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Gauley Season!
What with the increasing number of paddlers, hoards of rafters, a growing festival and new roads into the river, Gauley season is more of a carnival than a simple whitewater experience...but it's still the best show in town.

Whitewater Worlds
Stunning performances cap a superbly staged event on Maryland's Savage River.

By Mac Thornton

Tygart Tales
Face it...one stretch of whitewater looks pretty much like the next, even on a river with as much variety as West Virginia's Tygart. It's the people, tradition and history surrounding a river that make a river unique--and in that regard, the Tygart is a special place.

By Bob Gedekoh

AWA Briefs
Noah International burned to ground...Product review of Perception's Corsica...AWA Directors meet

conservation Currents
Conservation hotspots for 1989...AWA stragedy for upcoming year...Rep. Rahall comments on value of whitewater...Relicensing sites of hydro projects...Exemption bill for hydro plants dangerous to boaters...FERC throws obstacles before paddlers wishing to participate in relicensing

Safety Lines
Safety at the World Championships a result of years of planning

By Charlie Walbridge

Two more whitewater fatalities reported as 1989 proves a black year for paddlers

End Notes

Front cover: James Swedberg captures an ender by Lee Liebfarth on Canada's Ottawa River
Releases!

As I write this a steady late-July rain pounds down outside my window. Rain in July...amazing! Especially after the last two drought years.

Normally at this time of the year, I'm already sweating about water levels at West Virginia's Summersville Dam...will there be water for Gauley releases? And if there are no releases, what will happen to the AWA Gauley River Festival?

Sponsoring the festival is nerve-racking enough without facing the prospect of the Army Corps cancelling a release—as was the case in 1987.

But I'm happy and relieved to report that at this point, the forecast for water looks good. Unless there's a major catastrophe (like a supernova evaporating the lake), we'll have releases as scheduled.

Which means this year, I'll be able to enjoy the river as well as the festival. See you there!

After nearly three years up at the American Whitewater editorial batter's box, a couple of pinch hitters have agreed to stand in and take a few swings for me.

Bob Gedekoh will assume responsibility for the November/December issue of American Whitewater while John Porterfield will oversee the January/February magazine.

Both men are well qualified. Bob has been a frequent contributor to American Whitewater and River Runner magazines while John is the co-author of a whitewater guidebook and a contributor to American Whitewater. But just as important—both are expert paddlers. We wouldn't want no wimpy boaters serving as editor of the world's best semi-professional whitewater magazine.

I'll still have my hand in production of the next two issues: I'll still lay out the issues on my computer and oversee the printing. Maybe I'll even write something. But mostly I intend to hang out and recharge some batteries.

Serving as a one-man editorial staff is a rewarding and exhausting task, as I'm sure Bob and John will discover. I understand that some people actually do this as a full-time job, instead of an after-work hobby. It's easy to run low on enthusiasm after several years at the helm—but I hope to be back fresh and full of lies for the spring boating season.

American Whitewater Staff

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WHAT IS THE AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION?

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over 1,300 whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 50 local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

EDUCATION: Through publication of a bi-monthly journal, the AWA provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique, and equipment.

CONSERVATION: AWA maintains a national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through its "River Watch" system, publishes information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers, and provides technical advice to local groups regarding river management and river conservation. AWA also gives annual awards to individuals to recognize exceptional contributions to river conservation and an annual "hydromania" award to recognize the proposed hydroelectric power project which would be most destructive of whitewater.

EVENTS: AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation. Since 1986, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual Gauley River Festival in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation, other than at international racing events.

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

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES: AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 146 N. Broadway, Palatine, Illinois. 60067. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 401(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF: Except for membership services and the Executive Director position, all AWA operations, including publication of the bi-monthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.

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Dear Sir,

I read with interest Bruce Hare's letter about the problems he had paddling in Costa Rica with Rafael Gallo's company, Rios Tropicales. Rafael worked for me before starting his own company, and I know where Bruce Hare is coming from.

It is not fair, however, to tar all professional outfitters with the same brush. Costa Rica Expeditions did the original exploration and Costa Rica white-water in 1978, and we've been giving highly professional service to 1,000's of satisfied paddlers ever since.

Sincerely,
Michael S. Kaye, President
Costa Rica Expeditions

---

Different brush

Dear Sir,

I do wish you had published a rebuttal alongside of Paul Janus' ridiculous and self-serving letter regarding the Merrimack River. Almost nothing in it was true and the "local boaters" he refers to are himself and a few others of a 165 member club plus all the rest of us.

Mark Citorowski has single-handedly turned Manchester into a safe and worthwhile site for boaters and had nothing to do with river bottom changes affecting the "hole" formed by the water main. Before he took out two truckloads of old iron, cable and rebar, I wouldn't let my sons use it. Janus implied some pristine setting, not an industrial mill site in a concrete setting!

Janus had done absolutely nothing positive for site--only use it--and apparently fears congestion. Not only that, "someone" continues to cut down the practice gates which Mark and others placed for use by all in gaining skill and control and which did not interfere with any of the normally used waves and eddies. Janus had previously agreed verbally to all changes done including all rock placement and leaving the "tiny concrete piers" (which, incidently provide eddies that allow one to paddle back to the head of the rapid without getting out of one's boat).

These comments about the Merrimack site are completely irrational. Any ink you give him certainly does not serve the boating community.

Sincerely yours,
Jim Sindelar
Concord, NH

---

No knuckleheads

Dear Chris,

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Jim Sindelar
Concord, NH

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Knuckleheads II

To: Chris Koll, Editor AWA

Thanks for publishing AWA Knuckleheads letter. It was the only correct article AWA has printed regarding the Merrimack River race course project. This project destroyed the best sidesurfing play area in New Hampshire. Promises were made, none were kept, and objections from local paddlers were ignored. Now, our advice about restoring the area is being ignored. It is time for the responsible persons to remove the boulders, placed and restore the area to its former condition.

Editor's note: Since I have never boated the Merrimack, I have no official opinion regarding this apparent controversy. It is my policy to print every letter possible even within space constraints. Publication does not indicate endorsement--I don't know who is right or wrong here.

However--it has come to my attention that individuals involved with restructuring the area have received unsigned obscene letters, apparently from paddlers objecting to the project. I'd reprint some of the letters, but the language offends even my stretched sense of propriety.

While I'm not taking sides in the issue, I'd welcome the opportunity to beat the snot out of the unsigned letter writer(s). Even though my brawling days are a few years in the past, I don't think I'd have any trouble punching out the little punk(s). Anyone who sends an unsigned obscene letter has got to be a gutless pussy.

---

Not slick

Dear Chris,

I already receive two slick, overdone journals (Outside and Canoe). Your articles appear to come from the real people I meet on the river. Don't change a thing. It's great!

Thanks,
Adam James

Editor's note: Gee, thanks Adam...I think. Actually, I try as hard as I can to succumbing to slickness. That's why I purposely leave a few typos and spelling errors in every issue. Believe me, it's not easy staying the best semi-professional whitewater magazine on the market.
Dear Chris,

I would like to comment on Bruce Hare’s letter concerning the book The Rivers of Costa Rica and my company, Rios Tropicales (American Whitewater, May/June 1989). It would appear that Mr. Hare’s memory has failed him with regard to several aspects of his trips to Costa Rica, especially the episode at the Rio Sucio four years ago. In addition, I am surprised that a person who was provided with two complimentary trips to Costa Rica would express such venomous remarks in a public forum such as the AWA Journal.

The reason for the construction workers firing shots at the group, and the group later being pursued by the police, was due not to simple trespass around an official roadblock, but because Mr. Hare himself struck the guard. In defense of the level of services provided by the outfitter, it should be emphasized that this was not a standard commercial trip, but rather a bare-bones hair boaters’ trip organized for the benefit of the participants. The commercial trips run by my company and by Costa Rica Expeditions are thoroughly professional, comparing favorably with any U.S. operation in quality of equipment, safety, food, and accommodations. Mr. Hare specifically criticized the quality of the boats used. Perhaps he should recall that he brought new Perception Dancers from the States with him.

A guided kayak or raft trip in Costa Rica through the services of Rios Tropicales or Costa Rica Expeditions (the competing operation, which is also listed in our guidebook) can be a great experience with few hassles. That is why the foremost outfitters in the U.S. and Canada use the services of the licensed commercial operators in Costa Rica. I don’t believe that Sobek, Nantahala Outdoor Center, Arizona Raft Adventures, Mountain Travel, Journeys, Baja Expeditions, Madawaska Karu Camp, and many others would chance winning their reputations by offering tours through a company that offered anything less than superb service. These companies have been operating tours in Costa Rica for five years with considerable success, many return customers, and strong bookings for future trips.

While it is illegal to operate commercial trips in Costa Rica without a license, it is certainly possible for private boaters to visit Costa Rica for self-supported tours. In fact, I believe that the guidebook will make such trips much easier to accomplish by providing accurate information about put-ins and take-outs, gradients, degree of difficulty of the various segments of rivers, and general information about travel in Costa Rica.

Foreigners will find Costa Rica to be a country that is not only beautiful and blessed with an incredible abundance and variety of whitewater, but one whose people are warm and friendly to all visitors. As a country that has earned an international reputation for its devotion to peace and without a standing army, Costa Rica is a warm, friendly nation, but acts of violence such as those perpetrated by Mr. Hare are not welcomed.

Sincerely,

Rafael Gallo
Pavas, Costa Rica

Re: May/June American Whitewater letters

I agree that AWA should drop “Affiliation.” Please pass the info on.

Phil Montgomery
Boats. molds desfroved

Fire wipes out Noah kayaks

Vladimír Vanha, the Czechoslovakian emigre who founded Noah International and molded the company into the country’s second-largest producer of kayaks, literally watched his dreams of carving a niche in the white-water market go up in smoke.

As swift fire, fueled by 600 plastic kayaks waiting to be shipped and flammable chemicals, leveled Noah’s headquarters near Bryson City, NC in late July.

- 650 boat shells
- Seats and bracing for 300 finished boats
- All old glass boat molds used in designing process
- Current boat, seat and knee brace molds
- Design work for a new boat scheduled for introduction in September
- Computer and other office equipment and supplies

The total loss was estimated to be $500,000. Unfortunately, Vanha’s facilities were uninsured.

Ironically, prior to the disaster, Noah’s business had never been better as the company projected a profit as of August. Now Vanha will probably need to declare bankruptcy.

Vanha speculated that the fire originated after his brother had been working on a glass boat for his son and let a jar with some catalyst remaining. Apparently, the jar was near remnants of a small cobalt spill from two years ago when Vladimir noticed the jar smoldering.

Since the fire marshall had been by just a few days before, Vladimir was a little paranoid about a potential fire. There was flammable material around, but more significantly, a 500 gallon tank of propane.

It was nearly lunch time, so before everyone left, Vladimir put the jar in the middle of the concrete floor and instructed the last person out to check the jar before leaving. He also made sure he knew the location of the fire extinguisher.

Thirty minutes after leaving for lunch, the building for engulfed in flames. The propane tank exploded, sending shards of metal and pieces of the building as far as half a mile away. Flames were shooting higher than the surrounding trees, witnesses reported.

Because of the flammable materials, firefighters refrained from using water to subdue the blaze. Because of the toxic smoke produced by the blaze, seventeen local residents were temporarily evacuated. However, fortunately no injuries were reported and no significant damage was reported to surrounding property.

Vahna seems fatalistic about the event—even to the point of participating in a little black humor.

With curious passersbys crowding up to roped-off area to view the damage, Vanha painted “Short Look--$1.00” on a barrel supporting the barricades across the driveway.

And Vanha also supplied a jar of charred remains to the NOC store labeled “Instant Aeroquatics: Just add water...$9.95”.

Vahna is uncertain of future plans, contemplating working as a boat designer, teaching, or perhaps returning to Czechoslovakia.

But nevertheless, the kayak world has just lost one of its major suppliers of quality equipment and contributors to river conservation.
**Product test**

**Corsica rates favorable reviews**

*By Tom McAndrew*

"...Too round and big! You'll never ender that thing."

"...Only new paddlers will like that boat."

These were the initial reactions by my friends when they saw the Corsica. Were they surprised to see a 200 pound, experienced paddler virtually out of the water after endering in Perception's new design.

After a few hours in the Corsica, large-framed paddlers reviewing the boat acted as if they had found a plastic Shangrila. Each of them listed comfort as the boat's most important feature. One added that the thigh braces were the first that enabled him to really utilize his legs for boat control. Indeed, after reviewing the boat, he purchased one.

Smaller paddlers also liked the comfort, but felt the boat was too big to use on many rivers. They indicated an interest in an "XS" (smaller version), and Perception is considering developing such a boat.

The Corsica is 10'9 1/2" long and weighs 39 pounds. It features a substantial bow rocker and a well-rounded bow point. The cockpit is spacious and a large-cockpit sprayskirt is needed. The boat is 25 1/2" wide and exhibits a moderate chine.

This review reflects opinions from a diverse team of reviewers who ranged in height from 5'2" to 6'4" and in weight from 125 to 220 pounds.

The boat's short length and upturned bow enables one to easily surf short, steep waves. It rarely dives and when it does, you can lean way back on the stern deck, which is significantly lower than the bow deck. This feature may also be the reason that our 200-pound reviewer got back enders more easily than front enders!

In most holes the Corsica performed quite well. Since there are no hard edges to be caught by the water, the boat was quite stable in bigger holes. The short length combined with the raised bow enabled one to spin effortlessly at the edge of holes. The only problems were encountered in small, shallow, ledge holes where the boat's width caused it to bounce out.

The boat's ability to turn on its center point was an asset on steep creeks as well as in holes, allowing paddlers to spin around in short, narrow eddies. (Appropriately, the boat's name comes from an island boasting some of the best steep creeks in the world.) Even the heaviest paddlers found that the boat barely submerged after going over a ledge or a falls, and smaller paddlers felt very well protected. The rounded edges and high volume made it seem impossible to vertically pin on most drops and the boat cruised easily down some quite technical streams.

While good for steep creekers and large-framed boaters, the Corsica is also viable for another class of boaters: those that no longer can get out very often because of other commitments. This group wants to run the tough rivers they used to, and get a high level of performance from their boat, but they are not in the condition they once were. With the Corsica they can paddle these rivers without spending the whole day upside-down in a low-volume, hard-railed boat.

Most of the reviewers felt the boat was slow, which the design suggests. However, as if to compensate, the boat tracks quite well, which was a surprise. It also held a good line while ferrying, though in big water it did get pushed sideways.

