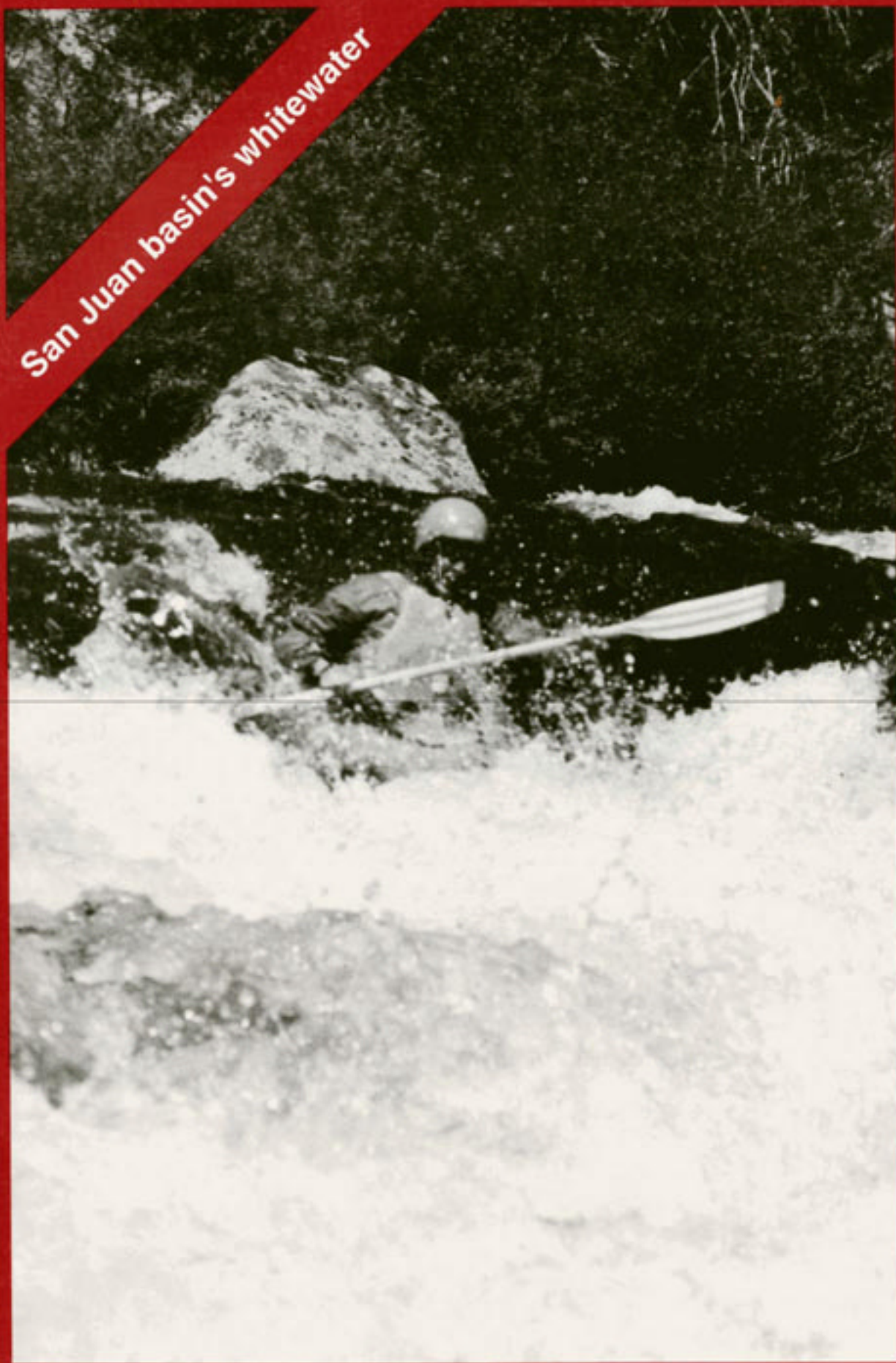


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November/December 1991

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Whitewater Heaven...Whitewater Hell

Steeped in the history of the old West, Colorado's San Juan basin features a variety of whitewater runs. And like the frontier, rivers of the San Juan can be wild and woolly.

By *RICHIE HUGHES*, *JULIE TROGDON*, *MIKE TROGDON* and *BOB GEDEKOH*

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The island off of Italy is reknowned for its hair whitewater--but there's also some reasonable whitewater to be found amid the **spectacular** scenery.

By *LEE BELKNAP*

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West Virginia rivers pass first hurdle with Forest Service approval...**FERC's** bizarre definition of navigability...Gauley outfitters pressure Forest Service...**Trout** fishermen snag Michigan Rivers Bill...Protection for Little River pushed

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Cold weather boating results in near miss.

By *CHARLIE WALBRIDGE* and *DAVEREID*

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Dear **Santa**--I've been a good girl, dammit, so here's what I want.

By *CARLA GARRISON*

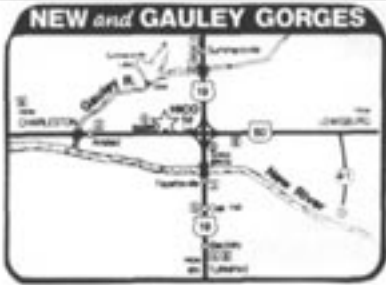
Front cover: Charlie Pettigrove negotiates a drop on Idaho's Deadwood River.

Rear cover: An unplanned surf at the first drop of the Russell Fork's Triple Drop.

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FORUM

Big Trouble in River City

"Friendsville. The Friendliest Little Town in Maryland."

That's what the t-shirts that they sell in the general store proclaim.

But lately it just ain't so.

Yes sir, folks, once again we got trouble in River City, the take out for the Upper Yough. After several years of peaceful coexistence, the river rats and the townsfolk of Friendsville are at it again.

The mayor shouts at boaters on the street, no parking signs are torn down, calls are made to the state police, vehicles are vandalized and there are threats of violence. Lately, when it comes to boaters, Maryland's "Friendliest Little Town" has all the charm of Beirut.

Who is to blame? I wish I could tell you that the townspeople are at fault, that they are nothing but a bunch of backwards, backwoods isolationists who instinctively distrust and want to harass outsiders. But that just isn't true. Most of them are genuinely nice people.

I wish I could tell you that the boating community has done nothing to deserve this recent epidemic of inhospitality. But, sadly, that ain't how it is.

To a sorry degree, we boaters, influenced by circumstances beyond our control, brought this on ourselves.

This summer's drought drove hordes of rain-starved whitewater enthusiasts from all over the east into this tiny Appalachian town. They congregated like herds of wild animals at the last water hole during a hard desert summer. The situation became particularly intense on the Fridays and Mondays this September, when many boaters paused in Friendsville to run the Upper Yough during their seasonal migration to the Gauley. And, because many of these boaters were far from their home turf, they had little appreciation of the local sensitivities.

The result was sensory overload for the citizens of Friendsville. Or rather, an overload of insensitivity.

Too many cars parked under the bridge. Too much traffic. Too much noise. Too many raucous young strangers loitering on the street corners. Too many people sneaking behind bushes to change their clothes or to pee. Too much for the decent folk of Friendsville to bear.

I know that none of this sounds so terrible, at least to those of us who deal with urban America on a daily basis. Frankly, even on the busiest day the streets of Friendsville hardly compare to D.C. Beltway. And, after all, if you catch a glimpse of someone's bare behind a half mile away, you could just look the other way.

Considering that the river was only running one day a week for most of the summer, one might argue that the locals could have been a little more tolerant. But,

please turn to page 21

STAFF

Managing Editor: Chris Koll, 25 South Street, Apt. 67, Marcellus, NY 13108

Editor: Bob Gedekoh, Box 228, RD 4, Elizabeth, PA 15037

Advertising Director: Phyllis Horowitz, Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464; (914) 688-5569

Conservation: Pope Barrow, Mac Thornton, Peter Skinner

Safety: Charlie Walbridge

Address Changes: Keith Morgan, 2601 Tanglewood Dr., Durham, NC 27705

Missing Copies: Contact Phyllis Horowitz

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PURPOSE

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over 1300 whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 50 local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

EDUCATION: Through publication of a bi-monthly journal, the AWA provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique, and equipment.

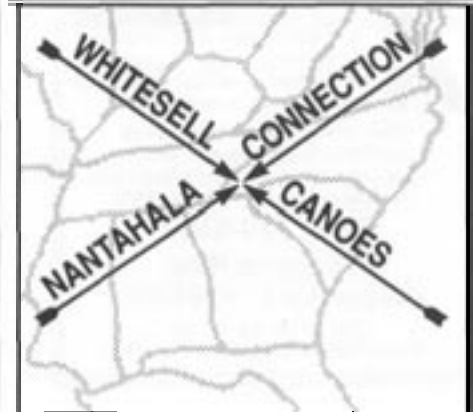
CONSERVATION: AWA maintains a national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through its "River Watch" system, publishes information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers, and provides technical advice to local groups regarding river management and river conservation. AWA also gives annual awards to individuals to recognize exceptional contributions to river conservation and an annual "hydromania" award to recognize the proposed hydroelectric power project which would be most destructive of whitewater.

EVENTS: AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation. Since 1986, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual Gauley River Festival in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation, other than at international racing events.

SAFETY: AWA promotes paddling safety, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, and maintains both a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and the internationally recognized AWA Safety Code.

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES: AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF: Except for membership services and the Executive Director position, all AWA operations, including publication of the bi-monthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.



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DIRECTORS

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Route 2, Box 614
Princeton, WV 24740
Bill Baker
9429 W. Ontario Dr.
Littleton, CO 80123
Pope Barrow
136-13th Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
Bob Gedekoh
Box 228, RD 4
Elizabeth, PA 15037
Dan Givens
300 Straugh, #705
Boise, ID 83712
Bob Glanville
66 Deer Run
Glenwood, NY 14069

Jack Hession
241 E. 5th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99501
Diana Holder
Route 1 Box 90
Fairview Mt. Rd.
Reliance, TN 37369
Chris Koll
25 South St., Apt. 67
Marcellus, NY 13108
Sara Lawrence
6660 Bacchi
Lotus, CA 95651
Tom McAndrew
5535 Ridge Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19128
John Porterfield
RR2 Box 669
Orrington, ME 04474

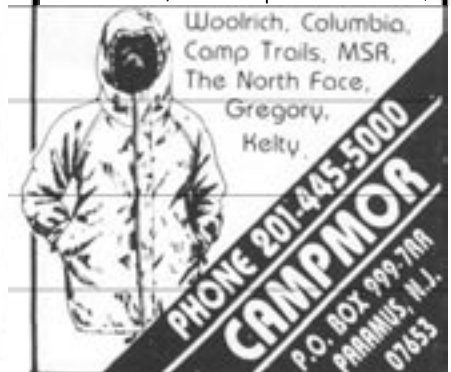
Pete Skinner
Box 272, Snyder Rd.
W. Sand Lake, NY 12195
Keith Thompson
1171 N. 10th St.
Laramie, WY 82070
Mac Thornton
322 10th St. S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
Treasurer
Claire Gesalman
6301 Hillcrest Place
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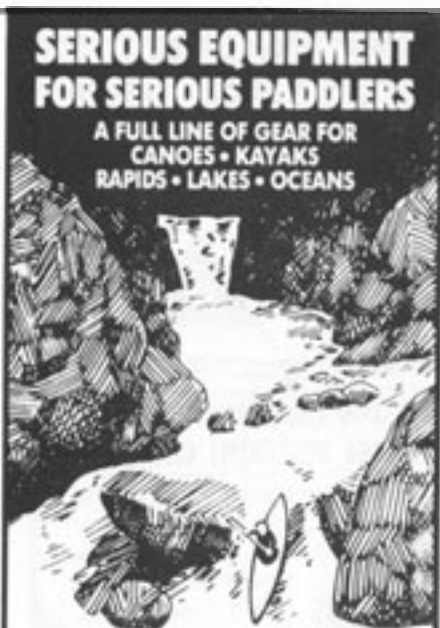
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A changing sport

Dear Editor,

My original intent was to write a letter of rebuttal to George Siposs' letter in your May/June '91 issue which was titled "No More Hair". The more I read the article though, the more I can see his dismay and concern. Instead of a rebuttal, here's an attempt at an explanation. (After three months of thought.)

George, you were with the AWA and Eastern National Champ in the early '60's I'm sure you know a lot about the sport--as it was in that era. The sport itself hasn't changed so much; people are still having fun in their preferred style (racing, recreation, etc.) although the playgrounds and risks have become more diverse. The playgrounds of today's extreme boaters have a few more bullies lurking around--so one better be damned sure he can run faster than them before he ventures onto their turf. The AWA us still aimed at the recreational aspect, as stated in the charter. "...promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of whitewater sports." But nowhere in this magazine do I see any qualifiers on the term "whitewater sports." Swim it, boogie board it, race it, or tumble down the mountains on it. Recreational sports seems to be the key word--having fun. I can honestly say that when I'm paddling hard stuff, I'm having incredible fun. If I weren't, I wouldn't do it. It would be only a macho thing. It would only be scratching the surface of a very deep sport.

Is the fun only in going "to greater and greater heights, literally, to pump adrenaline into our veins?" Naw--the buzz can be great fun, but that's not all. Bungee jumping would suffice if that were the case. The physical motion of launching through the air, of hitting an impossibly small eddy, sticking a move you've run through your head a hundred times feels really good. Ah, but the fun and challenge isn't limited to the physical side. The mental acuity, the pure thoughtless concentration you're able to achieve when running the extreme allows you to pack a whole lot of life in a short chunk of time. Speaking of both mental and physical skills, my honemaster bud Eric Nies says, "It's like being the mad scientist and the white rat at the same time."

Yes, it does require skill, George. Your statement regarding waterfall jumpers "this is not technique, freefall does not

require paddle braces" is completely ludicrous. Wake up and smell the coffee (polypro). The "safe and sane" stunts you used to do are no different from today's stunts--the people doing them would certainly consider them "sane." As for safety, they've never been "safe". It's the calculated risk thing. Any good boater is going to have a pretty good idea of the outcome of the rapid before he runs it. I don't think anyone wants to roll dice out there more than they have to. The house usually wins if you rely on luck...

Luck. This is where the problem lies. Forgive me, but the river Gods aren't fair. You see, if a climber's skill isn't commensurate with the climb, he falls. But even if a boater is a complete hack he can still bumble down most anything if he's lucky. Conversely, a homeboy ninja might have a lapse of concentration and pay heavily. Go figure. What to do? Well, we can stack the deck in our favor by honing skill, covering our butts with ample safety and portaging when our heads aren't right. Hopefully, by then the risk is one we're happy to accept for the love of the sport, and not one born of ignorance and rammed down our throats.

Thanks for listening,
Tom DeCuir
Wesser, NC

No hair? No way!

Dear Editor,

Hair today, done tomorrow. NO WAY!!! That's all we need is another pond paddling magazine. Keep printing those hair boat'n articles. This is my response to a letter entitled "No more hair" that appeared in the May/June issue.

I'll never consider myself to be a hair boater, but I sure enjoy reading those articles. And do you think that just because I read these articles, I'm going to grab my boat and run out to do mystery moves at the bottom of Niagara Falls? Naaah, I don't think so.

I think the AWA, ACA and other whitewater organizations do an excellent job of educating and informing the paddling community on safety and the dangers of river running. All we can hope for is that each individual paddler can judge his own skills, abilities, and limits properly.

Hair boating has been around a

LETTERS

long time. I would guess those paddlers who first paddled the Colorado, Gauley or Upper York could be considered hair boaters. These paddlers have years of experience and are well seasoned. They know the dangers and risks involved and accept them. There will always be boaters pushing the limits. It's like that in any sport. Not to glorify them or anything, but the sport wouldn't be what it is today if someone hadn't kept pushing to do more challenging rivers. Heck, we'd still be paddling seal skin

kayaks. The sport has come a long ways over the years. A lot of safe and durable equipment has been developed. And we've learned a lot about safety and rescue techniques.

I agree with Mr. Siposs, hair boating is not for everyone. But that is no reason to censor it from the AWA Journal. As for myself, if every kayak trip was a quiet and safe enjoyment of our waterways, and I didn't have just a little adrenalin pumping through those veins, well, I guess I'd take up a new sport.

Sincerely,
Donald Gens
Zoar Valley Paddling Club

Call 'em Canyaks

Dear Editor,

Is a new rating system for canoes needed? They say open boats have run the Gauley River, New River Gorge, and even the Colorado thru the Grand Canyon. I've seen films of "open boats" filled with airbags and other types of floatation running these rivers, but not a true open boat.

Should these so called "open boats" fall under a new classification such as C1-AB (AB=air bag), C1-F (F=foam or other types of floatation)? The only thing they lack is a double-blade paddle and a solid deck over their floatation. Maybe they should be classified as "canyaks".

Bob Beck
Louisville, KY

Editor's note: Since I don't paddle an open canoe (and since I am sound of mind--nor would I want to), I don't feel I can speak for the legion of open boaters I think would take exception to your views, Bob. However, I'd



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LETTERS

like to *point out* that kayaks, decked canoes and open canoes all possess their own particular performance characteristics--regardless whether they're outfitted with floatation. Those individual characteristics are what distinguishes an open boat. Just as a state of mindlessness distinguishes an open boater.

Who's complete?

Hello AWA magazine dudes and dudettes!

Just a note to let you all know that your semi-professional or "amateur" magazine is what I would consider to be the only and real mag for complete whitewater enthusiasts. I live for each new issue. Y'all do a great job. Thanks for putting out a quality piece of reading material for obsessed kayakers like myself. Since I can't paddle the level I wish I could, I love to read about the people who can.

Keep up the good work!

Thanks
Heidi Erland

P.S. I fully support Carla and Gary's efforts to make people laugh. I want to know who the father of the first boating super baby is?

