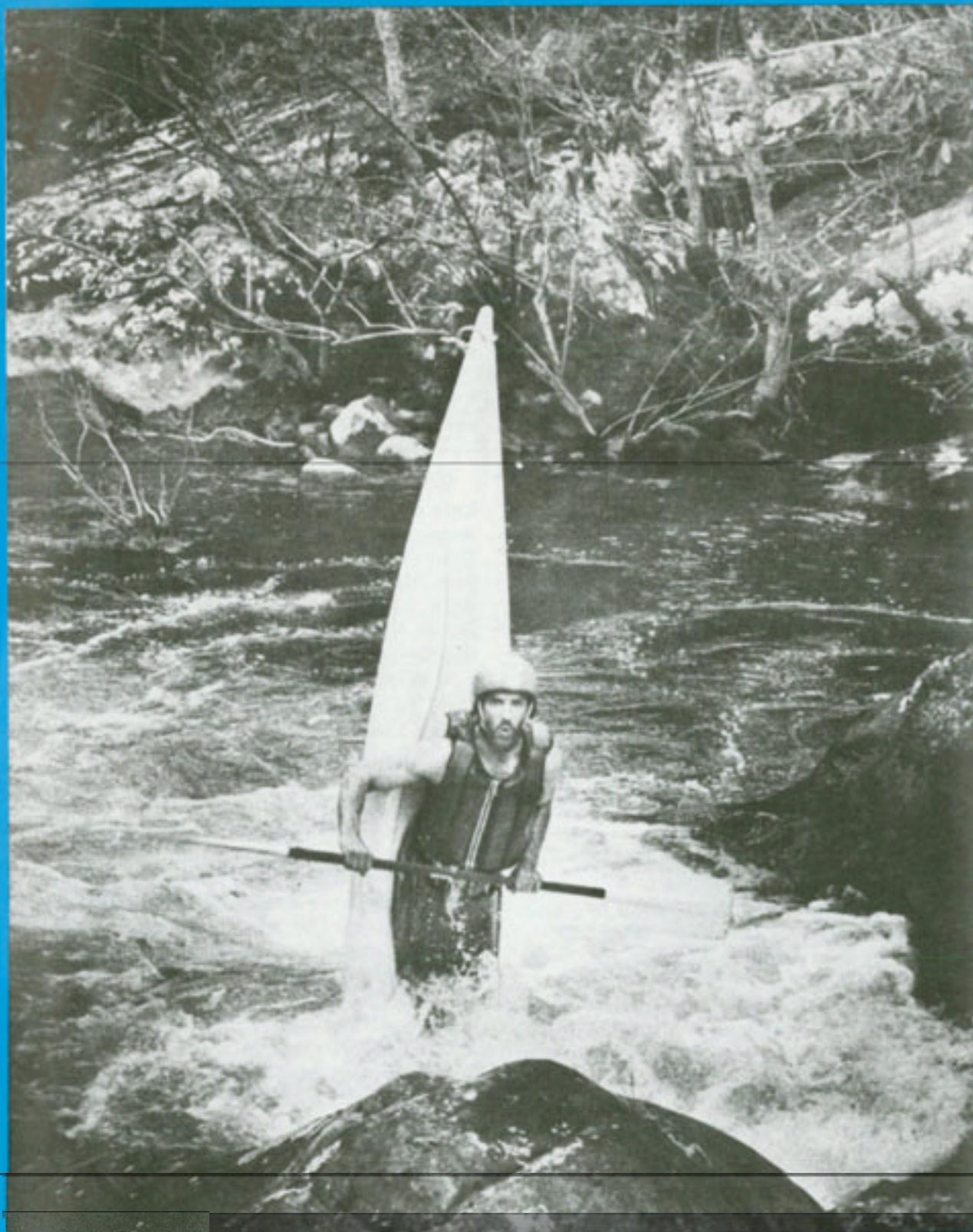


American **WHITEWATER**



AMERICA'S OLDEST WHITEWATER MAGAZINE

A THIRTY-YEAR TRADITION

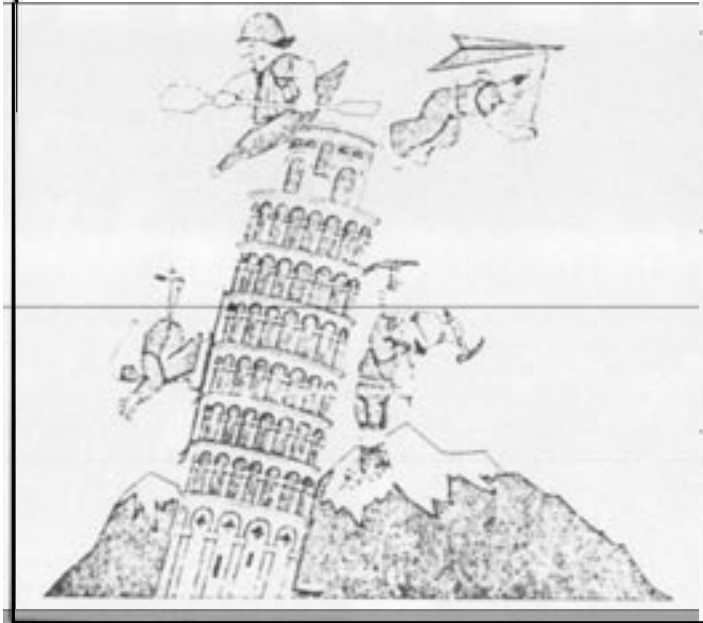
January-February 1986

Newsstand Date — March 1986

\$1.95

Vol. XXXI, No. 1

Gravity Sports Films Inc.



NEW GSF TITLES AVAILABLE FALL '85

85 WHITEWATER HIGHLIGHTS— During the spring and summer of 1985, we travelled to 8 Western States, and filmed 18 different rivers, including the Grand Canyon, Forks of the Kern, South Fork Salmon, Animas and Chilibar Rodeos, windsurfing at the Columbia River Gorge, the 1985 North American Telemark Championships, and Fat Tire Bike Week at Crested Butte. Basically this is our fall video catalog showing highlights from our most recent productions. We didn't get enough footage at all our stops, so this will be your only chance to get a look at some of these rivers (Forks of the Kern, Salt, Virgin, Westwater)... until next year! RP/30 50 minutes \$35.

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Box 273
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(503) 447-6293

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Colorado River Excitement

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Cover Photo: Charles Peterson at Ender Falls, Gould's Bend Section of Obed River, Tenn.

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to a letter written in your Sept.-Oct., 1985 issue of the AWA Magazine by Kate J. Myers, EMT, Carbondale Ambulance Crew, P.O. Box 1103, Carbondale, CO 81623.

Hooray! To Kate J. Myers, EMT, for speaking out against inaccurate and misleading information about CPR. You see it all the time on TV where an actor tries to do CPR. As a CPR instructor, you could teach a class on everything that is done wrong.

As an ex-EMT Instructor for Southwestern Technical College in Western North Carolina, I agree, theoretically, with everything Ms. Myers says. "Prompt, accurate assessment of the situation and a prompt attempt to get your patient further help" are vital concerns. However, this theory is great for the city, but not practical in a wilderness situation. "Getting him out or bringing a more qualified crew *in*," is easier said than done!

Having worked on the Instructional and Guide Staff of the Nantahala Outdoor Center, I've had the opportunity to get first hand information concerning the drownings that have occurred on the Chattooga, what was done, what was not done; and I have read the Accident Reports. From this information and experience, I would like to make some suggestions for the average paddler. Some of what I have to say is in direct opposition to what Ms. Myers has written, mainly because in a real-life, wilderness, river rescue situation, you are dealing with paddlers, who are lucky if they have taken a CPR course in the past year or two, and to expect him to be a card-carrying Standard First Aider is even more doubtful.

The first statement that I must take issue with is that "if taught correctly then a rescuer will know how to move a patient while performing CPR accurately." I am a skeptic! I won't believe it until I see it! I would like to invite Ms.

Myers to come to the Nantahala Outdoor Center for their staff training on the Chattooga River. If she and the Carbondale Ambulance Crew can do good, efficient CPR on a Recording Annie, while evacuating her around 7 Foot Falls, and then maintain this good CPR for the next 2 miles up-river, over rocks, around trees, if they can run me a good tape off that recording Annile while doing all this, I will stand corrected and will take the entire crew to the Dillard House for the best "crow-eating supper in the Appalachians. The point is that I don't believe they can do it. A well-trained, much practiced, paid, professional ambulance crew might be able to move someone up and down stairs while doing CPR, but they would not last long on a class V portage and a 2 mile carry. And remember, these are professionals, Can you expect the average paddler to be able to do all this?

So where does this leave the average paddler? Because CPR will only keep ~~25-35%~~ of normal carotid artery flow circulating, provided the rescuers are doing technically perfect CPR, due to this low efficiency, I feel that it is more important to stay put and do good CPR for the next hour than it is to worry about getting the person out and doing sloppy, inefficient CPR during the evacuation. Hopefully, by the end of that hour, outside help would have arrived, as in a helicopter or an Advance Life Support team.

Another reason for this 1 hour of good CPR is the possibility of the Mammalian Diving Reflex associated with Cold Water drownings. As far as I am concerned, in any water situation, if the water temperature is around 70 degrees, the approximate temperature at which the body can no longer offset the heat loss to the water, the average paddler should always think—COLD WATER, MAMMALIAN DIVING REFLEX! This dive reflex buys the first aidertime, up to 60 minutes according to the Dive Spec-

ialist of the University of Michigan. There have been dramatic rescues where people have been revived after prolonged periods of submersion in cold water. The protective MDR stops once the victim is removed from the water and is less operative the longer the person has been out of the water (1 hr. limit). Therefore, because of the lack of efficiency while evacuation a person and because the MDR is operative within the first hour after a person has been removed from the water, STAY PUT! Have as many of the odds as possible working for the victim. Give them that first good hour of CPR, then go to Plan B, getting the victim out if help has not arrived within that first hour.

As to what Ms. Myers says about starting CPR "as soon as possible" with the possibility of the MDR reaction, with the slowed and weak heartbeat of a cold water drowning victim, is it asking too much of a first aider to be able to detect a heartrate of 5 beats per minute, 1 beat every 12 seconds, a task that would normally be left up to advance life support equipment? Do we now want first aiders hesitant about doing CPR in Cold Water situations because they are worried that the victim might have an undetectable heartrate of 5 beats per minute? Is this rate enough to sustain life, even with the body's diminished needs for oxygen? I don't know! I think we can ask paddlers to think about cold water survival. In a cold water drowning, I think we can also teach first aiders and CPR's to take 15 to 30 seconds to check pulse (not 5-10 sec. as Red Cross teaches) due to the possibility of the MDR, to make sure in their own minds that there was no detectable pulse; however, any more than this, I would rather have them start CPR as soon as possible once they have completed the above checks as opposed to wasting valuable time wondering whether or not they missed a heartbeat in their pulse check or wondering whether or not they would be doing more harm than good.

