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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

Forum	4
Corner Charc	6
Letters.....	8

Access

- Access Updates 10
- Grand Canyon Ideology 12

International Special

- Paddle Ecuador 2002..... 18
- Paddling by Air 20
- The Art of Travel Logistics 22
- Cartwheeling the Himalayas 24

Events

- Teva National Championships..... 39
- Nationals Results 40

Conservation

- Ocoee River Post Nationals 41
- Conservation Updates..... 44

Safety

- Taking Risks on Dry Meadow..... 47

River Voices

- Vertical Creeking..... 56
- Adventures of Hank Clondike 58
- Keg Rescue..... 66

American Whitewater Journal

Volume XLIV, No.1

F E A T U R E S

Banditos in the Mist

Poaching O-Pyle
Falls **14**



The Floating World

Two Years in Japan **30**



White Salmon, WA

Conservation &
Access Updates **61**



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by Pat McDonnell



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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 bimonthly 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), and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1424 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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Forum

A Vertical Boat Is a Happy Boat

by Ambrose Tuscano

I've been paddling whitewater for a long time now. One thing that hasn't changed since I began in the mid '80s is that boaters still like to get high...above the water. You know—stand your boat on end and smile for the camera. When I was learning to kayak, there was really only one way to do this (unless you paddled a squirt boat). You had to find some powerful river feature (a hole, pour-over, or wave) and nose your bow into the onrushing water. If you were lucky, the river would pile up on your bow and lever your boat into a vertical position before dumping you back flat in the water, usually on your head. But for those few seconds, you were airborne. Getting an ender in a 13-foot boat is a part of old school kayaking that I'm glad I got to experience.

I remember how my dad once talked his buddy, Mike Maher, into paddling the Upper Gauley with him in a two-man kayak. I doubt Mike would have agreed if he had known that the sole purpose of the stunt was to attempt an ender at the infamous Tumble Home. You see, Mike had to paddle in the bow position. I find it telling of his commitment to teamwork that he agreed to try the move just "one more time" after repeated failures. What resulted was, according to one witness, "the biggest darn ender in the history of whitewater." Although this claim remains unverified, I can say with certainty that only one of the participants was really able to appreciate the event. While my dad whooped and hollered high above the water, Mike was submerged, his torso plastered to the kayak's deck by the force of the river. So Mike has made the best of it, enjoying his monster ender by means of a photo...in which he is invisible. It hangs in his office to this day, above the caption, "Mike's still the best looking guy in this picture."

Today, of course, Tumble Home has lost much of its prestige as a play spot. Now it's simply the fourth drop of Lost Paddle, barely meriting the occasional rock-spin.

This fall, when I paddled by the huge, empty eddy in my new playboat, I couldn't help feeling a little nostalgic. I can remember vividly a day when that eddy would have been filled with dozens of long boats, all lined up to do enders.

Despite the near extinction of the ender, the urge to have a bow or stern submerged in the water has not disappeared from the sport. Kayakers, C-1ers and even the occasional open boater can be seen cartwheeling in popular hydraulics all across the country. Nowadays, it is rare to spend a day on the river without encountering colorful boats whirling away in various holes, pour-overs and waves.

So I guess I was both curious and puzzled a couple of years ago when I began to notice the transition: it seemed that more and more boaters were doing tricks in flatwater. I thought maybe the paddlers I was seeing had started in lakes and ponds and spilled over onto rivers as these sedentary bodies of water became overcrowded. (Almost anything could be happening on lakes without attracting my interest. I try to stay as far away from them as possible...mainly due to my fear of giant, man-eating fish. And don't try telling me the Loch Ness Monster doesn't exist, I don't buy it!).

My lake theory didn't hold up very long, however. Eventually, I realized that in order to paddle on lakes, boaters in most states would have to ante up and register with the government. Yeah, right! The paddlers I know would rather sneak into the neighbor's pool late at night. I hate to typecast us, but the majority of us boaters tend to be stubbornly opposed to spending money on anything but gas, gear or alcohol.

No matter how much I puzzled over it, I couldn't make sense of the trend. I had almost despaired of solving this riddle, when I had an epiphany on the river. As is often the case, the answer was beaten into my brain.

On my first day as the proud owner of my first new playboat, I took it into the first big hole on the first river I paddled. I expected to perform an automatic succession of wheels, spins and assorted other cool tricks. I believe the move I actually executed is called a "window shade," which I cleverly linked to an inverted mystery move and, much further downstream, a roll. Having water gush up my nostrils with all the force of a fire hose was not exactly a confidence booster...but, all the same, I felt sure I would be able to repeat my move the next time.

Since then, I've been more careful about the holes I choose to play in. I often find myself thinking about the health of my sinuses and my pride before I jump into anything bigger than a riffle. And, yes, I have attempted a few flatwater cartwheels myself. At first, I was a little, well, embarrassed about it. I'd tell the boaters in my group, "You go on ahead. I've got to stop and empty some water out of my boat." Then, as soon as they rounded the next bend, I'd go off on a two, or sometimes even three point cartwheeling binge. These days, however, I don't feel the need to hide behind a raft, or paddle way ahead of my group to practice in the flatwater.



Now, as soon as someone lets out so much as a chuckle or snide comment, I just look 'em straight in the eye. "How would you like to paddle the Gauley with me in a two-man kayak?" I ask. "The front seat's all yours."

Ambrose Tuscano
Journal Editor - American Whitewater

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In the upcoming year, we expect to report on the successful conclusions to a variety of conservation and access projects. Some will be the result of long term efforts, others will involve putting out fires on a moment's notice. Representing our members by protecting and restoring rivers—wearing a “white hat”—is gratifying. It makes it easy to refuel our pursuit of AW’s mission.

For each of us, wearing the white hats (or helmets, perhaps) of river stewards, there are other stakeholders wearing hats that are gray, or darker. Others may not view us as allies interested in restoring rivers. Utility company officials may hope, quietly, that whitewater boating will turn out to be infeasible, allowing them to preserve the status quo and minimal environmental requirements that they enjoy. Anglers and local biologists may fear that recreational boating releases will damage river habitat, even when an endangered species didn't live there prior to the river drying up. While we prioritize releases that support the interests of boaters, we frequently coordinate our requests with the needs of other river users, for the good of the resource.

Having now overcome such obstacles in order to secure releases on the Moose, Russell Fork, Chelan, North Fork Feather, Deerfield and others, we know that releases on rewatered reaches make rivers happier, not sadder. Habitat in formerly dry riverbeds is being revitalized. The positive economic impact of whitewater recreation to remote communities around the country has been undeniable.

Greater demands on our rivers (i.e., more people interested in using them) are a reality, and we are pragmatists. We'll never pick a fight but will speak up when injustice crosses our path. In 2003, as in years past, rest assured that we will:

- work to protect your right to paddle rivers safely,

- battle bureaucracy that supports corporate dewatering of hundreds of river miles, and
- continue to ensure that if you have to pay a fee at a river, your dollars will pay for enhancements and maintenance at that river, and not disappear into a black hole in Washington, DC.

We will alert you to threats to your local streams and inform you of broader issues on which your input can make a difference. The beneficiary of the effort will be you, your paddling buddies and, of course, the rivers themselves.



Risa Shimoda
Executive Director - American Whitewater

I hope to see you on a river sometime, soon!

Volunteer Salute

Barry Tuscano, Immediate Past President

Barry Tuscano has just stepped down as president of the board for American Whitewater. Throughout his involvement with the organization—especially during the past year—he has illustrated, beyond words, his love for rivers. He has poured thousands of volunteer hours into various aspects of the organization. His textbook path to leadership is an example of incredible commitment and tenacity.

Having served on the board for over a dozen years, Barry has supported AW in almost every way possible: he has offered setup, wiring and tear down assistance at the past dozen Gauley Festival—even organizing the event one year.

He contributed to the journal with tales of adventure and river-based antics. He drives local conservation projects in western Pennsylvania and Maryland (from building the takeout changing room at the

Upper Yough, to raising five figure sums for dam modifications that promise to make the Stoneycreek the region's hottest boating destination). He engaged the Three Rivers, Keel Haulers and Bens Creek paddling clubs to step up with incredibly ambitious AW membership drives. For years, Barry was an annual donor, and last summer signed on as AW's first lifetime member!

He led by example and leaves a footprint that will be difficult to fill. We are thrilled that he took on the presidency during this particularly challenging year.

Thanks, Barry. We're indebted to you for your service, as it will continue to benefit our community for years to come.

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Letters

Dear AW,

In the September/October issue of American Whitewater, the "California Rivers Legislation" article supported the California Wilderness Bill without reservation. But to boaters who also mountain bike, this bill presents serious problems. Federal wilderness designation bans mountain biking, and this bill would shut down some of the best biking terrain in the state. At the same time, the bill would allow higher impact activities like horse packing because it constitutes "traditional use."

It is common to observe large groups of horses chewing up and stomping around in wetland meadows and knocking out water bars—something mountain bikers would never do. Yet bikes are banned and horses are not. An analogy would be a federal law stating that rafting is allowed on Wild and Scenic Rivers because it is traditional, but hard shelled boating is banned because it is a new sport. Federal law should be based on real impact and science, not arcane traditions promoted by special interests. AW members should encourage legislators to work with IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) to find ways to protect public lands from significant impacts like roads dams and logging, without banning low impact activities, like mountain biking.

Tom Meagher
Sacramento, California

Dear American Whitewater Editors:

I must say you guys do a great job and produce a fabulous journal dedicated to one of my most inspirational hobbies. I just got done reading about the terrible losses that occurred over the summer. With regard to the article about H2O Joe, I would like to point out that the magical quote at the end of the article was written by Gavin McClure (the "unknown" author). He wrote it in dedication to my best friend, Lucas Turner, the originator of the NRPW (New Rider of the Perfect Wave). Though he may now be the least famous member, Nick Turner, Ben Selsnick, and the Wilson Brothers (now all TGR boyz) have focused all their energy to keep his memory alive. Lucas died kayaking on the North Fork of the Payette's Jacob's Ladder on July 12th, 1998. I hope you guys can give credit to Gavin McClure for his talent to make the memory of all paddlers who pass on, live on. Especially Lucas Turner.

Your Sept/Oct 2002 was engulfing. I hope your next issue is too.

Thanks for all you do,

Brian R. Menzies

P.S. Never stop paddling, no matter what the consequences are.

Dear Editor,

Another paddling season, another list of fatalities.

The good news, according to Charlie Walbridge, is that low water levels due to drought have lowered the casualty rate; the bad news is that the first half of the year claimed 19 lives. If this wasn't poignant enough, AW featured obituaries of two expert boaters: Paul Zirkelbach and Joe Altieri, Jr.

Such tragedies suggest that whitewater paddling may have become the most lethal sport in America. But you wouldn't know it by the response of the boating community. AW dutifully reports the heartfelt loss by fellow paddlers as well as surviving family members; but then the episode is glossed-

over by a puzzling refrain—"he died doing what he loved"—as if that justified the death.

It is time for whitewater boaters to figure out how they can paddle the rivers they love without losing the friends they love.

During the past five years I have lost two friends, both seasoned boaters, in river accidents. Each incident was avoidable insofar as fellow paddlers could have elected discretion over valor. But judgment has been trumped by bravado as evident when boaters throw caution to the wind and paddle in raging floods, class V and VI rapids, and with unprepared companions.

If the boating community insists on an ethic of disregard for risk, then why not adopt novel ways to paddle more chal-

lenging: class IV without helmets, class III sans PFDs? I propose an alternative ethic: if you wouldn't want your sister to paddle this stretch, DON'T!

After twenty years of whitewater boating, I have concluded that, just as the unexamined life isn't worth living, neither is the unchallenged life. Yet, the freedom to take risks invariably carries with it responsibility.

Every time I paddle my kayak, I recite the first two stanzas of Jim Harrison's "The Theory & Practice of Rivers" as a benediction for the friends I have lost. A segment of the poem suggests an ethic that diverges from the machismo that has claimed the lives of so many of our fellow paddlers:

It is not so much that I got there from here, which is everyone's story:
but the shape of the voyage, how it pushed outward in every direction until it stopped: roots of plants and trees, certain coral heads,
photos of splintered lightening, blood vessels,
the shapes of creeks and rivers.

David Stoesz

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By Jason Robertson

Land Acquisition Opportunity on the Tieton (WA)

Washington's Tieton River is a popular fall run that flows during the annual reservoir draw-down, as part of the Bureau of Reclamation's Yakima irrigation project. The river provides intermediate whitewater and a dependable release schedule enjoyed by both private and commercial boaters. Land owned by the Plum Creek Timber Company has become available. Obtaining this land would bring important access and wildlife habitat into public ownership. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has applied for a grant to fund this acquisition and paddlers are encouraged to contact Governor Locke in support of this purchase at: Governor Gary Locke, Office of the Governor, P.O. Box 400002, Olympia, WA 98504-0002. A sample letter is available at: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/653/>.

AW Rescues West Virginia River Gauges!

In October, American Whitewater rescued USGS stream gages from the ax on the Blackwater, Dry Fork, and Shavers Fork. Operations at 18 popular stations were threatened due to proposed budget cuts. We were successful because so many members and supporters wrote or called the Governor, tourism office, and USGS. After our intervention, the West Virginia Office of Emergency Services hosted a meeting with several interested State agencies. This coalition of agencies worked together to identify potential funding sources. The result is that no interruption of gauge records or warnings is likely to occur. Many thanks to everyone who worked those phone and email lines to save our vital stream gages!

More information: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/652/>.

Upper Yough Boaters and AW Save Maryland's Taxpayers \$6000

Member donations at the Upper Yough have funded our work managing the Sang Run put-in and Mountain Surf take-out. Thus far we spent \$901 in both 2001 and 2002 managing the Upper Yough site. We also received \$6203.39 of in-kind services or volunteer labor; that is money Maryland taxpayers did not have to pay to manage recreation on this State Wild and Scenic River. Thanks to all our volunteers for their help. If you are interested in assisting this program in 2003, please contact Charlie Walbridge at ccwalbridge@cs.com.

More information: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/605/>.

AW Submits Comments on Grand Canyon CRMP

In October American Whitewater submitted comments on the Grand Canyon management for the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP). Our letter was intentionally exhaustive since we wanted to be sure to cover as many of the points that our members expressed to us as possible. Our comments are available at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/655/>. Thanks to everyone who wrote and shared their concerns, opinions, and ideas with the Park and us.

In reviewing the issues related to management of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon National Park, AW and the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association (www.gcbpa.org) identified several principles that we encouraged the Park to adopt in the CRMP; these guiding principles are provided below. We found broad support for these principles from outfitters, wilderness advocates, kayakers, rafters, and members.

Letters Needed for Big Cheat Canyon and Big Sandy Land Purchase

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WV-DNR) is seeking to acquire approximately 6,500 acres of land in Preston County. Approximately 4,700 acres are in the Cheat Gorge. The remaining 1,800 acres are along the Big Sandy. Allegheny Energy wants to sell these lands as soon as possible. It has other buyers lined up for the property, but is willing to donate 25% of the acreage to WV-DNR if the state can purchase 75% of the land. At present, the state has allocated funds to acquire approximately 13% of the lands. If acquired by the state, these lands would become wildlife management areas.

Currently, American Whitewater leases the public put-in for the Big Sandy from Allegheny Energy for just \$1 per decade. If the land is sold to a private owner or corporation, there is no guarantee that the agreement will be continued. It is vital for the state to acquire both the put-in and take-out to protect future access opportunities. Your letters to West Virginia Governor Robert Wise are needed to support this purchase. More information and a sample letter are available at: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/642/>.

Sky Fund Grows to \$20,000 for River Access in Washington!

An old station wagon stacked high with eight boats pulls over on the opposite side of the road from Washington's Skykomish River. The car is parked on a blind curve at the bottom of a long hill, as logging trucks race by. The paddlers suit up and race across the road with their boats, brush past faded "no trespassing" signs, and finally launch on this classic Class III-IV river. The driver of the wagon peers up and down the road

before peeling out and heading downriver to the railroad trestle where he will meet his friends.

On November 1, 2002 Werner Paddles, American Whitewater, Washington Kayak Club, and organizers of the annual SkyFest announced that we have reached our initial goal by raising over \$20,000 to secure public river access to the Skykomish River.

Jason Robertson, Access Director for American Whitewater, expressed the team's enthusiasm. "Working together, our groups reached our ten-year goal in a mere 18 months. This is a testament to the importance of this river to Washington's paddling community. We could not have achieved our goal without the help of our corporate partner, Werner Paddles, and the avid support of our dedicated volunteers who are the heart and soul of SkyFest."

The Skykomish River is located about 50 miles outside Seattle, in central Washington's Snohomish and King Counties. Legal river access opportunities along the whitewater sections of the "Sky" are diminishing as a result of changing ownership and management priorities of public agencies. Local volunteers will now work with local officials

and agency personnel to improve access opportunities on public land and identify privately owned parcels that may be available for purchase. The funds generated will also provide the means for local volunteers to apply for matching grants from government agencies and private foundations, and to initiate the process of developing permanent boat launch and take-out facilities for kayaks, canoes, and rafts.

If you would like more information about our project, or are interested in supporting the Sky Fund, please contact Jason Robertson at Jason@amwhitewater.org

Werner Paddles Inc., manufacturer of high performance kayak and canoe paddles in Sultan Washington, is dedicated to promoting environmental leadership in the paddlesports industry. Werner contributed a third of the funds raised for the Sky Fund, and our groups could not have reached our goal so quickly without the company's strong support. www.WernerPaddles.com.

SkyFest, originated in 1996 by a group of dedicated kayakers, celebrates the beauty of the Skykomish River and raises funds for on-going river access projects. The festival has become the premier whitewater event

in the Puget Sound area. Volunteers Nick Newhall, Julie Albright, and Dave and Sue Wester, along with tremendous support from many local paddlers, have raised awareness about the challenging access issues facing the Skykomish. www.image-that.com/skyfest

American Whitewater is a national non-profit whose mission is "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." 8,000 members nationwide represent an additional 80,000 paddlesport enthusiasts through 165 affiliate canoe and kayak clubs. American Whitewater is managing the Sky Fund and was successful in engaging Werner Paddles' support through the WAVE Corporate Partnership Program. www.AmericanWhitewater.org

The Washington Kayak Club represents 1,200 paddlers in Western Washington. The club promotes safe boating opportunities through instruction, training, festivals, competition and club trips on rivers throughout the region, and promotes conservation and access initiatives. www.wakayakclub.com



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AW's Guiding Principles on the Grand Canyon

1. In accordance with existing law and policy, and to the extent possible given the downstream effects of Glen Canyon Dam, the fundamental requirement of the Colorado River Management Plan is to preserve the Colorado River corridor within the Grand Canyon as an unimpaired natural and cultural area for the enjoyment of this and future generations.

2. The revised Colorado River Management Plan should strengthen and enhance the Grand Canyon river experience for visitors as one of the world's premier wild and primitive backcountry river journeys.

3. Because demand for recreational river use appears to exceed the level necessary for protecting the resource and river experience, visitor opportunities in the Colorado River corridor within the Grand Canyon must be rationed and distributed in a sustainable and equitable manner that awards potential users with a sense of fair treatment in relation to each other.

4. Within resource protection and visitor experience quality parameters, visitor opportunities should be maximized and equitably distributed to the greatest number of participants as practicable, while maintaining a diverse range of trip styles and experiences.

5. The Grand Canyon river experience draws potential visitors of all types of backgrounds. Visitor demand ranges from highly proficient and committed outdoor and whitewater recreationists, to those with no previous experience in a wild, primitive, backcountry environment. Colorado River corridor management and administration must acknowledge, respect, and respond to this wide spectrum of user interest, need, and expectation.

6. Qualifying areas within Grand Canyon National Park deserve Wilderness designation. The President should immediately make his recommendation to Congress in this regard. Until Congress acts upon such a recommendation, the National Park Service remains obligated to protect the suitability of all identified qualifying lands. The Colorado River within the Grand Canyon is unique, and provides outstanding visitor opportunities to experience soli-

tude, a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and natural quiet; therefore, its management should preserve and enhance these opportunities.

7. The question of whether to continue allowing the use of nonconforming motor-powered rafts is of considerable interest to many of AW's members. The decision must be explicitly addressed in the CRMP to create an effective management plan. The Park should address whether a limited level of motorized use on the river is compatible with the Wilderness Act of 1964 as an established use under Sec. 4.D.1, which states "Within wilderness areas designated by this chapter the use of... motorboats, where these uses have already become established, may be permitted to continue subject to such restrictions as the Secretary of Agriculture deems desirable". Though it is not our preference for motorized use to be continued, in examining their use AW has found that they may be an effective tool for enhancing visitation, dispersing use, and expanding trip opportunities. If motor use is allowed to continue under this authority of the Wilderness Act, then a swift transition to very low noise or silent, non-polluting propulsion systems suitable for Grand Canyon river operations should



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be implemented. It is AW's position that motorized use is not necessary to provide safe, economical, and enjoyable access to the river.

8. The revised Colorado River Management Plan should identify present activities that are inconsistent with existing Grand Canyon National Park General Management Plan "Management Objectives" for the Colorado River and establish a strategy, as well as a pragmatic implementation schedule, to mitigate such activities in a manner consistent with other priorities. Creative problem-solving opportunities may exist through active and site specific management techniques, or through adaptive management processes. The public should be proactively invited to participate in solving these issues.

9. The Colorado River Management Plan should impose comparable rules, regulations, and policies on all use sectors to the maximum practical extent, without compromising the essential visitor experience of each sector.

10. Simplicity, practicality, ease of use, and equality of opportunity should distinguish the private permit distribution system. NPS

administration and customer service for visitors should be fair, responsive, timely, and economically affordable.

11. A multiple path private river trip permit distribution system may assist the goal of achieving the best possible private visitor access to the river experience.

12. Trip leaders and repetitive visitors should not have their access penalized; these individuals bring a wealth of cultural, historic, logistic, and safety information to any Grand Canyon visit.

13. Helicopter passenger exchanges or flyovers within sight or sound of the river are in violation of the Wilderness Act and do not meet the traditional use standard established under Sec. 4.D.1. The Park has the authority to bar these exchanges as a contractual obligation by outfitters operating in the Grand Canyon. The Park Service may waive this rule for management and public safety purposes such as emergency evacuations or on a case-by-case basis evaluated under the Minimum Requirement Standard.

14. JetSki® or other Personal Watercraft Use (PWC) is inconsistent with the Wilder-


ness Act and violates Park Service Policy regarding their use. PWC use should be terminated unless their use is required under extreme circumstances in life saving rescue efforts. The use of PWC's for non-life saving purposes such as raft extrication or body recoveries should not be permitted.

15. The river is a public resource and should be managed to benefit the public.

16. Visitor fees should not be used as a disincentive for park visitation or otherwise limiting use.

17. Concession-outfitters offer a spectrum of "necessary and appropriate" types of river trips and services. This spectrum should be examined and re-evaluated before the 2005 concession contract revisions.


