The officials would use their launcha to help us find another launcha because they did not want us to linger in the area. In fifteen minutes our entire camp was packed in our boats, and we were ready to leave. This turned out to be part of the "hurry up and wait syndrome" which I had come accustomed to on other boating trips. Ready to leave, we watched the launcha leave to find us a way out. We had decided to give our hammocks to the refugees as soon as we were cleared to leave. There were many who gathered about to see our flurry of energy. It was difficult to decide who would be the most deserving since these would be prized possessions. I talked to several people before I gave mine to a man who had been in the camp since April of 1983. He was genuinely thankful for the gift and rushed away from the group with his hammock. At 2:00 pm we were still on the beach ready to leave when the officials returned saying we should paddle down to a local fisherman's house some 7 miles downstream where he had a large launcha that we could probably hire.

By 4 pm we were on the river again with our papers and our cameras which were returned at the last minute. Paddling with a sense of urgency we arrived at the launcha well before dark. As soon as arrangements for our trip out were made, we shared the hidden "Victory Beer". We camped on a beach across from the launcha so the driver could not miss us.

At 7:00 am our driver showed up to take us out. By 10:10 am we were loaded and on the river. Five minutes into the trip the engine stopped, allowing the boat to drift toward a large midstream log. In his finest hour Cully dispatched the paddles with lightning speed and the entire group began to paddle the large boat away from the impending broach. Soon the problem was found, then fixed and we were once more headed "outta-here". Fifteen minutes downstream the

driver stopped again to pick up some corn. I watched amazed as workers loaded 4 tons of corn among our boats. Bret asked if we would still make it to Boca Lacuntun today? The driver seemed confident we could still travel the 85 miles before nightfall. Everyone settled down on the sacks of corn and watched the miles go by. People began to ask if we could buy beer at any of the villages down stream. The answer was yes. The beer drinking crowd could only have been happier if the village of Pico de Oro would materialize at the next bend but we were learning to be patient. Two hours later we landed at Pico de Oro. The marines would have been proud to see our group establish the beachhead, then quickly focus on the primary objective, finding beer. After a thorough search, no cervesas in town. Second best would have to do. Next the group descended on a local general store which sold tequilla. The clerk produced the bottles and they disappeared into the crowd. We left Pico de Oro as quickly as we arrived only picking up a few snacks and fruit juices to cut the edge on the tequilla. Once back on the launcha, a marathon drinking session began. Soon the Tequilla took its toll. A lunch of peanuts and Nabs does a poor job to slow down alcohol absorbtion. The launcha motored its way down the Lacuntun. The heat of the afternoon sun was lessened by the breeze of the boat. We lay back on the corn sacks to take in the scenery. Occasionally I could hear someone in the back of the boat with their head over the side. The tequilla was fighting back. By dusk we had travelled within 5 miles of our destination Boca Lacuntun. The dark evening sky covered our craft, forcing our driver to slow the boat negotiating the shallows and sand-bars with care. Any previous lack of confidence in his ability was forgotten as he slipped the boat through the channels without a scrape.

The night was now with us. The driver navigated from experience and used no light. Four of the group were in a quiet Tequilla induced sleep. Soon afterdark I could see the faint glow of incandesant lamps in the distance. Closer and closer we came to the lights. Soon I could make out the silhouette of a pier ahead. Within a couple of minutes the boat was making an approach turn and we were headed to