It is easy for us to sit behind our typewriters and make all these good suggestions. What is obvious is the need for all people who are around water or play in the stuff to be trained in CPR. The ability to do good CPR on cue takes practice, just like that river roll, practice, practice, practice! You can never tell

when you may happen upon the scene of a river accident, or worst, be that accident! Then who will be there for you?

Sincerely yours,
David W. Mason
Vice-Commodore, Dixie Division
EMT, U.S. Team '84

Hydra Tuf-Lite Donates \$25,000 To Festival

On May 7, 1985, Bob Grossman, Chairman of the Board of Rotocast Plastics, donated \$25,000 seed money to get the Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival off the ground. In making his contribution, Mr. Grossman said, "It's my hope that this Festival will do for canoeing and kayaking what the Indy 500 did for auto racing. This region (the Knoxville area) is God blessed with the greatest network of rivers for canoeing."

Hydra Tuf-Lite, a division of Rotocast Plastics, recently completed construction of a plant in Knoxville. The company makes several lines of rotationally molded boats, including canoes, kayaks and dingies.

North American Whitewater Rodeo May 31

"Enders", "pirouettes", "surfing", and "handrolls" will be the order of the day on May 31 at the North American Whitewater Rodeo. The rodeo, to be held in conjunction with the Wildwater Nationals, will include competitions for kayaks, open canoes, and a Rapid Race for downriver enthusiasts. Dr. David Jones, a member of the U.S. Whitewater Team and Mike Miller of Go With The Flow, Roswell, Georgia, are co-chairmen of this event.

More than 150 competitors from throughout the East are expected for the free style competition. Open boat surfing and a "squirt contest" are also planned.

Slalom & Wildwater Nationals to Attract World Class Competition

June 1-3

The Ocoee River will once again host a major national whitewater racing championship in 1986. The National Slalom Championship will be held on the Ocoee June 1-3 as part of the Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival. The nation's best whitewater racers, including several current and former world champions are expected to compete in the event.

Doug Cameron, former chairman of the American Canoe Association Slalom and Wildwater Committee, is manager of the national championships. "The slalom course will be designed by Kent Ford, member of the world champion U.S. Team, and it will be tough," says Cameron. Slalom racers compete for the best time by maneuvering through 25 to 30 gates suspended over $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of crashing whitewater. Cameron expects World Champions David Hearn and former Champions John Lugbill and Kathy Hearn to compete in the slalom race. John Fishburn, who placed third in the World Championships in 1985, will lead the competition in the wildwater race on May 31.

The Ocoee River, located 24 miles east of Cleveland, Tennessee, is one of few world class whitewater racing sites in the U.S. Its use for the Nationals is made possible through the cooperation of the Tennessee Department of Conservation, the Tennessee Valley As-

servation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the U.S. Forest Service. The Atlanta Whitewater Club and Ocoee River Outfitters are also assisting in producing the event.

Pan American Cup Championships

Scheduled for June 7-8

Multi-boat photo finishes, olympic medalist and a cast of international

athletes make the Pan American Cup Championships one of paddling's most exciting events. Teams representing Canada, the U.S., Mexico, and several South American countries will compete in the 1986 Championships scheduled for June 7-8 at Melton Hill Lake. An Olympic event for 39 years, canoe and kayak sprint racing features head to head competition over 9-lane flatwater course. Race distances are 500, 1,000, 5,000, and 10,000 meters. Classes include single (C-1) and two-person C-2) canoes; single (K-1), double (K-2), and four-person (K-4) kayaks. The K-4's are powerful enough to pull a water skier.

A group of the world's finest competitors are expected to compete in the event. Several olympic medalist from Canada and Greg Barton of Homer, Michigan, winner of the Bronze Medal in Los Angeles, and current world champion in the 10,000 meter event are among the prospective competitors.

Charles Dambach of Columbia, South Carolina, Chairman of the National Paddling Committee of the American Canoe Association, is manager of the 1986 Pan American Cup. The Melton Hill Aquatic Center is cooperating with the Knoxville Canoe and Kayak Festival in hosting the event. The Melton Hill course is regarded as one of the finest Olympic flatwater racing sites in the nation and has been the site of many national rowing competitions.

Safety Modifications For Kayaks

by Joey Buddenberg

If you paddle a kayak with a rotomolded plastic wall, you might be interested in a modification I have made to my boat that I think greatly reduces the danger of foot entrapment in a pinned or broached kayak. One of the dangers in a broach or pin is that the wall could

be crushed to one side and trap your foot or leg against the boat, preventing you from wet exiting. This danger can be greatly reduced by securing the wall to the hull and deck of your boat.

A method of doing this that seems to work well is to glue and or bolt polyethylene strips to the inside of your boat that attach to the hull (deck), go around the bottom (top) rib of the wall, and attach to the hull (deck) on the other side of the rib. The materials I used to modify my boat were from a Coleman canoe patch kit. (About \$22) Do the hull (bottom) first because its easier.

First, cut one of the pieces of polyethylene lengthwise. Second, LIGHTLY heat the ends (about 1¼ to 1½ inches) and bend them in about 90 degree angle. I used an acetylene torch, but any clean flame should do. Third, heat and bend the middle of the strip. The strip should now look kind of like a "W". Fourth, lightly sand the inside of your boat where you plan to attach the strip, making sure the placement of the strip doesn't interfere with the placement of your feet. Put the strip in the boat and make sure the ends you bent in step one touch the hull where you've sanded it. Fifth, heat treat the surfaces of the strip that are going to touch the hull according to the instructions in the kit. The instructions in the kit say to heat treat the boat too, but I didn't like the idea of climbing around the inside of a kayak with a torch, so I substituted sanding (see step four) and didn't have any problems. Sixth, mix the glue (see kit instructions) that comes with the kit, and glue the strip in place. I used some big chunks of angle iron to hold the ends of the strips down while the glue dried, but anything heavy would work. Seventh, let the glue dry overnight and do the same thing for your deck tomorrow.

This article isn't intended to say that your boat isn't safe just like it came from the factory. This is just a way to buy yourself a little time at a time when you may need it.

Americans For Fair Access To Public Lands

The various governmental agencies are allowing select segments of the
Vol. XXXI. No. 1

population access to public lands, while denying others the same right. On Independence Day, 1985, myself and twelve other white water enthusiasts entered the Rogue Rivers' Wild and Scenic Systems without government permission. We were fined \$100 each. That same day several hundred other Americans entered the same Wild and Scenic area without permits. These people were not fined. They included down river commercial trips, up river jet boat boat traffic and entry by trail.

The government is discriminating against the private boater. The implication of this act is far reaching. It translates tot he bureaucraties' ability to deny Americans equal access to public lands. This power is unjust, unfair and unconstitutional.

Apathy has placed us in a precarious position. We must challenge the system in court. The legal fees necessary to test the Constitutional issues cost thousands of dollars. WE NEED YOUR FINANCIAL HELP.

Sincerely,
Jim Quinn

I want to become a member and contribute to:

Americans For Fair Access To Public Lands, 20021 Badger Rd., Bend, OR 97702.

Name _____
 Telephone _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____



RIVER ACCESS: THE REAL ISSUE

by Kirk Jonasson

The controversy over permit allocation on wilderness rivers gets hotter every year. Commercial outfitters want to maintain the split allocation system used on most wilderness rivers which guarantee their clients' passage on the river of their choice at the time they want it. This guaranteed access on most permitted rivers represents roughly 50 per cent of the total user days allowed during the season. The rest of the public competes for their launch permits in a lottery drawing or are put on a waiting list, currently more than ten years long for the Colorado River through Grand Canyon. Much of this non-commercial public supports an open lottery system where all boaters, including commercial passengers, would compete for permits. Those people without boating skills could hire themselves a guide after receiving a permit, much like the elk tag system works for the hunters.

Many outfitters claim that this would force them out of business, feeling their potential clients would not even get to the stage of filing an application, much less have the knowledge necessary to hire an outfitter. Non-commercial boaters counter that an open lottery, by forcing everyone to go through the same competitive process, would even the odds which are prohibitive (8-1 on the Rogue River, 16-1 on the Middle Fork of the Salmon and 30-1 on the Selway River) against them getting permitted under split allocation.

Lots of statistics and historical use data have been cited in support of each system. Unfortunately, statistics can be made to support your viewpoint, and historical use does not measure the demand for access represented by rejected permit applications. Furthermore, historical use patterns on permitted rivers are pre-determined by the access previously allotted to each group, instead of being a true picture of free-flowing demand.

The statistics and data just obscure the larger issues, such as: why is wilderness set aside in the first place—and what level of activity should receive priority when access must be restricted?

These are explosive questions but must be answered by managing agencies, or they will just continue to set their sails in the direction of the strongest political winds.

What is wilderness? The standard dictionary definition (uninhabited land or region) does not begin to describe the ecological and scenic value of wilderness or the psychological impact it has on many people who seek it. Wilderness provides opportunities for experience in unspoiled areas where the only control of the elements is supplied by mother nature. This lack of man's influence is what sets wilderness apart from a city park or even a downhill ski area. The challenge and risk in confronting nature on its own terms is the reason many are attracted to wilderness. The benefits to society of preserving these opportunities for natural challenges are a large part of the reason these areas have been set aside for the public.

The commercial passenger is insulated from this risk and challenge by the expertise of his river guide. The intensity of the experience and involvement with the environment is diminished by comparison to someone who outfits himself. This fundamental difference in the commercial and non-commercial experience should be recognized by river managers. They should ask themselves which activity best fits the concept of wilderness. Then they should decide which activity should receive priority under a restricted access system.

The assertion by the commercials that this is an elitist attitude held by non-commercial boaters trying to luck up the wilderness for themselves is the same thing that James Watt said about backpackers. Backpackers and whitewater

boaters are no more elitest than those who choose to spend their leisure time perfecting cooking, knitting, skiing or badminton skills. Boaters have simply decided to develop boating and camping skills. That choice is open to anyone, including the least inclined commercial passenger.