Jason Robertson is Access Director for American Whitewater. He has worked with the National Park Service over the past 5 years to develop a new permit system on the Grand Canyon. Currently he is discussing an idea with the United States Forest Service to create a non-profit organization to manage all federal river permits under a single authority.



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Banditos In The Mist

*By River Jack, as told to Ken Strickland
Photos © Kevin H Breslin*

“You know it’s a fricking five thousand dollar fine, and they’ll confiscate your boat for sure,” he said, his right shoulder rolling in a nervous tic. “You might even go to jail!”

“Yeah, but I think it’s more like five hundred dollars and. . . can I borrow your boat?” I said.

My ol’ bud, Bunjee. He’s always a little nervous before a big event, gets jerky and babblative, hence his nickname. But, without fail, he settles down and focuses once the crisis commences—or in the patois of our peers, once the s%@\$ hits the fan. Bunjee and I go way back. We learned to paddle together. We never took a whitewater course, choosing instead the enlightening path of rock-hard knocks. We learned to roll from a book. One of us would stand in waist-deep water while the other attempted to roll, the standee assisting the rollee when things did not go as planned—which was most of the time, at first. Then we would go over to the shore and look at the pictures in the book again. In time we became excellent boaters—in boater parlance, creekheads.

“Heck no you can’t borrow my boat!” he answered. Then added, “Sheeee-yaht...you were just jerking my chain, weren’t you!”

“Like...Yaaaah,” I replied in faux Mall-ese. “You know the plan, dude—that’s why I pulled this old yellow creeker out of mothballs. Believe it’s even got a crack in it somewhere. After this I’ll see if one of those barbeque joints down on River Road might buy it—you know how they like to nail a kayak over their entrance, a way of saying they’re boater friendly.”

Ocoyopyle State Park. The word is an old First Nations word meaning, “Where the river jumps down like a frog off the rock.” The name is a clear zoomorphic reference to the twenty-foot waterfall that is the centerpiece of the park. On any summer’s day throngs of people visit the park and a



thriving commercial rafting industry has evolved over the last two decade, because the eight miles of river below the falls is filled with bouncy, class three rapids.

It is a fact of life that any-time masses of people congregate and the government holds sway over that area, rules and regulations will follow.

The wood-routed signs in the park say: No Alcoholic Beverages Allowed. No Swimming Allowed. No Boating Or Wading Above The Falls Allowed. Pets Must Be On A Leash, and. . . *It Is Illegal To Run The Falls In Any Craft.*

"Okay, Bunjee," I said. "Paddle on down to Magician's Bend and wait for me. You know the drill, eddy out behind Baboo Mandrill then slip up into the woods and wait for me." Magician's Bend gets its name from an old Gypsy who lived in a nearby shack during the early 1900s, and Baboo Mandrill is a huge, blue-gray boulder shaped like a

crouching baboon. Red iron-ore stains run down the baboon's rump.

Bunjee registered then shouldered his kayak down the cement ramp to the legal put-in. I watched as he made his way through the raft-gaggle and noticed that he had stopped to talk with a tanned chica-rafttoid. Go On! I waved, pointing to my watch. I had given him fifteen minutes to get down to and set up in the woods at Magician's Bend. He looked up my way, nodded, then turned and continued walking to the river, repeatedly drawing what appeared to be invisible numbers in the air as if committing something to memory. Relieved, I watched him launch and paddle away.

I walked back upstream, cautiously looked around, then darted into the woods where I had stashed my old yellow creeker and paddling gear the night before. I quickly donned the distinctive garb: sprayskirt followed by a red paddling jacket, red helmet, and red life jacket. I pulled them on over the shorts and T-shirt I was wearing and chuckled to myself as I thought about the significance of the shirt I had bought for two dollars at a thriftshop. "JUST DO IT" was emblazoned across the front, just



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below what appeared to be a small coffee stain. I sat quietly for a few minutes then checked my watch: Showtime! I slid my boat through the thick brush at the river's edge, entered, and shoved off.

I paddled into the middle of the wide pool above the falls. Exposicion Grandioso! I could not stay long in this place, but I did want my presence known. As I made for the falls, I sidled a glance to shore and saw a khakied woman talking on a cell phone. From its strap her Smoky-the-Bear hat swirled in the vortices behind her head as she picked up her pace and fell into a full run. I can only imagine what her voice sounded like on the other end of the line: "Weeeeevegottaviolatorinthepond!"

I focused downstream on the horizonline. Gauzy fingers of mist wafted up from below—a river's way of letting you know there is something formidable ahead. The pressure was on.

I could ill afford to botch running this drop since I would certainly end up paddling hangdoggy-style into the waiting arms of Smoky and the Federales.

And therein lay the real horror!

I charged ahead, skirting the bubble line coming in off the right wall then hitting the curler that I had earlier zeroed in on as the visual key to the best line over the falls. I took one final heave-stroke at the

brink then nose-dived off the falls, leaning slightly forward as I plunged into the boil below. My creeker quickly resurfaced, spilling a veneer of water off its bow. Perfecto! As good a run as I had ever had off a twenty footer! But there was little time to savor the drop. I could sense a flurry of activity behind and above me. A park ranger came bolting down the launch ramp, bullhorn in hand.

"Stop! Man in yellow boat! Stop! Man in yellow boat! Stop!"

Man in yellow boat? For crying out loud, why didn't I think of a wig and some lipstick or something? I hung fire on my paddle and sprinted across the plunge-pool, turning the corner to begin the long descent down a rapid known as Go Ask Alice. Go Ask Alice was named during the late sixties after a hippie-girl foraging for mushrooms accidentally fell into the river and was never seen again. The river continues to bend around in what can be called a horseshoe and Magician's Bend is the apex of the shoe. Baboo Mandrill loomed into view and I paddled toward it. Soon I eddied out behind the great boulder and quickly took to the woods.

"Bungee...Bungee...where are you?" I called nervously.

"Over here," he said, stepping from behind a large tree.

"Hand me the towel and spray paint," I said. I quickly dried the yellow creeker and began to spray spots of black enamel paint over its surface.

"Dude, your boat looks just like that gal's truck—you know, the one who hangs out at the Chattooga!"

I laughed. "Yeah, that Cheetah Truck chick! That's gotta be an old state highway truck she painted up! Here, put on my life jacket and hand me yours—I like purple," I said.

Next, I took out a roll of half inch yellow tape and hurriedly fashioned radiating sunrays from the top center of my helmet to its bottom edges.

"Looks like somebody busted an egg on your head," Bungee laughed.

I stashed the paint can, towel, tape, and my red paddling jacket under a small rock overhang; I would pick them up another day.

"Let's get out of here," I said. We hopped into our boats and set sail. I had morphed: I was now clad in a purple life jacket, an egg-burst helmet, white T-shirt. . . and I rode the Cheetah-Yak!

"You know they'll be waiting at Loop Beach," Bungee said. Loop Beach was the first point that could be easily accessed by foot and was only a stone's throw from where the whole episode had begun.

"Yeah, I know. We need to hang with some other boaters, kinda blend in."

Ahead we could see what appeared to be a beginner kayak club trip. A group of seven boaters followed a leader who was some distance ahead and giving river signals and directions to his flock.

"Let's fall in at the back of this group," I said. "Let that alpha dog up front do all the talking if we meet any rangers at the beach." We hung back in the group, not actually paddling with them but giving the impression we were to anyone on shore. And sure enough, as we approached Loop Beach, three rangers waved the group over.

"We're looking for a kayaker wearing a red helmet, red life jacket, and paddling a yellow boat," the one with binoculars around his neck shouted.



"Haven't seen him," said the trip leader. "Nobody in our group fits that description."

In a voice only loud enough to be overheard by the outermost person in their group—a woman paddling a mottled, purple Crossfire—I said to Bungee, "I think I saw someone fitting that description up around Magician's Bend."

"THERE'S SOMEONE FITTING THAT DESCRIPTION UPSTREAM AROUND MAGICIAN'S BEND!" the woman in the Crossfire shouted to the ranger.

"Thanks, folks," said the ranger. "You can go." He made a stilted waving motion in the direction of downstream, as if allowing both the waters of the river and us to continue our journey to the sea. His nametag read: Moses.

Bungee and I paddled into the group and watched their trip leader ahead make mystic signals with his paddle and hands. With his back to the group, he held his paddle high and tilted it left, and like ducks on a tether we all slanted left and dropped single file down a wide, river-left channel. Bungee and I nodded to the leader as we passed by.

We paddled on.

"Dude, I do believe we're going to pull this thing off!" Bungee exclaimed as we put some miles behind us.

"I'll admit things are looking good, but there's still the take-out to deal with. I'm sure there'll be several Smokey Bears there."

We spent most of the afternoon frittering about on the river. We caught and surfed a few waves as we continued downstream, but today our thrill was not about whitewater or river-play. For us, running rivers in general, and whitewater rivers in particular, was a way of life; it defined our very being. This lifestyle of ours had taken us all over the country and even into Central and South America. All of our closest friends were paddlers and I had even married someone I met on the river. So for some-

one—especially someone clueless and empowered—to decree that we could not paddle a particular river, or a particular stretch of river, did not sit well with us. Today was our own small foray into civil disobedience and it felt good, even though we knew it would be short-lived.

We continued down the river, weaving our way through the commercial rafts and a few private boaters. The take-out parking lot soon came into view and sure enough, a couple of rangers were stoically standing there with arms folded across their chests. We paddled up to the cross-tie steps and got out.

"Registration," the taller ranger ordered.

"Sure," responded Bungee, pulling the plastic ziploc from the zippered pocket of his life jacket and handing the registration slip over.

"Bunji Khorde...two in party...launch time 9:59 AM," the ranger read. "That's a funny name--Bunji."

"It's a nickname," replied Bunjee, his jangle-tic beginning again.

"In the future don't use nicknames on our forms," the ranger said, then added: "We had an incident up at the falls at 10:15 AM--that would have been after you were on the river. You didn't by chance see anyone dressed in all red and paddling a yellow boat, did you?"

I answered, "Nope, but we overheard another group saying that they'd seen someone like that—up around Magician's Bend I think they said."

The ranger walked over to my boat.

"That's a strange color, don't think I've seen one quite like that before."

"Oh...uhhh...yeah, it's a Cheetah-Yak, made in South Africa," I responded, my right shoulder beginning to twitch. "Not many of them in this country."

"Nice colors," he said as he and the other ranger walked away.

"We did it, dude!" Bungee whispered excitedly as we walked toward our car.

"Yeah, now let's get the hell out of here!" I answered.

"Not so fast," he said, rummaging through a cooler in the back of the car. "We got to celebrate...look at this!" He held up a can.

"Cold beer!" I exclaimed. "Tecate!...but we can't drink it here. They'll bust our chops and our butts for that, you know."

Bungee pulled out the shells of two empty Coke cans that he had cut out with scissors. We each taped one around the Tecate cans. He pitched me a package of Ramen and kept another for himself.

"Wa-La!" he said. "We're legal now!"

We walked over and sat on the curb under the sign that said: NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ALLOWED. We opened our wrapped beers and packages of dry noodles, and sat facing downstream, away from the activity at the take out steps. The sun was setting low over the river and throwing a bedazzling array of shimmering gold nuggets and yellow diamonds our way. We were rich men...rich men indeed.

"Salud," he said.

"Salud, my friend."



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Paddle Ecuador 2002

Story and photos by Theresa Landman

Nine of us paddlers were on our way to Tena, the whitewater mecca of Ecuador. Micro Nyhof and Mandy Grainger are from Australia and Andrew and Ngaire Lawson are from New Zealand. The Canucks, Alastair Caddick, Shaun Boughen, Andy Hyde, Bob Daffe and myself, made up the rest of the group. We found a driver whose vehicle used to be an old ambulance.

Avoiding the many pickpockets at the bus station in Quito was a big relief. However, our trip hit a different snag about an hour out of Quito. Our driver developed a perplexed look on his face as the van started to lose power going up a steep hill. The air conditioning was on but it felt more like the heater. Then Alastair noticed fire under his feet.

We stopped and rushed out of the former ambulance to find the engine smoking. Bob, Andy and the driver grabbed water to douse the fire; others scrambled to get the gear out. The whole van was in flames, which intensified when the hood was opened. Bob yelled for us to get the kayaks, so we cut the ropes, and Andrew jumped on top of the van. As he tried to shove the kayaks off, he lost his balance and fell onto the road. Luckily he only got some scrapes and bruises. The fire eventually died off when the radiator hose melted, and leaking coolant doused the flames. The driver was feeling pretty down because he had no insurance. We were feeling down too, as we waited over an hour in the dark for another ride. Finally, we flagged down a very crowded bus and, five hours later, we were in Tena.

The first river we paddled in the Tena region was the Upper Jondachi. It is a challenging river whose steep, technical drops are draped in jungle foliage. Just around the first bend on the river, Micro got pinned on a log. Fortunately, Andy and Andrew were able to lift him over the strainer. After that Bob led the group, often perching up high on rocks to show us the line of upcoming drops. Bob would say something like, "paddle hard right, make two boofs, cut left and you'll see the bottom." Alastair and Micro had never done this kind of paddling before and were very impressed by the difficulty of the river. It was getting late, and we didn't think we could finish the run before dark, so we stashed our boats in the jungle and walked out on a trail. When

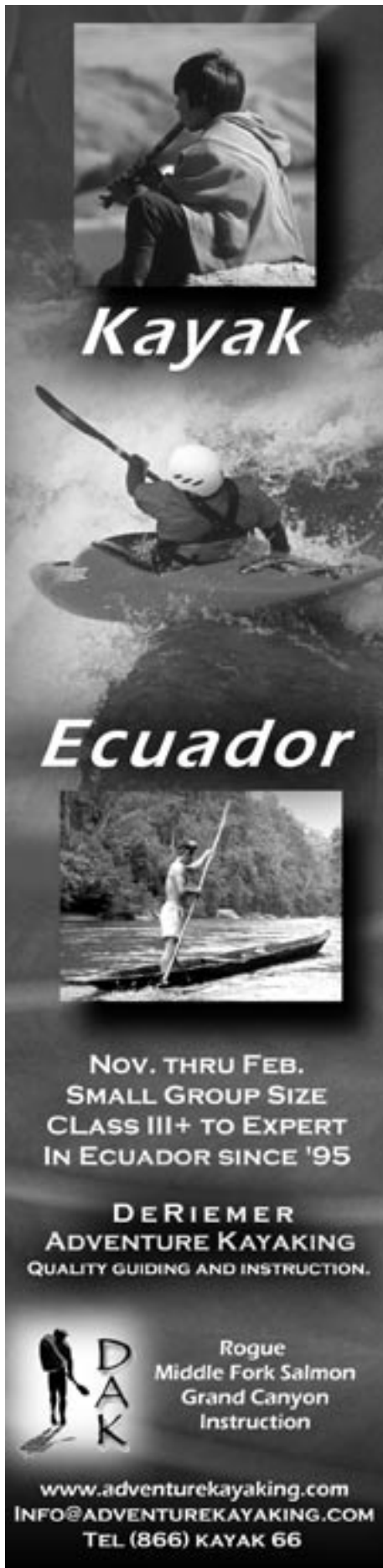
we got back to the river the next day we rinsed our boats well, making all the creepy crawlies were out. Just as I was about to get into the kayak, I noticed a scorpion walking on my seat! I was freaked out and made sure it exited my kayak before I got in. It took another full day of paddling to complete the Upper Jondachi.

After a hard, all-night rain the Upper Misuahali was in flood, and Bob, Andy and Micro decided to run the river. They said it was a totally different from the river we had paddled a couple of days before; now it was booming. Places where many rocks had been showing were now full of pourovers. At one drop, Bob used hand signals and told Andy and Micro "first boof straight, second boof go left." They did this and ended up in a place they dubbed the "white room," from which there was no obvious exit. However, the second boof landed them on a tongue of water that shot them around a 90-degree corner and safely through. Micro and Andy both swam that day and each lost a paddle. They got one paddle back from a local kid for \$10.

One morning Bob went to the store to buy some orange juice. He grabbed a container off the shelf and the store clerk said, "You really don't want that." He explained that it was what the locals call "allahuasca"; shamans use it to induce hallucinogenic visions. Just what we needed before tackling a class V river.

Returning to Tena on the local bus was a wild ride. In Ecuador, bus drivers are always competing, passing each other on narrow roads to be the first to pick up waiting passengers. Our bus driver looked just like a Columbian drug lord with his black, slicked back hair and shades. Very confidence inspiring. On our ride, we saw a bus deep down in a ravine. Apparently two buses met and swerved to avoid a head on collision. One bus went over the edge, and its driver jumped out. He was the only one killed, but there were many other injured passengers.

Back in Tena, we joined in on a 2-week long festival. Lots of people were spraying water and carnival soap at innocent bystanders. When we were heading to the river, a little girl hiding in the bushes threw a bucket of water at us. She was happy because all the gringos drove with their windows rolled down. February 12th is the Discovery of the Amazon River holiday, the finale of the



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festival. The streets were crowded. Bands were playing all over and lots of cheap rum was consumed. The next morning when Bob went to buy our lunch there were a lot of passed out bodies on the streets. Most of these partiers had everything stolen, including their shoes. Fabian, our taxi driver, was one of them. He lost \$180 US, his watch and the keys to his truck. The next day a friend of his took us to the river.

Fabian planned to take us to a friend's house. His amigo had a boa constrictor and a 4.5-meter long anaconda. Both snakes were usually allowed to roam the house on Fridays to eat mice and bugs. But this time both snakes escaped from the house, and he couldn't find them!

We went to see the bullfight. Afterward, the locals had a soccer game with the bull. They set up nets and waved shirts, enticing the bull through the goals. The players would often get run over. It was very entertaining.


After the game some locals went into the ring to challenge the bull. Micro decided to bring his large Bolivian red poncho into the ring. He was careful, staying near the gate, until a local girl coaxed him into the center of the ring with her. With everyone waving shirts, guess what the bull went for? The bull came charging for the poncho, so the local girl let go. Suddenly the bull was heading straight for Micro. He got his butt shoved forward by the bull's head but managed to stay afoot and escape the ring. The crowd went crazy for Micro. Later, as we were walking through town, people would call out "hey torrero" (bullfighter). Our buddy, Micro, was a celebrity!




After our trip Micro and Bob became sick. Bob got dengue fever, which gave him a serious fever, chills and bone aches. He became quite dehydrated and was hospitalized in Montreal. Micro had similar symptoms and was hospitalized in Australia, but they never did find out what he had.

Above: Micro on the Jondachi River
Below: Bull charging Micro and his red Bolivian poncho





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What Are You Doing This Winter?

Paddling by Air

By AW Intern Ryan Kellems

Traveling with a kayak is a dilemma many boaters face at some point in their boating careers. Unfortunately, airlines have made the problem even more difficult than it needs to be. These difficulties stem from the many different methods used to get boats on planes. They range from extremely evasive (duct taping your boat so that it resembles a 10 foot, oblong suitcase), to downright direct (telling the airlines you expect to travel with your kayak). American Whitewater decided to see if we could ease traveling kayakers' airborne dilemmas by finding the best strategies.

We started with the question, "Why are paddlers inclined to smuggle boats onto planes?" The main problem lies within the guidelines that airlines have set for transporting kayaks. Few airlines have established guidelines for kayaks, though most airlines have provisions that allow travel with surfboards and windsurf boards.

AW spoke with several of the major carriers in regards to their policies. The conversations all had the same general theme: confusion. For example, Delta and Continental officially will not allow you to travel with your boat (posted on website), but Continental will take your boat as air cargo. As a consequence, most people experience major problems when trying to transport their boats through these airlines.

AW member, Jim Leutenegger, recently contacted Pat Rary, an employee in Delta's Baggage Services Department. Rary indicated that it would be a waste of our time to meet regarding a policy change. This position was indicative of Delta's policy towards transporting kayaks. It also typified the second most common theme encountered: indifference.

This lack of interest was also conveyed by American, United, and British Airways, which had no guidelines, and established different means of handling kayaks.

Jeff Green of United's Media Relations Department, stated that United was more than willing to allow any kayaks if they were less than 5'2". When asked why sailboards and surfboards were given special treatment but not kayaks, Mr. Green stated "the policy would be changed." Before AW could ask when, he responded, "I cannot give you an exact date this will be changed." He apparently felt that it was more important to ap-

pease the boating community with words than to make a valid attempt at changing frustrating policy.

At American Airlines, Emillo in the Media Relations Department simply stated, "American Airlines is not interested in changing any policies at this time, due to the money that would be needed to change the policy." He neglected to mention why money was an issue in changing the policy. Other boaters reported having this same conversation regarding money with Delta.

At present, most boaters are at the mercy of the personnel at the check-in counter. Here are some tips that will help make your traveling experience a little easier:

- Before you purchase your ticket, announce that you are going to be traveling with a kayak. Have the airline make a note on your ticket that you will have a kayak as a piece of luggage. You may need to talk to a few different people. Some airline employees seem to be more accommodating than others, even within the same airline. HINT: Call the airline back to check if this information was actually added to your file in the computer system.
- Wrap your boat and make it easy to handle. This can be done by packing your boat in a bag, wrapping your boat with bubble wrap or heavy plastic, or making sure the grab loops are easily accessible. Just be sure it is easy to handle. You may put all of your gear in the boat depending on the weight. HINT: If your boat looks awkward to handle, it won't help you get it aboard.
- If you have problems during check-in, tell your agent about the note on your file that indicates you are bringing a boat. HINT: If matters escalate, hold your ground and ask to speak with a supervisor.
- Be prepared to pay a fee. Some boaters pride themselves on traveling with their boats for free. This is becoming harder to do. Each airline AW spoke with mentioned some type of fee. Expect to pay \$50-100 each way. This price can vary greatly (from free to \$300). Do not be surprised if you are asked to pay an "oversized luggage" fee. HINT: If you can keep the weight of your boat under 40 pounds, you will have a better chance of getting it on a plane.
- Another commonly used tactic is the "Well you got my boat here, you can get it

home." However, you should be prepared to support this statement.

- As a final resort, you may have to ship your boat air cargo (generally your boat is on your flight but in a different cargo compartment). Air cargo tends to be much more expensive and may be priced by volume rather than weight.

If you decide the hassle of dealing with your boat is not worth it, there are alternatives. Our members have widely reported good luck in renting kayaks—both domestically and overseas—in the proximity of their destinations. Sometimes the rental shop may seem out of the way, or you may feel like you're getting ripped off, but it is likely to be cheaper and easier than dealing with the airlines.