(Editor's note: Heidi, you misinterpret our intentions. As the Journal of the AWA, we obviously are attempting to serve a constituency of incomplete whitewater enthusiasts.)

Pop it back in!

Dear AWA Editor,

As a paddler, a physician and a recent survivor of shoulder **surgery following** multiple dislocations, I would like to comment on Stanley Burbank's safety article in the **Sep/Oct** AWA. Anyone who has tried to splint a dislocated shoulder on the river, knows that it is next to impossible to find any position of comfort and that it leaves the victim unable to assist in **his/her** own evacuation. It is firmly the position of the Wilderness Medical Society (a group of outdoor oriented health professionals, many of whom are paddlers and skiers), that with proper training (a 1-2 hour session), most

individuals can and should attempt reduction (relocation) in the field. The National Ski Patrol may feel differently as they can usually sled someone down the slope to immediate attention.

In my own experience, immediate reduction is much easier to accomplish and it eliminates much of the residual discomfort. It does not eliminate the need to see a doctor after evacuation to make sure there are no associated injuries and to plan out an appropriate rehabilitation program. Although most of my dislocations happened on the river (while foolishly high bracing or otherwise not paying attention to my shoulder), my last one occurred in the emergency room while I was at work. Despite already being at the hospital and being a physician there, it took over 30 minutes (X-rays, etc.) before it was finally **back in place**. Imagine what it would be like for a wet, tired paddler who just had to sit in the back of a pick-up over a bumpy mountain road. The only pain I've experienced worse than that night in the emergency room was the first few days after surgery. And I've taken my share of beatings on the river.

There are many excellent methods for reduction, including the ones mentioned by Burbank. One particularly good way employs using your foot in the armhole of the PFD on the affected side as a way of achieving countertraction, and then gently pulling back on the forearm bent at the elbow using cravats for leverage. I don't think anyone should try this unless you've had a dry run during a **safety clinic**. As far as using a weight, it's a very good way, but once you are concerned about circulation (decreased pulse or color in the hand), you need a quicker method.

This debate will probably rage on, but in my experience (personal and professional), there is much less risk of causing damage relative to the benefit of early reduction. In many cases, the paddler can either walk out or sit upright in a raft, thus avoiding danger to the entire party in trying to carry someone out who is almost senseless from pain. I would definitely not want to **be splinted, fall out in a rapid**, and have to try self-rescue with one arm.

I agree that the best first aid is avoidance, therefore, when you see me on the river next spring, I'll definitely be the low brace queen.

Sincerely,
Laura Helfman
Glen Cove, NY

West Virginia Rivers Coalition Fights Dams in Cheat Watershed

It's the year 2004. You have been enjoying a marvelous whitewater adventure on the gorgeous Laurel Fork of the Cheat. Suddenly, the pristine, laurel-choked forest gives way to scrub and mud flats. You turn a bend and you are confronted with a monstrous earthen dam, over two football fields wide and as high as a 12-story building! (The dam is kept without a reservoir most of the time to be able to absorb flood water.) Fences and buoys block your path and you face a bone-crunching half mile portage up the mud flats and over the crest of the dam.

Dam advocates want to build five of these boondoggles in the upper Cheat watershed. They would justify this proposal by invoking the fear engendered by the Great Flood of 1985. Only one catch: the dams would protect downstream communities only from a 100-year flood. The Great Flood was much larger than that.

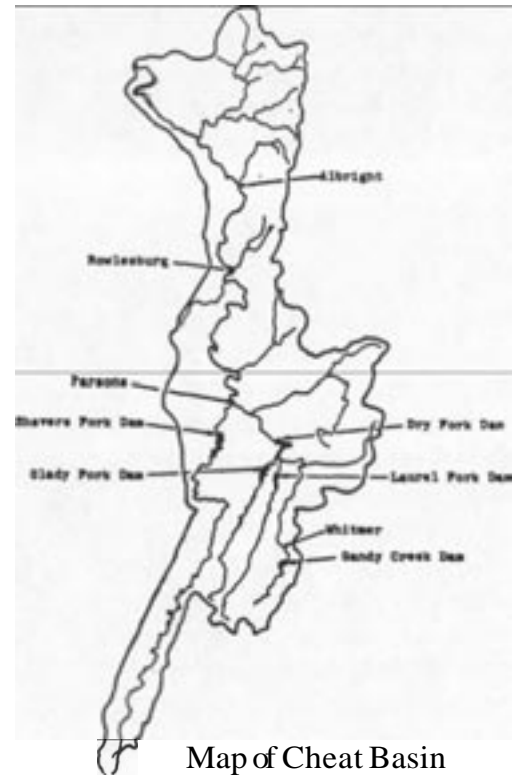
The **West Virginia Rivers Coalition** thinks there are better ways to handle floods, like early warning systems, limits on construction in the flood plain, par-

icipation in the Federal flood insurance program, and perhaps levees in the towns.

Founded by the AWA in 1989, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition has a concrete goal: **to guarantee the future of thirteen West Virginia "crown jewel" rivers in the Monongahela National Forest** (see next page). Included on our list are whitewater classics like the Smoke Hole Canyon, Blackwater, Shavers Fork, Laurel Fork, and the Cranberry. We are now conducting an intense grass roots political campaign in West Virginia for designation of these rivers under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Designation would mean:

- no dams or hydropower projects.
- improved water quality.
- better management of mining and timbering.
- enhancement of river access and river recreation.

Our campaign is gaining momentum, but it is expensive. If you have not already joined WVRC, **we need your help!**



Map of Cheat Basin from state-sponsored dam study.

Please Help WVRC Save West Virginia Rivers!

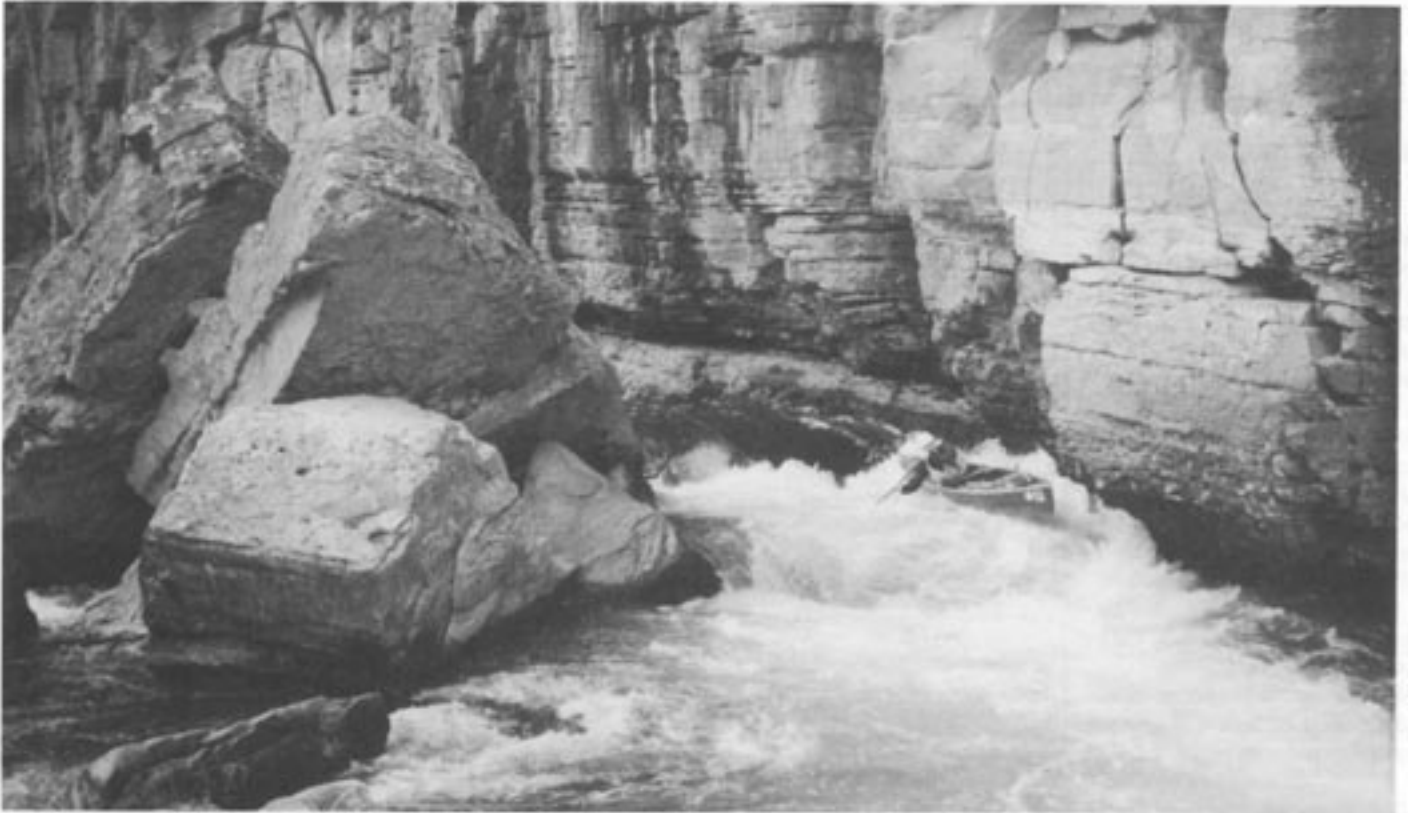
Yes, Count ~~me~~ in with over 240 AWA members who have already joined WVRC! Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____. Donors of \$20 or more become WVRC members (\$10 for West Virginia residents).

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Make your check payable to "AWA/West Virginia Rivers Coalition" and send to WVRC, Box 606, Buckhannon, WV 26201.

_____ Please let me know how else I can help!



Open canoeist on Smoke Hole run of the Potomac--one of the 12 rivers found eligible for Wild and Scenic status.

12 WV rivers "eligible" for Wild and Scenic

A report issued by Monongahela National Forest has concluded that 260.5 river miles on 12 West Virginia rivers are "eligible" for designation as federal Wild and Scenic rivers. A finding of eligibility is the first step in the designation process. Included on the list are whitewater gems like the Smoke Hole Canyon of the South Branch Potomac, Laurel Fork, Blackwater, and Williams. Among other advantages, designation would forever prevent flood control dams and other boondoggles affecting these streams.

The conclusions are a smashing victory for paddlers and for the West Virginia Rivers Coalition (WVRC), a group founded in 1989 by the American Whitewater Affiliation. For almost two years, WVRC has been advocating permanent

protection for 269.6 river miles on these same dozen rivers, and the Forest Service agreed with WVRC's views on 260.5 river miles. The only segment advocated by WVRC which the Forest Service did not find eligible was the 9.1 mile segment of the Laurel Fork upstream (south) of U.S. Route 33. Yet, the report expresses the view that this segment could be reconsidered for Wild and Scenic if the rest of the segments on the Laurel Fork are recommended for Wild and Scenic.

"WVRC's recommendations are just a hair short of being totally approved by the Forest Service," said Executive Director Roger Harrison. "We look forward to working with the Forest Service on the next phase of studies--the suitability phase."

A finding of eligibility is the first major step in the

designation of a river as Wild and Scenic; the next step is the suitability phase, which amounts to an impact statement of the pros and cons of protecting each river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The final suitability report is forwarded to the Department of Agriculture and eventually to the President, who will decide whether to recommend any Wild and Scenic designations to the Congress.

In practical terms, Congress rarely waits for the whole process to be completed before acting. "We hope to have a bill in Congress sometime next year," said WVRC Chairman Mac Thornton. "WVRC is advocating Wild and Scenic designation to prevent dams and hydropower projects, improve water quality, and provide permanent management

direction to the Forest Service to maintain natural values on the designated rivers and about 90,000 acres of riverside land."

WVRC is in need of financial support of any amount, although a contribution of \$20 or more makes one a member. Make the tax deductible check out to "AWA/WVRC" and send to WVRC, Box 606, Buckhannon, WV 26201.

Rivers found eligible by the Forest Service include:

1. So. Br. Potomac, 22.5 mi.
2. N. Fork S. Branch Potomac, 32 mi.
3. Seneca Creek, 13.0 mi.
4. Shavers Fork, 77.8 mi.
5. Glady Fork, 31.6 mi.
6. Laurel Fork, 29.1 mi.
7. Dry Fork, 13.7 mi.
8. Otter Creek, 11.0 mi.
9. Red Creek, 8.7 mi.
10. Blackwater, 8.7 mi.

Inside the beltway

Conservation news from the capitol

by DEEP THROAT

An eight-lane interstate highway (known as the "beltway") encircles Washington, D.C. (stands for darkness and confusion) like an impenetrable moat isolating the capitol from the outside world. Inside this terrifying inferno, while the rest of the nation looks on in horror, the ponderous wheels of governments slowly grind away. The world inside the beltway is a cacophonous Tower of Babel--inhabited by politicians, bureaucrats, TV newscasters, lobbyists, lawyers, government contractors, drug addicts and special interest groups.

Undeterred by this horrific scene, and ever alert to anything and everything



affecting whitewater, AWA volunteers keep a close watch on events of interest to whitewater boaters.

The following is part of a continuing series of reports from inside the

beltway.

FERC REDEFINES NAVIGABILITY

In a decision so amazing that even seasoned

veterans of government double speak were shocked, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (a consummate inside-the-beltway agency) has pronounced the Upper Yough in Maryland to be non-navigable. Is the Mississippi next?

The fact that thousands of people navigate the river every year in kayaks, canoes, rafts, duckies, and even on surfboards, made no impression on the agency.

This outlandish decision is insane, but important. It means that the Federal government will no longer require the Pennsylvania Electric Powerplant on Deep Creek to have a Federal license. Under recent amendments to Federal law, Federally licensed powerplants are

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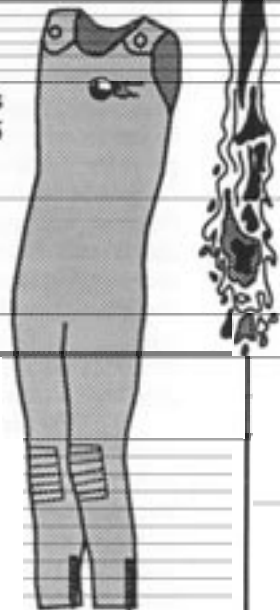


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required to give recreation equal consideration when those licenses are renewed every 40 years. Boaters are now uncertain as to whether Penn Elec will continue to cooperate by providing telephone notice of flows on the Upper **Yough** and by sometimes making flows available for boating events (such as the Upper **Yough** race).

FERC found the Upper **Yough** to be non-navigable in the face of overwhelming evidence that the river has been used as a transportation route in historical times by Indians, early settlers, loggers, and others. However, since there was no direct evidence that these early users crossed from Maryland north into what is now Pennsylvania, FERC ruled that the river did not meet the strict test of being a water highway used in

interstate commerce.

Recreational usage in modern times is another matter. Since recreational canoes and rafts have gone from Maryland into Pennsylvania, the interstate logic would suggest that the river is presently navigable for commercial recreational purposes.

Not so, said FERC in September of this year.

Rather than floating down river with one of the many raft companies that run commercial trips on the Upper **Yough** every week, FERC relied on expert judgment from whitewater guidebooks purchased at a bookstore inside the beltway. These suggested that the river could not be safely navigated by an average recreational canoeist (i.e. complete geeks who could not paddle across a bathtub). The result: FERC found that the river was just

too rough to be called navigable.

One guidebook, Ed Gertler's "Maryland and Delaware Canoe Trails" was quoted approvingly by the agency as evidence that the "unrelenting boulder piles, ledges, blocked views, unobvious passages, menacing undercuts, and technical difficulties" rendered the river impossible to commercially navigate. (Note to Ed Gertler: Thanks a lot, Ed! Your hyperbole may sell guidebooks, but now FERC is relying on your purple prose to defame perfectly normal rivers.)

Ed Gertler may think it is too tough to navigate, but one 7-year old reported to AWA that his raft trip was "an excellent trip". He declared both Ed Gertler and FERC to be "bogus dudes".

TROUT UNLIMITED FIGHTS MICHIGAN RIVERS BILL

The bill to designate 14 rivers in Michigan as national Wild and Scenic rivers has hit some tough sledding. It passed the House of Representatives earlier this year, but now Trout Unlimited has voiced its opposition to the bill. Trout Unlimited wants the bill to specifically allow fishery restoration activities to be carried out in the newly designated rivers. Wild and Scenic river purists balked at the idea, and a stalemate ensued.

One side is determined to preserve the "integrity" of the wild and scenic rivers system as a museum of perfect river specimens. The other side (fishery interests) wants an assurance that fish can stay alive in the rivers even if some human intervention is needed.

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Unless a compromise can be reached, the bill may die.

The Michigan rivers bill is important to whitewater boaters because it **includes** several whitewater segments: the Black (14 miles), the Paint (51 miles), the Pine (25 miles), the Presque Isle (57 miles), the Sturgeon (43.9 miles), and the Brule (33 miles).

LITTLE RIVER BILL INTRODUCED

Legislation proposed by Congressman Tom Bevill of Alabama to make the Little River Canyon in northern Alabama a National Preserve has finally been introduced. **Whitewater** boaters are hopeful that hearings can be held before Congress winds up its work for 1991 and that the bill will be passed early next year.

The area affected **includes** one of the most outstanding whitewater river

segments in the entire southeast, not to mention magnificent canyon scenery.

The proposed legislation would permanently protect Little River Canyon from hydroelectric power developments. (Alabama Power developed plans for a huge earthen dam in the canyon many years ago). It would also authorize the transfer of thousands of acres of Alabama Power Company property to the National Park Service, and possibly also some lands in the Desoto State Park, as well as a wildlife management area now controlled by the State of Alabama.

Under Congressman **Bevill's** bill no private property--other than the Alabama Power Company lands--would be purchased by the National Park Service. Nevertheless, a small group of fanatics continue to fight the proposal. It is a case of **political warfare**

by FAX. Opponents of the river protection idea obtained the fax numbers of key members of Congress and jammed Congressional fax machines with bizarre diatribes blasting Congressman Bevill for his river protection efforts.

