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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION

Oct/ November/December 1987
Volume XXXII, No. 4

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editor's forum

Help the AWA: Recruit a member

Guys like Pope Barrow, Pete Skinner, Steve Taylor, Charlie Walbridge and Rich Lewis—they really know how to make you feel guilty.

Barrow, Skinner and Taylor are AWA river activists. In addition to working regular full-time jobs, they donate 10 to 20 hours weekly to help protect our whitewater resources so that the rest of us have a place to paddle on weekends.

Walbridge, the AWA Safety Director, recently finished coordinating the revision of the AWA Safety

Code. Hundreds of hours were poured into the task to make us all more aware of whitewater safety.

Lewis, an AWA Director, organized the 1987 Gauley Festival. His Herculean efforts resulted in the most successful Festival ever—netting approximately \$8,000 for AWA conservation activities.

Like I said—these guys make you feel guilty. Compared to their level of commitment, I often feel I'm taking more out of watersport than I'm putting back in.

But, the other day, I did something that made me feel better.

A buddy of mine asked if I'd give him an extra copy of American Whitewater—for free. Well, I threw the miserable slug on the ground, yanked out his wallet, extracted \$15 and tossed him an AWA membership card.

"There," I said. "Now you'll get it at home."

I realize my actions won't cut down any of the hours that Pope, Pete, Steve, Charlie and Rich spend saving or making rivers safer. But at least it will broaden the AWA's constituency and provide a few more bucks to cover their expenses.

I felt good. I recommend it to you.

If every current AWA member will go out and toss a boating partner to the turf, brandish a paddle over their head and demand they join the organization, our membership will double over night.

And even if they refuse...our rivers are becoming too crowded anyway.



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letters to awa

(The following correspondence is an open letter to Larry Adams, superintendent of Ohiopyle State Park. Ohiopyle is located in southwestern Pa., and is home to the Lower Youghighany--one of the most heavily-used whitewater rivers in the U.S.)

Hello--Larry

The talk on the hard boat hot line is about paddlers being turned away at Ohiopyle. Shades of the olden days. I would wait for hours (it seemed) to have someone to paddle with.

Well, sir, for those down the list in order of appearance, I will repeat that the guided rafting outfitters have insisted from the outset that private hardboaters should have the free run of the river. As you tell me, we have an explosion of players in the game. This then, has it that the difficulty lies within the community of the helmeted ones.

It would seem that the day of "all them as wants" is over. We are entering the "how to" phase. How to provide for the least complicated access to the river, keep the conflict at places where we show off within norms and not impose an unwieldy reservation or scheduling burden on the park personnel seems to be the nub of the thing.

We may have passed by my simplistic approach. A sign-in sheet at no charge at the campground office for open slots beginning at noon the day before might yet work. Large group bookings for clubs prior to that time, would cost money.

Let's go your way and accept written input from all and sundry. We'll let your people sort through these and hope for a better idea.

I'm glad that you take the attitude that it's our river and not your river and that you're merely stuck with the job of

keeping everybody happy.

See you on the river,
Ralph McCarty

Dear Editor,

I have recently "discovered" a steep creek in western Maine, Moxie Stream, and I would like to know if you have any information on first descents on it. Moxie Stream flows from Lake Moxie to its confluence with the Kennebec River in the Kennebec Gorge just upstream from The Forks, Maine. It drops at a rate of 100 feet per mile (excluding one major waterfall) where it descends into the Gorge, and it looks like an excellent whitewater run. Local boaters I have asked about the stream do not know if it has been run before. I would appreciate it if you could tell me if you have any information concerning Moxie Stream, and if it has been run before.

Guy D. Bateman

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conservation currents

Army Corps of Engineers Declares:

YOUGH WHITEWATER IS NO FUN!

You thought you were having fun when you squeezed your toes into your squirt boat and jumped on the turbulent waters of the Lower Youghiogheny River. Sorry, pal. It didn't happen.

Despite what you thought, that was not recreation at all. Even when you were blasting the hole at Swimmer, you were not really having fun. According to officials at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, kayaking on the Lower Yough is not recreation. You were just confused.

In fact, kayaking and rafting are not even navigation. So in addition to not having fun, you were not even going anywhere.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers vs.

Webster's Dictionary

All these years misguided whitewater boaters thought they were having fun floating downstream, playing the holes, surfing the waves, doing mystery moves, squirts, enders and pop ups. This looks like recreation. It feels like recreation. But according to the Corps, it is not.

The official word from the Pittsburgh District of the Corps is that—at least on the Youghiogheny River—the word "recreation" doesn't include kayaking and rafting downstream of the Youghiogheny Dam. This astounding pronouncement was accompanied by the equally bizarre claim that kayaking and rafting are not "navigation."

According to Webster's, "recreation" means a "refreshment or

diversion" while "navigation" means "travel by water." When Congress authorized building of the dam on the Youghiogheny River in Pennsylvania, it said that recreation and navigation were official purposes of the project.

Since in 1938 when the dam was authorized there was no rafting or kayaking and probably not much canoeing on the Yough, the Corps decided that the law did not encourage or protect those activities. In the summer of 1987, the Corps pronounced that kayaking, canoeing and rafting were excluded from the official project purposes.

Management of Flows May Be Affected

Unfortunately, more than semantics is involved here. The decision that "recreation" and "navigation" do not include kayaking, rafting and canoeing downstream of the Yough Dam can affect the way releases are provided from the dam.

Over the years, the Corps of Engineers have been extremely cooperative in managing the flows from the Yough Lake. Since there was no hydropower at the dam there was no incentive to arrange flows to conform to the peak power needs of the local electric utility. But now a private hydroelectric power project has been licensed for construction at the dam with power sold to the local utility.

The Corps is now writing a Memorandum of Agreement with the project owner (the Borough of Seven Springs). The Memorandum will govern the effect of the project on

other uses of the dam. It will not give power generation priority over official project purposes. However, with whitewater boating not protected, it means that the Corps can ignore the issue of whitewater in deciding on the timing and amount of water to be released from the dam.

It is possible that the historic pattern of flows would not be changed, but certain signs of trouble have already been detected. The new power plant is supposed to be run-of-the-river, but in the case of water from a managed dam, run-of-the-river does not mean whatever water comes into the dam goes out at the same time. It means the flows are managed to fulfill project purposes.

The owner of the new power plant as a contract to sell power to the local utility. The contract price will be higher during peak hours than at other times. The Corps could adjust flows to improve power revenues whenever it wanted so long as official project purposes are not impaired.

If flows from the dam were decreased during off-peak hours and increased during peak hours to improve power revenues, the increased flows would not reach Ohiopyle until around 1:00 p.m. It doesn't take a genius to see who will probably be the loser in all this.

Deja Vu

This has all happened before, on the Gauley River in West Vir-

ginia. Several years ago when the Huntington District of the Corps declared whitewater not to be a project purpose of the Summersville Project, Congressmen from the districts surrounding the Summersville Lake were outraged. Almost before the ink was dry on the Corps letter, Congress passed an amendment declaring, in no uncertain terms, that when the law said "recreation" it meant all kinds of recreation, even scuba diving and kayaking.

This amendment was attached to the bill providing money for new Corps projects and the Huntington District got the message loud and clear. Now they cooperate fully in providing whitewater releases on the Gauley during the fall drawdown. The Pittsburgh District has not yet got the message.

Whitewater Groups Protest

Most of the whitewater boating clubs and outfitters who use the Lower Yough, as well as a large number of individual whitewater boaters, protested the Memorandum of Agreement which the Corps proposed. They all asked that whitewater use be protected from interference associated with power generation. A total of 68 protests were received in the summer of this year.

The Corps responded by saying that "ponding" would not be allowed, but otherwise the Corps has not budged from its position that whitewater is not part of the project's official purposes. AWA members and several canoe clubs met with outfitters in Ohiopyle October 4, 1987 in a marathon meeting to plot strategy.

What is Needed

Unless the Army Corps of Engineers can be persuaded to recognize that whitewater boating downstream of the Yough Dam is "recreation" or "navigation" within the meaning of the law authorizing the dam, the only way to assure that flows will not be screwed up by power generation will be to get Congress to pass yet another law to set the Corps straight. At this time, AWA and members of various canoe clubs are asking their members to write to the Corps, urging them to update their interpretation of the law governing the Yough Dam.

What You Can Do

You can help. Write to John S. Doyle, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army, Office of the Assistant Secretary, Washington, D.C.,

20310-0103. Ask him to make the Pittsburgh District of the Corps wake up to reality.

Explain to him that kayaking, canoeing and other types of whitewater boating at the Youghiogheny River are just as much recreation (and just as entitled to protection from hydropower development) as any fishing, swimming or water skiing. Be sure to send copies of ~~your~~ letters to Senator John Heinz and Senator Arlen Specter.

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Three Rivers Club Comments on Yough Situation:

THREE RIVERS PADDLING
CLUB
AD HOC COMMITTEE
ON OHIOPYLE STATE PARK

Notes from initial meeting

Problems Identified:

(1). The hardboat daily limit (presently set at $192 + 5\% = 202$). This was not relevant until recently, when numbers of hardboaters increased to the point where we are

routinely experiencing peak-day turnaways of persons desiring to run the entire Lower Yough (Ohiopyle to Brunner Run takeout).

(2). Loop access restrictions (limited to put-ons after 3 PM). In light of point one, persons turned away before Noon on peak days now have to hang around Ohiopyle until 3 PM before being permitted to put on for the shorter Loop run. This is particularly unfortunate for those

Three Rivers Comments:

coming from considerable distances--the very persons most likely to have difficulty in arriving early enough to make the morning limit, and most needing to leave for home at a reasonable hour.

(3). Increasing congestion on the river resulting from peak put-on times between 10 AM and Noon. This is a direct result of problem one as the mid-morning filling of daily quotas tends to force paddlers to earlier and earlier arrival to protect their chances of getting a shuttle ticket for river access. The current policy aggravates the situation further by requiring immediate put-on after buying a pass.

Possible Solutions:

The solutions put forth and discussed by the committee include

encouraging the Park to find a means of spreading hardboater traffic more evenly throughout the day, particularly during the now under-utilized early afternoon put-on hours.

Ways of doing this might include a set rate-per-hour system of put-on times, but much preferable to another layer of regulation would be the raising or abolition of hardboater number limits until such time as the Park had reason for reimposing a limit. The initial regulations setting hardboater limits were not, we believe, set for any reasons of safety, since it is generally accepted that hardboaters represent an increase in safety factors for other users, but rather was an arbitrary number selected only because it was presumed higher than necessary to

provide unlimited access to hardboaters desiring to run. If this understanding or original intent is correct, that argument might carry some weight in getting the limit raised or abolished entirely.

We would seek the removal of limitations on access to the Loop to post-3 PM put-on, particularly as it now discriminates unfairly against those whose travel distances, work or family schedules, or limited experience or stamina preclude their running the entire Lower on a Sunday. We would like to see Loop restrictions removed, at least on Sundays. If hardboater number limits are not removed, on days when the "quota" is reached, the Loop should be opened at least within an hour after the ticketed paddlers have put on and moved downstream.

Protection for Kings and Kern

Bills to designate as wild and scenic two major California rivers--the Kings and the Kern--were approved October 1 in the U.S. Senate.

The more controversial of the bills, HR 799 for the Kings, represents a compromise among Republicans, Democrats, commodity interests and conservationists. It would designate 81 miles of the river wild and scenic and protect another 11 miles without formal designation.