Unfortunately, getting your boat on the plane is only the biggest battle. You may also have trouble getting your paddle or gear on a plane. Here are some hints that American Whitewater's staff have developed based on their travel experiences:

- Travel with a break down paddle. If the blades are wrapped tightly in cardboard, most airports will let you carry them through security, and they will fit in the overhead bin.
- If you have to stow your paddle as luggage, most airlines now make you sign a waiver stating that the paddle is fragile. If so, be sure to wrap the blades, and especially brace the joints with the blade in cardboard. This is where many hairline fractures occur.
- Dry your gear completely to reduce weight. If it is not possible to remove the dampness, at least make sure to drip-dry the gear. If the gear is wet, pack it inside a plastic or waterproof bag to avoid damaging other luggage in the plane.
- Double check that you have everything before you depart.

AW draws the following conclusion: when you want to travel with your kayak, you better think in terms of "air pressure." Lay some pressure on the airlines to establish kayak-friendly rules; otherwise surf's up!

Who puts the "friendly" in the friendly skies?

By Frazer Pearce

The "friendly" airlines are likely to agree to carry your boat. The airlines marked with a star (*) are likely to place a moderate surcharge on your luggage, while the unmarked carriers may be free depending on how you approach them.

Kayak Friendly Airlines

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The Art of Travel Logistics

By Jason Robertson

So you have your plane ticket and are about to embark for an endless spring. You can't wait to leave and start chasing water all around the globe! Before you pack your bags, make sure that you are well-armed for the worst that the world can throw at you. Be prepared with the right documents and information that you will need to reduce or even prevent travel headaches.

The first order of business for an international traveler is getting a passport. This process is easy if you give yourself several months to complete the paperwork and give the State Department time to process your application. You can get the forms you will need from <http://travel.state.gov> or by calling the National Passport Information Center at 1-900-225-5674. Your DS-11 application will cost \$85. If you need to expedite your application, many passport agencies now operate by appointment and generally serve only those leaving in fewer than 14 days. You can also apply using an overnight delivery service. However, you will need to pay the additional \$60 fee for expedited service and include a self-addressed, prepaid, two-way, overnight delivery envelope. Whichever way you apply, be sure to include your travel itinerary and copies of your tickets if they are available. You will also have to submit proof of your US citizenship, proof of identity, two photographs, and appropriate fees.

If you already have a passport, is it valid? If it has expired, then you will have to submit a DS-82 passport renewal application along with \$55. If your name has changed through marriage or if you have filled all the pages in your passport, you will have to submit a DS-19 application.

So, you have a valid passport in hand, what else will you need to do to prepare? First, fill out the emergency information page in your passport.

Second, make two photocopies of your passport identification page. Pack one separately and leave the other with family or friends. These will be your lifeline if your passport is lost or stolen, saving hours, or even days, of heartache.

Third, carry at least two extra passport-style photographs with you; these may be required at border crossings, particularly in Africa, at some airlines or in other special circumstances involving the loss of your passport.

Fourth, consider carrying a photocopy of your birth certificate. This is unlikely to be required, but, again, will expedite matters if you lose your passport.

Fifth, leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home so you can be reached in an emergency at home or while you are abroad.

The final element you may need to cross borders is a travel visa. A complete listing of the countries requiring visas from U.S. nationals is available at travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html. Be sure to check this site well in advance of your travel date to determine whether you need any additional paperwork.

With your travel documents taken care of, it is time to start worrying about your health. You should make sure that your inoculations are adequate for your travels. Are they up to date? Are they comprehensive? Ask your doctor to compile an immunization record that documents all of your shots—when they were given, and when their protection expires. Consider carrying your immunization record stapled in the back of your passport so you always know where it is.

Also check <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/> for a complete list of the immunizations that are recommended, or required, for travel in different parts of the world. The list is likely to sound frightening, and could tempt you



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to avoid travel. However, consider how bad the listing sounds for North America:

Certain diseases occasionally occur, such as plague, rabies in wildlife, including bats, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia, arthropod-borne encephalitis, and seasonal outbreaks of influenza. Rodent-borne hantavirus has been identified, predominantly in the western states of the United States. Lyme disease is endemic in the northeastern United States, Mid-Atlantic, and the upper Midwest and the southwestern provinces of Canada. Occasional cases have been reported from the Pacific Northwest. Recently, cases of West Nile virus have occurred around the New York City area. During recent years, the incidence of certain foodborne diseases, e.g., *E. coli* O157:H7 and salmonellosis, has increased in some regions. Other hazards include poisonous snakes (see Animal-Associated Hazards on the Making Travel Safe page), poison ivy, and poison oak.

The risks are only relative. Realize that you are likely to be fine if you follow basic sanitary practices, watch what you eat, and get your shots. Since you are likely to be near water, Tetanus and Hepatitis-A vaccines

are a must. But they are merely the first of many that you should consider, depending on your travel plans.

In addition, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends many actions that will help you stay healthy. Some of this advice is common sense, like washing your hands often with soap and water, keeping your feet clean and dry to prevent fungal and parasitic infections and eating only thoroughly cooked food with the admonition to "Boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it." Other advice may not seem so obvious, like drinking only bottled, boiled, or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles; avoiding tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes; remembering to take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel; and using a latex condom.

Consider carrying a complete medical kit for your encounters with foreign hospitals. This should include your own needles, basic antibiotics, and painkillers. You will have to think creatively about what to carry and you will have to be on your best behavior in requesting prescriptions from your physician.

In the event that you get into difficulty requiring helicopter evacuation, you may wish you had travel insurance. Some options to research include the American Alpine Club at <http://www.americanalpineclub.org/members/insurance.shtml>, Mountain-West Insurance Agency at 1-800-826-1300, Divers Insurance Company at 1-800-288-4810, and Diver Alert Network at 1-800-446-2671.

One further travel trick I learned while kayaking in Mexico was the value of documenting boat serial numbers. Consider carrying an "official" form documenting the serial numbers and descriptions of your boats. This document can serve as a receipt "proving" you own your boats, bought them in the US and are not going to sell them in Mexico. Without this documentation, some of the less salubrious border bureaucrats might try to bleed an export or import tax out of you.

Finally, if you get into trouble abroad, contact the local U.S. embassy. The embassy will be much more help to you than even American Whitewater can be.



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Cartwheeling the Himalayas

The Annual Himalayan Kayak Rodeo

By Will Van De Berg
Photos by Sean Glaccum

Owing its origins to some drunken brainstorming and frantic scratchings on the backs of beer labels at Rum Doodles bar in the Thamel district of Kathmandu, the Annual Himalayan Kayak Rodeo has been going strong for the past eight years. Originally held on the Trisuli River, the event now takes place a short three-hour bus ride from Kathmandu. The two sites for the competition sit on the banks of the mighty Bhote Kosi and Upper Sun Kosi rivers, which flow southward from the Nepal-Tibet border, some 25 kilometers to the north. The event alternates yearly between Ultimate Rivers' Riverside Resort on the Bhote Kosi and Equator Expeditions' Sukute Beach Resort on the Upper Sun Kosi. The Sukute Beach Resort hosted the 2001 contest the weekend of November 3 and 4. Nepal river guidebook author, Peter 'Green Slime' Knowles, and Equator Expeditions co-owners Gerry Moffat and Mahendra Singh Thapa organized the event.

Billed as "a get together for Himalayan kayakers in the prime paddling season," the rodeo promised to be a "friendly competition for all classes with no strict world-class rules and totally biased judging." Although I can't testify to the bias of the judges, boaters had a great opportunity to paddle in a fun and relaxed competition in the shadows of the world's highest mountains. The rodeo

spotlighted Nepal's considerable whitewater talent and attracted kayakers from all over the globe. As an added benefit, all proceeds from the event went to supporting the Nepal whitewater team at the upcoming World Kayak Championships.

Approximately 66 paddlers, representing nine countries, attended this year's event, making it an internationally diverse gathering of boaters. Participants and spectators lounged around the resort before, after and in between heats, eating, drinking, shooting pool and playboating near the resort's compound.

Due to unpredictable water levels, organizers were unable to select the rodeo site until the last minute. With only one day to go before the competition, Gerry Moffat and several Western and Nepali friends selected a large, flushy river-left hole on the Upper Sun Kosi, just upstream of the Sukute Beach Resort. However, there was no eddy directly adjacent to the hole that would allow contestants easy reentry. This problem led to some resourceful brainstorming by Gerry and company. First, he and his crew enlisted the help of some locals in bringing rocks and bamboo poles down to the river-side. These were placed across the river on river right to create the foundation of the eddy-to-be. Then old beater kayaks, previously used as a roof for the resort's bus stop, were brought down to the site. One by one, Gerry paddled the kayaks upstream of the

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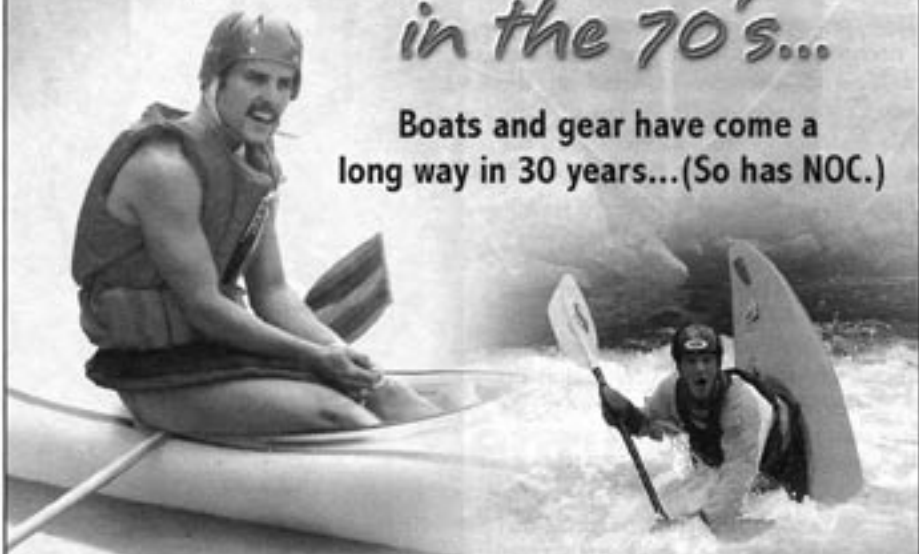


fabricated eddy, rolled over, and entrapped the kayaks between the poles and rocks. Each time he extracted himself from an embedded kayak, he quickly had to climb to safety on a raft that had been anchored downstream of the eddy. Six kayaks later, the end result was an eddy that worked perfectly for the event and was demolished a few days later, thus returning the river to its normal state of affairs.

The event started off with the Intermediate heats, which were dominated by the skills of Dicky Mott (UK), Steve Fleagre (France), Nepali local Indra Rai and Canadian Kris Lindal. These heats were followed by the Women's division, which included both Expert and Intermediate class boaters. In the Women's division, American Lillian Llager took first, followed by Sarah Hudson (Ireland) in second and Inka Trollas (Sweden) in third. After the Women's event came the Himalayan Masters division, which consisted of some of the oldest names in Nepalese river running. Peter Knowles (UK) wowed the crowd and took the gold by hand paddling the large hole. Aussie John Wilde, a member of the first descent party of the Sun Kosi River in 1981, got the crowd singing "Waltzing Matilda" while playing in the hole. His inventive turn earned him second place. Last but not least, long-time Nepal river runner, Jock Montgomery (US), had some great rides and took third. The final class of the day was the Juniors (all Nepali), who demonstrated their country's tremendous up-and-coming talent. First place among the Juniors went to organizer and resort owner Mahendra Thapa's fourteen

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year-old son Mish Thapa. Second place went to sixteen year-old Saroj Rai and third went to seventeen year-old Sham Lal Shrestha.

At the end of the first day's competition everyone retired to the dining hut and pool hall, where cold beers and a great Nepalese barbeque dinner were served. Following dinner, the party really got kicking. Live music provided the auditory stimuli for the evening and as the night wore on, the audience began to join in, leading to some memorable moments for those caught rocking out.

The next morning began with a big breakfast served Equator Expeditions style. Then the show got underway with the qualifying rounds for the Nepalese Expert division. Twenty-two Nepalese kayakers took to the water in four heats to determine who would make it into the final showdown later that afternoon. Ascending to the finals were seven of Nepal's finest kayakers, all of whom had great runs. These boaters would later duke it out for top honors after the International Experts battled their way through their own qualifying heats.

The International Men's Expert division consisted of three heats of boaters going at it for the chance to compete in the finals. Once this exciting class was through dueling it out in their preliminaries, the Nepalese finalists reentered the water and showed the crowd just whose country it was. After some serious competition, veteran rodeo contender Minh Magar won first place, followed closely by Dili Sharma. Sanu Gurung took third, but not before giving Dili some tough competition in a head-to-head tiebreaker jam.

The International Men's Expert division finals began shortly after the Nepalese finals, and these fellows ripped the hole in a




truly global way. Brett Gleason rose to the top with long surfs and endless cartwheels, while "Crazy" Dave Thompson styled his way into the mix with a 360-degree peace sign. Alex Bailey tossed multiple wave wheels into some nice surfs, but a few untimely flushes from the hole knocked him out of the ultimate rounds. The championship came down to American Brett Gleason and Australian Aaron Hernando, who cranked through not one, but two, man-to-man final matches before Brett emerged victorious and Aaron took a hard-fought second place.

The award ceremony followed the finals, with Peter Knowles, Gerry Moffat and David Allardice as well as Nepalese Tourism Ministry representative, Shankar Koirala, handing out awards to the winners. Donated by Palm, Perception, Dagger, Peak UK, Smith and Shred Ready, the awards were much appreciated in a country where getting new paddling gear is a challenge. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed a short session on the river and then either packed

it up for the three-hour bus ride back to Kathmandu or headed upriver for a run on the popular upper section of the Bhote Kosi. Everyone agreed that the event was a huge success.

Editor's Note: Will Van De Berg, is a doctoral candidate in the University of Georgia's Department of Ecological and Environmental Anthropology. He has lived in Nepal off and on for the past three years, conducting research on the importance of the whitewater industry to its Nepalese participants and the country's tourism industry.





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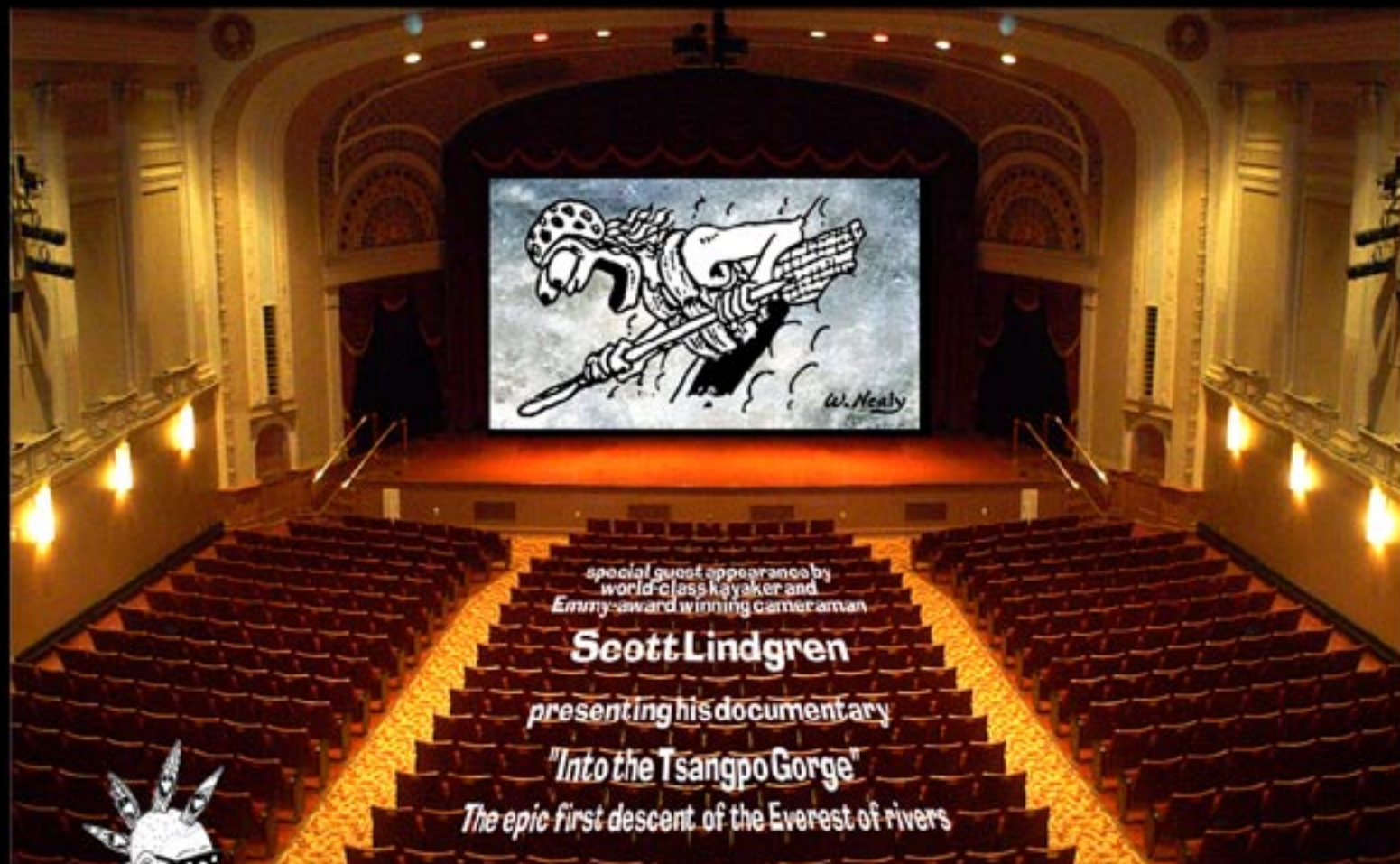
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The Floating World

Two years of paddling Japan

by Chris Emery

*A dry riverbed
glimpsed
by lightning
-Issa*

In late August of 1998, burned out on paddling and the same old daily grind, I sold my kayak and packed my bags for Japan. My fiancé Monica and I planned to teach English in Tokyo for a year. After six months though, the novelty of tiny apartments, thick crowds, and endless concrete had worn off. In a bid to preserve our sanity

we accepted teaching jobs in the mountainous Nagano prefecture.

One hour by bullet train from Tokyo, the rugged landscape of Nagano was nothing like the urban sprawl of the Kanto Plain we had left behind. Farmers planting rice in terraced fields, thatch roof houses between grooves of blossoming cherry trees, and streams swollen with spring snow melt were the backdrop of our lives. The jagged, snow-capped peaks of Japan's Northern Alps replaced the neon lights and skyscrapers of Shinjuku. Within weeks of moving to Nagano, the itch to kayak again hit like a keg of sake.

Snowboarding, mountain biking, and in-

flated Japanese prices kept the craving to kayak in check for a year after we moved to the mountains, but then I took a job at a junior high school deeper in the Alps, and we decided to stay for another two years. I couldn't wait to paddle any longer. I spent the yen saved for a plane ticket back to the U.S. on a kayak. Then I bought a Mapple road atlas ("a map, like an apple, keeps us happy"), strapped my new kayak to our 550cc Suzuki K-Car, and set off to find some whitewater.

*Wax on, wax off,
wax on, wax off*

-Mr. Miyagi





Ignorance and loneliness soon led me to the Japanese Freestyle Kayak Association (JFKA) for help finding rivers and paddlers. The owner of the kayak shop where I bought my kayak and gear gave me the telephone number for the president of the JFKA. Unfortunately, my Japanese was good for ordering *nama biru* (draft beer), bowls of ramen, and little else. Our phone conversation went as follows:

"Uh...I Japanese, no speaking," I said in Japanese.

"Huh! We English, sorry," the JFKA President responded in English.

"Uh...kayaku want to," I said.

Then the JFKA President was either channeling the ghost of Charlie Brown's teacher or speaking Japanese way too fast.

Above: Monica Lam plays in a small hole on the Shiribetsu river with a volcano in the background, Hokkaido

Opposite: Chris Emery paddles down a rapid on the Sorachi River, Hokkaido
Photo by Monica Lam

The Ultimate in Kayak Instruction

- by World Champion Ken Whiting

The Playboater's Handbook II follows up on the best-selling success of the original Handbook with a completely updated look at freestyle kayaking technique. It covers almost 3 times as many moves as the first edition with the help of other elite freestyle paddlers, including Corran Addison, Tyler Curtis and Steve Fisher. From the fundamental skill sets and 'catching your first wave', to the latest moves like the tricky whu and aerial loop, *the Playboater's Handbook II* will be a must have for both those who did and did not take advantage of the first.

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“Uh.....huh?” I grunted.

“English...no. Sorry. Bye,” replied the JFKA President

“Sorry. Japanese....no.” I hung up after a long uncomfortable silence.

Caller ID saved the day. Soon after hanging up on the JFKA President, a man called and in clear English introduced himself as Osawa. The JFKA President had got my number off his caller ID and asked Osawa-san to call me. There was a rodeo on the Arakawa (*kawa* is the suffix for “river”) and I was welcome to join in.

The Arakawa originates in the Chichibu Mountains just West of Tokyo. The Arakawa Rodeo is held annually at *Supinu Horu* (Spin Hole) where the Ara flows through the *onsen*—or hot spring rich—town of Nagatoro. Health conscious pilgrims flock to Nagatoro to soak in the pungent mineral baths. Boaters go to play in Spin Hole. I traveled to Nagatoro that first time to dish out a little taste of old fashioned American whupass. *How good could the Japanese be at kayaking*, I thought.

At the registration desk for the rodeo, Osawa-san was busy signing people up. It turned out he was Vice-President of the JFKA and owned a rafting company based on the Arakawa. He told me that no other foreigners were registered for the rodeo. When I asked him to sign me up for the expert division, he apologetically informed me that first time entrants could only sign up for the intermediate class. Sure of placing well in the expert division, I was irritated, but wrote it off as a case of infamous Japanese inflexibility. After seeing me paddle, they would definitely assign me to the expert class in the next rodeo. I managed to understand another paddler at the reg-

istration desk say, “An American paddler? Guess I just got bumped a spot.” A warm glow of self-satisfaction swelled between my ears. It did occur to me as I carried my shiny Foreplay and Lightning paddle to the river, that a lot could have change, even in Japan, in my two-year hiatus from kayaking. My signature half-cartwheel to wing-over to windowshade might not cut it any more...nah.

Reaching the river and spotting the eddy full of kayakers next to Spin Hole, my winner’s-glow suddenly rushed to my cheeks. Ends were being thrown like I had never seen ends thrown before. Cartwheels, fast as an Iron Chef’s knife, with split wheels thrown in for flavor, were the basic technique for several of the contestants. The half-cartwheel to wing-over to windowshade was definitely not going to be the hottest trick in this rodeo.

Just as I was contemplating a stealthy retreat, a wedding party floated through the rapid in a long wooden boat being poled by men in Edo era outfits. A woman in the boat pointed at me and yelled, “*ah Gaijin-san da (Look a foreigner!)*.”

Suddenly, all eyes in the eddy were on me.

