



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS  
September/October 2009

## CANOE ISSUE!



### OC-2 on the Green Narrows?

**Olympic Dreams**

**OC RG Compared to GC**

**Why C-1?**

**Open Canoe on the M.F. Salmon @ 4,500 cfs**

**Southeast Icons: Steve Frazier and Milt Aitken**





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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

**A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY**

**American Whitewater Journal**

September/October 2009 - Volume #49 - Issue #5

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Will Lyons and JJ Shepherd going OC-2  
style on the Green Narrows  
photo by Stephen Bates



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Publication Title: American Whitewater  
Issue Date: September/October 2009  
Statement of Frequency: Published bi-monthly  
Authorized Organizations Name and Address:  
American Whitewater  
P.O. Box 1540  
Cullowhee, NC 28723



# Purpose

## American Whitewater

### River Stewardship: An Integrated Approach

Our mission: "To conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely," is actively pursued through our conservation, access, safety and education efforts under the umbrella of River Stewardship. The only national organization representing the interest of all whitewater paddlers, American Whitewater is the national voice for thousands of individual whitewater enthusiasts, as well as over 100 local paddling club affiliates.

AW's River Stewardship program adheres to the four tenets of our mission statement:

**CONSERVATION:** AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision-making

processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

**EDUCATION:** AW shares information with the

general public and the paddling community regarding whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, [americanwhitewater.org](http://americanwhitewater.org), paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

Together, AW staff, members, volunteers, and affiliate clubs can achieve our goals of conserving, protecting and restoring America's whitewater resources and enhancing opportunities to safely enjoy these wonderful rivers.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723; phone 1-866-BOAT-4-AW (1-866-262-8429). AW is tax exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service.



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# The Journey Ahead

September in West Virginia: the weather is becoming a touch chillier, the leaves are starting to pop, and US Route 19 looks like the epicenter of the boating world with every type of whitewater craft ever invented in evidence. Yes, it's Gauley season. You arrive at a normally quite Nicholas County Veterans Memorial Park, in Summersville to find that it has become tent city...

Mark your calendar, it's Gauley Fest time! This year's festival dates are September 18 – 20 (note that this is the second release weekend on the Gauley due to weekends starting late in the month). Established in 1983 to celebrate the derailment of a hydroelectric project that would have disrupted the flows on the Gauley River, Gauley Fest has grown to become the largest river festival in the world. The festival is a showcase for American Whitewater and the top whitewater vendors in the boating community, plus it's THE place to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and just have a great time with like-minded river loving folks. Gauley Fest is also American Whitewater's largest fundraising event. All proceeds from the festival support American Whitewater's national stewardship work. For those who have never been, Gauley Fest features live entertainment, a whitewater marketplace, raffle and a silent auction where you can pick up some awesome outdoor gear. Come out and join us for a weekend of great paddling, exciting camaraderie, live entertainment, killer boat raffles, and the American Whitewater membership drive.

Last year, after over 20 years of effort, the National Park Service purchased critical public access to the Gauley River at Woods Ferry and Mason's Branch. The site at Woods Ferry established a public take-out for the upper/middle reach and a put-in for the lower reach. That's right, in 1988 legislation was introduced to create the national recreation area and provide access! Now, 20+ years later, the Park Service has obtained public access at Mason's Branch and Woods Ferry. Over the last two decades, American Whitewater has worked to provide access to the Gauley and the job is not over yet. The critical parking

field at the top on the Mason's Branch take-out was not part of the National Park purchase. American Whitewater will again be leasing this field from the landowner to provide private boater parking (the leasing of this field is made possible through your membership dues).

Demonstrating that what's good for the river and boating can also be good for the local economy, Gauley Festival is responsible for generating \$858,000 of economic activity, producing \$281,000 in wages to local employees and business owners, and supporting 19 jobs. Plus total direct spending in the local economy generated by the Gauley Festival weekend in 2007 was \$1,110,870 (*Source: Crane Associates of Burlington, Vermont, Economic Impact Study on Gauley Festival*).

On your way to the Gauley please be aware that the local Summersville police department takes their speed limits seriously. Drive at or below the limit through Summersville and have fun out there.

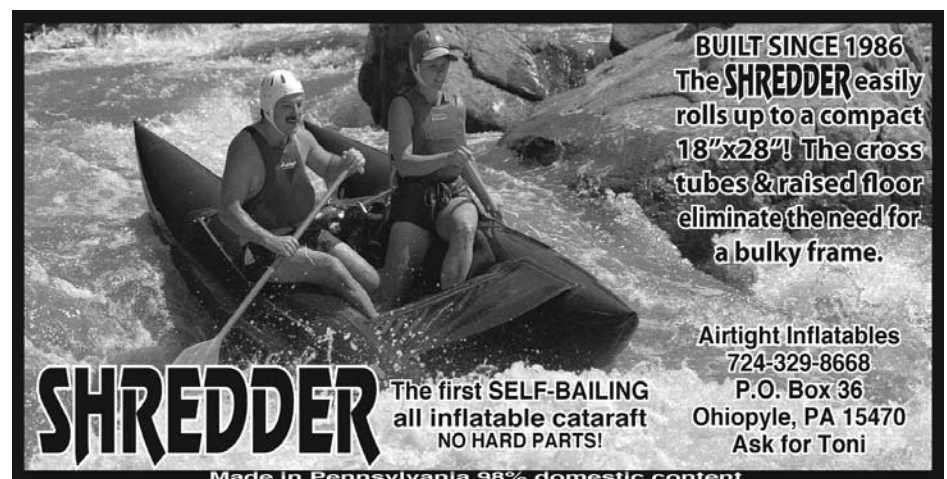
See you on the river,



Mark Singleton  
Executive Director

P.S. For those on the west coast, the 19th annual Feather River Festival (CA) will be

held Saturday and Sunday, September 26 and 27, 2009. See page 6 for details.



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# President's Message

It is late June and I just learned that my friend and former AW Board member David Ennis passed away suddenly and unexpectedly last week. My thoughts and prayers are with David's family and friends as they grapple with their tremendous loss. David was a wonderful, bright and energetic man and he has made a difference in many people's lives. In his role as AW Director, David played a key role in helping return AW to a solid financial footing four years ago. David's passing is certainly a sad day for the AW family.

Many of you routinely access AW's river pages on our website to help plan trips to unfamiliar places, learn the current flow of your favorite river, or share news about a particular river reach. This is a wonderful member benefit and resource. However, I bet most of you have never thought about the vitally important role that AW's national database plays with federal and state agencies and their policy making. Whether is to help identify potential river reaches for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River system or to help justify the recreational value of a river reach during water negotiations in Colorado, AW's national river database is THE place that federal and state agencies turn to for information about rivers. It is a vitally important asset to AW's Stewardship mission.

Our StreamTeam volunteers are the key to the creation and maintenance of AW's river database—yet another great example of the power of volunteers. Thanks to all of the StreamTeam volunteers who have contributed to our river database over the years. Your efforts make a difference.

Recently AW launched an update to our website. This update was a major overhaul to the back end (non public) foundation of the site. This was a necessary first step toward improving the website's look, feel and overall usability. We certainly have received a great deal of feedback from members regarding the "new" website—much of which falls into the "needs improvement" category. Over the last six or eight years AW's organizational energy and

resources have been focused on shoring up our financial foundation and our core stewardship mission work. As a result our website has taken somewhat of a backseat to these other efforts. We recognize that it now time to improve our website to make it more useful and relevant to our members. At a recent Executive Committee meeting we agreed that it is now time to devote additional organizational resources to the website. Expect more news about exciting improvements to American Whitewater's web presence in the coming months.

This month's issue is devoted to our paddling brethren who choose not to wear a skirt, sit on their butts, or use training wheels on the river. Of course I am talking about those strong, proud open boaters, their canoes and single bladed paddles. I myself am a reformed open boater so I can speak expertly on the subject (I gained the good sense to switch to kayak about 5 years ago). Canoes, particularly open canoes, are a challenging and exhilarating way to explore difficult whitewater and a relaxing way to enjoy less difficult rivers and streams. Personally, I like to think that kneeling is a more reverent way to pay homage to the river gods. Whatever your take on canoes, I hope you enjoy the stories!

See You on the River,



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# Letters to the Editor

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Dear *American Whitewater*,

I am unsure of what to think about the article, in the July/August issue about access to the Grand Canyon. First of all, I apologize for not knowing the proper way to define all the acronyms. Secondly, I'm hoping that AW will honor my request for information, in the same public forum that was used to express Richard Martin's commentary.

Thank you, to GCPBA, AW, GCROA, GCRRA and the NPS for bringing us many improvements to the older CRMP. I have benefited, personally, from their 2005 agreement to modify the CRMP. The hard work of the people in these groups has resulted in many, many spectacular river trips that could never have happened under the old system. RRFW clearly thinks that we boaters can do better. Who to believe? Why?

Richard Martin's article, in the July/August 2009 *American Whitewater* raised a couple of questions. What is the practical application of "parity in river access?" Three times, Mr. Martin stated that there is equal parity in river access between private trips and commercial trips. On a numerical level, that is obviously true. NPS lottery statistics and actual river usage clearly show that winter trips are in low demand. Practically speaking, the unpleasantness of Grand Canyon winter trips complicate the simplicity of annual averaging. Yet, the winter trips, including the unclaimed launch dates, seem to be counted as being "equal access" with the outfitters. The outfitters continue to retain a large majority of the non-winter launch dates. How does this attain parity?

The GCPBA made a huge effort to understand the effects of the seasons on desires for river access. They worked hard on this and I am grateful for the fruits of their labors. I would like to have a deeper explanation of how issues related to seasonal demands affected adoption of the current CRMP. It would be easier for me to believe in AW's difference of opinion with the RRFW lawsuit if I had a better understanding of how the issues of winter trips was construed as being a fair

compromise for the continued disparities of the other "fair" seasons.

Paul Janda  
Madison, WI

Alumnus of a fabulous GC trip, thanks to the 2005 CRMP and many other good folks and lucky twists of fate.

Dear Mr. Janda,

Congratulations on scoring a Grand Canyon trip! While the monitoring results are not in yet, it sure seems to us like far more private boaters are getting to paddle the river under the new system than under the old system. I think few would argue that the old system was better. You asked whether you should believe River Runners For Wilderness, who oppose the plan, or the other groups (like AW), which support the new plan, and why. When AW joined the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association and the outfitters in supporting the new plan we did the same complex calculus that we always do in settlements situations (most often in relicensing hydropower dams). We weighed the value gained through the settlement against our best alternative to a negotiated agreement (often called a BATNA in negotiation-speak). In this case our BATNA was no-change on the river accompanied by years of risky and expensive political, legal, and agency challenges. We chose to collaboratively recommend a broadly supported, prompt, and hugely improved management of the Grand Canyon, rather than fight for our vision of perfect management. AW is a small organization with a ton of projects, so we have to choose our battles very carefully; we prefer collaborative solutions.

You asked about parity. Under the new plan, user days were changed from 66.5% commercial and 33.5% recreational to 50.4% commercial and 49.6% recreational. You are correct in asserting that there is not equal access between commercial and non-commercial use by season. There are a lot of variables on the table in negotiating river access, and sometimes the best (or only mutually acceptable) way of meeting all the

interests at the table is not to simply split the baby in half. The new plan is the result of an intense give and take that was an attempt at meeting all interests. Like all such plans, it can either be viewed as a huge success or an abysmal failure depending on what aspect of use is most important to you as an individual and what you compare it to. We supported it as the best option on the table at the time, and still believe it to be so.

As far as the ongoing legal challenges go, we have decided to stay out of it. We have affiliate clubs on both sides of the issue, and respect this diversity of opinions. We have committed to seeing the existing plan through, and are going to work to learn as much from the implementation of the new plan as possible, and hopefully improve it when the next plan is developed in 10 years or so, or in the interim through adaptive management.

Sincerely,

Kevin Colburn  
National Stewardship Director,  
*American Whitewater*



# News & Notes

## Feather River Fest

The 19th annual Feather River Festival (CA) will be held during the scheduled releases on Saturday and Sunday, September 26 and 27, 2009. The fund-raiser for American Whitewater is hosted by local paddling club, the Chico Paddleheads. The benefit event will be held at "Indian Jim School" campground located two miles upstream from the small town of Tobin and one mile upstream from Tobin Vista. Free camping and ample parking is available.

The event will include a free Class II slalom course appropriate for all skill levels, ages and for kayaks, whitewater canoes, and IKs. The slalom race will be located at the Indian Jim School campground and will be held from noon to 3:00pm. There will also be a free Class V downriver race on the Tobin stretch Saturday afternoon beginning at Tobin Vista. For both

races, inquire at the campground benefit headquarters for information and signup.

Jackson Kayaks has generously donated a boat-of-choice to the event that will be raffled off Saturday night as part of the fund-raising for AW! The benefit party with live music, food and beverages will begin at 6:00 pm Saturday night. Raffle prizes, race prizes and silent auction items will be given at the benefit party Saturday night at the Indian Jim School adjacent to the campground. Details about raffles, prizes, and race results will be available at the event headquarters.

The Rock Creek/Tobin releases will occur beginning Saturday morning through noon on Sunday. The Rock Creek reach is a Class III run appropriate for rafts, IKs, and kayaks and the Indian Jim

campground is the perfect take-out. Below the campground is the Class V Tobin reach followed by the Class IV "Lowbin" reach. There will also be flatwater and Class I/II sections available all weekend.

Bring the whole family to enjoy, celebrate, and support the work American Whitewater has done to ensure regular recreational whitewater releases on this amazing, classic California river!!

For more information see: [www.chicopaddleheads.org](http://www.chicopaddleheads.org)

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## 27th Annual National Paddling Film Festival Slated for February, 26-27th, 2010

The National Paddling Film Festival was born in a barn in October, 1982 at the Kentucky Horse Park in central Kentucky. That first festival was a rowdy party with over 150 people in attendance and 23 film, slide, and video presentations. The 8 and 16 mm films were shown on two home-made screens and mattresses were used as sound barriers for the theaters. Much has changed since the inception of that Festival; however, the camaraderie remains the same as does the excitement of viewing the films for the first time.

The 2010 festival will remain at the Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort, KY. With over 5,000 square feet available to us inside, and a full wraparound covered porch, there's more than ample room. There is also sufficient parking for Festival attendees. In addition, tours of the distillery grounds are available as well as bourbon tastings. Festivities include, but are not limited to, films, a silent auction, a chili cook-off, a still image contest, and paddling opportunities.

Our 2009 event was a huge success! We had over eight hours of the latest in whitewater films and well over 300 folks in attendance both nights. Film and image entries for the 2009 NPFF were some of the best we've seen to date. Every year the competition goes up a notch! Generous sponsors donated lots of great gear for our silent auction, including a boat from Wakawai. We also gave away a Wavesport boat through an AW membership drive. The most important success, however, was the contribution to river conservation. We were able to donate money to AW, Friends of the Cheat, WV Rivers Coalitions, and Friends of Elkhorn Acres. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the entrants, the sponsors, and those who attended and supported the 2009 NPFF. We look forward to your support for the 2010 NPFF.

The 2009 NPFF winners are as follows:

Amateur General - MUWC3: Team Go Medium, *Heath Damron*

Amateur Documentary - Exploring the Boat Midget Phenomenon, *Thomas Gerencer*

Accomplished General - The Endangered Creeks Expedition, *Mikkel St. Jean-Duncan*

Accomplished Documentary - Symbiosis, *Carl Jacks*

Professional General - Eastern Horizons, *Bryan Smith*

Professional Documentary - A River's Last Breath, *Trip Jennings*

Professional Instructional - Steep Creek Skills, *Whitewater Instruction*

Paddlers' Choice - MUWC3: Team Go Medium, *Heath Damron*

We are excited to announce that the winner for 2009 Best of Show is Eastern Horizons by Bryan Smith and the Still Image winner is Beth Koller with her image "Koller-Diver."

The National Paddling Film Festival (NPFF), along with American Whitewater, has raised thousands of dollars for river conservation efforts. The NPFF is an all-volunteer organization—all money raised goes to organizations such as AW, the Green River Access Fund, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and many more.

Now we challenge you to get out there and take pictures and video and then be sure to enter them in the 2010 NPFF and help us raise more funds for river conservation! See you all in February!

Please visit our web-site at: [www.npff.org](http://www.npff.org).



# River Voices

## Bike Paddle Run

By Lila Marie Thomas

"On your left!" barks a deep, panting voice from behind. I stop, pull my bike off the steep trail while three racers grunt past me like a freight train spraying spit and sweat in their wake. They disappear around the bend as I give a running start and hop back into the saddle. I'm in my granny gear now, slowly climbing back and forth up the rock and root laden hillside. My mind wanders. "I bet I've been going about a mile now ... eleven more to go on the bike, then paddle, then run. Save your energy," I remind myself. Captain Thurmond's in Fayetteville, West Virginia is my first off-road triathlon and consists of a 12-mile mountain bike ride, a nine-mile paddle on the New River, and an eight-mile trail run up and out of the gorge.

Exactly a month ago I was let go from a career that had swallowed up my whole life. The loss felt like a gunshot. The bullet came swift and silently. It pierced straight into vital organs and stayed lodged there. The word "inconsistency," that was the bullet. The word made my heart race. It twisted knots in my stomach. And it was still there lodged tightly in my gut as I climbed up and out of the gorge and began a fast, smooth downhill section ....

"Look out for a right-hand turn coming up soon." It's Megan, the only other woman in the race. We met briefly on the lush green lawn of the county courthouse where the race started. She lives in Fayetteville, WV working as a mountain bike instructor and raft guide. She's also on a national running team so I expect her to kick my butt royally. I watch her petite frame hammer past me as I wave hello and say thanks for the head's up. I pick up my pace. There is nothing like a little competition from another lady to get my mind back in the moment. The unmarked right-hand turn comes up fast and I'm confused since tire tracks continue on the trail I'm on. I take the turn anyway counting on Megan's advice. It pays off and after a few miles the single track spits me out on to a paved road that winds down to the put in. I release my hand from the

brake and feel the hot air rush into me as I soar around smooth corners.

The road dives down to the river where volunteers have dropped my boat and paddling gear. I change quickly and lug my huge race boat down a steep flight of stairs to the water's edge. Although I've never paddled the New river I am confident this will be my easiest leg. I've been whitewater kayaking since college and the Class III New River is nothing compared to what I'm usually on. I easily fall into my paddling rhythm. I see Megan ahead in an inflatable ducky and breeze past her with a wave. "I'll see you on the run," I shout. I pass raft trips with customers engaged in fierce water battles. Approaching the first major rapid I ask a nearby raft guide what the line is. "Stay center and head left at the bottom," he says. "Hey, you might not be the fastest but you sure are the prettiest racer I've seen yet." I chuckle to myself considering all he's seen is men so far and wave my thanks. I bop through the first rapid and look up to the crystal clear blue sky and steep green walls. It is a beautiful gorge and the festive atmosphere on the river has me relaxed and confident. "I am consistent," I tell myself as I tuck my chin down and pull my blades through the water harder than before.

The river goes by quickly and before I know it I'm pulling my boat to the shore, fumbling my socks and running shoes on my wet feet and embarking on the last leg of the race: the run. Clanging of cow bells, whistles and cheers fade away as the cheerful onlookers disappear below me and I wind slowly uphill alone. The road turns to trail and the trail turns to rocky stairs. I want to stay here between the beginning and the end. I want to stay here on the steep mountainside where no one asks what I will do with my life. I want to stay here where my breath roars in my head and gives me no room for commentary.

At the top of the gorge an aid station doles



Lila and Megan (the other female competitor) taken in downtown Fayetteville, WV after the race

Photo by Brian Menzies

out bananas and gator aid to exhausted racers. "Two miles to go and it's mostly downhill," says a smiling a race organizer. My pace has slowed to a crawl and my right knee, which has always given me trouble, starts to throb. The trail flattens out and turns to packed sand. I hear a woman's voice from behind asking a racer I just passed, "Where is she?"

"Right around the next bend," I hear him answer. I try to pick up the pace since I know Megan is hot on my trail but my legs feel like lead and the mid-day sun has started to burn down on me. I hear her fast footsteps approach from behind.

"We're almost there," she pants as she sprints past me and bursts out of the forest and onto the final stretch in to downtown and the finish line. I muster everything I have. I tuck my self-doubt, loss and exhaustion sincerely away and run harder than I've ever run before. Cheers and applause from friends meet me there but I am in another world, a world where I gave it my all, where I didn't win, and where it doesn't matter.



## David Ennis Tribute

By Mark Singleton

Former American Whitewater board member, David Ennis passed away Saturday, June 20th, 2009. Loving family and friends surrounded him: his wife of 39 years, Donna Knauer Ennis and children, Claire and Chris. His parents and brothers were with him as well. David lived the fullest of lives.

From 2003 to 2007, David served on the American Whitewater board. His work on the finance committee was instrumental in restoring American Whitewater to sound financial health. Investment recommendations David made were conservative and served us well over the last year as markets turned downward. Beyond his financial expertise, David was particularly interested in access to rivers and protecting the quality of these special places. To that extent, his prior business and volunteer experience were extremely constructive in his role as a board member.

As much as anyone on the American Whitewater board, David encouraged me to apply for the Executive Director position back in 2004 when American Whitewater was conducting a national search. Without



that support it is quite likely that I would not be sitting in the chair I'm in today. Former Olympian, Wayne Dickert, gave the eulogy at David's memorial service and recognized David's boosterism not only for his service to American Whitewater, but his other causes as well.