The original bill would have designated the entire 93 miles (with rounding) wild and scenic. The compromise was forged in the House-passed version of HR 799. The U.S. Forest Service has misgivings about a 48,000-acre special management area the bill would establish as the service generally does not like unconventional land

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safety lines

The Making of the Code

by Charlie Walbridge
AWA Safety Chairman



The men and women who founded the American Whitewater Affiliation in 1952 were the first of a new breed of responsible river runner. Until that time, "shooting the rapids" was considered incredibly reckless if you weren't a Maine Guide or a Canadian Voyageur.

But with the end of World War II, a few Americans teamed up with a number of European immigrants to turn river running into a safe and enjoyable sport. The skills and equipment they developed laid the foundations for today's paddlers to build upon.

By 1957, the AWA was a strong national network of paddling clubs. They ran trips to unexplored rivers and passed on the latest skills and equipment to their membership. Safety was always central in their approach to running whitewater, and they hoped to raise the safety consciousness of river paddlers throughout the country.

As a part of this effort, a nine-man committee was formed to begin work on a safety code. The result was a brief outline of the essential precautions to be taken by canoe, kayak and raft enthusiasts. Although less than half the length of the current code, it was so carefully put together that the basic outline is still in use today.

When the code was first published in 1959, the sport was still in its formative years. People paddled aluminum canoes with home-made decks; war-surplus rescuer rafts and imported single-seat folding kayaks. "Rigid" fiberglass boats were just beginning to be used in races,

but they were home-made and not available to the average paddler. Life vests were accepted, but still controversial. Helmets were rare, and floatation was still in the future. Bracing technique had been learned from Milo Duffek and other Europeans, but the Eskimo Roll was still a "stunt" for experts in calm water.

Trips were real adventures into unknown waters. Swims and pins were so common that many groups carried a "come-along," a portable winch weighing almost fifteen pounds, to rescue derelict craft. They were invariably led by a strong, experienced person who exercised real authority over the group.

As the AWA Safety Code gained wide acceptance throughout the country, the Guidebook Committee under Jeff Wilhote developed an American version of the International Scale of Difficulty. Although based on a six-level scale adapted by the ICF in 1954, the wording of the ratings was the work of this group.

It is interesting to note that this description has been used in many foreign guidebooks. A point system for rating rivers, now outdated, was also produced. It might be useful to bring this back in the future.

Over the years, the Code and Classification System have been revised to keep pace with the growth of the sport. By today's standards, the experts of the 50's possessed the skills of "gutsy intermediates," and many of the "Class V" runs of the era have been down-

graded to Class III+.

Using the techniques they pioneered and equipment they helped develop, we breeze down runs which tested the limits of their skills. But their responsible attitude toward safety impressed many government officials and kept the sport free of regulation. Indeed, the first known death among experienced club paddlers occurred at a slalom race in 1975. We are indebted to those who volunteered their time and energy to lay this groundwork for us.

The 1987 revision differs from previous versions in several ways. In the early days of the sport, most trips depended on the leadership skills of a few experienced people. Today, when most outings are run by groups of friends with roughly equal skills, it was felt that the concept of the "common adventurer" more accurately reflects the way responsibility for group safety is shared.

In the new code, there are no formal leaders except on designated instructional or guided trips. And since each person is ultimately responsible for the consequences of their actions, a section on self-evaluation has been added. Because trip "leadership" responsibilities are shared

under this concept, an outline of the basic principles of group travel seemed in order.

Other matters deserved attention. As decked boats have become stronger and smaller, safe outfitting becomes more important. The code reflects this, as well as changes in the way open canoes are now being paddled.

There is a strong statement about alcohol and drug

Safety Code of the American Whitewater Affiliation

Three Decades of Service to the Paddlers of America



Adopted 1959 — Revised 1987

CHARLIE WALBRIDGE

Revision Chairman

PETE SKINNER

Production Coordinator

This code has been prepared using the best available information and has been reviewed by a broad cross section of whitewater experts. The code, however, is only a collection of guidelines; attempts to minimize risks should be flexible; not constrained by a rigid set of rules. Varying conditions and group goals may combine with unpredictable circumstances to require alternate procedures.

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use which is long overdue. New equipment innovations such as drysuits have been noted. The rescue section has been enlarged to cover aggressive self-rescue and stresses the need for appropriate rope skills.

In addition, the revised river classification descriptions, in an effort to "open up" the top end of the scale, define Class VI as including extremely difficult, but runnable, rapids.

As chairman of the revision committee, I depended heavily on the feedback I received from many ACA and AWA members. Every effort was made to contact paddlers of all skills and interests in different regions of the country.

Pete Skinner provided special insight into the problems of river classification; Ron Waters helped us with the "common adventurer" concept, and Mac Thornton served as legal advisor in our efforts to stay clear of liability pitfalls. In all, over fifty people corresponded with me. To all of you: thanks. It could not have been done without you.

Most people liked our work, but there were concerns. The major one was that the code was becoming too long. We've grown quite a bit from the two-page summary that Porter Baker

demand of his committee, and this may not be for the best.

The question of group organization and leadership has been extensively debated in all revisions, and we have now come full circle in embracing the "common adventurer" concept. The original document was not

please turn to page 36

Safety Code of the American Whitewater Affiliation

I. PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. **Be a competent swimmer.** with the ability to handle yourself underwater.
2. **Wear a lifejacket.** A snugly-fitting vest-type life preserver offers back and shoulder protection as well as the flotation needed to swim safely in whitewater.
3. **Wear a solid, correctly-fitted helmet** when upsets are likely. This is essential in kayaks or covered canoes, and recommended for open canoeists using thigh straps and rafters running steep drops.
4. **Do not boat out of control.** Your skills should be sufficient to stop or reach shore before reaching danger. Do not enter a rapid unless you are reasonably sure that you can run it safely or swim it without injury.
5. **Whitewater rivers contain many hazards which are not always easily recognized. The following are the most frequent killers:**
 - A. **HIGH WATER.** The river's speed and power increase tremendously as the flow increases, raising the difficulty of most rapids. Rescue becomes progressively harder as the water rises, adding to the danger. Floating debris and strainers make even an easy rapid quite hazardous. It is often misleading to judge the river level at the put in, since a small rise in a wide, shallow place will be multiplied many times where the river narrows. Use reliable gauge information whenever possible, and be aware that sun on snowpack, hard rain, and upstream dam releases may greatly increase the flow.
 - B. **COLD.** Cold drains your strength, and robs you of the ability to make sound decisions on matters affecting your survival. Cold water immersion, because of the initial shock and the rapid heat loss which follows, is especially dangerous. Dress appropriately for bad weather or sudden immersion in the water. When the water temperature is less than 50 degrees F, a wetsuit or drysuit is essential for protection if you swim. Next best is wool or pile clothing under a waterproof shell. In this case, you should also carry waterproof matches and a change of clothing in a waterproof bag. If, after prolonged exposure, a person experiences uncontrollable shaking, loss of coordination, or difficulty speaking, he or she is hypothermic and needs your assistance.
 - C. **STRAINERS.** Brush, fallen trees, bridge pilings, undercut rocks or anything else which allows river current to sweep through can pin boats and boaters against the obstacle. Water pressure on anything trapped this way can be overwhelming. Rescue is often extremely

difficult. Pinning may occur in fast current, with little or no whitewater to warn of the danger.

- D. **DAMS, WEIRS, LEDGES, REVERSALS, HOLES, AND HYDRAULICS.** When water drops over an obstacle, it curls back on itself, forming a strong upstream current which may be capable of holding a boat or a swimmer. Some holes make for excellent sport; others are proven killers. Paddlers who cannot recognize the differences should avoid all but the smallest holes. Hydraulics around man-made dams must be treated with utmost respect regardless of their height or the level of the river. Despite their seemingly benign appearance, they can create an almost escape proof trap. The swimmer's only exit from the "downing machine" is to dive below the surface when the downstream current is flowing beneath the reversal.
- E. **BROACHING.** When a boat is pushed sideways against a rock by strong current, it may collapse and wrap. This is especially dangerous to kayak and decked canoe paddlers; these boats will collapse and the combination of indestructible hulls and tight outfitting may create a deadly trap. Even without entrapment, releasing pinned boats can be extremely time-consuming and dangerous. To avoid pinning, throw your weight downstream towards the rock. This allows the current to slide harmlessly underneath the hull.
6. **Boating alone** is discouraged. The minimum party is three people or two craft.
7. **Have a frank knowledge of your boating ability,** and don't attempt rivers or rapids which lie beyond that ability.
 - A. Develop the paddling skills and teamwork required to match the river you plan to boat. Most good paddlers develop skills gradually, and attempts to advance too quickly will compromise your safety and enjoyment.
 - B. Be in good physical and mental condition, consistent with the difficulties which may be expected. Make adjustments for loss of skills due to age, health, fitness. Any health limitations must be explained to your fellow paddlers prior to starting the trip.
8. **Be practiced in self-rescue,** including escape from an overturned craft. The Eskimo Roll is strongly recommended for decked boaters who run rapids of Class IV or greater, or who paddle in cold environmental conditions.
9. **Be trained in rescue skills,** CPR, and first aid with special emphasis on the recognizing and treating hypothermia. It may save your friend's life.

10. Carry equipment needed for unexpected emergencies, including footwear which will protect your feet when walking out, a throw rope, knife, whistle and waterproof matches. If you wear eyeglasses, tie them on and carry a spare pair on long trips. Bring cloth repair tape on short runs, and a full repair kit on isolated rivers. Do not wear bulky jackets, ponchos, heavy boots, or anything else which could reduce your ability to survive a swim.

11. Despite the mutually supportive group structure described in this code, individual paddlers are ultimately responsible for their own safety, and must assume sole responsibility for the following decisions:

- A. The decision to participate on any trip. **This** includes an evaluation of the expected difficulty of the rapids under the conditions existing at the time of the put in.
- B. The selection of appropriate equipment, including a boat design suited to their skills and the appropriate rescue and **survival** gear.
- C. The decision to scout any rapid, and to run or portage according to their best judgement. Other members of the group may offer advice, but paddlers should resist pressure from anyone to paddle beyond their **skills**. It is also their responsibility to decide whether to pass up any walk out or take out opportunity.
- D. All trip participants should constantly evaluate their own and their group's safety, voicing their concerns when appropriate and following what they **believe** to be the best course of action. Paddlers are encouraged to speak with anyone whose actions on the water are dangerous, whether they are a part of your group or not.

II. BOAT AND EQUIPMENT PREPAREDNESS

- 1. **Test new and different equipment** under familiar conditions before relying on it for difficult runs. This is especially true when adopting a new boat design or outfitting system. Low volume craft may present additional hazards to inexperienced or poorly conditioned paddlers.
- 2. Be **sure your boat and gear** are in **good** repair before starting a trip. The more isolated and difficult the run, the more rigorous this inspection should be.
- 3. **Install flotation bags** in non-inflatable craft, securely fixed in each end, designed to displace as much water as possible. Inflatable boats should have multiple air chambers and be test inflated before launching.
- 4. **Have strong, properly sized paddles or oars** for controlling your craft. Carry sufficient spares for the length and difficulty of the trip.
- 5. **Outfit your boat safely.** The ability to exit your boat quickly is an essential component of safety in rapids. It is your **responsibility** to see that there is absolutely nothing to cause entrapment when **coming free** of an upset craft. This includes:
 - A. Spray **covers** which won't release reliably or which release prematurely.
 - B. Boat outfitting too tight to **allow** a fast exit, especially in low volume kayaks or decked canoes. This includes low hung thwarts in canoes lacking adequate clearance for your feet and kayak footbraces which fail or **allow** your feet to become wedged under them.

