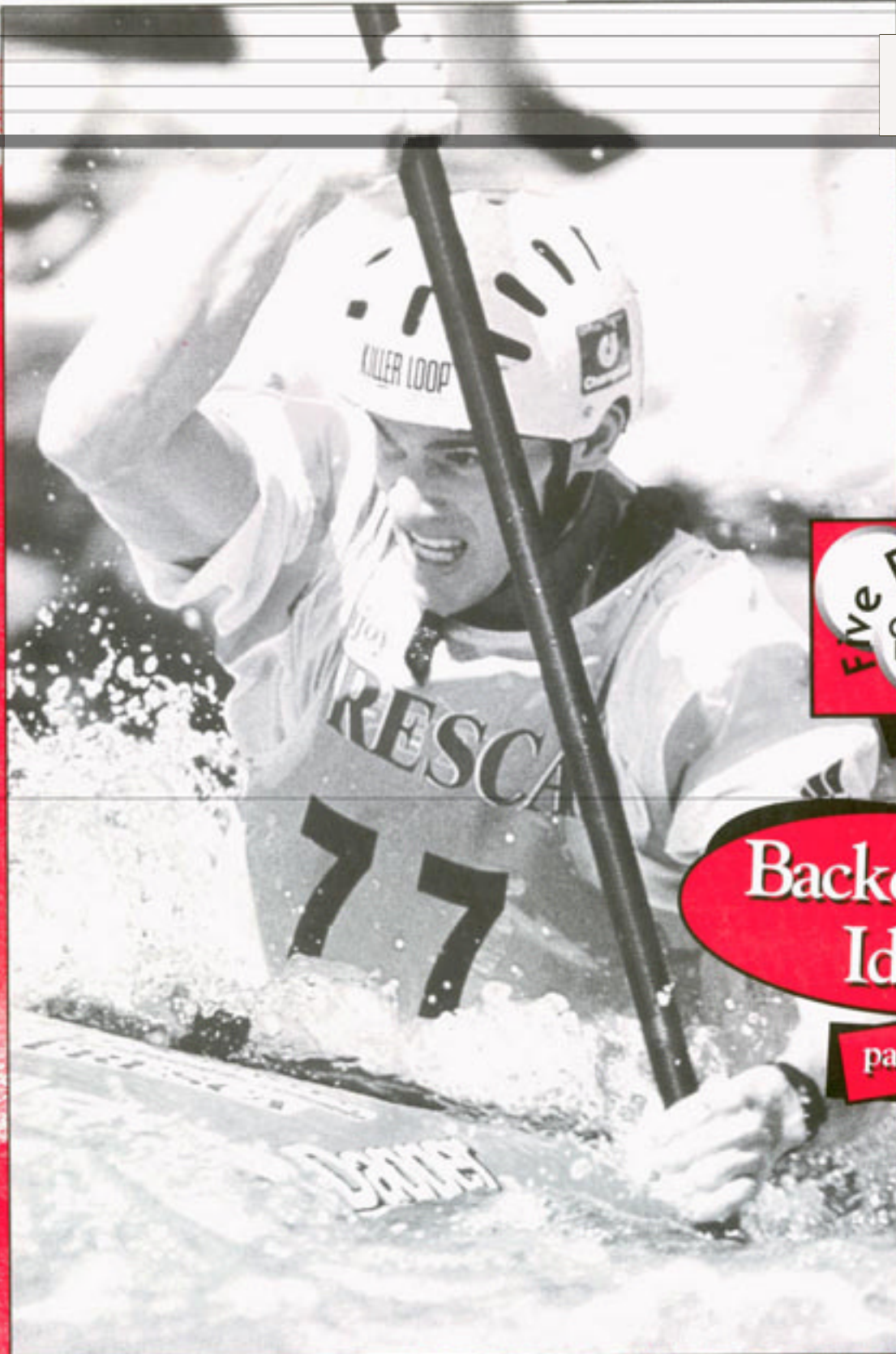


# american whitewater

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# american whitewater

Journal of the American Whitewater Affiliation

Volume XXXVI, No.4

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Front cover: Scott Shipley, 1995 World Cup Champion, earning a spot on the 1996 USA Olympic Team. Shipley co-designed his boat, a Predator, with Dagger design team Steve Scarborough and Andy Bridge. Photo generously provided by Dagger.

Back cover: Adam Clawson, 23, captures a seat on the 1996 USA Olympic C-1 team. Clawson paddled a Zealot C-1, which he co-designed with Dagger's Andy Bridge and Steve Scarborough. Photo by Ed Michael, generously provided by Dagger.



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# FORUM

## But What About Safety???

Dear Bob,

I just received my **March/April** issue of American Whitewater and greatly enjoyed the "hair" articles, especially since I grew up and learned to boat in Washington and spent a year in California where I, too, stared, on many occasions at the Cataracts of the Kern. It shows how far paddling has come since then (1979) to think that people are now running those rapids.

Despite enjoying the articles I find myself increasingly concerned by the general message which is being sent by the majority of articles in the Journal these days:

"Yeah, we're on a hair river and we're ignoring all the safety rules which apply to difficult whitewater, but we're so good and so damn macho that we're going to get away with it."

For example, consider the Ernie's Canyon article, where two experienced paddlers on a Class V river are leading a third paddler down who does not know the run.

1) They make almost no attempt to scout, despite the fact that the river is only two miles long and the paddler who is new to the river could presumably have walked the entire river before putting on. 2) They appear to have limited safety equipment with them. In fact, the author apparently does not even own a throw bag and has borrowed one - which he has tossed into the front of his boat, thereby guaranteeing that he will not have quick access to it in an emergency. The only redeeming safety feature of this article is that the title is at least accurate; "Tempting Fate" is exactly what these folks are doing.

The Crystal article continues in the

same fashion. Contrast these articles with the article that you personally wrote about the Clarks Fork, which was equally enjoyable to read, but far more safety conscious in tone, description of dangers, etc.

Your editorials regularly espouse good safety practices, which I am glad to see. I wonder, however, if the Editorial Disclaimer which is near the beginning of each issue shouldn't be expanded to include a statement such as: "The articles in this magazine may describe activities which are dangerous and in violation of accepted safety procedures. The AWA does not endorse or recommend these activities."

Regards,

Doug Gordon  
Salt Lake City, Utah

**D**oug Gordon is a former member of the U.S. Kayaking Team and an accomplished hair boater. He has participated in difficult expeditionary runs in Mexico, Quebec, and, most recently, on the Homathko River in British Columbia. I have seen Doug in action on extremely difficult and dangerous whitewater. (I was portaging and/or setting safety on the shore.) Believe me, he ain't no weenie!

I'm glad that Doug took the time to write this thoughtful letter, particularly since I share many of his concerns regarding safety and the contents of American Whitewater.

In defense of the authors and participants in the Crystal story... the events described occurred during the production of the Meltdown Madness video; the Coloradans scouted the difficult and dangerous run extensively and set extensive safety on shore. Admittedly, this wasn't emphasized in the article.

I do not know the specifics of the run

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The opinions expressed in the features and editorials of American Whitewater are those of the individual authors. They do not

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through Ernie's Canyon, but I suspect that these boaters, who are respected north-western paddlers, made every effort to address safety issues. I have heard that Ernie's is very extreme and dangerous and that there is only so much that can be done to make it safe. But Doug is right, there wasn't much about safety in that article.

In general, though, Doug Gordon is raising a valid point. For better or worse American Whitewater seems to have become the "place" to publish accounts of wild, "on the edge" whitewater adventures. This certainly makes for thrilling reading, but it does have a down side.

The majority of whitewater boaters and most of our readers simply do not have the experience or skill to paddle class V+ water. There is nothing wrong with this; few paddlers have the time, energy and opportunity to pursue the sport to this degree. I certainly don't want to imply that I think that the only kind of whitewater worth doing is Class V. The only reason I don't publish more articles about class III and N whitewater is that I rarely get any. Many of our readers and potential contributors apparently labor under the false impression that no one wants to read about class III and N rivers.

I don't believe this is true at all, and I would love to see more "gentle" submissions.

As for the failure of our authors to address safety issues, I think this reflects a problematic attitude in the paddling community at large. In many circles it seems that expressing concern regarding safety has become decidedly "uncool". There is not just a disregard for river safety among these people, there is an open disdain for it. This seems to be particularly the case with the younger generation of "would be" hair boaters and creekers.

During the past few months I have heard about and witnessed a number of misadventures which suggest that folks need to start thinking about safety a whole lot more.

I have seen relative novices paddling remote class V water without basic safety equipment. I'm not even talking about first aid kits, breakdown paddles, carabiners and webbing. I'm talking about floatation and throw bags! When I asked them about this I was informed, in no uncertain terms, that since they didn't plan to get into trouble, they didn't need ropes and air bags. Well, when I go out on the river I don't plan to get into trouble, either! But sometimes it just seems to happen!

The sad thing is that these boaters didn't even grasp the fact that throw ropes are not tools for self rescue, but are intended to save others. Nor did they appear to understand that a boat without floatation is a far greater menace to those who attempt to salvage it than to its former occupant!

But, of course, just carrying safety equipment isn't enough. When I started boating almost everyone received some kind of formal or informal safety training, most often at a club sponsored safety seminar. But many newcomers seem to be far more determined to learn to execute a "truly sweet" boof, than how to save a comrade who is dangerously pinned.

On two separate occasions this winter I watched parties of paddlers putting on frigid class V rivers (that they did not know) so late the day that paddling out in darkness was inevitable. Come on guys, even Rich Weiss and Cathy Hearn can't see in the dark!

I have watched paddlers charging blindly into unfamiliar class N and V whitewater, presumably because they thought it was "uncool" to scout, or ask to follow someone familiar with the river. When I ran the Clarks Fork last summer I was more than happy to paddle in the wake of experienced Clarks Fork veterans. And, in consideration of the difficulty and inaccessibility, we scouted and portaged

very judiciously. Experiencing the Clarks Fork was, in every respect, a penultimate paddling experience. But when I returned home the disappointing question that I heard most often was, "Could you run everything on the river?"

When I answered negatively, I was inevitably confronted with smirks that suggested one of two thoughts. "Maybe you couldn't run everything, but I bet that I could." Or, worse yet, "Why would anyone want to paddle a river where you can't run every single rapid?" These people just don't have a clue!

During the past season I have watched a lot of inexperienced boaters attempting to run dangerous class V+ rapids (Big Splat on the Big Sandy is a case in point) because all their buddies were doing it. It seems to me that peer pressure, mindless bravado and big volume, blunt nosed plastic boats are poor substitutes for common sense, experience and skill when it comes to running class V whitewater!

I have also heard disturbing reports of whitewater boaters in trouble requesting (demanding?!?) rescue by non boating locals. I would suggest that if the local volunteer firemen know more about river rescue than you, that you don't belong on class N or V whitewater!

The bottom line is that a lot of boaters haven't accepted the fact before you become a Big Dog, you have to be a Puppy.

These irresponsible boaters are not only endangering themselves; they are a hazard to others. And they are a menace to the sport in general, since their inevitable mishaps will likely result in access problems for all of us, particularly when they get into trouble on rivers that flow through public lands.

Sure, everyone gets into serious trouble once in a while. And sometimes there is no reasonable option except to ask for help. But carrying appropriate equipment and knowing basic river safety and rescue techniques can go a long way to make these instances few and far between.

All of us in the AWA are concerned about river safety, even if this isn't reflected in every article published in this magazine. I will continue to print as much well-written safety related material as I can. And I will encourage our regular contributors to include pertinent safety information in their features, particularly when they are describing runs of dangerous class V whitewater. Finally, as I mentioned before, I am still looking for well-written articles about class III and N rivers. I really want American Whitewater to be of interest to all whitewater boaters, not just for those who are responsibly, or irresponsibly, paddling on the edge.



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# LETTERS.....

## HIDDEN DANGER

Dear Editor:

There is a particularly dangerous undercut on the Lower Blackwater that can go easily undetected, but poses a very serious danger. The rapid is the second below Rock and Roll, and the rapid above the long washboard slide mentioned in most guide books. I recently witnessed two boats pin on the left side rocks of the run out of the rapid. The spot is rather innocuous looking, but one of the boats folded in half and was forced through an underwater crevasse.

While assisting a member of my group extricate his boat from this spot, another person flipped and ended up bailing out of his boat. The current led him directly to the undercut. Fortunately we were there, because the force of the water was pulling him under the water and into the crack. Two of us were able to pull him out to safety. It took an incredible amount of effort to free the boat, and the force of the water pulling into the undercut is very strong.

I have paddled through this rapid numerous times, but have never noticed the

undercut before. None of the currently available guide books mention this rapid. The rapid by itself is class IV, but that undercut makes the consequences of a mistake serious business. I may be losing my ability to read water with my age, but the undercut did not seem easy to spot. If it weren't for the boats pinning there, I would of never seen it.

Jerry Spence  
Reynoldsburg, Ohio

*Editor's Reply:* Thanks for the info. I understand that the flood of 96 altered both the Upper and Lower Blackwater at a number of places. As a consequence there have been many close calls on this river this year. The Blackwater is a tough river and one of consequence, and no place for complacent paddling.

## DEFENDS 1-6 SYSTEM

AWA Editor,

When I first heard about changing "outdated rating system" I figured it was the gum-flapping talk that paddlers are

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Please read this carefully before sending us your articles and photos! This is a volunteer publication, please cooperate and help us out. Do not send us your material without a release - signed by all authors and photographers (attached)!!!

The editorial staff of American Whitewater carefully reviews all material submitted for publication. We are particularly interested in receiving full length feature articles, conservation and club news, special event announcements, articles pertaining to whitewater safety and short, humorous pieces.

Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, AWA Briefs, River Voices, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines, Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater cartoons are also welcomed.

If possible articles should be submitted using Wordperfect on a 5 1/4" single sided flexible disc. Please use the standard default settings; do not alter the margin or spacing parameters. If you use a different word processing program and/or smaller disks, send us one anyway... we may be able to transfer it to our files. Send a printed copy of the article, as well.

Those without access to a word processor may submit their articles typed. Please double space.

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints or color prints. Keep your originals and send us duplicates if

possible; we can not guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Because we publish in black and white, photos with a lot of contrast work best.

American Whitewater Feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flatwater. The best features have a definite slant... or theme. They are not merely chronological recountings of river trips.

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

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

Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through and don't be afraid to poke a little fun at yourself... and your paddling partners.

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not our intent to intentionally offend our more sensitive members and readers.

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

Articles will be edited at the discretion of the editors to fit our format, length and style. Expect to see changes in your article. If you don't want us to edit your article, don't send it to us! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes we make prior to publication.

The American Whitewater Affiliation is non-profit; the editors and contributors to American Whitewater are not reimbursed. On rare occasions, by prearrangement, professional writers receive a small honorarium when they submit stories at our request. Generally, our contributors do not expect payment, since most are members of the AWA, which is a volunteer conservation and safety organization.

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prone to. I'm beginning to think some of the flap is serious. What's the problem? There is no problem. We can't expect a 1-6 rating system to be something that it's not. We certainly shouldn't attempt to make it into something that it doesn't need to be. As it stands the 1-6 rating system is inaccurate, unreliable, and prone to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. It's approximate. It's just fun. It's all it needs to be so long as it's recognized for what it is.

Paddling is about insight into personal ability. Attempting to accurately determine the difficulty of rapids is misguided. Accurately rating a rapid for somebody else is an attempt to tell them in a definitive manner how hard a drop will be to paddle. Even if this is possible, it's more information than a guidebook or "the paddling community" can reasonably offer to an individual as they ponder; to run or not to run. The decision to paddle a difficult rapid must come from experience and insight. Each river and each rapid has its own unique character. Rivers don't need accurate ratings, they only need to be looked at. If you can't read a line that you can run, either from the cockpit of your boat or from the shore, than walk. Knowing if you can run a line, or are willing to try, is entirely personal. This is the adventure, the excitement, and part of the fun of boating. Attaching some quantitative figure to the experience is not necessary, though it may help in ego building and boasting personal success.

I would not advocate doing away with rating rivers altogether. The current 1-6 system does help in communicating about rivers and gives paddlers visiting a new area some idea of what they would like to check out. Stop and think though, isn't it the anecdotal information, the stories of the thrills and spills, the descriptions of the beautiful gorge and the cool drops that attract you to a new river? The num-

bers are only of minor importance. Let's keep them that way. It's the fun that counts.

David Hus  
Asheville, North Carolina

*Editor's reply: Thanks for your input. But I think you are going to lose this battle. A great deal of energy, coupled with input from hundreds of paddlers, has already gone into modifying the rating system... and the results will likely be announced soon.*

## SETTING "ERNIE" STRAIGHT

Dear Editor:

Please help me set the record straight. A recent article written by Nate Lewis about the North Fork of the Snowqualine, commonly referred to Ernie's Canyon or Ernie's Grove, has several factual errors. He didn't get the obligatory "second source" confirmation before he went to press, so let me help the first timer. I guess Nate must have hit his head a little too hard on some of Ernie's rocks.

I was given credit for doing the first descent. I wish I could claim that honor. The honor goes to Matt Davidson, Jim Good, Bob Duffner and Tommy Templeton. It was those four who introduced me to Ernie's. Sorry guys, Nate missed a paddle stroke here. Second, he was right that we don't know Ernie. Because Ernie was a settler who the river's lower basin was named after, Ernie's Grove. Hence how the upper canyon got named. Nate missed again.

But since we are on this subject, Matt and Jim tried to navigate the canyon in their race boats after finishing a course work out upstream. After surviving the first four drops they hiked out with their boats a little worst for wear, not to mention their physical and mental state.

Matt and Jim soon convinced Bob and Tommy to join them for round two with Ernie. Deep down I speculate Matt and Jim just wanted to share the misery. As fortune would have it, later that night eating and consuming mass quantities of beer in celebration of their first descent, they named the rapids they could remember. Some names came easy; Ferry Land,

Raft Cache, the Cluster, Vertical Vortex; and some came later, Bruce's Boil. Little did they know on that fateful day in January 1989 that a Northwest gem was found. Since that time several paddlers from around the world have twisted a paddle blade in the turbulent waters and breathed air deeply in anxiety in this Cascade chasm.

I don't get out much with Matt, Jim and Bob these days. They have a much more demanding schedule these days called fatherhood. As for Tommy, he finished his Ph.D. and moved to the other Washington. D.C.'s gain was our loss (Hi Tommy, from all of us).

So for those would be river authors please check your river history and facts to give credit where credit is due. Especially when speaking of first descents. This is a special honor to those who treaded before all others. Thanks Matt, Jim, Bob and Tommy for sharing.

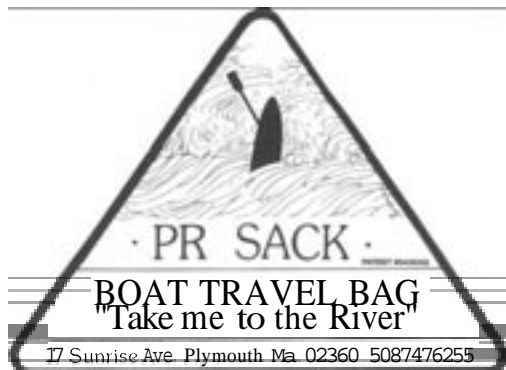
Rick Williams  
Maple Valley, Washington

*Editor's Reply: Thanks for the clarification. It's great to give credit where credit is due. However, I think I should come to Nathan Lewis's defense. In his article he stated, "I've heard conflicting opinions about who made the first descent of Ernie's. It depends on how many portages you allow," Nathan never claimed to "know" who "really" made the first descent of Ernie's, and he acknowledged this.*

*While making a first descent of a difficult river is an accomplishment, it is not quite as big a deal as, say, winning a Nobel Prize or Medal of Honor. The honest truth is that hardly anyone really knows or cares who made the first descents of most rivers. This information is difficult to document and, often, when you think you know the answer, you don't.*

*I remember attending a Three Rivers Paddling Club meeting in Pittsburgh several years ago where an elderly couple matter of factly presented faded slides documenting their descents of classic eastern rivers, including the Tygart, Gauley and Upper Yough. They had accomplished these runs in the early 1960s... rowing Navy surplus rafts... long before any of the "known" first descents. It came as quite a revelation to all of us. Interestingly enough, they didn't think running the rivers first, or getting credit for it, was such a big deal.*

*For all we know some courageous Native American paddled a birch bark canoe through Ernie's canyon a thousand years ago!*



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## The American Whitewater

### Affiliation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at P.O. Box 636, Margaretville, NY 12455, (914) 586-2355. AWA is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.


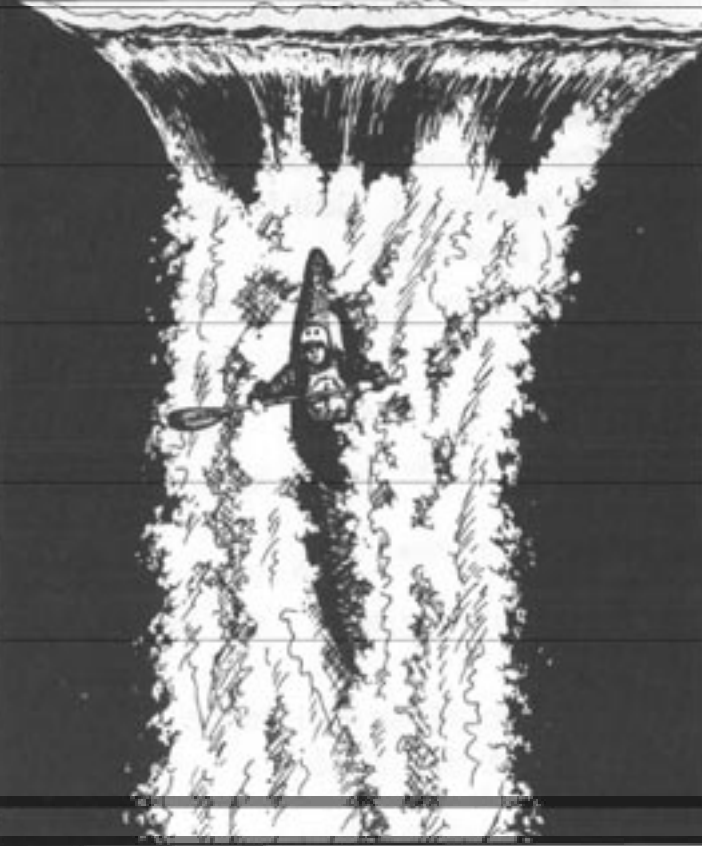
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## Teaming with Dollars! How Fish and Wildlife Agencies Want Your Money

by Rich Bowers

In previous editions of American Whitewater, the AWA reported on (and opposed) a proposal by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) to support fish and wildlife programs through an excise tax on outdoor recreation and related products. This tax would be levied on boats, paddles, recreational vehicles, etc.

While this proposal has been gathering strength for several years, it came to a head on June 6th, when a hearing was held before the US House of Representatives Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans. Now, this was merely an oversight hearing, and no bill has yet been introduced... kind of a dry run for both Congress and affected groups!

In the hearing, the Subcommittee heard from a variety of wildlife groups and agencies who supported this bill. Again and again these proponents claimed that: the tax would benefit outdoor recreation; that they had talked with outdoor user groups; and that outdoor users supported a tax that protects natural resources.

There were several glaring errors in this testimony. First, many groups contacted by the IAFWA (including AWA) did not support this bill. Second, while outdoor users have consistently held that they would support measures to protect outdoor resources, they have no desire to contribute over \$350 million per year to just a few select and narrow programs.

Those who opposed the bill offered testimony also, including outdoor manufacturers, taxpayer groups, and car manufacturers. Who was not asked to testify? Those who will ultimately pay this tax - outdoor users - hikers, boaters, climbers, etc. This point was quickly picked up by Representatives Jim Saxton (R-NJ) and Peter Torkildsen (R-MA). Congressman Saxton also addressed the actual cost to the consumer (you and me). Here is how this "Teaming with Wildlife" tax would work - it would be levied on the manufacturer, which means that for canoes and other gear, a 2% to 5% increase in costs would be imposed before they are even produced. This cost would then be passed along to the distributor, then to the retailer, and then finally on to the consumer - all the while this tax cost would be increasing as different levels added in their mark up. So the original 2 to 5% tax would represent much more by the time it winds up on the price tag. For big ticket items (including canoes and kayaks costing over \$1000 dollars each) this could represent big money.

But the cost has never really been the reason AWA opposes this tax. Our opposition comes from 1) what programs benefit from the tax 2) who gets the money and decides how to allocate it, and 3) how this tax will work in relation to other fees and taxes being levied on outdoor users.

Previous articles have described our opposition. In brief, AWA will not support a tax which dedicates all funding to only a small part of the river conservation issue. We like wildlife too, but we are not willing to give \$350 million a year to this, especially when we will still need to find additional funding for other river needs. We likewise can't support funding state fish and wildlife agencies which represent only a small percentage of outdoor users (often to the detriment of other users, like boaters).

Our third concern lies in the failure of the IAFWA to recog-

nize the many other fees which are proposed for outdoor users.

Many boaters may also be unaware of these issues, and the po-

tential increase in the cost of using the outdoors in the future.

For instance:

- Congress has finally agreed on a budget for the Department of the Interior and other agencies. A part of this includes a three-year demonstration recreation fee program which will raise Funds from users for recreation programs and needs.

- A separate and more permanent bill was introduced into the House Resources Committee in late March, a bill which would require outdoor users to pay a substantial portion of the costs of recreational services. On the up side, fees would remain in the areas collected, but the downside is that user fees will replace appropriations, meaning that recreation services could get worse, even though we are paying the tab.