The Ennis family posted the following information:

*After graduating from Robert E. Lee High School in Jacksonville, FL he attended Washington and Lee University graduating in 1969 with a degree in Physics and Engineering. The United States Navy was next on his list of challenges. He married his beautiful bride, Donna, during his tour in Vietnam. After the Navy, David went to graduate school in Real Estate and Finance at the University of Florida before starting his professional career at Cameron-Brown Mortgage Company in Raleigh, NC.*

*David's professional career led him to multiple banks and many cities where he made lifelong friendships and pursued those things for which he will be best remembered. The communities of Raleigh and Charlotte, NC, Clearwater, FL, St. Louis, MO, and Jacksonville, FL were all introduced to David's unique ability to blend his extraordinary work ethic with a huge desire to play. David's greatest strength as a banker was not his technical expertise, which was extensive, but his ability to be a fair and excellent coworker and leader.*

*Only his alter ego as a fun hog matched David's professional career. He had many friends that had no idea of his career as a banker, but instead knew him as a hunter, fisherman, cyclist, and whitewater paddler. His quest for fun led him to the mountains of western North Carolina where he failed at retiring multiple times due to his competing loves of finance, fun and family. At home in Bryson City he devoted an enormous amount of time to establish a chapter of Big Brothers*



*and Big Sisters mentoring a child himself. He was also very active in the Bryson City Presbyterian Church and volunteered many hours to Church needs.*

*David kept his passions strong and close to his heart. He introduced his family and many friends to the outdoors. As he got older the fun and family finally began to win out over the finance, and David spent as much time as possible with the next generation. "Papa" spent last week, just before he became ill, at his family's beloved Ft. George home teaching his three grandchildren his enormous love for the outdoors.*



# River Voices



## Inner City Kids Kayak

By Jessie Stone

Eight years ago, after the attacks on the World Trade Center, I felt inspired to bring something positive to inner city kids in New York. The best message of hope for the future I could think of was to teach kids to have as much fun and adventure as I had been having through kayaking. I wanted to show these kids that taking risks and exploring the unknown world would provide them with confidence and fun—not fear—in life. What better way than kayaking? From this idea, the Inner City Kids Kayaking Camp was born.

For the camp to become a reality though, two things had to happen. We needed to find students and instructors. Even though I thought it was a great idea, I had no idea if anyone else would. Luckily,

a former kayak student of mine put me in touch with Boys and Girls Harbor, an educational institution that provides all kinds of opportunities for underserved youth in Harlem and the South Bronx. After proposing the idea to Boys and Girls Harbor, I was introduced to the Upward Bound Program.

Upward Bound is a college preparatory program for underserved youth. All of the kids in the Upward Bound Program share certain commonalities. None of their parents have gone to college, they come from below a certain income bracket, and they are all very motivated individuals. Some of the Upward Bound graduates have returned as teachers to the program because it was such a life changing experience for them. These teachers have also become our kayak students, learning to paddle alongside the kids.

*Inner City Kids Kayaking Camp students get on the water*

photo by Juerg Ruf

After a challenging and very successful first camp in 2002, we have gone on to teach kayaking every summer since then to Upward Bound students and teachers. Each camp begins in a swimming pool at the Boys and Girls Harbor building in lower Harlem. We progress from the pool to a beach in Long Island, and ultimately to two rivers in Connecticut. Students come in a variety of ages and skill levels. Often we have non-swimmers, and the camp usually numbers more girls than boys, for a change of pace. We also get new students and teachers as well as returning participants. While trying something



totally new, these students are venturing to places they would never otherwise visit and are having an adventure doing it. In fact, the majority of our students have never left New York City.

Over the years, we have had top-notch instruction for the camp. EJ, Emily, and Dane Jackson have brought their teaching expertise. Nick Troutman has accompanied Emily for several camps too. The kids have been inspired seeing and being taught by people close to them in age. Anna Levesque, Andrew Holcomb, and Alex Nicks have made guest appearances, and long time instructors Margie and Hayden Glatte from Sundance Expeditions in Oregon have taught every camp we have done. Without the commitment and dedication of these instructors, the camps would never have been so successful.

We have had terrific gear sponsors as well. Jackson Kayak has donated all our boats. AT paddles have donated all our paddles. Astral Buoyancy has supplied all our life jackets, and Shred Ready Helmets has given us great head protection. Dermatone Sun block has donated sun block for everyone. We have had great sponsorship of shoes and expenses from Keen Footwear first and later from Crocs. In fact, without the financial help of both Keen and Crocs, we would not have been able to continue the city-based camps!!

After a couple of years doing the city camp, all the instructors agreed that it would be

really great if we could add a multi-day river trip to the camp itinerary. With the help of a visionary donor, Joe Perella, we have been able to expand our camp to include a wilderness river trip on the Rogue River in Oregon. With the multi-day trip on the Wild and Scenic Rogue, the kids are able to solidify their kayaking skills and get an intensive education in the natural world. There is nothing quite like watching someone see his or her first osprey catch a fish, or observe a salmon spawn, or glimpse a black bear in his natural habitat. It opens up a whole new world for them.

Since most of these kids have never left the concrete jungle, every plant, bug, and animal is a new experience, not to mention camping out with no cell phone, no showers, and no hair dryers! Most of the time the kids begin the trip with a fear of the unknown, but as the river carries them downstream, they experience the beauty and magic of the Rogue. Fear turns to curiosity and then to fun. The kids see all they can do with their newly acquired skills, and they soak in their new surroundings. Through these kayaking camps and journeys downstream, these kids cultivate an interest in their natural world, develop confidence from learning a new skill, and have a lot of fun doing it.

Over the eight years of teaching these camps, it has been really fun and exciting to watch these kids grow from their kayaking experiences. Some of the kids become

kayakers and love it. For others, learning to kayak is an opportunity to try something new, challenge themselves in a totally new way and expand their horizons. No matter whether the kids continue to paddle or not, we all get something very positive out of it, and the camp continues to be very popular with Upward Bound Students. With recent government funding cuts in education, Upward Bound's future may be in jeopardy. But, for the moment, we are enjoying each camp as much as possible and researching plan B to keep the camp going in the future.



*Kids, instructors, and volunteers on the Farmington River*

photo by Juerg Ruf



# River Voices

Photo by Jake Sander and Abe Riosuabe





## Circus at Sunset

By John G. Schier

In early November 2008 a message arrived at the Outdoor Adventure Center in Index, Washington. Mike Faussett was congratulating whoever it was that pulled off the first successful modern day conquest of whitewater that has eluded all but one of the world's top paddlers since 1926. Eighty-two years ago Mike's grandfather Al had survived a plunge down the terrifying maelstrom in an uncontrollable 32-foot dugout, as gravity and good fortune had allowed. Year after year since that day, whitewater record holders have intently studied yet dismissed the feature as beyond unrunnable. Unlike so many "falls" which are essentially long hucks into a deep pool, Sunset Falls on the South Fork of the Skykomish River (WA) constricts a 200-foot riverbed into a 40-foot wide continuous Class VI slash through solid bedrock. Were he to look down at Sunset Falls now, Al might shiver and ask himself what was I thinking? Locals never expected to hear of another attempt.

But then, in October 2008, 62 tons of water per second were crashing down the dizzying gradient of Sunset Falls, pushing directly into a 30-foot undercut bank, exploding against an unavoidable hotel sized boulder which created a frightening midstream 20-foot by 20-foot vertical wall of white, twisting and slamming any floating object hard right with deafening thunder, before the entire force of the flow trapped and held it through the final set of two massive river wide ledges. The film and support team members could only communicate with hand signals, thought they stood side by side. Disbelief gave way to a sense of history, then to pride and confidence in the skill of a world-class paddler.

Rob McKibbin had been commuting within sight of Sunset for several weeks, at some points so closely that an errant swerve could have been bad news. He is so in tune with boating that I might understand if

he told me Sunset had been speaking to him, but he wouldn't. An occasional lunch break on the bank gave him a chance to visualize lines. The right boat, the ideal flow—at some planetary alignment point all agreements were finalized. Game on.

Eerily floating to the lip of the entrance pool, many of the lines came into view over the massive horizon line. Starting with a left edge at medium speed, he pushed through the entrance drop and stroked further left, as much of the flow was flushing into the long undercut on the right, which is in your face at river level. He gingerly moved onto the main tongue and carefully straightened out when it all dropped out from under him with heavy acceleration. He hit and sliced a stopper wave at the bottom of the next ledge, and with a strong left draw was back on the tongue.

He was still on line and driving hard to ride up and around the right side of the huge midstream rooster rock.

The next 30-foot slide pushed momentum into hyper drive, the left side of the boat slammed hard, but he maintained his course while tons of water drove right. Seconds later another massive blow from the left knocked him over and held him on the bottom still in the boat for the next nine seconds over and through the final two ledges. Rob took out, apologized to his boss for taking a long lunch, and mentioned he might need to take time off due to injured ribs. The support teams went ballistic, frantically screaming at each other. Whatever the intended discourse there was a second sense of history, perhaps unspoken admission into the mutual admiration society. Some might say it was an impressive display of extreme athleticism capped off with an uncommon dose of humility. Al Faussett might have been looking upstream and repeatedly tapping the top of his leather helmet, two thumbs up.



## Who Was Al Faussett?

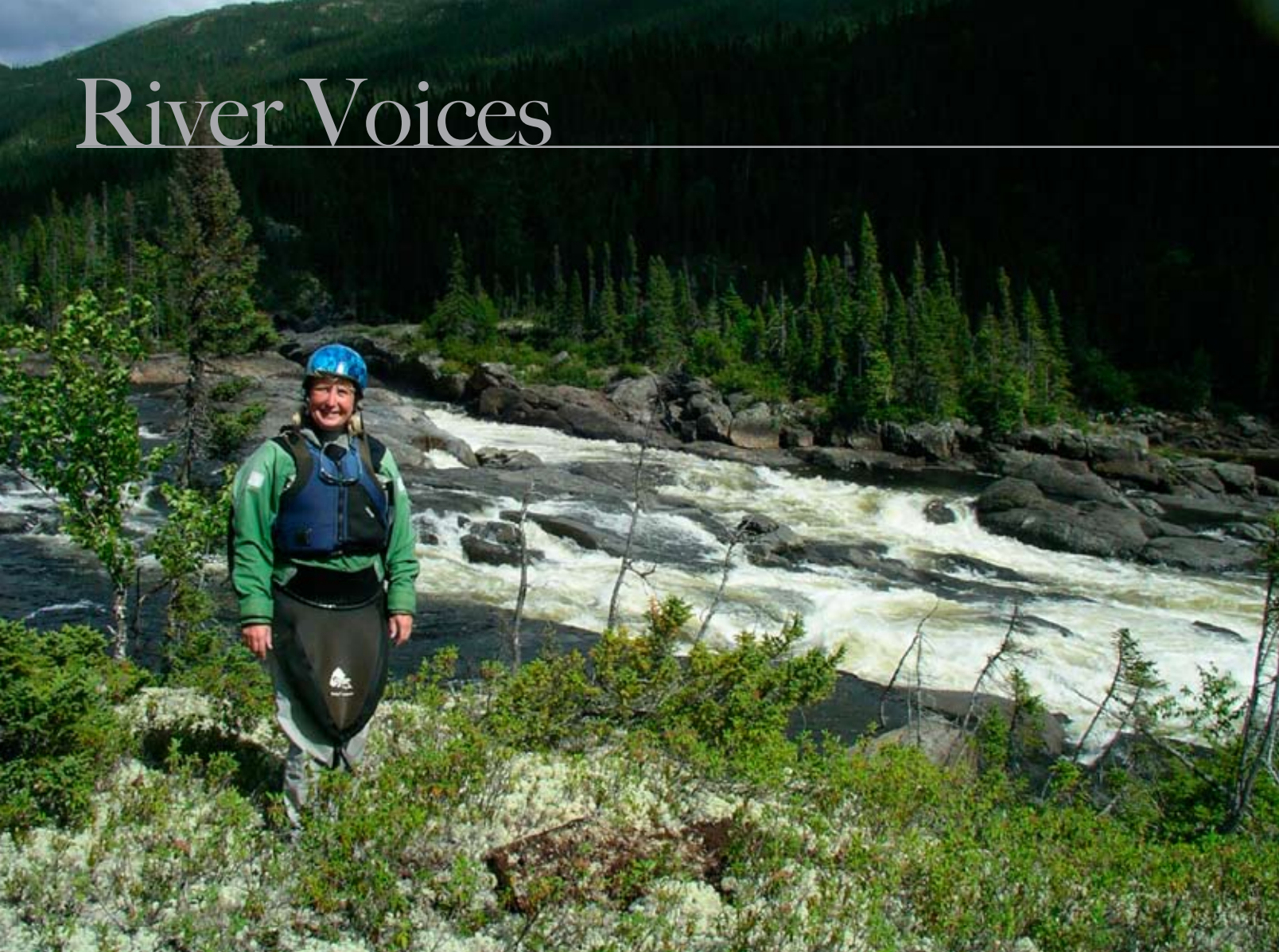
By Ambrose Tuscano

Many readers may already be familiar with Al Faussett from Whit Deschner's excellent history, "Daredevil Al Faussett," published in *Liquid Locomotive*, a collection of whitewater stories edited by John Long. For those who've never heard of Al Faussett, a short biography is in order, with special thanks to Louise Lindgren, director of the Index-Pickett Museum in Index, Washington, who provides a much more thorough history in her HistoryLink.org article, number 8567.

Al Faussett was a logger living in Monroe, Washington. Born the eighth of ten children, in 1879, Faussett seemed to constantly seek out ways of drawing attention to himself. Given the craze for daredevil stunts in the 1920s, it's little surprise that Faussett eventually decided to descend Sunset Falls. The falls drops over 100 vertical feet in the course of about 275 horizontal feet, making for an extremely steep angled slide. Faussett's plan to survive the chaotic plunge was to secure himself inside a craft of his own making. Along with a friend, Faussett crafted a wooden canoe, christened *Skykomish Queen*, in which he would ride the falls. With the help of a manager, Faussett promoted his undertaking ceaselessly, and on May 30, 1926 thousands arrived on the shores of the Skykomish to witness his folly. Faussett's successful descent of Sunset Falls was not the end of his daredevil life. In the next several years he went on to run five other falls of varying height in the Pacific Northwest. In spite of his temporary fame, born of his thrill-seeking stunts, Faussett lived most of his life in relative obscurity. It is little wonder, then, that among those familiar with his exploits, Faussett's legend, has few bounds. Indeed, even an accomplished paddler might wonder at his or her own pride when they consider the death-defying cataracts this untaught and largely unpracticed "canoeist" survived.



# River Voices



## Roughing it on the Romaine

By Chrissy Zeltner

"You are going to end up spraying it the wrong way and seasoning yourself for a bear," my brother Dan exclaimed optimistically when I told him we were taking bear spray on our nearly 150-mile whitewater wilderness trip. As it turns out, I managed to make it through without seasoning myself or anyone else, but several times it was quite comforting to know we had it with us.

The people involved in our adventure were Craig Wassinger, Jason Miller and I. I had only met Jason once before embarking on this journey. I was hoping we'd get along. He seemed easy going enough. I'd been paddling with Craig for a few years now

at that time and considered him one of my closest friends. We were invited to join a private group to paddle the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon last year. The journey down the Colorado and the fun had on it were what enticed us to search for another multi-day trip. When asked later how this trip compared to that 18-day adventure, we had to say that the Romaine made the Grand Canyon look like a spa vacation.

The river is the main character in this tale. Her name is Riviere Romaine and she has her origins in northeast Quebec, up in Labrador. She is a big, mighty river who alternates between taking her time and rushing impatiently to drain into the

St. Lawrence Gulf. She has many sisters all along the northern St Lawrence— the Magpie, the Aguanish, the St Jean. She is remote, accessible by floatplane only, scenic, challenging and mostly runnable— she filled all of our qualifying traits for a river we wanted to attempt. But did we stand up to hers?

We had been in frequent contact with Bob Gedekoh, local kayaking legend and all-around good guy, regarding several aspects of this trip. He provided us with an article about his trip down the Romaine in the late 1980s. An excerpt of his article reads, "What are the qualifications? Solid Class IV boating skills. The physical stamina

*Chrissy Zeltner scouting a big rapid on the river*

**Photo by Craig Wassner**



to complete the journey. The fortitude to spend 10 days in the wilderness with less than 25 lbs of gear. And perhaps most important, an easygoing disposition—the ability to laugh in the face of adversity. Whiners and snivelers need not apply.” I don’t know about Craig and Jason, but just reading this made me want to crawl in my sleeping bag and take a nap!

Our conversations with Bob were quite helpful in deciding upon this particular river and in the planning and logistics. He had paddled the river with Mike Bush and Dean Fairburn in the late 1980s. When I met Mike at the Gauley Fest the year after our trip, he told me with a laugh, “I don’t do trips like that anymore.” Barry and Kitty Tuscano were also invaluable in our planning and preparations. They had kayaked the Romaine in the early 1990s with their son Ambrose. I kept bugging Kitty, calling her to make sure I could handle the whitewater. She and Barry stressed that we would all be fine with the whitewater, but that we really needed to function well as a team and be conservative due to the wilderness and remoteness of a trip like this.

So the decision was made. Food, gear and special equipment were purchased, borrowed, or rented. We ended up borrowing two old Prijon boats from the Tuscanos. We liked the Prijons for 2 reasons: one, the durability of the plastic and two, the lack of a stern wall leaving more room for gear. Reservations for the floatplane were made after some confusion about water levels. The air charter service actually told Craig that they would not fly us in to the Romaine because it was too low to land on. We made the plans anyway and our departure flight was scheduled for August 14th.

The drive itself was quite an adventure. I left from West Virginia, met Craig in Pittsburgh and we proceeded to his parents’ house in Buffalo. Already five hours of drive time for me. Jason came over from Akron the next morning to meet us and we were on our way. The next 22 hours of driving include many moose crossing signs, a 2:00 a.m. surprise ferry ride in

Tadoussac, some bumbling attempts to communicate with French speaking gas station attendants, and last-minute efforts to find ketchup packets to take in the boats due to Jason’s condiment addiction. We drove through towns whose names we couldn’t pronounce, such as Baie-Comeau and Port-aux-Quilles, and finally arrive in Havre St. Pierre. A small quaint fishing village on the shore of the St. Lawrence, Havre St. Pierre was not quite a bustling metropolis, but it was the location of the charter float plane service that was to fly us to the put-in.

So there we were. The air service had flown a hunting group somewhere on the plane that we were to have reserved. They informed us that we could still fly in that day, but we were split up into two even smaller planes. One plane had two of us inside and one kayak strapped outside to the landing float. The other plane had one of us and the other two kayaks inside. Everything was divided up, loaded, strapped down and we were ready to go. Jason and I got into one plane and Craig boarded the other. Our pilot, Stephan, spoke very good English, but looked barely old enough to drive a car, let alone fly this

small plane. I was having serious second thoughts about this. I am not a good flyer. I hate flying on any plane and we were about to let a single engine tiny little pile of metal fly us into the middle of nowhere and drop us off. Egad!

Once in the air, I actually calmed down quite a bit. I looked around as much as I could and saw absolutely nothing but mountains, rivers, and lakes—no signs of civilization at all. Talking was at a minimum due to the noise of the engine and my nerves. Jason was quite reassuring, squeezing my shoulder during turbulence and pointing out features on the ground. Stephan, the pilot, also attempted to elicit calming conversation, but I was focused on maintaining meditative breathing and not losing the contents of my stomach.

About an hour into the flight, we spotted the Romaine. We began to circle her as we descended. To ensure a safe landing, the

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*Craig Wessner, Chrissy Zeltner, and Jason Miller next to the Romaine sign on the road*

Photo by Christine Zeltner





# River Voices

pilot had to assess our landing location options. He had to be totally certain that there was nothing under the surface of the water for the nose of the plane to catch or collide with. This whole process consisted of circling and circling and more circling as we flew lower and lower. This whole circling thing was, of course, done with one wing dipped down pointing at the ground. I was so thankful that I had taken Dramamine for motion sickness before we left the ground. I'm sure Jason and Stephan were glad of this as well. The eventual landing on the river was quite smooth, much smoother than most ground landings I've experienced. We taxied to shore and soon spotted Craig's plane circling.

It was real "last chance" moment. We had a satellite phone and a personal locator beacon, but this was our moment of abandonment. The pilots started their engines and began to taxi away. My heart was racing and the moment seemed surreal. We were questioning ourselves. Did we forget anything? Can we do this? Who the heck are these other people I'm with and what are we doing here? Did anyone bring toilet paper? The planes took off and grew smaller and smaller until they disappeared over a range of mountains. I decided that my first course of action was to toss myself on the ground and make a sand angel on the sandbar where we started. That done, we were on our way.

The first seven or eight miles were totally flat. We had to keep an eye on where we were going to avoid getting beached on sandbars. We saw our first of many sets of moose tracks coming toward and entering the water. We decided upon a huge, sandy island for camp the first night. We filtered river water for drinking, gathered wood, made dinner and attempted to sleep while anticipating our first full day on the Romaine and her rapids that awaited us.

We awakened to a spectacular morning. Throughout the trip, our average daytime temperatures ranged from low 60s to upper 70s, depending on sun and/or rain. Our night time temperatures hit upper 30s and 40s. Our first day was probably our

warmest of the entire trip. Each morning, we would get a fire started and cook breakfast ... always oatmeal, except for one attempt at pancakes. We had decided to cook over campfires each morning and night so as not take up space in the boats with stoves and fuel. By the rainy end of the trip, the campfire thing got to be discouraging. Our time required for preparation and reloading the kayaks each morning was about 1 and 1/2 hours. Each day, we wondered how we got everything packed the day before and where it went.

That first morning, the first rapids began to appear on the horizon. Things began easy and slow and we were happy to have any kind of whitewater. We could easily notice that the flow was low in the flatwater sections, but the rapids all appeared to have plenty of water in them. After some simple Class IIs and IIIs, we encountered our first Class IV! Upon scouting, we found that it was pretty straightforward, but that it contained some huge holes. It looked fabulously fun, but with a kayak weighed down with all of our life essential gear, I opted for a sneak line down the left. The guys ran the main line cleanly, but later said that it was pushier than it looked.