shore. Soon as the boat came within flashlight range of the pier, our craft was scanned. As the boat pulled up to the pier several flashlights were pointed in ourfaces. Looking into the lights I could see gunbarrels accompanying each light. At the sight of these weapons all who were awake brought full attention to the subject. Soon the bark from an army officer on shore brought Bret to his feet. When the boat landed we were in the full protective custody of the Mexican Army! Bret left out of the boat as it was moored. He quickly gave the officer a rundown of oursituation. It was as if he had put water on the fire, almost. The guns were put away and the situation calmed. A narrow plank connected the shore with the pier and our boat. All the people sober and otherwise had to pass over the plank. More than one person had to be carried across the narrow plank. Once at the top of the hill we gathered with our equipment. We were escorted to another Migracion station where we surrendered our papers. Signing in was not as ominous as before. I could see our shuttle driver and bus 100 yards down the road. The Migracion officer was courteous and told me we could leave in the morning. He then told us we could camp behind the office in the adjoining field. I gathered up my belongings and headed there only to find a small gravelled area and an open sewer. I headed for the bus. With some scrambling around I was able to make a bed in the bus. Cully came by saying there was a place to eat dinner in the village. I was elated with the thought of not cooling at 11:00 pm in the evening. Wandering through the village towards theeatery, Cully told mea little about the village. South of here oil has been discovered and there is a push to develop this portion of Mexico which has been totally roadless. This village is the construction site of two bridges which will be the first to cross the Rio Lacuntun. Walking to dinner I passed several large pieces of earth moving equipment. We entered a large hut. There were several men eating in the shadows. I sat down at a long table. A woman came in the room to see what was going on. She was quite surprised to see 15 people ready for supper at that hour. Soon she asked what we wanted to drink. I answered any soda will be OK. A moment later she brought

an ice cold bottle of soda "ah civilization again". She prepared a fish dinner which was very good. The frijoles (beans) and tortillas were not from a can.

In the morning light we could see the progress of civilization. A fifty foot strip of jungle had sank into the hard pan of the newly constructed road. At the roads end the river, now soon to be vaulted by large steel and concrete span. On the other side lay the last vast regions of untamed Central American jungle.

Howler monkeys were calling in the canopy overhead, swinging from tree to tree. On the ground chickens and roosters gave the wakeup call. Women gathered wood for the breakfast fires. I was ready to leave. Don urged me to eat breakfast instead of packing. While drinking my coffee, the lady who served dinner the night before emerged from the kitchen carrying a chicken and a butcher knife. She passed quickly and returned still carrying the chicken save the head. A trail of blood stained the dirt floor. I put my money on the table and left.

Soon we were given our papers back. At 10:00 am we were on the road to Palenque. The bus trip would take seven hours. In that time we would sing several verses of "Down on the Lacuntun Tonight". This song was composed by Glenn and Neil. Others busily wrote in their diaries trying not to forget the most recent events.

In the evening we reached the town of Palenque but opted to visit Agua Azul.

This is a park with spectacular travertine waterfalls and the bluest water I have seen. We camped in an organized area with several other groups. It rained a good portion of the night turning the river color to mud. The next morning we left for the comforts of Palenque.

A short distance from the park are the ruins fo Palenque. Here stand the towers of Mayan Architecture entwined in the jungle. Visiting the ruins gives one an insight into this culture that can't be appreciated from a book. Six story pyramids are borne out of the rock. They were extracted and built without the use of metal tools. Lifesize limestone carvings decorate the halls of many buildings depicting many of the Mayan Gods and their rituals. On the perimeter of the area, a small museum depicts some of the smaller objects of the culture like pottery, jewelry, and weapons.

We spent the next day enjoying the inexpensive luxury of the city below the ruins. Monday morning we rode our bus for the last time, going to Villa Hermosas's airport. Several flights later we arrived home tired but not so much so to tell the stories. Every river has many stories to tell but I've never been on one with half this many. Each story has its own author so sit down and listen to Ed Puterbaugh, Charlie Andre, Mike Weeks, Dave Weiland, Dandy Don Spangler, Glenn Goodrich, or Bob Dickson. They all have a different story.

Thanks Guys, What a Trip!!

BOOK REVIEWS



Betty Pratt-Johnson paddling.

Whitewater Trips for Kayakers, Canoeists and Rafters on Vancouver Island

by Betty Pratt-Johnson, 128 pages,
Pacific Search Press, Seattle.