- Finally, seeing that national legislation may take too long, individual state agencies are talking of implementing individual state taxes on outdoor products.

Add to this a 2% to 5% tax and we can see that the future of outdoor recreation will no longer be based on who is able and qualified to enjoy it, but who can afford it! AWA is not comfortable with this vision of outdoor use.

From the Subcommittee hearing, it seems like the Teaming with Wildlife Tax will not be introduced in the near future. However, this will give supporters even more time to lobby and push for this legislation.

Here is what you can do. If your elected representative sits on the Subcommittee, write him/her and say that, as an outdoor user, you do not support this tax. Address your letter as follows: Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Send a copy to the AWA at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD, 20910, fax # (301) 589-6121.

House Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee

Republicans: Jim Saxton (NJ-chair), Don Young (AK), Wayne Gilchrest (MD), Billy Tauzin (LA), Peter Torkildsen (MA), Linda Smith (WA), Walter Jones (NC), Jack Metcalf (WA), Jim Longley (ME).

Democrats: Gerry Studds (MA), George Miller (CA), Sam Gejdenson (CT), Solomon Ortiz (TX), Frank Pallone (NJ), Sam Farr (CA), Patrick Kennedy (RI).

## Forest Service Releases Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Westside Wild and Scenic Rivers Study (Tahoe National Forest, CA)

This DEIS evaluates twenty-two rivers and streams, all on the West side of the Sierra Crest and within the Yuba and American River drainages. These rivers were evaluated for possible addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Boater comments are critical, as the Forest Service's recommendation is to designate only three rivers out of the twenty-two. The rivers evaluated include:

### NORTH YUBA DRAINAGE

– Canyon, Empire, Lavezzola, and Pauley Creeks, New York Ravine and the North Yuba River

### SOUTH YUBA DRAINAGE

– Humbug and Fordyce

### NORTH FORK AMERICAN DRAINAGE

– North Fork, North Fork American, Big Granite and Little Granite Creeks, and New York Canyon

### MIDDLE YUBA DRAINAGE

– Macklin, East Fork and Oregon Creeks, Middle Yuba Rivers

### MIDDLE FORK AMERICAN DRAINAGE

– North Fork of both the Middle and North Fork American Rivers, Grouse Creek and Screwauger Canyon

The Middle Fork American River, although eligible, was not evaluated since it flows mostly through Bureau of Land Management land.

The Forest Service has identified Alternative C as their preferred alternative. Alternative C recommends National Recreational and Scenic Status for the North Fork Yuba River, Canyon Creek, and the South Yuba River below Spaulding Reservoir.

Now is the time for boaters to educate the Forest Service as to what other rivers and streams in this area are important recreational rivers. Recreation in the Tahoe National Forest is recognized as a major

activity, and has been ranked fifth or sixth in the nation in terms of total recreation visitor days. However, important recreational rivers such as Fordyce Creek were not even listed under the section "Management for Recreation Opportunity."

Comments will be accepted until August 8, 1996, and should be sent to Phil Horning, Tahoe National Forest, P.O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959. For more information, contact the Forest Service at (916) 265-4531 or AWA at (301) 589-9453 or by email at 70732.401@compuserve.com

## Forest Service Reviews Clavey Eligibility for Wild and Scenic (CA)

In late May, the AWA commented on the outstanding characteristics of the Clavey River. The Forest Service, in its Stanislaus Forest Plan, found the Clavey to have 16 "Outstandingly Remarkable Values," yet determined that the Clavey was "unsuitable" for Wild and Scenic designation. At the heart of this decision were plans to build five hydro dams by the Turlock Irrigation System.

However, plans to build these dams have been killed, and there is now a second opportunity to permanently protect this river.

In its comments the AWA stated that: The Clavey is

truly an "outstandingly remarkable" river, worthy of being "protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations." (1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act) This is the type of river that the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was designed to protect, offering over 28 miles of Class IV, V and VI whitewater in a spectacular wilderness valley. As such, the AWA believes that the Clavey represents one of the most suitable rivers in the nation for Wild & Scenic designation.

For copies of AWA's comments, please call the Conservation Office at (301) 589-9453.

## HYDROPOWER UPDATES

By Rich Bowers

### Dam Removal and the case of Edward's Dam (ME)

When AWA and other river groups talk about dams on rivers, often the first thing that gets thrown back at us is that environmentalists and recreationists "just want to tear out all the dams."

However, while the AWA is involved with lots of dams (either through direct intervention or through participation in the Hydropower Reform Coalition), we have asked that dams be removed only on Washington's White Salmon, on Wisconsin's Pine, the Clyde in Vermont, and on Maine's Kennebec River.

We have pushed FERC, and hydro applicants, to address dam decommissioning at every project (eventual removal can be one option of decommissioning). But this is only good common sense. Dam owners, just like coal, nuclear and other energy producers, need to provide the public with long term plans – before they build new dams or relicense existing ones. Otherwise, we may wind up with another Elwha situation, where the dam owner walks away and taxpayers foot the bill [In April, 1996, the US Department of the Interior released the DEIS for restoring the Elwha River system by removing both the Glines Canyon and Elwha dams located in Washington's Olympic National Park].

Don't get me wrong – there are a lot of dams we would like to see come out. But when you get involved in the specifics of individual dams, you often find that (no matter how much you may want to) you just can't remove the dam. For instance:

AWA wanted very much to remove Moxie dam in Maine, but unfortunately this meant destroying the property values of some

250 local landowners.

AWA would love to tear out the **Fairview Dam** on the Upper Kern in California, but this would allow predatory fish to infiltrate the Golden Trout Wilderness area upstream.

On the reverse side, a few interests wanted to remove the Falls River dam in Connecticut, not to restore the river but to improve the stocked fishery. This removal would destroy commercial boating businesses and an Olympic training site.

Sometimes the cost of removing a dam is just too harsh to be realistic. And we need to look not at just our own issues, but how these decisions affect others.

But sometimes — every once in a while — there comes a good opportunity to rip one of those suckers out! To restore a free-flowing river... to set things right with nature. Let's face it, just like every other business, some are valuable and some are down-right turkeys!

Enter the Edward's Dam on the Kennebec, the first dam upstream on the river. Environmental groups, and even the State of Maine, have asked that this dam be removed. The Hydro Reform Coalition sees this dam relicensing as THE test case in which, for the first time, FERC could order dam removal against the will of the dam owner (a private manufacturing company who uses the energy to power its own plant). Dam removal would restore the Kennebec river ecosystem and allow fish passage up river.

The owner, of course, is not so keen on removal. Based on a technicality, Edward's Manufacturing Company and the City of Augusta have requested that FERC separate the Edward's Dam Project from the cumulative EIS which looks at the other 11 separate projects on Maine's Kennebec River. The licensee alleges that a FERC staff member participated in both earlier (and unsuccessful) settlement agreements regarding this project, and as advisory staff to FERC Commissioner's on findings and legal issues. This violates FERC's "separation of function" rule.

The AWA was a participating member of these earlier negotiations, and continues to work on many of the upstream dams (including the Moosehead and Moxie storage projects). The AWA has not been directly involved with the Edward's Dam, as this dam lies far below the fall line of the Kennebec (i.e. all flat water). However, as a member of the Hydropower Reform Coalition, the AWA is working with many of the groups looking to remove Edward's. We agree with these groups; Edward's offers a great opportunity to start working to restore the Kennebec, a great whitewater river.

## Housatonic (CT)

In a surprise decision, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) ruled in early June to recommend the discontinuance of stocking Rainbow Trout, the use of barbless hooks, and the closing of the Trout Management Area of the Housatonic River from June 15th or July 1, through August 31st.

Over the past several years, the Housatonic has seen heated debate between whitewater boaters and fishing interests. Fishing interests have contended that flows released below the Falls Village hydro project for whitewater recreation have produced fish kills in the river, and have requested that boating flows be discontinued.

However, at the last meeting of the "Upper Housatonic Working Group" (fishermen, boaters, environmental groups and others), the CT. Power and Light Company stated that new flows designed to augment boating were never implemented, and thus could not have been responsible for the fish kills (some twenty

or less fish). This predicated a closer look at other factors which may have contributed to the loss of fish. Incredibly, the fish kills took place immediately after the introduction of Rainbow Trout. Rainbow Trout offer strong competition for food and habitat with Brown Trout, and both are stocked in the river. Neither Rainbow nor Brown Trout are native to the Housatonic..

There are still many issues to be worked out, and both the Falls River and the downstream Bulls Bridge dam are up for new licenses in the next few years. In addition, AWA and local boaters do not anticipate agreement with this state decision from all fishing groups. The final outcome will have serious impacts on New England boaters — look for updates in future editions of *American Whitewater*, or call (301) 589-9453 to find out what's going on.



*Dewatered Black Canyon of the Bear*

## Bear River (UT)

In mid-May, the AWA traveled to far eastern Idaho to participate in the beginning of the Bear River Relicensing.

**PacifiCorp** held public meetings in Pocatello, Soda Springs and Preston, and these meetings were attended by boaters, fishermen, irrigators, local landowners, and an assortment of state and federal agency representatives.

AWA joined Liz Paul (Idaho Rivers United) and others to head off rumored opposition to improving whitewater flows and access in both the Black Canyon and Oneida Narrows areas. We determined that 1) the rumors were true, but that 2) this opposition seemed less problematical once boaters were able to talk directly with each group.

However, boaters must now convince **PacificCorp** to conduct real and effective whitewater studies. These studies will have a positive effect on boating, as well as developing needed information on fishery, aesthetic and channel stabilization issues. Both Idaho Fish and Game and local Trout Unlimited chapters

have agreed to support well-designed whitewater studies. AWA is looking at conducting these studies next spring.

Local landowners are concerned over trespassing and liability issues. This is another area which will be addressed during the studies and the rest of the relicensing process.

Public comments deadlines were due by July 15th, but if you have direct knowledge of boating on the Bear, or are interested in helping with this issue, please call the AWA Conservation Office. We can use all the help and information we can get on the Bear — and we would be happy to share our written comments with you.



Bear Creek UT

## Boaters Win Big on the Snake River's Milner Section (ID)

In April, the FERC weighed in favor of whitewater releases in the Milner Canyon section of Idaho's Snake River.

Last year, as part of the Milner Hydroelectric Project relicensing, Idaho Power Company was required to conduct a whitewater boating study (requested by AWA, Idaho Rivers United and local boaters). As a result of this study, FERC found that "further modification to the... project is appropriate to improve boater use and to maximize power generation benefits."

This means that for 12 weekend days each year in April, May and June (8 hours each day), Idaho Power must shut down its operation to provide whitewater flows of 10,000 cfs through this section of the river.

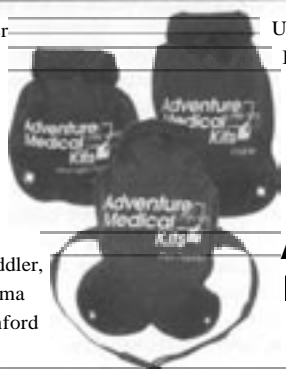
Of course, this is effective only when there is 10,000 cfs available, in excess of needed irrigation flows. Idaho Power does not have to shut down the project in the April-May period if the flows do not exceed 4,000 cfs, since the whitewater study found that flows below 10,000 were considered by test participants to be hazardous.

Special thanks are due to members of the Idaho Whitewater Association and especially to Rob Lesser, who spent many years working on this issue.

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# Davey Hearn Acquitted

by Steve Taylor

**D**espite efforts from the highest levels of the National Park Service to get the charges against Davey Hearn dropped, the National Park Police took Davey to trial on May 21 just three days after he made the Olympic Team.

From the very beginning, the judge started questioning the prosecution on the legality of Davey being on the river and the Park Police's jurisdiction "on the river." The Potomac has never been "closed" to paddling. Maryland (which has jurisdiction on the river) does not presently close its rivers during high water. AWA board member and lawyer Mac Thornton had earlier predicted that the charges would be dropped because the river was legally open for paddling. Mac was right about the law but did not appreciate the extremely strong feelings of the Park Police about this case.

Indeed, it took a judge [after four hours of the prosecutor's presentation] to get the Park Police to focus on and understand the law. Before Davey had to present his defense, the judge dismissed the case because it was legal to be on the river and Davey's troubles started when he paddled to shore in response to the Park Police helicopter that was hovering over him on the river. [Note: This has

been the position of AWA and local boaters since the beginning. Potomac boaters attended the original 1990 meetings where the Maryland laws were discussed, including changes in the Law to paddle Great Falls. Unfortunately, National Park Police did not attend this meeting.)

The judge ruled that the National Park Service and the National Park Police are without the authority to close the Potomac River, although the National Park Service retains the right to close federal park land on the banks of the river. The judge also dismissed the government's claim that Davey came within its jurisdiction when he paddled to shore, and told the prosecution and police, "You can't do that." ...meaning that police ordered Davey to shore and then arrested him. The judge found that Davey had violated no laws.

However, the Park Police's strong feelings about the case still need to be addressed; otherwise such incidents will happen again. Davey's arrest is not the first time certain individuals with authority have created problems for boaters who are operating within the law. Concern over drowning in the Potomac sometimes gets focused on boaters even though no kayaker or closed canoeist has ever died

on the Potomac. Boaters have prevented many more drownings by warning and rescuing potential victims. Complicating the matter is the police's duty to order someone to stop an activity which is perceived by them to be dangerous. Davey's arresting officer stated, "It was not a recreational situation and he (Davey) had no business out there. Whether Mr. Hearn thinks it or not, I feel I rescued him."

In order to protect experienced boaters against future incidents and to help communicate the formal rules to both the boaters and all the individual authorities connected with the Potomac River, AWA and the Canoe Cruiser's Association of Washington have asked for a **registration/permit** system to be implemented at high water (there may also be some legal issues concerning rescue that can be addressed with a **registration/permit**). In addition, AWA has asked for a formal system of communication between boaters and authorities in rescue situations to be developed.

The AWA would like to thank Barry Roberts for his pro-bono lead attorney defense of Davey, and also those within the Park Service who sought to help with this situation.

## Management Plan for the Upper Youghiogheny (MD)

In May, the Youghiogheny Scenic and Wild River Local Advisory Board issued a Draft River Study and Management Plan which includes proposed changes for boaters on both the "Upper" and "Top" Yough. This proposal is included under river access because it may drastically change access to two of the most outstanding whitewater rivers in the Mid-Atlantic.

The stated purpose of the plan is "to guide and direct activities to river areas which are appropriate for a particular use," and designed "to address local concerns and to implement State policies to ensure effective river management." As with most management plans, this one has some major problems up front. Ac-

cording to the plan, it is intended to guide everyone involved with the river. However, not everyone has been involved in developing the plan.

The "citizen advisory board" consists of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), riparian landowners, Garrett County residents, and a representative of the local government. There are no known boaters represented on this panel, even with the high density of boaters and boating businesses located and living in this area. While the DNR is now actively seeking boater input, this is not acceptable as the regulation of whitewater boating is a prominent (although not the only) issue in the plan. Boaters are once again placed in the position of defending

recreational use, rather than helping to develop an acceptable management plan.

On May 22, 1996, a public meeting was held to discuss this plan at the Garrett Community College and a 30 day written comment period was opened to the public. Unfortunately, the deadline made it impossible for AWA to print this in an earlier edition of the Journal.

Here are some portions of the draft which will affect private whitewater boaters:

■ The major goal is to manage and ensure continued recreation use of the river, and to protect landowners from potential negative impacts associated with public recreation.

■ Garrett County, in cooperation with DNR, should consider the option of developing the county-owned properties near Oakland and Crellin as access points.

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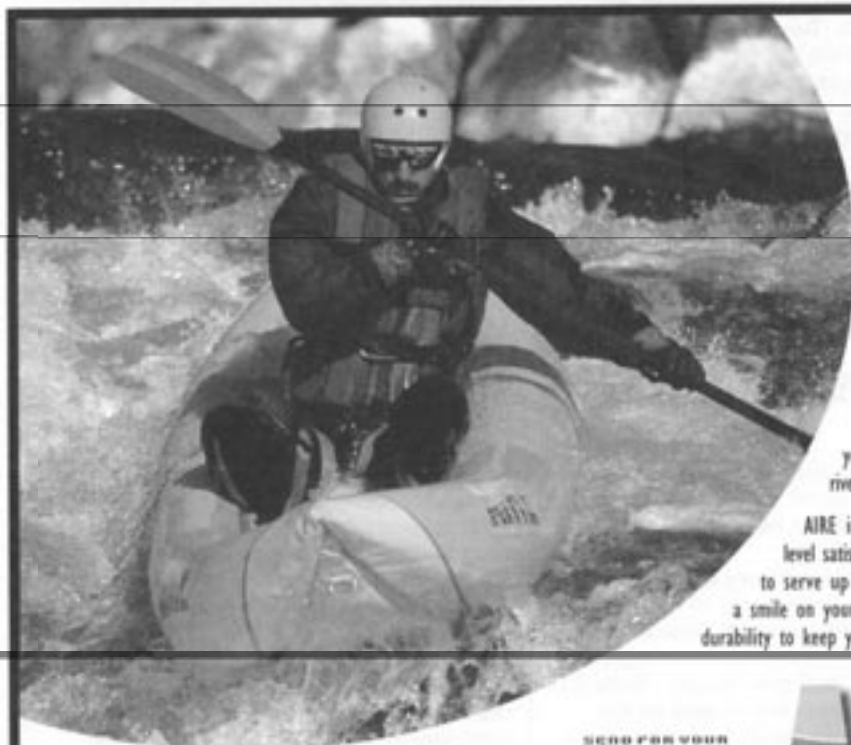
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Use of the river from Swallow Falls to Sang Run is increasing. DNR should study the need to include this area for whitewater regulation and management.

The Department should initiate a study to evaluate the impacts of the private whitewater boater on the Youghiogheny Wild and Scenic River Corridor. The study should evaluate safety, levels and patterns of use, levels of conflicts with private landowners and the projected carrying capacity of the Youghiogheny River. The scope of the study should also include a launch fee assessment to the private boater, a launch fee sharing arrangement with landowners within the corridor and local volunteer agencies, an economic impact review that private boating has on the local economy (positive and negative), and the effects other users on the river have on the river and corridor surrounding it. This study should result in recommendations regarding the options and appropriate level of control and management of the private whitewater boater.

For updates on this management plan, or to get copies of the AWA's comments, please call the AWA Access Office at (301) 589-9453 or email your comments to [72732.401@compuserve.com](mailto:72732.401@compuserve.com)



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# NEAR MISS IN THE WAUTAUGA GORGE

by Charlie Walbridge  
AWA Director

The Wautauga River, west of Boone, North Carolina, is one of the best technical runs in the Southeast. I'd been down it a few times before, and except for a rather eventful first run with Jack Wright in the mid-70's, had always found it enjoyable. The two previous trips had been in the company of local paddlers who knew the river extremely well. This time the gauge was reading -8". Half our group had been down the river before, but none of us really "knew" it.

We'd been proceeding slowly and carefully, scouting the big drops. We portaged Hydro and ran everything else. We arrived at a steep boulder drop, the last major rapid above Stateline Falls, that some people call "Knuckles". I sat in an eddy while Ned Hughes scouted, then ran. He reported hitting a rock, so I got out and scouted the drop also. The base of the drop appeared shallow, but not dangerous. As I scouted, two other boaters went over. They tagged the rock lightly, but it didn't slow them up.

My run was probably farther to the left than the others. When I hit the rock my boat stopped dead. The outfitting gave way, throwing me forward in the boat about four inches. I hesitated momentarily, then tried to push myself back upstream with my paddle. The boat slipped to the right, then settled into the drop against a left-hand boulder. Water shot into my back and flew over my head. This jammed me tightly against the front of the cockpit. I was stuck!

I knew I was in real danger. The cockpit rim was pressing hard against my hips. The deck of my C-1 was so slippery I really couldn't push myself upstream. The current was powerful enough to knock me over if I didn't brace myself upright. I was scared, and called for help. Peter Hubbard, who was onshore, threw me a line. This helped me stay upright, but wasn't going to get me free. I asked him to move behind me, then I carefully tried to slide backwards, without success.

Suddenly a tag line appeared above me. Ned Hughes had paddled to the center of the river and positioned himself on a mid-stream rock. I hung my arms over it, and yelled for the group at river right to work upstream to put more bend in the rope. This improved their ability to hold on and pull. Pete, now joined by Kate

Heisler and Cindy Otto, started to pull back hard.

The force pushed me against my back deck, then lifted me back a few inches. My thighs came free. It was time to get out! I kicked my legs back and slid out of the boat.

My wife was preparing to run when she heard the screams and investigated. She saw me slip below the surface and thought I was gone, but fortunately this was not so. I swam to shore about thirty yards downstream, badly shaken, but otherwise OK. My boat, a full-sized Hahn Munich C-1, was completely under water and required considerable effort to free.

This incident came as quite a shock; afterwards my main feeling was disbelief. Although I have no illusions that my safety work provides any special protection, I consider myself a pretty careful paddler. I'm primarily into the scenery, people, and the experience, and not shy about carrying big drops. A number of people with considerable experience on the Wautauga, including a group of local paddlers who helped recover my pinned C-1, have said that the rock has been there a long time, and except for one other incident, has never caused trouble. I suspect that my long (13') boat, carrying my 240 pound weight, dives deeper than smaller individuals in modern high-rocker designs. Or I may simply have been too far left. Either way, I simply did not read the water correctly.

If I was fortunate that the remainder of my group was equipped and trained for rescue. Several of them had been students in my rescue classes, and performed well under the pressures of the moment. Ned Hughes, by moving into position, played a key role in setting up the tag line. By getting set up immediately, rather than waiting for a "leader" to give him orders, he minimized my time in the water. He held onto his end of the rope with great difficulty, but fortunately long enough.

My reading and teaching gave me a good idea of what to expect; I knew what was coming and what to do. I did try to keep my sprayskirt in place as long as possible so that water wouldn't fill the boat. Although I thought I'd released the sprayskirt before exiting, in the heat of the moment I did not. I actually came out

through the waistband.

Normally a stabilization line, rather than a snag line, is used to recover alert, stable victims. The trapped person holds onto the line and uses it for support as he or she works free. But the adrenaline was flowing and the group simply pulled back hard. It was a bit uncomfortable, but it lifted me enough so I could escape. I was glad to be in a C-1; a kayak would have sunk much deeper and a paddler would have needed to work harder to get free. Although I was only pinned for a few minutes, it could have been much worse.

To those who think that they can't get into trouble, this narrative should serve as a wake-up call. This is a dangerous sport; potential hazards are not always clearly visible and anyone can make a critical mistake. If you think that river rescue courses are somehow "nerdy" or impractical, this incident shows that the things we are teaching really work and can make a difference.

Moreover, there may not be time to improvise during an actual emergency. Experienced paddlers who are mechanically inclined may be able to get the information they need from reading books. It is sobering to think that if this had happened back in the 1970's, I could be dead. Back then we simply didn't know what to do.

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# Five Ring Quixotism

## Olympic Dreams

by Elmore Holmes

### Olympic Epilogue

The ultimate results of the Olympic Team Trials were largely as predicted by Elmore Holmes in his excellent article *Five Ring Quixotism*. Most members of the 96 Olympic Team reached the trials by virtue of being "A" division racers. The exception is the C2 team of Dickert and Holden, who did not race together in 1995, and so did not receive an automatic Trials invitation.

The 96 Olympic team will consist of Rich Weiss and Scott Shipley in K1, Cathy Hearn and Dana Chladek in K1-W, Davey Hearn and Adam Clawson in C1 and the team of Horace Holden and Wayne Dickert in C2.

Congratulations and best wishes go to these talented athletes. We'll all be rooting for you on the Ocoee.

But we'll also be remembering all those dedicated competitors, like Elmore Holmes, who didn't quite make it, this time. Don't give up. Remember, 2000 is only four years away!



**A**n icy wind descends from Lake Michigan and penetrates my geriatric late-twentysomething bones, leaving me incredulous that Spring is nearly a month old. It actually was hot yesterday when I left my Memphis home. Here, some 8 degrees (latitude, that is) due north, a nearby bank clock issues a 35-degree report which betrays the formidable wind chill.

My chin buried within the collar of my fleece jacket, I gaze upon the freshly-constructed slalom course on the East Race Waterway, distant-second to Notre Dame football among the attractions

The author finds life as a hack on the slalom circuit glamorless and emotionally draining. But the intensity and desire among his fellow racers is nothing short of Olympian. Above: Toiling in Obscurity: The author cleans a gate at the South Trials Qualifier on the Nantahala.



which put the shabby **rustbelt** city of South Bend, Indiana, on the map.

The occasion is the North Olympic Trials Qualifier, one of four opportunities for slalomists to earn a starting time in the U.S. Olympic Team Selection Trials, a month from now on the Ocoee River in Tennessee. The first opportunity was the South Qualifier on North Carolina's Nantahala River, held two weeks ago. This weekend will see qualifiers for the North, here in South Bend, and the West, on the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River near Seattle. The drama will conclude two weeks from now with the East Qualifier on the Farmington River in Connecticut.

A berth in the Trials is the Prize: the pursuit of that dream leaves dozens of

racers to these qualifiers.

And, in all likelihood, a spot at Trials will be the Ultimate and only Prize. Because when the Olympic Games finally roll around in late July, the men and women who advance to the Trials from these qualifiers, will almost certainly be at home watching on television.

