

american whitewater

January/February 1999

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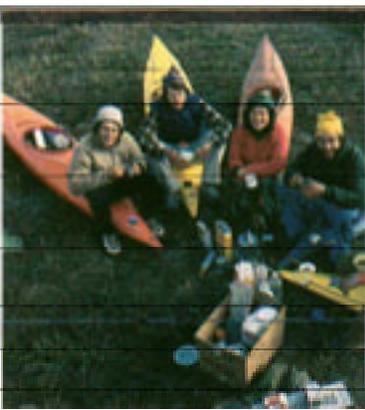


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Bloodshed and Irony

Last October, after years of procrastination, I finally made the pilgrimage to the Adirondacks to paddle the Bottom Moose. For more than a decade I had dodged the Moose with a host of lame rationalizations... too long a drive... too short a run... too crowded... too cold... better water closer to home. But in 1998 the cards were stacked against me. My excuses weren't going to cut it anymore. First, my old friends Chris and Carin Koll, who arrange the Moose releases and host the festival, were getting justifiably testy because I never came to visit their playground. Second, the mid-Atlantic was in the midst of a drought; there just wasn't anywhere else to kayak. Finally, the hot dogs I boat with were starting to look at me with arched eyebrows every time the Moose was mentioned. Word was that I was afraid of the Bottom Moose.

There was more than a little truth to that rumor. Over the years I had edited a lot of articles about the Bottom Moose... articles peppered with references to jagged undercut rocks, potentially lethal holes and difficult crux moves on the brinks of fearsome waterfalls. You know the old saw, "You need to go here, but the current carries you there." I published reports of broken boats, a near drowning and, years ago, a fatality.

My boating buddies didn't make it sound a whole lot more inviting. They would limp home from the Moose saying things like,



"You should have been there! We had such a great time. XXX (who lives on class water) slammed into a rock at Shurform and knocked all the meat off his knuckles and swam. YYY (who is better than me) got stuck in the hole at bottom of Fowlersville Falls and would probably have drowned if some guy in a huge open boat hadn't crashed into him and knocked him out. ZZZ (who never screws up) got knocked off line at Crystal and fell sideways fifteen feet onto a big boulder pile. Boy, is he scuffed up. It was the best weekend ever!"

Well, it sure sounded like a lot of fun! Of course, I'd heard similar horror stories about lots of the rivers I paddle and it hadn't stopped me. But something about the Moose made me uneasy. I had an eerie sense that if I attempted the Bottom Moose I was going to screw up and get hurt. Call it a premonition.

To make matters worse, I knew that if I messed up on the Moose it would be in every public way. The Bottom Moose, like the Russell Fork, attracts large crowds of boaters who congregate at all of the major rapids to enjoy the carnage. If I screwed up on the Moose it would be all over rec.boats.paddle — with my luck even before the ambulance arrived!

One of the disadvantages of editing this magazine is that many of you assume that I am a really hot boater. A sad but undeniable consequence of this is that many of you would love to see me take a thumping. Don't deny it... I know what mischief lurks in your black hearts. (Well, I know what mischief lurks in my black heart, and I figure most of you aren't any nicer than me.)

The truth is I certainly am not a hot boater; I'm a lukewarm boater at best. Those of you who have seen me in action know this. I take my share of river trashings and I often tell about them in this column. But writing about a spanking six months after the fact is a lot different from making an ass of oneself in front of a hundred hooting yahoos. I don't mind shedding a little blood in the company of a few select friends, but not the entire East Coast paddling community!

So, before I went to the Moose, I bought a new helmet and PFD that I hoped no one would recognize. And I double-checked to make sure my Blue Cross card was in my

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wallet, just in case. I was resigned to my fate. What the hell, I figured, let the games begin.

Well, I hate to disappoint you, but to make a long story short I paddled the Bottom Moose on Saturday and Sunday without a bit of trouble. On Saturday Chris Koll gave me the deluxe tour. I was a bit anxious but we scouted all of the rapids and I chose the conservative lines. Fowlersville and Agar Falls were a hoot. Shurform and Powerline were challenging, but fun. Knife's Edge looked a little iffy, but really wasn't that big a deal. (No, I didn't sneak it.) Crystal looked real iffy, but after I saw several floundering, out-of-control boaters survive the rapid in spite of themselves, I figured I could too.

We had a great meal at the Koll homestead on Saturday night and we cleaned the Bottom Moose Sunday morning in an hour and a half and started the long drive home.

Of course, on both Saturday and Sunday, my hair dog buddies, Chuck, Jim and Joe, tackled Magilla, an ugly class V falls that lies just below the conventional Bottom Moose take out. It took one look at it and said, "Oh no, Homey don't do this s...!" Besides, somebody with steady hands and nerves of steel had to hold the video camera. The boys paddled Magilla several times, but most everybody else passed on it, so I didn't feel too wimpy. Incidentally, Magilla is named after Gorilla, a rapid on the North Carolina's Green, another river that I have avoided because of a "premonition."

Now we come to the irony and bloodshed.

The day after I got back to Pennsylvania my lawnmower threw a rock that whacked me on the foot. It hurt like hell but I didn't really think any serious damage had been done so I kept on cutting the grass. About five minutes later I discovered that the side of my shoe was soaked with blood. The rock had punctured my shoe, gashed my skin and chipped one of the bones. This necessitated X rays, IV antibiotics and sutures. I was on crutches for a week and was still limping six weeks later.

So, what is the moral to this story? Actually there are two.

The first moral is that mowing grass is no good for you. After this incident I took a sledgehammer to that old lawnmower of mine. That sucker won't get me again. Come next spring I'm going to buy me a goat!

The second moral is that everybody gets beat up once in a while, so you might as well do it having fun. To hell with premonitions! Next year I'm going back to the Moose. I might even try the Green.

Bob Gedekoh

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Letters

More Gauley Memories

Hi Bob,

I just read your Forum comments on Gauley River Memories and had to send you these pictures. The local photo shop didn't do too good a job on making some prints from some old slides, but they get the point across. I thought 20 years ago, "This may be as good as it gets." Things haven't changed much. I also included a picture of the "Iron Ring" for those who may never have seen it. I didn't know if it disappeared before your time or not. I'm sure a lot of newcomers may wonder about the name. For all I know, this may be the only picture in existence.

By the way, the name of the rapid on the Meadow is, "(I'm) Coming home, Sweet Jesus." Make sense for a dangerous rapid?

Ward Eister
San Jose, California

Editor's note: Ward Eister is one of the authors of Wild Water West Virginia and was a pioneer boater in the mountain state.



Close Call on the Gauley The School of Hard Knocks

Dear Editor:

The following story is true, though it's only coincidence (luck) that I am the one telling the story. Here is the slightly edited story as I reported it to the Rec.Boats.Paddle newsgroup:

Hey folks,

Did a little paddling over the weekend and had a really, really, really close call on the last rapid (Kevin's Folly) of the Lower Gauley. The rapid is only a class III; some people stop to surf the wave on river right in the main flow. There are no reported hazards in this rapid except for a "strong hole" at higher flows. In the past I have been in the habit of running a shallow slot river right of the main flow, located back in the boulder jumble.

Last night, as we paddled through Kevin's Folly, I ran this slot. Due to drought conditions, the water levels were lower (2400 cfs vs. 2800 cfs) and the water was beginning to drop. Since many hazards are covered at higher levels, I did not know that this slot covered the top of a boulder sieve. I scouted the slot from above and all appeared clear. As I negotiated the slot I stalled on the entrance

and was pushed left into the side of a boulder. This slot had very little flow, less than a 50 cfs. As I stalled, I was thinking to myself that I was simply "stuck". Then my stern started to sink and I knew that it was much worse.

If you're wondering, I was paddling a Whiplash, not a real short kayak, one with decent volume, but still one having a very small stern.

As the stern sank I still did not know I was above a sieve. I was under the false impression that the stern drop was due to a build-up of water coming into the slot from above. Once the boat went past vertical and the stern started going "too deep," I realized the seriousness of the situation. I didn't want to go into the hole with the boat on top of me, so I bailed out.

For those of you who are trying to visualize this situation, imagine being a bug in a toilet as someone flushes. I was being sucked down into a hole and there was nothing I could do to stop it. Fortunately, I came out of the cockpit clean and went into the water feet first. But then the water caught my body and started pulling me down. What's interesting about being fed into a sieve is that the pressure is not from above, as you might think, but rather a suction from below.

Though the sieve was rather small, maybe three feet across and two feet deep, there was so much suction that I never had a chance to resist. I tried to keep my self up at the surface,

but as I clawed at the rock I just slipped further and further into the water. I jammed myself in the rock about two feet below the surface. It was dark and quiet, and that sense of the end became crystal clear.

I had time enough to think about the hopelessness of the situation, that I was obviously not going to get out the way I went in, so I prayed that the outlet was clear, relaxed, let go of the rock, and closed my eyes. I felt myself surge into the flow, then after a few seconds I popped out in the main flow of the river, at the same spot where kayakers often eddy out to surf the wave. I stood up on a rock, still in the river, and looked right into the eyes of a canoeist. I'm not sure who was happier, me seeing him or him seeing me. The realization that I had just "swam a sieve," under rock for over twenty feet, left me numb.

In talking with the canoeist I learned that he had seen my boat go vertical behind the boulder and knew something wasn't right. Though he was right behind me, by the time he came around the boulder I had already flushed out into the main flow. Had I been stuck in the sieve, it would have taken at least a few minutes before any rescuers could have reached me. How fast could they have gotten me out? Probably not fast enough to keep me from drowning. So, yes, pulling the skirt worked out to be the right move after all.

So what can I say after surviving a potentially terminal situation? I think it's impor-

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tant to note the factors that changed this slot from being "safe" to being potentially deadly. Though the slot was "clear from above," the water levels were dropping and it had become a marginal line. Simply because I had taken the line in the past, does not mean that the slot was hazard free. Finally, low volume does not equate with low risk. The higher volume in the main flow of the river was far safer than where I "swam."

In conclusion, I would like to relate my experience to some recent RBP "threads" on short boats, low volume boats, creeking play boats, and the need for increased safety on the river.

First, there has been considerable discussion about boat length, boat design, and safety. I wholeheartedly believe that if I had been paddling a longer boat or a boat with more stern I would have traversed the slot much easier. This was obvious to everyone who was present following the accident. In addition, a larger boat would have prevented me from maneuvering into the slot in the first place, thus avoiding the situation altogether.

Second, for anyone out there who imagines that you can swim out of an sieve or undercut the way you went in, or grab a rope while being held underwater, I can only say one thing: "No Way!" Even a small amount of water weighs so much and can create such an incredible suction that there is often no way to come out the way you go in, with help or not. In my situation, the further I got in, the harder it was to get out. If the outlet of the undercut had been blocked, you'd be reading about this "close call" as a "death on the Lower Gauley." The best way to get out of an undercut or sieve is to stay out of it in the first place.

Third, not that I want to criticize my friends, but only one of the three kayakers I was paddling with that day were within sight of me at the time of the accident. The one friend who was within sight realized that something was wrong when he saw people clamoring on the rocks with ropes in hand. He still had to paddle upstream for a few minutes before he could reach me. The other two paddlers had continued downstream, assuming that we were so far behind because we had stopped to play. Please, talk safety and stick together. Consider how important a few minutes can be in rescuing a drowning paddler.

Fifth, in regards to the repeated discussions on "how long does it take to paddle Class V whitewater?" I remember a number of postings to the effect that a fit and motivated paddler could be paddling Class V after one year. This is true; I've seen it happen with a number of my friends, as well as myself. However, would you trust a surgeon if they had only practiced surgery for one year, even though they had excellent skills? There is definitely something to be said for the value of time spent on the water. It's simple math

folks: Five years experience is four more years than one year. Experience is essential to safe boating. Risky paddling behavior is often due to a lack of experience with the hazards of boating. I imagine that we will see more new paddler deaths in the years to come due to a combination of rapid advancement in paddler skills, improved river access, and better equipment, coupled with a deficit of river running experience.

Finally, I'd like to address the issue of relative risk and river choices. There have been a number of postings concerning the skill level necessary to paddle a river such as the Russell Fork Gorge. Based on descriptions of the run, the Russell Fork is only slightly more difficult than the Upper Gauley. Does this mean that a person who can paddle the Upper Gauley is ready to consider running the Russell Fork? Many of my paddling friends would say yes. In questioning their responses I would like to remark on my reading of the AWA casualty reports. It seems that many of the reported deaths have taken place on runs that the victims knew, on runs that were moderate in terms of the victims' skills, and in places where many people had passed unscathed. Death comes in many forms; sometimes it is more obvious than in others. If the deadly consequences of a river like the Russell Fork don't make you think about life and risk, then I suggest you have a sit down session with someone who cares about your life more than you care for your life (family, friends, a pastor). Death leaves a wake of despair in it's passing. No one who knows you will ever be the same.

I didn't sleep well last night because every time I closed my eyes I saw the swirling waters of the sieve closing above my head. Yes, I will continue to paddle the Gauley. Yes, I will continue to paddle Class V. Yes, I will be a lot more aware of what I am paddling, who I am paddling with, and the dangers that lurk in the most innocuous places. But the best lesson of all was that sometimes the river gives you a second chance.

Please take care, life is precious and it's the only one we get.

Ben Kadas
Blacksburg, Virginia

What is the Right Equipment?

Would you take your cross country skis up on the ski lift? Would you go out for a jog in your cowboy boots? Although you could, chances are you wouldn't, simply because those items were not designed for those purposes. Then why do some people think it's OK to run thirty foot waterfalls in a play boat?

I have been thinking about this for several months and have decided to share my opin-

ion about what I consider to be a dangerous practice.

Once upon a time kayaks had one basic design — long and pointy. The biggest problem with this design was the likelihood of pinning vertically while running steep shallow creeks. For this reason there were many creeks and rivers that people wouldn't consider paddling because the risk was too great. Later, the "creek" boat came onto the market, shorter and rounded on the ends with enough volume to surface quickly. Soon those drops considered unrunnable began to be tackled. Now, enter the play boat, craft specifically designed to go into holes and stay there. These boats are very short and have low volume bows and sterns made to initiate tricks. Thanks to these designs a boater with moderate skill can quickly learn advanced moves. However, because of their tendency to stay in holes, play boats are NOT intended for big water or steep creeking.

And this is where the problem begins. There are many boaters who have gained considerable skill with these small craft, to the point that they are running the big rivers and steep creeks in them. Although many have gotten away with such practices, I feel strongly that those attempting such runs in play boats are risking serious injury or even death.

In the past several years I have heard of some very close calls on the rivers involving play boats. Although in part this is because people are running things that have never been attempted before, I feel the equipment being used has added to the problem. I can think of three recent deaths where the type of boat being paddled was probably a contributing factor to the accident. Now it is not my intention to slam any boat manufacturer or specific boat design. In fact I won't even mention what boats they are, because any of these accidents could have happened in any number of play boats.

What I will say is that each of these boats were designed specifically for rodeo and they all shared in common a lower volume stern. One of these designs is notorious for doing tail stands and I have heard reports of many people getting pinned in it. What these incidents also have in common is each occurred on a river that I would only attempt in my creek boat. Even then I might well choose to portage some of the drops.

My feelings only increased after I read a recent article in *American Whitewater* that was written by Rick Weiss' widow, Rosi. Rich died on the White Salmon River in July of '97 while practicing for an upcoming extreme race. Rosi writes of her experience in hope that others will not have to go through what she has faced. This moving article is quite an eye opener and I would encourage all to read it. (July/August 1998 edition of *American Whitewater*, page 64.) Although Rosi does address the issue of high water and Rich's apparent reluctance to run the drop, she also

Guidelines for Contributors

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If possible articles should be submitted on a 3" computer cassette. (WordPerfect preferred - others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters: use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

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Open the story with an eye catching lead, perhaps by telling an interesting anecdote. Dialogue should be used to heighten the reader's interest. Don't just tell us about the river... tell us about the people on the river... develop them as characters. Feature articles should not be written in the style of a local club newsletter.

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to class III and IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

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Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally responsible for the accuracy of such material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

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focuses on the equipment he used.

"What I really want for other paddlers to know, especially racers," Rosi writes, "is that running rivers is different from racing and therefore different clothing should be worn. I truly feel that if Rich was wearing his other helmet he would not have suffered a hit to his head on his temple. I think the cut on his temple is what caused him to be unconscious. Maybe if he had not been wearing his (racing) life jacket, which racers try to keep as thin as possible, things might have been different, too."

Later in the article she states that she realized his boat played a major part of the accident. Again it is a matter of equipment. I know that Rich had been trying out a lot of plastic boats and had said that he needed to get a boat with more volume for the race. Now I understand why. Tree (who was with Rich that day) was paddling a boat with a lot more volume and it definitely helped. Rosi continued by saying, "Please understand I am not saying anything against the boat he was paddling. But I think Rich himself stood there and realized that, even though he liked the boat because it turned and felt more like his race boat, it was not the boat for those falls."

I can't make the decision for you as to which boat to use and when to use it. A play boat may be perfect from some runs, while it could be extremely dangerous at others. Only personal experience can guide you. But since most people own more than one boat these days, why risk the extreme? I always believe that you can't go wrong if you fall on the side of caution. Therefore, I will leave these thoughts with you, and once again, encourage you to be careful out there.

See Ya on the River,

Jim Virgin
President, Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club



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Purpose

American Whitewater

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

The American Whitewater (AW) is a national organization with a membership consisting of thousands of individual whitewater boating enthusiasts, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates.

CONSERVATION: AW maintains a complete national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors threats to those rivers, publishes information on river conservation, provides technical advice to local groups, works with government agencies and other river users, and-- when necessary-- takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

RIVER ACCESS: To assure public access to whitewater rivers pursuant to the guidelines published in its official Access Policy, AW arranges for river access through private lands by negotiation or purchase, seeks to protect the right of public passage on all rivers and streams navigable by kayak or canoe, resists unjustified restrictions on government managed whitewater rivers and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

EDUCATION: Through publication of the bi-monthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater, (AW) provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

SAFETY: AW promotes paddling safely, publishes reports on whitewater accidents,

maintains a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and publishes and disseminates the internationally recognized AW Whitewater Safety Code.

EVENTS: AW organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation, including the Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo in Tennessee, the Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), the Arkansas River Festival in Colorado, the Kennebec Festival in Maine and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AW was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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Please direct inquiries to Ken Ransford, attorney and CPA, 970-963-6800, or by email at ransford@csn.net.

Director's Cut

by Rich Bowers

Several years ago, as the newly hired Conservation Director for American Whitewater, I attended a meeting in Washington DC and found myself discussing the idea of legalized whitewater boating in Yellowstone National Park. I was stunned when a senior Department of the Interior person told me, "You boaters shouldn't assume you can just run every river."

"Why," I asked, "should we assume we can't?" Even at that time, it seemed incredible that anyone could believe that whitewater boaters would damage a resource already being used by thousands of anglers, horsepackers, hikers and others each year.

A few years later, in 1994, I read through the newly published guidebook "Western Whitewater." I came across a section titled "The Forbidden Rivers of Yellowstone," written by Ron Ladders. In this passage, Ron made a comment that caught my attention, "Rivers runners have a defensive mindset; they concentrate on saving rivers, and opening up new rivers usually doesn't occur to them."

This stopped me. At the time, I was deeply into the work of opening new rivers affected by dams. The passage didn't seem to fit with my idea of whitewater efforts, or of the many boaters who worked with me. It made me decide right then that opening rivers in Yellowstone was a task especially well suited for American Whitewater.

Before the Thanksgiving holiday, we presented more than four

years of research and hard data to Michael Finley, Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, and his staff. A summary of our "Proposal for Allowing Limited Whitewater Recreation in Yellowstone" is included in the River Access section of this Journal, and I encourage you to take a few minutes and read through this. At stake is over 400 miles of whitewater rivers and streams. As Ron put it, "the largest collection of unexplored rivers in the lower 48 states."

I'd like to claim credit for this, and I certainly played a part, but this proposal resulted from months of research, writing, editing and re-editing by Rich Hoffman, Triel Culver and Jason Robertson. They were assisted by many of our staff, directors, regional coordinators, and local boaters interested in paddling some of the most magnificent whitewater in the country. It's a strong proposal and we look forward to working with the Park to open select rivers in Yellowstone.

Finally, boating in Yellowstone is not an easy issue. Most people who weigh in on the issue of boating in the park either demand their right to boat (and boat legally), or are adamantly opposed to any new use. While Yellowstone is a special place, and while some rivers are so fragile that restricted use may be appropriate, it is whitewater boaters who are being restricted and denied access to rivers enjoyed by a host of other users, both motorized and non-motorized. We believe our proposal stresses protection of one of our most magnificent national parks while addressing the right of access and fairness. We believe our proposal outlines a way to do both, and presents a way to open more rivers in the future.

And for that Interior person, after years of reflection (and almost daily experience arguing this issue) — I still think you're wrong!



30th Anniversary Wild & Scenic Rivers Act

Due to the dams, diversions, and water resource development projects which occurred from the 1930's to the 1960's, the need for a national system of river protection was recognized by river conservationists (like Frank and John Craighead), congressional representatives such as Frank Church, and federal agencies. On October 2, 1968, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was signed and concluded that selected rivers be preserved in a free-flowing condition and be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act today protects river segments covering 10,844 miles of the

nation's most outstanding rivers from dams and other inappropriate development

On November 5-6, 1998, a forum was held in Shepherdstown, West Virginia to create a forward-looking agenda for the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act on it's 30th Anniversary, and to develop a vision for the future role of Wild & Scenic in river conservation.

The meeting was called by the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council and the River Management Society. In addition to federal river managers, the forum also included state river managers and river organizations including American Whitewater, American Riv-

ers, American Canoe Association, Idaho Rivers United, Friends of the River and others.

Over this day and a half, agencies and non-profits discussed the rivers protected by Wild & Scenic, other benefits of designation, the current problems with adding new rivers under Wild & Scenic, and changes needed in the future (including the need for other river protection measures). Participants decided to focus on four categories of goals for the future: 1) building congressional support, 2) education, 3) non-governmental organization coordination, and 4) management. A new vision statement for Wild & Scenic was also agreed upon, one which highlights the

value of these rivers "to maintain diverse ecological, recreational, cultural and geographical representation" and that identifies Wild & Scenic Rivers as "the heart of watersheds." Innovative approaches to Wild & Scenic will be based on "sound scientific information, as well as collaboration and partnerships among federal, state and local governmental and non-governmental organizations and the general public."

For more information contact Rich Bowers, American Whitewater, or Caroline Tan, Director of the River Management Society at (406) 549-0514 or email: rms@igc.apc.org/

INTERNSHIP IN RIVER CONSERVATION & RECREATION



at American Whitewater's National Office in Washington, DC

American Whitewater

Organized in 1957, American Whitewater's mission is to "conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." American Whitewater is a national boating organization with a membership of more than 7,650 individual members and 180 local kayak and canoe club affiliates, representing some 80,000 whitewater paddlers across the country.

National Office Internship

The National Office Internship is a three to six month position that can be scheduled throughout the year to meet a variety of schedules. The position may include a stipend depending on need and qualifications. Our goals for the internship are three-fold: to provide real world experience to our interns that will better position them for full time employment in recreation and the environment; to increase the productivity and effectiveness of American Whitewater; and to make a real difference in protecting whitewater rivers.

Responsibilities

The National Office Intern's main responsibility will be to assist the access, conservation, events, and safety program directors, and to assist and strengthen American Whitewater's volunteers. There is also an opportunity to assist the Executive Director on administrative programs including funding and membership. Specifically, interns will help Program Directors with:

- Research topics related to rivers, safety, public access, recreation, and program development
 - Production of American Whitewater Publications and program reports
 - Responding to requests for assistance from activists and members
 - Administrative duties such as filing, photocopying, database entry, phone answering, etc.
- The National Office Intern will take on several long-range projects during the course of the internship. American Whitewater staff will work with the intern to select projects which incorporate his/her special interests and talents, provide experience, and meet the goals of our strategic plan.

Qualifications

- Interns should possess the following qualifications and skills:
- College Degree
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 - Strong research and writing skills
 - Demonstrated interest in river conservation, whitewater boating and/or outdoor recreation

To Apply

Send a cover letter describing why you are interested in an internship with American Whitewater, your major areas of interest, and when you can start. Include a resume, a writing sample, and a list of three references. **Please do not call!** Send to:

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American Whitewater is an equal opportunity employer.

An advertisement for North American River Runners (NARR). The word "Riot" is written in a large, stylized, gothic font. To the left of "Riot" is the word "NEED" in a smaller, sans-serif font. Below "Riot" is a stylized graphic of a river or wave. In the bottom left corner, there are three logos: a circular logo with "NARR", a logo with a river and a boat, and a logo with a river and a boat. In the bottom right corner, the text "NEED NO MORE ...SHOP NARR" is written. At the very bottom, a dark banner contains the text "North American River Runners • 800-950-2585".

Welcome Back Boaters

Nisqually Whitewater Releases WELCOME BACK BOATERS?

John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director

Boaters gathered excitedly on November 21, 1998 in anticipation of whitewater restoration in the Class V La Grande Canyon of the Nisqually River. This release, the culmination of a six year process to relicense Tacoma Public Utilities hydropower project on the Nisqually River, was advertised widely in the Pacific Northwest as the paddling event to attend. The releases were publicized for a reason: This is part of a three year evaluation to determine the feasibility of whitewater boating in the canyon and demand for the resource. The announcements paid off — a large crowd of committed boaters arrived for the Saturday release despite the constant drizzle and 38 degree temperatures.

Many of the boaters entering the La Grande Canyon were unaware of the significance their participation in the Nisqually releases had on future releases at hydropower projects across the country. The liability concerns associated with the difficult access into the La Grande Canyon made this a high profile event for utility companies and regulatory agencies across the country. Success or failure would send ripple effects for other rivers de-watered by hydropower projects. Most boaters were there for the opportunity to explore a new river and justifiably so. The La Grande Canyon offers a unique paddling experience.