In Japanese Tea Ceremony, every cup, gesture, and topic of conversation is attended to with the utmost care, resulting in a heightened appreciation of the moment. The moment the competitors in the eddy started staring at me, I had a heightened appreciation that it would have been much better were I carrying an old, faded Dancer and a red and white Norse paddle, (or a sign in Japanese that read: THIS GUY CAN’T DO A TRICK TO SAVE HIS LIFE).

There was no turning back. I got into my boat and paddled into the eddy, where I



Above: Dog in Canoe on the Ara River, Honshu

Below: People soaking in Seseki Onsen, Hokkaido
When the tide comes up the onsen is covered

Opposite: Japanese paddler plays in Spin Hole on the Ara River, Honshu
Photo by Monica Lam

was greeted by appraising gazes and a couple of shy nods. The bobbing heads in front of me entered the hole one by one until I was left at the front of the line. I paddled in to Spin Hole and spent what felt like a good five minutes trying to get out. Back in the eddy, breathless and humbled, I noticed a change in atmosphere. While I was gone everybody had apparently dropped their guard. The shy nods had morphed into gentle smiles and the paddlers started talking to me.

“Where are you from? How long have you been paddling?”

In a case of spontaneous language acquisition I learned to say in Japanese, “I paddled in the States, but I haven’t paddled in TWO YEARS.”

The Asian tradition of helping a person “save face” runs strong in Japan. No one laughed or pointed while I was flailing in Spin Hole—not that I would have noticed during my Triple Windowshade. In fact, all of the paddlers I talked to managed to communicate to me in one way or another that I was paddling very well after taking two years off.



I came away from the Arakawa rodeo with third place out of five in the intermediate class, and the conviction that the Japanese paddling community exemplified the best of Japanese culture: thoughtfulness, generosity, and a desire to make foreigners feel welcome...even arrogant ones.

May rains—
even a nameless stream
is a frightening thing

-Unribo

My first impression of the state of rivers in Japan was, "Man, the Japanese Whitewater Association must suck." Over time, that initial reaction was replaced by a better understanding of the relationship between the country's inhabitants and its rivers.

Like the mythical *Kappa*, a pugnacious goblin dwelling in rivers and picking fights with passers-by, Japanese rivers themselves are prone to violence. For millennia, the people of the Japanese archipelago inhabited small stream fed valleys, avoiding the basins of larger rivers. But everything changed during the *Nara Era* (710-794AD). A political decree encouraged inhabitants to expand their land holdings. This proclamation fueled the settlement in the flood prone alluvial lowlands. Since then, the rivers and people of Japan have clashed regularly. The outcome has often been catastrophic. The *Iwase* typhoon and resulting floods of 1960 killed 5000 people.

The centuries old battle of man vs. nature, combined with the Japanese Ministry of Construction's make-work policies resulted in massive alterations of streams and rivers. Concrete retaining walls on riverbanks and low-head dams are ubiquitous in Japan.

Tetrapods, like giant concrete children's jacks, are haphazardly strewn in riverbeds. The Shimantogawa on Shikoku Island is the only river in Japan that hasn't been dammed up.

It's not as grim as it sounds, though. Despite the overabundance of hardware, Japan still boasts some excellent whitewater rivers. As my friend Chad learned, you just have to do your research to avoid death traps and sandbagging *senpai*.

In Japan, a *senpai* is a person ahead of you in some discipline—be it school or kayaking—who assumes the role of mentor. A *senpai* bears responsibility for his protégé's welfare. Thus when I taught Chad to roll in a local lake in early April I became his kayaking *senpai*, responsible for his safe progression through the sport.

Chad learned to roll on the first day we went out to Aokiko lake. Snow still lingered in the soggy rice paddies as cars drove by with skis on top. But Chad was Canadian; he bore the cold well. I was excited to have a new paddling partner that wasn't put off by the cold water. The locals however, were worried for us. When the housewives in my community center English classes heard about us paddling, they insisted the lake was so cold it would give us heart attacks. A younger student who grew up in the area told me the locals weren't really worried about the water temperature. They feared ghosts. Before a new road was built for the 98' Nagano Olympics, a school bus slid off the narrow, icy road into Aokiko, and the children all drowned. Superstition runs deep in the snow bound towns of the Japanese mountains. Over the years all kinds of rationale had been devised to explain why no one swam in the Aokiko any more.

In the summer and fall before Chad learned



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to roll, I had paddled the Himegawa, a class two river running through town, countless times. Usually mellow and relatively unobstructed (or so I thought), it seemed like the perfect place to take a neophyte. By late spring though, most of the heavy snowpack from the winter monsoon had melted off, and the river was just a trickle.

Three high water seasons grace Japan: the snow melt of March and April, *tsuyu* (summer monsoon) in July, and typhoon season in Autumn. When *tsuyu* brought heavy rains two months after Chad learned to roll, my excitement got the better of me and I convinced him to paddle the Hime.

Floating quickly past rice and buckwheat fields in the cappuccino colored water, I realized that I had never run the Hime at such a high flow. Chad wasn't a very strong paddler yet, but I told myself that everything would be fine. I'd just have to keep one eye peeled.

I caught a little wave and shouted for Chad to head for an eddy. I peeled off the wave just in time to see Chad disappear over a drop downstream. Paddling hard to catch up, I could make out the ends of his green boat poking violently above the muddy horizon line. Coming up to the drop I saw Chad and kayak being tossed around like two kernels of corn in a Jiffy Pop. A low head dam—one that I didn't remember from my summer runs—was recirculating the flow in a river wide hydraulic.

I am a very bad senpai, I thought.

I boofed into an eddy on river left where the dam ended in a concrete wall. Taking a second to get composed with a Zen-ful

belly breath, I told myself to focus on fixing the mess I had made. I had to think clearly—*Oh man, I KILLED Chad!* I had never met Chad's mother, but her face came to me in the eddy; she had a fair complexion and accusing eyes.

Recirculating water extended about ten feet downriver of the hydraulic. In the time it took me to paddle to where Chad was making his rounds in the hole, he resurfaced twice, and his boat once. Serendipity brought him up next to my stern, and I towed him into the down stream flow.

Twenty minutes later, sitting in the car with the heat blasting, I admitted to a shivering Chad that if licenses were mandatory for kayaking and *senpai-ing*, mine deserved to be irreversibly revoked.

We especially like typhoon season!

-Jatsuya Yagi, Japanese kayaker

Despite the dams and other flood prevention hardware, paddling in Japan is still a unique and worthwhile experience. Where else can you take out under the massive cedars of a six hundred year old Buddhist temple then go have an Asahi Super Dry in a wooden *onsen*?

Rivers like the Yoshinogawa in Shikoku, the Mugawa on the north island of Hokkaido, and the Tonegawa in the center of Honshu are classic Japanese Class IV runs. For play



Above: One, two, three... chi-su!
Athletes at the Arakawa Rodeo

Below: Edo Era style boat trip down the Ara River, Honshu

boaters, the Nagaragawa (also on Honshu) has an array of spots: Kono Wave, Onna Nobori Hole, and Tachi Tachi Hole. An added perk of paddling the Nagaragawa is a chance to see local fishermen using birds with rings around their necks to catch fish.

Creeking has just recently caught on among Japanese paddlers, and there are tons of first descents either being run or waiting to be run. I remember hiking in the Central Alps before I bought a kayak. I saw a staircase of four, twenty to thirty-foot waterfalls and suspected they had never been run. The Japanese mountains are full of creeks, rivers, and waterfalls that kayakers have never laid eyes on. Paddler and kayak designer Clay Wright went in search of some of these hidden gems on Hokkaido—the most remote of the major islands.

"I was psyched how little of Japan is the landscape we see on TV, and how much is steep and wooded, with excellent roads, conveniences, and scenery," he said.

Intrepid visitors to Japan only need remember a few things: be mindful of the Construction Ministry's concrete booby traps; Kappa Sushi chain restaurants are cheap and tasty, but be sure you are going to eat what you take off the conveyor belt—it's bad form to put it back; and if you see Chad, please don't remind him of his near drowning on the Hime. He just placed tenth in the expert class at a JFKA rodeo and I'm hoping that, in his excitement, he has forgotten all about it.

Editor's Note: Chris Emery currently paddles and writes in Washington D.C. For more information on paddling in Japan, check out his website Kayakmind.com or his Rapid Rambles column on Outdoorjapan.com





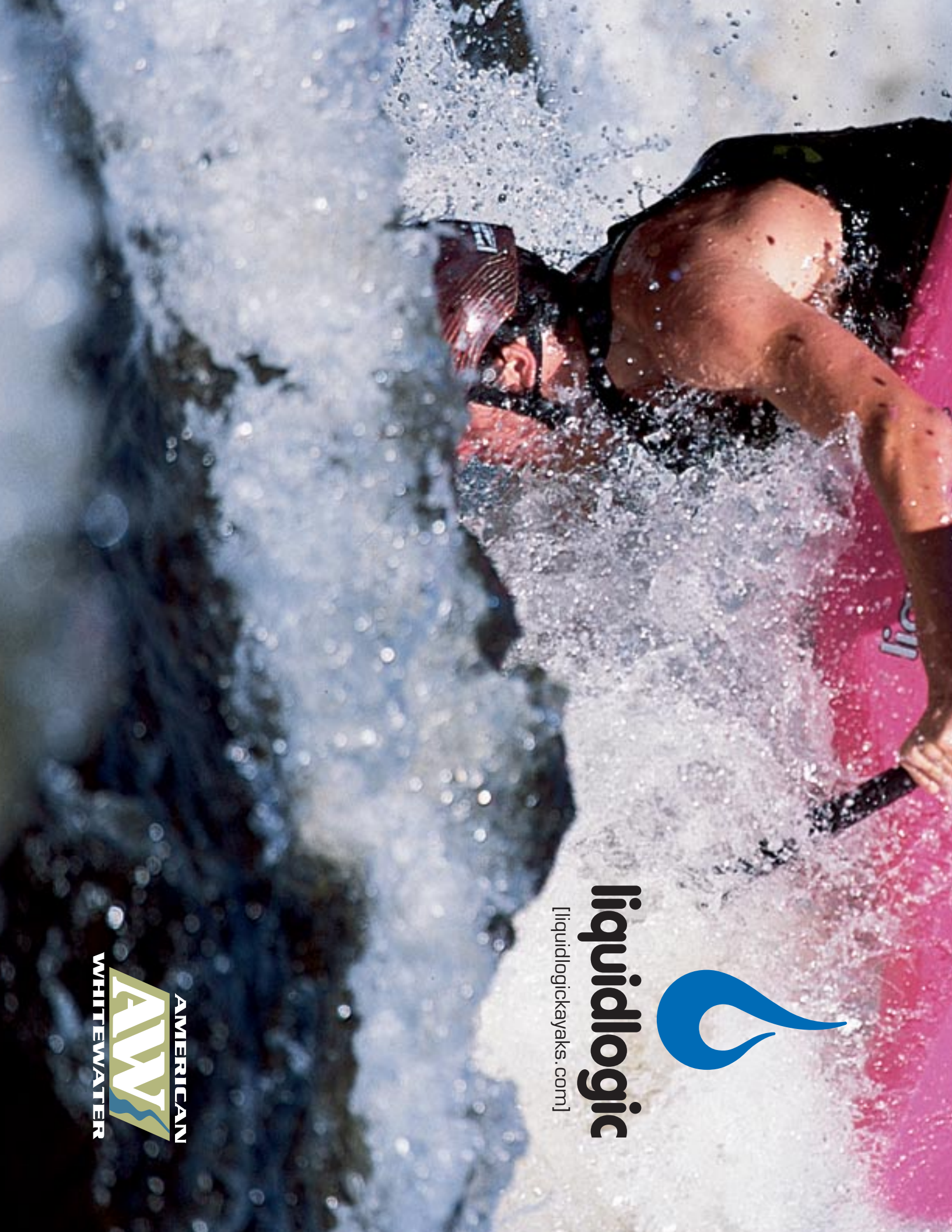
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Kyle Scarbrough, Ottawa River



photos by Jock Bradley



2002 Teva Whitewater National Championships a Success!

By Michael Phelan

Photos by Pat McDonnell

With the leaves changing to brilliant hues of yellow, orange, and red, vehicles with license plates from all over the country began to deposit bleary-eyed paddlers on the banks of the Ocoee River at the Olympic Whitewater Center. Paddlers from as far away as Oregon, Washington, and Maine were arriving to compete in the American Whitewater sanctioned Teva Whitewater National Championships.

The 2002 Teva Whitewater National Championships concluded seven months of intense competition on the Teva Tour that included thirteen events held across the United States. Competitors from all ability levels were invited to compete at the Olympic Whitewater Center on the Ocoee River based on their Teva Tour performance.

It was with a real sense of pride that I watched the weekend unfold. Eighteen months of grueling work took place to bring the Teva Tour and Teva Whitewater National Championships into fruition. In the weeks prior to the event, I suffered from a severe case of “what if nobody wants to come to the party syndrome,” but with careful optimism I watched the registration numbers swell to well over 170 athletes. For the first time ever, the entire paddling community, Amateurs and Pros alike, were focused on becoming the National Champion of their respective classes.

The Championships marked a number of firsts in the sport of freestyle kayaking. The event was the first to recognize champions from each age and ability level. The event also became the place for amateur athletes to earn their pro status for 2003. Rob Terry from Maryland was one such athlete. Terry placed fourth in the Mens’ Expert division giving him the opportunity to compete as a pro athlete in 2003. Terry said, “To me, Nationals was everything a competition should be: it combined a sweet feature, loud music, an enthusiastic crowd, warm sunshine, and fierce competition.” By the time competition was over, some paddling legends were forced to take a step back and make room for a new generation of Pros.

The elite of the Women’s Pro class were also forced to make room for a dark horse who came from the wilds of Maine. Karyn McMullin Roy snatched the National Champion title from several of the top women competitors. Karyn had impressive rides that included several vertical moves that many of the other women struggled with. Karyn’s accolades from 2002 also included a second at the Potomac, and a fourth at the Ottawa. What makes Karyn’s success at the Ocoee so amazing was that this was the first year she competed as a pro athlete. Among the athletes enjoying a fantastic fall weekend in the heart of the Appalachian Mountain was Deb O’Keefe from New York. Deb earned the bronze medal in the Women’s Pro Division and stated, “I was proud to be a part of the tour and learned a



lot by making a commitment to the entire series. I am especially thankful to the organizers and volunteers for hosting such an incredible event.” Deb also won first place in the squirt competition.

Tennessee native Javid Grubbs wowed the crowd with an impressive array of aerial moves, clearly identifying that a new era in freestyle paddling is here to stay. Grubbs went on to become the Men’s Pro National Champion. The National Championship had a purse of \$10,000 in cash and prizes.

The 1996 Olympic venue on the Ocoee River was chosen for its superior ability to comfortably host athletes, spectators and the media. “Everyone worked tirelessly to present what, in my opinion, was one of the best freestyle events ever held,” said Adam Druckman, Sports Marketing Director for Teva Footwear.

American Whitewater chose the Ocoee River to host the National Championships to further publicize the Tennessee Valley Authority unwillingness to provide water on the Upper Ocoee in order to support the local economy through a healthy whitewater and tourism industry. For more information regarding the TVA’s involvement in the Upper Ocoee River, please take a look at Kevin Colburn’s article on the Ocoee in this issue of the Journal.



Teva Nationals Results

Women's K-1 Pro			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	Roy	Karyn	ME
2	Lonsdale	Whitney	NC
3	O'Keefe	Deb	NY
4	Mitchell	Erica	WV
5	Winger	Brooke	OR
6	Shuman	Tanya	MD
7	Taylor	Harriet	VA
8	Levesque	Anna	CAN
9	Barker	Devon	
10	Kelly	Nicola	NZ

Men's K-1 Pro			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	Grubbs	Javid	TN
2	Holcombe	Andrew	NC
3	Spino-Smith	Andre	VA
4	Berman	Tao	WA
5	Selby	Jed	CO
6	Wright	Clay	TN
7	Kirk	Bryan	VA
8	Bedingfield	Andy	OR
9	Shimrock	Jesse	WV
10	Blakeney	James	WV

Open C-1			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	Kennon	Barry	NC
2	McKnight	Bill	TN
3	Bell	Andrew	CA
4	Hopkins	William	VA
5	Bahn	Ryan	CO
6	Warner	Glen	NJ
7	Kortze	Denny	MD
8	Burke	Dan	ME
9	Chapelle	Seth	VA

Men's K-1 Expert			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	Hopkins	Luke	VA
2	Burke	Dan	ME
3	Moser	Karl	OR
4	Terry	Robert	MD
5	Rankin	Lane	TN
6	Miller Jr.	Robert	MD
7	Doherty	Scott	MT
8	Hall	Cory	TN
9	Volt	Corey	UT
10	Ligare	Scott	CA
11	Smith	Dru	TN
12	Metheny	Pat	VA
13	Wray	Alan	NC
14	Todd	Chris	OR
15	Jacobs	Lane	MT
16	Winger	Ethan	GA
17	Wright	Stephen	PA
18	Maser	Andy	MD
19	Hale	Jason	NC
20	Letorney	Calef	VA

Women's K-1 Expert			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	Armstrong	Karen	NJ
2	Hawkins	Paige	PA
3	Kloberdanz	Lisa	NC
4	Rice	Jessie	VA
5	Tidmore	Jamie	NC

Men's K-1 Junior Expert			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	Quinif	Michael	GA
2	King	Charles	NC
3	Long	Marlow	NC
4	Gragtmans	Chris	SC
5	Keller	Pat	NC
6	Edmiston	Michael	GA
7	Sanders	Jonathan	GA
8	Sturges	Rush	MT
9	Urban	Dustin	ME
10	Kleminsky	Nick	AL

Open OC-1		
Place	Last Name	First Name
1	Chapelle	Seth
2	Bell	Andrew
3	Smerda	Craig
4	Tombras	Dooley
5	Simpson	Dave

Men's K-1 Beginner and Sport			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	McNeely	Jeremy	CA
2	Twist	Paul	NY
3	Horton	Adam	NY
4	Fowler	Mark	GA
5	Knuettel	Nick	TN
6	Oster	Ben	VA

Freestyle Through A Rapid			
Pl	Last Name	First Name	Class
1	Armstrong	Karen	WmnsExp
1	Jacobs	Lane	Expert
2	Doherty	Scott	Expert
3	Metheny	Pat	Expert
4	Ligare	Scott	Expert
5	Rathmann	William	Expert
6	Jennings	Brian	Expert
7	Champion	Fraser	Expert
8	Witt	Willy	Expert
1	Stiefel	Matt	Jr. Expert
2	Quinif	Michael	Jr. Expert
3	Hotze	Alex	Jr. Expert
4	Garcia	Ian	Jr. Expert
5	Rettig	Aaron	Jr. Expert
6	Rehage	Peter	Jr. Expert
7	Bradt	Tyler	Jr. Expert
8	Shields	Miah	Jr. Expert
1	Ritchey	Todd	Jr. Sport
1	Winger	Brooke	Wmns Pro
2	Shuman	Tanya	Wmns Pro
3	Taylor	Harriet	Wmns Pro
4	Stone	Jessie	Wmns Pro
5	Roy	Karyn	Wmns Pro
6	Kelly	Nicola	Wmns Pro
7	Carroll	Shannon	Wmns Pro
8	Levesque	Anna	Wmns Pro
9	Beckstead	Lisa	Wmns Pro
10	Mann	Karen	Wmns Pro
11	Barker	Devon	Wmns Pro
12	Lonsdale	Whitney	Wmns Pro
13	Chapelle	Heather	Wmns Pro
14	Prickett	Dixie~Marree	Wmns Pro
1	Jackson	Eric	Mens Pro
2	Kincaid	Jay	Mens Pro
3	Holcombe	Andrew	Mens Pro
4	Blakeney	James	Mens Pro
5	Bedingfield	Andy	Mens Pro
6	Mounsey	Stuart	Mens Pro
7	Groves	Shane	Mens Pro
8	Warner	Glen	Mens Pro
9	Mckee	Tom	Mens Pro
10	Selby	Jed	Mens Pro
11	Isaacson	Tyko	Mens Pro



Women's K-1 Beginner		
Place	Last Name	First Name
1	Bundy	Christine

Men's K-1 Junior Beginner and Sport			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	Schell	Chris	SC
2	Williams	Philly	TX
3	Kennedy	Charles	MA
4	Johnson	Adam	NJ
5	Harbin	John	GA
6	Thieling	Matthew	SC
7	Ritchey	Todd	PA
8	Thompson	Nathan	CA

Women's K-1 Junior Beginner and Sport			
Place	Last Name	First Name	State
1	Kennedy	Elyse	MA

Men's Squirt		
Place	Last Name	First Name
1	Urban	Dustin
2	McKee	Tom
3	Mills	Nathan
4	Zitzow	Eric
5	Casson	James
6	Wilensky	Jesse
7	Buley	Jim

Men's Amateur Boatercross		
Place	Last Name	First Name
1	Doherty	Scott
2	Rathmann	Austin
3	Shields	Miah



Above: Unidentified Airhead

Below: Shane Benedict

Opposite Left: Andrew, Eric & Tao

Opposite Right: Barry Kennon, C-1 Champ

Photos by Pat McDonnell

Women's Squirt		
Place	Last Name	First Name
1	O'Keefe	Deb
2	Chapelle	Heather

Men's Pro Boatercross		
Place	Last Name	First Name
1	Bedingfield	Andy
2	McKee	Tom
3	Burden	Brad

Women's Pro Boatercross		
Place	Last Name	First Name
1	Kelly	Nikki
2	Armstrong	Karen
3	Mann	Karen



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Ocoee River: Event Ends Stalemate?

By Kevin Colburn

In October, American Whitewater used the Teva National Championships to launch a new campaign to stop the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA's) plan to end all releases on the Upper Ocoee. When the event was over, TVA closed the gates on the Ocoee #3 Dam and the river ran dry. If the TVA is allowed to continue its plan, the gates will be open only two days next year, and never again after that. Thanks to the momentum that AW was able to gain at the Nationals, we now have hope that the Upper Ocoee will once again support a vibrant boating community.

The timing of the event could not have been better: it came less than 3 months after the Upper Ocoee was removed from a large study that the TVA was conducting on how to best manage their rivers. American Whitewater had been told for over a year that the study, called the Reservoir Operations Study (ROS), was our public process to affect the management of the Ocoee River. We were successful in garnering a large number of public comments on

the study that supported releases in the Upper Ocoee, and have worked diligently on a steering committee for the ROS. Still, the Ocoee was pulled from the study with no justification, and we were left with no public process whatsoever to address concerns over the Ocoee. A similar thing happened in 1997 when the TVA unilaterally decided to impose unreasonable fees on users of the Upper Ocoee, totally undercutting a unanimous decision by the US Forest Service, AW and the TVA itself to provide 74 days of recreational releases annually on the Upper.

AW and the people of East Tennessee were twice burned, and the TVA was left with no accountability for its actions.