A few rapids later, we found ourselves at our first "chute." The map had the distance of this particular chute listed at 800 meters. We arrived at the conclusion that the French had labeled all the waterfalls or otherwise unrunnable stretches of whitewater as "chutes." Our introductory chute on the Romaine was phenomenal, absolutely breathtaking, but very, very unrunnable. We began our first portage up and over huge boulders. We attempted to stick to a straight line, staying beside the river. We eddy-hopped between micro-eddies here and there along the left bank only to get right back out and drag, push, carry, and slide our boats through and over the boulders again. The right side portage looked like it would have been worse, though. Sheer cliffs and straight up and down slopes on that side would have made portaging even worse. Sweating and beginning to tire, we finally saw an end to the long series of drops. We finished our first portage in 4 hours and

some minutes.

That night, we reviewed our map. We counted almost 20 chutes and rapids rated at least Class V; some were Class VI. We realized that we were facing several days of long portages. At the rate we were going, we worried about completing the 144 miles back to the St Lawrence in the planned eight days. Nevertheless, we had no alternative other than to keep moving, by land or by water

The next morning I awakened to find that I couldn't see very well out of my right eye. The soft area under my eye was swollen due to a mosquito bite. I also had one on my forehead that felt like an itchy goose egg. My neck and ears ... well, let's just say I'm sweet. The bugs didn't seem to have even noticed Craig's presence in the area, but Jason had gotten a couple of bites. I was wearing my bug head netting almost 100% of the time when we were off the water, but the bugs seemed to find their way under it. We could see black clouds of the nasty little critters and they were relentless in their search for bare (not bear) skin.

At the beginning of the trip, to allay my fears, Craig had said to me, "We'll be fine. It's just paddling and camping." He forgot to mention the whole portaging thing. The portages turned out to be the most challenging aspect. Some were only 30-40 minutes while others lasted grueling hours. We learned that the fastest way wasn't always the straightest way. We began to look for and find trails through the woods left by previous trips, even though the most recent trip reported on the Romaine had been at least five years earlier. The trickiest part was finding the "trails" and then scouting them back to the river so we didn't find ourselves backtracking with loaded boats if a trail ended or we couldn't get back to the river that way. The vegetation on even the easiest trails was dense and the going was slow. Fallen trees, moss, roots, vines and wild blueberries! I needed quite a bit of help with my boat, especially on steep areas. Jason and Craig were extremely patient and helpful, sometimes telling me to take care of the paddles while they



would take care of the boats. As concerned as I was with equality and pulling my own weight out there figuratively, there was no way I could have done a lot of the portages alone.

At the end of one especially long portage, we came back down to the river and could find no easy access. There was a sheer rock all around with a small pool at its base and a small rock island about 15 feet out. We decided that I would get out to that island, then we would navigate the boats down and to the rock with ropes and webbing. The guys lowered me down with webbing as far as they could, but I was still dangling about 7-8 feet above the water. I let go, dropped into the river and quickly discovered that I couldn't see a thing because I still had my bug net over my head. I flailed around, hopefully flailing in the direction of the rock island. I found it with my shins and spider crawled up due to its slippery wet surface. At this point, I was to toss a throw bag back over to the guys to anchor on to a boat. Perhaps this may have been the time to admit my lack of practice with a throw bag. I think they are still quite dumbfounded by the attempt that actually went behind me. Eventually we re-grouped and got back on the water.

Another grueling portage ended steeply, but with an easy access back on the river. At first glimpse, it seemed benign enough to put in here, make a ferry move across the current and out around about a 40-foot rock wall to be out in the main current. Upon closer inspection, the ferry move was looking more and more dynamic. The current we were looking to ferry was approximately half of the entire river and swirling around before pillowing up on the 40-foot wall. Craig had gotten in his boat and was playing around in the eddy. Watching him try to control his boat in the fast, turbulent current had me looking at Jason and saying, "I don't know about this." It didn't look that bad if it weren't for the heavy boats being slow to respond and hard to manipulate. And it didn't look that bad if it wasn't for the wall we had to make it around. And it didn't look so bad if it wasn't for the size and swirliness of the water. That was too many risks for



me on this specific river. I'm sure none of us would have thought twice about that particular ferry move anyplace else, but we needed to be conservative as a team. So up and over another few boulders and we were on our way.

The Romaine began as a beautiful and mighty river. She increased in splendor and size every day. Some areas had sheer rock walls; others were mountains as far as the eye could see. There were fields of blueberries and wild flowers. The rapids were spectacular, something new and challenging everyday. Big water waves and hydraulics everywhere, some creek lines down sneaks in channels that were possible due to the low water. The features were always much bigger than they looked from the scouts. We paddled almost 80 rapids in eight days, ranging from long, fun, bouncy wave trains, to swift narrow chutes, to tumultuous rock gardens full of holes and pour-overs. We all agreed that one hole that we saw at the bottom of one of the chutes was, by far, the biggest hydraulic any of us had ever seen.

On day 5 or 6, we came to a long series of drops. We portaged a couple of drops, ran a few, and then arrived at a drop that was punctuated by three fairly large islands spaced across the river. This was a good indicator of how wide the river had become in places—there were three major islands with five channels of water to choose from. We scouted from the farthest left island. The most left channel was straightforward, Class II-III, easy

*Some classic Romaine whitewater*

*Photo by Christine Zeltner*

boogey water, but it fed into the bottom of the channel going to the right of the island. At the bottom of this was the THING! It was a 30-40 foot wide monstrosity that had to have been alive. One second it was a smooth glassy wave, but seconds later it had morphed into a huge sinister looking hole. Then unpredictably, it would have a split personality—a hole on one side and a wave on the other. Then, the features would change sides. A minute or two later, you were looking at a smooth glassy wave again. But there seemed to be no rhyme or reason to its stages or personality changes. We were unable to discern a pattern and there was no way I was paddling anywhere near this creature. Craig decided he saw his line and that he wouldn't come anywhere near the THING. Jason and I watched and videotaped his attempt. He started out, had no problems with the left channel and appeared to be heading for a line that would take him right past the creature. But wait! The current was too strong. It had hold of him and despite his efforts, brought him right around the bottom of the island and right into the channel containing the THING. Even Craig had a concerned look on his face at this time, and that is a pretty rare sight. He fought with the current for 15, maybe 20 seconds, then committed to a line that ran him right through the smooth glassy wave phase of the THING where seconds later, a



# River Voices

hole took its place. At this point, Jason and I retrieved our boats and ferried across to the center island to select a nice sweet THING-less channel to navigate.

One of the highlights of the trip was “La Grande Chute de Le Romaine.” In less than a quarter of a mile, the river lost more than 200 feet. It was unquestionably one of the most impressive displays of whitewater beauty I’ve ever seen. Seeing La Grande Chute alone would have been worth this entire trip. Its presence was apparent far upstream by the mist and that roar of a big one that gets your heart racing before you even see it. The portage around the right side of this drop took less than an hour despite its size. We stayed for a while, took

an abundance of pictures and commented on how lucky we were to have gotten to see something this beautiful that so few others have ever and will ever see.

Another highlight of the trip was the bear cub we watched swim across the river in front of our kayaks, and the loons diving everywhere for dinner and staying underwater for minutes at a time, and the waterfalls coming straight down the faces of the mountains, and the tortellini with pesto on night three, and the wild blueberries, and wildflowers, and the three of us sitting straight up in the tent suddenly one night when a moose walked up to and around the tent, and the moonrise so bright it cast shadows, and the look on the guys faces when I rolled my heavy kayak up after flipping where I really shouldn’t have been upside down, and the chocolate pudding with dehydrated milk. (Thanks,

Craig—it made up for the split pea soup!)

Of course along with the highlights, there were some tough times. I considered not speaking or writing about this but I’m telling you everything else about the journey so here goes.... I cried at one point on the trip. It was towards the end of the day, we’d been paddling and portaging all day, the temperature was dropping, we were all getting chilly. The sun was going down, we were trying to find someplace to make camp. Visibility was decreasing, we ran into a sandbar just under the water. The fastest option was to get out of the boats and walk/slosh along until we hit moving water again. I lost my footing and fell into the cold water. The guys just kept on going, I think they knew I just needed some time alone. Not sure if I cried because I’m a girl? Not sure if it is fair to other girls to generalize and say that is

---

*Craig Wessner and Chrissy Zeltner pose for a photo along the river*

Photo by Jason Miller







*One of the many memorable portages*

Photo by Christine Zeltner

why I cried? At that point, I thought back to reading Bob Gedekoh's qualifications to run the Romaine, especially the "whiners and snivelers need not apply" part.

The final 20 or so miles were flatwater. Or they were supposed to be. They would have been if it weren't for the gale force wind racing up the canyon. The wind was whipping up two to three-foot waves, which would have been nice if they were headed downriver. If we stopped paddling, we would lose ground ... or should I say water? We were all having skin breakdown issues on our hands at this point and conversation was minimal. We stayed in a drafting formation for most of the paddle out, keeping our heads down and our arms moving. At this point, none of us wanted to spend another night with our wet clothes and no dry firewood. We pushed on and reached the bridge of Route 138 along the St Lawrence sometime in the

mid-afternoon.

Our river journey was complete and we climbed up the hill to the road and back into civilization. Our next challenge was to hitchhike back to the airport to retrieve my 4Runner. Easier said than done with 3 grungy looking, smelly, English-speakers in the Middle of Nowhere, Quebec. Someone kindhearted eventually agreed to take Craig. He returned with my 4Runner and we loaded up and drove about two hours into Sept Iles for much needed showers, a meal and soft, comfortable beds in a hotel.

"Would you do it again?" I've been asked. My answer now is "absolutely!" My answer upon being asked immediately after or in the middle of the trip may have been different. Before beginning this trip, Barry Tuscano had said something to me that I'm sure he doesn't think is as profound as

I interpreted it to be—something along the lines of rather dying than not living. This journey was just that, a living life journey. I am so glad I had this opportunity to traverse this spectacular stretch of land and water with such fantastic friends. In fact, the Romaine River, its landscape, and its boreal forest environment is now at risk for changing forever. Four large hydroelectric dams have been proposed for construction on that beautiful waterway since our journey. So, yes, I would definitely go back!



# Stewardship

## Federal Judge Disconcerted by Lack of Progress on Twelvemile River Dam Removal

By Kevin Miller

At a hearing held on July 7 in the Anderson Federal Courthouse, United States District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr. ordered Schlumberger to have completed removal of the Woodside I and II dams on Twelvemile River by July 7, 2010. Judge Anderson chastised delays in the project stating that it was a “sad commentary on the litigants and lawyers involved.” He further stated that he had expected the attorneys of United States v. Schlumberger Technology to notify him of any issues with compliance to the consent decree he approved between the two parties in June 2006. After being notified of the lack of progress by Greenville News reporter Anna Simon, he called a hearing regarding why his order had not been complied with. Furthermore, he stated that he was taking “full control of the case.” With respect to the 2006 order, he vowed to “follow it until it is complied with or contempt

proceedings are issued.” The dams were ordered to be removed as part of a settlement for natural resource damages caused by the release of more than 400,000 pounds of PCBs between 1955 and 1977. The settlement included removal of the two dams and payment of an additional \$12 million in damages.

Schlumberger’s attorney, John Hanson, claimed that Schlumberger had found issues with the original contractor they had hired to do the work, had difficulty obtaining permits, and had encountered other procedural issues. He stated that they had terminated their agreement with the original contractor and were now progressing with their new contractor to have the dams removed by the end of 2011. The new contractor had also proposed more cost effective means of sediment removal, though these were rejected by South Carolina’s Department of Natural Resources and they returned to the original plan for sediment removal. Schlumberger and the EPA agreed that removal of the dams were most effective means to allow clean sediment transport from Twelvemile River to isolate the PCBs found in Lake Hartwell’s existing bottom sediment.

The judge allowed community organizations to present their opinions on the matter. Dr. Larry Dyck, a professor and river restoration expert, presented a community vision, including a blue way from Pickens to Lake Hartwell, whitewater recreation, and ecological restoration for fish migration and natural sediment transport. He also stated that the original contractor, Restoration Systems, had the community’s support with respect to their proposal for dam removal. He stated that Restoration Systems had a positive background with numerous dam removal projects and that he was unable to find evidence that the new contractor had adequate—if any—dam removal experience.

The community organizations also requested that consideration be given to order Schlumberger to remove the third, uppermost, dam in compensation for failure to administer the original consent decree in a timely manner. Judge Anderson ordered that the court will reconvene on October 13, 2009 at 9:30 am to discuss the matter.

Joe Carroll, an employee with Restoration Systems, stated that immediately following the consent decree, Schlumberger attempted to modify their original 15-page contract with 85 pages of amendments. He clarified that his company’s contract was terminated for “economic reasons” not because they lacked the capability to do the job. He further stated that they had all but one of the required permits and that they had indications from that agency that this permit would be issued as soon as they applied.

In conclusion, Judge Anderson gave Schlumberger exactly one year, until July 7, 2010, to remove Woodside I and Woodside II dams on Twelvemile River. Unwilling to tolerate any additional delays, he ordered the parties to inform him immediately of any obstacles. It remains likely that such obstacles will still create further delays.



*An existing play spot on Twelvemile River*

Photo by Michelle Miller



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# Stewardship

## Pit River Releases in Jeopardy

by Mick Grochol

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recommended ending summer whitewater releases on the Pit River (the Fall River Mills to Pit 1 Powerhouse reach) in the interest of protecting the endangered Shasta Crayfish. Recently, a study conducted with the help of PG&E concluded that, in the interest of protecting the species, summer flushing flows on the Pit 1 Reach should be ended. This comes after American Whitewater worked diligently with FERC to secure the releases during the relicensing process. AW has challenged the USFW recommendation, asking that more research be done to demonstrate a clear link between slight temperature changes caused by the flushing flows and the diminished number of Shasta Crayfish present in the river. There was even a call to the members of AW to write appeals to FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) on behalf of those who greatly enjoy the diverse run that is the Pit 1 reach, a unique stretch of river that contains both Class IV and Class II runs. The response from AW members was overwhelming, and as of this writing no decision has been made.

It's distressing to note that, on the PG&E website, they list the invasive species, the Signal Crayfish, as the primary threat to the continued survival of the endangered Shasta Crayfish. Nowhere on the website do they mention the small excerpt of text from their 120-plus-page document suggesting stopping the summer flushing flows as a preventative measure. This is the hang-up in the apparently incomplete research that got the attention of American Whitewater. In the official letter to FERC, Dave Steindorf, California Stewardship Director, cited AW's frustration with not being consulted before the

recommendation was made, since it was "...not in the spirit of collaboration that we have worked hard to establish with our agency and utility partners."

This writer hopes that FERC, PG&E, USFW and AW can work together to establish the true cause of the decline in population of this endangered crustacean, and come to a solution that will satisfy

all parties. If that resolution, sad as it would be, is the end of the releases, hopefully it will come only after a clear link is established between releases and crayfish declines.



*Kyle Allred, Pit River Falls*

Photo by Darin McQuoid



## Nature Conservancy to Tackle New England Dams

By Kevin Colburn

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) recently announced details of a project aimed at improving the management of dams and riparian ecosystems in the Connecticut River watershed. The project will address the management of several whitewater rivers in Vermont and New Hampshire, including the West, Westfield, Millers, and Ashuelot rivers. This project will be the first hard look at how the Army Corps of Engineers manages these dams, and will include opportunities for public involvement. American Whitewater staff members are in contact with TNC staff and intend to participate significantly in the project. One of TNC's main goals is the protection and restoration of remaining hardwood floodplain forests, which require regular flooding to function properly. The flood control dams in the watershed have (intentionally) curtailed this flooding. American Whitewater is hopeful that the scientific skills of TNC can infuse the Connecticut watershed with better management that benefits forests, fish, and paddlers alike. Paddlers have long struggled with inconsistencies in the management of these rivers.

## Carolina Dam Relicensings Continue to Stumble and Press On

By Kevin Colburn

A number of developments in the relicensing of Duke Power dams on the Tuckasegee and Catawba Rivers are keeping us guessing. On the Tuckasegee, Jackson County has decided to attempt to take over Dillsboro Dam using their powers of eminent domain. Duke Power is fighting this attempt, and as of the writing of this article has broken ground in preparation for removing the dam. Sediment removal from behind the dam will begin immediately and be completed by year's end. Removal is scheduled for

completion by March of 2010, and will pave the way for releases on the West Fork of the Tuckasegee and Upper Nantahala. Regardless of ongoing litigation and the condemnation threat that could halt removal, Duke Power is bound by a settlement agreement (which AW signed) and an order from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requiring dam removal, and is pressing on with removal. Farther to the east, another settlement agreement, on the Catawba River, experienced a different hurdle. A challenge of the state permit for new (positive) dam operations was successful, and therefore the settlement agreement signed by AW and a large number of other stakeholders may require additional negotiations. Setting the management of rivers for 30 to 50 years is no small matter, and challenges are the rule rather than the exception.

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# Canoeing

## How it All Got Started: A Life in OC

By Milt Aitken

The big fat man was clearly having a bad time on that summer's day in 1981. Two screaming kids and a cooler accompanied him in the Sears birch bark blown fiberglass canoe. He'd run aground again on the metro Chattahoochee and the crappy boat was sinking. At the end of the river, he breathed a big sigh of relief when I traded him my last ice cold Budweiser for his busted up canoe.

Thus was the beginning of my long addiction with whitewater canoeing. I patched the boat up and took it down a number of Class III runs, re-patching it after every trip. That fragile glass boat taught me my first lessons about grace required by open canoeing. The quest for that grace and style captured me.

Soon after, Don "Karnage King" Kinser and I began paddling together. The glass boat met its end on a high water tandem trip with Don on Sweetwater Creek near Atlanta. A Blue Hole OCA, a Dagger Dimension and ultimately a Caption followed. Don got himself a Perception H2O, a boat that was only stable upside down. We worked our way up to what was thought was the pinnacle of whitewater canoeing—Section IV of the Chattooga at summer levels. We thought we were pretty hot. But that feeling faded away one day.

Around 1990, I took my girlfriend down Section IV tandem in the Dimension. We had a dry hair day. It made me think: If I can take a girl down this "hard" river for her first time and have a dry hair day, how hard can it be? I needed more challenge.

Don and I ran into "Strokin Steve" Frazier. Steve's paddling resume was far better than ours, but he needed paddling partners with dependable cars, as anyone could see from looking at Steve's old junker. So we started paddling together. Steve challenged us and pushed us to learn more. Tom "Action Jackson" joined up with us a little later, and then we had a core group of four open boaters. We progressed rapidly from

Section IV to steep creeks and big rivers in Alabama, West Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina. It was on one of our West Virginia trips that we realized the presence of a hidden evil....

In the early 80s, I was accustomed to swimming rapids out of my OCA since I was just sitting on a bench seat with no straps. By the 90s, my newer boats were outfitted better and I learned a roll, so my flips were far less frequent. But, sometimes, it felt like something tugged on my paddle and yanked me over. I got a video camera and started filming to show people what we did on our weekends. Watching the tape, I could see other instances where one of us was pulled over to our on-side. The thought that it might have been bad boating briefly flashed across our minds, but we dismissed that silly idea quickly! We realized that there was a sinister force at work ... a paddlesnake!

I decided to make a video about the paddlesnake, which became a great excuse to paddle new rivers & film a lot. The open boat provided a greater cargo capacity allowing me to carry cameras, mikes, and a cooler. And, of course, bigger boats mean better carnage! At the end of the day we'd have a beer and make fun of each other's wipe outs. And I noticed that, for some reason, open boaters are much more tolerant of ribbing from their friends than kayakers. Open boats mean open minds, perhaps.

One day, I taped a rat trap to one of Don's paddles and attached a very large rubber snake. We were all going to take turns





staging a paddlesnake attack. Tom went first while I filmed. His performance was perfect. The guys behind me were rolling on the rock laughing their asses off and I had a tough time seeing through the viewfinder through the tears of laughter. I got a tripod after that and the open canoe made it easy to carry.

Ultimately, I made four Paddlesnake videos, two of which were big winners at the National Paddling Film Festival. I started WhitewaterVideo.com to help sell them, which became the largest retailer of paddlesport videos. And all of this because I traded a cold beer for a canoe! Sadly, paddling partners don't last forever. Steve quit boating. Tom got married and backed off to a couple times per year. Don became a skirt wearing butt-boater, abandoning his manly roots. But I will always remember those paddlesnake hunting trips as some of the best times of my life.

Digitizing all of my Hi-8 & MiniDV tapes onto hard disk has given me a chance to review some great old video. And I've realized something else. It seems like the times that Tom, or Steve or I were attacked, paddlesnakes were in a feeding frenzy, very much like sharks in chummed waters. When the bulk of the attacks occurred, there was one particular paddler who was always there and usually attacked. That's why I'm dedicating this story to my chum, Don Kinser!

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*Photos from left to right:*

*Steve Frazier tasting the beefy water of the Upper Blackwater*

*The path to fame: a brutal piton on Little River Canyon Falls*

*Steve Frazier in Bull Sluice*

*Steve Frazier in Bull Sluice*  
**Photos by Milt Aitken**

*Milt at short Creek Falls*  
**Photo by Tom Jackson**

*Tom styling the eddies on Jawbone*

*Steve Frazier on Jones Creek Falls*  
**Photos by Milt Aitken**





# Canoeing



*The author on the Chattooga in 2007*

**Photo by Casey Jones**

## Memories of the River

*By Chuck Neese*

On a recent trip down the Chattooga River, my paddling buddy of 25 years, Tim Ray, posed the question, “What would our lives have been like without paddling?”

The river has been one of two true constants in my life, the other is God. No matter what is going on in my life, I know the river is always there waiting for me. There to bring me comfort, peace, and excitement.

I was fortunate enough to take my first river trip on the Siuslaw River at age 11 while growing up in Oregon. My fascination continued as we moved to South Alabama paddling the Sepulga, Conecuh and Burnt Corn Creek. When I was 18 years old, my parents moved to North Alabama. There I met Sonny Barker who took me down the Locust Fork and introduced me to the Nantahala.

The Nantahala became my home away from home. Entering the gorge has always been like walking through my own front door after a hard day at work.

Advancements in technology allowed me to paddle a wider range of rivers. In 1987 I met the river of my life, The Middle Fork of the Salmon. This became the river all others were measured against. The intensity of the water was far greater than anything I had ever experienced. That combined with the remoteness and the grandeur of the wilderness made me realize just how small I really am.