Judging by the preponderance of split allocation on permitted rivers, commercial operators and their passengers are now receiving preference. This is at the expense of literally thousands of boaters capable of handling themselves on these same rivers. Hunters, fishermen and backpackers who are self-sufficient, should ask themselves what this means for the future of their favorite activities as pressures on recreational resources approach their limits. This issue just may go beyond the sport of whitewater rafting.

Let the commercial operator on our rivers run his business so that passengers can enjoy the scenery. But when access to the wilderness must be restricted, distribute access fairly through an open lottery. Those who have prepared themselves to tackle the whole wilderness experience deserve at least that much of a chance to enjoy it.

Whitewater/ Wilderness Medical Seminar

Permit me to introduce you to Idaho Afloat a licensed whitewater rafting outfitting service on the Salmon River through the 2.2 million acre "River of No Return" wilderness area, the largest in the Lower 48.

With Dr. Philip Goodman M.D. of the University of Nevada's School of Medicine Idaho Afloat has developed a unique seminar during the August 22-27 trip on the Main Salmon River.

The speakers and their topics are:

1. Dr. Martin Neimroff M.D. of the US Coast Guard, and their specialist on NEAR DROWNING and HYPOTHERMIA, will speak on these problems for the whitewater/wilderness user.

2. Dr. Sandy Campbell M.D. an orthopedic surgeon who was a member of the US Olympic Kayak team, will speak on SHOULDER DISLOCATION IN KAYAKING.

3. Dr. Philip Goodman M.D. will speak on WILDERNESS MEDICINE, this lecture will be based on Dr. Goodman's article in the Spring 1985 issue of the National Ski Patrol magazine.

The participants are flown from Boise to Salmon the day prior to their trip and will return to Boise on the 27th via a charter bus or Idaho Afloat will shuttle vehicles for those who drive to Idaho. Also it will be possible in Salmon to rent kayaks for this trip.

This will be the perfect vacation for the kayaker who can now have their family join them in their boating activity. Thrill to the rapids, watch Bighorn Sheep from the boats, enjoy great meals plus relax in a riverside Hot Springs! There will also be paddle rafts available for the guests besides our oar powered rafts.

The cost for the trip, seminar, C.M.E. credits and all the transportation once in Idaho is \$845.

Idaho Afloat
P.O. Box 542
Grangeville, ID 83530
Phone (208) 983-2414

Big Ed's Glossary

In which the CCA's own Edward Evangelidi makes paddling terms clear to all

Airbag—paddler who talks too much
Airbrace—excellent way to cool off
Aluminum canoe—type of craft used to make rock music in low water
Bailer—person who springs you from jail after you run Ohiopyle Falls
'Biner—what happens when you forget to take the carabiner off the throw rope before throwing it
Brace—what everyone needs to do when rounding a sharp turn in a shuttle car loaded with six boats
Bull Run—talkative paddler recalling past trips
Canoe—support barge for kayak trip
Canoe rack—tool used to stretch out a wrapped canoe



AWA FINANCIAL CRUNCH

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

AWA RIVER RESCUE PROJECT APPEAL

Dear Claire,

I'm glad I'm not spending my nights like Pete writing testimony and fund raising letters. I'll kick in some cash to help AWA wage these river wars. Win a rapid for me!

Enclosed is my check for a tax-deductible contribution* of:

\$500 \$100 \$35 \$25 Other _____

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

Name _____ Date ____/____/____

Address _____

City & State _____ Zip _____

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

SEND THIS CARD AND YOUR CHECK TO:

**Ms. Claire Gesalman
AWA Treasurer**

**6301 Hillcrest Pl.
Alexandria, Va 22312**

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

D ring— D head noise after D helmet hits D rock
 Decked canoe—one that gets run over by a raft
 Dry bag— waterproof container still in its original box
 Eskimo roll— cold weather bread
 Expert boater— same as expert boaster
 Farmer John— the guy after you for trespassing
 Feather— what your paddle doesn't feel like in a wind
 First-aid kit— a six pack and duct tape
 Gore-tex— blood and guts paddler from Texas
 Gorge— a narrow river that eats lots of boats
 Guide book— the book at home that doesn't have this river in it anyway
 Gunnels— part of an open boat used for bracing
 Head gear— waterproof matches and a pipe
 Heavy water— the part of the river that you are carrying downstream in your boat; discharge from a nuclear power plant
 Hero route— the route that you have to take after you miss the last eddy
 Hole buster— an aluminum canoe in a rock garden
 Ice breaker— "Hi honey— first time out this winter?"
 Keeper— always has an eddy upstream for you to hop into and wave the next guy through
 Knee Pads— cushions for your knees while partying
 Life vest— part of a three-piece suit for paddlers
 New wave— the strange music that your craft makes as it hits the irregular wave that just appeared
 Overlook— a spot on the river where nonpaddlers gather to watch the crazies below
 Painter— a paddler who leaves colors on the tops of rocks as he or she proceeds downstream
 Pillow— a cushion of water around rocks but not around the one dead ahead
 Polypro— what Polly thinks she is after running the Staircase successfully
 Raft guide— person with a good vocabulary of derogatory terms and a commanding "paddle"
 River time— some fraction of shuttle time
 Rivet— what a frog says as your aluminum canoe pops one

Rollers— waves that make your hair curl
 Safety— not showing up for the trip
 Scrapees— scratches and sores on the bottom of canoe caused by a desperate paddler trying to find water in late summer
 Scuba diving— the ultimate wet exit
 Second aid kit— money to buy beer after the first-aid kit is used up
 Self-rescue— technique acquired when you find that your buddies have gone on downstream
 Short shuttle— what it was before you got lost

THE ARKANSAS PADDLER

From *the Arkansas Canoe Club*

Bullwinkle's Corner: The ACC paddler compecy test (must pass exam or be denied admittance to the water slide ride at Buffalo Point during state meeting).

Part I— Vocabulary

1. A. A lawn game played with wooden mallets and wire hoops stuck in the ground
- B. One of Mikey Beard's famous alcoholic concoctions.
- C. The end result of surfing the hydraulic below Murray Lock and Dam at 80,000 CFS (or any other water level).
2. Head Gasket
 - A. Nifty little neoprene product that helps hold your eyeglasses on.
 - B. Brand name for a new spray skirt on the market.
 - C. In charge of all the assistant gasket.
3. Hex
 - A. Simultaneously having 6 boats surf the same wave or hole.
 - B. Medical term for the burning sensation you get in your lungs after your 6th attempt at rolling your kayak up.
 - C. The official ACC Canoe School campfire thirst quencher.
4. Cossatot
 - A. The name of a horse that ran at Oaklawn last year.
 - B. A nice family canoe— camping float after a 4" rain in March.
 - C. An Indian word that means "Stay off this river you turkey!"

5. Upstream Ferry
 - A. Name of a Rock'n Roll group in the early '60's.
 - B. An advanced whitewater maneuver when there are two eddies, one on each side of the river, a 100 ft. waterfall 20 yds. downstream of you, and the eddy you're in has a 1000 ft. vertical wall for getting out and scouting or portaging.
 - C. Any suspicious character paddling a pink Dancer.
 6. Pitch
 - A. Antiquated Yankee terminology for a drop or rapid.
 - B. Technique used by river goobs throwing sticks into possible keepers to see if the sticks recirculate or not.
 - C. What you get when you ;make the mistake of asking Mike Beard, "Do you know where I can find a used canoe?"
 7. Unobtainium
 - A. Space age hi-tech plastic used in whitewater boats.
 - B. Material used in paddling gear you need desperately and the local dealer is currently out of.
 - C. A newly discovered radioactive isotope that gets the funk out of used polypropelene underwear.
- Part II—River Savvy**
1. How do you spot a Yuppie on the river?
 - A. He's wearing a 3-button, pin-striped paddling jacket.
 - B. Plastic boat, helmet, paddle, and the personality to match.
 - C. His shuttle vehicle is guaranteed to have inadequate ground clearance even to run shuttle on the Ocoee.
 - D. He tries to pay for his boat fee at Helton's farm on the Piney with his American Express card.
 2. Rufus wants to install a set of thigh straps in his canoe. What's the best way to mount them?
 - A. Wrap them around both wrists to prevent gunwale grabbing.
 - B. Put them high enough on the thighs so a wet exit is impossible thereby forcing Rufus to learn how to roll his canoe or drown.
 - C. Mount them ~~3/4"~~ above the knee cap so as not to ruin his perfect tan.
 3. An inconsiderate kayaker is spending too much time in a perfect surfing hole that everyone else would like to get in before dark, what is the most tactful way to get him to move?
 - A. Ask all the photographers and spectators to look the other direction.
 - B. Set up a Z-drag on the nearest tree and have someone swim out and clip a caribeener on his stern grab loop. Caution: you'll find more resistance than from a canoe pinned upstream on a tree!
 - C. Take some duct tape and fasten 3 M-80's together in a bundle, light the fuses and throw the projectile aiming just ever so slightly upstream of the obstruction in the hole.
 4. The Annual Moonshine Madness Marathon
 - A. Is an innovative foot race (26.2 ml) with still stops instead of water stops.
 - B. A Triathlon by day and drunk by night.
 - C. The festivities that go on around the campfire at Canoe School.
 5. Who originally said, "half the paddle, twice the goob!"
 - A. Horace Greely
 - B. W.C. Fields
 - C. Burt Reynolds in the movie "Deliverance".
 6. Spell Kayak backwards with your eyes closed (NO PEEKING).
 7. What's the best way to run 28 ft. Frummit Falls?
 - A. Left of center and then eddy out half-way down.
 - B. In an old whiskey barrel (full of whiskey of course).
 - C. Run as far "Frummit" as possible.

8. What's the most common paddling-related injury?
 - A. Canoer's knuckles (from aluminum gunwales).
 - B. Kayaker's thumb pits (from the paddle shaft).
 - C. Bruised ego (from swimming Gray Rock rapid in front of 150 people).
9. Pick the best excuse for not having your share of the gas money.
 - A. I left all my money in my suitcase and the airline sent it to Dallas.
 - B. I was robbed by a mountain man during the last pit stop on the river bank.
 - C. All my money got wet when I swam and it'll take it a day or two to dry.
10. In descending order, list the three biggest lies in paddling.
 - A. "It's my first time, too".
 - B. "The government will take care of us".
 - C. "The check is in the mail".
11. How much does it cost to camp, park, get a shuttle and pay the access fee on the Piney for a week-end?
 - A. \$27 + tip
 - B. \$10 until ya get caught.
 - C. Too ~~100~~ much!