Despite the furious opposition, the bill is expected to move ahead when cooler heads come to the fore.

GAULEY OUTFITTERS PRESSURE PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service, already in a tight spot at the Gauley River National Recreation Area, has come under increasing pressure from commercial rafting outfitters. This time the problem is those pesky private boaters who keep coming to the river in ever larger numbers during the fall draw down season.

It seems that private

boaters are interfering with business of usual on the Gauley and trampling on private property rights. Outfitters wonder, "why won't these durn **redneck** kayakers just go find their own river where they won't get in the way of our trucks, busses, and rafts?"

In a letter to the National Park Service (which was leaked to AWA by sources inside the beltway), one of the largest outfitters on the Gauley demanded that the Park Service "develop" the Woods Ferry road on river right as an exclusive private boater take-out and put-in. The idea is to get private boaters off the Panther Creek trail. Development of this existing road to accommodate a large amount of traffic would require blasting away a rocky area right next to the river.

Outfitters have built two private roads down to the river in the Sweets Falls area

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several miles upstream of Woods Ferry to make it easy for their customers to gain access to the river. These roads are located at spots which are ideal take-outs for an Upper Gauley trip. Currently both roads are blocked to private boater traffic. So private boaters have been carrying their boats up the incredibly steep Panther Creek trail which follows Mason Branch up the diffs below Sweets Falls. This is private property (owned by outfitters, of course) and boaters park at the top along a narrow road. Outfitter trucks and buses are inconvenienced because they have to slow down to get by.

An astute business decision was made by several large outfitters just before the Gauley was included in the national park system. They quietly bought as much of the lands in the river corridor as they could--which was most of

the corridor and immediately adjacent lands. They were especially adept at acquiring areas which could be used for access to the river for Upper and Lower Gauley trips. In the blink of an eye, bulldozers were sent in to build roads in to the river through the newly acquired areas. Then this year, an outdoor restaurant was constructed atop Sweets Falls. Next year will there be a Burger King going up? Who knows?

From a purely business point of view, all of this was smart... and profitable. One wonders, however, if maximum profiteering will wind up as the bottom line so far as the Gauley is concerned. Congressional hearings are expected to be held soon on all issues related to national park concessions and businesses since excessive profiteering is also viewed as a problem in Yosemite National Park and Jackson

Hole, among others.

The Gauley is now the only completely privately-owned park in the nation. With most of the lands owned by business interests, the Park Service has an incredibly difficult job trying to manage the area as a public resource. At the present time, the park service does not even have access to an Upper Gauley take-out or a lower Gauley put-in for Park Service personnel without begging outfitters for temporary mercy.

UTILITY BUILDS TRAINING SITE

It's several miles outside the beltway, but word percolated in from the Maryland suburbs. It's now official. In an unusual example of cooperation between an electric utility and whitewater boaters, the Potomac Edison Power Company in Maryland has committed \$25,000 to

help construct a \$50,000 whitewater training site for the U.S. whitewater racing team.

The site would be located in the warm-water discharge canal at the company's plant in Dickerson, Maryland. It will be operational by Thanksgiving and will provide the only year-round training site in the United States which is similar to the course athletes will be racing on in Barcelona in next year's Olympic competition.

The course is reported to be slightly shorter than the Barcelona raceway (900 feet long as opposed to 1200 feet long) and less steep (16 foot drop as opposed to 24), but will have more volume (650 cfs versus 350 cfs).

The project is the brainchild of two D.C. area racers, John Anderson and Scott Wilkinson, who built a scale model of the course with PEPCO's help. The model was tested in September.



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AWA River Projects

Access, conservation dominate funding

Throughout the course of any given year, AWA expends thousands of dollars and man hours in the course of furthering the goals of its Whitewater Defense Project. Much of this time and money must routinely go for the general conservation expenses of its Directors and Regional Coordinators-- phone calls, postage, legal and technical assistance, travel to meetings, conferences and hearings, and the like. Unfortunately, you never get a dollar-for-dollar or hour-for-hour breakdown on how this benefits your favorite rivers.

But on October 14, 1991 members of the AWA Conservation Committee tried a little something new. They sat down for a day-long meeting in New York City to evaluate a number of highly specific funding proposals invited from our Directors and Regional Coordinators. During the course of this session almost \$18,000 was committed to fund these various proposals.

So, in response to the ever-popular question -- Where does all the money go? -- here's a breakdown on current AWA conservation funding commitments and what's going on in your backyard:

Deerfield River (Massachusetts)
AWA Project Sponsors: *Bill Hildreth and Tom Christopher*
AWA Contribution: *\$1,500 and pro bono legal representation*
Project Description: Attempt by New England F.L.O.W. and AWA to obtain a regular, frequent recreational release schedule on all boatable sections of the Deerfield River through intervention in the FERC relicensing process and negotiations with New England Power Co.

North Chickamauga Creek (Tennessee)
AWA Project Sponsor: *Ron Stewart*
AWA Contribution: *\$100*
Project Description: AWA joins other organizational sponsors participating in a clean-up effort as a kick-off for the North Chick Preservation Program.

Tennessee Valley Rivers
AWA Project Sponsor: *Ron Stewart*
AWA Contribution: *\$300*
Project Description: Effort to bar wood

chipping activities which threaten the health of whitewater rivers and steep creeks within the Tennessee Valley region. Funds donated by AWA and other organizations will be used to defray legal costs of briefs currently being filed on behalf of all interested parties.

Little, Locust Fork and Cohaba Rivers (Alabama)
AWA Project Sponsor: *Ken Burst*
AWA Contribution: *\$450*

Project Description: Purchase of second-hand raft to facilitate regular clean-up efforts of the Birmingham Canoe Club on area rivers-- the raft will also be used for educational purposes to introduce local politicians and dignitaries to the value of whitewater rivers within their domain.

Lower Saluda River (South Carolina)
AWA Project Sponsor: *Laura Parker*
AWA Contribution: *\$400*
Project Description: Improvement of public lands access to Lower Saluda River. The Palmetto Paddlers Club will perform the work necessary to rebuild this heavily eroded put-in in an effort to foster better relations among boaters, other river users and local citizens.

Arkansas River (Colorado)
AWA Project Sponsor: *Ric Alesch*
AWA Contribution: *\$500*
Project Description: Promulgation of lawsuits and related activities being conducted by the Colorado White Water Association to obtain continued boater access to "The Numbers" section of the Arkansas.

Smith and Boundary Creeks (Idaho)
AWA Project Sponsor: *Doug Ammons*
AWA Contribution: *\$242*
Project Description: Focusing public and governmental attention on threats posed by proposed hydro development on Boundary Creek and existing FERC project on Smith Creek. These educational activities will support interventions in progress.



Rodeo proceeds maintain Ocoee access points.

Ocoee River (Tennessee)
AWA Project Sponsor: *Diana Holloran*
AWA Contribution: *\$620*
Project Description: Purchase of equipment needed by U.S. Forest Service to efficiently maintain Ocoee River access points. These funds represent partial proceeds of the Ocoee Rodeo.

Olympic Peninsula Rivers (Washington)
AWA Project Sponsor: *Carol Volk*
AWA Contribution: *Grant sponsorship and preparation*

Project Description: Education of Olympic Peninsula residents as to the benefits of Federal Wild and Scenic protection for area rivers in an attempt to overcome present majority opposition. As an initial effort to assist the Olympic Rivers Council in this endeavor, AWA will develop and sponsor a grant application to the National Rivers Coalition for the necessary funding.

West Virginia Rivers
AWA Project Sponsor: *Mac Thornton*
AWA Contribution: *\$5,000*

Project Description: Further support efforts of AWA's West Virginia Rivers Coalition in its attempts to gain Federal protection for 13 whitewater segments located within the Monongahela National Forest. This most recent infusion of funds (AWA has contributed an additional \$10,900 to WVRC since its inception in late 1990) was made possible by the Gauley River Festival

BRIEFS

proceeds and will be specifically used to build in-state membership and support of project goals.

Upper Yough (Maryland), Russell Fork (Kentucky), Gauley (West Virginia), Kennebec (Maine), Penobscot (Maine), Black (New York) and Klamath (Oregon)
AWA Project Sponsor: Pope Barrow and Steve Taylor

AWA Contribution: \$2,000

Project Description: Technical analysis of hydro-electric licensing and re-licensing projects, including analysis of hydrology (i.e., recreational flows) and numbers crunching on power economics.

North American Relicensing Activities

AWA Project Sponsor: Pete Skinner

AWA Contribution: \$4,000

Project Description: Identification of all U.S. whitewater relicensing opportunities subject to review by December 1991 and immediate intervention in FERC proceedings to protect recreational interests.

James Bay II Hydro Project (Quebec)

AWA Project Sponsor: Pete Skinner

AWA Contribution: \$1,700

Project Description: Travel to Quebec with two U.S. legislators and other influential persons during August 1991 to introduce members of party to adverse environmental and recreational impact of proposed \$12.6 billion James Bay II hydroelectric project. The group visited the area and met with representatives of the Cree Indians and others who would be adversely affected by such development. The immediate positive results of this expedition included the initiation of U.S. public hearings on the subject by the legislators involved, the shelving of related contracts for a one-year period pending investigation and a commitment from Robert Kennedy, Jr. to represent adversely affected parties.

Bio Bio (Chile)

AWA Project Sponsor: Pope Barrow

AWA Contribution: \$1,150

Project Description: Establishment of new Bio Bio Protection Committee and partial underwriting of expenses related to bringing several Chilean river activists to the United States to meet with World Bank officials, U.S. politicians, environmental groups and media contacts to enhance lobbying efforts and generate public interest in protesting proposed dams on the Bio Bio.

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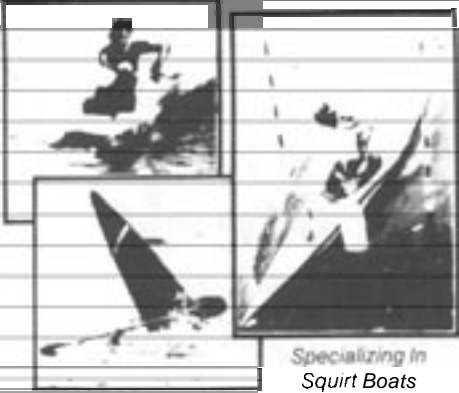
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Film festival celebrates paddle sport

The Bluegrass Wildwater Association is pleased to announce its annual gathering of talented photographers and videographers for a unique and exciting **film/video** competition celebrating paddle sport in all of its forms.

This is the **ninth year** that amateur and professional presentations have competed independently for recognition, prizes and Best of Show honors. Amateur entries are judged and scored on creativity, **photographic** quality, editing, content, and use of sound by a distinguished panel of judges from the boating and media industry.

Professional entrants are judged by a panel of paddling club representatives from across the United States in a "peoples choice" competition.

Entries may cover any paddling topic from hair whitewater to ocean kayaking as long as the presentations feature only human powered activities. Categories for the amateur competition include: **Recreational/Scenic**, Racing, Hair Boating, Humor, Conservation, **Safety/Instructional** and Club. Amateur entries are limited to 20 minutes and may be in **8mm** or **16mm** film, 35mm slide or video format. Winners in each category receive a prize and an award. The amateur entry with the highest point total receives a grand prize and Amateur Best of Show honors.

Professional entries compete in two categories, Open and Commercial. Open presentations may be in any format but are limited to 30 minutes. Commercial presentations have special guidelines. Prizes and awards will be given to the winners of each category and the entry with the highest score will receive a grand prize and Professional Best of Show honors.

Past film festival entries have covered paddling exploits in remote regions of the world including Chile, China, Russia, Pakistan, Nepal, Peru, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Canada and Africa. Rare film and video footage of these areas plus many rivers of the United States have had their world premier at the National Paddling Film Festival.

In addition to competing and viewing the latest paddling productions, the National Paddling Film Festival is also a

chance for the individual film and video presentersto meet and discuss all aspects of **production**.It's a unique opportunity for amateurs to pick up tips from professionals in the film and video industry and for all to becomeexposedto currenttrends in paddle sport depiction. The Film Festival has proven to be an excellent place to make new film and video alliances.

Even if you don't have a formal paddling production to enter--it's still easy to become a competitor at this year's Festival. The Best Paddling Slide competition continues in 1992. Simply send in no more than three of your favorite 35mm boating slides and perhaps a become prize winner chosen from the first 160 entries received.

Of simply viewing excellent ama-

teur and professional paddling sport presentations is your preference then the National Paddling Film Festival will provide you with a feast of original and exciting presentations. Plan to attend.

For more information please contact: Bluegrass Wildwater Association, PO Box 4231, Lexington, KY 40504.

Raffle sponsored by Millbrook Boats nets \$1,722 for AWA river defense

ByPHYLLISHOROWITZ
A WA Executive Director

Last February we got a phone call from John Kazimierczyk, boat designer extraordinaire and owner of Millbrook Boats in **Weare**, New Hampshire, asking us if we would be interested in having him put together a raffle to **benefit AWA's** Whitewater Defense Project and donating one of his models as first prize. Were we interested? I'll say! Familiar with the popularity of his designs, we knew the idea would sell. But little did we know that his efforts would reap a \$1,722 bonanza for AWA!

Quickly the project unfolded. Before we knew it, John obtained commitments for a number of substantial secondary prizes -- a \$245 paddle of choice from David Gatz of Fine Line Paddles, a \$200 clinic (or the equivalent in merchandise) from Tom Foster of the Outdoor Centre of New England and a \$100 gift certificate from Bill **Zeller** of the Country Canoeist. Such generosity inspired us to throw in five AWA gift memberships as fifth prizes, pick up the tab for ticket printing and run ads in **AMERICAN WHITEWATER** to publicize the event.

Then, John took care of the rest. He distributed tickets to the participating dealers and other interested individuals and businesses, and he and his volunteers could be found hawking raffle tickets at every race and take-out in the northeast throughout the spring, summer and fall. The response was more than encouraging.

The grand finale took place at the Farmington Slalom in New Boston, Massachusetts over the weekend of October 19 and 20. The latest Kaz hot canoe designs -- Hooters, Howlers, and Kyotes -- were all over the race course. Everyone present spent the weekend determining which model they would select when their winning ticket was drawn after the awards ceremony on



Denis McLane photo

John Kazimierczyk presents raffle check to AWA Executive Director Phyllis Horowitz as prize winners Dick Maciel (left) and Charles Peterson (right) look on.

Sunday.

Fantasy provoked decisive action, and last-minute ticket sales soared -- especially after **Denis McLane**, owner of the campground at the Esopus Creek take-out, announced at the Sunday morning racers' meeting that he would match the value of that day's sales with a cash donation of up to \$200. Those present decided to hold **Denis** to his word -- 120% worth! Kaz was grinning ear-to-ear; so was AWA Executive Director Phyllis Horowitz, as they paused between each race run to handle raffle transactions.

So, who won the grand prize? Despite large blocks of tickets held, nobody present at the drawing. The Millbrook Boats canoe of choice went to Terry Thrasher of Cleveland, South Carolina! Terry had purchased his tickets by mail in response to the

ad run in this magazine. Other prize winners were Dick Maciel, Klaus Renner, Charles Peterson (who won both Fourth and Fifth prizes!), Bill Gilleece, Allen **Harmson**, Henry Schreiber and Deb Dickson.

AWA extends its gratitude to John Kazimierczyk for his energy, enthusiasm and generosity in executing this successful enterprise. As he specified, the \$1,722 in raffle proceeds will be used to fund an AWA conservation or access project in the northeastern United States.

Would your business or club like to help AWA in its efforts to preserve and protect our threatened whitewater resources? We'd be happy to get behind you as much as possible. To discuss possible fundraising ideas, contact Phyllis Horowitz at (914) 688-5569.

BRIEFS



Dear Dave.. you missed a good time at the Gauley Festival

Dear Dave,

Sure, Dave, your poor mother died just two days before the Gauley Festival. You did your best to streamline the funeral--got her in the ground in six hours, a new entry in the Guinness Book. Then when that fiasco with your boss came up, you had no choice but to quit your job. Imagine asking someone to work on Festival weekend. So, **your wife** went into labor at a most inconvenient time--you still had 40 hours to drive from Colorado to Summersville. Maybe if you'd had another hour or two to sleep, you wouldn't have caused that chain reaction **accident** on the Interstate and ended up in jail. But let me tell ya, buddy, you were the one and only paddler in the whole country that didn't make it to the 1991 Gauley River Festival!

Why, we had boaters from every state except Nebraska and **Iowa**, and every country in this hemisphere. Yup, as bad as you feel lying there recovering from your injuries, it would've taken just as **long** to recover from the hangover you'd have had if you'd have made it. You know how the boating crowd loves to party!

What a bash! It started Saturday morning when the vendors started showing up. Kind of a low-level, mellow kind of free-for-all. We had every single kind of gear-maker there, over thirty of them. They really went all out this year. Everyone was running videos--with incredible set-ups; Tom Love even had an inflatable pavilion. New Wave, OTP, and NOC were overflowing with accessories. All the paddle makers were there. Must have been a thousand boats sold this year. In the afternoon people started drifting in off the river. We set up the auction booth and all the food vendors. We had everything from barbecued chicken and hot sausage sandwiches to burgers, pizza, and corn on the cob. And, of course, beer.

Things really got going around five o'clock. The crowd was swelling, the weather was great, and everyone was feeling good. As soon as they ate and got a beer, they made the circuit to check out the deals. As always, the best deals were at the auction, and Chris and his crew were in rare form. I got all my birthday and



Christmas wishes filled out early on, then just got down to the serious stuff.

