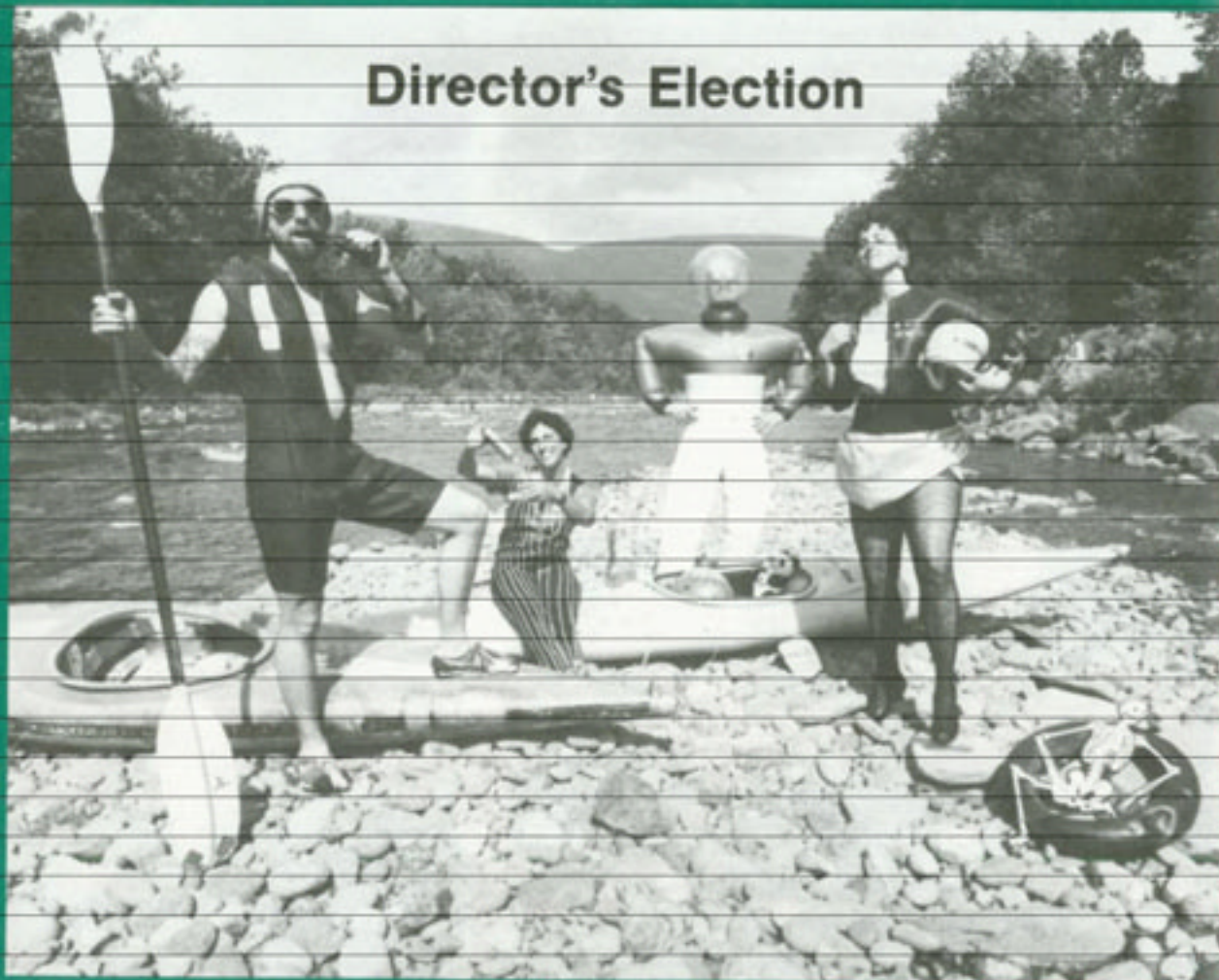


American **WHITEWATER**

Director's Election

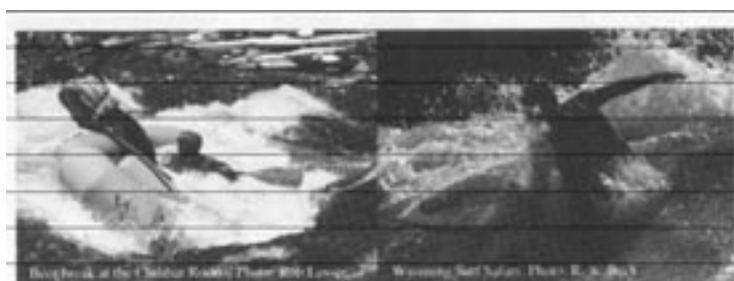


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September-October 1986
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Vol. XXXI, No. 5



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September—October

Vol. XXXI, No. 5

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Table of Contents:

- 4 River Notes
- 7 J.P. Munn/Whitewater Entrepreneur
by Tom Mellers
- 9 Whitewater Nutrition—by Kristi Streiffert
- 12 Dedication to John Wilson—
by Tim Tibensky
- 13 Review of 1987 River Runner's Calendar
- 14 "All Ate Up With The Magpie"—
by Bob Gedekoh
- 21 AWA Elections and Ballot
- 24 Costa Rica, Gem of the Americas—
by Gary Duven
- 26 New Equipment
- 27 Kayaking In Grizzly Country/Paddling The
Talkeetna River by Mac Thornton
- 30 Safety Code

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River Notes

EXPLANATION OF THE AWA CODE REVISION

by Charlie Walbridge

The AWA Safety Code is the only set of guidelines currently in use for whitewater sports. First developed in 1959, it is currently recognized by the American Canoe Association and the U.S. Canoe Association and has been reprinted in dozens of textbooks and pamphlets. It is an unusually valuable document which deserves respect and support.

This revision was requested by AWA director Pete Skinner, who was concerned that the recent upsurge in lawsuits could threaten the assets of a group leader. He commissioned Mac Thorton, a Washington D.C. lawyer an excellent paddler himself, to change the emphasis of the code to put the responsibility where it has always been: on the individual boater, not the trip leader. Mac, who had already revised the "trip coordinator" guidelines for the Canoe Cruiser's Association, consulted extensively with the Three Rivers Paddling Club of Pittsburgh and Dr. Betty Vandersmissen, a nationally-recognized expert in the legal problems of adventure sports. The package has been reviewed by Ron Watters of Idaho State University, who has done considerable research on the "common adventure" concept which is the basis for our changes.

My job was to integrate his ideas into the Safety Code. As I did so, I realized that although the text was still valuable, numerous changes had occurred and many important concepts were left out. Substantial advances in kayaks, open canoes, and rafts created previously unrecognized problems. Older references to obsolete equipment or technique have been deleted. Aside from the new emphasis on individual responsibility, there is a strong statement on alcohol and drug use, considerable attention to the problems of low-volume boats, a statement of the need to protect the rescuer, and guidelines on using rescue lines and resuscitating cold-

water drowning victims. In the interest of brevity those sections which became repetitive were combined with others.

The code has been sent to forty people including both ACA and AWA activists. Every attempt has been made to include rafters, open canoeists, and kayakers. Much useful feedback was received, and most of it found its way into the Code. Because of the ASAP of the various changes, Pete Skinner wants this code adopted immediately, and I agree. It is hereby published as superceding the last revision. But I will be open to revisions and comments for 3 weeks after you receive the Journal at which time we will reprint it. Whether the comments are substantive or merely editorial, they will be welcomed. Send them to:

Charlie Walbridge
AWA Safety Code Revision
Box 447
Penlyn, PA 19422

Comments on legal issues may be directed to:

Mac Thorton, 334 6th Street SE, Washington, DC, 20003, Phone 202-543-4923.

See page 30.

KINGS RIVER CLAIMS BOB PORTER

by Matt Kuckuk

California boaters were shocked and saddened this month by the news that Bob Porter had lost his life in a boating accident on the Upper Kings River. He was paddling this section on Sunday, August 10, 1986, with a party of other expert kayakers.

The accident took place in Rough Creek Rapids near the beginning of the Garlic Falls section of the Class V river, at a flow of approximately 1800 cfs. The party scouted the rapids and several boaters made it through successfully before Bob's run. Bob pinned in the drop, and his companions quickly got two ropes out to him. He was able to remove himself from the pinned boat with the aid of the ropes, but was then pulled underwater, apparently into a

River Notes

rock sieve. The rescuers believed that he still had a hold on the ropes, so they continued pulling for about 10 minutes, eventually breaking a rope. At this point the rescue efforts were abandoned and the party continued downstream.

Bob Porter was a wine maker by profession and a resident of Ukiah. He was a very highly skilled and experienced kayaker who participated in many difficult exploratory and high water runs in California. He was also active in the boating community and a frequent contributor of articles and analyses to the PNB. To say that he will be missed is a great understatement.

Letters To The Editor

Dear Dave:

I am enclosing a copy of River Valuation Bibliography: A Practitioner's Guide to River Valuation Literature. I would like to have it reviewed in American Whitewater so that river defenders can have the advantage of this literature.

This 27 page paper includes an introduction and discussion of the literature, two tables that index and summarize the value estimates, and over 100 citations. The papers are primarily the work of river planners, managers, and the public interest economists who have defended free-flowing rivers against development. It is the most complete river valuation bibliography available.

The bibliography is \$5.00 postpaid. It can be ordered directly from me at my Virginia address.

If I can provide any additional information, please contact me by phone or mail.

Sincerely,
Stephen O. Andersen
2401 S. June St.
Arlington, VA 22202

AWA Ballot

INSERT

What Do Plastic Boats Really Weigh?

Dear Editor:

It seems that many weigh a good deal more than the manufacturers tell us in their advertising. Several years back I bought a Perception Sage C-1, advertised at 42 lbs. When I took it out of the box, it weighed 50 lbs., or nearly 20% overweight. I complained to Perception and received an apologetic letter implying that it would not happen again. Two years ago I ordered a Gyramax after telephoning the company and receiving personal assurance that a delivered boat would weigh 38 lbs. as advertised. But the one I received weighed 44 lbs., almost as bad as the Sage. This year I bought a Duet C-2, having an advertised "hull weight 50 lbs.". The boat I received weighed 64 lbs. Hydra doesn't tell you that they add seats, coamings and bracing to the naked hulls they weigh, bringing the delivered boat up to 64 lbs., a major difference which a buyer has no way of discovering from the advertising. Although my experience is limited to the duet, "hull weights" given for the rest of the line are certainly suspect. Complaints to the companies involved have indicated no inclination to correct their figures in spite of the facts that boat weight is a major performance factor for a whitewater boat, and that a departure of even 10% from the specified weight certainly constitutes false advertising since the manufacturing processes used actually control weight to within a pound or so.

I feel strongly that the boating public is entitled to correct figures **before** they buy, and to this end, I am trying to determine how widespread the problem really is. I would appreciate it if everyone who has received an overweight boat would send me the details—boat model, manufacturer, specified and actual weights, and date of purchase. The data will be collected and used with the manufacturers and the media in an attempt to correct the problems.

Sincerely,
Jim Sindelar
264 East Side Dr.
Concord, N.H. 03301

River Nofes

WHITEWATER

WHITEWATER BE DAMMED SAYS FERC;

Licenses to build hydropower projects on whitewater rivers are being issued by FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission). In many situations, hydropower is compatible with whitewater boating provided the project is constructed with certain conditions. However, FERC has dismissed requests from boaters and issued the licenses without the conditions. Outrageously, FERC is keeping its reasons secret despite the Freedom of Information Act. Even worse, construction has been allowed to start before the licensing process has run its legal course.