If you're scouring the rest of the newsletter for the answers so you can cheat, forget it. There are none. Anyone gullible enough to grab a paper and pencil and tak this test **DESERVES** a ride on the Buffalo Water Slide!

First Decents:

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

PARTY MEMBERS

RIVER OR STREAM

DATE

SECTION OF RIVER

RIVER DIFFICULTY (Classification)

VOLUME OF WATER

CRAFT USED

DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR RAPIDS

PUT IN

TAKE OUT

HAZARDS

PERSONS TO CONTACT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Send to:

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RIVER RENDEZVOUS GETS RAVE REVIEWS

by Rudolph Davison

In 1806 the Scottish explorer Mungo Park made rafting history by being the first white man to attempt navigation of the 4,169 mile long Niger River in North-western Africa.

Unfortunately for Park fame and glory eluded him. His crude wooden rafts were upset by hippopotamus. Most of his crew were eaten by crocodiles. And after surviving the perils of numerous rapids, Park only made it downstream a relatively short distance before falling victim to the spears of hostile tribesmen, ending up like one of those conjured up visions of the unlucky explorer boiling to death as the entree in a native feast.

Perhaps if things had worked out differently Park would have been an honored guest at something like last weekend's Third Annual River Rendezvous where first descents of rivers and international whitewater rafting were the two primary topics.

Saturday night's Tribute to Walt Blackadar captured this spirit exactly.

In a moving eulogy by Susan Blackadar, she spoke about the essence of freedom, adventure, and giving of one's self that river running meant to her father, a man whose devotion to kayaking caused his accidental death.

Susan described her father as a family man with diverse interests who discovered and was consumed by the stimulation of whitewater kayaking relatively late in life. Walt Blackadar was 42 years old when he learned to kayak. But within a few short years he challenged himself and much younger elite kayakers to attempt the outer edges.

Somewhere Walt found release and comfort in experiencing danger, the unknown, self reliance, and building of the inner spirit that this aspect of river running offered.

He became famous after writing an article in Sports Illustrated describing his death defying solo descent of Turn Back Canyon on Canada's Alsek River.

This achievement coupled with his overall love of running rivers Walt

shared with his family and friends exuding a spirit in rivers as a reward in one's life and something that is not taken away in the event of a tragic mishaps.

Walt's heroism to the accomplishments of the kayaking community was picked up by television's American Sportsman where he was the subject of more than one movie episode. When he died, the American Sportsman released a special eulogy film, A Tribute to Walt Blackadar, which showed the man Susan portrayed. This was shown as part one of the Walt Blackadar Tribute.

Since then further recognition to his memory was created with the naming of Mount Blackadar which sets at the entry to Turn Back Canyon where the Tweedsmuir Glacier causes the Alsek River to chew through a rock bank creating the rapids Blackadar challenged alone.

And in 1983 Susan's brother Bob Blackadar and six close companions launched the Mt. Blackadar-Alsek River Memorial Expedition to raft and kayak to the foot of the mountain, climb it, and place memorial dedications at the summit. Their trip was shown as part two of the Walt Blackadar Tribute with expedition members Ron Watters, Jim Brock and Kathy Daley narrating.

Just as Walt Blackadar is a revered hero to kayaking and the inner spirit of dedicated explorers and adventurers, Saturday night's second guest tribute, Richard Bangs, shifted the audience into the high gear business aspects of today's international rafting adventure.

Had Bangs attempted the Niger in 1806 instead of Mungo Park, he probably would have made it. Bangs is no amateur river runner. He is an organizer capable of commanding sizeable sponsorship with enough funds and fellow expert explorers to create first class expeditions. And where Park's diary ended up in the rare books library of a university, Bangs is creating a legacy of well filmed motion pictures which transcend the usual adventure documentary by blending interesting stories into exciting plots.

Waghi, Eater of Men and Alas, River of the Red Ape are the two most recent Bangs films which were shown. Both were world premieres.

The *Waghi* is a BBC production on the first descent of New Guinea's Waghi River. It's part of a series on Great River Journeys which is a followup to the successful BBC series Great Railway Journeys. And Bangs' pirated film reels allowed the Rendezvous to see the *Waghi* weeks ahead of the official \$100 per plate Los Angeles Theatrical Film Premiere hosted by Jimmy Stewart, and the scheduled PBS television debut on November 6.

Likewise, the Alas premiere was finished only hours before Bangs showed up in Telluride. The story takes place in tropical Sumatra and is about the first river expedition down the Alas River in order to see how rehabilitated captive orang utans are doing in the wild. The movie was totally produced by Sobek, Bangs' international travel company and is so new that it has yet to be marketed.

Prior to the showings, Bangs' narration on the subject of the History of International River Running assured listeners that there is a distinction between those people who do adventure for a living and those who only claim it.

Case in point appeared to be the differences between the two films. In footing the bill for the *Waghi* adventure, the BBC selected a blond enigmatic starlet named Christina Dodwell who claimed to have lived several months in the highlands of New Guinea travelling alone through notorious country barefoot or via a white horse. Later she solo paddled the length of the Sepik River.

Apparently, Christina cast doubts about her assumed journey when she was observed in camp unable to figure out how to put up her tent. And descriptions of the views she saw from New Guinea's highest peak were not the same as those recalled by expedition members who actually did climb to the summit of Mt. Wilhelm.

Coupled with this was the BBC film crew, people totally out of their environment. At one point four members of the crew ended up in a rapid which dumped everyone out. Taking a swim and event-

ually ending up on shore only resulted in one crew member bolting through the jungle until he was found and returned to a local hotel where he hysterically announced there was a tragic accident from which he was the only survivor.

Another member eddied up on shore near a local tribesman whose ferocious look convinced the unfortunate rafter that he was among cannibals. He too bolted through the jungle and was found several hours later recovering at a Catholic mission more than twenty miles from the river.

Events such as this cast doubt on the completion of the film as well as the amount of footage actually allotted to doing a first descent of the Waghi. Only careful diplomacy on the part of Bangs saved his goal of doing the river, and he admits that today the first twelve miles of the Waghi are part of his routine tourist river trips.

Filming the Alas was different. Bangs had complete control over production, direction, script, casting, and was a principal actor. Everyone was selected as an expert or capable learner. The same was true of the film crew. There was no need to create self images larger than life. What mattered was filming a good movie and running a lot of the river.

Both are excellent films depicting high adventure. But there is certainly another story behind the scenes.

The tributes were undoubtedly first class and were the highlights of the River Rendezvous. But the River Rendezvous also operates as a quasi convention of river runners interested in trading knowledge, discussing topical river subjects, and in the most demonstrative showing to date, provided an impressive equipment display of self bailing rafts.

Addressing seminars only, one of the big questions asked by Eric Bader of the Boulder Outdoor Center was the prospect of creating a new and more accurate system for rating rivers. Bader said the current system of Classes I-VI are based on an older European method where Class I is flat water and Class VI is unrunnable. However, problems arise when water levels in rivers cause dif-

ferent conditions and classes among rapids, and that there is no consistency between a river's rating in one section of the country to another.

Bader stated that he didn't have answers but if the rating question is brought up at gatherings like the River Rendezvous there was a better chance for it to surface as an active national issue sponsored by one of the prominent river organizations.

Among audience suggestions for rating rivers was conversion to the system used among climbers where Class I-VI remain but there is another ten points between each class. Thus Class III which is an average rapid becomes more difficult from Class III Point One to the top end at Class III Point Ten. After that it becomes Class IV.

And since rivers vary in toughness around the country another suggestion stated that there could be standardized rivers or river sections. Also, it would be helpful if these standards were river sections easily observable by roads or some other access rather than having an isolated stretch for the standard.

Another dimension of the seminar session was a panel discussing their favorite Mexican rivers. Mexico has gained a lot of river running popularity over the past ten years and offers excellent commercial and first descent opportunities.

Speaking to the commercial aspect was Mike Davidson of Far Flung Adventures in Terlingua, Texas. Davidson stated that the Antigua River in the State of Vera Cruz was a perfect stretch. There was enough white water to provide action, but most tourists are interested in the cultural exchange of seeing and being in a foreign country. The Antigua offers a few excellent seafood cafes along the route as well as exploration of old ruins.

Davidson's experience in Mexico goes back at least ten years which allowed him an accumulation of new rivers and first descents. But he is so satisfied with the Antigua that further exploration for new rivers is practically unnecessary.

Cully Erdman of the Slick Rock Kayak School in Moab, Utah is more high

adventure oriented and only specializes in kayak trips. His choice rivers are in the state of Chiapas where travertine geology formations provide a series of waterfalls. "These can be tricky", he explains, "and a trip of this sort is really offered to kayakers with Class III ability or better." Seeing his slides of the white limestone dams which create azure blue green pools below graphically illustrates the skill level necessary as one sees a kayak suspended between the top and bottom of a 10-20 foot free fall.

Bob and Tom Robey of Albuquerque, New Mexico do not operate commercially in Mexico. They are young men who enthusiastically look for first descents. "We found a probable stretch of the Moctezuma River which flows out of the Sierra Madre Mountains northeast of Mexico City which was accessible by the Pan American Highway. Accessibility is one of the big problems in Mexico because the roads are so bad and the maps are inaccurate. But access and travel times in Mexico from the United States are easy and it's always fun to go there to be with the people as well as the rivers," Bob says.

Speaking more specifically to their Moctezuma trip he admits that while it was thoroughly enjoyable the river was a lot more unrunnable than they anticipated. "No doubt someone else will run it again at a later date, but probably not for awhile. In the meantime we'll be looking for more new rivers."

Finally, there was the all new equipment segment of the River Rendezvous which completely filled the yard in front of the Community Center. Self bailing rafts are a growing part of the market. They have appeal because one doesn't need to bail water in heavy rapids which makes the raft lighter and more maneuverable. They work by having a detached floor which is sewed to the bottom of the raft and a separate pocket which holds inflatable material allowing the detached floor to bouy up in a convex shape to displace water and keep a dry floor on flat water. Otherwise, water flows out between the stitching.

Past problems with self bailers were ribbed floors which created drag and there was constant water in the bottom.

However, the new technology is showing flatter seamless floors with tighter control on providing dryer bottoms.

A particular appealing solution is that there is an easy conversion from a conventional raft floor to the self bailing floor for those who can't afford the expense of buying a new self bailer. For full sized rafts at least fourteen feet long my choice goes to the white Maravia. In the smaller paddle boat category I liked the Riken.