We put up a hi-striker for the he-man crowd and a dunk stool just for laughs. Pat Norton and Bob **Glanville** were the good sports that kept us entertained there. Then as the sun set, Barry Grimes set up the videos and, as usual, had some unbelievable footage that had us spellbound throughout the evening. We even had a video projector up at the stage with everyone's run at Pillow Rock, bigger than life. The band that took the stage was **Tim and the Tornadoes**. They were the only wild weather we saw that weekend, a first for the Gauley Festival. A full moon came up by nine o'clock, and that's about when the howling began. You know what a full moon does to boaters!

So anyhow, everyone got real crazy, but not crazy enough that I'd have something embarrassing to relate now! In the morning we were able to resuscitate all the bodies. A few need reconstituting, but everyone was breathing when I left and that's good because the river was great, too!

I was hoping to make enough money this year to start a new AWA policy: Buy the River. Well, we made enough to continue the old policy--protect the rivers. We cleared around \$15,000. But that's okay, too, considering the fun factor. Where else can you raise that kind of money so painlessly?

Do you think if we threw a party, we could raise enough money from our boating friends to hire a lawyer, or maybe post bail? You think it over and get back to me in a couple of months.

Sincerely,
Barry Toscano
Festival Director

BRIEFS

Hydropower opponent

Echeverria resigns American Rivers

A critical player in the war against unwise and environmentally damaging hydropower has announced that he will be leaving his current job at American Rivers.

On August 15, John Echeverria told AWA River Conservation Director, Pope Barrow, that he will be moving on to join the National Audubon Society as their chief attorney. John's departure could be a serious blow to the river conservation movement.

John has been the preeminent force over the past decade in the effort by environmental groups to bring about improvements in the hydropower policies of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

In 1986 Echeverria established the National Hydropower Center at American Rivers and became its first Director. Almost immediately, American Rivers and John targeted FERC's policies of limited public involvement, limited public notice, voodoo economic analysis, and hydro industry bias.

Despite the occasional frustrations suffered by John- and others- in their dealings with the hydromaniacs at FERC, river conservationists throughout the nation are all aware that John and the National Hydropower Center have made a very important contribution to the nation's energy policies and to the ecological well-being of America's rivers and streams.

John is probably most famous for his exciting and precedent setting efforts to have existing dams removed so that a badly damaged river ecosystem could be brought back to life. He has worked on both the Edwards dam removal effort in Maine and the Elwha River dam removal project in Washington State.

John is also noted author who has written many articles on hydropower. He did 95 percent of the work on RIVERS AT RISK (coauthored by Pope Barrow and Rich Roos-Collins), a book which explained in layman's terms the various ways in which private citizens can effectively influence the hydropower licensing system.

Matt Huntington, who has been working with John at American Rivers for several years will take on the position of Coordinator for the National Hydropower Center when John leaves. He will be stepping into very large shoes.



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BRIEFS

Forum continued

Boaters need to consider local's feelings

as the locals see it, they shouldn't have to be tolerant.

Friendsville is, after all, Their Town. Most of them were born there; in fact, most of their grandparents were born there too. And, in spite of their proximity to one of America's premiere whitewater runs, most of them have no interest in riding whitewater.

Instead, the younger residents of Friendsville prefer horses and pickups and the ubiquitous ATVs. Too each his own. The older residents, who are, to understate the facts, set in their ways, consider boaters at best an annoyance; boaters disrupt their daily rituals and routines.

Only a handful of residents are in a position to profit from the presence of boaters. Popular though it may be, the

Upper Yough ain't Disneyland and Friendsville ain't Orlando. For most locals, there really aren't many incentives to be tolerant. Only a few own or work at the handful of restaurants, gas stations and stores that serve boaters.

Besides, they argue, the DNR built a take-out downstream with plenty of parking, a change house and facilities. The boaters should go there and stay off the streets. Not being boaters, the locals don't understand that this would necessitate paddling a couple of extra miles of flatwater. Worse still, because of the late, abbreviated releases, it would require spending another hour or so on river, waiting for the flow to make its way downstream. The locals don't understand that the boaters don't want to be stranded on the river until after dark.

Well, I'm sure you get the picture. A lot of this could have been avoided if everyone had just used a little common sense. Tried to consider other folks' point of view. After all, how would you feel if you saw someone using your street as an outhouse?

Maybe, now that the releases are over and the crowds are gone, everyone will calm down. Maybe there won't be a

drought next year. And, maybe, if we're lucky, by this time next year the boaters and the citizens in Friendsville will be on civil, if not friendly, terms again.

But this little piece wasn't meant to be just about the trouble in Friendsville. It is about the trouble that occurs in practically every River City, USA.

The trouble in Canon City, Colorado and Watertown, New York and Summersville, West Virginia. The trouble that can occur between locals and boaters anywhere.

Some of this trouble can't be helped; it is the inevitable consequence of a cultural clash.

But clearly a lot of it could be avoided, if boaters showed a little common sense, kept a little lower profile and acted a little more courteously. It would save a lot of grief in the long run.

The lesson of Friendsville is clear. The time has come to stop testing the tolerance of the Friendliest Littlest Towns in the USA.

Bob Gedekoh

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You can't break a fiberglass boat

By PETER COGAN

Occasionally someone will look at the front of my fiberglass kayak, which is green with two black "headlights", and say something like, "What are those two black spots on your boat?"

"Black epoxy paint," I tell them, somewhat embarrassed. Yeah. A mistake.

Sooner or later, it happens to everyone. When I finally purchased my first glass boat, I had two major fears. I wouldn't be able to paddle it. And I wouldn't be able to fix it.

Now, several years later, I am competent at both. This article is an attempt to allay some of the fears of the boater who doesn't run a garage for a living, yet is faced with the daunting task of fixing a common glass boat problem: a hole or a crack.

My buddy Bruce taught me the first rule of glass boat repair early on: Fiberglass boats do not break. I had difficulty



Fiberglass patches are cut to size before mixing the epoxy.

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BRIEFS

believing this as I gazed down upon two cracks in the stern of my **Vampire**, after an inadvertent stern squirt.

"No really," Bruce said. "Fiber glass boats do not break."

But, now I know. It's true. Fiber glass boats do not break, because they can almost always be fixed.

Of course, before you start your career in boat repair you will need to put some money down. A power drill with a sanding attachment, large quantities of resin and hardener, ie. epoxy, fiberglass, gloves, a scissor, a respirator and goggles.

Yeah, a respirator. This is serious business. Breathing fiberglass while grinding could easily shorten your future seasons.

Finally, **for the** true novice, you need a pair of Dickies, available at Ames, K Mart and the like. I patched for several years in old dungarees and wasted shirts before buying the one piece, dark blue, **multi-pocketed** mechanic's outfit. The difference is substantial.

Even if you are a rookie (and you are), even if you make **a number of** stupid mistakes (and you will), you will feel and look the part in this uniform. Clothes do make the man; the **right attitude** is in the outfit. **When** your neighbor drops by as you are laboring in the sun on your once new boat, you will barely recognize your own voice when you say casually, very casually, "Yeah, just a little boat repair. No big deal."

But it is a big deal, and that is why you need a mentor. You will need to watch someone in action while you take copious mental notes. Bill was my mentor; the one really good looking patch on my boat bears his signature. Exquisite work... a patch to be proud of.

Basically, there are four steps to boat repair: grinding, prepping, glassing and admiring.

First, you need to grind down the area on your dry boat so that the crack disappears. If your boat is wet, try putting a lamp under it to speed the drying. It may take quite a bit of grinding... continue grinding until you are **left with** a smooth, concave area where the crack once was, much like a hole dug by a very careful dog.

A sanding attachment on a power



A disc sander is used to thoroughly grind the area to be

drill will suffice; but if you intend to do a lot of patching or want to do fine work quickly, a grinder is better.

For prepping, layout **all your** glass pieces on some newspaper, as well as some plastic and some masking tape. If you do this anywhere near your boat, you will get epoxy on it. It won't come off. Trust me on this. And wear gloves. Epoxy doesn't wash off easily.

The glass should be **cut** into progressively bigger pieces to fit the repair. The smallest piece will cover the actual crack, the largest piece should cover the entire area that you have ground. A patch may require anywhere from two to six layers, depending on the size of the defect you have put in your boat.

Make sure you saturate the glass with epoxy. I don't bother with a brush; I use my gloves to knead it into the glass.

When glassing, it is important to do it right the first time. The more you play with the pieces, the more likely they are to separate and turn into a mess.

Once you have carefully layered your progressively larger pieces of glass onto the crack, take off the gloves and lay some plastic over the entire area. Then squeegee the excess epoxy to the side. Finally, tape down the plastic with masking tape.

The speed at which the epoxy will set depends on the temperature of the area where you are working. If your room is cold, come back in a month. Otherwise, at room temperature, overnight should be sufficient. Once again, putting a bright light under your boat will speed the process.

When it's dry, off comes the plastic and you can admire your beautiful patch. If it isn't really beautiful, don't worry. After all, you're only a beginner.

Now if you were really smart you would have mixed some pigment into the epoxy to match the bottom of your boat. Oh well, next time.

You can use your sander to touch up the patch as needed. Or leave it alone, a bit rough around the edges.

Remember what you did well and how you screwed up for future reference and head for the river. And remember, you can't break a fiberglass boat.

Now, even with a good mentor, there is still **one other crucial** component to boat repair. This is the technical consultant. It might be your mentor, but it doesn't have to be.

Who do you call when some knucklehead has bowled you over in an eddy, lifting the combing from your cockpit? Who's your source for the latest news in material... Dynell? Zynell?

Your technical consultant, of course.

How do you choose one?

Look for the boater with the Mikita grinder. The individual whose boat doesn't appear to have any cracks, any signs of repair. Even though you know you saw that boat ender, hit rock and sink. That man... or woman... is your technical consultant. Once you find this person... never let them go.

Good luck.

Editors note: Peter **Cogan** is the President of the Kayak and Canoe **Club** of Boston (KCCB). If you send him large amounts of money, he will reveal the name of his technical consultant.

Russell Fork popular despite low flows

Releases limited to a bony 800 cfs to help fish

The recreational releases on the Russell Fork might have been minimal—but at least they were predictable. And consequently, boaters flocked back to Tennessee's premier class 5 run for the 1991 season.

The Russell's rebound came on the heels of a disastrous 1990 season when the Army Corps of Engineers unexpectedly lowered the releases from the James Hannigan Dam from the usual level of 1,100 to 1,300 cfs to 800 cfs. Unsure about the doability of the Russell at that level resulted in only 880 rafters and boaters experiencing the run.

The concerns of the whitewater community were not groundless. Optimal flow levels on the Russell are between 1,100 and 1,300 cfs and while the river remains navigable between 800 and 900 cfs, this small river turns into steep-creek-style paddling with an enormous push and little room for error. Things tighten up, and routes are not very distinct in the tight slots and boulder gardens. Pinning and broaching opportunities increase by leaps and bounds with enough exposed undercut, subterranean territory to satisfy avid cavers.

But a low Russell Fork is better than no Russell Fork. And during the four October weekend release dates, over 1,600 whitewater enthusiasts descended through the Gorge.

Despite the Russell's popularity, the chances of returning to the former release levels are slim. The Army Corps is following the recommendations of a combination of fish and wildlife agencies that advised that releases in excess of 800 cfs from Flanigan Dam are detrimental to fishery in the Pound River.

Flanigan is located on the Pound approximately a mile upstream from the confluence with the Russell Fork. The fishery experts concluded that advanced flows during the four weekends might damage gravel spawning beds and wash away aquatic life on which fish feed.

However, the experts failed to mention that higher flows are often released



Boater plunges into the maw of the third drop of El Horrendo.



Commercial raft drives for the sneak route at the third drop of Triple Drop.

from the dam during the spring for flood control purposes without adversely affecting the fish population.

The Army Corps has assured paddlers that the 800 cfs releases will be continued during October weekends. And if the main stem of the Russell has better than

average natural flow, paddlers might still see optimal levels.

The Corps has also added a flow phone for the convenience of paddlers. The phone number is (703) 835-1438.

*Too close to the edge***Lessons to be learned from cold-weather accident**

By Dave Reid and Charlie Walbridge

Sometime last spring I got a near miss report from Dave Reid, an active paddler in the Tulsa, Oklahoma area. This town, is an unlikely hotbed of whitewater boating. Local boaters call themselves "The Dust Bowl Chapter of the Arkansas Canoe Club". The "Tulsa Play Wave" on the Arkansas River is a serious local play spot; capable of giving even expert boaters a wild ride. After tuning up here 2-3 nights a week, the group treks to Colorado, New Mexico, and Arkansas regularly. The victim, Dave Reid, is at 51 a 20 year veteran kayaker; an experienced class IV-V boater who spends a lot of time on the water. His story is compelling not only because of his near drowning experience, but for the teamwork and persistence of his companions. It gives each of us a lot to think about.

Dave Reid Begins:

"On the morning of January 12, 1991 it was eighteen degrees at 6:00 AM on my ice covered driveway. I loaded my Corsica on Jon Harrison's Land Cruiser in record time, then rushed inside to wait for Harrison Sutcliffe and Rick Irwin.....Rick suggested that a water level of 6.5' was high enough to paddle the Upper, Upper section of the Mulberry..... the shuttle was only \$6 and it was hours closer to Tulsa, (so we decided to go).

We put in at Wolf Pen. Air temperature was now 35 degrees and Jon thought the water temperature was also 35.... We all had drysuits and neoprene rubber gloves, except for Harrison who had Yellow Jackets so he could hold his paddle better. Even with neoprene gloves our hands got cold.

"We played our way down the river to a little surfing spot that looked Class II at most..... We all surfed a bit and decided to go to the south bank for lunch..... I decided to try Jon's new Seda Mountain bat..... setting the stage for a truly terrifying sequence of events. Each little mistake I made would not normally make any difference. Added together, they were deadly. The cold water changed everything.

"All our normal sprayskirts have golf wiffleballs looped on the grab straps. Jon had a new Yak Keyhole skirt with just a flat nylon (grab loop) strap. No problem! It had been years since my roll failed me. Squirt boat window shades and forward

360's on the Tulsa May Wave had taught me patience and confidence. Jon's state of the art bulkhead (foot braces) were adjusted too far forward for me to lock into the full length thigh braces. No problem! I just slid forward in the seat until my toes touched the bulkhead. By doing this I was off the back band and hip pads, just sitting on the edge of the seat. I thought, "Bulkheads are a real hassle to adjust and this is only a woof-type hole." I put on my thick full-fingered neoprene gloves because my hands were cold, and headed out to have some fun.

"That Mountain Bat would really accelerate out of the north bank eddy into the wave slot. I felt like I was in my Bishop Z-Axis squirt boat, not a plastic kayak. After three shots, the water kept wanting to turn me into a side surf. So I arched backward and stuck out the old low brace.

"I don't know what caused me to flip over.... When I set up for the roll, the thick neoprene gloves could have caused me to orient the paddle the wrong way. I did my roll by instinct, and was surprised not to roll upright. I think the whole roll movement took 5-10 seconds; in retrospect I think I had lost coordination and strength..... it was no big deal. I would pop my skirt and swim. I ran my fingers around the cockpit rim and could not get the slippery nylon pull strap in my fingers. This took another 5-10 seconds to perform.... no panic.... time for the hands roll I'd been working on..... I just didn't have the extra snap hand rolls require. My head is still underwater. No panic.... lots of time left.... I could push out, skirt, and all.... I was suddenly too tired to push.... I remember thinking "Is this really it?" After no more than 30 seconds I just went to sleep. My head was underwater and my body was asleep.

"Now, here is what my friends tell me happened:

"No one saw me go over. Rick noticed the upside down kayak and shouted, "watch for the swimmer!" Jon went for his camera to record me swimming and started planning the harassment program. Everyone was sure I was not having difficulty because my actions were slow and precise.

Harrison saw the paddle floating downstream, sensed that I was in real trouble, jumped in his kayak..... and started paddling across the river at top speed.... He

put his kayak's bow in my hand and attempted an eskimo rescue. I put a hand on the boat.... it must have been instinct.... (but) I did not try to roll up. Next Harrison.... attempted to pull me up by my helmet.... even with an adrenaline rush, he could not get my face up. So he used the bulldoze technique to push me and my boat across the river.... the current was super pushy. Jon had run down the shoreline even with us.... and jumped in.... the swirling water caused my kayak to veer back into the river. Harrison had to make another bulldozer pass.... (and) Jon got in the water and grabbed my boat.

"The river bank was 5-6 feet high, almost vertical, and slippery with mud.... the water was over Jon's head.... (he) could not roll the boat upright.... (so he) reached under the boat.... and released the sprayskirt and popped me free.... Jon and Harrison still could not get my head out of the water.... the rushing water's current would not get me to the bank.... he was almost crying with frustration.... (he) finally pushed my head into the bank. Rick Irwin slid down the steep bank and grabbed my inert body. Jon got on the bank somehow.... at last my head was out of the water. I think my head was under water at least five minutes and maybe ten - who will ever know?

"..... What a sight! The person who minutes ago had been joking now had a face full of mud, was colored a revolting blue, and had blood oozing out of his nose. Jon could not see any breathing or pulse and knew I was in serious trouble.

Somehow they got me up the bank, but dropped me pretty hard. At that point Jon thought I might have a chance because I made a rattling sound in my throat.... Jon opened my eyelids.... my eyes were not rolled back and the pupils were not dilated.... Jon was able to pry open my jaws wide enough to insert his hand.... he said my mouth was full of mucous and my throat was completely closed.... not a pretty sight.... all this time I was making rattling sounds, but my chest was not moving. The team started (giving) chest compressions in time with the rattles coming from my throat.... it was like I was in a deep sleep making really gross snoring sounds.... I finally started breathing in short, shallow bursts.