This is the first in a series of five guidebooks covering 157 whitewater

trips in British Columbia and Washington. The Vancouver Island trips includes for kayakers: 16 novice trips, 22 intermediate and advanced trips. For canoeist; 2 novice trips, 8 intermediate, and 15 expert. For rafters: 9 novice trips, 10 intermediate, and 10 advanced. All in all, quite a number of trips for an island.

I found the guide to be an excellent resource book for an area not known by U.S. paddlers. The whole B.C. area is known for vast wilderness and pristine rivers. Vancouver Island is one such region. With a combination of ocean surfing, and sea-kayaking, and running the rivers, year around paddling is possible.

The guide book covers such rivers as Campbell, Gold, White, Nanaimo, Cowichan, Eve, Marble, and Jordan. Each river or ocean surfing location includes length of run, water to expect, facilities, guidelines, why go, season, shuttle, and river volume. The why go section is refreshing to the reader, and tells history of the area and what to visually expect. Also the fine maps give the river runner perspective on put-in and take out.

I had no idea there were so many float trips on Vancouver Island. The book format allows the boater to check out their level of ability and type of craft for each river, and decide on suitability. The best time to float on the island is in the winter or spring, or fall. Late spring tends to swell the rivers, and summer flows can become low if the rain tails off. Check your local book store or write to Pacific Search Press, 222 Dexter Ave. North, Seattle, Wa 98109.

This book is a must for the paddler looking for new challenges, or intermediate runs to keep yourself interested. Though Vancouver Island is not full of advanced rivers, it is full of enough challenges to last quite a few years.

by Dave McCourtney



Derek Hutchinson's Guide to SEA KAYAKING

by Derek Hutchinson

Publication date: September 1985

\$12.95, paper

According to recent poll of its readers, River Runner magazine found that sea kayaking ranks first as **the** new paddling skill to learn. Derek Hutchinson's Guide to Sea Kayaking responds to this rapidly growing enthusiasm with the most detailed and expert guidance yet offered to sea-bound paddlers. Published in September by Pacific Search Press, Seattle, the guide may be ordered by sending \$12.95 plus \$1.00 postage and handling to Pacific Search Press, 222 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98109.

The author, a 20-year veteran of sea kayaking, is—by his own admission—a

shameless romantic when it comes to the sea. But he is also a seasoned expert who stresses the importance of technical mastery, safety precautions, appropriate equipment, and informed common sense. With humor and precision, numerous photos and illustrations, and step-by-step instructions, Hutchinson guides the practicing kayaker through the complete array of strokes, launches, rescues, navigational exercises, survival strategies, and many other techniques.

Whether evaluating kayaking equipment, which ranges from boats to radar reflectors, or offering valuable advice on leadership and group dynamics, this guide shares the confidence and expertise acquired by one of the sport's foremost authorities.

Derek Hutchinson is listed in The Guinness Book of World Records for his nonstop crossing of the North Sea in an unescorted kayak. The author of Sea Canoeing, he designs kayaks and is the senior coach of the British Canoe Union.

WATER WISE

by David S. Smith and Sara J. Smith

©1984

Smith Aquatic Safety Services,
5163 Christy Lane, Imperial, MO 63052
8½x11", b&w photos, drawings, spiral
bound softcover, 190 p., \$7.00

No question we all want to eliminate water accidents, drownings, and cold-water-induced hypothermia. This book is the contribution to that worthwhile goal of David S. and Sara J. Smith. Divided into eight major chapters, several appendices and a glossary, it covers a very broad range of topics, including such things as recognizing a drowning person, physiology of drowning and hypothermia, alcohol use in drowning, various devices to improve floatability and reduce heat loss, and treatment of near-drownings. Mr. Smith is apparently a retired Coastguardsman, and has access to all their statistical information. Useful for some purposes, but sometimes overdone. Statistics can show the decrease in the numbers of drownings over the last 70 years, and also that the greatest number of drownings occurs in the 15-25 age group, but who cares that the safest time to go boating is on Tuesdays in January?! The authors make a powerful case for the value of

knowing how to swim, of wearing a floatation device whenever working around water, and of now being impaired in any way by alcohol. The quantity of information pertaining to water safety is impressive, far more than this reviewer cares to condense into a few lines.