The grab loops are ergonomically designed for wrist comfort when portaging. This is interesting, but we wished they were larger to better facilitate bow and stern lines while "car-top portaging". Both ends feature two depressions so that you can retrofit a second grab loop if you so desire.
There is a recessed groove that extends for most of the length of the boat along each side. This protects the seat adjustment screws and provides additional strength and rigidity to the plastic. A few reviewers wished that Perception would round off the small edges of these grooves. Whenever the paddle was caught by the water, while surfing or hole playing, the paddler’s thumb would get scraped by the groove’s edges.

Perception’s brochure for the Corsica mentions an optional “Biner-Basket”, which is an “in-deck mounted carabiner/safety rope assembly.” This may be a great safety feature. Unfortunately, this option is not currently available, as they are still evaluating products to be used in this feature.

Some frustration was reported concerning efforts to empty water from the boat. Tilting the boat up-and-down left quite a bit of water inside. Perhaps something can be modified to improve this situation.

Overall, the Corsica is a good, very comfortable boat that satisfies the needs of several types of paddlers. Beginners, steep creekers and occasional paddlers will love its versatility. Large paddlers will be ecstatic with its comfort. Small, experienced paddlers and squitters will like it on creeks, but may find it clumsy and somewhat awkward at other times. Perception should be commended for creating a boat with such a wide range of uses.

(Primary contributors to this review were Forrest Calloway and Rich Widman)

Directors meet, review policies

With members of American Whitewater Board of Directors geographically spread across the entire country, it’s not surprising that the entire Board has never attempted to sit down in one place together.

But with the attraction of the World Whitewater Championships on the Savage River combined with the excellent natural-flow levels on the nearby Top and Upper Yough, a majority of the directors gathered their initial national meeting at Swallow Falls State Park in western Maryland.

The Directors addressed key issues facing American Whitewater: developing a plan for organizational growth; increasing membership; production of the journal; and formulating plans for priority conservation and fundraising projects.

The Board approved a proposal by Mac Thornton to develop a network of regional American Whitewater representatives around the country. The duties of a regional rep would be alerting the organization of new or ongoing threats to local rivers, keeping local constituents apprised of American Whitewater activities, and soliciting articles and information to the journal.

Also on a organizational level, elections were held for several constitutional positions. Diana Holder of Tennessee was elected president; Sarah Lawrence of California was elected as secretary while Pope Barrow of Washington, D.C. was named conservation chairman.

In an effort to boost membership, approval was given to develop an American Whitewater video explaining the organization’s activities. Also, programs to regain members who failed to renew were discussed. As a method of redistributing responsibility for production of the journal, Bob Gedekoh and John Porterfield were named as co-editors.

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National newsletter features club info

Confluence, a quarterly newsletter featuring selected articles reprinted from the newsletters of over 100 local paddling clubs, is now being compiled by former AWA Board Director Marge Cline.

As long-time editor of The Gradient, newsletter of the Chicago Whitewater Association, Cline has been involved newsletter exchanges with clubs across the country. While much of what appears in club newsletters is relevant to members only, the publications often contain articles of interest to the whitewater community as a whole.

It is the intent of Confluence to track down those entertaining or informative articles to produce a grassroots paddling publication. No editing is done to articles used and an inexpensive cut and paste operation is used for layout and reproduction.

In addition to reprinted articles, the newsletter will include a feature a profile of a different paddling club with each issue. An inexpensive classified section for selling, trading or exchanging equipment will also be offered. A year subscription (four issues) is available for $12 from Marge Cline, 1343 North Portage, Palatine, IL 60067. Issues will be mailed first-class.

Nominations for Directors, regional staff volunteers - now being solicited

With annual elections for American Whitewater Board of Directors scheduled for the next issue of the Journal, executive director Risa Calloway is accepting nominations and recommendations of potential candidates.

The roles of responsibilities of an AWA Director have increased during the past five years, and candidates must be willing to take an active part in AWA activities.

In addition, the AWA is looking for regional conservation directors. Interested parties should contact Pope Barrow at the address included in the masthead.
AWA fights for whitewater

The American Whitewater Affiliation is fighting to preserve endangered whitewater across the nation. Here’s a quick rundown of the whitewater hot spots of 1989:

**North Fork of Payette (ID)**

The AWA Hydromania Award this year went to the project proposed to be built by the GEM Irrigation district on the North Fork of the Payette in Idaho, one of the nation’s most treasured whitewater rivers. The extremely dangerous and harmful project is backed financially by Idaho potato magnate J.R. Simplot, reportedly one of the richest men in the world. Details are in the Jan/Feb ’89 issue of American Whitewater.

**Klamath (OR)**

Last year, AWA’s Hydromania Award (given to the City of Klamath Falls, Oregon) spotlighted an outrageous project on Oregon’s Klamath River. Unfortunately, the city’s Salt Caves proposal is still alive and kicking despite the bad publicity and the efforts of local river conservation groups to administer the coup de grace. The dam may be turned into a tunnel, but either way, a fabulous whitewater river would be desecrated.

**Savage (MD)**

A hydro proposal on the Savage River was still alive, but just barely, as of this writing. Although the Savage has now attained astounding prominence and importance as the site of 1989 Whitewater World Championships, State officials have not yet agreed to set the river aside as protected from hydroelectric power projects. AWA, in cooperation with ACA and the Savage River Defense Fund, continues to work for permanent protection for the Savage.
Mongaup (NY)
Together with the Kayak and Canoe Club of New York, AWA filed formal legal papers in the case on New York's Mongaup River involving the so called Rio Project owned by Orange and Rockland Utilities and located 3 miles above the confluence with the Delaware River. AWA and the KCCNY demanded that the utility cease barring public access to the lower Mongaup. (If access were available, the lower Mongaup could offer excellent whitewater boating when the plant is generating with either or both turbines.)

James (VA)
Listed by American Rivers as one of America's 10 most endangered rivers, the whitewater section of the James through downtown Richmond is the victim of a virtual deluge of hydroelectric projects. AWA has protested 3 new proposed projects so far. The Synergics proposal to reopen the now-defunct 12th St plant would affect Pipeline Rapid and the City of Richmond proposal upstream at Hollywood Belle Isle would affect the popular Hollywood Rapid. AWA volunteer attorney Paul Flynn, with help from American Rivers and the Coastal Canoeists, has taken the lead in fighting these projects. Details are in the Jan/Feb '89 issue of American Whitewater.

Chattooga (GA)
Rabun County Georgia has been considering a site near the Chattooga River for a new airport. AWA has joined with numerous other national and local organizations to pressure the country to take the Chattooga site out from consideration because of the effects of aircraft in the river corridor. Opposition has been intense and it now appears that the county will select another site in order to maintain the pristine quality of the Chattooga River. Details are in the Jan/Feb '89 issue of American Whitewater.

More Wild and Scenic for West Virginia (WVa)
AWA Vice President Mac Thomson has been spearheading a project to have the National Forest Service study a number of tributaries of the Cheat, Gauley, and Potomac rivers in West Virginia for possible Federal Wild and Scenic designation. The rivers on the list include some whitewater favorites, such as the Blackwater, the Cranberry, and the Shaver's Fork. Over 20 other groups delivered a quality color-illustrated packet explaining the importance of these rivers to Dale Robertson, Chief of the Forest Service.

Upper Yough (MD)
The Deep Creek Lake Project, which provides whitewater releases all summer long for the Upper Yough is now up for relicensing. AWA has been in communication with the Pennsylvania Electric Company and with State and Federal officials to try to improve whitewater flows on this immensely popular stream. Meanwhile, AWA has been attempting to insure that the new State management plan for the Upper Yough does not result in unsafe and overcrowded conditions. The river can be dangerous, especially when overcrowded. (One person died earlier this year at Lost and Found Rapid.) Details are in the Jan/Feb '89 issue of American Whitewater.

Gauley (WVa)
The bill enacted last year including the Gauley River in America's newest National Recreation Area was too late to protect the Gauley River corridor from rampant bulldozing by commercial outfitters. USA Whitewater quietly constructed two new roads into the river corridor near Sweets Falls, just as the bill was nearing enactment. Now AWA is trying to get Congress to provide funds to the Park Service to undo the damage. Meanwhile, two proposed hydroelectric projects are still under consideration for construction at the base of Summersville Dam. These projects were exempted from the new law. (See the article in this issue by West Virginia Congressman Nick Rahall)

Lower Youghiogheny (PA)
Crowding problems persist on the Lower Youghiogheny in Western Pennsylvania. AWA has been supporting Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Club plan to have the Park administration adopt an interpretation of its regulations which would allow private river use during off-peak periods. So far we have been unable to obtain a positive response. Details are in the March/April '89 issue of American Whitewater.

Ontonagon (MI)
AWA and American Rivers filed a formal legal opposition to the Upper Peninsula Power Company's proposal to relicense the Bond Falls Project on the Ontonagon River in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The two groups demanded that the power company's new license comply with a 1986 Federal law mandating that whitewater recreation and fishing be equal consideration with power production when a new license is issued for an existing project. Details are in the Jan/Feb '89 issue of American Whitewater.

Arkansas (CO)
AWA has injected itself into the acrimonious controversy involving the Arkansas River in Colorado between Granite and Canyon City where various groups are debating the merits and demerits of turning control over the river over to the Colorado Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation for intensive tourist-oriented management. (The river is now managed in part by the Federal Bureau of Land Management and in part not managed at all.) AWA has asked that whoever wins this fight should have an affirmative responsibility to protect the river from water projects and other forms of river abuse. Almost all concerned groups are opposed to over-regulation of the river by the State Parks agency.

Niagara Gorge (NY)
In terms of State over-regulation, the situation at the Niagara Gorge takes it to the extreme. Despite fierce opposition (led by AWA director and attorney Bob Glanville) New York
State Department of Parks and Recreation has closed Niagara Gorge to whitewater boating. AWA sued the State agency, lost the suit, appealed, lost the appeal, and is now working to get the decision overturned in the NY State Assembly. The early skirmishes in this battle are described in the Sep/Oct '88 issue of American Whitewater.

North Fork of the Yuba (CA)
In response to appeals for help from local California groups AWA has filed motions at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission protesting a new hydroelectric project proposed by Sierra County for the North Fork of the Yuba. The project would be just upstream of the put-in Upper Run on the North Fork (13 miles of class IV-V water from Sierra City to Downieville).

Mokelumne (CA)
Together with several other groups (led by Friends of the River) AWA has protested the proposal by Amador County California to build the Devils Nose/Cross County project on the North Fork and main stem of the Mokelumne River. AWA was formally allowed in to the case in May of this year to advocate protection of the Mokelumne's fabulous whitewater resources.

Black (NY)
Although the major battle for the Black River below Watertown seems to have been won, at least for the moment, AWA continues to work with the Glen Park company to implement the historic AWA-Glen Park agreement which provides whitewater flows. Meanwhile AWA is pressing the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to reconsider Long Lake Energy's proposed Fletts Mills project upstream. If built, the project would be the largest new hydro facility in New York State, and possibly the largest new project in the northeast.

Raquette (NY)
AWA is pressing State Department of Environmental Conservation to stop the Adirondak Hydro's Sissonville Project and examining the relicensing of several Niagara Mohawk projects.

Beaver (NY), Dead (ME), West Branch of Penobscot (ME), Kennebec (ME), Deerfield (MA)
AWA expects the Beaver, Dead, West Branch of Penobscot, Kennebec, and Deerfield rivers (together with the Upper Youghiogheny in Maryland, and the Ontonagon in Michigan, both described above) to be among the most critical whitewater rivers involved in relicensing. AWA has appealed the new FERC regulations on relicensing to make the job of handling these cases easier.

Smith (CA)
AWA is backing the proposal by California Congressman Tom Lantos to designate several sections of the Smith River as components of the Federal wild and scenic rivers system.
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Conservation strategy for 1989

By Pope Barrow, Mac Thornton, and Pete Skinner

American Whitewater is continuing its struggle to protect whitewater rivers throughout the country. With last year's exciting victory in the battle over the West Virginia Rivers bill now fading into history, we are moving on to a smorgasbord of promising new conservation projects.

The job ahead is formidable. The vast majority of whitewater rivers in the United States are exposed to potential river abuse in all its ugly forms; and several of the best whitewater runs in the nation (the North Fork of the Payette in Idaho and the Klamath in Oregon) are in immediate danger of complete extinction. Still, we have high expectations. Appreciation for whitewater is growing by leaps and bounds throughout the country with new whitewater boaters added to our ranks almost daily. Even Vice President Quayle became a whitewater aficionado after enjoying an early summer raft trip down the New River Gorge. President Bush may be next!

AWA Has A Special Interest

A recent study has identified over 1,000 organizations and groups throughout the nation now active in river conservation. Strange as it may seem, however, few of these organizations focus on whitewater. In fact, some avoid a purely whitewater orientation so as not to appear to be catering to narrow special interests. This is more or less predictable. After all, whitewater is a real rarity. Only 1% of America's total river mileage consists of class II or better whitewater. But that 1% is AWA's special interest, and that 1% is where AWA puts its energies and effort. True, we have a narrow focus, but we figure that at least 999 other organizations are available to handle flatwater issues.

Help from Some Key Allies

Although AWA is a national advocate exclusively for whitewater conservation, the job can't be done in isolation. AWA plugs away persistently to alert and sensitize other organizations to the plight of whitewater rivers. American Rivers, Inc., New York Audubon, and the Eastern Professional River Outfitters (EPRO) deserve special mention for their response to our pleas for help. The formidable legal skills of American River's...
accompanied by John Echeverria and lobbyist Kevin Coyle have given whitewater appreciators a big boost. Three cheers for them! We hope to see more of the same... much more. NY Audubon, a major force in the relicensing battle, is also working on projects upstream of whitewater sites. On some key issues (such as last year’s battle over the Gauley, Meadow, and Bluestone) EPRO, led by David Brown, has flexed some truly awesome political muscle.

With help from these allies and with funds from the Gauley Festival, with grants from far-sighted businesses like Patagonia and R.E.I., with gifts from individual benefactors, and with membership dues, AWA is waging war for whitewater from all possible angles.

The Top of Our Agenda: Star Wars
At the top of AWA’s agenda is developing new techniques to get permanent recognition and protection for whitewater rivers. This scheme is the whitewater counterpart of the Strategic Defense Initiative (a.k.a. “Star Wars”).

The project is not limited to rivers qualified for inclusion in the Federal wild and scenic rivers system; it would cover all whitewater rivers with class II or better whitewater, even those which have little or no chance of ever being included in the wild and scenic system.