The composition of the 1996 U.S. Olympic Team is all but a foregone conclusion. The two C-1 spots will be filled by some combination of Adam **Clawson**, Davey Hearn, Joe Jacobi, Jon **Lugbill**; the two K-1 spots by Eric Giddens, Eric Jackson, Scott Shipley, Richie Weiss. The brother tandem of Fritz and **Leck** Haller figure to claim whatever C-2 berth materializes, barring a mild upset by **Barry Kennon/David Hepp** or **Steve Isenberg/**

Matt Taylor. And the K-1W team will consist of one or more of Renata Buddeusova-Altman, Dana Chladek, Jana Freeburn, Cathy Hearn, Kara Weld.

The South and North and West and East qualifying races are of no great concern to these people. The aforementioned stars are guaranteed a Trials berth by virtue of their membership in the "A" division, a class of **rankings** which the national federation calculates each year by using some bizarre algorithm which even my mathematical mind cannot comprehend. Below the elite "A" boaters are the B-, C-, and D-division racers, who must paddle their way into the Trials via the four qualifying races.

Most of the A-ranked paddlers are currently living in the Ocoee region in



preparation for the upcoming Games. Consequently, many of them were on hand for the first qualifier on the nearby Nantahala, using the race as a tune-up. But here at South Bend the field consists mostly of perennial rank-and-file types like me, vying for their fifteen nanoseconds of fame. A few juniors with bright futures in the sport are present—Scott McCleskey and Ryan Bahn in C-1, Josh Russell and Scott Parsons in K-1, Megan Stalheim and Amy Brown in K-1W, the C-2 team of Chris Ennis and John Grumbine.

"If I had made Team Trials at the Nantahala, I wouldn't have come up here," I will tell K-1 racer Tom Piccirilli.

"I believe that's the understatement of the weekend," Tom will say.

## Wimps

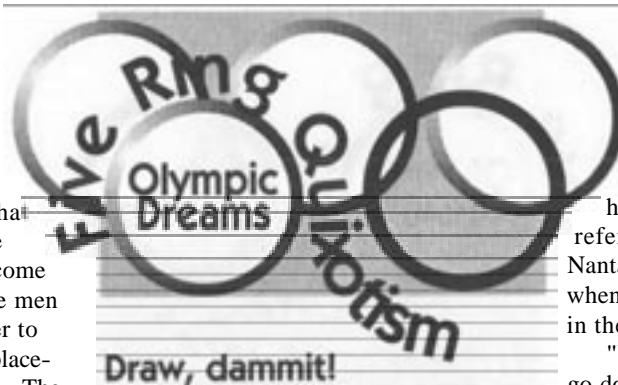
"I can't believe some of these wimps," says Bobby Hartridge, who stands next to me on the bank of the canal. Bobby is a South Carolina kayaker better known for his steep-creek conquests (he has appeared in two Wayne Gentry videos) who is now rising in the K-1 slalom ranks. At this moment he is annoyed by the pleading of several racers to simplify some of the tougher moves: "What's the point of having a slalom race if any slob can run the course?" Bobby is blessed with remarkable perspective.

But the course is, in fact, diabolically tough. Gates 8 through 11 comprise a sequence of downstream offsets in the first section of fast water, requiring the paddler to work downstream through a strong

eddy on river right and then execute an extremely tight left-right-left move. Gate 16, a downstream, also hangs above a large eddy, and sends the paddler into a must-make surf from 17 to 18.

Bobby's perspective will serve me well these days, for my slalom season has unfolded not at all the way I had hoped. Back home, a couple hundred miles from the nearest whitewater, I work full-time as a high school mathematics teacher and track coach, and struggle to schedule my training around my real-world obligations.

I manage some sprints on the Mississippi River and some moving-water gate work on its muddy Wolf River tributary, but this alone will not deliver slalom success. Having studied untold miles of vid-



eotape of the great canoeists, I see that while my forward stroke is up to the task and my leans and pivots have come a long way, I am outclassed by these men in certain subtleties which are harder to measure. Hull kinesthetics. Boat placement. Edge control. "Elite" balance. The amphibious savvy and intuition which only hours on the water each day can develop.

But inadequate training is only partly accountable for my problems this season. The truth is that my performance is not much worse than it was last season, if any worse at all. My frustration has resulted more from an unreasonable rise in my expectations which has stemmed a perceived lack of success. Bobby Hartridge, for instance, is able to shrug his shoulders and say, "Hey, it's only my third year of racing, and if I don't make Team Trials now, I'll do it later on." My attitude is more, "I've been doing this three years now. When the hell am I going to get good?"

## You Gotta Pay to Play

The duties of the demonstration run, for which Bobby and Tom and I and a number of other racers have been waiting this dreary evening, have been assigned to Richard Dressen, a talented kayaker who just missed out on an "A" ranking last year, but claimed his Trials berth on the Nantahala two weeks ago. Most of our predictions regarding the course's difficult moves are borne out by Dressen's run.

Having seen all I need to see, I walk out to my car and set my course for the Super 8 Motel on the north side of town. I give the '92 Corolla a reassuring pat on the dash, whispering a promise that she will be put to bed shortly. In three and a half years the vehicle has delivered me through 30 states and over 73,000 miles, the last 600 of which have passed since yesterday afternoon. Desperate for some sleep of my own, I wonder how long I can go on like this.

I pull into the Super 8 parking lot and bring the Corolla to rest alongside several other vehicles bearing boats. Across the street at the Motel 6 are more boats with cars strapped beneath them, their owners inside relishing the luxuries of \$28.99 per night. The U.S. Olympic Committee doesn't cough up and funds for grunts like us.

By morning the sun has emerged and the air temperature has risen, but the wind remains fierce. I roll out of bed after a glorious nine-hour slumber, check out of the room, and return to East Race. I arrive to find the double canoe class just underway, and the profane, exasperated screams which waft up from below the Colfax Avenue bridge tell me that Bob Bofinger and Jack Dawson must be on the course.

The delicate temperament of their relationship notwithstanding, Bofinger and Dawson are one of the finest tandems who have never made a U.S. Team. They weave mostly-clean through the tough 8-through-11 sequence, and their Trials berth seems eminent. The outlook quickly sours, however, when they have to paddle back up after missing #18 and take a 50-second penalty on #24.

A short time later the women are up, and they sound off with a few expletives of their own as the course victimizes its new wave of challengers. But, in keeping with custom, the racers descend in reverse order of ranking, so gradually the moves become crisper, the runs cleaner.

When the morning session ends, the Olympic Trials field is five boats larger. The Criscione brothers, John and Joe, and Ennis/Grumbine have capitalized on the mistakes of Bofinger/Dawson to qualify in C-2. And Joanne Bogner, Becky Brown, and Anne Mitchell have secured their trip to Ducktown as K-1W competitors.

## Gravity

Shielded from the chill of polypro and neoprene, I carry my trusty Fanatic C-1 to the dock, fingering a slab of iron fastened inside the bottom of his boat with Bondo. "My boat didn't make weight. Had to go to a machine shop for this thing last night," he explains.

We paddle out onto the flatwater of the St. Joseph River, which has been dammed to allow for the Waterway's steepened gradient. "I was unnerved as

hell by all the studs there," Scott says, referring to the first qualifier on the Nantahala. "It's hard to paddle well when you feel like you're the suckiest guy in the race."

"Yeah," I agree; "Sometimes I have to go do some mickeymouse race just to recover some self esteem."

Paddling off for some prerace quiet time, Scott murmurs, "Self esteem is a good thing."

Other C-boaters have commenced their **warmup** on the St. Joseph, and I recognize faces from competitions past. Todd Murdock, whose running times are always faster than mine, but whose numerous penalties sometimes enable me to beat him, hopes that his Olympic Festival experience will carry him into the Trials. A well-conditioned build belies the somewhat advanced age of Andrew Padyk, a late-bloomer on the slalom circuit. The Criscione brothers are trying to add a second boat class to their activities on the Ocoee next month. No A-ranked C-1's are present, but Scott McCleskey, Ryan Bahn, Jesse Gillis, and Andrew Bell, reliable B-rankers all, take on the role of favorites.

My practice run is nothing short of sloppy, but I am unconcerned. Every racer knows it is bad luck to have a great practice run. I return to the **warmup** area with my synapses firing furiously in analysis of my mistakes. I am fortunate enough to have run track and cross country in high school for a coach who understood the importance of visualization as a preparation tool for competition.

In front of me is the starting wand, and the starter has informed me that I start in thirty seconds. In silence, I stare downstream at those who have started before me, trying to glean whatever information I can about their progress on the course.

"Ten seconds," the starter says. "Five, four, three, two, one...GO!"

The gradient at the top of the course is slight. Five of the first six gates are upstreams, and I handle the first three cleanly, congratulating myself for my practice sessions on the Wolf. At #4, which hangs over the backwash of a small pourover, I am sucked into the maw of the hole and flipped, rolling up to the sound of cheers from the spectators on the banks and footbridges. Some of the





best entertainment at slalom races is provided by the mediocre racers.

I paddle on, negotiating 5, 6, and 7 with reasonable efficiency, and set up for the first flight of "wicked offsets," as they are called by the P.A. announcer. For most the move of choice at #8 has been to eddy out, cleaning the gate in the process, and to peel out wide to take #9 over on river left. #9 must be made with boat angled back to the right in order to sprint over to #10, on river right. Some paddlers have made #9 "direct," executing a full clockwise spin to achieve the desired angle, while others, C-2s in particular, have taken #9 in reverse and firmed back to river right for #10.

I choose the former method, but being a lefty paddler, I have trouble making the spin and am swept through #9 pointed left. Discombobulated, I made a feeble attempt to backpaddle over to #10. But the current is much too strong, and my first "50" is in the books.

The gradient eases now, and I compose a clean run of the next five gates before encountering the next tough move at 16-19. Boldly, I deviate from the plan of most of my fellow racers and do a complete spin in the river-left eddy at #16, setting myself up beautifully (or so I think) for #17. One must enter #17 with the perfect upstream angle in order to catch the foam of a small wave and be surfed over to #18. My angle is decidedly imperfect, and instead of a smooth surf I am given a violent jolt which jars my paddle grip from my right hand and flops me wrongside-up once more. By the time I regain control of my stick and right myself, I have missed gates 18 and 19, digging my hole 100 seconds deeper.

Now I'm upset, in violation of the cardinal rule in slalom... to remain at peace with oneself at all times. I narrowly avoid passing through #23 the wrong way and collecting another "50"; I drift across the beam of the electronic eye to complete what is, in my humble estimation, a perfectly awful run.

At the takeout, I find that I am not the only disgruntled C-ler. "I didn't know I was capable of paddling so poorly," pants Andrew Padyk, who arrives just behind me. "I have *never* screwed up a run the way I just did," announces Eric Revels, who drifts down moments later. "I had a one-touch run going until I flipped at #23

and  
50'd the last three gates."  
I gather up my belongings  
and begin the journey back to the top.  
Rounding out the C-1 class are Bahn, McCleskey, and Gillis, and I watch all three take gates 16-19 cleanly and quickly. By the time I reach the foot-bridge overlooking the 8-1 sequence, the first K-1s are careening downriver.

## Scintillation

If you would like to know how hot Hell is, just enter the K-1 class at a national-level slalom race. 158 male twin-bladers made the '95 rankings list, compared with only 90 for C-1, the next-largest class. So loaded is men's kayak that Bobby Hartridge, a far better boater than I, is only the 101st-ranked K-1, while I enjoy a seemingly-stellar 51st ranking in C-1. Today the mean difference among first-run scores in C-1 is 25.39 seconds. In K-1 it will be less than half that, 11.85 seconds, with many competitors separated by mere hundredths of a second.

One after another the K-1s descend, and the fastest run of the "wicked offsets" is impossible to discern with the naked eye. Chris Rush, Bobby Hartridge, Tom Piccirilli, Craig Law pass through the circuit, darting river left to take gate 9, backsweeping back to the right to pass their heads a centimeter within #10. Toward the end of the order is a cluster of A-ranked kayakers who have made the trip to East Race—Billy Brennan, Josh Russell, Jay Mulligan, Scott Parsons, Kyle Elliott, Brian Parsons. They demonstrate subtle skills which will make their runs a shade faster than those of their predecessors, particularly by foregoing a full eddy-out at gate 8 and simply backferrying straight over to #9.

## Faith

Throughout the K-1 class I have studied intently the parts of the course which gave me trouble on my first run. Unfortunately, after two ill-fated attempts at a couple of moves, I am beginning to doubt my ability to pull them off on my final run. Given my less-than-impeccable

skill level, Plans B, C, and D seem hardly more feasible than Plan A. My composure has diminished as I return to the starting area, and my hope for an outstanding run has been replaced by a twinge of desperation for a run that is simply respectable.

I recall a quote from Davey Hearn, "You can't think negatively. You have to be positive and have faith. Lots of times that's what separates the higher places from the lower places." Having some Worlds medals at home in my sock drawer would help.

Still, if I really believed I couldn't pull myself together, I would pack up the car and leave right now. Instead I am back behind the wand, the starter counting down the seconds. I sprint out of the gate determined to produce my best run ever. After all, I have paddled well on *most* of the course, and I feel that if I can run fast and clean through these easy parts and get through the difficult sections without any 50s, I will breathe competitive life once more.

I plop down through gate 8 into the eddy and set up to peel back out. Trouble is, I never did make up my mind what exactly I'm going to do at #9, and I find myself in the same left-angled predicament as before. This time I extend for several aggressive backstrokes, and find myself set up for #10 with no worse than a 5-second penalty to pay.

But the cunning canal will allow me no such fortuitous feat. It snags my paddle blade with one of its "rocks" (a block of cement with a plastic covering which resembles a section of a Porta-Potty) and over I go. 50-second penalty, gate 10.

The wind sucked from my sails, I nearly repeat my blunder at 17-18. This time I paddle back up for #18, refusing to fold completely, but just downstream at #23 I flip again and score another 50. So much for the best run ever.

For several minutes I take out my frustration on the surfing wave just above the takeout, then shoulder my boat over to the Corolla, parked on Niles Avenue. The wind picks up and gives me the shakes as I methodically change into dry clothes, careful not to flash any pedestrian South Benders.

I walk over to the scoreboard to face the awful truth. My scoresheet is second

from the bottom. Somehow the judges have given me four 50-second penalties rather than two. But I see no point in filing a protest, as to do so might improve my position from the bottom quintile to, say, the bottom quartile.

Scott McCleskey has moved into first with a clean second run—the only clean run for C-1 all day. Jesse Gillis settles for second with his one-touch first run. Third place is filled by a foreigner, Simon Twigger. So the final spot for the Olympic C-1 Trials goes to the fourth-place finisher, Todd Murdock, who has kept the penalties under control this time.

I scribble down the results for later study and return to the car to begin the ultramarathon drive back to Memphis. I cross the LaSalle Avenue bridge as the last few kayakers are making their way down the course. "A" boaters will take the top seven places in K-1, so the four Olympic Trials berths will go to finishers 8 through 11: Shaun Smith, Ben Gorman, E.J.

McCarthy, Abel Hastings.

From the bridge I spot Todd Murdock walking up the canal. I detect the same aura about him that surrounded the Trials qualifiers for C-2 and K-1W earlier in the day. His demeanor carries no obvious celebratory aspect, for such is not good form for any circumstances short of a World or Olympic title, but his inner satisfaction is apparent.

Sport is all about setting personal goals, and having the discipline to attain them. Every time I ran a personal record in the mile or two mile in high school, for instance, I felt satisfaction knowing I had done something which would have been very easy *not* to do.

Now, Todd and Scott and Jesse and all the other qualifiers have done *some-*

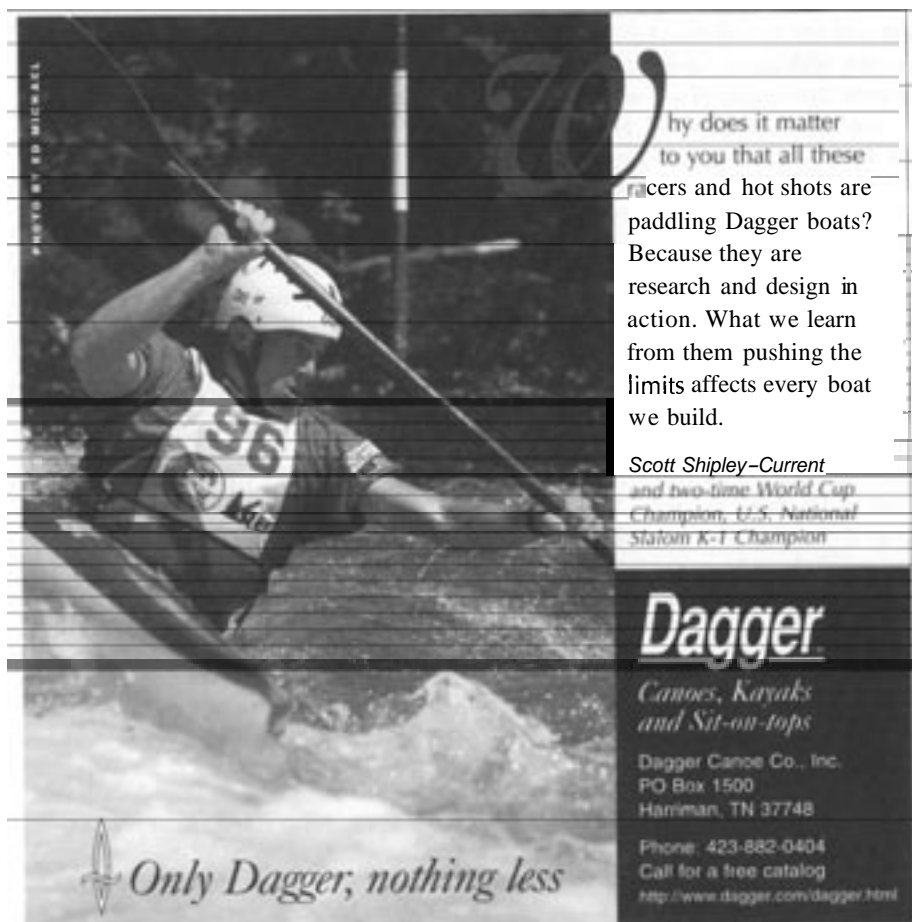
thing which I found *all* too easy not to do. And their personal satisfaction is enhanced by an external reward: a ticket to the next level, the right to work out on the nifty new Ocoee Olympic course, an opportunity to make the *really* big time—the United States Olympic Team. They almost certainly won't do it, of course, but I, for one, will think of them as I watch the studs in action on July 26-28.

Meanwhile, I have just dipped my feet into the second half of my 22-hour round trip. I won't get home until 2 or 3 AM, and any chance of having a productive day at work tomorrow is shot. All to finish one spot out of dead last. I think of a quote from another great canoeist, Jon Lugbill: "It's not worth suffering to get to an end. The means must be enjoyable."

Am I really enjoying this? I've got to admit that I can think of more delightful pastimes than getting my brains beat out in some stupid competition. For that matter, even when I'm out paddling just for "fun," while my buddies hoot and holler and have the time of their lives, I'm silently screaming at myself for blowing a surf or an elevator move I once saw some hot boater do. Is *that* enjoyable?

Maybe not, but if I didn't push myself at all, I wouldn't be as good a paddler as I am, and probably wouldn't have seen the wondrous sights I've seen and met all the interesting people I've met. I have a good job and a nice little life at home, but I'd go crazy if that were *all* I had.

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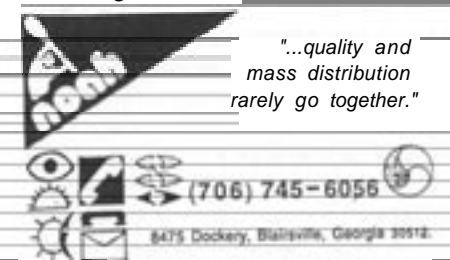
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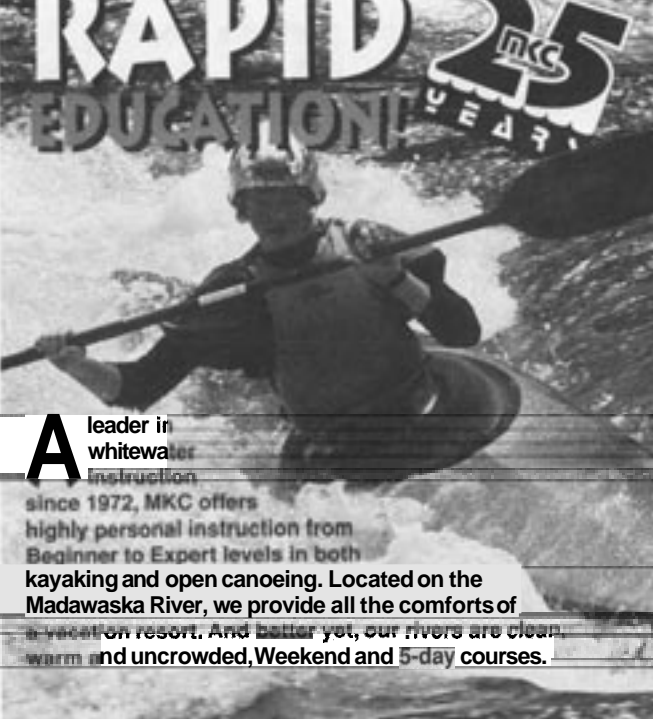


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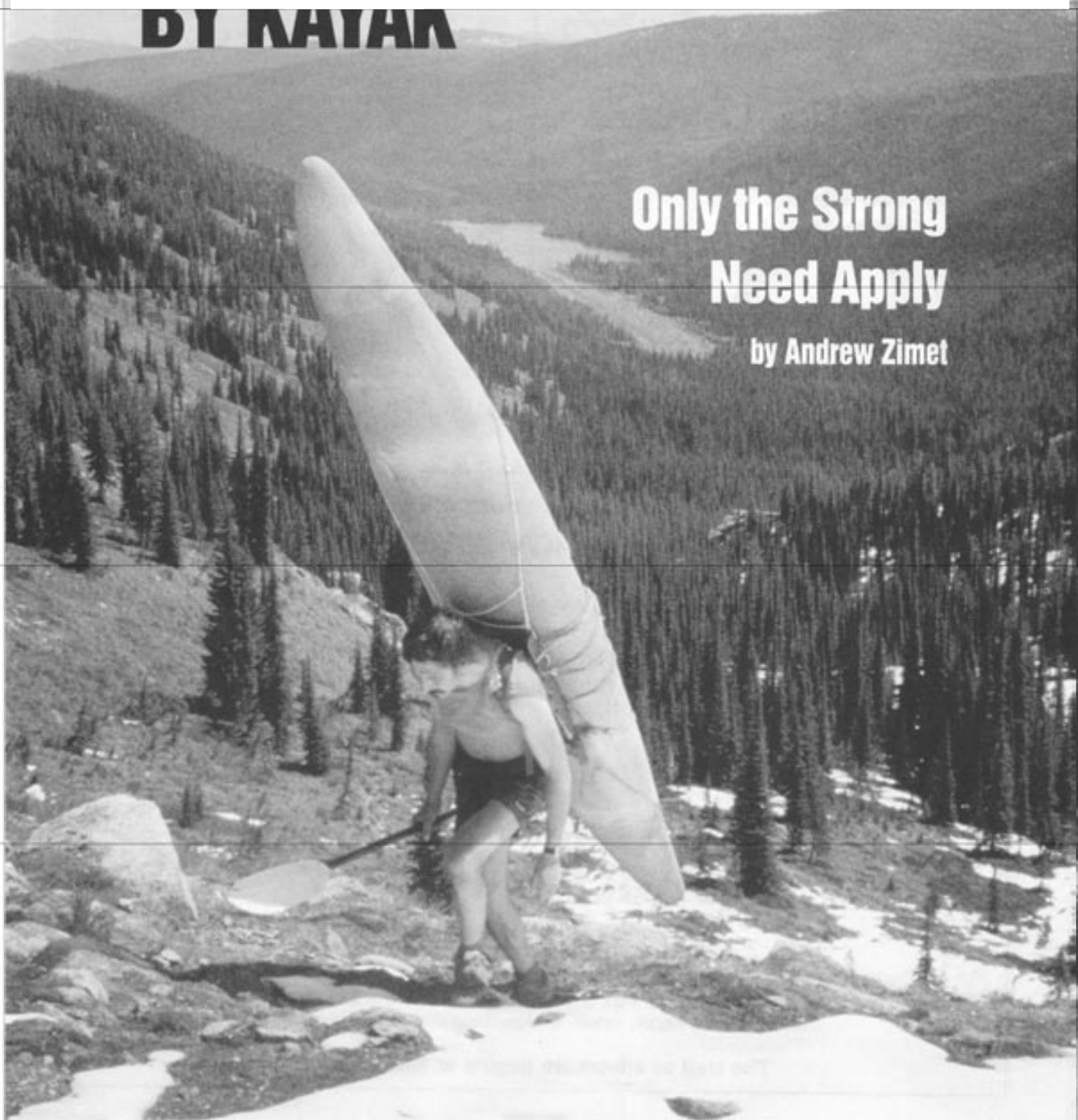
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**BY KAYAK**

# **Only the Strong Need Apply**

by Andrew Zimet



After a day and a half of hauling my kayak, loaded with gear and food for six days, I finally reached (aptly named) Army Mule Saddle. My partner, Steve, had hauled his boat the 12 miles and 3000 vertical feet to this "low" point in the ridge the previous weekend. Just four more miles of bushwhacking and we would reach the North Fork of Moose Creek.