C. Inadequately supported decks which collapse on a paddler's legs when a decked boat is pinned by water pressure. **Inadequate** clearance with the deck because of your size or build.

D. **Loose** ropes which **cause** entanglement. Beware of any length of loose line attached to a white-water boat. **All** items must be tied tightly and excess line **eliminated**; painters, throw lines, and safety rope systems must be completely and effectively stored. Do not knot the end of a **rope**, as it can get caught in cracks between rocks.

6. Provide ropes which permit you to hold on to your craft so that it may be rescued. The following methods are recommended.

A. Kayaks and covered canoes should have grab loops of $\frac{1}{4}$ " + rope or equivalent webbing sized to admit a normal sized **hand**. Stem painters are **permissible** if properly secured.

B. Open canoes **should have** securely anchored bow and stern painters consisting of 8-10 feet of $\frac{1}{4}$ " + line. These must be secured in such a way that they are readily accessible, but cannot come loose accidentally. Grab loops are acceptable, but are more difficult to reach after an upset.

C. Rafts and dories may have taut perimeter lines threaded through the bops provided. Footholds should be designed so that a **paddler's** feet cannot be forced through them, causing entrapment. Flip lines should be carefully and reliably stowed.

7. Know your craft's carrying capacity, and how added loads affect boat handling in whitewater. Most rafts have a minimum crew size which can be added to on day trips or in easy rapids. Carrying more than two paddlers in an open canoe when running rapids is not recommended.

8. Car top racks must be strong and attach positively to the vehicle. Lash your boat to each crossbar, then tie the ends of the boats directly to the bumpers for added security. **This** arrangement should survive all but the most violent **vehicle** accident.

III. GROUP PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. Organization. River trips should be regarded as common adventures by **all** participants, except on **specifically** designated instructional or guided trips. The group is collectively responsible for the conduct of the trip, and participants are individually responsible for judging their **own** capabilities and for their own safety as the trip progresses.

2. River Conditions. The group should have a reasonable knowledge of the difficulty of the run. Participants should evaluate this information and adjust their plans accordingly. If the run is exploratory or no one is familiar with the river, maps and guidebooks, if available, should be examined. The group should secure accurate flow **information**; the more difficult the run, the more important this will be. Be aware of possible **changes** in river level and how this will affect the difficulty of the run. If the trip involves tidal stretches, secure appropriate information on tides.

3. Group equipment should be suited to the difficulty of the river. The group should always have a throw line available, and one line per boat is recommended on difficult runs. The list may include: carabiners, prussick loops, first aid kit, flashlight, folding saw, fire starter, guidebooks, maps, food, extra clothing, and any other rescue or survival items suggested by conditions. Each item is not required on every run, and this list is not meant to be a substitute for good judgement.

4. Keep the group compact, but maintain sufficient spacing to avoid collisions. If the group is large, consider dividing into smaller groups or using the "Buddy System" as an additional safeguard. Space yourselves closely enough to permit good communication, but not so close as to interfere with one another in rapids.

A. The lead paddler sets the pace. When in front, do not get in your own way. Never run drops when you cannot see a clear route to the bottom or, for advanced paddlers, a sure route to the next eddy. When in doubt, stop and scout.

B. Keep track of all group members. Each boat keeps the one behind it in sight, stopping if necessary. Know how many people are in your group and take head counts regularly. No one should paddle ahead or walk out without first informing the group. Weak paddlers should stay at the center of a group, and not allow themselves to lag behind. If the group is large and contains a wide range of abilities, a designated "Sweep Boat" should bring up the rear.

C. Courtesy. On heavily used rivers, do not cut in front of a boater running a drop. Always look upstream before leaving eddies to run or play. Never enter a crowded drop or eddy when no room for you exists. Passing other groups in a rapid may be hazardous: it's often safer to wait upstream until the group ahead has passed.

5. Float plan. If the trip is into a wilderness area or for an extended period, plans should be filed with a responsible person who will contact the authorities if you are overdue. It may be wise to establish checkpoints along the way where civilization could be contacted if necessary. Knowing the location of possible help and preplanning escape routes can speed rescue.

6. Drugs. The use of alcohol or mind altering drugs before or during river trips is not recommended. It dulls reflexes, reduces decision making ability, and may interfere with important survival reflexes.

7. Instruction or guided trips. In this format, a person assumes the responsibilities of a trip leader. He or she may pass judgement on a participant's qualifications, check equipment, and assume responsibilities for the conduct of the trip normally taken by the group as a whole.

A. These trips must be clearly designated as such in advance, as they could expose the leader to legal liability. Trip or personal liability insurance should be considered.

B. Even on trips with a designated leader, participants must recognize that whitewater rivers have inherent hazards, that each person is still responsible for their decision to participate and their safety on the water.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR RIVER RESCUE

1. Recover from an upset with an eskimo roll whenever possible. Evacuate your boat immediately if there is imminent danger of being trapped against rocks, brush, or any other kind of strainer.

2. If you swim, hold on to your boat. It has much flotation and is easy for rescuers to spot. Get to the upstream end so that you cannot be crushed between a rock and your boat by the force of the current. Persons with good balance may be able to climb on top of a swamped kayak or flipped raft and paddle to shore.

3. Release your craft if this will improve your chances, especially if the water is cold or dangerous rapids lie ahead. Actively attempt self-rescue whenever possible by swimming for safety. Be prepared to assist others who may come to your aid.

A. When swimming in shallow or obstructed rapids, lie on your back with feet held high and pointed downstream. Do not attempt to stand in fast moving water; if your foot wedges on the bottom, fast water will push you under and keep you there. Get to slow or very shallow water before attempting to stand or walk. Look ahead! Avoid possible pinning situations including undercut rocks, strainers, downed trees, holes, and other dangers by swimming away from them.

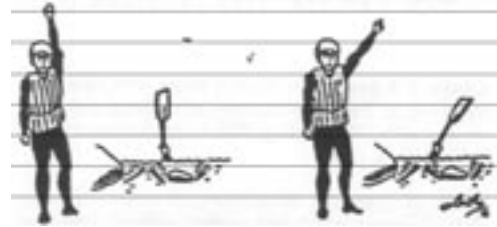
B. If the rapids are deep and powerful, roll over onto your stomach and swim aggressively for shore. Watch for eddies and slackwater and use them to get out of the current. Strong swimmers can effect a powerful upstream ferry and get to shore fast. If the shores are obstructed with strainers or undercut rocks, however, it is safer to "ride the rapid out" until a safer escape can be found.

4. If others spill and swim, go after the boaters first. Rescue boats and equipment only if this can be done safely. While participants usually assist one another to the best of their ability, they should do so only if they can, in their judgement, do so safely. The

first duty of a rescuer is not to compound the problem by becoming another victim.

5. The ~~use~~ of rescue lines requires training; uninformed use may cause injury. Never tie yourself into either end of a line without a reliable quick-release system. Have a knife handy to deal with unexpected entanglement. Learn to place set lines effectively, to throw accurately, to belay effectively, and to properly handle a rope thrown to you.

6. When reviving a drowning victim, be aware that cold water may greatly extend survival time underwater. Victims of hypothermia may have depressed vital signs so they look and feel dead. Don't give up; continue CPR for as long as possible without compromising safety.



A U CLEAR: Come ahead (in the absence of other directions proceed down the center.) Form a vertical bar with your paddle as one arm held high above your head. Paddle blade should be turned flat for maximum visibility. To signal direction as a preferred course through a rapid around obstruction, lower the previously vertical "all clear" by 45 degrees toward the side of the river with the preferred route. Never point toward the obstacle you wish to avoid.

V. UNIVERSAL RIVER SIGNALS



STOP: Potential hazard ahead. Wait for "all clear" signal before proceeding, or scout ahead. Form a horizontal bar with your outstretched arms. Those seeing the signal should pass it back to others in the party.

HELP/EMERGENCY: Assist the signaler as quickly as possible. Give three long blasts on a police whistle while waving a paddle, helmet or life vest over your head. If a whistle is not available, use the visual signal alone. A whistle is best carried on a lanyard attached to your life vest.

VI. INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

This is the American version of a rating system used to compare river difficulty throughout the world. This system is not exact; rivers do not always fit easily into one category, and regional or individual interpretations may cause misunderstandings. It is no substitute for a guidebook or accurate first-hand descriptions of a run.

Paddlers attempting difficult runs in an unfamiliar area should act cautiously until they get a feel for the way the scale is interpreted locally. River difficulty may change each year due to fluctuations in water level, downed trees, geological disturbances, or bad weather. Stay alert for unexpected problems!

As river difficulty increases, the danger to swimming paddlers becomes more severe. As rapids become longer and more continuous, the challenge increases. There is a difference between running an occasional Class IV rapid and dealing with an entire river of this category. Allow an extra margin of safety between skills and river ratings when the water is cold or if the river itself is remote and inaccessible.

The Six Difficulty Classes:

Class I: Easy. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little **training**. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.

Class II: Novice. Straightforward **rapids** with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional **maneuvering** may be required, but rocks and medium sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. Swimmers are seldom injured and group assistance, **while** helpful, is seldom **needed**.

Class III: Intermediate. Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required; large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large-volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare; self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may **be** required to avoid long swims.

Class IV: Advanced. Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Depending on the character of the river, it may feature large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast maneuvers under **pressure**. A fast, **reliable** eddy turn may be needed to **initiate maneuvers, scout rapids, or** rest. Rapids may require "must" moves above dangerous hazards. Scouting is necessary the first time **down**. Risk of injury to **swimmers** is moderate to **high**, and water conditions may make **self-rescue** difficult. Group assistance for rescue is often essential but requires 'practiced skills. A strong eskimo roll is **highly** recommended.

Class V: Expert. Extremely **long**, obstructed, or very violent rapids which expose a **paddler** to **above** average endangerment. Drops may contain large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools, demanding a high level of fitness. What eddies exist may **&** small, turbulent, or difficult to reach. At the high end of the scale, several of these factors may be combined. Scouting is mandatory but often difficult. Swims are dangerous, and rescue is difficult **even** for experts. A very reliable **eskimo** roll, proper equipment, extensive experience, and practiced rescue skills are essential for survival.

Class VI: Extreme. One grade more difficult than Class V. These runs often exemplify the extremes of difficulty, unpredictability and danger. **The** consequences of errors are very **severe** and rescue may be **impossible**. **For** teams of experts only, at favorable water levels, after close personal inspection and **taking** all precautions. **This** class does **not** represent drops thought to be **unrunnable**, but may include rapids which are only **occasionally** run.



Competition

in

Paradise

**By Chris Koll
and George Mower**

A summer weekday awakens late in Friendsville, Maryland. Out in the surrounding farmlands, fieldhands have been hard at it for hours--baling hay or tending to the animals--before life stirs on the town's main drag.

Maybe about eight a solitary rider will cruise down the street on a mountain bike, looking for a fix of coffee at Tabor's. And maybe a little later a single pedestrian, barefoot and followed by a dog, ambles over to the bridge on the west side of town to check out the level of the natural flow on the Yough.

Like similar agricultural communities, Friendsville might best be described as "sleepy."

Of course, other farming towns aren't bordered by Class V whitewater river. But Friendsville's proximity to the Upper Yough doesn't seem to disturb its serenity.