Boaters gathered at the registration table to view the video footage shot during the 1994 test release. Most were excited to take on the restored rapids of the Nisqually River's La Grande Canyon. The organized nature of the releases coupled with the generally light-hearted nature of the

Continued ▶

Nisqually Whitewater Releases WELCOME BACK BOATERS

paddling community caused many of us to take the Class V whitewater below lightly, not to mention the Class V put-in. None of us were aware of the dramatic changes the 1996 flood had made to the rapids and portages. Few of the participants anticipated the long day about to unfold before them.

The put-in entailed belaying boats in two stages down a steep gully while paddlers used a hand line. The greatest hazard on the descent was rockfall from others. Participants estimated that once on the ropes it took nearly 30 minutes to reach the river. This delay led to congestion of kayakers at the top of the gully waiting to descend, which led to further congestion at portages in the canyon. In retrospect, the delays at the descent and portages pale in comparison to the six year relicense process that brought these releases to fruition.

By day's end, a record 64 boaters descended into the La Grande Canyon. Beth Geiger, author of *Canoe and Kayak* magazine's *Whitewater Dispatches* column described the day as "A first in kayaking history — the equivalent of sixty-four first descents!" Geiger's comment was in reference to the newly formed and yet unrun river channel dramatically altered by the 1996 flood.

At 4:30 PM darkness set in with only half of the sixty-four boaters accounted for at the takeout. My imagination began to conjure up my worst fears. Could this well publicized restoration of the Nisqually River end in tragedy? Earlier in the day, I'd had my share of doubts as I stood in the gully belaying boats and boaters to the river below. From my position in the gully I had a birds-eye view of the water spilling from the top of the 185 foot dam to the river below — a dramatic sight. The technical nature of the descent coupled with the crowd of boaters caused me more than once to question the logic of this release. Each time images of dry river beds across this country silenced my doubt. Those doubts took a quantum leap with news of the stranded boaters. By 9:00 PM my fears were nullified as the last boaters walked out of the Canyon. Relieved, we headed to the Rainier Overlander for dinner, beers, and a few first hand ac-



The 185 foot high La Grande Canyon Dam on the Nisqually River spilling 800cfs for whitewater releases on Nov. 21. For the remainder of the year the dam diverts water away from the river channel to the powerhouse at the downstream end of the canyon.

counts soon to make their way into the analogs of legendary boating adventures.

And the stories kept pace with the Alaskan Amber on tap. I particularly liked the first hand account of the boater clinging to a rock in the middle of the river with darkness an arms length from his face. A boater portaging the drop heard his desperate shouts from mid-river. On the third attempt the throw bag made physical contact with the marooned boater. He described his swim to shore as "a total leap of faith diving into a rapid in complete darkness with no idea what lay downstream!" Obviously, the rescue was successful.

Another paddler described the realization of succumbing to the darkness realizing he and his companions were about to bivouac in the La Grande Canyon facing approximately 14 hours of darkness with thirty degree temperatures. The eventual rescue by fellow boaters and chili dinner at the Overlander were more than appreciated.

Utilities typically try to deny whitewater releases below hydropower projects claiming

that kayaking and rafting are dangerous activities that will place local search and rescue organizations at unnecessary risk. American Whitewater responds that boaters are self-reliant with the necessary rescue skills enabling self-rescue. On the Nisqually, the paddling community demonstrated

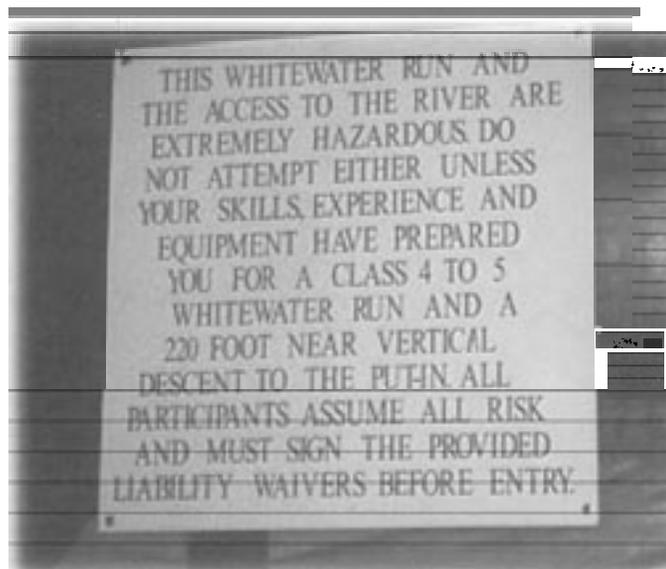
this self-reliance in full color. Pitch Black!

Collectively, boaters in the Overlander agreed that delays at the descent and congestion along portage routes greatly increased the time commitment for the run. The run itself can be completed in a reasonable time frame. In fact, the last party to launch on Saturday put-on at 3 p.m. and members of that team arrived at the powerhouse by 4:30 p.m.

Clearly, the descent time needs to be improved as well as congestion at portages. Both can be accomplished fairly easily by informing paddlers at the registration

table how to rig for the descent and move quickly through portages. Alternative descents were used on Saturday which could speed up the process for future releases.

In the week or so since the release I've received numerous positive comments. Many want to return so they can



Sign at the put-in warning paddlers of the whitewater ahead.

Nisqually Whitewater Releases WELCOME BACK BOATERS

relax and appreciate the unique rapids and setting of the La Grande Canyon. Most felt the strenuous descent was worth the paddling. All remarked that the rapids and portages were dramatically different from the video and these changes should be emphasized at the registration. One rapid in particular is definitely Class VI with a small eddy above to initiate the portage.

Many felt the run should retain the Class V rating with an emphasis on the time factor given the descent and short days. When asked if they would return most replied enthusiastically yes, the paddling makes the descent worth it.

Additional releases are scheduled for December 5 and 6, 1998. Due to structural changes in rapids and portages, releases will be kept at 800 cfs. On both Saturday and Sunday. Please arrive at 8 a.m. at Alder Lake Campground. Keep in mind these whitewater releases are under evaluation for the first three years. The results of these first three years will effect releases for the remaining 37 years in the project license.

Lastly, many individuals rose to the occasion on the first release day assisting fellow paddlers where needed. These individuals compassionately shared their skills at the risk of compromising their own ability to get out of the canyon before dark. Six boaters in particular hiked back into the canyon after dark to assist stranded paddlers. Kudos to all these individuals. Thank you to all participants for making this a safe initial release. Bring your knowledge to the following releases.



Boaters descending the gully into La Grande Canyon of the Nisqually using handline.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Punctuality:** An early start is imperative, particularly given the unavoidable delays descending into the canyon. Registration is at 8 a.m. sharp.

- **Ideally, summer releases** would negate the need for a dawn start and greatly reduce safety concerns associated with bivouacs.

- **Logistics:** Designate a team leader for each paddling group. This individual should be skilled with rigging boats for a belayed descent. Ideally, paddling teams would contain members capable of rigging and belaying boats. If you have questions about rigging boats for the lower ask for assistance from someone in the know. Additional volunteers dedicated to belaying boats into the canyon would greatly accelerate the descent. These volunteers should be equipped with hand held radios for ease of communication.

- **Equipment per paddler:** mandatory — throw bags, two webbing slings, 2-3 carabiners preferably locking. Assume this is an inaccessible canyon (because it is) therefore boaters must be prepared for self-rescue. Equipment necessary for self-rescue includes but is not limited to the following items; breakdown paddle, repair kit, first aid kit, bivvy kit, and extra food.

- **Additional equipment:** We set up approximately 450 feet of climbing rope (three rope lengths) from the canyon rim to the water. Ideally, one rope would be dedicated to belaying boats with a second line functioning as a hand line. Two belay stations are necessary for lowering boats. Each belay station must be equipped with a heavy duty belay device. We destroyed one locking carabiner due to the dirt on the rope.



Tracy Clapp descending into the La Grande Canyon of the Nisqually close to 3:00 pm.

Nisqually Whitewater Releases WELCOME BACK BOATERS

BACKGROUND ON THE NISQUALLY RELEASES

The La Grande Canyon is situated just downstream of the Nisqually Hydroelectric Project. The La Grande Dam diverts water from the 1.7 mile canyon to a powerhouse downstream, de-watering the natural river channel except during extreme flood events. The Nisqually Project is a privately owned hydroelectric facility regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). FERC grants private utilities 30 to 50 year licenses. Roughly six years prior to license expiration the utility must initiate a relicense process to secure a new license. The relicense process, through the input of state and federal agencies and the public, is intended to evaluate project operations and establish specific conditions in the next license term for resource protection, mitigation and enhancement.

American Whitewater's conservation program has been actively involved across the country restoring whitewater rivers through the relicense process. American Whitewater, along with the Rivers Council of Washington, actively pursued annual whitewater releases as a condition of the new license for the Nisqually Hydroelectric Project. In June 1994, flow levels of 800 and 1000 cfs were tested as part of a whitewater feasibility study. Based, in part, on these tests the FERC required Tacoma Public Utilities to make four whitewater releases annually. Initially, the boating community requested these releases occur in the summer months when boating opportunities on adjacent rivers were less likely. The Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, silent for much of the relicense process, objected to summer releases

claiming releases would impact spawning fish. The parties agreed to schedule releases between November 15 and December 31 annually. Furthermore, the releases were set for an initial three year evaluation period. At the end of three year evaluation period, FERC would reassess the license condition requiring whitewater releases.

Tacoma Public Utilities has been extremely concerned with liability issues surrounding the whitewater releases. And justifiably so. The put-in requires a five hundred foot descent down a steep gully and is likely more difficult than the rapids. Once in the La Grande Canyon, the near vertical walls give you only one logical way out. To ease their liability concerns, Tacoma put together a video of the rapids enabling paddlers to make an informed decision about the difficulty of the whitewater prior to descending into the La Grande Canyon. Participants are required to view this video prior to descending into the La Grande Canyon. Upon completion of the run, paddlers are asked to fill out a survey to record their impressions of the paddling experience. The results of these surveys will be submitted to the FERC upon completion of the three year evaluation phase of the releases. American Whitewater will work closely with the Tacoma compiling the report.

For more information about hydropower relicensing, the Nisqually releases or to provide feedback on the La Grande Canyon releases contact American Whitewater's conservation office at 482 Electric Avenue, Bigfork, MT 59911. Phone: (406) 837-3155 - Fax: (406) 837-3156 Email: jgangemi@qdigisys.net

Randolph Pierce — Outstanding Effort on the LaGrande Canyon

Successes in river conservation are usually the result of incredible efforts by committed individuals. Randolph Pierce is one of those outstanding individuals. RP, as he's commonly referred to, had a vision for the LaGrande Canyon of the Nisqually River. That vision came to fruition November 21, 1998 when Tacoma Public Utilities released 800 cfs into the canyon for whitewater. The Nisqually River is situated on the western flank of Mount Rainier in Washington state. RP's unrelenting efforts in the relicensing process, video pro-



duction, logistics coordination in the weeks prior to the November 21 release and the day of the release helped make it possible for 64 paddlers to

He doesn't stop. We go to RP for his work on restoring the river flows to the LaGrande Canyon of the Nisqually River. If you don't have the opportunity to meet RP, then you can't miss a personal, but still welcome, email at: pierce3@eskimo.com.

Navigability of Chelan Gorge

Chelan Hydropower Relicense

John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director

On November 18, Conservation Director John Gangemi hiked the Chelan Gorge below Lake Chelan in central Washington state to determine the navigability of the river. John was joined by staff from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), National Marine Fisheries Service, American Rivers and the Chelan Public Utility District. The Lake Chelan Public Utility District is undergoing relicensing of their hydropower facility with the FERC. The relicense process is currently in the "honeymoon phase" where interested parties identify issues associated with project operations.

American Whitewater identified the four mile de-watered river channel below the lake as prime whitewater potential. The river drops 400 feet in four miles before the confluence with the Columbia. Non-boaters claim the gorge is not survivable. In July 1998, a local boater paddled the lower end of the canyon. To date, no one has paddled it from top to bottom.

Based on the site visit, Gangemi feels a whitewater feasibility study is warranted. Chelan PUD currently diverts 2000 cfs from the natural river channel leaving the four-mile gorge bone dry. American Whitewater will pursue a schedule of annual whitewater release into the gorge if the whitewater feasibility study proves it is navigable.

For more information contact John Gangemi (406)837-3155, <jgangemi@digisys.net>.

Bear River Hydropower Relicense Southeast Idaho

John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director

PacifiCorp finally released their long awaited draft license application for three Bear River hydropower projects in southeast Idaho: Soda, Grace and Oneida Hydropower projects. Each of these three projects is undergoing relicensing. To refresh your memory, American Whitewater readers will recall the write-up in the July 1997 issue of the journal (page 14) describing the Black Canyon of the Bear below Grace power plant. In short, the Black Canyon of the Bear offers 6.2 miles of Class III, IV, and V rapids a short distance from Salt Lake City. Unfortunately, water is seldom in the natural river channel due to PacifiCorp's pipes diverting water around the canyon to their powerhouse. In addition to the Black Canyon section, the Oneida hydropower facility impacts boating opportunities on the Oneida Narrows section of the Bear. This section is even closer to Salt Lake City than the Black Canyon.

Although expected, the draft license application was a disappointment. American Whitewater has been actively pursuing an

annual schedule of whitewater releases as a condition in the next hydropower license. The draft license proposes a three year trial period of spring whitewater releases once the license is issued. In the first year, 2001, four days of whitewater would be provided. In the second year, eight days. In the third year, twelve days. Each year the whitewater releases would be evaluated based on impacts to the fishery. If at any point in time during the three year trial period, fishery impacts are detected then the whitewater releases would be curtailed.

American Whitewater is adamant these studies should be conducted prior to issuing PacifiCorp a license. Furthermore, releases should be scheduled in the summer to maximize use when other boating opportunities are in short supply.

If you are interested in participating in this relicense contact John Gangemi (406)837-3155, <jgangemi@digisys.net>. American Whitewater needs boaters to submit comments and/or volunteers to assist with this

relicense. The new license will permit PacifiCorp to generate power from the river for the next 30-50 years. Commenting on this project is a critical step in the relicense process.

Comments should be sent by February 8, 1999 to:

David P. Boergers
Secretary, Federal Energy
Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20426

FERC requires eight copies plus the original for comments to be accepted. Comments must be received by FERC by February 8, 1999, 5 p.m. EST. It is also recommended that commenters file a motion to intervene. Call or email John Gangemi for instructions on intervening.

Copies of the draft license application are available at the following address:
Michael Burke
Project Manager
PacifiCorp
825 NE Multnomah, Suite 1500
Portland, OR 97232
(503) 813-6656

Montana Voters Ban Cyanide Leach Mining

John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director

On November 3, Montanans took on the mining industry by voting to ban cyanide leach mining in the state. Montana is only the second state to take a strong stand against the mining industry. Last year, Wisconsin voters passed a mining moratorium bill prohibiting new permits for sulfide mines.

The cyanide leach process was developed for use on low grade ore. Rock is excavated from the earth, crushed, and sprayed with cyanide to dissolve the minute particles of gold. The waste is stored in tailings ponds. These ponds routinely leak. Since 1982,

there have been over 50 cyanide spills at Montana gold mines totaling 135 million gallons of cyanide solution released into soil, surface water and groundwater. The cyanide solution is extremely toxic.

For boaters, cyanide spills present a serious health risk. In addition, the cyanide solution wipes out aquatic flora and fauna along contaminated rivers thus severely degrading the quality of a paddling experience. Cyanide leach mining has been proposed for many Montana watersheds with exceptional paddling resources including the Blackfoot

River and Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone. Montanans should be congratulated for their pioneering effort to curb mining pollution.

The Montana initiative, known as I-137, passed by a narrow margin. The mining industry quickly challenged passage of the initiative in court. American Whitewater will keep you posted on this legal challenge.

For more information contact Jim Jensen at the Montana Environmental Information Center (406)443-2520 or contact John Gangemi (406)837-3155 or jgangemi@digisys.net.

Your contributions at Work!

By Jason Robertson

American Whitewater has capped off a very successful year by securing land for public access on two more classic whitewater rivers! We have used donations from our membership to ensure that the Alberton Gorge (MT) will be protected from development, and that John's Creek (VA) will be accessible for the public. These successes build upon our work on the Watauga (NC) earlier this year, and would not have been possible without the donations from our members for land acquisition. Our volunteers and supporters are the best!

Alberton Gorge, MT

American Whitewater donated \$15,000 to the River Network in November to secure the long-term option for the Alberton Gorge on the Clark Fork River in Montana. The property, valued at \$1.1 million, is at the heart of a giant land transaction between the Lolo National Forest, the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, and the Montana Power Company. Our participation in this project was made possible through a gracious and timely donation from the Kenney Foundation, as well as assistance from our members.

The Alberton Gorge is a quick drive from Missoula, MT and has some of the best Class III whitewater in the region, including three great rodeo spots, featuring fast burly surfing waves

and tight eddy fences that are made for squirting. When the River Network's director, Phil Wallin, called, we knew that we needed to be involved. American Whitewater's participation clinched the sale of the land, and has been instrumental in preserving this river for the public's enjoyment!

Contact the River Network at PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207-8787 for more information, or send an email to American Whitewater at Access@amwhitewater.org

John's Creek, VA

American Whitewater has finalized the purchase of a take-out on John's Creek in Southern Virginia. The Coastal Canoeists donated a third of the \$10,000 cost of acquiring this land, and

American Whitewater has provided the rest through donations with help from Lynn Aycock and our southeastern members. Securing this property ensures public access in perpetuity and resolves many of the access problems on this classic Virginian whitewater. Lynn encouraged American Whitewater to purchase the property because of historic access problems dating back to the early 70's, including numerous stories about shotgun-toting locals and not-so-random acts of vandalism.

John's Creek is a Class III-IV(V) river with an average gradient of 65 feet per mile (some portions approach 125 feet per mile). The hardest rapid on the river is called Bambi Meets Godzilla where the river drops 15 feet over 30 yards and plunges

through several large holes. The river is often compared in difficulty and beauty to the Top Youghiogheny (MD) and portions of the Watauga (NC).

There is limited parking at the put-in, so we encourage boaters to leave as many cars as possible at the take-out. The put-in and take-out are on Highway 311 West of Newcastle, VA (20 miles West of Roanoke). We will post complete directions on our website (www.awa.org) and in the Journal in time for the upcoming paddling season.

American Whitewater would like to thank Lynn Aycock, Liz Garland, Tim Spangler, David Hawkins, Roanoke Parks and Recreation, the Coastal Canoeists, and everyone else who made such generous contributions and volunteered their time in preparing this property for public access.

American Whitewater Position Announcement Development Professional

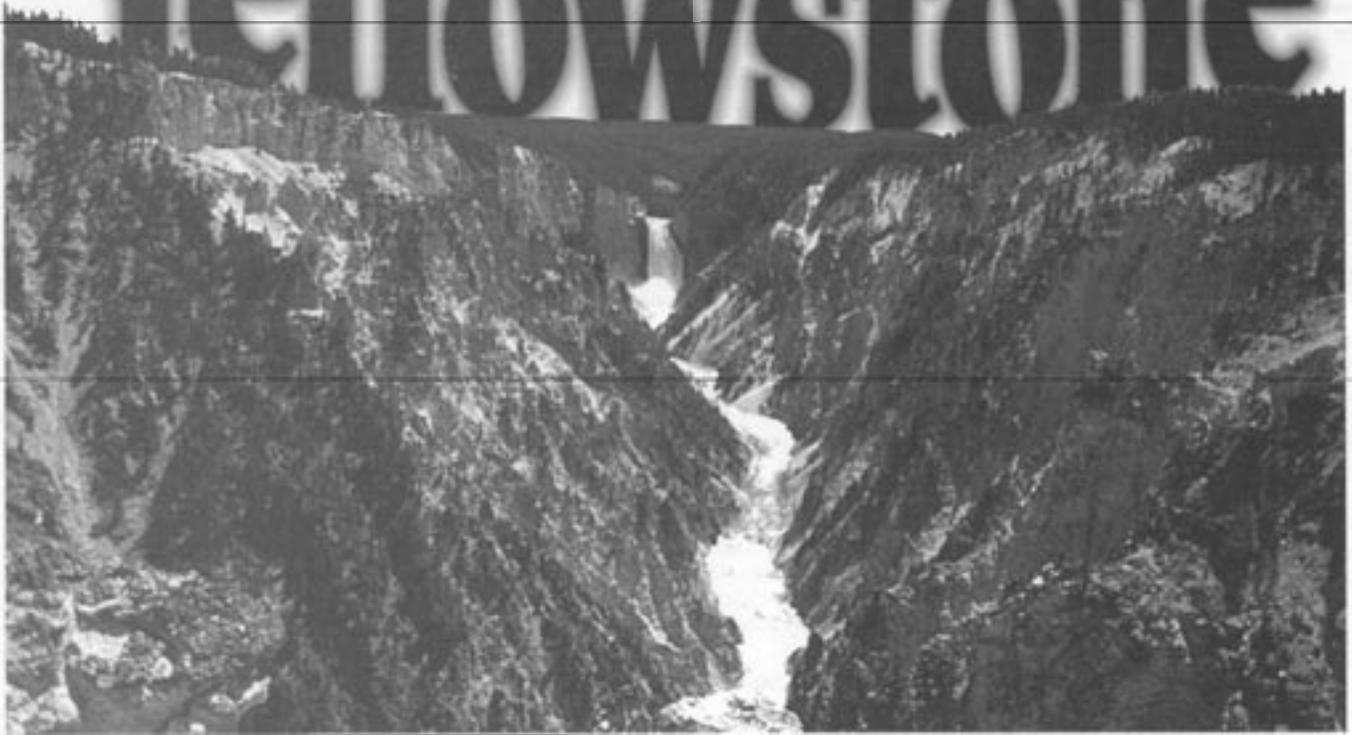
Are you interested in — Rivers? Outdoor recreation and whitewater boating? Helping to conserve and restore America's whitewater rivers and streams? Do you have experience in public relations and fundraising, and a desire to put these skills to use improving natural resources and the effectiveness of American Whitewater? If you have top-notch writing and speaking skills, are able to articulate a paddler's vision for America's wild rivers and would enjoy life near the nation's capitol, there may be a job at American Whitewater for you.

American Whitewater is seeking a development professional to create and implement long-term strategies. Responsibilities include planning and managing fundraising activities, including foundation and corporate grants, major donor development, and coordination with our events and membership programs.

Experience in fundraising or sales; excellent written and oral communications skills; strong organizational and management ability; computer literacy; and an ability and willingness to work at American Whitewater's headquarters in Silver Spring, MD (just outside of Washington DC and one block from the Metro) are required. A sense of humor is mandatory and an interest in rivers and outdoor recreation is a big plus!

Send letter, resume, and writing sample and salary requirements immediately, to Development Position, American Whitewater, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD, 20910. American Whitewater 301-589-9453

Yellowstone



"If Roosevelt had been photographed in Yellowstone with his canoe rather than his horse, there is little doubt that whitewater recreation would be permitted in the Park today."

*Jason Robertson,
American
Whitewater's
Access Director*

By Jason Robertson

Yellowstone! The word is evocative of so many things. It is the oldest National Park. It is the first uniquely American institution. It is a United Nations Heritage Site. It is a proposed wilderness area and home of the grizzly, wolf and peregrine. Yellowstone is many things to many people. However, Yellowstone is off-limits to all whitewater boating.

Four years after meeting with Yellowstone's Superintendent, Michael V. Finley, American Whitewater has completed our research and finalized a proposal that recommends opening Yellowstone for limited whitewater recreation. After countless hours talking to our members, regional coordinators, and other interested parties, we have decided to recommend opening the Black Canyon of the Yellowstone as well as portions of the Lamar, Gardner, and Lewis rivers for whitewater recreation. Our recommendation is described in detail on the following pages in the proposal's executive summary.

Submitting this proposal is the latest step in our efforts to lift the arbitrary ban on whitewater recreation in Yellowstone. We will be following up on our proposal with meetings with the Park at the regional and national level. We will also plan meetings with resource and conservation associations, and local boating clubs and affiliates.

It is very important to me that we communicate our interests and concerns to a wide and diverse range of the public. Many people have told us that they are opposed to any new uses in America's National Parks, I hope that we have assuaged some of their concerns in this document. We are very conscious of the public opinion against commercial rafting in Yellowstone, and have made it very clear that we do not support the level of use that commercial activities imply.

I would like to hear your comments. Please send email to Access@amwhitewater.org or letters to:

Jason Robertson, Access Director,
Yellowstone Comments
1430 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Yellowstone Proposal: Executive Summary

American Whitewater submits this proposal with the recommendation that the Park Service open four select sections of rivers for non-commercial whitewater recreation by kayak and canoe in Yellowstone National Park on a season-limited basis. Though American Whitewater would prefer to have all of the rivers and streams in Yellowstone opened to the boating public, we have limited our request to opening these four segments due to: 1) their unique value as whitewater resources to boaters of varying skill levels and interests, 2) the park's need to balance use and resource protection, 3) the fact that whitewater recreation has no unique impacts relative to other human-powered recreation, 4) the ability of park personnel to manage the resource on a limited basis, with the ability to open or close additional rivers in the future.

American Whitewater proposes that Yellowstone National Park staff work with us in opening and managing whitewater boating on the following river segments:

- Black Canyon of the Yellowstone
- Gardner River Canyon
- Lamar River
- Lewis River

Yellowstone National Park was founded in 1872, and is the oldest park in the country. It is enjoyed by millions of people every year (2,889,513 recreational visitors in 1997). American Whitewater recognizes that Yellowstone is an environment without parallel, and that its rivers, in many ways, define and create the region's dramatic landscapes. Yellowstone's rivers and streams provide a spectacular opportunity for the park's visitors to visit and experience the Park and behold its natural splendor.

However, all of Yellowstone's rivers are off-limits to whitewater boating. The ban on whitewater recreation affects boaters throughout the country and is inconsistent with management policies in many of America's National Parks. Due to this ban, American Whitewater's members, as well as other non-commercial whitewater boaters across the country, are denied the opportunity of enjoying and benefiting from the experience of exploring Yellowstone's rivers and streams.