Continuing to paddle the rivers of North Alabama and North Georgia filled my life with enjoyment even through the midst of personal crisis. The Chattooga became a refuge of solace, bringing peace and strength to an otherwise unbearable world.



Throughout my life, I have felt it my duty to share my love of paddling with anyone interested in the hopes they would find what I have found. Seeing their excitement the first time they experience whitewater brings me a renewed passion for the river.

Every river brings new friends into my life, friends who will always be there. When you share the river with friends, the boundaries of the world disappear. It does not matter what they are in the outside world, only that they are there sharing in the experience.

Once, while paddling Section IV of the Chattooga, I was privileged to paddle with a group of five people all close to age 70. When we got to Corkscrew, all of them ran it as clean as I have ever seen. I thought to myself, how incredible to be 70 years old and still able to run Section IV. That is what I want to be.

Some of my greatest heroes are paddlers on the river: Tim, old Dub, Evelyn, Chester and more than I could ever list. These are the people that know what the river has to offer, not just the rush of the whitewater.



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*Top right: Author playing on the Nantahala*  
**Photo by Eddie Lindsey**

*Middle right: Author running Idaho's Middle Fork  
Salmon in 1987*  
**Photo by unknown photographer**

*Bottom right: Canoeist on the Nantahala, circa 1976*  
*- Note: American Whitewater does not recommend  
emulating the paddler's safety gear - or lack thereof*  
**Photo by David Neese**



# Canoeing



*Us maneuvering through offset gates mid course*

Photo by Scott Foster

## A Dream Almost Fulfilled

*By Casey Eichfeld*

Paddling is a form of recreation that all can enjoy. Some of us find our joy in river running, others like to sea kayak, and some of us thrive in the competitive world. No matter what, if you don't have fun doing it then it isn't worth doing at all.

My name is Casey Eichfeld and I have been a whitewater slalom competitor from the age of 6. I've grown and learned from this aquatic lifestyle. My dream always has been and continues to be an Olympic gold medal. From the time I was two I have been paddling in search of that dream. I have had constant support from friends and family and my dream has never wavered. My heart has always been with the canoe. I have almost always only known the C-1 to be my boat but took a leap and jumped into the C-2 with a longtime friend and paddler. Combining our dreams and hopes of making it to the very top we worked for that ultimate goal. Being a C-2 is never an easy business. One partner always thinks they have a good idea or understanding and conflicts often ensue. But in the end those are all put aside so that you can continue to chase that dream.

We trained and faced many conflicts head on. We knew that to be great we would disagree but to be greater we had to resolve those disagreements. On April 27, 2008, we became the second seeded C-2 on the U.S. National Team. We had completed a major step in the road to our goal.

As the summer drew closer we prepared for our last important step towards that Olympic position. We traveled to Europe and immediately continued our training under our coach. Augsburg, Germany was the town where we would compete for that spot that we so deeply desired. Training on that course was of the utmost importance and we spent as much time there as we possibly could.

As the middle of July rolled around, we were in our last preparatory stages for the race. We had paddled the course many times and learned as much as we could in the time that we had. It was time to put ourselves to the test.

The first day of racing passed and we had come so very close to securing our position. We only needed a solid day to take that

position for ourselves. As the second day came, we did our best to mentally prepare ourselves for any outcome. At the finish of our second run of the second day, my partner and I looked at each other, smiled and said "We've done it..."

In July of 2008, my partner and I secured our first Olympic position at the third seasonal World Cup in Augsburg, Germany. We went on to compete in the Olympics and had a finish of eleventh place. We did not have the most impressive finish but we took away an experience that would last a lifetime and would prepare us for future Olympics.

A dream is something that is so important to have. A dream is a part of who we are and a part of who we want to become. Our dream was almost fulfilled last year and it will only push us that much harder to eventually reach it, but paddling will always be a love that can never be replaced.





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# Canoeing

## Close call on Overflow Creek: Sun. June 8, 2003

By Steve Frazier

It was a nice day, sunny and warm. The level was 1.0 feet at the take-out, a low but acceptable level for Overflow Creek. In short, the kind of day you dream about paddling your favorite creek on—an amazing late spring day. I put on with Snuffy Hall, Kent Wiggington and three others. I had done the creek about three weeks before and was told by a group taking off that there were no more new trees down in the creek. There were, however, a couple that I knew were there and so we would have to take care in those spots.

The one in question here is in a rapid about a third of the way downstream from the put-in called Round About. The top of Round About is where the trouble started. It begins with a three- or four-foot ledge with a good size hole at the bottom. Not a huge hole, but a respectable one.

As a boater lands at the bottom of this small drop he or she must be ready to make a 90-degree left hand bend with the creek. As one goes around to the left there is a narrow gap about 10 feet wide where the rapid has another small drop and then has a short run out. There is a very long pool at the bottom.

There was a tree about 8 inches in diameter in the second drop, which I knew it from the previous trip. After going over the first drop, the bow of my canoe hit the right hand gorge wall and I was floating toward the second drop and the tree backwards before I knew it. This is where I made my mistake. I should have looked over my shoulder and tried to get past the tree backwards. Instead, I tried to turn around forwards again. I only made it about half way around before the force of the current pushed my canoe into the tree.

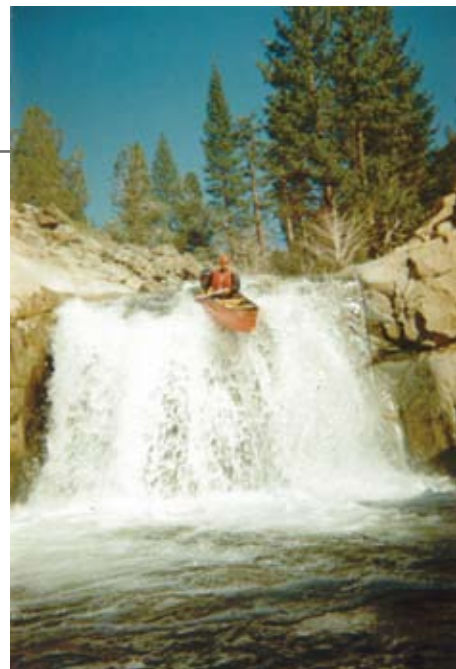
About four feet of the stern of my canoe was to the right side of the tree.

Unfortunately, there were only about five

feet between the tree and the gorge wall on the left. For about two seconds I thought I might be all right. I thought the boat might stick on the gorge wall, pin, and allow me to climb out. No such luck. First I felt the stern of the boat wrap about the tree. Next the upstream gunwale started sinking and the boat filled with water quickly. The gunwales started bending about two feet in front of me. In the next five seconds or so the 10 feet of boat between the tree and the left gorge wall folded into the five-foot wide gap between the two. After the boat “squeezed” through the slot it straightened back out and was, naturally, still stuck with the four feet of stern still wrapped around the tree.

I was upside down with water rushing over my head. I had no idea why, but there was an air pocket, so I was able to breathe. I tried to push out of the thigh straps, but couldn't. I was unable to get my right foot back enough due to the force of the current and the fact that the boat was pinned just behind the saddle. No problem, I thought, I will just release the Fastex buckle on the strap—something I usually don't have to do when I want to wet exit. After a few seconds of searching I found the buckle, but couldn't release it. The current was so strong that it had my leg forced into the strap. The force was too great to allow me to release the buckle.

It had been a good minute or so by now, but I had not lost my air pocket so was not in any immediate danger. I changed my tactic and decided to go back to trying to get my leg out of the strap. After several seconds of trying this I concluded that it wasn't going to happen. Okay, back to trying to release the buckle, I thought. I found it again and carefully tried to release it. It just wasn't going to happen. Two minutes or so had gone by now and I realized my boating partners would probably be setting up a rescue by now. I had already started to consider folding



Steve Frazier boofing somewhere in California

Photo by unknown photographer

myself up under the canoe so I could breath and relax until they unpinned my boat. I also thought by repositioning my body I might be able to work my way out of the strap. On one hand, I knew I was breathing and didn't want to do anything to change that. On the other hand, I knew I couldn't stay there indefinitely and my thigh was really starting to hurt from the force of the strap. Fortunately this was a decision that I didn't have to make. That force eventually ripped the d-rings out of the boat and I floated free.

Now I was free of the boat, but still had some rapid left to swim. I was on my stomach and my head was downstream. Obviously this is not the ideal position for swimming a rapid. I had no time to get my feet downstream, but was able to roll over on my back. Just as I did I went over the last drop and the water took me down. I landed on a rock with the small of my back. Snuffy threw me a rope and pulled me to shore.

I felt there was a lesson or two to be learned here. First of all, a knife would have been very valuable here. I used to carry one. I lost it a few years back and started thinking that I had been carrying it for a really long time and had only used it to slice apples and cheese. I never replaced it, incorrectly thinking there was no real way to get stuck in a canoe by anything that could be cut by a knife. WRONG!!!





*Top to bottom:*  
 Steve Frazier looking after the safety of others on a  
 different day  
**Photo by Tom Jackson**

*Steve Frazier on Jones Creek Falls*  
**Photo by Milt Aitken**

*Steve Frazier in Bull Sluice*  
**Photo by Milt Aitken**

Second, the fact that I didn't panic helped a lot. I made sure I was breathing deeply and slowly the whole time, thus keeping my heart rate slow and my oxygen use at a minimum. This allowed me to continue to think clearly and keep focused on what I needed to do. It also kept my muscles supplied with much needed oxygen. This would have been really important had the d-rings held and I would have been forced to wait for my paddling partners to rescue me.

Also to be remembered is the old "never give up." After this was all over I was pleased with myself for not ever thinking a negative thought. Equally important was the fact that my partners had already started to mobilize for a rescue. If you are ever in the position they were in it is VERY IMPORTANT to assume the victim is still alive until you are sure he or she is not. Snuffy was the only person that saw the accident happen in its entirety. He told me later that we were sure I was dead, but was ready to try the rescue on the off chance he was wrong. He did everything right. That would have saved my life had I remained pinned in the boat. As it turned out, they got my boat off the tree in about 10 minutes. I bet if they had needed to they could have done it in five.



# Current Poetry

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## North American River Runners and Big-Bottomed Girls

By Jerry Hoff

On a constantly shaded slope,  
where rattlesnakes never go,  
high on, "Grandfather's Mountain"  
a stream rises and falls through both  
Carolinas and old Virginia—to here.  
When he discovered it in 1694,  
(he said "... here's a new one. . .")  
Colonel Woods should have named it  
"River-That-Is-Only-Happy-When-  
Rushing-Down-A-Hill"  
but he did not.

Day One:  
(three-hundred-plus, years later)

After a slick breakfast and holding  
a casual coffee, kayak school begins:  
eddies, downstream vees, pillows, and  
standing waves;  
reverse and forward sweep, low brace,  
and the cross-handed downstream lean  
of the Duffek maneuver.  
Soft cork tailors boat to body  
and patient Ms Barnes shows us the roll.  
We learn that big-bottomed girls  
are more stable in the water, that  
every stroke  
is a correction, and kayak is the same  
forward or back  
on page, in water.  
"Goddam Boat," we say.

Day Two:

Ms Barnes says:  
"... brace paddle, body parallel  
snap hips under, head out last. . ."  
while my amygdala issues its' imperative:  
"... oxygen cannot be extracted from this  
substance, the medium for this organism  
is air—  
so get us in it and do it now!"  
Fast water, upstream vees, often have  
three-ton  
basalt boulders under them, and  
at my first encounter, I broached,  
caught an upstream edge, and promptly  
presented the bottom of my craft

to the swiftly rising towers  
  
of columnar ridges in the gorge,  
for witness,  
while I become an intimate with  
the geology  
of the bed of this continents oldest river—  
called New.

Day Three:

The most alive day—ever.  
Acres of water flow under  
the goddam boat during a cross-  
current-ferry,  
and I hold way. We turn upstream  
and sit precarious on a standing wave,  
paddle for rudder.  
Feeling the power against butt and thigh,  
I find elemental solutions in this  
liquid sculpture.

We beach on sloping aggregate  
for bologna on rye with brown beer, and,  
as a light rain begins falling, peeking  
the surface  
and finding new shades of orange  
in the paper-brown rock,  
I discover reason  
but no design in the threaded mist.

The river—in the gravity of its  
stumbling fall—  
is just the river,  
and not at all acquainted  
with my exuberance.

---

## Cross Current Ferry

By Jerry Hoff

I nose upstream and paddle strong  
into an exhilaration  
of cold breeze, filling

distant tissue with fuel.  
I can feel the glycolic burn  
in the tips of my finger

much the same as friction  
you feel when they slide down  
the front of a slick body.

Scent lifts like the marshy

moist odor you get sometimes  
from rolling a mossy stone, and

my body arches to its task.  
Every stroke becomes a correction  
and I feel the sheened strength

of current against  
my thighs and strokes grow  
imperative. Arms and shoulders

rock in a lover's rhythm.  
A final thrust to the crest  
of a standing wave, precarious

for a shivering moment  
and I slip, serene, into  
an eddy and rest breathing

molecules of air that has been shared:  
with an Indian snow leopard;  
lifted from broad leaves

of Mexican maize; liberated  
from frozen lungs of a woolly mammoth  
dead forty-thousand years.

The entire world is in me and as I lean  
downstream and slip into the current,  
the liquid lady whispers her secrets.

She reveals what she knows of  
the mountain  
and of her fears of being fouled  
by human clatter in the flood plains.

At her spread-fingered destination  
she releases evidence of her  
primal message  
to that regent of silted saltwater, the Broad  
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# Canoeing

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*A rapid way to reach transit*

Photo by Stephen Bates



## Talking Jobby Jabber

By: Stephen Bates

*This article previously appeared in Canoe & Kayak UK in May of 2008*

Have you ever talked so much rubbish that you have become buried neck deep, it's too late to back down and you have to go ahead with what you have proposed? The next morning you wish you hadn't drunk all that beer which led you into the verbal diarrhoea frenzy that has literally put you in it. It's make it or break it time, do you go ahead with what you have told the world to save face, or reject the suggestion over weak claims of drunkenness and be deemed to be cowardly. Not many people put themselves on the line to save face, would you?

Will Lyons, an accomplished C1 boater and JJ Shepherd, a master of the kayak, have run the Green Narrows on numerous occasions, however they wanted a new challenge, something to really test them on the tight and committing Class IV-V run. They decided that they were going to run it in a two man open canoe and this decision was announced over a keg of beer.

I happened to be in the vicinity to witness and record the event and, to help them to put words into action, I acceptingly aided with the challenge. The first hurdle was to find a boat that had a high possibility of not returning in one piece. Therefore on a night time stealth mission complete with balaclavas, we borrowed a boat from an undisclosed sponsor. Will was having yet another keg party so we took the boat to his place to outfit it correctly. As the beer fuelled the talk and the hype, mobile phones were being abused spreading the word: "It's on, meet tomorrow morning at 11am, they're going to do it!"

Waking groggy the next morning, realization that hype was becoming reality, the nerves set in. Will and JJ downed a few extra strong coffees and caffeine fuelled, were off to face their challenge. A huge flock of carnage vultures had gathered in the car park ready to watch the spectacle,

hungry for disaster. They proclaimed they were there to aid safety; in reality they were the paparazzi, waiting to relish the suffering of others.

On the river, the pre-run in to the gorge went without a hitch, the Class III warm up was over. JJ had previously been OC2 training two years ago on the Class II Tuckaseegee, so he was confident. Now the Bride of Frankenstein was looming, the point of no return, and the vultures were hungrily gathering at the bottom in anticipation of a feed. Grins beaming, JJ and Will paddled straight through, a slight bit of water was taken on board but this was easily emptied. The next technical rapid, Frankenstein, would surely make them swim.

At Frankenstein, the boys elected to take the more direct race line, bearing in mind that this rapid is littered with rocks with an undercut boulder guarding its exit. Entering the rapid they started well but deviated slightly off line subsequently forcing them to become broached across the top of the rapid. Rather than aid them,

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*Frankenstein: Full face saves Will's face*

Photo by Stephen Bates





# Canoeing

the vultures laughed while taking photos. However, by rocking back and forth, JJ and Will managed to manoeuvre the cumbersome boat through the narrow gap, boof the final drop and duck through the undercut.

Like pros, the two skilfully paddled all rapids without a hitch up until Go Left or Die. The vultures had so far been denied their satisfaction, would this infamous rapid claim yet another victim? On the rock scouting the innocuous line was a group who were paddling the Narrows for the 1st time. I can only imagine what was going through their minds as the vultures poured through the rapid with an OC2 looming on the horizon. Cameras appeared from everywhere as Will and JJ prepared themselves for the possible consequences if they did make the line.

Dropping into the eddy above the log that they needed to boof, they discovered that their boat was too long to get a good angle

of entry. The scene from Austin Powers where he gets his car stuck between two walls began to unfold. Back and forth, back and forth.... Eventually, when they felt they were in the best possible position, Will and JJ went for it. A boof over the log, angle back right staying on a right lean and through the gap and the vultures were out of luck once again, though they might have been impressed by Will and JJ's miracle paddle combination. On entry, JJ took a stroke on his left side switching mid-drop to a cross bow on the right. He then slid his top hand down to the bottom of the shaft and his bottom hand to the top, ending in a low brace on his right through the slot—paddle poetry!!

The vultures began to realize that the carnage they had expected was not going to materialize; Will and JJ were OC2 masters. Gradually the crowd died off leaving the shuttle crew to negotiate the remaining rapids alone. Gorilla and Sunshine were contemplated but wisely portaged; there

already was enough purple plastic left on various rocks in the river. The final technical Class III+ rapids were expertly navigated with a missed brace or two (JJ, having to remember that there is only one blade on a canoe paddle), but otherwise there were no swims.

When asked if they would do it again the pair said, "No way, that was crazy!" So when you are in the pub or just drinking and talking trash, will you actually put your words into practice or choose the sensible option when the hangover of reality kicks in. Personally I take my inspiration from Pinocchio and claim "I'm a real boy!" and do not condone this behaviour for others. Paddle safe and within your limits.

---

*OC2's can fly*

Photo by Stephen Bates





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# Canoeing



*John Frachella in a Jefe C-1 conversion boat on the Britenbush River in Oregon*

**Photo by Tod Wooldbridge**

## Why C-1?

*By John Frachella*

“Because it is more elegant.” At least that’s what I heard a Canadian Slalom Team member say when asked why he paddled a C-1. And it may be so. Try sitting on the floor as if you’re kayaking. Then try kneeling, top hand on an imaginary T-grip, shoulders back, spine arched, your head held high. More elegant? Well maybe not if you’re floundering down a big rapid....

Elegance may or may not be reason enough to try C-boating but perhaps there are other reasons. You’re at least a foot taller in the water in a C-1 and thus, you can see farther downstream; rapids are less blind when you approach kneeling versus sitting. And C-1ing can be fast and efficient; C-1 slalom racers are as fast, or faster than K-1 slalom racers. And the C-1 roll can be

easier for some people; from the kneeling position one’s body leverage makes a hip snap inherently more powerful.

Negatives? Sure there are a few. Since you’re taller on top of the water, you’re deeper under water when you flip. Also, a C-1er’s center of gravity is higher than that of a kayaker’s so a C-1 is less stable (however, it could be argued that the C-1er can adequately compensate for this because he has increased leverage on his paddle and can put more of his torso into his high and low brace). Another negative might be that there are fewer C-1 specific hulls to choose from, however, many K-1’s (especially larger ones) make good C-1 conversion boats. Regardless, it can be a lot of work to rig a C-1 saddle into a kayak hull. It takes a certain amount of creativity. Kayak manufacturers will sell you an empty hull and walls and will even offer C-1 outfitting suggestions on their

web sites (as does [www.c-boater.com](http://www.c-boater.com)), but if you want to take the easy way out, just get a kayak.

In the long run, it takes a certain mindset to be a C-boater. If you like to telemark ski, or ride a single speed mountain bike, or if you ride a unicycle, you’ve already isolated yourself from the masses and, as such, you may be a C-boater in the making. At least you might be more sympathetic to the concept. C-boating’s not for everyone. It takes more skill and it’s more challenging. C-boating tends to attract those who want an additional challenge and it turns off those who don’t.

I was first attracted to C-1ing because I’m a surfer. In the late 70s I was looking for





an inland analog to ocean surfing. Ocean wave riding was getting too crowded for me. Paddling a flat-bottomed slalom C-1 on my knees on a standing wave in a river reminded me of the first step necessary in catching an ocean wave just before springing up. Kayaking on a wave felt too much like “butt-surfing” and didn’t appeal to me. It seemed like I couldn’t quite get the chine of a kayak to act like the rail of a surfboard. From the C-1 kneeling position, this wasn’t a problem. I could really carve a wave. I still prefer the purchase I have on a wave face while kneeling rather than sitting on my butt.

But, the disadvantages can’t be ignored. On short, fast, steep river waves, kayakers can pull off more radical moves than I can in a C-1. That’s because they’re more balanced side-to-side, they don’t have an “off-side” stroke and they’re always in shorter boats. Also, when I come to a rapid that I’ve never paddled, I often have to “transpose” K-1 lines into C-1 lines. For instance, if I see a kayaker take a dozen successful left-paddle strokes through a Class IV rapid, I better re-think what that person is doing because I’m a right-sided C-1er and I don’t switch sides. Problem is, there may not be another safe line in that particular rapid.

My brother, who’s a commercial pilot for Southwest Airlines, tried my C-1 once in an eddy on a whitewater river in Maine. The more and harder he paddled, the more he went in circles. I told him that, to go

*Tod Woldridge stand up C-1ing on the Oregon coast*

Photo by Leslie Blok

straight, he had to use some directional control strokes: J strokes, C strokes, sweeps, draws and “doodads” (a term I learned from veteran OC-1er Nolan Whitesell). Also, to make a C-1 go straight, my brother would have to constantly adjust his hip angulation while he paddled. “Ah ha!” he said, “Like flying a twin prop with an engine out—if you don’t adjust your pitch and yaw, you’ll fly around in circles all day.” Right on, Bro! So, is the need for continual adjustment positive or negative? It’s hard to say. It depends on the rapid, the wind, the confluence of currents and your energy level. Most of the time, it’s more an issue of whether or not your knees can handle it.