Paddling Moose Creek's North Fork had seemed like a great idea last winter when I planned the trip. I was looking for first descents in Idaho and decided that the best bet would be creeks that could only be reached by long hikes. I figured that when I went

backcountry skiing I spent less than 10% of the time skiing and more than 90% of the time climbing. Surely carrying my boat to a remote put in couldn't be too bad, because the work to fun ratio had to be much better than for backcountry skiing, perhaps even reaching 50%.

While wrestling 80 pounds of loaded kayak across a steep sidehill choked with alders, I began to doubt my armchair rationalizations. But by this time, retreat was not an option.

Finally, after several hours of gruesome bushwhacking, we reached the North Fork of Moose Creek. The creek averaged 135 ft/mile for 18 miles and Steve and I had both been worried that the water would be too high. But my first impression was that there were plenty of eddies; in fact the creek looked a little boney to me. I thought Steve's concerns about high water had also been allayed.

Unfortunately, by the next morning, Steve was convinced that although what we could see looked okay, the lower section would be a suicide run. He figured that the West Fork of Moose Creek, which entered three miles down river, would push water levels way too high. Since this confluence was followed by a six mile trailless canyon, he feared that we would be committed to running an out of control river. So he decided to leave his boat, hike out, and return when the water level was lower. He suggested that I do the same.

I tried to convince Steve to at least boat down to the West Fork confluence before making a decision. He refused. After some angry words we parted ways.

Though I hadn't planned on it, this was going to be a solo trip. I enjoy boating alone; it demands a purity of concentration that is hard to achieve when boating in a group. In addition you get to be the probe all the time, and if you swim, you don't have to buy beers for anyone. So it didn't take me long to get psyched.

But I was a little shaky at the onset. Almost immediately after putting on I broached and spent several minutes getting free, hoping all the time that Steve

where few, if any, had ever been. By early afternoon, after about 10 miles of boating, I reached the Rhoda creek confluence, where once again a trail ran along the river.

I stopped in an old growth cedar grove to camp. Later that evening I took a walk up the Rhoda Creek trail. Although the trail was far from the river the glimpses of white, along with the roar of fast moving water, convinced me that I had to return to run it someday.

The next morning I got an early start and was rewarded with a view of a young bull moose by the river. To my surprise the lower section of the North Fork was even better than the previous day's boating.

Thanks to the additional flow from Rhoda Creek it was pushier and more exciting,

eight miles of fairly continuous class 3-4+ with lots of big holes that kept me focused.

There were no logs and I boat scouted everything. This was pure boating pleasure. It reminded me of a revved up version of the lower canyon of Big Creek, a tributary of Middle Fork of the Salmon.

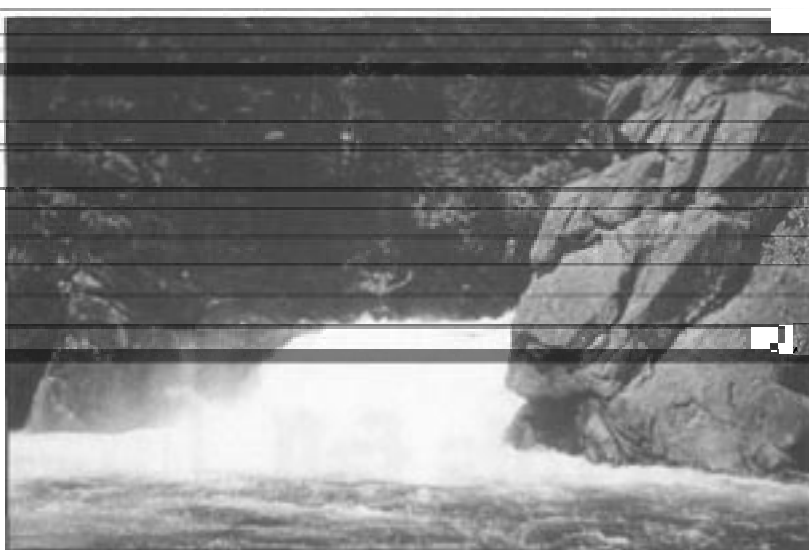
At the take out I considered my experience.

Seven hours of great boating after 16 hours of hiking. A little mathematical calculation gave me a fun to work ratio of 30%, not as high as I had hoped, but still a lot better than backcountry skiing.

## ON TO RHODA CREEK

While I was still drying out, I started planning the Rhoda Creek trip. Although I enjoy going solo, it's more fun to go with a friend, so I called up Jon. Jon is mentally tougher than anyone I know, and I knew that once he got interested in this adventure I would have a solid partner.

The easiest approach to Rhoda would be to fly into the Fish Lake airstrip and then hike eight miles, gaining 1800 ft, before dropping three miles down to Rhoda Creek. Jon agreed that this sounded better than the hike into the North Fork of Moose Creek and he agreed to join me,



**Left: Fish Lake in Background on the Way to Rhoda**  
**Above: Falls on the North Fork of Moose Creek**

wasn't witnessing my thrashing. The first three miles were both boney and pushy. This strange combination, which had me banging into many more rocks than I would have liked, didn't do a lot for my confidence. I was worried I was going to be broaching and pinning for miles. But luckily the West Fork came to my rescue, padding the river bed and starting the fun.

The trip through the canyon was a blast, featuring lots of continuous mostly boat scoutable class 3 and 4, one log portage and one 14 foot waterfall, which I portaged, but Steve ran when he returned at lower water. Though the canyon never really gorged up the sides were steep, and with the trail 1500 feet up and over a mile away, I felt the thrill of being in a place



even though he had just torn some intercostal (rib) muscles running the South Fork of the Salmon at high water.

Luckily, we **survived** the most dangerous part of the trip when we just missed hitting a deer that wandered onto the Fish Lake runway. Fending off the hordes of mosquitoes with one hand while trying to pack up with the other was not very efficient, but it was the only way to maintain our superiority in the food chain. It was a relief to finally shoulder our heavy loads and leave the pests behind.

I thought that after the brutal hike into the North Fork of Moose Creek this would be a breeze. But much of our route lay covered with snow. This slowed us considerably and we were still two miles from Rhoda creek when we collapsed in a heap and camped for the night. The next morning, aching from the previous day's exertions, we were still moving slowly.



Lake Creek

We didn't reach the confluence of Rhoda and Grotto Creek until 11 am.

The map showed a steep gorge just upstream, so I persuaded Jon to hike another 1/4 mile so we could run it. This short, **300 ft/mile**, section got us kick started and put a big smile on Jon's face, despite his aching ribs. The

rest of the creek averaged **190 ft/mile** for eight miles, so there were frequent horizon lines requiring scouting. We portaged one complex 25 ft falls and a couple of drops with logs.

We had been boating some pretty intense stuff for about five hours. On the next scout we saw two horizon lines. I was getting tired and, in a classic example of poor judgment, decided we really didn't need to look since the drops appeared to be just a few ft high (though I couldn't see the bottom of either). It was my turn

to lead so I set off, confident that it would be a mellow run.

My confidence was shattered by flying over the first ledge, which turned out to be six ft high. In no time at all I was at the lip of the second drop. It was ten feet high, with a large sharp rock in the middle at the bottom. The center clearly wasn't an option and the left side wasn't appealing either. It had a log sticking into it.

Luckily the right hand side was clean and I was just able to make the move.

I scrambled out of my boat to warn Jon and waved him off just in time. We were more cautious after that close call and enjoyed the furious class 4/5 action down to the confluence with the North Fork Moose Creek without mishap. Exhausted after a full day of hiking and boating, the cedar grove beckoned and we pulled over to camp for the night.

The next morning we set off down the now familiar North Fork of Moose Creek. Though the water levels were considerably lower than when I ran it the previous week, it was still good fun. In all we spent ten hours boating and nine hours hiking, yielding what I considered to be an excellent fun to work ratio of 53% on the Rhoda expedition.

## ON TO LAKE CREEK

Now that I was getting the hang of backcountry boating I wasn't about to stop. On the flight to Fish Lake, I got a quick glimpse of Lake Creek (it runs from Fish Lake into the Lochsa). It looked very white and I didn't see any logs, so that was my next destination.

Jon's ribs were still aching, reagravated after a Crossfire fired into them on the Lochsa, so it looked like I

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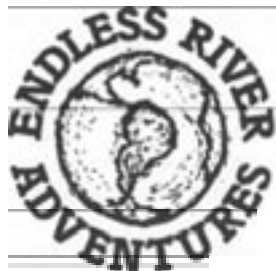
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was on my own again. Lake Creek is in a trailless canyon, but a trail crosses it 5 miles up from its confluence with the Lochsa. This would require a six mile, 2700 ft climb. Since the Lake Creek run was only five miles long, I planned this as a day trip, but decided to break up the hard work by **carrying** the boat part way up the afternoon before. The next morning, I rendezvoused with my boat and continued over the pass and down to Sponge Creek, which merges with Freezeout Creek to form Lake Creek.

I knew that flows had been steadily dropping over the last week, but I wasn't prepared for the rocky state of Sponge Creek. As I balanced my paddle on my boat and pushed on the rocks with my hands to inch down the damp rock garden that was supposed to be a creek, I feared it might take an eternity to go five miles. (Of course, this would give me a great boating/carrying ratio.) Pushing my boat along like this gave me plenty of time to think about what I was going to say to my friends to make this trip sound **worth-**while.

Luckily, it turned out that I wouldn't have to lie about what a great time I had... when I reached Freezeout creek it was pumping and I was floating again. The next three miles averaged 250 ft/mile and, except for four log portages, everything was runnable. After six hours of boating down steep continuous complex boulder gardens with lots of 3-6 ft drops but no real falls, I was finally spit out into the Lochsa. With hiking and boating times of six hours, I had a good solid 50% ratio.

## BACKCOUNTRY EXPLORING

It almost seems a disservice to write about adventures like this. Much of the pleasure of doing these remote wilderness runs comes from figuring out the logistics and not knowing exactly what you'll find when you get there. These creeks may have been boated before, but since I had no information about them, the adventure remained "intact" for me.

Perhaps by writing this article I have diminished the experience for those of you who decide to tackle these creeks. On the other hand I hope this article might get you interested in running something you wouldn't ordinarily run.

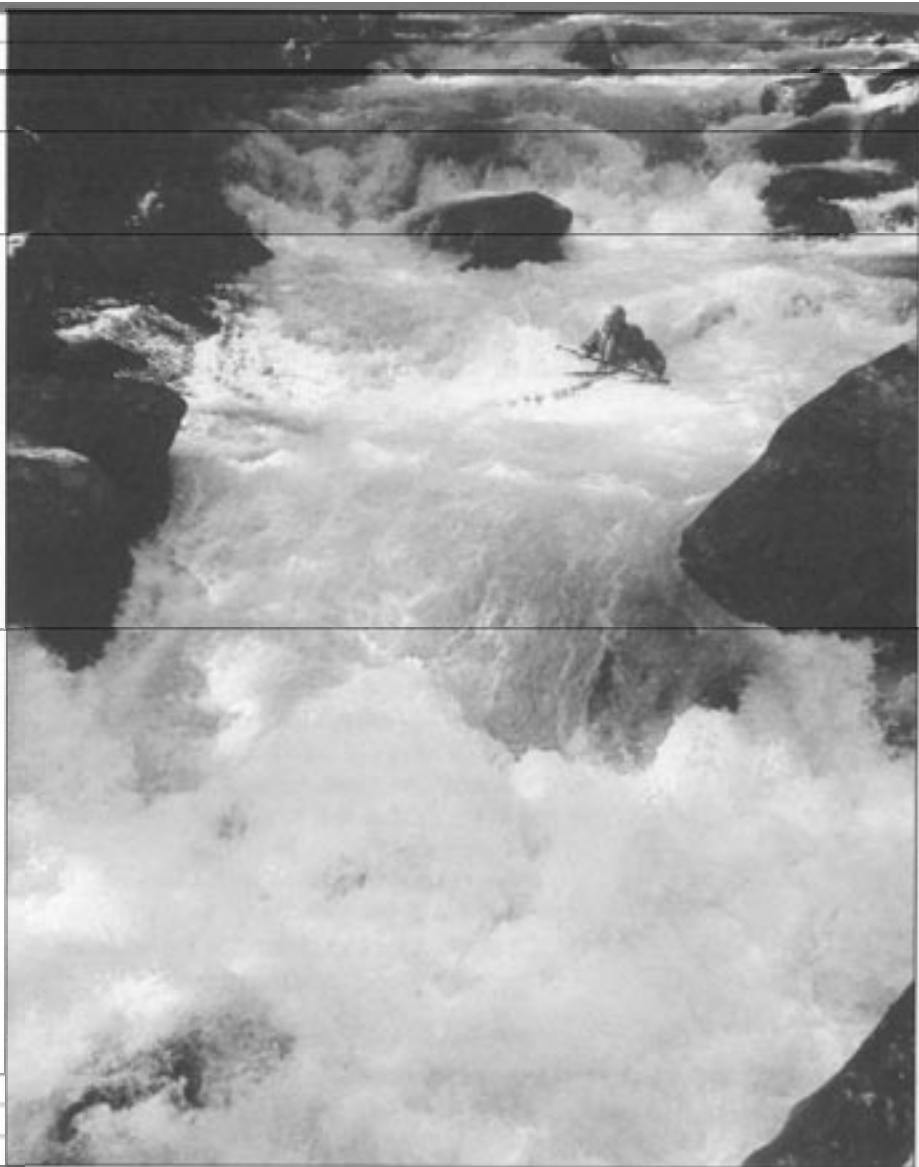
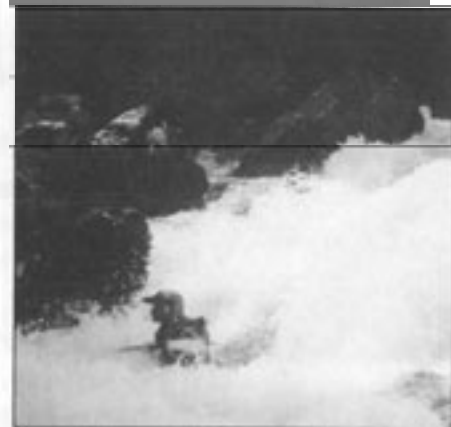
After all, if it hadn't been for the de-

scription of the East Fork of Moose Creek in Grant Amaral's guide book, I might never have gotten interested in the North Fork of Moose Creek. If you are willing to make the effort, there are still great virgin whitewater adventures to be had in Idaho.

*Editor's note: When he is not making solo wilderness first descents of class V rivers, Andrew Zimet lives in Whitefish, Montana.*

*Running difficult whitewater alone is not without risk, even for experts. This subject has been debated many times in this publication. The AWA neither sanctions nor condemns this activity, but suggests that it should be a personal, albeit informed, choice.*

Both photos Rhoda Creek  
Bottom:



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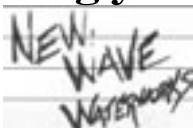


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*Taking the Big Ride!*

# An Epic Misadventure on California's Clavey River

**A**n easterner on vacation finds a little more excitement than he bargained for in the Golden State.

by Bruce Farrenkopf

## Taking the Big Ride!

It was hard to hear anything except the pounding, booming Clavey resonating off the narrow canyon walls all around me. The crashing river created a reverberating hum reminiscent of rapids in the Grand Canyon. The sun had finally shown itself and I was tired of trampling through the poison oak-infested underbrush along the river as well as the frequent climbing and scrambling. The river was high and any 'banks' that it might have had were mostly under water, forcing me to frequently climb up and over each rocky outcrop. I felt a short nap was in order.

Rushing this expedition didn't seem important any more - I was **boatless and just** trying to get to the takeout in one piece. So I laid down on a flat rock and let the sun warm my face. "Will there be a rescue attempt?" I asked myself as I was relaxing. "Is a rescue even necessary?" I couldn't be more than a few hours from the takeout - I expected to see the takeout bridge each time I worked around the next bend.

A helicopter ride would probably cost me a few hundred dollars, compounding the loss of my Cascade C1, a paddle and assorted gear that had been stuffed in the boat. And

it would be a big embarrassment. I'd have to explain to the rescue crew the litany of mistakes that led to my **boatless** predicament. I'd likely get a stiff lecture, amid comments relating to my level of incompetence and on and on and on. My EGO would need a rescue after the trouncing I would get. "Maybe I'll just wave the chopper away, if one shows up."

I dozed for about 10 minutes, but was roused by a different kind of throbbing sound. Scrambling to my feet, I spotted a small red helicopter zipping upstream. Waving my paddle overhead I yelled "Over here.....Hey.....Damn." But they had missed me. "OK, let's not get hysterical. You don't need that ride anyway."

But now that a helicopter rescue was becoming a reality, I quickly began re-assessing its merits, and began to appreciate that it would avoid a grueling trek to the takeout. A bruised ego I could handle. I'll be humble and grin and bear the criticism. Besides, I deserved a verbal thrashing. And what's a few hundred dollars for a helicopter ride? It could keep me from making some even bigger mistakes in this canyon. So I wised up and decided to wait for the return

downstream search. Sure enough, in about 20 minutes I heard the "thump-thump-thump" of the chopper. This time I made sure they saw me. After circling a few times, they found a landing site a quarter mile upstream.

One of the rescue crew met me part-way, asked if I was all right, then introduced himself as Scott. I apologized for getting them involved in my boating excursion and mumbled something about my poor judgment. Scott stopped momentarily, squinted his eyes and said "Hey, shit happens".

Yeah - that's right! Geez...I LIKE these guys!

"We were lucky, this landing area is one of only two or three that we found in here," Scott yelled over his shoulder as we headed for the helicopter. "We don't have the gear to hoist from the air, so we figured if we found you we'd probably only be able to wave hello." They strapped me into the chopper; I introduced myself to the rest of the three man crew and we roared down the canyon, several hundred feet above the roiling, boiling Clavey. It's really amazing how easily and quickly these contraptions move relative to the plodding I had been doing in that canyon for the last 24 hours. Now I was feeling very grateful for the rescue effort, but now the question began to re-emerge in my brain, "How much is this going to cost?"

"Aw, who cares, I'm in one piece!" And judging from the helicopter ride, I could have spent another night down there before getting to the takeout and my three buddies.

I was one of four East Coast boaters visiting California for the first time to feast on her OVER-FLOWING bounty of rivers. It was late May of 1995; California was experiencing a BIG water year, and we were right in the middle of it. Two days earlier we had run a stretch of the Merced, normally Class III-IV, but at 6000 CFS a big-water Class V with strong potential for flush drowning.

One indicator of the high water was an enthusiastic comment Dick had made when I rendezvoused with the group at the Merced. "I think this level is just about right. I wouldn't want one more drop of water in this river!" That was scary to hear. I had been boating with Dick many years and at the end of some truly hairy runs Dick would deadpan, "It would have been better with another foot of water" and mean it. We were surprised at the scarcity of local boaters on the rivers, but we eventually concluded they knew it was TOO EARLY in the season. They were waiting for more reasonable water levels and the balmy sunshine of



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Page 33: Looking downstream at the Clavey from the put in. Above: The author having a better day at "Big Splat" on the Lower Big Sandy, WV.

summer. But **we** were exhilarated about being in California and determined to make a go of it.

Our next run was to be the upper section of the Clavey River, a tributary of the **Tuolumne**. It took us a full day to set the shuttle, driving a Dodge Intrepid and Ford Escort with 3 inches of clearance over closed, washed out roads to the takeout. The next morning we were standing at the put-in bridge, trying to gauge the volume of the Clavey. Our collective estimate was 1500 CFS and the water was a cold 50 to 55 degrees. We were being a trifle casual for this class V+, 8 mile run, lounging around the put-in, basking in the 70 sunshine until 11 am. When Holbek & Stanley (authors of "A Guide to the Best Whitewater in the State of California") rate a river class V, believe it.

After scouting the first rapid, just below the put-in, a class VI broken falls, Dale decided not to take a ride on the Clavey. "I just have the wrong feeling about this." This turned out to be the most intelligent decision of the week and I shall forevermore respect his judgment. We decided to meet him in Tuolumne City later that day.

John, Dick and I portaged the first drop. After some otter entries into a foam pile near the base of the falls, we cruised off. About a mile down stream John found a hole that liked his company and wouldn't let him go. Out came John and there went his boat, **beebopping** downriver at an extraordinary clip. John got himself safely to the left shore and began scrambling downriver to catch his kayak. The kayak caught briefly on some midstream bushes, but wiggled free and was quickly swept away into the recesses of the canyon. About a mile further along, the river moderated to a vigorous class IV+ and I paddled over to John, who was sitting dejectedly on a rock, having given up the chase. He was looking over this enticing stretch of river. **He knew** His Ride was over and was in a fairly cranky mood. He elected to hike out before the canyon closed in tight.

Dick and I eyed each other before continuing downriver. We were down to two boaters. Any "support" needed in the event of a problem would be thin. **What'smore**, time was going to catch us with our pants down if we didn't start moving more consistently. Our plan was to quickly scout the big drops, from the boats if possible, and develop some rhythm. We located John's kayak broached on some small trees about a mile downstream and soon passed Reed Creek on the left, which was boosting the Clavey's strength by another 400 CFS. This

put the total volume at two fold the level recommended in the guidebook. Nevertheless, our approach seemed to be working. As the tempo accelerated, we negotiated one pushy class V drop after another. A comfortable cadence was developing.

An hour later I lost my sense of rhythm, something akin to tripping over my feet and poking myself in the eye at the same time. Dick had peered over another nameless big drop and pronounced it a straight shot down the left. Dick started left, then quickly jogged right, just clearing a sharp pointed rock obscured in the middle of this thinly covered route. I went left, missed the rock, but neglected to avoid a small tree, which flipped my C1. In a tight tuck I immediately started taking a series of thumps on the back of my head and shoulders. I decided to wait for things to clear before opening myself up and extending for the roll. "Just give me a second and I'll roll this thing." But it didn't let up.

I remember the tip of my Putnam paddle impacting hard once... twice... on the third hit I felt the shaft snap. I waved it around, felt no resistance and painfully realized it was bailout time. I've got to say that lately I hadn't had much practice swimming and so I did a poor job of it. It seemed almost impossible to get myself to safety and hang onto the boat at the same time, especially after being swept through a few holes. It

## Taking the Big Ride!

was a swirly, bubbly, disorienting ride, punctuated with some solid hits, and featuring underwater acrobatics as I coupled a long series of vertical and horizontal body rolls. After taking the mandatory thrashing I found solid ground on river left and crawled up on the **bankside** rocks.

"Wo Baby", I thought, "that water's **cooold** - I should have worn my full **drysuit**. Now where's my boat?" Upstream my C1 had just finished doing the Mamba in a hole and was moving toward me like she had a homing device. I grabbed her as she floated by, pulled out the spare paddle, and realized all I needed now was a short rest to get my head back together.

The Clavey seemed to be in an ugly mood, angry at the prospect of Dick and I riding its backside. It was swollen, strong and full of sharp, irregular rocks - not the round, polished and friendly kind I had seen in the California guidebooks. The river had the demeanor of an furious Brahma bull, cinched too tight in the groin and trying to shake us off.

In 15 minutes Dick and I were back on the beast. Dick accidentally fell into a big

hole and rode it for a solid minute before he was able to work free. "Yee Ha! Ride-em cowboy!"

Dick was in excellent form and displaying his usual cool head. Above a menacing drop about 4 or 5 miles into the canyon, Dick eddied out left and I eddied right.

My eddy was small and had two small trees annoyingly situated in the middle of it. I carefully placed my paddle on an onshore rock, grabbed one of the trees, and tried to use it to maneuver my boat into the more friendly downstream half of the eddy. "What in Sam Hill was I thinking?"

The current suddenly caught an edge and there I was, in a truly bizarre position, holding onto a tree with both hands, my paddle on the shore, and my boat inverted with current forcefully pulling me into the drop. I screamed in rage at my own stupidity before I let go of that blasted tree. It was a long, exhausting, sub-surfaceswim. When I popped up I swam for the river right and finally got myself to safety, one eddy away from the next big rapid. An incredible move, but there it was.

A few moments later my boat came


bouncing down after me. It passed just out of my reach. My C1 continued through the next drop and out of sight. This was two paddle-less swims and two times I could have used that hand roll I had been working on. Dick paddled over and handed me my spare with a perplexed look on his face. "What the hell happened?"

The plan at this point was to catch my boat and get back in the saddle. I hiked downstream only a few yards before realizing an uphill detour was required to circumvent a large rock outcrop. The river canyon was tightly constricted with the canyon walls frequently dropping straight into the churning water. This would be the first of countless zigzags up, over and down though pockets of twisted, tangled brush and poison-oak. I was spending most of my time hundreds of feet above the river, trying to find a route around each obstacle. Dick was supposed to parallel me until he could locate my boat. But I kept thinking, "He's not going to be able to gauge my progress and we're going to lose each other."

After about an hour, while I was peaking on one of my climbs, I saw Dick paddling away in the distance. He was totally confused about my whereabouts. Inherently I realized that staying together was a much safer strategy, but I felt relieved to see him continue on downstream - because I was feeling guilty about holding him up. Now I could relax about my lousy progress.

Progress was frustratingly slow; the biggest problem was the hazard of constant climbing. Often a mistake would have meant a 100 ft fall into the rocks or into the river itself. This was totally nuts! What's more, the possibility of spotting my boat seemed remote, since I was forced to traverse high above the river. A change in plan was in order. 'Forget the boat - just get your ass to the takeout'. I began climbing toward the canyon rim, hoping that if I got to the top of the canyon, walking along the rim would be more efficient. As I ascended my spare paddle came in useful for self-belay on the sections of steep, slide-prone talus.