What Is Going On at FERC? Federal agencies have been known to ignore the law unless challenged in court. This is what is happening at FERC. Unless the issues are taken to court and the politicians, it looks like boater's interest will continue to be trashed by FERC.

Others have had similar problems with FERC and have won. However, the courts take time and money. You can help by contributing financially and standing by when political support is needed.

If you would like to help, send your tax deductible contribution to:

River Research Systems — River
Defense Project

721 Boundary Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Let us know of your boating club affiliation so we can keep you informed through the club. If you do not have an immediate club affiliation, ~~give us~~ a name and address we can use as a contact for you and your boating buddies.

The Rivers Thank You

Contacts:

Steve Taylor (301) 587-1204
Pope Barrow (202) 546-4912

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CANOE Magazine's 1987 calendar is here! It reflects a vivid combination of images embodying the excitement and subtle beauty of canoesport.

When the editors of CANOE Magazine ran a contest last spring for calendar photos, they never dreamed they would be selecting thirteen finalists from

literally thousands of entries. The result is an outstanding collection of exquisite photographs that represent the sport of canoeing.

The photos depict all aspects of canoeing, from wilderness solitude and sunset silhouettes to wild whitewater kayaking and outrigger surfing. This beautiful, four color, glossy format with plenty of memo room will be displayed with pride.

To order your calendar(s), send \$9.95 per calendar to:

CANOE CALENDAR

P.O. Box 3418, Kirkland, WA 98083

Or Call 1-800-MY CANOE.

NATIONAL PADDLING FILM FESTIVAL

Start the 1987 paddling season off with a splash! The Fourth National Paddling Film Festival will once again gather together paddling enthusiasts from around the country to share our experiences in person and on film. February 27 from 7 p.m. on you'll be welcomed to the Paddling Film Festival site at the University of Kentucky Health Science Center with an opening reception and the professional film competition. Saturday morning, February 28, the amateur competition begins. From 10 am until 5 pm entries put together by you and your friends will be judged by a distinguished panel of paddling and filmmaking personalities. If you don't have anything to enter—come to the festival and watch! Spectators are sure to be entertained by the skills, exploits and adventures of fellow paddlers, the scenic beauty of the waterways we travel, the thrill of racing competition, the insight of instructional wisdom, and the humor of it all.

There's a new competitive category this year. "Best Paddling Slide". Send us that favorite slide and you could be a winner. Hurry with your entry—we can accept only the first 160! Limit of one slide per person!

The party starts Saturday night at 8 pm with another indoor water experience. Winners will be announced and receive their awards and prizes poolside and then...The Party begins. Bring your dancing shoes and swimsuits!

J.P. MUNN: THE RAPID RISE OF A WHITEWATER ENTREPRENEUR

by Tom Mellers

When young John Percy Munn, rising star in the prestigious New York investment firm of Buck Brothers, Run was caught red handed (so to speak) selling inside information in the men's room of a Manhattan YMCA, he thought his world had come to an end. Barred for life from Wall Street, forced to return \$87 million of his \$132 million in ill-gotten gains, he felt for awhile that life was no longer worth living.

"Gosh," said J.P., "I wondered if I could go on. I spent a whole afternoon in the library investigating the financial implications of suicide. If they hadn't changed the pertinent tax laws, I probably would have jumped off a bridge."

Instead, J.P. scaled down his standard of living, moving from an 87th floor triplex to a 43rd floor duplex, fired his chauffeur, and—the best substitute for jumping off a bridge—took up whitewater boating. In a matter of hours, J.P. transformed himself from an enterprising financier to an aggressive paddler.

"It took me four minutes to learn to roll a kayak," J.P. explained while neatly spearing a shrimp over lunch in one of Fashion Avenue's best known hide-aways. "After an hour I paddled over my first 15-foot waterfall. After 90 minutes I executed my first ender."

Yet, something was wrong.

"Acceptance," he said, waving a forkful of delicately dressed watercress in my face. "The guys would see me paddling down the river wearing my Princeton football helmet and my wire rim goggles, sucking on a silver spoon to relieve the pressure, and they'd laugh at me. I had an image problem."

J.P. overcame his image problem with characteristic boldness and directness.

"One afternoon I tattooed a naked woman on one arm, and an airborne kayaker on my other arm, and a rising Polaris II missile on...well, never mind. That night I inflicted knife and chain

wounds about my body. As I slept I let my beard and hair grow. In the morning I rubbed motor oil into my scalp and gave myself a vulgar, irregular haircut. Personally, I've never taken a drink in my life. So after breakfast I developed a water-resistant, bourbon-flavored cologne and drops that turn my eyes red.

"By afternoon I was back on the river. People who had ignored me before were paddling over and punching me in the face. At last, I belonged."

It didn't take entrepreneurial J.P. long to capitalize on his new social success.

"If changing image could have a profound effect on my life, then changing image could have a profound effect on other paddlers' lives. There were good boaters out there who couldn't make a splash in the whitewater social scene. I was just the guy to put these people across. The right clothes, the right accessories, the right scent...."

Thus was born MunnWear, the latest rage in whitewater fashion.

MunnWear: High River Fashion for the Eighties

text by Tom Mellers

photography by Donald Mason

(From left to right.) J.P. Munn models a power-black neoprene jumpsuit styled for warmth and comfort. "The Bad Mother" style shown here is sleeveless to suggest once powerful biceps. Knife-gash openings tell the world J.P. will confront any danger. Tasteless Bermuda-short-length trouser legs intimate a low-life insouciance to fashion (\$234.95). Power-black jumpsuits also available in drop-bottom sleepers (\$276.95), and sailor-boy bell bottoms (\$298.95), depending on your problem. For summer paddling J.P. dons MunnWear AquaSneaks (\$69.95). A new dimension in whitewater foot-gear ventilation, Aqua-Sneaks' adjustable laces provide a snug custom fit. Triple-



Left to right are J. P. Munn, Sheila Matz, David Arnot, and Phyllis Horowitz.

polarized. MunnGoggles (\$14.95), are available in erotic pink or morning-after green.

For Bangor, Maine, trash sifter, Sheila Matz it's first class on the river in her all-business pinstripe Farmer John (\$179.95). Sheila's portable phone (\$327.95) connects to the banks (riverbanks, that is) via water conductivity, giving her immediate access. Even white lightning tastes smooth when decanted from Sheila's elegant flask by Munnpewter (\$67.95). Sheila's pop jewelry by Amphetoppearl (not commercially available) give her that extra something.

Scottish rabbit farmer David Arnot can paddle forever in his new Munn-DuranceSuit (\$384.95). Optional MunnBunn thermostatically controlled internal climate system (\$2,451.95) lets Dave laugh at the weather. With optional complete ecosystem in his MunnSphere helmet (\$9,861.95), Dave doesn't even have to stop for meals.

Carmelite nun Phyllis Horowitz gets a real charge out of her kayak groupie river costume. Gold lame sprayskirt (\$87.95) keeps her warm if not dry. Neoprene heels (\$64.95) are perfect for high stepping amidst the rocks. MunnGam stockings (\$3.95) add a playful touch. Optional performance-award pins (\$1.95 for a package of five) suggest Phyllis just might mean business.

WHITEWATER NUTRITION: Eat for Strength and Energy.

by Kristi Streiffert

Whitewater boating is an exciting and demanding sport. As you challenge the rivers, you train and condition your body rigorously. But to perform well, your body must be properly nourished. Most of us eat because we're hungry, and we forget that food is our body's fuel—fuel to be converted into strength and energy.

During a day in the office the average man will use around 2500 calories to maintain his weight, and a woman will need about 2000. On strenuous whitewater trip your calorie requirements may double. Requirements increase with your activity level, and with cold weather and contact with icy water.

Good river nutrition involves not only increased calorie intake, but a well balanced, nutrient-providing diet as well. Your basic daily requirements include carbohydrates, proteins, fats, a broad variety of vitamins and minerals, and lots of water. A review of the basics and some thoughtful planning will enable you to fill your coolers with foods that provide the calories and nutrition you need for maximum river performance.

Nutrition Review

Carbohydrates are our most important energy foods. They are an ideal fuel, easy to break down and use for energy. Complex carbohydrates (potatoes, rice, breads, pasta) are wholesome and filling. They should make up the biggest part of your menu. To get plenty of carbohydrates, plan to take foods like potato salad, spaghetti, whole grain breads. When you buy whole grain breads, look for those with lots of texture—the smooth breads are really just brown colored white bread.

Protein is essential because it helps make, maintain, and repair tissue. Protein cannot be stored in the body—you must eat about 60 grams of it every day. Sources of protein are dairy products, eggs, meat, and a combination of grains and beans. There is some protein in almost everything you eat, including fruits and vegetables.

Fats are indispensable for your body's proper functioning. They are a source of stored energy, are insulation against the cold, cushions for internal organs, and lubricants. Fats are found in meats, dairy products, nuts and flours. Of the obvious contributors—mayonnaise and butter—a total of one tablespoon per day is enough to meet most people's needs.

Vitamins and minerals are essential for life. They enable the biochemical reactions to occur by which the food we eat is utilized. To ensure that you receive all the necessary vitamins and minerals, you must eat a variety of fresh foods. Fruits and vegetables will supply many of your needs: leafy green lettuce, cabbages, tomatoes, and peppers; apricots, apples, melons, and citrus. Again variety is the key. Do not use vitamin pills as a substitute for a good diet. It is neither health-wise nor necessary to do so.

Liquids

Few people, including athletes, recognize the crucial importance of water in keeping their bodies in peak condition. Water regulates body temperature, filters the blood of toxic wastes, maintains blood pressure, and supplies nutrients. If you don't drink enough water you can seriously impair your performance and health. Inadequate hydration is a major cause of fatigue in boaters, especially during hot weather. Heat cramps and heat exhaustion are the results of inadequate intake of water and loss of salt.

Never wait to drink until you are thirsty. Begin drinking extra water two days before your trip. During the river trip, replace lost water before thirst becomes noticeable. You need 3 to 5 quarts of water daily. Under maximal conditions, it may be necessary to drink three pints of water per hour. Again, drink often and drink past the point of thirst.

To replace salts lost during extreme exertion, you can drink some of the specially prepared electrolyte solutions such as Gatorade. These solutions contain glucose which aids in the uptake of water from the digestive system. Alternatively, salt tablets are available and cause less nausea than straight salt.

One source of liquid frequently consumed on the river is beer and other forms of alcohol. Although the body metabolizes alcohol as if it were a carbohydrate, the muscles cannot use alcohol as a direct source of energy. Alcohol can impair muscle efficiency and interfere

with coordination and judgement. In addition, alcohol is a diuretic, and dehydrates cells causing them to lose some water soluble minerals. If you consume alcohol while on the river, it is best to limit your intake to one or two drinks per day.

Menu Planning

River menus should incorporate maximum nutrition and minimum on-river preparation. For most of us, the end of an intense day of whitewater is not a good time to pull out the "black-tie" cook book. Begin planning your menu in plenty of time. List the entire meal plan on a large sheet of paper and include a column to list the ingredients and utensils you will need.

For each day include two fruits and three vegetables; some whole grains, dairy products, and meats. Fresh fruits and vegetables can be packed in sturdy containers to prevent bruising. Whole grain items include pancakes, oatmeal, breads, and cookies. For dairy products bring along yogurt, milk, and cheeses. Your meat possibilities include hamburger, steaks, pork chops, freshly caught fish, and chicken. Don't forget to plan for water and juices.

While planning the foods you will bring, think in general terms about calories, carbohydrates and proteins; no need to count every gram, but have a general idea of the nutritional content of each day's plan. Nutritional information is listed on most of the foods you purchase. Refer to your cookbook, too—the reference section should have much of the information you need.