The US is now enjoying a temporary pause in the hydromania boom which has plagued whitewater streams for the past 10 years. Current low oil prices are hurting hydropower economics. The result is fewer new hydroelectric proposals. When oil prices climb again, our rivers will be facing an onslaught of new threats.

AWA political strategists strongly believe that now— with the pressure for new dams easing off—is the time to get the ball rolling. We need new river protection techniques which will work for all whitewater rivers.

Our starting point is the Nationwide Whitewater Inventory, a massive database documenting each whitewater river segment in America. AWA published the first edition in early 1989 with funding from R.E.I. and help from hundreds of volunteers. The data is constantly being refined by whitewater experts across the country. Soon river maps will be added to the database.

AWA uses the inventory to establish conservation priorities on a State and Federal basis. The inventory has been sent to State and Federal agencies to help them identify valuable whitewater resources. Ultimately we hope to have a National Register of Significant Whitewater Rivers established under Federal law, together with legal requirements protecting all important whitewater areas from unwise and unnecessary abuse.

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Relicensing Opportunities

Next on the AWA agenda is our effort to obtain whitewater flows and access for boating at old hydroelectric projects where the existing Federal license is expiring. These projects have to be relicensed in order to continue generating power under the same ownership. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to obtain agreements allowing whitewater boating at sites where it has been extremely limited or where it has never existed before. Hundreds of these sites exist. Several of the best whitewater runs in the country are involved (such as the Upper Yough, the Kennebec, the Penobscot, etc.).

Almost 10% of AWA's entire annual budget for 1989 went into legal fees contesting new Federal rules on hydroelectric relicensing. The rules excluded river conservation groups from the critical decision-making process. AWA hired the legal top gun in the field, FERC expert Chuck McGraw, to fight the new this misguided process and obtain a fair opportunity for whitewater boaters to participate in relicensing.

On another front, AWA, together with NY Audubon, established an outreach program (the National Hydroelectric Relicensing Network) to help individuals and groups throughout the nation take advantage of the relicensing opportunity. Under the leadership of American River's expert lobbyist, Kevin Coyle, AWA pushed to obtain $500,000 in new Federal money to allow the National Park Service to participate in the relicensing process as an advocate for river recreation, including whitewater.

As of this writing, the $500,000 was approved by the House of Representatives.

To help local river conservationists handle the complexities of relicensing, as well as with new hydro-power projects, AWA conservation volunteer, Pope Barrow, co-authored (with John Echeverria of American Rivers and attorney, Richard Roos Collins) a new book explaining in detail on how river advocates can cope with hydroelectric power projects. The book will be published by Island Press in December of 1989.

Critical Issues Reach the Boiling Point in 1989

Plotting and planning permanent protection of whitewater rivers and gearing up for relicensing is only one facet of AWA's 1989 river conservation agenda. Critical conservation issues and river access problems involving whitewater rivers in at least 11 States simmered at the boiling point in 1989. AWA is dealing with many of these through publicity, political action, and--when the chips are down--through lawsuits.
The war is not over

By Congressman Nick Rahall

On the wall in my office is a framed copy of a piece of parchment signed, on October 26, 1988, by former President Ronald Reagan. His signature is at the end of a Congressionally enacted bill, the West Virginia National Interest River Conservation Act, which I shepherded through the 100th Congress.

West Virginia congressman Nick Rahall backpaddles while a passenger on an oar-rigged raft on one of the Mountaineer State's primo whitewater rivers.

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With one swoop of a pen, the President's signature on this bill established the largest network of federally protected rivers in the East by designating the premier whitewater segments of the Gauley and Meadow Rivers as a National Recreation Area, a segment of the Bluestone River as a National Scenic River and combining them with the New River Gorge National River. "For the benefit of present and future generations," states the new law.

All of the various guide books invoke descriptions of the Gauley River, and the word 'awesome' is often employed. While I have run many rivers in the country, I always come back to the Gauley because its whitewater defies any preconceived notions. It is awesome. Its legendary rapids such as Iron Ring, Lost Paddle, and Pure Screaming Hell make it one of the most intoxicating river runs in the country. But the river's raw and unadulterated power has some surprising subtleties. This, coupled with the Gauley River Gorge's luxuriant forest cover topped by lofting rock outcrops and palisades has made the Gauley a mecca for white-water enthusiasts nationwide.

An then, there is the Meadow. With a reputation as being the 'forbidden fruit of eastern whitewater' the lower Meadow contains cascading whitewater and boulder strewn descents flowing through a primitive and heavily forested valley. Meanwhile, the lower Bluestone is perhaps the best kept recreational secret in the East. It is a misty river, and in many ways its natural beauty surpasses all other rivers in the region. The New, of course, speaks for itself. Often called the "Grand Canyon of the East", the New River is the grandaddy of big, powerful eastern whitewater and was designated as a unit of the National Park System back in 1978.

The enactment of the West Virginia Rivers bill one year ago gave us the greatest victory yet in the battle for the Gauley by placing the river's whitewater segment under the protection of the national park service. This is extremely important because the United States is slowly by surely losing some of its most pristine while rivers and streams to small hydroelectric power and...
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other types of developments. With respect to the Gauley, faced with a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plan to install a hydroelectric power generating facility at the Summersville Dam, we have also gained the enactment of federal laws making whitewater recreation a specific authorization for the project. In fact, we even placed in federal law the fall whitewater release schedule! To top it all off, just last year, we extended the whitewater project purpose provision to Army Corps' dams on the Youghiogheny, Lehigh, Savage, and North Branch of the Potomac.

Yet, while battles have been won, the war is not over. A cruel hoax is being perpetrated on the American people by speculators in hydroelectric power. If we are to maintain the recreational values of many of our rivers, the legislation such as the West Virginia Rivers bill and the whitewater project purpose authorizations gave those of us seeking to protect these rivers an edge, but do not insure the achievement of our goal. For example, just because a law was enacted saying that whitewater recreation is a legitimate purpose of these projects does not mean that the Corps is going to be your best friend. What the law does give you some legal standing before the Corps. It gives you a statutory underpinning on which to make your claim. But it is going to take your active and persistent efforts to make it all come together.

In other words, we cannot simply rest on our laurels. A great deal of work remains to be done in order to ensure the proper implementation of these new laws by the Federal agencies involved.

Let us continue to work to ensure that the opening passage of the West Virginia rivers bill, "for the benefit of present and future generations", rings true.

simply put, this hydropower madness must stop. Even the Gauley River remains subject to the threat of private hydropower developments. Currently pending before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission are two proposals to build electric generating stations at the base of the Summersville Dam.

The enactment of
Three years ago the Savage River was selected by the International Canoe Federation as the site of the '89 World Whitewater Championships. As a former racer who had competed on the Savage many times, I knew that I wanted to become involved. When I began paddling, everybody raced—and we all looked to Europe for the latest in equipment and technique. This event would be symbolic of our sport's growth and achievement over the past decade. It would also be a great opportunity for those of us who tried for the U.S. Team and missed to become involved with a world-class event.

I always had a lot more interest in working safety at races than in the other available jobs. For one thing, gate judging bores me to tears. For another, a safety assignment leaves plenty of time for river running. The Savage, despite what you may have heard, is a very playable river to those skilled enough to catch the many one and two boat eddies which line its course. I was especially pleased when I learned that I would be working with O.K. Goodwin, the former AWA Safety Chairman whose writings laid the groundwork for much of what I do today.

The first question was how to do the job. The Europeans have always used frogmen who had little exposure to paddling and sometimes rescued racers who did not really need help. This made them extremely unpopular among U.S. competitors, since some of those "rescued" might have completed their runs.

In a wildwater race, moreover, many of the rescue stations would be accessible only by boat. The Competition Committee decided to rely on a team of individual whitewater paddlers, skilled in rescue and interested in donating their time to this event. Letters were sent to contacts in the area's largest clubs soliciting people with rescue skills. Two groups, the Upper Delaware River Patrol (Team Delaware) and rescue trainers from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (Team Ohio) responded strongly, forming the bulk of our group. They were augmented by skilled volunteers from other organizations who signed up individually.

Because of highway construction, opposition by fishing interests and burnout on the part of race organizers, there had not been a race on the Savage for some years. Two races held in 1987 in atrocious rainy weather showed us how far we had to go. O.K. Goodwin and Team Delaware (lead by Dick Rhodes) were assigned to slalom. Team Ohio (lead by Emily King) worked with me to handle wildwater. Our job was relatively easy; find the best spots to protect the racers, make estimates of our manpower and material needs for the organizing committee, and learn the needs of the racers and the ways of the river. Those who had never seen the Savage, and even those of us who had, were reminded once again of the speed and power of its icy water. Those who had left wild-water gear at home would not do so again!

The organizing committee, World Championships, Inc., faced a greater challenge. They had to prepare the area not only for the 300+ competitors we expected but also for the 9,000+ spectators, coaches, exhibitors, vendors, volunteers and support personnel who would arrive each day. The bussing schedule alone required thirty school busses, the entire fleet from both Garret and Allegheny Counties! The State of
Maryland put the National Guard and Department of Natural Resources to work, spending millions on site improvements. Each time we arrived the race area had been upgraded further, and traffic flow, food, communications, and other amenities improved beyond our wildest expectations.

Security was tight; the river and the road along it was closed to private paddlers and most traffic. Much of this was essential given the importance of the event and the numbers of people requiring access. Those of us who had been accustomed to driving up, camping, and putting in had to adapt. I’d have to give special credit to Executive Director Don Storck, who took time from his many responsibilities to solve numerous access problems for the safety crew. Without him we would have spent more time walking than working!

At the end of the first year we knew what we needed. Wildwater safety could be provided by six teams of four people each located at the Upper Bridge, Piedmont Dam, Lower Slalom Course, Triple Drop, Memorial Rock, and First Island. For the last 2.5 miles the water was easier, and the racers would be on their own.

The slalom course could be covered by fifteen people, armed with throw ropes and spread out over the course. In addition, two tethered rafts, on loan from Appalachian Whitewater and manned by three of us, were set up above L’hota’s Rock and House Rock, both sites of previous pinning incidents. Although the rafts were never needed, it felt good to have them there. A tethered raft which could sweep across the entire width of the river was set up below the finish to gather floating equipment and serve as back-up. Although the rafts were never needed, it felt good to have them there. A tethered raft which could sweep across the entire width of the river was set up below the finish to gather floating equipment and serve as back-up.

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The Pre-Worlds was held in June 1988 in the midst of a searing drought and heat wave. The lake was low and water was in short supply. This created intense pressure to run the races on time in order to finish before the water ran out. As Randy Smith set up his rigging, I was introduced to the radios provided by Motorola. We had enough that each work group could have one, a big improvement over past years when most of my time was spent running up and down the banks "passing the word" to the troops.

But while the radios covered the slalom course quite effectively, the six-mile long wildwater course which twisted down a narrow mountain corridor was a different question! During that event, my Jeep Cherokee, loaded with a raft and paddles and carrying myself and a Team Ohio EMT, became the "safety base". We drove up and down the Savage River Road, dodging spectator busses and cop cars, looking for places where we could make radio contact with each of our river teams. If we had to, we were prepared to ferry medical help across the river or transport an injured paddler back to the road without disrupting the event.

In a wildwater race, the only thing that matters to a competitor is crossing start and finish lines upright. Competitors may make a self-rescue after a flip, get back in their boats, and continue racing. Any help, even if it is unwanted, disqualifies them. Our teams were instructed not to assist unless the person called for help, was separated from his gear, or was in obvious distress. If there was any question, a safety boater would be dispatched to "shadow" the potential victim until their needs became clear. If a person was helped and would not fish the race, this information was relayed to the finish.

This produced some tricky judgement calls for Team Ohio as several athletes, wearing little more than lycra or polypropylene, found themselves in the 42 degree water of the Savage. All were recovered without incident except for a New Zealand paddler.
woman who found herself caught in some netting left at the lower bridge by the Maryland Fisheries people seeking to determine the effects of releases on fish. Although badly cut up, she was able to self-rescue from this unmarked hazard.

At the slalom course, Team Delaware were facing a challenge of a different order. O.K. Goodwin, a fixture at Savage Races during the seventies and the father of world-class K-1W racer Cindy Goodwin, instructed the team to "know when to throw them, and know when to hold them!" a premature heave could entangle a rolling racer, leading to protests and embarrassment for the host country; everyone was a skilled throw line user, but making an accurate toss between the slalom wires criss-crossing the river added to the challenge. Once or twice the rope went over the wires and got snagged in the gates! The radio crackled impatiently and the race was held up until they could be freed; with water at a premium, this was the wrong mistake to make! Fortunately, each rope came off quickly, and the event held to its schedule.

With three races under our belt, everyone connected with the Worlds was confident that we would put on a world-class event. So much to do and to think about! I knew that the weaker federations like Mexico, Brazil, Costa...
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Rita and Japan, absent from the previous events, would be with us in '89. This would mean many more racers than in previous years, when only the elite whitewater nations attended. But our teams had ben doing two or three assists per event, and were anxious for more business.

The World Championships in 1989 was a two-week event, the first week for Wildwater, and the second for slalom. The two teams, which worked together in previous years, would now be split so as to cover all on-water activities without making excessive demands on each volunteer's time. We later found out that this was the first time that practice sessions had ever been so covered at a World Championships.

1989 also produced the wettest June in thirty years! But with rain continuing through the week and clearing up in time for the timed runs each Friday it seemed that God was on our side...unless you happened to have been in our drenched and soggy campground at Jennings Randolph Lake at midweek! During the cold, rainy week before the Wildwater event, Team Ohio boaters were the only non-racing paddlers on the river. Split into six groups, they circulated between the rescue stations and tried to keep warm.

The first day was the most exciting. The river was running higher than expected and a modification of the slot in the dam left a vicious hole at the base. We had twelve assists that day, including two members of our own team at the slot. I went to a team meeting to discuss the water level and dam modification, but fortunately the problem had already been recognized.

Each day when the humid Appalachian air met the icy Savage River flow a thick mist developed which hung over all the practice sessions. Sometimes you couldn’t see twenty yards ahead! This made it hard for racers and safety boaters alike. I’ve run the river over fifty times and raced it extensively, but sometimes I just didn’t know where I was! For the foreign competitors, learning the river must have been hellish. Wildwater boats move fast and are hard to maneuver, so racers must plan their

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route well in advance. Not being able to see far ahead is a real handicap.

Even under the best circumstances, it is hard for paddlers at cruising speed to stay out of their way. With the swirling mist, they appeared suddenly like headlights around a blind curve, sending mobile safety workers scrambling for shore. Despite the misgivings of the British and German watches, there were no willisions with any members of the safety team. The athletes gradually got used to us and began to welwme our presence.