At Nationals we hosted a press briefing that catalyzed news features on 4 TV channels and front-page articles in newspapers in Chattanooga and Knoxville (the TVA core areas). We also used the event to get nearly 1000 letters signed which we sent to the board of the TVA, asking them to settle the issue. The result is a complex and dynamic series of conversations between the stake-



holders that will hopefully result in a settlement agreement addressing our interests.

The Teva National Championships was the perfect example of why AW runs events. It was a fun and exciting celebration of the sport that empowered our conservation and access work in a manner that would be otherwise unachievable. Because of the momentum gained at this event, there will hopefully be many more events to come on the Upper Ocoee.

SE Conservation Updates

Flow Study in Bona's Defeat Gorge, NC.

A paddling feasibility study was held in the Bona's Defeat Gorge of the East Fork of the Tuckasegee on July 9th, 2002. AW and Duke power worked together to organize this study, which placed 15 paddlers armed with still and video cameras at numerous locations in the Gorge. Duke power then provided flows of 170, 190, and 325 cfs through the gorge, which is usually dewatered by Tanasee Dam and Diversion Tunnel. The paddlers observed and documented at least 6 major rapids to determine whether or not they were runnable. We then shared video footage with one another in a focus group meeting. At the lower two flows the entire river flowed into sieves in several locations making the already Class V rapids impassable. The highest flow filled the many sieves up, making all but one or two rapids runnable. It was determined that if flows approximating 325 cfs were provided, Bona's Defeat would offer a mile long difficult Class V+ river.

Western North Carolina Relicensings Near an End?

In February American Whitewater expects to sign settlement agreements on the Tuckasegee, Nantahala, and Cheoah Rivers that determine how those rivers and watersheds will be managed for the next 30 years. We eagerly anticipate the results of these negotiations, following 4 years of hard work by volunteers and American Whitewater staff on these projects. Once settlement agreements are signed it will take 2 years for most of the changes to be implemented. We hope to achieve improved flows, access, flow information, and land conservation on each of these projects.

Above: Karyn Roy, K-1 Champ
Photo by Pat McDonnell

Right: Flow Study Participant boofs the Horns of God, Cascades of the Nantahala
Photo by Christopher Smith



White Salmon, WA Conservation & Access

By AW Regional Coordinator Tom O'Keefe
Photo by John Hart

Wild and Scenic Designation

While the Lower White Salmon was designated as a Wild and Scenic River through the Columbia River Gorge Act of 1986, the sections upstream of BZ Corner have remained designated study reaches. This means the upstream areas are currently protected while they are considered for designation. But this administrative policy is subject to change. In 1997 the Forest Service recommended that Congress designate an additional 31.4 miles upstream from BZ Corner into the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. This move would have offered permanent protection to this stretch. However, SDS Lumber Company raised concerns regarding the impact this action would have on future management of their timber lands, adjoining the river in sections. So Congressman Baird recently introduced Wild and Scenic River legislation that would not include the 18.4 mile part of this section (notably the Farmlands and Green Truss runs) where the river passes through private land. American Whitewater has joined in supporting this legislation with the hope that when private land concerns can be satisfactorily addressed, the Farmlands and Green Truss runs will one day be included as part of the Wild and

Scenic Rivers system. This action would preserve the river's free-flowing nature, its unique hydrologic and geologic features, the rural lifestyle around it, recreational opportunities, and the natural resource-based economy.

Condit Dam

Plans to remove Condit Dam continue to move forward. As part of a settlement agreement to restore fish passage and bring salmon back to the river after more than 90 years, PacifiCorp has agreed to remove the outdated dam in the fall of 2006. This will require drilling a large hole at the base of the dam and draining the reservoir over the objection of property owners on the reservoir. This past summer, FERC issued a SEIS recommending that dam removal proceed. The original settlement agreement has expired, although no parties have indicated they will back out and PacifiCorp continues to acquire the necessary permits with the goal of completing the project on schedule. Having exhausted appeals with FERC to preserve the reservoir, the local county governments have initiated legal

action to block required permits. In response to this action, the state Department of Ecology has announced plans to further study the impact of sediment release expected to occur with dam removal. We anxiously await the outcome of what would be the largest dam removal project in the country, and the intriguing possibility of a new run on the White Salmon.

Green Truss Access

With the growing popularity of the Farmlands and Green Truss runs, parking at the Green Truss Bridge has become more of a problem. Local paddlers have been working with SDS, the owner of this private access point, to develop a solution that would preserve access. For now, the Green Truss Bridge should be considered pick-up and drop-off only and you should park your car along Carr Road (about a 200 yard walk to the north). Local volunteers are working with SDS to develop signs to inform paddlers of the revised access policy. Check the White Salmon Streamkeeper page for the latest information and updates on how you can help.





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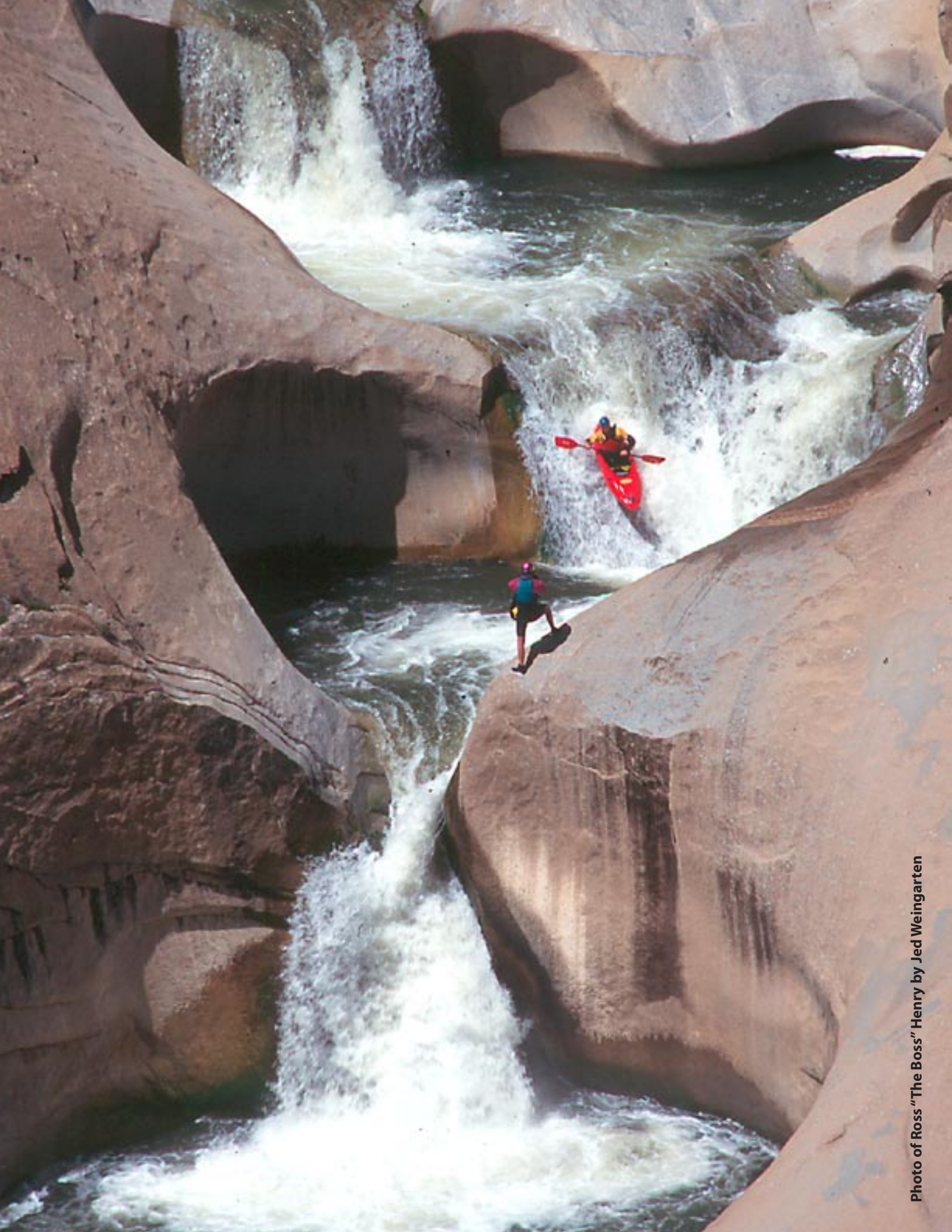


Photo of Ross "The Boss" Henry by Jed Weingarten

Limits of Acceptable Risk

California's Dry Meadow Creek

By Bruce Genereaux

In the spring of 1998 I was 34 and at the peak of my immersion in the California whitewater scene. I planned to paddle the formidable Dry Meadow Creek with Kenny Llewellyn, a frequent paddling companion of mine during the past year. As we headed for the river, our group included Tahoe locals Mark "Jake" Jacobson, Sam Solomon and Jason Hansford. Rounding out the team was Chad Parker and a Chilean visitor, Roark Westland. We were all strong paddlers.

As I contemplated that day's forthcoming adventure, I thought about how many times I had seen images of Dry Meadow's crux and heard it described. Having kayaked some of California's test pieces such as the Clavey River, the Cherry Creek section of the Tuolumne, and having just spent a month kayaking the classic Class V rivers of Chile, I couldn't wait to see how this run matched up.

We carried and dragged our boats down the mile-long trail, donned our dry tops, helmets, neoprene spray skirts and life vests and commenced kayaking. At times our passage was impeded by brush so thick that I wished for ski goggles while I pulled, grabbed and clawed my way through the thickets. Eventually, the gradient increased and I could see that high water had scoured the riverbed clear of brush. House-sized domes and cliffs of granite capped with Ponderosa pines and Douglas fir lined the creek. Instead of traditional rapids, we encountered a series of rock-bordered pools each followed by twenty to fifty-foot-long, angled cascades over, along and through water-worn rock ledges, grooves, and gullies. Each pool/cascade combination looked different than its predecessor, but all had the same general character.

As we approached the crux, a ridge of granite appeared to dam the river's progress. We exited our boats on river-left and all of us except Sam carried our kayaks along a faint path up across a smooth granite slab for a view downstream. Below, the river plunged out of sight more steeply than an expert ski trail. Its banks consisted of smooth granite walls rising hundreds of feet. The creek bed was made up of eight perched, nearly round, backyard-sized swimming pools each connected by nine waterfalls ranging from 10 to 80 feet tall. The creek issued

a constant roar as it dropped all the way to the Kern River about 1,000 feet below us. An apt name for the creek at this point would be "Swiss Cheese Cascade" or the "Tea Cups."

No one had ever run the seventh, eighth or ninth waterfalls. The seventh ends in a narrow, escape-proof pool. Ten feet further, the eighth waterfall plummets 40 feet onto a whale-like boulder centered in its vertical-walled basal pool. Following this pool, a sheer-sided, funnel-like trough channels the creek directly into an 80-foot long, near-vertical, cascade that T-bones a granite wall. Portage before the seventh waterfall is *de rigueur*.

From our vantage, the whole run, except the eighth and ninth waterfalls, was visible. Chad, Jason, Kenny, Roark and I each immediately concluded that we would not run it. The steepness of the succession of waterfalls and the overall intensity of the setting left me awestruck.

I began to portage on the granite slab. Roark continued along the trail to study the eight and ninth waterfalls. Enroute, he passed the sixth waterfall, the mandatory take-out. This pool was clearly marked by the bushes growing on its near bank.

About 100 cfs poured between pools. Here on Dry Meadow, I knew failure to roll meant having to swim out from under one's boat into the churning and aerated waters. The only way out of the steep-walled pools was by rope. However, without anchors above or ascending equipment, an extraction would be nearly impossible. Drowning and hypothermia were real possibilities.

Akin to solo rock climbing without a rope, or driving your car recklessly without a seat belt, running this section of Dry Meadow Creek was a no-mistakes proposition in a remote, inaccessible wilderness setting. The consequences of swimming here could be fatal.

I positioned myself at the seventh pool's edge with safety rope in hand. Sam, having run these waterfalls before, was game to go again. He positioned his kayak on a narrow rock shelf above the first pool, stretched his muscles, squirmed into his boat, sealed his spray skirt and mentally prepared himself for the upcoming descent.

Just then, a group of professional kayakers emerged upstream and moved to scout the waterfalls. Their entourage included Steve Fisher, Ross Henry, Nathan Seeby and Corran Addison. Professional photographer Jed Weingarten and a spectator, Katie Desrochers, were positioned on the river-right cliff top 500 feet above. They used two-way radios to communicate to their teammates below. Now, nearly fifteen people, ten still cameras and three video cameras were poised as Sam tightened his chinstrap, squeezing sweat and river water from his helmeted locks.

Sam launched himself down the waterfalls, plunging, then collecting himself and plunging again, six times. Through the cheers of the spectators, he paddled over to the left bank, escaping the grasp of the subsequent terminal waterfall.

Knowing that no more of our group was to paddle the tea cups, I moved up to the perch above the third waterfall where the rest of our group watched. As the professional paddlers descended, they intentionally added complex ballet-like maneuvers to the already challenging falls.

Their cavalier attitude and the resulting carnival-like atmosphere eroded the serious tenor our group felt. On each descent, the whole crowd watched and moved with the kayakers. There was so much focus on getting video and still pictures that no safety had been used since Sam's initial run down the falls. Confounding the situation, the two separate groups were now mixed together and communication between them was limited to requests such as "Hey, will you shoot video with our camera while we go down?"

Meanwhile, the team of professionals wheeled their way over the waterfalls, and performed various other tricks in the turbulent pools. Professional kayakers are distinguished from most other kayakers by their unwavering confidence in their ability to recover. Indeed, Ross Henry's paddle became wedged between the shear walls of the third waterfall and was wrenched from his hands. He chose to chase his paddle, hand paddling three more waterfalls and completing the final ferrying above the terminal drops with his hands.

"It's psycho," Kenny told Jason from their vantage point. "He paddled half the drops without a paddle." This observation, combined with the allure of becoming one of the few people to have run Dry Meadow



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Creek, spurred Kenny and Jason to contemplate runs of their own.

Roark voiced his conundrum, "I've run things this hard at home. But I have a wife, two young kids and a new house now. I don't think I'll be running it today." While we watched the elite boaters running the tea cups, he portaged his boat part way to the bottom of the waterfalls.

Meanwhile, Jason and Kenny convinced each other to run the drops. Kenny's paddling showed his nervousness. He and Jason regrouped in the pools after each of the first three drops. Kenny flipped and rolled up in the turbulent third pool. After this, his tension eased and he continued, thrilling the audience on each waterfall. In the sixth waterfall's pool, both Jason and Kenny let out hoots of pleasure and relief as they paddled across to the take-out shore. They could count themselves among the few who had descended one of the most intimidating sections of whitewater in the United States. Sam and I joined them for an impromptu celebration.

We were preparing to portage the terminal section below when we remembered Roark. Looking around, we were all surprised to see him preparing at the edge of the first waterfall.

During the previous descents, no one on shore had been stationed at the sixth pool for safety. Roark's situation was no different. We were caught up in taking pictures of our kayakers. We moved back up and across the granite slab to be nearer the river.

Roark's paddling style revealed both nervousness and intensity. He surfaced upside down after the first waterfall and attempted two rolls before succeeding on his third try. Spectators yelled "back-paddle" hoping Roark would take time for recovery and avoid running the second waterfall out of control. But, without hesitation, Roark angled his boat correctly to the lip of the next waterfall and paddled off—only to have to roll again in the next pool.

Like others before, on the third waterfall he accelerated sharply and was enveloped in the column of water. He surfaced upright and circled once in the pool just below the crowd who called out again asking him to slow down and give them time to move down to the second viewpoint. Roark appeared to not even notice their requests and continued his determined descent in

a near trance. It was as if the pools he was running now were to be dispatched as fast as possible.

He plunged down the fourth waterfall without mishap or rest. In the pool below the fifth waterfall Roark capsized and rolled up a third time. Without any hesitation, Roark plunged down the sixth waterfall where, at its base, he stopped for the first time, braced against the rock shore on river-right.

There had been palpable tension during Roark's descent. The collected crowd breathed a sigh of relief. Both groups turned to gather their gear before starting the portage to the Kern. I presumed that Roark, like every other boater that day, would paddle across to the distinctive bushy bank of the take-out pool.

The next thing I or anyone else knew, Roark had pushed off and was paddling forward towards the edge of the seventh waterfall. This shocked me into silence. Others who also saw him proceed remembered Roark either tentatively paddling forward or back-paddling as he slipped irreversibly over the tiered seventh drop. However, all clearly remember him paddling deliberately, as one would above any waterfall's lip, across the eighth waterfall's pool, angling sharply left and disappearing over the horizon.

"He's dead," Corran Addison shouted. Earlier, he had scouted the 40-foot-high eighth drop and concluded it was suicidal.

We moved enmass downstream to look, expecting to see Roark swept to sure death at the base of the 80-foot-tall ninth waterfall. What we saw put a pit in my stomach. No boat or paddle was visible, just a blue-helmeted head floating twenty feet from base of the eighth waterfall, near the far shore.

Seeing the base of the eighth waterfall for the first time, I initially assumed he must have landed on the whale-sized rock that spanned its basal pool. Closer inspection revealed only one possible water landing. He would have had to paddle off the left edge of the falls with speed and head for a four-foot wide gap between the vertical left wall and the flat whale rock.

Roark appeared conscious, but wasn't doing anything I could see to try to rescue himself. He floated on the line between the downstream current and swirling backwater. Luck seemed to be the only thing that kept him from being swept further downstream. The shore leading to Roark

was water-slickened, crowned granite that steepened to vertical twenty feet above the river. Roark swirled out of control over sixty feet away. No one could get near the river's edge. The severity of the terrain was such that most would-be rescuers stayed put on flatter ground to avoid becoming victims themselves.

"Swim to the right," shouted Corran over the melee of shouting people and thundering river. Roark somehow moved in the right direction, but made no other movements. Nathan Seeby signaled Roark to see if he was OK. There was no reciprocal signal. This suggested that even if a throw rope were to reach him, he would not be able to grasp it. The consequences of a 40-foot fall (internal injuries, compressed spine, paralysis or concussion) did not escape the crowd on the shore. Furthermore, if Roark were seriously injured in this setting, it was unlikely that he would survive long enough to make it to a hospital. Twelve anxious people scrambled up and down and back and forth along the treacherous bank looking for access.

Corran briefly entertained a running, "Superman-like," jump across the pool. The distance was great, the water swift and the consequences and benefits of this were un-

certain at best. His cardinal rule—never risk your life to save someone else's—prompted him to stay put.

Nathan moved down to the beached kayaks and retrieved safety throw-ropes. He then threw them up to others who considered using them to string a safety line from a nearby tree, but the distance was too great. They edged carefully towards the accident pool unprotected. None of the throw ropes came close to reaching Roark.

Corran, recognizing the gravity of the situation, raised his two-way radio. "Katie and Jed, we have a serious accident here. A helicopter rescue will be needed, stand by for confirmation," he said succinctly.

Time was running out for Roark, as the water in the river was 40°F snowmelt. He needed to be pulled out of the water within minutes if he were to survive, otherwise a helicopter would not be needed, just a land-based body recovery team.

Accessing Roark was a puzzling issue. Crossing the funnel chute below the capture pool seemed impossible. It was too wide to jump. Downstream access was rejected because of impassable cliffs as far as one could see. Upstream crossing options existed in shallow river sections above where the cliffs constricted flow. This access mode would require a two-mile walk, around cliffs and through bush, followed by a 500-foot rappel descent down a 60-degree gully to reach river level again. Roark would be dead by the time anyone could travel this route.

Everyone except Corran was stumped by the Swiss-cheese geometry of the riverbed. He saw an option that no one else even considered. It would take raw courage and put rescuers at risk, but could make the difference between life and death for Roark. Corran instructed Sam to move downriver and set up safety that would keep Corran from being swept down the 80-foot ninth waterfall if his plan failed.

The eighth waterfall, down which Roark had plunged, was 20 feet wide by 40 feet high. Nearly-vertical walls encircled it and its basal pool. At half height, directly behind the curtain of water, there was a weakness. A horizontal, cave-like shelf ended at a treed platform. The obvious problem was that this shelf started just after a seemingly impassable bulge on its side nearest to the rescuers.



Ross Henry hand-paddling the fourth waterfall
Photo by Jed Weingarten



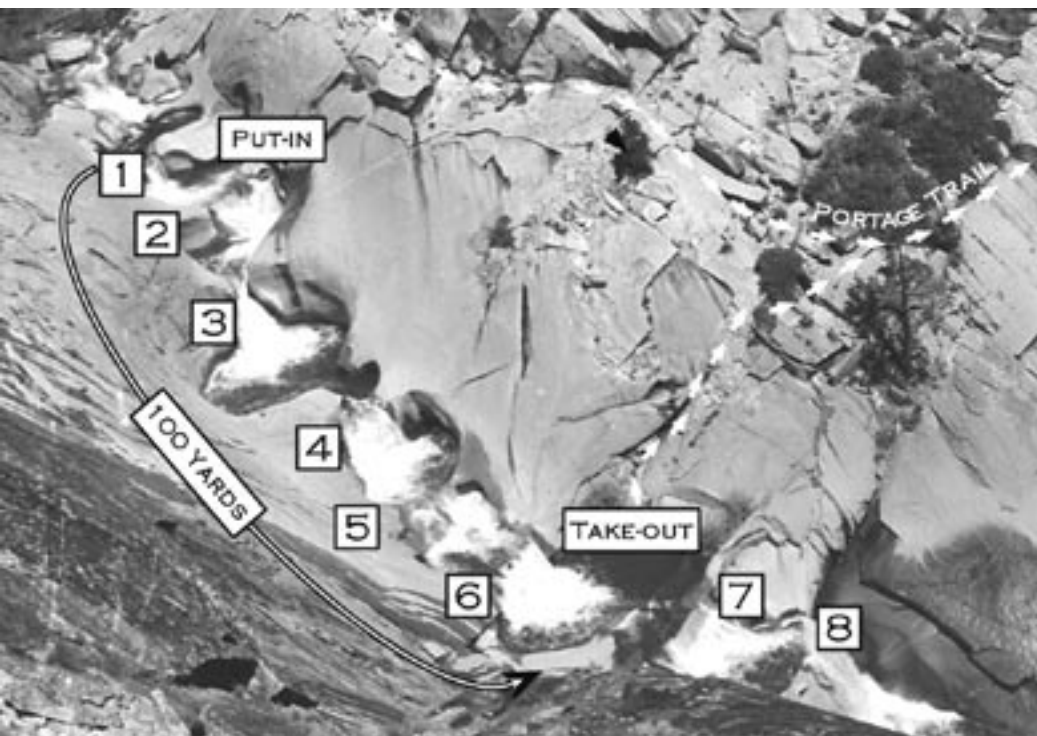
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The area around the bulge was dark, running wet with water and shrouded in spray and deafening noise from the impact zone 20 feet below. The pounding water of the falls was only six feet out from the wall. I saw Corran creep up to the bulge and delicately test a small hold with his outside foot. Then, arms spread Christ-like, he pressed his body against the bulge, trusted completely the one-foot hold and leaned across far enough to reach into the back of the cave shelf. He hauled himself across the bulge and up into the cave shelf. One mistake or slip and he would have fallen 20 feet onto the whale-rock.