Below is a day's meal containing approximately 5000 calories. If you are overweight, or a non-paddling passenger you will need less food; but if you are lean and will be paddling or rowing all day, you may need all these calories to keep up your energy level.

Breakfast should be a big meal. Eat only after you have been awake and active for at least one hour, and relax for twenty minutes after you eat. For nearly 2000 calories eat: 1 egg, 1 slice of ham, several whole wheat pancakes, and some milk and juice.

For a 1000 calorie lunch eat: 2 peanut butter and banana sandwiches, carrot sticks, 4 cookies, and apple juice. For a 2000 calorie dinner eat: 2 hamburgers with vegetable garnishes, corn on the cob, a baked potato, and for some dessert, some banana bread. This day includes 130 grams of protein. Women can cut back to 3500 calories and 90 grams of protein by eating only one pancake, sandwich, and hamburger.

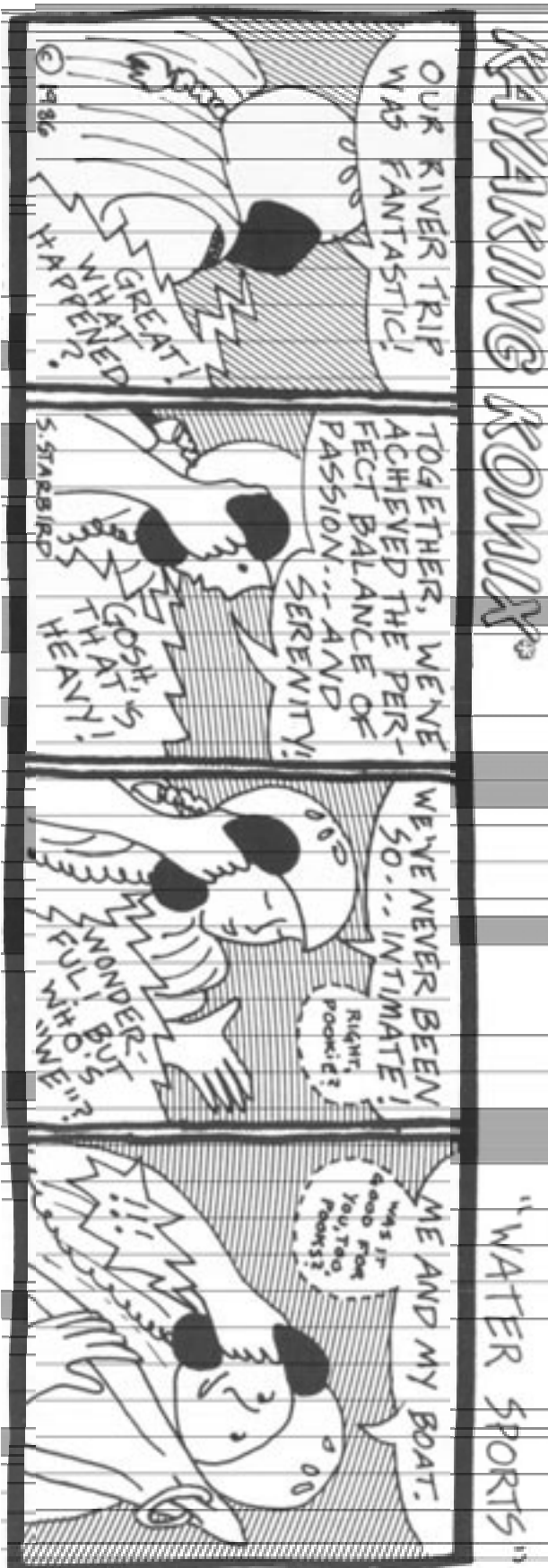
Once you have made your list and done your shopping, begin to prepare your foods. Much of your preparation can be done at home to give you more freedom on the river. Wash all fruits and vegetables, and chop or slice as needed. For example: the lettuce, tomato, onion, and cheese for tacos can all be chopped, shredded, and packaged at home. As you organize and pack your river gear, keep your stove and oven busy cooking breads, cookies, and potato and macaroni saïads. Prepare pancake and biscuit mixes ahead of time, leaving out the wet ingredients.

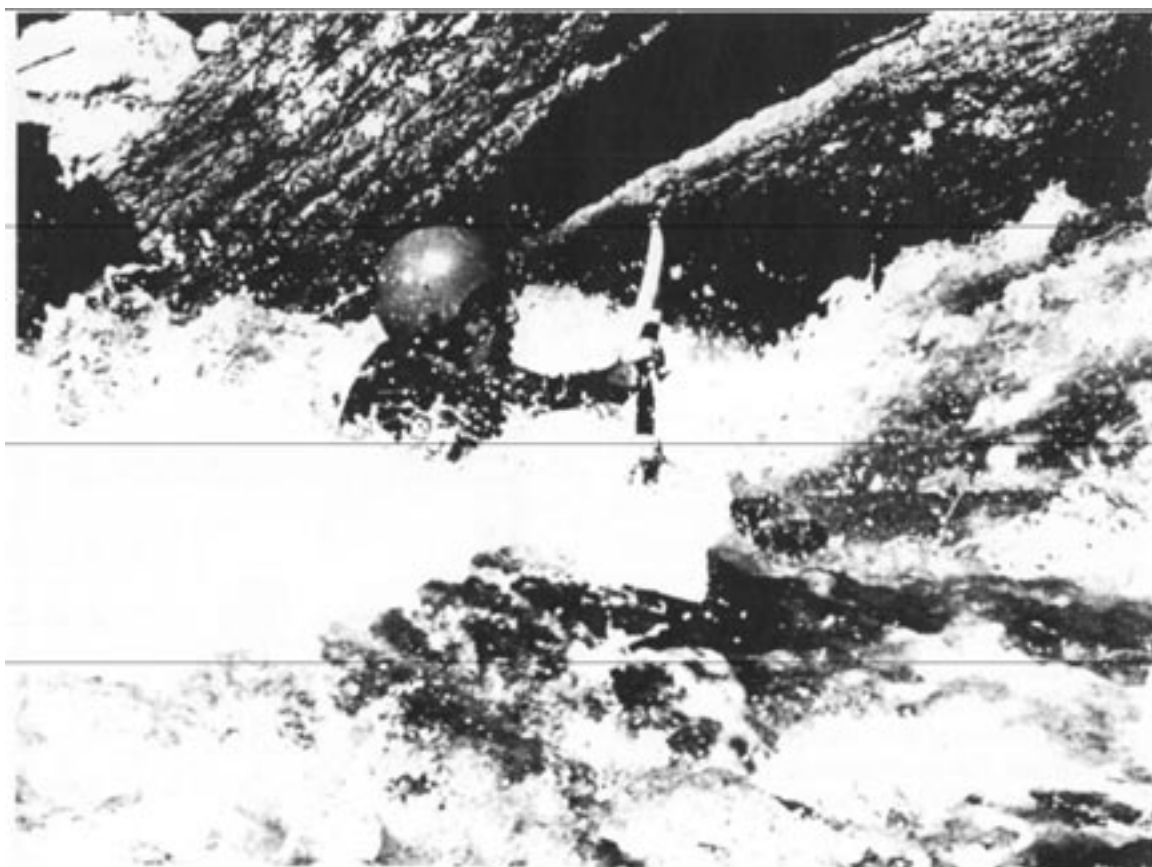
After packing food items in their individual containers, freeze and refrigerate everything possible. Freeze butter, milk, water, and other beverages. Your meats and drinks are used as ice until consumed. Once on the river, open your cooler as little as possible. Pack your lunch at breakfast. Also, take ice out in the morning so that cool water will be available throughout the day.

Satisfying a huge river appetite is always a pleasant experience, but now you can combine that pleasure with confidence in what you eat and drink. Nutritious, fuel-filled meals will make you stronger and more energetic—and ready to challenge the best of the whitewater!

AWA Ballot INSERT

*TALES FROM REAL LIFE.





ESPECIALLY JOHN WILSON

by Tim Tibensky

Early in my whitewater paddling career I bought a "Whitewater 81" racing program. Wanting to absorb everything, I read the booklet from cover to cover. In the introductory pages there was a message: "Special thanks to the many people who contributed photos (especially John Wilson of Illinois who each year sends the only photos from his part of the country)." I was surprised to learn that this friendly, good-humored man I knew from pool sessions was also a fine photographer. In the years since we have all seen the artistry of his camera work in many paddling publications. We have laughed at his wonderful "white-water words" cartoons. Nearly every CWA member has a t-shirt of his design.

There are not enough paddlers in the world like John Wilson. Always willing to encourage and assist others with their paddling, he didn't make any fuss about

**Editor Note:
We dedicate this issue
to John.**

his own ability. At most races he would be perched on a rock with his camera, his boat would never get wet. If he got a good shot of you a gift of a print or a slide was soon on its way to your house. He encouraged racing and striving for excellence without ever being negative or overbearing. When this year's slalom rankings came out it happened that I was ranked equal with a former racing superstar. John sent me a telegram that said "Congratulations! You finally caught Eric Evans!"

When I learned that John had passed away I thought of all the things about him that I would miss: the great smile, the paddling photos, the cartoons, the support and encouragement, the warmth. The loss of a friend is a sad event; it's hard to say goodbye to good good people. Especially John Wilson of Illinois.

REVIEW OF 1987 RIVER RUNNER'S CALENDAR

Imagine yourself in prison—one wrist shackled to a typewriter, the other to a telephone. Not hard to do, is it? Indeed, that's the daily grind for many people.

Now, let your imagination wander a bit to another world where there are no bonds, only the sound of rushing water and the caress of a warm summer sun overhead. You've been there perhaps—deeply embedded in the belly of the Grand Canyon or floating lazily along Oregon's irresistible Rogue River. Or perhaps your mind's eye has led you another way—to a river you've never seen, never even heard about. But with a name like "Bio Bio", what water-lovin' fool wouldn't want to go? Imagine no more. Set yourself free. You can see these places now, as clearly as if you were there, through a 10-by-13-inch window of freedom—the 1987 River Runner's Calendar; definitely the next best thing to being there.

Although Sandpiper Publishing's 1986 Calendar was a beautiful, well-received work of art, the fledgling company's second effort is even better. The images are so sharp and clear, the colors so vivid and true that you can almost taste the euphoria as a boatload of rafters float out from under a rainbow on Chile's Bio Bio, feel the reverent awe of pilgrims pursuing Granite Narrows in the Grand Canyon, or hear the palpitating anticipation of kayakers perched on the ledge of a 24-foot waterfall. The full spectrum of the whitewater experience is here for you to enjoy—the excitement, the awe, the unexpected, the challenge, the solitude, the tranquility.

As in the first edition, each month is filled with tantalizing trivia, anecdotes, historical information and celestial happenings. Photo captions are lively and entertaining, including a special tribute to those who've perished in their pursuit of happiness. The publisher's unswerving dedication to river preservation—the neglected wilderness battle—shines through in an eloquently worded essay that should inspire us all to get

more actively involved in saving our free-flowing rivers and streams from the rape, ruin and run crowd.

Novices and experts alike will get their fill of vicarious thrills from this handsomely produced calendar, a bargain at \$7.95. Write to Sandpiper Publishing at P.O. Box 5143, Stateline, NV 89449 and order yours today. Sandpiper is donating to AWA \$2.00 of the retail price of each calendar sold to AWA members, so remember to say you heard it in American Whitewater!