As described in our proposal:

•Whitewater recreation is consistent with other recreational uses in Yellowstone.

•Whitewater boating is consistent with the purposes for which the park was established.

•Whitewater boating will not have unacceptable impacts on visitor enjoyment or be an encumbrance to participants or the public.

•Whitewater boating is not a consumptive use of park resources.

•Whitewater boating will not have unacceptable impacts on park resources.

•Environmental impacts from whitewater boating are minimal relative to other recreational activities that are allowed in Yellowstone.

Continued page 24. ▶

*Yellowstone and Yosemite
"should be kept as a great national playground. In both, all wild things should be protected and the scenery kept wholly unmarred."*

Theodore Roosevelt (1908)

Opening the Black Canyon of the Yellowstone for whitewater recreation is American Whitewater's highest priority.

Yellowstone National Park has the most extensive system of legally inaccessible rivers within America.

The preservation and sustainability of Yellowstone's resources must take precedence over access.



Our goal is to establish a cooperative relationship between whitewater boaters and the park, while safeguarding the unique resources of Yellowstone. This proposal is designed to allow whitewater boaters the opportunity of experiencing one of America's most outstanding natural areas in a manner consistent with park policy on non-motorized use and resource protection.

American Whitewater began working on this proposal following a meeting with Yellowstone's Superintendent, Michael V. Finley, and staff in June of 1995 in which we discussed the issue of boating on rivers within the park. As a result of the meeting, American Whitewater agreed to develop a proposal for opening Yellowstone's rivers to whitewater boating in which we would explore the issue in depth and formally present our position and recommendations on the subject. In developing and preparing this document, we have adopted a

deliberate and methodical pace, allowing us to conduct a significant and substantial fact and opinion gathering process. As a result of our research into this issue, American Whitewater proposes that the Park open the Black Canyon of the Yellowstone, Gardner River Canyon, Lamar River, and Lewis River to whitewater recreation.

We have selected these four rivers segments based on several criteria, including: recommendations from our members, accessibility, presence of existing facilities (such as parking), quality of the whitewater experience (including a diverse range of whitewater experiences), the park's ability to manage these resources and the unique quality of the Yellowstone experience.

Recognizing certain political and environmental realities and concerns, American Whitewater recommends:

- Limiting river access on a seasonal basis.
- Restricting commercial operations.

Creating a system of direct and ongoing communication that includes all affected user groups.

Collecting data on river use through the collection of permits
 Conducting a five-year reassessment of whitewater recreation .
 American Whitewater and Yellowstone National Park staffers would conduct this reassessment after data collection is completed.

Immediate implementation of these recommendations would permit American Whitewater and the Park an opportunity for collecting data and examining the resource and social impacts of whitewater boating within the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park.

As evidenced by the volume of comments and responses from our members (Appendix I), the issue of boating within Yellowstone National Park is extremely important to our constituency. This issue has generated as much response as any other single issue on which American Whitewater has worked. It is truly an issue of national

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concern to boaters as demonstrated by the letters from both local and regional paddlers, and from those as far away as Alabama and California. Our members strongly favor access to the rivers within Yellowstone National Park, and the Yellowstone River in particular.

American Whitewater understands that there is some opposition to allowing whitewater recreation within Yellowstone. Arguments against whitewater boating are based on concerns for opening the park to any new use, fears for the cumulative impacts of multiple recreational uses, and desires for restoring the park to its most natural state. We hope that people with these views will take the time to carefully read our limited proposal and understand our position. This proposal was developed in an effort to minimize, if not eliminate these concerns, put them in perspective, and allow controlled use of Yellowstone's unique river resources for human-powered outdoor recreation. As we have described in our proposal, whitewater recreation can be managed effectively and will not result in any environmental impacts relative to other forms of human-powered outdoor recreation, which are permitted in Yellowstone.

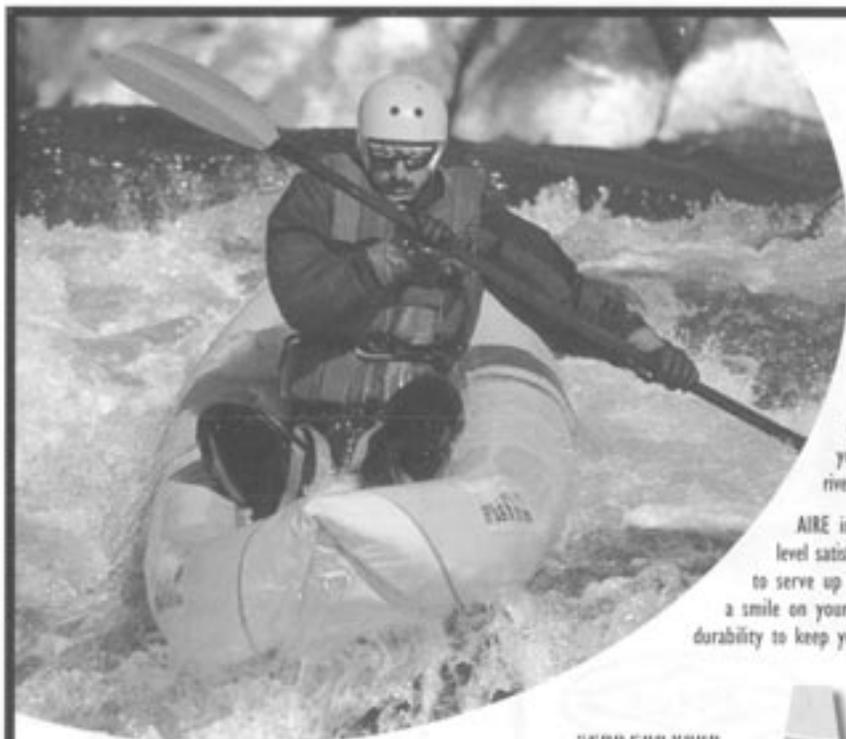
The backcountry experience as discussed in the Master Plan for Yellowstone National Park provides a "vital introduction to wilderness" and a place where the "visitor can test not only his desire but also his muscles."

American Whitewater supports conserving the outstanding resources of Yellowstone National Park. We believe this proposal demonstrates a method that allows limited, managed whitewater recreation while acknowledging our concern for the resource. We do not wish to damage the resource or degrade the Yellowstone experience for other visitors. In fact, American Whitewater believes that the preservation and sustainability of Yellowstone's resources must take precedence over access. However, we also believe that our proposal is consistent with these statements and that whitewater recreation is an acceptable use of Yellowstone National Park. We believe that we can accomplish both!

American Whitewater recognizes the difficulty facing the park's staff in attempting to balance resource preservation with a variety of public uses. In this regard, American Whitewater believes that the management of public resources should be based on objective science and a fair standard of management. However, the current ban on river running in Yellowstone National Park is unnecessary and unfairly discriminatory. Our proposal presents compelling arguments and data, which illustrate that:

- Whitewater boating is an appropriate use of Yellowstone National Park from a resource protection and public policy perspective.
- Whitewater boating can be managed according to accepted protocol.
- Whitewater boating will not cause significant impacts to Yellowstone's natural resources.
- Working with whitewater boaters, rather than banning use, can provide benefits for Yellowstone through the building of a strong and vocal constituency.

Continued
page 26. ▶



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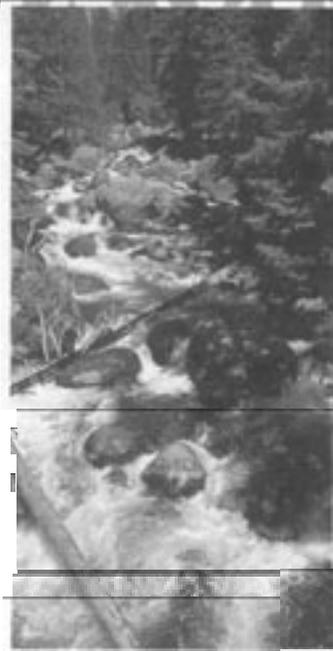
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American Whitewater's goal is to establish a cooperative relationship between whitewater boaters and Yellowstone National Park, while safeguarding Yellowstone's unique resources.



American Whitewater can help Yellowstone National Park staff open select rivers, and create a fair standard of management for whitewater boaters in the following ways:

- *Identifying outstanding and diverse whitewater resources.
- *Providing up-to-date and comprehensive information on whitewater boating.

*Facilitating communication between park staff and whitewater users.

*Assisting with data gathering, management of whitewater issues, and future openings or closings of river sections within the park based on data collected with rigorous scientific study.

This proposal addresses whitewater recreation from the perspective of resource protection and the equitable management of multiple recreational uses. The park completed a similar study in 1988, entitled, "Boating on Yellowstone's Rivers: An Analysis and Assessment" (referred to as the 1988 Assessment). However the park's assessment is speculative in nature and fails to exercise an objective evaluation of impacts from whitewater recreation. American Whitewater's proposal addresses these flaws. In particular, we examine the perceived impacts from boating, and compare boating with the approved recreational uses within Yellowstone and America's other National Parks. Furthermore, we address the discrepancies between Yellowstone's ban on whitewater recreation and management of this activity within other National Parks.

There have been significant advances that have occurred in whitewater recreation since the 1988 Assessment was completed, including improvements in safety, skills, and technology. These advances have allowed routine whitewater exploration of rivers and streams that the Park Service indicated were unsuitable for navigation in 1988. Today, difficult rivers, comparable to the Black Canyon of the Yellowstone are run on a safe and consistent basis by advanced boaters.

This proposal directly addresses the concerns for resource protection by discussing the nine environmental parameters that were evaluated in the 1988 Assessment. While some river segments within Yellowstone may not be appropriate for whitewater boating due to



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Whitewater recreation can be managed effectively and does not result in any environmental impacts relative to other forms of human-powered outdoor recreation.



American Whitewater's mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

resource concerns and a changing environment, American Whitewater believes that whitewater recreation will not have cumulative impacts exceeding existing non-motorized recreational activities in the park. Whitewater recreation certainly won't have the impacts associated with motorized use of the park.

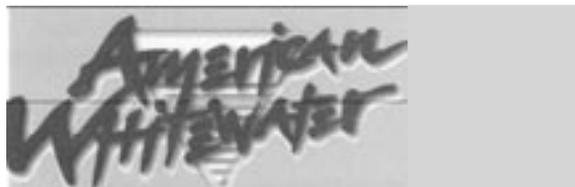
Park staff can manage whitewater recreation by working in partnership with American Whitewater, paddlers, clubs, and other organizations while using management tools that have proven effective for other backcountry activities in the park. We feel strongly that we can identify an equitable solution allowing whitewater boating while protecting Park resources by guiding use through effective management and education, rather than through an arbitrary ban on river running.

The original ban on river recreation was inherently flawed because it was implemented to address another concern, overfishing, rather than river voyaging and recreation. There are better tools for managing anglers without banning access on Yellowstone's rivers. While the restrictions were implemented based on concerns for resource conservation, they have had the effect of limiting a low-impact recreational use. Therefore this ban actually targets the wrong recreational group.

Today, whitewater boaters are denied the opportunity to enjoy more than 400 miles of rivers and streams within Yellowstone National Park. Current park policy denies whitewater boating due to a number of reasons that we address in the following pages. American

Whitewater hopes that this proposal will provide updated information on the increasing skills and abilities of whitewater boaters, a better understanding of how whitewater use can be managed without denying access outright, and the opening of select river and stream segments to whitewater boaters in the future.

Providing an in-depth evaluation of sustainable, human powered, whitewater recreation is in keeping with the philosophy of our National Parks. It has been said that the "establishment of a park is only the beginning; that if we do it right, we never stop establishing that park, because we never stop learning about it, and about ourselves."



American Whitewater is a national organization with a membership of over 7,750 individual whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 180 local canoe club affiliates, representing approximately 80,000 whitewater paddlers. American Whitewater was organized in 1957 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America. American Whitewater is dedicated to safety, education, and the preservation and conservation of America's free flowing rivers. This proposal is consistent with our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

American Whitewater's charter contains language with the purpose of:

*Encouraging the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of America's recreational waterways by human-powered craft:

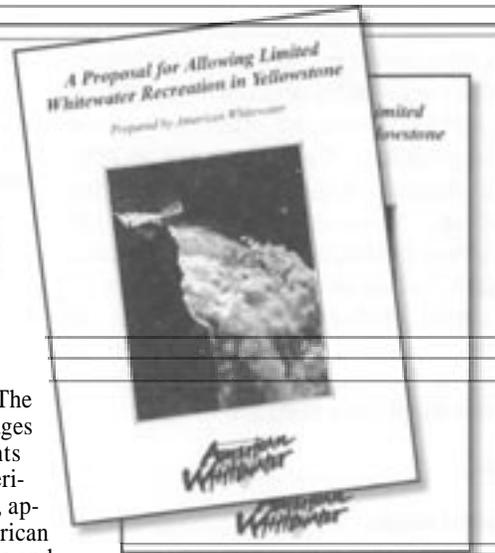
- Protecting the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources:

- *Promoting appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

Order the Complete Yellowstone Proposal

The complete Yellowstone Proposal is available upon request. The proposal is about 300 pages long and includes reprints of articles from the American Whitewater Journal, appendices regarding American Whitewater's Safety Code and Access Policy, as well as a glossary and other relevant information. A shorter, 75-page version is also available, which does not include the appendices.

Unfortunately, we cannot afford to copy and mail these documents for free. American Whitewater members and non-profit organizations can order the proposal at a discounted price. Members and non-profit organizations can order



copies of the complete 300-page proposal for \$37 (abridged 75-page copies are available for \$15). Other individuals and organizations can order copies for \$45 (\$20 for the abridged version). Prices include shipping.

Call 301-589-9453 to order your copy, or mail your request to American Whitewater at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Patagonia Pays in 1999!

Patagonia, renowned for cutting edge paddling gear, just gave boaters one more reason to buy Patagonia this year. When you buy a Patagonia watersports product through mail order or at one of their retail stores, you have the option of making a donation to American Whitewater. Patagonia will then match your donation up to the full price of the garment. Paddlesports products qualifying for the program will be distinguished with the American Whitewater logo.

"Patagonia has long distinguished themselves in the outdoor industry as a company with a strong commitment to conservation beyond mere marketing ploys," said John Gangemi, Conservation Director for American Whitewater. "In past years, Patagonia has supported American Whitewater's Conservation Program through company grants."



For Patagonia, designing the American Whitewater Challenge Program is a way to actively link the connections between sport and environment. Patagonia believes that in watersports, as well as other outdoor pursuits, where you play is as

important as how and why. Now, Patagonia is making it easy for their patrons to practice environmental advocacy, thus greatly expanding their own stewardship ethic globally.

So if you need paddling gear in '99 give Patagonia a strong look. Not only is their gear extremely functional and of great quality, it's also working toward protecting your rivers.

To request a catalog call Patagonia at 800-638-6464. For more information about American Whitewater's Conservation Program call John Gangemi 406-837-3155 or write <jgangemi@digisys.net>.

REPORT ACCESS PROBLEMS Trouble on the Waters

If you had trouble getting to the river, let us know. Use this form to report access problems so that AW can convince legislators and government authorities where and when river access is a problem. If you have met an irate landowner, noticed signs forbidding access, or were stopped by a landowner, barbed wire fence or a locked gate, tell us about it on this form. If several boaters are arrested or involved, only 1 form should be filled out per incident naming a boater available for future contact.

River _____ State _____

Date of incident _____

Access code categories: List below or circle the categories, multiple categories are ok.

Brief description of incident:

Boater contact _____
Address _____
City etc. _____
Phone _____
email _____

Landowner/Agency/Sheriff contact (if known)
Name _____
Address _____
City etc. _____
Phone _____
email _____

- 1. Trespass. Ticket, warning or arrest for:**
1.01 Trespass on private property
1.02 Trespass on public property
1.03 Criminal trespass
1.04 Civil trespass

- 2. Public Access Closure**
2.01 Denied by federal law
2.01.01 Denied by BLM
2.01.02 Denied by Forest Service
2.01.03 Denied by Natl Park Service
2.02 Denied by state
2.03 Denied by local authority
2.04 Denied by administrative edict

- 3. Injury from man-made obstacles**
3.01 Barbed wire or fence
3.02 Low head dam

- 4. Obstacles running river, scouting or portaging**
4.01 Fence or chain on land blocking access
4.02 Fence, wire, or tree on river blocking access
4.03 Posted no trespassing sign
4.04 Vehicle towed, ticketed, or vandalized
4.05 Threats or acts of violence

- 5. Closures: Rivers closed that were once open**
5.01 Closed by private landowner
5.02 Closed by government agency
5.02.01 Federal
5.02.02 State
5.02.03 Local
5.03 High water closure

- New access fees**
6.01 Charged by private landowner
6.02 Charged by government agency
6.02.01 Federal
6.02.02 State
6.02.03 Local

- Dam controlled rivers**
7.01 Water turned off
7.02 Inconsistent flow: too much or too little
7.03 No notice of releases

Send to Ken Ransford, 475 Sierra Vista, Carbondale, CO 81623, 970-963-6800, FAX 970-963-6700. ransford@csn.net

Access is a constant struggle. The AW Access Committee needs your help.

Applications for the 1999 Tallulah Releases Accepted Starting January 1, 1999

The November, 1997, and the April and November 1998 releases for the Tallulah Gorge releases have taken place with great enthusiasm and excitement! The town hosted a successful festival during the first release weekend in April 1998, and will repeat the party on April 3-4, 1999. Great cooperation among Georgia State Parks, Georgia Power Company, American Whitewater, local boating groups, and the boaters ensures the agreement over a 30-year period will continue in effect.

Tallulah Gorge is an advanced/expert whitewater run involving Class IV and V rapids. In addition, it has severely limited access in and out of the canyon in case of accident, and is further restricted due to the fragile nature of the gorge and the existence of several federally

endangered species, including "Persistent Trillium."

If you are unsure of your whitewater skill, do not attempt the Gorge. Boating accidents are always unwelcome, but are even more unwelcome during such limited releases. Besides hurting yourself, you may jeopardize future whitewater releases in this incredibly beautiful canyon.

Tallulah Gorge State Park is administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Access is limited to 120 boaters per day, in groups of no more than three. The permit system has been changed slightly to better serve the needs of the boaters. Please follow all instructions exactly when making your application. Call American Whitewater at 301-589-9453 for further information.

PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW ALL OF THE INSTRUCTIONS.

FAILURE TO COMPLY MAY RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION OF THE APPLICANT'S PERMIT REQUEST.

1 Only persons paddling qualified whitewater craft will be permitted to paddle Tallulah Gorge. Qualified whitewater craft are defined as follows: Kayaks (one or two person); whitewater canoes or open hard boats; decked canoes, including C-1s and C-2s; and qualified inflatables. Per Georgia Parks, qualified inflatables (one or two person only) mean inflatable craft owned (not rented or borrowed) by the applicant or a boater on that permit. Determination of eligibility will be made by American Whitewater's representatives, according to established DNR guidelines.

2 Permits allow access for both days of the release weekend. Each permit holder, or one of two alternates listed on the application, must check in by 12:00 noon on Saturday, or the permit will be released to those on the waiting list. Change: if the permit holder does not check in by noon on Saturday, the permit is cancelled for both Saturday and Sunday. Change: a permit allows a maximum of three people paddling qualified whitewater craft.

3 An applicant may apply for a permit for each of the scheduled release weekends. The dates for 1999 are April 3-4, April 10-11, and November 6-7, November 13-14, and November 20-21. A separate request must be submitted for each scheduled release weekend.

4 Requests may be submitted after January 1, 1999 for the 1999 season. The drawing for April, 1999 permits will be held on Monday, February 1, 1999. The drawing for November, 1999 permits will be held on Wednesday, September 1, 1999. Mail your requests at least ten days before the drawing.

5 Permit holders will be notified of a successful draw by mail from Tallulah Gorge State Park. You are encouraged to confirm that the scheduled release has not been postponed or cancelled due to adverse or emergency conditions. Call 1-888-GPC-LAKE to note whether a postponement or cancella-

tion message has been added to the recording.

6 Camping for boaters is available at the state park campground. The charge is \$3.00 per person per night, including showers, instead of the regular \$12. Call the Park at 1-706-754-7970 and identify yourself as a boater to obtain the special rate; you will be directed to the special boater camping area. Boaters arriving in RV's or motorhomes will be required to pay the regular overnight fee of \$12 per night; call ahead for reservations.

7 The Boater Parking Area is not a campground. The area will be blocked off at night and overnight parking will not be permitted. Dispose of trash properly. Be discreet about your choice of beverage.

8 Each group and boater must check in by noon on each day of the release at the Boater Registration Table. This table is also used for sharing reminders, rules, lost and found articles, and so on.

9 Walk-ons: The rules allow 20 walk-ons each day of the release. Additionally, boaters can get on the wait list for cancelled permits. Names for the walk-ons and the wait list will be done by lottery each day. Names will be taken between 8:00 and 9:00 am, at the Boater Registration Table. At 9 a.m. a lottery will determine the order for the 20 walk-on slots and for the wait list order. Wait list boaters will then be assigned permits as they become available. This means that all 120 slots can be filled each day.

10 Boaters are reminded that much of Tallulah Gorge State Park is extremely rugged and potentially hazardous. It is also an environmentally sensitive area. To protect the visitor from the gorge, and more importantly, the gorge from the visitor, all regulations and laws are strictly enforced. Remember that polite, responsible and safe behavior is expected.

PERMIT INSTRUCTIONS

I All permit requests must be mailed in a legal-size envelope.

II The outside of the envelope must contain the following:

- A The applicant's name and return address in the upper left corner.
- B The date of the permit requested and the number of people in the group, including yourself (maximum of three), in the lower right corner.
- C Adequate U.S. Postage for First Class Mail (reminder: the rates go up in January 10, 1999).
- D The correct address: Tallulah Gorge State Park Boating Permits, P.O. Box 248, Tallulah Falls, GA 30573.

III The envelope must contain:

- A A legal size return envelope bearing the applicant's name and return address, and adequate U.S. postage for first class mail.
- B A 3 x 5 inch index card containing the following information:
 - i the applicant's name, address, and day time phone number;
 - ii the name and daytime phone number of another member on the permit.
 - iii the date of the scheduled weekend release being requested; and
 - iv the number of people in the applicant's group (not to exceed three, including the applicant).

IV A person may apply for one permit for each weekend, but each request must be made separately.

By Jayne H. Abbot, Events Manager

We're heading into winter here in the Southeastern U.S. and still no rain is in sight. It's been a dry summer, dry fall and is turning into what is predicted to be a dry winter. It's not looking good for us southern boaters and those who plan to travel to this area looking for a fill of winter creek paddling. Hopefully those predictors of weather are wrong as they usually are and our winter paddling will come on full force soon. We need to be in shape for the 1999 river festival and competition season that is sure to be incredible.

In this issue is the 1999 event schedule full of all your favorites like the Gauley, Moose, Deerfield, National Paddling Film Festival and Russell Fork. Two additions include Stoney Creek Rendezvous and the resurrection of the Sacandaga Festival after a year's hiatus.

Stoney Creek is located near Johnstown, PA and is a staple for local paddlers learning to kayak as well as a great play river for those just looking to have fun. Stoney Creek is currently runnable on natural flows only during highwater and local boaters are looking to create new opportunities to boat the river during times of low water by pressing the dam for recreational releases. Jumping on an opportunity to crank up the pressure for releases, the local Bent Creek Canoe Club is joining with American Whitewater to jointly present a higher profile event aimed at showing dam owners and the town the economic and good will impact of recreational flows. The festival is sure to be a good time with vendors, food, band, camping and a race. Check it out and help create a haven of boating recreation.

Fresh from successful negotiations for releases on the Sacandaga River in New York State returns the Sacandaga Festival. The 1999 festival will focus on fun, family river activities such as raft and canoe races.

The Freestyle Rodeo Scene

A new committee, the US Freestyle Kayak Committee (USFKC), was formed this past summer by interested freestyle athletes to provide suggestions to NOWR on next year's circuit, judging rules and the point series. In addition, the committee is coordinating the US Freestyle Team Trials locations and setting up the rules for choosing the US Freestyle Team that will attend the World Championships next December in New Zealand. So far, the committee has been great at coordinating and communicating with NOWR. One change that has been suggested for rodeo is

to rename the sport to freestyle since rodeo seems to confuse those people who can't image how you could get a horse into a kayak. We'll be trying this new name out during the next year and would welcome your feedback. The next journal issue will contain details on the 1999 NOWR Point Series and judging rules as well as information on how the US team will be chosen. It will be a busy summer for freestyle kayakers as they prepare for what is looking to be some tough World freestyle competition.

The NOWR circuit is shaping up to be stronger than ever. The Oregon Cup organizers are slipping into an even higher gear this year by running five competitions over nine days including three separate rodeos, a downriver race and a surf off on the Oregon coast. Providing water levels are low enough, the much publicized Sunset Falls Rodeo will be back again. You'll note on the schedule that some events have changed dates moving from fall to spring (Coosa Whitewater Rodeo), moving from fall to summer (Ocoee Rodeo – tentatively moving from October to July), or moving a few weekends later (Outer Banks Rodeo moving 3 weekends ahead to early October). New events may still be added to the schedule and other changes may still take place so keep your eye on the freestyle pulse here in the American Whitewater journal.

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NOWR 1998 Point Series Winners

Nathan McDade, 1st Place Junior K-1, age 17.

In addition to winning the point series, Nathan, a Nashville, TN resident, was voted the 1998 Team Adventure Paddler of the Year by Adventure Quest of Vermont. Nathan's rodeo skills have quickly improved during his three years of paddling under the guidance of Adventure Quest's trainer Shane Benedict. Nathan spent last winter in Adventure Quest's schooling/training program in New Zealand and is looking forward to heading to Ecuador this winter for more Southern Hemisphere paddling. Nathan paddles for Dagger.