He wormed down and along the shelf and positioned himself above the pool where Roark helplessly bobbed.

"Are you OK?" yelled Corran down to Roark.

"My arms are broken," came the barely audible response.

"What day is it? Where are you? What is your name?" queried Corran, using his first aid training to assess the condition of the victim. What Corran was probing for was morbidly real. Was it worth additional risk to rescue Roark? Had Corran temporarily forgotten his cardinal rule of rescue?

"Friday, Dry Meadow, Roark," Roark responded, confirming his viability.

"Steve, call Jed and Katie and confirm that we need a helicopter rescue as soon as possible," Corran yelled across to Steve Fisher who manned the radio.

"Hello, this is Steve Fisher, we have confirmation that a helicopter is needed. It looks like we can pull him out of the water and try to stabilize his condition."

"OK, Steve, this is Jed. I am an EMT. I need to know what the injuries are, the age of the victim, and his name, otherwise the authorities may not agree to a chopper."

"Looks like we have a 50-year-old victim, two broken arms, possible internal injuries and soon to be hypothermic," Steve reported.

"OK, assuming you'll get him out of the water, we'll go straight to our car where we have a cell phone and call 911," Jed signed off. It was 1pm.

Back at the river, the intensity was unrelenting. The instinct to rescue a fellow kayaker in trouble was nearly irresistible. Perhaps this was why Corran broke, or stretched, his rule. Nathan and I crept down to the bulge and checked out the delicate and risky rock climbing traverse Corran had executed. At the time, I had 10 years rock climbing experience, a few difficult kayak/rock climbing river descents under my belt and could lead rock climbs at a 5.10 level of difficulty. I took one look at what Corran

did to move behind the waterfall and was filled with dread.

If I made the move and safely got across, I would be able to assist in saving the injured kayaker. If I slipped while making the move and fell, I would become a statistic. My gut tightened, I reached out for the hold with my foot, felt its slope and slipperiness. It didn't feel secure. I felt sick inside. Conflicting on a primal level, I debated what to do for a few long seconds. I pulled my foot back and backed away from the bulge. Self-preservation overcame altruism.

Corran saw that Nathan and I were trying to join him. He wormed up behind the pounding curtain of water and wedged himself in. He called for us to bring safety ropes. It was obvious he was prepared to assist us across the bulge—risking his life once more. The water was a mere two arms' length in front of us—misting, chilling and intimidating—so loud as to drown any conversation.

I looked down again and saw the rock on which Roark must have landed and the funnel just below. Steeling my nerves, I reached again to the uncertain foothold, clasped Corran's outstretched arm and, in one committing motion, stepped across. I crawled over Corran and slithered down the shelf. The curtain of the waterfall was now just beyond the reach of an outstretched hand. I saw Nathan grit his teeth and repeat the move.

I was amazed that anyone could have made that move unassisted. Not only had Corran just done it, but he came back to act as an unprotected anchor while we made the same desperate move. It was entirely possible that if we slipped mid-move he could have been pulled off trying to hold us.

Three rescuers were now on the treed platform 15 feet above the pool in which Roark was still slowly spinning. He followed our movements with just his eyes. He must have been nearly frozen.

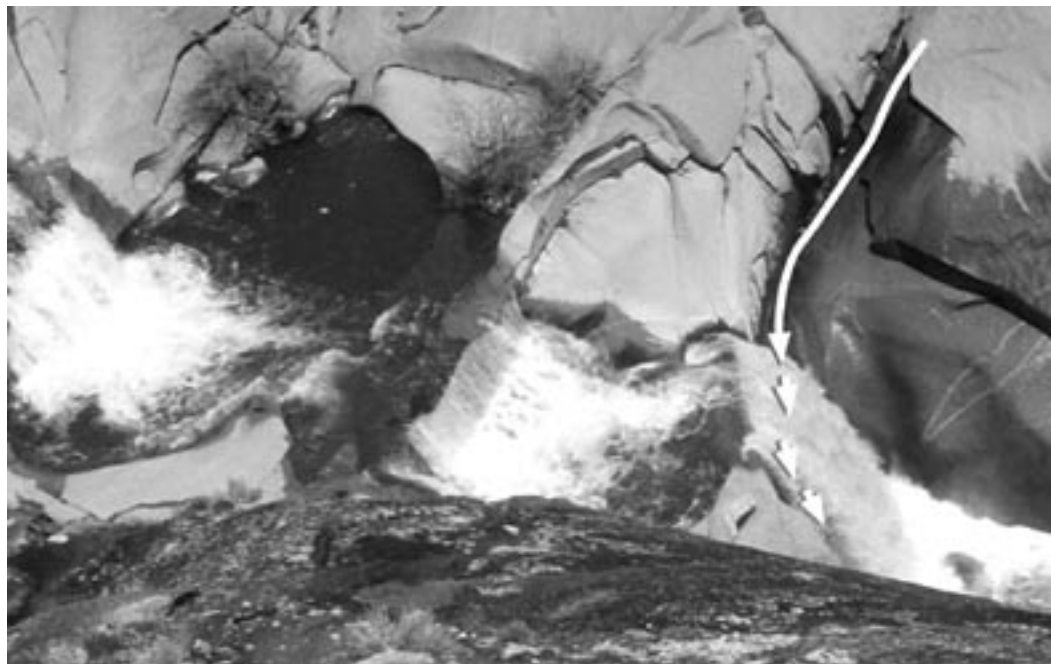
Corran jumped 15 feet into the river holding a throw-rope we had tied to the tree on the platform. He swam over to Roark, attached the rope with a carabiner to Roark's life vest and signaled to us to reel him in. Finally, they beached on a flat shelf directly below us.

Corran climbed the rope hand-over-hand, Spiderman-like up the wall. However, the kayak safety rope was only 6 millimeters

in diameter, making it nearly impossible for Corran to grip it tightly enough to haul himself up the last feet of the shear face. He missed grabbing my outstretched hand by inches. Totally committed to his lunge, he fell unimpeded to the flat rock shelf, smacked his knee, deflected off of Roark and splashed into the pool, momentarily stunned by the impact.

The current tugged him toward the funnel and the 80-foot fall below. With an obvious adrenaline surge, Corran swam back to the ledge, leaped out, grabbed the rope again and, this time, with Nathan holding my vest, I reached much further down. Corran and I locked forearms and he stopped risking becoming a victim for the third time that day.

We three then hauled Roark up, using friction from the tree to lock off the rope as we lifted. He arrived on our branchy, misty ledge with blue lips and an ashen face. Barely able to speak, he reported numb legs and painful hips. It was obvious that his arms were broken at the elbow from the way they hung limp at his sides. Blood oozed from the wrists of his drytop. He never called out in pain.



Roark looked hypothermic. We had to move. The mist of the waterfall and the shade of the cliff above were compounding our problems. With assistance, Roark walked with us around the edge of the tea cup to a sunny, flat rock area beside the pool's outlet where it was much quieter and warmer.

Above: Corran's route behind the eighth waterfall. Corran performed a 5.10 free-climb behind the curtain of water to reach Roark.

Opposite: Overview of Dry Meadow Creek

Photos by Bruce Genereaux

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We called across the river to the other kayakers who, by now, had crept down the opposite granite slab to the shore. They threw clothes over. We dressed Roark in another outer layer. We decided to leave his arms clothed and not dress what we suspected were compound fracture exit points, since the blood flow had seemed to slow. We felt no rush to move him anywhere or do any splinting because we thought that a helicopter was on its way. We lay next to him to try to transfer body heat, waiting for the helicopter.

Idle time allowed our minds to contemplate what had happened. Obvious questions came to my mind. "How did you get out of your boat?" I asked, given that both arms were useless.

"I don't remember," Roark responded. Likely he had been momentarily unconscious from the impact. This, combined with the broken arms, made his escape from his boat seem miraculous. Adrenaline and need foster miracles.

Roark's boat, but not paddle, was found a mile downstream later that day. Bow bent up radically and cockpit deformed, the boat's condition confirmed conjecture

that Roark's impact on or near the whale-rock forcibly ejected him from his boat. I thought this might explain the damage to his hips.

"I f@%&ed it up. I miscounted the number of drops," Roark remarked unprompted.

"I'm embarrassed at what I've done. I have kids and a house now," Roark continued.

"Listen, we have you stabilized, a helicopter has been called, and you'll get out of here," said Nathan.

We settled in, waiting for the helicopter. Roark was sandwiched between Corran and me.

Corran said, "I know Katie and Jed will be able to call out. They have a cell phone in their vehicle at the put-in."

"We should look at other options," I suggested, letting my growing lack of confidence in the helicopter rescue slip out.

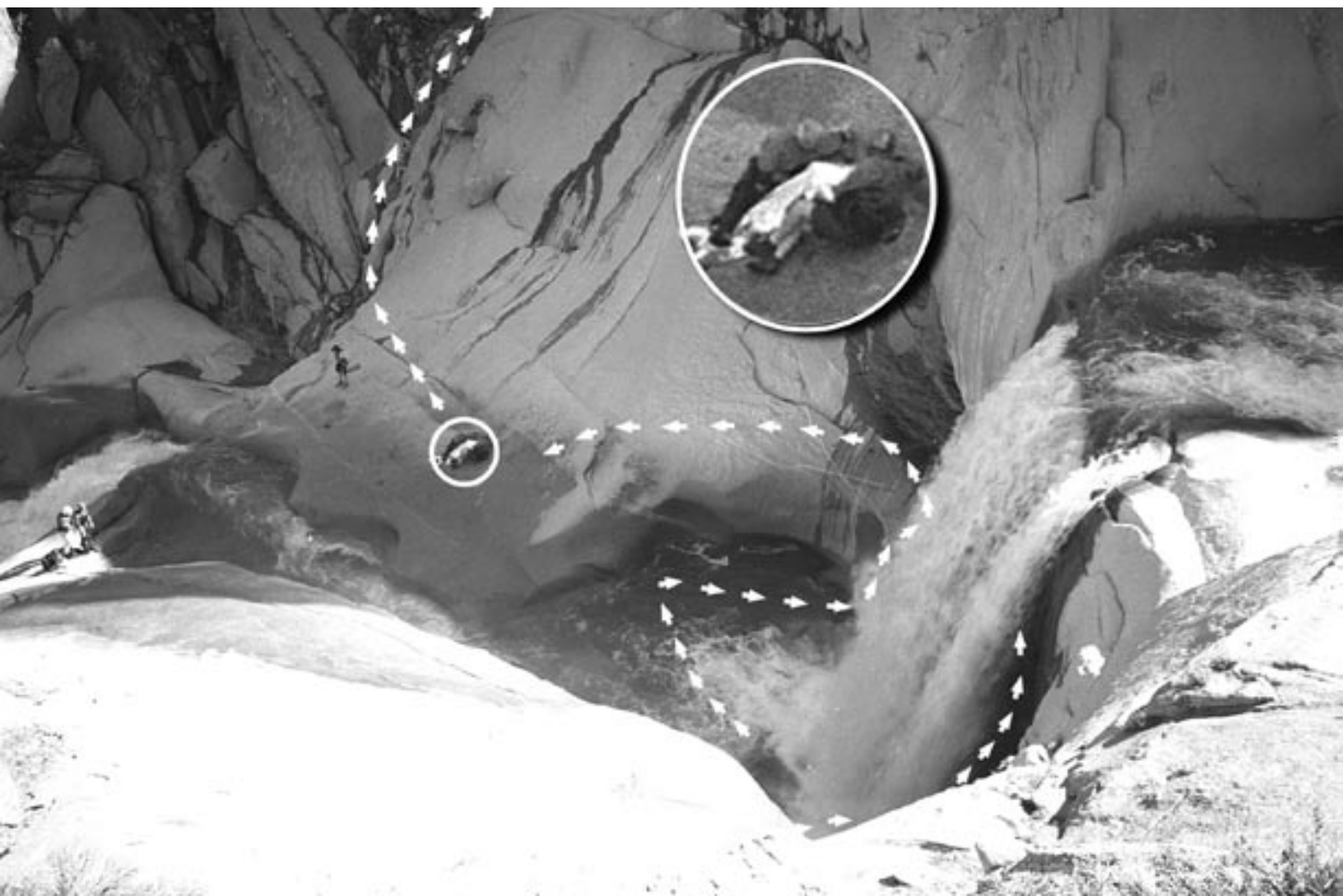
"OK," Roark said. Despite blood loss, shock, hypothermia and immobile arms he must have known there might be no choice but self-rescue.

All the while, the sun was sinking below the cliff top, inevitably bringing cool shade, and prompting us to play out options: Wait for a helicopter? Transfer Roark across the river? Wait on that side for the helicopter? Use the assembled manpower on the other side of the river to carry Roark out? The last option seemed to increase our chances, as there was a known trail to the road on that side of the river.

Regardless of the mode of escape, the deteriorating conditions and time passage dictated self-rescue. We broke our heat-transfer huddle. The group across the river cut and tossed over branches for splints.

Our first effort at self-rescue was to try crossing the river. To this end, a raft of two kayaks secured together by two paddles strapped to the tops of the boat was made to transport Roark across the 20-foot wide funnel section above the ninth waterfall. Though good engineering was applied, getting in and out of the raft and the crossing would require a second person to help Roark. Collectively it was agreed that we would not risk anyone else getting hurt.

It was now nearly 3pm, two hours after Jed and Katie had left. Our confidence in heli-



copter rescue was waning. We agreed that walking out from our side of the river was our only option.

Above and behind us a steep, wet and mossy, but likely climbable gully was incised in the cliff. It was the only weakness in the entire southern river bank. At about 500 feet tall (half of the Empire State Building) and 60-degrees steep, this climb would require two strong legs and two functioning arms. Above the gully was a forested, rolling plateau that led to a road.

The group on the other shore tossed water bottles, clothes and all the extra food available across the funnel. Ross Henry knew the shortest way to the road. He and Kenny started walking around to the top of the gully to assist with our ascent and hike to the road. The remainder of the group either portaged their kayaks down to the Kern or reversed the morning's journey and walked back to the put-in. They intended to check on the status of any official rescue.

Amazingly, the gully/cliff climb did not faze Roark. We supported him as he walked to its base. I went up first with the rope, securing myself in a belay stance. The lower end of the rope was tied to Roark's waist.

Wrapping the rope around my waist, using a body-belay technique, I acted as protection and a human winch.

Roark needed substantial tension on the rope as he pawed upward with feet only. Corran and Nathan clambered behind, pushing, forming footholds and assisting Roark with balance.

The terrain Roark climbed was generally smooth, wet, moss-covered rock. Towards the top, trees, soil and shrubs variously helped and hindered our progress. Three times Nathan and Corran fell and tumbled down slope a few yards, sharp reminders of the risk of this rescue.

During the ascent, Roark was as stoic as anyone I have ever seen. Occasionally he would instruct Nathan or Corran how to best support him or to make an artificial foot hold with a hand from below. I was awed by his strength and coordination despite the adverse conditions. He toppled to his side a few times when his feet slipped, but never once cried out in pain. At times his silence was uncomfortable, as he had to be in excruciating pain when his shattered arms cushioned his falls. He possessed what seemed to me an unnatural stoicism.


The process of ascending the cliff-climb up, set a belay stance, steadily pull Roark up and repeat—continued 15 times over an hour and a half's time before the terrain flattened out. By the time we reached the top of the climb, Ross and Kenny were there. Their ropes provided more security on the final section. Soon we were off the cliff and into heavily vegetated slopes. The accident site lay invisible, 500 feet below. By this time we were acting under the assumption that the helicopter would not come. If it did, it was unlikely to see us, let alone land. Corran and Nathan returned the way Ross and Kenny had come and kayaked down the Kern River to the take-out bridge.




Opposite: The rescue in progress and route taken
Photo by Catherine Hansford

Above: The rescue helicopter
Photo by Bruce Genereaux

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Ross had scouted Dry Meadow Creek the day before from this side. Therefore he knew a more direct and shorter way to the road than retracing the river upstream to our cars. Ross took the initiative to run ahead through the small ridges and trees and call back to us the most efficient way to get across the terrain. He performed this critical task with dogged determination and poise.

Douglas fir and ponderosa pine formed the canopy while live oak, manzanita, prickly pear cactus, and yucca cactus—also known as bayonet bush—conspired to impede any direct passage through the understory. We hiked directly into the setting sun. Arms splinted with manzanita tree branches that stuck out an extra six inches, Roark now started to shudder in pain each time the splints snagged on a branch.

He walked gingerly, showing, for the first time, the damage to his hips. Dehydration, compounded by blood loss and shock from the actual accident, made him seem spacey. We slaked his thirst with water from the river and fed him all of our energy bars, to little effect.

Finally, after about a mile of hiking through difficult ridge and gully terrain, Ross led us to easier ground along a tributary of Dry Meadow Creek. If we followed a trail up this drainage about a half-mile to a height of land, the road was mostly downhill about a mile and a half from there. None of us carried a watch, but we estimated from the sun that it was about 6pm. The sun set around 7pm this time of year.

Roark's pace slowed. He wanted to sit to rest every 100 yards. It took two of us to help him down and up each time. At best, we were covering a quarter mile an hour. We figured it would take a minimum of six hours to reach the road assuming Roark could keep up the pace. It seemed to me that Roark's condition was deteriorating so fast that we would not make the road that night, unless we carried him all the way out. We had no lights, matches or shelter; and, at our elevation, overnight temperatures would be near freezing. The situation was becoming critical.

When we crested the head of the drainage, we sat down for another rest in a football-field-sized granite slab clearing. A chill had set in the air. Then we heard the faint, but growing chatter of a helicopter. Our spirits soared as it rapidly approached and flew a half mile north and west of our position,

towards the river. It circled directly over the accident site.

From our hilltop clearing, we could see the chopper. It was now about 6:45pm. With the aurora of the sunset behind us, we were effectively invisible to the helicopter.

Without hesitation, I jumped up and ran back down the trail towards the chopper, vigorously waving a yellow dry-bag above my head. Even when it passed directly overhead, there was no indication that the pilot saw me. The tree cover and darkness snuffed my chances. I could only hope they would spot the group in the clearing. I headed back up the river towards the clearing. While I was still a half a mile away I could see the helicopter had stopped circling and was now randomly getting closer and then further from our clearing. Then, to my amazement, it stopped above our group and hovered. We were spotted!

By the time I got back to the clearing, the helicopter was just landing. A paramedic climbed out of the cabin and walked towards Kenny and Ross. Roark sat 20 yards away with me on a log. We expected the paramedic to take command of the scene, but she never inquired about Roark's condition or the accident's history, and had to be directed to the splinted man. I relayed to her the critical information about the accident. We lifted Roark into the chopper, unfortunately clipping his splint one last time. I saw him flinch.

"He'll be at Fresno University Hospital," the pilot said.

"Thanks," Roark said, looking us in the eye.

The helicopter wound up and lifted off. Within minutes we were in silence.

Our ordeal was over.

Roark was only 15 hours out of surgery when I stopped off at the Fresno hospital on my trip home the next day. He was under the influence of narcotic pain killers and had full arm casts. Both upper arms were repaired with 10 to 15 screws and one plate each. His right humerus bone severed the tendon that connects the triceps muscle to the elbow. The tendon was stapled back together. Bone fragments were found in his dry top as the fractures protruded beyond his skin. Some chips were missing altogether.

He said that he had already made arrangements to fly home. I bid him good luck.

When I consider that fateful day in April 1998, I think about kayakers who chose to run what some initially deemed too difficult and others who chose to take unprecedented risks when confronted with the plight of a stricken human being. This incident was a stark lesson about instincts overriding rationale. The result was simple: one Chilean man was able to fly home to his family and lived to kayak another day.

Editor's Note: Bruce Genereaux lives in Hanover, New Hampshire. He is an industrial and resource economic consultant by day and father and former Class V kayaker by night. This piece is an excerpt from his forthcoming book, *Beyond the Comfort Zone – Extreme Sport Adventures*, which will be published in April by Class Five Press.



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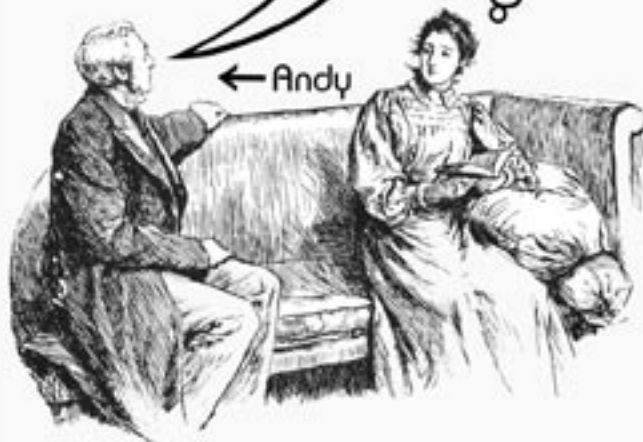
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Vertical Creeking

First Descent of the South Fork of the Powell

Story by Al Gregory

Photos by Dave Garringer/LVM

Southwestern Virginia had just experienced its worst flood in more than two decades. I was aware of this massive rainfall, but in western North Carolina precipitation had been light. We were contemplating the next day's options when the call came in. It was BJ. He had information on a first descent he'd been eyeing for years—the South Fork of the Powell. After consulting a map, I realized this creek was less than two hours from Asheville. Better yet, I happened to have four paddlers at my house ready for the task. Earlier that day, BJ had spoken with an eyewitness who indicated that the creek was too high, but would be good the next day. Everything was falling into place.



We decided to meet in East Stone Gap, Virginia. BJ came down from West Virginia with Stuart and Todd, and I traveled with Little Dave, Jason, Tico and Hair Todd. Our meeting was uneventful. BJ had the plan. We dropped a car at the take-out and loaded the new team truck for the ride to the top.



The drive to the put-in is reminiscent of the Green River Narrows take-out—only much longer. Once we peaked the ridge we had to rely on our map, because it was our only source of information. After some confusing back-road navigating, we began looking for a reservoir as our landmark for the put-in. We didn't see it. You would

think a large body of water would catch the attention of kayakers. A little further down the road we saw a very small river far below us. Only by checking the general shape of the creek against our map were we able to confirm that we had found our river.



Actually, the South Fork of the Powell is hardly a river at all, and instead falls into the very small creek classification (not so small as to be called a drainage ditch). There were no more than 150 cfs running through it that day. An abundance of fresh driftwood scattered about the banks made it clear that the water had recently been much higher. When we arrived, the water was crystal clear and the level appeared to be adequate for navigation. The information we had about the gradient suggested that the creek cuts through two 800ft/mile gorges. Typical of steep southern waterways, rhododendron and mountain laurel cover the shores in dense tangles. We knew that, combined with the gradient, this could make for a very long day of portages.