The poison oak was no longer a consideration - my only goal was to keep the stuff out of my eyes, and even *THAT* wasn't easy. My biggest concern was falling, since an injury would plunge me into a major league mess. So I took my time, rested when necessary and avoided risky routes. Adding to the aggravation was a cadre of mosquitoes which feasted on my face whenever I came to a stop. Two hours and 1500 vertical feet later I cleared the rim and gazed into paradise. A relatively flat and open forest



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floor spread out before me - I even stopped to smell the flowers. "This is going to work! I might get to the takeout road by sundown."

I picked up the pace and felt **Energized** walking through this beautiful forested highland replete with mature Ponderosa pine, rolling grassy floor and patches of wildflowers. Another half-mile of easy hiking brought me to the top of a small rise, I saw something that made me feel as if my battery pack had shorted out. A side canyon drove a deep cleft across my path - 1000 ft down and 1000 ft up the otherside. This was going to ruin my chances of getting out before darkness.

"How about trying to make it back to the put-in? Maybe the ridge is intact going back?" Hiking back in the opposite direction for a quarter mile with my eyes fixed firmly on the horizon made me realize there was no such thing as an unbroken canyon rim along the Clavey.

I looked at my watch and realized it was 7:30 - darkness was just an hour away. It would take me much longer than that to get to the other side of this newly found ridge - if that was even a desirable objective. The sky began to darken with cumulonimbus, and thunder rolled around in the distance. The wind kicked up to a gale and it started to rain in gusty fits. Discouraged, I sat on the rim overlooking the Clavey, watching a huge skeleton of a long-dead pine waving around wildly in the wind. The storm finally blew by and that big stick was still in place. Too bad it didn't fall - that would have been quite a show.

I headed in the direction of the takeout, looking for a spot to bed down. It didn't make any sense to go thrashing around in the dark through this difficult terrain. Who knows? Things might look a bit more rosy in the morning. I had no matches to start a fire, I was still wet from my swimfest and it had been getting cold at night. Hypothermia was weighing heavily on my mind. I found a flat patch of ground on the uphill side of a large Ponderosa pine. I dug out a rectangular pit in the loose soil with my canoe paddle, filled it in with pine needles and then made a big pile next to the cushioned pit. (Before I go any further, here's a chance to point out another advantage of the C1 over the kayak - the canoe paddle makes a better shovel.)

I snuggled into my newly made bed and then pulled the pile of pine needles on top of me. "Ahh!! Almost like home, except for the mosquitoes feeding on my face."

I didn't want to wave the mosquitoes away or touch my face for two reasons. If I

lifted an arm, my pine needle insulation fell away and it felt a lot colder. Secondly, my hands had to be rife with the juice of poison oak, which I was still trying to keep out of my eyes. If poison oak is anything like the east's poison ivy - I didn't want it! So I let the little buggers have my face without resistance. Eventually the mosquito swarm was forced to disperse... the temperature dropped through the 40's in the early part of the evening.

Now I was alone with my dreams. The dreams came in weird, short-lived flashes, the concoctions of a besieged mind. Images of swirling water, my wife Paula, restaurants (it was **way** past dinnertime) and home were flying around in my head. I thought about God. It was a cold, uncomfortable

night with brief snatches of sleep. I never got the serious shivers, but sleeping rigidly in one position all night long was more difficult than I had expected. A slight body shift would cause my insulation to fall away, exposing a limb or two to the chilled air. So I periodically spent time patching my pine-needle insulation back into place.

Regrets, I had a few. How could I have so stupidly put my paddle on the bank and then flipped hanging onto a tree? Yeah, yeah, I know, there was some other mental sloppiness, too. This kind of boating seemed to be overly chancy and in my delirium I considered moderating my boating in the future. But the night eventually ended, the sky brightened, and by 6:30 AM I could see well enough to begin tromping around again

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in the bush.

I was wondering about Dick and whether he had gotten **HIS** fanny to the takeout the previous day. I learned later that Dick had waited a couple of hours by a large pool after recovering some of my gear. It was approaching 5:30 PM, he was worried about me, and was becoming anxious about his own chances of getting out before dark. He was facing a solo journey with zero support on an isolated class V+ river at a very high volume with no prior experience on the river. He knew that there were a series of increasingly difficult Class V's and a killer VI lying in wait for him somewhere in the recesses of the canyon.

Finally, Dick decided he had to move on.

We had been pushing our limits. We'd had some bad luck, lost our mental edge and gotten careless. The river's stampeding character, its high volume, tree sieves and scarcity of eddies, led us to allow the Clavey to set the pace. We had permitted the river to wrestle control from us. Our minds had become preoccupied with the INTENSITY, and we had failed to pay close attention to the small but critical details that make the difference. Dick knew it was time to stay frosty, shake off the unfortunate circumstances and get back on the bull for a full 8 second ride.

Dick wanted to bum through the rest of the run, but realized that only an ultra-cautious approach would get him to the takeout. He scouted all the serious drops and walked around three, including the terminal Class VI, pushing himself hard as the skylight went from yellow to gray. While portaging another bone-cruncher he saw the last bit of gray light disappear from the western rim, finally plunging the river canyon into darkness. It was 9:30 and he could go no further.

He hiked up the canyon wall 100 ft to a semi-flat area, then had to do some digging to accommodate a bedroll and remove the ubiquitous poison oak. Dick's oft-proven talent for bonfire-building came to his advantage. He built an oversize White-man's fire to dry himself and stay warm. He stripped down to hairy nakedness and let the heat soak through his reclining body and his hanging polypro. From where I was sleeping that night, this scene would have looked like the Garden of Eden.

Dick was back in his boat by 6 AM. He paddled 15 minutes and found himself at the takeout. In the darkness he had no way of knowing he was within spitting range. After looking around the takeout he found no sign that I had made it out, so he pulled out some

dry clothes and food for me, covered the supplies with a tarp, and drove the Ford Escort up and out the other side of the Clavey canyon to Tuolumne City. When Dick got to town he found John and Dale at the rendezvous and told them to call 911, then rode back to the takeout bridge to wait.

Just about the time Dick found the car at the takeout. I was getting a drink at a little stream near my bivouac about 4 miles upstream. I washed my face and after some stretching to unknot my back, I began to feel re-energized.

"I actually **DID** get some rest last night." Boating didn't seem like such a lame-brained activity anymore. I was still shivering but I felt that would quickly pass once I got motivating. My next move was clear, get back down to the Clavey and slog along to the takeout as close to **bankside** as possible. Any search and rescue effort would start from there. The streamlet led to a creek (probably Bear Spring Creek) which brought me down to the Clavey. The hyperactive Clavey River was thundering like a stampeding herd, but at this point the canyon had opened up slightly, so moving along to the bank was possible for longer stretches.

Just a half-mile down I saw a flash of yellow on the river left side. **THERE IT WAS**, my yellow and red C1, sitting four

feet up the bank, high and dry! Dick had managed to salvage my boat! The Clavey was swollen to a width of 60 feet and I began pondering how to get myself to the other side of the river. I sat for 20 minutes staring at that expensive, custom outfitted, gear-laden boat, packed with Snicker bars.

My only options seemed to be what kind of swim stroke to use, and **where** to throw myself into the water. I could back-track to the pool upstream, jump in and swim hard, allowing myself to be swept into the river left side of the heavy rapid. It would be another cold thrashing. And IF I still had some juice at the bottom of the rapid, I could probably get to my boat. The other possibility was to try to swim across the fast moving pool immediately in front of me, but I wouldn't have given a greased Mark Spitz in his prime a chance of getting to the other side without being swept over the next horizon line. I was still marginally hypothermic and the idea of hurling myself into the Clavey's cold, callous clutches so it could pound me against the rocks like a sack of laundry, seemed like the wrong way to go. Nah! Forget it. It's only a piece of plastic. I waved good-bye to my boat.

I continued zigzagging down the canyon walls wishing for some sunshine to dry the rocks and decrease the likelihood of a fall. A little sunshine would also dramatically improve my disposition. I was studying the Clavey for a placid crossover, but it became clear that there would be no easy way. I finally gave up, once and for all, the notion of getting back into my boat. Down at river level a burst of sunlight lit up the rocks around me and things finally began to dry off. I took advantage of this newfound warmth by laying on my back for a short nap and then heard the helicopter.....!

I completed the run, albeit by chopper, buzzing the canyon walls far above the

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Clavey. In less than 5 minutes we were looking at the takeout bridge.

The chopper circled neatly around the bridge and then gently set down dead center on the span. Dick was there and it was refreshing to see his broad smile. I unzipped my vest and my yellow camera fell loose around my neck. As usual I had forgotten all about it once I had gotten into my boat at the put in.

Scott asked with an amused expression, "You brought a CAMERA?"

"Yeah."

"Take any pictures?"

I answered "NO", a little annoyed with myself.

"Well, how about now?"

Dick obliged us by taking a couple of shots of Scott, myself and the pilot in front of the chopper. When the shoot was over I looked at Scott, scratched my head, and asked the painful question.

"So... how much is this going to cost?"

He looked confused for a second and then said "YOU don't have to pay anything."

Geez...I LIKE these guys!

Epilogue: On another day our crew could



have boated the Clavey in reasonable style and without serious incident. Honest. However, the high water, coupled with some questionable judgment and a certain degree of misfortune, made for a frustrating, albeit entertaining experience.

Another day will surely come. Next time we plan to get it right.

*Editor's note: A California boater, John Hanser, recently phoned Bruce Farrenkopf to tell him that he had rescued*

*his C-1 from the maws of the Clavey Canyon. John is storing Bruce's boat until Bruce heads west again for another epic California adventure.*

Above: The Rescue Squad and Clavey victim at the takeout bridge.

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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION (AWA) Seeks New Conservation/Access Person For Western U.S.

**REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:** Reports to Executive Director, AWA, with collaborative relationship with other staff and the Board of Directors.

**JOB SUMMARY:** Represents AWA and whitewater boaters on conservation and access issues in the western U.S.

**PROGRAM MISSION:** To conserve and restore Americas whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

**MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES:** Implement AWAs Strategic Plan in the western states.

**Conservation:** . Represent AWA and whitewater interests at all levels regarding the conservation and restoration of whitewater rivers and streams. . Implement AWAs ongoing hydropower program to restore whitewater rivers. Coordinate western issues with the Silver Spring office and the Hydropower Reform Coalition. . Develop new conservation tools, with an emphasis on the economics of recreation and grassroots activism. . Create a stronger network of river advocates -- Coordinate efforts of local boating clubs, individual paddlers, and AWA regional coordinators, and Directors in the west.

**Access:** . Negotiate access policies and fees. . Reduce landowner liability concerns. . Guarantee access at hydropower dams. . Acquire streamside lands for put-ins and take-outs. . Protect public right of travel down whitewater rivers. . Represent noncommercial boater inter-

ests in river management planning.

**Other:** . Fundraising for AWA activities. . Attend whitewater and river conservation events in the west to represent AWA.

**JOB REQUIREMENTS:**

Must live in western United States or be willing to relocate.

Four-year college degree or equivalent, preferably in environmental or public policy related field. Law school and license to practice in western states highly desirable.

Minimum of one year work experience in public policy issues, preferably in the areas of environmental advocacy and/or river recreation.

Hands on computer experience in word processing; database and Internet experience desirable. Must be able to use e-mail.

Background in FERC relicensing process is desirable.

Experience in networking with western conservation and access organizations, local, state and federal agencies, and recreationists is preferable.

Ability to deal effectively with people, exercise diplomacy and discretion in all areas of work. Strong organizational capacity.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:**

. Must be self-motivated and able to work independently and with minimum supervision. Must be a self-starter for a newly established office; and have a strong commitment to ac-

tion. . Must have a working knowledge of conservation and access issues on rivers in the western United States. . Must have excellent verbal communications and facilitation skills. Ability to work collaboratively with a wide range of volunteers and associates. . Must have excellent written communication skills with an ability to produce large volumes of written correspondence, comments, newsletter articles, on a strict timetable.

**WORKING CONDITIONS:** May be required set up an office in the home or co-located with another conservation/access organization, with the possibility of a future independent office.

Extensive travel in the western states is necessary, with less frequent trips to the east for lobbying, board meetings, and coalition building efforts.

**SALARY:** Commensurate with knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience. The approximate range will be \$25,000-\$30,000.

To apply for this position, please send a resume and cover letter describing your knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet the needs of AWA in the west to: Phyllis Horowitz, Administrative Director, AWA, P.O. Box 636, Margaretville, NY, 12455 (74663,2104@compuserve.com) by August 30, 1996. For additional information contact Rich Bowers, Conservation Director, Silver Spring Office, at 301-589-9453 (72732,401@compuserve.com).

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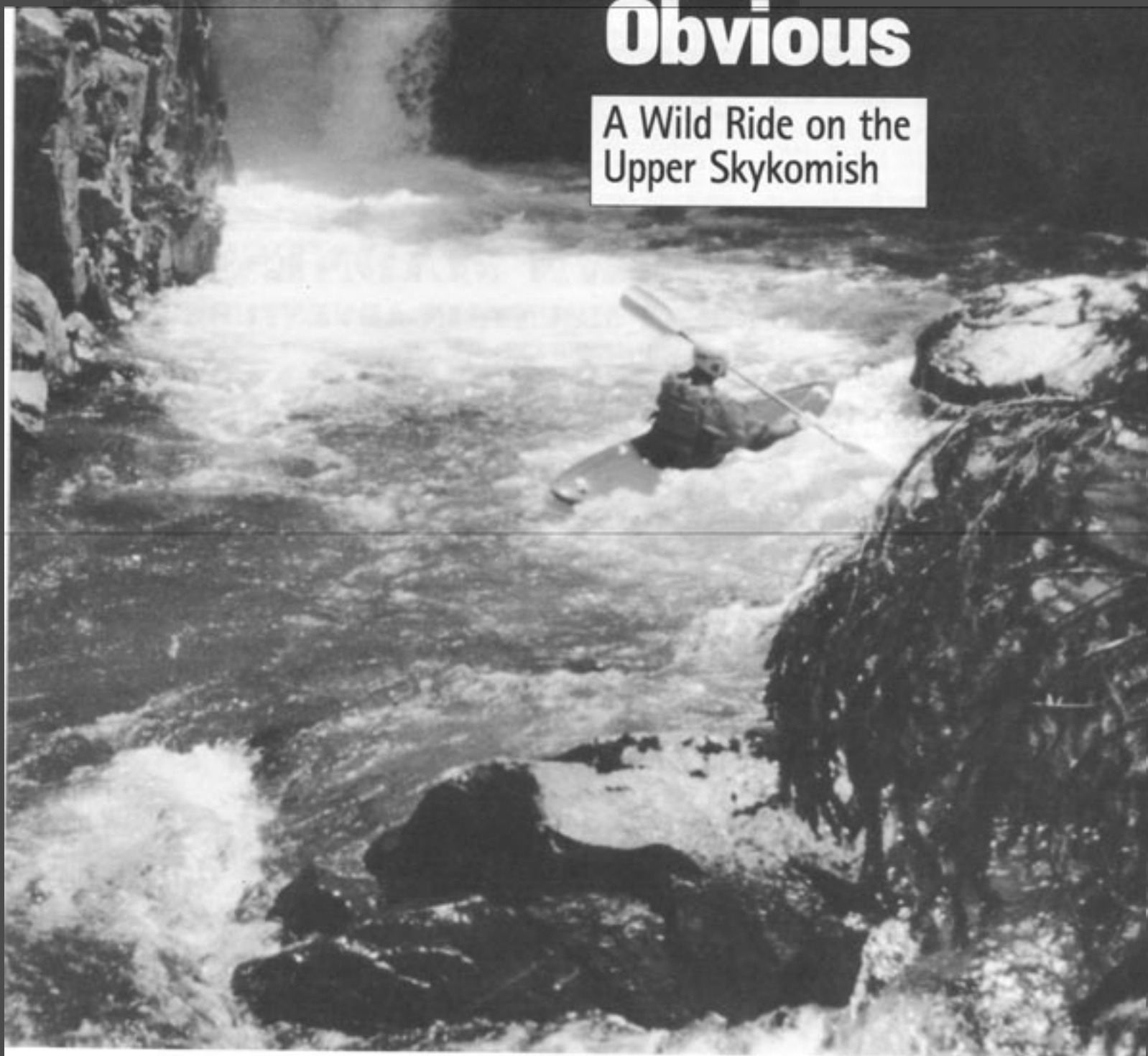
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# A Rubber Duck Goes In Search of the Obvious

A Wild Ride on the Upper Skykomish



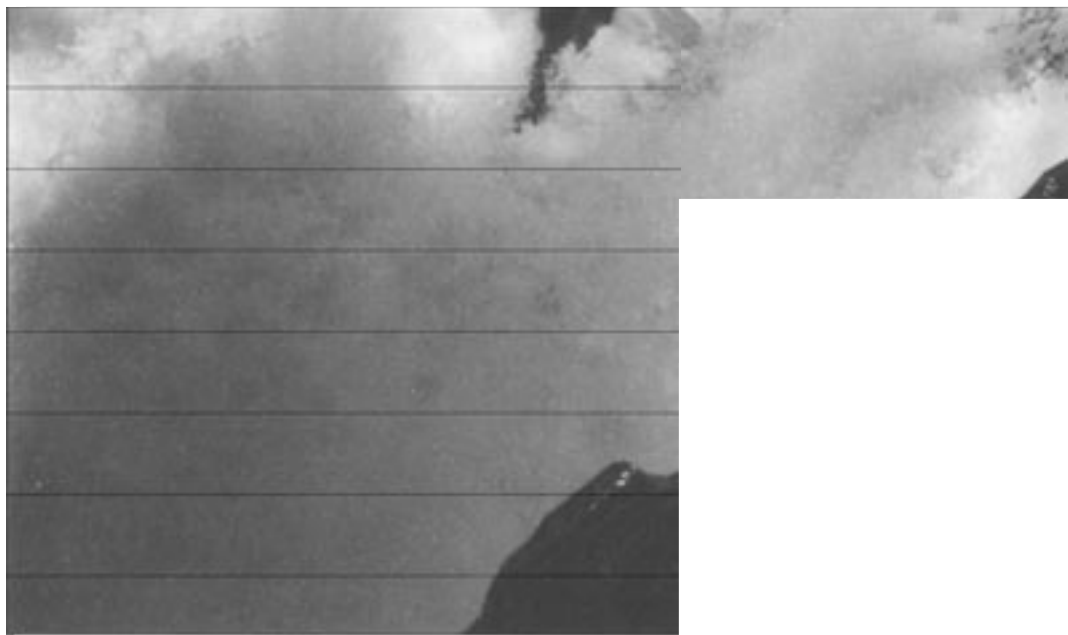


by Nathan Lewis  
**Contributing Editor**

Left: Third major drop' a twisting falls that may be unrun.

Above: Just below, drop #3. A 2.5' entrance ledge was cropped off.

**I**n Poe's "The Purloined Letter", detectives scour a house to find an incriminating letter stolen from rich and powerful man. The detectives are sworn to find the letter at any cost. They dismantle furniture, they search the spaces between the walls, they question everyone in sight. They do it all. The letter is, of course, sitting right on the mantel over the fireplace... in a place so obvious that no one would think of it.

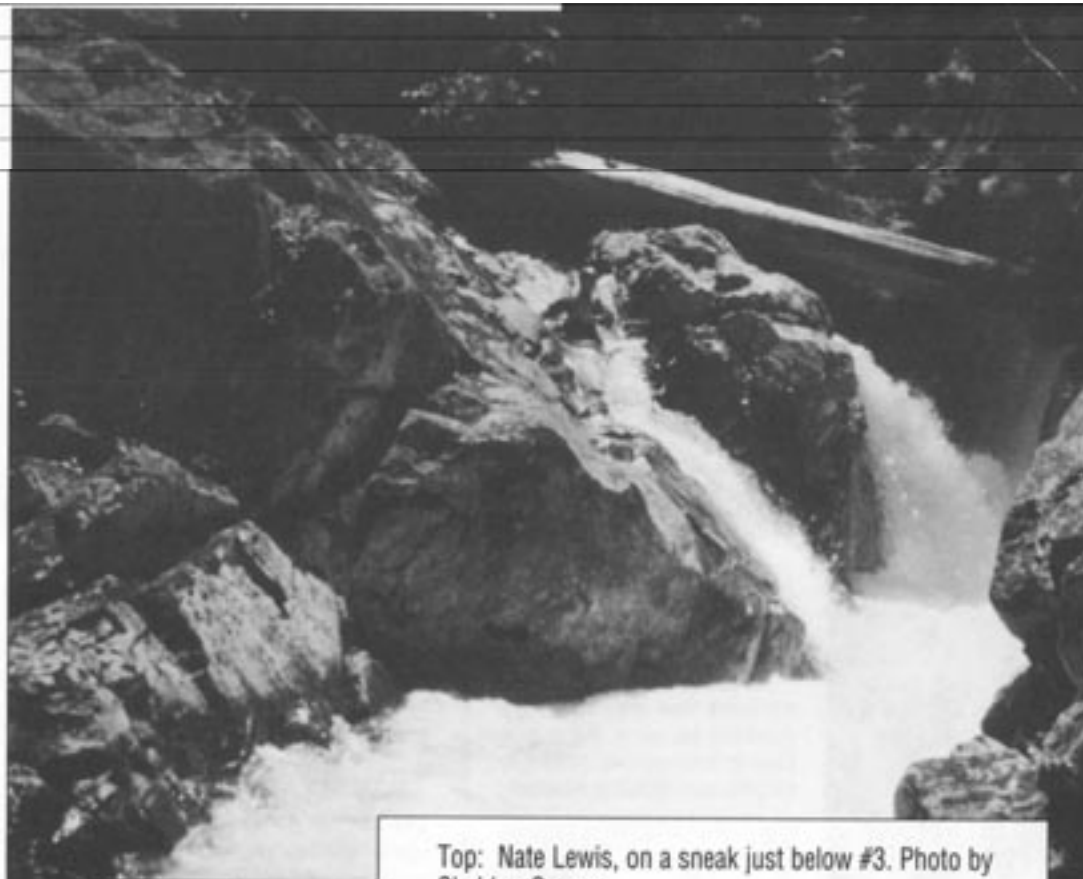


A biggie. The 0-deck is on river left.

If you're serious about boating you've may have gone to the map room of your local library and spent hours pouring over topographic maps, calculating drainage basins, gradient, distances, rainfall... looking for virgin whitewater runs. Usually this doesn't pan out, unless you're investigating the north woods of Canada or the vast basins of China, places accessible only by plane, foot, or dozens of miles of logging roads. Within an hour and a half of a major population and boating center you can't expect to find many unexplored gems free for the taking. Maybe a waterfall or two, maybe a surfing wave, but not a whole river, for goodness sake!

You'd think that a river that runs right by one of the major roads through the Cascades would be in the guidebook. After all, the biggest waterfall is visible from the road. The biggest





Top: Nate Lewis, on a sneak just below #3. Photo by Sheldon Cooper.  
Below: Sheldon on the same drop.



runnable waterfall actually sports its own observation deck, picnic area, parking lot, and public toilets; and is labeled on road maps as, ironically enough, "Deception Falls".

The Upper Tye was first run several years ago- this we gleaned from some guy who pulled over in his pickup as we tried to hitch a ride on Route 2 after our first excursion on this section. He had boats on his roof and a tell-no-secrets, been there, done that attitude. But not until 1995 did the word start spreading through the Seattle boating community...Upper Tye...Upper Tye.

Why it took so long is a mystery. The Upper Tye is nothing more than a section of the Upper Skykomish, probably the most well-known and well-used river in the Cascade range. Just downstream is the most famous rapid in Washington State and one of my favorite Class IVs, Boulder Drop. Just upstream is Steven's Pass, the only route through the Cascades for twenty miles in either direction, and home to everyone's **second**-favorite Washington State ski area.

The Upper Tye runs through much of the wet season; in fact, it's a good run to do when there's a bit of water, but not enough to bring up the more esoteric creeks. It's a Saturday afternoon kind of run, plenty of whopping big drops, but close enough to home that you can stay out late on Friday night.

Imagine a three-sided box, 10 feet on a side. The left side is open. The approach side has a six foot sloping ledge. The far side pillows the turbulence back into the falls. Imagine boating over the ledge- perhaps nothing would happen. Perhaps, if one's luck was bad, you would backender and get pillowed back into the falls. The seam at the base of the falls offers little floatation- the boat sinks down into the water in backender position, leaving about two feet of kayak above the water, pointing at the sky, and leaving the boater with a **faceful** of waterfall. Perhaps, in this unfortunate position, you would get stuck, a sort of upside-down backblast in a creek boat. And so I did. It was a rough way to start my second run on this stretch.