In closing, this year's River Rendezvous was definitely successful even though the numbers of people remained about the same as last year. Most noticeable were participants from much fur-

ther away and a lack of people from closer destinations as well as a smaller local turnout.

The quality of programming was high and the highest compliments for excellence should be extended to the two tributes which were the best ones ever.

Finally, it is with a great deal of gratitude that special praise for organization and successful running of the Third Annual River Rendezvous go out to Larry and John Hopkins who were the real force behind the event. Also, special thanks go to Sherry and Dave Farny of Skyline Ranch who provided the space for Sunday's fun and games and cooked one great bar b que.

NEW PRODUCTS



Jeti 86 — New Release

Jeti '86 — First Plastic Featherweight

New PLASTIC system which is more RIGID than linearlow or older cross-linked polyethylenes. The '86 model is now the first full sized plastic kayak UNDER 30 POUNDS.

Jeti is a boat which continues to receive rave reviews. Whitewater schools report their "Jeti" students PROGRESS with uprecedented speed. Yet, Jeti is VERSATILE, preferred for example, by many EXPERTS like Kathy Bolyn, who took it down to Chile for some Class V first descents.

With acknowledged best outfitting such as the seat and kneebraces improved further by rotational molding, Jeti '86 is tougher than ever. Wider GRANDE model fine tunes paddling of anyone

above 160 pounds bent on advancing their skills. After the first year, the only real objection to Jetis boiled down to untraditional look. Elegant antiglare finish and NEW BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED DETAILS will help to overcome this as well. In addition to POPULAR YELLOW and RACEY RED, NEW SPARKLING CAROLINA BLUE completes the color selection.

PRIME MARKET: "One" boat paddler, exploratory trips and play.

HIGHLIGHTS: Most forgiving boat, excellent for big water running, exhilarating shallow spot enders.

Contact Jeti '86 c/o Noah Co., 71 Needmore Road, Bryson City, NC 28713.

AEROQUATIC Kayak —

the new plastic boat from Noah Company Classically shaped kayak, PACKAGED FOR PERFORMANCE... is 11 feet of white water ACTION and BEAUTY. ACCELERATORS T.M. (set of shallow grooves starting behind the seat) inspired by the best surfboards, make Aeroquatic formidable FAST and more FUN on slow streams. Eleven SLEEK feet provide MANEUVERABILITY and RESPONSIVENESS of a fighter plane. ERGONOMICS of Jeti transferred outfitting reinforce your CONFIDENCE in big water. NEW plastic with IMPROVED RIGIDITY assists in ENDERS ON DEMAND.

Noah's quest for perfection is never ending; New Double Seal cockpit rim is unnecessary on design already miles ahead... but because Noah cares. Noah's traditionally giant supporting walls and foot room are other welcome features.

Aeroquatic weight is approximately 31 pounds and comes in yellow, red and Carolina blue for \$649.00.

PRIME MARKET: Fun seekers, look conscious kayakers and for play rivers.

HIGHLIGHTS: Adrenalin rush of skyward soaring enders, more forgiving than most boats, attention to detail brings "dryer fun".

Contact **Aeroquatic** c/o **Noah Co.**, 71 Needmore Road, Bryson City, NC 28713.

The FANTAIL Kayak —

yet another boat by Vladimir Vanha. Noah's designer and maker of the very popular Jeti has done it again! Fantail is 100" OF INNOVATION. The experts call this a "squirt boat" because one of the moves it can be made to do in the water, respectively it's tendency to jump out of it.

Noah's "squirter" is not just for experts, it is STABLE, yet surprisingly one of the fastest whitewater boats, helpful in dodging big "pulsar" holes. Fantail brings NEW EXCITEMENT TO rivers you have already mastered. With it's squared-off stern and flattened ends, it CAN DO most of the TRICKS the other kayaks can do, PLUS PIROUETTES AND SQUIRTS—even on flat water!

Classified by onlookers as futuristic, "test paddles" claim having the feeling driving Ferrari, Lamborghini and the like. Everyone, from beginning paddler to expert enjoys this boat. Because, for now, Fantail is handmade by Vladimir himself, availability will be limited to winter and early spring.

PRIME MARKET: Fantail brings excitement to gentle river paddlers and rejuvenates experts running on whitewater rivers long ago mastered.

HIGHLIGHTS: Longest lasting "airy" enders—anywhere. Still more forgiving than most traditional boats. Surfer's delight.

Contact Fantail c/o Noah Co., 71 Needmore Road, Bryson City, NC 28713.



News Release.....

The Piranha's design can enhance your ability to run bigger and wilder water. This big water playboat features a high volume, funnel-shaped bow to keep you riding on top rather than slicing through. A pivoting bulge on the side gives ultimate maneuverability; a shallow arch near the ends fades into a rounded arch-shaped bottom to add stability and control while reducing wear.

The Piranha models are radically different in design from any other Royalex canoes. No other canoe has these features because no other canoe was designed specifically for whitewater play. This canoe and the outfitting system are proven—tested in the Grand Canyon with 25,000 cubic feet of Colorado River rushing by each second. In 1984, five canoes were run through every rapid (including Crystal and Lava Falls) on the 225 mile stretch from Lee's Ferry to Diamond Creek, taking the most difficult routes without one swim. That had never been done before.

In 1985, we took 11 canoes including the Piranha P-2 tandem which ran all the rapids. No tandem open had ever tried this run before. These Canyon canoes were not altered in any way from out "standard" outfitting. Included in that outfitting and the \$985 price tag are: solo float bags custom made to fit this canoe, laced in with Bluewater mountain climbing accessory cord and held by webbing to D-rings, a Perception saddle with storage compartment, adjustable Yaki-ma toe blocks, special foam knee pads, an individualized brass deck plate with your name and even the painters. This "total system" approach to canoe design enables subtle features to be incorporated into the "system" which give this canoe its reputation for being so responsive and forgiving. The Piranha is ready for the Colorado or any river you are, the day you pick it up. There is no other canoe sold that can make this claim.

The hull design is the reason the

Piranha is a much drier running canoe than any other. The design of the ends forces the bow to the surface unlike the "cut through" bow design found in other canoes. Most designs now available in Royalex did well as racing designs, and therefore were considered good. Races, however, are always run on class 2-3 rivers and the designs reflect that. On the other hand, the Piranha is designed for class 5+, but you certainly don't need to paddle class 5 to enjoy its qualities. The design features which make class 5+ runs possible, also enhance your ability to do more in class 2-3 rapids, and stay drier at the same time.

The pivoting bulge which is designed into the side/chine area gives the combined maneuverability and final stability for which the canoe is known. Kent Ford, world class open C-1 champion, chose the Piranha to enter and win the 1984 Nationals Hot Dog Contest. Bob Costantini made the first canoe descent of the top Kern in the Piranha. The first open canoe runs on Moats Falls (18 feet) and Big Splat were made in the Piranha. If you know "big water" canoeists—call them and ask—they'll know about us.

The Piranha design and outfitting system combine to give you total control of the canoe for maneuvering and rolling. Yes, this canoe is designed to be rolled. Contrary to the belief of many that rolling an open canoe is just a stunt, it is a proven technique which expands any canoeist's ability to paddle more difficult rivers with confidence.

A high priority was placed on minimizing wear points. The bow has a smooth, even transition to the bottom. The shallow arch in the bow and stern fades into a rounded spoon-shaped center minimizing wear under the paddler. The A.B.S. substrate material in these "highest wear" areas has been increased to 3 times the standard thickness to insure a long useful life for your canoe.

Contact Whitesell Ltd., P.O. Box 9839, Atlanta, GA 30319.

NEW YORK CITY PADDLERS: ON THE WAY UP?

by Tom Mellers

Recently I read in this journal a reference to New York City. I am a whitewater paddler. And I am here to tell you that this skittery allegation is a half-blooded, half-articulated half-truth. Oh, the statement flirts with verity. But it goes limp when measured against the reality it purports to penetrate. So bark off, Skinner. New York City is not the "soft white underbelly" of whitewater paddling. New York City is the "dyspeptic soft white underbelly" of whitewater paddling.

And you would be too if you had to choke down our corrosive air all day. But I won't make excuses. Suffice it to say that some Big Apple paddlers aren't half as wormy as you suggest. And what the rest lack in skill, we make up for in excitement. Why, just the thought of river running starts us rolling. Travelling to a river? Read, if your heart can stand it, the following true-life adventure. It begins on a spring Friday several years ago. For the unimaginative this journey — north from Manhattan to the Hudson Gorge — takes five hours. For us...well, let's pick up the action...

Around noon: Like a thermometer East 25th Street ends in a rounded bulge. Marking this cul-de-sac is the co-op apartment complex where a certain mad kayaker lives. A mercurial man with a talent for defying nature, Chuck Palsen compresses when heated. So heated is he now, waiting for me on the street, that a careless dog might confuse him with a nearby fire hydrant, even though he's sitting on a cooler. A frying pan lies beside him. A bag of groceries. Paper plates. Large canvas bag (which strongly resembles an appropriated U.S. Mail sack dyed black, but which of course isn't — it's navy blue). Small valise. Kayak. In one white-knuckled hand he strangles his long, two-bladed paddle.

A passerby might mistake Chuck for one of New York's disenfranchised — homeless mentally as well as physically. Like so many of them, he spatters the sidewalk with sudden bursts from a

mysterious inner monologue. "Late!" one might have heard him spit out of his caramelizing fury. Or, too upset for discretion: "Damn Mellers!"

Be assured. The man is no more crazed than your average whitewater enthusiast. The warm personal reference is to me, who approaches him now in my Fiat Rustmobile, green fading into brown, in the protracted autumn of its life, regarded by many as automoted litter. The object of Chuck's deep concern is metaphysical. He is rehearsing his arguments for our periodic discussions on the nature of time.

To briefly summarize, Chuck believes that time resembles a lava flow, which one can sufficiently outrun to observe what is about to burn one's feet. I think of time as water bursting a dam. Consequently, I tend to seek a vantage point from which to observe what events would have overwhelmed me had I actually been where I was supposed to be when I was supposed to be there. Translated into everyday terms: Chuck sets his watch five minutes fast. He then shows up five minutes early. My watch tends to run five minutes slow. And I tend to run five minutes slow myself. Net result: Chuck accuses me of being twenty minutes late. We discuss our differences for five minutes. Then we take five minutes to strap on his kayak and load up his gear.

Everything is right on schedule.

12:45 P.M. (my time): Wesputter down Second Avenue past 14th Street. (Actually, it's the car that sputters. It just feels as though it's us.)