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AWA Ballot

INSERT



Bob Gedekoh, Mike Bush, Dean Smith, John Boulger celebrate the success of their self-contained expedition. Photo by Jess Gonzales

MAGPIE RIVER

"All Ate Up With The Magpie"

by Bob Gedekoh

We stood solemnly on the bank of the river, swatting blackflies and watching our shuttle planes disappear over the horizon of Quebec's Laurentian Plateau, one of Canada's most spectacular and rugged wilderness areas. One hundred and twenty-five miles from civilization and on our own. Facing one of the whitewater world's ultimate challenges and wondering if we had gotten in over our head.

The only way out was down the river.

Down the river being the West Branch of the Magpie...65 miles, Lake Magpie.. 25 miles, and finally the Magpie proper.. 35 miles. A class five plus whitewater run with a decidedly unpleasant reputation.

One that Eric Evans had called "the extreme wilderness whitewater river." **(Canoe)** A river that Tim Ellege had termed, "The most terrifying stretch of continuous class V and VI whitewater that anybody...has found in North America." **(River Runner)**

Four groups had attempted the West Branch/Magpie in Kayaks before. Only one had made it to the St. Laurence Seaway. Dennis Labelle, our gregarious French-Canadian bush pilot, had assisted with several of the Magpie rescues. As we soared over the remote and inhospitable countryside he had regaled us with tales of terror on the river.

"Zee Magpie...she eez no gift", Le-belle had chuckled. "No gift at all". We were in for "many, many hard times". Le-belle was downright evasive when asked if we would succeed where others had failed.

"Maybe yes, maybe no, maybe rain, maybe snow," Labelle responded with a roguish grin, and I thought to myself that he was already deciding how he would spend the money that he would earn effecting our rescue.

Small wonder he left us a trifle uneasy.

Less than two hours later that feeling uneasiness gave way to genuine concern when we reached Stranded Man Falls...the first class 5+ rapid on the West Branch that had nearly claimed the life of an unfortunate boater on one of the ill-fated expeditions.

The West Branch is a big river running at 4000 cubic feet per second, and when that much water tumbles thirty feet over a series of ledges the result is a meal-storm. We scouted Stranded Man Falls from a sensible portage trail, but all the while we were looking for some way to run the rapid. It would take less than fifteen minutes to portage the rapid but that wasn't the point. We hadn't come nearly 1500 miles to carry our boats through the woods.

Beside, we had seen a photo of one intrepid boater paddling Stranded Man ...how could we do less? Not only did we want to finish the Magpie but we were determined to run as much or more of the class five water as any previous group.

But by the time we finished scouting Stranded Man Falls my companions weren't so sure.

"They had raft support," observed Mike shaking his head. "They weren't paddling loaded boats. It's going to be tough to maneuver in that cauldron with thirty pounds of gear."

"Maybe they ran it at lower water", said Jess, as he shouldered his kayak and started the portage.

"That hydraulic could recycle a fellow forevery," muttered John as he hit the trail.

"Not to mention that undercut rock on river left," added Dean.

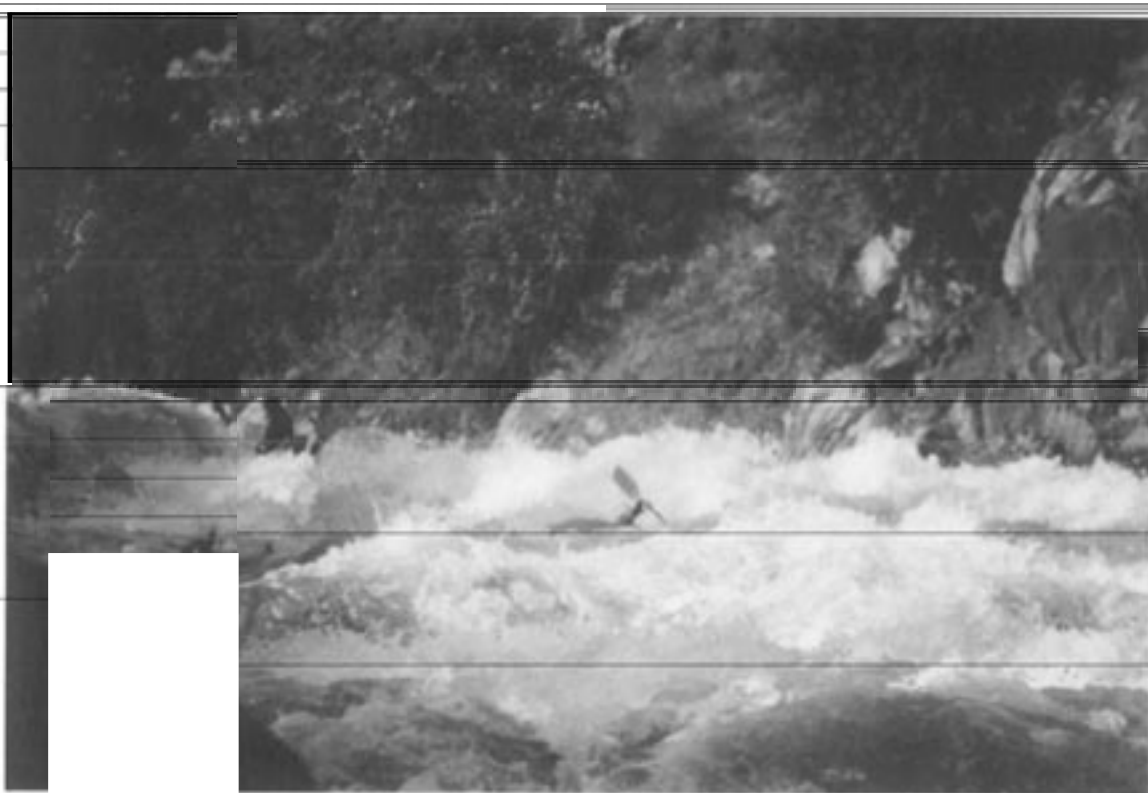
And so a minute later I found myself alone in my kayak at the top of Stranded Man, the only one who had elected not to portage. I'll not deny that my knees were shaking as I paddled through the rock garden that littered the approach.

As it turned out Mike was right. It was damned tough to stay on course in my loaded boat. I skirted John's terminal hole by less than two feet. And I came precariously close to Dean's undercut rock.

But I made it...and in one piece. I felt like a hero and I felt like a fool. It was a state of mind we would all share at one time or another during the Magpie Odyssey. But my success at Stranded Man only reinforced my resolve to tackle the class five water.

And it was this determination that would almost cost me my life eight days later.

The idea to attempt the West Branch/Magpie had been mine. Mike Bush, a close friend best known for his exploits



in the large hydraulics of the New and Gauley Rivers, was the first to be drawn into my madness. We had paddled the Colorado together and practically every class five run in West Virginia. Mike is my better half; his droll humor and relaxed attitude effectively moderate my more aggressive and intense approach to life.

Mike and I decided that disposition and personality should be given as much consideration as paddling ability in selecting who would accompany us.

Four or five seemed the optimal size for our expedition. If only three made the run and one was seriously injured someone would have to solo the river to get help, or the injured individual would have to stay alone... perhaps for as long as a week. But including more than five seemed unwise, the likelihood of a lost boat or injury was directly proportional to the number of participants.

Jess Gonzales, a solid class five boater and survivalist who handcrafts Gonzo paddles, was our first choice. Jess can start a campfire in the middle of a swamp in a hurricane... without matches. Well read and erudite, Jess comes across as a Renaissance Rambo.

Dean Smith, a feisty, young newcomer to our circle of paddling acquaintances, had demonstrated his ability to handle big water by paddling the Gauley

with us at 15,000 cfs during the preceding spring.

John Boulger, a cattle rancher from Ohio completed our crew. With his laconic grin and bashful demeanor, John is one of those guys you can't help but like. As solid as a rock, we knew his physical and spiritual toughness would come in handy.

After the team was finalized, we made every effort to spend time together to grow accustomed to one another's eccentricities and to establish an esprit de corps. Anticipating the physical and psychological strain that we would face, we hoped to avoid the interpersonal conflict that had plagued other West Branch/Magpie explorations. We even rotated between the two shuttle vehicles during the thirty hour drive to Quebec to enhance group cohesiveness.

We had contacted veterans of the other Magpie explorations to ascertain what went right, and, more importantly, what went wrong with their expeditions. They suggested that late August was the best time to attempt the run, after the peak of the blackfly season but before the onset of the harsh, unpredictable Canadian autumn.

Raymond Boyer of the Canoe-Camping Federation of Quebec provided invaluable maps based on his exploration of the river in 1981.



Boyer warned us that the West Branch/Magpie was no place for a cavalier approach to river running. Previous trips had been marred by lost and damaged gear and serious injuries.

Boyer told us, in no uncertain terms, that the river was too technical and difficult for raft support. It had been raft related problems that had ultimately ruined three of the previous attempts to run the river. And so we decided on self support from our kayaks.

This was a difficult decision. Carrying supplies for nine to twelve days would not be easy. Freeze dried food and wood fires offered part of the solution. Light weight synthetic sleeping bags and backpacking tents were chosen. We nervously packed and repacked our boats, modifying our foam walls, testing waterproof storage systems and rejecting all but essential equipment. Each man carried only one spare set of pile garments. Drysuits would provide protection from the bugs as well as the icy water. Two spare breakdown paddles and two complete first aid kits were included.

Our group elected to paddle plastic kayaks to minimize the likelihood of irreparable boat damage. Without raft support there would be no room for error, the loss of a single kayak would strand one of our number in the wilderness without supplies.

Though I am a physician and John Boulger an EMT we realized that a serious injury could easily lead to death. Sophisticated medical care would not be available.

While planning the trip I had a recurring nightmare. We were in the middle of the Canadian wilderness, stranded, and someone had appendicitis. I had a first aid kit that included antibiotics, local anesthetics and basic surgical supplies, but there was one problem. I was the one that needed the surgery.

I shared my dream with Mike on the long drive to Quebec. He laughingly reassured me that, "If punch comes to shove I'll be happy to slice you open."

Somehow I didn't take much comfort in that. Mike is an electrician and a squeamish one at that. Once we found a

body along the Cheat River in West Virginia. Mike was green for a week and he still chokes at the mention of it. Small wonder I had little confidence in his ability to perform backwoods surgery.

Fortunately we never had occasion to rely on Mike's medical expertise.

Mike did prove to be an able and avid fisherman, supplementing our evening meals with trout that provided badly needed protein. Each morning we picked blueberries and red raspberries to garnish our daily ration of oatmeal. Even so by the ninth day it was pretty hard to choke the damned stuff down.



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Correspondence with veterans of previous attempts to run the Magpie had prepared me for its difficulty but not for its beauty. We started our journey atop the barren plateau at an elevation of 2,000 feet. Here the trees were gnarled and stunted by the arctic wind and the ground was carpeted with a thick, yellow moss. Innumerable feeder streams pumped crystalline water into the river by way of tiny, delicate brooks.

As we continued our descent we passed towering mountains, forested with majestic spruce and elegant birch trees. The slopes were punctuated by jagged cliffs and talus slopes, testimony to recent avalanche activity.

Early morning and late evenings were the best time to explore the shoreline, for the pestiferous blackflies did not appear before 9 a.m. and they mysteriously disappeared about 7 p.m. Between these hours head nets were de rigueur.

At night the stars were stunning and we witnessed several dramatic meteor showers. Each evening the orange moon crept over the horizon and hovered above, a pregnant orb that seemed ready to burst.

On two consecutive nights we were treated to a brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis that lasted for nearly an hour and left us speechless. Curtains of green, blue, yellow and orange light danced across the sky, while their psychedelic reflections shimmered on the water. It was hard to believe that it was a natural phenomenon.

Other times were less inspiring.