"My first recollection is shouting over and over, "Jon, I'm O.K." (Jon said I

really only mumbled a few times) I remember breathing and it was one of the hardest things I've ever done.....as soon as I started breathing my skin color started returning to normal. I wanted to move my arms and legs, but **they were** too heavy and I couldn't move them. I remember wanting to stand up. It was all I could think of..... I would twitch my arms and legs, get up on my elbows, and fall backwards. Finally I was able to balance on one elbow, then my hands and knees. The guys told me to relax, but I never heard them. I just knew I had to stand up.

"Jon thinks that it took fifteen or twenty minutes for me to stand up with the group's help.....I kept saying, "let me go, I can walk", fighting off all help. When they would give in and let go I would start falling down. They would grab me and the argument would start again. After some time.....I began to see images for the first time. I had no idea where I was, who I was, or how I got there.....my speech was very slurred, as if I were severely intoxicated. I wanted my kayak and argued that I could paddle.....my hearing was returning. Harrison finally convinced me that I had lost my paddle and to get into Rick's canoe.....he deflated his air bag and I kind of draped myself in the bow.....With Harrison's help, Rick made an Arkansas mud slide launch down the steep bank into the river.....(and paddled to) a summer home about 1/4 mile downriver.

"Jon towed my kayak across the river and along with Harrison tried to help me out of the canoe. I would accept very little help.....and insisted on pulling my kayak to the road.....about 200 yards uphill. I was close to the road when I got really tired..... There was a short strip of black asphalt driveway leading to the road.....I lay down on the asphalt to relax.....I felt like a limp dishrag.

A truck took Jon to (the put-in, and he) returned with the cruiser. I changed

into wool socks, a fleece paddling jacket, and a fleece jacket..... I felt really good and we decided to highball drive back to Tulsa. When we got to the hospital in Broken Arrow (Oklahoma) I thought they would listen to my lungs, give me antibiotics and send me home. EKG, chest X-Ray, and blood samples started and went on throughout the night. They put me on oxygen for a day and a half and it was wonderful. The nurses kept measuring my blood oxygen and it got to 98% of what it should have been at 3:00 AM the next day. About then I finally got warm.

"The doctors said that the cold water caused my esophagus, trachea, and larynx to go into severe muscle spasms.....my body asphyxiated itself! The lack of oxygen shut down my brain and slowed my heart.... The fall helped to get my heart back into action. As blood started moving, my brain kicked back in. As more oxygen became available, other functions came back....a true cold water/near drown-ing incident!

"I ended up with a severe case of pulmonary edema. It took four weeks of recovery before I could get back in the water.....My larynx developed an infection.....My voice will probably sound a

little different for a long time. But I have no heart or brain damage and should make a full recovery. Jon, Harrison, and Rick's ability to handle my lifeless body, their calm work in clearing my throat and in coordinating the chest compressions brought me back....it takes real dedication to do what needs to be done on a personal basis to save a person's life.

"Kayaking is an assumed risk sport. It means a lot to me and my friends. I hope this story helps every paddler avoid this situation.

"Look for me on the river. I will be the guy putting golf wiffle balls on spray skirt pull straps."

I have chosen this report for a number of reasons. The first is that it emphasizes not only that trouble can strike on an ordinary trip, but that the presence of experienced companions can make a difference between life and death. The group responded quickly and intelligently, dealing with the problems they faced until they succeeded. All of those involved should be commended for their actions. Most of the lessons learned were covered by Dave in his report; I will condense them and add others.

Second, this experience points out

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SAFETY

the seriousness of a near-drowning incident. Many people have been rescued from drowning only to die later because of a failure to seek follow-up medical treatment. When deprived of oxygen, metabolic changes occur in the victim which can be damaging long after he starts breathing again. Sometimes a bad swim can have the same effect. I strongly recommend that anyone who goes through an experience like this go to a hospital afterwards.

Third, as the narrative shows, victims are often irrational, even belligerent, in dealing with rescuers. Many of the metabolic changes which occur will reduce reasoning ability and alter personality. We've all dealt with the guy who won't get out of the water after a long, cold swim. Jim Seggerstrom of Rescue 3 describes a situation in which a little old lady who called an ambulance started shooting at the paramedics with a .357 magnum revolver! Don't be surprised by absurd or aggressive behavior. Take charge. Guide the victim as best you can to keep him from injuring himself.

Fourth, it's clear that extremely cold water can in itself be a life-threatening way that are not well understood at present. A number of inexplicable deaths

have occurred during swims of relatively easy white water. Heart attacks are one possibility; laryngospasm is another. "Sudden Disappearance Syndrome", or cases where a person falls into the water and does not surface, has been linked to cold temperatures and drug abuse. Several people have reported feeling of apathy and disorientation hanging under a kayak in extremely cold water. More information is needed, any anyone with first-hand experience is encouraged to write me.

Modern dry suits are excellent. They're so good that they may give paddlers a false sense of security. It is possible that the shock of cold water may reduce a paddler's ability to function so that performing learned movements like the eskimo roll is impaired. All this must be taken into account on extreme-weather runs.

Fifth, what are the risks that come with using the new generation of leakproof sprayskirts? Unlike the old bungee-cord models which can be worked loose by struggling paddler, the latest super-dry models like the Yak, Manhole, Bushsport, Seals, or Harmony are so tight that a paddler can't push free and must use the grab loop to escape. Many of these have flat webbing grab loops which can be plastered close to

the deck. All are hard to feel with neoprene-gloved hands, which this accident shows may create a potentially deadly combination.

If you own one of these skirts, how do you protect yourself? First, you've got to be sure that the grab loop is out. This is designed into most, but not all, sprayskirts. Second, Dave Reid recommends using Pogies or Yellowjackets or cutting off the fingertips from neoprene gloves to improve your ability to find the grab loop. Don't count on using a knife to cut your way loose; it's possible, but you won't have time. You may want, as Dave Reid suggests, to attach a wiffle ball or some other item to the grab loop so it is easier to find.

Sixth, it's worthy of noting that this group of four experienced paddlers had their hands full with this mishap. Think about this when you plan your next winter run with only one or two other people.

Lastly, poor boat fit definitely contributed to this mishap. This is often a problem with borrowed boats, and is tolerated far too often. Always consider the risks involved with sloppy or dangerously tight outfitting.

And please: let's be careful out there!

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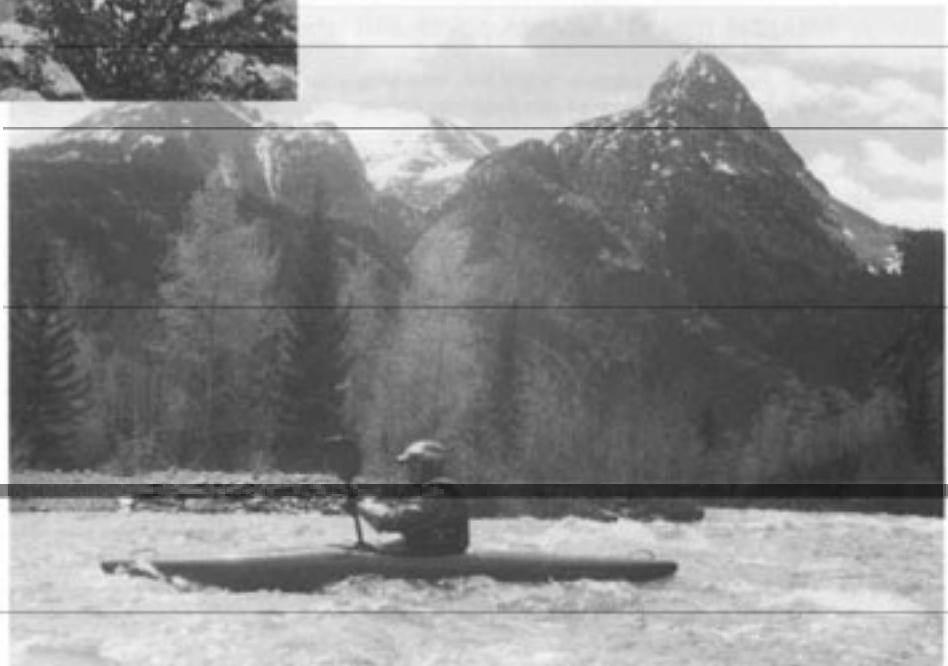
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Whitewater Heaven.....

by *RICHIE HUGHES, JULIE TROGDON, MIKE TROGDON*
and *BOB GEDEKOH*



WHITEWATER HEAVEN

The Animas stands as the gem of the San Juan Basin with 26 miles of nonstop class 3-5 rapids through a superb wilderness setting.

.....*Whitewater Hell*

*Colorado's
San Juan Basin
retains the flavor
of the old West:
wild, beautiful,
untamed...and at
times dangerous.*



WHITEWATER HELL

With potential carries around No-Name and Broken Bridge rapids and a lethal box canyon lurking just past the take-out, the Animas can prove dangerous to the unwary paddler.



1881.

Durango, Colorado. Boomtown.

Though less than one year of age, Durango is heaven and hell on earth. Ore miners, cowboys, gamblers, whores, gun-fighters, aspiring railroad tycoons and a handful of decent folk wander the dusty streets.

There is no law and there is no order.

The town's first dentist arrives one afternoon by stagecoach. Before **nightfall** he watches in dismay as the coach's driver, a **miscreant** and murderer named **Henry Moorman**, is hanged from a tree in front of what is to be his office.

A range war rages between two cowcamps; one centered in the Durango area, the other in nearby **Farmington**, New Mexico. Resident desperado and gunslinger **Isaac Stockton** leads the Colorado contingent, terrorizing the community. **Stockton** goes so far as to threaten the life of Mrs. **Caroline Westcott Romney**, the town's fashionably plump and feisty newspaper editor. She is anything but intimidated and continues to take **Stockton** to task in her paper, *The Record*.

Mrs. Romney is no stranger to danger, she had personally transported her press from **Leadville** the preceding December, crossing **one** ice cold river 30 times and another 16 times. Reportedly she cheered her despondent teamsters on by singing "Many Rivers to Cross" at each fording.

Eventually, an inimitable character named **Robert Dryer** is hired as sheriff, and, for a time, things settle down. A fair and honest man, he rules with an iron fist. Unfortunately, he is accidentally shot in the neck by one of his deputies while making an arrest, and must temporarily return east to have the slug removed.

By September, **Isaac Stockton** has also fallen victim to a bullet. He dies resisting arrest and is unceremoniously planted in the town's **Boot Hill**.

Meanwhile, in **Silverton**, about 50 miles up the Animas river, there is a sudden outbreak of piety and all the "soiled doves, gamblers and harlots" are driven out of town. They promptly join their spiritual brethren in Durango. Some feel that **Silverton's** loss has been **Durango's** gain. But not all.

When **Maud Austin**, one of the "soiled doves", dies, Mrs. Romney writes, "She was a remarkably good looking woman" who "lived a **life** of shame, and here we draw the veil of charity". To Mrs. **Romney's** mind Durango does not need "soiled doves".

But she has definite opinions about what Durango does need.

"The only lack of resources here is those potent civilizers of their pioneer brothers—the **girls**."

All the while, Denver and Rio Grande workers continue to toil at a furious pace on the rail line that will **link** Durango and Silverton, not suspecting that more than a century later, the narrow gauge line will still be in use, transporting, not ore, but a human cargo the **like of which** they could never have imagined.

1881.

Durango.

F r o n t i e r
Heaven and Frontier Hell.



1991

Durango, Colorado. Boomtown.

Hundreds of vehicles cruise the tree lined one way streets, **carrying tourists** on their way to the train station, where they **will** bring their Journey Through the **Past on what is now**

called the Durango Silverton Narrow

Gauge Railroad. Back-pack & board the train too; it provides access to the **Needles**, one of the most spectacular hiking areas in the **San Juan Mountains**.

Around town locals are talking about the opening of **City Slickers**, a comedy western that was filmed nearby. The cost of living in Durango is a frequent topic of conversation as well. "What is the best way to become a **millionaire** in Durango?" they ask one another.

By now everyone knows the punch line. "Start out with two million." Mountain bikes weave their way through traffic, headed for the trails on the outskirts of town. Later, their riders will soak their aching bodies in the **Trimble Hot Springs**. At the fairground young cowboys challenge the bulls and bucking broncos at a professional rodeo. Most wind up with a face full of dirt, but hometown hero, C.R.

Kemple, and **Bruce Ford**, both champion bareback riders, take home some cash.

The rodeo cowboys aren't the only ones in town taking a wild ride for money. Kayaks are everywhere, as many perched



The Silverton narrow gauge railroad carries tourists through the scenic Animas River gorge.

atop pickups and Four by Fours as on the river. They reach their greatest concentration at the southern edge of town, where loudspeakers blare and the river is lined with spectators.

Nationally ranked slalom racers **Rich Weiss**, **Kara Ruppel**, **Scott Shipley** and **Kent Ford** thread their way through a series of gates on the Animas' surging current, intent on claiming some of the prize money being offered to the winners of the **Champion International Whitewater Series**.

And, with the Animas pumping more than **2500 cfs** through the infamous **26 mile** run upstream, there is plenty of danger too, for those with the nerve to challenge it. A handful of boaters ride the torrent, punching mile after mile after continuous mile of exploding waves and roaring hydraulics.

Late in the day they decide to continue down the river two more miles through the infamous Animas Box. Near the end, one falls into a roaring keeper. After a heroic surf, he is forced to swim. Fortunately, he makes it shore before the current enters the infamous and **unrunable Rockwood Box**. His **brand new** kayak is not **so lucky**; it flushes downstream and is never seen again.

1991.

Durango.

Whitewater Heaven and Whitewater Hell.

During the past century Durango has undergone an amazing transformation. **Gunman Stockton**, Sheriff Dryer and Editor **Romney** would hardly **recognize** the place. They are long gone, but the spirit of adventure that brought them to **Durango** lingers on.

There is still plenty of color and excitement in Durango, especially if you are an outdoor enthusiast. Located in southwest corner of **Colorado**, Durango functions as a center of operations for whitewater boaters exploring the tributaries of the San Juan River, as well as for the Delores.

Snow melt from the San Juans provides the action. Depending on weather conditions and snowpack, the San Juan tributaries are at optimal levels between mid May and mid July.

Durango serves as a sort of **spiritual center** for boaters as well, with the **Four Corners Marina**, operated by the esteemed **Wiley** family, the nucleus of whitewater activity. During peak season a continuous **stream** of local and out of town boaters pass through the store, stocking up on gear, checking on river levels and seeking advice from old-timer Milt and his daughter Nancy, a renowned hair and expeditionary boater.

"Is there too much water to run the Piedra?" they ask, or "Just how hard is the Animas, really?"

Of course the unspoken question is, "Are we good enough to **survive** these famous runs?" But even if the answer is no, there is no need to despair. The San Juan tributaries provide whitewater to challenge all skill levels; there is something here for everyone.

And **so** we present, for your edification, some profiles of the most popular rivers of the San Juan basin, **all** readily accessible from Durango.

Read them, enjoy them and stash them away.

Next summer the surf will rise in

Colorado again. And the rivers of the **San Juan** basin certainly merit a place on every serious boater's wish list.



The Animas: Silverton to Rockwood

by Bob Gedekoh

The Animas was indisputably one of the most exhilarating expert whitewater runs in the nation, if not the world. It was also a very serious undertaking, particularly at flows greater than 2000 cfs.

This much I had gleaned from **talking** to Animas veterans and by scrutinizing the guidebooks to the area. But none of this really prepared me for the overwhelming intensity of my first journey down the river.

It was the summer of 1987 and I was still recovering from a near fatal auto accident. I was paddling with a sixteen inch **metal rod** driven through the center of my femur. **A metal plate** was holding one of the **bones** in my forearm together. I was not in top form.

We rolled into Durango and met hair boaters Ron Mullet and Dean Tomko, who had paddled the river the day before.

Great news! The river was **running** 3000 cfs. Only 1500 cfs more than what most **Animas veterans** recommended! Ron and Dean scrutinized our party and pointedly suggested that this might not be an appropriate run for everyone. In fact, I was the only one they encouraged to go. The others were dispatched to the **train station**;

they would see the Animas from the safety of the excursion train. Considering my physical condition, I thought this was an interesting determination... but I was flattered and really wanted to do the Animas badly.

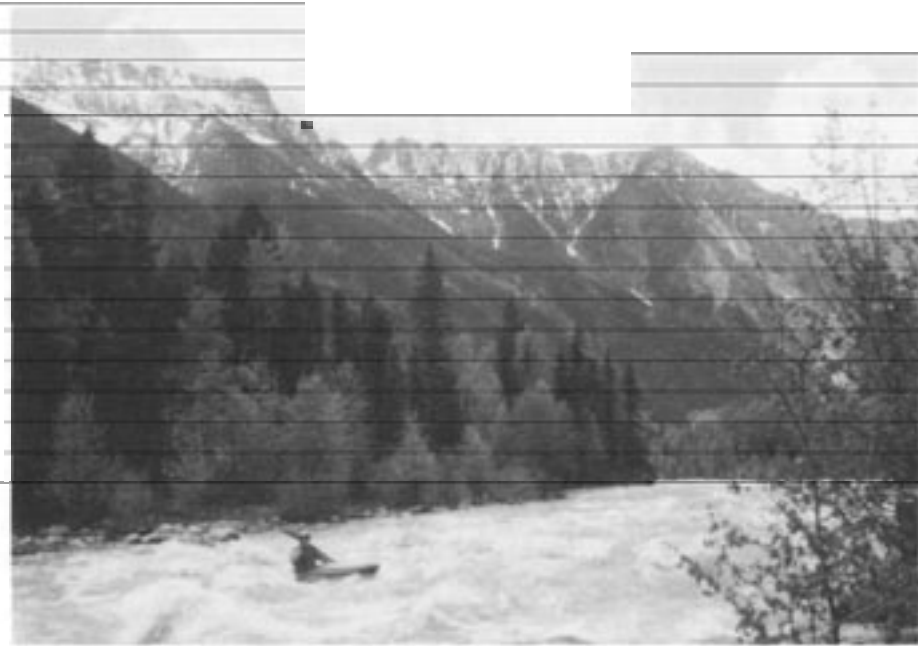
We drove to the put-in at Silverton, crossing not one, but two, **11,000 foot passes**. Soon we were on the river. Just outside of town the river passed through an imposing chasm. Within a few miles the volume increased dramatically; the river was being fed by gushing streams rushing down from the snowcapped **13,000 foot peaks** that surrounded us.