"Look!" I say to Chuck. "That guy's going to do a back flip."

I refer to a cross-eyed man standing at curbside, the front of his red and black double-knit hound's tooth trousers bulging out like a kangaroo's pouch beneath the friar's rope run through every other belt loop and tied like a shoe lace beneath his sagging belly. In his left arm a paste pot from which protrudes the disheveled white bristles of a brush. Pushed through the other arm like an

index finger through the handle of a teacup, a roll of bent posters, no doubt predicting the end of the world. Intimations of this terminal event now slide toward him. He screams in terror, leans back to avoid the onrushing blade, which scythes the air an inch from his nose.

We had tied Chuck's paddle to the rear roof rack of my car, but forgot the front.

12:50 P.M.: I unlock and slide open the accordion gate that secures the photographer's studio on the ground floor of my apartment building on lower Second Avenue. The gates out of the way, I am able to open the ground-level hatch to the cellar, where I keep my kayak.

Now start counting: A minute to find and adjust my noseclips. A minute to clear my mind. A minute to marshal my emotional energy, to point it like a spear in front of me. Yes, I am armed. I am focused. I am ready to charge like a race horse. To dance over and around the softer movements in the shifting contours of the darkened basement. I pick the best line! I surge down the steps! I emerge triumphant, my sneakers unscuffed! I hoist my spotted kayak above my head, a trophy.

I run up to my apartment, collect my paddling gear, camp stove, tent, sleeping bag, and assorted fruits and vegetables. Meanwhile Chuck unloads the car for more efficient packing.

1:10 P.M.: A handsome man with a distinguished moustache (or, if you prefer, a distinguished man with a handsome moustache), Ken Fischman resembles, on a good day, a Prussian officer forced to resign his commission to avoid a naughty scandal. In his better moments there's dignified ooze about the man: One senses surging within him not just hot, noble blood, but also an erotic oil on the verge of breaking down. On a bad day Ken has the look of a hotel doorman who has just been splashed with mud, or—as he does now, standing on the fire escape of his second-floor apartment on East 15th Street, lowering his kayak with the aid of a rope and pulley—the look of an overworked stevedore, around whom an entire shipment of imported beer has just exploded.

The Rustmobile, protesting the cheap gas with which its impecunious owner has filled it, just now lurches and heaves its way up the block. I announced our arrival not by honking the horn (which doesn't work anyway) but by throwing the transmission into neutral and gunning the engine. From my perforated muffler, the tearing roar of a machine gun attach. Stray cats dive for cover.

As Ken brings down his gear, Chuck unloads the car for more efficient packing. The high school across the street is also unloading. Pupils bounce around like heated molecules. One bounces over to me and asks: "Mister, why do you go out in those boats? Does it make you high?" I say: "Yeah, kid. That's what it's all about." She bounces back into the crowd.

3:30 P.M.: We reach our final pick up, Steve Satch, in Parsippany, New Jersey. We unload the car for more efficient packing. Out of room, we stuff Steve's peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and bananas in the trunk (never stuff bananas in a trunk), and set off.

4:00 P.M.: Realizing we will never reach the Hudson Gorge by nightfall, we stop in a Dairy Queen for butterscotch sundaes. Then we gas up the car and adjust the tire pressure—not by gage (the gage is in the trunk, under the bananas) but by eye. We plan to drive leisurely up Route 17 until dark then speed north on the Thruway.

5:30 P.M.: Just past Suffern, as we casually discuss how the car probably bears twice the manufacturer's recommended load limit, a tire blows. We change the tire and back down an entrance ramp. Straight ahead, a sign: "Tires." The kind-hearted mechanic, observing that one of our problems was too much weight on the Rustmobile, thoughtfully unburdened me of more money than any tire ought to cost. Struck by the emotional support of my travelling companions, I hit the road. Still they won't kick in any money.

We decide to head south on Route 17 a short way and pick up the Thruway.

7:10 P.M.: Dusk sits in and so does nostalgia. Ken recalls himself as a boy,

nose pressed to the window of a bus, wheezing (Ken, not the vehicle) up Route 17 to summer camp, stopping at a ramshackle hot dog stand called the Red Apple Rest somewhere north of Ramapo. As he speaks his hands sweat. He can almost feel that mustard-soaked napkin wrapped around his frankfurter. This is important. Ken will have his hot dog. Of course, the rest of us will have hot dogs, too. I turn the car around. On the way we stop for lubrication (us, not the vehicle).

7:35 P.M.: Well, you can't expect things to stay the same. The Red Apple Rest isn't a small hot dog stand anymore. There's an inside cafeteria. And a bar. And the hot dogs aren't what they used to be. We wash them down as best we can.

8:15 P.M.: Exhausted by our long trip, we stop and contemplate Modena Creek, which none of us has run.

8:45 P.M.: It is dark when we enter the Thruway at Newburgh, but we lighten our way with song. As the Rustmobile burps past Kingston and Saugerties and Cocksackie (a story behind every name?), its passengers (except for Steve, who hides his alarm under the pretext of sleep) float down the Mississippi with "Old Man River," soar to the excruciating heights of "Blue Moon," shuck and jive to...well, you get the idea. We entrust our liquid yoga to Chuck ("I don't drink much") Palson. Once again his magico-spiritual nature manifests itself: Half the contents of the bottle disappear. Absorbed through his hands?

11:15 P.M.: We run out of songs and gas at the same time. It's just as well. I feel as though I have a wood rasp in my larynx. Still, as my car swoons on the shoulder of the moonlit Thruway, I am blessed with an insight: Euphoria knows no direction. We could have left the Thruway at Albany and driven up the Northway in a direct line to our destination. Or we could have ranged west on the Thruway toward Buffalo, which is supposed to have a great modern art museum. At the time it didn't matter. Now, however, out of gas thirty miles from Utica late at night, my wrong turn assumes a certain significance. Nothing

can dampen our spirits, however, Or perhaps I should say our spirits are already so damp nothing much matters. True, I do ask Chuck what sort of mental deficiency* led him to insist we pass up a gas station because there was supposed to be a discount station up the road. And true, he does point out that if I had the sense* to go the right way, we would have found that very discount station. But this discussion burns out quickly; the team springs into action. Ken and I wipe mashed bananas off a jerry can from the trunk. Steve, a tee-shirt wrapped around his head to insulate against excessive heat loss (always thinking), positions himself in the middle of the Thruway, ready to risk his life to stop any vehicle that might try to pass us by. For a while it seems he may never have a chance to demonstrate his valor. Nothing but stars. Then: the dim flicker of headlights on the horizon. We watch them grow steadily larger, rising and falling with the contour of the road. Steve plants his feet. Chuck, Ken, and I hold our breath. The apparition stops: An antique car transporting two older women with tight blue curls. Chuck takes the jerry can and drives off with them to the nearest gas station, which may be in Cleveland, for all we know.

Those left behind celebrate our good fortune. Then I begin to have my doubts. Were those really tight blue curls in the women's hair? Or were they dead shrimp? Was there a portent in the lunar gleam of the women who insisted Chuck put himself in their hands? What did she mean when she said: "Now you hop right in the back seat, young man; we'll take very good care of you. Won't we Emily?" Scenes from *Arsenic* and *Old Lace* flicker before my eyes. I picture Chuck, defiant no more, stuffed into the bay-window seat in a Victorian home somewhere in Utica. Did anyone note the license plate? I am filled with remorse. Chuck wasn't such a bad guy. He was kind of fun, in a way. I could have told him that. I could have said...nah.

*Not the exact words used.

12:15 A.M.: Chuck returns unmolested. The gas station was only five

miles down the road. Coming back, the first car gave him a lift.

12:45 A.M.: We have gassed up the car and are driving toward the next exit. Ken studies the roadmap, trying to figure out the best way to reach North Creek. He suggests an elaborate course of back roads, a plan which Chuck and I endorse. Steve votes no, arguing that we'll get lost. He is reprimanded for his negative thinking. At the exit we ask the toll collector how to connect with the first of the roads we identified on the map. As we watch her illustrate with her hands the bridge we have to go under and the second right we have to make at the end of a winding road just before the mail box that looks like a covered wagon, the car stalls. It always stalls. This time, however, it won't start again. No lights. No endearing clicks and growls when I turn the key. Nothing. We push the car to the side, where Chuck checks the fuses. They look fine to him. He and Ken discuss the peculiarities of European fuses. ("Those things can go on you and you just can't tell.") We finally diagnose the problem as chronic corrosion of the battery cables, which we soak in a baking soda solution. (Ken carries baking soda in his first aid kit.)

As the others look on, I turn the ignition. A faint rumble calls up a vision of giant worms processing the earth. A glass-shattering squeal: the blood cry of an invading army of killer ants. An

erratic snorting: a sleeping warthog, troubled with indigestion. And finally, a crescendo of bovine flatulence. The car is running like a charm. Everyone piles in. Fifty feet down the road we realize we have forgotten the directions. We back up to the toll booth, are reinstructed, and also warned:

"You know, if you break down on those back roads, there won't be anyone to help you."

"Don't worry," I say. "This car always gets where it's going."

The toll collector responds with a story:

"I've got an old Ford Falcon," she says, "and it hasn't let me down yet. When it stops running I pour in some oil. Then I take the old broom I carry in the trunk and touch the car seven times all along the side. After that it works."

As she speaks she gives my car this voodoo benediction with an imaginary broom.

3:30 A.M.: The muted blue moonlight stretches — an osmotic sheet — across the sparse landscape of the North Creek campground. Cold, the light seems to absorb, to arrogate, the life, the definition from all it covers. The stoney reach of the irregular terrain looks softened, stayed. The shrubs bow to the ground. Large amorphous lumps — maroon, orange, and green sleeping bags — tense, stretch, yield. Soft words. A muffled moan. A filing snore.