Photo © Colin Meagher

Brooke Winger, 1st Place Women's K-1, age 21

Brooke has been paddling since the age of 13 and gets her strong paddling roots from slalom racing, where she competed as a junior on a national level. Her rodeo goal is to place in the top three at the World Freestyle Championship in New Zealand next year. She then plans to complete her Biology degree at California State University. Prior to taking the rodeo circuit by storm, Brooke has showed jumping horses and still enjoys riding in addition to skiing, climbing, running and anything that puts her in the outdoors. Wave Sport, California Canoe and Kayak, Lightning Paddles, Manastash, Grateful Heads and Aloe Up sponsor Brooke.

Eric Southwick, 1st Place Men's K-1, age 23

This is Eric's second year in a row of winning the point series. Eric has been paddling for 13 years and has competed nationally and internationally in both slalom and freestyle rodeo. Eric currently makes his home in Albuquerque, NM. When not paddling, Eric enjoys climbing and snowboarding. Eric gives special thanks to his Grandma and parents for their support. Eric is sponsored by Wave Sport, Nettel, Smiley's Nose Plugs (premier sponsors), Lightening Paddles, Bula, Orosi, Surf the Earth (major sponsors), Five Ten, Lotus, Freestyle Watches and Cliff Bar (contributing sponsors).



Photo © Christopher Smith Photography

Eric Jackson, 1st Place C-1, age 34

Eric, or EJ as he is better known in the paddling world, is an icon for the sport of kayaking. A US Canoe and Kayak Team member since 1989 and veteran Olympic slalom paddler, EJ and his family spent the 1998 season criss crossing North American RV-style as he divided his training and competition time between slalom and rodeo. His goals are to compete in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and win the 1999 World Freestyle Championship in New Zealand next December. EJ is sponsored by Wave Sport, Swiss Army, Werner Paddlers, Wilderness Tours of Canada, Orosi and Lotus Designs.

Continued... ►

Congratulations to all of the participants in the 1998 NOWR Point Series Championship. The following are placements for all the competitors who registered for the point series. Individual placements at events and points earned from each event can be obtained by contacting the Events Office at JHAbbot@aol.com or by calling 828-645-5299.

Place ... Junior Points

- 1 Nathan McDade 115.4
- 2 Charlie Beavers 58.0
- 3 Brad Ludden 49.3
- 4 Andrew Holcombe 42.6
- 5 Ryan Felt 38.2
- 6 Ben Coleman 21.0
- 7 Dave Zinn 14.0

Place ... K-1 Men Points

- 1 Eric Southwick 663.4
- 2 Dan Gavere 571.7
- 3 Jimmy Blakeney 487.9
- 4 Jason Bates 438.7
- 5 Shane Benedict 431.4
- 6 Eric Jackson 363.1
- 7 Sam Drevo 335.4
- 8 Rusty Sage 328.9
- 9 Billy Craig 287.4
- 10 BJ Johnson 247.9
- 11 David Persolja 210.2
- 12 Craig Heflin 192.0
- 13 Chris Emerick 185.0

- 14 Dan Brabec 159.2
- 15 Brad Sutton 146.7
- 16 Luke Hopkins 118.5
- 17 Bo Wallace 104.1
- 18 Taylor Robertson 104.0
- 19 Ed Lucero 92.1
- 20 Chip Hogan 80.0
- 21 Dunbar Hardy 64.0
- 22 Evan Mounsey 58.0
- 23 PT Wood 56.0
- 24 Macy Burnham 54.8
- 25 Seth Warren 44.0
- 26 Raymond Cotton 34.0
- 27 Tom McKee 12.0
- 28 Dan Glauser 11.0
- 29 David Edelberry 0.0
- Patrick Jungles 0.0
- Michael Harvey 0.0
- Daisuke Aiba 0.0
- Ricky Rodriguez 0.0

Place ... K-1 Women Points

- 1 Brooke Winger
-
-
-
-
-
-
- 8 Amy Wiley 54.5

Place ... C-1 Points

- 1 Eric Jackson 61.3
- 2 Allen Braswell 53.5
- 3 Shane Benedict 33.2
- 4 Luke Hopkins 26.0
- 5 Ellis Smith 23.0
- 6 Harry Field 12.8
- 7 Norwood Scott 0.0

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VIPER 11 & 12: Choice of steep creekers & many expert paddlers.
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RODEO 10'6": Took four out of the top 6 places in 1995 world rodeo.
XL SERIES: Dry, stable and very user friendly.

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SPCS	LENGTH	BEAM	DEPTH	WEIGHT	MATERIAL	DUDD	FACTORY
						LIST	PRICE
PROBE 11	10'6"	26.5"	16.5"	47 LBS	R-64	1860	1637.50
PROBE 12	11'6"	28"	15.5"	45 LBS	ROYALEX	1875	1654.25
PROBE 12 B	12'6"	28.5"	15.5"	49 LBS	ROYALEX	1875	1654.25
PROBE 12 II	12'2"	27.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	R-64	1875	1654.25
PROBE 14	14'2"	30.5"	15.5"	59 LBS	ROYALEX	1940	1706.00
VIPER 11	11'0"	27.5"	16.5"	45 LBS	ROYALEX	1875	1654.25
VIPER 12	12'0"	27.5"	15.5"	49 LBS	ROYALEX	1875	1654.25
XL 13	13'0"	30"	15.5"	54 LBS	ROYALEX	1920	1690.00
XL 15	15'4"	30"	15.5"	65 LBS	ROYALEX	1870	1727.50
SHAMAN	12'7"	26.5"	15.5"	49 LBS	ROYALEX	1875	1693.75

1999 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS

Come join American Whitewater in 1999 as we celebrate whitewater rivers across country through our world famous festivals, races and rodeos. Hope to see you there!

AMERICAN WHITewater EVENTS

National Paddling Film Festival – East	February 26-27	Lexington, KY	Barry Grimes	606-623-9067
Stoney Creek Rendezvous	April 10-11	Johnstown, PA	Steve Podratsky	814-266-9744
Sacandaga Festival	July 17	Hadley, NY	John Duncan	518-696-5710
Black River Festival	July 24-25	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Deerfield Festival	July 31	Charlemont, MA	Mike Coleman	781-646-2012
"Don't call this a Festival River Rendezvous"	September 4-6	Belfort, NY/Beaver River	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Gauley Festival	September 25	Summersville, WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355
Russell Fork Rendezvous	October 1-3	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011
Moose River Festival	October 16	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397

AMERICAN WHITewater CASCADE SERIES

a series of American Whitewater premier level races from mild(er) to wilder held across the country

Canyon Creek Race	May 6	Clarks Country, WA	Andrew Wulfers	503-285-0464
Potomac Great Falls Race	May 30-31	Great Falls, VA	Ricky Rodriguez	703-742-8742
Black River Race	July 24	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Upper Yough Race	August 26	Friendsville, MD	Jess Whittemore	301-746-5389
Gore Canyon Downriver Race	August 21-22	Kremmling, CO	Paul Taff	970-923-3955
Russell Fork Race	October 2	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011
Gauley River Race	October 4	Summersville, WV	Donnie Hudspeth	800-950-2585
Moose River Race	October 16	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WHITewater RODEOS (NOWR) CIRCUIT

Kern River Festival	April 16-18	Kernville, CA	Linda Ivins	805-871-6790
Gillman Falls Rodeo	April 17-18	Old Town, ME	John Miligan	207-827-5872
New River Rodeo	April 24-25	McCoy, VA	Roanoke Co. Pks/Rec	540-387-6091
Merced River Rodeo	April 24-25	Mariposa, CA	Susan Scheufele	408-459-7978
Oregon Cup (May 1-9)				
Maupin Daze	May 1-2	Maupin, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201
Oregon Surf Off	May 4	Oregon Coast	Wave Slover	541-395-2201
Canyon Creek Downriver Race	May 6	Clackamus County, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201
Sunset Falls or The Wheel Rodeo	May 7	Clackamus County, OR		
Rob's Hole Rodeo	May 8-9	Clarks County, WA	Andrew Wulfers	503-285-0464
Coosa River Whitewater Festival	May 14-16	Wetumpka, AL	Lonnie Carden	334-272-0952
Bigfork Whitewater Festival	May 22-23	Bigfork, MT	Derek Thompson	406-862-4926
Jackson Hole Rodeo	May 29-30	Jackson Hole, WY	Aaron Pruzan	307-733-2471
Kananaskis Whitewater Rodeo	May 29-30	Calgary, AB	Mark Taylor	800-656-8288
Potomac Whitewater Festival	June 5-6	Great Falls, VA	Ricky Rodriguez	703-742-8742
Headwater Championship/FIBARK	June 17-20	Salida, CO	P.T. Wood	719-539-3174
Willow River Yaddlefest	June 18-20	Prince George, BC	Rick Brine	250-964-7400
Animas River Days	June 25-27	Durango, CO	Nancy Wiley	970-259-3893
Skyfest	June 26-27	Index, WA	Randolph Pierce	206-789-0444
Ocoee Rodeo (tentative date)	July 9-11	Ducktown, TN	Jayne Abbot	828-645-5299
Gorge Games – WW Rodeo	July 10-11	Hood River, OR	John Trujillo (TREE)	541-386-4286

Continued... 

1999 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS continued...

Derby Creek Rodeo	July 24	Burns, CO	Chris Emerick	970-736-0080
Kootenay Whitewater Festival	July 30-Aug 1	Castlegar, RC	Gerry Harrmon	250-362-7259
Wausau Whitewater Rodeo	August 28-29	Wausau, WI	Julie Walraven	715-845-5664
Ottawa River Rodeo	September 4-6	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	415-222-2223
American River Festival	September 11-12	Placeville, CA	Larry Goral	530-621-1224
Outer Banks Surf/Kayak Rodeo	October 1-3	Nags Head, NC	Pam Malec	252-441-6800

OTHER EVENTS

Tallulah Festival	April 3	Tallulah, GA	Mary Beth Bundrick	706-754-4318
High Country Triple Crown				
Watauga Gorge Race and Rodeo (exp/pro)		April 10-11	Watauga County, NC	
Nolichucky Rodeo (adv/exp)	April 17-18	Erwin, TN Contacts:	Spencer Cooke	828-297-1257
			Clem Newbold	828-295-4441
South Yuba Pedal-Paddle	April 24-25	California	Dave Good	916-265-9653
Cheat River Festival and Race	April 30-May 2	Albright, WV	Dave Bassage	304-379-3141
Golden Rodeo (tentative NOWR event)	June 5-6	Golden, CO	Chuck Cremer	303-277-0133
Boulder Rodeo (tentative NOWR event)	June 12-13	Boulder, CO	Kevin Sloan	970-748-9605
East Coast Team Trials (date, contact, etc. still to be determined)		Rock Island, TN	??	??
West Coast Team Trials (date, place, contact, etc. to be determined)			??	??
World Freestyle Championship	Dec. 1-5	Rotorua, New Zealand	Andi Uhl	NZFKC@clear.net.nz

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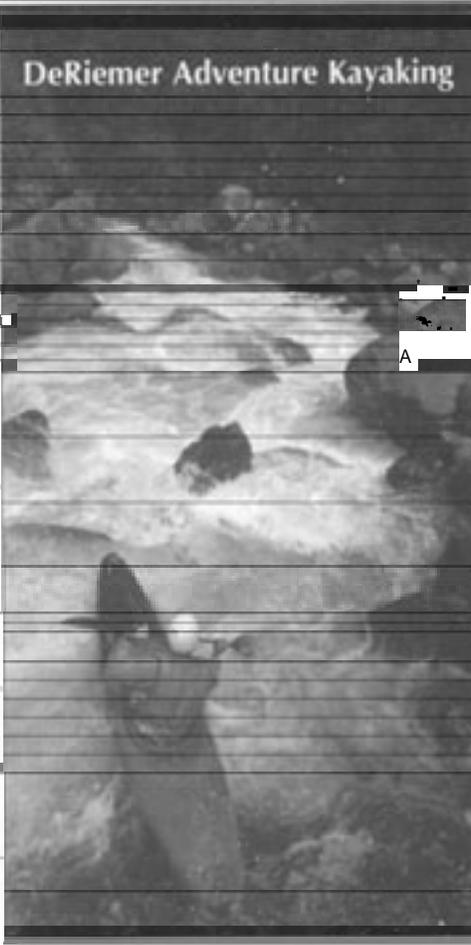
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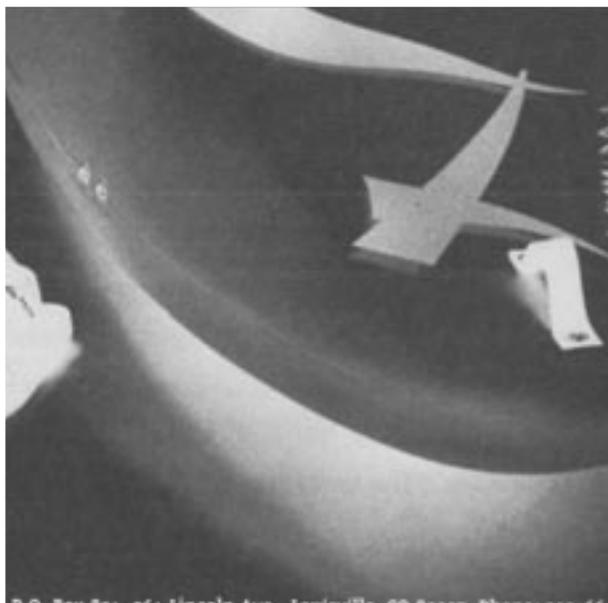
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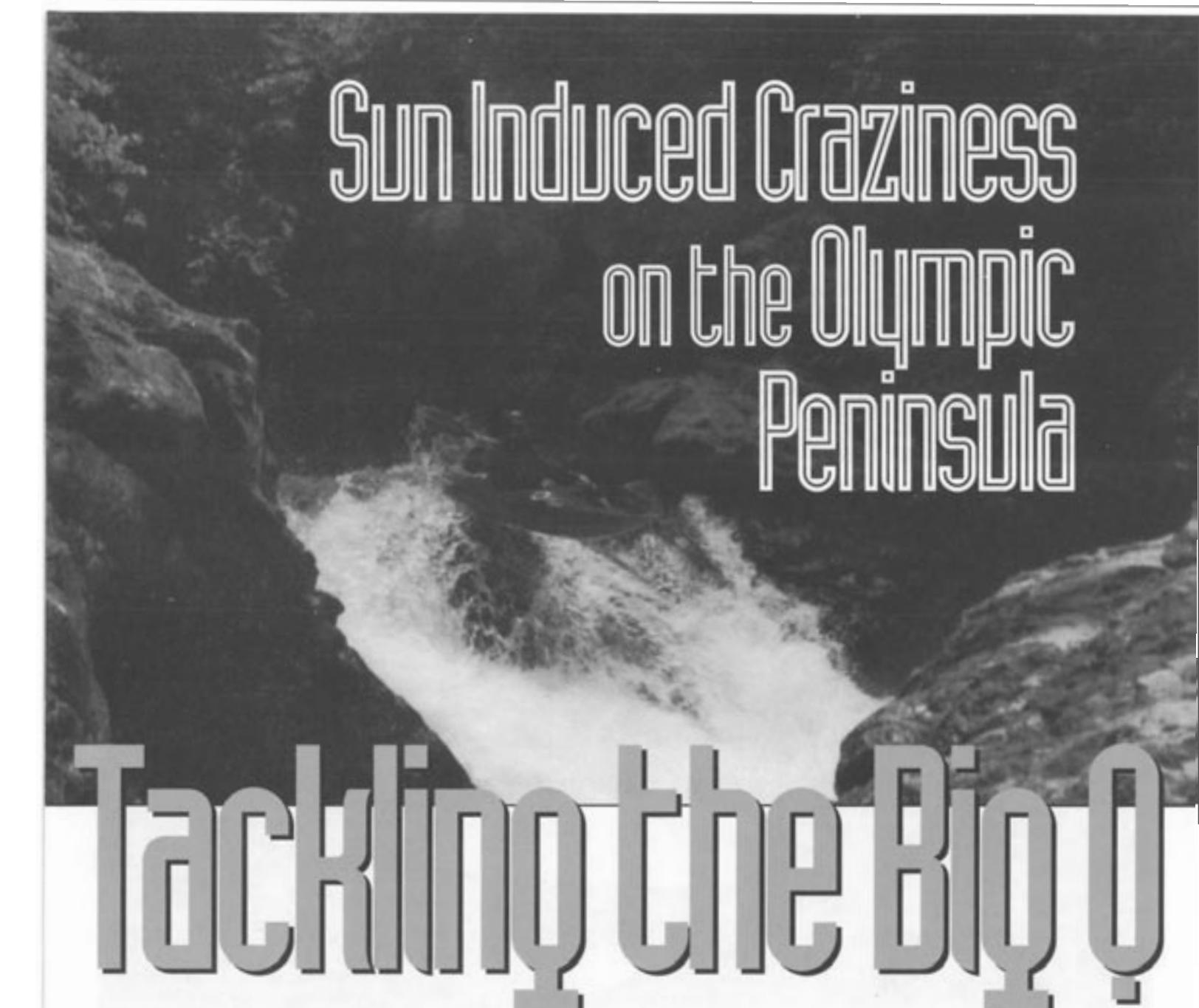
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Sun Induced Craziness on the Olympic Peninsula

Tackling the Big O

By Dan Halsey

"It looks like there's a good recovery pool," Jeff said as we scouted Casserly's Cascade. We were standing on the slanting boulders on river left, looking at the pool below the falls. Casserly's is the first drop on the Big Quilcene River and it's a real attention getter. After a mile or two of class 2 water you are confronted with a thundering, steaming horizon line. The banks shoot upward, blocking any sun, and the temperature drops noticeably. It is downright eerie.

This was Jeff's first time on the Big Quilcene. I thought back to my first run, when we all stood staring at this 16-foot double ledge falls. At that time no one we knew had run the falls. We wondered what the boil would do to a probe. I still have a picture of two boaters looking at Casserly's, their faces serious and pale. That day most of us portaged 23 feet down the scree cliff with a rope. The ques-

Above: Jeff Somers nailing the line at Cheese Whiz.
Photo by Don Halsey

Tackling the No 0

tion of what lay in store for us downriver weighed heavily on our minds. Then, Justin Casserly, having stayed above to lower boaters and equipment, hopped in his boat and sailed over the falls, popping up just fine in the outwash below. Suddenly, our smiles returned and we were ready to face the rest of the river.

Justin drowned in 1997 paddling a river in Mexico. His friends decided to name this drop Casserly's Cascade in honor of his first descent of the falls. It is a rugged and beautiful spot. More than once I have seen a rainbow span the pool when looking back upstream.

But Jeff and I weren't seeing any rainbows yet. I was the "guide" for our twosome. We had weighed the risk of paddling as a twosome and decided the odds were not too bad. Here in Washington we often talk of SAD, or seasonal affective disorder. This is depression brought on by our long, cloudy winters... i.e. light deprivation. But I believe there is another behavioral anomaly, S.I.C., or Sun Induced Crazy-

ness. Perhaps Jeff and I were just victims of S.I.C. Earlier, as we stood on the sun drenched banks viewing the gentle stream flow, it was hard to imagine anything going wrong on such a nice day. I had done the run recently; now it was running at a lower level, making the drops easier. And I'd paddled with Jeff before and he had looked confident and able. Besides, the sun was out.

So. There we were, at the brink of Casserly's.

"Yeah. there is a pool." I said. eyeing the top blocked drop just 30 yards downstream. "But if you're swimming and start to drift downstream abandon all equipment and head for river right for all you're worth."

Below: Jeff Somers at Island Drop on Big Quikene. Photo by Don Halsey

"I've swam this one at a higher level and as far as I know I'm the only one to do so. But I'm happy to report that you CAN swim out after one recycle," I continued.

With Jeff watching from shore I lined up to head over the drop. I recited the route in my mind, "Head for the mid-river peak and do a delayed boof off the mid ledge hump. Stay left. Stay left." Recently I'd been frequently hitting the right wall, which was slightly undercut. I'd been able to flail out past the recirculating cave on river right, but it wasn't pretty boating. I was becoming all too familiar with the right wall. I knew various hand holds and spots to push off. But that day I hit the boil, got a chilling face full and a visual flash of my bow against sky, then settled in the pool; this time on the left. Whew! Made it.

Now it was Jeff's turn. I pulled out my camera after scooting myself onto shallow rock so I could reach Jeff if needed. I noticed the sun shining above the lip of Casserly's as I waited



Tackling the Big O



Above: Jeff Somers mid-flight in Casserly's Cascade
Photo by Don Halsey

for Jeff to appear. It was a beautiful day. I was feeling good and confident, even cocky.

Jeff lined up perfectly and hit the midway hump looking good. Snap! I got a picture. Then I watched with dismay as he bow-dived, stalled in the boil, and stood on his tail back into the curtain. Things were suddenly getting tense. There were only two of us and one was in trouble.

Jeff hung in there a long time doing some serious bracing and amazing semi-controlled rodeo moves while I scrambled back toward the boil line. But man does not live by bread alone; he needs oxygen. So after a valiant effort, Jeff bailed out, but hung onto his boat. He started recirculating along the right wall I knew so well. I grabbed his paddle and threw it into an eddy. I managed to grab one of those hand holds along the wall I'd come to know so well and bow rescued Jeff before he recycled for the fourth time. I left Jeff hanging onto his boat on shore and sprinted over to retrieve his paddle again, before it flushed into the log-infested mess downriver. I was very busy. Too busy.

Thankfully we hadn't lost any equipment. Now a little voice was scolding me; something about three boater minimums. Jeff tried to apologize but I praised his efforts and pointed out that things could have been a lot worse. I pointed out that he had saved me from the infamy of being the only swimmer of this drop. Our Sun Induced Craziess was now dampened a bit.

Paddling Casserly's successfully is a real boost. After nailing this big ledge the drops below are really a hoot. Swimming Casserly's has an opposite effect. You are now at the start of 3 miles of class 5 water and are wet and tired. Not optimal. I knew I'd better get serious about trying to get Jeff through the rest of the trip smoothly.

The next rapids went well. We'd scout from shore, then I'd run first. Jeff watched the line from shore with a throw bag in hand. Then I'd shore spot Jeff. We leapfrogged down the river this way; it was slow going and extra work, but it was the safest option. We had a minor mishap above a logjam, but I was Johnny on the spot. I had crawled out on the logs and was there to grab Jeff and hold him so he could work free of an old growth sieve. I was feeling very pleased with my guiding abilities. The sun continued to shine, restoring our sense of euphoria.

The next drop had wood in it, a narrow slot, so we had been portaging



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Above: Mike Lawson under the log roof in the steep section. Photo by Ray Schroeder

it. I wanted to clear the wood. Jeff and I spent a lot of time horsing around with rope and wedge till we thought it was clear. I decided to try and run it. I hit the boil and plowed right into a submerged part of the tree, stalled, and did a slow motion backender. I rolled up after flailing against and around the limbs of this log that was still obviously blocking the route, though now less visible. It was Dan's turn for a spanking. What was I thinking? Another example of Sun Induced Craze, I guess. I had emerged with a mild bloody nose and a scratched lip. I was humbled, but I could still feed my lungs and paddle. Life was good. And the sun was still out.

We proceeded on. Jeff nailed Cheese Whiz, a sweet 12 foot boof in a very pretty part of the river. This drop's name was inspired by a boater from Wisconsin nicknamed Cheese. I was told he ejected mid drop after pinning, just before his boat folded horribly. Brrrr. Cheese Whiz. Now we all

aim a little more left.

Things continued to go well as we negotiated the steepest part of the river. Three back to back drops here plummet 50 feet in 30 yards. There is a v-shaped folding 14 foot falls with a river left undercut wall, a boulder garden (6 feet here) ending with a limbo move under wood at the lip of a 12 foot slide, and a narrow squeeze under an amazing log roof and through several narrow chutes totaling 18 feet. After we both portaged the first drop, I paddled on while Jeff portaged river left. He wisely ignored my advice that he could probably handle it. Jeff finished by running a narrow chute just above a tricky rock wall that has bested some good paddlers.

I had planned to recover a lost paddle in the drop below. The Big Quilcene had been eating one friend's paddles this year. (For details, ask Ray.) We'd all decided Ray was suffering a "paddle jinx." I noticed his jinx disappeared as soon as Ray got his own

Tackling the Big Q

spare (and stopped borrowing and losing others). When I scouted the drop I couldn't believe my eyes. The paddle we'd lost a week ago was sitting in a river right eddy, just waiting for us!

Below the steep section, the river is mellow for a time, then offers another series of ledges. These are less precipitous and in a more negotiable canyon, but they are still challenging. We reached a boulder garden that begins with another low hanging old growth log (yes sir, this is indeed Washington). The river flows just under the log, but there is a 2 foot slot to the right that is open. I waved to a fisherman on shore and mimed paddling through. He smiled and nodded yes, then pulled his line in. I tried for the slot, blew the line and had to do a desperation brace to duck under the log.

"That was amazing," the fisherman said, laughing. "I was wondering what you were going to do when you headed for that log!" He was very impressed. I didn't want to disillusion him by admitting I'd had the same misgivings. Now Jeff showed his stuff and nailed the line easily, sailing past the tree and into a perfect eddy turn. We soon gathered a crowd of fishermen. We proceeded to provide additional entertainment by broaching, then flailing our way through the next narrow slot. We waved good-bye as we headed downstream.

The Big Quilcene is just one example of the rugged rivers on the East Coast of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. It lies northwest of Seattle off Rt. 101. It is a striking steep creek with mossy vertical cliff walls rising over 200 feet. (It takes 4 rope pitches to climb out, don't ask why I know.) There are 15 4 IV+ to V drops in the canyon. Over 6 miles the river drops about 900 feet, with an easy one mile paddle in and a two mile paddle out.