I spend less time on the water than I would have liked. As team leader, during the day I solved problems. Where were the radios? They would not arrive until Thursday. Could I get administration to tell the M.P.'s that our parking passes were good for the lots at the top of the course? Yes, but it took two tries to find the right person. Where are the Extrasport World Championship Rescue Life Vests which would be distributed to the team? In the rescue shed. What was the combination for the lock? And what about volunteers whose names had been somehow "lost" and were being denied passes? Thankfully, at the end of each day I could leave all this behind me when I "swept the river" from top to bottom.

The new bright red Extrasport "Ranger" life vests, actually HiFloats (tm) with a built-in quick-release strap, arrived the next day. The company had donated sixty of these jackets to test the new design, and soon became the insignia of the safety team. By race day we also had the new Motorola radios. On our channel we would talk to anyone from start to finish. What a joy after years of static and hassle. The start of the first race was delayed for an hour because, as it turned out, the damkeeper did not have the necessary pass! Turned away by humorless State Police Guards, he had to go out to a pay phone and call the race organizers for help. In the meantime, Team Ohio boaters did not have enough water to go to their stations. But to our relief, the water finally rose.

The race was on! Each station had a start list, so racers were tracked from station to station. I sat in the ve-
1989 death toll mounts

White Water Tolls

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reacted quickly and got a rope onto the kayak while Stallings was attempting to stay above the water and push himself off the conveyor. However, the victim disappeared under the water and was only briefly seen again near a submerged tree.

One section of the belt, about 40 feet long, was winched to shore. Rescuers estimated it weighed well over 100 pounds.

The incident stands as the tenth reported Eastern whitewater fatality to date in 1989 involving hardboats or rafts. The shocking number of deaths significantly surpasses past single-year fatalities.

High-water conditions throughout the East during the early portion of the paddling season after two years of drought may partially explain the increase in accidents.

Commercial outfitter cited after Bluestone death

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources has charged a Fayette County rafting company with 16 misdemeanor counts in connection with the drowning of a 62-year-old Raleigh, NC man. Adventures, Inc. of Lansing was accused of inadequately training guides, action that the DNR said led to the death of Allen Beavers on the rain-swollen Bluestone River near the Mercer-Summers County line.

The company's owner, Eddie Lilly, had 30 days to prove why his license shouldn't be suspended or revoked.

The DNR's law enforcement division plans to file criminal charges against Lilly.

According to DM records, 14 people have died in West Virginia whitewater accidents since 1971.
End of a decade of change

by Ron Burke

The nineteen-eighties are marked as a decade of change for Gauley River whitewater.

Like most boaters, I vividly remember my first Gauley season. Early in the decade, it hardly resembled the assembly of paddlers and rafters that now gather annually below Summersville Dam...

Only a pair of lonely traffic lights intruded upon Route 19 as it shanked south from the interstate. In the late-night dark, I twice drove past the road to the dam. The highway was deserted. Its shoulders empty--no motels, stores or gas stations to stop and ask directions.

I finally found myself in the parking lot below the dam. A small collection of cars topped with the reassuring outline of racks and boats were parked at the end of the cul de sac. In the glow of my headlights, I could see a few tents scattered about on the grassy shoulder of the gravel.

I awoke to find the parking lot enveloped in the thick mist billowing up from outflow tubes at the base of the dam. The morning sun had yet to rise above the surrounding hills and the September air remained chilly.

From the east end of the lot came the drone of generators and the hiss of blowers as outfitters commenced inflating their rafts. More cars bearing kayakers trickled down the hill to the dam and the lot gradually filled, although there seemed to be space for even the late-comers.

I strolled down the middle of the gravel lot, between the two rows of vehicles. Paddlers were busy unloading boats, slipping into neoprene, or orchestrating shuttle arrangements. I was surprised to see that almost every face looked familiar. And as a Gauley initiate, I got the feeling I was about to be admitted into a special, private club.

That feeling was reinforced during the initial Gauley River Festivals. Sponsored by the Citizens for the Gauley River during the bleak days when the Army Corps threatened to dewater half of the Upper Gauley, the early festivals were small, personal affairs.

Maybe a couple hundred paddlers would gather around a couple kegs of beer, listen to some blue-grass music, award some door prizes and mingle in general. By the end of the evening, you would have either seen or met everyone else at the festival. It was more of a family reunion than a fund-
I’ve returned to the Gauley every autumn since those initial years. So has practically every other boater that I’ve ever paddled with. For an Eastern boater, missing a Gauley season is akin to not coming home for Christmas.

But each season, the Summersville area seems a little different—changes hardly noticeable by themselves—but now at the end of the decade the Gauley scene has been significantly altered.

Route 19 is no longer a barren section of asphalt stretching south from Summersville. A burgeoning tourist trade, spurred by the whitewater industry, has encouraged development of motels, restaurants, service stations and convenience stores along the highway.

On release weekends, thousands of rafters and hundreds of boaters descend upon the area. The parking lot at the dam fills early and a line of cars, marshalled by Army Corps personnel, forms at the top of the dam waiting for an opportunity to approach the put-in and unload boats. Boaters are zipped in and out of the parking lot with all possible dispatch to avoid congestion.

Once virtually inaccessible, the river corridor has been opened at more points. Originally, a paddler was forced to choose between Peters Creek or Swiss as a takeout. Then Appalachian Whitewater developed an access point. Then the steep carry up the trail at Panther Creek became popular. And now, USA Whitewater is building roads to the river just below Sweets Falls.

A flood of new boaters arrive each year to test the Gauley. Once frightened away by stories of the Gauley’s difficulty, increasing numbers of advanced-intermediate boaters are attempting the run.

And the Gauley Festival, under the auspices of the AWA, has altered its image. With the addition of the Whitewater Marketplace, improved entertainment and varied activities, the Festival has attracted record numbers of participants.

The unfortunate consequence of these changes is a diminished sense of community once associated with Gauley Season. The common rallying points where boaters once would gather and socialize have vanished.

In the past, boaters would plan to "meet on the Gauley" with full confidence that their paths would cross while camping at the dam, loitering at the put-in, driving a shuttle, paddling on the river or celebrating at the festival. Now, a rendezvous must be more detailed.

Essentially, the Gauley community has grown from a small town to a city. And like life in a city, you often don’t know your neighbors.

But this essay is not meant as a eulogy to paddling "the way it used to be" on the Gauley. The AWA and the Citizens for the Gauley River both share part of the responsibility for the explosive growth of paddling on the Gauley due to their promotion of the popular Gauley Festival.

And without the extensive recreational use of this wonderful natural resource, West Virginia congressman Nick Rahall would have been unable to push his West Virginia Rivers Bill—legislation that protects the Gauley from future development—through Washington D.C.

Call it an ironic paradox: the 1980s were a decade of change so that the river can remain unchanged in the future.
The annual Gauley River Festival, sponsored by the AWA, will be held September 16, 1989 at a new location—the New River Gorge Campground (NRGC).

The NRGC, located off Route 19 on the left (headed south) one mile north of the New River Gorge Bridge, offers four times the space as the festival's previous site which translates into more room for parking, exhibits and camping and revelry in general. Look for signs marking the festival grounds.

A donation of $5.00 (proceeds utilized by the AWA for river conservation projects) will be charged at the gate. The festival kicks off at 5 p.m. This year's festival features some changes, some additions and some of the same attractions that have made the festival the East's most popular whitewater gathering.

The primary improvement is a change in the situation which contributed to the long lines waiting for food that occurred at last year's festival. Dinner is not included in the price of admission this year, and consequently we've been able to reduce the charge at the gate.

However, private concessionaires will be on hand serving a variety of foods throughout the evening. The new arrangement promised to offer hungry paddlers a better variety of food, beverage and dessert as well as eliminate the delays that plagued the festival last year.

The beer concession will be handled by Tom Koontz, manager of the NRGC. He is well prepared and organized for a mob of thirsty paddlers. As he has been extremely helpful and supportive of the festival, boaters are encouraged to keep this concession busy.

On stage, the festival will spotlight some great musical entertainment. Folksinger Renee Brouder is back by popular demand after appearing last year. She is lauded for her river-related compositions.

Making their first appearance at the Gauley River Festival is a pair of Blues musicians, Nat Reese and Bob McGraw. They will perform a special style of Blues—a mix of Delta Blues from Louisiana with country music influence: West Virginia Mine Blues. They are veterans of many performances and are guaranteed to be dynamic.

The feature band is a premier rock 'n roll ensemble from southern West Virginia. Making their Gauley Festival premier is the Michael James Gang who will appear for three hour-long sets. A pumped-up jam time is on tap.

For more cheap thrill and chills, plan to witness or participate in the Tug-of-war and/or Beer Chugging Contest. Registration forms for the events have been sent to raft companies, paddling clubs and individuals. If you are interested in participating and did not get a pre-registration form, you can receive information from Anita Adams, Route 2, Box 614, Princeton, WV 24740 or sign-up at the AWA booth before 7 p.m. on Festival day.

Once again, the Festival Marketplace will be a star attraction with whitewater manufacturers and retailers showing the latest in boating equipment. The Marketplace will be ongoing through the night and there is bound to be some Festival night specials.

Also ongoing through the evening will be the popular AWA Silent Auction and Raffle. Every year paddlers find the best deals available for equipment and clothing and this season will be no different. And remember—proceeds go towards keeping our whitewater flowing.

Speaking of whitewater, Festival night will feature continuous whitewater videos on a large screen. There will be numerous films—too many to mention by name. No whitewater junkie will go away disappointed.

After hours of imbibing at the Festival, celeb rant s are encouraged to camp on the Festival grounds. A nominal camping fee of $2.00 per person will be due Sunday morning, payable at the NRGC store/office. This is half the normal fee to camp, so please be honest.

Camping reservations are not required, however, the NRGC is available throughout the rest of Gauley season. If you want to make reservations for nights other than the Festival, its phone number is (304)658-9926.

We've enjoyed the best white-water season the Southeast has seen in years and the Festival promises to serve as a fitting grand finale.
In my eleven years of boating, through the use of turkey maneuvers, bozo moves and occasional lapses of concentration, I have managed to amass a fairly impressive repertoire of "epic swims". It is still quite easy, however, to decide which of these was the most memorable.

For several seasons after my first run on the Gauley, this river had a way of giving me the "butterflies" at the put-in. In 1982, no sooner had I grown comfortable with this stream than I had the unsettling experience of helping to carry out the body of a kayaker who drowned at Initiation Rapid, the first major drop on the Gauley. He had eddied out on river right just above the main drop. Unfortunately, this eddy feeds into a sluice which mostly empties into a toilet bowl suckhole which disappears under a very large rock. This experience left me with put-in jitters for at least another season thereafter.

It was a warm, sunny October morning and I was feeling very laid back as I climbed into my kayak and shoved out onto the Gauley River. Many of my paddling friends were here: Tom Beres, Bob Harvey, his son, Alex and Bob Miller, the unflappable open-boater. Cindy, my wife of less than four months, and a beginner kayaker was riding in a raft with several of our friends on an accompanying commercial raft trip.

The rafts headed downstream as we hardboaters played and acclimated ourselves to this wonderful river. As we approached Initiation, I was as comfortable as a human can be, sort of chit-chatting with Bob Miller as we reached the top drop of the rapid. In an instant, my calm demure was totally destroyed when I realized that I was in the far right eddy above Initiation!

My first thought was, as the Talking Heads sang, "How did I get here?" This is an absolutely horrible place to be and any idiot knows not to go near the right side! The fatal accident that happened here flashed through my mind. The boater and his boat were sucked vertically into the hole and under the rock, disappearing for the rest of the day. I figured the only thing I could do was to paddle hard and hope that I could bounce over that death trap hole.

I realized that this strategy was a semi-failure as the front of my kayak slammed into rock and pinned. The tremendous amount of water pouring over my back and neck created a three foot rooster-tail. My boat was slightly bent and the extreme water pressure was pushing me down into the boat, making it difficult for me to peel myself out of the cockpit. Nevertheless, it was easy to remain calm. I could breathe with no trouble and the water was particularly warm. So long as I made no sudden movements, by boat was not going to slip into that dreaded hole in the rock and my friends were already attempting to get a rope to me.

This rescue was not a simple task. Initiation is a steep drop with lots of weird currents at the bottom and there was only one skinny rock from which to throw a rope. Alex Harvey was amazing. He somehow paddled through a whirlpool and slithered up this steep rock and then managed to throw a rope right to me. I gingerly pulled myself out of the boat, being cautious to not fall into any holes.

This is where my luck really turned bad. The rock was unbelievably slippery and my feet came out from under me. I immediately fell right into that hole that I was so worried about. I knew this was getting to be serious stuff!

At this instant, my brain went into that "supercomputer" mode that you hear about when people get into dangerous situations. In hindsight, this was the most amazing thing about this horrifying experience. Somehow, as if someone reprogrammed a portion of my brain to take control, every single synapse was energized with one goal in mind: survival.

At this point, I was several feet under water and could not breathe. The water pressure was pushing down on my head with the force of a hurricane.
Savage River notes:

- Lugbill dominates...
- Tough placement of gate one proves costly to kayakers...
- U.S. Wildwater team blanked...
- The "other" river at the Worlds

Right: France's Miriam Jerusalami took gold in K-1W. Below: Jon Lugbill dominates C-1 field. Don Coachran photos
Lugbill's 'perfect' run earns fifth world title

By Mac Thornton

Jon Lugbill became the first paddler ever to win five individual world titles with a convincing C-1 victory on the Savage River. Lugbill's winning time of 205.04 seconds was an astonishing 12 seconds faster than Davey Hearn, who collected his fifth silver behind Lugbill in this event.

Neither Lugbill nor Hearn had a penalty of any sort on their runs. After the first run, Lugbill stood in first place with a solid time of 212.13, easily good enough for the gold. But Jon said later, "I knew I had a better run inside me. I just let it rip." His second run was as perfect as any spectator will likely ever see: aggressive, precise, obviously a gear faster than anyone else.

The middle of the course had a difficult sequence of two downstream gates (16 and 17) leading to an upstream Gate 18. The typical racer reached into the eddy at Gate 18 to spin his boat, one or two strokes up through the gate, and another stroke out into the current to get going downstream again. Lugbill handled Gate 18 with two strokes: he reached into the eddy to simultaneously spin and pull up through the gate, and one more stroke to spin back heading downstream.