The first few rapids we encountered were small and clean. The drops ranged from four to ten feet and reminded me of Overflow Creek in Tennessee. My initial impression was about to change. The first significant rapid required a left-to-right move into a small pool. Reaching the pool, I glanced downstream to see a steep, boulder-strewn riverbed dropping out of sight. Gulp! Here we go. After I was relieved of my safety position, I thrashed along the ivy-choked

shore to the bottom of a complex series of boulder drops. Though none measured more than twelve feet, a log compromised the crux move. It might have been runnable, but it wasn't a day for experimentation. I went back up and informed the group that we would need to portage.



The next rapid was similar to the first—marginally runnable with a mandatory log limbo halfway down. I was happy to be the probe, since I could see the line clearly and I had ample safety. This rapid consisted of ten continuous drops feeding into a low angle slide. I had a reasonably good line, managing to stay upright and unharmed but, to my surprise, everyone else chose to battle the thick underbrush on river left. Onward and downward!



The creek had already confirmed our estimation of its gradient and we were only about a mile into the three-mile run. The next horizon line marked another large, boulder-filled rapid of which we couldn't see the bottom. There was a log blocking the lower left portion of the main channel. We ran down the right side onto a shallow slide with Hair Todd standing in the water directing traffic. He motioned us into a river left eddy just above an obvious horizon. I got out and saw a small hemlock choking the next rapid. Jason and I succeeded in extracting the tree. In its place was a smooth twenty-foot slide, which was actually the bottom of the previous rapid.

Between the previous big rapids the gradient had been continually steep. But after some more be-bop, the gradient completely flattened as though we had reached the bottom. The banks became tame and not as overgrown. Was it over? After less than half a mile of Class I current, the canyon walls rose and the underbrush again looked hostile. Something was coming.



The next drop was another complex series of boulders that looked runnable but somewhat marginal. There was only one questionable section where the ideal slot had a great boof, but the transition onto the boof looked abrupt. We walked.

The river became significantly steeper just downstream. Little Dave was the first to

come back from the scout, and he described it as "falling off the face of the earth." We all stopped for a break before continuing the portage. As we struggled along the shore, we had a great view of the whitewater we were missing. The rapid was on the edge of runnable and could prove to be the next level of technical whitewater. It dropped approximately one hundred vertical feet in a series of boulder ledges. The terminus was an eighteen-foot slot that formed a pillow and then ran under a rock. The portage on river right closed out, and we decided to make a human chain across the river, passing boats from hand to hand.



We reached a road on river left and began to think the run was over, but then another large rapid loomed ahead of us. It was the

same style as the previous one—a Class V boulder garden, requiring a series of technical moves around pin rocks and logs. With eight people it was easy to have great safety for everyone. Again I probed for the group, and it was good. My run was the beginning of a chain reaction. By the end, six of us had successfully navigated the rapid with BJ and Little Dave styling it out.

The initial beta for the South Fork of the Powell proved accurate. The river has two distinct gorges of a very steep nature. The presence of logs prevented our descent of several steep, runnable rapids. We had low but adequate water; slightly more would make for some serious action. If you choose to tackle this river, beware: all of the rapids—big and small—are complicated by downed wood. Potentially all of the drops are runnable except one, but even this portage could one day be run, since current kayaking standards are constantly being pushed. Although the run is only three miles long, it is packed with boulder-strewn rapids. This creek could very well become a classic. We had a great time with warm temps, consistent water and a strong group willing to go slow and probe.



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Dad: "Timmy, back when I was getting first descents with the LVM crew, we'd cut wood like this out of nasty drops all the time."

Timmy: "Dad, you're such a #\$\$%&@#\$ liar!"



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The Adventures of Hank Clondike

The horn blasting outside was one of those with three notes that attempt to make a chord of some kind. “F#,” I mused. It was annoying, and my coffee had not yet brought me to full wakefulness. I grabbed my mug, locked the door and headed down the sidewalk. The morning sun shined harshly.

“Let’s go boatin’ dude,” said Art, stretching his head out the window of a candy apple red convertible. “It’s a ’59 Caddy Eldorado. Completely restored. Cost me ten years of my retirement fund.” I slid into the passenger’s seat.

“You’re not really going to drive this up the gravel road to the Crystal Creek trailhead?” I asked.

“Hell yes! This is a special occasion. We haven’t done a first descent like this in years. Besides, I figure you can drive the last few miles and show it off to this horse packer you’ve been raving about. What’s her name—Matilda?”

“It’s Melina,” I said. “And no, thanks. I’ll try to impress her with my love for horses.”

“Right,” said Art, knowing full well that I hadn’t been on a horse since I fell off a pony at a carnival when I was six.

I had been planning all winter long for this adventure on the Crescendo River. We would meet with the horse packers this morning, and ride with them over the pass and across the Montana border. This would be the first leg of our adventure—a first descent on Grizzly Creek, and on down the Crescendo Canyon for a total of 45 miles.

First we had to meet Pat and Dan in Missoula. The four of us make up “Team Hack,” an older generation of boaters who still think the put-in and take-out should be at different locations. Although we own play boats, our creek boats wear out sooner.

We’re also a very diverse group. Art is a plastic surgeon who works on the movie stars and other celebrities that are moving into Montana in droves. Pat’s a bouncer in a strip joint in Missoula. I’m not sure what Dan does, but I think it’s illegal. He doesn’t talk about it much.

My real name isn’t Hank Clondike, either. That’s just my stage name. I do bit parts in movies about liver eating mountain men. That sort of thing. When I don’t have an acting gig (which is most of the time), I play banjo in a local country band. I don’t really care much for the banjo; I do it for the chicks. Women always go for the tough banjo player.

A molar on my left lower jaw was throbbing, so I popped a couple of aspirin, saving the codeine I’d been given in case it got unbearable. I knew better than to start a trip like this with an abscessed tooth, but the plan was set.

When we arrived at the Conoco on Reserve Street, Pat and Dan were there with the trailer full of boats and gear already loaded. “Whoa, a red Cadillac!” exclaimed Dan.

“Must be a mid life crisis,” laughed Pat.

We were late getting out of town and drove the Montana speed limit (pedal to the metal) most of the way. I fell asleep for several hours until we turned off the main highway and headed up the gravel road to Crystal Creek. Pat was towing the trailer behind the old Ford truck, and was nice enough to let us go first up the dusty road in the Cadillac.

When we arrived at the trailhead, Melina was giving last minute instructions to the shuttle drivers, Gene and Doug. “Don’t forget to bring in extra beer and ice at the take-out. And oats for the horses.” Melina, although young, is one of the finest packers in the country. Much to our delight and surprise, her riding “buddies” were in fact members of the Idaho Horsewomen’s Association. We later learned that Sheri, Nannette and Beverly were also classmates who would attend the University of Idaho the coming fall.

The plan was to pack the kayaks over the pass and down to a likely put-in on Grizzly Creek. The girls planned to ride the horses around the Grizzly Creek Gorge, and meet us at the confluence with the Crescendo. They would camp with us, then meet us again at the confluence of Falls Creek and the Crescendo River for a final night on the river. Melina waved goodbye to the shuttle drivers as they headed back down the



Illustration by Ryan Buchanan

road. “Shuttle studs; no, shuttle beef,” she quipped. The other girls giggled.

We loaded our gear and boats onto the four mules. The girls would all ride double with us on the four horses, with the pack mules following. We were amazed at how Melina was able to rig the boats two to a mule and load all of the camping gear and provisions on the last two. “The boats were easy, but the paddles are a pain,” she complained.

“You women have a way with big, dumb animals,” said Pat, winking at Nannette.

I had to drag Art aside. “Stop looking at Beverly’s chest when you talk to her. Look at her eyes, or at least her face. If you don’t, she’ll get wigged out. After all, you’ll be riding behind her on the horse for almost twenty miles. Besides, I think she really likes your car. Just play it easy.”

“Cool, dude,” Art said, in his usual articulate fashion.

At last everything was loaded and ready to go. I climbed on behind Melina, with Dan, Pat and Art riding behind the other girls. We began our climb to Grizzly Pass.



It was late in the summer, almost the middle of August. A cool breeze blew down the canyon, the air sweet with the smell of cedar and alpine fir. Slowly, we made our way up the trail, ascending almost four thousand vertical feet. In some places, when I looked out over the side of Jingles (the horse), all I could see was a drop-off of three or four hundred feet. Melina said, "Don't worry about Jingles. He doesn't want to go off the edge any more than you do." I just held on tighter to Melina. Below us, Castle Creek was a slender silver ribbon, glistening in the warm evening sun. I reached for a codeine tablet. My tooth was throbbing.

We sang old '70s rock songs and African chants as we rode along. Pat thrilled the girls by reciting Thoreau from memory. Sometimes we just rode quietly along, letting civilization slip away as we made our way further into the deep green wilderness around us.

As we approached the pass, several granite peaks came into view. "My God," Dan stuttered. "This looks just like the Alps, or Glacier Park."

"That tall one looks like the Matterhorn," said Sheri, leaning back on Dan. Snow covered the north slopes of most of these peaks, and we knew where the water was going to come from for our kayaking. This had been a banner snow year, and we were about to catch the last of the runoff.

At last, we topped out at Grizzly Pass. "Let's take a break here and rest the horses," Melina ordered in her take-charge way. We were transfixed by the scenery. Gazing out into the light blue haze of the early evening, we could see what was probably the confluence of Grizzly Creek with the Crescendo.

"If God ever moves out of Montana, I think this is where He will go, Hank," said Art. "This trip was a great call to end the boating season."

Beverly found a patch of huckleberries, and we all ate to our hearts' content. We refilled our water bottles in a small spring, then saddled back up for the final trek to our first camp. Pat pointed out a large set of grizzly bear tracks in the mud by the spring. "They probably don't call this Grizzly Creek for nothing. You girls better stay close to me."

The trail curved down off the south side of Grizzly Peak and onto Starvation Ridge. Below in the fading light, we could see



glimpses of whitewater on Grizzly Creek. "That looks like waterfalls to me," said Nanette. "You guys are nuts to put a boat in that." I hoped she wasn't right. According to the topo maps, the first part of Grizzly Creek drops about 300 feet per mile. It would be very steep but doable, especially with empty boats.

Our first camp was at Keena Lake. We rode in about a half an hour before dark. The girls unloaded the mules and set up the tents. Pat and I grabbed our fishing poles, and tried our luck in the lake. We had a bet going on who would catch the biggest fish. I thought I had just lost a six-pack of beer when Pat pulled out a three-pound cut-throat trout. No sooner had Pat landed his fish, than I hauled in a five-pounder. What a trip this was shaping up to be!

"Why the hell didn't we come up here before, Clondike?" asked Dan.

Above: Hank and the boys at the trailhead on Crystal Creek

Below: Keena Lake

"Ever try to get this kind of a trip set up?" I said. "It's hard enough to get this many people organized for a day trip, much less a four-day trip with horse support. Ever boat with horses before?"

"No," replied Dan, "but if I'd known they came with gorgeous women, I'd have a whole herd at home."

We put the fish in foil with apples and some of Art's secret spices, then covered them in coals to cook. By now it was pitch black. That's when we noticed the streaks of light in the sky. "Cool, dude!" said Art. "That's the Perseids meteor shower." I had marked the event on my calendar at home, and then forgot about it in my rush to put the trip together. We kicked back to watch the show,





and ate our fish and drank wine. For the grand finale of the night, Dan passed out his Cuban cigars, and I played the guitar while the girls sang. Life was good at Keena Lake, and the wine was helping my tooth.

Later when we said good night, Art thanked me for my advice with Beverly. "I was getting no where fast, but now she hangs on my every word. I owe it all to you Hank. You're a cool dude."



Morning dawned at the high mountain lake with the rustle of a sweet breeze blowing through the alpine fir and hemlocks. Puffy white clouds of cotton candy dotted the powder blue sky. The girls were up early, and had prepared a morning feast of bacon and eggs, huckleberry pancakes and coffee. "Come and get it guys. You'll need your energy if this trip keeps up like it started," Sheri laughed. Dan blushed.

After breakfast was done, the girls loaded the horses for the next leg of their journey. "We'll be riding around the head end of the Grizzly Creek drainage, then dropping down to meet you guys at the confluence with the Crescendo. We've got about eighteen miles to cover, so don't be in any big hurry," said Melina.

"Yeah, and be careful," said Sheri, winking at Dan.

It was about a half-mile down a steep trail to the put-in, but since we were going

downhill and pulling nearly empty boats, it was an easy hike. Right away, the fir and hemlock forest gave way to a grove of giant cedars. It was more like a park than a forest—shady and cool, with almost no brush. There were only needles on the forest floor and trail, making the half-mile to Grizzly Creek a painless drag.

"I hear the creek," said Pat.

"Yep," said Art. Five minutes later we were putting on our boating gear, doing high fives in anticipation of the great day to come.

"Doug scouted this on horseback and tells me there are a few logs in the canyon. I expect there will be more than one thirty-foot falls, and lots of Class IV and V drops," I said. We reviewed our hand and paddle signals, and checked our list of emergency gear. Art and I had breakdown paddles and climbing gear in our boats. Dan had the first aid kit and water filter. Pat had the group's lunch and a GPS system, as well as a satellite phone. "We're about as well prepared as a group can be," I said. "Let's go boating!"

The first few hundred yards were Class II and III, giving us a little warm-up. I estimated the flow to be about 300 cfs. We pulled eddies, boofed rocks, and generally got into the swing of things. Ahead, we could see the creek dropping into a tight canyon. Things started to pick up fast. As the gorge narrowed, the gradient got steeper. I was in the lead and pulled an eddy, signaling the other guys to join me. "Things are getting hectic below us. Let's hold tight formation," I yelled.

Every group of kayakers has its own method of handling these situations, and for us, "tight formation" means "high alert, no mistakes." The lead boat never proceeds without a safe eddy below. I always feel comfortable in tight formation because I have an excuse to scout anything I want.

We were having fun on this run, though, and mostly just needed to boat scout. Only a few times did I have to get out of my boat to check things out. As steep as the creek was, there seemed to be ample eddies, and even a few small pools. We boofed our way over eight and ten foot drops, charged down long Class IV rapids and occasionally stopped to check out the scenery.

Grizzly Creek in this section runs directly north. The canyon is deep and cool, with vertical, moss-covered walls. Cedar trees and ferns grow in any flat spot available. It reminds me of some of the runs in the Cascades of Washington State. One thing that sets it apart is the water temperature. Numerous hot springs in the high country add enough hot water to make the creek feel almost warm.

We stopped for lunch at the end of this first canyon at a deep green pool. This was one of the few spots where the sun actually hit the creek. We stripped down and dived off the rocks into the pool. A pair of otters played hide and seek with us. They were diving for fish that looked a lot like salmon to me.



After lunch, we suited back up and left the otters to themselves. After a short Class III section, we dropped into another gorge. This gorge was deeper and more foreboding than the first. I tried to shake off the ominous feeling I was getting. A long Class IV+ section got the bugs worked out, but I still had "that feeling." And my aching tooth was back.

Maybe it was the tooth, or maybe the cocaine, but somehow I got caught off guard. We were setting up to run a long slide. The creek made a blind, right angle turn at the bottom of the slide, but I thought I saw a good eddy to continue scouting from the left. "I'm going to pull the eddy behind that rock on the left. Wait for my signal!" I shouted. As I got to the bottom of the forty-

foot slide, I realized there was no eddy, just a rock behind a rock. I rode up the pillow of water that piled headlong into the canyon wall. I turned to the right and looked down the canyon to see the tops of several cedar trees over the horizon. I was about to run a huge falls without having had a chance to look at it. I did manage to throw my paddle up into horizontal position to warn the others not to follow.

I looked around for an eddy, brush, tree roots, anything to stop myself. Nothing. My only chance was to have a successful run. As the Class IV water pushed me off the pillow and around the corner to the edge of the falls, I saw a log lying with one end on the top left corner of the falls, and the other dropping down to a pool just beyond the landing zone at the bottom. It was propped against the falls at about a 45-degree angle, and had no bark and few limbs. I still don't know how I did it, but I managed to get up onto the log on my way over the brink of the falls. For a brief second I stalled out, balanced on the log, then slid down the log to the pool below.

I couldn't believe what had just happened! I was unhurt, and still in my boat. The landing zone of this thirty-footer was a boulder jumble, completely unrunnable, except for the line I had taken down the log. I quickly got out of my boat to try to climb up the rock wall to see the other guys. We weren't going to get that lucky again, and I didn't want anyone else to follow me.

I worked my way up the right wall of the canyon to a ledge. Fortunately, I could see the others and signaled to them to portage. When they finally made their way down to the base of the falls, I told them about my one-in-a-million run. They just stood and stared at the roaring mass of water, rocks and tree. "Clondike," Dan said in awe, "You're one lucky SOB."

"We've got about five miles to camp," I said. "We'll know we're about there when the creek starts to turn to the East. That's where the Crescendo comes in." Small tributary streams had brought Grizzly Creek up to about 600 cfs, and I hoped the gradient would let up a little.

We set off downstream, running Class IV and Class IV+ drops with an occasional ten to fifteen foot falls thrown in. Once again we were paddling like a well-oiled machine. To our delight, another big thirty-five foot falls was clean. We all dropped over the edge, penciling into the deep green pool



below. We played and splashed our way through miles of bubbling white foam. Eventually, the creek seemed to turn to the East, offering us a view of Freezeout Ridge. High above we could see a caravan of horses and mules. The girls were making their way down Grizzly Creek Trail 301. They had also spotted us on the water, and were waving to us. We blew kisses back at them, and headed for camp.

"I smell sulfur," Dan said, eddying out. "Yeah, me too," said Pat.

"It's the hot springs at the confluence with the Crescendo," I said. "That's where we'll be camping." We ran the next mile or so down to camp on easy Class IV with lots of play holes and surf waves. We were all completely paddled out by the time we reached camp, right where Grizzly Creek emptied its clear green water into the Crescendo. By contrast, the Crescendo was aqua blue, similar to Chile's Futaleufu.

We dragged our boats into the field in front of an old log cabin that marked the junction of Grizzly Creek and Crescendo trails. Trappers and gold prospectors had used this cabin in the early 1900s. The roof was still intact, but the doors and windows were long gone. "I heard a horse," said Pat. "The girls must be coming." Sure enough, a moment later, with Melina in the lead, the girls rode into camp.

"What a beautiful ride," said Melina as they dismounted. "Glad you guys made it alright. That creek looked pretty rough. I was getting nervous about you guys."

"Speaking of nervous," Nannette said, "the horses were acting really spooky that last

Above: Grizzly Pass

Below: Grizzly Creek

Opposite: All you can eat fish fry at Keena Lake
Photo by Pat Foster

couple of miles on the trail. I think something was following us." We all set about making camp, and the mood got much lighter as we toasted the day with shots of Drambuie.

Pat had brought along elk tenderloin, which he proceeded to broil over the fire. "It's from that seven pointer I got last fall," Pat said. "This should feed us all with some left over."

"Not as hungry as I am," said Sheri, who was busy making a strawberry cheesecake.

"Where did those come from?" I said, looking at the bowl of little strawberries.

"I picked them," Beverly said. "They're all over the place behind the cabin." Give me a break. Strawberry fields?



We all feasted until we couldn't eat another bite, then headed for the hot springs just a few hundred feet up the trail. There wasn't a pool to sit in, but the water cascaded over the rocks, making several perfect showers. We all got naked and soaped each other down (in a boy/girl, boy/girl sort of way).

Afterwards, we sat around the campfire and rehearsed the day's events. A warm, gentle wind was blowing up the canyon. "Are those car lights up on the ridge?" said Melina, just as it was getting dark.

"No," Dan exclaimed, "they're Northern Lights! You know, *area borealis* or whatever they're called."

"Cool, dude!" said Art. The northern sky flickered and burned with green, purple and orange flashes of light. As if that wasn't enough, we began hearing wolves howling. We were all quiet for the next hour, just watching and listening. It had been a long day. We wandered off to our tents for some much needed sleep.



"Bear in camp! Bear in camp!" The words filtered through my dreams and into my waking consciousness. Talk about instant adrenaline. I jerked open the tent flaps and stuck my head out to see what the hell was going on. The horses were stomping around and making lots of noise. Maybe the bear was just wandering through. The others were all up with their flashlights on inside their tents. The glowing tents looked

eerie in the dark and there was not enough light to see any bear. I flashed my light toward the cooking area. No bear. Over by the horses. No bear. The tent with screaming people. Bear—Grizzly. Dragging the tent with the screaming people.

This grizzly intended to inflict some major carnage. It was trying to drag the tent across the field and into the woods with the people still in it. They were very much alive and kicking, they just couldn't find the way out of the collapsed tent. The stench of carrion filled the air. Grizzlies always smell like dead stuff.

I never make a big deal about packing a pistol on these trips; I just do, and keep quiet about it. With my headlamp on high beam and the gun in my right hand, I ran toward the bear. "Get out of here, you SOB!" I yelled. "Get! Get out of here!" I really didn't want to shoot this bear, and was hoping he would run. The horses and mules were whinnying and straining against their ropes, while stomping the ground. The whole place was pure bedlam.

My charge at the bear must have shaken him a bit. He dropped the tent full of terrified people and stood up on his rear legs. He squared off against me to show his size. My knees were knocking like a worn out Chevy. To shoot, or not to shoot, that was the question. The bear roared and waved his head from side to side. I pulled the hammer on the Smith & Wesson .44 magnum, aimed at his chest and fired. The bear dropped onto all fours and charged. I fired once more and bolted toward the cabin.

When I got to the corner of the cabin I spun around to see where the bear was. Not



far, maybe forty feet. Using the windowsill of the cabin for a foothold, I jumped up onto the roof and climbed to the peak. The bear tried to do the same but wasn't having much luck. I would later learn that my second shot had broken his left shoulder. He was only able to rip the cedar shakes off the roof. Slobber and blood were flying everywhere.

The bear's eyes glowed yellow in my headlamp. I had heard that a bear's skull would stop a .357, and maybe even a .44. I aimed between its eyes and pulled the trigger. The sound it made from twelve feet away was like a jar of mayonnaise hitting the pavement. The echo of the shot was the last sound for what seemed like a minute. The fury was over.

"Did you get him?" a voice whispered in the darkness. It was Pat, with Melina and the others creeping slowly behind.

"I think so, but stay back for a minute," I gasped. I peeked over the edge of the cabin roof and looked down at the carcass. "Yeah, he's dead."

Dan and Sheri had finally gotten out of the tent, and joined us by the cabin. "I think I need to change pants," Dan said, trying to console Sheri, who was still shaking. "That bear was going to kill us for sure, no doubt about it."

"We'll have to ride out in the morning and alert the authorities," said Nannette.

"No way," replied Melina. "We just bury the darned thing and forget it."