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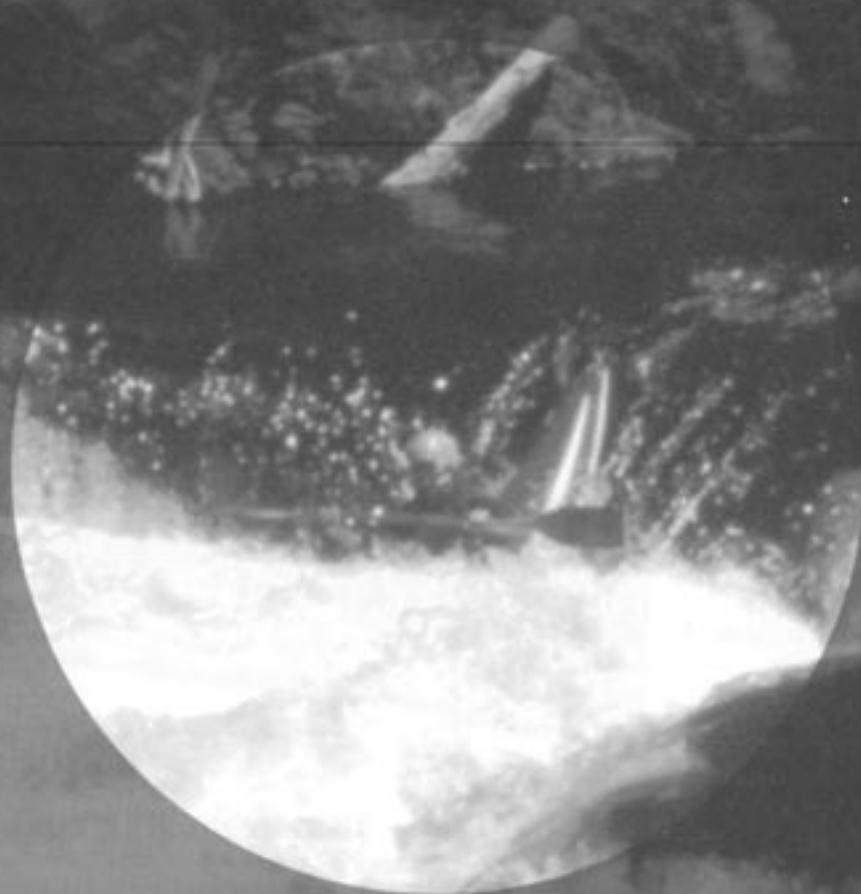
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Dreaming of a Whitewater Christmas



By Whit Deschner

Dreaming of a Whitewater Christmas

For three years I had been well accustomed to sit on the floor of the canoe (never using a cushion or even a mat), and at once to apprehend the various knocks, and vibrations, and grazings received, which are quite distinguishable as the boat passes over rocks, boulders, shingle, gravel, sand, mud, or weeds. This feeling of the object outside, through the thin oak plank (not an inch from your body), is almost as easy as by the hand itself; and therefore I knew in a moment that some hard, smooth, heavy substance was knocking below against my boat, and moving forward. The most likely of all things was that this was a crocodile.

— John MacGregor, *The Rob Roy on the Jordan*, 1870

On one of Captain Cook's visits to New Zealand, he dropped off — much to the crews delight — a bunch of pigs. Supposedly the pigs were to help feed shipwrecked survivors. This made the Maoris extremely happy, for it offered them a change of menu from the usual, shipwrecked survivor. Not only was the pork more tender, but the pigs were also easier to clean. Yet the arrangement also must have confused the Maoris. What were they to think of a culture that said, "Well, instead of improving navigation,

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from a genetically enhanced line, a strain that learned to outrun Maoris.

One of the largest natural pig habitats in the country is around the East Cape region, specifically the Motu River. Although the upper reaches of this river are pastoral and sheep-infested — which probably accounts for the river's wonderful murky-green hue — the lower fifty-five-mile section has hills crowding it that are referred to as mountains. Whether these *are* mountains or not, I'm not going to argue. I do know, however, that the Tarzan-oriented vegetation that smothers them would severely hinder an escape from the valley, unless you are adept at swinging on vines.

My escape, though, was to the valley. Carol and I were hiding from Christmas. Now, don't get me wrong about Christmas. There's nothing I like better than the slow pace of a good Christmas traffic jam to bring my fellow man good cheer and, as he fights to buy the last Nintendo, peace on earth. I dread to think what the leading economic indicators would do if we returned to the old standard of sleigh bells ringing instead of cash registers. As a protest, I used to send my Christmas cards out in the middle of summer, an idea I thought original to the point of genius. However, my enthusiasm was totally squashed one day when, I realized that *everyone* in the Southern Hemisphere sends their Christmas cards out in the middle of summer. And, as I subsequently discovered, the temperate climate in New Zealand has totally mutated the holiday season. In an eighty-degree environment, fake snow in the corner of store windows is hardly convincing. Santa in his winter garb looks like the perfect S-and-M perversion. His most famous quote, "Ho, ho, ho," sounds more like the mournful last gasps of a person locked in a sauna.

So on our escape, setting off down the Motu river, we made a pact not even to mention the big C-word. As for the run itself, providing a flood didn't drown us and wash us into the Bay of Plenty (plenty of what, no one could say, but I suspect kayak gear) the river promised some classic



Dreaming of a Whitewater Christmas

whitewater. Actually, the river didn't promise this; some boaters who told us to run it did. So did the local guide book.

That book also advised there was virtually no camping for the first seventeen miles as the river went through two gorges. Now, when I think of two gorges I think of one gorge followed by another gorge, with some un-gorge-like behavior in between. Not in this upper section. Here space for gorges is at a premium; the two are smunched together so close it takes a geologist with a magnifying glass to detect the difference.

Flooding was also noted, both by the guidebook and myself: A scoured no-man's land rose twenty to thirty feet above the currently non-flooding river. In one recorded instance, the river had, overnight, gone from forty cubic feet a second to *six thousand*. But the guide's most notable item was this little gem, an extra incentive not to miss a roll: *"Motu eels deserve special mention — many as thick as a man's leg and they seem to be exceedingly hungry. It is not advisable to be in the water after dark as they have been known to attack humans at this time."*

The river was just cloudy enough to obscure my view of the life that I knew was lurking within it, feeding my suspicions that only an all-too-thin layer of fiberglass separated my personal rump steak from a river teeming with eels, the bigger ones no doubt inhabiting the pools below nastier rapids.

In short, the price we were paying to escape Christmas was to share a large, flood-prone trench all day with eels big enough to star in their own Hollywood horror flick. But these were just abstract and potential problems, nothing like the real one that developed as we descended. Due to various uncharted rocks, our boats began leaking. They were only a week old and now, quite literally, we were breaking them in. When ordering the kayaks, I had specified heavy-duty. They were fifty pounds each so the first criterion had been met, but the "duty" was neglected. In a matter of hours the boats were wearing half a roll of Duct Tape between them. Ironically, we were carrying a dozen raw eggs packed only in their cardboard container and *not one* of them cracked. Pulling ashore to fix another hole, I kicked my boat and immediately had another crack to repair. With four-and-a-half days yet to go on a rapidly diminishing roll of tape, it looked like we might be hunting pigs after all. But it was darkly comforting to know we were not the only people who had suffered such a problem. At the river's hardest drop, "The Slot," we discovered two wrecked kayaks abandoned in the brush; they were the same make, the same pie-crust construction.

We reached camp at dusk, just as the exceedingly hungry leg-sized eels no doubt began prowling the river, cruising for kayakers foolish enough to linger in the water.

The next day the valley temporarily yawned and vegetation, not rock, flanked the river. One such plant

was the cabbage tree, a Dr. Suess designer plant. Around forty-foot tall, these trees contained no foliage except for a single cluster at the end of each branch. We also saw the rare, dove-gray Blue Mountain ducks. Crouching along the river's edge as we passed, they apparently believed they were going unnoticed — which is, of course, the reason they are rare.

After floating a handful of miles we came to a permanent camp and would have passed right by had it not been for a ribbon of smoke advertising someone's presence. We stopped, hoping for some river information.

The camp's lone occupant met us as we stepped from our boats. He said, "I really don't like boaters coming ashore here, I've got cyanide all over the place."

"Cyanide?"

"For trapping possums. It's horrible stuff. They scream when they die."

"That's OK," I said, "We'll shove back off. We were just wondering what you knew about the river."

"It bloody well nearly flooded me out of my own camp."

"You know anything about it downstream?"

"Nothing but bloody waterfalls and whirlpools!"

"You've seen it then?"

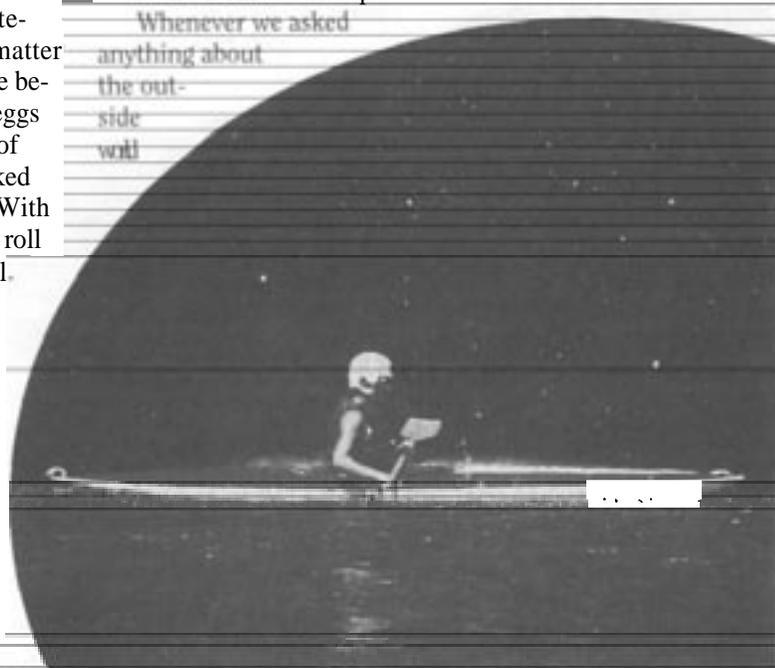
"No way! The kayakers told me. I wouldn't go near it. The bloody thing's filled with eels."

"Well, thanks. We'll be going."

"You'd better have a cuppa tea first."

After emptying six cups of tea and supersaturating our kidneys close to failure, Carol and I learned the trapper's name was Beaver. While Carol and I were eluding Christmas, Beaver was eluding most concepts of civilization — like washing. And as much as he espoused the life of a recluse, he sure seemed starved for company. Every time we finished our tea, Beaver snatched the tea billy from the coals and refilled our cups.

Whenever we asked
anything about
the out-
side
world



or his past, Beaver became vague, as if suffering from mild amnesia. But when we asked him about life in the bush we couldn't shut him up. Like only yesterday, walking his trap line, he'd unknowingly stepped between a wild sow and her piglets. The sow charged. Having only a single shot .22, he had to be certain that his bullet wouldn't stray. He shot the pig at ten feet; it dropped dead at his feet. He said we'd have it for "tea."

"But we've got to be going," I insisted.

"It's only going to go to waste if you don't stay." Then he asked what day it was.

"December twenty-fourth," I said.

"I thought so," he said sadly, but then, in the same breath and a revived eagerness, added, "It'll be our Christmas pork." I helped him fetch the carcass, which was in a gunny sack, but the flies had got to it anyway and blown all but a shoulder. After cawing the good meat off, he asked, "You seen any eels yet?"

"Not yet."

"I'll show you bloody eels!"

We carried the carcass down to the water's edge, Beaver tied a line around a leg, tied the line to the bank, and pushed the remains into the river.

That evening pork hissed in the frying pan. We gorged ourselves then lay back, watching the darkness push the evening pastels from the sky. At last, when the stars were out in full bloom, we checked the carcass. We trooped down to the river's edge and Beaver, holding a kerosene lantern aloft, proclaimed, "That's

river!" I could hardly see the carcass for all the eels dangling from it. I leaped to a boulder for a closer look, not seeing that the boulder was slimy and that a foot would never adhere to it. My momentum carried me into the water, landing me squarely on the carcass. All I was wearing were shorts. All I felt were eels slithering over my body. Jesus might have walked on water, but I ran.

The next morning — each of us carefully avoiding any mention of what day it was — Beaver cooked up more pork. Tea, of course, washed it down, and when our cups were empty we insisted they not be refilled, that we really had to be leaving.

Carol asked Beaver for an address where she could send him a card but he admitted he didn't have one. So we thanked him, wished him luck, and floated away — but not before noticing the pig carcass stripped clean.

We paddled the remaining gorge. It was wider and less technical; with the greater volume there was little worry about adding additional holes to our boats. However, in this section helmets became an essential piece of equipment; as they scrambled for safety, the wild goats on the cliffs were forever showering us with rocks. When we came to the end of the gorge, we camped. That evening, as we ate dinner, clouds crowded across the sky and shortly afterward it began to sprinkle. We went to bed.

When the drizzle stopped I awoke, immediately becoming aware of a strange twinkling. Looking out the tent screen, I saw the whole valley aglow with dim fairylike lights. I said, "Carol, wake up."

"Why?"

"Are you awake?"

"No."

"I won't say what day it still is, but look outside."

We stayed awake for the rest of Christmas gazing at hundreds of glow worms clinging to the nooks of the cliffs.

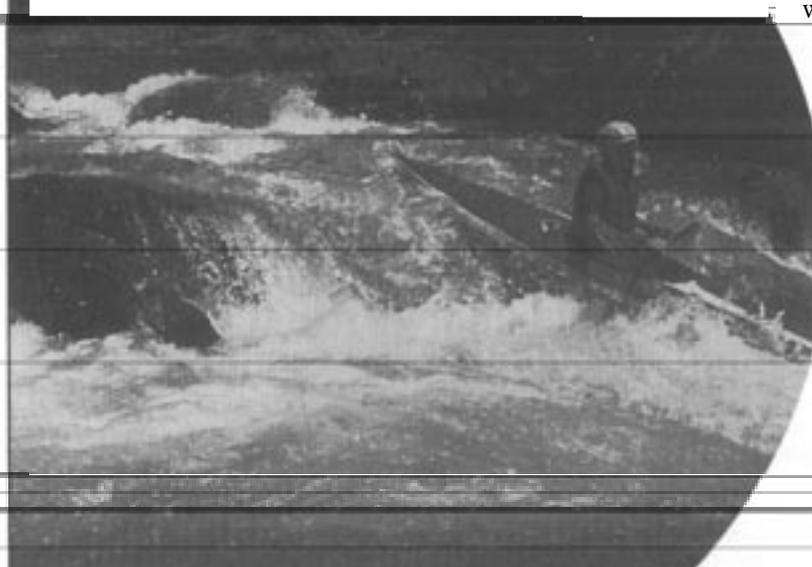
I wish this story ended there, but it doesn't. Several months later while staying with a friend I told him of our trip down the Motu and of the possum trapper we'd stayed with. He said, "You say, possum trapper?"

Then he began to dig through a pile of newspapers until he found the article he wanted me to read. It was about an escaped convict who had been hiding out in the Motu Valley. The police had finally caught up with him.

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BORED OF INQUIRY

by Jonathan Katz

[To our readers: It is impossible to print a moment of silence in a magazine. Someone on the Board of Directors suggested that we delete the latest McBride-Omaha idiocy and print three blank pages in memory of our dear departed paddling friend "Cracker" Jack McCracken. Though most people thought this would improve the magazine, it would not do justice to the memory of our dead buddy. So instead we print here the Report of the Board of Inquiry, in the hope that you will read it and take up needlepoint.

In honor of what little remains of our dead friend, we ask that you close your eyes and count to ten before reading the Report. Thank you. The Publisher.]

Kasha was a left handed kayaker from Russia, a generous, good natured nutjob who paddled ferociously by day and livened up the campfire at night. He appeared out of nowhere in the summer of '97 and paddled anything anyone would drive him from the Upper Yough to the Lower Meadow, Russell Fork, Watauga and the Green. He didn't play a lot, but he was relaxed and totally at ease on the water. "Not too hard," was his stock answer at the bottom of the run. People who got to know him better heard the stories of the rivers back in the old country, when the snowpack in the Urals thawed and the gorges flooded with miles and miles of milky, freezing water. They built most of their own equipment over there and didn't grade rivers. They just paddled improvised cataracts made of tractor innertubes — bubliks — and it was a good day if you lived.

In addition to a plastic creek boat, Kasha bought himself a used guitar, and at night, when he'd drunk enough vodka, he would sing about the woman he left behind when he emigrated. The song was a blues tune and went like this:

Her name was Katya
Katya from the Ukraine
She had hips like a bublik
But she'd rock you like a big wave train.

In the Army Band she used to play the tuba
With lips that tasted sweet as Eukanuba

In her peasant dress she used to dance so
gaily
Get her drunk she'd let you strum her
uke-LAY-le

I called her Katya
Katya from the Ukraine
I hit all the bars in Friendsville
But I never found my baby again.

Kasha knew hundreds of verses to that song, and if you didn't brain him with a paddle you'd laugh so hard you'd pull a muscle. He was crazy.

One day, somebody told Kasha about the west fork of the south branch of Ball's Creek. It was steep and twisted and had never been done. He had to stow away with his boat on a freight train, jump off at the top of Sawbuck Mountain, and bushwhack down off the tracks a mile to get to the put-in, which was a big boulder sticking up twenty feet out of what passed for a riverbed. He sat on top of the boulder, double checked his spray skirt, and pushed himself over the edge to land on J. Alfred Boofrock, the only rapid that had been named yet. And down he went, disappearing immediately over the first ledge. A couple hundred yards downriver Kasha got vertically pinned and drowned. He was the second expert paddler to die on that section of river.

Kasha's body came to the attention of Clarence Jackson, who played catcher in the Culpeper County ER. Over the years Clarence

had seen the good old boys come in with just about every kind of trauma young Southern gentlemen could inflict on each other. They got busted up in cars, shot each other accidentally or on purpose, mangled their hands and feet in farm machinery, got cut or stabbed with anything that could hold an edge or a point, and voluntarily poisoned themselves with everything from bootleg whiskey to LSD. Occasionally, one of them would do something even stupider than normal, like the fellow who swapped his buddy's cold Coors for a 12 ounce beer bottle of Coleman fuel. The drinker gagged and spewed the stuff into the campfire, and lived another week before he died from his burns. All in the spirit of good clean American fun. And Clarence had been there, to help sew up the pieces, or sometimes pull a sheet over a face.

When they brought in the kayaker from Ball's Creek, Clarence shook his head. The fellow was drowned blue and cold, but Clarence and the duty doc did their best to resurrect him. They worked on the corpse for an hour before they wrote him off. Clarence tagged him for the morgue, and wondered. The dead man was an illegal from Russia, and nobody was falling all over himself to claim the body. Clarence had fished the lower section of Ball's Creek for years and didn't see why anyone would want to paddle its steep upper reaches in a kayak on the third day of a miserable cold three day rain, a December Sunday good for nothing but watching football.

Three weeks later they brought in another paddling stiff. This one wasn't even close. He'd been dead for a couple of days, and the force of the current slamming his head into a boulder had scraped off most of his face. Why? On Clarence's next day off he drove to Ball's Creek, where the west fork of the south branch joined the river, to see for himself.

The river ran low and fast from a deep

wash eroded into the flank of the mountain, a gully choked with boulders and downed trees. There wasn't much water, and what there was gushed out from a narrow gap between two massive blocks of sandstone. He stared into the space between them, into a jumble of rocks. Apparently, the dead men had been paddling their boats UP THERE, in a steep and fishless gorge, inaccessible from the usual river banks. Why? Clarence had been pondering the ways of the world since Vietnam. He'd seen a lot, but he couldn't imagine why anyone would bust his ass hauling a boat up the 45 degree slope of that hill, or risk his life trying to paddle an orange plastic cigar down the uppermost tributaries of Ball's Creek.

The information superhighway being what it is, word of a paddler's death comes across the internet before his lungs stop gurgling. And when the first postings came through that yet a fourth boater had been killed in an unknown gorge in Eastern Kentucky, even Kenny Omaha sat up and took notice. He'd been sipping TNT — tequila 'n' tonic — watching Chopper play Quake online. Chopper had a program that searched usenet postings for the word "killed" in the same paragraph as "kayak" or "river." When the program set the alarm off, Chopper paused the game and checked his favorite newsgroup, wreck.boats.paddle. There it was:

Hear tell they hauled another dead kayaker out of Balls last weekend. Details, anyone?

Details were gleefully supplied by someone who called himself "Yakmaniak@daggerception.com":

Upper Ball's is a mile long boulder sieve that drains the east flank of Sawbuck Mountain. It is the west fork of the south branch of Balls Creek. The gradient is estimated at 700 feet per mile. It has never been run, and is not runnable. "Cracker" Jack McCracken was the fourth paddler to die trying. He pinned and drowned yesterday. Leave it alone.

Omaha focused his besotted eyes long enough to read. Four dead! He felt a tingle of excitement, dampness on his palms, a stirring in his loins. "Ask him if there is a gauge," he said. Chopper typed something on the keyboard and went back to playing Quake. Twenty minutes later he had an answer.

There is no gauge for Upper Ball's Creek. It is only runnable in flood, and then it is not runnable.

Chopper was used to real-time whitewater levels from the internet. The data gap where the Ball's Creek gauge should have been pissed him off. Determined to solve the problem, he drove down from New England the next weekend and rigged a solar powered fiber optic camera and a transmitter at the top of the wash. Real-time still photos would appear at <http://www.hydroview.com>. Chopper also scouted the first quarter mile of the run. This took him three exhausting hours. He re-

ported a jumble of rock and debris choking a virtually invisible riverbed. He estimated that about 300 cfs might lubricate the rocks a little, and told Omaha to forget about it. This was the single most provocative, alluring phrase he could have uttered. Omaha homed in on that first descent like a buck scenting pheromones.

While Chopper was getting beta on the river, Clarence Jackson was fuming about the bad luck that had caused him to work in the nearest hospital to Ball's Creek. Just what I need, he thought, something else to supply me with bodies. These people are supposed to be experts. They are supposed to know what the hell they are doing. Why are they coming to this river like lemmings to die? Whatever is making them so stupid? He decided that the next time it rained he would take the day off and see for himself.

In early March a big storm boiled up out of the Gulf and swept north into the Appalachians, dumping torrents of rain. Every river and stream within a 500 mile radius of Bryson City came up. For paddlers it was a buffet, a smorgasbord, all you could eat for free with breakfast thrown in. With nearly 400 rivers to choose from, Omaha fixated on the west fork of the south branch. He wanted that first descent, and he wanted it bad.

"The name is enough to make my compass puke," he said, studying the aerials Chopper had downloaded. He was committed. He had the jones. Chopper tried to talk him out of it. No way.

"I need to run something different. Besides, all these dead guys were kayakers. Nobody's tried it in the open boat."

Omaha also had a secret agenda. He wanted to find out why Jack McCracken died. People said he drowned, but there had been that mysterious explosion that scattered his body parts over a 500 foot circle. Folks mumbled about terrorist activity, Shining Path guerrillas from Peru, possibly the KGB. Omaha shook his head. "Nobody blows up a lone kayaker. I think it was equipment failure."

The night before he left he glued a couple of E-Z Widens together and wrote his will. Hunched over the tiny square of paper, he did not see his girlfriend Yvonne Dellameure slip into the room behind him. Six feet of sinew and spun gold, Yvonne could melt the icecap, but tonight she could not break his concentration. She sobbed, begged him not to go. Tears stained her tragically beautiful features. But the stubborn bum she loved did not change his plans. Sensing that crying was getting her nowhere, she finally dropped the big one.

"Please don't go, Kenny," she pleaded, "I'm carrying your child."

"Put it down in the corner," he said. With a loud wail she fled the room.

Five minutes later she was back with the portable phone. "It's the plaque guy," she said.

"I don't know any black guys."

"Not black. Plaque."

"The dentist?"

"Here." She shoved the receiver into his hand. He listened.

"Hi. This is Mike Hendricks from Monuments to Failure. Can I confirm your date of birth please?"

"Why?" Omaha was a child of the Sixties — he hated giving out ID.

"We heard you were going to run Ball's. AWA has a standing order for memorial plaques. Thought I'd proofread it before you left."

"I'm not going to die on that river."

"Didn't say you were. But I like to get the jump on the competition. What date did you say you were going?"

Omaha slammed down the phone, but not before he heard the guy ask, "Bronze or plastic?"

When it came time to leave, Chopper refused to go. "I don't believe in the death sentence," he said. "If you must go to a funeral, get Yvonne to drive the hearse."

Omaha could not bring himself to disturb his girlfriend in her delicate condition (she was sleeping). So he found Ted McBride passed out in front of his TV. Drawing his pistol, he quickly talked the older man into driving.

McBride and Omaha drove deep into the Appalachians, in search of the lethal river. In the wee hours before dawn McBride hit a deer. Omaha inspected the damage to the front of his van.

"The buck stopped here," he said.

"Looks like a bad case of headlights in the deer syndrome," McBride replied, throwing the carcass in the back. "What we don't eat we'll take home."

They arrived at the base of Sawbuck Mountain around breakfast time. Omaha couldn't eat from nerves. Instead he hauled his boat to the side of the tracks, and waited for one of those long slow screeching coal and freight trains to round the uphill curve. When the train appeared he tossed his canoe onto a flatcar and scrambled aboard. Ten minutes up the mountain, an hour sweating, he carried down to the boulder at the put in.

The river was roaring. The Boofrock was well under, creating a grim and sticky hole. He would go from dryland launch to survival brace in twenty vertical feet.

Omaha never stretched or warmed up at the put in. Stretching was something done by workout babes in aerobics class. He was a paddler! Real men don't stretch!! He locked himself into his outfitting, checked to see that his 9 millimeter automatic was securely fastened in its shoulder holster, and shoved the bow of his boat over the brink.

Omaha's canoe speared into the hydraulic at the base of the boulder and canted

BORED OF INQUIRY

downstream. With a mighty stroke of his paddle he busted free and pointed his bow at the first horizon line. Over, down, splash. Paddlepaddlepaddle. SMASH, into a sandstone monolith. Bounce off and slide down. Blind drop, hard left, paddlepaddle and . . . down. Boosh. Play off the reaction wave. Punch that hole! Paddlepaddlepaddle. Boof!! Splat, brace, paddlepaddle, bang off a rock with the port bow, and down. Hole! BANG! as the stern slammed down into an unseen underwater rock. Breathe, 20 clear feet, a breather, and over, down, left, right and down. Ride the torrent. Damn this was steep!