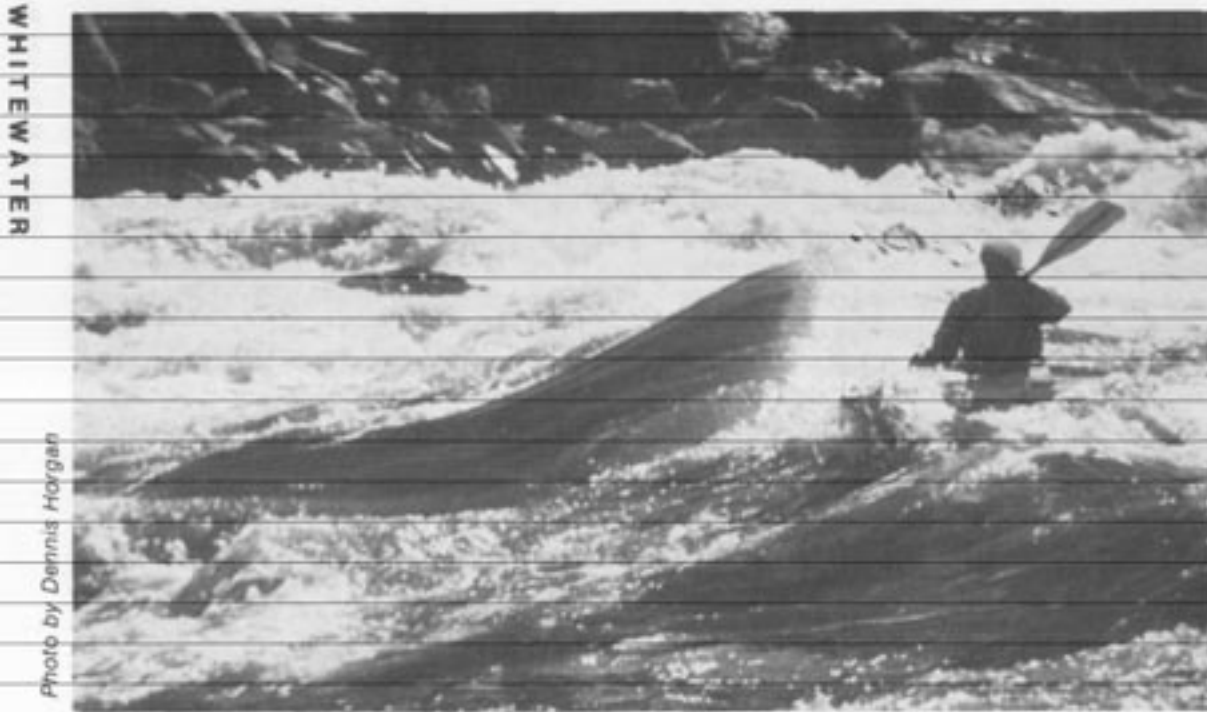
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Mark Thompson, seldom seen Kayaker and noted western artist, uses the western style approach to Hermit Rapids.

YAKPACKING THE COLORADO RIVER

By Randy Welch

The waves of Crystal Rapid were huge. Brown seething waters were coasting downhill like a heavily loaded freight train. My senses reeled. John Jaycox grew a sty grin as is usual for him around big water. The sunbaked face of Brooks Hoven grew just a bit paler.

The three of us were near the halfway point on our Grand Canyon trip. Large river flows, the result of spillway testing at Glen Canyon Dam, had carried our kayaks—only flotilla to this rock verses water battlefield in just three days. The condition of the infamous Crystal Hole was, in spite of all the power and fury shown, somewhat reassuring. I didn't see the easy bypass route I had hoped for but the "hole" was definitely washing out and had more the characteristics of a wave. Over the roaring waves, a faint collective cheer reached our ears as a series of rafts and dory boats began to descend. Adrenalin was applied to the oars to pull the heavy drift boats to the right.

Gladly, we slipped back into our kayaks. The hot noonday sun had made the possibility of getting drenched most attractive. Aggressive John paddled out first and purposely went for the hole. Brooks and I emulated the drift boats and sought refuge in a heaving eddy after just skirting the first waves.

Once out in the main current we were committed to run. At first fear scrambled my thoughts, but I quickly realized the commitment and became determined to do my best. There was only me, my kayak, and the river to consider. No longer aware of the positions of my partners, I made intuitive judgements concerning current velocity and the force of cascading wave crests. My hands gripped the paddleshaft tightly to insure that small but important movements of the wrist would aid stability and through the blade angle provide direction control. The kayak, holding me tightly at the feet, knees, and hips, responded well. Exploding sheets of

water failed to push the tiny craft out into the main current. The craft's sleekness and my single mindedness saw to that. I slid off the shoulder of the third wave and into the target eddy. As I paid my oxygen debt, I looked for the others. Brooks had taken much the same line as I and was nearby. John had followed the fall line. The hair water flipped him end over end backwards but he smoothly rolled right side up and entered an eddy farther downstream. We regrouped and paddled the less challenging remainder of the long drop.

Four years had passed since my name was placed on the waiting list for a commercial Grand Canyon River trip. During those years my concept of how the trip would be organized had been altered several times. Personal tragedy, the death of a main character, put an unwelcomed end to the original script. After that, I carried a nebulous concept of the typical rafting expedition. The possible casting of the crew seemed to be without limit and I didn't feel that organization would be a problem.

Just before the actual trip, however, the once enthusiastic crew began to fall away like hair from a radiation victim. I considered not going. My mind, caged by the concept that a trip down the Grand had to include several rafts and at least a dozen people, was then set free when a park ranger stated that a kayak trip, unsupported by rafts, would be allowed. Park regulations had been altered to allow that exciting concept only two years before. Reportedly our group would be the third or fourth to take advantage of the opportunity. I had paddled the Grand before and had made self supported kayak trips on most of the other government regulated runs in the west. I knew that such a trip would be quick to organize and, most importantly, enjoyable.

At the bottom of Crystal, we secured an over-turned dory that had taken the same route as John. The heaving mass of dented metal was difficult to handle but we thought the risk worthwhile for if we could right the swamped cargo vessel, we as friendly buccaneers could commandere a few beers. Unfortunately, by the time the dory was

pushed to the canyon wall, we drifted into sight of the owners. They, being somewhat mercenary, took a light-hearted view of our piracy and thanked us for our interference by graciously giving up a small amount of desired fluid.

Kayaks are unsurpassed as white-water craft. While supporting the paddler and providing storage space, the kayak enables the user to feel the currents and experience the river almost as a salmon or trout does. Walter Kirschbaum, a German paddling champion turned American, made the first true kayak descent of the Grand in June of 1960 with the help of two larger support boats. Walter found the trip to be technically manageable even in his frail, overly long kayak of canvas and brittle fiberglass. He felt that the small width of the kayak exposed the paddler to less of the water's power. Today modern materials make the use of kayaks more practical but no more rewarding.

Of that first trip, Walter stated, "...I greatly failed to supply my own food which I usually carry in my own boat". This was, doubtless, due both to Walter's confessed dislike for powdered food and the convenience of the supporting boats. In this modern backpacking age there is less reason to fear a week of dried food, and watertight bags provide dry storage as well as flotation. A kayakertripping in the wilderness for a week has at least as much cargo space as a backpacker. For the kayaker the weight is certainly less noticeable. Many kayakers balk at the notion of carrying gear because they fear a loss of maneuverability. Such a loss is not a figment of the imagination, but at the same time it is not of critical importance on the large rivers where most extended trips are feasible.

On an extended trip, more than two days, there is not enough room inside most kayaks for both the usual outfitting and the necessary food and camping gear. However, the usual outfitting can often be left behind since a tightly packed boat needs no additional internal support (on our big western rivers) and watertight bags provide



The cargo can easily get out of hand. Bill and Janet Schoberlein in Granite Rapids. Photo by Pat Call.

adequate flotation if too much air space is not eliminated during the packing.

There are three categories of dry storage bags that have found use among kayakers. Each has its own advantages and shortcomings.

The first category is the delousing type. These bags are modeled after the old military surplus delousing bags, many of which still provide useful service on the river. The best are made of vinyl coated dacron and one bag provides all the volume needed for one person. These bags are long and can be placed within the stern section before packing commences; they are the easiest means to load a kayak. When all the gear has been added, you simply allow the stiff lips of the opening to close and roll up the excess portion. Both ends of the roll are then tied with string. Similar bags which rely on a slide closure device tend to leak when placed in the narrow confines of a kayak. Delouser bags don't have a real serious drawback but of course using one is a bit like pulling all your eggs in one basket.

The second category also has a military history: the black bag. Black bag type storage bags are usually smaller than delousers but the larger ones provide more volume than the largest

backpacks and come complete with shoulder straps. The straps are real nice on a portage and could be of great value should it become necessary to hike back to civilization. The construction material is usually PVC-coated dacron which provides plenty of durability. The drawback to the black bag type is that as the load decreases, as it does as food is consumed, it becomes increasingly difficult to obtain a watertight closure. This is so because the side straps can only be cinched tightly when there is a certain minimum volume or more in the bag.

The third category consists of unreinforced vinyl bags made especially for kayakers. These bags are the least expensive but only slightly so. Because they can be inflated after the gear is sealed in, they provide superior flotation. Their drawback is that they are not resistant to the environment and have, therefore, severely limited periods of usefulness. Punctures can easily be repaired but the seams have a tendency to blow out after only a season or two of nominal use.

Food is always a challenging consideration on a kayak trip though it doesn't have to be. The world of backpacking has been advancing the concept of go-

light food for sometime now. Freeze-dried food, even a week's worth, weighs next to nothing and the bulk will diminish rapidly after the first day. But, most trips will contain at least one person who for some vague religious or political reason will object to eating only freeze-dried food.

Usually there is enough room in the kayaks so that if only the dinners are freeze-dried; breads, nuts, and dried fruits can be carried for breakfast and lunch. One method that works great for cool season trips is to prepare all or several meals at home beforehand, heat seal them in single serving size plastic bags, and freeze them. These meals can be reheated and eaten in the bag and thus leave no messy pots and pans to be cleaned.

Naturally a bigger boat would make meals less of a consideration and such boats exist in the form of cruising kayaks that are about fourteen feet long. Cruising boats handle well enough on big roomy rivers and might be worth the investment for some people. However, for a group of cooperating kayakers, making the most of assigning community gear such as cooking utensils and emergency equipment, the usual thirteen-foot recreational slalom boat has enough volume for at least seven days.

On a kayak trip of any sort, where there is more than one participant, close cooperation is called for. Many times, the participants can be separated by a mile in a matter of minutes. Confusion can arise as to whether someone is upstream or downstream of the main group. Because there is the possibility that a paddler will be stranded in an extremely remote and inaccessible location with only kayaking duds, members of the group should always be aware of each other's relative position. For this reason a small group is to be preferred. It follows that passing a point of difficult return well before others of your group have arrived, is at best, poor manners. Each paddler owes it to the group to reduce the risk of losing gear by paddling conservatively.

In spite of the duty to cooperate, kayaking a long wilderness trip is

worthwhile because it provides a sense of individualism. In your kayak on a boiling whitewater wave you are exercising self reliance to the maximum. Individualism is also expressed, through the kayak, by the ease in which the paddler can slip over to any river bank feature that seems to deserve closer inspection.