C-1 strokes can be tricky. Many of the ones I use were learned from squirt boating. Jon Lugbill, Davey Hearn, Kent Ford and Jammie McCuen, all C-1ers previously on the U.S. Team, were really the first squirt boaters. They were doing stern and bow pivot turns around slalom gates to streamline their fast and clean Olympic runs in the 80s, before squirts boats were “invented.” Slalom kayak racers couldn’t pull off pivot turns like the C-1ers because, from the sitting position, they didn’t have enough leverage to sink their relative high volume boat ends. Low volume ends, more width, flatter hulls and increased leverage



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# Canoeing

allowed slalom C-1ers to slice their boats underwater while entering upstream gates. Thus, kayak squirt boats developed directly from C-1 slalom race boats.

In 1990, some friends and I modified a popular race C-1 and thus, developed the first “Squirt C-1” called the Viper. It squirted much more easily than any of the slalom C-1s of the day. While the boat was still in its prototype stage, Jeff Snyder taught me some squirt-specific canoe strokes. Some of these strokes were variations of the standard C-1 race pivot turn. Some weren’t. Holding a C-1 stern squirt into a rock splat was not a race move by any means, but it taught me a lot, especially about what was going on under the surface of the water, which has been key in improving my general boating skills.

I’ve never given up C-1-ing and I still do a lot of it but, about 10 years ago I also became a stand up paddleboarder. For me, this “new” sport combines two of my

passions: C-1ing and surfing. Standup paddleboarding involves the use of an oversized surfboard and a long stiff canoe paddle. You paddle out into breaking waves and over foam piles in the ocean till you’re well beyond the standard line-up of lay-down surfers. As a swell approaches, you turn around, paddle like hell and glide onto the building wave face long before it begins to break. Once you’re on the wave, you can paddle to accelerate or brace to stall into an ideal surfing position. It’s power-assisted-surfing at its best and it’s way fun. To me, it’s like standup C-1ing. I can catch 20 waves with a standup paddleboard to one wave with a regular lay-down board. The paddle really helps.

Lately, I’ve been taking my standup paddleboard to the river. Yes, people run whitewater on standup paddle boards. But this isn’t new, it’s just a single-bladed version of Jeff Snyder’s “Striding” thing. I guess none of us really invents anything new per se. Ideas pop up from examples given in nature and recognized by humans

until, collectively, we decide to engage with that idea, or not.

C-1ing’s like that. If you decide to try it, I hope you have fun. If not, we’ll see you on the river anyway.

“Half the paddle, twice the man (or woman)” or, “half the paddle, half the brains”?

You be the judge.

---

*Top: Standup C-1ing on Oregon Coast*

**Photo by John Frachella**

*Below: John Frachella stand-up C-1ing on the Oregon Coast*

**Photo by Leslie Blok**





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# Canoeing

## Wishbone

by Brent Glover

This story evolves from endless reading of American Whitewater. When reading a past issue's letters to the editor I took note of the editorial comment, "AW has nothing against the Midwest, we just don't get much material from paddlers there."

Let's begin in the Boston Mountains of Northwestern Arkansas. This jewel of geography is hidden away from most of the world with exception of those who live there or nearby. Now, you say, is this really the Midwest? We live in Southwestern Missouri 90 miles to the north.

This part of the country is referred to as the Ozarks—beautiful country, a well-kept secret. This story is about the headwaters of the Buffalo National River and how some of the best river trips are not planned, they just happen.

My wife and I travel to these mountains often. We were married on top of Lookout Mountain six years ago. This is the second time around for both of us. Our first mates lost the battle with cancer. We teach in public schools and live in a sizeable city. Stress has a way of disappearing when hiking or paddling in places like this.

It's spring break for us, the last week of

March. The very beginning of spring. The first spring wildflowers are out; the trees are bare. We've spent the winter hiking the side canyons of the Upper Buffalo Wilderness. Several of these are a creeker's paradise. Great hikes for those of us who do not possess the skills or have the desire to paddle these kinds of things. A warm dry winter is coming to a close. It's thunder storming with temperatures in the 30s. Who cares? We're in a log cabin less than a mile from where the Buffalo River exits the Upper Wilderness Canyon. Boxley Valley, a gorgeous place. The fireplace is blazing, the roast chicken is ready to eat. As I carve up the bird the wishbone appears. I challenge my wife to make a wish and pull. She wants to know what my wish is as I am the victor. I assure her that she's included in the wish.

---

*Thirty-foot Paradise Falls in the Boen Gulf/Upper Buffalo Wilderness*

Photo by Brent Glover





Spring break passes without any whitewater runs. Cold, snowing, not quite enough rain. The rivers begin to dry up when they should be rising. The drought is still on. Looks like we'll have to wait till summer vacation and drive for some whitewater fun.

A month has passed, the outdoor world has turned green. The wild azaleas are blooming as are the umbrella magnolias. I call up the owners of Lookout Mountain and get the old farmhouse rented for the weekend. We haven't had our traditional spring breakfast at The Cliff House overlooking the Grand Canyon of Arkansas, only one mile from Lookout Mountain.

Now, at this point you must be thinking, these aren't 20-something creeking kayakers. You're right. How about 50-something Class III open boaters?

My wife would point out that she's in her early 50s (and she's more than two years younger than me).

To continue the story. We stop by some friends' cabin on the way down Friday night to visit and discuss the forecast of huge rains coming our way in a matter of hours. They have to go back to Springfield for an occasion, but Sunday will work for them. We'll be staying on top of a mountain, so cell phones will work.

The rains came big time Friday night and through Saturday morning. At the Cliff House we couldn't even see the canyon for all the rain. The angle flake biscuits were superb. All full of home cooking, coffee, and tea we head off to Ponca to gauge the Upper Buffalo. It quit raining around 11 a.m., the river is 1-1/2 feet over the Ponca Bridge. High-optimum level

for the Hailstone Run (Upper Buffalo Wilderness). It's getting late, there's more rain on the way. We decided to go hike into Smith Creek and get a look at the gorge the creekers won't run. It ought to look pretty cool with a lot of water running through it. It did. Well, there's always tomorrow for Hailstone.

The rains came again around 5 p.m., hard and heavy. This assures something for tomorrow. There's a lot of things to choose from in this area when it's wet. Our retired teacher friends called and said they were headed for Hailstone in the morning. It sounded good, but we weren't up early enough in the morning to fit their schedule. What should we do?

Off to Ponca we go. The water is a couple of inches over the Ponca Bridge and a little under 6 feet on the Boxley USGS gauge.



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Photo: NPFF 2009 Still Image Competition Winner, 'Diver' by Beth Koller



# Canoeing

Still an optimum level. Off to Boxley, the take-out for the Hailstone. Wonder if we'll have any luck finding other boaters.

As luck would have it there were boaters we knew from our paddling club. They offered to carry us to the put-in. What a deal! Lets see, 70 degrees, sunny, friends, shuttle—more than I had wished for!

The Hailstone is a beautiful place. Not a big wilderness by western standards, but wilderness no less. I've run it many times, but never in the warm sunshine. Always in cold weather after heavy rains. It's often years between opportunities to make the run. It's 15+ miles long based on the National Geographic topographical map. A Class III run by most standards, it starts with over a mile of ledges, good surfing, then a sharp turn to the right where Pruitt Hollow enters and the technical Class III pool drop rapids begin. The canyon is fairly tight here. Waterfalls pour in from

the sides; the wildflowers are abundant.

It's been over ten years since I've been here. It's my wife's first run; she's ecstatic. The upper five miles are my favorite of any place I've been. I point out some of the side canyons we've hiked in recent years. This place is creekers' paradise. They run out on the Hailstone in flood.

I'm trying out some new artificial hips on this run, titanium and ceramic. I bow before my surgeon. He gave me another chance, later in life, to do the things I love.

About halfway through the run after you pass The Cave or The Room of Doom, an undercut bluff at the bottom of a rapid, the gradient eases and so do the rapids. At about the 10-mile mark you drop through Keyhole and start the lower part of the technical rapids of about three miles. Somewhere down in here I didn't see the

tree at the bottom of the rapid. Cataracts in the eyes. It's not easy growing old. About halfway through the rapid I saw the submerged tree with several large limbs sticking up. My wife's sitting in the front of the tandem canoe wondering what I'm doing. So much for bouncing off the pillow. How about through the limbs and head on into the pillow rock? The boat turns and pins broadside with us in it. The bow goes under. Time to pop the thigh straps and go swimming. The canoe, once relieved of its human burden, bounced off the pillow as planned and headed downstream. It was a short swim with friends nearby.

At about the 13-mile mark you leave the canyon and enter the willows. We've had few floods and lots of dry weather in recent years. The strainers do not offer much clear passage. I read a story on the first descent of Boen Gulf, a side canyon in the Upper Buffalo. They had a good run on

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Boen Gulf, and no problems on a flooded Hailstone only to have multiple swimmers in the willows. A fitting challenge for the end of a beautiful day. I wonder if I'll get to see this place from a boat again? This is what makes free flowing streams so special.

You can find information about this stream and other Arkansas streams on the American Whitewater web site and the Ozark Whitewater Page.

*Hiking in to Hailstone Creek*

Photo by Brent Glover



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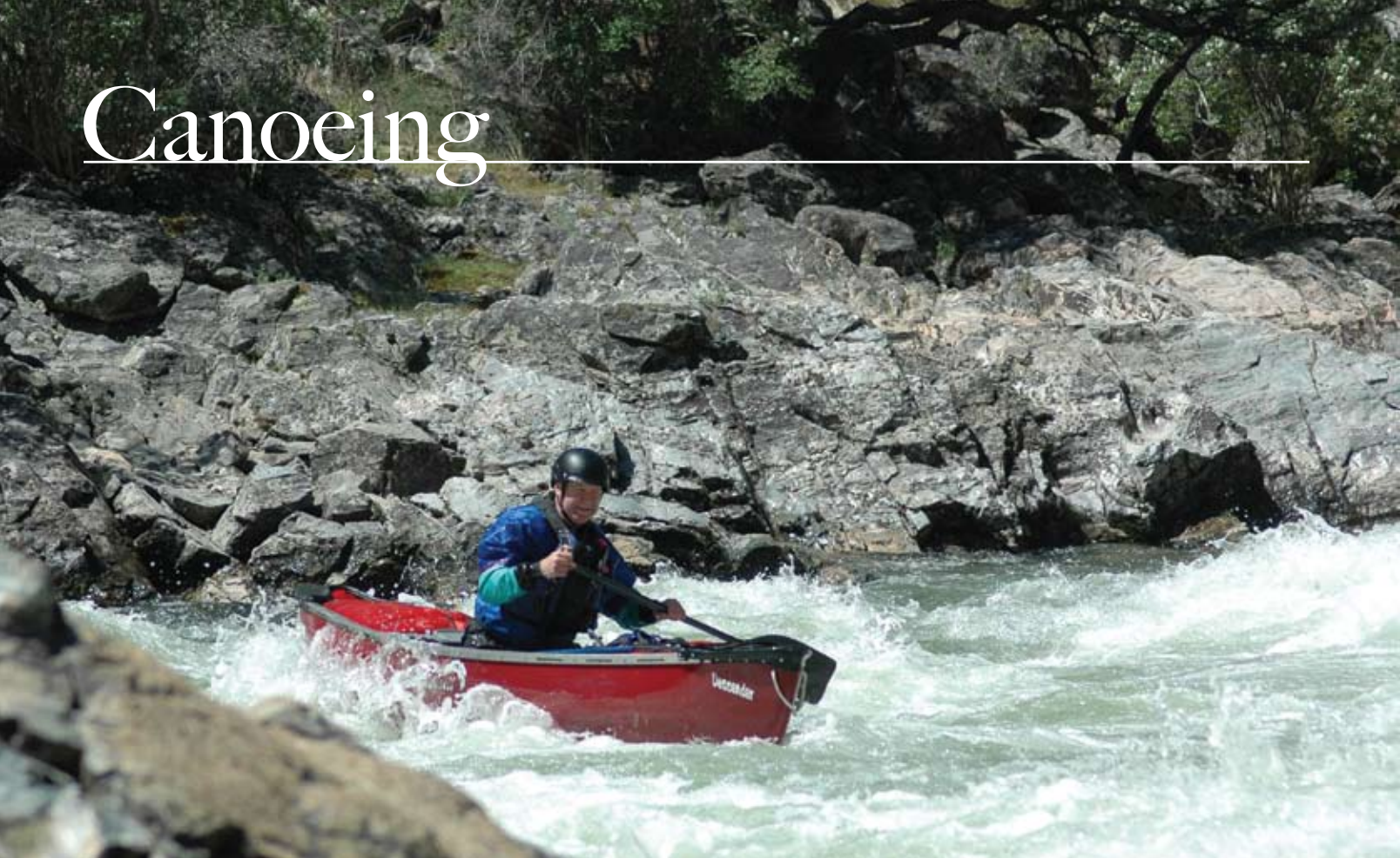
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# Canoeing



## June 2006 Middle Fork of the Salmon, Idaho

By Mike Jackson

If you want to test your open boat skills, jump on the Middle Fork of the Salmon at 4,500cfs. That was the reading at the Yellow Pine Lodge when we started our six-day, 96-mile trip on June 19, 2006 with Les Bechtel's outfitter group Canyons, Inc. The Sawtooth Mountains had received 125% of the normal snowfall that year, so the high water level was not a surprise. The put-in at Boundary Creek is at 6,000 feet elevation with an average drop of about 50 feet per mile for the first day. That made for an exciting first 14 miles. There were nine kayakers, my Whitesell Descender canoe, a group of paddle rafters, the support oar rafts and a kayak guide. The guides were worried about having an old man (over sixty) in an open canoe on the trip with the river running so high. I learned a few days later that Les had told them not to worry about the old man in the canoe and to focus instead on taking care of the young kayakers.

It was only about a half mile from the put-in that the fun began. I was paddling what I thought was a smoother route than the guide's to avoid taking on water and so I did not see Murphy's Ledge on river right until it was too late. Then I knew why the guide was taking everyone down the left. By the time I saw the hydraulic the only choice I had was to hit the hole square and punch through the middle. Open boats paddled by older men don't do the backup move well. The backwash brought my Descender to a complete halt but I managed to pull on through the hole. The big volume of an open boat will allow you to punch through most hydraulics. The whirlpool after the backwash kept trying to pull me back in. A kayaker that was following my route dropped into Murphy's ledge too. He had quite a fight trying to get out of the backwash. After that experience he and another kayaker decided they had played enough for the first day and got on support rafts.

Hell's Half Mile is a rapid a little upstream of Velvet Falls. It is not listed on the USFS river guide but it is definitely there big time at the flows we experienced. The

*The author making the move at the Tappan Falls*

Photo by Chiara

rapid was very pushy with waves and hydraulics everywhere. I was enjoying the ride but it was the most challenging rapid up to that point. A very skilled kayaker got trashed following my route. Gene flipped and rolled up several times but then took a hard hit to his hand and lost his paddle. He had broken his ring finger in three places but we did not know that until he got home after the trip and had to have surgery. He had to ride the support raft the rest of the first day and the next. Then he duct taped his finger to another one and got back in his kayak for the last four days. He is one tough dude.

Velvet Falls at mile 5.1 was impressive at 4,500cfs. The water was so high there was a sneak route on the left of the huge boulder on river left. Usually we make an S turn around it to drop through the falls. There was no way I was going to make that move at 4,500cfs so I took the sneak route made the drop fine. A kayaker got trashed above the falls, rode it out through the falls and then bailed out after coming through the backwash. His shoulder was dislocated so





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# Canoeing

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he was not able to get back in his yak until day three. So, within five miles of the put-in we went from nine kayakers paddling to five.

Power House rapid at mile 11.2 is very long and was very wild. I took on a lot of water going through the first section. There was no calm water so I had to turn upstream and hold onto a tree while I bailed. This is one of those times one wonders why he is paddling an open canoe. The kayak group had no opportunity to hold up so they blew on through the rapid. The sweep raft came around the bend about the time I was ready to head down river. I did not want the raft pushing me from behind so I let it go by first. One problem: now I couldn't see. I moved right of the raft just in time to see what looked like a straight wall of water. That standing wave is not in Power House

at lower levels but it was there that day. I love big standing waves but this looked like a 14-foot wall with no way to see what was on the other side. I put all the power I could get to the paddle and hit the wave as fast as I could. The guys on the sweep raft said the canoe went airborne and was almost totally out of the water when I went over the top. It turned out to be fun. I was very glad to see the kayak group sitting in a big eddy at the bottom.

The second day was filled with choppy waves and a lot of unnamed rapids that would be big compared to the Ocoee. Waves are fun but when you are paddling an open canoe you have to focus on each wave and time your strokes precisely with the waves to keep a dry boat. I was using a carbon paddle with a spooned blade. I loved that paddle as it is super light and the

large spooned blade gives you a big bite in the water. Then I found out why a spooned blade is not a good idea for canoeing strong whitewater. I had my paddle in the water toward the bow when the spooned blade wrapped against the canoe and hung there. I instinctively hold onto the paddle no matter what, but this time I pulled the canoe over as I tried to get it free. I tried to roll the canoe several times but it was not working and the effort was draining me. We were in virtually flat water but a very big logjam was ahead on an island in the middle of the river with the group split on river left and right. I decided that the right side was my best opportunity to get away from the logjam in the center. I

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*The author in Pistol Creek Rapid*

**Photo by Ariana Lowe**





# Canoeing

set up an angle to the river current with the canoe and while swimming I ferried the canoe to the right side. The canyon walls were steep with no opportunity to get in an eddy so I swam against the wall through several waves until I finally found a micro eddy behind an outcropping in the wall. Several kayakers helped me push the canoe in. Helen Low, our kayak guide for the day, was on river left when I swam. She quickly worked her way across the river in front of the logjam. Helen and Ray Sufczynski helped me get the boat dry and held it in the micro eddy. It took a while for me to recover before I was ready to head downstream.

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*Big water on the M.F. Salmon*

Photo by Chiara

A safety tip: if you are old and the water is big and cold, you best get in good shape before you run the river. A long swim in cold water sucks the life out of you, even when you are wearing a best dry suit. Another tip to all the open boaters: when I swim (and we all are just paddling between swims) I always focus on self-rescue. The best rescue is always a self-rescue and often in big rivers, it is the only rescue. I never let go of my paddle and I always swim guiding my canoe through the remainder of the rapid and into an eddy. It doesn't always work out but it's a great goal to have. We all should be ready to help the other guy but we all should do all we can to help ourselves out of difficult situations too.

Pistol Creek Rapid at mile 21.4 is always

fun. Peter Eisner, a very skilled kayaker from Arizona, and I decided to look at the rapid ourselves instead of running the rapid from the guide's description. We both had run the rapid more than once before but not at 4,500cfs. Scouting a big rapid from shore is especially helpful for open boaters. That extra insight helps on the big, long rapids like this, when the river is running fast and the rapid requires a critical S turn to make a clean run. Open canoes cannot adjust as well as a kayak so the more you see in advance, the better. A dry approach coming into a big rapid is very important to an open boater. It is no problem if you take on a lot of water in the teeth of a big rapid but it is a problem if your canoe is full of water going into the rapid. The decision to scout Pistol Creek turned out to be a great one, as we could





see a clean dry run through the top of the rapid and the perfect cross current to make the cut in front of the hydraulic near the bottom. Peter and I both made clean runs through Pistol Creek.

The fourth day was a 23.3-mile stretch from mile 48.1 to mile 71.4. I was not looking forward to paddling that far in one day. Even in easy water an open canoe has to be paddled with strokes timed with the waves to keep it dry. The constant focus on the waves makes it much more tiring to paddle a canoe than a kayak on long days. At guide Lisa's suggestion I rode one of the oar rafts for the first eight miles of easy water. That way I could kick back and enjoy the magnificent scenery. We saw a pack of wolves with three adults and four pups on river right. It is very unusual to see wolves since they had only just been introduced back into the Idaho wilderness a few years before.

The sixth day was a short 10.1 miles but WILD. There were a lot of choppy waves and small holes all over the river. Upper Cliffside Rapid at mile 88.6 and Lower Cliffside Rapid at mile 88.8 were not too difficult but you must miss the big holes. Ouzel Rapid at mile 89.8 had a huge, steep hole that you must miss by running up very close to the cliff wall on the left. I was paddling about ten feet off the left wall when Lisa came up in her oar raft and warned me that a big hole was coming and suggested that I get up against the wall. I did not hesitate to do what Lisa said as she has incredible knowledge of the river and often gave me great advice about the currents and routes through the big rapids. When I blew by the hydraulic, it was huge and so loud it nearly made my heart stop. If Lisa had not warned me I would still be in that hole.

Rubber Rapid at mile 91.1 was big time water! We scouted from river left just above the drop. I ran into the drop left of center and kissed the right edge of a hole on the left top of the drop. As soon as I

cleared the hole on the left, I moved hard left. There was a lateral wave on the right coming up with a big hydraulic below it. I banked off the lateral wave. That quickly threw me farther left to where I needed to be and allowed me to miss the extra big hole on the right below the lateral wave. I then moved back right to finish the run. The canoe came through completely dry. Devil's Tooth Rapid is at mile 93.4. The Forest Service guidebook lists this rapid as a Class III. I did not even remember it from prior trips, however, it looked like a big Class IV+ to me that day. It featured a river wide hole that would stop a truck with some fun waves below. There was a small sneak on the left and another small sneak on the right between the right wall and a boulder with a pour-over. Between the boulder with the pour-over on the right and the right edge of the huge hydraulic was a chute but the flow was pushing into the hole. To make the run clean, you had to be paddling hard right after the pour-over while going through the drop.