I awakened one cold morning to the sad sound of raindrops on the roof of my tent. I pulled my sleeping bag over my head for nearly half an hour before crawling out to face the inevitable. Jess already had a fire going and he was roasting something over the flames. I naively thought it was breakfast.

I was more than a little disappointed when I discovered he was toasting his wet jock strap. I knew right away it was going to be one of those days.

We managed to endure that day of persistent drizzle and two other brief showers. But for the better part of the

trip we were lucky. The skies were clear except for an occasional fluffy cumulous cloud.

As a group we ran all but eleven rapids. Most carries were around single drops, characteristically river wide slides (the Canadians call them chutes) of up to twenty feet into terminal looking holes. Two were lengthy canyons with complex falls ranging to one hundred seventy-five feet in height and sections where the entire river was channeled between rock walls scarcely a boat length wide.

Here the water was unbelievably turbulent with dramatic undercuts and ominous whirlpools. We could not imagine that these sequences would ever be run.

Jess Gonzales aptly termed the second canyon portage the Magpie Death March...a three hour scramble up a bug and brier infested mountain-side, a mile and a half trek across a swamp, a hair raising cliff crossing, followed by a forty-five degree descent back to the river through a monstrous rock jumble.

Tempers grew more than a little short on that occasion and I suspect we might still be there were it not for Mike's humorous alter ego, Pierre Zee Trapper, and John Boulger's muscle.

My brush with death came on the Magpie on the eighth day of the trip. We were ahead of schedule and things were going well. Perhaps too well. We were getting a little cocky. At least I was getting cocky...and I was the one who got thrashed.

We came upon one of the chutes which we had come to know and respect. Here the river was split by a massive, midstream boulder. Each channel dropped fifteen vertical feet over a distance of thirty feet. The hole at the bottom of the left channel was deadly, with a backflow extending forty feet downstream.

The hole at the bottom of the right channel didn't look much better, but I thought I could see a narrow tongue seven feet to the right of the midstream obstruction where I might blast the hydraulic.

While the others judiciously protaged I tried to locate landmarks that would guide me to the magical tongue. There weren't many. I finally slid into my kayak and paddled boldly into the rapid with an aura of confidence that might best, in retrospect, be termed misguided.

As I crested the final wave before the drop I found myself looking down into the heart of the monster.

I had lost my line and there was no turning back.

An instant later I was in the hole...and then out of my boat. You know the old cliché...it was sucked right off me. I was recycling, ass over tincups, in the foam. Mike Bush and Jesse Gonzales tell me that there was no sign of me, my boat, my paddle or any of my equipment for more than thirty seconds.

It seemed to me like thirty hours.

I finally surfaced for an instant but there wasn't much anyone could do but take my picture. Then I was underagain, tumbling like a rag doll in an automatic washer. I thought it unlikely that I would get out alive.

In desperation I rolled into a tight ball in the midst of a particularly deep cycle and several seconds later I surfaced at

the brink of the backwash.

With an inspired effort I managed to escape and swim to shore.

The hole had popped the lenses out of my glasses. All of my gear was floating free and the walls had been dislodged from the boat. Fortunately we managed to retrieve most of my equipment...all that I lost of consequence was my Tom Selleck baseball cap, my Herschl Walker knee pads and at least 90% of my dignity.

Mike Bush claimed the other 10%.

As I pulled myself onto the shore, coughing and gagging, Mike stomped toward me and I could tell he didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. I knew I was in for it and I thought about throwing myself back into the river.

"Some guys are all ate up with money and some guys are all ate up with women", Mike sputtered, "but you are all ate up with the dumbass."

There wasn't a thing I could say in my own defense.

Jess pointedly reminded me that we had agreed not to jeopardize the trip by taking reckless chances. He was, of course, quite right, but he could have saved his breath. The Magpie had already taught me the lesson.



Loaded Kayaks handle differently. Farmer Jonn Boulger plows through whitewater.



Access by air — Canada's mass transit system of the North.

I wanted to name that rapid the Eye of God. I thought that should be my prerogative. But John Boulger suggested Death Wish while Mike Bush insisted upon Comeuppance.

Perhaps the Hole of Humility would be an appropriate compromise.

The remainder of our odyssey was uneventful but nonetheless spectacular. The Magpie saved the best for last. As we approached the Seaway we encountered one waterfall after another, each more magnificent than the last.

They were all quite unrunnable...but somehow that seemed appropriate.

An hour before we paddled into the St. Laurence we reached the base of an eighty foot falls, the most spectacular of all. A vivid rainbow arched across the

base of the flume and the mist drifted more than a hundred and fifty feet over our heads.

The fact that no one else was there made it all the more special.

Knowing that we had reached the end of the run, we snapped the obligatory pictures and shook hands. Then we sat together, congratulating ourselves, all the while gazing at the falls.

Before long we couldn't think of anything to say. Suddenly we all felt very small.

Nine days before we had vowed to conquer the river. Now that seemed a ludicrous idea.

Paddlers may survive the river. They may even enjoy the run. But no one will ever conquer the Magpie.



Jean Smith angling over a precipitous West Branch chute.

The Future of AWA is in Your Hands

Your vote for 5 of these candidates will be the key to revitalization of our organization. Please take the time to study the points of view of each candidate in addition to their skills and experience to help us achieve a balanced and vigorous Board of Directors.

DON'T FORGET TO MAIL THE BALLOT WHICH IS STAPLED TO THIS ISSUE.

Running Great Falls on the Potomac no longer fazes me, but, boy, do I get freaked out about small hydro expropriation of our nation's rivers. I love to paddle but over the last few years, I've been forced to spend more and more of my time working with Friends of the Earth, ARCC, the ACA, and Audobon saving rapids endangered by small hydro facilities. Besides my daytime work as a lawyer in Congress, I and Steve Taylor formed River Research Systems which provides paddlers a platform for presentation of carefully prepared testimony and reports about the value of recreation and the costs of hydro development. Our work has led in part to the successful defense of the Black River and the Gauley (at least so far).

If elected to the Board, I would give full attention to the financial and membership problems of AWA and help it make better presentations for the hydro cases in which AWA becomes involved. I would also help AWA craft a more up-to-date constitution and bylaws. AWA is the only national organization fighting for river protection which can speak exclusively for whitewater paddlers - it must survive - it must prosper. I can help assure that this happens.

Mr. Pope Barrow
Bethesda, Maryland



I run a rafting business on rivers in New York's Adirondack Mountains and take my kayak out on them as often as my schedule as a teacher and businessman allows. Although conflicts between private paddlers and rafters occur often, AWA can be a voice for both groups without playing favorites. It's Board can also serve as a point of mediation where such conflicts arise. AWA has a history of coming to the aid of rivers both rafters and paddlers alike enjoy. If I were elected to the Board, I would help bring the rafter perspective to the organization.

I am also extremely concerned about saving rivers. As many people know, I was instrumental in initiating the fight for the Black River, now develop into a real success story. I have learned a lot about how to facilitate this protection and can help bring other rafting businesses behind AWA's efforts in this regard. In addition, my business sense will help give the Board some guidance into how to save money and manage activities more effectively. With time off in the summer, I can devote a significant amount of time to help AWA solve its problems and the problems facing our sport and rivers.

Ron Smith
Old Forge, New York

Six years ago I started kayaking in the southeast. Because I did not live near a place with an established whitewater or canoe club, I did most of my paddling with individuals whom I met at put-ins or with others who preferred to avoid the large group social outings of the clubs. Later when I moved to Texas A&M University (where I teach philosophy), I continued that pattern during the summers in Colorado and New Mexico. From the list of fellow boaters I have accumulated during those years I often call on individuals to go on trips such as a couple of no-frills first descents we did last winter in Mexico.

There are a lot of individuals out there who are interested in non-organized paddling at the level of class IV-V and extended self-support expeditions. These are the hardest to get to, but with the informal networks such paddlers have established among themselves, the Journal might tap a new resource. My interest as a director would be to try to help in the transition in format of the Journal to attract such individuals into the AWA. Primarily they are interested in reading about the individual experiences of others (either in articles or letters to the editor); but they do not know about the AWA or the Journal. Since the Journal is the means for generating and sustaining their interest in the AWA—most, despite what we would like, do not get involved in conservation or legal activities—the Journal's reconstitution in a less expensive format is the key. As a former college newspaper editor-in-chief, I know ways in which that might be done (note: I am not, however, offering my services as editor of the Journal). My contribution would be in helping get all those "hair" boaters who do not like to see themselves as members of social canoe clubs tied into one another through an organization like the AWA.

If this description sounds like the type of thing you are looking for in a director, include my name.

Keep up the good work.

Steve Daniel
3806 Oakwood
Bryan, Texas 77801

The AWA has been the leader in the evolution of the decked and open boat whitewater experience. Being a strictly volunteer organization, it is oftentimes difficult to concentrate on substantive issues such as promoting safety, protecting free-flowing streams, conducting races and clinics and the like, when there is no money to do anything and your volunteers are spread all over North America.

For the past four years I have been the Executive Director of a private nonprofit organization and school for children with handicapping conditions. Fund-raising, volunteer recruitment and organization, budgeting, and policy development are experiences that I feel would be assets that I could share if elected to the AWA Board of Directors.

I have been boating between 40 and 65 days each year since 1980. Whitewater is a primary sustenance in my life! In 1982, I was the director of the Southeastern River Safety and Rescue Symposium in Lexington, KY. I am a member of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association and the Viking Canoe Club. My primary interests are in seeing the AWA continue its tradition of leadership in the areas of safety, free-flowing river conservation, and whitewater cruising.

Richard J. Lewis
Frankfort, Kentucky

After serving as AWA's President for the past few years, learning the inner workings of this organization, meeting many of our unique and interesting members, and yet, somehow still finding the time to get to the river, I have decided to seek one more term as an AWA Board member. We are in need of strong volunteer labor; people dedicated to saving rivers; those interested in seeing the Safety Code revised and brought up-to-date; and, infallibly, paddlers interested in seeing to it that AWA survives. Those are my objectives and reasons for once again saying "O.K." Ten years ago, when first enamoured by whitewater, AWA provided me with many resources for learning what this sport was all about

through articles in the Journal and contacts with clubs around the country. I want to see this resource and the joys of river running still available for my kids and grandkids as they get old enough to enjoy it as much as I have.