Omaha fought his way down the canyon, banging and bracing, taking on water. There was no place to stop, no time to bail, no time to do anything but read, react and survive! He sensed the river was getting steeper. The shore line was a blurry, barely perceived smear of jagged stumps, rock jumbles and rhododendron. The river swept him down and down, until he realized there was really no paddling going on in the conventional sense. Rather, he was trapped in some life size game of pinball where he . . . was . . . the ball!

Somebody hit the flipper button and he

slammed into his hundredth boulder, through a narrow slot, just wide enough, and down, down a V shaped groove where all the water in the world was sweeping him toward something. Toward a gap, toward an even smaller slot. Toward . . . toward . . . the biggest, gnarliest, most evilly placed TREE in the world. G..dam strainer!

It was a tree of death, placed by a demon, a foot in diameter, jagged with broken branches reaching deep into the rapid, and there was no room on either side, no eddy, no last chance, no breaks, no ropes, no magic. Omaha's waterlogged boat roared down the slot with all the kinetic energy of a runaway truck. Omaha did the only thing he could. As the bow of the boat slammed into the branches he leaped high, fighting to get on top of the trunk and live. But the thigh straps caught, and the broken branches snagged him, and a four inch limb slammed him in the jaw. A big branch slid along the side of his hull, rolling the canoe by force, and in less than a second he was capsized under water, fouled in his straps and pinned against the branches, with the weight of the boat and all the force of the current holding him there. And in the raging chaos of pressure and foam he thought absurdly of the android's

line in the movie Blade Runner: "Wake up! Time to die!" And it was.

Trapped underwater in the wreckage of his canoe, pinned and drowning, Omaha did the only thing he could think of. He grabbed his cannon out of its shoulder holster and fired three fast shots upward at the shredded surface of the river — the international distress signal. Then his body forced him to exhale his last breath, and he snorted two endless lines of Ball's Creek.

Clarence Jackson was orbiting Ball's in the back of a borrowed Army medevac chopper, and Omaha's bullets nearly hit him in the ass. Looking down out the open door of the helicopter he spotted the red stern of Omaha's Impulse sticking up out of the rapids.

"Take us down," he screamed at the pilot, and rode the winch hook down into the twisted rhododendron scrub of Ball's Creek Canyon. He landed on the upturned hull of Omaha's boat. Crazy he leaped into the river, heedless of the tree, or the roaring danger of the rapid. He hooked Omaha through the shoulder strap of his PFD, and hauled the lifeless body of the drowned boater up into the hold of the medevac, where McBride (who hated choppers) hauled him in.

Frantically, Jackson worked over Omaha's body. "There's no pulse!" he screamed at McBride. "Paddles!!"

McBride swiftly handed him a 200 centimeter Mitchell with a zero-angle blade, and the short, silver studded black leather number his wife sometimes spanked him with.

"Not those paddles, idiot! The defibrillator!!"

Given the right equipment, Jackson shocked Omaha's prostrate body. "I've got a pulse!" he yelled.

McBride grabbed the medic's wrist and squeezed. Paused. "Yes. You certainly do," he said.

Omaha struggled against his bonds. The pain in his mouth was terrible. The little swarthy man kept asking him the same question over and over again.

"Where is my gold?"

Omaha shook his head. He didn't know. He didn't have the man's gold. He'd never seen him before. He had no idea what the man was talking about. And the man kept hitting him and he couldn't make him stop. And he was going to get beaten to death because he didn't know where the gold was.

Finally, the little man smiled. He had big smile but his eyes were as black and deep as pit latrines at midnight. "Would you like some coke?" the man asked.

Coke would be wonderful, Omaha thought. Anything to numb the pain in his face, his nose, his teeth. He nodded. The man smiled again.

"So sorry I am out of coke. But I have



Continued page 50...

FOLLOW THE



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BORED OF INQUIRY

some seltzer." He brandished a couple of old fashioned siphon bottles like sixguns. He inserted their nozzles into Omaha's nostrils and squeezed the handles. The soda and carbon dioxide gas, trapped so long under such pressure, boiled toward freedom in Omaha's sinuses. Foaming liquid flooded the inside of his face. The trapped gas bulged against his eyeballs and his eardrums and ripped at the exquisitely delicate membranes on the surface of his brain. He thrashed insanely in the iron grip of agony as he drowned... .

Clarence Jackson watched Omaha struggle against the restraints in his hospital bed and nodded.

"He's finally coming around," he said. Then he noticed the pain in his right hand and looked down. Yvonne was squeezing him so hard her nails were digging into his skin.

"Easy, miss," he smiled, "You'll ruin your manicure."

"Please, please, tell me he'll be alright?" she pleaded breathlessly.

"We'll have to see. He was under for a long time. He might have some brain damage."

McBride spoke up from the corner. "Nothing he didn't have to begin with, the damn fool."

Three days later Omaha was sitting up in his hospital bed. He'd written a note to Yvonne to get him some tequila, and she'd smuggled in a pint of Two Fingers. Now he was sipping TNT through a straw. It blended nicely with the Percocet, cutting the pain in his jaw and setting his mind awandering. They told him he was lucky to be alive. He thought about sex and whitewater, both of which he craved, and decided that he was lucky indeed.

He'd gotten about halfway down the gorge before the tree stopped him— further than anyone so far, dead or alive. The bragging rights to the upper half of Upper Ball's were his and his alone. He hadn't solved the mystery of why McCracken's boat exploded. Might have been too much HydroCele on the float bags. Or maybe McCracken died because his balls were just too big. Either way, Omaha didn't care right now. All he wanted to do was heal up his jaw, get laid, and run something easy, maybe go West, do Gore Canyon or the North Fork of the Payette.

For in truth, Omaha thought he was fine. But he was wrong. The long immersion, the awful flooding of his nose and lungs, the dark time without oxygen had done fierce damage to his brain. For days afterwards he'd p...ed out the corpses of gray cells, cells late of the deepest part of his brain, where his lizard lived. And it was there, in the sodden, post-flood landscape, that the thoughts were first conceived: thoughts of a long, steep hike with a chainsaw, and the birth of a confidence that yes, dammit, Ball's Creek would go! He stared at the dull hospital TV and hardened

his resolve. He would break Ball's! If Lucy could do reruns, so could he.

He had a visitor — a male visitor. It was Mike Hendricks, the plaque guy, wearing a grease-stained Marlboro baseball cap and penny loafers. He carried a flat package wrapped in yesterday's Inquirer under his arm — the headline read "Bigfoot Ate My Mother's Only Child." He handed the present to Omaha.

It was an embossed plastic plaque, spray painted gold, bearing Omaha's dates of birth and death and the following prayer:

To all of you brave kayakers
Who came up here to die
May you run good lines forever
In the rapids in the sky.

Somebody had defaced the plaque with a magic marker, crossing out the date of death and the poem and writing:

"He got this far... and lived to die again."

Ball's Creek has yet to be successfully run. It has killed kayakers, catarafters, and a guy named Newt who called himself a "re-bublik-an." They are forecasting three days of rain in the southern Appalachians, so if you think you're good, buy some gas and head south. Be early, and expect a crowd at the put-in.

Hey all you glory seekers
There's a first descent to claim.
The death toll stands at seven
And the river calls your name.

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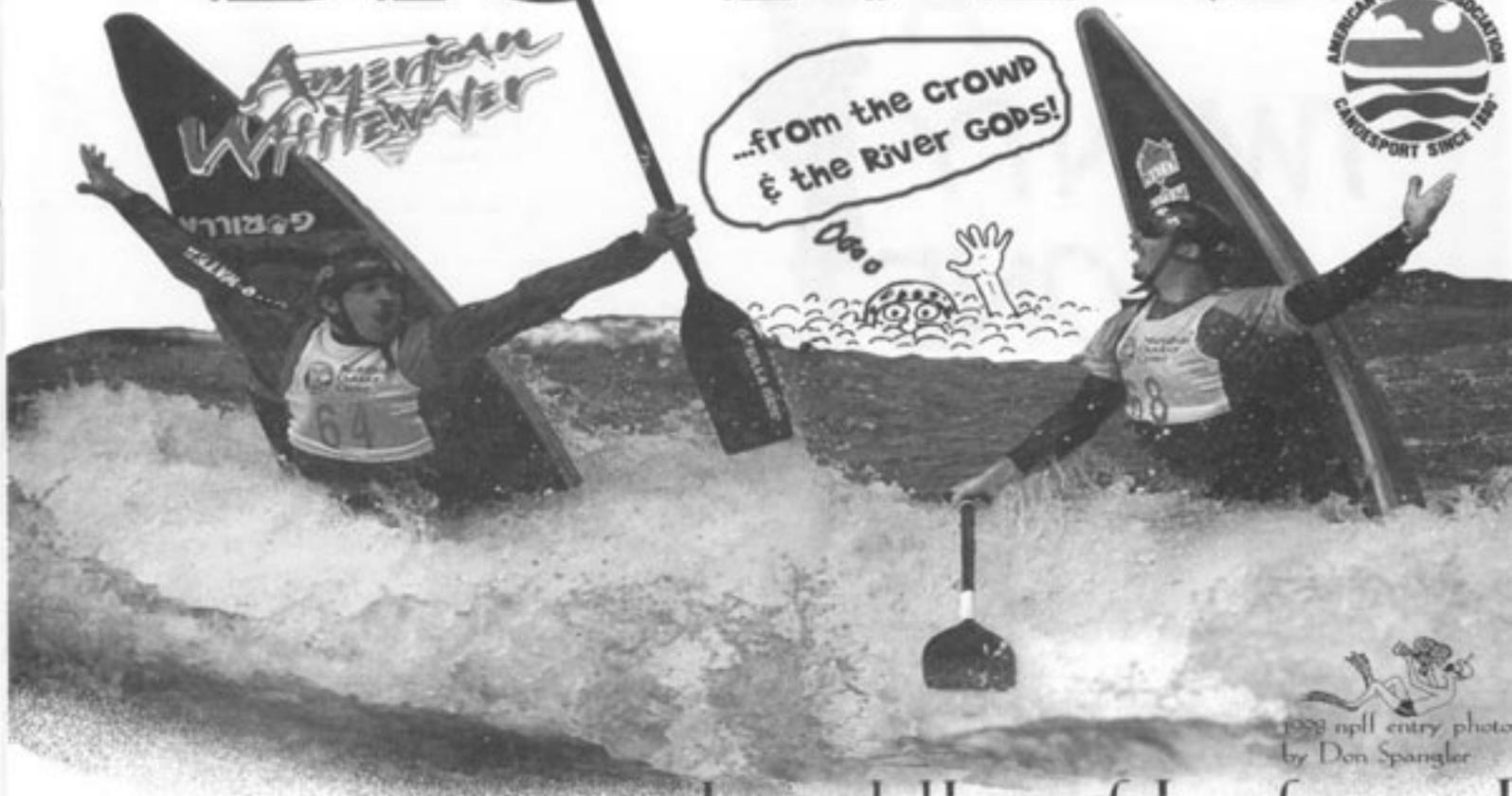




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A TWENTY- ONE FOOT RIP IN A SIXTEEN FOOT RAFT

The Tatshenshini is careful not to
overwhelm too soon...

By A. Scott Douglas

We were a team of close friends with a lot of mutual trust. All of us, in different capacities, had spent our summers leading people in wild places from Patagonia to Alaska. We were all fired up to be among friends and not constantly worried about the comfort and safety of others. We were also boaters. Many of us love nothing better. As professionals we emphasize the rigid protocols of safety, communication and emergency response. But now we were relaxing with our peers. Maybe that's why I was so slow to react when all hell broke loose on day one of a ten day Tatshenshini-Alsek expedition.

Soon below the put-in at Dalton Post, the Tatshenshini constricts into a sharp rock canyon. It was late in the season and the river level was especially low for our heavily rigged gear boats. The translucent green water compounded the difficulties of navigation as many of the fluted rocks slept just below the surface. Those of us in kayaks, blessed with the virtues of a light, maneuverable craft and resilience of polyethylene plastic, hardly noticed. Nor did we give a second thought to the hundreds of pounds of hard and software that we'd heaped in Bean's raft, his being the biggest, a sixteen foot conventional Avon with an ingeniously outfitted frame for maximizing its load. The rig was ideal for its home rivers, those mostly deep water canyons of the Colorado Plateau where you pile on all that you can, set your angle above the rapids, slide down the tongue and punch the features straight on.



A TWENTY-ONE FOOT RIP IN A SIXTEEN FOOT RAFT



This was different water though, the bony beginnings of a massive watershed in the Yukon wilderness. The rapids were not especially scary, but even the riffles required lots of heads-up maneuvering. For the kayakers it was a chance to surf and savor the whitewater, to get in our wahoos early because, word was, and maps and literature confirmed, that the river would later flatten and its scenic grandeur increase exponentially. According to all sources the Tatshenshini would be careful not to overwhelm too soon. The upper canyon was beautiful, swirling schist from the basement of time rising straight up to the boreal forest that covers the northern flanks of the Saint Elias Mountains. But aside from these distinctions, we could've been paddling Idaho.

We were lulled by the enjoyable waves, moderate rating and the relief of finally launching the expedition into a sense of false security. Even the subarctic fall felt more like summer. Bean and Pizza rowed their boats bare-chested beneath their life jackets. We were settling into what we imagined to be a mellow river trip, perhaps the world's most scenic float. The work season was completed, old friends reunited. We had kayaks, rafts, and drag bags full of beer. So, when Bean briefly parked his raft on a hidden rock, spun off and continued downstream, I didn't give it much thought. Then I noticed Elaine was ferrying quickly towards the raft. There was commotion on board and it became clear that Bean was struggling to move his boat. Granted it was heavy, but if Bean couldn't move it, something was wrong. Then he was parked again. Most of us were responding by now. Fortunately Bean was in the lead. All of us in kayaks easily made it to the river right bank beside the distressed crew and buckling raft. The other two rafts landed in the swift water above and below the accident.

We popped our skirts, secured our boats, and jumped into action. The floor was apparently missing from the raft and the river boiled in the oval beneath the rigging. The baffled tube held air but rode hopelessly low without the added buoyancy of a floor. Ten feet of shallow water separated the raft from shore. We formed a fire-line, de-rigged and unloaded most of the gear to the river's edge. Stern and bow lines were extended and manned at the proper angles to free the raft and swing it into a small eddy below the rock. We regrouped and considered our options. We were immobilized; we were committed; there was to be no solution before a camp could be established, dinner prepared and a think tank initiated. We anticipated at least one layover day. The only suitable camp was across the river.

Bean was utterly in command of the situation, it being his boat, him being Bean. "John, you and Chris wanna get a line across the river. Scott, you and Geoff get that side. Hunter gimme a hand over here." We lashed the avulsed floor to the tube on either side to prevent it from flipping any further. The damage consisted of two op-



We were lulled by the enjoyable waves, moderate rating and the relief of finally launching the expedition into a sense of false security

A TWENTY-ONE FOOT RIP

IN A SIXTEEN FOOT RAFT

posing flappers that, put together, looked like a giant capital "P" the length and width of the raft. The splintered remains of a 3/4 inch plywood floor board dangled in pieces between the thwart.

The rest of the rescue operation went smoothly with everyone doing what needed to be done. The kitchen was unloaded, erected, and tarped, garlic peeled and chopped, charcoals lit and given time to whiten. Dutch ovens were layered with tortillas, beans, cheese and chilies, covered and set to bake. The bar was opened and cocktails distributed as individuals broke off to pitch tents and change into dry clothes. We ate and discussed our predicament. Collectively, we had forty years of experience running rivers; but none of us had seen anything like this before.

Repair kits were inventoried and plans took shape. We removed the frame and carried the raft with its gaping floor up the bank to a clearing on the bluff and pitched a huge yellow tarp over it. This was to be our shop, a critical dry space as clouds heavy with rain streamed up the valley from the coast of Alaska. Chris said, "We've gotta have a complete plan before starting." The repair, if it was pos-



up the main tear. We cut and made placements for the patch material, just enough to secure the top and bottom.

There would be no room for error. The coordination between those holding the floor in place, those mixing glue and catalyst, and those drying and scuffing up the patches and floor, spreading glue and deciding the precise moment to lay the patch, would have to be perfect.

Everyone had a niche. Pizza was glue technician, a job he relished. He carefully poured off portions of the glue and measured the catalyst by the ribbing on the can as he stirred the contents with a stick. He knelt beside the work bench, a remnant of the floor he'd leveled on a pile of rocks. When the concoction was right, he handed it to the patchers with the reverence of a shaman or some mad chemist offering potion to a group of disbelievers.

Not that any of us doubted him. The group attitude never faltered, but it was hard in the beginning stages to conceive of a fully buoyant and functional raft by day's end.

Chris was resident bush mechanic and idea man, a backcountry jack of all trades and the obvious choice for senior counsel. This was unspoken. Bean has said it for years:

"Chris is a handy guy to have around." The man could wire a Volkswagen together with duct tape and bailing twine and drive it to Tierra del Fuego.

Pete was elder statesman, Chris's old man and not one to argue with. Pete's an observer, always keen; and when he spoke we listened. He was omnipresent on the sidelines until he identified some lack in the process. Then he'd simply and quietly pick up our slack. Pete had never patched a raft before (though he'd taken on many comparable tasks), so his innovations were fresh, unclouded by dogma. As the rest of us were setting up to patch, Pete began cleaning and drying the critical areas, using a barrel pump to blow air and rolling warm water bottles along the rips.

Bean was the prop of this disheveled rugby team, the backbone of the serum, propelling his teammates forward in the face of heavy odds. but he was more than that, not just some grunt who never

gives up, but a force of one with the rare ability to unite people, the kind of man I always feel a little safer to be around.

Matt did everything no one else wanted to. He stood bent over in awkward positions for long periods of time just holding something in place, never shifting or tiring of the job.



sible with our limited resources, required vision. Like a ball of clay to a potter, we had to know what we were shooting for. The beginner may start right out centering his clay on the wheel with some vague notion of a bowl and end up with an ash tray, but he would inevitably waste materials. And an ash tray would not float us the remaining hundred and twenty miles to Dry Bay in the Gulf of Alaska.

Our patch material was limited, our glue supply even more questionable. We were going to have to sew up the long axis of the tear. We were going to need most of our duct tape, all of our dental floss and both speedy stitchers. A tarp would have to be cut up and quadrupled to reinforce the stitching. That much we knew when we retired to our quarters to sleep. Rain pattered on my tent fly throughout the night.

I thought I was up early the next morning, a cloudy dawn that cast gray light inside my tent. I walked the game trail to the kitchen past the shop and discovered the core members already discussing the repair over steaming mugs of coffee. We agreed that we'd begin with the patchwork, bringing the ends together, and then address the awesome task of sewing

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A TWENTY-ONE FOOT RIP
IN A SIXTEEN FOOT RAFT



*It's what it takes
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raised spear for
three days in the
arctic winter be-
side a hole in the
sea ice, waiting
for a seal to come
up and breathe.*

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A TWENTY-ONE FOOT RIP IN A SIXTEEN FOOT RAFT



He lay beneath the overturned raft on a jumble of rocks and wet moss to hold counter-pressure for the patches. He remained there silently performing this crucial task for so long, I forgot he was there until I noticed his long shins and sneakers poking out from under the tube. Bean told Matt he possessed koviashoktuk, the Inupiat word for eternal patience. It's what it takes to crouch with raised spear for three days in the arctic winter beside a hole in the sea ice, waiting for a seal to come up and breathe.

Hunter was all over everything. Never a dumb suggestion or hesitant explanation of the inner-workings of a speedy stitcher or the properties of toluene. He's big and fast and continued to sew with amazing dexterity, even after knocking back a dozen cans of beer. At once reckless and composed, Hunter kept the rest of us laughing just enough to prevent an epidemic of spontaneous combustion in the evening hours when, the thread broke for the fiftieth time.

Geoff was in on the patches or standing back with Pete commenting on the nature of the operation. His hands were steady and he has an eye for detail and ethic of clean work that spilled over to the rest of us. I watched him hold the tear together ahead of a lengthy patch job. He was bent evenly over the task not moving a muscle. The concentration in his face was the concentration of an athlete, not intense, but relaxed. If I'd had his job I would have surely felt some knot forming between my shoulder blades and adjusted my posture constantly; but Geoff could have held his position all day.

Everyone lent support in some fashion. Dominic had a bum ankle and had to stay off it. Sam prepared delicacies in the kitchen and delivered cocktails all afternoon. Elaine, an unrelenting strength on the river, would arrive on the scene and examine our progress with such genuine enthusiasm

that even in the depths of the sew job we were encouraged to persevere. JB strolled the perimeter of the shop and performed elaborate comedies, all body theatrics that never failed to draw laughs. He satirized and dramatized the event, an instrumental role. I've never known anyone who can do so little and remain such an essential cog in the overall function of a team.

We split into two groups after laying a couple patches and working out the routine. One group focused on the bow, one on the stern. The morning passed outside our world of diffuse yellow tarp light, the river rushing by and windows of sunshine moving across the valley. Occasionally, someone would break away and dart for his water bottle or coffee mug, pound the fluid and dart back. We were machines that required some servicing to continue performing at peak. Pete was in the habit of approaching strained individuals and asking them if they required servicing of any kind. Provided the answers were not too outrageous, Pete or someone close by would always oblige.

Hunter, Bean and I laid a critical patch and got a good bond. Bean stood up from his crouch, beaming the kind of relief that accompanies victory in the playoffs, the chance earned to continue to the next more challenging game. "intensely grippy!" he exclaimed. "This is class five patchwork. The line wasn't pretty but we're in the eddy at the bottom."



I've never known anyone who can do so little and remain such an essential cog in the overall function of a team.

A TWENTY-ONE FOOT RIP IN A SIXTEEN FOOT RAFT

I took regular breaks from the patching to sit on a nearby rock with my notebook. Pete was also writing notes, his mind clearly perked by this display of teamwork by his kid's generation. He said, "if we could focus this kind of energy on non-crisis situations, we'd have a force." We watched together the big push before lunch. Patch communication went like this...

"Glue?"

"Ya."

"Rag?"

"Ya."

"Pliers?"

"Got'em."

"Duct tape? C'mon where's the duct tape?"

We could've been sitting in a med school observatory, Pete and I, scribbling notes and watching closely the movements and facial expressions of a team of surgeons. The primary difference was in the eight hands coming together on a patch, gripping different instruments and flexed in different positions. Instead of being gloved and soft underneath from antibacterial soap and lathering, they were scarred, cut and creased with the dirt of lives lived outside the living



room walls, strong hands that had bled many times without being noticed.

To say we broke for lunch is not quite right. We each got up from our work in turn and devoured a bowl full of pasta salad while our minds remained engaged in the repair. Chris and Hunter were finishing the final patch. I was content to kick back and peel the dried glue from my fingers; but Bean was

antsy to get sewing. "I know what the deal is," said Chris. "It's the glue. Bean's experiencing withdrawal."

Bean and I took measurements and cut two pieces from a blue tarp, each four times the width of the band aid we planned to sew into the raft floor. Once cut, we quadrupled and taped each one into eight foot by three inch strips. We placed these over the rip on the inside of the floor and secured them with cross pieces of duct tape. We propped the raft on its side and went around to the boat's bottom where we drew straight lines in black marker along each side of the rip to guide the speedy-stitchers. This was the prep work for the ensuing task, a monstrous effort of two-man teamwork with two teams going nonstop for five and a half hours.

Hunter and Chris stitched up one half, Bean and I the



Speedy stitching is performed with an awl fit with a curved needle and fed by its own bobbin.



The commands I received from Bean were: "Give her... Take. Give her... Take. Tension."

other. Speedy stitching is performed with an awl fit with a curved needle and fed by its own bobbin. It requires tending on both sides of the material being sewn, in this case a raft floor; so the team members worked on opposing sides of the boat with no visible contact. Chris and I worked on the boat bottom side, Hunter and Bean in the bilge. Chris stood to my left sending loops through to Hunter who shuttled the running end of the waxed thread through the loops and pulled tension to form the stitches. I had Chris's job and Bean worked opposite me. Our first ten stitches took half an hour to complete before a system was worked out that enabled faster progress. The commands I received from Bean were: "Give her... Take. Give her... Take. Tension." After a dozen or so stitches, our lines straightened out and communication was abbreviated to a simple "Take", and so on until verbal commands were replaced by a subtle push-pull. It seemed a fine metaphor for relationships, the give and take fading to take and replaced ultimately by mute tension.

When the bobbins were depleted of their specially designed thread, we wound them up with dental floss. We reamed wax buildup from the mechanisms of our tools with fish hooks and awl tips, burned floss ends and crimped the melted wax to harden. We trimmed the hackles from salmon flies and cut the hooks off at the bends to employ the shanks as shuttles for the running ends of the floss. It was work in the micro, fingertip dexterity and communication in a language that evolved over the course of the afternoon. And it was a salvage operation that grew and took shape with every new stitch in the line. Just as one's sanity may be strained when communication fails in a relationship, with perseverance through a rough stretch, the bond becomes a little stronger.

At one point about a thousand stitches into the job, I looked over to see Chris red in the face, his temporal arteries visibly pulsing through the side of his head. He commenced a high-pitched laugh and loudly declared

continued 



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that he was experiencing a tension pneumothorax. The thread had frayed to breaking point; the bobbin needed re-spooling, shuttle misplaced, or some combination thereof that would require an involved sequence of eye-hand coordination, implement modification and teamwork to rectify.

It got so we could only laugh at the near-sighted nature of the operation. Hunter mim-

icked little Chinese women in sweatshops. Pete and Sam serviced us regularly with margaritas, and puffed tobacco smoke to keep down the white socks that mutilated our hands and faces. Laughs turned to cackles; and by some miracle of determination, one thousand five hundred and some stitches and fifty-three man hours later, we patched together and sewed that ragged floor from end to end.

The next morning we carefully taped the seam on the bottom of the raft and launched the reincarnation of an old

Frankenraft, however, did float some fifteen river miles that day without leaking a drop.