The paddle raft went too far left going into the drop. It did not make the cut back to the right and had to turn straight into the right side of the hole. The impact was so great that everyone in the raft, including the guide, was thrown out. The guide had misjudged the speed of the water flow in the drop pushing everything to the hole. Kayakers Peter and Robert made perfect runs to the right of the hole, however, Ray S deliberately went into the center of the hole sideways. He eventually fought his way out the right side of the hole but it was very scary. Peter and Robert's run showed me what I needed to do. I knew I could not cut to the right as the kayaks had. I ferried forward out of the eddy on river left to get over to the right above the drop. I used the pour-over boulder to see where I needed to turn down river. I kissed the pour-over on the right of the drop and entered in a perfect position to cut right against the current pushing left. The move was working perfect except that I quit paddling one or two strokes too

soon. The current pushed the stern of the canoe into the right side of the hole. I did not expect that to matter so I did not try very hard to miss it. The hole grabbed the stern, pulled the canoe in and filled it with water. I was going over downstream so I committed to a strong low brace to pop back up. However, the water was too fluffy and the low brace did not work so it was swim city. Luckily I was downriver from the hole. I grabbed the canoe and headed for Lisa's oar raft that was waiting for me a short distance away. I rode through Rock House with Lisa as there was no time to get back in the canoe before the rapid. I got back in my canoe and paddled the last two miles of easy water to the take-out across the confluence of the Middle Fork and the main Salmon.

One might ask why I paddle an open canoe in big water when a kayak is much easier and better designed to run the big whitewater. My answer may not make much sense to some. In an open canoe, one has a very different relationship with the river than in a kayak. You cannot challenge the river and win. You must rely on your river reading skills and use what the river gives you. It is a dance with the river that rewards the skill that many years of experience has given you. The trip was the best whitewater adventure ever. The Middle Fork of the Salmon calls to me. It is more than a trip down river. It gives me a close awareness of God's love for us through His creation. I will be back again in June of 2010 to canoe the Middle Fork Salmon when the good water runs.



# Canoeing

## A Mexican/American Classic: Canoeing the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande

By Axel Thomsen

I would like to nominate the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande as the best multi-day backcountry whitewater canoe trip in the United States. It has the distance to make the trip long enough: 84 miles, to be done in 6-8 days—long enough to forget about the world for a while. Long enough that you'd really need to carry lots of food and gear. But then it often does not have the water to be paddled by rafts. When we did it we had 250 cfs at the put-in. That leaves a touring kayak or a canoe, and the whitewater difficulty is just right for open boating. So especially if you like to eat well in the wilderness, getting together a small group of canoeists for a week to head down the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande is about as good as it gets. Yet few people

venture out to experience this run, so let me tell the story of our trip and compare it to a run more people may know.

The character of the run is that of a desert canyon—the Grand Canyon of the Colorado comes to mind, but there are a few differences. So let me describe the river in terms that the Grand Canyon paddler is familiar with. First the permit. Instead of a lifetime wait, we simply register with the Park Rangers at Big Bend and in 10 minutes we are good to go. If you arrive after hours, you self-register.

The put in is opposite the ghost town of La Linda, Mexico, abandoned maybe 30 years ago when the mine closed. Maybe in 100 years it will look like the Lee's Ferry historical district. The first day of the trip is spent on fairly flat water in open country. Gravel bars form rapids at this low water, since often there is only 250 cfs of flow and not the 25,000 cfs the canyon runner may be used to. We paddle through minor canyons, the big walls are farther away from

the river. Furnace Flats comes to mind.

Day two continues in this way, until finally near the end of the day the canyon walls start closing in. Wonderful sandy beaches await paddlers, just like in the Grand Canyon. Unlike your average Canyon trip though, no other groups have been seen so far, and this is the busy season—spring break.

During the third day we are now in the depth of the canyon. The walls are rising 1500 feet—short of the 5000 feet of the more famous Canyon, yet still very impressive. We pull in for an early stop because we have reached Silber Canyon and Asa Jones pumphouse. Silber Canyon makes for a neat exploration with some serious climbing—Silver Grotto comes to mind. Across the river is a hot springs. Everyone

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*Axel and Amiya in the approach rapid to Upper Madison*

Photo by Alex Thomsen





soothes paddling muscles and we replenish our water supply. This surely beats the lukewarm murky waters of Pumpkin Springs. Next to and above our campsite are the ruins of an old wax making operation. The candelaria plant was boiled here to extract wax. Commercially more successful than Beamers mining attempts in the Grand Canyon.

On day 4 we soon get to the first major rapid – Hot Springs rapid. It is very rocky at this low water so we decide to line. After all, a loaded tandem canoe is very hard to unpin and we are right in the middle of the canyon. A Grand Canyon equivalent? Hance comes to mind, being kind of rocky, or Crystal, being the second hardest rapid on the run. A solo canoeist successfully negotiates the left side chute. After we successfully line our three loaded boats, we enjoy a soak in the hot springs. There are two other groups in camp so later in the day we continue on. The section from here down to San Francisco Canyon is the nicest part, kind of like the roaring 20s—20 miles with seven rapids of Class II and above. And remember, Class II for a loaded open boat is really like a Class IV for a raft or a kayak—lots of fun, but not too hairy. After all, this place is very, very remote. We paddle down to the Bullis Fold through Bullis Fold rapid, a Class II rapids with lots of boulders requiring a good

line. The geology in this area is impressive, the rock strata look bent and tortured. Another campsite on a wonderful sandbar is right below.

The next day we paddle through Las Palmas rapid, then a little later Rodeo rapid. What looks like a simple ledge drop is rough enough to fill up one of our loaded canoes and sink it. And a few miles later we arrive at Upper Madison Falls. Being the hardest rapid on the run, the comparison has to be Lava Falls. We have the same excitement as we approach the falls, but it is a big rock jumble and there is not sufficient water to paddle our canoes through. The intrepid solo canoeist manages to run the rapid, but it is not pretty as he grinds over many rocks. We scout for a while. Then we go through the standard procedure of edging out right above the entrance rapid, letting kids and wives walk from here, then paddling the boats to the middle bay from where we can portage 200 yards past the crux of the rapid. Everything has to come out of the boat, and be carried over a rocky trail to an eddy below. It is an hour of hard hot labor. Later we watch as another group successfully lines their emptied boats through the jumble. The only Grand Canyon comparison for this was when we had to flip over a fully loaded raft at House Rock rapid and could only do it after unloading it while upside down. Memorable

and fun in retrospect.... We camp right below Upper Madison.

The next morning a few of us do what I would consider the best hike on the Rio Grande, up Burro Bluff. From there you have a view down onto Upper Madison falls from 1000 feet above. Very cool. Not quite as cool as my favorite Grand Canyon hike—to Thunder River—I have to admit. Three miles below Upper Madison we have Lower Madison, and again the low water makes it very risky to run. Horn Creek comes to mind, a rapid that requires a precise entry and making the right move. Fortunately the lining looks easy, too, so that is what we do (not a good place to pin a boat!).

We have a few more fun rapids, another night in the depth of the canyon, another side canyon to explore. It still feels like the middle of the trip. Yet when we paddle on the next morning the canyon walls drop noticeably. Two more Class IIs are negotiated and by the late afternoon we reach the take out at Dryden Crossing. Our shuttle drivers delivered the car to this place in the middle of nowhere. An hour on a dirt road takes us to Dryden—kind of like the drive from Diamond Creek to Peach Springs... and a few hours later we are back home.

So, when your number didn't come up for the Grand Canyon yet again, there is a fun place to go to experience the beauty of a remote desert canyon. Load up your canoe and head down the Lower Canyons. Only if the water is too high, take a raft instead.

Thanks to Louis Aulbach for an excellent guidebook and Ted Thayer for shuttle service. Note that the 2008 Rio Grande flood changed the Rio Grande Village gauge significantly, so all old rules about proper water levels need to be adjusted. I'd say canoe between 200 and 1000 cfs.



*On day 2 we were paddling through open desert*

Photo by Daniel Anderson



# Canoeing



## Norwood Scott: Legendary West Coast C-Boater

*By Ambrose Tuscano*

Growing up on the East Coast it never seemed to me as though canoes were any less prevalent than kayaks or rafts. Show up to a popular river and chances were you'd find canoeists there. After college, when I moved to the West Coast, I found a very different scenario. Canoes were so scarce that every time I saw one it really caught my attention. No canoeist, however, was as noticeable as Norwood Scott. Not only was he notable for being the only C-1er I would regularly see on Class V California whitewater, but he's so confident, so precise, so smooth that he almost made me wonder if maybe canoeing isn't easier than kayaking. But then I would have to remind myself that Norwood's just that good.

Of course, his excellence in a canoe is well documented. He's been a C-1 freestyle champion, a longtime member of the U.S. Wildwater and Slalom Teams, National Champion in Wildwater C-2, and a featured athlete in whitewater videos and television specials. Just as impressive is his dedication to whitewater rivers across the country. He's served on the board of American Whitewater since 2001, and is currently the vice president of the board. Norwood also served for seven years on the board of the Tuolumne River Trust and is currently a board advisor.

A paddler for over 30 years, Norwood learned to canoe at Camp Mondamin in Tuxedo, North Carolina. After returning to the camp as a counselor, he continued to teach canoeing for four years. He's gone on to organize events like the Potomac Whitewater Festival and the



*Above: Norwood Scott dropping into V-Slide on the Hospital Rock section of the Kaweah, CA*

**Photo by Sean Manchester**

*Inset: Norwood Scott competing in the Potomac River Festival*

**Photo by Dave Patterson**



Great Falls Race. Today, he works for the Environmental Protection Agency in San Francisco, where he tries to ensure that recreational concerns are addressed at the federal level.

So if you're hanging around Meral's Pool on the Tuolumne some summer afternoon and you spot a C-1 pulling into the eddy, go ahead, ask, "Are you Norwood Scott?" Chances are really good you'll be right.



*Norwood Scott dropping into Lumston Rapid,  
Cherry Creek CA*  
Photo by Erin Petlock

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*Norwood Scott surfing La Pistola, Futaleufu, Chile*

Photo by John Cornwall





# Canoeing

## Salmon River: Source to Sea

By Tyler Williams

At 8,300 feet, I knelt into a snowbank and took a drink of pure meltwater. Standing once again I turned and began to follow the trickle downhill. In 970 miles, I would be at the take-out. This was the second leg of my source to sea quest, in which I hope to descend the four major Pacific rivers of North America: the Yukon, Fraser, Colorado, and Columbia. It was the story of the Columbia that I sought here, at the source of its longest undammed tributary—the Salmon.

The mighty Columbia, and the ocean at trip's end was far from my mind as photographer Doug Marshall and I glissaded through a snowy forest along the Salmon's upper reaches. The stream was only inches deep, yet too broad to jump across when I stopped and proclaimed to Doug that I was putting in.

I inflated the pack raft, dry-bagged my gear, and got into paddling clothes. With full photo documentation and a touch of ceremony, I plopped down in the boat. And there I sat. Thrusting hip gyrations gained a few feet of progress before I halted again and again on the gravels of the riverbed. Humbly admitting defeat, I stepped into the ankle deep water, shouldered my miniature raft, and continued schlepping downstream.

Within a mile, the Salmon's channel changed, and I was able to begin floating around bow-knot bends as the mountain brook lethargically crept out of its headwater valley. Reaching a sagebrush plain, the creek became swift, and raced me to a highway bridge where Doug waited. Take-out beers floated in a circle of rocks, chilling perfectly.

The following morning, wet paddling gear steamed in high altitude sunshine. The last storm of spring had spun off into Montana, and the forecast was for steadily warming temperatures. The river level would be coming up.

The growing river could now float my whitewater kayak, so I rolled up the alpacka raft and began to methodically pack my 8-foot-long plastic boat for the next 400 miles. I would re-supply on food en-route, but the clothes and gear I chose to take would have to get me to Lewiston, Idaho, still two weeks downstream. I crammed into the heavy boat and waved Doug goodbye. Now I was on my own.

Willows leaned over the channel, pinching an already narrow stream into narrower gauntlets with no room to pass cleanly. Too stubborn to get out and portage around the bothersome vegetation, I pressed on, tucking through ever tightening willow tunnels. At a particularly dense passageway, the current flipped me over and held me fast against the brush. After flailing for several seconds in the cold water, I emerged upright, covered in a mantle of sticks and cobwebs.

Once the willow sluices were behind me, the miles rolled past. By evening, I was

passing dramatic cascades where Redfish Lake Creek enters the Salmon. The river splashed through a broad bed of boulders, creating continuous Class II-III whitewater. I ran the rapids while squinting into a low sun, finally pulling over where a bench of land promised flat camping.

The river was swift, and soon I had left snow-covered mountains behind for sagebrush desert. Great gray slabs thrust out of the earth as tilted plates, forming a wall that would seem to dam the river. But the Salmon ran straight through the blockade, creating a canyon of dark gray granite painted in green and orange lichens.

The river picked up its pace in the canyon. A Class III rapid even forced me to catch an eddy, my first in over 40 miles. I peeled out of the relative calm immediately, shocked by the sudden sensation of stillness. Now three days into my journey, the ocean bound current was my pulse.

Two days later, the river snaked around a ridge, and a row of snow draped peaks burst into view. It was the Beaverhead Range on the far side of the Lemhi Valley, home to the town of Salmon, Idaho. Alison Steen and Chris Louderback ("Layback" to his ski buddies) of Yellowjacket River Guides welcomed me to their warehouse, where our friend Pat Phillips arrived with impeccable timing, just as dinner was ready. Pat and I would paddle together for the remaining 264-miles of the Salmon to its confluence with the Snake River.

Drifting, we made six miles per hour. There were swirls, boils, waves, and wavelets. Some were faster and some were slower, but they all ran with the greater flow, sliding headlong toward the sea with the force of a thousand falling streams behind them. Eddies near shore weren't really eddies at all, just areas of slower water where the drag of land tugged at the slithering monster.

The river took a sweeping turn at Tower Creek, where Lewis and Clark followed an Indian route away from the Salmon to traverse easier terrain above the river



canyon. They decided against using the river as a route to the Pacific because of Pine Creek Rapid. Clark wrote of the place, "The river...is almost one continued rapid, [and] with canoes is entirely impossible." Given the fact that Lewis and Clark later ran Class IV-V rapids downstream on the Columbia, they probably would've managed the Salmon successfully, but Clark's assessment wasn't far off. Granite bluffs rise from water's edge at Pine Creek, and the crashing waves in the gut of the rapid were enough to give me pause two centuries after Clark's assessment.

Pat and I rode the spine of the growing river to the confluence of the Middle Fork of the Salmon before finding a sandy cove for camp. Prior to its confluence with the Middle Fork, the Salmon had been a big river. Now it was enormous, and cold, and raw, and restless.

"So Alison tells me you're going to the ocean huh?" the ranger said casually as she started our permit paperwork at the Corn Creek Launch Ramp. "Yup, and Pat's going to Lewiston with me," I replied. Jen had been the ranger at the Main Salmon put-in for nine seasons. She was unimpressed. "We get almost one trip a year doing that now," she said flatly. "Last year an Australian couple did it. Seems like it's getting more popular." So much for my great continental exploration, my 900-mile journey of unique insight into the lifeblood of the Northwest; my vision quest was apparently something the Aussies do on a lark.

Pat and I re-encapsulated into our drytops (his actually dry, mine a porous shadow of its former self), and cast off into the roiling Salmon. Pat wore a wide-brimmed shade hat rather than his kayaking helmet because "there aren't many rapids for awhile, right?" I replied vaguely, honestly unsure of what the river would look like at this high flow.

Around the first bend, Killum Rapid roared with a huge breaker where normally there existed an island of car-sized rocks. The big



*Top: Pat Phillips battles big water below The Slides*

*Bottom: Looking for a put-in near the source of the Salmon*

**Photos by Tyler Williams**

*continued on page 64*



# River Voices

## A Kayaking Family

By Bree Emerson

Sometimes there is a new element added into an existing social system that is the catalyst for change. When kayaking entered into our family I don't think that any of us expected it to permeate and spread through our friends and family the way that it did. It all started with my boyfriends' father, Buddy, who was the first person to introduce kayaking into the group; he invited us to a kayaking class taught by our future patriarchal kayaker Don. Buddy thought kayaking would be a good diversion for his sons, Jason and Eric, and an outlet for their endless energy.

Initially I had the same type of reaction to kayaking that most people do. My first introduction to whitewater was a short rafting trip down the Big Pigeon River, a very tame and safe river compared to

what we are running today. The entire raft trip I was turned around backwards, with my eyes glued to Jason and Eric in their kayaks. Watching my future husband Jason, the love of my life, following behind us in his first kayak, dropping down into wave trains, disappearing, flipping over and rolling back up sent me into my own waves of panic and terror. But kayaking has a way of sucking you in, like a moth to the candle, changing your mind and overriding decisions that you thought you had already made for yourself. By the next season there I was following him down that same river in my own kayak. The first chapter in our kayaking lives had started.

Our kayaking family began to grow past our immediate family; we started to build a solid extended kayaking 'family' network. We had an eco-idiot step mom, Claudia, who everyone actually referred to as such, Don our godfather from the kayaking class, and a whole string of kayaking siblings

that were on the same path as us down the river. As the years went by, we realized that it seemed harder to maintain relationships that were not somehow related to this new world we had found, while the bonds made with our river companions throughout the years seemed to hold strong. The best of our non-kayaking friends remained of course, but overtime we had whittled it down to a handful. Friendships that weren't so strong were thrown overboard, if we had to have a so-so friend we would at least have them be someone we could run shuttle with.

After nearly 10 years together, and seven years of kayaking, Jason and I had relocated ourselves to West Virginia and started planning our "Wild and Wonderful" West

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*Our great group of friends and wedding party  
on our Wild and Wonderful West Virginia  
Wedding Weekend*

Photo by Tammy Wells Photography





Virginia wedding. We were planning the wedding that we had always dreamt of, a wedding that had the feel of a kayaking trip. We wanted wedding guests with boats on their cars and no one having plans of dining and dashing. A place for everyone could stay, chill and really enjoy the moment, and last but not least, to have great whitewater around.

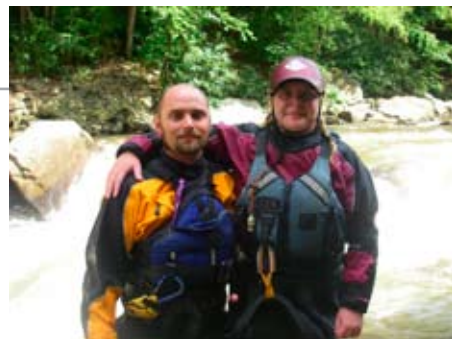
On the wedding invitations non-kayakers were all invited to join in on the fun and go rafting the day after the wedding, and boy were they in for a surprise (the New River Gorge ran at almost 10ft that day, a shocker for those not in the know). Our three-day wedding was a smash; we had a live bluegrass band and had rented an entire plantation-style property that slept 40. Looking back though our wedding photo album, I had to stop and chuckle at one photo in particular. To an outsider I am sure that this picture would have seem a little out of place in a wedding album, but to our friends and family it almost seemed natural to have a kayak included in the wedding photos.

I started thinking about how kayaking has affected the way I relate to others, and in many ways how it changed the way that I interact and bond with other people. I more often than not now, expect that I can rely or trust in someone else, even if sometimes that other person is a stranger. Whether on the river or off the river, you have to have at least a certain amount of blind faith with your kayaking companions. Even if you know you are 100% self-sufficient on the river, any shuttle other than a bike shuttle or hitchhiking is a group effort. Although there are always those momentary lapses in some much needed trust, faith, support, or guidance, I no longer approach the situation or person with distrust, but exactly the opposite.

A recent trip down south clarified the unique cultural bonding that occurs within the kayaking community, and I had a déjà vu moment. Last season my friend Abby (the brown haired girl with me in the wedding photo) and I were hiking our boats down to the put-in for the Lower Gauley. It was almost the last release of the

*My husband Jason and me on my first run on the Upper Youghegeny River*

Photo by Eric Emerson



*A picture of the Lower Gauley on a day where my husband and I were able to run the river due to natural flow and never see another soul*

Photo by Bree Emerson

season and we were expecting a pretty chill day on the river. Halfway down the trail we come up upon a man resting with his boat while he was hiking back up. He asked if we knew anyone at the top going back to the Swiss take-out. We told him that we didn't, and then a light bulb idea went off in Abby's head, an idea that only a kayaker would ever think of. Within minutes a total stranger was hiking back up the hill with Abby's car keys and driving it back down to the take-out, a win-win situation for both groups. The thought didn't even cross Abby's mind as to the safety of her car or the possessions within.

My husband and I took a recent vacation down south, and this memory came back to me when unexpectedly we running a

shuttle for two guys who were planning an overnight trip on the Chattooga with no second car. Once again a kayaker handed their car keys over to a complete stranger. We all had a chuckle, because right after he gave my husband the keys to his \$30,000 pickup truck he turned and said, 'by the way, what was your last name?'

Maybe its naïve, crazy or unrealistic, but I think most kayakers have a sense of community and family within kayakers, with the ability to easily bond and/or trust one another, an almost instant, just add water, extended family environment. Just one of the many things that makes kayaking such a unique experience.



# Accident Summary

## Whitewater Accident Report: January-June 2009

By Charlie Walbridge

In the first six months of 2009 American Whitewater received reports of thirty fatal whitewater accidents, which break down as 12 kayak, 4 canoe, and 14 rafting deaths. This number is about average when compared to previous years. There are more kayaking deaths than usual, due primarily to more accidents involving inexperienced paddlers. Lack of experience was the primary cause of canoeing fatalities as well; most of the paddlers involved weren't wearing life vests. Thanks to lower water levels on many Western rivers, this season's rafting death toll is down significantly from last year. Many of this year's fatalities occurred as a result of bad swims when a person drowned even though life jackets were worn.