I knew that the first few miles were supposed to be relatively easy, but we were paddling nearly continuous class 3 and 4 whitewater... big, booming whitewater.

I flipped on an oblique hydraulic and rolled quickly. I **was glad** that Ron and Dean didn't notice; they were preoccupied with reading the torrent ahead. The water was absolutely frigid. Eddies were few and far between. Sometimes miles passed between pauses to catch our breath. The **Animas** was not a pool drop river. It occurred to me that a long swim could have serious consequences and that it would be difficult to rescue a person, much less a boat, in this icy maelstrom, even for powerhouse boaters like Ron and Dean. I had heard of a number of individuals who had sacrificed their boats and paddles to the Animas. I resolved to keep my ass in my boat.



Richie Hughes in the Alpine meadow setting of the Animas put-in..



Whitewater as far as you can see...class 3/4 rapids stretch for miles on the Animas.

The miles and the time passed quickly. We were going very fast. Considering the current, we had no choice. Why makes the Upper Animas so swift? Gradient, for one thing. Volume, for another. The average gradient for the 28 mile is 80 feet/mile. To put **this in** perspective for eastern boaters, the **Animas is roughly** two and one half times steeper than the Upper Gauley. Considering that the two are frequently paddled at about the same volume, 1000-3000 cfs, it is not surprising that the Animas provides non-stop, big water action. At higher levels it features several **class 4 rapids** that are several miles long.

Ron and Dean led through these long wave trains, effectively scouting from their boats. We punched meaty hydraulics and dodged ominous pourovers with potent patterns of recirculation. There weren't a lot of these, but there were enough. It seemed to me that my companions had a second sense regarding the location of these monsters. Still I worried they might get tired and suffer a solitary lapse in vigilance, one that would have horrible consequences for someone... most likely me.

Although his lines were flawless, Ron seemed almost cavalier in his approach to the river. Of course, he had tackled it several times before, and at even higher levels. **He was so** relaxed, while I was wired. Right in the midst of rapid he would nonchalantly spin about and point out some scenic feature.

"That is Mount Garfield... 13,074 feet," **he would calmly** announce, or "This is Needle Creek." "Just pay attention to

where we're going!" I replied. By this time I was in no mood for a scenic tour... especially a tour of one of those brutish holes.

Without scouting, I followed Ron and Dean through the first, and easiest class V rapid of the river... the Garfield Slide. At the first eddy below the bottom of the rapid my companions debated whether it really merited its class V rating, while I struggled to regain my composure. After a few seconds of careful consideration I informed them that I wanted to scout the remaining class Vs.

After looking at the next one, No Name, I shouldered my boat and hit the tracks. **It was** steep and powerful, featuring "must make" moves with violent hydraulic consequences. Class four water continued **from the** bottom of No Name as far as **I could see**. At 3000 cfs No Name looked like a class 5+ to me. On subsequent trips, when the Animas was running less than 2000, I have paddled this rapid. Even at lower levels, it is frightening. To make matters worse, No Name is relatively hard to spot from upstream; the approach is nondescript.

At my request we stopped to scout the Broken Bridge Rapid... one of the most difficult sections on the river. The rapid was somewhat different from the rest. A number of boulders had tumbled into the river, rendering it technical as well as pushy. And, of course, there were those ledges and pourovers. Happily, my companions tracked a benign route through this maze.

By the time we reached the railroad bridge below Tacoma, 26 miles down-

stream from Silverton, I was physically and mentally beat. Ron and Dean, on the other hand seemed quite chipper. Amazingly, we had been on the river less than four hours.

This point presented an interesting dilemma. Beyond the bridge the Animas entered a deep box canyon with vertical walls that were hundreds of feet high. The rail bed traversed a cut, high on the face of the cliffs, then left the river canyon altogether for several miles.

There were a number of factors to consider. The two mile box canyon was said to contain rapids more difficult than any of those we had paddled. Some of these, particularly the first one, could not be adequately scouted or portaged, because it was wedged between two sheer rock faces. Finally, immediately below this two mile box canyon, was a second box canyon, one that was said to be inescapable and totally unrunable. Reportedly it had already claimed several lives. The first box flowed directly into the second, without much of a pause.

On the other hand, carrying two miles out the tracks to Rockwood posed distinct disadvantages as well. The excursion trains were running through every hour and the cut is so narrow in places that it is difficult to get off the tracks to let them by. As a consequence, the railroad had forbidden boaters from walking out the tracks. Those who got caught faced a stiff fine for trespassing.

(Editors' note: They still do. Sometimes it is possible to make arrangements with the railroad in Durango to shuttle out on the train, but this is expensive. Other boaters keep a very low profile while running their shuttle, then wait until late in the evening, after the last train has passed, to carry out. This is a tense access situation, and boaters are advised not to incur the wrath of the Durango and Silverton Railroad.)

After some consideration I decided to wait until the last train had passed and walk out. I waved as Dean and Ron disappeared over the first blind drop that marked the entrance to the Box.

But my adventure on the Animas was not over. **While** I sat waiting, another group of paddlers rounded the corner. I recognized some of their faces, they were **Upper Yough** regulars from the **Baltimore** and D.C. area. After some discussion, they announced their intention to run the **Box**. "Wasn't I going to run it too?"

I didn't know them well, but I had seen them paddle, and I knew that I was at least as good as several of them. What the hell, I thought, as I watched them charge

over the blind drop, **one by one**. If they can do it, I can do it.

My head full of **this mindless bravado**, I charged after **them**. From the crest of a wave just above the first ledge, and past the point of **no return**, I realized that I might have made a mistake.

Just ahead of me was a towering white wall of water. Beyond that lie carnage... empty boats, unattended gear and **swimmers**. I charged the wall, back ended, and rolled in the swirling current.

We spent the next hour and a half doing our best to **reunite paddles with paddlers** and boats with boaters. We were almost at the bottom of the box before we completed this task. The character of the Animas was dramatically different in the Box. It was a **dark and eerie** place. The river was compressed and boiling between the cliff walls and there were strange swirlies in the eddies.

The Animas was still swift and pushy, though there were occasional pools. There were plenty of nasty pour overs and hydraulic stoo, and **they were** hard to miss, especially without Ron and Dean to follow. It was serious class 5+ water; no one knew the way, and we were in over our heads.

I wasn't even sure that we would recognize the gap in the cliffs of river right that marked **the end of the first box and the beginning of the second**. It was getting late and no one was having much fun. We pushed on, taking turns in **the lead**. I rolled several times in unpleasant places, and I **was not alone**. **Everyone was** afraid that we were going to **be inadvertently flushed** into the second box.

Fortunately, from a small eddy between two large rapids, we spotted the trail that leads out of the river. After what we had experienced, the steep, rocky half mile **climb** out of the canyon seemed easy. It was nearly dark.

I was ecstatic. I had survived the **Animas**. Since that day I have paddled the Animas a number of times and it is still one of my favorites. It is hard to imagine so much incredible whitewater in such a spectacular place. The river seems less intimidating to me now; I'm in a lot better shape and I know what to **expect**. I'd even like to run the Box again, but somehow I never seem to catch the river at less than 2200 cfs, and I'm not anxious to repeat my first experience. It's one of those dragons out there still waiting to be slain.

My advice to anyone thinking of running the river? Review the maps and text of **Wheat's Floater's Guide** to Colorado before you go. Make sure your skills and equipment are up to the task and that your

companions are too. Go with someone who knows the river and choose a level appropriate to your **abilities**.

Paddling the Animas can be a fantastic paddling experience, but it also has the potential to be a disaster. **In the end, it's all up to you.**



The Animas: Durango Run by Julie and Mike Trogdon

This section of the Animas features numerous class II and a few class III rapids, making it a favorite with novice and intermediate boaters. It is also run commercially by a number of raft companies headquartered in Durango. Multiple access points are available at either end, so that boaters may elect to paddle only a few miles, or as many as twenty. This is a great place for boaters to practice their basic techniques.

A permanent slalom course has been constructed by volunteers at Smelter Rapid, a long class III located at the southern edge of Durango. For two years this course has been utilized for the Champion International Whitewater Series Kayak and Canoe Races. **This event has attracted** world class competitors and the site has been named a Center of Excellence by the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team.

Several popular play spots are located downstream, including a number of excellent surfing waves not far from the **Four Corners Marina**. The lower section of this run flows through the Ute Indian Reservation.

Each June the Animas River Days, featuring a whitewater rodeo and canoe, kayak and raft races are held on this section of the river. Much of the credit for the creation of the course, for organizing the Animas River Days and for attracting the Champion Series to Durango belongs to the aforementioned Nancy Wiley, **co-owner of the Four Corners Marina with her father, Milt.**

But Nancy, whose whitewater exploits have been documented in numerous articles and documentaries, is not the only member of the Wiley clan actively involved in whitewater sports. Her sisters Amy, a professional photographer and guide, Janet, an architect, and Susie, a graphic artist, **all share their father's enthusiasm and commitment to river sports**. Small wonder, considering the fact that they were raised with a whitewater treasure flowing right through the middle of their hometown.



Hermosa Creek by Bob Gedekoh

This small, steep and continuous **high mountain tributary of the Animas** does not see a lot of traffic because of difficulties with access. But those with the perseverance and the stamina to overcome this obstacle are rewarded with a magnificent and challenging wilderness run.

There are basically two ways to put on Hermosa Creek. Most boaters follow the suggestion in Doug Wheat's guidebook and carry and/or drag their boats four miles upstream from where Highway 576 dead ends. This provides a lively eight mile class IV paddle downstream to the junction with the Animas. Wheat suggests that an additional three miles can be added to the run... by carrying three additional miles at the top!

Needless to say, it is hard to get too enthused about this proposition. But there is another way.

Not necessarily a better way... but another way, **none the less**. Hermosa Creek becomes navigable, and I use that term with some reticence, eighteen miles upstream of its confluence with the **Animas**. Not far from the base of one of the back slopes of the Purgatory Durango Ski Area the two forks of Hermosa Creek, merge, conditionally providing enough water to float a boat.

Last season we found our way to this junction with the help of **Jack Turner**, a fifth generation Durangoan who is an accomplished paddler and a former member of the U.S. Cross Country Ski Team. Jack, currently a Marketing Vice President for Purgatory, hunted elk in these mountains from horseback as a boy. Nonetheless, he was anxious to see the **Hermosa Creek valley** from another perspective, and from the top down. It soon became apparent that Jack's physical stamina and good humor are a match for his sense of adventure.

At this put in Hermosa Creek is excruciatingly small; many more tributaries will contribute to its volume later.

For several miles the stream meanders through an alpine valley; and one soon discovers why this means of access **has limited appeal**. **Although the surroundings are** pristine, the upper reaches of this run are almost certain to be bony, even at relatively high flows. But strainers represent an even greater obstacle to paddling the upper Hermosa Creek. Strainers that **are not so much a challenge to one's boating ability, but rather a challenge to one's tolerance.**

Fortunately, most of the strainers

were apparent soon enough to allow us to safely exit our boats and portage, but at very high flows this might not be so easily accomplished. And it seems likely that new strainers appear on Hermosa Creek on a regular basis so the element of danger is unpredictable. About one-third of the way through the run the stream entered a mini-canyon so choked with strainers that we elected to make a single quarter mile portage on the trail located high on the bank on river left.

In summary, if climbing in and out of your boat at least twenty times to traverse five river miles sounds insanely unacceptable, this is not for you. On the other hand, if you really want to paddle Hermosa Creek, and you consider the alternative of carrying your kayak four miles...

The lower half of the run was lively fun, more or less continuous class three and four white water, unusually technical for a western run. And the surroundings were spectacular, the only signs of habituation are along the last mile or so, this truly is a wilderness run.

In summary, there is a stiff price of admission to paddling Hermosa Creek, but it is not without reward. It is not something most of us would choose to do on a regular basis, but, paddled on occasion, it represents a vigorous whitewater challenge.



The Piedra

by Richie Hughes

Do grizzly bears still stalk the wilds of Colorado?

Probably not... at least according to the state's Division of Wildlife. But not everyone agrees.

Doug Peacock, a Vietnam veteran and Green Beret, has founded an organization called the Citizens' Committee for the Colorado Grizzly. These volunteers continue to scour the wilderness for signs of grizzlies, and there have been a number of undocumented sightings since the last confirmed one was killed in self defense by an outfitter in 1979.

If there are grizzlies remaining in Colorado, Peacock, who has written a book on the subject, believes they will be found in the San Juans, specifically in the upper reaches of the Piedra watershed. Under the stress of coexisting with humans, grizzlies often abandon their usual barren habitats and head for the forests... like those along the Piedra. The stress of human contact also causes the bears to become more noctur-



nal... certainly an encouraging thought for paddlers planning overnight trips on the river. Sweet dreams!

But grizzlies or no grizzlies, whitewater paddlers who tackle the Piedra are guaranteed a real eyeful of natural wonder. River otters were reintroduced to the Piedra several years ago (as documented in the March/ April 89 issue of American Whitewater). Perigrine falcons soar over the valley and mule deer are common. *All* things considered, the Piedra is clearly one of the most beautiful whitewater runs in the west.

Described as a little sister to the magnificent Animas, the Piedra flows out of the San Juans with a charm all its own. While the Animas flows between towering peaks and through an expansive valley, the Piedra flows through a series of three precipitous box canyons and steep, forested slopes. The Piedra offers technical pool drop rapids, in contrast to the big water action of the Upper Animas.

The Piedra is more mellow and intimate than the Animas and is somewhat less intimidating, but this twenty mile stretch of class III, IV and, at higher levels, V whitewater requires advanced boating skills. The Piedra flows through a pristine wilderness setting; between the put-in at Piedra Road Bridge about ten miles north of Pagosa Springs and the take-out at the Lower Piedra Campground upstream of highway 160 there is only one point of access... the Hunter Campground. The most difficult rapids on the run lie just downstream of this site in a box canyon; boaters who have experienced difficulties upstream would do well to stop here.

At lower levels many parties elect to put-in at the Hunter Campground since the upper reaches of the run lie above several major tributaries and hence can be a bit bony. A Forest Service Road parallels the river from Hunter Campground down on river left, but it runs high on a ridge, generally more than a half mile away from the action.

But if there is adequate flow, I prefer to run the entire river. Admittedly the lower section is more exciting than the upper, but the upper portion of the river passes through some fantastically beautiful rock formations that are not to be missed.

In the box canyon below Hunter Campground there are at least six class IV or V rapids that command attention. Most are short, steep eastern style drops. One... the Mud Slide Rapid... was formed as recently as 1979. Since the approach to some of these rapids is blind, savvy boaters take time to scout, since logs could create potential deathtraps here. At higher levels this section of the river becomes very pushy and is best left to the experts.

Optimal flows on the Piedra occur with snowmelt in late May and early June, generally when the Animas is running at greater than 2000 cfs in Durango or the San Juan is running greater than 700 cfs at Pagosa. However, snowpack and melt in the various portions of the San Juan watershed is variable and unpredictable, so that the advisability of attempting the run is best made by checking the river yourself.

And while you're eyeballing the river... keep an eye out for those bears!





A steep ledge on the Piedra... with higher levels the river provides a challenging run.

Mesa Canyon: San Juan River
by Julie Trogdon

Not all of the whitewater in the San Juan watershed is of the hair raising variety. A number of runs are appropriate choices for beginners and intermediates.

For instance, the San Juan, from the town of Pagosa Springs to Trujillo, offers a 16 mile scenic trip through the San Juan National Forest and the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.

Known as Mesa Canyon, this section of the San Juan is graced by sky high ponderosa pines, junipers and cottonwoods. Bird watchers may spot golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, western bluebirds, tanagers, warblers and many species of ducks.

Like most rivers in southwestern Colorado, Mesa Canyon is best paddled in late spring and early summer... when the flow at Pagosa is higher than 800 cfs. The run consists mostly of class II whitewater with a 30 foot/ mile gradient, enough that a lazy paddler would hardly have to put a paddle in the water except to dodge an

occasional rock. This is not the kind of whitewater likely to bruise your ego.

I have had the pleasure of paddling Mesa Canyon twice. Both times my companions were boaters of the insane category who had spent the previous days tackling the hardest rivers in the region; the Upper Animas, the East Fork of the San Juan, Hermosa Creek and the upper Box of the Rio Grande. They were slumming, and certainly would not appreciate word getting out that they had cruised a novice river with a novice boater such as myself, so alas, they must go unnamed. Nonetheless, I'm quite certain that they found Mesa Canyon a guilty pleasure, an opportunity to enjoy a relaxing float through some delightful scenery, instead of being terrorized by killer rapids.

Of course my companions managed to find a series of holes about seven miles into the run where they could seek redemption by practicing every imaginable way to surf their kayaks. But, to my mind, surfing the hot springs at the put-in at Pagosa is surely the best way to cap off this fine run.

East Fork of the San Juan/ San Juan
by Richie Hughes

This convenient run, just north of Pagosa Springs, should be a staple in the whitewater diet of boaters visiting the San Juans. This gem, tucked away between the Piedra watershed and the watershed of the Rio Grande, features mostly class III and IV water. With a convenient shuttle on roads that are never far from the river, but are unobtrusive. Most boaters will probably spend two or three hours on this run.

Boaters comfortable on technical water bordering on class V may elect to put in above the Sand Fork confluence three miles above the junction of the West and East Forks of the San Juan.

Less competent boaters should skip the East Fork and put-in near the West Fork junction, since the run is mostly class III-IV beyond that point.