On our first trip down the two mile long Upper Tye we barely found the put-in. We boated very conservatively and spent better part of five and a half hours portaging through the forests along either bank. It was interesting, but mostly consisted of bony class I-II gravel bars separated by big

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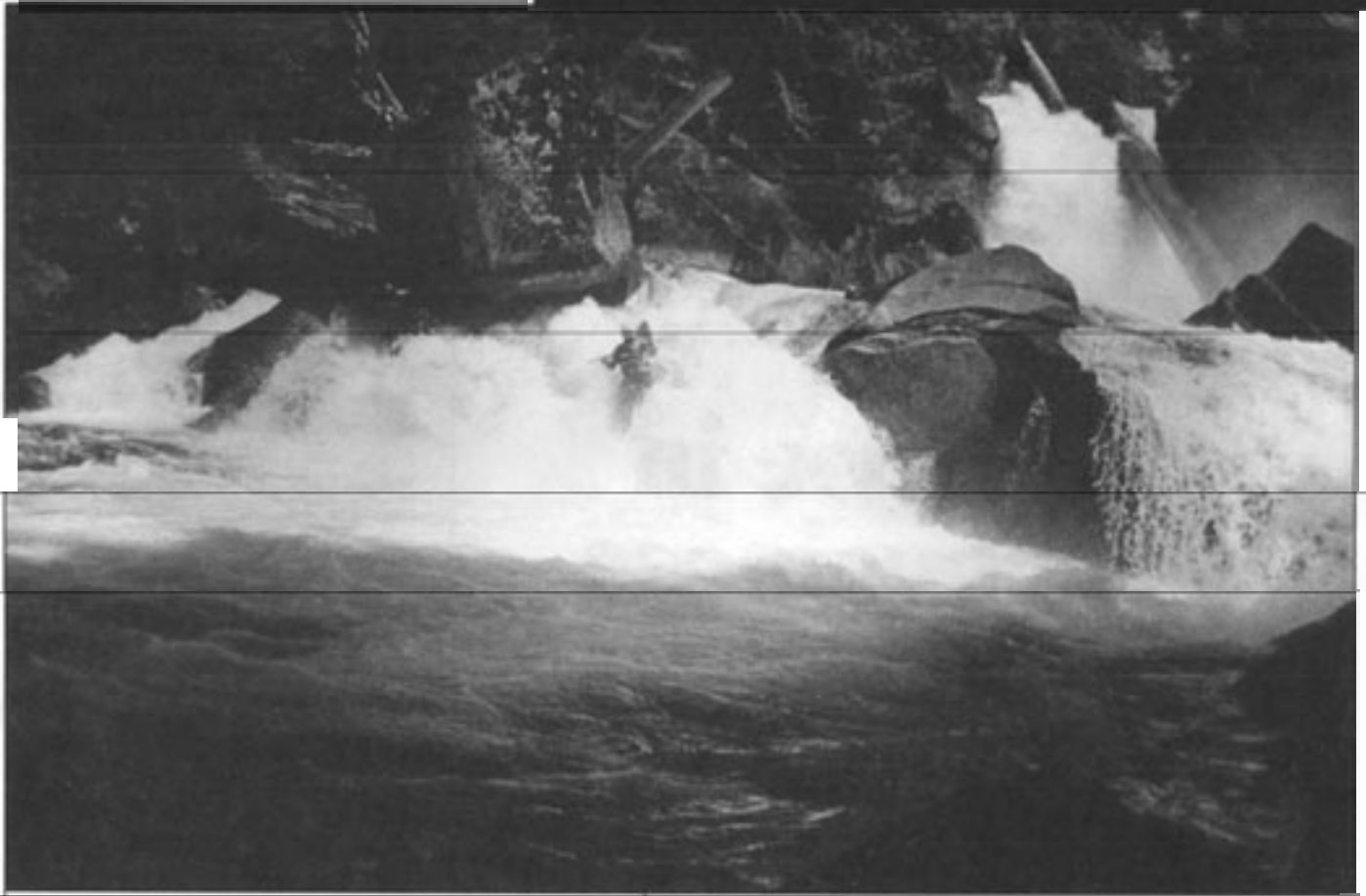


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A big double falls. The drop in back is at least twice the size of the one in front, but looks runnable without the log.

waterfalls that we walking around. Later Sheldon Cooper assured me that almost all of these were runnable, that he had done it with someone who knew. This I had to see. Hence, my second trip.

Running this strange-looking, box-like drop, I was operating on the rubber-ducky theory, which has nothing to do with inflatables. The rubber-ducky theory is: Many hard-looking rapids demand little more than passing a smile on your face, getting in the middle of the current, and letting gravity do its thing. Don't laugh- it works at Gorilla on the Green Narrows. But maybe this little ducky should have gone to market or stayed home, because at the moment I was in a most unhappy situation.

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I swam. It was a mistake. When I came to the surface Sheldon was glaring at me with that "how did I get stuck with you" look. My boat floated over the 12' as-yet-unrun falls down below. This was going to suck big time and he knew it.

For at least a quarter mile downstream, the river was continuous congested III-V in a vertical-walled canyon. I spent at least an hour trudging along the canyon rim, high above, searching for my kayak. I was amazed- could it have made it through here without pinning? Was it pinned underwater, gone forever? I walked back with the bad news only to find that Sheldon had found my boat in an extremely unlikely eddy at the base of the falls. He was not happy, having had to wait an hour while I thrashed through the forest.

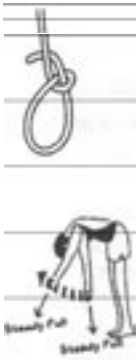
The next move is a ten foot plume over a trashy ledge. He looked at me dubiously as we surveyed it from shore. My credibility was running a little low. "Don't worry," I told him, "I've done this one. Just paddle straight ahead, or slightly to the right, and you'll bounce over all that garbage and be at the bottom before you know what happened. You go first."

"Hey, you're the one who's done this before," he said.

"Please? I just got hammered."

He took my instructions on faith, pointed slightly right and boofed brilliantly. It worked! It worked for me, too. We weren't nearly as mad at each other after that.

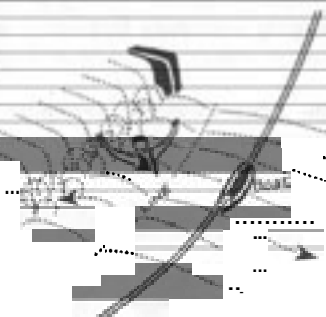
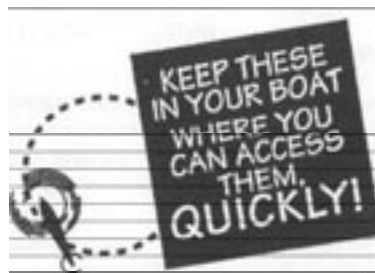
After some decent class III-IV scrambling, the observation deck comes into view on the left bank, and the river placidly disappears over a clean horizon. This is the pearl of the Upper Tye. (Deception Falls is actually a tad upstream, on Deception Creek, which empties into the Tye at that point.) The observation deck overlooks a steep, sixteen-foot slide into a



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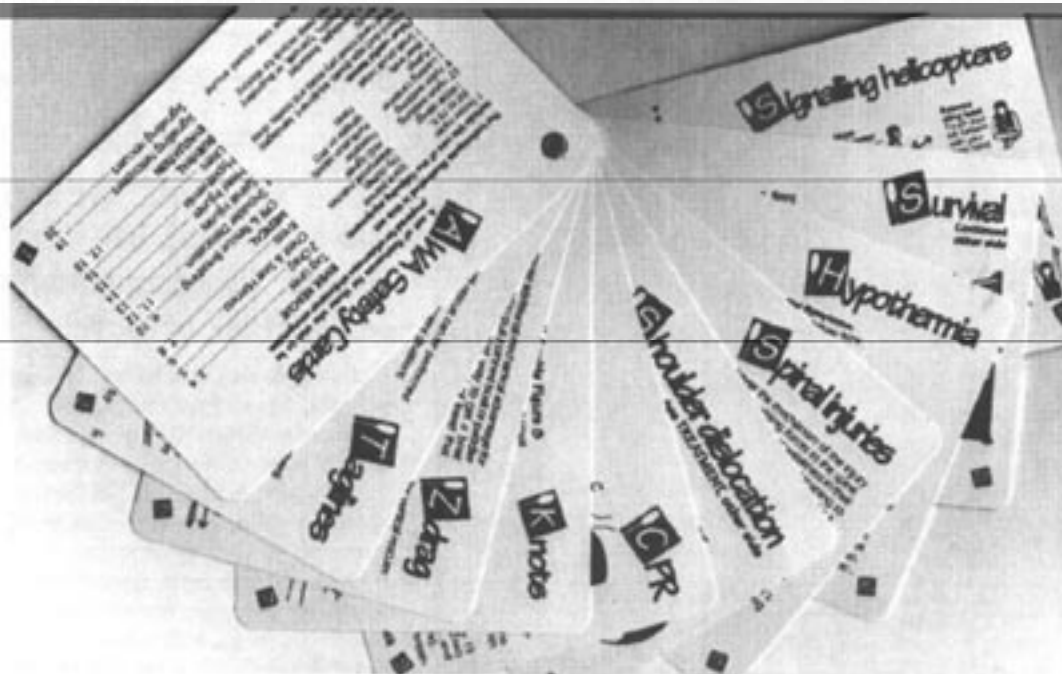
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hole, which is walled-in on either side by vertical rock. On our first trip I looked at this long and hard. The falls blows out blinding spray- very dramatic. The hole was a mystery. It looked like you would submarine under and blow out the bottom at high speed. But if you got caught, it would be carnage for sure.

Sheldon had paddled it on his first trip. "It looks like there's a lot more water this time," he pondered, "but I think it will be OK. Basically, you just set up on that little string of bubbles and float over the edge." It was, in other words, a rubber-ducky move.

I perched on a rock to take a picture. Sheldon was floating in the eddy above the drop. For a long time. But eventually he started, lined up, bobbed over...he blew out the bottom- no problem. The tourists loved it. But now it was my turn.

"Have you ever done this before?" asked a middle-aged woman with a video camera as I crawled around the 0-deck's pilings.

"Actually, no," I said.

"Oh, I see," she said, and propped up her video camera. What must normal people think of all this?

I scoped out the entrance, let the current take me...and did my very best log imitation as I whizzed down the slide and into the hole. It blew me out instantly. Sheldon and I hooted and hollered, paddled around and clowned in the spray jetting out of the little canyon.

After a sneak that's a wonderful, nearly-dry slide over smooth granite, followed by a tricky, sticky hole, we arrived at the biggest falls on the trip. At least thirty meaty feet high, it was blocked by a pair of huge logs, so we didn't even have to think about running it. We were able to run a much smaller plume below and continued along a string of acrobatic boofs and lovely class IV's separated by cobbly sections that were mercifully short. One favorite consisted of three ledges spread out in the sun that seemed to be class III. Looks are deceiving, though; those ledges harbor quiet but greedy holes prone to backender an unsuspecting boater.

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The lower one is runnable.

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Downstream a huge cedar trunk spans the entire river about forty feet in the air. It's a great place to scout the Class IV below it. You can straddle the tree out to the middle of the river and survey the scene like a king. The only problem is that the trunk seems rather rotten. It quivers in a wondrous way as you scoot along. Riding a multi-ton cedar stump into the river from forty feet up, like Slim Pickens riding the bomb at the end of Dr. Strangelove, might be worse than anything that could happen in a kayak.

There's only one major log strainer in the river itself, in the midst of a class II-III boulderfield. From the stories I'd heard about this log, it is one of the river's major hazards. So while I portaged (to some snickering), Sheldon tried to kayak through its branches, and ended up swimming and losing his paddle. After an anxiety-filled half hour, we found it a quarter-mile downstream, floating in an eddy. Now we had matched stupidity for stupidity, and were even.

The last class IV on the run is a beauty. The river drops over some small cascades, then pillows up on a big, flat, sloping rock. The outflow from the pillow drills into a wall on the left side. The pillow is unavoidable; if you side surf it, you hit the wall. The trick is to "rail-slide" the pillow like a snowboarder rail-sliding the pipes. To manage this you punch directly into the pillow. But if you punch too hard, you hit the rock, bounce off, and end up against the left wall. And if you punch too weakly, you end up surfing the pillow, again into the wall. Ideally, you ride the crest of the pillow, and then, as you pass around the edge of the rock, you paddle over the top into the

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eddy behind.

I love that move. From the bottom I watched as Sheldon came down. He bounced down the cascades, blundered into the pillow, and got smeared harmlessly and humorously against the left side wall. Har, har, har! "I wasn't quite sure what to do," he said, after he made it into the eddy, "so I just came down the middle..."

We pondered the irony that sometimes the easy rapids take skill while the hard ones take, well, what is it? Balls? Curiosity? Or is it just experience? But the car was just up the hill, and soon we were pigging out on tortilla chips and less inclined towards philosophy.

You can't make a trip bopping over the Upper Tye's ledges without taking a look at Alpine Falls, just downstream of the take-out. As far as I know, it has yet to see a descent. Alpine Falls is a steep slide, about forty vertical feet high. Most of the water pours into a big safe pool, but some gets diverted into a little chute, which plummets down thirty feet, then plows into a rock and makes an abrupt ninety-degree turn to the left. It's not the kind of place you would ever want to be.

Of course, if you had the right set up through the waves and holes above you could just ride the water down into the pool below. But, if you screw up...

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# The Rodeo Zone

by Rich Bowers

The boast, among DC boaters, is that the Potomac River offers a full range of placid to gnarly whitewater at any level. After a year of "weather" on the East Coast, these local bragging rights were severely tested during this year's combined Potomac Whitewater Festival and Great Falls Race.

Between 4 and 4.6 feet on the Little Falls gauge, there is usually an exodus of boaters headed out to surf Rocky Island. A little lower, say 4 to 3.6 feet, and there is a mass upstream migration to O-Deck.

Above 5.4, it's a trip downstream to the hole at the Middle Chute.

At outrageous levels, above 13 feet, there is the legendary surfing wave at Brookmont (see Davey Hearn article about the hazards of surfing this wave). Of course there is always Little Falls – and all of this is a short 30 minute trip outside of Washington, DC.

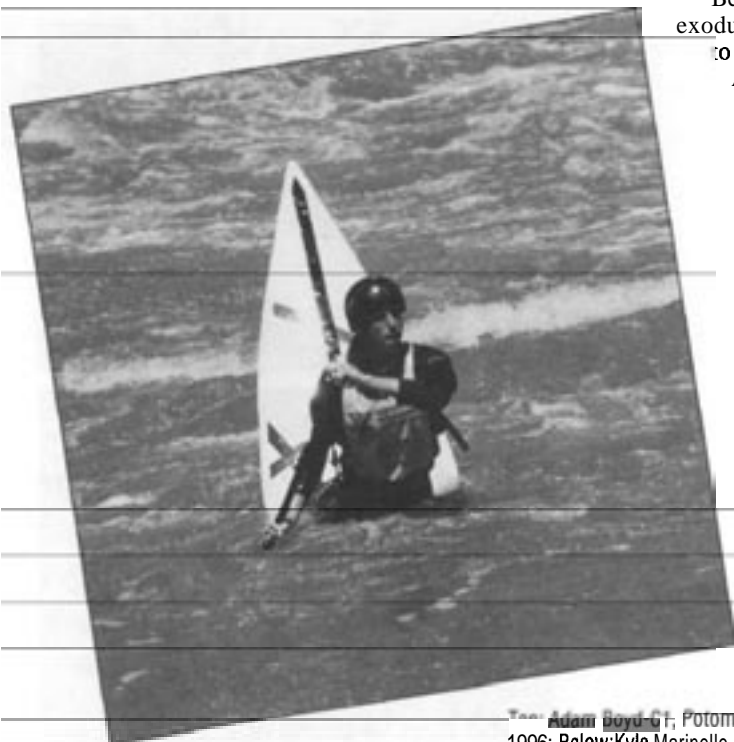
Likewise, you can run Great Falls at 3.1 feet or lower. At this level, the run is down the Virginia side of the river and over the "Spout," the traditional (and highly photographed) site of the Annual Great Falls Race (a definite part of the "Adrenaline Tour" of Class V+ races). Last year, when the river went just above this level, race organizer Gil Rocha got creative, and thus was born the first race over the middle chutes of Great Falls. Truly an awesome site to witness. At incrementally higher flows, there is still the option to run the Fish ladder or Bridge Channel routes, but it's starting to get just a little dicey!

So it may be understandable that race organizers and volunteers began to get a little nervous when torrent after torrent hit the Eastern United States. It started in January, when the Potomac crested at over 19 feet (see March/April Journal). Between then and the start of the festival and race, the river dropped to Rocky Island levels only once. The morning of June 1st, the first day of the event, volunteers and participants alike awoke to a Potomac raging at 6.68 feet.

This is where the bragging rights were tested. And this is where the Potomac held its reputation – although not for everyone. At this level, a special place is formed – a place known to those who boat it as "THE RODEO ZONE."

The zone forms just below Great Falls, at this level a solid mass of foaming cataracts and holes. Brown water swirls out of control, with a mixture of trees, cans and miscellaneous trash flushing down from West Virginia, Virginia and Eastern Maryland. However, in the middle of chaos forms an area of surfing waves, outrageous eddy lines, and holes – the zone.

Not exactly a place made in heaven – and luckily only a place made in hell for some! The first test came in getting into the zone. Rodeo participants were faced with a put-in which demanded an immediate and strong surf across a series of standing waves. The destination of these waves? A huge boiling (and sometimes exploding) pillow against the Virginia cliffside. The second test came in exiting the zone, which lies just above S-turn rapids. For those who exited sans boat, a long swim through boils and



Top: Adam Boyd at Potomac Fest 1996; Below: Kyle Marinelle



# The Rodeo Zone

whirlpools was in order (several rescue boaters joined the swimmers before reaching the relatively calm water at Rocky).. Obviously, judicious judgment and strong boating skills were the order of the day.

The third test came in the zone itself. The location picked for the hole-riding contest was so intense that the possibility of a full-fledged mutiny was narrowly avoided. Participants, including some of the best in the country, flatly refused to enter the shallow, rocky and totally out-of-control hole. Luckily, most boaters are easily bribed and this held true on the Potomac. The hole riding contest was quickly made an exhibition event, with the lure of bonus points to those who dared to sacrifice themselves to the zone. Most did, making this an outstanding spectator event.

Also extremely popular in the DC area is squirting, with two separate events held in the zone, the "Squirt-Till-It-Hurts" and the standard surfing and subbing contests. The zone offered definite lines for rodeo moves, including a two-foot deep seamline running through the S-turns. From where I sat, the squirt contests were spectacular but guarded. The penalty for a mystery move in the zone above this seamline must have seemed too harsh, as I saw no one anxious to accumulate downtime here.

Since the Potomac is a naturally flowing river, events, schedules and participants needed a good deal of flexibility. Intermediate events, and the annual attainment race were re-scheduled for just after Sunday's Great Falls Race, in the hope that the level would drop to more mortal levels.

The Potomac did drop, but just barely under 6 feet (and unconfirmed since the Little Falls gauge was stuck for the entire weekend). Sunday morning brought decision time to those who wished to enter the Falls race, and locked in the only possible remaining route — the Fish ladder.

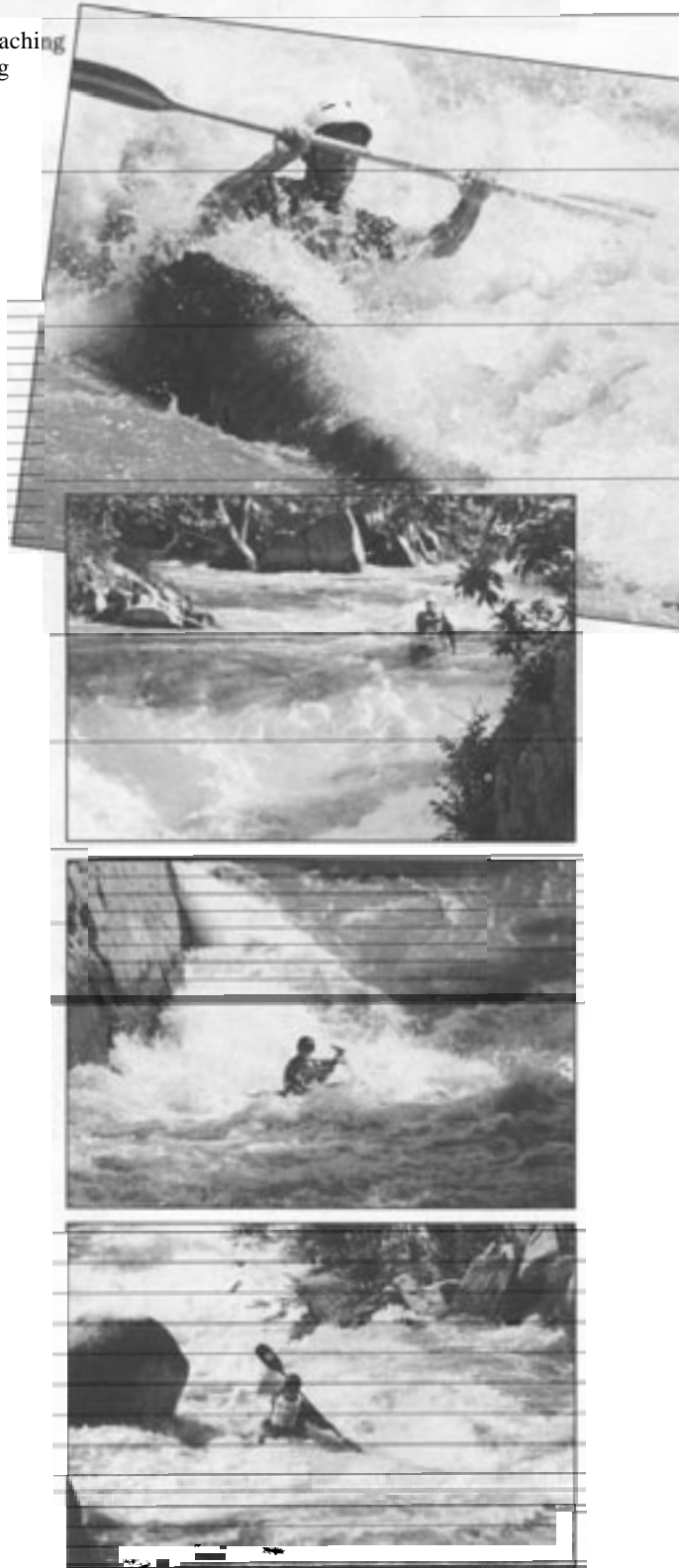
The pre-race safety meeting said it all. "We don't recommend that anyone enter the race. Take a look and make your own decision." Safety teams were established, rope locations were set, and well-known spectators were actually drafted to help augment the safety plan. However, a screw up by anyone, regardless of safety plans, would mean the swim or ride of their lives.

Fifteen boaters decided to test their skills, resulting in one of the best demonstrations of expert boating ever witnessed at Great Falls (or anywhere, at least by this witness). Fifteen perfect runs, on a course that held little room for error. I can't say much more than that; you really had to see it firsthand. Luckily, the carnage was saved for the next event, the attainment race.

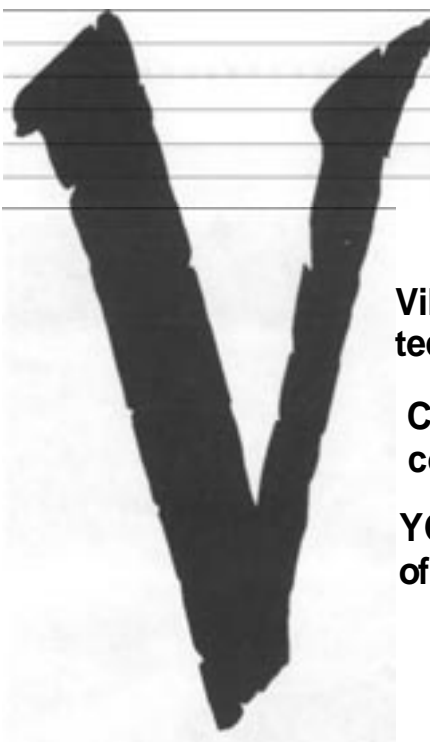
Attainment races are supposed to be fast, demanding, and precise. There is normally no carnage involved. Not so for attaining in the zone, or for any attainment course set by AWA's own Pope Barrow! Pope's quirky humor was fully demonstrated on those who entered this event. First, a mass start at Sandy Beach quickly left boats, paddles and boaters floundering in the wake of more speedy racing types (Eric Jackson, Clay Wright and Davey Hearn set the tone this day — see results of events posted elsewhere in this Journal). However, even the ending provided spectator gratification in the form of a boat-pin on the Virginia cliff (yes, the attainment race ended with a reverse surf across the put-in waves), a swim or two, and assorted mayhem.

The key word for boating on the Potomac is "FUN." The Potomac Whitewater Festival and Great Falls Race try to reflect this each year, and provide a good time for paddlers both on and off the water. This year, the high watertightened the-meaning of fun for some boaters, but that's the good and the bad of natural rivers — some of us wouldn't change this for anything!

As we go to press the river has started to drop. This afternoon the exodus is on for Rocky. If you're ever in the DC area, sample the Potomac. If you're lucky, maybe you too can experience the Rodeo Zone — a unique boating dimension!