## Kayaking Accidents

On March 29th Mid-States paddlers were shaken by the death of Mercer Oast on the Goshen Pass section of Virginia's Maury River. Mr. Oast, 51, was part of a group of ten boaters running the river. He was an experienced kayaker who paddled aggressively and wasn't afraid to swim. According a report from Jeffrey Hatcher, who was in the group, the trip was uneventful until the group arrived at Devil's Kitchen, a long Class IV rapid. Mr. Oast ran a center line, flipped, and bailed out after several roll attempts. He washed into a downed tree to the left of House Rock and was trapped under water. Paddlers from several groups converged on the site in minutes. After attempting to pull him out by pulling on his PFD they attached a line to his body and used mechanical advantage to extricate him. He was under water for about 30 minutes, which was too long.

The Silver River is one of the best creek runs on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. On April 17th two very experienced local kayakers decided to paddle the Upper Silver after work. They'd run this two-mile-long section

many times and knew it well. They had no problems at the first big drop, Hail Mary, and they passed cleanly through the ledges below. At the final drop, the Cabins Section, they stopped to scout a long, complex Class V. Dave Bullock, who reported the accident to AW, elected to portage the drop and set safety for Richard Honrath.

Mr. Honrath, 47, cleanly navigated a series of small ledges culminating in a 10-foot drop. The next feature was a 6-foot pourover with a bad hole on the left and a chute on the right. Mr. Honrath missed a key eddy and was pushed into the pourover where he rolled once before bailing out. Although his boat filled with water and quickly flushed free, Mr. Honrath recirculated in the backwash for some time. Mr. Bullock tried to reach him with his rescue rope. He made 8-10 throws, many of which were on target, but Mr. Honrath was too tired or disoriented to grab hold. He finally washed out and floated around the corner.

Mr. Bullock jumped in his boat and sprinted after him. He found Mr. Honrath caught on an overhanging tree with his boat eddied out nearby. After trying desperately to free him, Mr. Bullock paddled the remaining half-mile to the take-out where he flagged a driver, and asked him to call 911. He then went back upstream to continue his recovery efforts. After a time he was met by 10-12 people from a local rescue squad who helped get Mr. Honrath ashore and administered CPR. He was taken to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead.

An epic father and son outing turned tragic when John Burnham, 63, died on California's Kern River. A Canoe & Kayak.com article tells the story: on April 17th Mr. Burnham and his son Macy were part of a group of 14 paddlers who hiked into the famous Seven Teacups on Dry Meadow Creek, a Kern River tributary. After running the Teacups and portaging two unrunnable cascades below, they finally reached the Kern River and began paddling out. At Carson Falls, the last big drop before the take-out, Mr. Burnham flipped in a small hole in the entrance ledges. He attempted several rolls, then flushed into the main drop where he disappeared. A boater setting safety threw

a rope to him; he felt someone grab hold, then let go. Weeks later the body had not been found.

Macy Burnham, a professional kayaker, has several theories that may help explain what happened. His father's boat was missing its drain plug when recovered, so water seeping in through the drain hole may have rendered the boat unmanageable. It's also possible that his father, who swam once in the Seven Teacups, was exhausted by the time he reached Carson Falls. This drop has several known sieves and undercuts, his body may have lodged in one of them.

Two kayaking deaths in Alabama show how inexperience, questionable equipment, and whitewater are a dangerous mix. On May 8th Walker Taylor, 22, joined two friends from Auburn University for trip down a two-mile stretch of the Tallapoosa River below Thurlow Dam. A local outfitter said that the group was using rec-style kayaks that were not suitable for whitewater. The river here is 100 yards wide and contains Class III-IV rapids. Although water levels were high, creating powerful holes, none of the paddlers wore life vests. It's not clear exactly what happened, but self-rescue on a big, wide river without a PFD would challenge even the strongest swimmer. On June 21st Alabama's Coosa River was the scene of another fatality. A family group was paddling through the rocky shoals below Jordan Dam when Jimmy Debartoli, 64, fell off his sit-on-top kayak. He stood up immediately in fast water and his foot became entrapped. Although he was wearing a life vest and his family did all they could, he could not keep his head above the water. By the time firefighters arrived, he was dead.

Dr. Tony Oertling, Chair of the Eastern Washington University chemistry department and a veteran whitewater paddler, lost his life on Marble Creek, a tributary of the St. Joe River in northern Idaho. The accident occurred on May 30th below Three Mile Rapids, a long Class IV. The group spread out in the easier water downstream and lost track of Dr. Oertling, who they later found snagged in a strainer. The group theorized that he had flipped and



encountered the strainer while swimming ashore. It's a reminder for all of us to stay together, even in mild rapids.

Black Gore Creek is a small, steep stretch of whitewater accessed via a bicycle path in East Vail, CO. On June 4th Drew Hunter, 29, was boating the Class IV+ Fishladder Section with two friends when he was caught in a steep pour-over. His friends tried to throw him a rescue rope, but he couldn't grab it. He washed downstream into a gorge; his PFD and his body were found separately about a mile downstream.

Although large waterfalls are routinely run nowadays, the recent death of Ed Gaker reminds us just how serious these drops can be. Mr. Gaker was known around Morgantown, WV as an outstanding kayaker who ran many of the area's toughest creeks. His fiancé, Sarah Cranor, provides this account of what happened. The couple scouted Cinnamon Gorge on the Lake Fork of the Gunnison near Sherman, Colorado for several days. On June 6th Mr. Gaker decided to run a 60-foot waterfall at the top of the gorge while Ms. Cranor set safety downstream. He pitch-poled slightly during the run and landed upside down. Mr. Gaker tried to roll, but he was pushed behind the falls and forced to bail out. With some effort he climbed the wall behind the falls and tried to jump far out into the water and swim free. He went under for a long time and surfaced unconscious behind the falls.

Ms. Cranor went for help, and rescue squads later recovered the body. The bow of Mr. Gaker's kayak was badly dented, suggesting an underwater collision that could have set off an unfortunate chain of events. Ms. Cranor told AW that she has studied pictures of the falls from this year and years past and believes that a rock probably fell into the pool recently. Thus the falls, once thought to be clean, may not be today.

On June 13th a party of five attempted Wyoming's Encampment River, a small stream with a deserved reputation for intensity. At noon C-1 paddler Brian Stothart, 35, was bringing up the rear when he flipped in the rapid above Damnation

Alley. He rolled quickly, but washed into the big Class V drop. Paddling hard for an eddy on river right Mr. Stothart hit a large rock sideways, flew into the air, then disappeared from sight. Later, searchers discovered a deeply undercut rock shelf just downstream. The group believes that both his boat and body were pushed under here.

His friends followed quickly and searched carefully, but after 45 minutes there was no sign of Mr. Stothart or his gear. At this point the group split up, with three paddlers going for help and two others and continuing to search. After another 45 minutes the search party moved downriver. They found Mr. Stothart's boat in the middle of the river about 5 miles downstream. The next day searchers found his life vest in an eddy below Damnation Alley. His body was recovered a month later.

## Canoeing Accidents

Canoes are often paddled by novices in whitewater, and they make mistakes that more experienced paddlers would avoid. In these four fatalities none of the paddlers were using PFDs, placing them at a serious disadvantage in the water. On May 2nd Jody Jones, a 31 year-old Charleston man, disappeared after his canoe flipped in the New River near Thurmond, WV. On May 8th a group of four men in two canoes missed an intended landing and were swept into Class IV Angel Falls on Tennessee's Big South Fork of the Cumberland. One of them, Tony Evans, 61, started having trouble in pool below and slipped beneath the surface. On June 19th a canoe capsized in the Colorado River near Moab, UT, throwing two men into the river. Only one of them made it ashore. On May 8th James Vavra, 45, was going for an evening paddle the Upper Dolores River with his girlfriend when their canoe capsized under the 4th street bridge in Dolores, CO. The girlfriend survived, but he did not. Although the newspapers said nothing about life vests this might well be another case where they weren't used.

## Rafting Accidents

Flush drownings occur when a swimmer is so battered by river turbulence that they drown despite the protection of their PFD. Rafts usually carry a number of passengers; after a flip it's easy for a single person to slip away. The Colorado River was running high on May 21st when Michael Carlos, 37, was thrown from his raft in Cataract Canyon's Drop #2. He did not survive the swim. Two similar accidents occurred at Westwater Canyon's notorious Skull Rapids, one on May 25th, when 57 year-old Dennis Young drowned, and one on July 4th, when the victim was 17 year-old Timothy Rau. Both of these victims were wearing life vests. In both cases a raft flipped against a cliff near the river right eddy. The currents here are very confused and powerful, tending to pull swimmers underwater for long periods.

Any swim in Colorado's Upper Animas River is a serious matter. Continuous hard rapids, high altitude, and icy cold water means that even fast rescues may not be quick enough. On June 26th Laurie Clemmons, 35, fell out of a guided raft at Ten Mile Rapid. A half mile later she was pulled aboard a safety raft. She was unresponsive and did not respond to CPR.

Big holes and hydraulics pose a serious danger to swimmers and the Murtaugh section of the Snake River near Idaho Falls is known for its powerful reversals. According to a report by Gary McDaniel the river was running at 17,000 cfs on April 19th when his group of four rafts made the run. Approaching a Class III drop above Lets Make a Deal, Dirk Gombert, 53, caught his oar on a submerged rock. The oar broke, and he couldn't get a spare in place in time to avoid a big ledge hole. The boat dropped in and was violently worked in the reversal. The four passengers had to respond quickly with high-sides and position changes as the raft spun 180 degrees at a time. Several of them washed out and had to be pulled back in. One rafter fell out, washed past the boil, and was picked up in the fast water below. The remaining three rafters agreed that this was the best way out and jumped off the raft. Two of them made it, but Mr. Gombert washed back towards the boat.



# Accident Summary

He held on until he lost consciousness and moments later his body flushed out. Fellow rafters picked him up and began CPR, but it was too late. The raft stayed in the hole for several hours afterwards.

There's another big hole in Three Oar Deal, the biggest rapid in Alpine Canyon on Wyoming's Snake River. Here the river turns right and the main current flows over a sandstone ledge on the left, creating a huge reversal. On June 26th the river was running high at 18,000 cfs. A group of Boy Scouts was making its third run of the day through Three Oar Deal when Craig McCuistion, 50, was thrown from his raft and swept into the hole. He was thrashed and recirculated for about three minutes. When Mr. McCuistion finally washed out his raft picked him up and began CPR. An outfitter called local Fire-Rescuers, who transported Mr. McCuistion to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead. Several others on the trip also fell out of the raft, but were able to swim to safety.

Even strong swimmers are hard pressed to survive in whitewater without a PFD. Unfortunately, inexperienced rafters frequently forget this vital piece of equipment. On May 20th a 23 year-old soldier from Fort Lewis perished when his raft capsized on the Nisqually River Washington State. None of the eight men aboard were wearing a life vest. A few days later two men in their 40s drowned when their raft flipped on Idaho's Coeur D'Alene River. Neither man was wearing a PFD. There were similar accidents in mid-June that killed fishermen on the Colorado River near Kremmling and the James River near Glen Wilton, VA. In each case, a raft capsized and the occupants were swimming without PFDs.

The owner of a fly fishing shop was killed on Montana's Bitterroot River on May 6th after his raft hit a huge brush pile and capsized. Two rafters were able to swim to a midstream island, but Richard Galli, 72, was caught in the strainer. On May 25th Jeanne Haylett, 40, was rafting the Upper Dolores with a friend when their boat capsized. Ms. Haylett's PFD was torn off during the accident, which probably contributed to her death.

On June 29th Soren Pederson was participating a five-day guide training on California's South Fork of the American. The flow was 1800 cfs, which is a medium level. After he fell out of his raft at Troublemaker Rapids Mr. Peterson, 29, apparently stood up in fast-moving water and caught his feet between two rocks. The force of the water pulled his PFD from his body and made rescue attempts almost impossible. The El Dorado County Swiftwater Rescue Team had to wait until flows were cut back at Chili Bar Reservoir before they could retrieve his body.

## Dam Related Deaths

Low head dams were responsible for six of this year's 30 river-running deaths, double the 10% "average" of the past few decades. Although vigilant paddlers can spot these hazards and portage when necessary, warning signs and continued public education efforts are needed to alert the general public. The only sure way to keep these tragedies from recurring is to modify or remove obsolete dams, but these efforts have been stymied by high costs. Below is the toll taken by these "drowning machines" over the past six months.

On May 5th four young men planned a short rafting trip down the Yakima River. Their float came to a tragic end when their raft flipped in the backwash of Wapato Diversion Dam 15 miles south of Yakima, WA. Alberto Ramirez, 20, and Jesse Moran, 19, were caught in the hydraulic and drowned in spite of the fact that they wore life vests. Their companions washed clear of the reversal and made it ashore.

On June 6th A founding member of the Creek Freaks Paddling Club died at a low-head dam on the Blackwater River south of Roanoke, VA. The river was running high as Chris Odum and three friends approached the low-head dam just above US 220. All were experienced paddlers with life vests and safety gear. According to an account in the Franklin, Va. Post the trouble started when a kayak flipped and its paddler swam through the dam's fish ladder. Then another canoeist was pushed over the dam by fast water but came through OK. Mr. Odum, 38,

ran the dam near its center, flipped, and got caught in the hydraulic. His friends tried to reach him with throw bags, but could not. After Mr. Odum washed free the group brought him ashore and attempted CPR.

On June 9th Chris and Chad Miller decided to run Pennsylvania's Brandywine Creek in a pair of borrowed kayaks. That day powerful thunderstorms raised the flow of the river from 130 to over 2400 cfs, making the trip a lot more dangerous. Workers at Brandywine Park shouted warnings to the pair, who continued downstream and ran a four-foot high dam below Creek and Meetinghouse Road. They flipped and were tumbled in the backwash. Rescuers recovered one body that afternoon; the second was found by picnickers a few days later.

A June 19th incident reminds us that the backwash of a dam can be dangerous to downstream paddlers, too. Ronnie Campbell died on Arkansas' Ouachita River below 60-foot high Rammel Dam. According to the Benton, Arkansas Courier Mr. Campbell, 55, was paddling with his two daughters when all three were pulled into a hydraulic created by the dam's floodgates. The two girls were rescued, but Mr. Campbell disappeared.

On June 30th 62 year-old Alan Neely was killed after his motorboat washed over the Center Street Dam in Des Moines, Iowa. According to the Des Moines Register Mr. Neely's motorboat stalled above the dam and washed over the 10-foot drop. Mr. Neely and his wife were dumped into the deadly hydraulic. Mr. Neely, whose PFD was torn from his body, died after a brief struggle. Mrs. Neely was able to hang onto floating debris for almost 30 minutes. A construction worker on a nearby bridge was strapped to the end of a crane and lowered down to her. She was pulled from the hydraulic and lifted to safety. Photos of this rescue made headlines throughout the Midwest.

According to the Iowa Whitewater Association the state has roughly 160 low-head dams on its rivers. There's no state ordinance requiring warning signs



or other precautions at these dams. Many are obsolete and abandoned. The Center Street Dam, once used to generate power, is now owned by the City of Des Moines. Three other people have drowned here in the last 15 years. A safety cable that washed out in 1968 was not replaced and upstream warning signs are either quite small or hidden by overgrowth. Dam owners must pay attention to these sensible precautions if future tragedies are to be avoided.

The Vermillion River near Oglesby, Illinois is a popular Class I-II run used by many Midwestern paddlers. On July 2nd seven people rented two rafts from a local outfitter. The trip was going well until the group reached the low-head dam owned by a cement making plant. According to the DeKalb, Il Chronicle the dam extends only part-way across the river. The first raft and its four occupants moved to river right and ran the drop without difficulty. The second raft ran the dam towards the center, became caught in the backwash, and flipped. One of the paddlers washed out and a second was pulled from the river alive by firefighters. The third paddler, Jennifer Wehling, 36, was dead when she was pulled from the boil. All three were wearing life vests. The two survivors were cited for boating under the influence of alcohol.

This dam has been run often at various water levels by people who know what they're doing. But there have been several serious accidents here, too. This recent fatality, and several other narrow escapes, unnerved Buzzi Unicem Co., an Italian firm that owns the dam and both banks of the Vermillion River for several miles. They closed the river to all public access, thwarting paddlers and putting a local rental operation out of business. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources said that the river isn't deep enough for commercial navigation and therefore the company owns the river. That reading of the law is suspect, but for now we hope that local paddlers and outfitters can successfully negotiate future access.

## Near Misses and Rescues

There were a significant number of paddler rescues this season, several of which were summoned when the person in trouble pulled a cell phone from a ziplock bag and dialed 911! One man called while sitting on a logjam in the Red Cedar River near Lansing, Michigan. Firefighters rescued eight kayakers from a rain-swollen Esopus Creek after a local resident saw them stranded on a flooded island and called 911. In a June 26th rescue, State Police helicopters evacuated a dozen people, ten of them children, who were stranded on rocks in the Shenandoah River near Harper's Ferry. Why they didn't ask outfitters to send a couple of guys in rafts is beyond me; it would have been less risky and thousands of dollars cheaper!

In a rather shocking incident, a commercial rafting guest was accidentally abandoned in a Class I section of the Lehigh River near Bowmanstown, PA. A raft pinned on a submerged tree was piled onto by two other boats. In the confusion a 49 year-old woman was trapped between the pinned boats and left behind. At the take-out, the guides made a head count and realized someone was missing. In the meantime, local residents heard the woman's screams and called 911. A Fish Commission Waterways Patrolman launched a rescue boat, found the woman, and slashed several rafts as he worked to free her. Then, unfortunately, the rescue boat capsized on the way back to the shore! Other commercial rafters nearby rescued the woman and the waterways patrolman.

The North Fork of the Virgin River in Utah's Zion National Park was closed on April 28th after high water caused four paddling groups to spend an unscheduled night in the Narrows. Several lost boats and had to be evacuated. One kayaker washed into a logjam and lost his boat. He spent two nights in the Narrows before being rescued by another kayak party. Another group tried to climb out on their own but were halted after 800 feet by sheer cliffs. A helicopter from Grand Canyon National Park was called to pull them out. Park management is re-evaluating access policies in the wake of these problems.

A well-known Western Pennsylvania kayaker was evacuated from the gorge on Colorado's Vallecito Creek after a bad swim left him with a badly broken lower leg. The accident occurred at Trash Can Rapid, a hard Class V. Don Smith, 42, self-rescued waited as another group of kayakers paddled down to Vallecito Campground and called 911. Two doctors in third kayaking group stayed with Mr. Smith. Later the Upper Pine Technical Rescue Team arrived and hauled Mr. Smith safely out of the 70-foot deep gorge. A few weeks later, still in his cast, Mr. Smith was running the Upper Yough!

Some paddlers take pride in performing their own rescues and evacuations, as exemplified by the kayaker who vertically pinned at "Knuckles" in Tennessee's Watauga River Gorge. This particular spot likes to pin big guys in old-school kayaks. The boat was completely submerged in the drop; the kayaker's head created an air pocket and a huge rooster tail. But according to Boatertalk, the man was old school, and very tough. He fought his way out of his boat, breaking his knee in two places. Once on shore the group duct taped his knee as best they could and put an elbow pad on his knee. The initial plan was to have two of the others help him "walk", but the pain was too much and he decided to crawl. By the time the group had paddled out and met up with the others, he'd gotten out and used half of a broken paddle to splint his knee. The boat is still there, completely underwater about 10 feet off the left bank.

As always, I'm indebted to my regular safety correspondents for their help creating this report. They include Dave Cernak, Slim Ray, Margaret Weise, Aida Parkinson, and Jason Robertson. Other accounts came from various listserve's, including the IBWW Newsletter; the "Incidents" report from the U.S. Coast Guard's John Malatak, and Yahoo's "SwiftH2O News" chat room. To report a whitewater accident, near miss, or serious injury, go to the Safety page at [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org) and click "Report an accident." You can also forward newspaper articles, chat room posts, and first person accounts to [ccwalbridge@cs.com](mailto:ccwalbridge@cs.com). Thanks!



# Canoeing

*continued from page 57*

wave slapped us both with an explosion of whitewater, and sent us on an elevator freefall to the next trough. I heard a whoop from behind, and looked back to see Pat with a wide grin, his straw hat dangling from his neck by the chinstrap.

“Are there gonna be more of those?” he gleefully queried. I shrugged. High water does funny things to a river, and despite having guided on the Salmon for several seasons, I didn’t know what to expect. Many of the rapids would surely wash out. Others would grow into monsters. “Maybe you should wear your helmet,” I replied.

Indeed, many of the big drops were washed out due to the high water, but some were just coming alive. Over the next two days, we made it through several big water rapids, including infamous Chittam and Ruby, but The Slide was the king of them all.

Rocky bluffs jutted toward the river as grassy hillsides gave way to a granite gorge. A large rockslide led straight to the water from high above on river left. Two hundred yards above the drop, the canyon began to roar. At one hundred yards, the river started boiling and swirling toward the center, gathering itself for the flush. We both paid close attention to the emerging currents because a few feet to the wrong side of a boil would send you headlong for the rapid.

We got out of the water, and started across a pile of sharp rocks—the slide of The Slide. It was instantly impressive. The entire 47,000 cubic feet per second of the Salmon funneled to a pounding V-hole. Two opposing walls of white, both several feet tall, converged in the center of the river with awe-inspiring force. Below the great collision of whitewater, eddies on both sides surged and boiled and exploded and sucked.

The most obvious line was to charge right down the gut. This, we agreed, would

probably go. The questions were whether you could hold your breath long enough to drift free of the turbulence; whether you could hang onto your paddle through the hit at the V; and whether you had more good luck than bad. There was a “sneak” line too, but experience told me that in big water like this, it was best to simply follow the water. And that, unfortunately, brought me squarely back to the monstrous V-hole.

The rapid had lines. The portage, leading over sharp loose rocks, looked heinous. But after several minutes of deliberation, I reluctantly scrambled into sharp gray rocks of the rockslide, and began my portage.

An hour later, Pat and I were sitting in shade below the rapid. I felt disappointed that I hadn’t given The Slide a shot, and looked upstream at it discerningly. I got into my boat on a bedrock ledge several feet above the water, and seventy-five-yards below the hole. Random waves smashed into the rock below me, sending splashes over my head. I crept to the edge, then pushed off with a grunt to hit the water paddling. A whirling vortex formed, opening a gulf several feet deep under my bow. Paddling straight into the pit, I suddenly found myself looking skyward as my kayak pitched vertically. Landing upright to the whoops of my partner watching from shore, I continued stroking to get the hell out of there. Any lingering doubts about my decision to portage were firmly put to rest.