A TWENTY-ONE FOOT RIP IN A SIXTEEN FOOT RAFT

Avon gear boat. JB christened her "Frankenraft" with an indelible marker on the starboard side of the bow. Bean assessed the water-tightness of our work as Frankenraft tossed unrigged in an eddy. We all agreed that the new patches and stitching were now the strongest parts of the boat. I too nodded my head; but I think I speak for us all when I say that this was an essential optimism. We had a long way to go and had worked too hard for doubts.

Frankenraft, however, did float some fifteen river miles that day without leaking a drop. And the next day, and the one after that, she continued to ride high on the swelling waves of the Tatshenshini, and later the Alsek below that tremendous confluence. As the river widened and her channels grew deep, as the volume doubled and tripled and leapt by tens of thousands of cubic feet per second, we came to trust the buoyancy of Frankenraft. We came to believe that she would deliver us to the sea, carried by a river that breached the wildest range of coastal mountains on Earth.

"It's a lot to measure yourself by," said JB, gazing at the profusion of glaciers hanging from the escarpments of the Alsek Range. We were swallowed up in fog as we crossed through the mountains from the Yukon interior to the temperate rainforest of coastal Alaska. We watched yearling brown bears slip from the steep rocks on shore and plunge into the icy Alsek. We heard them groan as they fell, wild bears not at all pleased by the intrusion of our kayaks and rafts. We slept in an amphitheater of calving glaciers and paddled among ice bergs tinged blue in the sunlight. We were passed by V formations of Sandhill Cranes and Trumpeter Swans, and we drank the sweet water of the Saint Elias, sealed in ice since before men burned diesel fuel, made pulp from trees, and detonated nuclear bombs in the desert. Indeed, all of our boats carried us to the salt air and sprawling expanse of the Pacific Ocean; and as we paddled the last strokes before pulling up at the Dry Bay air strip, as cranes chortled and gained sustenance for their south-

ward flight from the rich nutrients of the delta, I looked back to see Frankenraft afloat on the silver water with two figures profiled against a backdrop of blue-gray clouds. And I felt... very lucky.

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Safety

Instructor's Warning:



Foot Entrapment and Swim Drills

By Charlie Walbridge

This past summer on July 24th, Adam Dzialo, a 12-year-old boy, caught his foot during a whitewater swim drill in a Class I rapid on the Fife Brook section of the Deerfield River near Charlemont, Massachusetts. He was under water between 20 and 30 minutes. Despite the cold water of the Deerfield and the excellent medical care he revived afterwards, he very nearly drowned. The last time I spoke with his father he was still very seriously injured.

I was asked to investigate the accident for Greenfield Community College, who operated the youth camp that Adam was attending. The rapid looked straightforward and harmless, but there was a 6" diameter void between two rocks that was completely hidden even at pre-release flows. This is where Adam apparently tried to stand up and caught his leg. Had he touched bottom 6" to either side he would have been fine. Rescue was effected by a team of guides from Crab Apple Whitewater who happened to be on the scene. Adam was defibrillated on reaching shore and transferred to a helicopter soon after.

Since whitewater swim drills are becoming more common, those who use this type of exercise must be aware of the risks. In whitewater, your natural reaction is often wrong. Adam was clearly warned not to stand up, but discussions with those running youth programs involving kayaking and my own experience as a professional river guide and canoe instructor suggests that a single warning may not be enough. At a counseling session for the other boys in the group, guides reported that they were unfamiliar with the term: foot entrapment. This suggests that the briefing should have been more thorough.

Standing up in the current is an instinctive reaction to fear when swimming. In easier rapids the chance of a foot entrapment by persons standing up is not likely, but in this case it happened. A warning not to stand up can be repeated several times, and in several different ways. First, give the warning. Second, explain the foot entrapment mechanism. Third, demonstrate proper swimming style. Instructors should always

swim a rapid before their class tries it, and it's a good idea to let the students watch this. The caution can be repeated before the group breaks up, or by a coach stationed at the top of the rapid to see that the students are spaced properly.

Students must always have the freedom to decide whether or not to they will participate. If they are nervous they should be encouraged to watch other students before deciding. I have, on occasion, swam down with a student, giving advice and encourage-

ment. If someone does not wish to go down, they should not be pressured to do so. Adam was not pressured, but this idea deserves repeating.

Let's think of Adam Dzialo as we teach this important skill in the coming year.

Charlie Walbridge
Safety Committee, AWA
Training Committee, ACA

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We are sponsoring a study to give us a factual basis for determining the accident

rate in whitewater paddling. This will allow us to determine how it compares to other sports, jobs, and activities in the U.S.

The intern/researcher will contact managers of the U.S. rivers that keep track of the actual number of participants over the past decade. They will use the AW data base to determine the actual number of fatalities on each river. Using this we hope to calculate an accurate accident rate. This might be expressed as a "Fatalities per user days" number. Efforts will be made to separate commercial guided rafting from private canoeing, kayaking, and rafting activities. Ideally, we would like to get a number for each.

The intern/researcher will also establish ways to compare the risks of whitewater paddling to sports like bicycling, skiing, rock climbing, sailing, skydiving, hang gliding and high school football, activities like mining, logging, construction, military basic training, advanced military training, and

travel by airplane or automobile.

The successful candidate is a student studying outdoor recreation or a related field and has actual experience as a whitewater paddler. A basic knowledge of statistics and good computer skills is a plus. The intern/researcher will work directly with members of the Safety Committee of American Whitewater and the organization's executive director. They will serve as coaches and resources throughout.

The successful candidate will have expenses paid and receive a modest stipend depending on experience. Inasmuch as nothing like this has been done before, we would expect a publishable paper to come out of this effort. The timetable for completion of this project is negotiable.

For additional information contact Charlie Walbridge at 304-379-9002 or the AW executive office at 301-589-9453.

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by Kent Ford

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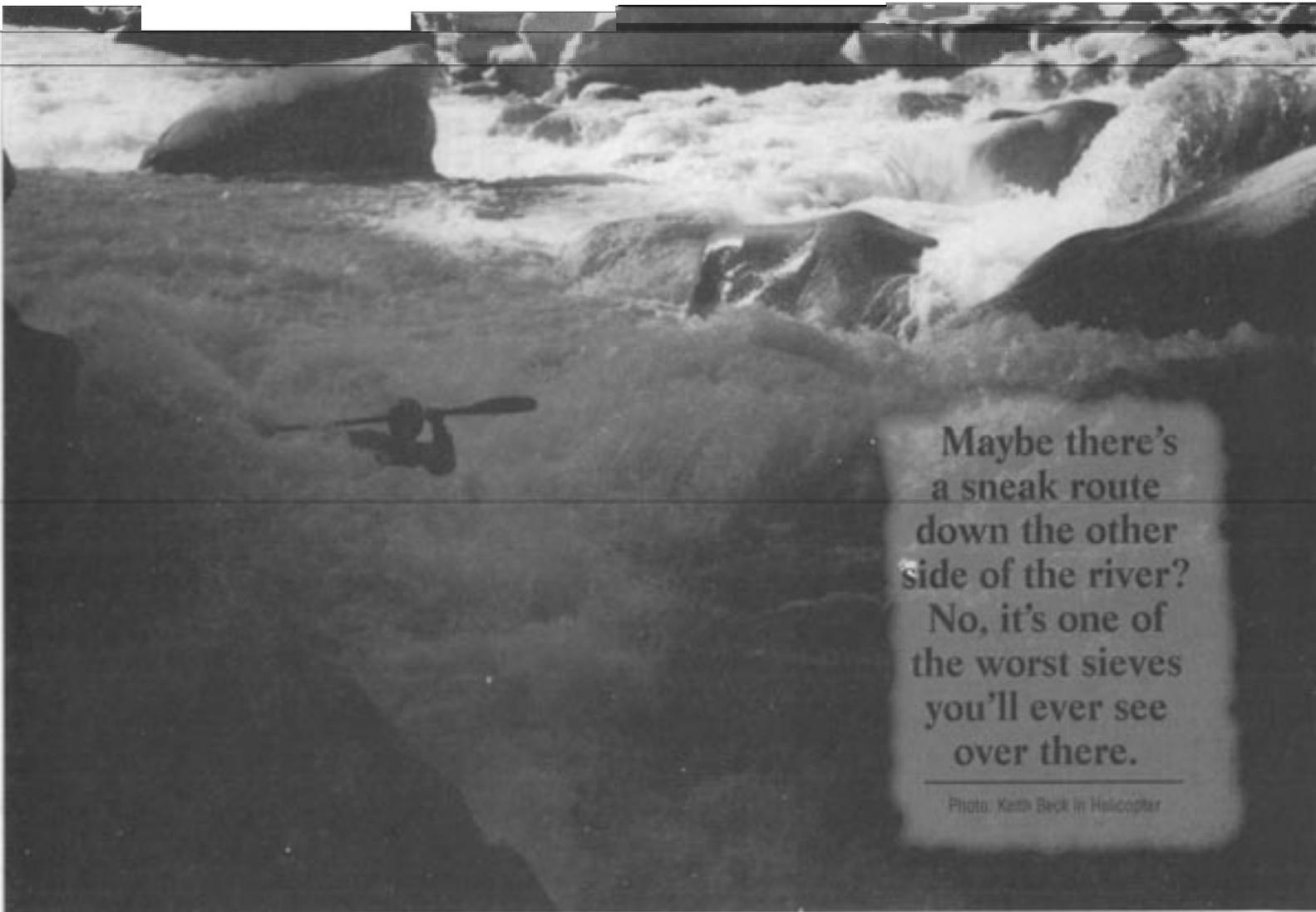
You've Gotta Run It

Story by Charles Foster

Title by Keith Beck

The rapid is horrifying.

Water cascades over a huge ledge, roils through a violent hole, then slams into a polished granite wall. And that's just the start. Below is more turbulence, a second hole, then slower moving water. This slack water flows under an enormous undercut. Keith Beck gazes up at the sheer cliff, a precipice that bars any hopes of portaging the rapid. "Look at those yellow flowers. Aren't they beautiful?"



Maybe there's a sneak route down the other side of the river? No, it's one of the worst sieves you'll ever see over there.

Photo: Keith Beck in Helicopter



"Just so you know, there's one Class V that you can't portage."

—River, Charles Foster of Helicopter

We're on our third and last day of a mind-altering run down Northern California's Middle Fork Feather River. Between us and the takeout lie several, solid Class V rapids, but all of them can be portaged if we choose. All but this one, Helicopter.

Keith, a hardened veteran of several Feather runs, had warned us about the rapid long before we started the trip. "Just so you know, there's one Class V that you can't portage. It's called Helicopter, because, when you see it, you'll wish you had a helicopter. You've gotta run it."

Nothing more was said about Helicopter as Rick Norman, Keith Dinger, Tom Gelder, Keith Beck and I prepared for the trip. Secretly, I hoped Keith was just pulling our legs.

Even on the river, the subject didn't come up. We were too busy absorbing the stunning scenery and paddling the exquisite whitewater to worry much about a particular rapid miles downstream. Or maybe we just didn't want to think about it.

The campfire flickered, driving off the evening chill and darkness. It was our second evening on the Middle Fork and the time had come to talk about Helicopter. Keith sipped some brandy. "Every time I get to Helicopter, it's always the same. You look at it, and say,

'No way am I running that.' So you start looking for a portage route. First you look at the river left, the side you're scouting from. It's a vertical granite cliff, maybe a thousand feet high. So you look at river right. Its cliffed-out too. Maybe there's a sneak route down the other side of the river? No, it's one of the worst sieves you'll ever see over there. So you go back to looking at the rapid."

We were all quiet. What could we say? Someone threw more wood into the fire. The night seemed to have grown cooler.

Keith wrapped up his story on a cheerful note. "On my last trip, Glen Troness broke a rib upstream of Helicopter. He hiked cross-country for a day and a half to avoid running the rapid in his condition. It's that bad."

I'm forced to admit to myself there really is a Helicopter Rapid. But surely it can't be *that* bad.

We stand on a smooth granite walkway, staring silently at the big, unavoidable rapid. We're shaded by the high cliff wall, as is most of Helicopter. Salvation, in the form of a big, sunlit pool, lies a hundred feet away.

My hopes that Keith had been exaggerating are dashed; he'd described Helicopter perfectly. I feel sick to my stomach. In eight years of boating I've never run anything that looked this bad. Even worse, I'm injured. Earlier in the day I flipped in a difficult rapid

and badly bruised my ribs before rolling up. I've lost much of the strength on my right side as a result.

Keith breaks the silence. "As you approach that first ledge, paddle hard to your right. You can use that midstream haystack to line up the move. This should help you stay upright through that first hole." Keith has been reading and running the Feather's rapids with impeccable accuracy for three days, and we hung onto his every word like swimmers clutching a throw rope.

"Keep paddling hard to the right, otherwise you'll wipe out in that curler."

Most of the current is crashing into the wall obliquely, creating a big, curling wave that spirals down into Helicopter's second major ledge.

"What if you hit the wall?" someone asks.

"I've seen lots of people roll in that wave. It tends to keep you off the wall. Everyone washes through the bottom of the rapid just fine."

Considering the violence of that final section I know there is no way I want to be upside-down in there. At the same time I don't see how I'll remain upright.

"Just make sure you roll up, you don't want to float into that undercut." The undercut looks terrible. Over the centuries the river had cut a notch at least ten feet deep



into the canyon wall. Most of the current flows sluggishly into this notch, not emerging for twenty or thirty feet.

"I'm ready to go. Who's coming with me?" asks Keith. Eager to end the torment, Keith Dinger and I volunteer. On the short walk back to our boats Keith Beck admires the flowers clinging to the canyon walls. In one of those moments of heightened reality that only occurs in the most exceptional circumstances, I can see every petal, every leaf, of every flower with crystal clarity. They are indeed beautiful.

We slide into our boats, checking, then double checking drain plugs, spray skirts, helmet straps. "Give me a minute or so before you take off," Keith says. He peels out and disappears from view. I hear whoops of joy from Tom and Rick. Keith has made it!

My turn. I brace my feet against the boat's bulkhead, locking my legs solidly in place. A few deep breaths to quell the sick feelings of uncertainty. Damn my ribs hurl. Focus! Peeling out, into the current, lining up for the first drop. Every stroke aimed at getting the boat lined up on that midstream rock. Airborne! As I free-fall, in a moment of hyperacuity, I hear Tom Gelder. "Shit, I'm out of film!"

The photo is the least of my worries. I hit the rapid's second tier with enough angle and speed to clear the hole and easily pass upstream of the mid-river boulder, several feet from the curling wave.

A big eddy sets me up for an easy exit to the pool, far from the undercut. I'm screaming with relief, and the guys on the ledge are hooting as I enter the sunlit pool. Bubbles rise through the emerald green water, hiss-

ing as they break the surface. The sun is shining on me, driving off the chill. Life doesn't get much better.

It's several minutes before I remember my ribs; something magically let me switch off the pain. They'll bother me for a couple weeks but I never felt them in Helicopter.

The rest of the team makes it through with varying degrees of success. Keith Dinger brushes the curler, braces and finishes perfectly. Rick Norman wanders a little too far left, is flipped by the big curling wave, but rolls up quickly and stays out of trouble. Tom Gelder has the most baffling descent. He punches the first hole, and survives the curler. The final hole flips him, though. He takes forever to right himself, almost washing into the undercut. Later Tom says he capsized because he was so surprised he'd stayed upright so long!

It was a happy group of paddlers that floated down the canyon that afternoon. We could deal with the remaining Class Vs as we saw fit. Helicopter was behind us.

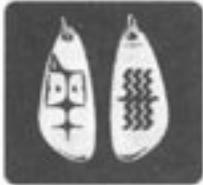
A couple years have passed. I've paddled a lot of miles on a lot of rivers since then. But I'll never forget Helicopter. You've gotta run it.

01997, Charles Foster

Gifts for River Runners

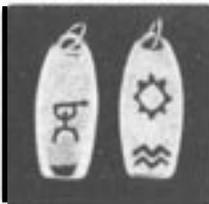
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Kayaking Sucks

(inspiration by
Sandow Birk,
surfing magazine)

When does kayaking fall apart?

When does this rush seeking
lifestyle all crumble?

When it's dry. This is when it all
becomes brittle.

Then you realize how dumb kayaking is. When it's dry you see kayakers playing tiny waves and pour overs. You see a lone squirt boater cart wheeling in a lake alongside families and kids on floaties. When your summer plans include driving hours for water.

This is the point at which you realize how lame the kayaking lifestyle is. You realize how kayaking is not any more glamorous than curling.

You see how boring life is without water. In the dry season you can't help but realize how dead Fayetteville is. Really, biscuits more than twice a day? It might as well be Kansas or Iowa; the same amount of water and just as few women.

The realization of having nothing to do enters your mind. Yard work, fix gear, outfit boats, fraternize with non-paddlers, watch paddling flicks, JONES. What's the Forks like without rafters, booze, hot tub and

moose. Exactly, Moose. It's like a ghost town. I'd much rather be in the city where there are People, not just hicks and Moose.

When it's dry, kayaking sucks and kayakers are just losers, slackers and workers, just like everyone else doing the daily grind.

Through the years the "brotherhood" of kayakers has been touted, but come winter, where are Eric, Ken, Kathy or Tim? Living their otherwise dreary pathetic lives in some dreary existence of work.

When it's winter, a simple thaw excites you, but then you realize it's still too low to paddle. Focus on other pursuits to stifle off the paddling bug. Girlfriends are happy, unless they paddle. Fat change, though. Think what you want, this whole lifestyle of "oneness" with Mother Nature can't bring you rain. Look, kayaking is just as bad as golf or heroin, some wise to spend your money on.

Boats are hung. Face it, kayaking sucks! It's a waste of time, money and effort. Forget the exercise factor, it's not expanding your mind or getting you chicks.

Kayaking is for dorks.

Come winter you'd rather be in the city in bars, shops, malls, skiing, all to take your mind off the obvious. You drown your sorrow in concerts, plays and drinking.

Until it rains.

Until creeks and rivers swell and
houses flood.

Until you're calling in sick with the
flu to paddle.

Your job thinks you're Real Sick.

Boofing rocks, scouting killer
drops, surfing big brown waves,
tossing endos in frothy holes,
avoiding strainers and dead sheep.
Then kayaking is the best thing in
the whole entire world.

Then everything else doesn't mat-
ter, and neither does driving.

Then I wouldn't trade it for any-
thing. Good water, friends and fun!

*Professional sh.. talker, novice
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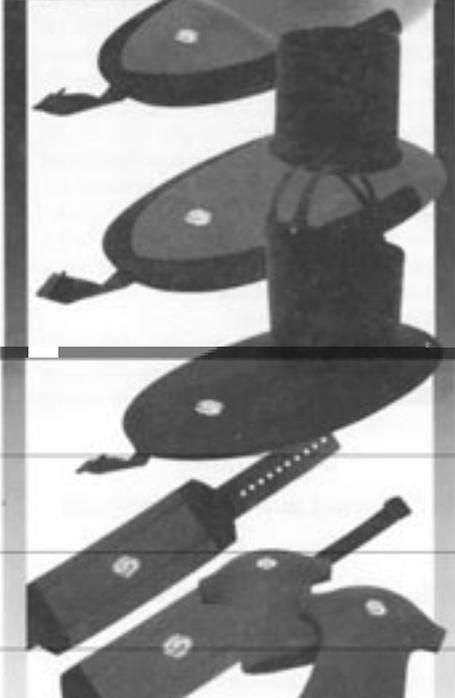
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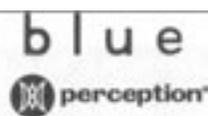
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Briefs

South Yuba Gathering Slated May 1998

By Dave Good

The South Yuba is a California classic. A quick easy shuttle puts you on one of the most accessible high quality class V runs in Northern California. But with predictable flows, scheduling an event on the South Yuba is always a challenge. In 1997 the river level dropped to an unrunnable level just days before the event. In early May of 1998 rain pushed flows over our cutoff the day before the class V Chuck's Race, named in memory of Chuck Kern, who loved this canyon. Nevertheless, a wild time was had by all, as the spirit of Chuck was felt in the walls of the Yuba canyon.

The FIR was held on Initiation Rapid. The water was high and the holes were meaty. The run started on a nice wave train where you could spin and get vertical. The top five finishers were Clay Wright, Lars Holbek, Brad Brewer, Robert Hogg and Norwood Scott.

The relay consisted of an 8 mile mountain bike ride with an awesome single track

descent through forested switchbacks to the river, where a four mile class IV paddle begins. The competition in the men's solo class was intense. Davidson Collins beat Lee Wilhelm by less than a minute, although Lee is at least 10 years older and had a much shorter boat. Third placement to Lars Holbek, followed by Dieter King and Tom Waclo. Evans Phelps and Hiedi Biber who tied for first led the solo women. The fastest coed team was Greg Weber on the bike and Wanda Shiotsuka on the river. The men's team event saw Jason Mogschler sizzling the single track, so Jeff Martinez could paddle without looking over his shoulder into first place. Natalie Kanowski set Mela Breen in position to capture the top women's team honors.

Look for the 1999 South Yuba Gathering next April 24 and 25, just a week after the Kern River Festival. It will include Chuck's Race and The Pedal/ Paddle Relay.

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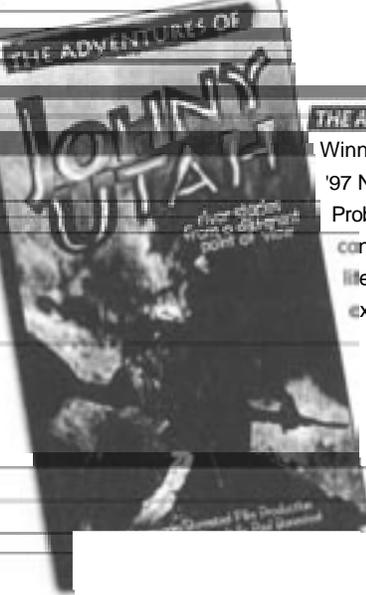


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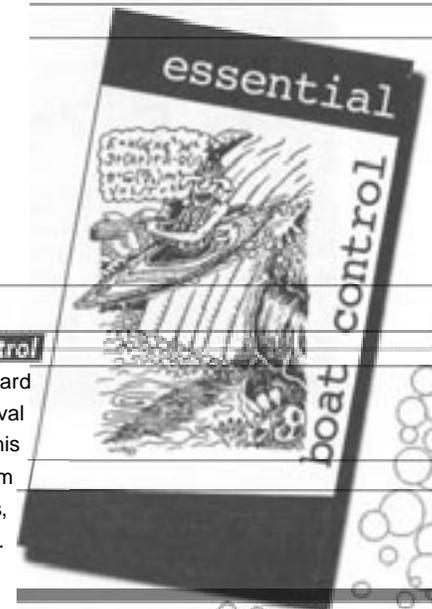
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Olympic Whitewater Course to Host **20th Ocoee Double Header** *April 3 & 4*

The rapids of the Olympic Whitewater Course will thunder yet again for the 20th Annual Ocoee Double Header, on Saturday, April 3 and Sunday, April 4, 1999, at the Ocoee Whitewater Center in Ducktown, Tennessee. Presented by the Atlanta Whitewater Club (AWC) and the Atlanta Center for Excellence (ACE), the Ocoee Double Header attracts national-level whitewater athletes who compete in this two-day series of slalom (includes downstream and upstream gates) and wildwater (downriver sprint) racing events.

Whitewater racing has been taking place on the Ocoee River since 1977. According to AWC President and Volunteer Race Director Steve Vitale, "The Ocoee Double Header is our club's largest volunteer effort and one of the best opportunities our members have to contribute to the progression of the sport. The Ocoee Whitewater Center is truly a remarkable resource for the Southeastern U.S." Coordinated by the AWC, the race will attract over 150 top level racers from across the United States, including 1992 and 1996 Olympians. For many of these athletes, the Double Header serves as an important "warm-up event" for the National U.S. Whitewater Slalom Team and Wildwater Team Trials held annually in May.

Olympian Scott Shipley of Atlanta is always impressed with this event. According to Shipley, "Every year the Ocoee Double Header stands as the one event that sets the pace for all of us that head into U.S. Team Trials with hopes of garnering a spot for the World Cup Series. Last year's event was especially exciting given



the use of the 1996 Olympic Course and the unbelievably stiff competition. It just goes to demonstrate what an attraction and training tool the Olympic Course has become to our ongoing efforts to win Olympic gold in the upcoming Quadrennium."

The two-day event will consist of one race each day on different slalom courses. Twenty-five downstream and upstream slalom gates will be placed by veteran course designer and Olympic Coach Mike Larimer of Kennesaw, Georgia. According to Coach Larimer, preparing this year's course provides an opportunity for him to assess his own skills as a coach. "In designing the course, I will try to set a series of problems which the athlete will be required to solve by using the techniques he or she has learned. The athletes best able to solve the technical, physiological and psychological problems associated with the slalom course will have the best results. The course will help me to evaluate not only the problem-solving abilities of the athletes but my own effectiveness as a coach."

Organizers expect a number of Olympians to participate, including Adam Clawson, Eric Giddens, Lecky Haller, Cathy Hearn, David Hearn, Horace Holden, Joe Jacobi, and

Scott Shipley, as well as veteran members of the U.S. Slalom and Wildwater Teams, such as Rebecca Bennett, Adam Boyd, David Hepp, Steve Isenberg, Barry Kennon, Matt Taylor, Steve Thomas and Dave Wallace. (To register for the race, call Registrar Cathy Rowan at 706-546-1968.)

Doris Babcock, Executive Director and Board Chair of ACE, sees the Ocoee Double Header as a great "point of entry" for individuals and families interested in whitewater boating on both the competitive and recreational levels. "The Ocoee Double Header not only brings elite level athletes back to the site of the 1996 Olympic competition, but also the public to get a sense for the tremendous excitement of whitewater slalom and wildwater racing."

As multi-year volunteer Race Director Beth Wilson explains, the 1999 Ocoee Double Header promises to be "internationally prominent" as well. "This year, in collaboration with the American Canoe Association, the 1999 Double Header will proudly feature two Pan-American Wildwater Races during the weekend. An international field of competitors will include wildwater athletes from South, Central and North America in two

days of races sanctioned by the International Canoe Federation. We are proud to host an international field of athletes at the site of the 1996 international Olympic competition."