Top to Bottom: Skip Brown Surf!; AWA's own Rainey Hoffman on the Approach to the 2nd hole of the Fishladder - 96 Great Falls Race; Keith Liles at Entrance to First Hole, Fishladder; Keith Liles in Fishladder Rapids



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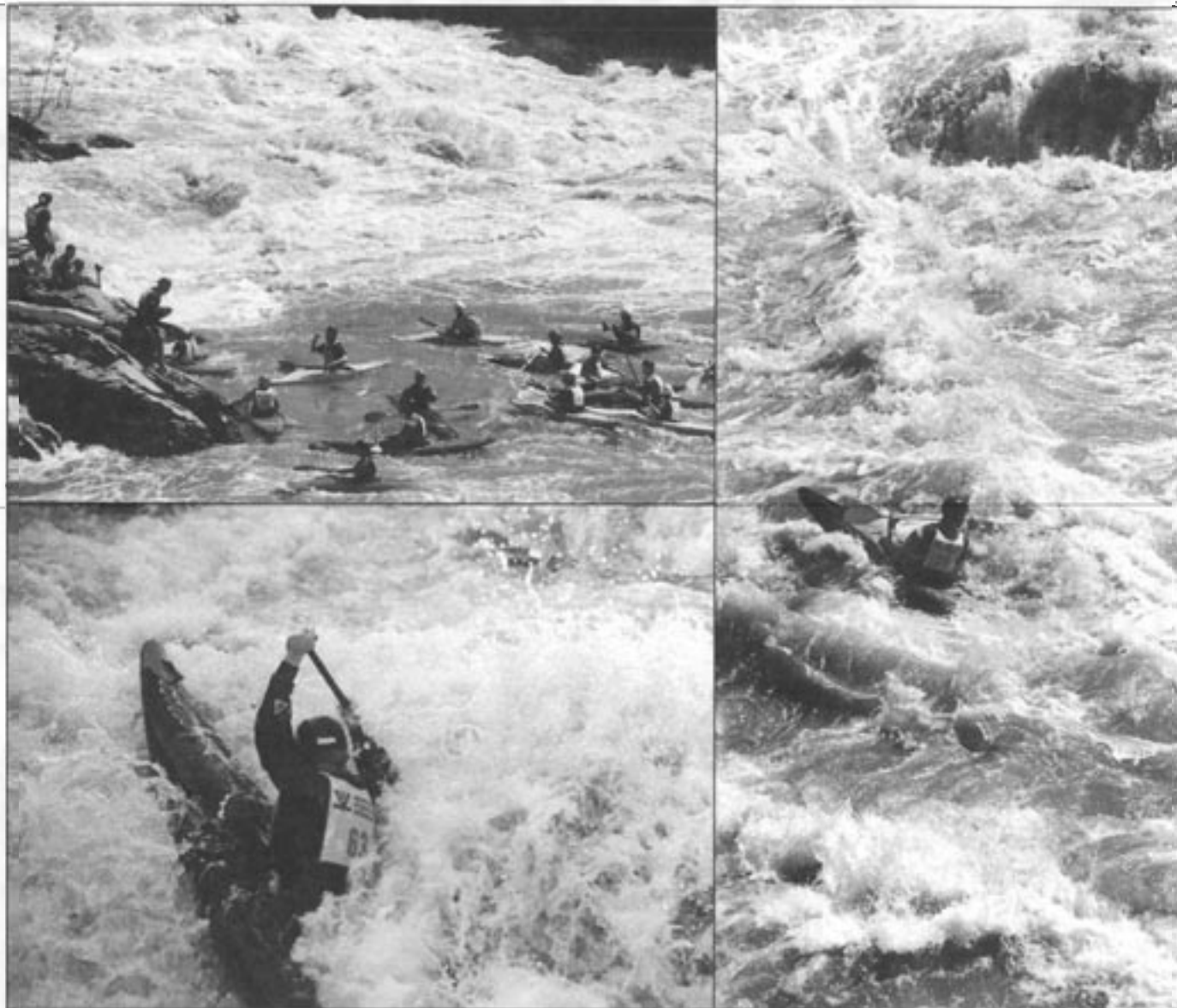
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# The Rodeo Zone



Special thanks to those without whom the Potomac Festival, the Great Falls Race and the many other rodeos and festivals across the country could never have happened. Special-Special thanks to the many sponsors who supported the Potomac rodeo and race, including the major sponsors of the AWA's National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos (NOWR); Perception, Dagger and MTI. National sponsors Prijon, Jag, Teva, Croakies, Kokatat, Leau Vive, NRS, ICS Books, Canoe & Kayak Magazine, Mountain Surf, New Wave, Sport Helmets, Adventure Medical Kits, Mohawk, Salamander, Chaco, Menasha Ridge Press, Norse, PD Designs, Stohlquist, Silver Creek, Sidewinder and Werner Paddles, Lotus Designs, Cascade Outfitters, Snap Dragon Designs and Seattle Sports.

For the Potomac Festival and Race, thank you to race organizers Ricky Rodriguez and Gill Rocha; all of the volunteers who organize, judge and argue about the events and schedules; volunteers who create the T-shirts, posters and flyers; and the staff at both the Virginia and Maryland Great Falls park. Thanks to local sponsors Hudson Trails Outfitters, Good Stuff, Dave Paterson Photography, Glen Echo Pottery, Ursy's Pottery, Springriver Corp., Outerquest, Ohiopyle Prints, WoodStone Glass, Custom Glass Services, and Patagonia.

Finally, thanks to the boaters who show up year after year and make this such a great event.

Top Left: Expert level "Out if Control".  
Bottom Left: Adam Boyd-C1 in Fish Ladder Rapid.  
Top Right: Albert Stephan in "Swirls of brown water".  
Bottom: Clay Wright squirts till it hurts.



## Olympic Epilogue

The ultimate results of the Olympic Team Trials were largely as predicted by Elmore Holmes in his excellent article [Five Ring Ouixotism](#). Members of the 96 Olympic Team all reached the trials by virtue of being "A" division racers.

The 96 Olympic team will consist of Rich Weiss and Scott Shipley in K1, Cathy Hearn and Dana Chladek in K1-W, Davey Hearn and Adam Clawson in C1 and the team of Horace Holden and Wayne Dickert in C2.

Congratulations and best wishes go to these talented athletes. We'll all be rooting for you on the Ocoee.

But we'll also be remembering all those dedicated competitors, like Elmore Holmes, who didn't quite make it, [this time](#). Don't give up. Remember, 2000 is only four years away!

## Second Wolf River Triathlon Slated

### Wild Wisconsin Challenge

The Second annual Wolfman Triathlon, an off road event held on and around the Wolf River in Wisconsin's Northwoods, will be held on Saturday, August 17.

Last year 61 men and women came from throughout the **midwest** and from as far as California and New Mexico to challenge the course, which combined whitewater paddling, mountain biking and a trail run.

Competitors start the event by paddling a three mile section of the Wolf River in whitewater canoes, kayaks or inflatables. This is followed by a ten mile mountain bike ride on logging roads and a three mile run on a riverside trail.

Overall winners in 1995 were Darrell Morris of **Hayward**, Wisconsin in the senior men's division, with a time of 1:33:12; and Michelle Koss of **Antigo**, Wisconsin in the senior women's division, with a time of 2:04:18.

The Wolfman Triathlon is sponsored by the Wolf River Territory, an association of businesses and individuals whose missions includes the preservation and responsible economic development of the Wolf River area.

Entry fees are \$25 per person before July 31 and \$35 per person after August 1. For more information write to the Wolf River Territory, po box 265, White Lake, WI 54491.

## First Cheat Canyon Downriver Race Kicks Off Festival

### Zbel Wins Again!

Veteran river guide and hair racer extraordinaire' Roger Zbel smoked the competition at the First Annual Cheat Canyon Race, held on Friday May 3 in Albright, West Virginia. Zbel, inarguably the premiere "hair" racer east of the Mississippi, crossed the finish line two minutes ahead of his friend Steve Kauffman. Veteran **riverman** Phil Coleman returned from Costa Rica to place third on the nine mile, class III-IV course.

The fastest time in a slalom boat was posted by Pittsburgher Billy, Zollars, who finished fourth overall. Kayaker Jan Steckel capped the women's division, followed by C-1 boater Heidi Domiessen in second, and Julie Wingard in third.

The race, organized by Rob Vorhees, served as a dramatic kickoff for the 1996 Cheat River Festival.

After a mass start within a stone throw of the festival site in Albright, the racers streaked through such classic rapids as Decision, Beech Run, and Even Nastier; and dodged (hopefully!) the voracious hole at the bottom of Big Nasty. The Cheat was running at a moderately high four foot, not quite high enough to allow the competitors to sneak past two of the biggest rapids: High Falls and Coliseum. Instead racers were forced to tackle the meat of High Falls, and to negotiate the turbulent line that skirts the mega holes Cyclotron and Particle Accelerator, near the top of Coliseum. Happily everyone crossed the finish line below Coliseum exhausted, but smiling.

The Friends of the Cheat and the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, the sponsors of the Cheat Festival, have said that they hope the Cheat Race will become a permanent part of the Festival Tradition.

## 1996 Cheat River Canyon Race Results

Roger Zbel	WW	41:46
Steve Kauffman	WW	43:47
Phil Coleman	WW	46:53
Billy Zollars		46:56
Rick Gusic	WW	47:08
Myk Herrera	WH	47:15
Scott Stough	WH	47:31
Jamie Klein		48:25
Bob Gedekoh		48:36
Geoff Lewis		49:10
Chuck Stump	WH	49:30
Mike Kinney		50:08
Bobby Miller		50:43
Keith Heasley		51:50
John Edmonds		52:07
Mike Rockwell		54:22
Charles Hartley		54:28
Joe Griffith		54:30
Wally Hatfield		54:33
Trip King		54:51
Pa York?		55:17
Jan Steckel		55:18
Heidi Domiessen	C1	57:06
Julie Wingard		57:32
Matt Wester		57:41
Kirk Nelson		59:34
John Jeffries		59:57
Lara Voythe		60:20

WW-wildwater, WH-wavehopper, C1-decked canoe, all others K1



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# 1996 13TH National Paddling Film Festival Wrap-Up

The Lexington, Kentucky weekend forecast was for sunny skies in the 50's and there had been plenty of rain. Any other time the members of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association would be dialin' the gages and packing the racks for the river. But this was the last weekend in February - time for the National Paddling Film Festival, so many of us were locked in to donate our time to help raise some money for the rivers that usually beckon. We were actually a little worried, "What if they all go boating", exclaimed Paul "Sockeye" Singleton, president "for a while" of the BWA.

Some probably did, but nearly 300 decided that the next best thing to being on the river was to watch their pals get hammered on the Green, see the latest, steepest, creek runs, or check out the whitewater in Alaska and Chile. With 16 entries from across the US, Canada, and Europe, they made a good choice. For the 13th year The National Paddling Film Festival continued to provide top notch paddling presentations.

So who won?

This year's top honors, including Best of Show Professional and the audience choice Ender Award, went to Loss of Altitude, an exuberant video that profiled the "aura" of whitewater. Daniel and Jennifer Murphy, two dedicated and talented film makers from Steep Creek Films of Austin, Texas, labored two years to bring Loss of Altitude to life. Interviews with familiar riparians- sprinkled with bent boating philosophies- round out this excellent entry that had it's world premier at the NPFF.

Spanking The Monkey (The Northern Boys Do The Green) was the Amateur Best of Show. The title gives a preview of this hilarious, stylin' video. From the opening scene-a van overloaded with boats tearing down a dirt road to the twanging surf guitar sounds from "Pulp Fiction" - this video is crash and bum on the Green River to the maximum. As filmmaker Rick Gusic, of Aspinwall, Pennsylvania, says in the synopsis, "Tired of watching videos where all the wipeouts are edited? Big egos hiding their mistakes? Here's a look at the Green River, uncensored".

Another winning world premier video - with an attitude.

Diablo was this year's Professional Commercial winning entry. Not at all your typical infomercial, Diablo, exhibited

By Barry Grimes  
AWA Director

by Wildwasser Sport of Colorado, made watching a commercial an enjoyable experience. A chorus line, beer swilling and smooth surfing on glassy green waves contributed a stand alone show that made me want to buy their boat.

Different Attainment Wars - Second Annual Upper Yough Challenge. This winner of the Racing Category brought new meaning to the phrase "a tough rapid to run". Try running Charlie's Choice, Triple Drop, Heinzerling, or Powerful Popper - upstream. James "Boze" Houck, of New Rieggle, Ohio, captured the action as famous Upper Yough paddlers make it look easy.

Rounding out this year's video winners was A Waterfall In Florida And Other Streamside Attractions. Taking top honors in the Recreational - Scenic Category, videographer Will Reeves, of Atlanta, Georgia, showed us a year's worth of whitewater from Colorado to the streams of the Southeast, as well as Florida's highest (only?) waterfall.

The Best Paddling Slide competition was won by Derek Eggers of Lexington, Kentucky. His winning entry of a Canadian "war" canoe in a rapid on the King's Canyon River in southern California was irresistible. The slide is a computer composite of two actual photos taken by Derek. Only the person in the bow of the boat gives away the illusion. It's doubtful that someone in a boat like that, sliding sideways into a hole of that size, would be looking to the stem, and not for a way out!

## Congratulations to all the winners of 1996

After the show it was time to party! The BWA's own band of paddlers, "Utterly Rudderless" cranked out tunes until late into the night. When the dust had settled we had raised about \$4000 to be divided up between the AWA, ACA, and the BWA's designate: The Trust for Scott's Gulf, a fund established to acquire land for a public wilderness surrounding the spectacular Caney Fork River in Tennessee. Not bad for two days of films and fun!

Throughout the day film fans were not only able to watch the hottest videos, but also check out some of the latest paddling gear, new boats and even new, shuttle ready cars. Thanks to the generous support of the following companies the Film Festival was once again able to provide entertainment and money for river conservation.

Please remember these companies in the coming year when you are purchasing new river gear or services.

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If you missed this year's Film Festival it's not too early to begin to plan for 1997. Break out those cameras and snap those photos and videos. If you would like a 1997 brochure or have any comments or questions please write:

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*Eric Jackson appears with the permission of the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team*

# Deerfield Festival will make a big splash again this year!

## THE DEERFIELD RIVERFEST WILL BE HELD AUGUST 3,

1996 in the large field across the street from Zoar Outdoor on Route 2, Charlemont, Massachusetts. The Deerfield River relicensing story is fast becoming the "glamour child" of the environmental and recreational community as the publicity from the Deerfield Settlement Agreement continues to focus on this landmark agreement between the New England Power Company and a diversity of river interest groups.

The Deerfield River has been the site for national championship races in both canoe and kayak events and continues to build its reputation as the next major league whitewater mecca in the northeast as thousands of boaters now travel to western Massachusetts each summer. Through the co-operation of the New England Power Company boaters now have the opportunity to enjoy great whitewater just a short distance away from most of the large population centers in New England.

Last year's Deerfield Riverfest was HUG E, with over 1,200 people attending

this event in spite of the rain. Like the Kennebec, people and vendors again came from all over the U. S. to sample the newest whitewater resource and celebrate its rebirth at the festival. The trade show at the Deerfield drew fifty-two exhibitors, many who had come to realize that the New England boater market was hungry for whitewater products. They just had to make the to New England and they were not disappointed at the Deerfield.

The addition of environmental exhibits and children's games during the afternoon brought in many families to enjoy the festivities. The availability of the latest in boats developed a longing gleam in the eyes of many ten and twelve year olds. This event also have a barbecue and music throughout the evening during the entire trade show.

Tom Christopher, festival coordinator for the New England events said, "Last year's festivals were significantly more successful that we had ever hoped for. It just goes to prove that boaters are hungry for opportunities to get together with each other in a festival atmosphere to talk about what they enjoy the most—

whitewater." He continues "We had so many local people helping out to make these events work and the fact that boaters were welcomed into their communities not only fosters a positive image for us as a user group, but provides us with an opportunity to increase our constituency when their kids take an interest in our sport. AWA gets to build its membership and the people of these communities enjoy the economic benefits of a non-consumptive activity in their towns. It makes a great partnership for AWA.

With so many dams in New England up for relicensing these river festivals play an important role in establishing the American Whitewater Affiliation and our members as important players in this process. The more positive economic impact we present to communities near whitewater resources, the easier it is to generate local support in our negotiations with public utilities. The more credibility we establish as an important user group, the greater our chances for future success.

Get out to the New England festivals this summer. When you support the AWA you're never disappointed.

## DEERFIELD RIVER

DATE: Saturday, August 3, 1996

LOCATION: The Deerfield River Fest is located on Route 2, Charlemont, Massachusetts, just west of town in a large field next to the Deerfield River. The field is across the street from Zoar Outdoor Outfitters

TIME: 12:00 Noon until 11:00 P. M.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES: Chicken Barbecue, Food, Desserts, Whitewater Trade Show, "PADDLES UP RACE", Vendors, Beer & Wine, Environmental Exhibits, Silent Auction, Raffles, Games & More.

### THE RACE:

The first annual Deerfield Riverfest PADDLES UP race is a unique event open to anyone and everyone who paddles a canoe, kayak, or raft. Participants will be timed and scored over a slalom-like course on Class I whitewater. The true challenge in this event comes from the many obstacles paddlers will have to negotiate such as a limbo gate, a rock jump, an underwater gate and any other obstacles the course designer can think of by the day of the race.

REGISTRATION: Registration will take place at the Festival site from 10:00 A. M. until 3:00 P. M. The race will start promptly at 5:00 P. M.  
ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST WEAR APPROPRIATE PFD'S.

There will be three classes of craft: SINGLE KAYAKS, TANDEM CANOES, & RAFTS.

### ENTRANCE FEE:

KAYAKS \$10.00  
TANDEM \$20.00  
CANOES \$20.00

RAFTS \$ 30.00

NOTE: NO RACING CRAFT WILL BE PERMITTED. THIS INCLUDES SLALOM RACING KAYAKS, DOWNRIVER RACING KAYAKS, RACING CANOES, OR RAFTS OTHER THAN HUMAN-POWERED.

CAMPING:  
Mohawk State Forest

### P. O. Box 7

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(413) 625-6618

Mohawk Park  
Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(413) 339-4470

HOTELS & INNS:  
The Inn at Charlemont  
Route 2  
Mohawk Trail  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(413) 339-5796

Zoar Outdoor  
Box 245  
Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339

**(413) 339-8596**

Country Air Campground  
Mohawk Trail  
Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma  
(413) 625-2996

The Swift River Inn  
South Street  
Cummington, Ma. 01026  
(413) 634-5751

Oxbow Motel  
Route 2  
Mohawk Trail  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(413) 625-6011

Forest Way Farm (B & B)  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(413) 337-8321  
Jimmie & Paul Snyder

Ashfield Inn  
Main Street  
Ashfield, Ma. 01330  
(413) 628-4571

Parson Hubbard House (B & B)  
Shelburne, Ma. 01370  
(413) 625-9730  
Jeanne & Dick Bole

**RESTAURANTS & OTHERS:**  
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Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(413) 339-5796 (full service)

Mohawk Park Restaurant  
Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(413) 339-4470

Charlemont Pizza  
Main St. Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(413) 339-4472 (pizza & subs)

The Depot  
Monroe Bridge  
Monroe, Ma.  
(Great Burgers, Beer, & Pool)

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Buckland, Ma.  
(413) 625-2570 (full service)

McCuster's Market & Deli  
Main Street  
Shelburne Falls, Ma. 01370  
(413) 625-9411

Sweetheart Restaurant  
Route 2

Shelburne Falls, Ma. 01370  
(413) 625-2064 (full service)

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**RAFTING:**  
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Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(800) 553-7238

Wilderness Plus Rafting  
Box 562  
Wilmington, Ma. 01887  
(800) 83-GO RAFT

**PADDLING SCHOOLS:**  
Zoar Outdoor  
Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(413) 339-8596

North American Whitewater,  
Mohawk Park—Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. 01339  
(800) RAPIDS-9

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**  
Old Deerfield Village  
Deerfield, Ma. (Historic)

Salmon Falls Marketplace  
Shelburne Falls, Ma.  
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Potters,  
Carvers, Sculptors)

Mountain Biking  
(Everywhere)

Sterling & Francine Clark Museum  
Williamstown, Ma. (Extensive collection of French Impressionist Art & other important American painters)

Fishing—Stream & Lake (Everywhere)

Hiking—Catamount Trail Association  
(802) 864-5794 (Everywhere)

Picnicking—Deerfield River  
Guidebook (413) 339-8596

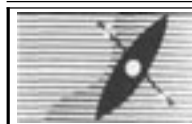
Williamstown Theater Festival  
Williamstown, Ma. (Major productions by well-known artists throughout the summer)

Deerfield River Guidebook  
(Extensive directory to boating, hiking, and fishing throughout entire Deerfield River System)

Concerts By The Trail Route 2  
Charlemont, Ma. (Weekend concerts by local Artists throughout summer)

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## THE HORIZONLINE

by Doug Ammons

The Lochsa river was high that April day, the sky overcast and drizzling. Near the water broad-branching cedars woke from winter's spell while the spring rain spread over the land, pleasing life and the river.

I was driving over from Missoula with four new kayaking buddies, one being my friend Cliff. Cliff and I were new to the Lochsa, but the others had been paddling on it for the last few years. The river had a reputation among intermediate kayakers in the area - it was The Next Step Up. "Watch out," the guys said, "that's big water class four and only good paddlers should go there." Sound enough advice, but when has youth ever listened to reason? Cliff and I had paddled a whole month and were ready for anything. The challenge of a new river only tweaked our enthusiasm. Horizons beckoned, and we had the key to their mysteries.

Driving the shuttle that morning, we looked at the whole stretch of river we were about to paddle. The view from the road far above the water made the rapids seem easy. Even so, when we climbed to river level to get a closer look they were much bigger and more imposing than we were used to. This was a bit disturbing to our inexperienced minds. But we were young and strong, and the water was clear. The river sang of being freshly born from mountain snow melt. When the sun broke through the clouds and reflected off the water's surface, it spoke of excitement and fun. So we put in - giddy, laughing, and slightly apprehensive.

Lilliputians in Gulliver's world, the first rapid overpowered us, slapping our confidence in the face. Experience? Hah! We floundered around and were swept downstream. Swirling in the powerful eddies, we did a dozen eskimo rolls within sight of the car. Uneasiness grew as the big river gently flexed its muscle and left us gasping for breath. We were quick learners though. Each time we popped up our view of the world expanded with leaps and bounds. The problem was - we had so much to learn.

But this was a day made for learning! Smiles replaced frowns as our reflexes stretched along with our minds. The Lochsa, River of Clear Thoughts - big, fast, clean, and forgiving. It was a river made of smiles, and we couldn't help but mingle ours with its water.

Our group made its way down into the heart of the canyon. Then Cliff and I surfed too long at a set of beautiful waves, laughing at each other's flailing attempts. All thoughts disappeared when we caught one of the big smooth faces and felt the pulse of the river beneath us. A rollercoaster of fun, it told us our fate - of kayaking and rivers wild. Of friendship and laughter.

Suddenly we realized that everyone else was gone. No matter, a few more tries, then we let the current carry us downstream expecting to catch up to our group around the next bend. Instead, as we rounded the corner, the river ended.

Alarmed, we windmilled strokes into an eddy just above the brink. The river surged over the horizonline in front of us and fell off our map of the world. Splashes and spray were all we could see; a loud roar filled our ears. We sidled up as close as we dared and craned our necks, but still couldn't see past the edge.

"I don't remember this," I said. "What should we do?"

"Beats me, the others already went down."

We were novices in over our heads. Safety and civilization were only a few yards away, right up the bank and over the guard rail. The noise and swell of the water bewitched us though. Our vision of what mattered didn't go beyond the river - and its ominous end.

The minutes ticked by as we bobbed around in an eddy near the bank. The current tugged on our boats, knocking them together. Out in the river just a few feet past the eddyline, the deep water's pull had a firm and unrelenting grasp. A grip that would drag us over the edge into something we didn't understand.

"This is kind of scary," Cliff said.

"Yeah. I don't like it either."

"Where did they go?"

"I don't know."

Now this was not some life-threatening decision, just a little encounter with the unknown. The obvious thing to do was get out of the boats and see what was going on. You know, just scout the rapid. However, ignorant minds are not necessarily rational. Our month of kayaking didn't make scouting part of our river skills. If somebody had



suggested it we would have thought, "Wow, that's a good idea!" Instead, our paddling had all the forethought of hungry chickens - pecking full blast was the only thing that made sense. And like any birdbrains confronted with dinner on the other side of a fence, it never occurred to us to go around.

Chowderheads. That's what we were. And there was only one direction on our river map - straight downstream. Not because we were daredevils, but because we didn't know any better. Backpaddling, ferrying, scouting, eddyhopping, we had none of the standard river running skills, our introduction to them lay somewhere in the future. My river sense was distilled into the maxim, 'When in doubt, paddle hard'. It had worked so far, but this horizonline was a different animal. We were face to face with out limits.

We hemmed and hawed a little more. Then, never one to bridle action by too much thought, I said, "If they made it, so can we." Doubtful logic, but at least it broke the stalemate. True to my principles I took a deep breath and paddled as hard as I could straight down the middle and over the horizonline.

It's a different world over there, past the edge. I found.... well, I found some things that have stayed with me every since. Cliff? He was smarter than me. He went behind, watched me get thrashed, and saw where to go. We both survived, and both learned some lessons.

Since that day on the Lochsa, I've paddled a lot of rivers. Kayaking has shown me a lot of fun, a lot of seriousness, and a simple fact: Life is full of horizonlines. They come in all shapes and sizes - accidents and jobs, people, marriage and children. Time is the current that pushes us toward the edges of what we know, usually faster than we can cope. And flowing water is the current of time made real. I know that fear comes from doubt about where those horizonlines lead. I also know that the truths of life, large and small, are what lie beyond each one.

## After the Horizonline

Some truths must be relived a thousand ways before their measure can be taken. Such is life.

After I wrote the little story, "Horizonline", I had a choice to make: should I keep the story isolated, or perhaps ruin it by adding what happened in the years after Cliff and I had seen our first horizonline? Poetic license demanded the former, reality the latter. In the midst of contradiction I sought a com-

promise, and what appeared is not really a story but an epilogue. In what follows I don't know if I've been successful bridging the gap, but I console myself by saying that life is like that - full of unfortunate impurities

Each in our own way, Cliff and I went beyond the first horizonlines we met on the Lochsa river. The lessons we found there have grown in ways we never imagined.