You could tell the paddlers in the crowd from the nonpaddlers: the paddlers were the ones with jaws agape as Lugbill flew past. U.S. Team Coach Bill Endicott was also impressed. "He's the paddler of the century, the greatest athlete in the history of our sport. And I'm just happy to live in the same century he does."

Davey Hearn's performance (217.01) suffered only in comparison with Lugbill's. Davey had to endure endless questions about how it felt to be second again to his teammate and training partner. Graceful as always, Davey doesn't let it show that were it not for Lugbill, he would be a six-time world champ. (Hearn won the gold in 1985, and was second to Lugbill in 1979, 1981, 1983, 1987 and 1989.)

Third place in C-1 eluded U.S. racer Jed Prentice by less than two seconds to Frenchman Thierry Humeau (226.52).

The U.S. team also scored big in the women's kayak event, as Dana Chladek and Cathy Hearn paddled through a foggy downpour to take second and third, while Myriam Jerusalmi of France took first. Cathy's medal was particularly remarkable, since she had been hampered all spring by a
rotator cuff injury. In 1979, she turned the Jonquiere, Quebec Worlds on its ear with three golds, but had only won one medal since. "I'm not washed up yet," she exclaimed. Dana's chance for the gold vanished with a touch at Gate 19, a downstream gate set sideways to the current at the entry to a midstream eddy.

Things did not go so well in the men's C-2 competition. Jamie McEwan and Lecky Haller were second in the 1987 World's and were the favorite on the Savage. However, the pair missed a gate on their first run (50 second penalty), and accumulated three five second penalties on their second run. Although their second run was the best raw time of the day (234.10), the fifteen seconds in penalties put them in fourth place. On the other hand, the C-2 pair of Joe Jacobi and Scott Strausbaugh finished in fifth place, an impressive performance for a pair of young C-2ers.

In the team events, the U.S. took the gold in the C-1 event, as expected, and the K-1 women took a silver. The French took two golds in the team events, giving them seven medals in the slalom events. The U.S. team had six slalom medals.

The State of Maryland and the race organizers earned lots of kudos for the site improvements and the handling of the events. There were no significant snafus and few complaints.

Coach Endicott said, "Now the Europeans are saying we have the best site in the world."

State Senator John Bambacus, head of the committee which produced the events, quickly announced plans to try to put the Savage on the World Cup circuit, and to enter a bid for the 1995 World's. These developments should help the continuing battle by paddlers affiliated with the Savage River Defense Fund to kill hydropower proposals for the Savage.

**Difficult first gate penalizes kayakers**

*By: Mac Thornton*

Gate One of the World Championships slalom course on the Savage River was the toughest first gate on any Championship course in memory. The Gate 1 judges were kept busy calling penalties, and an apparently bum call here cost the United States whitewater team its first medal ever in men's kayak.

Those who have run the Savage are familiar with its continuous, mostly Class III nature. However, there is one place that gives most paddlers a chill at the old Piedmont Dam, a five-foot high structure which is broken out on the far right side. Most paddlers opt to plunge over the face of the dam; although most of the current sluices around the right abutment in a screaming left hand turn, featuring two pinning rocks. Here is where the mischievous race organizers placed Gate 1.

U.S. kayaker Rich Weiss will not soon forget Gate One. The U.S. has never won a medal in men's kayak, and Rich was our top prospect, having finished sixth in 1987 in France. On his first run in the Savage World's, he had what can only be described as a career run -- the hot, clean (penalty-free) run a racer often dreams about but rarely achieves. He was clean almost. The word came down from Gate One that the judges had assessed a five second penalty for a pole touch. Even with the penalty, Rich Weiss' run was so good (adjusted time = 203.77 seconds) that his name stood at the top of the leader board after everyone had had their first runs. Spectators dared to think: a gold for the U.S.A.?

On the second run, three kayakers edged just ahead of Rich's time with clean runs of 203.28, 203.39 and 203.55. Rich himself slipped up at a couple of gates on his second run, leaving him out of the money.

Then came Britain's Richard Fox, three-time world champion, who stood at 206.08 going into his second run. Fox charged into the breakout at the Dam and slammed into the inside pole at Gate 1. At that point, Fox said he was convinced he could not win, "but I just put it out of my mind." From that point, what followed was one the most superlative kayak runs of all time. Fox is known as a master at working a river's currents and features; while Lugbill overpowers a river. Fox finesses it. For example, Gate 10 is an upstream gate on river right, and Gate 11 is a downstream gate almost directly across the turbulent Savage. Most racers come up through Gate 10 flailing away to ferry across. But Fox was cool and smooth; after coming up through Gate 10, he hesitated a fraction of a second to await the optimum alignment of his boat to the current. A pair of fast strokes, and Fox shot across the river, through Gate 11, spinning around for Gate 12.

Fox' raw time was 193.61, and with five seconds added for the penalty at Gate 1, his adjusted time of 198.61 still won the gold with almost five seconds to spare.

Thereplays of the NBC "Sports-world" tapes show that Rich Weiss should have had the silver, a scant .16 seconds behind Fox. That would have been the result but for Weiss' penalty call on Gate 1. Viewed in slow motion, the tape shows that Weiss' boat kicked up a globule of water in the violent approach to Gate 1, and the water hit the inside gate pole. Weiss' body clears the gate, but the pole swing draws the penalty call.

There were no sour grapes from Weiss. He entered a formal protest, but when it became clear the call would not be changed, he withdrew his protest, and has had no complaint. "That's the way it goes," he said, although you could see the disappointment etched on his face. A class guy is Rich Weiss.
U.S. blanked in wild water

By: Mac Thornton

As of ten years ago, the Europeans enjoyed a New York Yankees style dominance in both slalom and wildwater world competition. However, in 1979 in Jonquiere, Quebec, the U.S. slalom team toppled the European dynasty in the slalom events. In recent times, the Europeans have remained ascendent in wildwater, but there were high hopes for a breakthrough in the wildwater events on the Savage.

Well, there is no joy in Maryland. The U.S. wildwater team struck out.

Jon Fishburn came to the Savage as the only male U.S. wildwater kayaker ever to win a medal in World competition, having won a bronze in Germany in 1985. Fishburn came close on the Savage. He finished fourth, an aggravating seven tenths of a second behind the bronze medalist from France. In a race that took over 22 minutes down the cold, crashing Savage River course, seven tenths of a second is darn close.

Things looked good for Andy Bridge in the C-1 wildwater event. He finished second in this event in last year's Pre-Worlds on the Savage, and had over 100 practice runs on the Savage to his credit. Andy's time in the Worlds was 2 seconds better than his second-place time last year in the Pre-Worlds. "But everyone else got faster, too," he said. Bridge finished a disappointing seventh.

Yugoslavia was the big winner in the individual wildwater events, with golds in men's C-1 and C-2, and the French dominated the team events with three golds and a silver in the four team events. Yugoslavia is the site of next year's Pre-Worlds and the 1991 Worlds. Then, there are the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. For our wildwater racers, there is always next year.

The Top Yough

The Worlds "other" river

During the early part of the weeks preceding both the wildwater and slalom events of the World Championships on the Savage River, the skies opened up over western Maryland and drenched the rugged area with several inches of rain.

If race organizers were apprehensive that the weather might hold down attendance--they were right to be concerned. But not for the usual reasons.

Because race days, the clouds had cleared and conditions for spectating were near perfect. But with the numerous whitewater rivers in Maryland and neighboring West Virginia flowing at optimum levels, paddlers were faced with the wrenching decision of attending the Worlds or spending an afternoon on the Cheat, Tygart, Youghiogheny or Blackwater.

Fortunately, many boaters had the opportunity to do both.

Starting at Maryland's Swallow Falls State Park, less than half an hour from the site of the Worlds, the Youghiogheny River abruptly drops 60 feet at Swallow Falls and continues to descend at nearly 100 feet per mile for the next three miles. Known as the Top Yough, the stretch offers continuous class IV-V rapids that can be completed in under 90 minutes by experienced paddlers.

Its accessibility and length made the Top Yough a popular meeting place for boaters after a day at the Worlds. Taking advantage of the long June evenings, the parking lot at Swallow Falls was filled with shuttle vehicles throughout the twilight hours.

It may have been the busiest weekend the Top Yough has ever seen. Unlike its downriver brother--the Upper Yough--the Top is not influenced by a hydroelectric release. In fact, the Top's
TYGART TALES

By Bob Gedekoh

A river rich in history ... and whitewater
had been kayaking for less than a year when I first paddled the Tygart's Valley River. I have spent countless days on the Tygart since then...but I remember that day with the clarity that accompanies wonder and exhilaration and, yes. I'll admit it, terror.

It was one of the first times I paddled with Dean Tomko and Harvey Shapiro and I had been warned. I met Dean and Harvey at a Three Rivers Paddling Club meeting; I was a new kid on the block but had already established a reputation for not having very good sense. The conservative elders of the club were justifiably concerned about my safety...and several of them cornered me in an attempt to settle me down.

As part of the lecture they pointed out Dean and Harvey...potentially dangerous acquaintances who might lead me astray. Dean and Harvey paddled difficult rivers far from home. They paddled high water in inclement weather. They didn't even keep floatation in their boats. I would do well to stay away from them.

I knew immediately that I wanted to paddle with them. I sensed that they were my kind of people.

And so my regular paddling buddy, Ray Yutzy, and I convinced Dean and Harvey to take us to the Tygart Gorge one balmy (in the 50s) February afternoon. The river was running five feet, the upper limit of navigability according to the guidebook, but Dean and Harvey knew the Tygart. They were our river gods and we trusted them empirically.

"Follow me". Dean said, as he led us through the tight, blind slot at Keyhole. We did and all went well.

"Follow me", he announced as he led us over several steep ledges, each time at the precise spot where the hole could be punched. It seemed so easy if you just did what Dean said.

Left: Dropping over Tygart Falls on Arden section. Right: Historic covered bridge in Philippi; James Hanger, first man to be injured by a cannonball in Civil War; Overview of the Battle of Philippi.
Tongue Falls. "Drop straight down this chute," Dean said, gesturing to river left, "then turn to the right and brace into the pillow on your left. No problem. Just follow me." Simple enough...we didn't even hesitate.

Dean disappeared over the edge and it was my turn. I drove towards the brink of the sluice, certain that I had the situation well in hand.

Wrong. I don't remember exactly what went through my head in the instant between when I spotted the monstrous white mountain of water and when I hit it. I must have been thinking about Dean's instructions, since I managed the mandatory left brace and bounced down the ten foot oblique wall of water into the sanctuary of the eddy in the center of the river.

I was still agog when Ray careened into the eddy. He eyes were nearly as big as the holes that suddenly seemed ready to swallow us whole.

I was beginning to wish that I had read the guidebook more carefully. I was beginning to wonder if I should have listened to the club elders and stayed on the Lower Yough practicing eddy turns. I was beginning to suspect that Dean and Harvey really were dangerous acquaintances. I was beginning to suspect that they were both crazy.

But the Tygart worked its magic on me that day. Ray and I followed Dean and Harvey down crystalline wave trains, skirting greedy hydraulics and rocks. We followed them through the serpentine course of S Turn...still one of my favorite rapids on earth.

We even convinced Dean to let us scout Shoulder Snapper...though he was right...the route was simple and direct...no problem if you just "Follow me."

By the end of the day I was hooked on paddling with Dean...he has since led me down countless rivers...but I was also hooked on the Tygart, an infatuation to which there seems to be no cure.

Since then I have paddled the Tygart Gorge, the Arden Section, the Loop, Valley Falls, the Middle Fork, and several other small Tygart tributaries at every conceivable level. But trips to the Tygart's Valley River, for that is its proper name, are still a treat. I have never grown tired of it, because I've discovered that there is a lot more to the Tygart than class four and five whitewater.

Tygart's Valley is a special place, with a history as wild and tumul-

A paddler descends into the maw of Wells Falls on the Tygart's Arden section.
The Tygart Valley River
first in Pennsylvania, then later in Virginia. Unfortunately for Files, he led his family from the frying pan into the fire.

At first the Valley must have seemed a paradise on earth to these intrepid pioneers, the river bottom wide and fertile, the woods filled with game. But the families had unwisely built their homesteads next to the Old Seneca Trail, an important Indian thoroughfare, and their intrusion did not pass unnoticed. Neither family managed to raise enough corn to see them through the winter and they had resolved to return east, but ironically, just before the date of their departure, the Indians attacked the Files' homestead.

Files, his wife, and five of his children, the youngest a boy of ten, were all tomahawked to death. Only his eldest son, who was away from the cabin at the time of the attack but who witnessed the slaughter, survived. Ho ed, the youth ran two miles upriver to the Tygart cabin, warning them of the imminent danger and allowing them to escape back across Cheat Mountain. Eighteen years would pass before the English would inhabit the region again...though the Valley, and its river, came to bear the name of David Tygart.

Nor have those who perished been forgotten, a tributary of the river draining off Cheat Mountain near Bev-

HUTTONSVILLE’S TALES

Huttonsville’s claim to notoriety is the state prison, located along the river, but there other points of interest as well. At least two rambling Victorian homes are being converted into bed and breakfasts. One of them, the Cardinal Inn, was built in 1901 and has been restored by Eunice Kwasniewski, an expatriate from upstate New York who fell in love with West Virginia. The inn has been popular with skiers staying in the area.

“We haven’t had many whitewater boaters here yet,” Eunice observed. “but they’d sure be welcome.”

The Huttonsville General Store has changed little since the day it opened. nearly one hundred years ago. With
well worn hardwood floors, an ornate tin ceiling and hand-crafted counters full of canned goods, penny candies, ammunition, nuts and bolts, miners’ belts, garden seeds and dry goods, the store represents a nineteenth century institution that has by no means outlived its usefulness. Surveying the contents I concluded that if the store didn't have it, you probably didn't need it.

The General Store may call to mind days gone by, but the proprietors are not without a streak of modern humor. A baseball cap on sale bears the complaint “206 Joints in My Body and None in my Pocket”, while a sweatshirt in the front window showing two bears gnawing on human bones is inscribed, “Send more tourists to West Virginia...the last ones were delicious.”

I asked the lady behind the counter about the local history and she promptly referred me just up the road to the stately home of Hallie Hutton, the grand dame of local society and a wealth of information regarding Tygart’s Valley.

Hallie, a handsome woman of indeterminate age...the one question she slyly evaded..., greeted me at the door with a mischievous smile and escorted me into her parlor, while her terrier, nicknamed E.F.Hutton, yapped at my heels.

"Dont let E.F. worry you”. Hallie grinned. “he's a little dog and dont bite much.”