The Double Header represents the collaborative efforts of a number of agencies, which have offered assistance to the AWC in presenting this event. The event's planning committee gratefully acknowledges the participation and assistance of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Park Bureau, and the Polk County Chamber of Commerce.

Atlanta Whitewater Club

The Atlanta Whitewater Club (AWC) was founded by a dedicated group of Atlanta's kayakers and canoers to provide educational services and events that increase the enjoyment, safety and skills of paddlers at every level of the sport. Proceeds from the Ocoee Double Header enable the club to continue efforts to conserve and protect the region's rivers through education, advocacy and hands-on-clean-up projects. For more information on the Atlanta Whitewater Club, call Dawn Findley at 404-296-1820.

The Atlanta Center for Excellence

Recognized as an official training "center of excellence" by the United States Canoe and Kayak Team, the Atlanta Center for Excellence (ACE) was established a decade ago through the efforts of the Atlanta Whitewater Club, and the two organizations have worked together to present the Ocoee Double Header ever since. ACE exists to introduce, promote and advance whitewater slalom racing in the metropolitan Atlanta area for paddlers of all ages; its ultimate objective is to develop local paddlers into national team caliber athletes. More important, however, is ACE's commitment to the sport of whitewater racing as an opportunity for individuals to pursue personal excellence in a directed, focused environment.

In early 1999, ACE will introduce "Project 2004," an exciting new initiative to expand the sport of whitewater slalom at every level. First conceived in January, 1998, Project 2004 encompasses participants from ACE's three primary development groups including elite national team athletes, junior and development athletes, and participants in ACE's "junior outreach programs. As ACE Board Chair Doris Babcock describes it, the Project 2004 program "will provide a way for interested young people to "experiment" with the sport. In addition, it will also enable ACE to identify athletes with true potential and support those athletes in their individual quests for the 2000 and 2004 Olympics." For more information about the Atlanta Center of Excellence, call Doris Babcock at 770-937-5073.



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American Whitewater

74

January/ February 1999

Put Your Paddling Images To Work For the Rivers : Enter the 1999 NPFF

For the 16th year the National Paddling Film Festival is seeking help from you, the imaginative boater and artist, to continue to exist. The beauty, entertainment, excitement, information, compassion, humor and competition that has made the NPFF a unique and fun event would not be possible without your continued support.

By entering your amateur or professional images in the 1999 NPFF competition on February 26,27,1999 you are automatically contributing to paddlesports. All profits from the NPFF go to American Whitewater, American Canoe Association, and other waterway conservation efforts across the country. Besides helping the rivers, lakes, oceans and streams we all paddle you can also help yourself to \$100 cash, a new Lexmark 5700 series printer, recognition, promotion and profits for your talents.

Win \$100!

Enter the 1999 NPFF "River Safety Poster Contest." In this competition poster entries from 3 age groups; under 8yrs, 9-15yrs, and 16. Each age group will vie for a \$100 cash award. Posters will be voted on by the NPFF audience. Posters should have a theme. They should be no larger than: 17.5 x 25 inches in finished size. Digital entries are also accepted, can take any format and may be sent via the internet using your Netscape or Explorer browser. Please contact the NPFF for details on submitting your digital entry. Email: 99entry@surfbwa.org. Winners will be printed courtesy of Lexmark, Inc. and distributed nationwide to enhance River safety awareness. Age categories : 8 and under; 9-15 years; 16 to adult.

*River Safety Poster Competition
Deadline: 2/26/99*

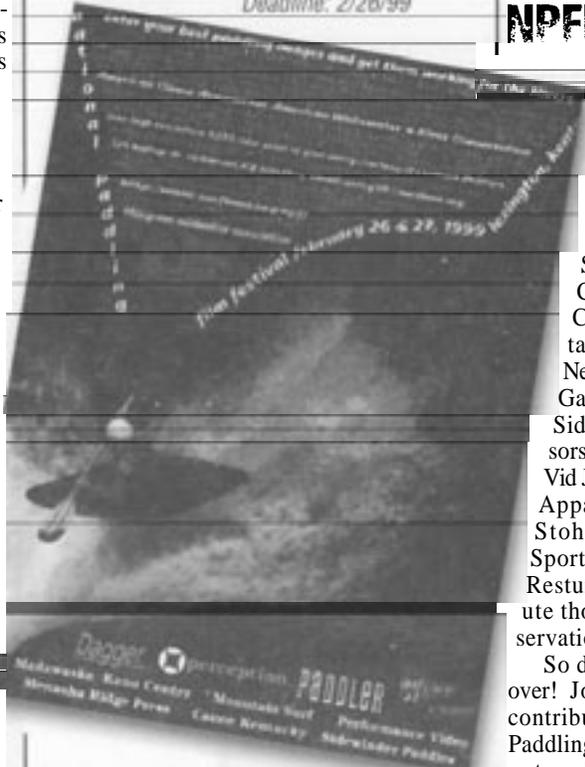
Win a New Lexmark Printer!

The easiest way to become a contributor and a competitor at the 1999 Festival is to enter the "Best Paddling Image" competition. In this audience judged competition, still photographic 35mm slides of actual scenes or virtual computer generated images will compete for the Best of NPFF award. New in 1999 thanks to Lexmark, Inc., the printer folks from Lexington, KY, are generously donating a free 5700 series, photographic quality, printer to the winner of the Digital

Image division as well as providing an 8 X 10, high resolution, color printout of every 1999 NPFF Digital Image entry!

2 entries /person are permitted \$5 entry fee /person All Entries will compete there is no prejudging. 35mm slides will be returned after competition only if a self addressed stamped mailer is included. Please be sure to mark your name, address, and phone number on each slide entered. Digital entries can take any format and may be sent via the internet using your Netscape or Explorer browser. Please contact the NPFF for details on submitting your digital entry. Email : 99entry<&@surfbwa.org

*Best Paddling Image Competition
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Have Your Video Entry Seen Across the Country in the "NPFF Roadshow"!

In an exciting innovation for 1999 the "NPFF Roadshow" has been created to give the paddling public unable to attend the NPFF competition in Lexington, KY an opportunity to view the latest and best in paddlesport videos and raise even more money for paddlesports. The Roadshow is sponsored

by a paddling club, waterway conservation organization or commercial outdoor enterprise interested in raising funds for local waterway conservation efforts.

Plan to attend the first NPFF Roadshow Wednesday Feb. 17,1999 in Bozeman, MT at the Emerson

Cultural Center sponsored by Rapid Discoveries, Inc. kayak sales and instruction. Please contact Rapid Discoveries, Inc. (406)582-8110 for info or rapidd@gomontana.com

Everyone's Contribution to the NPFF Makes \$\$ for the Rivers!

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So don't despair that paddling season is over! Join in the fun and please plan to contribute to, and attend the 1999 National Paddling Film Festival. We can't do it without you!

Deadline for Motion Competition: January 29, 1999

For more information please contact:
NPFF
124 Hilltop Dr.
Richmond, KY 40475
email: 99npff@surfbwa.org

Visit the NPFF website: www.surfbwa.org/npff

Book Review

Demon River Apurimac

by J. Calvin Giddings; University of Utah Press, 1996, 290 pages, paper, \$22.00

Reviewed by Charlie Walbridge

Last spring after the Cheat Race I rode up from Jenkinsburg with Mike Giddings. As we talked I realized his father was Cal Giddings, a longtime AWA director who lead two expeditions in the mid 70's down Peru's Apurimac River. He told me that his father was now dead, but his account of these explorations, *Demon River Apurimac*, has been published. Since it is available at Amazon.com, I got on line and ordered it with a click of my mouse.

What a tale it is! The second trip in 1975 was an ambitious 33 day self-supported expedition down one of the deepest gorges in the world. The group paddled and portaged over two hundred miles of river, dropping over 7,000 feet from the alpine zone to the jungle! Personnel included longtime AWA executive director Jim Sindelar and two other men. A brief account was published in *American Whitewater*, but this is a lot more detailed.

This run, made in 13' fiberglass boats, was the most impressive exploratory trip of its era. Great obstacles, including the incredible Chasm of the Acobamba in the guts of the mighty Villacamba Range, had to be traversed. Giddings frankly recounts the fears and stresses of the journey and the interpersonal tensions that developed within the group. It's not pretty, but it is honest. This is good reading for paddlers, and especially for those interested in expedition boating and exploratory paddling in South America.



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Women's K-1

Shannon Carroll	12:10
Hope Concannon	13:28

Men's K-1

Jason Hale	11:28
John Stockdill	11:30
Greg Hoskins	11:34
B.J. Johnson	11:36
Bryan Jennings	11:49
Eric Strittmatter	11:52
Bryan Kirk	11:53
Joe Pugh	12:02
Chris Hull	12:06
Matt Terry	12:21
Allister Donald	12:28
Eric Henderson	12:28
John Lord	12:31
Willy Witt	12:45
Brent Austin	12:58
Joe Baranski	12:59
John Grace	13:10

Men's WW

Chris Hipgrave	9:58
Jeff Snyder	10:23
Boone Brothers	10:51

Men's C-1

Andy Bridge	11:23
Harry Field	14:57

Men's OC-1

Paul Fantetti	16:22
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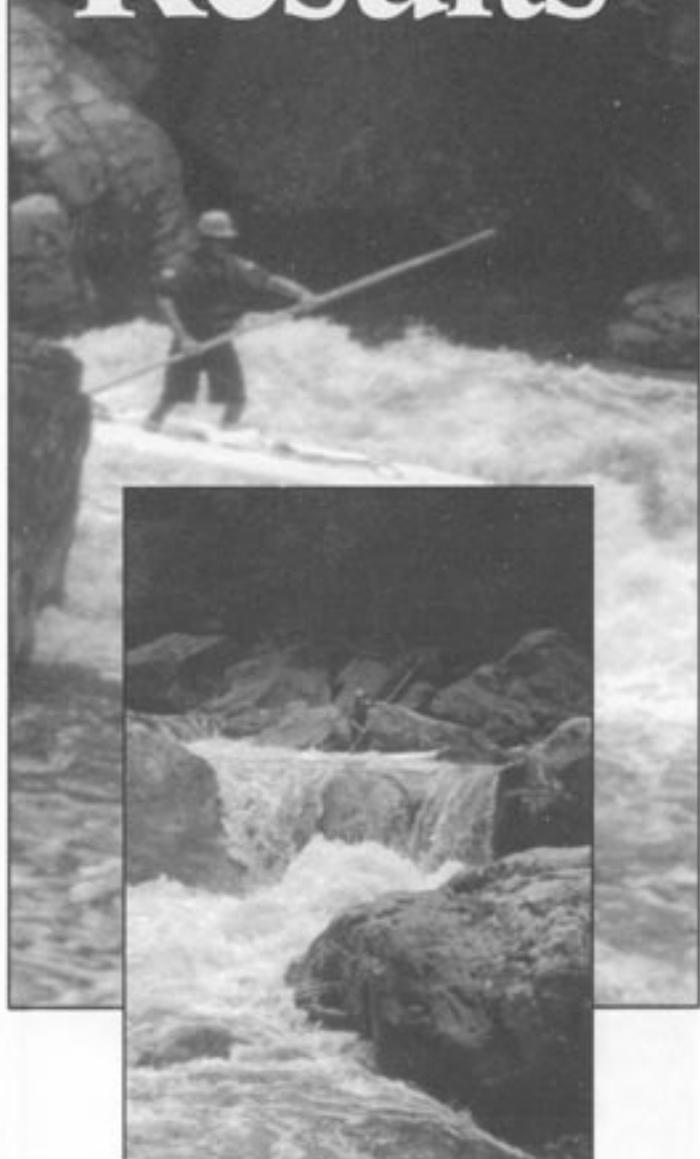
Men's Strider

Colby Mackley	18:37
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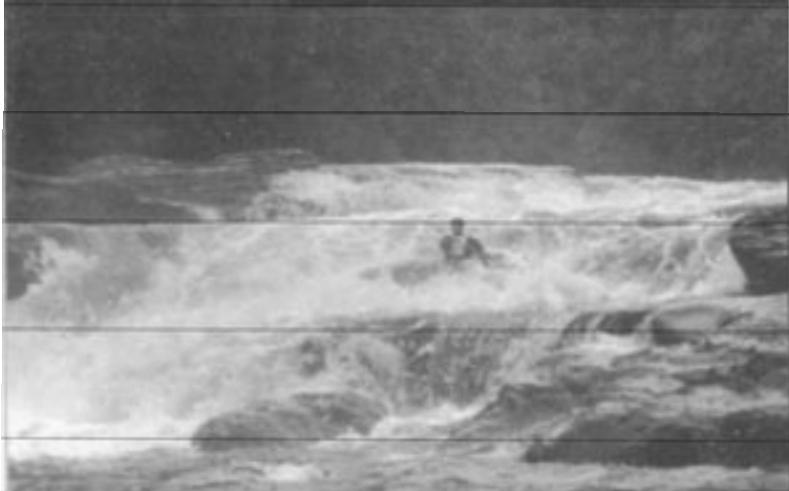
For the first time in the race's history, a strider entered this class V competition. Colby Mackley makes it look easy as he comes through the bottom portion of Climax during the 1998 Russell Fork Race.

All Photos by J.A.Hinton © 1998

Russel Fork Race Results



Racer Boone Brothers bursts through the multiple drops of El Horendo in his wildwater boat



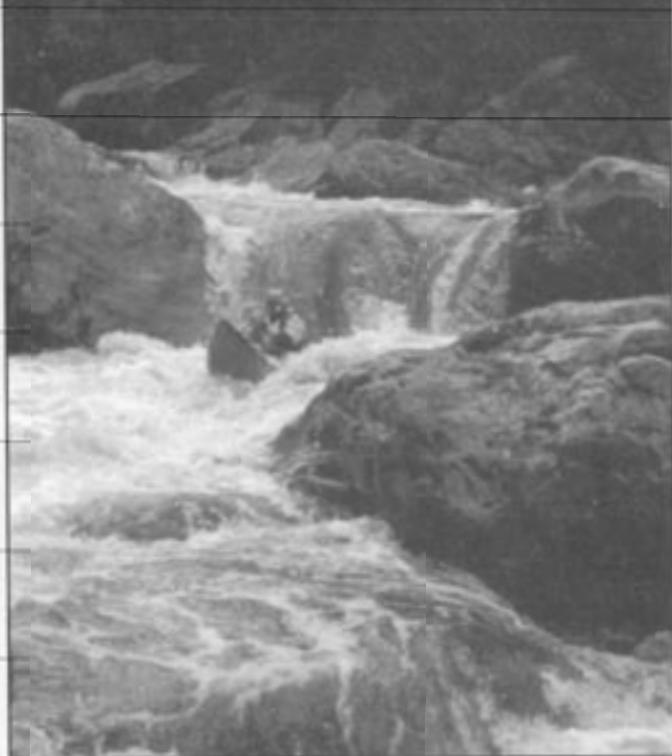
Chris Hipgraves, winner of the wildwater division, completes the last portion of El Horendo



Harry Field boofs through the Right slot of Climax.



The only open boater entry, Paul Fantetti, comes over the bottom drop of Climax.



Russel Fork Race

continued...

All Photos by
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Paul Fantetti was not only the single competitor in the open boat division, but he also locked up the swimming category as he proves that nothing is going to stop him from completing this race.





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Bldg. 2807
Mt. Home AFB, ID 83648-5000

Outdoor Centre of New England
10 Pleasant St.
Millers Falls, MA 01349

Ozark Mountain Paddlers
P.O. Box 1581
Springfield, MO 65801

Ozark Wilderness Waterways
P.O. Box 16032
Kansas City, MO 64112

Paddle Trails Canoe Club
P.O. Box 24932
Seattle, WA 98124

Paddlina Bares
P.O. Box 22
Milltown, NJ 08850-0022

Palmetto Paddlers
c/o Mandy Maier
284 Shoreline Drive
Columbia, SC 29212

Perception Kayak Club
c/o Perception Inc.
111 Kayaker Way
Easley, SC 29640

Philadelphia Canoe Club
4900 Ridge Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19128

Pikes Peak Whitewater Club
c/o Seibel
700 Divide South Drive
Divide, CO 80814

Project Challenge
8306 Mills Drive, #190
Miami, FL 33183
Kim Soule
Rapidmile
1007 Aragon Street
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Rhode Island Canoe Association
c/o Dave Hevner
254 Bailey Woods Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Susan DeFoe
The River Alliance
236 Stoneridge Drive
Columbia, SC 29210

River Rendezvous
P.O. Box 888
Telluride, CO 81435

River Touring Section
Sierra Club - Angeles Chapter
c/o Dave Ewoldt
9624 Saluda Avenue
Tijunga, CA 91042

River Touring Section
Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter
c/o Fred Juergens
5117 Minocqua Crescent
Madison, WI 53705-1319

Rivers Council of Washington
1731 Westlake Avenue North.
#202
Seattle, WA 98109-3043

Roanoke County Parks & Rec.
c/o Bill Sgrinia
1206 Kessler Mill Road
Salem, VA 24153

Rocky Mountain Canoe Club
P.O. Box 280284
Lakewood, CO 80228-0284

San Joaquin Paddlers
P.O. Box 595
Friant, CA 93626

San Juan College Outdoor
Program
4601 College Boulevard
Farmington, NM 87402

Scenic River Tours
703 West Tomichi Avenue
Gunnison, CO 81230

Sequoia Paddling Club
P.O. Box 1164
Windsor, CA 95492

Shasta Paddlers
c/o Kevin Lewis
4641 Hornbeck Lane
Anderson, CA 96007

Sierra Club Loma Prieta
c/o Dave Kim
3309 Oxford Lane
San Jose, CA 95117

Sierra Club RTS
c/o Wini Heppler
18 Columbia Circle
Berkeley, CA 94708-2104

Sierra Nevada WW Club
3485 Zion
Reno, NV 89503

Small World Adventures
P.O. Box 3214
Crested Butte, CO 81224

Smith River Valley Canoe Club
c/o Harry B. Rhett, President
15 Cleveland Avenue
Martinsville, VA 24112

Southwestern Whitewater Club
P.O. Box 120055
San Antonio, TX 78212

Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club
P.O. Box 819
Spokane, WA 99210

Steep Creek Films
4104 Shoal Creek Boulevard
Austin, TX 78756

Stokers Paddle Club
P.O. Box 2285
Tuscaloosa, AL 35403

Texas Whitewater Assoc.
P.O. Drawer 5429
Austin, TX 78763

Three Rivers Paddling Club
c/o Bruce Berman
1151 King Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Three Rivers Resort & Outfitters
P.O. Box 339
Almont, CO 81210

Toledo River Gang
c/o Charlie Schultz
2321 Broadway, Apt. 5
Toledo, OH 43609

Triad River Runners
P.O. Box 24094
Winston-Salem, NC 27114-4094

U. of Maine at Machias
Library
9 O'Brien Ave.
Machias, ME 04654

University of Tennessee
Canoe & Hiking Club
2106 Andy Holt Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37996-2900

University of Utah
Outdoor Recreation Program
Building 420
Salt Lake, UT 84112

USU Canoe & Kayak Team
c/o Jean Lown
UMC 2910, USU
Logan, UT 84322-2910

Vermont Paddlers Club
c/o Eric Bishop
RR 3, Box 440
Jericho, VT 05465-9202

Viking Canoe Club
P.O. Box 32263
Louisville, KY 40232

Washington Kayak Club
P.O. Box 24264
Seattle, WA 98124-0264

Waterline
c/o Irv Tolles
103 Bay Street
Manchester, NH 03104

Water Wolf
c/o Joe Powell
P.O. Box 3341
Telluride, CO 81435

West Virginia Wildwater Assoc.
P.O. Box 8413
S. Charleston, WV 25303

Western Carolina Paddlers
P.O. Box 8541
Asheville, NC 28814

Wildwater Boating Club of
Central Pennsylvania
c/o Ann Guss
3825 S. Atherton Street
State College, PA 16801

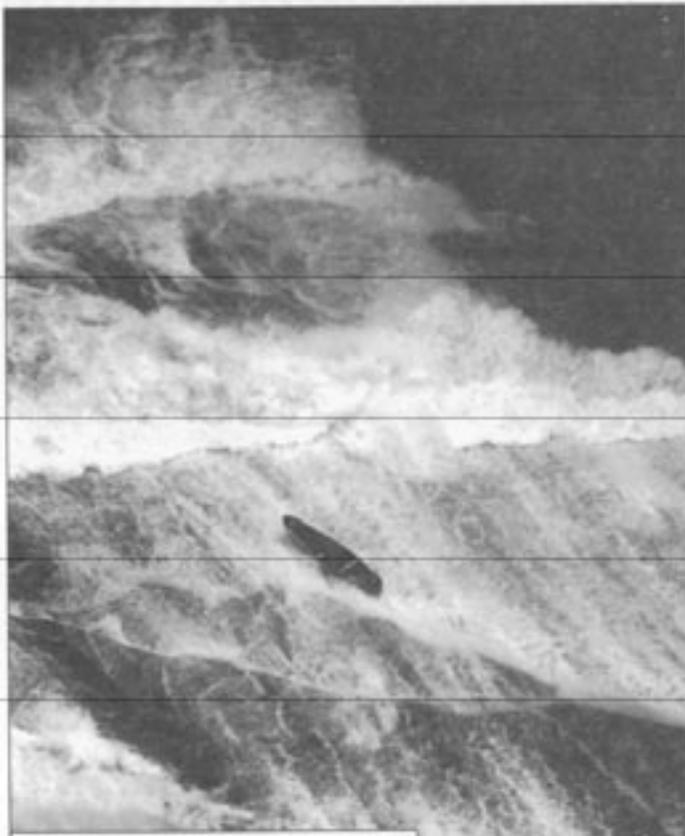
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club
P.O. Box 1062
Corvallis, OR 97339

Yayasan Arung Jeram Indonesia
J1. Bungur Raya 113, Depok
Jakarta, Indonesia 16432

Zoar Valley Paddling Club
c/o Ken Ahlstrom
46 Albany Avenue
Dunkirk, NY 14048

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□ **Photo Feature** □



The Thing

Barry Smith Heading for the Thing, Oceana Rapids on the Tallulah Gorge, GA.
Photo by Julie Keller©



Going down the stairs

Kathy Bragg running Staircase Rapid on Big Laurel Creek, NC.
Photo by Julie Keller ©

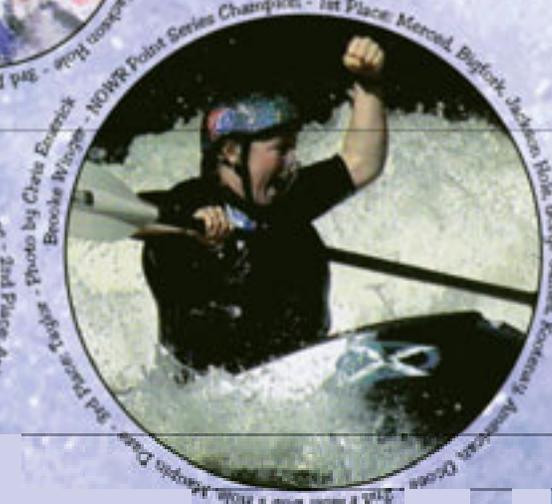
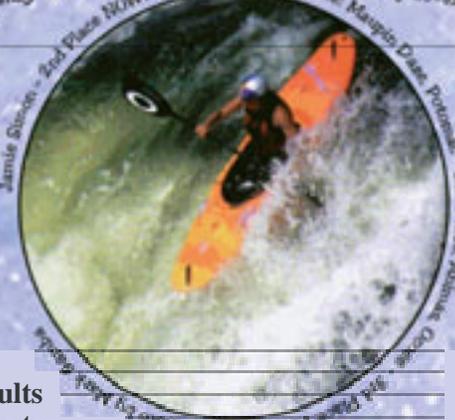
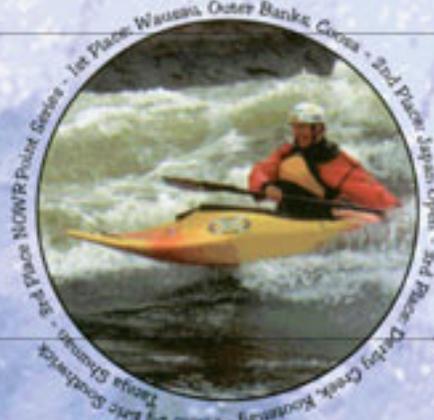
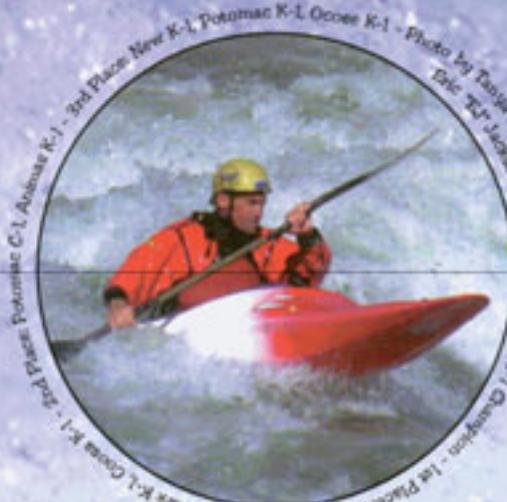


Eric Jackson shows his Versatility

in a C1 at the Taylor River Rodeo. © Gregg Morin



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and start upstream into the heart of the jungle
we enter hell and it looks like we'll
to stay and dig out every pound pack and banks uphill
we camp along the poh river here the poh is
bridge ditch hopefully at some point tomorrow we will
average in coats

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Contact Dagger via the internet to receive your Grant Application along with a detailed listing of the official rules, qualifications, deadlines and other fine print.

1. Deadline for applications is May 1st, 1999
2. The Grant will be awarded on June 1st, 1999
3. Send Applications to: Dagger Endurance Grant, P.O. Box 1500, Rahmah, TN 37748
- *A portion of this amount will be reserved for product

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