Later in the morning, at a suitably decent hour, Keith Backlund might appear at his woodworking shop; Jesse Wittemore might turn up next door at

his boat factory to work on a new mold; and the guides for Precision Rafting drift in to prepare for a ten o'clock release--but the mood remains remarkably laid back.

Summertime in Friendsville...and the living is easy.

No one really knows the derivation of the term "team Friendsville." The name just popped up a year or two ago to describe the gaggle of expert boaters who settled in Friendsville, and finding both the river and the community to their liking, put down semi-permanent roots.



Roger Zbell--perennial victor

There's really only two rigid criteria to be included on the team's roster. You have to live, have lived, or work in Friendsville--and you have to be one of the best whitewater boaters in the world.

A remarkable number of Friendsville residents qualify. Forget that "10 best whitewater paddlers" you might have seen printed elsewhere--too many political and geographical factors contributed to that compilation. If the truth be known, any accurate "10 best" listing would be liberally sprinkled with members of "the team."

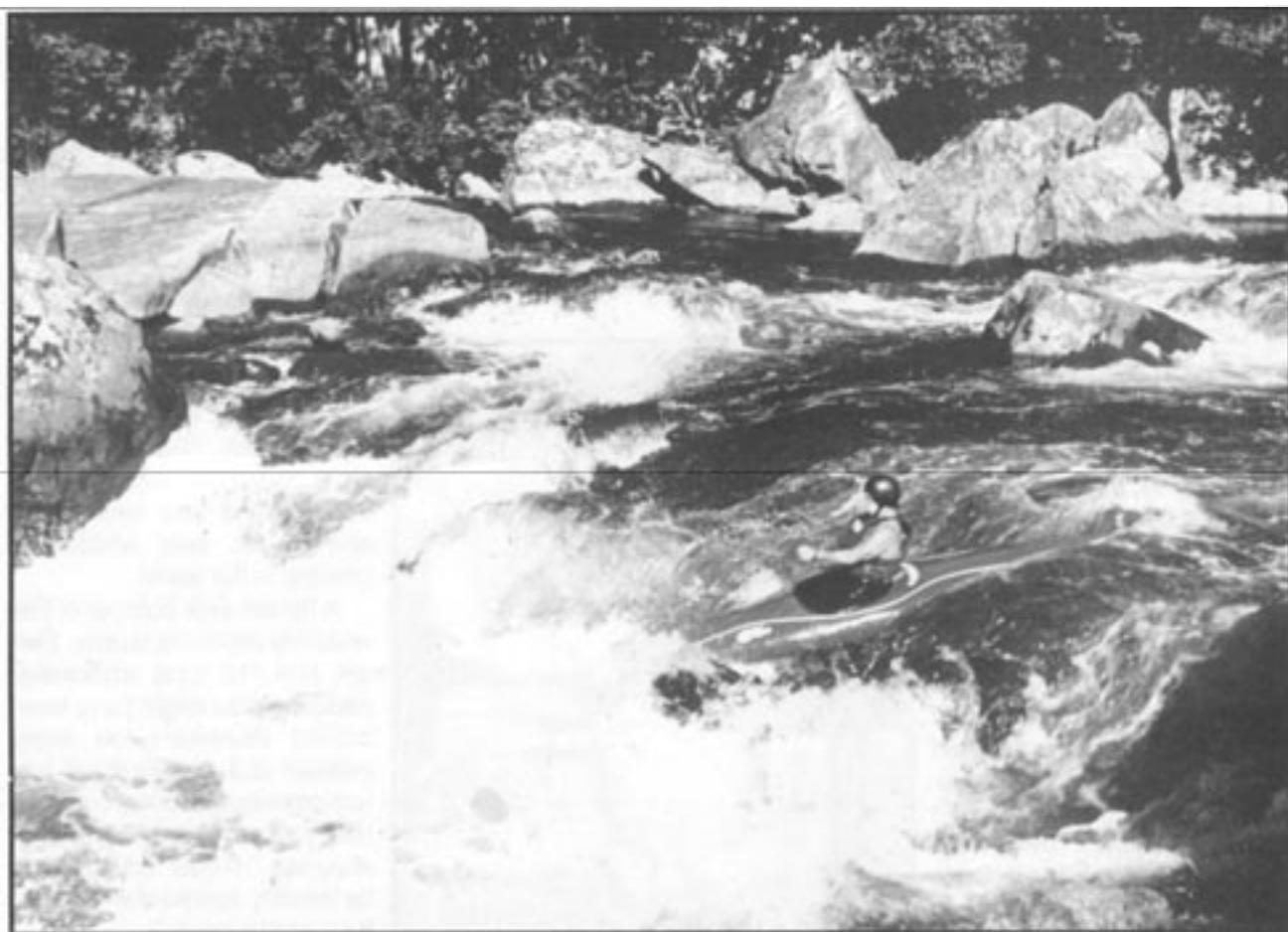
Arguably, Friendsville has more expert boaters per capita than any settlement in the world. There's Phil Coleman, Roger Zbell, Jim and Jeff Snyder, Jesse Wittemore, John Regan and a collection of other paddlers of nearly equal ability.

The label "team Friendsville" suits the group. Like natives of any typical American small town, Friendsville paddlers are a tad clannish. They live together, occasionally squabble together--but always maintain a strong sense of be-

longing to a rather exclusive community.

But, wait a minute. Something seems definitely wierd here. The village is coming off like some sort of grass-roots American Shangra-la where the inhabitants co-exist in a state of tranquil brotherhood.

It just can't be. Find a group of individuals who are the "best of" anything, whether it be cancer research,



Pete Zerfleis negotiates a drop during the Upper Yough Race. Zerfleis was the top C-1 finisher.

chess, car sales or backgammon, and inevitably, you find a healthy strain of competition. It's one of the fuels that fires an individual into accepting the often arduous physical or psychological demands required to rise to the top of the heap.

How can you reconcile the concept of "team Friendsville" with the individualistic striving to be the best? The idea of competition seems strangely foreign in Friendsville's laid-back setting.

In a Shirley Jackson short story called *The Lottery*, the residents of a small straight-out-of-Norman Rockwell New England village lead a peaceful existence except for one day a year when the entire population draws lots and the unlucky winner gets stoned—pre 1960s style.

The idea of the story is that there are dark human traits that cannot be

repressed—so we package them with the trappings of civilization and limit them to a cathartic outpouring on a single day.

"Team Friendsville" has its own version of *The Lottery*. It's called the World's Toughest Downriver Race—the Upper Yough Classic.

Back in 1981 when Jim Snyder and Al Fauber (the former owner of the Riverside Tavern whose back porch conveniently overlooks an Upper Yough takeout) organized the initial Upper Yough Downriver Race, they intentionally kept the event free from a clutter of rules.

Actually, there were only three: you started above Gap Falls, you finished about six miles later at Kendell after running all the big drops, and you had to compete in a

boat no longer than four meters. Snyder and Fauber kept it simple—there were no gates to be negotiated and the only penalties assessed were the possibilities of broken boats.

Friendsville boaters at the time, precursors of "team Friendsville," were intrigued by the idea. In 1981, the Upper Yough was a river most paddlers approached with trepidation—a tight and technical sluiceway dropping at 120 feet a mile that required considerable scouting and the use of every safety precaution. For that matter, it still is today.

But what Snyder was suggesting was a balls-to-the-wall sprint straight down the guts of the Upper Yough's class V rapids. No stopping to check your line, no sneaking down the right side to avoid a difficult move and no safety boat waiting

in an eddy below to help if you screw-up.

The race had a certain elemental appeal--just paddler against the river. Eighteen boaters showed up for the inaugural race and when the spray had settled, Friendsville's Roger Zbell had emerged the winner.

Since then, trying to beat Zbell and winning the Upper Yough Race has become an annual ritual for members of "team Friendsville." It hasn't happened often--Roger has won every year except 1983 when his time was slowed after paddling ahead of the water release--but on one day a year the normally low-key Friendsville natives are transformed into competitive monsters and try to make it happen again.

Well, maybe not only one day a year. To tell the truth, preparation for the Upper Yough race has become something of a year-round obsession for some members of "team Friendsville."

First, there's the matter of what boat to use. Until this year, boats longer than four meters were prohibited, thus preventing a paddler from using a faster downriver racing design. Actually, until this year when Zbell and Jeff Snyder competed in downriver boats, no one had given much thought to the possibility of using one. Built for straight-ahead speed, the idea of crashing down a river as technical as the Upper Yough in a V-hulled downriver craft was positively frightening.

But even with the original length restriction, racers had any number of cruising designs to choose from. And serious racers were constantly tinkering with various hull configurations to find that little edge. Some racers would go so far as build a special boat--just for the Upper Yough race.

Back a few years ago, Zbell's close friend and business partner Phil Coleman (the two of them own

Precision Rafting) unveiled a new boat he had layed-up just for the race. But the locals were mystified by the letters B.T.F.R.Z. laminated into the hull.

It wasn't until later that the meaning of the acronym became clear: Beat That F***** Roger Zbell. The jinx didn't work. Roger still won.

The real preparation for the race takes place on the river. It's no surprise that year after year, most of the top finishers are Friendsville natives--boaters that paddle the river four or five times a week. In the Upper Yough race, there's no substitute for a total familiarity with the river...the top racers have their lines committed to memory, rock by rock.

You may have guessed, those "racelines" are not the typical routes chosen by the normal boater during a descent of the Upper Yough.

Over the years, "team Friendsville" members have discovered little "short-cuts" for getting down the river. There might be a slot that shaves off a few seconds through one drop or a certain channel that eliminates a little distance through another rapid. It didn't matter that the new routes proved horrifyingly difficult with catastrophic consequences in case of a screw-up, if it was a faster way down the crick, you had to go for them.

The end result was that the race inspired a whole different way to run the Upper Yough--one that is guaranteed not to appear in your basic guidebook.

A prime example of the process is the race line through the rapid known as "Tommy's Hole." Normal procedure at the drop is to skirt a jumble of car-sized boulders on the right, cut left in the eddy below, then cruise down the left for the remainder of the rapid.

The race line, however, dictates that the paddler screams straight into the rock pile and down a narrow sluice. To compound matters, immediately below the water pillows onto another car-sized boulder de-

Upper Yough Race Advertised By Word of Mouth

So you want to attend or participate in the next Upper Yough Race? Don't be looking in the pages of American Whitewater for the date of the event.

"Team Friendsville" will probably get together sometime next spring, figure a certain day in August will be as good as any for holding a race, and that will be that.

"The gang in Friendsville gets together to organize the race, but it's all pretty loosely done," said Phil Coleman, one of the race's original participants. "Roger, Jess and I have been taking turns doing it. Up until this year Bob Hicks did the timing. He's an older fellow from Friendsville but he had a kidney stone this year.

"The race isn't advertised and people find out about it pretty much through word of mouth," Coleman said. "We have a lot of the same old faces every year. Sometimes a gang of people will show up and want to race and they'll come straggling in, long after the race is over."

Not all the paddlers who show up in Friendsville looking to race are uninitiated. Some of the past participants include world-class racers such as Jon Luginbill, Davey Hearn and Norbert Stadler.

What's the big attraction of the Upper Yough Race? It certainly isn't the prizes.

"There's been boats and paddles offered in the past, but no one is racing for prizes," Coleman said. "It's more for the glory."

manding that the paddler somehow veer the nose of his kayak 90 degrees right or risk slamming onto the rock like an insect on the windshield of an automobile.