A bridge on a local road just off highway 160, about nine miles north of Pagosa, serves as an acceptable take-out. Not far below the confluence of the East Fork and Sand Creek, the East Fork drops through a tight, steep gorge, about a mile long, that contains a number of large boulders and pour-overs. Unfortunately this portion of the river, which drops at a more than 150 feet/ mile, often captures log strainers. For this reason the canyon should be scouted from the cliffs along river right... it will be necessary to abandon your car to accomplish this. At higher levels this section would merit an honest class V rating.

Downstream of this gorge, the East Fork provides class III and IV action; but it is still necessary to be vigilant for strainers, since the river is quite serpentine in its course. The flow doubles and the riverbed widens considerably after the junction with the West Fork, reducing the risk of entrapment. However, a broken down low-head dam located several miles below the junction might present a hazard at some levels.

Unfortunately the East Fork valley is apparently being threatened by a proposal to open a ski resort within the National Forest, upstream of the run mentioned here. Such a development would almost certainly damage the river, since the valley is quite narrow and any widening of the road would surely compromise the riverbed. Local conservation organizations are opposing the development, citing pre-existing ski complexes nearby at Purgatory and Wolf Creek as more than adequate to meet the demand for ski services in this area.

CORSICA EXOTICA



By LEE BELKNAP

I was standing alone by the road at the put-into the Gravona river in eastern Corsica. As I pulled on my spray skirt, a short, thin, well weathered and very irate farmer came running around the VW camper from down the street. Since I couldn't understand a word he said, I shrugged. The man quickly figured out how useless I was and ran a short distance past me while I wondered if I was going to be allowed to join my friends who were putting in across the field that lay between me and the river.

The group was still in sight. Earlier I had expected to get ready while shuttle was being run. The language barrier had prevented me from learning of the changed plans of one group member who decided to conserve the bottom of his boat and spend the day shuttling for us. From that point until now, I was about 2 minutes behind everyone.

I could see the rest of the group was down by the river. Half of them had taken the most obvious trail to the river, stepping over a bed frame that made up part of a fence. The man had just run to the trail the other half of the group had taken—a wide, overgrown road bed with a heavy brush pile blocking it. He began frantically rearranging this brush pile while continu-

ing to yell at me.

It didn't take me much time to figure out that the brush pile was part of his fence and my friends had in effect left it open. At one point he used 2 fingers from each hand to demonstrate horns coming out of his head. I recognized the 'horns' as an attempt to say that he was trying to keep in his "GOATS!" As I was about ready to start walking to the river, he motioned for me to use the bed frame trail. I gratefully joined my group.

Like most of the rivers we did on this trip, the Gravona was kind of...er, low. Well actually, very low. In fact, I learned a new definition for low. The beginning of this very long run was pastoral class 1 and 2. At one point early on, in a swift moving bend in the river, a member of our group decided to do some tree climbing on a strainer.

Soon, the river began to steepen. For the most part the water channelized, but scraping on rocks was the rule of the day. The river began flowing through long, continuous rock gardens as Julie and I tried to maneuver our heavy barges through the maze of rocks.

We came up on a blind drop. Ziggy, our skilled guide dropped into a slot, around a garage sized boulder and out

of sight. The next guy soon followed, then Gerd, and then Tulie. When I entered the slot and made the turn, I found a one boat eddy with Julie in the current next to it, and Gerd a meter ahead of her. I was able to grab the eddy and miss hitting anyone, but the next person, Willie, was upon me before I could leave.

Willie spoke no English, and I couldn't even spell "Foren language", let alone speak it. I think he thought I was eddy hopping for the fun of it and was just plain in the way (Who Me?). Naturally, Julie and Gerd were long gone by this time. As he barked something at me in German, I tried to figure out if he wanted me to go or stay put. Was he trying to line up that big orange tug for the next slot, or for the eddy? He grew more and more perturbed, and I more confused. We danced around until he was finally able to take aim and go down the drain. While this was going on, I realized that it was Willie who was supposed to take me back to camp that evening. All was forgiven in the eddy below the drop.

After watching the trouble he had in maneuvering his boat, I was left with the impression that he was one of the weaker members of the group. Later, I would find out how wrong I was.

This was the 3rd day of our 12 days on the island, and a particularly interesting one both on and off the river. The day had begun with a drive across the island from our camp on the Asco river to our run on the Gravona. During the drive over the mountain passes we were surrounded by majestic 10,000 ft snowcapped peaks, curving roads and impatient drivers who would play chicken with oncoming traffic as they passed us on the narrow and curving mountain roads. By now we were getting used to this worrisome behavior when, shortly before reaching the "gauge", we were passed by a race car. It was a real live race! And it was a real live race car too! We were in the middle of the annual road rally.

At the gauge bridge was the first of the pit crews. From here on down the road there were cars parked along both sides of the road for miles. Some smaller cars had been squeezed into non parking spots in such a way that they stuck out a meter or so (3 feet) into the narrow 2 lane highway. Every so often another race car would speed by.

It was while looking at the gauge pillar from the bridge that we saw what would surprisingly be the only car wreck of the whole trip. It was a minor, no damage kind of wreck, but still, These drivers were nuts. Weeks later, after I'd gone home, I realized what these drivers reminded me of: teenagers. These people drove like teenagers! I wondered if my acclimatization to the local driving habits was a sign of resignation to the idea that if I was going to die on the highway, at least it would be in a wonderfully exotic place.

Back on the Gravona, we continued through intricate class 3 and 4 boulder fields until we came to our first scouting. This rapids was a boulder garden that began with a line of boulders above a funnel went to the left side of the river to avoid an awful undercut boulder in the center right of the river.

Rescue ropes for the first yaks through were set on both sides at the top. One by one, we boofed the first drop and made the left turn to avoid the undercut. A couple of times someone would look a little shaky but they would quickly recover with plenty of time to avoid the undercut. Thankfully, there were no flips and all arrived at the bottom safely.

More rocky class 3 decent. Sometimes we would have to push ourselves off rocks with our bare hands. Eventually we arrived at the next big rapids where we scouted and decided to take a hike. The portage ended at a cliff where we had to



lower our boat halfway to the river where one of the Germans held on to us as we got in and slid down the rock I wondered how the last person was supposed to get back in his boat. When the time came, he carried his boat to a flat place twice as high as our launch and somehow managed to avoid sticking in a couple of potholes as he tobogganed towards our previous launch position and became airborne.

For the next few miles of class 3 and 4's, my mind wondered back to the put-in and something I had noticed at the house across the highway. While we were getting ready, I had noticed that in front of this house was a woman in her late twenties who had stepped out of her front door and was waving a white and black Corsican flag at passer's by. Occasionally she would wave her hands at friends who would honk back. I was curious and asked Gerd why she was exhibiting such strange behavior.

Gerd explained that houses displaying the Corsican flag would be left untouched during the local separatist movement's next act of vandalism. I felt sorry for her, and lucky for myself that I didn't have to worry about such absurdities at home. This was the only in person event of dissatisfaction among the local islanders towards their French "occupiers", but stories and graffiti were plentiful. All I had to worry about was getting down this river.

We had come to another big rapids. This one was difficult to scout, but a route down the almost dry left wall prevented a nasty portage. Near the bottom, where the rapids was steepest, was a guaranteed vertical pin in about an inch of wa-

ter. We were able to extricate ourselves unassisted without getting out of our barges (kayaks).

As the day got longer, the continuousness of the river didn't let up for long until we reached the backwater of a 35 ft. dam. We beached above it heaved our boats onto our shoulders and began carrying around it. The part of the knee braces that rested on my shoulder broke. This was supposed to be a very sturdy barge (I mean boat)!. As we carried I waited for a spell at a hidden turn in the trail to alert others behind me, then walked down to the river. When I set the boat down, a large frog jumped out. He had been in there for at least part of the trip, and possibly since camp. Poor guy!

As we got back in, thunderheads began swarming above us. Soon it was raining, and then thundering. I have never been comfortable with the "safe in the gorge" theory of stormy paddling, but the practice is so normal that I generally let the rest of the group decide if we should continue. If we do, then I at least attempt stay near the shore. (Has anyone ever experienced trouble with lightning? If so, let me know.) Since the rest of the group was ignoring the storm, Julie and I continued with them.

At one of the long steep rock gardens, Julie took off down the rapids and bounced off a lot of rocks. Suddenly, while she was about two thirds down, something caught my eye off to the left, about two thirds of the way up the scrubby hillside. When my eyes turned to that position, the lightning bolt was gone, but the explosion on the ground was not. It looked and



sounded like a scud had made a direct hit. The bright flash was immediately followed by a very sharp thunderclap and a puff of smoke. Julie was admonished at the bottom for making so much noise when she hit that rock. The storm subsided soon after, and Julie and I enjoyed the luxury of having someone else drive us back to camp.

This was Corsica or Corse as both the local inhabitants, and the French who "occupied" the island called it. Among the whitewater community the island has a reputation for some of the toughest and most beautiful whitewater rivers in the world. In fact, most paddlers I had talked to seemed to believe that there is only one kind of whitewater available on the island: class 5-6 hair. I must admit that I had thought the same thing until Julie invited me to join her on this trip.

Julie and I had come here on the invitation of her German friend Fred. Fred and many of the rest of the group had been kayaking in Europe for 30 years. 22 years ago, they began exploring Corsica. For 20 of the years since, these guys have explored every corner of the island. In many cases they bagged first descents on runs that have since become world renown classics and have been the subjects of countless posters and magazine covers.

I had a hard time imagining Julie having a good time on such rivers since she usually preferred runs in the more comfortable class 4 to low 5 range. My instincts told me that there had to be a broader range of a difficulty than was generally known. Besides, I reasoned, why would these guys invite her if she wasn't going to be able to paddle with them? After asking some questions, I became satisfied that we would

have plenty of runs in her range to choose from. What? Go to Corsica to paddle class 4? Well why not? I was here by invitation of Julie and her host, and besides, I had never been to this place before. I didn't mind if the new rivers I paddled were not the hardest available, they would be there for the next time.

Another factor to consider were the boats we were borrowing. Until we were picked up at the airport, we didn't know what to expect. Fred had brought 3 boats, one of them was of the design that Willie paddled. It was full regulation length, full height, and empty weighed 75 pounds. For the first few days I was able to paddle one of the other 2 boats of a popular design (brand not specified to protect the guilty), and found it to be as heavy as my popular American plastic boat full of camping gear!

After a few days I was finally accustomed to the boat and had to give it back to Fred. That put me in the big boat, and in the same situation as Willie. Only, he could maneuver the thing. It was then that I figured out how wrong I was about Willie's skill. I didn't have the strength to do half of the things he could with that boat. Someone asked me how I liked the boat and my reply dubbed the boat the Aircraft Carrier. Many times I'd find myself above a narrow twisting channel in an otherwise dry rapids and wonder how this big thing was supposed to make such turns in such narrow and swift places. It kept surprising me when somehow success would occur.

I was also surprised that the size and weight of the boat didn't prevent me from enjoying the rivers. Many times in the past I have borrowed full length, 40 pound kayaks and wondered why I had bothered.

Even the "easy" Corsican rivers were interesting enough at low water to cause such problems to be forgotten.

There were many other runs similar to the run on the Grovona. There was The Asco, a standard warm up run with an upper section with hints of an easy Watauga. Our first camp was here complete with cold showers and a view of the highest (10,000 ft) peak on the island.

There was the Golo nearby with countless quality class 3 rapids and fast current when the rapids didn't move. At one spot we found a shallow funnel leading into a recirculating hole at the beginning of a narrow slot. There were tail enders and plenty of airtime to be had here and the second or third person through left his paddle wedged across the slot about 4 inches above the water. I was amazed at the resiliency of the blade as it bent 90 degrees 3 or 4 inches back from the tip. Upon release, the blade sprang back to normal, apparently with no harm done. The surfing here was kind of interesting too!

On day four, the Travignano became our first taste of Corsica with water. This neat river carved its class III rapids into the bedrock creating low, narrow canyons that were very beautiful. At one point in the run we emerged from a twisty canyon that was only slightly wider than about length to find ourselves confronted by a nasty looking horizon line that our hosts had uncharacteristically not warned us of. By the time we could figure out that all was well, we had already flushed past the innocent class 2 ledge. We all enjoyed the prank. Near the takeout we passed under another one of Corsica's bridges.

Ah yes, the bridges. The island was full of old arch bridges built of stone. Sometime early in the trip we discovered that these bridges had been built between the 12th and 17th centuries by the city of Genoa, the occupiers of the island during those times. They were magnificent, and I wonder to this day, how many of today's wonder bridges will still be standing in the 25th century. I'd bet the Corsican bridges will be.

The Lower Travignano was where I first tried out the boat Fred lovingly called "the Big Ship". On this low watered run we found zillions of gnarly low water class IV's. I couldn't believe the intricate channels they expected me to navigate with this log. At one point I was asked to go ahead in one particularly shallow spot to plow a channel for the rest. It almost worked.

One particular rapids of note was about a 4 ft. drop into a rock pile. There was one point to place our nose and a micro

eddy at the top. To lineup properly for the drop, one had to slowly back ferry into the microeddy across swirling currents above an impossible rock pile. Once there, we were instructed to go slowly over the edge of the drop with our noses in the proper place. It worked and the current took over and delivered us to the base of the rapids. This trip had begun in the middle of snow capped peaks and ended within sight of the Mediterranean sea.

The **Solenzara** was a river the Germans had rarely been able to paddle. By this time in the trip, we were getting daily thunder storms, although the mountain tops were still receiving snow (we drove through some the other day). This was enough to bring the river up to a barely runnable level. In one of the first rapids, I found myself in the aircraft carrier with my nose stuck between two rocks on the right shore and my tail caught between the 2 ft drop I'd just run and the left shore — 3 feet from the right shore. The boat was too long and the hundred or so CFS that was landing on my right rear flight deck was trying to flip me. As I carefully probed the waters behind me, I discovered that as I backed up two things would happen: that one flight deck got heavier, and my nose became elevated. A few more probes and I was ready to carefully raise my nose up and over the foot high rock that had stopped me. I was free and on my way.

Several miles away I realized that while I was working my way out, water had worked its way in. The combination of boat, water and me must have weighed over 300 pounds! Later still, I found a hole in the deck with a missing plug that funneled water in. I plugged it with a twig. Once again, we found our takeout pool or two above salt water.

With 3 days left, we looked at the Fium Orbo. Too high—they said—we'll come back in a couple of days. I told Julie to take a picture of what looked low to me. I wanted to be able to remember this new definition of high water.

Instead we paddled the Lower Travignano. This was a short run with plenty of water. Plenty of class III rapids with diagonal surfing waves all over the place. In another boat, I could have played my life away. In this boat I was still able to enjoy maneuvering through the boulder gardens. I could hear ends out there calling me, but never really had the chance nor the muscle to discover their hideouts.

Our Grand finale brought us back to the Fium Orbo. This was billed to be an honest hard class IV-V run. And so it was. The trip began in a little creek about six feet



widewith chutes that narrowed to two feet wide. The stream wove through steep boulders for about a hundred yards before joining the creek.

I found myself transported back home to the Watauga! The river even looked like the Watauga. The only differences were the actual routes taken and the snow capped peaks way above our heads. I found myself singing to myself as we worked our way down this wonderful gem. A couple of times, we had to scoot ourselves over shallow rocks to avoid a downed tree.

Towards the end, we could see the road, and the river steepened. An innocent looking 'S' shaped rapid hid a hole in it's middle. We had a swimmer. The swimmer made it to shore and Ziggy with the help of someone else was able to grab the boat as it attempted a solo run over a class V waterfall. The paddle was found in an eddy in the pool below, just above our planned take out above a class VI waterfall. The class V was a sliding 10 footer into a boil pushing into the left wall.

Momentum at the bottom had to be supplemented by hard paddling to get over the boil and down stream. The paddler before me ended up rolling in the eddy on the right, but had to paddle very hard to get from that eddy through the boil and downstream. I was luckier. Several in the group ran a sneak slide to the right of the main drop only to have to portage out of the eddy!

We found ourselves lingering at the takeout and exploring the drops downstream. The class VI was directly under a narrow footbridge with no railing. We had

to cross it to get to the panther creek style takeout trail.

The next drop was runnable. It was called "The Rocket". It was a pitcher style waterfall perhaps in the 20 foot neighborhood. To run it would probably show off the reason for its name as one would surely rocket out of the water on a massive tail ender. Nobody in any of the groups present were running it that day though, the portage out of the caldron pool below the rocket was too much trouble. Besides, most of the groups were going on downstream which meant a quarter to half mile portage down a goat path. This had been our original plan, but time was running out on Ziggy our triplader, as he had an evening ferry to catch later that evening.

After saying good by to Ziggy and some of the others, we returned to our last night in camp. The next morning Julie and I were packed early for the long plane flight home and had some time to kill.

For the last half of the trip we had been staying in a campground on the Mediterranean. We went for one last walk on the beach. As we walked in the cold surf we could see what made this island the whitewater heaven it was. In the distance the beach stretched into what looked like the cliffs of Big Sur. As the eye followed the cliffs up ridges towards the interior of the island, one found majestic snow capped peaks. Still farther inland, the peaks rose into the stormy clouds as they reached altitudes close to 10,000 ft. Later, when we took off for Paris, we could see patches of blue sky between those peaks and clouds. I think we'll both be back.

Election features full slate of candidates

Voting procedures

The 1991 AWA Board of Directors election features a full slate of candidates from across the country. Newly approved directors will assist the AWA in its expanding programs and conservation efforts.

To be seated on the Board, candidates need to receive approval over 50% of the returned ballots. Please complete the attached ballot and return by mail before January 15, 1991.



Bob Gedekoh
Elizabeth, Pa.