E.F.’s teeth looked plenty big to me, but eventually he settled protectively in his mistress’s lap, eyeing me warily while Hallie spun her tales. And what tales they were, ranging from the days when the first pioneers crossed the Appalachians right down to yesterday’s news.

Hallie’s late husband, Henry C., was a fifth generation descendent of Jonathan Hutton, who founded Hutonsville in the late eighteenth century. Hallie was born a Dyer, a descendent of one of the first families to settle in neighboring Pendleton County.

“My great-great grandfather, James Dyer, was kidnapped at the massacre at Fort Seybert on April 28, 1758. He was only fourteen when Kilbuck and his band of Shawnees carried him off,” Hallie recalls matter-of-factly. “They would have killed him too, except he had dark hair and was a fast runner. James was held captive for more than two years and during that time they made him run the gauntlet many times against other captives. The loser always got his brains bashed out with a tomahawk.”

“'That would certainly motivate you to run fast.” I observed.

“Yes, James hated to be part of..."
it but he had no choice. So one day when he got to the end of the line he just kept going and they never caught him. Came back home all the way from what is now Chillicothe, Ohio."

Not bad for a sixteen year old kid, I thought, but Hallie's story wasn't over.

"Kilbuck had taken James's older sister too, Sarah Howes. The Indians spared her life because she had red hair and they thought her a goddess." Hallie paused for a moment, interjecting that red hair has appeared sporadically throughout her family tree ever since.

"Before James ran off, he told Sarah he would return for her...and he kept that promise...rescuing her from captivity a year and a half later. The Indians taught James a lot, and it proved of service later when he used to sneak behind enemy lines to steal munition."

It wasn't clear to me whether this was during the French and Indian War or the Revolutionary War, and I never did find out because Hallie immediately launched into another story...about a convict who escaped from state prison up the river and raped and murdered a local woman.

"Got her when she went to the barn to milk the wws...slit her throat and stuffed her in a manger". Hallie concluded, but I never did find out whether this had happened last week or fifty years ago because Hallie soon had me engrossed in the story of her daughter's birth.

Hallie's daughter was born prematurely, and according to Hallie, she spent the first three months of her life in an incubator. "Only weighed a pound and a half and now she stands six feet tall and is forty nine years old." This is the only clue that I will receive regarding Hallie's age.

Before I left Hallie showed me notebooks full of historical and genealogical materials that she and her husband had collected over the years as they traveled the local countryside, talking to other older West Virginians. People like Mrs. Hutton represent living links to the past, and I drove away I hoped that someone with more time and ability than me would spend some time with Hallie soon and record her knowledge properly.

\textbf{THE LOOP}

The first significant whitewater on the Tygart lies between the small towns of Norton and Gage. For five miles the river meanders away from Route 33, creating the Tygart Loop. Unfortunately boaters looking for the class four and five action promised by Burrell and Davidscons' popular guidebook are in for a disappointment. The Loop is mostly class two and three...on club weekends intermediates can perfect their skills here, while their more experienced comrades tackle the Middle Fork or the Gorge.

At higher levels the Loop is a good place to get the feel of big water. The gradient is 25 feet/mile, about ten
less than on the Gorge downstream. There are some interesting wave trains and novices may want to scout a few rapids, most notably the Twin Giants, midway through the run.

Here the current flushes from left to right toward two large boulders set on pedestals; at some levels there is risk of entrapment and less confident boaters may wish to portage. Once the river rejoins the road it becomes placid again, flowing gently through the town of Belington toward its more exciting engagement in the Tygart Gorge.

### THE GORGE

Between Belington and Phillippi the Tygart plunges through a serene, uninhabited valley. This is arguably the most popular section of the river for whitewater recreation. It remains one of my favorite runs in West Virginia. Admittedly, paddling the Gorge these days is not quite as thrilling as that first trip with Dean and Harvey, but on spring days when the Cheat Canyon is mobbed with rafts and hard boaters, the Gorge offers a welcome, unclustered alternative.

A few outfitters raft the Gorge occasionally, but because the river rises and falls unpredictably, scheduling trips is difficult. For this reason, it seems unlikely that the Gorge will fall victim to commercial overuse.

Several miles of flatwater lie at either end of the Gorge, though this can be minimized if you put in at Papa Weese's Fishing Camp and take-out at the mouth of the Buckhannon. There is about eight miles of class 3-5 whitewater here. The difficulty of the run depends on the level of the river. The Gorge is scarcely negotiable when the river is less than 3.5 feet at Belington, and most regulars consider four a minimum level.

At more than five feet many will portage or select alternate routes through Keyhole and Hard Tongue Falls at the onset of the run. Six feet used to be considered a high water run, but in recent years parties of advanced boaters who know the river have tackled the Gorge at higher and higher levels. Above eight feet some of the major rapids flush out, but a few potentially lethal holes appear and any swim is likely to be long and result in lost equipment. At levels above five feet it is more fun to skip the Upper Gorge and paddle the Middle Fork into the Lower Gorge.

One of the most interesting rapids on the river, S Turn, lies about two miles below the mouth of the Middle Fork. The rapid lies just beyond a ninety degree bend toward river left. S Turn is steep and boulder choked and the action is fast and furious. At low to moderate levels the classic route begins at right center. The boater then paddles down a sluice to river left, then cuts back hard to the right after clearing a couple of steep hydraulics. After passing to the right of a large boulder near the bottom, the turbulent water spins back to the left into a long pool. Sounds complicated, but fortunately the current does most of the work.

At high levels S the timid can sneak S Turn down the far right, while more daring boaters enter from left center, then head right, avoiding a dangerous trap between two large boulders on the bottom left. Burrell and Davidson report a 25 foot drop here over 75 yards and at higher level S Turn merits a class 5.

Beyond the pool at the bottom lies Shoulder Snapper, perhaps the most notorious rapid in the Gorge. The steep, shallow descent down right center is particularly treacherous at lower levels.

At higher levels a stupendous hole forms on river left that must be avoided at all cost and the correct route leads directly into a large exploding wave. This merits a scout for all newcomers.

A number of other steep, powerful rapids follow in the next two miles, many featuring big, smooth surfing waves. But keep your eyes open, because to keep things interesting, there are a few holes hidden in those hills.

### BELINGTON BATTLES

The first Battle of Belington began on July 7th, 1861 and ended on July 12. For six days the Confederates, under the command of General Robert Seldon Garnett, and the Union Forces, under General Thomas A. Morris, skirmished on the banks of the Tygart. Several Union soldiers from Ohio and Indiana were killed. But the rebel forces were ultimately driven out of the Valley, leaving the locals, many of whom sympathized with the South, under the control of Union forces for the rest of the war.

General Garnett survived the
skirmish at Belington but only by one day. He was killed in the midst of retreat on July 13 near the town of Parsons on the Cheat.

The rebels had their revenge at the Second Battle of Belington, fought one early spring day in 1866. During this confrontation the north was represented by a battalion of kayakers from the Three Rivers Paddling Club in Pittsburgh. The south was represented by the Belington Little League Association.

Having spent an exhausting day paddling the Tygart Loop and Gorge, not far from deceptively affable town, the northern forces reconnoitered on a streetcorner, and sent out experienced scouts in search of a likely pizza parlor. They failed to anticipate the cunning of their southern opponents, who had prepared a clever ambush in the guise of a fund raising dinner for the Little League at the community hall.

Soon the entire TRPC contingent marched proudly into the enemy headquarters, and seated themselves around a large table, anticipating the home cooked meal that was to come. And so the noose was tightened.

For this was to be no ordinary fundraiser and this was to be no ordinary meal. This was the famed Belington Ramp Festival ...and it was ramps that the naive northerners would be eating. Ramp salads and ramps and potatoes and ramps and ham and boiled ramps and even ramp desserts. The southern forces were not armed with muskets or bayonets or cannons. They were armed with ramps.

You think you might have heard of ramps...but you're not sure? I doubt it. Either you know what a ramp is or you don't. There is no in between. Tangle with a ramp once and you will never forget it.

A ramp is a kind of wild onion...or maybe a wild garlic...or maybe a wild scallion...or maybe an alien life form that escaped from the Little Shop of Horrors.

West Virginians extol the virtues of the ramp. They are delicious...The purge your system. Drive the bad tumors out of your blood. On early spring days West Virginians forage through the woods collecting burlap sacks full of ramps.

Then they haul them back to town and feed them to unsuspecting northerners.

Ramps are tricky things. Camouflaged with salad dressing or ham or gravy they dont taste half bad. Dont get me wrong...they dont taste half good either. They just taste sort of...strong. But when you're sitting at a table surrounded by West Virginia Little League mothers proud of all their ramp specialties and they tell you to eat those ramps...you eat. You choke those suckers down. You even tell those ladies how good those ramps are. And you assume that those ladies are smiling because you like their ramps.

But they're really smiling because they're remembering the occupation of Belington and they know that soon the south shall have some measure of revenge.

For to say that a ramp has purgative powers is a gigantic understatement. A soup made of milk of magnesia, metamucil and Ex-Lax would be mild by comparison. Those who feast on the ramp are guaranteed a case of the gruesome green grizzlies.

But that is not the worst of it. The essence of the ramp experience is the smell. Ramps in the wild are pungent. But the nectar of the ramp, filtered through the bloodstream of the human, takes on a life of its own. The smell of the ramp becomes a part of you. It exudes from your pores and penetrates your clothing and there is no getting rid of it. No shower or bath can wash it off. No deodorant can staunch its flow. No cologne can cover it up.

Four or five days later, back in Pittsburgh, at work or on the job, you find yourself a social pariah, sitting alone, collecting strange and pitying looks from former friends and colleagues. It will be some time before you will be welcomed back into polite society.

Back in Belington the Little League Association members are laughing. Laughing and toasting the south and eating pizza with the ghost of General Robert Seldon Garnett.

Pizza...no doubt, garnished with ramps.
MIDDLE FORK

The two largest tributaries of the Tygart, the Middle Fork and the Buckhannon, both provide several miles of class four whitewater of interest to boaters.

Of the two, the Middle Fork, which empties into the Tygart midway through the Gorge, is the more popular. Those who paddle the Middle Fork must cruise the remainder of the Gorge, including S Turn and Shoulder Snapper, to reach an acceptable take-out.

Since the Middle Fork is usually negotiable only when the Tygart is running at five feet or greater in Belington, a Middle Fork/Lower Gorge trip offers two distinct river experiences. The first is a steep, technical descent, the second, a wild, high volume ride down rolling wave trains skirting large rocks and ominous holes.

Boaters access the Middle Fork at Audra State Park, a gem of a facility that offers superb camping. Hiking trails meander through the rhododendron and hemlock forests and pass beneath several dramatically undercut cliffs. A natural swimming area is popular with campers in summer, when water temperatures reach a tolerable level. It is the kind of place shuttle bunnies love.

The staff of the park has been remarkably hospitable to paddlers, going out of their way to accommodate groups and to facilitate early spring paddling.

The five mile section of the Middle Fork upstream of the park features class two water with several ledges that might prove tricky at higher levels. This pristine section of the Middle Fork is often used to introduce beginners to whitewater since it starts out flat and gets more difficult as you go.

But most Middle Fork paddlers come for the six miles of class three and four water that lies between the Audra bridge and the Tygart. The Middle Fork is best gauged on site since the distribution of rainfall in the mountains is often sporadic and the correlation with gauge at Belington is tentative at best.

The rapid under the bridge, usually run down the right, is one of the bonier on the river. If you can negotiate this there is probably enough water. If the rapid looks juicy, with large pillows and holes, the remainder of the run is likely to be lively. At low water pinning is a distinct possibility downstream; at very high levels the lower portion of the Middle Fork is continuous and approaches class five status.

Midway through the run a wave train ends in a sizeable but benign surfing hole bound to please both novice and expert hotdogs. Not far downstream a slide on river right terminates in a large stopper. Several large boulders lie in perilous proximity. Most boaters punch the edge of the hole on the right, but this is a struggle since the current drives to the left.

After several technical rock gardens one reaches the two most difficult drops on the Middle Fork. The first of these, Triple Drop, can be identified by a gigantic boulder at the bottom on river right. Scout this three tiered rapid. The left side looks inviting, but several expert boaters have experienced vertical pins here.

Failure to catch the small eddies on either side of this hydraulic can lead to trouble. Immediately downstream on the left the river takes another drop, then turns ninety degrees to the right in front of an undercut.

At higher levels this can be avoided by ferrying to the center of the river through a narrow sneak chute just below the oblique hole. The remainder of the rapid can be negotiated down the right...but be wary of subtle pinning situations.

The Middle Fork is a challenging run with a maximum gradient of 80 feet/mile. West Virginia boaters consider it a qualifying cruise for the Upper Yough or Big Sandy.

BUCKHANNON

The Buckhannon, the other major Tygart tributary, empties into the river at the end of the Gorge. Some boaters use this as a take-out for the Gorge, hiking about a mile up the Buckhannon on the railroad tracks to a small covered bridge. There are several interesting class three rapids on this short stretch of river. but unfortunately
the Buckhannon is flat for nearly forty miles above the bridge.

Which is not to say that this Tygart tributary is a bust. Upstream of the town of Buckhannon lies four miles of eclectic class four to five whitewater. This section, between Tennile and Sago, is paddled infrequently for several reasons. In many respects it is comparable to the Middle Fork...but the Middle Fork is more accessible and, coupled with the Lower Gorge, is longer. The Buckhannon must be man at high water and it drops quickly. To make matters worse it is easy to get lost on the shuttle, which meanders over several mountains on gravel roads.

These roads are so steep that it is not obvious on first inspection that they can be traversed in a two wheel drive vehicle.

On my second trip to the Buckhannon we launched four kayaks over the hood of a Reliant station wagon onto a nearly vertical downgrade. They bounced and clattered down the road for some distance...much to the amusement of a group of locals in a passing pickup.

The residents of the Buckhannon valley are friendly but rough and tumble. No doubt they inherit this trait from the original settlers of the area, the notorious Pringle brothers.

John and Samuel Pringle were deserters from the English garrison at Fort Pitt who took up residence in a hollow sycamore along the Buckhannon in 1764. They lived in the tree for four years, spending their time hunting, trapping and dodging the law. Somehow they managed to entice a number of other settlers from the South Fork Valley to join them in 1768 and the town of Buckhannon was born. Presumably the newcomers found trees of their own to inhabit. At any rate the new settlement was apparently lively.

Famed Methodist Bishop and circuit rider Francis Asbury visited the community not long after it was founded and commented in his diary that the residents were "enthusiastic" but that saving their souls would "take quite a lot of work".