Practically every rapid has its own race line of similar difficulty. For a normal recreational paddler, the race lines would represent a challenging new variation through the rapid, executed after considerable scrutiny and deliberation. The only deliberation an Upper Yough racer makes is how to blow through the crevice without missing a stroke.

This year's version of the Upper Yough Race, held Thursday, August 20, will be held as a benchmark in the history of the event. Zbell celebrated the initial year of wildwater design eligibility by slicing his way to a race record time of 28.27.

1987 UPPER YOUGH RACE

Men's division

1. Roger Zbell 28.27
2. Jeff Snyder 29.09
3. Marty McCormick 31.15
4. Ted Newton 31.36
5. Brian Homberg 31.42
6. Phil Coleman 32.50
7. Bill Heller 33.25
8. Jim Snyder 33.31
15. Pete Zurfleigh (C1) 36.40

Women's division

1. Deb Pepper 39.51
2. Jane Allison 42.06



Roger Zbell strokes to 1987 victory

Snyder finished second, paddling his wildwater boat across the finish line 42 seconds later.

The first of the "standard" boats, an old River Chaser paddled by nationally ranked slalom racer Marty McCormick, didn't finish the course until 31.15. The age of the wildwater boat in the Upper Yough Race was clearly established.

A total of 26 men contestants finished the race along with another first for the Upper Yough Race: a field of five women. It should come as no surprise that Deb Pepper--a Friendsville native--grabbed the first woman's crown with a time of 39.51.

The race was not uneventful. Both Zbell and Snyder reported getting "hammered" as did Bill Friend, who executed a dramatic series of rolls coming out of Heinzerling recovering in the nick of time before entering Boulder Dancer below.

The women also reported their share of difficulties. Pepper was freight-trained by a raft and pushed into a hole at Double Pencil Sharpener where she was window-shaded up against a sharp ledge and pulled from her boat. Cara Burrell O'Brian, rushing to the start-

ing line after National team practice runs on the nearby Savage, also had difficulty with the hole below Lost-n-Found.

Numerous other racers reported episodes which required self-rescue of one sort or another, underscoring the difficulty and, well, danger of the Upper Yough Race. With the course stretched out over six miles, the racers are totally alone for most of their descent.

And as for safety boaters, few kayakers possess the skills to even paddle the Upper Yough's sneak routes--much less render assistance in the river's challenging race lines. It's probably the only race in the country where even the spectators need to be expert boaters.

Like in Jackson's short story, *Please turn to page 36*



Racer negotiates rock-strewn course

"Tis the season for...

The Gauley

Name any whitewater river where its period of runnability is qualified as "a season?" Except, of course, the Gauley.

The Cheat runs for two weeks in the spring and attracts hundreds of

paddlers, but no one refers to April and May as "Cheat Season." The same could be said for any number of western rivers, swelling bankful with snowmelt in May and June. But who has ever heard of "Arkansas Season" or "Toula-loume Season?"

No, the Gauley is unique.

Starting in mid September with sun-drenched days that invite bare-skinned paddling, "Gauley Season" spans four weeks, ending in chilly October mornings that mandate layers of neoprene and polypro.

But what is it that makes Gauley Season more than just a series of scheduled releases?

First, there's the tradition. Ever since the Army Corps established a pattern of releasing an average flow of 2,500 CFS during its autumn draw-down of the Summersville Reservoir, boaters from across the country have made an annual event of paddling during the optimum levels.

At first, before whitewater recreation became a sanctioned use of the Gauley's water, news of release dates were spread by word of mouth and paddlers from across the coun-

ty would drift into the tail race camping area below the dam and stay a day, a week or a month.

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Acquaintances were made and friendships forged. Paddlers from the North, South or West could look forward to Gauley season as a common rallying point--a reunion of sorts.

Secondly, there's the people. Until the early 80s, the Gauley's ferocious reputation made it primarily the realm of the expert. Paddling the Gauley became something of a coming-of-age for the expert Eastern boater.

Since that time, the Gauley's image has softened. Now groups of strong intermediates, trailing be-

hind their trip leader like a string of ducklings, ease their way down the river.

But the experts still return. Sooner or later during Gauley Season, everybody who is anybody in Eastern boating circles makes an appearance. The river is a forum where boaters get the chance to see the hottest new moves by personages such as Jim Snyder, Nolan Whitesell or John Lugbill.

And finally, there's the river--always the river. There may be more difficult rivers than the Gauley, but mile-for-mile its consistent whitewater coupled with magnificent scenery make it the top run in the East.

The following paragraphs attempt to capture some of the highlights of this year's Gauley Season--and the people who make it an annual event.

Photo: A full release of 2,500 CFS explodes from the base of Summersville Dam.



(Right) Tim Kelly studies the approach to Pillow. (Below) A group of paddlers enter the second drop of Lost Paddle.



boater's hopes, but it wasn't until September 21--just a week before the AWA's scheduled Gauley Festival--that the Army Corps declared the river would run September 26th through 29th and for the final weekend in October.

As the season turned out, the Army Corps was able to provide water on all of the scheduled days. But that information did not become common knowledge until Tuesday the 29th.

The Army Corps has to be commended on the smooth way it runs the Summersville Dam put-in and camping facilities. The congested conditions that prevail during a typical Gauley Season weekend are enough to drive the most sensible person mad, yet Army Corps personnel respond with patience and courtesy.

The Season that almost wasn't

The 1987 Gauley Season was a season that almost wasn't.

Due to a particularly dry summer, the Army Corps of Engineers were forced to augment the flow of the Kanwha throughout the summer with low-level releases from Summersville Dam on the Gauley to maintain adequate levels for barge navigation.

By the time September with its scheduled whitewater releases rolled around, the lake behind Summersville Dam was already 28 feet below summer level and the Army Corps would only guarantee there would be enough water for the first two scheduled weekends.

A wet week in the middle of the month raised

The latest: Low-volume flippers

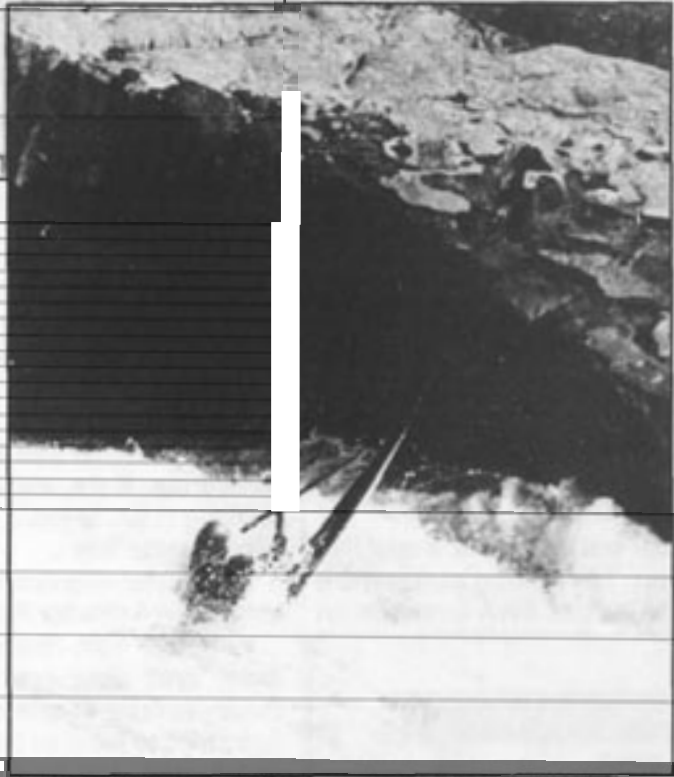
Put half the nation's top boaters in a single location at the same time, and you know someone's bound to try to come up with something different.

Take the case of Jim Snyder, who added a definite bizarre note to this year's Gauley Season.

You'd think that Snyder already stands out enough. As one of the prime movers of the squirt school of kayaking, Snyder is easily recognized as his sliver of a kayak cartwheels down a rapid or as his head disappears under the water sur-



Risa Callaway, AWA Marketing Director, sets up for and then executes a dramatic splat against Pillow Rock.



...is this called a Body Splat?

face in the middle of a "mystery move."

But on successive Saturdays during the past Gauley Season, Snyder redefined low-volume boating when he flopped down to the put-in wearing a wet suit, shin, knee and elbow pads, helmet, life jacket and a pair of swim flippers--and jumped into the river.

Snyder swam the entire Upper Gauley down to the Panther Creek takeout. He ran, in a matter of speaking, all the drops including multiple swims of Pillow Rock.

As a matter of fact, by the time Snyder body-surfed Pillow, he had inspired a number of imitators who joined him, climbing back on top of Pillow Rock and leaping into the flush of the current.

Throughout the days, Snyder alternately startled and amused various paddlers as he popped up from behind rocks in mid-river like some latter-day Gollum, a character from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

So what's next for Snyder? Well, as he flopped his way up the steep Panther Creek takeout trail, he was heard to comment, "I just got to get me a pair of smaller flippers."

AWA Continues the Festival Tradition

As with so many of our whitewater resources, the Gauley was once threatened by hydro development. Citizens for the Gauley River, a consortium of concerned paddlers and rafting outfitters, banded together to successfully fight the proposed diversion project and save the Upper Gauley.

The focal point of the CFTGR's efforts was its annual Gauley River Festival. Organized to help finance the battle to save the river, the Gauley Festival quickly grew popular among the paddling community as a damn fine party. Having a good time for a good cause at the festival became a permanent feature of Gauley

Season.

However, once the threat to the Gauley's whitewater had apparently passed, interest within the CFTGR to continue sponsoring the festival waned. After five years of ably shouldering the enormous undertaking of coordinating the festival, CFTGR or-

ganizers declared enough was enough.

Which left Gauley paddlers in the position of being all dressed down and no place to go.

Enter the AWA. Figuring that the Gauley Festival would provide an opportunity to publicize its conservation activities, earn a few bucks and continue an entertaining evening, the AWA assumed responsibility for promoting the event in 1986.

Our first effort was a qualified success. The evening earned more than \$5,000 for AWA conservation



place, a new addition to the festival program, came off without a hitch. Fifteen exhibitors displayed the latest advances in kayaks, canoes, squirt boats, custom wood paddles and boating accessories.

A full dinner menu of chicken and ribs, served up by the Fayette Plateau Chamber of Commerce, proved a popular feature to hungry paddlers fresh off

The band sets up for a night of blue-grass

programs and the huge turn-out proclaimed the food, programs and entertainment as outstanding.

However, an insufficient number of volunteer workers turned the event into a nightmare for the organizers. All evening long, there always seemed to be too many tasks and not enough bodies. By the end of the evening, the AWA staff was clearly burned out. If the festival was to continue in future years, there had to be a better way...

The better way emerged in the form of AWA director Rich Lewis.

Lewis, from Frankfort, Kentucky, lived close enough to the Gauley to make frequent organizational trips to the area through July and August. And by the time the estimated 1,000 festival participants flocked through the gates of the Burnwood Campground, Lewis' preparation was obviously paying off.

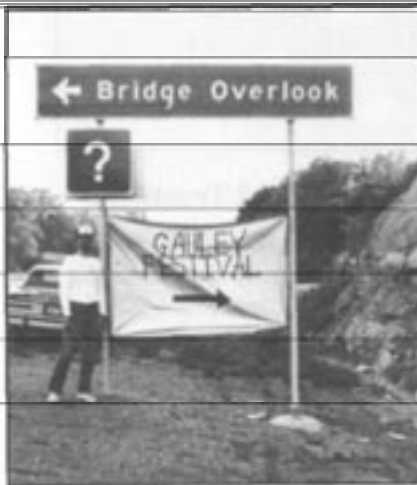
What they encountered was a well-planned festival site with food concessions, beverage stands and equipment displays flanking a grassy avenue leading up to the band stand and video area--all manned by a surplus of AWA volunteers.