I have been active in whitewater sports for more than a decade, and, with each passing year, my interest in and commitment to our the rivers has grown. Last year I spent close to one hundred days on the water; paddling in Colorado, New Mexico, Idaho, West Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee and Pennsylvania. Whitewater recreation and rivers are important to me, not only because I enjoy the challenge or running rapids, but because I have come to value the beauty and integrity of free-flowing water.

Over the years I have taken a lot of pleasure from riversport, and I feel obliged to work towards making certain that the next generation of boaters will have the same opportunities that I have had.

I know from experience that no other organization addresses the issue of whitewater river preservation as effectively as the AWA and I am proud to be running once again for a position on the Board of Directors. During my tenure on the Board I have had the privilege to meet and work with a number of incredibly bright, enthusiastic and dedicated people. The current Board represents an amazingly diverse group of people in terms of specific interests and lifestyles, yet there is a tremendous bond between us, based on our shared commitment to whitewater boating. As a group we

have accomplished a great deal, but there is much more to be done.

I believe that the AWA must continue to be active in all aspects of whitewater recreation: safety, communication, sponsoring special events and, most importantly, river conservation.

Of course, no individual can effectively address all of these concerns directly. Each director must evaluate his or her own interests and talents before choosing an area of service to focus on. During my tenure with the AWA I have volunteered at each of the Gauley River Festivals and I served as one of the Festival Coordinators several years ago. I have also been active in several river conservation and management initiatives, primarily involving the Upper and Lower Youghiohony. But my biggest contribution has involved the production of this magazine.

Working as one of the editors of American Whitewater has been a rewarding, frustrating, enlightening, time consuming and fascinating challenge. Besides contributing several feature articles each year, I am responsible for soliciting and editing materials from other writers. This brings me in contact with boaters from around the country, and, by definition, keeps me involved in AWA's safety and conservation activities. As a liaison between these two committees and the magazine, I function as a conduit for information to our readers. This is an important role, since insights into river safety must be shared to have an effect, and since this magazine is the best means we have to mobilize support for our organization's conservation projects.

I share Chris Koll's commitment to make American Whitewater the best semi-professional whitewater publication around, and, if reelected to the AWA Board of Directors, this will be my principle goal. By continuing to improve the quality of the material that we publish, we can insure that the AWA continue to be effective in representing the interests of whitewater boaters around the country.



Rick Alesch
Denver, CO

Imagine who surprised and honored I felt when "the General" nominated me for the AWA board at the Gauley Festival this year. How could I possibly refuse, especially after being urinated on at last year's festival, being roped into counting money all night at this year's festival, and running Pillow Rock upside down (rolling at the bottom, of course) in front of more boaters than I have ever seen on a river at one place during 20 years running whitewater.

I have paddled whitewater streams in canoes, rafts, and kayaks. I have to admit that most of my runs are in plastic boats, which are the norm out west. I have been a member of AWA for about a dozen years, serving as the Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinator for the last two. I have been active in the Colorado White Water Association for about as many years, serving on the board as Conservation Director and River Management Director for about half of that time. I have spent a great deal of time in recent years working to preserve whitewater streams in the Rocky Mountain region and devoting a concentrated effort to maintain access to the Numbers section of the Arkansas River in Colorado.

As an AWA Board member I would continue to fight for fair and reasonable recreation use regulations on rivers managed by government agencies (see my article in July/August issue of the Journal). For example, I am currently working on an appeal of new Bureau of Land Management regulations for Westwater Canyon in Utah that require, among other things, day-trip kayakers to carry an extra life jacket and a "human waste carry-out system." Can you visualize doing a pop-up while carrying a container in the back of your boat with your buddy's manure in it? While I support environmental protection stipulations, I think the BLM has gone too far on this one.

I will also continue our efforts to save whitewater streams that are constantly threatened by development pressures. I will work to increase membership among western boaters to make AWA a more national organization. I promise to submit at least one article of my own to the General that doesn't whine about conservation issues. Finally, I will work hard to convince Gary and Carla to use contraceptives at all times to keep their genes from spreading into the population.

Lee Belknap Lexington, VA

In the last decade and a half that I've been paddling, I've seen the sport grow from a small focused group of "crazies" to the large diverse sport we see today. During that time, I've had the privilege to paddle with some of the most interesting people in some of the most wonderful and remote places left on this continent: its wild rivers.

Over the years I've followed and appreciated what AWA has been doing for us, not only with conservation, but also with AWA's commitment to river safety. As the sport has grown and diversified, the work to be done in the area of safety has grown with it. As a paddler I have seen more than my share of emergencies. Working with the safety surveys as an AWA regional coordinator has allowed me to put some of this experience to good use. I elected to the AWA board, I hope to continue to expand AWA's efforts in this area.

My philosophy towards the sport has always been that paddling rivers is something we do as a challenge and for fun. To me, river safety is as much a part of the sport as dodging rocks--come to think of it, much of the time that's all it is: Dodging nasty rocks. River safety is not about the kind of burdensome rules and stats that only serve to limit the enjoyment and advancement of the paddler. That's what regulators do--and what AWA has always



fought. The last thing any of us wants is some regulator telling us how to protect ourselves from ourselves.

To me river safety is the knowledge and skills that make it possible to get from the top to the bottom of a rapids. I am a believer in the idea that with reasonable precautions, paddling can be as safe or safer than the drive to the put-in, even on the toughest of rivers. AWA will continue encouraging safe boating, even out there on the edge, and I would like to become an AWA director to help expand that effort.



Bill Hildreth Cohasset, MA

I have been involved in whitewater activities since 1965. I am currently the AWA Regional Coordinator for Massachusetts, and am one of the founders as well as a member of the Board of

AWA Board of Directors Election

Directors of New England FLOW. As a representative of AWA and FLOW, I have been actively involved in negotiations with New England Power Company (NEPCO) in an effort to ensure that whitewater recreation is given the major consideration it deserves with regard to the relicensing of eight projects on the Deerfield River in Massachusetts and Vermont.

As an AWA Director I would continue to actively focus efforts on 1) access to rivers; 2) striving for balance between commercial interests and the concerns of private boaters; 3) putting water back into **dryways**; 4) other activities which promote whitewater boating while protecting river environments.



Susan Gentry TN

I appreciate the work AWA does and would like to become more involved in the organization. I have been involved in the last two Ocoee Rodeos, both as a competitor and as a worker, as well as the last couple of Gauley Festivals. I have agreed to coordinate the 1992 Ocoee Rodeo, and look forward to putting together this popular event.

I have been an avid kayaker for six years. I first became interested in the sport while participating in a two-month Outward Bound Leadership course in Maine, which involved canoeing and sea kayaking. When the course ended, I was concerned that my life would return to the same old boring, inactive state that it had been in prior to the course. But after working for six months, I was able to scrape up enough money to purchase the kayak that changed my life.

Since that time, I have spent almost every weekend paddling somewhere. Most of my boating has been in the Southeast, but I have also paddled a lot in West Virginia, the Grand Canyon, Idaho and Chile. Steep creeks and squirt boating are my favorite types of paddling. This year I started boating the Narrows of the Green and really started enjoying that river. I also enjoy competing in whitewater freestyle competitions and have won the Women's Expert Squirt Boating Competition at the Ocoee Rodeo for the last two years. A certified ACA Kayak Instructor, I have

served as training director for the Georgia Canoeing Association.

I now work part time in real estate and have free time for working on AWA events. I think rodeos facilitate a lot of excitement for the sport. They bring people together, and this encourages growth and development of ideas, as well as money to help save our precious rivers. Kayaking has given me more excitement, more fun and more wonderful new friends than I ever dreamed of having. I hope I can repay the rivers by becoming more involved with AWA. Coordinating the 1992 Ocoee Rodeo is a challenge that I am really excited about and eagerly look forward to doing.

Diana Holloran Ducktown, TN

I am an owner of Ocoee Rafting, and I've been active in the AWA for the last five years. I feel the AWA is a growing and changing organization and I have been lucky to be one of the ones involved in the changes.

I feel that my contribution with the Ocoee Rodeo and different functions is a small part, but the benefits of bridging the gap between rafting companies and boaters is a valuable one.

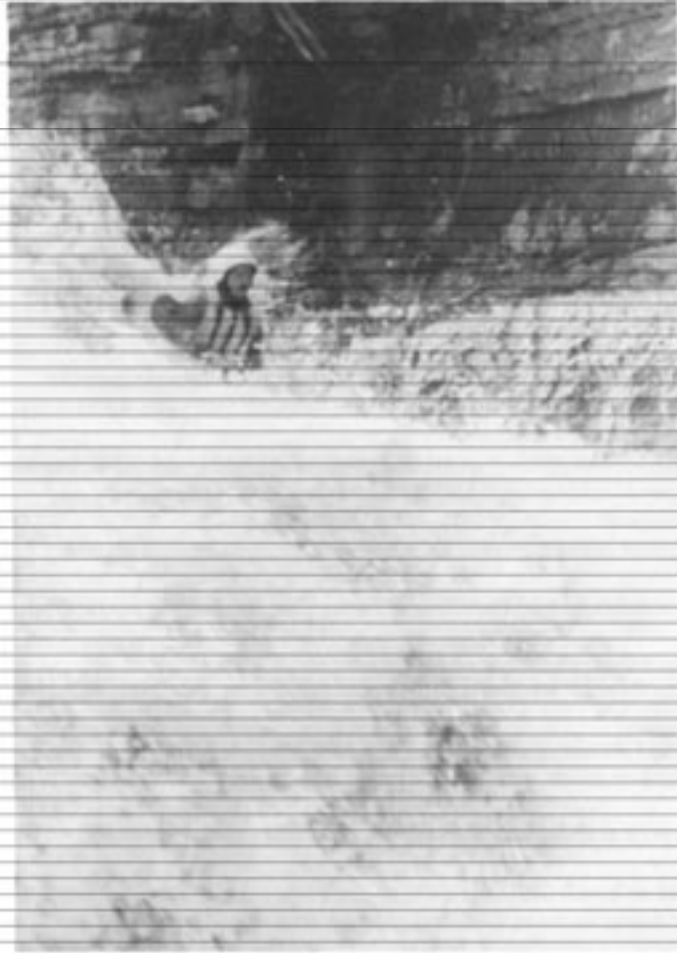
I will continue to do my share to what time allows if reelected to the Board.

I have been a boater for the last ten years, see you on the river.



Peter N. Skinner P.E. West Sand Lake, NY

AWA newcomers might not know much about me. I and my wife Bonnie and 2 boys live outside Albany, New York. Since 1970, I have earned my living as the Director of Scientists in the NYS Attorney General's Environmental Litigation Bureau on big cases like the Chicago Diversion and Love Canal cases, etc., somehow sandwiching kayaking on challenging rivers from Alaska to Chile in between. My **engineering/law** experience has come in handy during the 1980s when I was instrumental in sparking



Bob Glanville
Buffalo, NY

Three years ago you elected me to your Board of Directors. As a result, I have had the privilege of working closely with an extraordinarily energetic, creative and effective group of people from across the nation on issues such as river conservation, access and safety.

During the last three years, AWA has nearly doubled its membership and has become one of the most effective advocates in the country for the interests of whitewater enthusiasts. We have had some significant accomplishments over those years and I hope that I have made some small contribution to that success. Much remains to be done.

While the current economic climate has, at least temporarily, diminished the hydropower threat, issues of access and recreational water releases have come to the fore, particularly in New York. For some two years we have been engaged in negotiating a comprehensive access and release agreement with a major New York public utility whose hydropower projects are up for relicensing. Should those negotiations fail, we will almost certainly intervene in the ensuing Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing proceedings. If we're not successful there, our last resort will be in the Courts. I would like to continue to be involved in that process. I think that my experience and my skills as a lawyer have prepared me for that task.

I believe that the AWA is on the verge of a quantum leap in effectiveness: the Journal is the best publication of its kind and has increased our awareness of the importance of conservation and access issues, there may now be a critical mass of members, active directors, regional coordinators and local volunteers, and, for the first time ever, money. It's an exciting time to be involved in this organization and I would like the opportunity to continue to contribute to its success.

AWA's aggressive small hydro opposition efforts. I'm particularly proud of such successes as the recreational agreements on the Black and Moose Rivers and our nationwide relicensing program. In 1989, Perception named me River Conservationist of the Year.

The last time I ran for Director, I offered to do what I could to accelerate AWA's rehabilitation. Result, AWA has enjoyed a stunning recovery, not just because of my work, but because we have created a Team with concrete purpose backed by excellent fiscal management and executive support. Our membership has doubled; our safety, festivals, conservation and regional coordinator programs are flourishing; we have the most energetic set of Directors ever; our Journal has become the talk of the paddling community and on time; and our finances are rock solid.

Why do I want to continue being a Director? While helping to rebuild AWA has been very satisfying, I want very much to be part of AWA's fourth decade--the decade when I want to help AWA truly flourish. For instance, I would like to help AWA establish a permanent Gauley Festival Site, implement an effective safety outreach program, develop a stronger support network for the Journal editor, create a whitewater river access land trust, and solidify an aggressive staffed whitewater protection and enhancement program. After my 16 years of toil and trouble for AWA, now, at last, things are beginning to get exciting and fun. I would hate to miss a minute in the years to come.



November 1, 1991

Dear Santa

Let's get right to the point. I have been a very, very good girl this year so I expect a lot of very, very nice presents. I deserve to be rewarded in good measure for my good behavior: there had better not be any ashes in my river booties this year, Santa, if you **catch my drift**.

Now, you and I know that in years gone by I have not always been such a good girl, but then again, I haven't always gotten the nicest of presents either. Aluminum kayak paddles, cheap nylon paddling jackets, Jimmy Buffet tapes... Come on, Santa, you can surely do better than that.

And Santa, I really have been good this year. Your little spies must have told you that. Oh, I know you think you're a sly dog, that I don't know about the army of elves you have following me around. Well I do. Sometimes I feel like I'm surrounded by puny, icky little guys.

Some of them have even had the audacity to ask me out. Then they expect sexual favors in return for a good report to you. Really Santa, considering the abuse that I tolerate from these little twerps, you had better come through this year. Otherwise, I'm going to consult **Anita Hill**; this sounds like a classic case of sexual harassment to me.

Back to the point. Just how good have I been? Very, very good. Not perfect mind, but pretty damned good. Hell, one can strive for perfection, but you've got to remember that when a girl goes reaching for the stars, the nearest one is four light years away and the length of the average human arm is only a measly three feet!

Besides, even you will have to admit that my behavior was a lot better this year than in previous seasons. Just consider some of the things I didn't do this year.

I didn't spread any communicable diseases after the party at the National Paddling Film Festival. Lexington is safe from the northern scourge. Now that's really commendable, isn't it?

I didn't flatten any of my rivals' tires at the Upper Yough race this year. That's a change for the better.

And I didn't wear my Lady **Godiva** costume to the paddling club's Halloween Ball, did I? You know, that disappointed a lot of **people**, Santa. It had sort of become a tradition.

Oh, there may have been a few incidents this year, a few, shall we say, indiscretions. But a lot of them can be explained. Like that little fracas in the bar in Watertown last summer. You'll have to admit, that Black River guide really had it coming. What a sexist! **And** how was I to know the sucker had a glass jaw?

Or drilling those little holes in the bow of you know who's boat at the Ocoee Rodeo. I just wanted to help her master the mystery move. And boy, she sure did, didn't she?

And that business with the ranger in Yellowstone. That was as much Gary's fault as mine. He's the one who got me drunk and he's the one who crisscross double dared me to do it. He deserves most, if not all, of the blame. Besides, what right does the Park Service have telling me I can't run a river? Hell, I'm a taxpayer... I pay their salaries!

And while we're on the subject of taxpayers... If Gary Carlson gets nicer presents than me this year, like he has in the past, I am going to be really pi... peeved. Santa, my second cousin Gary has never been a good boy, but this year he has been particularly nasty.

Did you know, Santa, that Gary writes off all of his paddling expenses... all of his trips, all of the equipment he buys? Claims to be a professional. A professional what, I ask you! You won't catch me doing that... not since the audit, anyway. **And** did you know that Gary does not carry a throw rope on the river? Him, of all people. God knows we've been throwing them to him often enough lately. Of course you'd never know that to hear him talk.

You see, he tells fibs, too. Says he never swims. Boy, does he ever have a short memory. Good thing I don't! Well, enough of this finger pointing. I don't want you to think that I'm a tattletale.

Let's get down to business. So, what do I want for Christmas?

I'm not going to be one of those brown nosers that tries to impress you by acting selfless and **asking** for peace on earth or an end to world hunger or Nintendo games for all the poor children in Rumania. After all, I'm the one who has been good, not the rest of **mankind**. They haven't been good at all. Let them earn their own presents.

First off, I want a new **glass kayak**. An Extra... vacuum bagged, custom graphics, tawny rose with metal flake would be nice, at least a six over seven **layup**. And don't skimp on the kevlar!

I want a plastic boat **too**. **One** of those big, blunt nose jobs to use on the Green. Any color except blue.

Now, for the bootie stuffers. A few little odds and ends. A front entry dry suit would be nice, and a light graphite paddle. My sprayskirt is leaking, too, so I need a new one of those. Oh, and I'll need a helmet and life vest and Pogies, color coordinated to the Extra. You don't want your good little girl to look like some tacky geek, do you?

And loads and loads of warm, luxurious pile. We wouldn't want any of my vital parts to get frozen off, now would we, Santa? After all, I'm counting on you to keep me nice and cozy.

Well, that about **wraps it up**. You **know** where I live. By the way, I've decided not to set a glass of milk and a plate full of cookies out for you this year. From what I've seen of you lately, you're getting entirely too tubby. Pretty soon you won't be able to fit in your boat.

So, I've decided to leave you a nice spinach salad with lite vinegarette dressing. And don't let me catch you routing around in the cupboard for croutons.

Well, that's all for now. Just make sure I get what I deserve.

Yours truly,
Carla Garrison

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