I agreed. "In Montana, if you kill a Grizzly, you just shut your mouth and dig. It's probably the same here. I don't want to deal with the authorities for killing a protected species."

"This was an old bear," Pat exclaimed, peeling back the bear's lip with his thumb. "Look at these teeth." One canine tooth was missing and the few molars that weren't worn nearly away had huge holes in them.



"I know how he must have felt," I said, holding my jaw. This bear would have weighed as much as six to eight hundred pounds had he been healthy. I guessed his actual weight was closer to four hundred.

We used Jingles to drag the bear to a suitable burial spot and began digging. When the hole was finally deep enough, we pushed the bear into it and began covering him up. "This never happened," we all agreed. Beverly had started heating water on the Coleman stove so we could all clean up. "I've never smelled anything so gross," She said. "They must roll in dead stuff or something."

We all headed back to bed to try to get some sleep. By now, the sky in the east was beginning to show a hint of daylight. Hopefully a bright new day was coming.



We stumbled out of bed at about 10:00 a.m. I looked toward the cabin to see if we really had buried a bear there last night. Sure enough, there was the dirt pile. It wasn't just a bad dream. The girls fixed breakfast while we all rehashed the events of the last evening.

"We're heading out right away," said Melina. "It's late, and I want to get down to Falls Creek as early as possible. We have a surprise for you guys." The girls giggled. They loaded up the mules and headed up the trail. They would be climbing to about six thousand feet to reach Desolation Pass before dropping back down to our last camp.

We waved goodbye to the girls again and started suiting up for the fifteen mile run. The Crescendo was running at about 3,500 cfs. "Is this a first descent?" asked Dan.

"No, I don't think so. I heard some French group used helicopters for access a couple of years ago, and got the first descent," I said. "But they just did a day trip."

We played in a hole near camp that had a great feedback eddy—a nice warm-up for the big water we expected below. And big water we got. Although the gradient was only about 100 feet per mile, the narrowness of the canyon produced giant wave trains with an occasional thundering hole.



"This is a lot like the Upper Five on the North Fork of the Payette," Art remarked after several miles.

"Blue sky and white water. You sure know how to pick 'em Clondike," Pat yelled. I was sure glad this was turning out so well. Not much could happen at this point to make this a bad trip.

Now and then we had to eddy out just to look at the stunning scenery. Giant walls of granite were occasionally shattered by jumbled rockslides that dumped huge boulders into the river. The aqua blue water looked like a band of electricity running through the gorge. We took turns leading the way down this fabulous whitewater highway. At times, things would crank up to near Class V, then ease down to Class III to let us relax a bit. We were getting stuck in holes a lot, but we were all very good at digging our way out. We had a kind of competition going to see who would dare go into the gnarliest hole.

Art was in the lead on one of the more difficult sections. He had eddied out to boat scout a horizon line, and was pointing at what I suspected was a huge hole. Over the edge he went. I pulled out above the hole to see what he'd gone into. "Get your ropes!" I yelled to Dan and Pat as they joined me in the eddy.

When the two of them were on shore with their throw ropes ready, I dropped over into the hole with Art. I won't go on and on about how big the hole was. It will suffice to say that it held two boaters sideways with about ten feet in between. This was a hole

Above: The Crescendo River

Opposite Upper: Log portage on Grizzly Creek

Opposite Lower: Hank and Art at Grizzly Cabin

that was fun to ride, but almost impossible to get out of. The ends were closed off by the sheer granite walls. The foam pile was about six feet high. I doubt a play boat would wash out, much less a high volume creek boat. We were just bouncing up and down, trying to maintain some semblance of control.

"Try to pry your way out, like this!" I holered, straining to be heard above the roar of the water. I did my famous under-the-butt low brace, and started riding up on the foam pile. Art tried the move, but just got cart wheeled. "Keep your arm straight, like this," I motioned. It was no use. Art was too tired, and pulled his spray skirt. With the boat full of water, he did several more cartwheels before abandoning ship.

Most holes will wash out a swimmer, but not this one. Art was in trouble. Only now and then did he pop up on the foam pile to get any air, and he never saw the throw ropes coming his way. He frantically waived his arms, trying to grab anything solid.

I paddled my way across the bottom of the hole to where I had last seen Art. When he finally popped up beside my boat, his eyes were as big as tennis balls and he was gasping for air.

"Hang tight, bud," I said as I dug my paddle in low. This technique has gotten me out of some bad holes, but I'd never tried it with another person on board. It was much more difficult, but slowly the boat began to



climb up the pile. My shoulder was almost ready to give out when we cleared the foam and headed downstream.

I pulled over at the first Class III section I came to and dumped Art off of the boat and into the shallow water near the bank. "Thanks for the rescue, Hank. I was about to call it a life," he gasped.

"No problem," I laughed, "But I'll be an alcoholic by the time I'm through drinking all the beer I've got coming from this trip."

Dan and Pat joined us soon, and we were all glad to be back together. Even with the swim it had been a great day. We watched the trail high above on the canyon walls for signs of the girls. We were almost to Falls Creek where we would make our final camp. In the morning we would ride out the last two miles to the trailhead to meet our shuttle drivers.

All too soon, we rounded a bend and spotted Falls Creek plunging into the Crescendo. "I see why they call it Falls Creek," said Dan. A twenty-five foot falls with a clean landing pool was right by our camp, as were the Falls Creek Hot Springs.

As we pulled up to take out at the hot springs we got a surprise. A quadruple "moon," courtesy of the "Team Hack Girls," as they had begun calling themselves. We now knew the surprise they had been planning for us.

We beached our boats and joined them in the hot springs for wine and a supper that was prepared and spread out on the rocks. A short easy trail up the creek led to a pool

above the falls. We packed up and ran the falls until we were exhausted, then jumped back into the hot springs. Could life get any better? I didn't think so.



When it got too dark to paddle, I got my guitar out and sat on my Crazy Creek chair to sing and play. We sang on into the night, drinking and having a great time. Art, Dan and Pat all got sick from too much wine and headed off to bed. My tooth was throbbing, so I popped a second codeine tablet. I had been playing a song that went something like the old Santo and Johnny tune, "Sleep Walk." You know, that C, Am, F to G thing. Melina was singing slowly, but I couldn't understand the words. Her beautiful face and coal black hair were fading in and out as the moonlight ebbed in the darkness. I was slouching further into my chair as my arms and legs got heavier.

I tried to stand up to call it a night, but just then a man with a flashlight came walking down the Falls Creek trail. "Hello, is that you Melina?" It was Doug. "One of the trucks broke down, and I wanted to come in to let you know we'll be a little late tomorrow."

Doug was shining his light into my face. "Stop shining that damn thing in my eyes," I said, irritated. The girls giggled. I found that a little annoying, and I couldn't understand why my Crazy Creek chair was making me sit up so straight.

"Take it easy," Melina said as she pried her

fingers into my mouth. I tried to suck on them, but they tasted like rubber. "Shall I turn up the oxygen?" she asked.

"What oxygen?" I stammered, trying to figure out what the hell was happening.

"Yes," said Doug, "and turn off the nitrous oxide."

"What the hell's going on?" I asked, getting a little angry.

"Just a minute and we'll have this rubber dam out of your mouth so we can understand what you're saying," said Melina.

"Here's a prescription for some codeine tablets in case it starts hurting," said Doug. "Two hours and forty-five minutes. The longest root canal we've ever done."

Matilda broke in, "Your ride is here. Can you walk OK?"

Matilda? I didn't like this version of reality, and tried to no avail to go back to the Falls Creek Hot Springs. Matilda helped me out to the waiting room. "Don't worry about the bill," she said. "We'll send it later."

"Let's go boatin' dude," said Art, tossing his magazine back onto the pile. "I thought you'd never get out of there." The sun seemed harsh as we walked out onto the sidewalk. A chill ran down my spine as Art opened the door. Parked at the curb was a candy apple red convertible.

"I just picked it up this morning," Art said. "It's a '59 Caddy Eldorado. Completely restored. Cost me ten years of my retirement fund."

"Would you mind honking the horn once for me?" I asked. Sure enough, F#.



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Keg Rescue!

Gentle Reader,

American Whitewater is recognized as the place for cold hard facts about river access and for spearheading whitewater issues, but it is less known for its attention to the needs of the “inner boater.”

I have appointed myself to handle the less tangible, but no less important holistic issues that plague the modern boater. My many years of reading self-help books and squandering money on various cults have given me the insight to deal with these concerns.

My transformation to guruship came one day while leading a group of newbie kayakers down a local run (part of a court ordered community service program). I was hanging out in an eddy, showing them the fine art of being an eddy lizard when one of them floated up next to me and asked, “Dude, what should I do next?” It came to me in a flash of inspiration: I could mold these young boaters into anything I wanted them to be! Not only that, but they would shower me with money and admiration in the process.

Now my multidisciplinary approach to whitewater counseling will be brought to the pages of the AW Journal in my semi-regular advice column. My randomly scheduled columns will consist of two parts. The first will present my erudite and impeccably reasoned commentary about a current topic of discussion in the kayaking world. The second part will consist of your inane, incoherent and fragmented questions.

This first column will discuss the issue of keg rescue. I’ve chosen a benign topic to kick my column off with, but I’m not afraid to deal with more controversial issues like, “Shaving before Boating: Crime Against Nature or Simple Good Hygiene,” or “Board Surfers: Will the UN Mandates Work or Should We Take Unilateral Action?” So go ahead and share your deepest concerns and emotions with me! Please be assured that if I don’t personally answer your letter, one of my body doubles will—and you’ll never know the difference

Best Regards,

Dr. Hip Snap

Ask Dr. Hip Snap

Keg Rescue- Mindless Sport or Important Community Resource?

My first experience with keg rescue was in college in the late 70s. I was involved in an intense keg rescue on the Madison river in southwest Montana that featured one wayward keg of Lucky Lager, three Grumman canoes and a couple of fiberglass kayaks. This was a touch and go operation that finally boiled down to a cadre of dedicated keg rescue professionals draining the keg in order for it to not swamp a Grumman. I’d like to say the memory of that day is etched into my psyche, but it’s not. All I can remember is the terrible sunburn I got and the killer hangover I suffered the next day.

After that, I lost touch with the keg rescue community until I moved to Oregon in 1999 and met Tony Crawford. Tony is a key figure in the close knit and elite world of kayak based keg rescue. Through his selfless efforts the sport and, yes, the passion, of keg rescue have taken root in the great Pacific Northwest.

For the past two years, one of the most anticipated events in the Oregon Cup has been the International Keg Rescue Trials, held during the Bob’s Hole Rodeo. The event keeps getting bigger and better every year. This year they even managed to keep the keg under control and not have it float downriver into a pod of pro’s surfing at Bob’s Hole, like it did last year. Any questions?

Questions from The Boating Community

Dear Dr. Hip Snap: My brother Steve told me that this keg rescue thing was just something Tony Crawford cobbled together at the last minute to keep the crowds at last years Oregon Cup happy while they were waiting for Eric Jackson and Corran Addison to ride the mechanical bull off the sky ramp over a simulated waterfall while battling each other for the title of Head Huckster in the kayak industry. Is this true and was my question just one long run on sentence?
– Just Curious in Bend, OR

Dear Curious: No, this is not true at all. Keg rescue competitions have been around for hundreds of years in one form or the other. Tony’s event follows the rules laid down in the Reinheitsgebot or German Beer Purity Rules that were codified during the Middle Ages. Tony may be “new school” when it comes to boating, but he is way “old school” when it comes to keg rescue regulations.

As far as the second part of your question goes, I don’t think so.

Dear Dr. Hip Snap: A guy at work, who looks like he has rescued a few kegs in his time, is always complaining that the little guy doesn’t stand a chance against the big brewery pro teams. Is he right?
– Mini Me in Minneapolis

Dear Mini: Not at all, my inebriated friend! While it is true that large factory funded teams of the 70s and 80s once dominated the sport, two things have changed since then. The first is the microbrew revolution. Now anybody, even a 40-year-old loser still living with his parents, can buy a few carboys, get some labels printed out and call himself a “microbrewer.” Talk about confusion in the market place! This really leveled the playing field.

The other key change occurred when the rules were amended to allow the use of “pony kegs.” Before this revolution, you had to have a large wagon drawn by a team of Clydesdales, or at least a full-sized pickup truck to be a serious competitor. Now with the widespread usage of pony kegs any yahoo with a Subaru can be a player. Some of the more radical fringe of the sport even show up at competitions on bicycles towing pony kegs on roller blades. Talk about earth friendly!

Dear Dr. Hip Snap: My cousin Vinny went to Sicily ten years ago. Since then he has been an expert on all things European. He claims that because keg rescue has become an official European Union sport all gear has to be CE certified. Is he right about this? I’m thinking about taking up the sport and don’t want to get the wrong gear.
– By the Book, Burlington, VT

Dear By the Book: Like all things concerning CE approval and the EU, the answer is yes, no and maybe. It all depends on where you are. In France and Germany you will have to pony up the Euros and have a CE approved keg rescue vest, paddle, kayak and helmet. In Italy, Spain and Portugal you really won't need the CE certified gear as long as the local governing body for keg rescue has gotten a grant from the EU Commission On Keg Rescue to study compliance with the new regulations. The Swiss are neutral. The Scandinavian countries are mulling the issue and are planning a plebiscite on it in 2010. In the UK as long as you have the metric conversions handy you should be okay. Closer to home, Canada just requires the Coast Guard labels to be in both French and in English. In the US all you have to have is a cool looking helmet and you are good to go.

Dear Dr. Hip Snap: My ex-boy friend, Clarence, says that keg rescue is a fake sport like ice dancing or freestyle whitewater rodeo. He thinks that the events are rigged and that the judges trade votes. He even goes so far as to claim that the

judges determine the outcome of big events in advance at swishy cocktail parties paid for with UN grant money.
– Suspicious in Salt Lake

Dear Suspicious: Tell Clarence he needs to round up a couple of Mini 14s and head for the bunker because a new world order is coming! Boy do I have news for him. Keg Rescue judges and officials are from the same set of un-corruptible saints that keep the world of professional boxing pristine. I'm shocked that your boy friend should ask such a question. I'm sure that's not the only reason he's your ex!

Editor's Note: Dr. Hip Snap (also known as Mike Jolley) lives in the sterile suburb of Beaverton, Oregon. When Gen Xers meet the author they think of him as a youthful Baby Boomer. When Baby Boomers are asked about Dr. Hip Snap they describe him as an aging Gen Xer. One of his long-term goals is to get in as much boating he can without alienating his wife and two children. He is currently working on his first novel, *Confessions of a Serial Swimmer*, and making ends meet as a process development



engineer in the semiconductor industry. Dr. Hip Snap agreed to do this advice column free of charge as a good will gesture toward American Whitewater, so long as he can find a way to bill the time to somebody else.

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Focus on: Three Rivers Paddling Club

Three Rivers Paddling Club, based in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, provides organized river trips, promotes safety, river conservation and recreational access, and facilitates the exchange of information relevant to paddlers. Three Rivers is, in the words of newsletter editor, Barry Adams, committed to getting "as close to 100% membership in AW as we can." As a recent addition to our club initiative, American Whitewater would like to thank TRPC for their support and dedication!



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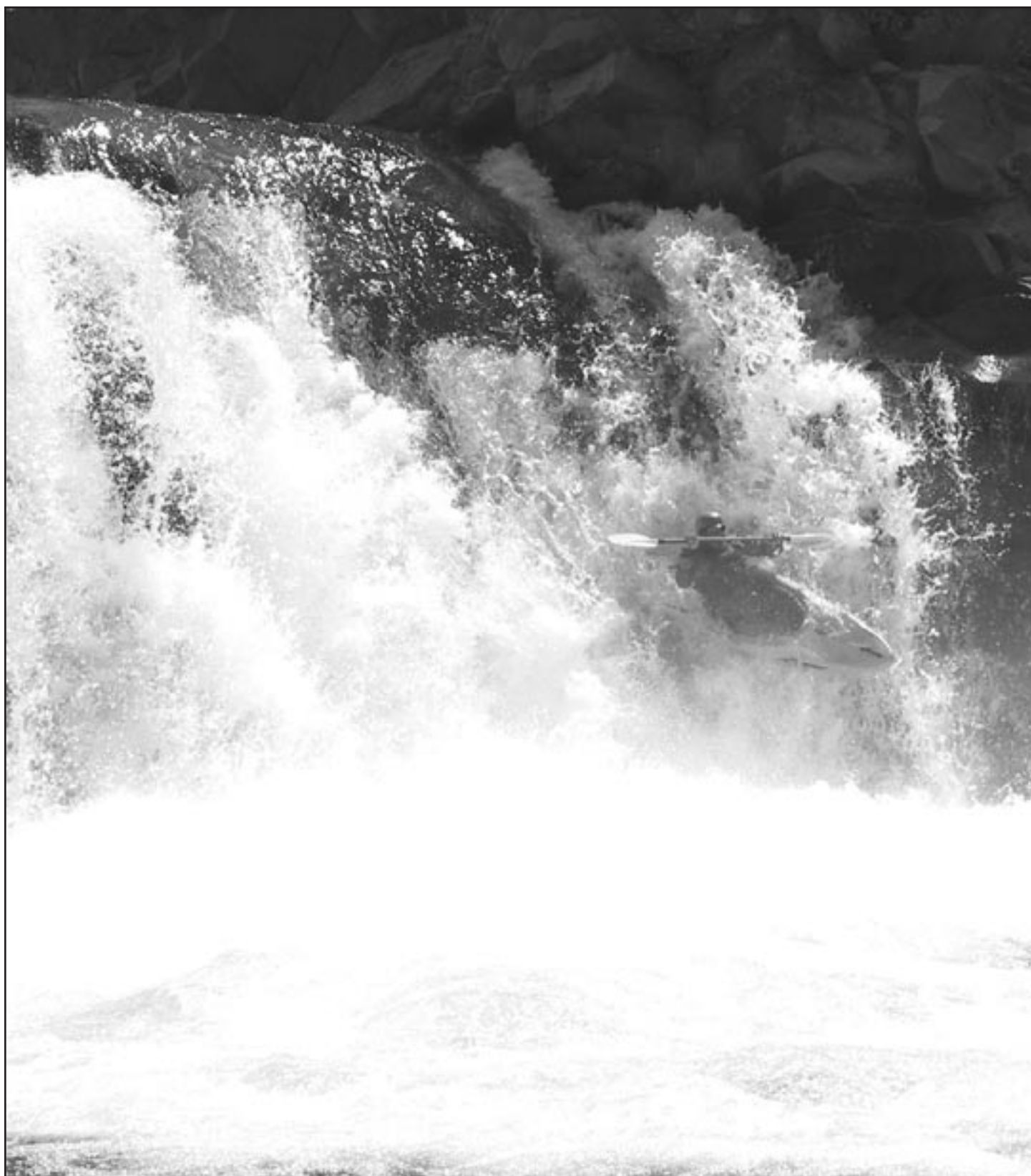
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Kenny on the Middle Fork of the Kings, California, July 2002
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Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints, or color prints or electronic, digital photos, 300 dpi tiffs or high res jpegs minimum 3"x5." Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we cannot guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. The better the photos the better the reproduction.

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater

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

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not

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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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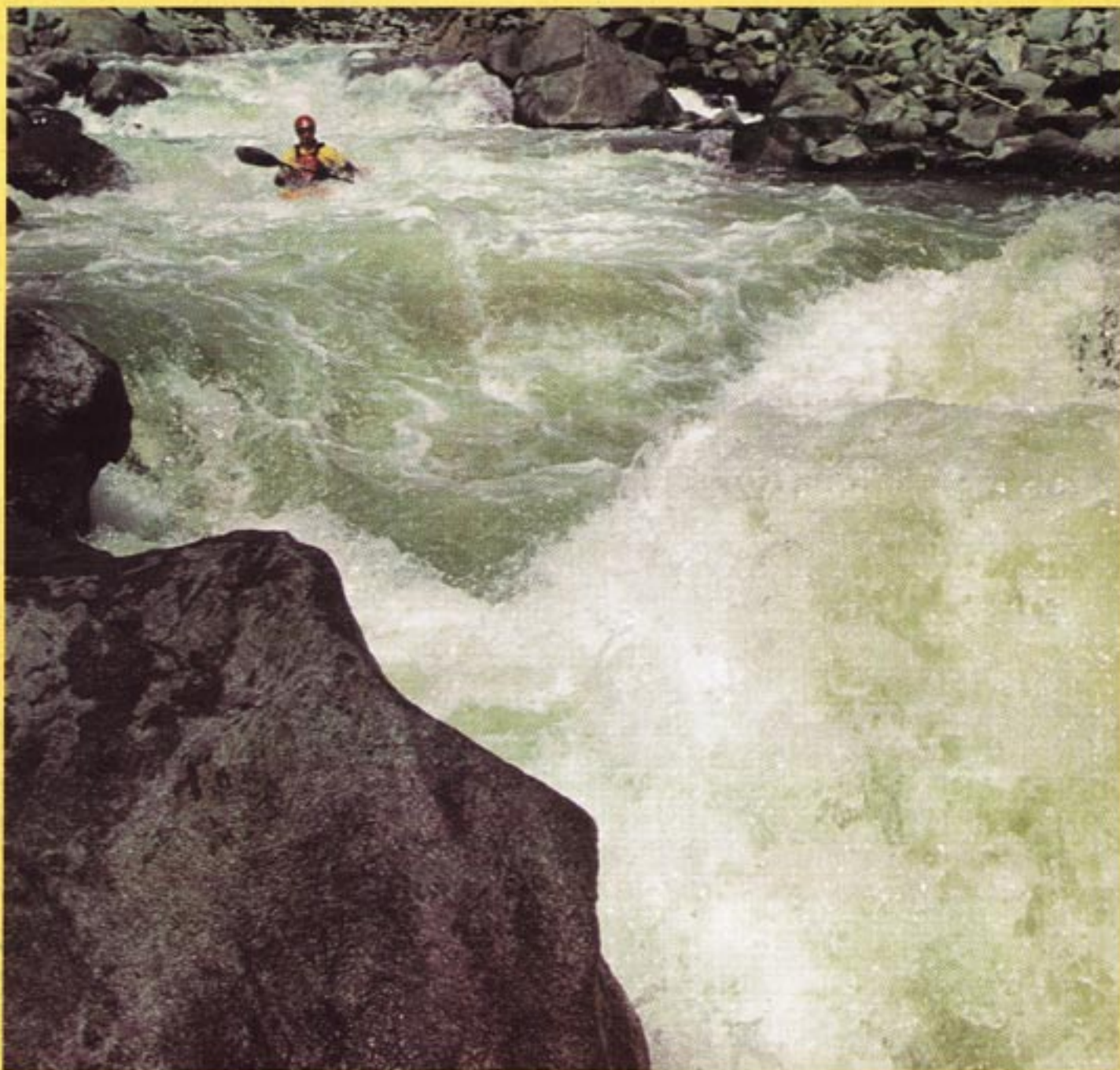
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