The Gauley Festival Market-

the river.

During the course of the evening, festival goers were treated to live bluegrass music, some of the hairiest videos available on tape, and some friendly competition bidding for equipment bargains at the AWA "Silent Auction."

The end result of Lewis' efforts was a one-night gain of approximately \$8,000 dedicated to the AWA conservation battles...along with the assurance that the tradition of the Gauley Festival is alive and well under AWA direction.



Rich Lewis prepares festival sign



Steve Taylor, Pope Barrow, recruit members



Ed Kiesa crashes through the second drop at Lost Paddle

Lasting memory: Touching the river's face

Close your eyes and picture in your mind for just an instant...the Gauley River.

What image appeared? For most paddlers, the initial recollection of the Gauley is not that of frothy water boiling high against Pillow Rock, or of the beautiful, precipitous cliffs that line the lower river, or even of the emerald water that runs clear and deep in occasional pools.

No, the vision that springs to mind of the Gauley has nothing to do with the river's natural aesthetics. Instead, you flash upon the spectacle of Summersville Dam and the sight of an entire river leaping forth from the three tubes at its base.

It's appropriate. During a typical autumn release of 2,500 CFS, cylin-

ders of water erupt from two of the tubes, jetting out 60 yards in broad arcs before smashing into a maelstrom of foam, waves and swirling eddy lines in the pool below. The elemental display is a fitting way for the Gauley to begin.

More than one boater has pondered, "If I launched a boat from the top of the tubes, directly onto the compressed jet of water, would it actually ride on top of the cylinder, suspended in air, before disappearing into the pool?"

Despite the attractions of the river below, the tubes inspire that kind of musing. The release has such an impressive, mystical quality.

Maybe it's just my imagination.

Maybe my obsession with the tubes has evolved because I have reached out and almost touched the water.

It happened during my first Gauley Season, back in 1982. It was only six years ago chronologically, but a generation in the past as far as changes in the paddling scene are concerned.

After a Saturday on the river, we were camped in the tail race parking area. There were few amenities back then, just a couple portable privies, and the lot was only half full. The sea of boaters, and the full staff of Army Corps personnel required to manage them, were still a few years away.

About 11 PM, knowing I was a



The Gauley erupts from the tubes

Gauley virgin, a fellow named Pete asked me if I wanted to go "tubing." A few beers had been consumed, and I blearily agreed.

All three tubes blasted full-bore as we stumbled along the dark parking lot and down the path to the dam. I remember the cold spray of the mist as we climbed over a broken section of gate onto the dam itself.

The tubes were housed in a concrete structure built into the base of the dam on the right. An open hatch, surrounded by railing, revealed an opening down into the bowels of the structure. We climbed down 20 feet on a steel ladder slick with moisture.

The ladder emptied into a concrete chamber lit by a single bulb. We stood on a narrow catwalk of metal grating. Before us, three steel tubes, 10 feet in diameter, emerged from beneath the lake and dumped into the concrete tubes that led to the river.

Inexplicably, the diameter of the concrete tubes was two feet larger than the steel feeders. Where the steel pipes ended, the compressed water immediately jumped outward to fill the additional space of the concrete tubes. There was no flange joining the two pipes--just a

ring of pulsing water. Surprisingly, little water spilled back into the chamber. The ring of water looked solid to the touch.

I reached my hand to within an inch of the ring. Pete shouted something in my ear. I couldn't understand him, the roar of the water made communication impossible, but I thought he was probably saying something like, "Don't touch it, it'll suck your hand off." I drew back.

I later learned the strange concrete room is called an aeration chamber. I haven't gone "tubing" since that first year. You probably couldn't get that close to the dam now, anyway. The scene around the dam is so controlled now.

But when I think of the Gauley, I remember the time I nearly touched its wild face.

Saving the Gauley for future Gauley Seasons

The West Virginia Rivers Bill (H.R.900) has passed the U.S. House of Representatives on May 27th of this year but it is stalled in the Senate. So far the Senate has taken no action although Senator Rockefeller has indicated that he will soon introduce a companion bill.

WHAT THE BILL DOES: the bill would make 24.5 miles of the Gauley River a National Recreation Area, protecting it from hydroelectric power development, timbering and other forms of river abuse once and for all. In addition, H.R.900 protects parts of the Meadow (4.5 miles) and the Bluestone (13 miles). (More than 100 miles of the Greenbrier was initially included but will be dropped from the bill due to local opposition.)

WHAT IS NEEDED: Whitewater boaters need to write or call Senator Robert Byrd now and urge him to support the bill. Tell the Senator not to let this golden opportunity pass by him. This bill would really put West Virginia rivers on the map. Tell him your own impression of the Gauley and West Virginia's other fabulous whitewater treasures. Urge him to put this bill on the Fast track. He can do it. All other members of the West Virginia delegation have done their part. Now it's up to him.

HOW TO CONTACT SENATOR BYRD: Write to Senator Robert C. Byrd, Majority Leader, United States Senate, S.221, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC, 20510 (or call his office at 202-224-5556).

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None of them knew the color of the sky...

"None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were off-foaming white, and all the men knew the colors of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like rocks."

from The Open Boat by Stephan Crane

Stephan Crane knew something about big water. While working as a reporter just prior to the Spanish-American War, Crane boarded a freighter out of Jacksonville, Florida bound for Cuba. The ship's hold was loaded with a cargo of weapons to be smuggled to Cuban insurgents.

Less than a day out of port, the ship mysteriously sprung a leak and quickly sank. Spanish secret service agents were suspected of sabotage.

The crew piled into the two full-sized lifeboats while Crane and three others manned the ship's dinghy--a 10-foot rowboat meant for navigation within a harbor, not in the open sea. The three boats became separated and for the next 24 hours, Crane and his comrades were alone in an angry ocean.

The incident was accurately recorded in Crane's short story masterpiece, *The Open Boat*. There is no record of Crane ever setting forth in wild water again during the short remainder of his life. No matter. In those 24 hours, Crane learned more lessons about big water than most paddlers gain in a lifetime.

'(Many a man ought to have a bathtub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea.

These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small-boat navigation."

from The Open Boat

Despite only living three hours away, I had never set eyes upon the Niagara River Gorge before a cold and misty morning this September.

It was early Saturday when we gathered at the Whirlpool Rapids State Park. From the top of the cliff walls, the Gorge unfolded in a panorama of exploding water 300 feet below.

Despite the distance, the waves still appeared barbarously tall while our kayaks, roped down on cars scattered about the parking area, their colors bright against the backdrop of the dull day, seemed pitifully small to dare the torrent below us.

There had been previous opportunities for me to test the Niagara. Pete Skinner and Bob Baker had, at various times, organized illegal descents of the gorge, sneaking their kayaks down the sheer walls under cover of darkness and returning the next day to make a commando put-in, complete the run and slink off into the woods before Park



Author Chris Koll waves to spectators during Gorge run. Photos by Robert Stoddard, Sue Glanville, Chuck Wenninger

Police arrived.

But it seemed to me that a Niagara Gorge run would be harrowing enough on its own merits without the added tension of a possible arrest. So I had let my chances slide.

Bob Glanville changed that. A Buffalo attorney, Glanville challenged the Niagara Frontier Parks

Commission's refusal to grant permits for river access and last May, the New York State Supreme Court ruled in his favor. Glanville, Baker and his brother Al from Rochester and Gibbs Johnson of Atlanta were issued a permit.

After a little last-minute wrangling, the permit was extended to in-

clude Skinner,

John Maxwell of Harrisburg, Pa., Marty McCormick of Washington, D.C. and myself. Our team represented the first sanctioned descent of the Gorge since 1982 when four boaters ran the Gorge without incident for a taping of The American Sportsman.

We planned to run at midday. During the evening, much of the Niagara River is diverted around the Falls and Gorge and through hydro-electric turbines. Promptly at 8 a.m., in time for the early-rising tourists, the Falls are turned back on and the Gorge rapids rise to a normal level of 100,000 CFS.

After we slid our boats and bodies down the goat trail to the Maid of the Mist Pool, we drifted down to the shadow of the Whirlpool Bridge to wait for the Gorge to fill completely

with water. But even in the realtive calm above the rapids, I realized that the Niagara was clearly different than other rivers with which I was familiar.

I had run rivers like the Ottawa, Black, Cheat, Gauley and New at high water. I had figured that the

Niagara would be similar to high

Stretching before us poured a mile of water racing at breakneck speed, lifting into waves reaching 20-feet high that broke unpredictably into crashing foam piles. Skinner crisply outlined the basic strategy of Gorge running:

"Under the bridge the speed of the current starts to increase," Skin-



A boater appears lost amid the tumultuous water of the Niagara Gorge.

ner said. "I call that section the Accelerator because the velocity of the water reaches 35 miles per hour. I normally start out left-center entering the Accelerator and try to punch through that first big diagonal wave at an angle. Do you see it?"

He pointed toward a 15-foot side-curler breaking in from the left. I

water on those rivers--only more so.

I was mistaken. High water does not equate to big water, at least not on the Niagara. The water in the Gorge seemed more dense than a normal river. My boat seemed sluggish, unwilling to respond to a stroke of the paddle.

The obvious parallel was with the ocean. The power of the water was closer to that of a sea than a river. And at that point, even though I've probably boated over 400 days during the past six years, I had the feeling that Steve Crane knew more about what was about to come than I did.

With time to spare, Skinner decided to give me a quick glimpse of what lay ahead. We scrambled along the steep talus slope on the American side to gain a perspective of the Gorge.

nodded my head.

"If I get past that and everything is still okay, I try to make my way over to the center right. That's where the real big waves are--the section everyone calls the Himalayas. The worst of it is far right.

Downstream I could see the big waves--like huge swells in the North Atlantic--cresting 20 feet from trough to peak.

"Actually, once you're in the Himalayas, and everything is still all right, the run is just fun. The waves are actually fairly widely spaced and you have a lot of time between them. The only problem at that point is that sometimes the speed of the current cuts the bottom out of the waves and if your boat is on top when it collapses...you go down pretty deep."

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Beyond the Himalayas remained a final imposing series of breaking waves too distant for me to make out.

"That's the Whirlpool section," Skinner explained. "We'll eddy above it and regroup on the right. You'll be able to see it up close then."

arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace."

from The Open Boat

McCormick, a nationally-ranked racer, pushed off first with a blur of

maw of the rapid.