The Buckhannon between Tennile and Sago is boulder strewn and steep. Scouting is usually necessary because the routes change dramatically at different water levels and because no one really paddles the river often enough to know it well.

There are a number of subtle but dangerous traps; siphons, undercut and strainers. Good boat control is a must. Once we nearly lost an acquaintance who disappeared into a dead end sluice in the midst of a technical rock garden. We could hear him calling for help but we couldn't figure out where he was.

Fortunately he managed to extract himself and ferry to safety...but we all arrived at the bottom of that rapid wide-eyed. We paused there, congratulating ourselves on having survived this menace.

Imagine then our surprise when three whooping and howling drunken tubers bounced nonchalantly down through the rapid and joined us in the eddy. No guide books, no helmets, no life preservers...and they were having one hell of a good time.

"Nothing to it!", one of the brawny tubers grinned. "we do it all the time."

"Maybe we should tell them that what they're doing isn't safe," one of my comrades whispered.

"Tell them that they should at least wear life preservers," another added.

I took a closer look at them. They looked pretty big and plenty tough. I wouldn't have been a bit surprised if their name was Pringle. And they didn't look like they would appreciate our expertise.

"You tell them anything you want," I said as I peeled out of the eddy. "Maybe I'll see you in Sago. Then again, maybe not."

My friends hesitated for a moment, then judiciously followed me down the river.

**PHILLIPI**

Sometimes when we paddle the Tygart Gorge we bypass the usual takeouts and cruise into Phillippi. Below the mouth of the Buckhannon the river is mostly flat and many of the hillsides have been stripped. Some have been effectively graded and replanted, others not. It is a good place to study the effects of surface mining on the land.

The picturesque town of Phillippi is the home of Alderson Broaddus University. Phillippi is notable in two respects. It was the site of the first land battle of the Civil War. And then there is the covered bridge.

The battle at Phillippi on June 3, 1861 represented the first confrontation between Union and Confederate forces on land. Though historically important, it was a relatively ignominious affair. A Union soldier from Indiana named Charles Denger shot himself in the leg while fording a creek on the way to the battle and bled to death. He was in fact, the only man to die as a result of the affair.

Three young local women, Mrs. George Whitescarver, Miss Mollie McCleod and Miss Johnson, passed through Union lines the day before the battle and rode into Phillippi, warning the rebel forces of the impending Union attack.

The first shot was fired by another feisty local woman, Mrs. Thomas Humpreys, in an attempt to alert the Confederates of the approach of the Union forces. In spite of all these warnings the Confederates, under General George Porterfield, were quickly routed from their position in the town, fleeing in a state of panic and disarray.

Excited by the retreat, two of the commanding Union officers, Colonel "Old Ben" Kelley and Colonel Frederick Lander, followed in hot pursuit. Apparently hoping to singlehandedly capture the entire Confederate force Lander had a flair for the spectacular. He had explored the far west, was an expert mountain climber and had been involved in a least one duel with Bowie knives.

Unfortunately for Kelley one of the fleeing rebels, a man named Simms, paused long enough to turn and send a slug into his chest.

Lander then captured the offending rebel, then had to protect him from Kelley's men, who wanted to hang him in the spot. Simms escaped the rope only because the wounded Kelley interceded on his behalf. Miraculously Kelley survived and was back in the saddle within three weeks.

Two southern soldiers were
not as fortunate. J.E. Hanger and Cap-tain Fauntelroy Dangerfield both had legs amputated as a result of injuries sustained at Phillipi. Fauntelroy’s leg was amputated using a carpenter’s saw and a butcher knife. The saw is now a treasured possession of a family residing in Parsons. The whereabouts of the leg are unknown.

Hanger ultimately made his fortune as a result of his misfortune. The artificial leg that he designed for himself proved so effective that he was commissioned to make similar prostheses for others. By the time of his death his company was manufacturing artificial limbs throughout the United States as well as in England and France.

But perhaps the most intriguing piece of Phillipi’s Civil War history involves a mysterious, clandestine meeting reportedly held in the middle of the covered bridge two days after the battle.

At precisely five o’clock on June 5, two troops of calvary galloped towards the bridge. Those from the north wore the blue, those from the south were clad in gray. The respective ends of the bridge were effectively sealed off by the strangely silent soldiers, who stood at disciplined attention. Villagers were ordered to their homes and no one was permitted near the bridge.

But, unbeknownst to the soldiers, two fifteen year old boys, Chick Simons and Shelton Reger, were hiding within the rafters of the bridge. Transcripts of their story are periodically republished in the local papers and merit repeating here.

At 5:30 two black coaches, each drawn by four horse teams, approached the bridge, one from the north and one from the south. The horses showed signs of hard driving and the blinds on the windows of the coaches were tightly buckled. The coaches disappeared into the bridge.

Simons later reported that he and his friend were “scared right out of our britches.” According to Simons a man got out of the surrey that came from the north, “the tallest man I ever seed, for when he got out of the surrey I thought his high stovepipe hat was going to knock me right off my rafter.”

“Then he took off his hat and bent over and went through the braces between the lanes of the bridge and got into the other surrey. There was a lighted lantern in this surrey and when he opened the door I seed his, the tall man’s, face. He was awful ugly and had a fringe of whiskers around his jaw.”

"After a while the tall man got out of the other man’s surrey. His shoulders seemed to be slumped over, as if he was powerful tired. I seed his face good and danged iffen he didn’t look like he was going to cry. He sorter hesitated, then he looked into the other surrey and said something about may-God-forgive-our something or other and he hoped somebody would have mercy on somebody’s souls or other. And then he turned back and slowly climbed into his own surrey.”

At six o’clock the two carriages emerged from the bridge and roared off in the directions from which they had came.

Did the two boys really witness a rendezvous between Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis? A desperate last-straw effort to stave off the Civil War. Historians doubt the veracity of the boys’ report, maybe with good reason. Simons once said that his friend Shelt Reger wuld tell the story better than he because "he recollects better of me so many of the important things about it that didn’t happen.”

But consider this. If such a meeting did not occur, what did Lincoln mean when he said to Seward, “I humbled myself and my county before a proud and resolute man; I can do no more. This war must go on to its inevitable sad conclusion.”?

And what did Jefferson Davis mean when he said to Lee, "My mission was a failure, General. The minds of the North and the minds of the south can meet only upon one common ground, the battlefield."?

Draw your own conclusions. I, for one, like to think that the ghosts of Davis and Lincoln visit the bridge at Phillipi still.

The bridge is still Phillipi’s most memorable feature. A double lane covered bridge that spans the Tygart, it was designed by Lemuel Chenoweth, a resident of Tygart’s Valley, and built in 1851 and 1852 in the middle of a typhoid epidemic. The bridge has sur-

wived the Civil War, ice jams, floods, the onslaught of tractor trailers, and, this spring, a catastrophic fire which destroyed its superstructure but left its roadbed intact. Amazingly enough the Bridge is still in use, and within a year or two it should be restored to all of its historic splendor.

**FYGART SCENE**

In the late 70s and early 80s the tiny town of Albright on the Cheat seemed to many of us to be the center of the whitewater universe. Hundreds of eastern kayakers honed their skills on the Cheat Canyon. Albright played host to master boaters such as the Snyder brothers, John Regan, Roger Zbel and Mykl Messer. Albright developed a distinct boating culture, and these were it’s high priests.

But there was another boating culture developing concurrently, unbeknownst to many of us, less than fifty miles away, in the village of Arden on the Tygart River. And though the Arden crowd never achieved the notoriety of their northern neighbors they were and still are very accomplished waters...with a tradition and a history of exploits uniquely their own.

While the Cheat was overrun with rafting outfitters, the Arden stretch of the Tygart was initially the domain of one company, Rough Run Outfitters. It was Rough Run that attracted young Josh Hubbard to Arden, and he soon became one of their top guides and the premiere kayaker at Arden.

Hubbard, a native of D.C., had cut his teeth as a raft guide on the Potomac and Shenandoah at Harper’s Ferry while in his early teens. But he found the big water on the Tygart more to his liking and soon he settled in Arden. Hubbard was among the first to run a number of the steep, small tributaries that pour into the Tygart below Arden, including Teeter Creek and the class 6 Laurel Fork of the Tygart. Josh also pushed the limits on high water runs on both the Tygart Gorge and the Arden Section.

Today Hubbard is co-manager for Tygart operations for Rough Run and he probably knows and loves the
Tygart better than any other boater. This, in spite of the fact that the Tygart nearly claimed his life.

March 31, 1984. Josh remembers the exact date. Hubbard and company were paddling the Tygart Gorge at eight feet...high water. Not many kayakers have seen the Upper Gorge at that level. Not many kayakers should. The usual route down the left side of Hard Tongue Falls looks terminal. Many competent class five boaters portage the rapid at this level.

But there is another route through Hard Tongue at high water, a precipitous and intricate slide down the right. A slide past a subtle jumble of rocks that is, in fact, a death trap.

In 1984 Hubbard was pioneering that route. He paddled his kayak over the ledge and down the slide, then came to a sudden, bone-jarring halt, vertically pinned with the flow of the Tygart pouring over his back and head. The force of the water hypere xtended his knees; five years later Josh still feels the pain when he walks.

He struggled for a time but there seemed to be no means of escape.

"I didn't know what else to do so I stuck my hand up and waved goodbye to the world. Not long after that I blacked out."

Fortunately for Hubbard his brother, Zack, and his friend, Steve Ware, managed to extract him from the boat and wrestle him to shore.

"I don't know how long I was under, probably five to seven minutes. The fact that the water was so cold saved me."

Josh Hubbard came as close to dying on the river as anyone could come. His friends administered CPR on the scene and Josh spent three days in an intensive care unit and a week in the hospital at Phillippi. His knee injuries were severe and for a time he had an intermittent heart arrhythmia.

But, not being one to hold a grudge, Josh Hubbard wasted no time in getting back to the Tygart. He has since run the Gorge at ten feet and the Arden Section at a phenomenal sixteen feet. He has his eyes on a few tiny Tygart tributaries that no one has run yet.

And though he occasionally guides on the Cheat and Upper Yough, Josh Hubbard calls the Tygart home.

### ARDEN SECTION

The Tygart has little gradient between Phillipi and Arden, but in the eight miles between Arden and the headwaters of the Tygart and the headwaters of the Tygart Lake the river drops at a respectable 25 feet/mile. Because this portion of the river includes the flow from the Middle Fork and the Buckhannon, it can be paddled at almost any level. The Tygart is pool-drop here and the temperament of the rapids changes dramatically depending on water levels.

Although relatively easy at low water several rapids become decidedly unpleasant. The first five miles can be scouted from a dirt road on river right. About two miles below Arden the Tygart courses over a steep river wide ledge. At low to moderate levels there is a sluice in the middle with a large hydraulic at its base. Much of the current slides to the left under an immense rock known as the Shoulder Blade. This in unnerving, but can be negotiated by advanced boaters. At high water there is a sneak to the right.

Not far downstream lies a multi-channeled ledge with a potent recycle. Next comes Moat’s Falls, a twenty foot river wide rapid that would be a spectacular attraction were it not for the generations of college students and locals that have graffit ied the rocks with spray paint.

A large peninsula of rocks extends out from river right. At low water one discovers that it is, in fact, an arch, and that a good portion of the current flows beneath it. Several of us once paddled under the arch at very low water on a dare. It wasn't a very bright idea. A log might well have found its way under the arch, resulting in a deadly trap. At higher levels the water flowing under the arch creates a dangerous siphon which is not apparent to the casual observer.

The channel of water that passes beneath the arch pools on the right side of the river, then drops through a serpentine, severely undercut sluice not worth considering.

On the opposite side of the river lies another shallow and turbulent class six sluice that screams over a series of jagged ledges. The potential for decapitation here is great, but it has been navigated at least once, by my friends George Mower and Jim Goddard. I mention this as a tribute to their courage, not their common sense.

The center channel drops vertically about fifteen feet. When the river is running less than four feet on the Phillipi gauge this is essentially a rock drop. At levels much greater than five feet the recycle at the base merits consideration.

Although this is a relatively easy falls to run it is scary. Not far to the left of the appropriate route the water tumbles onto rock. And the river is extremely wide here and there are few landmarks to outline the correct approach. The landmarks that can be identified while scouting seem to disappear at boat level.

The fact that the boater is in the middle of the river, with class six rapids along both banks, adds to the hysteria. And to top things off there is another rapid just below the small pool at the base of the falls. As seen from the approach this creates the illusion that the falls is much higher than it is. Small wonder that Moat’s Falls is often portaged.

The next rapid of consequence consists of a series of powerful exploding waves and holes at high water. At low water large boulders are uncovered and the rapid becomes quite technical...perhaps the most difficult spot on the Arden section. At any level this merits a scout.

Several miles downstream lies Well’s Falls, described by Burrell and Davidsons’ guide as “the most powerful, runnable rapid in the entire Monongahela basin”. Here the Tygart is deflected to the left by a jumble of rocks extending out from the right shore. The flow then turns back to the right and plunges dramatically through several large waves and stoppers. At the bottom the river drops abruptly into an exploding white wall of water. It goes without saying that this should be scouted and that there are levels when this is best portaged.

If one maintains the correct alignment it is possible to blow through the left side of the monster. If not, a backender and/or a megasurf and/or a swim are likely. Fortunately there is a generous pool below Well’s Falls, and
to make matters even better, a natural stone staircase on river right which makes it easy to carry back up and do it again.

Below Well's Falls there may or may not be several more rapids before the take-out at Cove Run, depending on the draw down of the lake. At low water the banks here are steep, desolate mud slides, a sad reminder of the damage the Corp of Engineers can wreck on a river.

**VALLEY FALLS**

The next river wide ledge is not quite as high, perhaps twelve feet, but the narrow sluice near the right center between two boulders is the usual approach to the vertical drop. Those who flip are sometimes pulled back against the rock wall to their left and forced to swim to extract themselves.

The corresponding channel on river left is beautiful, but does not appear to be clean.

The rangers at Valley Falls, once enthusiastic about kayaking within the park and tolerant of falls running, have reportedly become less so in recent years. Some boaters are putting in upstream of the park boundaries in hopes of avoiding confrontation.

Below the second falls lies a technical class four, followed by a dangerous rock garden ripe with pinning potential that is considered a class six. This is a dangerous spot that changes dramatically at different levels and must be scouted and/or portaged.

Several more class three and four rapids follow within the next mile and then, alas, the Tygart's gradient is spent.

**ENDERS AND RECIRCULATION**

Near the end of the Tygart Gorge lies Instant Ender...one of the quintessential kayak play spots in the Appalachians. Anyone who cant ender here should be sentenced to life in a very tiny squirt boat.