But reading through this book was a chore! Granted safety material is often tedious, but creative writing and presentation could be used to keep up the interest of the reader. Although a "text-book" of sorts, *Water Wise* is not targeted at any specific audience: a few pages apply to the general public, a few to boaters, some to rescue squads and E.M.T.'s, and others only apply to the M.D.'s who treat near drowning victims. There were some places I found myself to be in disagreement with the views of the authors, and other times simply unable to translate the residual Coast Guard Bureaucratese into understandable English. Quite a few pages could be eliminated by the reduction of repetition.

If you are a person with an abiding interest in water safety, if you teach any aspect of canoeing or rescue, or are looking for a rich source of background information, then you need this book, but the casual boater will not likely persevere from front to rear cover.

by Tom McCloud

***New Mexico Whitewater:
A Guide to River Trips***

by The New Mexico State Park Division

I mention this book because it has been on my desk for awhile. Published by the state, it is more of a resource book. The maps are small and hard to read. I gather the state decided to publish something to inform the public of river hazards. What they fail to do is describe where the rapids are and how to navigate them. To me that is what a guide book does, that is why I call this a resource book. I would like to see a more thorough edition someday.

The best part of the book is the care of the environment section. Did you know this decomposition schedule? Orange peel: 6 months or more. Paper containers: 2-5 months. Wool socks: 6 months-2 years. Plastic-coated cartons: 5 years. Plastic bags: 10-20 years.

Leather (shoes) 25-50 years. Nylon: 30-40 years. Polyester: 50-80 years. Plastic containers: 50-80 years. Aluminum: 80-100 years.

by Dave McCourtney

**RIVER ROLLING:
Can You Hang In There?**

by Bart Johnson

While preparing to put on a river one weekend, two kayakers came over and asked if they could join our group. Both had paddled the river before at lower water levels but did not feel they would have any trouble handling the bigger water.

Continuing our preparation, one of them came over to get some duct tape. After talking a few minutes about what some of the rapids would be like at that level, he said he hoped he didn't have to swim in any of them. Knowing that the river would be a good Class IV that day, I asked him if he could roll. He said he could roll in a pool but had been only moderately successful if he flipped in a rapids. I said the difference between the successful roller and the unsuccessful roller is that the successful roller will hang in there and try it again.

There is no doubt that for someone who is just learning to roll or who has not completely perfected it yet, this is easier said than done. Any competent roller can remember those agonizing pre-river rolling days when all of a sudden you found out that rolling in the river was not quite the same as rolling in the pool. This normally followed a winter's worth of pool sessions.

The river roll involves many factors that are not present in the pool such as unexpectibility, disorientation, mental preparedness, rocks, current, motion (sometimes violent), paddle or body on the wrong side of the boat, being out of breathe and tired from playing and of course the ever present sound of thundering whitewater that when combined with the other factors can bring about that unforgettable state of panic that leaves the paddler with one thought; get the hell out of this boat.

Once the novice roller realizes these are factors he must contend with on the river, the most important thing he must do is take the time to get his head together and reorient himself. During

these few seconds he might say to himself something like, "OK dummy, your underwater again, time to roll, what side is my body on, where is my paddle, what side to roll on, reposition paddle or body, am I getting tossed around a lot, am I being held in, should I wait to float out of it, will I make it up before running out of breathe, stroke, breathe. Repeat as necessary.

Knowing where you are when you dump certainly will affect how many of these things you have to think about or how much time you have to think about them. If you dump in the runout of a rapids and want to take all day positioning for your strong side, fine. But if you dump in a stretch where you know there is a boatchewing hole, head-bashing rock garden or pinning rock coming up then time is of the essence and if you are set to roll on your offside, then so be it. If you are in this situation and do not have a roll on your off side you'll wish you did, so, learn to roll on both sides in the beginning. Although good rollers can roll on both sides, most will favor one as their strong side, so it is important to practice the off side roll when the opportunity arises.