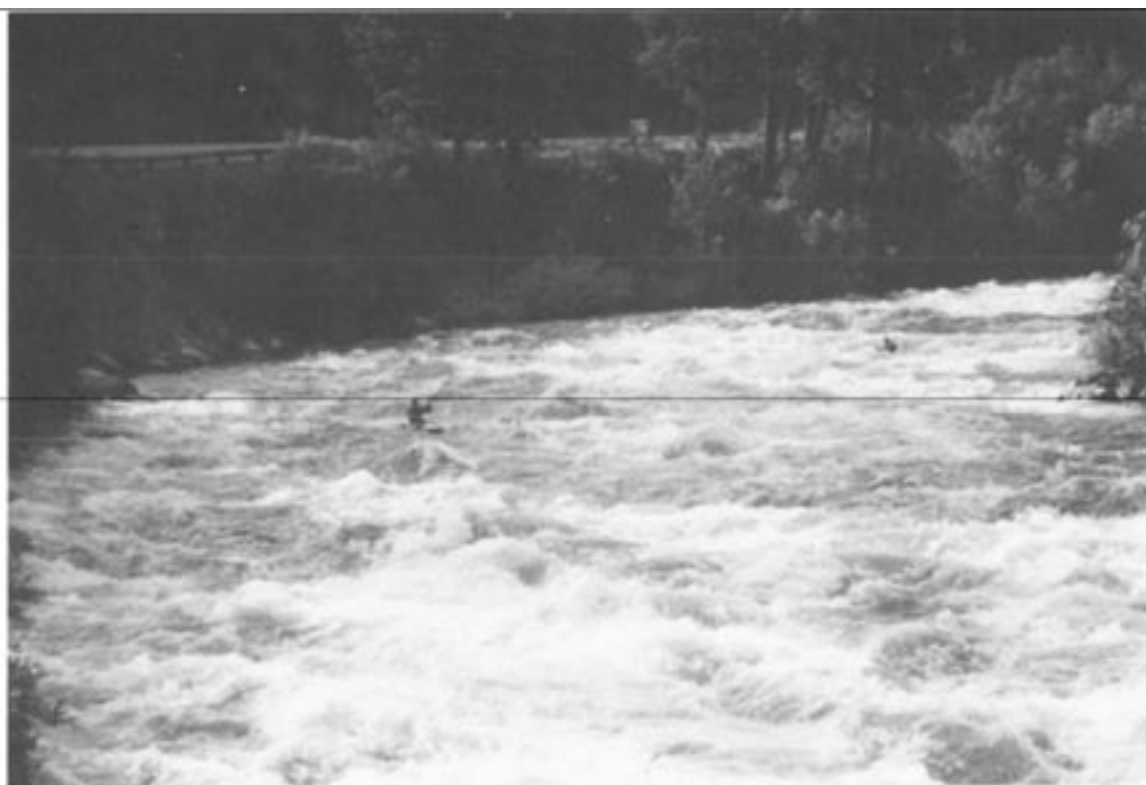
Marge Cline
Palatine, Illinois

When I first began paddling three years ago, I immediately joined the AWA. I felt then, as I do now, that AWA is the backbone of the national paddling network, designed to promote and disseminate information on recreation, conservation, instruction, and boating trends. The Journal touches on all aspects of America's whitewater activities. As editor of the KCCNY newsletter, I have tried to emulate this format on a local level, and at the same time, urge participation in a national newsletter exchange. If elected to the AWA Board of Directors, I would be willing to devote time and energy, furthering this cause. As advertising director, I would be able to raise funds to support both the Journal and AWA conservation efforts.

Phyllis Horowitz
Phoenicia, NY

I have been boating for two-thirds of my life and whitewater kayaking for the last nine years. My interests revolve around water, both in my recreational pursuits and my work as a hydrogeologist. I have enjoyed serving on the AWA Board of Directors and term my activities as Advertising Manager and Affiliate Coordinator. I have gained a knowledge of the workings of our organization. We need to continue our efforts in promoting boating safety and preserving our nations freeflowing rivers through our opposition to small hydroelectric projects and the effective intervention in licensing procedures. Coordinating our efforts with those of other whitewater organizations should help with that and other issues. We also need to strengthen AWA by increasing membership and broadening our geographic base. Only by increasing AWA's strength and gaining a broad base of support, will we be able to provide the influence that the whitewater boating community needs.

Keith Thompson
Laramie, Wyoming



COSTA RICA, GEM OF THE AMERICAS

by Gary Duven

I'm not one of those spartan types that enjoys cold whitewater paddling. Understand, I've done my share. Been snowed upon. Punctured by icebergs. On the edge of hypothermia. I wouldn't consider trading those memories; but I'm no longer compelled to relive them. So my New Year's Resolution #347 was this—do NOT go boating north of the equator in winter. That's not a recommendation for everyone, but just my own personal compromise with my aging, aching bones joints and epidermal layers.

Thus this past winter my destination was Costa Rica. Once again lured by hot tales of tropical temperatures, big water, and friendly people, not to mention a cheap round-trip ticket, I found myself aboard a Lacs Sirline flight to San Jose.

Costa Rica is slightly smaller than West Virginia. It is bordered on the east by the Caribbean and on the west by the Pacific. North is Nicaragua. South is Panama. Running through the country, north to south, is a mountainous spine. This highland area is where most of the people reside. The only change in season is from dry to wet, and it is the run-off during the rainy season that creates some of the best whitewater in the world.

Costa Ricans are friendly people and very proud of their country. There is a European and North American influence, especially in the capital of San Jose, which is very modern and cosmopolitan. Politically, Costa Rica is one of the most stable democracies in South and Central America, having gained its independence in 1821 by defeating Tennessee's soldier of fortune, General Walker (an interesting historical story). One of the surprising aspects of Costa Rica is its National Park system, which is one of the best in the world. These parks and wildlife reserves contain a fantasy of plant and animal life. The lowlands are covered by extensive virgin jungles supporting every sort of green plant and tree, over 800 species of birds, and some of the best fresh and salt water fishing to be found anywhere. Large populations of monkeys, bears, cats, deer, and various reptiles also thrive there.

My host in Costa Rica was veteran river-runner Mike Kaye. A former hockey player with the New York Rangers, he moved to Costa Rica in the early 1970's in search of warm weather and big water. Today, he is President of Costa Rica Expeditions. One of my objectives on this trip was to help Mike in the training of several new Indian guides (Fernando, Mario, and Oswaldo). As it turned out, I did more learning than teaching. Mike had met these three young native Costa Ricans on one of his earlier exploratory trips at the remote village of Bonampoco. They took to whitewater naturally, and their knowledge of the surrounding jungle was impressive. I'll never forget the awed look on their faces when they first took a look at my kayak; until then, their paddling experiences had come in an 800 lb. mahogany dugout canoe.

For the next two weeks, we paddled three of the best-known rivers in Costa Rica—the Chirripo, the Pacuare, and the Reventazon. San Jose remained our base camp between these trips, and most of our supplying and planning was done at Key Largo, a quaint little bodega near the center of town.

The Rio Chirripo was our first destination, about a four-hour drive from San Jose over on the western slope of the Cordillera for home, I could see the a 14,000 foot pass in 35 degree weather. Not what you'd expect in Central America. To envision the Chirripo, imagine the Colorado River at 10,000 to 15,000 cfs flowing through a mixture of jungle and terraced farmland with Class IV rapids every quarter-or-half-mile and a water temperature of 80 degrees. Ahhhhh. The pleasure of tropical river-running! Add to this an occasional monkey swinging through the trees, flocks of squawking parrots, colorful and rare butterflies, and iguanas (called chickens by the natives) sunning themselves in the branches of giant "La Gieba" trees, and it's almost beyond belief.

A word about the insect situation: we've all been horrified in our high school biology classes by chapters on insects and parasites in equatorial

regions. I can vividly remember a lecture on some obscure micro-organism whose sole purpose in life was to live in tropical waters waiting for an unsuspecting victim within which to provide a safe harbor for baby micro-organisms which eventually grew into something that ate one's bladder. Mosquito is another one of those words that invokes immediate attention. With these thoughts in mind, I sought out certain precautions prior to my trip which I felt might give me a fighting chance. I started consuming 500 mg per day of vitamin B1 and B12. I also swallowed two concentrated garlic pills daily which proved to be offensive to everyone and everything. Finally, I purchased a space age "bug spray" that is guaranteed to kill all roaches within 10 feet. Happily, I survived my trip without any complications at all. My organs remained intact.

We finished our trip on the Chirripo after four great days of paddling. Oh, there were the usual instances of flipped rafts, but nothing serious, and for the most part, I recall great "holes" for playing, one continuous three-mile Class III, lovely campsites, and excellent native cuisine. I was totally thrilled by this beautiful river. Back in San Jose for a day or two of rest, I was rudely awakened by vibrating; it was exactly the same feeling you get from a vibrating bed, but this bed had no coin slot! This occurred just four days after the devastating earthquake in Mexico City. Now we were experiencing the same in Costa Rica. It is surprising how trivial one's possessions become when the ground shakes beneath you. Fortunately, this was a small tremor and caused little damage.

The Rio Pacuare was the second river on our list, and it rated as my favorite. It was another four-hour drive, but this time over on the eastern slope. The river cuts a 90-mile path through some of the wildest jungle areas in Central America, and is tight and technical. Crystal clear water—beautiful waterfalls—numerous side hikes—solid Class IV-V rapids—and astounding wildlife. We camped each night in small clearings that had been used by animal trappers before government regulations outlawed them.

The night sounds were diverse and loud and gave us the sense of being carefully watched intruders. By day, the rapids never quit, and provided us with continuing excitement.

Thereafter we proceeded south for our last run on the Rio Reventazon (which is the Indian term for "bursting waters"). This was a one-day run. The scenery was decent, but nothing spectacular. The wildlife was marginal at best, but oh, what whitewater we encountered! Awesome!! The put-in was at a hydro-electric plant, and the release raced for 200 yards through two separate spillways, creating the kind of "hole" you'd like to tackle after an hour or so of paddling. For a kayaker, there is a feeling of being flushed. From this point on, the river dropped 125 feet per mile. Can't say I remember much of it, but I'll never forget it—big drops, big waves, big hydraulics. This was no place to flip, and if you did, you'd better roll! After three miles, the Reventazon eased up a bit. Tough, but manageable. By sundown, we were once again in San Jose, where Mike graciously put on a banquet in honor of the past two weeks. I had to smile at this tall Yankee who has built a very nice lifestyle for himself in this tropical paradise.

As my plane crossed the Central Cordillera for home, I could see the coastline and jungle below. It was a small wonder to me that I had been able to have traveled some of it. The guy in the next seat spent the entire trip trying to sell me stock in his Costa Rican orange grove. I resisted, but now that I'm home and reviewing my trip, it doesn't seem like such a bad idea!

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Paddling in Grizzly country should require firearms

KAYAKING IN GRIZZLY COUNTRY

Prairie Creek/Talkeetna River, Alaska

by Mac Thornton

"This is real bear country," said Jay Hudson, 28-year old bush pilot based in Talkeetna, south-central Alaska. Jay Lewis and I, Washington, D.C. area paddlers, were peering intently out of the windows of Hudson's float plane, looking for bear as we flew at treetop level up Prairie Creek. Our kayaks, crammed with camping equipment, were lashed to the undercarriage of the float plane. The plan was to land on Murder Lake, paddle eight miles down Prairie Creek, then another fifty miles down through the Class IV canyon of the Talkeetna River, all of it pristine Alaskan wilderness. While there are many more difficult rivers in Alaska, Nova River Runners, Alaska's premier river outfitter, describes its Talkeetna raft trips as Alaska's "ultimate river experience."

"It's about the end of the season for the king salmon run," Hudson continued "but if there're salmon still coming up Prairie Creek, the bear will probably be there."

The bear he was referring to was Alaskan brown bear, the grizzly. Jay and I were prepared for a grizzly if we met one. Sort of. We planned to carry a marine flare gun on the river, which might scare off a curious or hostile bear. We also had highway flares and a .357 magnum revolver, but these would be packed away in dry bags. Also packed away was a box of mothballs, our last purchase before embarking on the trip. We had been told to distribute these around the tent at night to ward off nocturnal visits by bears.

Although many people, including Hudson, advised carrying heavy duty firepower in grizzly country (excluding handguns), we chose not to. We were simply going to follow the basic rules. Above all, don't surprise them. Let the bear see and hear you while still at a distance. Back off facing a bear; never turn and run. Avoid sows and cubs. Don't camp near bear feeding areas, and hang **all** food from a tree. But one can

predict grizzlies to be somewhat unpredictable and the rules don't always work. Jack Hession, the Sierra Club's "man in Alaska" who had lent us the kayaks, had been charged by a grizzly this past spring, and the number grizzly "incidents" had been reportedly high this year in Alaska.