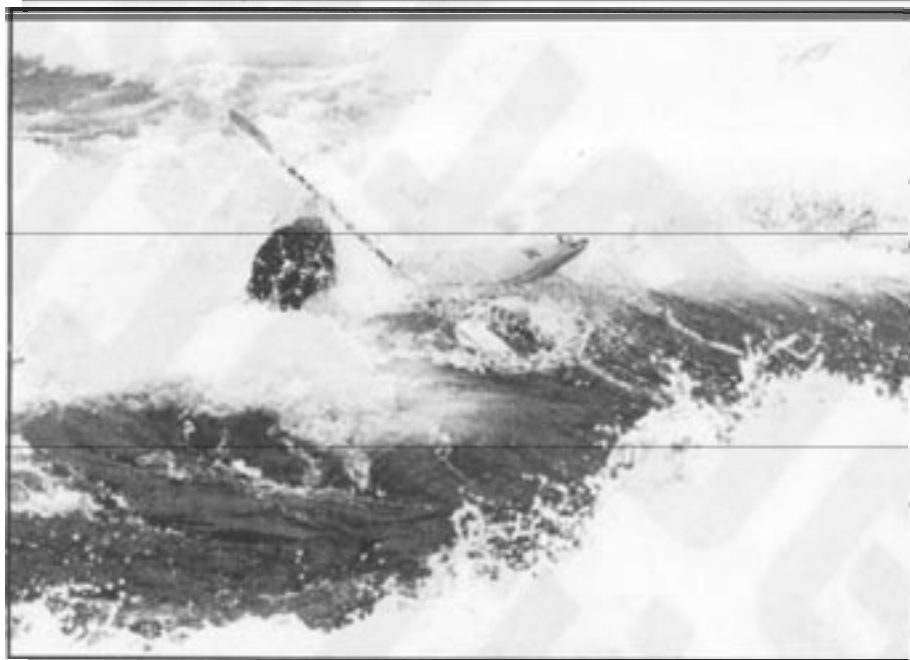
Once committed, I realized our preliminary theorizing was futile. Lost in a field of waves, I had no vision downstream. Pulling hard to the right, my strokes seemed to have no effect. I was totally disoriented, surrounded by water. Like Crane, I did not know the color

Pete turned on his heel and started back to the group. Then, turning, he made a final observation:

"Well, wherever you end up running, you can be sure of one thing--it'll all be over in a minute."

"A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a buck-

ing broncho, and by the same token a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide and race and splash down a long incline, and



Pete Skinner braces into the face of a breaking wave.

windmill strokes characteristic of a slalom competitor. Glanville followed 20 seconds later, then Gibbs and Skinner. Checking my spray skirt a final time, I peeled off into the current.

The bridge passed overhead quickly as I entered the Accelerator. Traveling at the same speed as the water, I felt no perception of increased velocity until I noticed the wind freshening in my face.

Of course, there was no wind. The day was still. The breeze was generated by my boat flying down the river. I hoped I wouldn't encounter any large insects.

Ahead, I saw Skinner cut through the threatening diagonal at an angle, just as he had planned. I followed seconds later, a little more to the middle, and then I was in the

marks on shore, I knew I was somewhere in the Himalayas. As Skinner predicted, the waves began to rise and fall with violent regularity. I held my breath as my boat struggled up the face of the swells, waiting for disaster to strike and the wave to break. Then, as my kayak plunged free, I was granted a respite of three or four seconds before the next incline.

On the Canadian bank, knots of spectators gathered on an observation deck. During the lapse between waves, I had time to wave to the onlookers.

Somewhere in the Himalayas, I lost all the apprehension, all the nervousness, all the fear I might have brought with me on the river. It came in a sudden flash: this isn't scary--this is fun. I found myself

of the sky.

The nature of the waves began to alter. I could feel the river begin to rise up, up, up underneath me. At the crest, I would duck my head as I was greeted with a five-foot cap of foam before my boat slid through, slipping downward into the next trough.

Judging from the land-

laughing as my boat mounted the final watery mountain and slammed into the eddy above the final section.

'''Maybe they think we're out here for sport! Maybe they think we're fishin'. Maybe they think we're damned fools.'''

from The Open Boat

Hey, where is everybody? I was where I was supposed to be--sitting in the eddy above the Whirlpool Section, ready to scout the final set, but where the Hell was McCormick, Glanville and Johnson and what the Hell was Skinner doing, already plunging into the middle of the next series of exploding waves without first giving me the benefit of his sage counsel?

Then I saw it...just a glimpse of red. But recognizing an upside-down kayak is like catching a glimpse of a snake--you don't need to see the entire outline to immediately know exactly what it is. I held my breath, shot back into the current, and headed more-or-less on Skinner's route straight down the middle.

I blasted through three tremendous rollers and rode the tail waves as the river grew tired of its uproar. Ahead, the channel veered 90 degrees to the right. In the elbow at the left lay an eddy a quarter-mile long--the notorious whirlpool.

McCormick, Skinner and Johnson were already at Glanville's side and, with a little assistance, the barrister righted himself.

As later video tapes confirmed, Glanville's boat was buried by a collapsing wave in the middle of the Himalayas. The kayak rocketed out of the water straight skyward then

More Legal Battles in Future Before Niagara Gorge Access is Guaranteed

Glanville's legal action opened the door to recreational use of the Niagara Gorge during the fall of 1987. In addition to the initial sanctioned run of the Whirlpool Rapids, two other groups were issued permits to navigate the river.

Skinner and Maxwell returned during the second week of October to join a group that included Nolan Whitesell who recorded the first successful open canoe descent of the Gorge. According to observers, Whitesell was masterful--rolling only once and using the lapse between the swells in the Himalayas to partially bail his boat.

Another eye-opener was the runs of Risa and Forrest Callaway of Denver, NC. Risa paddled a Jet while Forrest stroked a Surge--the first "squirt" boats to brave the Niagara. The low-volume kayaks made some interesting moves before blowing through to the Whirlpool.

Late in the same month, Chris Spelius and Davey Hearn led a final group down the Gorge.

But if the Niagara Frontier State Parks and Recreation Commission has anything to say about it, October will mark the last time a lawful run is made down the Gorge.

On the first of October, a notice of proposed rule making was filed with the state of New York officially prohibiting the use of state park lands to gain access to the Niagara River for the purpose of launching watercraft.

The regulatory impact statement accompanying the notice calls the Niagara Gorge "an extremely dangerous body of water both for persons who attempt to negotiate it and those who are involved in rescue operations."

The statement further claims that the park commission does not have qualified personnel to evaluate the capability of potential applicants nor adequate funding or trained employees to effect whitewater rescue.

According to state law, a comment period of 30 days must follow a proposal of rule making, and the 1987 trips fell within that grace period. However, unless the state attorney general's office advises the Park Commission that the new rule won't survive in court, the rule is expected to be adopted.

However, don't close the book yet on future legal runs of the Niagara. Glanville expects to challenge the legality of the future ruling in court and he sees a few angles of vulnerability to base his attack.

And if Glanville's past success in opening the Gorge is any indication of what to expect, paddlers can look forward to boating the Niagara in future years.

performed a sickening ballet, cart-wheeling end over end down the rest of the rapid.

Glanville knew what he had to do. He stayed in his boat, despite a blown spray skirt, kept a firm grip on his stick, and rode out the storm.

We made an illegal entry into

So how do you know if you are ready to attempt the Niagara? If a clean run is as much a matter of luck as it is of skill, how do you determine if you're up to the challenge?

My recommendation would be to go to almost any whitewater river and locate the meanest hydraulic on

Stephan Crane died of tuberculosis and other complications at age 29, five years after his shipwreck experience. According to bedside observers, as Crane lay dying, his last delirious words were instructions to his comrades how to carefully change positions in the lifeboat.

The memories of big water remained with Stephan Crane until the end. So will the Niagara with us all.

Canada for Glanville to catch his

breath. As soon as Bob had regained his composure, he began recounting the ride of his life. The Bakers and Maxwell pulled in, each contributing additional tales of terror. I just slunk away, feeling a little cheated. I hadn't rolled the entire trip. Under my helmet, my hair was still dry.

Boater struggles to maintain control in the middle of the froth of a breaking wave.

How can you explain the disparity between the runs?

Well, Steve Crane does a pretty good job at it.

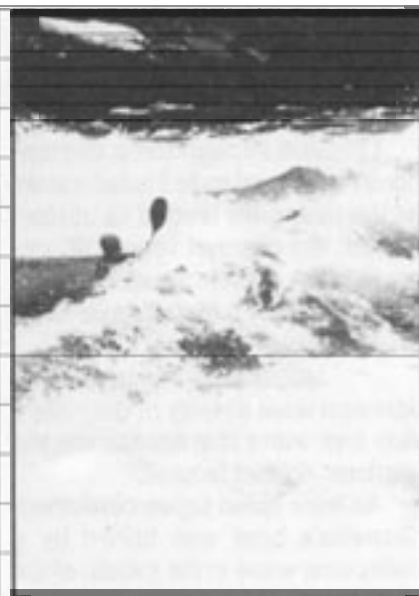
One of Crane's recurring themes is that nature is an unfathomable and uncontrollable force. Believe me, a trip down the Niagara will convince you Crane was right on that score. But Crane also notes that man attempts to superimpose his own values on nature (if I paddle hard and brace correctly on the Niagara, I won't get trashed).

No, the river on which we paddled is like the ocean that Crane survived. The waves rise and fall or rise and collapse, "coldly indifferent" to whether a kayaker is riding their peaks or whether the boater is a world champ or chump.

the run. I'm not talking about your basic play or blast hole--I mean a hole that most paddlers don't even dare to punch. Phil's Hole on the Ottawa, Mixmaster on the Moose, Magic on the Kennebec or the top hole in Insignificant on the Gauley come to mind--but there's plenty others of that ilk.

Once you find the hole, drop into it sideways. Your boat slams to a stop and commences a violent surf. Suddenly, the hole sucks in your bow and the boat cartwheels end-over-end. You roll up, still in the hole, then flip and roll, flip and roll. Window-shaded!

Finally, the hydraulic tires of the game and spits you free. If you roll up with a smile on your face, you're ready for the Niagara.



Paddler prepares to be buried by wall of water.

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Kings. Kern...

management categories.

The Kern bill (S247), which would designate 151 miles of the North and South Forks wild and scenic, is cosponsored by California's senators, Alan Cranston (D) and Pete Wilson (R). Both the Kings and Kern bills were cleared for Senate action September 16 by the Senate Energy Committee.

West Virginia Rivers Bill Now in the Senate

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HOW TO CONTACT SENATOR BYRD: Write to Senator Robert C. Byrd, Majority Leader, United States

Senate, S.221, U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C., 20510 or call his office at 202-224-5556.

Code...

developed without controversy, and this version wasn't either. But we can learn a great deal, as the original committee did, by the constructive criticism of our membership.

I feel that the code should be looked at again in 1989, on the thirtieth anniversary of its introduction. Let's hear your thoughts; write me in care of the American Whitewater editor and he'll publish your letters.

As a beginning paddler in charge of an Outing Club program at Bucknell University, I read the code from beginning to end in 1968 and made a number of changes in the way we ran our trips as a result. I felt then, and still feel now, that it is the AWA's greatest contribution to river safety.

Upper Yough...

once the annual event has ended, the surge of competitive emotion rapidly subsides. The racers gather in knots along the river. at Precision Rafting, Zbell's picnic area and the shops of Jess Whittemore and Keith Backlund to recount this year's mistakes and moments of glory.

The final activity of the day was the presentation of the award to the winner of the men's division. Artist/paddler Hoyt Reel had donated an original whitewater print as the prize.

Zbell accepted the award and then gave it away to Deb Pepper. Life had returned to normal in Friendsville. At least for another 364 days.

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The Salt Caves: A Bad Deal for Oregon

By J. Douglas Smith
reprinted from The Oregonian

Mayor George Flitcraft of Klamath Falls portrays the polarization created by that city's proposed Salt Caves Hydroelectric Project as "the inherent conflict between using and preserving Oregon's natural resources."