I've moved houses as a part-time job, been to college for interminable years, packed my head full of intellectual matter, married, had 5 lovely kids. I help edit two scientific journals, have research projects coming out of my gills. I paddle in wilder places than I ever would have thought possible in those early days on the Lochsa. Still learning after all these years, now I deliberately search for horizonlines in all parts of my life - because the river helped me understand where to find the pulse of really, what matters.

Cliff has confronted much bigger challenges. Not only a good kayaker, he

was a longtime climber, smokejumper, and an accomplished backcountry skier. He has a good sense of humor, and faced difficult situations with a relaxed matter-of-factness - though sometimes you could hear a little whine before the chuckling started again.

Some years after the events in "Horizonline" took place, he was severely injured in an avalanche, nearly dying and then spending months in intensive care. He had repeated surgeries for massive internal injuries caused by being crushed and dragged by tons of wet snow over a long rocky slope, through trees and over a cliff. Eventually he lost a leg above the hip to gangrene, and much of the use of his other leg from nerve damage. His matter-of-factness, the unwavering support of his wife Cathy and a life-long friend, Ed Ward, helped him through years of long dark nights, phantom pains, and the difficulties of finding a new way to live life.

Cliff walks with crutches, but in some ways I think his stride is longer than before. Perhaps this is because he's seen life

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from a perspective that most of us would never want. His spirit has been more grounded. As soon as he was able to get around he worked on his pilot's license, then got his instrument rating, then his multi-engine rating, and kept going from there. He is now a pilot for the Forest Service, flying lead-plane for firefighting crews, leading low-level dives for slurry bombers, coordinating the spot planes and jump planes. Complex, it's full of careful decisions, analysis, intuition, and difficult flying. It's the closest thing to being a fighter pilot civilian life offers - and despite having only the partial use of one leg, he's made himself into one of the best. He has the head for it. From years as a smoke-jumper he knows what goes on down on the ground, in the smoke, burning trees, and dirt. But then, he's learned about a lot of things over the years.

For all the success in the sky, his paddling continues to be frustrating. His one leg won't hold him in the boat and we have yet to find a solution.

The paradox of flight arising from a crippled body bites deeply, so perhaps it is best not to dwell upon it. But to escape one's pain and limitations and gain briefly the world of our spirits is an ache we all share. Up in the sky with the clouds is a piece of us, and Cliff has found it. Though some might feel he gave up too much for this he had no choice but to try.

It's not in his nature to philosophize, but I think for Cliff looking into the past brings back more than the bittersweet loss of youth. Perhaps it is true there is always pain with joy, but I believe the real issue is to continue as best we can - for our lives go on until they end. At each step there is more to be found, whether doubt or joy, fear or discovery, and seldom do these things take the from we expect. Until our hearts cease beating reality remains our master and our teacher, and as always - we have so much to learn.

## AWA Safety Flashcards

**"Invaluable"**

reviewed by Bob Gedekoh

We all like to think we are invincible. That bad things... truly bad things... foot entrapments, perilous pins, drowning, shoulder dislocations, spinal injuries... only happen on other people's whitewater adventures. But the sad fact is that no boater is immune to trouble. If you stick with the sport long enough, sooner or later you are going to be confronted with a serious situation on the river.

Recognizing this, many of us try to hone our rescue and first aid skills. Perhaps we take a river rescue or CPR course or read a river rescue book, like the new one by Charlie Walbridge and Wayne Sundmacher, also reviewed in this issue.



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Announces the release of **Creekin' USA!** It's 90 minutes of hardcore paddling action as GVP takes you to eight regions around the United States to paddle over 30 creeks and rivers with the local experts. Features runs in Maine, Alaska, West Virginia, the Southeast, Colorado, Yellowstone Area, the Northwest, and California. Only \$29.95 plus \$3.00 shipping. Gentry Video Productions, 646 Deer Creek Trail, Hoschton, GA 30548. (706) 654-2725. gentvid@rnindspring.com New Web site: <http://www.mindspring.com/~gentvid/index.html>





But, inevitably, we forget the specifics over time... how to set an effective Z drag, the correct ratio of chest compressions to breaths in CPR, how to take care of a hypothermic buddy in the wilderness.

And then disaster strikes... out in the middle of nowhere. Where every second counts. The situation is tense; you're trying not to panic, but you can't remember some critical details of a basic technique. Not even the most compulsive paddler is likely to have packed a river safety text in their boat. Besides, this is hardly the time to start leafing through the pages trying to find the information you need.

A friend is in trouble... the clock is ticking... If only you could remember...

And then... the AWA comes to the rescue!

How so? With the publication of the new AWA Safety Cards.

Ten compact, water resistant flashcards for boaters who wish to be prepared for whitewater emergencies. Designed to be carried in your boat, this bound set of plastic 3X5 cards, is chock full of crucial,

invaluable information presented in a concise, easy to access fashion.

The production of the cards has been a pet project of AWA Director and safety guru Lee Belknap, who did a commendable job in selecting the topics and condensing and editing the text. Belknap wisely focused on the management of mishaps and injuries most likely to occur to paddlers... head, shoulder and spinal injuries, drowning and hypothermia. Technical expertise was provided by Dr. Eric Weiss, a nationally known expert on Wilderness Medicine, who is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Stanford Medical Center.

The text, which is uniformly to the point, was provided by Rick Curtis. The graphic illustrations, provided by Sue Schaeffer, make it easy to see at a glance how to set a Z drag, tie a bowline, recognize and treat a shoulder dislocation, give chest compressions or signal a helicopter. All of the techniques illustrated can be initiated with a minimal amount of rescue gear. You don't have to outfit your kayak

like a fire truck or ambulance to utilize these procedures.

I have no doubt that these cards will save some lives. There is no reason why every boater shouldn't stash a set in his or her boat. They weigh next to nothing and take virtually no space. They could easily be fastened to a kayak wall, out of the way and out of mind... until you need them.

And the price is right...

Buy a set now and stash them in your boat. Someday you'll be glad you did.

A set of AWA Safety Flashcards may be purchased for \$8.95 plus \$1.00 shipping from AWA, Box 636, Margaretteville, New York 12455. (914) 586-2355. They are also available in whitewater stores. Quantity discounts are available to retailers and clubs.

# DEERFIELD RIVER FESTIVAL

## Saturday, August 3, 1996

### LOCATION:

The Deerfield River Fest is located on Route 2, Charlemont, Massachusetts, just west of town in a large field next to the Deerfield River. The field is across the street from Zoar Outdoor Outfitters

### TIME:

12:00 Noon until 11:00 P. M.

Chicken Barbecue, Food, Desserts, Whitewater Trade Show, "PADDLES UP RACE", Vendors, Beer & Wine, Environmental Exhibits, Silent Auction, Raffles, Games & More.

### THE RACE:

The first annual Deerfield Riverfest PADDLES UP race is a unique event open to anyone and everyone who paddles a canoe, kayak, or raft. Participants will be timed and scored over a slalom-like course on Class I whitewater. The true challenge in this event comes from the many obstacles paddlers will have to negotiate such as a limbo gate, a rock jump, an underwater gate and any other obstacles the course designer can think of by the day of the race.

### REGISTRATION:

Registration will take place at the Festival site from 10:00 A. M. until 3:00 P. M. The race will start promptly at 5:00 P. M.

ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST WEAR APPROPRIATE PFD'S.

There will be three classes of craft: SINGLE KAYAKS, TANDEM CANOES, & RAFTS.

### ENTRANCE FEE:

KAYAKS \$10.00  
TANDEM \$20.00  
CANOES \$20.00

RAFTS \$ 30.00

NOTE: NO RACING CRAFT WILL BE PERMITTED. THIS INCLUDES SLALOM RACING KAYAKS, DOWNRIVER RACING KAYAKS, RACING CANOES, OR RAFTS OTHER THAN HUMAN-POWERED.

## Born To Roll

(With apologies to The Boss)  
by Matt "River Ratt" Muir  
Akron, Ohio

We arrive in the night at the state campground  
in beaten-up, beer-soaked vans,  
In the morning we run in the hottest sun,  
**workin'** on precancerous tans,  
Fresh survivors of a Class-N shuttle,  
Nerves shot, **hungover**  
And seal-launching into the boil,  
**000h!**  
Baby, this river wipes the cobs from your  
bean,  
It's a wild scene, it's a boater's wet dream,  
You gotta run it until you get old,  
River Rats like us...Baby, we were bo-orn to  
roll!

Sandy, paddle with me, it'll set you free  
I wanna show you holes and enders,  
Point your bow right in, give the crowd a grin,  
This spot don't brook no pretenders!  
Together, Baby, we'll go over the top,  
We'll run all the drops, Lady, we ain't never  
gonna stop,  
**000h!**  
Will you stand here with the video?  
'Cause Babe, it'd make an awesome shot,  
You might scout it and say it's Class VI,  
But I gotta have that **rush**,  
Girl, I need that adrenaline fix!

(Here we suggest that you suspend reading for  
about 15 seconds; stand up, hum, whistle,  
or woo-woo some **Rockin'** Riffs while play-  
ing a ridiculous air saxophone—go ahead;  
you'll feel good, and no one's watching.)

All over the river is the scattered equipment of  
a paddler who's in a bad swim,  
His mind is addled—he'll grab your paddle  
When you try and rescue him.  
He said he's Class V; it's nothing but jive,  
His roll was simply pathetic,  
Let's tow him somehow to the riverbank  
This boy's gonna need a medic!

(Another Ridiculous Riff-op.)

(1-2-3-4)

The river's crowded with middle-aged rafters  
Who act like the place is their turf,  
You can see all the holes, you can wait in the  
eddies  
But there's no room for a real surf;  
Together, Baby, in a Topolino Duo,  
We'll carve up this spot when the rafting  
season's ooo-ver  
**000h!**  
Someday, Sandy, we'll quit our jobs, we'll live  
by the river,  
and we'll spend all of our lives  
in that mon-ster-ous hole,  
'Cause River Rats like us...  
Baby, we were bo-orn to roll!

## Video Review

# Meltdown Madness... Epic Colorado Adventure!

by Scott Stough

Easter weekend 1996... and snowing  
again! Friendsville, Maryland has sur-  
vived the winter from hell, a record set-  
ting 208 inches of snow that started to  
fall in mid November and is still coming  
down in April. I am beginning to wonder  
if I'm living in the Colorado Rockies.

How to cure my seasonal distress syn-  
drome? I pop the new video, Meltdown  
Madness, into my VCR and am trans-  
ported. The video brings back happy  
memories of my paddling trip to Colorado  
last summer, when an astonishingly  
heavy **snowpack** resulted in a tremendous  
flush... and rush... for whitewater boaters.  
Armed with the comprehensive new  
guidebook, Colorado Rivers and Creeks,

by Banks and Eckardt, we had some  
wild times. But none quite as astonishing  
as the whitewater action documented in  
Meltdown Madness.

The video, produced by Enviro Action  
Sports, provides a dramatic overview of  
class IV, V and VI boating across the  
state. It offers action to suit every  
paddler's taste. There is steep creek action  
on the Upper Roaring Fork, Vallecito  
Creek, Lime Creek and the incredible  
North Fork of the Crystal. Play boaters  
will revel in the footage from the Num-  
bers of the Arkansas and the rodeo at the  
Animas River Days. Those who like to  
surf will drool in envy at the phenomenon  
known as Big Sur, a perfect monster wave  
on the Colorado that last appeared fifteen  
years ago, during a season marked by  
similarly high flows.

Those who favor exotic, wilderness  
rivers will enjoy the footage of daredevils  
challenging the awesome Black Canyon of  
the Gunnison. And if the adrenalin rac-  
ing scene is your cup of tea, the video  
documents what the Gore Canyon Race is  
all about. There is even footage from  
Gore in early winter, when the first snows  
that will provide the 96 runoff were start-  
ing to fall.

Be forewarned, much of the footage is  
gnarly... these boaters are clearly pushing  
the limits. Keep the remote handy; some  
of the stunts are so incredible, you'll have  
to replay them several times before you  
believe your eyes. The landscapes are, of  
course, gorgeous. The video is of excel-  
lent technical quality and the music is fit-  
tingly "alternative".

Meltdown Madness is a "must"  
for every couch paddler and deranged ex-  
pert. If you can't make it to Colorado this  
summer to witness the meltdown in per-  
son, this video is the next best thing.

The Friendsville critic rates this video  
a solid Class V.

Editor's note: A portion of the profits  
from Meltdown Madness are being do-  
nated to the AWA. Those who purchase  
the video will also be eligible for prizes to  
be raffled off at the 1996 Gore Canyon  
Race and at the 1996 Gauley River Festi-  
val. (You need not be present.) To order  
call 800-482-8085. (VISA, MC and  
AMEX accepted)

## Book Review

# The Ultimate Whitewater Book Now Available

Rivers End: Features Classic River Tales  
The Best of American Whitewater

From behind his executive editor's desk at the Mansfield, Ohio News Journal, Bill Sedivy could always hear the whitewater calling him. Last spring, the fourteen year veteran newsman listened, quit his job and hit the river.

The result is River's End- A Collection of Bedtime Stories for Paddlers. Sedivy's 160 page tribute to and for those who love running rivers in kayaks, rafts and canoes.

Sedivy, 39, now a Professional in Residence in the Department of Communication at Utah State University, teaches students about the craft of journalism while keeping an ear tuned to the sound of rushing water.

"As a subspecies, boaters tend to be honest, generous, intelligent, funny, sincere and just plain fun to be with," Sedivy says. "Most of my best friends are boaters. I met my wife, Maryl, on a boating trip."

After he left the newsroom in Ohio Sedivy reached an agreement with the American Whitewater Affiliation to collect some of the best stories published in American Whitewater since 1985, and put them in a book of "bedtime stories for paddlers." The fifteen tales in River's End, he says, were chosen to "help fellow paddlers endure those times away from the river."

Sedivy's literary whitewater tour runs from the New River in the Appalachians to a float through the Grand Canyon, from negotiating grizzly infested waters in Alaska's Brooks Range to "Quebec's perfect river," from Idaho's pristine Middle Fork to the treacherous Lower Meadow in southern West Virginia.

River's End features a mix of high adventure and humor. Some of America's finest paddlers are among the story tellers.



Sedivy's favorite quote from the book: "Never make a life and death decision on a day when your breakfast came from a brewery."

Another favorite: "My idea of a greedy man is somebody who goes to work on Monday morning with five dollars in his pocket."

The American Whitewater Affiliation receives 33% of proceeds from the sale of River's End to continue their safety and conservation efforts.

Rivers End may be directly ordered from the publisher by sending \$15 plus \$2 shipping and handling to Bill Sedivy, Big Dog Publications, 1410 Country Manor Drive, Logan, Utah 84321. Retailers may order directly from the publisher (801) 752-6136, or from AlpenBooks, 1-800-290-9898.

## New Whitewater Thriller Published

Black Belt Press has announced the publication of Summer Games, a new sports fiction suspense thriller, written by Sabrina Wylly. The author, a forensic therapist who has worked at Atlanta jails and crisis centers, is an accomplished whitewater paddler. Technical consultant for the novel was Hank Klausman, a well-known southeastern boater.

Much of the action in this murder mystery takes place on the Chatooga River. The protagonist of the story is an Olympic swimmer and whitewater paddler, who has been accused of murdering a teammate on the river.

The novel is available in bookstores.



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# Whitewater Rescue Manual Review

By Bill Sedivy

Since I'm teaching college these days, I thought it would be appropriate to start this article with a short quiz.

Ready? Here goes:

1. Worth 100 points. (I told you it would be short.) You've just had a great run through Damn Big Drop and you're sitting in the eddy below, waiting for your two friends to paddle through. Friend #1 runs the drop cleanly and pulls into the eddy beside you.

Friend #2 begins his approach. . . He's too close to the right shore. Oh, no! Whack! A perfect vertical pin! Water is cascading over your friend's head. There's an air pocket in front of his face, but it seems he can't move! He's just stuck there. . .

What do you do? You have 15 seconds to answer this question.

What? Too hard? Geez, you guys sound just like my real students! Hasn't anyone out there done the assigned reading? What is wrong with the youth of today? Too much TV! Doesn't anyone read anymore!

Oh, wait a minute. Sorry. . . I guess I got a bit too caught up in the story line.

So, OK, no one actually assigned you to read Whitewater Rescue Manual. But every paddler ought to read it.

Written by river rescue gums Charley Walbridge and Wayne Sundmacher Sr., Whitewater Rescue Manual is an excellent river safety primer for beginning paddlers and it is a great refresher for anyone who has had rescue training before.

These guys know what they're talking about.

Walbridge has nearly three decades of experience as a whitewater paddler, river guide and paddling and safety instructor. He serves as safety chair for the American Canoe Association and was safety chair for the AWA from 1986 to 1991.

Sundmacher is a professional instructor and certified EMT who has been teaching safety programs for outdoor enthusiasts and rescue personnel for 10 years. He developed, with Walbridge, the ACA's Swiftwater Rescue Program.

Released earlier this year and available in a paddling shop or bookstore near you, Whitewater Rescue Manual is extremely easy to read because it is written so clearly and concisely. A liberal dose of outstanding photographs by Walbridge and drawings by Sundmacher help make

the subject matter all the more digestible.

The book covers a lot of material — everything from proper swimming and self-rescue

techniques to complicated haul systems, first aid and evacuation procedures — but is organized in nice, compact chapters that can be understood and beneficial individually.

I found the self-rescue and swimming chapters to be particularly good.

Hmmm. . . Does that tell you anything about my paddling skills?

Seriously though, did you know that it is a good idea to curl up in a ball when you're swimming over very steep ledges? That technique sure makes sense, but, I guess I wouldn't have thought of it had I not read it in this book.

Yep, there I'd be, floating over ledges in the traditional swimmer's position, screaming for my friend Dave to come rescue me, when. . . oh, shit, it's a perfect, vertical body pin/foot entrapment!

That would not be funny. Fortunately for me and my friend Dave, though, I don't really run rivers with bunches of big, steep ledges — at least not intentionally. That stuff is for the Big Dogs. I'm into geriatric boating.

Ah, but I digress. Back to the book.

In addition to covering the latest in rescue techniques, Whitewater Rescue Manual also discusses the latest in rescue equipment. And, the authors succeeded in writing a fine chapter on accident preven-

tion (a.k.a. common sense) without being preachy about it. For instance, they don't take any potshots at you folks who insist on running higher and higher waterfalls while twirling your paddles. Nor do they rap those who choose to boat alone.

They merely point out the potential consequences of choosing such styles of recreation.

Throughout this book, Walbridge and Sundmacher do an excellent job of stressing practical solutions to problems. And, every few pages the authors share a real-life episode during which practical solutions are applied or new, practical solutions are discovered. These short "sidebar stories" contribute further to the reader's understanding of technique, and, they help make the book even more interesting to read.

In the end, this is a wonderfully informative and easy-to-read book that belongs in the whitewater library of every paddler. As soon as I mail this review copy back to Bob Gedekoh, I'll be off to my local paddling store to pick up a copy of my own.

And class, I expect you all to be better prepared for the next quiz.

(Bill Sedivy is a journalism professor at Utah State University, an open canoe paddler and rafter, and editor and compiler of the book *River's End: A collection of bedtime stories for paddlers.*)

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No matter what else anyone says...the Battle of the Swine King will forever be remembered as the Grand Poo-Bah of all weird paddling trip happenings. I've never seen anything like it before, and I hope that I never slide to that grim and gory level again.

It was Friday night, and we were supposed to run Section III of the Chattooga the next morning. After a long drive down from Chattanooga the eight of us found a decent campsite near the put-in at Earl's Ford and crashed for the night. Warm fire...good food...good conversation...many, many cans of beer. We all crashed at something like two in the morning. My good buddy, who we'll call Hossenfeffer (or Hoss for short), had left twenty or so beers nestled in a plastic ice chest right outside his tent door before turning in. A tactical error, in hindsight, but we let it slide.

A few hours before dawn I was jarred awake by the noise of an ugly smashing of plastic, a few grunts, and then one of the strangest sounds I think I've ever heard...a soft, metallic crunching followed by a pop and hiss, and then rapid gurgling and snorting.

What does that mean, I wondered. Hottentots? Communists? Boy Scouts? I rolled over to my pack

and pulled out the .44 magnum that I reserve for those very special moments on paddling trips, and I crept quietly to the door of my tent. I scanned the camp, and made eye contact with a few of the others who were peering warily from behind tent screens. I flicked on my flashlight...

And then I saw him. Mother of Babbling Pearl! The Swine King!

My flashlight beam jumped out and caught what must have been a three hundred pound wild boar right betwixt his malignant red piggy eyes. He was standing amidst the debris of the cooler he had smashed, and as I watched in horror he turned his head away from me, rooted around through the shards of plastic and ice, and snuffled up a can of beer. He tilted his head back,

# The Battle of the Swine King

by Ed Ditto



and slowly began to chew the can. In just a moment came the sounds I'd heard before...a metallic crunching, then the pop, hiss, and gulping. The evil bastard was shotgunning our entire stash of beer!

Ye gods, I thought. What weirdness is this? We must save this beer! Twenty cans! And then the awful thought struck me...he had been through several cans already...and what kind of tolerance for alcohol do swine have, anyway? A three hundred pound pickled pig rooting up the camp at four in the morning is not to be tolerated under any circumstances, but what choice was there?

I considered the merits of creasing the Swine King across his hams with a few hundred grains of copper-jacked hollow point, but he was standing right in front of Hoss's tent, and the consequences of a missed shot might be a new part in Hoss's hair. Single combat, maybe? But no, the tire iron was safely locked in the car several hundred yards away.

The Swine King was still nosing through the beer stash when the answer came to me. I eased the barrel of the .44 out through the tent flap and squeezed off a quick shot straight up into the air. The cannon blast of the fat powder charge knocked me flat onto my kiester from where I'd been squatting, but it had even more profound

an effect on the Swine King...he leapt at least a foot into the air, came down hard on his belly, actually swallowed the beer can he'd been sucking on, and tore off into the underbrush squealing like Ned Beatty.

We never saw the Swine King again, but the next night we made Hoss sleep outside and we stashed the beer in his tent. You see, paddling isn't about soaring with the eagles...the trick is to soar with the swine instead of wallowing with the eagles. We figured that if the Swine King came back, he would know Hoss for one of his own.

*Editor's note: Is this story true? Does anyone out there know if this story is true!?*



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Mohawk has a new foam saddle with integrated quick release thigh retainers and knee wedges. It holds you comfortably and firmly in place and is adjustable so it will fit practically anyone. This innovative thigh retainer holds its shape so the paddler easily slips into "paddling position" without readjustment or having the hassle of getting into thigh straps.

By pulling on a single strap, located just forward of your lap, both legs are released at once for a quick exit. The four inch width of the unit and its thick micro cell foam give very comfortable and firm support to your thighs and hold you firmly in the boat with very little knee lift.

"So quick and easy to get in and out of. No thigh straps to mess with and it holds me firmly in place, yet it is very comfortable." (Jeff Richards - Steep creeker, winner 1992 Ocoee Rodeo & Winner 1994 short boat class Dixie Division (slalom races))

"I've used a Mohawk thigh retainer on big water in Costa Rica, the Upper Yough and Steep Creeks and it's just great. It is extremely comfortable and holds you tightly in the boat. It fits anyone, is easy in and out, and last but not least, pull on one strap and it is practically as your lap and it releases both legs at once. The students in my canoe rolling class just love it." (Mike Aronoff - ACA Instructor, Washington DC area.)

**PROBE 12-11:** The narrower version of the Probe 12-11 is my first choice among the new 12 footers. I have tried the others but like the predictability of the symmetrical hull. The design makes the 11 quick and very responsive. Upstream attaining, ferrying, turning, and surfing maneuvers are very easy and effective. Grossing currents and peel outs feel solid and predictable; without surprises as with some asymmetrical hulls. The R-84 lay up makes the boat a pleasure to carry and after a year of hard use, it is holding up fine. The boat does great on big rivers and creeks. My boating pals and students who have Probe 11's are happy with them. If people don't try the 11 they may be literally missing the boat. Mike Aronoff - ACA instructor, (Washington DC area)



## MOHAWK'S NEW SADDLE WITH THIGH RETAINER

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Specs	Length	Beam	Depth	Weight	Material	Suggested List+	Factory Direct
RODEO	10'6"	26 5/8"	16.5"	42 lbs.	R 84	\$850	\$595.00
PROBE 11	11'8"	28"	15.5"	45 lbs.	Royalex	\$875	\$612.50
PROBE 12	12'8"	28 5/8"	15 5/8"	49 lbs	Royalex	\$875	\$612.50
PROBE 1211	12'2"	21"	15.5"	46 lbs	R 84	\$875	\$612.50
PROBE 14	14'	30 5/8"	15 5/8"	59 lbs.	Royalex	\$940	\$658.00
VIPER 11	11'6"	27"	15 5/8"	45 lbs.	Royalex	\$875	\$612.50
VIPER 12	12'6"	27 5/8"	15 5/8"	49 lbs	Royalex	\$875	\$612.50
XL13	13'3"	30"	15 5/8"	56 lbs	Royalex	\$920	\$644.00
XL14	14'3"	32"	15 5/8"	60 lbs	Royalex	\$940	\$658.00
XL15	15'4"	35"	15 5/8"	65 lbs	Royalex	\$970	\$679.00

\* Tandem or Solo + Prices do not include freight

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