Because of the limited storage space, self supported kayakers tend to devour more miles per day than drift boats. This often leads other river lovers to view kayakers as being interested only in mileage. This view is unjustified as the longer trips often are that way merely because more of the trip's time is spent socializing in camp. Socializing is not a bad thing but there are other reasons to seek the wildness of a river. A person desiring to explore can become frustrated by all the housekeeping associated with a large raft trip.





The author paddling the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon.

Exploring by kayak is simple and not as time consuming as other means. Within minutes of waking up, you can be on the water headed conveniently to a new location for breakfast. Maybe you'll want a new view, a better sun angle, or maybe you just like to get the body machinery warmed up before eating. Very little energy is required for landing and launching at points where you will want to exercise your feet. A well absorbed dinner may recharge you and the impulse to explore a few more miles of canyon by evening light can be readily accommodated. It doesn't take a lot of river bank to provide docking and sleeping space, so you can risk running closer to dark before laying out camp. Always the obliging river does most of the work. The kayaker's job is to add enough control to insure that the river's effort is used most efficiently.

Of course, dues must be paid before the advantages of a kayak can be enjoyed. Those beautiful little trackless coves and beaches are that way because a considerable investment of time is required to develop the proficiency that will allow self supported trips. Should you be fortunate enough to develop the needed skills, you will find that the dividends are substantial.

Two days after leaving Crystal Rapid we were approaching the top of Lava Falls. Between those points, at John's urging, we had found the time to explore more of the Grand's notable side canyons. The high water in the river was moving at such a rate, that if we had wanted, we could have covered nearly 100 miles a day. As it was, we spent half our days scaling precipitous cliffs, hiking narrow exposed trails and swimming limpid pools. We attempted to communicate with one of the tiny inhabitants, who was disguised as a bat, of Elves Chasm. We sat in the cool hidden pools above Deer Creek Falls and contemplated Arizona's August heat. We climbed the old rope that leads into Olo Canyon, giant Venus Fly Trap. We appreciated the easy access of Olo's sister canyon, Matkatamiba. We stretched our leg muscles with a brisk after-breakfast hike into the ever narrowing National Canyon and two river miles later, enjoyed lunch next to the waterfalls of Fern Glen Canyon.

At Lava we burned. The sun's heat coupled with the re-radiated heat of the rocks was so intense that our government approved plastic potty jar (in the Grand Canyon, the pack-it-in-pack-it-out rule is carried to the extreme) melted

and became unserviceable. Even if the air had been scores of degrees cooler, the look of the drop alone would have been enough to induce an uncomfortable feeling. After much deliberation, we decided we really couldn't make heads or tails out of the confusion in the drop. Our confidence had been built up during the last five days so we decided to take the usual route on the right. In all the previous drops, no matter how difficult, there had been ample opportunity to use the maneuverability of the kayak to avoid the more challenging waves. Here the passage to smoother sailing was narrow and it didn't make sense to count on entering it. Each of us hoped for the best route but expected the worst. Normally the worst leads to a physically taxing but mostly embarrassing swim. In this case a swim could well mean the loss of a boat or other vital gear.

We fell into our natural order of descent: John first, me, then Brooks. Noting that it was his first run of Lava, and being aware of my relatively conservative approach to paddling, Brooks asked that I lead him along a good line. I agreed to do so after calming myself with a deep breathing exercise.

Hurrying into the drop to get the nasty business over with quickly, I was deeply impressed by how much larger the hydraulics appeared to be at close range. John was out of sight in a split second. I stiffened my back and pressed hard against the footbrace. My line was good but I was apparently too relaxed as I missed a stroke and turned upside down on the second wave. Twice I attempted to roll up but was hosed down. I then decided, still calm, to ride out the rough stuff in the inverted position. When I felt the wildly tossing waters relax, I fired off another roll. Again I failed to complete the midline sun maneuver as the whirling and crossing currents below the last waves proved to be too tricky for an oxygen starved mind. Knowing that a large eddy was close by, I performed our expedition's second wet exit and began to swim, towing the heavily packed but floating kayak. As I gulped for air I heard Brooks, riding high in the saddle, cheering and thanking me for the good line. Because the gear was stowed tightly and John and Brooks quickly came to my aid, nothing was lost.

After Lava, the river is less intense. We were able then to observe and more appreciate the serene canyon setting. I used the nimbleness of my kayak to shop the eddies and picked up a waterproof camera and a six-pack to go. Offerings delivered to the river gods at Lava Falls insure that the eddies for the next twenty miles are well stocked.

The only additional hiking we did was to inspect the flash flood alteration of the Diamond Creek road. A terrifying rain storm had blasted our camp the previous night and we expected that the road, which we planned to use as an exit, would be impassable. It was obliterated.

An additional day was spent paddling across forty miles of the uninspiring backwaters of Lake Mead. We were rescued from the Lake at Pearce Ferry by a local desert rodent and volunteer range, Ben Welch. The next day the arrival of our wonderful shuttle driver, who had outsmarted the flash floods, enabled us to start our Arizona exit.

The trip had been a welcomed opportunity for self expression. Each participant added something to the trip, and the whole was more than the sum of the parts. Yet at the same time we had enjoyed the freedom to exercise personal judgement and abilities on a level well above the ordinary. It was living, deliberately.

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JOHN PILLEY'S FIRST LAW OF RAPIDS

by John Lane

Someone told me once that there are only two types of kayakers, those that swim and those that are about to. Talking to experts, this seems a little extreme. Many great boaters with midnight runs down Section Four of the Chattooga and hands rolls at Painted Rock on the Gauley to their credit have been many, many years without being "out of their boats."

But the other night at supper I listened to two expert paddlers talk about how helpless they've felt at times when the moment did come when they had to swim out of a hole.

"It had been so long—seven years—since I'd been swimming that my body did not know what to do. I was gasping for air and my eyes were as big as plates," one of them said, remembering the fear, stirring his ice cream around in disbelief.

To paddle a kayak is to live constantly between curiosity and fear. Three years ago, when I first started paddling, I sat at the top of most rapids with a death grip on my paddle, no matter how small the drop. I had no eskimo roll at that time, no way of flipping the boat back upright if I leaned upstream or missed a brace. Each drop was Niagara Falls and I had

about as much control over my boat as I would a barrel. Fear had the upper hand.

Sitting in an eddy once at the top of a rapid called Little Corkey, on the Green River in North Carolina, I once watched three friends turn to make the drop. "How do I run this one?" I asked the woman who was the last to follow.

"Upright and downstream," she informed me, leaning on her brace like a racer. I would not gain access to Holy knowledge by questions, only by action, by following. I gripped the paddletightener and waited for curiosity to take over.

In three years I have been upright and downstream in many rapids, riding the swirls and holes of several rivers like the Ocoee and the Nanathala a hundred times. My fear was slowly replaced by skill acquired through many hours of watching water move over a rocky river bed. I thought I replaced the fear, feeling a curious question at the top of each drop, "Can I make it through?" That is, until I learned Pilley's First Law of Rapids.

"If you run a rapid enough, no matter what your skill level, it'll get you sooner or later," John Pilley, a man with probably close to a thousand river trips, told me once sitting in an eddy at the top of

Seven Foot Falls on the Chattooga. I did not want to believe him, looking over the edge at the churning hole below me as the water pushed against a rock wall to the left of the river.

But Pilley took the drop and I followed soon after, willing to play the odds on our years of paddling.

What Pilley was saying is that in paddling, no matter how good you are, there still remains the possibility of error in each difficult rapid; there is no sure thing. A little fear—respect some call it—should remain as much a part of a river trip as curiosity.

An experienced whitewater paddler pushes the odds well in his or her favor through years of skill, but the force and intent of the river is constant, something the human body cannot claim. To paddle class four and five, and especially class six whitewater, is to live within the possibility of human error. This might result in a swim through a rocky river bed, or something even more serious. Like auto racing, the deaths in whitewater sometimes count among them those who are most skilled.

The last weekend of the season I had Pilley's Law brought home to me in a most embarrassing way. During the Customer Appreciation Festival weekend at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Wesser, North Carolina, there is a hot dog contest on the Nantahala River. Each contestant gets two runs through a forty foot series of ledges known as Nantahala Falls. In the early seventies, this rapid was rated a class five at high water, but in the last fifteen years the number of people running it, the advances in skill levels and equipment, has dropped its rating to a class three.

I had run the rapid close to fifty times this year alone, since the river is only 20 minutes from my house. I had even made an effort to lose my fear and develop a curiosity about the "top hole," the one place in the falls where there is any real danger. Many times I had dropped from the small eddy to the hole's left and played at that near end, doing spinning turns and then heading downstream, losing my fear little by little.

I had seen the top hole grab rafts and swimmers and recirculate them three or

four times before spitting them into the downstream current and the waiting safety ropes. Once I'd even seen a man come out face down to be revived downstream. But watching, I had formulated my own opinions. If a kayak got into the hole the bulk of boat and body would push you downstream. It was only rafts and frightened tourists who would be kept by the river god in the top hole.

It all happened so fast, like an auto accident, but there was no doubt about it. I was upside down in the top hole. I rolled once and found myself sideways, bracing downstream. I could hear the guy on the bull horn, who was announcing the contest, telling the crowd that I would probably surf there and then pull my way out.

"He's getting some high scores with the judges," he joked as I worked to stay upright. Then I flipped again, banged my helmeted head on a rock so hard I let go of the paddle, and decided to take my chances out of the boat.

The boat stayed in the hole with me, circulating around as I was plunged on the upstream side of the boil, only to be swept along the bottom, popped up and head back upstream for another recirculation. Just like the tourists. Me and my boat.

I remember thinking, "Where are the safety ropes?" as I circulated several more times, getting tired and running out of ideas as to how to get out of the hole.

I tried to swim to the edge where there was plenty of downstream water, I tried swimming hard, each time I'd reach the furthest point downstream in my circulations. But no ropes came. Suddenly I relaxed and my body was popped "waist high", someone on the shore told me later, and I was on the way downstream.

Needless to say, I didn't do very well with the judges, although my swim was the most exciting thing the audience saw that day. Little did they know they were also seeing a river law being proven. Pilley's First Law of Rapids stands unchallenged with me until someone comes up with a unified theory of rivers and river running that can explain what made me get right back in my boat twenty minutes later for my second run. Very quickly, the curiosity kicked in.

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