To the contrary, the conflict is between the continuing use of a valued natural resource and its utter destruction. The many opponents of the Salt Caves project are not so concerned about "preservation for preservation's sake" as they are about the unnecessary sacrifice of a major wild rainbow trout fishery and one of the truly blue-ribbon white-water rafting rivers in Oregon to the short-term profit of developers in California, lawyers in Washington, D.C., and bond brokers in New York City.

Flitcraft advertises the city's proposed Salt Caves project as a "response to the dire local need for economic recovery." Were this so, the opposition to the project would not be so broadly based nor so deeply felt.

For example, two of the three newly elected Klamath Falls city councilors successfully ran on a platform opposing the Salt Caves project. The unfortunate fact is that construction of this project at best offers a short-lived Band-Aid for the immediate economic recovery needs of Klamath Falls.

The city's insistent focus on this unlikely project is derailing efforts it ought otherwise to be making in searching for the real solutions to local needs.

In its search for support, the city has recently proposed to add a ski

resort and a "sportsman's park" to the project, and hastily cobbled together an idea called "Operation Bootstrap."

It seems to have escaped attention that Operation Bootstrap has been available to Klamath Falls for some time. Since the sale of \$500 million in tax-free municipal bonds for its Salt Caves proposal, the city has been earning about \$2.5 million in interest annually. The likely future contribution of the Salt Caves project to local economic recovery could be best illustrated by the contribution it has already made:

--\$1,050,000 to a hydroelectric developer in Sacramento.

--\$391,049 to an environmental consultant in Portland.

--\$350,000 to an engineering firm in Denver.

--\$287,000 to a law firm in Washington, O.C.

--\$275,000 to a law firm in Portland.

--\$77,500 to a public relations firm in Portland.

--\$36,000 to a lobbying organization in Salem.

Perhaps there are no hydroelectric developers in Klamath Falls, but are there no lawyers, no engineers, no environmental consultants, no PR people or lobbyists?

Much of Flitcraft's commentary on the Salt Caves project has to do with "the scrutiny it has received during the six years it has spent in public and regulatory review." In fact, until only recently the city has not permitted a full and final regulatory review of the project. This review is by the Department of Environmental Quality.

The city has withdrawn its project from every other state or federal agency review process, including a previous certification application, each time an agency review appeared to threaten its project.

Flitcraft speaks of the need for a review process to provide "an objective forum, free of political pres-

sure, which judges the project on its technical merits." In just such forums, before the Oregon Water Resources Commission, Energy Facility Siting Council, State Land Board, Environmental Quality Commission or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the city has refused to permit judgement of its project on its technical merits.

On at least one point, Flitcraft is unarguably correct. None of the previous forums had been free of political pressure. However, opponents of the Salt Caves proposal would argue that this pressure has come by and large from Klamath Falls.

Flitcraft correctly speaks also of "a political football," and "continuously moving goal posts."

The opponents of his project will certainly agree with this point. It has, however, been the city of Klamath Falls that has persistently demanded that the goal posts be continually moved. It is the city that has demanded that its project be specially and specifically exempted from the state's hydroelectric policy statute, that its project be specially exempted from the state's water-quality standards, that review of its project under the state's administrative rules for hydroelectric development be at first expedited and then delayed, and even that all reviews by the state of Oregon, other than DEQ's certification under the Clean Water Act, are pre-empted by federal authority.

Flitcraft concludes, "The time has come to play by the rules and look at the Salt Caves project in an objective evaluation of its individual merits rather than resorting to a generic, knee-jerk phobia of all hydro projects." I believe that the opponents of Flitcraft's project will be agreeable to this idea.

What I believe they will not be agreeable to, however, is the idea that an "Oregon Comeback" must be built on the ruins of a unique Oregon natural resource--the Klamath River Gorge.

the last notes

Kayaking Develops a Middle-Aged Spread

By John Lane

One night several springs ago now, near the beginning of the New Age of squirt boating, I sat next to the big fire made with oak picked up along a power right-of-way near the Ocoee River.

"Paddling has become a science. You've got water going downstream and currents from side to side. We've always used those," the big, blonde paddler took a swallow of his beer, finished it, then tossed it in the big fire. "Now we've got that third dimension--the vertical currents. Scientific. Three dimensional paddling. Ya-hoo!"

This guy was six years old in 1972 when my friend, Bob Fennesy, ran Bull Sluice on the Chattooga in a tractor inner tube tied with ropes. Back then, paddling was adventure-joy--not science. There were hundreds of streams in the Southeast which had never been descended. Back then, Bob would say, you went out to cruise rivers, not to find one spot where the current curled or collapsed in just the right way to push you up or around.

That night Bob sat and listened. He had been out of paddling for several years, and so much had changed that he didn't even know the vocabulary.

"What's a squirt boat?" he whispered as the big blonde in the grey Patagonia jacket burped a night's worth of beer and talked about cart wheels at John and Sue rock.

The blonde had been on the river that day, paddling a yellow Sabre, Perception's plastic "squirt" boat. It was early spring and all the hot paddlers were trying new boats--Sabres, Jetis, T-slaloms. All plastic. All with some technical niche in the expanding, diverse world of paddling.

"The sport is growing," Bob had said, ironically, earlier that day as we fought for eddy space below Moon Shot on the Ocoee. Of course, he was speaking of the number of boaters, but I could see many of kayaking's changes right in Bob's outfit. He was like a kayaker caught in amber, somehow transported to present time. He wore a spray skirt he had made ten years before from a sheet of neoprene. He had bought the black synthetic at a diver's shop, then ordered a crude pattern from somewhere in California. Ten years ago, paddlers were pioneers when it came to equipment. Bob's spray jacket was elastic around the neck, waist and wrists and had the dark splotches from years of mold all over it. It was more like what we call a warmup jacket than the \$100 coated jackets made today by Blue Puma or Patagonia.

Mostly, it was Bob's boat that got the attention on the river. It was a ten-year old Holloform, designer Tom Johnson's first plastic boat. One friend calls it a "river pig" because of its high-volume. Just a couple of years before Bob made the change to plastic, each river trip was punctuated with an hour in the yard fiberglassing holes the river had added to his glass boat. Bob still talks about how hard it was to give up the glass boats when plastic came out. He had been pinned several times in his paddling life and glass seemed safer. Many of his

friends, the old paddlers, stuck with glass, but the convenience of plastic made it more appealing to Bob.

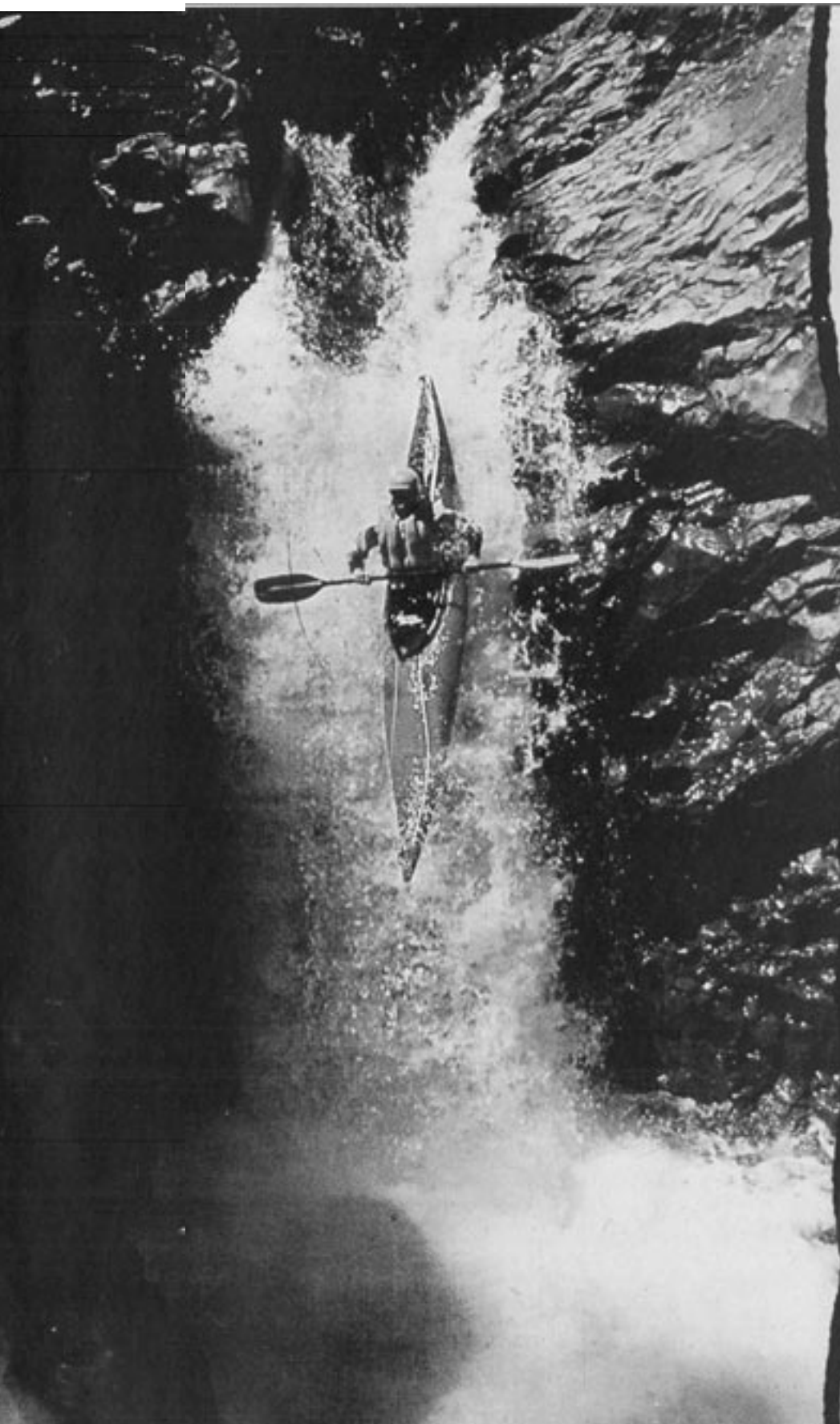
Bob had yet to become a kayak consumer. His boat was not full of gadgets. His old Norse paddle had been patched at least three times. His love of rivers was obviously somewhere in his body, not in the equipment and clothes that go along with it.

Bob had grown into middle age along with the sport. His roll was a little rusty. His equipment tattered.

Some might say, because of the heavy use of many southeastern rivers, that the sport has developed a slight middle-age spread. Just to name off a few of the rivers Bob has run in 15 years sounds like a southeastern lexography of the sport: Chattooga, New, Gaulley, Nolichucky, Ocoee.

Since 1972, the year Deliverance came out and Bob rode down Bull Sluice on his inner tube, use of the Chattooga has risen from a handful of boaters to a flood of rafters. The New is now the most rafted river in the East; the Nolichucky, which runs through the deepest gorge in the Southeast, is now rafted by five companies; and the Ocoee (which was dry in 1972) is so crowded on weekends it is affectionately called "Six Flags Over Tennessee."

As we sat in another eddy on the Ocoee the next day and watched the hotdoggers popping up, cart wheeling, splatting and ending, Bob wondered **outloud** what the next fifteen years would bring. "It's a science now," he deadpanned, peeling out of the eddy and heading downstream for the ten thousandth time in his river pig.



Take
me
to
the
river...
drop
me
in
the
water...

Phil DeRiemer, Siete
Tazas, Rio Claro, Chile.
Photo by Lars Holbek.
Kayak by Perception.

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The "Poop Chute" -- New York's Black River (photo by Mike Farmer)

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