Unless in one of the precarious situations mentioned above, I personally do not think the actual success of the first attempt is as critical as getting a big gulp of air. Even with the strong roller, there are many things that can cause an unsuccessful first attempt but getting some air and hanging in there for a second, third, etc., attempt makes the difference between success and failure. If not panic stricken, the novice paddler either gives up after the first attempt or fails to get the air he needs to stay under for further attempts. In any case, the end result is the same.

Since rolling makes the difference between night and day in the sport of kayaking, C-boaters included, the sooner the novice can become a competent river roller the sooner he will have more fun and be a safer boater. Of course, the only way to become a good river roller and to gain the confidence that goes with it is to practice.

I found that getting out in standing waves at the bottom of a rapids, above a pool, and dumping it was the best practice possible. Although this situation is not as controlled as in the pool, it is about the best you can hope for on the river. You are at least prepared in knowing that you are going to dump and if you end up swimming, you will be in the pool where you can get to shore, empty the

boat and go try it again and again until you get it right. On the day that you are successful and have gained the confidence that goes along with it, you will leave the river with a completely different attitude toward the sport.

This is of course not to say your swimming days are over as even the best paddlers swim on occasion. There is no reason trying to describe this situation; you will definitely know if you are in one. But do not be dismayed because you usually do not even get the chance at making an attempt, unless you get ended out, and if you do, you have usually been so physically abused by the water that you do not have the strength left to roll anyway. It is all apart of this game we play called whitewater boating.

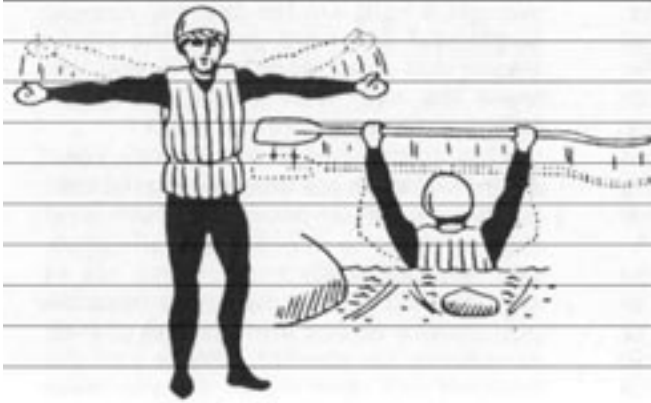
Without a doubt, the paddler who has a good river roll will improve his technique remarkably faster than the non-roller. He will venture into situations that require better paddling technique and until that technique is fully developed, the roll will take care of the mistakes. While his paddling buddy is worrying about getting dumped; he is concentrating on improving his paddling skills.

You will soon progress to the point where your need to roll will become less frequent, until your first ender, so don't forget to practice. The day will come when you will be rolling up so fast you will not even realize you thought about it. But above all, if you do miss one, hang in there and try it again; it's well worth the effort.

cont. from pg. 23

As sunset arrived we reached the put in and behold the river was running! This time we were prepared to bring gear and camp overnight so that we could both do the whole canyon and enjoy it at our leisure. The next morning we rose and looked at the river. It had dropped overnight too low. In July of 1985, Jim Heywood, a Midwestern paddler who now lives in Colorado told me of a rumor that more water may be sent down the Laramie in the future. I strongly recommend that boaters appeal to whoever controls the Wheatland Reservoirs to release water through the canyon for boating. It quite simply is one of the best technical and scenic canyon runs I've seen in the West. I don't know that the trip that Tom and I took was the first, but I'd never heard of anyone running the river or even thinking of running the river. This article may clarify that.

A New System of Universal River Signals:



in the NEW AWA SAFETY CODE

The 1980 revised edition of the AWA Safety Code is now available. This revision includes the new system of universal river signals combined with the excellent text of the past codes and is a MUST for all whitewater boaters.

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