Front enders, back enders, piroettes...you name it.

One of my good friends, Tomardons, a fanatic when it comes to play boating, has been known to spend hours here, literally endering his brains out. This ex-cm a bank vice president...it kind of makes you wonder...

But the whole of Tygart's Valley river is a lot like Instant Ender on a warm spring day...it's hard to get enough of it. The people, the history, the scenery and the whitewater are all very special...small wonder the Tygart keeps me coming back for more.

The author would like to thank the members of the Barbour and Randolph County Historical Societies for their help in the preparation of this manuscript.
FERC places roadblocks in relicensing participation

On May 17, 1989, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued its final rule governing relicensing procedures for all hydro projects in the US. This rule put an end to months of speculation among river activists (who commented and argued with the proposed draft much earlier) about how we would be permitted to play a role in relicensing the hundreds of America's existing hydro facilities.

**Public Participation**

We wanted FERC to enfranchise us as a full partner in the relicensing of these plants—on a par say, with state and federal fish and wildlife agencies. That way, a better balance could be struck during relicensing between fishing interests and paddling interests.

Well, we, the public, got blown away. FERC decided that, Yes, the public can have a say in relicensing, but (there is always that "but") it can have a say **ONLY ONCE!**

The public gets a chance to speak at one joint (project/owner) public meeting at the beginning of the state agency/project owner consultation process.

This paltry opportunity to convince owners to change their operations and design will probably be relatively useless, that is if paddlers even learn that such a meeting has been scheduled! You see, FERC decreed that the owner must, at least 14 days before the meeting "publish notice, at least once, of the purpose, location, and timing of the joint meeting, in a daily or weekly newspaper in the county or counties in which the existing project...are situated." (emphasis added) Clearly, if the interested paddlers don't live in the area of the project, they won't learn about the upcoming meeting.

But, it could have been much worse. Commissioner Trabandt, obviously a disagreeable soul, stated in his dissent to the majority opinion that involving the public in relicensing would: "...likely have a chilling effect on open and candid exchanges between resource agencies and the applicant. [already too cheeky!] In addition, such a procedure will encourage posturing by various interest groups [like AWA...[bracketed text added]] and resource agencies for the respective constituencies....Including private organizations with narrow parochial concerns at this stage of the process also clearly risks meetings that will be too large and unwieldy to control with numerous requests for otherwise unjustified studies and analysis. [like whitewater feasibility studies]"

(bracketed text added)

**Consultation**

The decision set up a three level process where the state resource agencies meet in secret with the project owners to decide what the final license should provide for. Three levels of consultation were defined—two of which pre-date filing of the final draft license application—the beginning of the formal public intervention process.

**Stage 1**

A. The owner holds the public joint meeting and makes a transcript or audio recording of the gathering;

B. The owner sends FERC and the resource agency a packet of general information about the project engineering, operations, local natural resources and streamflow information;

C. 60 days later, the resource agencies must send the owner a list of studies they want done.

D. Unless they dispute the need for the study, the applicant must undertake the study.

**Stage 2**

A. The owner sends the resource agencies copies of the results of the studies it undertook;

B. The owner sends the resource agencies copies of the draft license application for their review alone;

C. The resource agencies have 90 days to comment on the application;

D. The owner may file their draft application after their last joint meeting between the resource agencies.

**Stage 3**

A. The owner files their final draft license application with FERC;

B. The public, resource agencies and competing applicants will have at least 30 days to intervene in the formal licensing proceeding.

It's not too hard to see what FERC wants. They want the public to stay out of the relicensing process until after all the loose ends are cleaned up and after bilateral agreements are struck with state resource agencies. This is bad news for paddlers, since most state resource agencies and the owners rarely are friends of the paddling community. If the fish agencies have their way, all the water in an impoundment would be bled away in minimum flows instead of pulse flows for whitewater flushes. Unfortunately, it will be an uphill battle for paddlers in the formal licensing process when the state agencies are already aligned with the owner.

**Confidentiality**

Just to make sure that paddlers and competi-
tors for the site license (some competing applicants might offer paddlers a better deal—they shouldn’t be written off), FERC shielded the consultation process from outside scrutiny. FERC states that companies can request FERC confidentiality of all consultation materials, until at least the proposed license is filed.

Although state agencies are not bound by FERC confidentiality, their points of view toward paddlers will probably convince them to bottle up the consultation process as well. **AWA/AR/NWF Rehearing Motion**

In conjunction with American Rivers and the National Wildlife Federation, AWA hired top legal gun, Chuck McGraw to gussy up a massive motion for rehearing, an action needed to permit later litigation about the rules. In its thick filing, AWA argued that the public had a right to participate alongside of the state resource agencies and make the final license application reflect more points of view than just the fish agency’s. We also requested FERC make many other changes which will open the process up more to the public.

But stay tuned, who knows what FERC will decide. It could get worse, instead of better. Rest assured, however, AWA will be watching and responding.

At the very least, write AWA’s national relicensing project coordinator, Ron Dodson, NYS Audubon Society, RD #2, Box 131, Selkirk, NY 12158 for our relicensing guidance packet. Call the owner of the project you are interested in and find out when the public joint meeting is to be held and participate. If the meeting was held, ask for the transcript and send your comments in ASAP. At least get the process started.

### Relicensing sites listed by state

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Hydro exemption bill opposed

A bill currently pending in Congress designed to protect owners of pre-1935 hydro plants from competition could prove disastrous for whitewater boating as well as other forms of river recreation at approximately 350 dam sites across the nation.

Unlike most dam owners, the pre-1935 owners can refuse to meet the modern federal environmental and recreational requirements unless a competitor, with a better plan for overall use of the stream, applies for a Federal License at the site. If a competitor does apply for a license at the same site, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) serves as an arbiter-deciding which faction presents a better overall use of the resource.

FERC has historically favored the existing owner—but should the newcomer get the nod for the license, the existing utility would be forced to sell the facility and buy back power from the new owner.

On the surface, the possibility of a competitor "claim-jumping" an existing owner's dam site seems unfair. But on close inspection, the proposed legislation that would forever immunize these pre-1935 sites from competition also contains glaring inequities.

For over 50 years, these 350 projects have exploited water resources without regard to the potential of recreational opportunities. The only window paddlers have to gain favorable access or release provisions within a project area is when a competitor challenges an existing claim.

In a better world, pre-1935 plants should be forced to examine recreational opportunities without a competitor filing for a license. But for now, that situation provides paddlers their only chance for equal consideration of the water resource...and the proposed bill would end even that opportunity.

A prime example of how this bill can hurt whitewater boaters is a project owned by Orange and Rockland on the Mongaup River. Orange and Rockland has barred access to paddlers for decades, even though its regular releases provide a potential recreational opportunity for paddlers. Recently, a competitor—Rio Hydroelectric Associates—has filed for a license on...
conservation

the site, and finally the desires of boaters starting to be addressed. Should this bill be passed, Orange and Rockland would have no motivation to change its restrictive policies.

Ironically, Orange and Rockland will testify before the subcommittee in its initial hearings. Chances are, subcommittee members will receive an earful of how the "claim-jumpers" are unfair to the utility

without a mention of how O&R for years refused to talk to recreational interests who wished to share its lucrative resource.

The subcommittee is chaired by New Jersey's Bill Bradley. Paddlers are urged to write him and advise him that:

1. You enjoy recreational use of rivers, and you oppose the bill (S. 635) to eliminate competition for licenses on pre-1935 dams.

2. You oppose giving pre-1935 dam owners a perpetual government-granted monopoly.

3. If a pre-1935 hydro facility is inefficiently operated, FERC should retain its authority to reassign the license to a more efficient user.

4. The Federal Power Act requires FERC, in hydro licenses, to give "equal consideration" to the "protection of recreational opportunities, and the preservation of other aspects of environmental quality." This equal consideration is presently required for all hydro projects.

Other members of the subcommittee include:

Kent Conrad (ND)
Dale Bumpers (AR)
Wendell H. Ford (KY)
Howard M. Metzenbaum (OH)
Timothy Wirth (CO)
Daniel J. Evans (WA)
Mark O. Hatfield (OR)
Frank H. Murkowski (AK)
Malcom Wallop (WY)
Don Nickles (OK)
Fortunately, I thought, I still have the rope! I began to try to climb out of this hole in the rock but the force of the water was impossible to combat. I could not move.

I stopped to think, still holding my breath. How could this happen? Was I trying hard enough? Did I not realize how important it was for me to get out of this thing? Remember what happened to that other guy a few years ago? I thought, "You just have to try harder, Steve." I really tried with all my might this time but my efforts were absolutely fruitless.

It was time to stop and think. If I panicked at this moment, it would be all over. Strength was not going to get me out of this predicament alive and I had to spend whatever time I had left thinking up a strategy. Something dawned on me. Maybe this is one of those dreams where at last instant, I take a gasp and wake up. It sure seemed real but just in case, I tried to suck in a minute amount of water to test this hypothesis.

The dream theory was wrong. This was the real thing. Suppose I just wait for the other guys to get onto the rock where Alex was holding the rope? With enough of them up there, surely they could pull me out of this. I began to wonder what they were doing up there and wuld only picture the pandemonium. But there was no way that they were going to get through that whirlpool and onto that little rock in time to pull me up alive. What was I going to do?

I grew despondent. I began to feel sorry for myself and wondered how painful this was going to be. What were my friends thinking up there? What was Cindy going to say when she heard? How would she take it and what kind of fix am I leaving her in? What a jerk I must be. I threw away a pretty good life doing something stupid. Kayaking is great but it wasn’t worth this.

All these thoughts probably happened over a span of thirty seconds, the longest thirty seconds I have ever known. Then a critical new idea came to me. Where does all this water go? It must come out somewhere! Why not just let go of this rope? Suppose the hole is smaller than me? I’d be finished for certain. Then again if I just hang on this rope, I will eventually pass out and I would rather try to squeeze through a hole in the rock when I am conscious.

It became clear that this was my only choice. I would curl into a ball and let go of the rope. If I felt myself hitting rocks, I would try different positions and maybe one of them would produce the optimum shape to slip through this theoretical life-saving hole.

I let go of the rope.

Meanwhile, topside, Alex felt the rope suddenly slacken and pulling with all of his might, fell backwards off the rock. My friends told me he turned white as a sheet, thinking that the rescue attempt had come to a tragic conclusion.

In an instant, I saw daylight. I flushed under that rock like a super-sonic jet and this was the most beautiful sunlight I had ever seen. Unfortunately, this scene was not quite over. Upon exit from the rock, I got caught in a hydraulic and went for a long series of somersaults. In spite of this, I had a smile on my face. All I had to do is dive down and I’d be out of this thing. It worked and I was able to savor the tastiest breath of air I have ever known! The ordeal was over.

I guess kayaking is worth it after all. Yes, I still enjoy the Gauley and no, I never get near the right side of Initiation.

(Note: First of an occasional series on epic swims. An article on your big swim would be appreciated, both to promote safety and to entertain our readers. Concentrate on your decision-making processes you went through during the incident, as well as the reasons why you were swimming in the first place. Send your article to THE BIG SWIM, c/o Mac Thornton, 322 10th St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.)

Top Yough cont...

Swim: cont.

Trapped in an air-pocket under the rock, their friend was still alive. They climbed over the rock barrage, but could not find a trace. After a half hour, they were ready to abandon the search. Too distraught to paddle, they prepared to hike out when they heard a faint, "Help! Help!" emanating from the boulders.

Boaters on the Top Yough during the Worlds weekend didn’t encounter such epic difficulties. But no one left disappointed.
Be a slave to fashion

AWA river gear identifies you as a member of the bizarre subculture known as a white-water addict. Buy a shirt or hat today. See how quickly friends and family shun you.

Order your gear here

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mail order with check to AWA, PO Box 375, Denver, NC 28037--NC residents add 5% sales tax

Don't be sticky...

Let $15 find a hole in your pocket

The AWA is fighting to save our whitewater resources. You can help. Your $15 membership fee is funneled directly into our effective river conservation actions. Plus—every member receives a subscription to American Whitewater—the best semi-professional white-water magazine in the world!

Join the AWA today and receive American Whitewater at home

Yes, I want to join the AWA and receive a subscription to American Whitewater. I've enclosed my tax-deductable contribution of $15 ($18 Canada, $25 overseas) to help conserve our whitewater resources and promote river safety.

Name: 

Address: 

Mail to AWA, 146 N. Brockway, Palatine, IL 60067
Deprogramming a whitewater cultist

The trap was cunningly laid. I didn’t stand a chance. My captors knew what buttons to push. What bait to use.

They caught my attention as I stumbled out of a bar. Tacked on a telephone pole was a poster that read "Free beer—all night" with an arrow pointing down a dark alley.

Any reservations I felt as I groped down the black cul de sac evaporated when I encountered a second sign lit by a dim light bulb: "Free buffet—all you can eat." Another arrow directed me further down the alley.

At the end of the passageway sat a large cage—the kind used to live-trap bears and similar-sized animals. The door to the cage was open, but held ajar by a slender trip-wire.

I snorted to myself: "Bah, just because I'm a boater, do they really think the promise of free beer and food will induce me to crawl in there?"

Then I saw the final poster. "'Wet T-shirt contest tonight!' I dove through the door and remembered no more.

At first I thought my girlfriend was playing funny games again with those NRS two-foot straps. But as my mind gradually cleared, I realized I was bound hand and foot to a couch—the kind found in a psychiatrist's office. A gentleman in a white smock stood before me, a clipboard in hand.

"Where am I," I mumbled. "Where's the beer...the food...the girls?"

"All of your questions will be answered in good time." he replied. "But first, I have some queries of my own. Is it true you often wear a neoprene skirt?"

After I nodded an affirmative, he murmured something about "evidence of gender confusion" and scrawled notes on the pad.

"And is it also true that you travel with a marauding band of individuals, all in similar attire, eating, driving, sleeping and recreating together week after week?"

Again—a yes. This time he knotted his brow, muttering "devotion to clanish cult" as he scribbled on the board. Then he held up a color photograph.

"Now, does this outrageous design—with obvious Satanic overtones—appear on the deck of your boat?"

"Don't know," I said. "Is that a shot of my Demon or Vampire?"

The gent appeared a little shaken. His hand shook as he feverishly scrawled more notes.

"One last question," he said, taking a step back from the couch. "Am I correct in understanding that the kind of paddle you use is a..."

"Slasher," I said with my best "Ah, just one more question," the lawyer said. "How do you think you were brainwashed into joining this cult?"

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


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Perception