As Hudson circled Murder Lake for our landing, I felt relieved that we had not spotted any bears. In a few minutes we were off-loaded. Hudson taxied down to the far end of the lake, and revved up his engines. He took off right over our heads, flew over the first ridge and was gone. It is at such moments when conversation lapses and you find yourself seriously considering what you are committed to do.

It was 5:45 p.m. as we put in on the lake, but the Alaska sun was still high; in early August it is dark only from 11:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. As we paddled out on Murder Lake, we noticed it was like a giant, shallow goldfish bowl. The clear water was alive with red-colored king salmon, each from two and a half to four feet long and weighing ten to twenty-five pounds or more. At the end of the lake we eased our kayaks into Prairie Creek. I was a bit dismayed to see just how small a stream it was. Although the current was fast, it was basically a rock-dodging paddle down a big millrace about a foot a half deep. The king salmon were everywhere. We got more water in the face from salmon splashing away from our boats than from whitewater! There were dead salmon, too. The banks and gravel bars were littered with huge fish that had completed their spawning and died. But others lay on the river bank, caught and half-eaten or so it appeared. We also remarked that in between the bushes on the banks, the grass had been tramped down to the water's edge.

Around a bend, we came upon the first of many bald eagles, this one standing on an aristocratic perch in a dead tree off the right bank. Its mate stood in a big nest a few trees away. As we exited our kayaks for a closer look, we noticed that a trail had been worn along the bank, just in back of the first row of the bushes. Often the trail was overgrown at a height of about four feet, forming a sort of tunnel

of vegetation up the bank through the bushes.

By now we were halfway down the creek, and I began to wonder if we would see any grizzlies at all. Another two bends in the creek, and Jay calmly turned to me: "There's a bear." It was light brown, and at six feet in length, medium sized for a grizzly. It alone ambled the left bank looking for fish, about 40 yards downstream from us. We eddied out to the right.

"Shall I pull out the flare guns?" I asked.

"Not yet. Take a picture," said Jay. I admired his self-control, but he admitted later he was scared, too. The bear jumped in the creek and splashed around, evidently chasing a salmon. I got my camera out and fumbled with it, but I couldn't find the shutter button. Then I realized I was holding the camera upside down. The bear splashed around some more, then suddenly froze. He had spotted up. As I turned my camera right-side up he bounded up the bank and vanished into the bushes. Darn, no picture.

We pushed off and passed the bear's hunting spot wound around a turn to the right, then to the left where the creek narrowed to twenty-five feet. Tall vegetation stood on both sides. Jay was ahead of me and just to his left - only a boatlength away - a surprised grizzly stood up in the tall grass, and opened its mouth. Then he pulled back into the bushes.

We eddied out a minute later to catch our breath and check the flare guns. We agreed that two bears were enough, but on we floated, now backpaddling around the bends. Just a quarter mile further, we came into view of a big mama bear and two large, second-year cubs. We could only eddy out on "their" side of the creek, only twenty yards upstream. The grizzlies were staring at the water and walking up the bank towards us.

"Shall we say something?" Jay ventured "Hello!," I shouted. The sow looked up, took a step behind a five foot high bush and stood upon her hind legs. Her massive head and shoulders towered above the bush. For several long seconds she eyed us over, then dropped to all fours and walked away with her cubs in tow.

More bears, a total of eleven. A pair of solitary grizzlies in the left channel past an island. Not surprisingly, we went down the right channel. Another sow and two yearling cubs fifty feet to the left, scrambling off a log and into the woods as soon as they saw us. Finally a "silvertip" grizzly out in midstream - we watched him for a while before he wandered off, never having spotted us.

Another bend and the opaque, milky green Talkeetna, a large glacial river, came into view. It was a welcome sight, since grizzlies characteristically hunt salmon along only the clear side creeks where they can see the fish. We crossed the Talkeetna, quickly made camp and dinner, spread out the mothballs, and slept for ten hours.

The next morning was 50°, heavily overcast with showers. A caribou waded across the river just upstream. With the river about 35°, we prepared for a March paddle in West Virginia, wearing dry suits and polypropylene underwear. Today we faced the canyon of the Talkeetna with sluggish, fully loaded kayaks.

After five miles of fast Class II water, the canyon walls closed in, and we reached the first major rapid, a river-wide hole followed by a stretch with sheer walls, where the Talkeetna narrowed to only twenty-five feet. We were cautious and carried the hole. If one of us swam, it would be quite difficult to retrieve a loaded kayak in the continuous fast water, and a hike out would be forty-five miles through rough, trackless country. At the exit of the narrow stretch, I had few tense moments on a powerful eddy line, but escaped by riding the current right up to a rock wall. Next was a steep rapid with a huge (but avoidable) hole midstream.

Another mile of fast water, and the current really started to pick up! Long trains of three to five foot waves were interrupted by occasional holes and

exposed rocks. We had yet to see anything resembling a pool.

We eddied out left above a major rapid near Iron Creek which had several holes, a large, unavoidable breaking wave, and an impressive train of five foot waves, followed by more fast water. We deliberated a route down the right, but the route would require a ferry by surfing a medium sized breaking wave, skirting a hole, and then lining up fast for the big breaker. We walked it.

Back on the Talkeetna express for two more hours of endless wave trains and hole-dodging until we found a lovely campsite on a large gravel and boulder bar surrounded by high walls. Starting a fire with wet wood took an hour, but fueled with some Amaretto, we enjoyed the fire and the cool, cloudy evening. We had covered 31 miles in just five hours - including rest stops, scouting and the portages! Actually, the run was similar to the Lower Gauley without the more technical rapids like Upper Mash and Pure Screaming Hell - or like the easier rapids on the main stem of the Tuolumne at medium to low water. But this run was much faster and with no pools.

The last day's weather alternated cold driving rain with sun as cloud patterns blew rapidly up the Talkeetna Valley. Back on the river, we were surged onward just as we had been the day before until a narrow rock gateway signaled the end of the canyon. We then began a long afternoon of zigzagging our way through wide looping braids of the river for the last sixteen miles. We were accompanied by more eagles feeding on the occasional dead king salmon.

Early that evening, we floated into a campground near the frontier-style town of Talkeetna. As we walked towards town, an elderly couple pulled out of a campsite and told us they had left most of a fresh king salmon filet sizzling over a charcoal fire. We went at the fish like two hungry bears!

SAFETY CODE OF THE AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION



Adopted 1959; Revised 1986

Comments Requested.

Send within 3 weeks to:

Charlie Walbridge
AWA Safety Code Revision
Box 447
Penlyn, PA 19422

Comments on legal issues may be directed to:

Mac Thorton, 334 6th Street SE, Washington, DC, 20003, Phone 202-543-4923.

See page 4.

I. PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. Be a competent **swimmer**, with the ability to handle yourself underwater.
2. WEAR a **lifejacket**. A snugly-fitting vest-type life preserver offers back and shoulder protection as well as the flotation needed to swim safely in whitewater.
3. Wear a **solid, correctly-fitted** helmet when upsets are likely. This is essential in kayaks or covered canoes, and recommended for open canoeists using thigh straps and rafters running steep drops.
4. Do not boat out of control. Your skills must always be sufficient to stop or reach shore before reaching danger. Do not enter a rapid unless you are reasonably sure that you can run it safely or swim it without injury.
5. Whitewater rivers contain many hazards which are not always **easily** recognized. The following most frequent

killers:

- A. **HIGH WATER**. The river's speed and power increase tremendously as the flow **increases**, raising the **difficulty** of most rapids. Rescue becomes progressively harder as the water **raises**, adding to the danger. Floating debris and strainers make even an easy rapid quite hazardous. It is often misleading to judge the river level at the put in, since a **small** rise in a **wide, shallow** place **will** be **multipled** many times where the river narrows. Use **reliable** gauge **information** whenever possible, and be aware that sun or snowpack, hard rain, and upstream dam releases may greatly increase the flow.
- B. **COLD**. Cold drains your **strength**, and robs you of the **ability** to make sound decisions on **matters** affecting your survival. Cold water is **especially dangerous**; it draws heat from the body **25 times** as fast as air. Dress appropriately to protect **yourself** from **cold** water or weather extremes. When the water temperature is less than 50 degrees F, a **wetsuit** or **drysuit** is essential for **protection** if you swim. Next best **is** wool or **pile clothing under a waterproof shell**. In this case, **you** should also carry matches and a change **of clothing** in a **waterproof** bag. **If**, after prolonged exposure, a person experiences uncontrollable shaking, **loss** of coordination, and **difficulty** speaking, he or she **is hypothermic** and must be rewarmed at once.
- C. **STRAINERS**: **Brush, fallen** trees, bridge **pillings**, undercut rocks or anything else **which** allows river current **to sweep** through but which can **pin boats** and boaters against the obstacle. Water pressure on anything trapped this way can be overwhelming. Rescue **is** often extremely **difficult**. Pinning may occur in fast current, with little or no whitewater to warn of the danger.
- D. **DAMS, WEIRS, LEDGES, REVERSALS, HOLES, AND HYDRAULICS**: When water **drops over** an obstacle, **it curls** back on itself, **forming a** strong upstream current which may be capable of holding a boat or a swimmer. Some holes make for excellent **sport**; others are proven killers. Paddlers who cannot **recognize the differences** should **avoid** all but the smallest holes. Hydraulics **around** man-made dams must be treated **with utmost** respect regardless of their height or the level of the river. Despite their seemingly benign appearance they can create an almost escape-proof trap. The swimmer's only exit from the "drowning machine" **is** to dive **below** the

surface where the downstream current is flowing beneath the reversal.

6. Boating Alone is not recommended. The preferred minimum is three craft.
7. Have a frank knowledge of your **boating ability**, and don't attempt rivers or rapids which lie beyond that ability.
 - a. Develop the paddling skills and teamwork required to match the river you plan to boat. Most paddlers develop skills gradually, and that attempts to advance too quickly will compromise your safety and enjoyment.
 - b. Be in good physical and mental condition, consistent with the difficulties which may be expected. Make **adjustments** for loss of skills due to age, health, fitness. Any health problems must be explained to your fellow paddlers prior to starting the trip.
8. Be practiced in **self-rescue**, including escape from an overturned craft. The Eskimo Roll is strongly recommended for decked boaters who run rapids or Class IV or greater, or who paddle in cold environmental conditions.
9. Be **trained** in rescue **skills**, CPR, and first aid with special emphasis on recognizing and treating hypothermia.
10. Carry **equipment** needed for unexpected **emergencies**, including footwear which will protect your feet when walking out, a throw rope, knife, and waterproof matches. If you wear eyeglasses, tie them on and carry a spare pair on long trips. Bring cloth repair tape on short runs, and a full repair kit on isolated rivers. Do not wear bulky jackets, ponchos, heavy boots, or anything else which could reduce your ability to swim.
11. **Despite** the mutually supportive group structure described in this code, individual paddlers are ultimately responsible for their own safety, and **must** assume sole responsibility for the following decisions:
 - a. The decision to participate on any trip. This includes an evaluation of the expected difficulty of the rapids under the conditions existing at the time of the put in.
 - b. The selection of appropriate equipment, including a boat design suited to your skills and the appropriate rescue and survival gear.
 - c. The decision to scout any rapid, and to run or portage according to their best judgment. Other members of the group may offer advice, but paddlers must resist pressure from anyone to paddle beyond their skills. It is also their responsibility to decide whether to pass up any walk-out or take-out opportunity.
 - d. All trip participants must constantly evaluate their own and the group's situation, voicing concerns and ideas whenever appropriate and following what they believe to be the safest course of action.