The Slide served as a portal to Hells Canyon. Below the great rapid, craggy walls of schist rose from water’s edge as the river wound deeper into the famous gorge. We knew that the Snake River would have more traffic than the empty Salmon, and we approached the confluence hesitantly. On cue, a massive jet boat roared upstream and idled in the current at the mouth of the Salmon. The tour guide’s speaker was just audible above the rumble of his engine. “This is the Salmon River, sometimes

called the river of no return.” Pat turned to me and said, “I guess we could camp back upstream a bit.”

One river was behind me, yet the lower Snake and Columbia were before me. I floated, warmly reflecting on the trip I had just completed, and pensively considering the unknown that lay ahead. In a way, I was sorry to not be taking out the next day with Pat, but that was a fear-driven emotion. Source to sea trips are for seeing all phases of a river’s life, and traveling beyond the standard recreational runs. I steeled my resolve for the remaining journey ahead, and pulled ashore for one last night on a soft sandy Salmon River beach.

*Tyler Williams is the author of Whitewater Classics, Paddling Arizona, and three other titles. For the full story of his source to sea journey, check out Kayak Session’s 2009 Paddle World magazine. For more on Tyler’s four rivers source to sea quest, please visit [www.funhogpress.com](http://www.funhogpress.com)*



# Affiliate Clubs

## Affiliate Club Spotlight

The Colorado Whitewater Association has been actively supporting American Whitewater since our inception in 1954. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the CWA for their continued support and for their stewardship efforts.

Colorado Whitewater is an all-volunteer organization that has been promoting the sport of whitewater kayaking in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region since 1954. They introduce new kayakers to whitewater, teach paddling techniques, promote and teach whitewater safety, and support racing and freestyle kayak competitions. In addition, they inform the public about river access, conservation, and other general issues concerning rivers and wilderness, while working to resolve problems related to those issues.

Since the inception of our Colorado River Stewardship Program two years ago, CWA has been a strong supporter and advocate for AW's workplan and serves as a clearing-house for active volunteers. At a local, grassroots level, CWA has helped represent paddlers in management of the South Platte, Blue, and Arkansas Rivers. They have supported national campaigns to reform 1872 hardrock mining laws and US Forest Service Roadless Area management.

The yearly dues for a CWA member are \$30 for an Individual and \$40 for a Household. Member benefits include better, safer access to rivers throughout Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region; low-cost instructional kayaking classes; free one-day river trips; an annual two-day Training Camp; a bimonthly newsletter just for members; and special promotions offered only to CWA members.

To learn more about the Colorado Whitewater Association or to join their club, check out their website at <http://www.coloradowhitewater.org/>. And remember, current members of the CWA receive a \$10 discount off their AW membership.

Thanks again CWA for your support of American Whitewater!

## It's Easy to Support AW!

American Whitewater is proud of the work we have accomplished in our stewardship program but we need your help to sustain our success. Your support through membership and donations enables our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. Donations don't have to be large; each person doing a small part makes a noticeable difference. Many donors fail to take full advantage of federal tax incentives specifically intended to encourage charitable contributions. Such incentives often enable a donor to make a larger gift to AW at little or no additional cost. For more information about maximizing your gift visit the IRS website dedicated to charitable organizations.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN# 23-7083760. To learn more about the Giving Options below, contact us at 866-BOAT4AW or visit the "Donate" link under "Support AW" on our website at [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org).

- **Donate online today!**
- **Monthly Giving:** Contribute a minimum of \$10 via credit card or electronic transfer from your bank account.
- **Bequests:** Include AW in your will or living trust. Bequests to AW are generally exempt from federal or state inheritance taxes, and subject to an unlimited deduction.
- **Combined Federal Campaign:** Federal employees including federal civilians, military personnel and U.S. Postal Workers can donate to AW through the CFC a once a year charitable fund raising program. Look for AW (Agency #11351) in the official CFC listing of eligible donors.
- **Charitable Remainder Trusts:** Convert a highly appreciated asset (such as real estate or stocks) into a lifetime income while minimizing income and estate taxes.
- **Employer Matching:** Many employers will match your donations to non-profit organizations. This includes membership payments, as well as additional contributions. Check to see if your employer has a matching program.
- **MissionFish:** Sell your items through the MissionFish program on eBay and the proceeds come directly to AW.
- **Other Assets:** A gift of real estate to AW qualifies you for a tax deduction based on the property's fair market value. If it is not a river access point, AW will sell the property and use the proceeds to protect access and restore rivers. Acceptance of property is subject to certain conditions. You may also be eligible to receive tax benefits for gifts of real property. Art and jewelry are examples of personal property items that may be eligible. Interested donors should check with your financial and tax advisors and AW on the feasibility and tax considerations of such gifts.
- **Securities:** Donating appreciated stock to AW benefits both the donor and whitewater rivers. The donor receives two tax-related benefits. First, the gain on the stock is not subject to capital gains taxes. Second, the donor can deduct the value of the stock as a charitable contribution.
- **United Way:** All federal campaigns, and a few of the local campaigns will allow you to donate to AW. AW's UNITED WAY member # is 2302.
- **Vehicle Donations:** Turn that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefiting AW.



# AW Corporate Partners

## Class V Sponsor



In 2006, Keen's contributions will aid American Whitewater's projects in the Southeast, and the Pacific Northwest. In the Southeast Keen's support will help American Whitewater's work restoring the Catawba watershed. Additional funding from Keen will support AW's projects on the Columbia River Basin and the Cascade range in the Pacific Northwest.

## Class IV Sponsors



## Class III Sponsor



## Class II Sponsor



## Boof Sponsors



## Wave Sponsors







# Hybrid.Care™

ONE: COMMUNITY. ENVIRONMENT. CONSCIENCE.

Each day American Whitewater faces new challenges that threaten our whitewater rivers. To aid us in this fight, we rely on support from members, donors, foundations, and partners in the industry. Companies throughout the whitewater and outdoor industries are stepping forward to support AW's River Stewardship work. American Whitewater urges you not to make purchase decisions blindly. When you buy your next piece of outdoor gear there are many factors to consider: quality, dependability, comfort, safety, and fashion. American Whitewater hopes you will add one more consideration to this list: corporate responsibility. Support companies that support your rivers

KEEN Inc., manufacturer of hybrid footwear, socks and bags, is an outdoor brand that delivers innovative hybrid products, enabling all outdoor enthusiasts to live an active lifestyle. Founded in 2003, KEEN was first recognized for its Newport sandal, which featured patented toe protection technology.

The company strives to demonstrate integrity and leadership, especially on social and environmental commitments, while promoting an inclusive outdoors community. Through its giving program Hybrid.Care, the company provides support to a variety of social and environmental organizations around the globe.

Based in Portland, Oregon, KEEN products are available in retail locations in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Central America, South America and Europe. To learn more, visit [www.keenfootwear.com](http://www.keenfootwear.com).

### About Hybrid.Care™

KEEN is more than an outdoor company. Through its Hybrid.Care initiative, KEEN strives to be a company with a conscience and to make a positive difference by supporting and working with social and environmental organizations around the world. Established in early 2005 in response to the 2005 Tsunami disaster, Hybrid.Care has contributed monetary donations, products and volunteer hours to non-profit organizations around the globe.

Since 2004, KEEN has distributed more than \$1.5 million to non-profit organizations important to us. With limited resources and widely different goals, our Hybrid.Care partners have paved the way for change through community, education and understanding. What these organizations share is a philosophy of caring, conscience and sustainability. What they've already given back is invaluable.

Linda Tom, KEEN Marketing Manager, talks about the partnership this way; "Relationships like the one we have with American Whitewater are very important to KEEN. We feel fortunate to partner with AW, supporting the continued work it does for the environment, for responsible outdoor recreation and in building strong community."

American Whitewater is proud to be a core Hybrid.Care partner.



# Join **AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!**

American  
Whitewater  
has been  
extraordinarily  
fortunate in our  
ability to leverage  
a strong grassroots  
base—members  
and other  
volunteers—to  
assist our limited  
staff with many  
whitewater river  
conservation and  
restoration efforts.

Over the years, American Whitewater volunteers have participated in numerous hydropower meetings as well as instream and recreational flow studies; filed comments and assisted with an uncountable number of filings; appeared as expert witnesses; lobbied; worked to fight new dams, remove existing dams, deny licenses, and improve public access to rivers and streams. In nearly every river stewardship issue AW has been involved with, the outcome has been favorable to paddlers. Not only has AW secured favorable decisions for the paddling community, but we are the only national organization representing paddlers as these decisions are being made.

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the U.S. American Whitewater currently has 6,300 active members. When considering the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join American Whitewater. If you are a member, please

be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual Annual Memberships are only \$35. If you are a member of your local paddling club and your club is an Affiliate Club member of AW, join as a Club Affiliate Individual for \$25. This is less than a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

Join on-line today at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/>, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership  
P.O. Box 1540  
Cullowhee, NC 28723



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### CONTACT INFORMATION

☐ New Member    ☐ Renewing Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Club Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

(if claiming club discount)

\*Note: American Whitewater will never share your information with others

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- ☐ \$25 Junior (*Under the age of 18*)
- ☐ \$25 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (*SAVE \$10 if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club*)
- ☐ \$35 Individual One Year
- ☐ \$50 Family (*Immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18*)
- ☐ \$65 (2) Year Membership
- ☐ \$75 Affiliate Club Membership
- ☐ \$100 Ender Club (*Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-Shirt FREE    Circle Size: S M L XL XXL*)
- ☐ \$250 Platinum Paddler (*Receive Immersion Research's "Creek Bag" FREE*)
- ☐ \$500 Explorer Membership (*Receive a Dry Bag from Watershed FREE*)
- ☐ \$750 Lifetime Membership (*Receive AW's Lifetime Membership NRS Paddlers Duffle FREE*)
- ☐ \$1000 Legacy Membership (*Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Knappster Shorty Top FREE*)
- ☐ \$2500 Steward Membership (*Thank you items will be arranged on an individual basis*)

### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR SUBSCRIPTIONS

- ☐ \$5.00    ☐ \$10.00    ☐ \$25.00    ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \$30.00 Kayak Session Subscription (*Includes a \$5 donation to AW*)
- ☐ \$40.00 LVM Subscription (*includes a \$8 donation to AW*)

### JOURNAL OPTIONS

- ☐ Yes, mail me the AW Journal
- ☐ Do NOT mail me the AW journal, I will read it online (*saves paper and saves AW money!*)

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

- ☐ Cash
  - ☐ Check # \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Credit Card    ☐ MC    ☐ Visa    ☐ Disc    ☐ AMEX
- Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name as it appears on card: \_\_\_\_\_
- Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# Affiliate Clubs

# AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1954 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over 110 clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club, consider joining one.

Barry Adams from the Three River Paddling Club has taken on the responsibilities of AW's Affiliate Club Liaison. Barry is working with Affiliate Clubs to distribute information and promote AW memberships. You may recognize Barry's name as the Ohio Pyle Over the Falls Festival Coordinator. If you would like to get in touch with Barry you can email him at [barry@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:barry@americanwhitewater.org).

The 7th annual Clif Bar Flowing Rivers Campaign Grants, pledging \$2,500 to American Whitewater Affiliate Clubs for river stewardship work, will be awarded in August. Funding for this very effective program is provided by Clif Bar.

Grants are distributed to clubs for projects that promote river stewardship, conservation, access, and/or safety education on our nation's rivers. This program provides our Affiliate Clubs with the seed money necessary to implement programs in their own backyards.

Grant recipients in 2008 were the Atlanta Whitewater Club for river cleanups in the Atlanta area, and the Fairbanks Paddlers for their project on disposal of human waste on river trips. Check the AW website in August to find out the 2009 recipients.

Thank you Clif Bar for your continued support of AW and our Affiliate Clubs!

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

## **Alaska**

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks  
Nova Riverrunners Inc., Chickaloon

## **Alabama**

Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham  
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

## **Arkansas**

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

## **California**

Chico Paddleheads, Chico  
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus  
Sequoia Paddling Club, Forestville  
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Ch., Grass Valley  
Sierra Club SF Chapter, Livermore

## **Colorado**

Avid4 Adventure Inc., Boulder  
Colorado Whitewater Assn, Englewood  
Grand Canyon Priv. Boat. Assn., Colorado Springs  
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs  
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride  
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

## **Connecticut**

AMC - Connecticut Chapter, Colchester

## **Delaware**

Wilmington Trail Club Paddlers, Wilmington

## **Georgia**

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta  
Georgia Canoeing Assoc, Atlanta  
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta  
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

## **Iowa**

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W Des Moines

## **Idaho**

Idaho Whitewater Assoc., Boise

## **Illinois**

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Chicago  
Team SICK, Carbondale

## **Indiana**

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis  
Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

## **Kentucky**

Bardstown Boaters, Frankfort  
Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington  
Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington  
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

## **Maine**

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Topsham

## **Maryland**

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Silver Spring  
Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Cockeysville  
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Smithsburg

## **Michigan**

Club Sport: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

## **Minnesota**

SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

## **Mississippi**

Mississippi Outdoor Club, Clinton

## **Missouri**

Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield  
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

## **Montana**

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

## **Nevada**

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

## **New Hampshire**

Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Franconia

## **New Jersey**

KCCNY, Flauders

## **New Mexico**

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

## **New York**

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady  
AMC NY-NJ Chapter, New York  
Colgate University, Hamilton  
Flow Paddlers' Club, Ontario  
Hamilton College, Clinton  
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining  
St Lawrence University, Canton  
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia  
USA Paddling, West Falls  
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Buffalo

## **N. Carolina**

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee  
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh  
Genesee Waterways Center, Rochester  
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Charlotte  
NCSU Outing Club, Raleigh  
Triad River Runners, Winston, Salem  
Watauga Paddlers, Boone

## **Ohio**

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus  
Keel Haulers Canoe Club, Westlake  
Outdoor Adventure Club, Dayton  
Toledo River Gang, Waterville

## **Oregon**

Face Level Industries LLC, Portland  
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland  
Northwest Rafters Assoc, Portland  
Oregon Canoe and Kayak, Portland  
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis



### **Pennsylvania**

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf  
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown  
Blue Mountain Outfitters, Marysville  
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre  
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg  
Conewago Canoe Club, York  
Holtwood Hooligans, Lancaster  
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley  
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Inc., Lehigh Valley  
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia  
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh

### **S. Carolina**

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

### **Tennessee**

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Kingsport  
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville  
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge  
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis  
Tennessee Scenic River Assoc., Nashville  
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga  
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville

### **Texas**

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

### **Vermont**

Vermont Paddlers Club, Essex Junction

### **Virginia**

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station  
Canoe Cruisers Assn, Arlington  
Coastal Canoeists, Blacksburg  
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Richmond  
FORVA, Roanoke

### **Washington**

BEWET, Bellevue  
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle  
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane  
The Mountaineers, Seattle  
University Kayak Club, Seattle  
Venturing Crew 360, Snohomish  
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle  
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton  
Whitman College Whiteater Club, Walla Walla

### **West Virginia**

West VA Wildwater Association, S. Charleston

### **Wisconsin**

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison  
NE Wisconsin Paddlers Inc. Neenah  
Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, Madison

## **Discounted AW Membership for Affiliate Club Members**

*By Carla Miner, Membership Manager*

AW offers a discounted Affiliate Club membership of \$25, a \$10 savings. If you are renewing your AW membership or joining as a new member, select the Affiliate Club Discounted Personal Membership online at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/>. Or, if you are renewing or joining by mail or telephone just mention the name of the Affiliate Club you belong to and you can take advantage of the \$25 membership.

A list of AW Affiliate Clubs can be found on our website at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/>. If you do not see your Club listed here please encourage them to renew their Club membership or to join AW as a new Affiliate Club. Your Club's membership and your personal membership enable our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. When you join or renew your membership your support is helping to meet the many challenges whitewater rivers face.

If you have any questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please contact me. I can be reached at 866\_BOAT-4AW or [membership@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@americanwhitewater.org).

## **Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!**

### **10 Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club**

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap'.
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for the 2009 Clif Bar Flowing Rivers grant

**For more information,**  
contact Carla Miner at  
[membership@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@americanwhitewater.org)  
or sign-up on-line at:  
[www.americanwhitewater.org/membership](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership)



# Guidelines for Contributors



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

If possible, articles should be submitted on a 3-1/2-inch computer disk. (Microsoft Word if possible – others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

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

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

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water.

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

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

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

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

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



PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723

[www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)

## Release for publication

I hereby release my work (literary, graphic or photographic) for publication in American Whitewater magazine

- I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.
- I understand that I will not be paid for my work.
- I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation, or agency in this work.
- I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an American Whitewater publication
- I promise that this material has not been and will not soon be published by another magazine or publication and the rights to this material are clear and unrestricted.
- I understand that once this material is printed in American Whitewater it may be reprinted or reproduced in other publications if I wish, providing I notify them that it has already appeared in American Whitewater.
- I understand that the contents of American Whitewater Magazine, including my contribution will be archived on the American Whitewater website.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This release must be signed by the contributing author(s), photographers(s), and graphic artist(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Send your material to:

American Whitewater Journal PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723 or via email to [editor@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:editor@americanwhitewater.org)

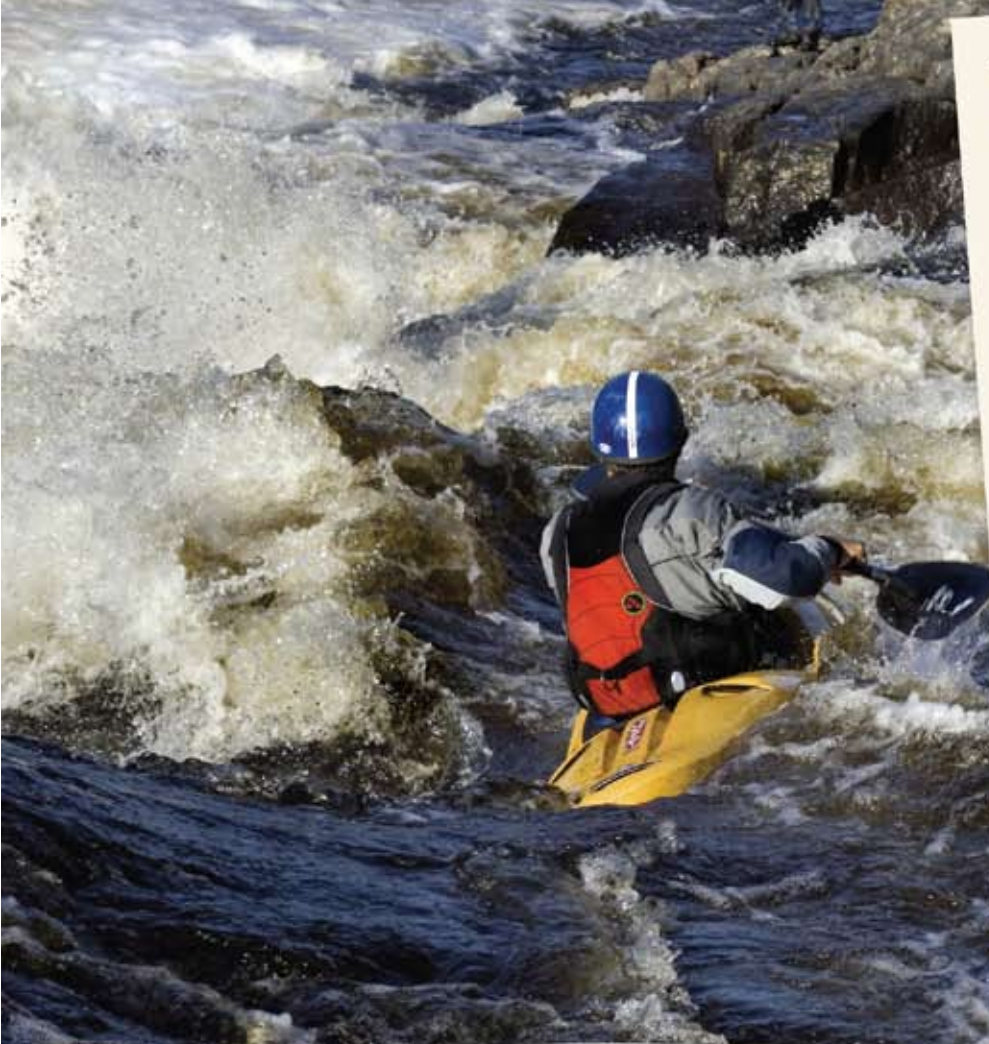
Send your material to:

Journal Editor  
P.O. Box 1540

Cullowhee, NC 28723

E-mail: [editor@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:editor@americanwhitewater.org)





## Px MY PADDLE PRESCRIPTION

PADDLER: JOHN GRACE

I'M A: WERNER SHO-GUN

TYPE: STRAIGHT

DIAMETER: STANDARD

LENGTH: 200 cm

HEIGHT: 5'11"

OCCUPATION: VIDEO GURU

LOVES PADDLING:

BECAUSE IT FORCES ME TO FOCUS - AND THE CONFUSION OF LIFE SUBSIDES FOR A BIT.



I choose to support American Whitewater through the Healthy Waters Program.

First descent Petite Mécatina, North Quebec

# WHAT'S YOUR PADDLE PRESCRIPTION?

Discover your custom fit paddle

- < increase your performance
- < reduce your fatigue
- < and have more fun on the water

Werner offers advanced design features with a variety of fit options to help you choose a truly custom fit paddle. Your custom fit paddle is waiting for you.

Our web site has more for you.



**Fit Guide:** Answer a few questions and discover your custom fit Werner paddle.



### HealthyWaters:

Buy a Werner paddle and you choose which of our non-profit partners you would like to support. We'll make a donation in your name.



**WERNERtv:** Hear what real people are saying about their love for Werner paddles.



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