II. BOAT AND EQUIPMENT PREPAREDNESS:

1. Test new and **unfamiliar** equipment under controlled conditions before relying on it for difficult runs. This is especially true when adopting a new boat design or outfitting system. Low volume craft may present additional hazards to inexperienced or poorly conditioned paddlers.
2. Be sure your boat and gear are in good repair before starting a trip. The more isolated and difficult the run, the more rigorous this inspection should be.

3. Install flotation bags in non-inflatable craft, securely fixed in each end, designed to displace as much water as possible. Inflatable boats should have multiple air chambers and be test-inflated before launching.

4. Have strong, properly sized paddles or oars for controlling your craft. Carry sufficient spares for the length and difficulty of the trip.

5. **Outfit** your boat safely. The ability to exit your boat quickly is an essential component of safety in rapids. It is your responsibility to see that there is absolutely nothing to cause entrapment when coming free of an upset craft. This includes:

- a. Spray covers which won't release reliably or which release prematurely under normal boating conditions.
- b. Boat outfitting too tight to allow a fast exit, especially in low volume kayaks or decked canoes. This includes low hung thwarts in canoes lacking adequate clearance for your feet and kayak footbraces which fail or which allow your feet to become wedged under them.
- c. Inadequately supported decks which collapse on a paddler's legs when a decked boat is pinned by water pressure. Inadequate clearance with the deck because of your size or build.
- d. Loose ropes which cause entanglement. Be aware of any length of loose line attached to a whitewater boat. All items must be tied tightly and excess line eliminated; painters, throw lines, and safety rope systems must be completely and effectively stored. Do not knot or attach anything to the end of a rope, as it can get caught in cracks between rocks.

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

- a. Kayaks and covered canoes should have grab loops of 1/4" + rope or equivalent webbing, sized to admit a normal sized hand. Stern painters are permissible if properly secured.
- b. Open canoes should have securely anchored bow and stern painters consisting of 8-10 feet of 1/4" + line. These must be secured in such a way that they are readily accessible, but cannot come loose accidentally. Grab loops are acceptable, but are more **difficult** to reach after an upset.
- c. Rafts and dories may have taut perimeter lines threaded through the loops provided. Footholds should be designed so that a paddler's feet cannot be forced through them, causing entrapment. Flip lines should be carefully and reliably stowed.

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

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

III. GROUP PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. Organization: River trips should be regarded as common adventures by all participants, except on specially designed instructional or guided trips, the

group is collectively responsible for the conduct of the trip, and participants are individually responsible for judging both their qualifications for participating and their safety as the trip progresses.

2. River Conditions: The group should have a reasonable knowledge of the difficulty of the run. Participants should evaluate this information and adjust their plans accordingly. If the run is exploratory or no one is familiar with the river, maps and guidebooks, if available, should be examined. The group should secure accurate flow information depending on available resources: the more difficult the run, the more important this will be. Be aware of possible changes in river level and how this will affect the difficulty of the run. If the trip involves tidal stretches, secure appropriate information on tides.
3. Group equipment should be suited to the difficulty of the river. The group should always have a throw line available, and one line per boat is recommended on difficult runs. The list may include: carabiners, prussick loops, first aid kit, flashlight, folding saw, fire starter, guidebooks, maps, food, extra clothing, and any other rescue or survival items suggested by conditions. Each item is not required on every run, and this list is not meant to be a substitute for good judgment.
4. Keep the group compact, but mainly sufficient spacing to avoid collisions. If the group is large, consider dividing into smaller groups or using the "Buddy System" as an additional safeguard. Space yourselves closely enough to permit good communication, but not so close as to interfere with one another in rapids.
 - a. The lead paddler sets the pace. When in front, do not get in over your head. Never run drops when you cannot see a clear route to the bottom or, for advanced paddlers, a sure route to the next eddy. When in doubt, stop and scout.
 - b. Keep track of all group members. Each boat keeps the one behind it in sight, stopping if necessary. Know how many people are in your group and take head counts regularly. No one should paddle ahead or walk out without first informing the group. Weak paddlers should stay at the center of a group, and now allow themselves to lag behind. If the group is large and contains a wide range of abilities, appoint a "Sweep Boat" to bring up the rear.
 - c. On heavily used rivers, do not cut in front of a boater running a drop. Always look upstream before leaving eddies to run or play. Never enter a crowded drop or eddy when no room for you exists. Passing other groups in a rapid may be hazardous: it's often safer to wait upstream until the group ahead has passed.
5. Float plan. If the trip is into a wilderness area or for an extended period, plans should be filed with a responsible person who will contact the authorities if you are overdue. It may be wise to establish checkpoints along the way where civilization could be contacted if necessary. Knowing the location of possible help and preplanning escape routes can speed rescue.
6. The use of alcohol or mind-altering drugs before or during river trips is not recommended. It dulls reflexes, reduces decision making ability, and may interfere with important survival reflexes. Alcohol in moderation is acceptable on the evenings or multi-day trips.
7. **Instruction or guided trips:** In this format, a person assumes the responsibilities of a trip leader. He or she may pass judgment on a participant's qualifications, check equipment, and assume responsibilities for the

conduct of the trip normally taken by the group as a whole.

- A. These trips should be clearly designated as such, as they could expose the leader to legal liability. Trip or personal liability insurance should be considered.
- B. Even on trips with a designated leader, participants must recognize that whitewater rivers have inherent hazards, and no guide or trip leader can guarantee their safety.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR RIVER RESCUE

1. Recover from an upset with an eskimo roll whenever possible. Evacuate your boat immediately if there is imminent danger of being trapped against rocks, brush, or any other kind of strainer.
2. If you **swim**, hold on to your boat. It has much flotation and is easy for rescuers to spot. Get to the upstream end so that you cannot be crushed between a rock and your boat by the force of the current. Persons with good balance may be able to climb on top of a swamped kayak or flipped raft and paddle to shore.
3. Release your craft if **this will** improve your chances, especially if the water is cold or dangerous rapids lie ahead. Actively attempt self-rescue whenever possible by swimming for safety. Be prepared to assist others who may come to your aid.
 - A. When swimming in shallow or obstructed rapids, lie on your back with feet held high and pointed downstream. Do not attempt to **stand** in fast moving water; if your foot wedges on the bottom, fast water will push you under and keep you there. Get to slow or very shallow water before attempting to stand or walk. Look ahead! Avoid possible pinning situations; undercut rocks, strainers, downed trees, holes, and other dangers by swimming away from them.
 - B. If the rapids are deep and powerful, roll over onto your stomach and swim aggressively for shore. Watch for eddies and slackwater and use them to get out of the current. Strong swimmers can effect a powerful upstream ferry and get to safety fast. If the shores are obstructed with strainers or undercut rocks, however, it is safer to "ride the rapid out" until a safer escape can be found.
4. If **others** spill and **swim**, go after the boaters first. Rescue boats and equipment only if this can be done safely. While participants usually assist one another to the best of their ability they should do so only if they can avoid significant danger to themselves. The first duty of the rescuer is not to compound the problem by becoming a victim himself.
5. The use of rescue **lines requires training**; uninformed use may cause injury. Never tie yourself to either end of a line without a reliable quick-release system. Have a knife handy to deal with unexpected entanglement. Learn to place set lines effectively, to throw them accurately, to belay effectively, and to properly handle a rope thrown to you.
6. When **reviving** a drowning **victim**, be aware that cold water may greatly extend survival time underwater. Victims of hypothermia may have depressed vital signs: they may look and feel dead. Don't give up; continue CPR for as long as possible without compromising your own safety.

IV. INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

The following **scale** is used to measure river difficulty by whitewater paddlers throughout the world. It can be

used to compare the difficulty of different rivers to one another. Be aware that this system is not exact. Rivers do not always fit neatly into the various classifications, and there are pronounced regional and individual interpretations of the scale which may create misunderstandings.

Paddlers attempting difficult rapids in unfamiliar area should exercise caution until they get a feel for how the scale is interpreted locally. Rivers **will change** from year to year due to geologic disturbances, downed trees, or variations in weather and water conditions. Always be alert for unexpected problems.

As rivers become more difficult, the risk of injury in the event of a swim increases. As rapids become longer and more continuous, the challenge intensifies. If you have run an occasional Class IV rapid, do not assume that you are ready for a whole river in that category. Extra care is indicated when the water temperature is below 50 degrees F or when the river traverses inaccessible terrain.

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

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

CLASS III: Intermediate. Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and capable of swamping an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and narrow passages requiring good boat control frequently exist; large waves, holes, and strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Chances of injury while swimming is low, but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims.

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

CLASS V: Expert. Extremely long, obstructed, or violent rapids which expose the paddler to above average risk of injury. Drops may contain very large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids often continue for long distances between pools

or **eddies**, demanding a high level of fitness. What eddies exist may be small, turbulent, or difficult to reach. At the high end of this class several of these factors may be combined. Scouting is mandatory, and rescue is extremely difficult, even for experts. A very reliable eskimo roll and above average self-rescue skills are essential.

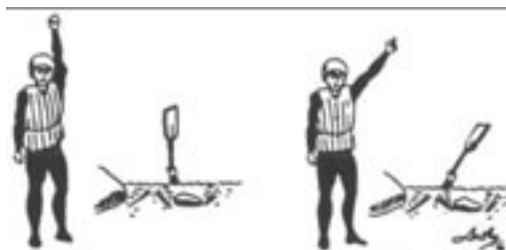
CLASS VI: Almost impossible. The difficulties of Grade VI carried to the limits of navigability. Nearly impossible and **very dangerous**; risks are high and rescue may be impossible. For teams of experts only, at favorable water levels, after close study and with all precautions. The frequency with which a rapid is run should have no effect on this rating, as there are a number of Class VI rapids which are regularly attempted.

A New System of Universal River Signals:



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

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



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

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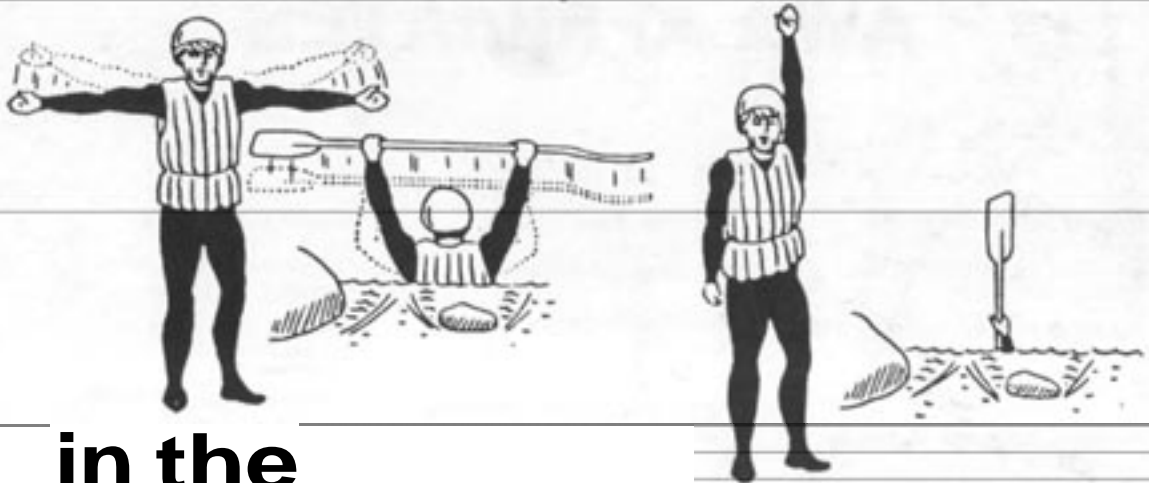
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A New System of Universal River Signals:



in the NEW AWA SAFETY CODE



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